

HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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STADIUM 11

RAAI SLAYS IN VIBRANT GLORY



BOX-OFFICE 12

HYDERABAD LAND STORM!

9,300 ACRES. ONE DECISION. A CITY REWRITTEN!

REVENTH REDDY UNLEASHES TELANGANA'S BOLDEST URBAN POWER SHIFT IN HISTORY



HYDERABAD'S HEART IS CHANGING. THE FIGHT FOR ITS FUTURE HAS BEGUN.

THE BATTLE LINES

GOVERNMENT SAYS
Urban Renewal.
Pollution Control.
New Industrial Parks.
Future Ready Hyderabad.

OPPOSITION SAYS
Land Grab.
Undervaluation.
Real Estate Bonanza.
Crony Capitalism
In Disguise.

THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

- 9,292.53 ACRES IDENTIFIED FOR TRANSFORMATION
- 4,740 ACRES PRIVATELY OWNED LAND ELIGIBLE FOR CONVERSION
- 2,800 INDUSTRIAL UNITS INSIDE ORR, INCLUDING 1,700 POLLUTING UNITS
- 60+ RELOCATION SITES IDENTIFIED OUTSIDE ORR
- 25% OF CONVERSION REVENUE FOR NEW INDUSTRIAL PARKS

TamilNadu Minister calls on CM Revanth



HYDERABAD, MAY 24

Thiru P. Viswanathan called on Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in Hyderabad on Sunday, following his recent appointment as a Minister in Tamil Nadu. During the visit, the Chief Minister congratulated and honoured Viswanathan. After being out of power for 59 years in Tamil Nadu, the Congress joined the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) -led government headed by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay. Earlier in the day, Viswanathan also met Ministers Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy and Seethakka separately.

PROFESSOR VS THE FIR MACHINE

Andhra's Political Establishment Faces a Blunt Question on Free Speech

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

Three FIRs. One political commentary. A veteran Academic, Political Analyst and Journalist standing his ground with a warning that echoes far beyond Andhra Pradesh. Professor K Nageshwar's explosive confrontation with the state machinery has now become a defining moment in the battle between political power and free speech. What began as a controversial observation about shifting equations between the ruling alliance and opposition forces has rapidly snowballed into a larger debate on democratic tolerance, media intimidation, and the shrinking space for independent journalism.

The political temperature in Andhra Pradesh has suddenly crossed into dangerous territory. Senior political analyst and journalist Professor K Nageshwar has drawn an uncompromising line in public after being hit with three FIRs linked to his remarks on sensitive political developments involving the ruling alliance and opposition equations.

And the language he used was not cautious. It was defiant. "I will die, but I will not stop fighting for free speech."

That statement did not come from a politician staging a rally. It came from a veteran observer of Andhra politics who has spent decades dissecting power structures, electoral shifts, and po-

litical strategy with brutal clarity. Now the battle has moved from TV studios and political meetings into police files. **THE REPORT THAT SHOOK THE ALLIANCE**

The controversy erupted after Professor Nageshwar reportedly discussed political intelligence suggesting that Union Home Minister Amit Shah advised Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan to maintain cordial political equations with Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

That single political assessment detonated like a grenade inside Andhra's already fragile alliance ecosystem. Supporters of the ruling combine viewed it as politically damaging. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >**

Congress conspiring to end free power to farmers, alleges KTR



HYDERABAD, MAY 24

BRS working president KT Rama Rao criticised the Congress government for its efforts to eliminate free electricity for farmers by implementing prepaid power meters and ultimately privatising the power sector. He expressed strong disapproval of the Congress government's plans to set up prepaid meters for domestic

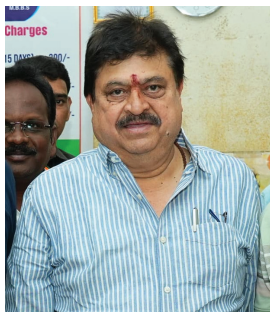
use and urged the public to resist this initiative.

Speaking at a party meeting in Amberpet on Sunday, Rama Rao highlighted that the State Cabinet had agreed to replace current electricity meters with prepaid meters in both rural and urban areas, including those used for agriculture. He claimed that the Congress government's proposal was aimed at encouraging private

sector involvement in the power industry and ultimately transferring operations to corporate entities.

The BRS working president accused the Congress of conspiring to abolish free electricity for farmers by installing meters for agricultural pumps, asserting that the introduction of prepaid meters was merely a step towards privatizing the electricity sector. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >**

BJP STATE CHIEF TO VISIT AGRICULTURE MARKET YARDS FROM MAY 25



HYDERABAD, MAY 24

BJP State President N Ramchander Rao is leaving tomorrow for a three days tour to meet farmers in various districts who are in distress following delay in procurement of their products by the Congress government in Telangana.

During his three days tour beginning from tomorrow May 25 BJP state chief accompanied by area MPs, MLAs and MLCs would visit Agricultural Market Yards to get first hand information from farmers in selling their grains. They will also have interaction with the farmers to know their woes and problems in procurement process by Revanth Reddy government. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >**



BANDARU DATTATREYA'S BIOGRAPHY UNVEILED IN VISAKHAPATNAM

VISAKHAPATNAM, MAY 24

The book launch event of "Prajala Katha Naa Atmakatha", which is the biography of former Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, was held at Kakatiya Convention Centre in the city. Odisha Governor Kambhampati Hari Babu attended the event as the Chief Guest. MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao, MLC Somu Veerajulu, former MP GVL Narasimha Rao, former minister Gudivada Amarnath, former MLA Karanam Dharmasri, BJP North Andhra district presidents, leaders and several other dignitaries also participated in the programme. Speaking on the occasion,

Former MP GVL Narasimha Rao said that Bandaru Dattatreya served in various capacities and added that brought dignity to every post he held. "Bandaru Dattatreya is a person, who gave his entire life for the BJP. One should read his biography and draw inspiration. You won't find individuals like Bandaru Dattatreya in other parties," he said.

MLC Somu Veerajulu said that the Bharatiya Janata Party was an organization that emerged for the nation. He said that Bandaru Dattatreya's life story was an ideal for everyone and added that His services during the Diviseema cyclone were unfor-

gettable. "Living in a very small house, he conducted himself as a man of the people. Dattatreya has been extremely loyal to his work and to the people. In united Andhra Pradesh in 1991, Dattatreya won as an MP from the BJP.

MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao said that In politics, along with posts, there were also rivals and noted that Bandaru Dattatreya was a leader, who had no enemies despite being in politics. "Participating in Alai Balai is an honour for those, who attend it. A programme like Alai Balai should also be organized in North Andhra. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >**

Telangana launches 'war-like' 10-day special operation to clear paddy stocks

HYDERABAD, MAY 24

Telangana has embarked on what is viewed as one of the most intense and expansive paddy procurement operations ever attempted in India, with Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy declaring a full-scale "War like ten-day special operation" to ensure that every grain arrived in market yards is purchased without delay.

At a high-level video conference on Sunday attended by Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Ministers Thummala Nageswara Rao, Ponnampati Prabhakar, Jupally Krishna Rao and Adhuri Lakshman, Government Chief Whip Adi Srinivas, MP, Vem Narender Reddy and Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao, Civil Sup-



plies Commissioner Stephen Ravindra, the Minister directed district collectors and civil supplies officials to complete procurement operations within the next ten days through "result-oriented field action."

The drive was launched in the backdrop of unprecedented agricultural output, mounting arrivals at procurement centres, severe labour shortages, heat-

wave conditions and unseasonal rains threatening standing stocks in market yards.

He said total arrivals are expected to touch 70-75 LMT, and assured farmers of steps for procuring the entire 75 LMT despite operational and financial pressures.

The Minister said Telangana recorded an estimated 140.81 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of

paddy production during the current Rabi season from a record 65.91 lakh acres brought under cultivation.

Calling it the "highest ever production and procurement exercise," Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana was now conducting one of the largest farmer-support operations in the country.

"This is not a routine procurement exercise. This is a state-wide mission to protect farmers under extremely difficult conditions," he observed.

In a major relief to farmers, Uttam Kumar Reddy categorically ordered officials to purchase even rain-exposed paddy. "Paddy exposed to rain will also be procured. No farmer should suffer losses because of weather conditions," he declared. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >**

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HYDERABAD LANDSTORM!

REVANTH REDDY OPENS THE GATES TO THE BIGGEST URBAN POWER SHIFT IN TELANGANA'S HISTORY

BY C. SUBRAHMANYAM

A silent revolution is unfolding beneath the concrete skin of Hyderabad. The Telangana Government led by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has launched an audacious industrial land transformation mission that could redraw the political, economic, and social map of the city for generations. Nearly 9,300 acres of ageing industrial terrain inside and around the Outer Ring Road (ORR) are now marked for conversion into glittering commercial corridors, residential towers, IT hubs, and urban mega zones. The government calls it modernisation. Critics smell a gigantic real estate war beneath the language of reform. In the middle of this furnace stands Hyderabad itself, gasping between the smoke of old factories and the shining promises of a Global City.

There comes a moment in the life of every ambitious metropolis when the old skeleton can no longer carry the weight of the new body. That moment has arrived in Hyderabad. The rusting industrial belts of Sanathnagar, Balanagar, Jeedimetla, Nacharam, and Kukatpally once stood proudly at the edge of the city like giant engines of production. Smoke stacks, machine shops, transport depots, and factory compounds symbolised industrial muscle in an era when Hyderabad still moved at the pace of a provincial capital.

Today those same industrial belts sit trapped inside a roaring urban monster. Apartment towers surround factory sheds. Luxury showrooms stand beside ageing warehouses. IT parks rise where machine oil once flowed. The city expand-

ed. The land became priceless. The industrial map did not change.

Now the Telangana Government has arrived with a political bulldozer. Under the Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation Policy framed through GO 17 and GO 27, roughly 9,292.53 acres of industrial land are being unlocked for large-scale urban redevelopment. More than 4,700 acres of privately owned industrial plots are immediately eligible for conversion.

Pause for a moment and absorb that number. This is not a minor zoning tweak hidden in a bureaucratic drawer. This is one of the largest urban land reclassification exercises seen anywhere in modern India.

INSIDE THE GREAT HYDERABAD LAND RESET

NEARLY 9,300 ACRES IDENTIFIED FOR TRANSFORMATION.

MORE THAN 4,700 ACRES IMMEDIATELY ELIGIBLE FOR CONVERSION. OVER 2,800 INDUSTRIAL UNITS OPERATING INSIDE THE ORR REGION.

AROUND 1,700 CATEGORISED AS POLLUTING UNITS.

MORE THAN 60 EXTERNAL RELOCATION SITES UNDER DISCUSSION.

DEVELOPMENT FEES LINKED TO SRO VALUES, TRIGGERING FIERCE POLITICAL

CONTROVERSY.

THE CITY RESET UNDER REVANTH REDDY

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has made one thing abundantly clear since assuming office: he intends to govern Telangana with visible force and unmistakable velocity. This industrial land transformation policy bears his political fingerprints from top to bottom. Aggressive. High risk. High impact. Calculated for maximum visibility.

The Revanth Reddy administration is making a blunt argument before Telangana and the nation. Hyderabad cannot dream of becoming a truly global economic capital while vast stretches of prime urban land remain trapped inside industrial zoning models designed half a century ago.

And the government is not entirely wrong. The industrial estates now sitting inside the city core were developed decades ago when Hyderabad's population, traffic load, land values, and economic ambitions belonged to another age altogether. Today Hyderabad is competing not merely with Bengaluru or Chennai. It is competing for international capital, multinational technology ecosystems, logistics infrastructure, and urban investment flows. The Chief Minister believes the city must evolve or suffocate. That is the political doctrine driving this transformation.

THE GOVERNMENT SAYS THIS IS URBAN SURGERY — THE OPPOSITION CALLS IT A LAND BONANZA

This is where the smoke

thickens. The Telangana Government insists the policy is rooted in rational urban planning. Officials argue that many industrial units inside the ORR have either become unviable, technologically outdated, or environmentally incompatible with dense residential growth. The government further argues that pollution-heavy industries cannot continue operating indefinitely inside an exploding metropolitan core.

There is truth in that argument. But opposition parties have launched a thunderous counterattack. They claim Hyderabad's most valuable land parcels are being opened for private commercial exploitation at rates far below actual market value.

The fiercest criticism centres around the decision to calculate Development Impact Fees using SRO registration values rather than soaring open market prices. And this is where Hyderabad's property arithmetic becomes politically explosive. In several stretches of the city, land valuations have entered stratospheric territory. Real estate circles openly discuss figures running into lakhs per square yard in premium belts. That reality has triggered allegations that enormous private fortunes may emerge from this policy. The government rejects those accusations and insists the transformation is essential for planned urban growth.

"Hyderabad is no longer merely expanding outward. The city is now preparing to reinvent its own heart."

THE REAL STORY IS NOT LAND. IT IS POWER

Whenever giant urban land

transformations occur in India, one question always stalks the corridors of power: Who truly benefits?

Because industrial land and urban commercial land belong to entirely different economic universes. A fading factory plot can become a luxury residential empire overnight. An ageing industrial shed can suddenly transform into a commercial gold mine. The multiplier effect is staggering. That explains the feverish attention surrounding this policy from developers, investors, consultants, and political observers alike. Every acre carries immense future value. Every notification alters the balance sheet of tomorrow's Hyderabad. This is not merely a planning debate. It is a struggle over the future economic architecture of Telangana's capital.

THE POLLUTION QUESTION IS REAL AND THE GOVERNMENT IS USING IT AGGRESSIVELY

The Revanth Reddy Government is also pushing a powerful environmental argument. Official estimates indicate around 2,800 industrial units currently function inside the ORR region, including nearly 1,700 classified as polluting units.

That statistic cannot be dismissed casually. Industrial pollution inside residential zones has become a serious urban governance crisis across Indian metros. Traffic congestion, hazardous emissions, chemical storage risks, and infrastructure stress are now deeply embedded inside Hyderabad's mixed industrial-residential pockets.

The Telangana Govern-

ment's answer is blunt. Shift polluting industries outward. Create modern industrial parks beyond the ORR. Free the urban core for cleaner economic activity. The administration has reportedly identified more than 60 possible relocation zones outside the metropolitan ring. Officials further claim that 25 percent of revenue generated from conversion charges will be channelled toward the development of new industrial ecosystems.

That is the balancing act unfolding before the public. Urban modernisation on one side. Industrial rehabilitation on the other.

"Factories built yesterday's Hyderabad. Revanth Reddy now wants technology corridors and vertical skylines to build tomorrow's Telangana."

BUT THERE IS A DANGEROUS SIDE TO THIS GAMBLE

Cities do not collapse only through neglect. Sometimes they collapse through uncontrolled ambition. That warning hangs heavily over this entire policy.

Because converting industrial land into dense residential and commercial districts demands gigantic infrastructure expansion—from roads to drainage, water supply, sewage systems, traffic corridors, flood management, and public transport. Without synchronised infrastructure growth, Hyderabad risks replacing one urban problem with another far larger one.

Urban planners privately admit this challenge is enormous. The city already struggles with congestion, flooding anxieties,

and rising civic pressure. Now imagine thousands of acres suddenly opening for vertical construction. The pressure on the city's arteries could become immense. That is why execution will determine whether this policy becomes visionary statecraft or a cautionary tale.

INSIDE THE NEW HYDERABAD GOLD RUSH

The moment the industrial transformation policy emerged from government corridors, Hyderabad's real estate ecosystem snapped to attention like a stock exchange hearing news of a market boom.

Land consultants began recalculating forgotten industrial parcels. Developers quietly reopened old files. Investment groups started tracking ownership patterns across ageing industrial clusters. Political conversations shifted from factories to floor space indexes. For decades these industrial estates were viewed as relics of another Hyderabad. Today they are being discussed as future urban diamonds.

That is the hidden drama behind the policy. Not merely redevelopment. Not merely zoning reform. But the birth of an entirely new urban wealth map. And whenever such wealth maps are redrawn in India, the political tremors are never far behind.

SMALL INDUSTRIES FEAR THEY MAY BE SWEEPED ASIDE

There is another layer to this unfolding storm. Industrial associations and SME operators fear that the language of modernisation may eventually overwhelm smaller manufacturing ecosystems built over

generations.

Several industry voices argue that not every industrial unit inside the ORR is obsolete or sick. Many continue to generate employment, production, and supply chain support. Relocation is not a simple administrative exercise. It affects labour mobility, transport economics, supplier networks, and business continuity.

The Telangana Government, therefore, faces a difficult balancing challenge. Can it modernise Hyderabad while protecting the productive industrial communities that helped build the city's economy in the first place? That answer remains uncertain. And uncertainty is where political fires usually begin.

THE CLOSING WORD IN HYDERABAD'S GREAT RESET

The Hyderabad Industrial Lands Transformation Policy is not merely an administrative document. It is a declaration of intent. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is signalling that Telangana will not approach urban transformation timidly. He is wagering that Hyderabad's future lies in aggressive redevelopment, modern land economics, and global-scale urban restructuring.

The gamble is enormous. If the plan succeeds, Hyderabad could emerge as one of India's boldest examples of metropolitan reinvention. If it falters, the backlash will echo through politics, industry, and public life for years. Because when nearly 9,300 acres of urban land enter the furnace of power, money, and ambition, the story is never merely about geography. It becomes a battle over the future soul of the city itself.

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PROFESSOR VS THE FIR MACHINE

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Complaints followed. Police cases followed even faster. And suddenly, the focus shifted away from whether the political information was accurate and toward punishing the person who spoke about it. That is where the entire episode becomes deeply uncomfortable for democracy.

THE CORE QUESTION

If political analysis itself begins attracting FIRs, where exactly does democratic debate survive?

THE REAL FEAR INSIDE THE POWER CORRIDORS

This controversy is not merely about one statement or one journalist. It exposes the nervous underbelly of Andhra's political establishment.

The current ruling arrangement in Andhra Pradesh rests on delicate chemistry. The alliance between the Telugu Desam Party and Jana Sena depends heavily on narrative discipline, cadre management, and maintaining the perception of complete unity against the opposition YSR Congress Party. Any suggestion of behind-the-scenes communication, tactical flexibility, or future political recalibration threatens that carefully managed image. That is why Professor Nageshwar's remarks struck such a raw nerve. He was not speaking as an anonymous social media provocateur. He was speaking as a seasoned political analyst with long-standing credibility and deep understanding of Andhra's political arithmetic. And that is precisely why the reaction became so intense.

FIRS CANNOT REPLACE POLITICAL ARGUMENTS

What stands out sharply is the complete collapse of democratic engagement in handling uncomfortable commentary. Instead of publicly disproving the claim through facts, debate, or political rebuttal, the system moved toward criminal complaints.

That is a dangerous road. In any functioning democracy, political speech must be answered politically first, and not through legal intimidation. FIRs cannot become substitutes for ideological counterattack.

Professor Nageshwar himself pointed

out the contradiction. Even after clarification attempts and public remarks acknowledging his seniority from sections of the political establishment, complaints continued moving through the system. That contradiction reveals a troubling reality. The outrage may not merely be about the statement itself. It may be about sending a message. A message to every journalist, analyst, YouTuber, academic, and commentator in Andhra Pradesh: Touch sensitive political equations at your own risk.

"Free speech does not collapse in one dramatic moment. It erodes case by case, warning by warning, FIR by FIR."

ANDHRA'S POLITICS IS ENTERING A MORE VOLATILE PHASE

The bigger political backdrop cannot be ignored. The ruling alliance is still consolidating power after an emotionally charged electoral battle. The opposition under Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy remains politically wounded but far from irrelevant. National leadership calculations continue hovering over Andhra's future alignments.

In this environment, speculation, political intelligence, and strategic interpretation become inevitable parts of public discourse. Veteran commentators like Professor Nageshwar operate precisely in that space, interpreting signals, decoding power movements, and exposing undercurrents before they become visible to the public. If that role itself becomes criminalised, Andhra's democratic conversation will shrink into fear-driven silence. And silence is always politically convenient for those already holding power.

