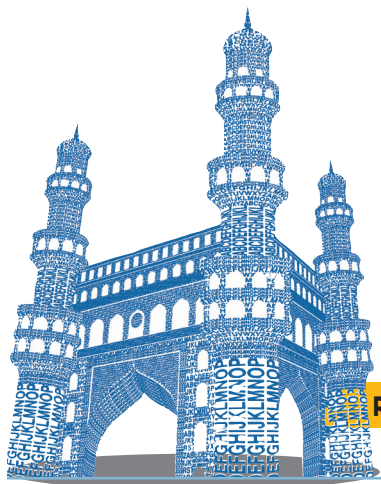




HYDERABAD HEADLINES

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SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2026

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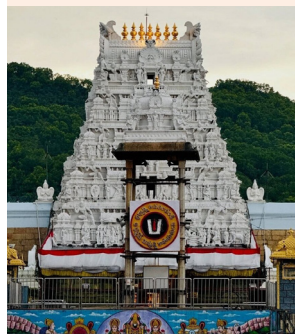


**SINGING
FOR
A CAUSE**

BOX -OFFICE

12

CHANGES IN ALLOCATION OF SRIVANI DARSHAN TICKETS



TIRUMALA, MAY 29

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has taken a key decision to introduce several changes in the allocation of Srivani Trust Darshan tickets for the convenience of devotees.

At present, TTD makes 1,500 Srivani Darshan tickets available online every day. Out of these, 500 tickets are released under advance booking quota three months in advance through the online portal.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CM REVANTH DRAWS CONGRESS ACTION PLAN FOR SIR

- ❖ The CM instructs TPCC to appoint party incharges to 119 Assembly and 17 Lok Sabha segments
- ❖ Organise meetings in all Assembly segments in Hyderabad limits on SIR
- ❖ CM warns tribals, Adivasi communities and migrant workers may face trouble due to SIR
- ❖ Dalits, Minorities and Women may also lose their names in the SIR
- ❖ The CM says he will meet party workers every 10 days. Instructs incharge ministers to attend party programmes
- ❖ MLAs MPs, MLCs, and corporation Chairpersons should attend the party programmes regularly
- ❖ CM Revanth Reddy attended Congress Political Affairs Committee

HYDERABAD, MAY 29

Chief Minister Shri A Revanth Reddy drew the Congress party's action plan to protect the vulnerable sections mainly Dalits, Minorities, Adivasi, Tribal and migrant workers from the deletion of their names in the voters list under the SIR (



Special Intensive Revision), which is being launched in the Telangana state from June this year.

Participating in the Congress party's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) meeting here today, the Chief minister warned that the SIR could emerge as a major issue for Lambada, Adivasi, and migrant workers. In several constituencies, a significant number of people have migrated elsewhere. The possibility of the omission of votes of Dalits, minorities, and women was also not ruled in the SIR, the CM remarked.

CM Revanth Reddy instructed the party

leadership to appoint In-charges for all 119 Assembly constituencies and 17 Lok Sabha constituencies. The In-charges should visit their respective constituencies regularly. We can ensure that not a single vote is deleted only when the incharges perform. The In-charge Ministers were also ordered to dedicate one full day every ten days exclusively to party-related activities. They should visit the grassroots level and personally interact with the party workers.

The CM said that he would also meet with party functionaries at village level once in every 10 days.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

DUDDILLA SRIDHAR BABU The Statesman Shaping Telangana's Future

**FROM COURTROOM ADVOCATE
TO ARCHITECT OF MODERN
TELANGANA**

**IN POLITICS, POWER
MAY BRING VISIBILITY. BUT
ONLY CHARACTER EARNS
ENDURING RESPECT.**

Among the contemporary leaders of Telangana, few have built a political journey as balanced, credible, and people-centric as Duddilla Sridhar Babu — a leader admired not merely for electoral success, but for his integrity, administrative depth, and unwavering connection with ordinary people. Born in the rural heartland of Dhanwada village in Kataram mandal, Sridhar Babu rose from humble beginnings to become one of Telangana's most influential political figures. Deeply rooted in the values of public service inherited from his father, former Assembly Speaker Duddilla Sripada Rao, he transformed personal tragedy into political purpose and evolved into a visionary administrator shaping Telangana's future on both national and global platforms.

Today, as Telangana's Minister for IT, Industries, and Legislative Affairs, Sridhar Babu stands at the intersection of governance, development, technology, and public trust. As he enters his 58th year, his political journey reflects not only longevity, but also relevance, resilience, and remarkable evolution.

A Legacy of Values, Not Just Politics

Born on May 30, 1969, Sridhar Babu inherited far more than a political surname. He inherited discipline, humility, constitutional values, and deep respect for democratic institutions. His father, Duddilla Sripada Rao, served as Speaker of the united Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and earned widespread admiration for his fairness and integrity.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Telangana releases Rs.2,000 crore to clear retired employees' dues

HYDERABAD, MAY 29

The Telangana government has once again demonstrated its commitment to the welfare of its employees.

It has not limited its promises to mere words but has translated them into action.

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka had earlier assured leaders of the Employees' Joint Action Committee (JAC) that long-pending dues of employees amounting to ₹6,000 crore would be cleared within 100 days.

Moving in line with this commitment, under the instructions of Finance Minister and Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, Finance department Special Chief Secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultania issued orders on Friday releasing ₹2,000 crore in the first phase.

With the funds released, the government has fully cleared key pending dues related to retired employees. The General Provident Fund (GPF) dues of



retired employees have been cleared 100%. Additionally, all commutation dues pending up to May 2025 for retired employees have also been fully settled.

"This has been made possible through advance planning and a clear action strategy. As promised, the government is working at a fast pace to deposit the remaining ₹4,000 crore into employees' accounts within the stipulated timeline," Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka said in a statement. Meanwhile, employee union leaders and retired employees have expressed happiness over the government's proactive approach and swift decisions, thanking the people's government.



Telangana launches first-of-its-kind rural women's incubator

HYDERABAD, MAY 29

Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Dr Danasari Anasuya Seethakka said that rural women should move beyond being beneficiaries of welfare schemes and emerge as entrepreneur role models with economic independence and self-discipline.

Addressing the launch of a first-of-its-kind Incubator programme for growth-oriented rural women-led enterprises at the tightly packed Komaram Bheem Adivasi Bhavan here on Friday, the Minister said the State government envisioned women not merely as job seekers, but as job creators capable of leading industries and businesses. The initiative is part of Mahila Varosthavalu as part of Praja Palana Pragathi Pranali. "We don't want women to remain job seekers. We want women to become job creators," Seethakka said. "The government does not want women to hold only bank passbooks in their hands; We want them to own businesses and industries," she added.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

Telangana procured 60 LMT of paddy

already accounts for 60% of India's total Yasangi procurement: Uttam

Telangana's share is expected to rise to nearly 75% of national Yasangi procurement by the end of the season.