THE PRESS IS NOT MEANT TO BE COMFORTABLE

There is another uncomfortable truth here. Journalism is not designed to make governments feel secure. Political commentary is not supposed to flatter ruling establishments. The role of the press is to ask difficult questions, interpret hidden developments, challenge official narratives, and sometimes publish information that unsettles powerful people.

Democracy survives because of that discomfort only. The moment political power begins expecting only obedient commentary, democratic institutions start weakening from within. This is why the current episode carries significance beyond Andhra Pradesh. Across India, debates over sedition laws, online speech, defamation complaints, digital surveillance, and police action against journalists have steadily intensified. The Andhra episode now joins that larger national pattern where legal pressure increasingly shadows independent commentary.

FROM CLASSROOM TO POLITICAL BATTLEFIELD

Professor K Nageshwar built his public reputation through a rare combination of academic depth and mass communication skills. Unlike many television panel regulars driven purely by partisan loyalty, he cultivated an image of analytical independence. That independence is now being stress-tested in the harshest possible way. What makes this confrontation politically explosive is not merely the FIRs themselves but the symbolism surrounding them. A professor and journalist publicly declaring that he would rather face death than surrender the principle of free speech transforms a legal controversy into a moral confrontation. And moral confrontations are far harder for governments to control than political ones.

The Andhra government and alliance leadership now face a defining choice. They can continue down the path where criticism and political analysis trigger police action. Or they can demonstrate democratic maturity by allowing disagreement, speculation, and journalistic interpretation to exist without criminal intimidation. Because once fear enters public discourse, democracy begins speaking in whispers.

Professor K Nageshwar's confrontation with the system is no longer just about one analyst defending one statement. It has become a test of how much political criticism Andhra Pradesh is willing to tolerate in the age of hyper-sensitive power politics. History has never looked kindly upon governments that confuse criticism with conspiracy. And history also shows something else: Attempts to silence uncomfortable voices often amplify them far beyond what power originally intended.

Telangana launches 'war-like' 10-day special operation to clear paddy stocks

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Uttam Kumar Reddy also pointed out that while the Central government announces MSP, its procurement support to Telangana remains limited. "The Centre's procurement from Telangana is restricted to around 52 lakh metric tonnes. Beyond that, the State government itself is taking responsibility for additional procurement from

farmers," he said.

He urged Ministers, MLAs and public representatives to explain these realities to farmers and reassure them that the State government would continue procurement operations without interruption.

As of May 23, 2026, procurement operations had already reached staggering levels. Some 58.79 LMT of paddy had arrived at procurement

centres and 50.01 LMT had already been procured. Nearly 85% of arrived stock had been cleared. Around 8.78 LMT remained pending and would be cleared within 72 hours. Another 16 LMT was expected from late-harvest districts within the next 10 days. The Civil Supplies department has already been working in mission mode with a fixed daily procurement target of 3 LMT,

he said.

The Minister directed district collectors and civil supplies officers to resolve procurement bottlenecks immediately at the field level instead of waiting for procedural approvals.

"All officials must totally focus on paddy procurement. Field-level decisions should be taken on the spot to speed up the process," he instructed.

Congress conspiring to end free power to farmers, alleges KTR

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KT Rama Rao recalled that the BRS had warned during the Assembly elections that the free electricity program for farmers would be at risk if the Congress gained power. He noted that BRS chief and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao had resisted pressure from the central government to introduce prepaid meters, despite facing alleged restrictions on loans amounting to Rs 30,000 crore.

However, he claimed that the Congress government now intends to roll out prepaid electricity meters within three months and encouraged citizens to oppose this action. He stated, "Before prepaid meters reach every household and agricultural motor, people should politically disconnect from the Congress."

The former minister also accused the Congress government of administrative failures, corruption, and not fulfilling election promises, despite having completed nearly half of its term. He remarked that public dissatisfaction with the government's policies and governance was growing.

Regarding civic issues in Hyderabad, Rama Rao criticized the Congress government for demolitions carried out under the guise of

HYDRAA, stating that while the previous BRS government built houses for the poor, the current administration was destroying thousands of homes, leaving many people homeless.

He also directed his criticism towards Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy regarding the proposed Future City project, claiming that the government was neglecting existing urban infrastructure and essential civic services while making ambitious promises about new developments.

On the Musi river rejuvenation project, the BRS working president claimed that significant sewage treatment plant projects had already begun during the BRS government and accused the current administration of exploiting the initiative for contracts and commissions. He argued that extensive demolitions linked to the Musi rejuvenation were causing distress to many residents. He announced that the BRS would soon initiate digital membership enrollment and conduct training sessions for party workers across all constituencies. He emphasized that the party would prioritize candidates who actively engaged in public issues when selecting nominees for upcoming municipal corporation elections in Hyderabad.

BJP STATE CHIEF TO VISIT AGRICULTURE MARKET...

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Rao has alleged that the Congress government has completely failed in procuring grains from the farmers. Through chief minister Revanth Reddy promised to purchase every last grain of grains, but failed to fulfill promises

and deceiving the farmers.

Rao would visit eight Market yards spanning in different districts beginning first from Tandur Agriculture Market Yard followed by Gajwel, Bhongir, Warangal, Bhupalpally, Kataram, Manthani and Peddapalli. He will have

night halt at Gajwel first day of his visit, second day on May 26 he will stay at night at Bhupalpally and last day on May 27 after completion of his, he will stay in the night at Peddapalli, according to a release from state party office here today.

BANDARU DATTATREYA'S BIOGRAPHY...

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All political leaders should be brought together on one platform," he said. Addressing the gathering, Former Governor Bandaru Dattatreya said that Politics and business were not for profit but they were very sacred. He also said that Politics means only public service and added that he never imagined that he would enter politics. "Whoever is in power, one must serve the people. Even in today's politics, there are leaders with high ideals and values. But day by day, the values in politics are declining," he said.

Odisha Governor Kamabampati Hari Babu said that Bandaru Dattatreya was a great person, who rose from among the people. "In-sults, hardships and pains could not stop his success. Dattatreya's efforts to protect democracy are an inspiration for future generations. His services during the Diviseema cyclone were immense. When Dattatreya was Union Minister, he provided necessary funds for Visakhapatnam. While serving as Governor, he lived among the people, not confined within the walls of Raj Bhavan," the Governor recalled.

Indiramma Bheema scheme to launch on June 2: Bhatti

HYDERABAD

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka stated that the people's government in Telangana is fulfilling every promise made during the elections and delivering welfare benefits directly to the doorstep of the poor.

The Deputy Chief Minister announced that the historic "Indiramma Bheema" scheme will be launched across the state on June 2 as a State Formation Day gift. He assured that this insurance scheme would act as a protective shield for 1.15 crore families in the state, irrespective of caste, religion, or economic status. Bhatti criticised the previous government, saying that families of farmers who died by suicide had to struggle even for minimal financial assistance. To ensure such situations are never repeated, the government has decided to provide ₹5 lakh insurance coverage to every family that loses its head due to an accident. Officials will soon visit every household to collect details related to the scheme, he said.

Bhatti Vikramarka clarified that the government's goal is not just to treat women as beneficiaries but to transform them into entrepreneurs. As part of this vision, he announced that a scheme to allot solar power plants to women's self-help groups across the state will be launched on May 27 at Ra-



jupalem village in Errupalem mandal of Madhira constituency.

The Deputy Chief Minister said the government is providing interest-free loans worth ₹20,000 crore annually to women's groups and promised to increase it up to ₹1 lakh crore if needed.

He also noted that women are already traveling free in RTC buses across the state. Soon, 550 special RTC buses will be allocated exclusively for women entrepreneurs. The government aims to make one crore women

millionaires, he added. Bhatti proudly stated that the people's government is the only government providing premium fine rice, which costs ₹50-55 per kg in the market, free of cost to 1.06 crore families in the state.

He said that under the Gruhajyothi scheme, free electricity up to 200 units is being provided across the state, reducing the electricity bill burden for 53 lakh families. In many villages, nearly 95% of people are receiving "zero" electricity bills. Bhat-

ti alleged that the BRS government deceived people for ten years in the name of double-bedroom houses. He said the present government is providing ₹5 lakh financial assistance to every poor family to build their own house. So far, 4.5 lakh houses have already been sanctioned statewide. The Deputy Chief Minister also announced that the Cabinet recently approved an additional 2 lakh houses. Making Telangana a hut-free state is the government's top priority, he added

Unified under KCR's call: Kukatpally set for a high-profile BRS gathering

MEDCHAL-MALKAJIRI

Kukatpally is set to witness a wide-scale BRS gathering as party workers rally behind a call from Telangana's first Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR). Sitting Kukatpally MLA Madhavaram Krishna Rao has urged workers across each assembly segment to participate actively, underscoring that the district-wide meeting is being organized in response to KCR's directive and aims to strengthen the party at the grassroots level. The event, scheduled for Monday, May 25, 2026, at 9:00 AM, will be held at NKNR Garden, Metro Cash & Carry, and is expected to draw a cross-section of cadre from across the Kukatpally constituency.

Among the notable attendees is KTR, the working president and former minister who represents the Sirisilla constituency, who is slated to grace the occasion as the chief



guest, along with other prominent figures. State leaders, including Senators K. Naveen Kumar and Sambipur Raja, are also expected to attend, underscoring the significance of the gathering and signaling the party's intent to project unity and organizational strength at a district-wide level. Madhavaram Krishna Rao emphasized that broad-based participation—from assembly workers to women and youth leaders, as well as leaders from affiliated organizations and supporters—would be crucial to the meeting's success and

to the broader goal of reinforcing the party's foothold at the grassroots.

The MLA highlighted that the call from KCR serves as a unifying mandate to mobilize cadres across all segments, with the district meeting envisioned as a platform to translate citywide momentum into tangible actions on the ground. He urged every segment of the party, including women's wings and youth wings, to come forward and contribute to the program's objectives, presenting the gathering as not just a show of strength but a coordinated effort to implement the party's programs at the local level. As preparations proceed, organizers are focusing on logistics, crowd management, and accessibility at NKNR Garden to ensure a smooth and impactful event, while keeping the emphasis on unity, outreach, and readiness for broader electoral mobilization in the months ahead.

SCR introduces three new weekly express trains

HYDERABAD

The Ministry of Railways has approved the introduction of three new weekly express trains from Telangana, regularizing the existing special train services operated by the South Central Railway (SCR).

The new services will connect Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana with Jaipur, Agartala and Sri Ganganagar.

According to a release by SCR on Sunday Train No. 17079/17080 Hyderabad - Jaipur - Hyderabad Weekly Express will commence services



from July 24 and 26. The train will be operated from Hyderabad, Secunderabad, Nizamabad, Nanded, Bhopal, Ujjain, Ajmer and Jaipur.

Similarly, Train No. 17031/17032 Charlapalli - Agartala - Charlapalli Weekly

Express will operations from July 27 and 31. The train will operate between Charlapalli, Vijayawada, Vizianagaram Jn, Bhubaneswar, Kharagpur Jn, New Jalpaiguri, New Bongaigaon, Guwahati and Agartala. Another new service Train No. 17061/17062 Kacheguda - Sri Ganga Nagar - Kacheguda Weekly will commence from July 25 and 28. The train will pass through important stations such as Kacheguda, Nizamabad Jn, Purna Jn, Akola Jn, Bhopal Jn, Sawai Madhopur Jn, Ringas Jn, Suratgarh Jn and Shri Ganganagar.

Telangana govt unveils mega roadmap for Women's Week

HYDERABAD

As part of the "Praja Palana - Pragathi Pranalika" initiative, Women's Week celebrations will be organised across the Telangana State from May 25 to 31. Programmes will be undertaken to highlight women's economic self-reliance, employment opportunities, health, nutrition, and industrial advancement.

On the occasion of Women's Week,

awareness seminars, exhibitions, cultural programmes, industrial expos, health camps, and special events for young women are being organised across the state under the aegis of the departments of Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and Women & Child Welfare, along with SERP and MEPMA.

In a statement here on Sunday, Minister for Panchayat Raj Seethakka stated that the women's empowerment initiatives undertaken by the Telangana

government serve as a model for the entire nation.

She stated that the State government has set a target to provide loan facilities amounting to ₹1 lakh crore to women's self-help groups through bank linkages over the next five years. Against this backdrop, since the people's government assumed office, loans totaling ₹60,487 crore have been disbursed to these women's groups to date. Through these initiatives, lakhs of women are

successfully running their own businesses, Seethakka said.

The Minister stated that interest-free loans, bank linkages, and marketing facilities are being provided to foster the economic empowerment of women. While the government has already disbursed interest subsidies amounting to ₹1,397 crore to women's groups, an additional ₹650 crore is set to be released during the Women's Week celebrations, she said.

Advanced Wellness Centre Inaugurated at Medcover Hospitals, Sec'bad

SECUNDERABAD

Medcover Hospitals has launched a dedicated Wellness Centre at its Annex Building in Secunderabad with the objective of making preventive healthcare and regular health screening services more accessible to the public.

The centre was inaugurated in the presence of members of the Jain Relief Foundation, including Mr. Dharmender Nahar, Mr. Vikram Kimtee Jain, Mr. Prashant Kocheta, Mr. Pawan Kataria Jain, Mr. Deepak Kimtee Jain, Mr. Gautham Parakh Jain, Mr. Prem Kothari Jain, Mr. Pramod Khivarsara Jain, and Mr. Rajendra Pincha Jain.



The newly established Wellness Centre will offer complete health check-up packages, screening for lifestyle-related diseases, preventive diagnostic services, nutrition and well-

ness guidance, and personal health consultations.

Hospital officials said the initiative is aimed at encouraging people to focus on preventive care and identify health

issues at an early stage before they develop into major complications. The centre is designed to support individuals in maintaining better long-term health through regular monitoring and expert medical guidance.

Doctors at Medcover Hospitals stated that increasing awareness about routine health check-ups and early diagnosis is essential in today's fast-paced lifestyle, where conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and heart disease are becoming increasingly common.

Centre Head Krishnaveni, doctors, and medical staff were also present during the inauguration ceremony.

GM/NFR Inspects Electrification Works in Araria - Galgalia Section



Redevelopment Works at World Class NJP Station

MALIGAON

Chetan Kumar Shrivastava, General Manager of North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) carried out a comprehensive inspection of ongoing electrification works in the Araria - Galgalia section on 22nd May, 2026 along with a review of redevelopment and upgradation

works at New Jalpaiguri (NJP) station. He was accompanied by senior officials from NFR Headquarters and Katihar Division during the inspection programme.

During the visit, the General Manager inaugurated the newly developed Boot Laundry facility at Rautara under Katihar Division to enhance maintenance and cleaning arrangements of railway staff equipment and operational gear. Shri Shrivastava also partici-

pated in a plantation drive by planting saplings, reaffirming NFR's commitment towards environmental sustainability and promotion of green initiatives across railway premises.

The General Manager reviewed the progress of electrification works aimed at enhancing operational efficiency, facilitating seamless electric train operations and promoting energy efficient railway infrastructure in the Araria - Galgalia section. He also

undertook a Window Trailing Inspection to assess track conditions, signalling systems, bridges, level crossing gates and passenger amenities along the route.

At New Jalpaiguri (NJP) Shri Shrivastava conducted a detailed inspection of the ongoing station redevelopment works under the World Class Station project. NJP is being transformed into a world-class station and international terminus with modern facilities, state-of-the-art platforms, enhanced passenger amenities and improved circulating areas. He also reviewed redevelopment initiatives being undertaken under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme aimed at creating a modern, efficient and future-ready travel hub for passengers.

The General Manager emphasised timely completion of all ongoing projects while maintaining the highest standards of quality, safety and operational excellence. He appreciated the dedicated efforts and professionalism of railway officials and staff in ensuring continuous modernization, infrastructure development and safe, reliable and passenger friendly railway services across the zone.

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Provide Rs.1 crore ex-gratia to deceased farmers' families: former Minister T. Jeevan Reddy

HYDERABAD

BRS party General Secretary and former Minister T. Jeevan Reddy on Sunday demanded that the state government immediately provide an ex-gratia of Rs 1 crore to the families of farmers, who died at grain procurement centers. He addressed a media conference held at Telangana Bhavan in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, He expressed deep concern that more farmers were resorting to suicide due to the negligent attitude adopted by the Congress party. He questioned as to why the difficulties currently being faced by the farmers regarding grains procurement in the state were not discussed during Friday's Cabinet meeting? He stated that the farmers were incurring a loss of Rs 250 per quintal during the procurement process, a situation he termed an "R&R Tax."

He alleged that the Congress party had been grossly deceiving the farmers ever since it assumed power. He criticised the Congress leader Rahul



Gandhi, accusing him of misleading the farmers under the guise of the "Farmers' Declaration." He noted that during KCR's tenure, the farmers used to receive the 'Rythu Bandhu' financial assistance for every crop season. He alleged that the Minister in-charge of Karimnagar district Thummala Nagawara Rao, had never once visited Karimnagar nor conducted a review regarding the grains procurement.

He lashed out at Chief Minister Revanath Reddy, pointing out that while the government has shown great interest in organizing beauty pageants and football tournaments, it had failed to conduct even a single review meeting to address the issues plaguing the farming community. He added that 50 percent of the harvested grains still remains lying at the threshing floors. He stated that there was complete

negligence regarding the procurement of maize crop. It was noted that state Minister Sridhar Babu appears rattled by the comments made by former minister Harish Rao regarding the "Future City." He lashed out, alleging that attempts were being made to hand over Pharma City project lands to the associates of CM Revanath Reddy. He criticized Chief Minister Revanath Reddy and Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy by stating that they were speaking without any clarity regarding the procurement of the grains. He remarked that if local body elections were held, PCC President Mahesh Kumar Goud would realize whether or not the BRS party would return to power?

Reddy stated that the slogan—"Revanth Reddy must go; KCR must return"—had originated from the people themselves. He made it clear that if the state government fails to procure the grains by May 31st, CM Revanath Reddy would have no moral right to hoist the flag on June 2nd, the day of the Telangana Formation Day celebrations.

Govt's decision to approve RDSS is atrocious: Former minister Jagadish Reddy

HYDERABAD

Former Minister Jagadish Reddy on Sunday stated that it was atrocious for the state government to approve a scheme that imposes a massive burden on all electricity consumers in the state. He made these remarks during a media conference held at Telangana Bhavan in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, He noted that the Revanath Reddy government had approved the RDSS (Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme) during a Cabinet meeting held on Saturday. He recalled that former Chief Minister KCR had previously blocked the implementation of this Central scheme, vowing that he would never accept it as long as he drew breath. He revealed that KCR had refused to yield, despite facing immense pres-

sure from the Central government. He pointed out that in BJP-ruled states, people were physically removing and burning the smart meters installed for households and agricultural pump sets under the RDSS. He alleged that, in stark contrast, the Congress government in Telangana had approved the very same smart meters, intending to impose them upon the people of the state. He explained that while the state government currently claims that it would install smart meters only at transformer points, this opens the door for their eventual installation at individual connections.

He clarified that the RDSS was not designed to uplift the poor. He warned that in the coming days, the smart meters would likely be installed even on drinking water taps. He alleged



that the Congress government was conspiring to privatize the electricity utility sector. He reiterated that the RDSS would place a severe financial burden on both farmers and general consumers. He questioned as to why the Congress party was attempting to implement the RDSS in Telangana, giv-

ing that the Uttar Pradesh government had withdrawn the scheme following pressure from the Congress party itself. He declared that they strongly oppose the RDSS and called upon all the farmers and consumers to unite and prepare for protests against the state government.

Thyroid and Nutrition: Awareness through Education



(On the occasion of "World Thyroid Day" on 25 May)

Thyroid diseases are among the most prevalent endocrine disorders globally, Indian is not an exception. Around 4.2 crores of Indians are affected by thyroid related diseases. The thyroid gland produces thyroid hormones which are essential for normal growth and energy metabolism. Thyroid dysfunction is common, readily identifiable and easily treatable, but if undiagnosed or untreated, it can have profound adverse effects. Iodine is a crucial component in producing thyroid hormones. Over one billion people globally lead lives in iodine-deficiency. The studies indicate that 1% of men and 5% of women have detectable thyroid disorders.

World Thyroid Day- 2026 Theme

To increase awareness about thyroid disorders and highlight the importance of early detection and proper treatment, "World Thyroid Day" is observed annually on 25 May since 2008. Although small in size, the thyroid

gland regulated essential body functions like metabolism, temperature, mood, heart beat, and growth. Early detection, timely treatment, and consistent follow ups can help manage thyroid problems effectively.

The theme of "World Thyroid Day - 2026" is "Thyroid and Nutrition: Awareness through Education" - a timely reminder and timely action can make a significant difference. The aim is to encourage individuals to take common symptoms like fatigue, weight change, or neck swelling seriously and consult a doctor as early as possible.

Thyroid Burden in India

In India, more than 42 million people are estimated to have thyroid disorders. The problem is that many individuals remain unaware of their conditions. A delay in diagnosis can lead to serious complications like infertility, heart problems, and mental health issues. Regular screening, early detection, and lifestyle changes can make a huge difference in managing these disorders. The common thyroid

disorder symptoms are fatigue, weight changes, mood swings, hair loss, cold sensitivity, heat sensitivity, depression, puffy face, muscle weakness, constipation, dry skin, irregular periods, and swelling in the neck.

Types and Risks of Thyroid Disorders

Disorders occur when the thyroid becomes underactive (hypothyroidism) or overactive (hyperthyroidism). The thyroid nodules, thyroid cancer, and goitre are also the other types of thyroid disorders. The major risk factors responsible for thyroid disorders are iodine deficiency or excess, autoimmune diseases, family history, gender, age factor, radiation exposure, hormonal medications, pregnancy and postpartum, and smoking.

The activities like educational programs, free thyroid checkup camps, social media campaigns, sharing patient experiences, and distribution of printed material on thyroid disorders can be planned and executed on this day.

— Prof Burra Madhusudhan Reddy
9949700037

Malkajgiri Traffic Police book 227 drunk driving offenders in weekend drive



HYDERABAD

Malkajgiri Traffic Police has conducted a special drunk driving enforcement drive over the weekend, resulting in the apprehension of 227 offenders. The total cases booked 185 two wheelers, 12 three wheelers, 29 four wheelers and one heavy vehicle. Based on their Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels, 197 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 36 mg/100 ml to 200 mg/100 ml, 20 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 201 mg/100 ml to 300 mg/100 ml, 10 offenders had BAC levels above 300 mg/100 ml. All the offenders will be produced before

the Court. Malkajgiri Police reiterate that driving under the influence of alcohol is a serious offence. If anyone is found to be driving in an inebriated condition and causes a fatal accident, such individuals will be booked under Section 105 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (Culpable Homicide Not Amounting to Murder). The maximum punishment under this section is 10 years of imprisonment along with a fine. In the last Week (May 17 to 23) a total 293 drunk driving cases were disposed in the courts, in which 11 persons got Jail along with fine, 2 persons got fine and social service, 280 persons got fine only.

Traffic diversions at Novopan Junction on NH-65

HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad police have imposed traffic restrictions due to the ongoing construction of retaining walls for the Vehicle under Pass (VUP) at Novopan Junction on NH-65. These restrictions are expected to remain in place until the completion of the roadwork.

As a result, traffic traveling from the Outer Ring Road (ORR) and Sangareddy towards Patancheru will be redirected at Pocharam Kaman to the left-side service road, continuing to the Patancheru vegetable market road, where it will join NH-65.

Moreover, vehicles moving from Patancheru towards Sangareddy will be redirected onto the left-side service road at Incor Lake City Apartments, continuing to Ramky Infra Tower, where they will merge back with NH-65.

The traffic police have urged the public to plan their travels accordingly and cooperate with the Cyberabad traffic police to facilitate smooth traffic flow.

Dignity in nomenclature: Govt approves name changes for several BC castes



HYDERABAD

After reviewing the concerns regarding the derogatory nature of certain caste names within the Backward Classes, the State gov-

ernment has approved a series of renamings. The Principal Secretary of the BC Welfare department has issued directives to implement these changes, following the recommendations made by the State BC

Commission. Specifically, the 'Budabukkala' caste, previously marked as number 4 under Group-A, will now be referred to as 'Shiva Kshatriya'. Additionally, the 'Vannar' designation has been eliminated and substituted with 'Dhobi'; it has been stated that any of the names—Rajaka, Chakali, or Dhobi—can be used in practice. Furthermore, the term 'Dommaru', listed at number 7, has been replaced with 'Gada Vamshiya'. The name 'Pichhakuntla', ranked at number 18, has been altered to 'Vamsharaj'. The name 'Veerabhadriya', at number 23, is now changed to 'Veeramushthi, Neti Kotala, Veerabhadriya'. In Group D, the caste previously known as 'Mera', listed at number 5, will now be called 'Meru'. Lastly, the caste name 'Shudra', which was listed at number 29, has been removed and replaced with 'Tammali'.

SUSMITHA GETS PH.D. TGS HAILS

HYDERABAD: Telangana Gangaputra Sangham State Secretary T Rajesh Khanna Gangaputra today congratulated Dr Ch. Susmitha Gangaputra, on her getting Doctorate in Economics, for her thesis on the living conditions of the traditional Gangaputra community. Rajesh Khanna said that Susmitha had done Ph. D. Under the guidance of Dr. Swaroopa Rani, even while working as a Teacher.

DONATION OF RS. 20 LAKHS TO TTD

Hyderabad: A devotee from Guntur Madala Seshagiri Rao, donated Rs.10,01,116 to the TTD Sri Venkateswara Anna Prasadam Trust on Sunday. Similarly, another devotee from Guntur, Vadlamudi Mithresh, donated Rs.10,01,111 to the Sri Venkateswara Pranadana Trust. The donors handed over the donation DDs to Temple Dy EO Lokanatham at Ranganayakula Mandapam inside the Srivari Temple. TTD Board Member Nannapaneni Sadashiva Rao also participated in the programme.

Govt should purchase rain soaked grains : Former Minister Niranjan Reddy

WANAPARTHY

Former Minister Niranjan Reddy on Sunday demanded that the state government purchase rain-soaked grains at the Minimum Support Price (MSP). He asserted that farmers were facing hardships solely due to the administration's negligence in the grains procurement. He inspected the rain-damaged grains at the Wanaparthi market yard, expressed solidarity with the farmers and assured them that he would stand by their side until justice is served.

Speaking to the media on this occasion, he lashed out at the authorities, noting with anger that the farmers had been waiting endlessly at the procurement centers for days, yet the weighing process has not commenced.

He expressed deep anguish over

the plight of the farmers, who are shedding tears as they watch their harvested grains being ruined by water right before their eyes. He alleged that this dire situation had befallen the farmers because the state government awarded transportation contracts to unqualified agencies. He remarked that while the government is quick to file cases against those, who raise their voices regarding public issues, its failure to apprehend the killers of Sridhar Reddy—even two years after the murder—stands as a testament to its sheer incompetence. He criticized Chief Minister Revanath Reddy for making irresponsible statements claiming that the state government had already procured the entire grain harvest.

He recalled that during former CM KCR's tenure, the government had supported the farmers by pro-

curating every single grain of the rain-damaged produce. He pointed out that the grains were cultivated across 542,000 hectares and added that there was currently no one willing to purchase it. He demanded that Civil Supplies department official Stephen Ravindra conduct an inquiry into the unqualified transportation agencies and initiate appropriate action against them.

He alleged that a co-miller had gifted a Range Rover car to a Minister's son and demanded that an investigation be launched into this matter. He asserted that action must be taken against the rice mills engaging in irregularities, without any bias. He noted that 14 million metric tons of paddy have arrived in the market, while 4.5 million metric tons of maize have also reached the market.

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) has come forward with yet another revolutionary decision to ensure the protection of its passengers. To put a permanent end to accidents and thefts, the Corporation's Managing Director (MD), Nagireddy, has implemented a brand-new strategy. He has initiated the installation of a state-of-the-art CCTV surveillance system within buses to ensure that the passengers can reach their destinations in a peaceful environment, free from any fear or anxiety.

Developed in coordination with Police Department, this innovative high-tech security project—titled "Buslo Bharosa" (Assurance on the Bus)—has been launched experimentally as a pilot project in the erstwhile Adilabad district during its first phase. Under this new security framework, these advanced surveillance cameras have been installed in approximately 175 buses operating within the Adilabad region. A noteworthy feature is that these cameras have been installed using specialized technology to ensure that every inch of the bus interior is clearly cov-



ered—from the vicinity of the driver's cabin, the seats specifically reserved for women and the footboard area, right up to the last row of seats. Everything is recorded by this system—from the facial expressions of every individual boarding the bus to every minor activity that takes place during the journey.

These visuals are not only accessible to the drivers and conductors but have also been integrated into a system that allows for continuous monitoring via the RTC con-

trol room. This system is expected to play a pivotal role in proactively identifying criminal gangs and the movements of suspicious individuals within buses—thereby enabling timely alerts—and in immediately gathering precise evidence should any untoward incident or accident occur," TGSRTC MD Nagireddy said while speaking to media persons after launching the app. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the person The decision taken by the TGRTC to curb incidents such as harassment

of female passengers, thefts and inappropriate behavior had garnered widespread praise. "In particular, the women traveling alone to distant destinations during the night, as well as the elderly have expressed immense satisfaction regarding the installation of this "vigilant eye." The public believes that the mere knowledge of the presence of CCTV cameras on the bus will instill fear in criminals, thereby making travel significantly safer. Furthermore, the officials state that the installation of these cameras will lead to improved driving standards and ensure that the staff acts with greater responsibility," he said.

He also said that Based on the results achieved by this pilot project—which was launched in the Adilabad district—the TGRTC management was formulating plans to extend this protective shield of CCTV cameras to buses across all depots throughout the state in the coming days. He said that the Passengers had expressed their deep appreciation for vision-ary approach of the corporation MD Nagireddy, who is steering the organization on a path of progress by leveraging technology to ensure public safety.

Chief Election Commission of India



CEC Reviews Uttarakhand SIR Preparations

DEHRADUN, MAY 24

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Gyanesh Kumar on Sunday chaired a review meeting here over preparations for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Uttarakhand, an official said. During the meeting held at the State Guest House in Bijapur, CEC Kumar said that the primary objective of SIR is to purify the voter list by identifying "absent, shifted, deceased, duplicate, and overseas voters". Uttarakhand is among the 16 states where the third phase of the SIR of electoral rolls is to be held in the coming months.

"In Uttarakhand, the draft electoral rolls will be published on July 14 and, after claims and objections, the final electoral roll will be published on September 9," according to the election Commission of India (ECI)'s schedule.

During the meeting in Dehradun, Chief Electoral Officer B.V.R.C. Purushottam gave a presentation, informing that 89 per cent of the mapping has been completed in the pre-SIR phase in the state. He also told that preparations for printing the counting forms in the state have been completed. The first phase of training for District Election Officers (DEOs), Deputy DEOs, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs)/Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) has been completed, and training for BLOs and other field staff is underway.

The CEC was also informed during the meeting that a comprehensive voter awareness campaign is being conducted through various means for the special intensive revision in the state, a statement said.

The Chief Election Officer Purushottam said that all DEOs and EROs have been instructed to hold weekly meetings with political parties.

Those who attended the meeting included Chief Secretary Anand Bardhan, Additional Director General V. Murugesan, Additional Chief Electoral Officer Vijay Kumar Jogdande, Dehradun District Magistrate Savin Bansal, District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan and Dehradun Senior Superintendent of Police Pramod Doyal.

8 of family drown while collecting mussels in Karnataka river

A group collecting freshwater mussels in the Venkatapura river near Bhatkal reportedly drowned, leaving eight feared dead and three missing. Rescue teams and local authorities are continuing searches as the Karnataka government says saving lives is the immediate priority.



A tragic river accident in Karnataka's Uttara Kannada district has left eight people feared dead and three others missing after a group collecting freshwater mussels reportedly drowned in the Venkatapura river. According to initial information, 14 people had gone together to collect mussel shells when the incident took place. Among those feared dead are seven women and one man. Three others were rescued from the river and shifted to the government hospital, while two injured women were later re-

ferred to a hospital in Udipi for further treatment. The victims are believed to be residents of Saradahole in Shirali.

RESCUE OPERATION UNDERWAY

Panic spread across the area after the group went missing in the river, prompting local residents and authorities to launch rescue efforts. Police from Bhatkal Rural Police Station rushed to the spot and

search operations are continuing to trace the missing persons. Authorities said three people are still unaccounted for, including two women and one man. The missing persons have been identified as: Madava Jattappa Naik (52), Manjamma Gotta Naik (50) and Nagarathna Parameshwar Naik (40).

DECEASED IDENTIFIED
Officials said six bodies

were brought to Bhatkal

- Government Hospital:**
- Jyothi Nagappa Naik, 37
 - Malathi Jattappa Naik, 38
- All were residents of the Padushirali Saradahole area in Bhatkal.
- The injured women undergoing treatment have been identified as Nagarathna Eshwar Naik and Madavi Naik.
- GOVERNMENT REACTS**
- Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar described the incident as unfortunate and said rescue efforts remain the government's immediate focus. "The Karwar incident should not have happened, but unfortunately it has happened. Mankal Vaidya has briefed me about the situation," Shivakumar said. "He is now heading to Karwar. Rescue operations are currently underway. Our first priority is to save lives. We will announce compensation later," he added. Further details are awaited as rescue teams continue search operations in the river.



Manappuram Rithi Jewellers inaugurated in Yelahanka New Town, Bengaluru

Bengaluru: The new store of Manappuram Rithi Jewellers was inaugurated in Yelahanka New Town, Bengaluru. This is the 15th store of Manappuram Rithi Jewellers in the country. The new gold, silver, diamond and platinum jewellery store of Rithi Jewellers was inaugurated by famous film stars Vasishtha Simha and Haripriya. S R Vishwanath, a popular MLA from Yelahanka constituency, inaugurated the new store by lighting the lamp. Manappuram Group Chairmen VP Nandakumar, Sushma Nandakumar, Karave State President Praveen Shetty, Narayana Prasad, NM Rudramurthy, Mahesh were the chief guests. Karave Vinuji, Manappuram of Rithi Jewellers CEO CP Balu, National Head Shihab, State Head Perumal etc. were present.



Andhra Pradesh's Chityala records season's highest temperature at 48.3 degrees Celsius

AMARAVATI, MAY 24

Andhra Pradesh continues to reel under the heat wave as Chityala in East Godavari district on Sunday recorded a maximum temperature of 48.3 degrees Celsius, the highest this season.

According to the State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA), Tanuku (West Godavari district) and Piduguralla (Palnadu district) recorded maximum temperatures of 48.1 degrees Celsius. SDMA Managing Director Prakhar Jain said that temperatures exceeded 45 degrees Celsius in 13 districts. He revealed that temperatures above 44 degrees Celsius were recorded in 174 mandals across 17 districts. He specifically highlighted that the heat intensity was particularly severe in 23 mandals of Eluru, 21 in East Godavari, 17 in West Godavari, 16 in Krishna, 15 in Bapatla, 14 in NTR, 13 in Palnadu, 12 in Konaseema, and 11 in Kakinada districts. In light of the record-breaking heat intensity currently being recorded across the state, he urged the public to remain vigilant. He noted that this level of intensity is likely to persist for another three days. Jain advised people to postpone travel between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. whenever possible. He also

emphasised that those undertaking essential travel must carry drinking water with them. Severe heat wave conditions are likely on Monday (May 25) in 29 mandals, while general heat wave is likely in 166 mandals. On Tuesday, a severe heat wave is likely to affect 50 mandals, while a general heat wave is expected in 205 mandals. Temperatures ranging from 45 degrees Celsius to 47 degrees Celsius are likely to be recorded in certain areas of the Konaseema, East Godavari, West Godavari, Polavaram, Eluru, NTR, Krishna, Guntur, Bapatla, Palnadu, and Prakasam districts. Maximum temperatures ranging from 43 degrees Celsius to 45 degrees Celsius are likely to be recorded in certain areas of the Vizianagaram, Parvathipuram Manyam, Kakinada, Markapuram, and Nellore districts. Maximum temperatures ranging from 40 degrees Celsius to 43 degrees Celsius are likely to be recorded in certain areas of the Srikakulam, Alluri Sitarama Raju, Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, Kurnool, Nandyal, Anantapur, Sri Sathya Sai, YSR Kadapa, Annamayya, Chittoor, and Tirupati districts. Meanwhile, heat wave conditions continued in neighbouring Telangana on Sunday.

Bengal orders holding centres for Bangladeshis, Rohingyas awaiting deportation

West Bengal's new order on holding centres has added fresh momentum to its anti-infiltration campaign, with district administrations now preparing infrastructure for suspected illegal foreigners awaiting deportation and citizenship verification.

West Bengal has moved to formalise its crackdown on illegal immigration by directing all district administrations to set up holding centres for Bangladeshis and Rohingya nationals awaiting deportation, giving administrative shape to the government's "detect, delete and deport" policy. The order, issued by the Home and Hill Affairs Department's Foreigners' Branch on May 23, instructed district magistrates to create facilities for "apprehended foreigners" and "released foreign prisoners" until deportation and repatriation procedures are completed.

The move comes days after Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari publicly unveiled a tougher anti-infiltration framework and declared that the government had adopted a "detect, delete and deport" policy, a phrase closely associated with the BJP's long-running political campaign around border



DISTRICTS ASKED TO CREATE INFRASTRUCTURE

According to the communication, district administrations have been asked to establish the infrastructure required to temporarily house those suspected of staying illegally in India as well as foreign nationals whose deportation process is underway. "In this connection, it is requested to take initiative/appropriate action for setting up of Holding Centres in the district for apprehended foreigners as well as for the released foreign prisoners awaiting deportation/repatriation," the order said. Copies of the directive have also been sent to the director general of police, police commissionerates, superintendents of police and the Foreigners Regional Reg-

istration Office in Kolkata. Officials said the centres would function as transit facilities while nationality verification and legal formalities are completed.

Under Union Home Ministry guidelines issued in May last year, suspected illegal entrants can be kept in such facilities for up to 30 days while authorities verify documents and nationality status. District magistrates or officers of equivalent rank would take the final decision on citizenship determination. The framework also provides for biometric data collection, uploading information onto a central portal and transferring confirmed illegal immigrants to border authorities for repatriation. A senior official said the purpose of the exercise was to ensure district administrations remain "pre-

pared and compliant" with existing procedures. "The districts have been asked to create the necessary infrastructure so that such cases can be dealt with in a regulated manner till legal formalities are completed," the official said.

ANTI-INFILTRATION PUSH

The order has come amid a sharper political and administrative focus on infiltration and border security in the state. Only days earlier, Adhikari announced that infiltrators detained by state police would be handed over directly to the BSF for deportation instead of being routed through lengthy legal procedures. At a meeting with senior BSF officers regarding fencing work along stretches of the Bangladesh border, the chief minister said the state's anti-infiltration agenda had entered the implementation stage. "Those who are outside the purview of the CAA are illegal entrants and will be arrested by the state police and handed over to the BSF," Adhikari had said.

According to the proposed mechanism, the BSF would coordinate with Border Guards Bangladesh for deportation.

LINK TO IMMIGRATION LAW
Officials indicated the

evolving framework appears linked to the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, enacted by Parliament last year.