The State has surpassed the Centre's 52 LMT procurement ceiling, with procurement already exceeding the target by 115%.

Rs. 11.050 crore has been paid directly to farmers

Telangana remains India's No.1 contributor to FCI rice procurement and the leading paddy procuring state during the Yasangi



HYDERABAD, MAY 29

The Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday declared that Telangana is conducting what is arguably the most successful paddy procurement operation in the country, with procurement crossing 60 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) till date and the State

emerging as the undisputed national leader in Yasangi (Rabi) paddy procurement.

Addressing a news conference at the state secretariat along with Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, Transport, BC Welfare Minister Ponnamm Prabhakar and Minister for Public Enterprises and Minority Welfare, Mohammed Azharuddin, Mem-

bers of Parliament and senior officials, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana has become the backbone of India's food grain procurement system.

"Today, nearly 60 per cent of all paddy procured in India during the ongoing Yasangi season has come from Telangana alone. By the time procurement operations

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >

CEMENTING DREAMS WITH SUPERIOR STRENGTH.

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ULTRAFAST
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**GERMAN TECHNOLOGY
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TAMPER PROOF PACKING**

3 TIMES BETTER

➤FROM PAGE 1

That legacy profoundly shaped Sridhar Babu's worldview.

Academically accomplished, he pursued Law at the University of Delhi and later completed a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Hyderabad. Even during his student years, he was recognised for intellectual sharpness, calm leadership, and analytical thinking.

He began his professional career as a lawyer in the High Court in 1998. But history intervened cruelly.

The assassination of his father by Naxalites in April 1999 shook the entire state. At an age when many would retreat into grief, Sridhar Babu stepped into public life with determination, choosing service over sorrow.

The Rise of Manthani's Trusted Leader

At just 29 years of age, Sridhar Babu contested the 1999 Assembly elections from Manthani and secured a decisive victory. That win marked the beginning of an extraordinary political relationship between a leader and his people.

Over the years, he went on to win repeatedly in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2018, and 2023, becoming a five-time MLA from Manthani — a remarkable achievement in Telangana politics.

For the people of Manthani, Sridhar Babu is not merely a politician. He is a dependable presence during crises, a leader accessible to the poor, and a representative who understands rural aspirations. His politics has always been rooted in human connection rather than spectacle.

Surpassing a Historic Political Benchmark

Manthani carries enormous political significance in Telangana's history. Former Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao represented the constituency for four consecutive terms between 1957 and 1972.

By winning five terms from the same constituency, Sridhar Babu surpassed even that historic milestone,

cementing his place among the most successful leaders in the political history of undivided Karimnagar district.

Yet unlike many career politicians, his public image remains remarkably untouched by arrogance or controversy.

The YSR Influence

Sridhar Babu's political growth accelerated during the era of former Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy.

As President of the Karimnagar District Congress Committee, he strengthened the Congress party at the grassroots level and played a crucial role in organisational mobilisation during YSR's mass outreach programmes and historic padayatra.

Even today, Sridhar Babu openly acknowledges YSR as his political mentor — a leader who shaped his understanding of welfare politics and public engagement.



An Administrator Known for Balance and Clarity

Over the years, Sridhar Babu has handled several critical responsibilities, including Government Whip, Minister for Higher Education, Civil Supplies, NRI Affairs, and Legislative Affairs. In every role, he earned a reputation for calm decision-making, administrative transparency, and issue-based governance.

One of the defining moments of his political career came during the Telangana statehood movement, when he played a significant role as Legislative Affairs Minister in introducing the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Bill in the Assembly — a historic and emotionally charged chapter in the formation of Telangana.

Unlike leaders driven by political theatrics, Sridhar Babu built his identity through consistency, preparation, and deep institutional understanding.

The Strategist Behind Congress Revival in Telangana

The 2023 Telangana Assembly elections marked a turning point in state politics — and Sridhar Babu played a central role in that transformation.

As Chairman of the Congress Manifesto Committee, he travelled extensively across Telangana, interacting with farmers, women, youth, intellectuals, employees, and grassroots workers.

The Congress manifesto reflected those consultations. Welfare guarantees, farm-

er-centric promises, youth employment initiatives, and social justice commitments resonated strongly with voters and became one of the key reasons behind the party's return to power. Political observers widely regard Sridhar Babu as one of the principal strategists behind the Congress victory.

The Face of Telangana's Global Investment Vision

In the Revanth Reddy government, Sridhar Babu has emerged as one of the most visible and influential ministers.

As Minister for IT and Industries, he has positioned Telangana aggressively on the global investment map. From Davos to the United States, Japan, and South Korea, he has led investment delegations with clarity and confidence, projecting Hyderabad as a future-ready innovation hub. Under his leadership, Telangana is increasingly being viewed as a destination for Artificial Intelligence, semiconductor manufacturing, data centres, electronics, and advanced technology industries. His approach combines economic ambition with employment generation, ensuring that investment translates into opportunities for Telangana's youth.

Investing in Telangana's Young Talent

Sridhar Babu strongly believes that Telangana's greatest asset is its youth population. That belief is reflected in the proposed Young India Skills University at Meer Khanpet in Rangareddy district — a visionary initiative aimed at preparing globally competitive manpower.

By focusing on sectors such as IT, avi-

ation, logistics, pharma, retail, and advanced manufacturing, the initiative seeks to bridge the gap between education and employment. At a time when unemployment remains one of India's biggest challenges, Sridhar Babu's emphasis on skill-based growth carries long-term significance.

Transforming Manthani into a Model Constituency

Despite handling major portfolios and global responsibilities, Sridhar Babu has remained firmly connected to his constituency. Under his leadership, Manthani has witnessed substantial improvements in education, healthcare, roads, irrigation, drinking water supply, and rural infrastructure. The establishment of educational institutions, including JNTU College, expanded access to quality higher education in the region. Farmer welfare, land distribution, and irrigation development also received sustained attention.

His larger vision is to transform Manthani into a constituency known not only for political history, but also for intellectual and economic progress.

Preserving Culture and Spiritual Heritage

Sridhar Babu also played a major role in organising the 2025 Saraswati Pushkaralu on a grand scale.

Significant infrastructure works were undertaken around Kaleshwaram, including temple development, roads, accommodation facilities, and civic amenities. Nearly ₹200 crore was mobilised for the development of the Kaleshwara Mukte-

shwara Swamy Temple and surrounding areas.

For Sridhar Babu, development is not limited to economics alone; it also includes preserving Telangana's spiritual and cultural identity.

A National-Level Political Strategist

His organisational abilities earned recognition beyond Telangana as well.

Between July 2022 and August 2024, Sridhar Babu served as AICC Secretary and Congress in-charge for Karnataka's Kalyana Karnataka region.

He played a strategic role in strengthening the Congress party and contributed significantly to the political groundwork and manifesto strategy that eventually helped the Congress secure victory in Karnataka. His ability to combine political strategy with administrative understanding has made him one of the most respected leaders within the Congress party.