The law replaced multiple earlier legislations governing immigration and foreign nationals, introducing a more technology-driven system for surveillance, detention and deportation.

It also empowered police officers of head constable rank and above to arrest, without warrant, persons suspected of violating immigration rules.

However, the Union government later issued an exemption order protecting certain minority communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan from prosecution if they entered India before December 31, 2024, citing religious persecution. Adhikari has repeatedly maintained that communities covered under the Citizenship Amendment Act would remain outside the scope of enforcement action. For years, infiltration has remained one of the BJP's most prominent political themes in border districts and refugee-dominated constituencies. With the latest directive, that campaign now appears to be moving from political rhetoric to administrative execution.

Mamata Banerjee Targets Poll Panel Again Over Bengal Results

KOLKATA, MAY 24

Three weeks after the Assembly election results, former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday once again alleged that the Trinamool Congress did not lose the West Bengal Assembly elections and claimed that the Election Commission helped the BJP secure victory in the state. She also alleged that she was defeated "by force" in the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency. Speaking on the day the results of the Falta Assembly by-election were declared, the Trinamool Congress supreme took a swipe at Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari and said: "How did you win in Bhabanipur? I will tell you that in court. If you have the courage, get a forensic report. We want the EVM report." Mamata Banerjee alleged that after coming to power in the state, the BJP has unleashed terror against Trinamool Congress leaders and workers and that the police were arresting Trinamool leaders and council-



lors. She claimed that around 2,000 Trinamool Congress offices had been looted. In Mamata Banerjee's words: "If the chair (Suwendu Adhikari) says, I will jail 2,500 people, a separate jail has been built for Trinamool Congress workers... I think he should go to jail first. From Saradha to Narada, his name is in every scam. Those who are giving orders today are out of order." She further said: "Counting was done on May 4. Today is the 24th. I have endured these 20 days silently. Not only me, but the people of Bengal and Trinamool workers are also enduring. Many have become victims of state terrorism. About 12 people have died. People are being forced

to commit suicide. Everyone is being forced to write resignation letters. Elected bodies are not being allowed to function. There are obstacles in the development work of major civic bodies like the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, including water supply, roads and other services." Criticising Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, Mamata Banerjee said: "I have also run the administration. We have never asked people in uniform (police personnel) to do all these things. We came to power in 2011 and played Rabindra Sangeet at every corner. Today, we are not being allowed to hold meetings. Every day, our elected councillors are being arrested. Goons are occupying municipal offices. More than 2,500 party offices have been occupied by lumpens in front of the police. When we go to complain to the police, they say there are instructions." Mamata Banerjee again alleged that the Assembly elections this time were not conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

We want jobs: Madurai men hold 'cockroach rally' over unemployment

Hundreds of unemployed youth marched in Madurai on Sunday in a 'Cockroach Rally' against joblessness and a judge's reported remark.

In a novel and emotionally charged protest, hundreds of unemployed youth took to the streets of Madurai on Sunday, staging a first-of-its-kind 'Cockroach Rally' in Tamil Nadu. The demonstration was organised to voice opposition against severe unemployment and recent remarks made by a senior Supreme Court judge comparing jobless youth to cockroaches. The rally was jointly organised by the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) and the Students' Federation of India (SFI). It also received strong backing from supporters of the 'Cockroach Janata Party', a satirical social media handle that recently took



the internet by storm. The march commenced from the Gandhi Museum premises and culminated in a massive demonstration in front of the Tamil Annai statue at the Thamukkam Grounds. The controversy erupted after Supreme Court Judge Surya Kant reportedly remarked that unemployed youth are turning into cockroaches and attacking everyone. The comment triggered widespread outrage among job-

less youth across the country, prompting the creation of the satirical 'Cockroach Janata Party' page on social media. The page rapidly gained over 10 million followers within just four days before it was reportedly blocked by the central government. During Sunday's protest, hundreds of educated, unemployed graduates marched carrying placards that read "We Want Work, We Want Life, We Want Respect". Many also

held posters reading 'Rally of the Unemployed Cockroaches'. The protestors raised slogans against the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led central government, condemning its failure to deliver on the promise of creating 20 million jobs annually. They also slammed the government over skyrocketing prices of petrol, diesel, and essential commodities. Meanwhile, echoing the Madurai agitation, a signature campaign was launched near the New Bus Stand in Villupuram under the leadership of DYFI District Organiser Arivalagan. Demanding immediate employment opportunities, a large number of local residents and youth joined the drive to protest against the central government's unfulfilled promises. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the protest, one of the key organisers, Sel-

vam, said, "Youth of India have united online to fight against rampant corruption, severe unemployment, and Prime Minister Modi's unfulfilled promise of providing 20 million jobs a year. We are taking to the streets today to demand that the Modi government immediately provide employment opportunities." Criticising the judge's remarks, Selvam added, "Comparing the hardworking youth -- who are the pillars of this nation -- to cockroaches and tarnishing their dignity is completely unacceptable. We vehemently condemn the Supreme Court judge's statement." The protestors further stated that escalating economic distress and inflation have pushed educated youth from ordinary lower-class and middle-class families into severe financial crisis and mental agony, stripping them of their basic livelihood.

EDITORIAL

THE CASTE CENSUS PARADOX:
WELFARE, IDENTITY,
AND THE LONG-OVERDUE
ENUMERATION

The Supreme Court acted correctly when it chose to dismiss a petition aiming to halt the inclusion of a caste census within the framework of the ongoing Census 2027. Backing the initiative to count caste groups, the Chief Justice of India pointedly observed that “any government of the day must know how many people are backward and how many need welfare.” This development follows a major policy shift in April 2025, when the Narendra Modi administration reversed its previous stance to declare that caste enumeration would be conducted alongside the upcoming national census, marking the first such comprehensive exercise since 1931. Prior to this turnaround, Mr. Modi had openly dismissed the concept, labeling it as reflective of “urban Naxal” ideologies, while the RSS had issued warnings that such data collection efforts threatened to fracture the unity of Hindu society. Simultaneously, the Congress party underwent its own dramatic reversal from its historical position to aggressively demand a caste census. In the early years of independent India, the ruling governments intentionally chose to exclude caste from national census counts. The prevailing logic during that era dictated that officially counting individual caste communities would serve only to reinforce and legitimize the very institution of caste that the democratic state aimed to dismantle. Consequently, a dual approach emerged: on one side, state initiatives aimed to foster a casteless social order, while on the other side, they systematically recognized caste identities to implement positive discrimination policies for employment and legislative representation. This dualism, which was deeply embedded within the foundational principles of the nation, established a structural paradox that remains unresolved to this day. The current nationwide clamor for a comprehensive caste census is simply the most modern manifestation of this deep-seated conflict. Meanwhile, the broader Census framework itself has faced prolonged delays. The mandatory decennial population survey, which was originally scheduled to take place in 2021, was repeatedly pushed back due to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent logistical bottlenecks. According to the current plan, the specific caste enumeration process is set to be rolled out during the second phase of the survey. This will require enumerators to ask every single citizen to state their exact caste identity, rather than just noting whether they qualify for Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe status as was standard practice in all previous post-independence censuses. This prolonged delay in executing the Census has significantly hindered national development planning across multiple sectors. Within the Indian administrative framework, a massive portion of public policy and governance is either directly or indirectly tethered to the specific caste demographics of the intended beneficiaries. The only modern attempt to execute a national caste count after independence occurred back in 2011. However, the entirely open-ended caste identification methodology utilized during that Socio-Economic and Caste Census backfired, generating an overwhelming list of more than 46 lakh distinct caste entries and over 8 crore data anomalies, which ultimately made the entire dataset structurally unusable. As a result, the vast majority of those specific findings were locked away and remain unpublished. Today, the Modi administration continues to grapple with the immense operational challenge of designing a foolproof methodology capable of delivering a precise and accurate count of diverse caste communities. Ultimately, a caste census can act as a double-edged sword: it slows down the societal push to eradicate caste divisions by ossifying and rigidifying these identities, yet it simultaneously serves as a vital tool when analyzed alongside other socioeconomic indicators to refine welfare distribution and guarantee fair political representation. Therefore, the absolute annihilation of caste divisions must remain the country’s ultimate societal objective, and the system must explicitly allow citizens the right to officially classify themselves as casteless if they choose to do so.

ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Lightning Strikes: A Warning from Nature or the Price of Human Neglect?

The unusual temperatures currently being recorded across the Telugu states are doing far more than making summers harsher; they are quietly rewriting the rules of the atmosphere itself. Rising heat is increasingly triggering the sudden formation of massive cumulonimbus thunderclouds, significantly increasing the risk of lightning strikes. What was once largely confined to the monsoon season now appears even during blistering summer days, turning the sky into an unpredictable threat. There was a time when dark clouds were greeted as symbols of relief and hope. Today, even the distant rumble of thunder can send waves of anxiety through communities. The changing behavior of the weather is no longer merely a scientific observation; it is becoming a growing human concern. Lightning is not merely nature’s fireworks across the sky; it is often tragedy arriving without warning. In a matter of seconds, it can alter the course of lives and leave entire families devastated. Agricultural workers laboring under the open sky, shepherds tending livestock, and people working in exposed spaces remain among the most vulnerable.

A lightning strike itself lasts only a fraction of a second, but its consequences can echo for years. In many rural households, even the simple expectation that a family member who leaves for work in the morning will return safely by evening increasingly feels uncertain. Lightning does not merely claim a life; it can dismantle a family’s hopes, stability, and future in a single blow.

Why do lightning strikes occur?

The process begins with rising temperatures. As heat intensifies, moisture from rivers, lakes, and the soil rapidly evaporates into the atmosphere. Warm air rises and collides with colder layers at higher altitudes, leading to the formation of towering thunderclouds rather than ordinary clouds.

Inside these storm systems, water droplets, ice crystals, and hail particles are violently tossed around by strong air currents. Their continuous collisions generate electrical charges. Eventually, when this electrical imbalance reaches a breaking point, the stored energy is discharged toward the ground in a sudden burst — the phenomenon we know as

lightning. The science itself is straightforward: the hotter the atmosphere becomes, the more fuel is poured into the storm.

Numbers that paint a troubling picture:

Statistics increasingly suggest that lightning is becoming one of the country’s most overlooked public safety challenges. According to recent national figures, lightning accounts for nearly 39.7 percent of all deaths caused by natural disasters in India. Last year alone, 2,558 people lost their lives due to lightning strikes. State-wise figures reveal a similarly worrying pattern: Madhya Pradesh reported 397 deaths, Bihar 345, and Odisha 294. The Telugu states are also witnessing a serious trend. Andhra Pradesh records an average of around 86–95 lightning-related deaths annually, while Telangana continues to face considerable risk. Perhaps the most disturbing reality is that more than 90 percent of the victims come from rural communities. Farmers, agricultural laborers, and shepherds often remain exposed because safe shelters are either unavailable or inaccessible. Reports suggest that lightning incidents across the country have increased nearly fourfold over the past five years — a warning sign that can no longer be brushed under the carpet.

Research is sounding the alarm bells:

Modern studies indicate that rising temperatures alone do not tell the whole story. Global warming, increasing atmospheric moisture, and pollution particles are increasingly working hand in glove, reshaping the character of thunderstorms. As the Earth’s temperature rises by even one degree Celsius, the atmosphere gains the capacity to hold more moisture. This creates stronger and more energetic storm systems. Researchers estimate that each one-degree rise in temperature could increase lightning activity by roughly 8–10 percent.

Pollution further complicates matters. Tiny particles released from industries and vehicles influence cloud formation by reducing larger water droplets and increasing the concentration of smaller ice particles. Amid intense air currents, these particles collide continuously, accelerating the buildup of electrical energy within clouds. What was once considered largely an urban pollution issue

is no longer confined to city boundaries. Air circulation carries pollutants into rural regions as well. Scientists warn that when atmospheric moisture and airborne particles cross critical thresholds, clouds can effectively become giant electrical power stations.

Human actions are adding fuel to the fire:

Treating lightning purely as an act of nature would be missing the forest for the trees. Nature may pull the trigger, but human actions are increasingly loading the gun. Deforestation, unchecked urbanization, and shrinking green cover are steadily pushing land surface temperatures higher. As trees disappear, nature’s built-in balancing mechanism begins to break down, disrupting local weather systems. The problem becomes even more severe with emissions from industries, vehicles, and agricultural waste burning. Nitrogen oxides and carbon particles released into the atmosphere continue to worsen the situation. Environmental neglect is now producing a boomerang effect: the damage inflicted on nature is gradually finding its way back to human lives. At the same time, inadequate awareness of safety measures continues to cost lives. Dangerous practices — such as seeking shelter under trees during thunderstorms — remain common in many rural areas.

India’s growing shield against lightning risks:

India has increasingly turned to technology to reduce lightning-related fatalities. Satellites, Doppler radars, lightning detection sensors, and artificial intelligence-based forecasting systems are now being used to strengthen early-warning systems. The Damini mobile application, developed under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, can provide alerts about lightning threats within a radius of 20–40 kilometers and warn users up to 40 minutes in advance. Research institutions in Pune have also established nationwide lightning detection networks capable of identifying electrical activity almost instantly. INSAT satellites continuously monitor storm-cloud movement, while Doppler Weather Radars in cities such as Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam analyze cloud behavior in three dimensions. Artificial intelligence and machine learning models are further being used

to analyze decades of weather data and improve predictive capabilities.

Learning from the world while building local solutions:

Several countries are experimenting with advanced technologies to reduce lightning damage. Europe is testing laser-guided lightning diversion systems, Japan is exploring drone-based cloud discharge techniques, and the United States employs space-based lightning mapping systems capable of tracking strikes in real time. However, for a country like India, with vast rural populations and different socioeconomic realities, expensive experimental technologies may not always be the magic wand. Practical local solutions such as community siren systems, real-time lightning mapping services, and affordable lightning-protection infrastructure may ultimately prove more effective where they matter the most.

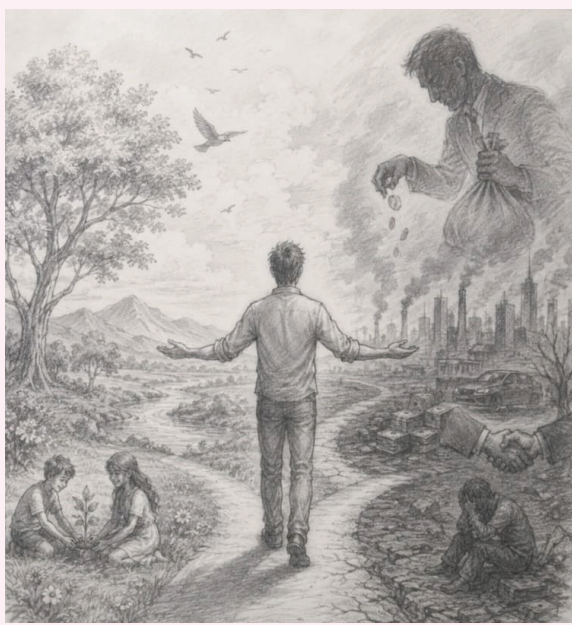
A warning written across the sky:

Lightning cannot simply be viewed as a natural disaster. It is also a warning signal that nature is sending about a disturbed environmental balance. No emergency response alone can solve this challenge. Controlling pollution, reducing global warming, protecting ecosystems, and improving public awareness must move together. If we cut down trees, nature changes the clouds. If we pollute the atmosphere, nature responds in flashes of lightning. The question is no longer why lightning strikes occur. The real question is: how long are we willing to ignore the warning signs written across the sky?



D. JAIRAM
Subject Expert – Current Affairs
Founder & Mentor
Sri Jairam Competitive Academy

DO NOT FALL PREY



Are all men selfish, but a few?
The water you drink, the land you tread,
The air you breathe—who gave them to you?
Can you not say who?

Is not the sky and earth so pure,
Giving without asking more?
The trees, the hills, in selfless grace,
Have you thought of this embrace?

Is greed the goal you chase?
Is bribery the dish you praise?
Is this the life you choose to live?
Is that all you have to give?

What makes a man, what makes him true?
What is the virtue he must pursue?
If all were like you, would life be grand?
Would beauty in this world still stand?

Life is meant to be embraced,
Its charm, its joy—let none be erased.
Savor it pure, cherish it bright,
But do not stain it with selfish blight.

..: Dr. Peruka Raju ..:
National Poet
7810032847

Like Naxal-free..
India will now become drug-free

After successfully crushing Naxalism, the Central Government is now facing the major challenge of uprooting the illegal trade of narcotic substances from the country. This issue is no longer merely a social problem; it has become a serious threat to both national security and the future of the younger generation. The encouraging aspect is that the government fully understands the gravity of this problem and is not prepared to make any compromise in solving it. This multi-billion-dollar black economy is causing massive damage to the country’s economy

states. Home Minister Amit Shah is working on a strategy to directly strike against international drug syndicates.

A robust mechanism has been created for better coordination among all anti-narcotics agencies. It is called the Narco Coordination Centre. This centre has been established by the Government of India to tackle drug trafficking and the drug menace. Additionally, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has been designated as the nodal agency under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Along with this, a fast-track extradition system has been in-

ister Amit Shah has given a clear message that not even one gram of narcotic substances will be allowed to enter India, nor will Indian territory be allowed to be used as a transit route for other countries.

Two Major Corridors of International Trafficking

Drug trafficking in India is primarily occurring through two major routes. On one side, synthetic drugs continue to be supplied from the Golden Triangle (Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand), while on the other, dangerous substances like opium, heroin, and opioids are being trafficked

study conducted on 1,630 young people visiting primary health centres in 15 states revealed alarming statistics:

- 26.4% of youth consume tobacco
- 26.1% consume alcohol
- 9.5% use cannabis (ganja)
- 22.2% are addicted to more than one narcotic substance
- Most worrying: 29.5% of youth are using synthetic drugs

These figures reflect the declining mental health and social environment of the youth.

The horrific drug situation in Punjab is known across the country, but now this problem is spreading rapidly to other states as well. Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Kerala are falling into its grip.

In Himachal Pradesh, there has been a massive increase in drug trafficking and consumption. The Governor has warned that if strict action is not taken in time, Himachal could also become “Flying Punjab”. In Kerala, NDPS cases have registered a 130% increase in the last four years (from 37,228 to 87,101). The long coastline makes it easier for narcotics to reach the state.

To eradicate this black trade from its roots, we need strong determination, a strict strategy, and collective efforts. Success will not come from words alone, but only through concrete action.



VIVEK SHUKLA



and weakening the foundation of society. During recent meetings with social workers, teachers, and senior government officials in Dera Bassi (Punjab), Mohali, and Chandigarh, it became clear that the problem of narcotic substances is continuously worsening in the border states.

Drug peddlers will no longer be able to escape

After bringing Naxalism largely under control, the Modi government has now intensified its campaign against drug traffickers. On the initiative of the Union Home Ministry, a policy of zero tolerance is being adopted in several

introduced to bring foreign drug traffickers to India and punish them. Fencing and technical surveillance along the borders are being strengthened.

Drug-Free India by 2047: Resolve and Roadmap

The goal of a drug-free India is undoubtedly challenging, but not impossible. If a complex problem like Naxalism could be tackled, then this drug trade can also be eliminated.

With the strong will of the Central Government, active co-operation from the states, and public awareness, this target can be achieved by 2047. Home Min-

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Democracy won, intimidation lost

PM Modi on BJP's landslide victory in Falta repoll

A constituency once seen as a fortress of the TMC delivered a stunning political reversal in West Bengal, with the BJP securing a landslide victory and the ruling party's candidate slipping to fourth place.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the BJP's sweeping victory in West Bengal's Falta Assembly repoll after the party crushed the Trinamool Congress by more than one lakh votes in a constituency long regarded as a TMC stronghold. The BJP's Debangshu Panda secured 1,49,666 votes, defeating CPI(M) candidate Sambhu Nath Kurmi by a margin of 1,09,021 votes. Kurmi polled 40,645 votes, while Congress candidate Abdur Razzak Molla finished third with 10,084

votes. TMC candidate Jahangir Khan slipped to fourth place with just 7,783 votes and forfeited his deposit, marking a dramatic collapse for the ruling party in a seat it had held since 2011. The BJP secured 71.2 per cent vote share in the repoll, a sharp rise from 36.75 per cent in 2021, while the TMC's vote share crashed to 3.7 per cent.

PM MODI HAILS BJP WIN

In a post on X, PM Modi called the result a victory for democracy and an endorsement of the BJP's performance in West Bengal. "People of Falta have spoken! Democracy has won and intimidation has lost. Congratulations to Shri Debangshu Panda Ji for winning in Falta by a record margin," the Prime Minister wrote. "It indicates the unwavering faith of the people of



West Bengal towards the BJP. People are seeing the exceptional work of the West Bengal Government across sectors and thus have decided to further bless us," he added.

Modi also congratulated BJP workers across the state for their "outstanding work" and said the party would continue working for Bengal's progress.

TMC SUFFERS MAJOR SETBACK

The Falta Assembly seat had long been viewed as part of the TMC's politically dominant Diamond Harbour belt. The party retained the constituency comfortably in 2021 with nearly 57 per cent vote share. The repoll, however, completely altered the electoral picture. The Election Commission had ordered fresh polling in all 285 booths on May 21 after complaints emerged during the April 29

election over alleged use of perfume-like substances, ink marks and adhesive tapes on EVMs. The repoll was conducted under heavy security cover. Two days before polling, Jahangir Khan announced he was stepping aside "for Falta's interest", though his name remained on the EVM because nominations could not be withdrawn at that stage. Residents reported little visible TMC campaigning during the repoll, with party offices largely inactive and Khan absent from public view.

ADHIKARI CALLS IT 'BEGINNING'

Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari described the verdict as proof that voters had finally been allowed to exercise their franchise freely. In a post on X, Adhikari said he bowed "in salutation to the people of Falta" for deliver-

ing a "resounding mandate" to the BJP and pointed out that the one lakh victory target he had appealed for had been crossed. He accused the TMC of turning into a "mafia company" that abused state machinery and encouraged intimidation politics. Without naming anyone directly, Adhikari also took an apparent swipe at TMC general secretary and Diamond Harbour MP Abhishek Banerjee, referring to a "fraudster who parachuted in and claimed the title of commander".

Calling the result "just the beginning", Adhikari claimed the people of West Bengal were preparing for a wider political rejection of the TMC.

After the result, Panda said, "People have been able to cast their vote freely and fairly. I want to thank the people of Falta for the victory."

Congress targets PM Modi over Marco Rubio's trade claim, seeks answers on U.S. imports

Targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi over U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's statement that India has committed to purchasing \$500 billion worth of American goods over the next five years, the Congress on Sunday (May 24, 2026) alleged that the "compromised PM" was going the extra mile to appease his "good friend".



At 5:37 PM IST on May 10, 2025, it was US Secretary of State Marco Rubio who first made the announcement of the cease fire that brought Operation Sindoor to an unexpected halt. He had claimed that it was intervention by President Trump that made the ceasefire possible. "The Indian rupee has lost 12% of its value against the U.S. dollar over the past 12 months. Will this surge in imports from the U.S. not further cause the rupee to depreciate?" he added.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X, questioned why key announcements relating to India's foreign policy and bilateral engagements were increasingly emanating from Washington rather than New Delhi. Referring to Mr. Rubio's recent statement that India had committed to purchasing \$500 billion worth of U.S. goods over five years, Mr. Ramesh said India's yearly imports from the country, currently at about \$52.9 billion, will have to be doubled.

Posting what he described as "five straight questions" to the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramesh criticised the India-U.S. trade agreement, asking why the Modi government did not have the "courage" to scrap what he termed as an "anti-people" agreement that threatened farmers and domestic industry. He argued that countries such as Malaysia had declared similar agreements "null and void" following a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that struck down the Trump-administration tariffs underpinning such trade ne-

gotiations. At 5:37 PM IST on May 10, 2025, it was US Secretary of State Marco Rubio who first made the announcement of the cease fire that brought Operation Sindoor to an unexpected halt. He had claimed that it was intervention by President Trump that made the ceasefire possible. "The Indian rupee has lost 12% of its value against the U.S. dollar over the past 12 months. Will this surge in imports from the U.S. not further cause the rupee to depreciate?" he added. Mr. Ramesh also sought clarification on whether the government's trade decisions were linked to recent developments related to the dropping of criminal fraud charges against industrialist Gautam Adani in the U.S. The Congress leader also recalled earlier instances where, according to him, major diplomatic developments were first announced by American officials. He pointed to Mr. Rubio's statement on May 10, 2025, regarding the ceasefire that brought Operation Sindoor to a halt, and his subsequent announcement concerning the Venezuelan President's proposed India visit. "Why have the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister renounced their responsibility to communicate to the Indian people and to the world the foreign policy of our sovereign state?" Mr. Ramesh asked.

Suwendu Hails Falta Win, Abhishek Questions Count

KOLKATA, MAY 24

Following the BJP's victory in the Falta Assembly bypoll, West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Sunday claimed that the "Diamond Harbour model" associated with Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee had failed politically. As soon as the election results became clear, Adhikari launched a sharp attack on the ruling Trinamool Congress. The Falta Assembly constituency, which falls under the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha seat, had long been considered a Trinamool Congress



stronghold. However, after the change in the political equation following the bypoll, the BJP managed to wrest the seat from the ruling party with a massive margin. Suwendu Adhikari wrote on his X handle: "I am especially grateful to the voters of Falta. I had appealed for the BJP candi-

date to win by one lakh votes. The margin of victory has crossed one lakh eight thousand. We will repay this debt to you through development." He further stated: "A party without principles and ideals, which transformed itself into a mafia company, has been exposed the moment it lost power. The leaders of this party took people for granted by abusing state power, looting government funds, extorting people's hard-earned money, and running syndicates and a threat culture. This time, when people regained the freedom to cast their own votes after 15 years, the true picture emerged. A tough fight against

'NOTA' awaits the Trinamool Congress leadership in the coming elections." Abhishek Banerjee, meanwhile, questioned the counting process in the Falta Assembly bypoll. In a post on X, Banerjee said: "The Falta AC repoll counting today exposes glaring inconsistencies. By 3:30 p.m. today, all 21 rounds were completed. On May 4, till the same time, only two to four rounds had taken place. The country deserves an explanation from the ECI. Although more than 1,000 workers from Falta have been forced to flee their homes in the last 10 days, the Election Commission continued to turn a blind eye.

Thousands Flood Manipur Streets in Bike Rally Against Narco-Terrorism

COCOMI leads 500-bike protest across valley districts as pressure mounts over abductions

IMPHAL, MAY 24, 2026:

Over 500 bikes and thousands of protesters rolled through Manipur's valley districts on Saturday in one of the largest demonstrations this year against narco-terrorism and militant violence. The rally, organised by the Students' Front of the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) under the banner "Save Manipur from Narco Terrorism," began at Koujing Leima Temple in Sekmai and ended at Khuman Lampak, Imphal. Youths, women, student bodies, and civil society groups joined the march.

Valley-wide show of strength.

The procession passed through Luwangsangbam,



Chingmeiron, Thangmeiband, Khoyathong, Nagamapal, Keishampat, Bishnupur, Moirang, Kumbi, Kakching, Thoubal, Lilong, Singjamei, and Wangkhei.

COCOMI Convenor Yengkokpam Dhiren said the rally was a call to unite people against organised violence,

have been released, six remain in captivity, according to community leaders. Civil society groups have issued a three-day ultimatum demanding the safe rescue of the hostages. Their demands include legal action against those involved, scrapping the SoO agreement with the Kuki National Front (Presidential), stronger security operations, and the removal of BJP MLA Nemcha Kigen over alleged family links to a militant. "We will remain united"

Protest follows recent abductions.

The demonstration comes after reports that 20 civilians were abducted from Leilon Veiphei and Sapormeina between May 13-15. While 14

Journalist Yogesh Kumar Goyal Selected for 'Desh Ratna Award 2026'

NEW DELHI:



Senior journalist Yogesh Kumar Goyal has been selected for the 'Desh Ratna Award 2026'. He will receive this award for his widely acclaimed book 'Sagar Se Antariksh Tak: Bharat Ki Raksha Kranti', which presents India's defence journey from a new perspective. The honour will be conferred by the non-political organization National Akali Dal at a grand ceremony to be held in New Delhi on June 28. This 300-page book written by Goyal, published earlier this year, is a vivid document of independent India's defence journey. In particular, the book's in-depth analysis of military technological advancement, strategic empowerment and the modern security framework in the context of an Self-Reliant India makes it distinctive.

For this significant work, Yogesh Kumar Goyal has also been granted financial assistance of Rs. 25,000 by

the Hindi Academy, Delhi. Through his sharp and insightful writing, he has long been creating awareness in society and this is not the first time that one of his works has received recognition at the national level. With nearly 36 years of extensive experience in journalism, Yogesh Kumar Goyal has authored several influential books on subjects such as environment, wildlife, social concerns and the harmful effects of drug addiction. Some of his works have also received financial support from the Hindi Academy Delhi and the Haranya Sahitya Akademi.



Preparations for making oxygen bank of Lok Manch

five lakh saplings will be planted on the banks of Yamuna
BY S N VERMA

Noida : Preparations are being made to plant trees on a large scale, for this, the third letter to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has been sent by the General Secretary of Lok Manch Mahesh Saxena. Earlier, letters have been given to several officials including MPs, MLAs, CEOs of the authority and ACOs. On Saturday, a meeting on the changing appearance of the Yamuna river and its conservation at the Noida Lok Manch office located in Sector 15 was organised. In the meeting, detailed discussions were held on preserving the natural appearance of river Yamuna, maintaining environmental balance and developing river banks as green areas. During this, the members present proposed to run a large-scale tree plantation campaign in the Yamuna river area. Under this campaign, a plan to plant about five lakh trees in the Yamuna river area from Sector 14A to Greater Noida was agreed upon. In this regard, proposals and suggestions

have been sent to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh so that this campaign related to public interest and environmental protection can be implemented on a large scale.

Mahesh Saxena said that Yamuna is not just a river but our cultural, environmental and social heritage. Public participation and administrative cooperation are both necessary for its conservation. The plantation campaign will not only strengthen the environment but will also help in improving the groundwater level and pollution control. Collectively, he pledged to give this campaign the form of a mass movement, in which five lakh saplings are prepared to be planted in the first phase.

In the meeting c. Jha, Deepika Thakur, Dr. Umesh, Indira Chaudhary, Lika Saxena, Mahesh Saxena, General Secretary Noida Lok Manch, Mukta Gupta, Pradeep Vohra, Ar. N Srivastava, Ramsharan Gaur, S. Jain, Santosh Thakur, Suresh Agarwal, Vibha Bansal, Vinod Sharma and Renu Chibbar were present.

Rahul Gandhi trying to create 'anarchy' to topple Modi Government: BJP

Sambit Patra claimed Mr. Gandhi's "plan" was exposed after Congress leader reportedly said at a meeting of the advisory council of the Congress' Minority Department that the Modi Government will fall within a year. The BJP on Sunday (May 24, 2026) accused Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and the Congress of being part of a "conspiracy", along with various other opposition parties and the "Toolkit Gang", to spread anarchy and destabilise the country. In a post on X, Union Minister Piyush Goyal quoted a news report claiming that Mr. Gandhi, at a Congress minority advisory committee meeting on Saturday (May 23), purportedly said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government would fall within a year owing to a "growing economic discontent".

CM Nayab Singh Saini Unveils Welfare Initiatives

CHANDIGARH, MAY 24

Haryana Chief Minister Sh. Nayab Singh Saini announced that the state government will provide land for the construction of a Dharamshala in Kaithal in the name of Maharishi Kashyap. He also announced that a chowk in Indri will be named after Maharishi Kashyap and a grand statue of Maharishi Kashyap will be installed there. In addition, adequate funds will be provided for establishing a Maharishi Kashyap Chair at Kurukshetra University. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini was addressing a state-level function organized on the occasion of "Maharishi Kashyap Jayanti" at Sant Kabir Kutir in Chandigarh today. Paying tribute to Maharishi Kashyap, he said that Maharishi Kashyap was a great philanthropist and protector of society. He gave a new direction to society through the creation of great scriptures such as the Smriti Granth and Kashyap Samhita. Highlighting the glorious history



Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini addressing the gathering during a State-Level function organised on the occasion of Maharishi Kashyap Jayanti at his residence, Sant Kabir Kutir, in Chandigarh on May 24, 2026.

of the Kashyap community, he said that the community gave powerful kings such as King Nishad during the Ramayana era. It was King Nishad who gave shelter to Lord Sri Ram during his exile. Bhakt Prahlad also belonged to this community. Among the Panj Pyare of Dashmesh Pita Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, Bhai Himmat Singh Kashyap Ji was also from this community. Sh. Nayab Singh Saini described the Kashyap community as courageous, brave, hardworking, and self-respecting. He said that the community possesses immense potential and still has a long way to progress. By

fully utilizing their abilities, members of the community can contribute not only to the upliftment of their own society but also play a constructive role in the development of the entire nation. He also appealed to people to keep their children away from social evils such as drug addiction. Referring to the opposition in the country and the state as "issue-less," he said they are merely spreading misinformation because the public has rejected them. He elaborated on the welfare schemes being implemented by the Haryana Government for the Kashyap community and other backward classes,

stating that the government's priority is to ensure that the light of development reaches the last person in society. He said that the guiding principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" is inspired by this very spirit. Sh. Saini described Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi as the biggest well-wisher of the Backward Classes and said that Sh. Modi had granted constitutional status to the Central OBC Commission. He added that Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi has a vision to make India a developed nation by 2047. He said that to realize this vision, there is a need to move forward by eliminating divisions based on caste, region, and language. MLA from Indri Assembly constituency, Sh. Ram Kumar Kashyap, said on the occasion that although the Kashyap community wanted to celebrate Maharishi Kashyap Jayanti with a grand function in Kaithal, they decided to organize a smaller event keeping in mind the shortage of petroleum products caused by wars in Western countries. He said the decision was taken in response to the appeal made by Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi and Cm Nayab Singh Saini to conserve diesel and petrol. He also expressed gratitude for the welfare measures undertaken by the PM and the Haryana CM for the OBC community. Among those present at the event were the Chief Minister's OSD Sh. Bharat Bhushan Bharti, Kashyap Samaj President Sh. Samay Singh, General Secretary Sh. Veerbhau Arya, Jagdish Kashyap, Pradeep Majri, Neelam Kashyap, and several other distinguished members of the Kashyap community.

Andhra Pradesh on alert over Ebola virus

AMARAVATI, MAY 24

Andhra Pradesh government on Sunday declared an alert in view of the Ebola virus in several African countries. The state health authorities have started taking measures to screen passengers arriving from the countries affected by Ebola. State Minister for Medical and Health, Satyakumar Yadav, announced that necessary precautionary measures have been implemented within the state in the light of the widespread prevalence, rising case counts, and increased mortality rates associated with the Ebola virus across several African nations. He expressed particular concern regarding the high rate of Ebola virus transmission in countries such as Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan. Following warnings issued by the World Health Organisation,

as well as specific guidelines, advice, and recommendations received from the Central Government, the state minister declared that the Medical and Health Department is fully prepared to effectively combat the spread of the Ebola virus and manage potential cases. He noted that the severity of the Ebola outbreak in Congo and Uganda is escalating day by day. In response to this situation, the minister announced that measures are being taken to ensure close coordination between airport authorities and the Medical and Health Department officials of the respective districts. This coordination aims to facilitate screening and diagnostic testing for travellers and tourists arriving in the state from Congo, Uganda and Sudan via the international airports in Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, and Vijayawada.

BLA claims responsibility for train blast in Pakistan's Balochistan QUETTA

The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) on Sunday claimed responsibility for the blast targeting a shuttle of the Jaffar Express in the country's Balochistan province, local media reported.

A statement issued by the BLA's spokesperson, Jayend Baloch, said that the BLA's fideyane unit "Majeed Brigade" carried out the attack. According to the statement, the Army personnel who were travelling by the train were targeted, the Balochistan Post reported.

A shuttle of three bogies connected to Jaffar Express, which was transporting Pakistani military personnel from Quetta Cantt to Quetta Railway Station on the occasion of Eid, was targeted by the attack.

According to Haniff Abbasi, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Railways, the explosion took place near Chaman Phatak when the train was on its route after departing from Quetta Cantt. Three coaches, including the engine, derailed while two bogies were completely overturned, he noted.

"Twenty-seven people were killed, and 131 were injured due to the incident. The death toll might increase as some injured personnel are in critical condition," the report noted. The BLA also issued another statement revealing the identity of the attacker. According to the statement, the attack was carried out by 25-year-old Bilal Shahwan, alias Sain, a member and commander of the suicide unit of the Majeed Brigade.

NSA Doval meets Marco Rubio, security and defence issues in focus

NEW DELHI

US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Marco Rubio held a meeting with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval here on Sunday, with talks focused on defence, security and strategic technology-related cooperation, including the TRUST initiative.

"US Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Mr. Marco Rubio met NSA Shri Ajit Doval today. The discussions focused on defence, security and strategic technology related cooperation including the TRUST initiative," the MEA said in a post on X following the meeting.

"The two NSAs reiterated the high priority accorded to the bilateral Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. They also exchanged views on regional and global issues," it added. Earlier in the day, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Rubio discussed the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and regional, global, and multilateral issues of mutual interest.

EAM Jaishankar also stated that he looked forward to attending the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting along with his colleagues from Australia, Japan, and the US here on Tuesday.

"Good discussions with Secretary Rubio of USA in New Delhi. Reviewed the entire spectrum of our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, including trade and energy, defence and security, critical minerals and AI, nuclear & people-to-people, counter-terror and counter-narcotics cooperation," he said in a post on X.

"Regional, global and multilateral issues of mutual interest were also discussed. Have a detailed readout at the press conference thereafter. Look forward



to joining Secretary Rubio and our colleagues from Australia and Japan for the QUAD Foreign Ministers' meeting on Tuesday," he added.

On Saturday, Rubio called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"The Secretary and Prime Minister discussed the current situation in the Middle East. The Secretary emphasised that the United States will not let Iran hold the global energy market hostage and affirmed that US energy products have the potential to diversify India's energy supply. The two officials reflected upon recent bilateral achievements, including significant investments that advance the President and Prime Minister's 'Mission 500' to double trade by 2030," a statement issued by US State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said.

Rubio, in a post on X, said: "In

New Delhi, I met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to underscore the importance of the US-India relationship. We discussed the situation in the Middle East and US-India partnership in energy, securing critical supply chains, and collaboration on emerging technologies. I was pleased to invite Prime Minister Modi to the White House on behalf of the President".

After the meeting, PM Modi said that both countries will continue to work closely for the global good.

"Happy to receive the US Secretary of State, Mr. Marco Rubio. We discussed sustained progress in the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and issues related to regional and global peace and security. India and the United States will continue to work closely for the global good," PM Modi wrote on X.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) stated the visiting US Secretary of State briefed PM Modi on the sustained progress in bilateral cooperation across a wide range of sectors, including defence, strategic technologies, trade and investment, energy security, connectivity, education and people-to-people ties. "Secretary Rubio shared the US perspective on various regional and global issues, including the situation in West Asia. Prime Minister reaffirmed India's consistent support for peace efforts and reiterated the call for peaceful resolution of the conflicts through dialogue and diplomacy," according to a statement issued by the PMO. "Prime Minister requested Secretary Rubio to convey his warm greetings to President Trump and said that he looked forward to their continued exchanges," it added.