The Rare Quality of Accessibility

Perhaps the most striking aspect of Sridhar Babu's personality is his accessibility. Despite occupying high office, he remains approachable to party workers, farmers, employees, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens alike.

He frequently tours villages, listens patiently to grievances, and focuses on practical solutions rather than political optics.

In an era dominated by aggressive rhetoric and image-driven politics, Sridhar Babu represents a quieter, more grounded style of leadership — one built on credibility rather than confrontation.

A Leader Admired Beyond Politics

— GOTTIMUKKULA BRAHMACHARY, SENIOR JOURNALIST

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1

ACTION PLAN FOR SIR

➤FROM PAGE 1

From now, he will dedicate 3 days a month exclusively to party functionaries. The CM highlighted that 4.5 million digital memberships were completed within 90 days with the help of the booth enrollers and those who registered the highest number of memberships were already felicitated by Rahul Gandhi. Ministers, MLAs, MPs, MLCs, Corporation Chairpersons were ordered to take part actively in the party programme. The TPCC leadership was also instructed to give priority to the enrollers who played a pivotal role in the

Congress membership during the SIR process.

The Chief Minister noted that the positive aspect was the party leaders and workers were understanding better about the SIR. The leaders were also recognizing the potential difficulties the SIR could pose to common people, the poor, and Congress party workers. CM Revanth Reddy emphasized that the party should develop a comprehensive understanding of the solutions to the problems that may arise from the SIR. Further, CM Revanth Reddy said that we should also seek and incorporate the ad-

vice and suggestions of former PCC Presidents. The party should take precautions to ensure that the votes of those who have migrated elsewhere are not lost. Meetings regarding the SIR must be organized on an Assembly constituency basis across the 15 constituencies within the Hyderabad city limits. Specific responsibilities within the Hyderabad region should be assigned to Rajya Sabha members and MLCs.

The Chief Minister appealed to all party leaders to move forward in a spirit of coordination. The Mahila Congress should conduct cluster wise SIR meetings.

Telangana procured 60 LMT of paddy

➤FROM PAGE 1

conclude, Telangana is expected to account for nearly 75 per cent of the country's total Yasangi paddy procurement," he said.

The Minister said Telangana has already procured 60 LMT of paddy, compared to about 24 LMT in Andhra Pradesh, 11-12 LMT in Tamil Nadu, 3 LMT in Maharashtra, and nearly 2 LMT in Kerala.

"Telangana is far ahead of every other state in paddy procurement. We are also the Number One State in supplying rice to the Food Corporation of India under the Central Pool mechanism," he added.

He said procurement operations were being intensified further and would preferably be completed before the onset of the southwest monsoon, forecast during the first week of June.

Rising Production, Shrinking Central Procurement

Expressing concern over the Centre's procurement policy, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana's paddy production has been increasing steadily year after year since the Congress Government assumed office.

"Every year and every crop season, rice production in Telangana is growing. Yet, despite this increase in production, the quantity of rice being accepted by the Centre through FCI is being reduced. The Chief Minister and I have repeatedly raised this issue with the Union Government," he said.

The Minister said that during the current KMS 2025-26 season, both Kharif and Yasangi crop cycles, farmer payments and procurement costs involved over Rs 39,300 crore.

The Minister said that under the ongoing KMS 2025-26, covering both Kharif and Yasangi procurement cycles, procurement-related operations and farmer payments have reached unprecedented levels, involving nearly Rs. 39,300 crore.

Government Protects Farmers from Rain Losses

Referring to recent unseasonal rains, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government had acted swiftly to protect farmers from losses.

Special arrangements enabled the transportation of 10,214 metric tonnes of rain-soaked paddy to boiled rice mills, ensuring that affected farmers received MSP payments without hardship.

"Not a single farmer should suffer losses because of adverse weather conditions. We have ensured that farmers receive MSP and that procurement continues uninterrupted," he said.

Centre's Procurement Cap Outpaced by Telangana

Uttam Kumar Reddy pointed out that while the Central Government had agreed to procure only up to 52 LMT from Telangana, the State had already crossed the 60 LMT mark.

"The scale of procurement undertaken by Telangana has exceeded the Centre's prescribed limit by 15 per cent. This reflects both the extraordinary production levels achieved by our farmers and the Congress Government's unwavering commitment to protecting farmer interests," he said.

Massive Logistics Network

To ensure smooth procurement, the State Government established 8,575 procurement centres, deployed nearly 13,000 transport vehicles, and mobilised over two lakh personnel for procurement, transportation and logistics operations.

Historic Achievement

Uttam Kumar Reddy described the ongoing procurement programme as a historic achievement unmatched anywhere in India. "The scale

of procurement, transportation, payments and logistical mobilisation undertaken by Telangana is unprecedented. No state government in independent India has carried out procurement operations of this magnitude while ensuring such extensive support to farmers," he said.

The Minister reiterated that the Congress Government remains firmly committed to purchasing every grain arriving in the market yards and extending full support until procurement operations are completed.

Ministers Tummala Nag-
eswara Rao and Ponn
am Prabhakar strongly criticised BJP and BRS leaders for what he described as their "politically motivated campaign" over paddy procurement, asserting that the ongoing procurement drive was unparalleled in Telangana's history both in scale and execution.

He said the unprecedented surge in paddy production and arrivals had posed enormous logistical challenges, yet the State Government had risen to the occasion by ensuring procurement of every grain brought by farmers.

"Tears and lip sympathy for farmers will not help. If BJP leaders are genuinely concerned about farmers, they should prevail upon the Union Government to substantially enhance Telangana's procurement allocation and FCI acceptance targets instead of indulging in political criticism," Tummala said.

CHANGES IN ALLOCATION OF SRIVANI DARSHAN TICKETS



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In addition, 200 Srivani Darshan tickets are being issued under the current booking quota at Tirupati Airport.

Of the 800 Srivani Darshan tickets presently available under the daily current booking quota, TTD has decided to earmark 300 tickets every day for eligible donors who have already contributed Rs.10,000 to Srivani Trust and are awaiting Darshan tickets.

This facility will be applicable to eligible donors who have made their donations on or after May 1, 2025. These tickets will be released daily at 9 AM. Devotees who book their tickets before 1 PM will be provided Darshan on the same day at 4 PM. The revised system will come into effect from June 10, 2026. Any tickets remaining unbooked under this quota will be added back to the current booking quota. This arrangement will remain in force until March 31, 2027.

Telangana launches first-of-its-kind rural women's incubator



➤FROM PAGE 1

Describing the initiative as "not an ordinary programme, but a financial movement that will transform the future of rural women in Telangana," the Minister said the incubation centres would provide a strong platform for women to realise their entrepreneurial ambitions and showcase their talent and capabilities.

She said the initiative reflects Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy's ambition of transforming one crore women SHG members into crore-patis.

The initiative is being implemented by the Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) in partnership with T-Hub, BITS Pilani and WE Hub to create an institutional ecosystem for rural enterprise acceleration.