Xi Jinping's purge of PLA erodes morale of China's military: Report

BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping's purge of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has shaken the foundation of China's military and created a climate of fear that is eroding morale across the ranks, according to a report. The suspended death sentences given to China's former Defence Ministers Li Shangfu and Wei Fenghe marked a watershed moment in the CCP's history. The two former ministers, who were once trusted allies of Xi Jinping, were convicted of bribery and corruption, and action against them showcases how the Chinese President is ready to sacrifice even his closest confidants to consolidate absolute power, according to a report in Nepal-based online portal Hamrakura.

"This campaign, while framed as an anti-corruption drive, is increasingly seen as a reign of terror designed to instil fear rather than discipline, leaving the PLA weakened and disoriented. The severity of these sentences stunned officers across the military. For decades, generals of such stature had avoided extreme penalties, but Xi's decision to impose suspended death sentences has created an atmosphere of paranoia," the report said.

"Mid-level and junior officers now worry that they could be targeted next, regardless of their loyalty or performance. Analysts note that this climate of suspicion is undermining cohesion within the PLA, leaving soldiers hesitant to act decisively and commanders reluctant to take initiative. The purge has effectively

dismantled trust between the ranks and leadership, replacing it with fear of reprisal," it added.

Xi Jinping has not only taken action against Li and Wei. In January this year, investigations were launched against Zhang Youxia, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and Liu Zhenli, chief of the Joint Staff Department. Although the two officials remain listed in their positions, they have not been seen in public, demonstrating the opaque and unpredictable nature of Xi's purge.

Zhang was the only general with combat experience, and his removal, along with Liu's disappearance, has left the PLA without seasoned leadership at a time when China is trying to modernise its forces by 2027. The lack of leadership is delaying China's modernisation efforts and weakening its operational readiness.

Earlier in March, a report detailed that the Chinese PLA faces mounting instability in 2026, with probes into services and units linked to the February 26 cases potentially disrupting leadership readiness and war-preparation efforts. It added that the February 26 purge resulted in the dismissal of five former senior officers who once led the PLA Army, Navy, Air Force, and Information Support Force.

Additionally, two operational unit Chinese commanders linked to the 73rd Group Army garrisoned in China's Fujian Province, directly opposing Taiwan, and three Generals serving in Central Military Commission (CMC)-level organisations, were removed from their posts.

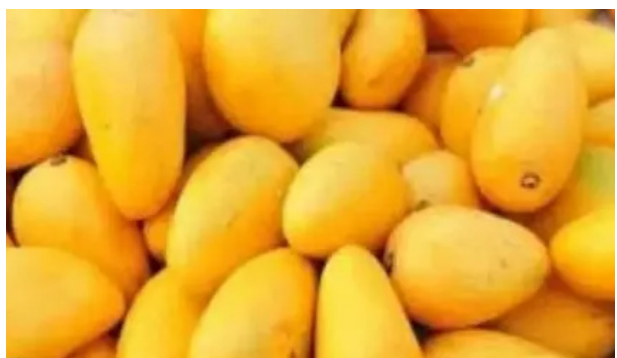
Gujarat's Kesar mangoes fill London's Heathrow airport with fragrance

GANDHINAGAR

Digvijaysinh Gohil, an importer of mangoes in England, said that whenever boxes of Kesar and Hapus mangoes packed from Gujarat are unloaded at London's Heathrow Airport, it fills the entire cargo area with the aroma, making him proud of his identity. However, he is not alone in feeling such pride. Those living across the seven seas have a strong liking for Gujarat's Kesar mangoes and Maharashtra's Hapus varieties.

Though mangoes from South American nations like Brazil and Peru also get shipped in international markets on a large scale but their flavour and taste remain no match to Kesar mangoes, the latter are truly the "King of mangoes". The Kesar mangoes are exported to US and Europe after undergoing detailed processing at orchards and pack houses, accredited by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

According to Samir Sapariya, owner of 'Kunj Cold Ware Solution' -- an APEDA-accredited pack house, said, "We conduct the necessary processing for mango exports right here at our pack house. We process and pack the mangoes in accordance



with the specific requirements of destinations such as the US, England, the UAE, Australia, as well as various European and Gulf nations." "For exports destined for the US, we employ a specialised 'Hot Water Treatment' process, which has been receiving an exceptionally positive response," he added. "For exports to England and Canada, the mangoes undergo a hot water treatment followed by a ripening process before being packed. We also process Kesar, Rajapuri, and Alphonso (Hapus) varieties of mangoes." Kesar mangoes are sourced from Junagadh, Talala, and Kutch, while Rajapuri mangoes come from Valsad.

Samir Sapariya also elaborated, saying, "When a product possesses inherent quality and is backed by modern technology, it is possible to achieve global rec-

ognition and prestige." The Kesar mango, hailing from the orchards of Gir, has today emerged as a global brand.

Now with Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), farmers are able to export their mangoes directly to foreign markets on their own terms and earn revenues without any mediator.

If farmers form groups or FPOs to streamline their production and export efforts, they become eligible for various subsidies and forms of assistance provided by the government.

According to exporters, the initiative extends beyond just mangoes, a grand plan has been set in motion to introduce Gujarat's premium vegetables -- such as G-4 chillies, okra, bitter gourd, ridge gourd, and sponge gourd -- to foreign markets using these same modern processing techniques.

Trump says Iran talks unlike Obama deal

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump on Sunday defended his administration's ongoing negotiations with Iran, sharply criticising the Obama-era nuclear agreement and asserting that the current talks would prevent Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump said the 2015 Iran nuclear deal negotiated under former President Barack Obama was "one of the worst deals ever made by our Country".

"It was a direct path to Iran developing a Nuclear Weapon," the US President wrote. "Not so with the transaction currently being negotiated with Iran by the Trump Administration -- THE EXACT OPPOSITE, in fact!"

The remarks came after Trump announced that a broad regional understanding involving Iran and several Middle Eastern nations was close to finalisation following calls with leaders from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and Bahrain.

Trump said the current ne-



gotiations were moving forward carefully and that his administration was in no hurry to conclude an agreement.

"The negotiations are proceeding in an orderly and constructive manner, and I have informed my representatives not to rush into a deal in that time is on our side," he added.

Trump also indicated that pressure on Iran would continue until a formal agreement was completed. "The Blockade will remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed," he wrote. "Both sides must take their time and get it right. There can be no mistakes!"

The US President described relations with Tehran as increasingly stable despite years of hostility between the two

countries. "Our relationship with Iran is becoming a much more professional and productive one," he said.

At the same time, Trump reiterated Washington's core demand that Iran must never possess a nuclear weapon. "They must understand, however, that they cannot develop or procure a Nuclear Weapon or Bomb," he wrote.

Trump also praised the support of regional countries involved in the diplomatic outreach and linked the effort to the Abraham Accords, the US-brokered agreements aimed at normalising relations between Israel and several Arab nations.

"I would like to thank, thus far, all of the countries of the Middle East for their support and cooperation, which will be further enhanced and strengthened by their joining the Nations of the historic Abraham Accords," he said. Trump even floated the possibility of Iran eventually becoming part of the broader regional arrangement. "And, who knows, perhaps the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to join, as well!" he wrote.

Two brothers disappear after being detained by Pakistani forces

QUETTA

An incident of enforced disappearance by Pakistani forces has come to light from the Dasht-e-Ballangur area of Kech district, Balochistan province of Pakistan, local media reported. The missing person has been identified as Imdad, son of Beg Muhammad and a resident of Kiliro-Ballangur, the Balochistan Post reported on Sunday.

According to local sources, Imdad was detained at the Bilingur camp on Saturday and has been missing since then. His family says they have not been provided with any information about him yet, the report noted.

Sources also said that Imdad's younger brother, Mehran, was also missing after being detained by Pakistani forces from Turbat about three months ago, but he has not been found yet. Recently, in the same Kech district's



Turbat region, an elderly farmer, Sheerdil, was killed by personnel of Pakistan's Frontier Corps (FC), the human rights body Baloch Yakehti Committee (BYC) said.

Citing local sources, the rights body said that on May 21, Sheerdil was struck during the firing and died on the spot. "The situation in Balochistan continues to worsen, with killings and recovery of bodies being reported from different regions. Families are living through unbearable pain and loss, especially during days that should bring peace and togetherness.

Iran not seeking nuclear weapons, says President Pezeshkian

TEHRAN

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday said that Iran is ready to assure the world that they are not seeking nuclear weapons, local media reported. "We are ready to assure the world that we are not seeking nuclear weapons, Iran is not seeking unrest in the region, it is the Zionist regime that is using every opportunity to keep war and unrest alive," said Pezeshkian, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported. He noted that the government's priority is to ensure the livelihoods of people and said that despite the problems, officials are working around the clock



to meet people's needs. "We announced during the time of our martyred Imam, and we announce now that we are ready to assure the world that we are not seeking nuclear weapons, we are not seeking unrest in the region. The one seeking to destabilise the region is the Israeli regime, which is pursuing the plan of 'Greater Israel'," Pezeshkian said regarding the recent negotiations between

Tehran and the United States, the report noted. "We and the negotiators will not compromise the country's honour and pride in any way," he highlighted. Addressing the people of Iran, he thanked them for their savings and asked them to think about efficiency in terms of energy and fuel.

In a meeting with managers of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) in Tehran on Sunday, Pezeshkian also said that no decision will be made in Iran outside the framework of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) and without the coordination and permission of the Supreme Leader, noted the report.

Journalists in Pakistan call for reviewing media laws, denounce amendments to PECA

ISLAMABAD

Journalists in Pakistan urged the Parliament to review all media laws and termed the recent amendments to the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Pecca) 2016 "draconian black law, specifically engineered to facilitate the arm-twisting of journalists and the suppression of Pakistan's media landscape", reports said.

A declaration issued at the conclusion of the National Journalists Convention on "Media Laws, Regulations, and Ethics", organised by the Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ), read: "We demand that the Parliament review all media laws that are contrary to Article 19 of the Constitution," the daily Dawn reported.



Through the declaration, known as the "Islamabad Declaration", the journalists slammed the "violation of the government's solemn promise that these laws would never be weaponised against the press".

During the event, the journalists voiced concern over continued retrenchments and the deliberate job insecurity created by media owners, especially in the electronic media, where layoffs

were made without any justification, resulting in hundreds of media personnel becoming jobless amid record-high inflation, as per the Dawn report.

The journalists condemned the denial of basic employment rights to media personnel, including health insurance, gratuity, and EOBI registration and benefits. The declaration stated, "The Convention expresses serious concern over the govern-

ment's policy of using public advertisements as a tool of financial pressure to dictate editorial content and enforce censorship through informal press advice. Daily Dawn, in particular, is a victim of this policy; it is being denied not only public-sector advertisements but is also facing a situation in which the private corporate sector is being persuaded to withhold advertising."

In April, Islamabad-based media watchdog Freedom Network said that Pakistan's media landscape saw a reduction in space for free expression during the past year due to increasing legal, regulatory, and economic and other pressures.

Titled "Regulatory Repression of Freedom of Expression -- Legal Controls and PECA Undermine Media and Journalism in Pakistan", the report stated that the amended Prevention of Elec-

tronic Crimes Act (PECA) law is the most "consequential instrument" being used to restrict journalists and free speech practitioners in the country.

According to the report, the provisions of PECA law were increasingly being used in 2025 and 2026 to criminalise lawful expression, target dissent, and intimidate journalists, lawyers and political commentators.

Freedom Network released the report to mark World Press Freedom Day, which is observed globally on May 3 each year.

"The weaponisation of PECA has created a climate of fear where journalists are compelled to self-censor to avoid legal repercussions," said Freedom Network Executive Director Iqbal Khattak, while terming it as "one of the most serious threats to media freedom in Pakistan today."



How resilient is our grid system?

Although the government has highlighted that peak demands are being met, presenting it as evidence of the strength of India's electricity system, reports of power cuts continue to surface; peak power deficit on Friday stood at about 1.7 GW

India's peak power deficit as reported on Friday (May 22, 2026) stood at about 1.7 GW, according to Grid-India. Representational image | Photo Credit: S.R. Raghunathan

On Friday (May 22, 2026), the Ministry of Power said electricity demand had broken all previous records, with peak demand rising to nearly 271 GW on Thursday (May 21, 2026). The government has highlighted that such record demands are being met, presenting it as evidence of the strength of India's electricity system. Yet reports of power cuts from many parts of the country continue to surface. Even while stressing preparedness, the Ministry also urged consumers to use electricity judiciously.

India's peak power deficit as reported on Friday (May 22, 2026) stood at about 1.7 GW, according to Grid-India. This would have translated into load shedding and blackouts in some areas.

Driver Shortage Hits JNPA Container Movement

Shortage of trailer drivers leads to piling up of import containers at JNPA terminals. JNPA, Customs Dept announce special measures for importers for evacuation of containers from terminal premises.

While port operations reportedly remain unaffected, the import inventory in the yards has risen to enhanced numbers forcing Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority at Navi Mumbai to announce additional measures. A shortage of trailer drivers at Container Freight Stations (CFSs) has severely disrupted the evacuation of import containers from terminals at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA) in Mumbai. While port operations reportedly remain unaffected, the import inventory in the yards has risen to enhanced numbers forcing JNPA to announce additional measures to handle the situation.

Centre begins process to set up industrial parks under Rs 33,660 crore BHAVYA scheme

NEW DELHI, MAY 24

The Union government has notified the guidelines of the Rs 33,660 crore BHAVYA Central Sector Scheme for selecting 50 proposals to set up industrial parks with world class infrastructure to facilitate investment for manufacturing growth and increasing employment in the country. The first phase will comprise two rounds of selection.

"The window for the first round of selection will open on June 1 and close on July 31. Up to 20 proposals are expected to be selected in the first round. The window for the second round will open on August 1 and close on September 30. An applicant whose proposal is not selected in the first round may also submit the proposal with suitable improvements for consideration in the second round," the official statement said. Financial assistance will be provided under the scheme for the development of 100 industrial parks. The industrial parks to be developed would be se-



lected in two or more phases. In the first phase, 50 projects shall be taken up. Each phase may have one or more rounds of selection. The objective of the Scheme is to develop investment-ready, world-class industrial infrastructure to enable investors to ground investment with ease, thereby adding to the manufacturing capacity in the country. The duration of the scheme is for a period of six years, from financial year 2026-27 to 2031-32. Under the mandatory criteria for an application for the land area requirement for non-hilly states, for consideration of

an industrial park under the scheme is a minimum 100 acre of contiguous land available for development. Non-contiguous, adjoining or connected parcels (not exceeding two) with a minimum area of 100 acre each located within a radius of 2 km may be considered, the guidelines said. In hilly states, northeast region, Union Territories and states having population less than one crore, namely, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar

Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, and Goa, the minimum area requirement is 25 acre of contiguous land available for development. Of the 100 industrial parks to be developed, up to 20 industrial parks may have a development area between 500 to 1,000 acre. For proposals where the sponsoring agency proposes to develop larger parks in phases, funding will be limited to an upper cap for 1,000 acre. Applications under the scheme would be invited in two or more phases. In the first phase, up to 50 projects may be considered for approval. The application would be submitted by the sponsoring agency/authority in prescribed format through the designated portal. A separate application would be submitted for development of each industrial park, and more than one application 5 may be submitted by the sponsoring agency/authority. Each application would be accompanied by a

Detailed Project Report (DPR) prepared in accordance with indicative template provided at Annexure II, along with such other documents and information as may be specified in this regard. Applications under this scheme will be received and processed through an online portal developed and managed by Project Management Agency (PMA). The portal would be opened for submission of applications for a specified period, following due public notice.

Applications meeting the mandatory eligibility criteria will be taken up for evaluation and scoring in accordance with the prescribed evaluation criteria. The highest-ranking applications scoring above the benchmark threshold would be shortlisted and their DPR will be examined and evaluated for further consideration and approval.

An appraisal report in respect of shortlisted applications will be prepared by PMA and presented before the NLSC for approval, the guidelines added.



REC Receives "NBFC of the Year" Award

at Bharat NBFC & FinTech Summit & Awards 2026

MUMBAI/GURUGRAM:

REC Limited has been honoured with the "NBFC of the Year" award at the 3rd Annual Bharat NBFC & FinTech Summit & Awards 2026, recognising the company's significant contribution towards financing and strengthening India's infrastructure and power sector. The award was received on behalf of REC by Shri Alok Kumar, CPM, REC Regional Office, Mumbai, during the award ceremony. This recognition reflects REC's continued commitment towards responsible financing, sustainable growth, and operational ex-

cellence. It also underscores the organisation's unwavering dedication towards contributing to nation-building initiatives, maintaining stakeholder trust, and delivering long-term value across the financial ecosystem. REC has consistently played a pivotal role in supporting India's power and infrastructure development through innovative financial solutions and strategic investments aligned with the nation's growth priorities. The accolade further reinforces REC's position as one of India's leading NBFCs committed to excellence, transparency, and sustainable development.

Union Minister to launch fisheries projects worth Rs 32.15 crore

NEW DELHI, MAY 24

The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAH&D) on Sunday announced that it will organise the "Regional Review Meeting: Northeastern Region 2026" in Mizoram's Aizawl on May 25, during which Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for fisheries projects worth around Rs 32.15 crore.

The projects are aimed at strengthening the fisheries sector in the Northeastern Region and promoting self-sustained growth through improved infrastructure, modern aquaculture prac-

es and livelihood support for beneficiaries.

The regional review meeting will be held under the chairmanship of the Union Minister and in the presence of Ministers of State S. P. Singh Baghel and George Kurian. Ministers in-charge of fisheries and animal husbandry from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are also expected to participate in the event, which will be conducted in hybrid mode. Senior officials from the Centre and the Northeastern states, including secretaries from the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Animal



Husbandry and Dairying, will review the implementation and progress of various schemes in the fisheries, livestock and dairy sectors across the region. The meeting will also focus on future strategies for sustainable sectoral growth, farmers' welfare and livelihood enhancement. During the programme, the min-

istry will launch a baseline village-level survey for expanding the coverage of Multipurpose Dairy Cooperative Societies (MDCS). An awareness film on African Swine Fever and a booklet titled "Good Husbandry Practices in Pig Farming" will also be released. The event will also witness the launch of MULCO Cow Ghee by Mizoram Milk Producers Co-operative Union Ltd, along with the inauguration of Mizo Café and an FPO office-cum-sale outlet. Certificates, including Fisheries Kisan Credit Cards (KCC), will be distributed to beneficiaries from the Northeastern states. Awards for best fisheries startups and fisheries

cooperatives will also be presented during the event.

The Union Minister is expected to interact with beneficiaries to understand the challenges faced by the sector and explore measures for further support.

The programme will include discussions on enhancing fish production, bridging value chain gaps, strengthening market linkages and promoting exports from the Northeastern Region.

Representatives from fisheries institutions and state governments will deliberate on actionable strategies to improve productivity and generate employment opportunities in the sector.

Govt. expands verification of CNG, LNG, Hydrogen dispensers with new fees

The amendments empower State governments to notify additional categories of weights and measures for verification through GATCs under their respective Rules

The verification fee for petrol and diesel dispensers has been fixed at ₹5,000 per nozzle, while the fee for CNG, LPG, LNG and Hydrogen dispensers has been fixed at ₹10,000 per nozzle. In a bid to improve efficiency and support the growing adoption of cleaner fuels across the country, the government on Sunday (May 24, 2026) said it has amended the Legal Metrology (Government Approved Test Centre) Rules, 2013, to further strengthen India's



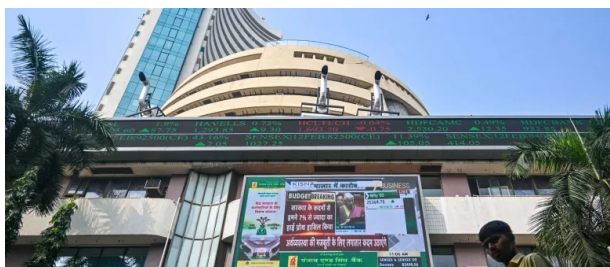
legal metrology ecosystem and expand the country's verification infrastructure for weights and measures.