With a total outlay of Rs 21.40 crore, the programme aims to support 300 high-potential rural women-led enterprises through structured incubation, financial assistance, mentoring and market linkages. Of the total allocation, Rs 8.74 crore has been earmarked for incubation support and Rs 12.66 crore for enterprise financing, in-

cluding grants and zero-interest soft loans.

The programme adopts a Challenge Fund model to identify scalable enterprises and provide end-to-end support ranging from business diagnostics and formalisation to branding, digital onboarding and market access. IT-enabled monitoring systems will track the progress of participating enterprises.

Minister Seethakka said the initiative is expected to facilitate a minimum annual revenue growth of 15% in the supported enterprises and generate between 900 and 1,200 jobs in rural areas. It also seeks to build a replicable model for rural enterprise acceleration across Telangana.

The Minister said the State government was taking historic decisions for women's empowerment and highlighted several measures aimed at strengthening women's economic participation. She noted that the limit for interest-free loans to women self-help groups had been enhanced from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 10 lakh and that over Rs 60,000 crore in bank linkage loans had already been extended to women's groups in

the State.

"Even when banks hesitate to lend to large business personalities, they are readily extending loans to women's self-help groups because women have demonstrated nearly 100% repayment and set an example for the country," she said.

The Minister said the government's goal was to ensure that products manufactured by women in villages reached international markets rather than remaining confined to local consumption. She recalled presenting tamarind-seed masks prepared by women from Cheriyal as gifts to guests from the Netherlands, describing it as a reflection of the creativity of Telangana's rural women.

Among those present at the event were SERP Chief Executive Officer Divya Devarajan, T-Hub Chief Executive Officer Kavikruth, WE Hub Chief Executive Officer Sita Pallacholla, SERP Non-Farm Director Johnson, representatives from DRDO, district women federation members, self-help group members and young entrepreneurs.

"RYTHU DISCOM WILL HARM FARMERS": KAVITHA

HYDERABAD, MAY 29

Kalvakuntla Kavitha, founder of Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS), on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Congress government over the proposed "Rythu DISCOM" (Farmers' Power Distribution Company), alleging that the move would severely harm the farming community instead of helping it.

Participating at a public hearing organised by the Telangana Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) at Erragadda in Hyderabad, Kavitha accused the Revanth Reddy government of secretly push-

ing ahead with power sector reforms without consulting farmers or political parties.

Calling the proposal "a curse on farmers", Kavitha said the creation of a separate DISCOM for agriculture was equivalent to "spraying Endrin on the farming sector". She questioned why the government kept the issue confidential for six months if the plan was genuinely beneficial.

She demanded that the government immediately withdraw the proposal and conduct district-wise public hearings across all 33 districts before taking any decision. Further, she urged the ERC

to reject the proposal, calling it "financially and administratively unviable".

The TRS chief questioned the need for a separate farmers' DISCOM when no farmer organisations had demanded it. She also raised concerns over the financial condition of existing power utilities, alleging that DISCOMs were already burdened with losses of nearly Rs.25,000 crore.

She further alleged that while the government plans to shift 42 percent of the power load to the proposed Rythu DISCOM, only around 2,000 employees out of the existing 45,000 workforce would be

transferred to the new entity. According to her, this could severely impact transformer repairs and electricity services in rural areas.

Kavitha warned that delays in maintenance could force farmers to wait months for transformer repairs and create uncertainty for nearly 2.9 million borewells across Telangana.

Referring to past agitations, she cautioned the government against taking decisions that could trigger unrest among farmers and recalled the 1999 police firing incident during protests linked to power reforms.



Training Collaboration on GIS and Remote Sensing Technologies

■ **between Institution of Engineers (India) and Japan-based Association of Geo Informatics for Earth Sciences**

HYDERABAD

The Institution of Engineers (India) (IEI), established in 1920 with its headquarters at Kolkata, has been serving as a prestigious professional and training institution for the past 106 years. Speaking at a meeting held on Friday, 29-5-2026, at the Engineering Staff College of India (ESCI), IEI President Mr. Manish Mahendra Kothari stated that many engineers trained through IEI have contributed to several world-renowned engineering structures and projects.

He further announced that IEI is entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Association of Geo Informatics Laboratories for Earth Sciences (AGILE), an organization functioning across Japan and Vietnam, to conduct training programmes on Global Information Ser-



vices and Remote Sensing Technologies in various parts of India through IEI.

The MoU documents were formally signed during the event by IEI Secretary and Director General Major General Mohan Jeet Singh Sayali and AGILE President Dr. Venkatesh Raghavan.

Mr. Manish Mahendra Kothari stated that during recent discussions with Union Minister for Education Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan on the

importance of skill-oriented education, it was emphasized that Remote Sensing Technologies training is highly essential for India. Accordingly, it was decided to take up these training programmes extensively through IEI.

He further explained that Remote Sensing technologies are extremely useful in sectors such as agriculture, forest conservation, aerospace, and several other fields. He also mentioned that IEI is prepar-

ing to utilize these technologies during the upcoming Kumbh Mela to be held in Nashik next year.

Speaking on the occasion, AGILE President Dr. Venkatesh Raghavan said that innovations should remain open and knowledge-sharing orient-

ed. He observed that the relevance and importance of GIS and Remote Sensing technologies are much greater in India than even in developed countries such as Japan. On this oc-

casation, he delivered a presentation on “Fostering Geospatial Technologies through IEI and AGILE.”

Major General Mohan Jeet Singh Sayali described the Institution of Engineers (India) as a visionary organization. He pointed out that candidates who recently underwent training on EV battery technologies are now successfully running their own businesses and service centers in different parts of India. He expressed confidence that GIS and Remote Sensing training would similarly serve as a guiding force for the youth of tomorrow.

AGILE representative Mr. Sumit Khin Vasaraexplained the significance of the agreement between the two organizations and its importance for the future development of the country.

Engineering Staff College of India Director Dr. G. Rameshwar Rao expressed pride that such an important agreement for the future of Young India was signed at ESCI, Hyderabad. Several ESCI officials and AGILE representatives participated in the meeting.

200 Years of Hindi Journalism Legacy

(On the occasion of "Hindi Journalism Day" on 30 May)



Two centuries back most newspapers were in India were either in English, Bengali, or Persian languages. The Hindi speaking people of this country had no publication of their native language. Pandit Jugal Kishore Shukla, who actually hailed from Kanpur, recognised this gap and decided to act in 1826. Shukla took the initiative of bring first Hindi newspaper as weekly in Kolkata, named “Udant Martand” which means “The Rising Sun” published on 30 May 1826. This historic day in the field on journalism in India is marked as “Hindi Journalism Day” annually on 30 May. This day recognise the work done by Hindi journalists, reporters, editors, photographers, field correspondents, and many others contribute daily to ensure that news reaches the masses across India. The theme revolves around the concept of Hindi from traditional knowledge to AI, emphasising the impact of digital revolution on journalism.

A Small Step for Big Change

Although the newspaper had to shut down after just 79 issues

due to financial constraints and limited readership, it left behind a legacy that still lives on. This single step by Shukla laid foundation for a powerful journalistic movement. Over the past two decades, Hindi newspapers grew in both number and influence, bringing important stories to households across the Hindi speaking belt and beyond. Language is not only a tool for communication, but also it connects the people emotionally and culturally. Hindi journalism has helped create awareness about civic rights, healthcare, elections, education, current affairs, politics, and social issues among both rural and urban population.

Events of Hindi Journalism Day

From a single Hindi newspaper in 1826, many papers like Dainik Jagran, Amar Ujala, Hindustan, and Rajasthan Patrica reached mil-

lions of readers every day in metros, small towns, and even rural areas. In addition to print media, Hindi television came on 1990s, Hindi news channels (like Aam Tak, ABP News, Zee News, and News 18 India etc) became popular for their accessibility and reach. Hindi news portals, YouTube channels, and mobile apps now serve a massive audience that prefer to stay informed in Hindi. The media institutes, press clubs, and universities must celebrate the day by organising lectures, debates, award ceremonies, and panel discussions. Students, journalists, and educators come together to talk about the evolution of Hindi media and the future of News in Indian regional languages.

- Prof Madhusudhan Reddy Burra
9949700037.

GITAM to Organize Professional Development Programme for Physics Teachers

HYDERABAD

The Department of Physics, GITAM School of Science, Hyderabad, in association with the Indian Physics Association (IPA), and with academic participation from the School of Education, GITAM, will organize a three-day Residential Professional Development Programme (RPDP) for Physics Teachers on the theme “Advanced Concepts, Pedagogy, and Educational Tools” from 1st to 3rd June 2026 at GITAM Hyderabad.

The programme is designed to strengthen Physics education at the school and undergraduate levels by

integrating conceptual understanding with experimental learning and contemporary pedagogical practices. The initiative aims to address the growing need for innovative teaching methodologies that promote scientific curiosity, active learning, conceptual clarity, and hands-on experimentation in classrooms.

The RPDP will bring together distinguished academicians, educationists, and researchers from premier institutions to provide participants with exposure to advanced concepts in Physics, modern educational tools, low-cost experimental techniques, simulations, ICT-enabled teaching,



and student assessment strategies. Faculty members from the School of Education, GITAM, will also conduct specialized sessions on pedagogy, learning theories, thereby enriching the interdisciplinary nature of the programme. The three-day programme will cover themes including

electromagnetic theory, photonics, quantum computing, superconductivity, magnetism, nuclear radiation, experimental demonstrations, DIY physics kits, classroom pedagogy, and learning assessment techniques.

The programme features eminent resource persons including Prof. S. Anantha Ramakrishna, Dean of Sciences, GITAM; Prof. B.V.R. Tata (Distinguished visiting Professor) and Prof. T.S. Natarajan (Former Professor, IIT Madras); Prof. Vibhor Singh (Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru); Prof. G. Ravi Kumar (Distinguished Professor, GITAM); Prof.G.A. Rama Rao (Former Scientific Officer, BARC);

Prof.Vanaja (Professor of Education, Maulana Azad National Urdu University); and Prof. Deepa Chari from Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education, TIFR, Mumbai.

The programme is open to school-level Physics and Science teachers and aims to create a collaborative platform for sharing best practices and innovative approaches in Physics education. The programme is coordinated by Dr. G. Sai Preeti and Dr. T. Vishwam. Interested participants may contact the RPDP coordinators Shamabee (77802 74121) or Gopi Krishna (87120 18815) for registration and further details.

PROVISION OF SECURED SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM WITH NETWORKING AT LC GATES OF RANGIYA DIVISION

E-Tender Notice No. RN-ST-01-2026-27-RT; Date: 26-05-2026. E-tenders are invited by the undersigned for the following work. **Name of Work:** Provision of Secured Surveillance system with Networking for real time monitoring at all Special Class LC Gates of Rangiya Division of N.F. Railway. **Tender Value:** ₹1,18,64,547.40/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹2,37,300.00/-; **E-tenders will be closed** at 15:00 hrs. on 26-06-2026 and **Opened** at 15:30 hrs. on 26-06-2026 at Sr. DSTE/Rangiya's office. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available in website www.ireps.gov.in.

DRM (S&T)/Rangiya
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

SIGNALING WORKS AT RANGIYA DIVISION

Tender Notice No. RN-ST-05-2026-27 Dated: 26-05-2026. Works tenders through "E" Tendering system for and on behalf of the president of India are invited for the works as detailed below:- **Tender No. RN-ST-05-2026-27. Name of work:** Signaling work in connection with provision of Full length Shunting neck at New Bongalgaon end on L/4 of Mirza station of Rangiya Division. **Tender Value:** ₹68,58,202.20/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹1,37,200/-; **Date & time of closing tender:** At 15.00 hrs. & opening at 15.30 hrs. on 26-06-2026 at Sr. DSTE/Rangiya office. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available in the website www.ireps.gov.in

DSTE/Rangiya
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers With A Smile"



A. Srinivasulu, Chief Publicity Inspector, Public Relations Department superannuation from service

■ **'after his 40 years service in South Central Railway**
■ **He worked in the Medical, Vigilance and Public Relations Department as**

HYDERABAD

Chief Pharmacist, Chief Vigilance Inspector and retired as Chief Publicity Inspector (for 10 yrs tenure). He is known for his dedi-

cation and utmost sincerity in rendering his duties during his service. He holds strong media relations and has been instrumental in building railways positive image during his illustrious career in railways.

Health Cards Should Be Implemented Only After Releasing Clear Guidelines

■ **Demand by Telangana United Teachers Federation(TUTF), State President Ramineni Venkateshwarlu(R.V) and General Secretary Lachimalla Venkanna**

HYDERABAD

The Telangana United Teachers Federation(TUTF), State President Ramineni Venkateshwarlu(R.V) and General Secretary Lachimalla Venkanna, in a joint statement, expressed concern that the government has not yet released comprehensive guidelines regarding the Health Cards scheme proposed for government employees, teachers, and pensioners. They stated that it is inappropriate to implement such an important scheme related to employees' health security in a hurried manner without providing clarity on all aspects.

They pointed out that although the government has fixed a deadline for data entry related to the Health Cards, the complete details of the scheme are still not available. There-



fore, they demanded that the data entry deadline be extended at least until June 30.

Speaking on the occasion, they stated that several doubts still persist among employees and pensioners regarding the scheme. They urged the government to clarify which diseases would be covered under the Health Scheme, whether Out-Patient(OP) services would be included, what the procedures would be for emergency treatments, and whether complete cashless treatment would be provided for expensive diseases such as cancer, heart ailments, kidney diseases, and neurological disorders.

They also suggested that the government release a district-wise list of government, private, and corporate hospitals that would be empanelled under the scheme. They said that if quality medical services are not

available nearby for employees working in rural areas, the usefulness of the scheme would be greatly reduced. Therefore, they requested the government to ensure the availability of quality hospitals at least at every constituency level.