A key feature of the amendment is the expansion of the scope of government-approved test centres (GATCs) to include verification and re-verification of additional fuel dispensing systems. The move is expected to enhance the availability of verification services.

Six of top-10 most valued firms add Rs 74,111 crore in market cap last week

MUMBAI, MAY 24

The combined market valuation of six of the country's top-10 most valued companies increased by Rs 74,111.57 crore last week, led by gains in ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro amid a positive trend in equities. During the week, the BSE benchmark index rose by 177.36 points, or 0.23 per cent. Among the top-10 valued firms, ICICI Bank, TCS,



Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and LIC emerged as the major gainers, while HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India (SBI) and Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) witnessed a de-

cline in their market valuation. The market capitalisation of TCS jumped by Rs 19,338.68 crore to Rs 8,38,401.33 crore. ICICI Bank added Rs 14,515.93 crore, taking its valuation to Rs

9,06,901.32 crore. LIC's valuation climbed by Rs 9,076.37 crore to Rs 5,14,443.69 crore during the week. Bajaj Finance also witnessed an increase of Rs 3,797.83 crore in its market capitalisation, which reached Rs 5,70,515.57 crore. Larsen and Toubro added Rs 2,685.87 crore, taking its valuation to Rs 5,40,228.21 crore. On the losing side, Bharti Airtel saw the sharpest decline as its market valuation dropped by Rs 20,229.67 crore to Rs 11,40,295.49 crore. The valuation of Hindustan

Unilever eroded by Rs 16,212.18 crore to Rs 5,17,380 crore, while State Bank of India's market capitalisation declined by Rs 12,784.4 crore to Rs 8,76,077.92 crore. HDFC Bank also faced a dip of Rs 2,094.35 crore in its valuation, which stood at Rs 11,79,974.90 crore. In the ranking of the most valued firms, HDFC Bank remained among the top companies, followed by Bharti Airtel, ICICI Bank, SBI, TCS, Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever and LIC.



India's affordable housing dream hits a luxury roadblock

India's housing market is tilting towards luxury projects even as affordable demand remains strong. Experts say rising costs, weak funding and policy gaps are pushing home ownership further from the middle class. Drive through almost any major city today and one thing becomes impossible to miss: Billboards rising above high-

ways promise sky villas, private decks, rooftop pools, golf-facing apartments, and elevated luxury living. Open a newspaper and glossy full-page advertisements showcase infinity pools and premium clubhouses. Scroll online and real estate ads increasingly sell aspiration, not affordability. The language of Indian housing has changed.

No Fuel Shortage, PSU Oil Firms Managing Supply Smoothly

NEW DELHI, MAY 24

Amid concerns over fuel availability in some areas, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited Former Marketing Director Sukhmal Kumar Jain on Sunday said there is no shortage of petrol or diesel in the country, adding that public sector oil marketing companies are fully managing fuel consumption and supply. Speaking exclusively to IANS, Jain said that public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) operate around 85,000 retail outlets out of the nearly one lakh fuel stations across the country, ensuring steady fuel availability. "I don't think there is any shortage because as far as the consumption part is concerned, it is being fully managed by the public sector oil marketing companies," he said. "At least I can say



that since they hold the larger share -- out of 1 lakh-odd retail outlets, around 85,000 are from public sector oil marketing companies," he added. So stray cases may be there due to various other reasons, but otherwise there is no shortage, whatever I understand in this area, Jain told IANS. Commenting on the current market situation, Jain said global crude oil prices and other associated costs remain highly volatile. He noted that shipping costs, insurance expenses, and fluctua-

tions in exchange rates have significantly impacted oil companies. "See, again I'll put it this way -- the situation is very volatile, and there are various components. If you have really seen crude oil, then shipping costs, insurance, and even exchange rates, the way they have moved," he said. According to Jain, exchange rates that were earlier around 89-90 are now hovering near 96, increasing the burden on oil marketing companies.

He said that due to the combined impact of these factors, oil companies are currently absorbing losses in the range of Rs 600 crore to Rs 700 crore per day.

Despite the pressure on margins, Jain maintained that PSU oil companies continue to ensure uninterrupted fuel supply across the country.

GreenLine expands LNG presence as India's freight sector shifts beyond diesel

NEW DELHI, MAY 24

India's heavy-duty logistics sector is increasingly turning to liquefied natural gas (LNG) as transport operators and policymakers look for alternatives to diesel amid rising concerns over energy security and crude oil imports. The transition comes as freight movement across the country continues to grow rapidly. India currently has nearly four million diesel-powered trucks transporting close to 70 per cent of domestic cargo, making the sector one of the largest consumers of imported fossil fuels. Against this backdrop, LNG is emerging as a practical near-term fuel option for long-haul trucking, offering diesel-like operational efficiency while supporting



lower emissions and reduced dependence on imported fuel.

GreenLine Mobility, among the largest LNG trucking operators in the country, currently operates more than 1,000 LNG-powered heavy-duty trucks across key logistics corridors. The company has also started deploying electric trucks for short-haul operations and plans to scale its fleet to 10,000 vehi-

cles over the next few years. The momentum comes at a time when the government is evaluating an incentive programme worth over \$1 billion to accelerate the adoption of cleaner commercial vehicles, as part of broader efforts to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels and strengthen India's energy security.

However, large-scale electrification of heavy-duty

freight transport is still expected to take time due to challenges related to charging infrastructure, long-distance range capability and higher upfront vehicle costs.

In comparison, LNG trucks are increasingly being viewed as a lower-emission alternative capable of supporting immediate decarbonisation goals while maintaining operational efficiency for long-distance freight movement. LNG-powered trucks can travel up to 1,200 km on a single tank and reduce carbon emissions by up to 40 per cent compared with diesel vehicles. The growing focus on LNG is also driving investments in supporting infrastructure. Ultra Gas & Energy, a subsidiary of GreenLine, currently operates seven LNG refuelling stations and plans

to expand the network to 100 stations along major freight corridors nationwide. Each hub is being developed as an integrated clean mobility facility equipped with LNG refuelling, EV charging and battery-swapping capabilities.

Industry estimates suggest that replacing 10 per cent of India's diesel trucking fleet with LNG vehicles could potentially reduce annual foreign exchange outflows by nearly \$3 billion through lower diesel imports.

Sector stakeholders believe policy interventions such as toll concessions, faster approvals for LNG dispensing stations, GST incentives and carbon credit frameworks could play an important role in accelerating the adoption of alternative fuels in commercial transportation.

MONDAY

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HYDERABAD | HYDERABAD HEADLINES

The wave of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has already begun reshaping every aspect of our society, with countries now competing fiercely to gain a strategic advantage. Be it business, finance, education, manufacturing, or healthcare, its growing physical potential, integrated with rapid technological strides, is now posing an existential predicament for mankind. Its impact now goes beyond what you ever expected.

The taste of this change was first astonishingly felt in 1996, when IBM Deep Blue computer beat Garry Kasparov at a chess game, and very recently, when a humanoid robot comprehensively beat the men's half-marathon record by a mile in Beijing. According to McKinsey & Co, AI could add up to \$13 trillion to global GDP by 2030, boosting it by approximately 1.2% annually. Meanwhile, a PwC report estimates that 45% of total economic gains by 2030 will come from product enhancements driven by AI. These inputs reveal that AI is not merely a technological development; it will fundamentally alter organisations' operations soon. Thus, leading in this new era of AI will additionally require a different set of skills. As AI reshapes business and industries, leaders are facing new challenges altogether. These new skills are vitally required to integrate technical and human-centred activities for the efficient functioning of organisations in the future.



Effective leadership in the age of AI

Sustained Learning and Inquisitiveness

Most prominent among these new skills are sustained learning and inquisitiveness. With the arrival of AI, technologies are advancing at an unimaginable pace, and, in all probability, today's modern technologies may become redundant

sooner than we expect. So, effective leaders must enthuse employees to learn continuously and remain inquisitive about new developments to stay relevant. In this regard, consider Netflix, which utilises algorithms for content recommendations and viewer analytics, and its leaders adapt strategies in tune with technical developments and con-

sumer behaviour. Thus, in a dynamic digital setting, this approach has helped Netflix to remain combative. Leaders also arrange customised AI literacy programmes to familiarise employees with automation and to avoid anxiety. Additionally, a leader should demonstrate willingness to learn by setting a personal example.

Data Literacy

Another core leadership skill is data literacy, the ability to understand, interpret, and use data effectively. Since AI systems bank upon data to generate predictions and insights, leaders who are not equipped to interpret data may find it difficult to make appropriate decisions. Take the case of Amazon, which manages inventory and consumer behaviour with the help of AI-powered forecasting. Their leaders use real-time data analytics to reach strategic conclusions, thereby saving considerable operational costs. Supporting this, a Deloitte survey recently found that 67% of executives believe AI and data analytics are essential to maintaining a competitive edge.

Merging Human and Machine Capabilities

Another significant leadership quality is merging human and machine capabilities. This is also sometimes called collaborative intelligence and refers to the ability to amalgamate the capabilities of humans and machines. With AI agents physically joining the workforce alongside human employees, this leadership quality has become vital. Leaders will need to create a conducive workplace environment to optimise the man-machine interface. While data processing and pattern identification are AI's forte, humans excel in creativity, ethics, and emotional understanding. Effective leaders are needed to integrate these capabilities to derive maximum outcomes. In this regard, while AI can undertake repetitive or ana-

lytical tasks, humans should focus on original thinking and decision-making. Leaders who master this art of integration are likely to overtake their competitors in this age of AI.

Adaptability

Another essential quality for leaders is adaptability. AI is developing at an unimaginable speed, and new tools and models will become obsolete, leading to frequent disruptions. In this scenario, leaders who tend to resist change could become outdated themselves. Therefore, leaders should view change as an opportunity rather than a threat and guide their teams through this technological disruption by constant transformation to remain relevant. To achieve the desired results, it requires an attitudinal shift and a mindset for learning and working with a new set of data or information.

Ethical conduct and responsibility are the other qualities; leaders must possess in this age of AI implementation. AI presents significant challenges, including algorithmic bias, surveillance risks, and significant privacy concerns. Therefore, leaders must ensure the responsible use of AI systems and their development. There have been reports of bias in facial recognition systems against some people in the past. To prevent this, Google and Microsoft have established ethical AI frameworks to display transparency. Harvard Business Review has found that companies that establish ethical AI governance build stronger customer trust and minimise regulatory risks.

Future leaders will also have to display sufficient Emotional Intelligence (EI). AI efficiently handles data analysis and automation, but it predominantly lacks human qualities like empathy and emotional understanding. EI includes empathy, self-awareness, and the ability to manage human relationships effectively. Therefore, leaders with high EI are better positioned to resolve conflicts, motivate their teams, and build trust. Research has repeatedly shown

that EI is valued more than IQ in leadership roles, particularly in a technology-driven environment. In the current work environment, with AI dominating, employees feel insecure in their jobs. According to the World Economic Forum, AI was expected to displace 85 million jobs by the end of 2025, but it may also create 97 million new roles. During this period of transition, effective leaders will have to reassure employees and encourage reskilling. Satya Nadella of

Emotional Intelligence

Microsoft has successfully encouraged a 'learn-it-all' culture that emphasises empathy and continuous learning as AI surges in the workplace. Microsoft has now emerged as one of the leaders in AI development.

It is also significant for leaders to remain conscious of their strengths and weaknesses, as mistakes and biases tend

to multiply hugely while working with AI systems and, in turn, impact decision-making. Since knowledge is continually advancing in the AI era, no single individual can keep track of all developments. Accepting mistakes and learning from them should be the way forward, and, therefore, self-awareness becomes vital. Further, in the AI era, we observe

increased globalisation, which requires interaction and cooperation across nations and the handling of diverse cultures and social groups. Displaying cultural and social intelligence, leaders must value the contributions of diverse teams to secure the best outcomes in innovation and problem-solving. Finally, leaders need to communicate effectively in a technology-driven environment by providing clear and sufficient instructions, demonstrating understanding,

and engaging attentively with employees. Successful leadership in the age of AI requires a balance between technological know-how and human sagacity. While AI aims to transform the industry and drive innovation, leaders who also respect people will emerge as winners. It seems futile to compete with AI; leaders should regulate and mobilise AI to build smarter, more flexible organisations that deliver the best results in the future.

The Geopolitical Catalyst: The 2026-2035 Indo-German Roadmap

This academic migration is no accident. It is being actively nurtured by landmark policy agreements between Berlin and New Delhi. The Indo-German Roadmap on Higher Education, signed to guide bilateral strategy, explicitly highlights "multidisciplinarity via co-created programs" as a foundational pillar. Bilateral academic initiatives like the German Indian Academic Network for Tomorrow (SPARC-GIANT) have shifted funding priorities away from traditional student mobility toward joint research

in high-growth, cross-disciplinary sectors like semiconductor design, sustainability engineering, and AI-driven healthcare. For Indian students, this policy alignment has practical, life-changing implications. It means their unconventional, hybrid qualifications are highly valued by German immigration authorities and corporate recruiters alike. It legitimizes alternative educational pathways that might have once faced structural skepticism in India's traditionally rigid civil service or corporate hiring systems.

Demystifying the Pragmatic Appeal: Fees, Visas, and the APS

While the philosophical alignment draws intellectual curiosity, Germany's practical advantages seal the deal for middle-class Indian families facing skyrocketing tuition costs in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia.

1. The Financial Freedom to Experiment

The defining feature of Germany's higher education system remains its structural accessibility. Public universities across the vast majority of German states charge zero tuition fees, regardless of a student's nationality. Students instead pay a nominal semester contribution (Semesterbeitrag) ranging between €200 and €500, which typically covers administrative costs and includes a regional public transit pass. This financial structure fundamentally shifts student psychology. When an international student isn't burdened by \$50,000 in annual tuition debt, they have the freedom to choose degrees based on genuine market relevance and intellectual curiosity, rather than rushing toward the most conventional, immediate return-on-investment pipeline.

2. Navigating the Bureaucratic Gates

Studying in Germany requires navigating a precise administrative pipeline. Since late 2022, the APS Certificate (Akademische Prüfstelle) has been mandatory for all Indian applicants. This authentication process, managed directly by the German Embassy in New Delhi, verifies the validity of an applicant's Indian

school and university credentials before they can even apply to a German institution. To secure a student visa, the German government requires proof of financial self-sufficiency through a Blocked Account (Sperrkonto), which stands at €11,904 per year. This money remains the student's own, unlocked in equal monthly installments to cover living expenses, groceries, and accommodation.

Beyond the Silos

Why Indian Students are Championing Germany's Interdisciplinary Frontier

For generations of ambitious Indian families, the blueprint for academic success was drawn with rigid, hyper-specialized lines. You were either a computer science purist, a mechanical engineering traditionalist, or a focused management aspirant. The boundaries between departments were concrete walls, and crossing them was often seen as a lack of academic focus. But a profound demographic and philosophical shift is unfolding. Driven by the complex demands of automation, global climate crises, and a rapidly evolving job market, tens of thousands of Indian scholars are turning their backs on traditional academic silos. Instead, they are flocking to Germany, a nation that has quietly revolutionized its higher education ecosystem to champion the power of interdisciplinary learning.

With over 60,000 Indian students currently enrolled in the 2025/2026 academic year, India has firmly established itself as the single largest source of international student talent in Germany. What makes this migration remarkable is not just the volume of students, but the nature of what they are choosing to study. They are bypassing hyper-focused

degrees to occupy the spaces between traditional subjects—where data science meets biology, where engineering fuses with environmental policy, and where autonomous mobility demands an understanding of human psychology.

The Death of the Single-Track Career Twenty-four-year-old Ananya Nair's journey reflects this generational shift. An electronics graduate from Bengaluru, Ananya felt stifled by the choice she faced at home: dive into standard software coding or prepare for a corporate MBA. "The real world doesn't work in neat departmental boxes anymore," Ananya explains via video call from her student apartment in Stuttgart. She is currently completing her Master of Science in Computational Mechanics and Materials Science—a degree that straddles applied mathematics, advanced physics, and digital engineering. "When you look at modern challenges like solid-state batteries or green aviation, a computer scientist doesn't know enough about material physics, and a traditional metallurgist doesn't know how to run machine learning simulations. Germany's public universities don't force you to choose. They teach you to be the bridge." This

philosophy is structurally hardwired into Germany's tertiary framework. The country's latest figures show a historic high of over 420,000 international students nationwide, fueled in large part by the creation of nearly 2,400 English-taught programs. Crucially, a significant portion of these new programs are explicitly designed around Interdisziplinarität—the integration of distinct academic disciplines into unified, cohesive degrees. Mapping the Interdisciplinary Ecosystem The shift toward multidisciplinary learning isn't just a pedagogical trend; it's an institutional response to global technological evolution. German public universities and Fachhochschulen (Universities of Applied Sciences) have structured their portfolios to address industrial intersectionality.

This pedagogical model is structurally distinct from the standard elective framework found in Anglo-Saxon countries like the US or UK. Rather than allowing a student to simply "minor" in a disparate subject, German interdisciplinary master's programs build a dedicated curriculum where the overlapping spaces between fields are treated as core competencies.

Bridging Academia and the "Mittelstand"

The ultimate test of any academic framework is its market integration. Germany's economy is anchored not just by industrial conglomerates like Siemens, Bosch, BMW, and Volkswagen, but by its Mittelstand—the thousands of highly specialized, medium-sized family businesses that dominate global niche markets. These companies are currently facing acute skilled labor shortages, and they are hunting for professionals who can operate at the intersection of departments. A modern automotive engineer in Bavaria is no longer just optimizing a combustion engine; they are integrating sensor arrays, writing embedded C++ code, and analyzing aerodynamic telemetry. Recognizing this, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) has spearheaded the Skilled Labour Initiative, an active program supporting over 100 public universities to intentionally transition international master's graduates

straight into the domestic workforce. With a generous 18-month post-study job-seeker visa, nearly 70% of Indian graduates choose to stay, anchoring themselves within Europe's largest economic engine.

The Road Ahead: Overcoming the Cultural Friction

Choosing this non-traditional path is not without its hurdles. Indian students arriving in Germany frequently encounter a teaching style that stands in stark contrast to the structured, textbook-driven environment of many Indian universities. German higher education expects a massive degree of self-reliance (Selbstständigkeit). Professors act as guides rather than lecturers, and interdisciplinary exams often require students to synthesize solutions to open-ended problems that have no single "correct" answer in a syllabus. Furthermore, while the academic programs are taught entirely in English, integration into the local community and the corporate workplace requires a commitment to learning the German language. While an engineer can code in English, discussing logistics on a factory floor or participating in a corporate strategy meeting requires localized professional proficiency. The Vanguard of a New Academic Era The surge of Indian students into Germany's interdisciplinary programs signals a maturing of India's global student diaspora. It marks a transition from seeking education as a mere passport to emigration, toward seeking education as a tool to master the complexities of a changing world. By breaking down the walls between departments, these scholars are not just building unique, future-proof career paths for themselves; they are forging the exact cross-functional mindsets required to lead the next generation of global innovation.



IPL 2026



We should have qualified earlier, says Riyan Parag



MUMBAI: Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag was happy as his team defeated the Mumbai Indians and qualified for the playoffs, but said they need to do better in the upcoming matches. Rajasthan Royals were cruising nicely with six wins in nine matches, after which they lost three successive matches. They eventually sealed victories in their last two matches to seal a playoff place. Claiming they should have qualified for the playoffs earlier, Parag gave credit to his bowlers, especially Jofra Archer, who picked 3-17 against the Mumbai Indians in Match 69 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Wankhede Stadium.