They further stated that announcing a 1.5% salary deduction from employees even before releasing the full guidelines is not justified. Instead of basing the premium on salary, they opined that fixing the premium based on the number of dependent family members would be a fairer method.

They also demanded that if both husband and wife are government employees, deductions should not be made from both salaries, and instead only a single family premium system should be implemented.

Further, they suggested that employees should be given an opportunity every year to update or modify the details of dependents according to changes in family circumstances.

Keeping in view the healthcare needs of pensioners, they urged the government to introduce special provisions for

them and ensure easy access to medical services for senior citizens. They also demanded strict monitoring to prevent hospitals from collecting additional bills from employees and requested the establishment of a 24-hour toll-free helpline to address employees' grievances.*

*Ramineni Venkateshwarlu (R.V) stated that if the welfare of employees is truly the government's objective, the government should hold discussions with all employee and teacher unions, clarify all doubts, and implement the Health Cards scheme only after releasing complete and transparent guidelines. They further pointed out that deducting the same 1.5% premium from both junior employees/teachers and senior employees/teachers is not reasonable. Senior employees and pensioners generally have fewer dependents, as most of their children would have crossed 25 years of age, and in many cases only the husband and wife remain as dependents. Therefore, they suggested that fixing the premium based on the number of dependents would be a more appropriate and equitable method.

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Employee Welfare and Safety Given Equal Priority



■ **Discipline and Team-work Are Singareni's Greatest Strengths**

■ **Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti's Remarks During His Visit to Ramagundam-1 Area**

RAMAGUNDAM

The Chairman & Managing Director of The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti, IAS, undertook an extensive tour of the Ramagundam-1 Area and reviewed mine production, employee welfare, safety measures, and various facilities provided by the company.

As part of the visit, the CMD interacted directly with employees, officers, and workers at GDK-11 Incline, seeking their suggestions for the company's development. During the inter-

active session, he discussed the present status of the company, measures for enhancing coal production, productivity, quality improvement, and future plans.

He stated that Singareni's rich experience, discipline, and collective work culture have made it a unique organization. He emphasized that the company accords equal importance to employee welfare and safety alongside production growth.

On the occasion, the CMD inaugurated the 5th Man Riding System established in the mine. He said that the system would enable employees to travel safely, quickly, and comfortably between the mine surface and underground workplaces, significantly reducing physical strain on workers.

The CMD also felicitated employees who played a key role in the installation of the Man

Riding System and other developmental works, appreciating their dedication and commitment.

Speaking on the occasion, Director (Operations) Sri L.V. Suryanarayana stated that GDK-11 is the second-largest mine in Singareni in terms of productivity and mechanization. He advised officials to make effective use of modern machinery to reduce the cost of operations while achieving production targets.

Director (Projects & Planning) Sri K. Venkateswaru urged employees to work collectively to bring the mine to a zero-loss position and ensure profitable operations. He said that efforts should be made to develop the project from the present production level of one million tonnes to 1.5 million tonnes in the future.

Later, the CMD visited GDK-5 Opencast Mine and reviewed

coal and overburden production, transportation, machinery utilization, and productivity. He instructed officials to achieve the assigned targets while maintaining safety, efficiency, and quality standards.

The CMD subsequently visited the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Ramagundam-1 Area and inspected the sports and recreational facilities provided for employees and their family members. He stressed the need to promote sports and healthy recreational activities for the well-being of employees.

Later, at the Ramagundam-1 Area General Manager's Office, the CMD conducted a video conference with General Managers of all areas. During the meeting, he reviewed coal production, productivity, safety standards, quality, cost control measures, and future targets, and issued necessary direc-

tions. He instructed all areas to work in coordination to achieve the production targets assigned to them and contribute to the overall growth of the company.

The CMD also enquired about the performance of employees working in various departments at the GM Office.

Among those present were Sri V. Seetharamaiah, President, AITUC, Sri M. Thirumala Rao, Director (E&M), Sri B. Venkanna, IRTS, Executive Director & CVO (Coal Movement), Sri T. Srinivas, GM (CDN) & Marketing, Sri D. Lalit Kumar, General Manager, Ramagundam-1 Area, Sri Madhusudan, General Manager, Ramagundam-3 Area, Sri Ramudu, In-charge General Manager, Ramagundam-2 Area, Heads of departments, officers, union leaders, and a large number of employees also participated in the programme.



Telangana tops in implementation of NMEO-OP

■ **Telangana accounts for 36% of the country's oil palm cultivation area**

■ **Revealed at National Conference-2026**

■ **"This success was possible due to farmers' hard work and government support": Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao**

HYDERABAD

Telangana State Agriculture Minister Mr. Tummala Nageswara Rao said that Telangana has secured the top position in the country in implementing the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), a prestigious program being implemented by the Central Government.

Speaking about the National Agriculture Conference-2026 held in New Delhi on Friday, the minister said the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare presented state-wise progress in oil palm cultivation, confirming that Telangana ranked first in the nation.

Under the NMEO-OP mission, oil palm cultivation has been undertaken across 2,73,084 hectares nationwide from 2021 to 2026. Of this, Telangana alone accounts for 98,112 hectares, representing 36% of the total, which the minister described as a matter of pride for the state's agriculture sector. He stated that oil palm is currently cultivated on 1.16 lakh hectares in Telangana, with 79,448 farmers engaged in the crop.

The minister said this achievement is not limited to statistics alone. He noted that the success was possible because farmers have started adopting profitable alternative crops alongside traditional farming, turning toward oil palm cultivation. Telangana farmers, he said, are significantly contributing to the goals of both the Central and State Governments to reduce dependence on edible oil imports and achieve self-sufficiency.

The minister explained that

with the continuous rise in demand for edible oils in the country, oil palm cultivation has gained strategic importance. Compared to other oilseed crops, oil palm offers higher yields and has become a stable, long-term source of income for farmers. Once a plantation is established, it can provide yields for nearly 30 years, enabling farmers to earn between ₹2 lakh and ₹3 lakh per acre annually.

He further stated that the government has taken special measures to ensure that oil palm farmers face no marketing difficulties. Fresh Fruit Bunches (FFBs) produced by farmers are being directly procured by oil palm companies, eliminating middlemen and ensuring remunerative prices. Currently, the price of oil palm bunches stands at ₹23,501 per metric ton, which is proving beneficial to farmers.

However, the minister opined that if the Central Government restores the earlier 44% import duty on palm oil, it would greatly benefit domestic oil palm farmers. He said that an increase in import duty would boost demand for domestic produce and could raise oil palm bunch prices to around ₹25,000 per metric ton. This, in turn, would increase farmers' incomes and attract more farmers toward oil palm cultivation. He added that it would also help increase domestic edible oil production, improve farmer incomes, and reduce dependence on imports.

The minister emphasized that the State Government is giving top priority to expanding oil palm cultivation. He said the government is providing quality seedlings, subsidies for drip irrigation systems, financial assistance for plantation maintenance during the first four years, incentives for intercropping, and subsidies of up to ₹51,000 per acre for purchasing harvesting equipment. Additionally, various agricultural tools are being supplied under subsidy through the farm mechanization scheme. These measures, he said, have reduced farmers' investment burden

and increased confidence in oil palm cultivation.

The minister also stated that the government is focusing on developing processing infrastructure required for oil palm cultivation. At present, three oil palm processing mills are operational in the state – two in Bhadradi Kothagudem district and one in Siddipet district – with a combined processing capacity of 150 metric tons per hour. In addition, seven more processing mills are under construction, and once completed, farmers will have better access to nearby processing and marketing facilities.

He noted that the oil palm sector is not only increasing farmers' incomes but also strengthening the rural economy. Processing mills, transportation, harvesting, storage, and related activities are generating direct and indirect employment opportunities for thousands of people. The sector is also contributing to industrial development in rural areas.

As part of crop diversification, the State Government has decided to further expand oil palm cultivation. The minister revealed that an action plan has been prepared to expand oil palm cultivation by another 85,000 acres during the 2026–27 financial year. The government, he said, is moving forward with three major objectives: increasing farmers' incomes, achieving self-sufficiency in edible oils, and accelerating rural development.

On this occasion, Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao stated:

"This top position is the result of the hard work, determination of Telangana farmers, and the encouragement provided by the government. Telangana becoming Number One in oil palm cultivation across the country is a matter of pride for every farmer. The State Government will always stand by farmers for their welfare and income growth. The government will extend every possible support required for the expansion of oil palm cultivation."

Proper implementation of the Special SIR

HYDERABAD

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) C. Sudarshan Reddy, IAS, directed officials to ensure the proper implementation of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, which will soon be conducted in the state by the Election Commission of India, with the objective of including every eligible voter in the electoral rolls and removing the names of ineligible persons from the list.

On Friday, a training program on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) was conducted through video conference at the State Election Headquarters, jointly led by Additional Chief Electoral Officer Dr. Vasam Venkateshwar Reddy, IAS.

Speaking on the occasion, the CEO stated that the training program was organized for District Election Officers (DEOs), Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs), BLO Supervisors, and other election officials with the aim of further strengthening the election machinery.

Addressing the officials, the CEO



explained the responsibilities of DEOs, EROs, AEROs, BLO Supervisors, and BLOs, as well as IT-related activities involved in the SIR process. During the training program, the State Nodal Officer (STNO) provided guidance on the legal provisions related to the SIR process and explained the stages and procedures involved in its implementation.

The Project Manager (IT) explained the ECINET modules, SIR stages such as pre-draft and post-draft activities, the BLO app, technical aspects, and the

process of filling out the enumeration form. Officials also clarified several doubts raised by participants during the video conference.

The conference was attended by the GHMC Commissioner, Hyderabad District Election Officer, all District Collectors and District Election Officers from across the state, along with the concerned EROs, AEROs, and BLO Supervisors. Deputy CEO (FAC), State Nodal Officers from the CEO's office, and related staff members also participated in the conference.

Singareni CMD Reviews Progress of New 800 MW Thermal Power Unit

JAIPUR

Singareni Chairman & Managing Director Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti, IAS, visited the Singareni Thermal Power Plant (STPP) at Jaipur Mandal on Friday and reviewed the progress of the ongoing construction works of the new 800 MW Thermal Power Unit.

During the inspection, the CMD directed the concerned officials to ensure the timely completion of the project as per the scheduled targets. He emphasized the importance of maintaining quality standards and adhering to the project timeline to strengthen Singareni's power generation capacity. As part of the visit, Dr. Buddhaprakash Jyoti planted a sapling on the plant premises and inaugurated the Rescue Safety Control Room.

He also reviewed the performance and progress of the thermal and solar power projects being undertaken by the company and held discussions with officials on various operational and developmental aspects. Directors of SCCL and senior officials accompanied the CMD during the inspection.

Unleash your imagination and celebrate in full colour

(On the occasion of "National Creativity Day" on 30 May)

National Creativity Day celebrated on 30 May annually, was established to encourage individuals to explore their creative potential, extended to businesses as well, highlighting how creativity fuels innovation, problem-solving, and overall growth. It was founded in 2018 by ScreenwritingU, an organisation that supports aspiring screenwriters. Whether you are an artist, writer, musician, poet, filmmaker, blogger, photographer, graphics designer, or any of 100 other creative personalities worldwide. Other than nature, everything we see originated with a creative thought from someone like you. It's an opportunity to celebrate the power of imagination and to encourage individuals to embrace their own creative potential.

Humans are born Creative

Humans are born to create. Some are less, and some are more. More creative people implement their innovative ideas in their daily lives and have an edge over others. Creativity is the ability to use imagination to generate original, unconventional, or valuable ideas, solutions, or expressions. It is not only limited to artistic pursuits but also serves as a fundamental problem-solving skill applicable to

any discipline or daily challenges. The main components of creativity are originality, value, utility, imagination power. Psychologists broadly categorised creativity into distinct levels like Big-C Creativity (high-level creativity), Little-c Creativity (everyday, personal creativity) allowing anyone to be creative. The theme of National Creativity Day-2026 is "Unleash your imagination and celebrate in full colour"



to emphasise the importance of innovative and creative ideas.

Creativity makes life more interesting and dreamy. It also helps balance the brain and heart. This day is celebrated by trying something new, participate in creative challenge, attend a workshop, collaborate with others, visit a museum, create something meaningful and so on.

— Prof Madhusudhan Reddy Burra
9949700037

Telangana procured 60 LMT of paddy: Uttam

HYDERABAD

Minister for Irrigation and Civil Supplies N. Uttam Kumar Reddy has declared that Telangana is conducting what is arguably the most successful paddy procurement operation in the country, with procurement crossing 60 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) till date and the State emerging as the undisputed national leader in Yasangi (Rabi) paddy procurement.

Addressing a news conference at the state secretariat along with Agriculture Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao, Transport, BC Welfare Minister Ponnampalapati Prabhakar and Minister for Public Enterprises and Minority Welfare, Mohammed Azharuddin, Members of Parliament and senior officials, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana has become the backbone of India's food grain procurement system.

"Today, nearly 60 per cent of all paddy procured in India during the ongoing Yasangi season has come from Telangana alone. By the time procurement operations conclude, Telangana is expected to account for nearly 75 per cent of the country's total Yasangi paddy procurement," he said.

The Minister said Telangana has already procured 60 LMT of paddy, compared to about 24 LMT in Andhra Pradesh, 11-12 LMT in Tamil Nadu, 3 LMT in Maharashtra, and nearly 2 LMT in Kerala.



"Telangana is far ahead of every other state in paddy procurement. We are also the number one state in supplying rice to the Food Corporation of India under the Central Pool mechanism," he added. Uttam Kumar Reddy pointed out that while the Central government had agreed to procure only up to 52 LMT from Telangana, the State had already crossed the 60 LMT mark.