IPL 2026

'Tried to execute plans with new and old ball'



KOLKATA: Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) left-arm pacer Saurabh Dubey said his focus during their clash against Delhi Capitals was on sticking to the bowling plans laid out during practice and executing them in the game, whether it was with the new ball or in the death overs. Dubey was the standout bowler for KKR by picking 2-28 in his four overs, where he took out Abishek Porel and Axar Patel as DC made 203/5 in their 20 overs at the Eden Gardens on Sunday evening. "Yes, whatever we had planned with the new ball and the old ball, and whatever planning was happening during practice, we were just trying to follow that and execute it." "The way practice sessions are happening and the plans the coaches are giving us.

CRICKET

Rwanda's Hamza Khan blasts second-highest men's T20I score



GABORONE: Hamza Khan made history with one of the greatest innings in Men's T20 internationals. He scored an incredible unbeaten 164 off just 65 balls for Rwanda against Ivory Coast during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Africa Sub-Regional Qualifier in Gaborone on Sunday. This explosive innings featured nine fours and 15 massive sixes, with a remarkable strike rate of 252.30. It helped Rwanda post a massive 288/2 in 20 overs, marking the seventh-highest team total in Men's T20I history. Hamza's 15 sixes also tie for the fourth-most hit in a single T20I innings. His unbeaten 164 is now the second-highest individual score recorded in Men's T20 internationals, following Aaron Finch's famous 172 for Australia against Zimbabwe in 2018.

Archer helps RR seal playoff berth with 30-run win over MI

MUMBAI

Rajasthan Royals rode on Jofra Archer's all-round brilliance to book the fourth and final play-off berth with a 30-run victory over Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday. Archer returned with splendid figures of 4-0-17-3 after his 15-ball 32 helped Royals reach a fighting 205 for 8 after 20 overs.

It was 73 runs in the last five overs bowled by Mumbai Indians which proved to be decisive as Mumbai Indians could manage only 175 for 9 in 20 overs. The victory lifted Rajasthan Royals to the fourth position in the IPL points table with 16 points, effectively knocking out Punjab Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, and even Delhi Capitals — latter two had slim outside chances.

Mumbai Indians' reply was spruced with a timely half-century from Suryakumar Yadav — 60 off 42 balls with four sixes and three fours — as well as skipper Hardik Pandya's 15-ball 34 and Will Jacks' 33 off 18 balls. But none of these efforts were enough to revive the five-time winners, who had slipped to 38 for four with Archer's two-wicket burst at the start.

The collapse began when Archer produced a jaffa — a perfect outswinger which darted sharply away from Rohit Sharma (0) who went on a fishing expedition away from his body. The resultant edge settled into wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel's gloves.

Archer then got one to nip off the surface to hit the wickets and see the back of Naman Dhir (6) in the third over, but the body blow came for MI in the form of Ryan



Rickelton's (12) dismissal off Burger, who found Vaibhav Sooryavanshi at square leg. A disappointing season had no different end for Tilak Varma with the bat when the India batter was undone by a Brijesh Sharma delivery which kept low while he attempted to flick it.

In a season marred by poor powerplay returns, Mumbai Indians had no respite in their final outing where they finished at 49 for four after six overs. Suryakumar also rode his luck, getting two reprieves en route to his second half-century of the season.

Brijesh missed a run-out chance on either ends when both Ryan Rickelton and Suryakumar were caught in a mix-up with an awful throw, and then dropped a catch at mid-wicket when the MI batter on 27 off Yash Raj Punja in the eighth over.

Suryakumar and Jaks put on 63 for the fifth wicket in an impressive turnaround for the hosts, but it was Pandya's dismissal off Archer in the 16th over — when MI were still in the chase — that shut them out of the game.

With 59 needed off 30 balls and Archer steaming in for his final over, MI could

have opted against going after the English pacer but Pandya took the punt that fell flat. A mis-hit ended Pandya's quickfire innings during which he made animated gestures, while also sharp caught-and-bowled from Nandre Burger (2/43) of Suryakumar in the 18th over sealed the deal. Earlier, Archer (32 off 15 balls) and Ravindra Jadeja's (19 no off 11 balls) vital contributions late in the innings lifted Rajasthan Royals to an under-par 205 for eight on a benign wicket.

Needing a win in this contest to book the final berth in the IPL playoffs, RR add-

ed 73 runs in the last five overs to stage a late comeback after their specialist batters cut a sorry figure. Archer smacked three sixes and a four to collect 32 off 15 balls while Jadeja, coming down at No 9, hit three boundaries in the last two overs to push the total beyond the 200-run mark.

All eyes were pinned on the explosive pair of Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (4) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (27) but while teenager was dismissed cheaply, Jaiswal showed a lot of promise during his brief stay before Will Jaks outfoxed him. Sooryavanshi went for a big swipe on the first ball and connected well which looked a certain six off Deepak Chahar (2/43), but Will Jaks at deep extra cover pulled the ball in spectacularly from beyond the ropes.

As if that save had some cascading effect, Sooryavanshi failed to connect with rest of the deliveries he faced. Another wild slog off an outswinger from Chahar saw Sooryavanshi hitting high in the air towards backward point where Naman Dhir took a smart catch sprinting forward. Sooryavanshi fell immediately after Jaiswal, who had made a flying start but paid the price of playing one shot too many. Jaiswal hit a couple of towering sixes off Chahar and even showed impeccable movement to hit Jaks over long-off for his third six, but couldn't prevent a leading edge off the MI spinner when he lured him with a fuller delivery. In a spot of bother at 33 for two, Rajasthan neither counter-attacked nor managed any recovery. Skipper Riyan Parag failed to convert a start while Jurel could not make a strong dent either.

IPL 2026: Ngidi, Kuldeep pick three wickets each as DC beat KKR by 40 runs



KOLKATA

Lungi Ngidi and Kuldeep Yadav picked three wickets each as Delhi Capitals produced a clinical bowling performance to defeat Kolkata Knight Riders by 40 runs in their final league clash of IPL 2026 at the Eden Gardens on Sunday. Defending 204 with ease also meant DC finished at sixth spot in the points table, as KKR folded for 163 in 18.4 overs. KKR began strongly in their chase, thanks to skipper Ajinkya Rahane hitting 63 off 39 balls, laced with four fours and as many sixes.

The slide began when Kuldeep struck twice in successive deliveries, removing Rahane and Rinku Singh, and nearly completed a hat-trick when Tejasvi Dahiya edged behind, only for Abishek Porel to put down a straightforward chance.

That reprieve denied the wrist-spinner three in a row, but the damage was already done. From 128/3, KKR lost their way completely, as they lost their last seven wickets for just 35 runs, as the three time-winners ended their season the way they had started it — on a losing note. For DC, Ngidi took 3-27 while Kuldeep ended his

tough season with 3-29. Ajinkya Rahane and Finn Allen gave KKR a brisk start via a 43-run opening stand before Ngidi castled the latter for 20.

Manish Pandey joined Rahane and the pair added 44 runs before Ngidi returned to dismiss Pandey for 25, courtesy a sharp catch by Starc. Cameron Green fell cheaply to Kuldeep, as KKR were at 98/3 after 10 overs.

Rahane reached his fifty soon after in 31 balls, but the required rate climbed above 10. Rahane looked set to take KKR home, but Kuldeep's double strike in the 13th over turned the game by removing him and Rinku in quick succession. Though Dahiya survived the hat-trick ball from Kuldeep, Axar Patel ensured it didn't cost DC much as he castled him for just one. After Powell was run-out for 29, Ngidi and Starc returned to take out the remaining batters, as DC signed off on a high.

Brief Scores: Delhi Capitals 203/5 in 20 overs (KL Rahul 60, Axar Patel 39; Saurabh Dubey 2-28, Anukul Roy 1-23) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 163 all out in 18.4 overs (Ajinkya Rahane 63, Rovman Powell 29; Lungi Ngidi 3-27, Kuldeep Yadav 3-29) by 40 runs

French Open: Marta Kostyuk overcomes fear for family to advance in Paris

PARIS

Marta Kostyuk battled through emotions and reached a straight-sets victory over Oksana Selekhmeteva at Roland Garros on Sunday, but her 6-2, 6-3 triumph came mere hours after learning a missile strike had landed just 100m from her family home in Kyiv.

Her first-round match at the French Open lasted 1 hour and 18 minutes, though the tennis was secondary given the situation that has surrounded her in recent weeks and months, and in recent hours too. She only discovered earlier that day that the missile had hit perilously close to where her mother, sister and grandmother's sister had been.

"Right now, I think it was just the closest that it has ever been to my house and this what probably makes it the most emotional," Kostyuk stated post-match. "There are obviously better days, worse days, but yeah, this one was, I would say, top three worst ones."

She stepped on court to deliver a composed performance, but admitted to drifting in and out of the game when thinking about what was happening at home. "There were times in the match where I would go back



to thinking about it," Kostyuk said. "Because most of the morning I was feeling sick, just from the thought that if it was 100m further it could be that I wouldn't have my mom and my sister anymore."

She suggested that the 11am match start may have been a blessing in one way, giving her limited time to process the devastating news. The usual Grand Slam opener anxieties suddenly seemed insignificant when compared to what her family was going through.

Her family spent Sunday at home trying to regain some calm following the sleepless night they endured in

Kyiv. "They feel ok," the 22-year-old revealed. "Obviously very scary but, you know, it's not the first very difficult night, not the last, so, you know, they are adapting."

For many years, the Ukrainian has openly discussed the immense psychological toll of living and working while at war. Sunday was just another example of what many Ukrainian athletes are currently enduring. "It's definitely exhausting," she said. "Especially when it repeatedly is happening over the night, nobody is sleeping well. People are just more irritated and scared. But generally, everyone is really angry."

French Open: Zverev begins chase for first major title with dominant performance

PARIS

Alexander Zverev made a confident start to his latest bid for a maiden Grand Slam title by cruising into the second round of the French Open on Sunday. The second seed delivered a composed performance on the clay courts in Paris, defeating French home favourite Benjamin Bonzi 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 in two hours and eight minutes. Zverev controlled the match from the baseline throughout, using his powerful serve and consistent groundstrokes to keep Bonzi

under pressure as he comfortably progressed to the next round at Roland Garros. "Very good start to the tournament. It's always nice to start with a straight-sets win, especially against Benjamin, who can cause a lot of problems to top players," Zverev said in his on-court interview. "All around, I think a good performance that I can build on. I have to build on it, but very happy with the start."

Zverev has long enjoyed success on the Parisian clay, advancing to the 2024 final, three semi-finals and another quarter-final in his

past five appearances. The German has not fallen short of the fourth round since 2017. The 29-year-old has shown similar consistency this clay-court season, making the Madrid final and semi-finals in Monte-Carlo and Munich. He also advanced to the semi-finals at hard-court ATP Masters 1000 events at Indian Wells and Miami. Zverev was never in trouble against Bonzi in their first Lexus ATP Head-2Head meeting. The Frenchman won a set against Jannik Sinner in Madrid, but was not able to upset the second seed.

Aryaveer Dewan emerges boys' U-19 Asian squash champion

PANZHUIHUA

Aryaveer Dewan became only the fourth Indian male to emerge the Asian boys' U-19 champion as he clinched the coveted crown at the 33rd Asian Junior Individual Squash Championships in Panzhihua, China, on Sunday.

Despite being the 3/4 seed for the tournament, the young talent from Delhi put on a masterclass in the final match, comprehensively defeating South Korea's Jonghyeok Lee with a commanding scoreline of 11-2, 11-7, 11-9 in under an hour to secure the prestigious continental title. This win fur-



ther solidifies Aryaveer's rapid ascent in the junior squash circuit. The Indian star had previously captured the boys' Under-17 title at the same tournament last year, and now, by adding the Under-19 championship to his collection, he has firmly established himself as one of India's most prom-

ising squash talents heading into the World Junior Championships later this year.

"This is an absolutely magnificent achievement by Aryaveer winning two consecutive titles. It will undoubtedly provide him with tremendous confidence as we approach the World Junior Championships in a couple of months," remarked Cyrus Poncha, secretary-general of the Squash Rackets Federation of India. Overall, India had a stellar outing at the championships, returning with an impressive haul of one gold, three silver, and four bronze medals across various age groups.

Dev Kumar Meena and Kuldeep Kumar set new benchmark

RANCHI

Madhya Pradesh's talented athletes—Dev Kumar Meena and Kuldeep Kumar raised the bar to 5.45m to set national record in the men's pole vault on the penultimate day of the 29th National Senior Athletics Federation Competition here in Ranchi.

Both the athletes bettered the previous national men's pole vault record of 5.41m, but Dev Kumar Meena walked away with the gold medal while Kuldeep Kumar settled for silver (on countdown). The previous record of 5.41m was set recently by Kuldeep Kumar in Bhubaneswar. The gold and silver medallists have also achieved the Commonwealth Games qualification mark of 5.25m. The meet record was 5.35m set last year by Dev Kumar Meena. Training partners and close friends, Dev Kumar Meena and Kuldeep Kumar



next goal is to repeat their performance at the international level. "It was a good day for us and we will continue to push each other to further raise the bar in future," jubilant Dev Kumar Meena said after winning the gold on Sunday.

If the spotlight was on sprinters on Saturday, the main attraction on Sun-

day was field events. At the long jump pit, Murali Sreeshankar won the gold medal with a jump of 8.08m which was better than the CWG qualification mark of 8.05m.

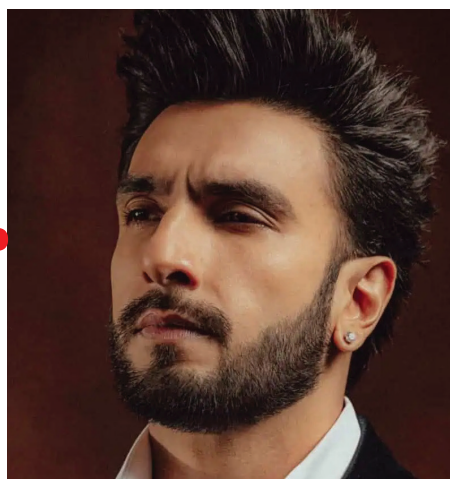
Sarvesh Anil Kushare of Maharashtra dominated the men's high jump. His gold-medal winning performance

of 2.28m was better than CWG mark of 2.22m. Kushare also equalled the meet record set by Tejaswin Shankar. He also raised the bar to 2.30m to improve the national record of 2.29m but missed all three attempts.

Aadarsh Ram, winner of silver medal, also achieved the qualification mark of CWG (2.22m). The men's 110m hurdles was dominated by Tejas Ashok Shirse representing Reliance. His gold-winning time was 13.50 seconds. He improved his own meet record of 13.61 secs but missed out to win a CWG berth.

The qualification time was 13.39 secs. Earlier in the morning session, Ravina representing Haryana won the gold medal in the women's 10,000m race walk with a time of 44:29.66 seconds which was better than the Commonwealth Games qualification time of 44:44.58 seconds.

DON 3 TURNS UGLY.. FARHAN DRAGS RANVEER TO FILM BODY



The Don 3 issue is no longer staying inside Bollywood circles. The matter has now officially reached FWICE after Farhan Akhtar reportedly filed a complaint against Ranveer Singh over his sudden exit from the film.

Ranveer was announced as the new Don with huge expectations. But things reportedly changed after creative disagreements and scheduling issues started creating tension between the actor and the makers especially after Dhurandhar's unanimous success.

Bollywood media reports say Farhan is upset because extensive pre production work was already completed before Ranveer decided to walk away from the project. The film has now landed in complete uncertainty.

Interestingly, this issue has been dragging for months with several reports about compensation demands and legal discussions already doing rounds in Mumbai film circles.

Rumours about replacing Ranveer also created massive buzz earlier.

FWICE is now expected to review the entire issue and announce its stand on Monday. With Don being one of Bollywood's biggest action franchises, the industry is closely watching how this ugly fallout finally ends.

Rashmika Shares Global Stage With Winston Duke

After recently getting married to Vijay Deverakonda, popular actress Rashmika Mandanna is continuing to make headlines with her growing international popularity. The actress is now ready to represent India on a global platform at the 10th Annual Crunchyroll Anime Awards in Tokyo, Japan. Rashmika will attend the prestigious event on May 23, 2026, at the Grand Prince Hotel Takanawa in Tokyo. She will present an award during the ceremony along with Hollywood actor Winston Duke. The news has created excitement among her fans across India and abroad.

Winston Duke is famous worldwide for his powerful role in the Marvel film Black Panther. He has also appeared in several popular television series and theatre productions before becoming a global star. According to reports, Winston Duke personally requested the organizers to pair him with Rashmika during the presentation segment. This shows how much recognition Rashmika has earned internationally in recent years.

Rashmika Mandanna started her career in South Indian cinema and slowly became one of the most loved actresses in the country. Her performances in Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Hindi films helped her gain a huge fan following. Movies like Pushpa: The Rise and other successful projects made her a pan-Indian star.

Now, her appearance at the Crunchyroll Anime Awards proves that she is becoming popular even outside Indian cinema. Fans are proud to see an Indian actress sharing the stage with international celebrities in a prestigious global event.



Lakshmi Raai Slays in Vibrant Glory

Just a little desi magic on South beats. Slaying in every shade Lights, camera, tadka #BehindTheScenesStories " In this vibrant, high-energy photoshoot, Lakshmi Raai (Raai Laxmi) lights up the frame in a colourful traditional lehenga-choli, radiating joy and charisma amid a festive set.

Born on May 5, 1989, in Bangalore, Karnataka, Raai Laxmi began as a model before making her acting debut in the Tamil film Karka Kasadara (2005). She quickly became a prominent name in South Indian cinema with standout performances in Rock N' Roll (Malayalam debut), Kanchana, Mankatha, Evidam Swargamanu, and Aranmanai. Known for her versatility across Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, and Hindi films, she has appeared in over 50 films.

Her notable works include Julie 2 (Hindi), DNA (Malayalam, 2024), and special appearances like in Bholaa. In 2026, she has exciting projects lined up including Wolf and Janatha Bar. With her glamorous screen presence and dancing prowess, Raai Laxmi continues to be a celebrated star in Indian cinema.

I'm genuinely forgetful with names:CHARAN

Actor Ram Charan, who predominantly works in Telugu cinema, has tendered an apology to the Indian pace legend Jasprit Bumrah after the actor mistook him for a footballer. On Sunday, the actor took to his X, formerly Twitter, and penned a note, as he shared that he is "forgetful with names sometimes" and it was a "genuine human error".

He wrote, Uff... I'm genuinely so forgetful with names sometimes. Apologies to @JaspritBumrah93 Ji for the mix-up - it was a genuine human error in the middle of all the excitement and the crowd. I truly respect you and I am a huge fan of your game. You make every Indian feel proud when you consistently put batsmen on the back foot". Earlier, during an event, when Ram Charan was asked to comment on Indian cricketers, he said, "Sachin - Long Legendary Run. MSD - Calm and Cool. Rohit Sharma - Everyone Owns Him. Virat Kohli - Fire. JaspritBumrah - I am your biggest fan. I love football and you've taking it more forward. Love you sir (sic)".

Ananya Panday's Bharatanatyam triggers troll fest

Ananya Panday is no stranger to online trolling. From criticism over her acting skills to memes targeting her expressions, the actress has faced frequent social media mockery since her debut. Her performance in "Liger" opposite Vijay Deverakonda had earlier attracted heavy criticism, with many mocking her acting style. However, in recent times, the trolling had reduced as audiences felt she was gradually improving.

Now, Ananya is once again facing online heat after a scene from her latest film "Chand Mera Dil," released on May 22, went viral.

In the sequence, she appears as an engineering student performing Bharatanatyam in a traditional outfit before a Nataraja backdrop. Social media users particularly targeted her dance movements and mudras, calling them stiff and robotic. Memes quickly flooded platforms, with one viral post joking that Bharatanatyam "evolved in 200 BCE and ended with Ananya Panday in 2026."