"The scale of procurement undertaken by Telangana has exceeded the Centre's prescribed limit by 115 per cent. This reflects both the extraordinary production levels achieved by our farmers and the Congress government's unwavering commitment to protecting farmer interests," he said.

The Minister said paddy cultivation during Yasangi 2025-26 covered 64.36 lakh acres, resulting in an estimated production of 141 lakh metric tonnes.

He said procurement operations were being intensified further and would preferably be completed before the onset of the southwest monsoon, forecast during the first week of June.

Expressing concern over the Centre's procurement policy, Uttam Kumar Reddy said Telangana's paddy production has been increasing steadily year after year since the Congress government assumed office.

"Every year and every crop season, rice production in Telangana is growing. Yet, despite this increase in production, the quantity of rice being accepted by the Centre through FCI is being reduced. The Chief Minister and I have repeatedly raised this issue with the Union government," he said.

The Minister noted that Telangana has become one of India's largest producers and procurers of paddy and deserves procure-

ment allocations commensurate with its production levels. To ensure smooth procurement, the State government established 8,575 procurement centres, deployed nearly 13,000 transport vehicles, and mobilised over two lakh personnel for procurement, transportation and logistics operations. MSP payments amounting to Rs. 11,050 crore have already been credited directly into farmers' bank accounts, he said.

The Minister said that during the current KMS 2025-26 season, both Kharif and Yasangi crop cycles, farmer payments and procurement costs involved over Rs 39,300 crore. He said that under the ongoing KMS 2025-26, covering both Kharif and Yasangi procurement cycles, procurement-related operations and farmer payments have reached unprecedented levels, involving nearly Rs. 39,300 crore.

Referring to recent unseasonal rains, Uttam Kumar Reddy said the government had acted swiftly to protect farmers from losses.

Special arrangements enabled the transportation of 10,214 metric tonnes of rain-soaked paddy to boiled rice mills, ensuring that affected farmers received MSP payments without hardship.

"Not a single farmer should suffer losses because of adverse weather conditions. We have ensured that farmers receive MSP and that procurement continues uninterrupted," he said.

Fake GOs, Rs.4-cr Illegal Land Deal Racket Busted in Cyberabad; 3 Arrested

HYDERABAD

In a major crackdown on land fraud, the Cyberabad Police arrested three accused in connection with a fake Government Orders (GOs) and illegal land deal racket involving nearly 10 acres of government land in Gandipet village. According to police, the case surfaced after Gandipet Tahsildar Srinivas Reddy lodged a complaint on May 23 alleging that forged Government Orders were being circulated on WhatsApp and social media, falsely claiming that government land in Survey No.18 of Gandipet had been regularized in favour of private individuals.

Based on the complaint, Narsingi Police Station registered a case and launched an investigation. Police conducted searches at the residences of accused Nimmala Venugopal, Nimmala Ramaswamy and Nimmala Rajesh, seizing bank passbooks, MoUs, mobile phones and a laptop.

Investigators found that members of the Nimmala family allegedly claimed ownership over around 10 acres of government poramboke land despite their petitions being dismissed by the High Court in October 2025. Police said the accused then allegedly conspired with Bolla Ramesh and Brahma Naidu to sell the land at Rs.3.5 crore per acre using fabricated ownership documents and fake GOs. The accused allegedly received nearly Rs.4 crore as part of the proposed land transaction. Police said the conspiracy was facilitated by Sunil, Radhakrishna and others, who are currently absconding.

Green Energy Corridor in Andhra Pradesh

AMARAVATI, MAY 29:

The Andhra Pradesh government is taking steps to establish a Green Energy Corridor in the state and further strengthen the electricity network accordingly. As part of Green Energy Corridor-3, proposals worth approximately ₹22,000 crore have been prepared to connect 18 gigawatts (GW) of green energy to the main grid. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu reviewed the Power Department at the State Secretariat on Friday. Discussions covered the Green Energy Corridor, the current power supply situation, plans for the next six months, progress under PM Surya Ghar, PM Kusum, and PM E-Drive schemes, the status of projects approved under the APIEC policy, strengthening of NREDCAP, and construction of a Digital Twin Grid. The Chief Minister asked officials about the steps being taken to expand the transmission network under the Green Energy Corridor. Officials explained that measures are being implemented under Green Energy Corridor Phase-3 to integrate approximately 18 GW of green energy into the main grid. New transmission lines and pooling stations will be constructed for this purpose. Out of the total 18 GW, around 11 GW generated through solar power and about 7 GW generated through pumped storage projects will be connected to the main grid. Officials said approximately 2,261 kilometers of new

Proposals worth around ₹22,000 crore to connect 18 GW to the main grid.. Solar installations on government buildings to be expedited
Solarization of 2,898 hostels and schools under the Net Zero model.. PM Surya Ghar scheme to be implemented in line with set targets

Chief Minister Chandrababu reviews Power Department



transmission lines will be laid. Plans have also been prepared to establish five major pooling stations with a combined capacity of 9,500 MW at Mudigubba, Talupula, Ramayapatnam, Porumamilla, and Koppaka. On the occasion, Chief Minister Chandrababu stated that the state has set a target of generating 160 GW of green energy and stressed the need to develop the network accordingly. He said the completion of the Andhra Pradesh Green Energy Corridor would greatly help in supplying electricity required for data centers in the state. He also observed that strengthening power infrastructure would attract large-scale investments into various sectors. The Chief Minister directed officials to launch the project immediately and complete it within a fixed timeline.

Faster Implementation of PM Surya Ghar

As part of the review, the Chief Minister discussed the implementation of schemes such as PM Surya Ghar and PM Kusum with officials. He also reviewed the progress of solarization work on government buildings. Officials informed him that the process of solarizing government buildings with a total capacity of 200 MW has already begun across the state. They stated that the RESCO model is being adopted for this process and solar panels will be installed under the net metering system. Under a pilot project, 78 Gurukul schools and hostels in Chittoor district have been selected. Officials also informed the Chief Minister that 2,898 hostels and schools have been identified for installation of solar panels to create "healthy campuses" under the Net Zero model. The Chief Minister stated that increased solar usage in government offices and schools

would reduce the government's electricity burden and instructed officials to focus completely on this initiative. He noted that Andhra Pradesh currently ranks fourth in the implementation of the PM Surya Ghar scheme and directed officials to take steps to secure the top position. He said solar panels have already been installed in 1,35,821 houses belonging to SC and ST beneficiaries and directed that the remaining installations be completed by the end of August. For BC communities, the government has targeted installation of solar panels in 10 lakh houses with a subsidy of ₹20,000 each. The Chief Minister instructed officials to expedite this process as well. The Chief Minister also directed officials to speed up the establishment of EV charging stations in the state. Officials stated that the process has begun for setting up 577 EV charging

stations across 131 locations. Officials also presented measures being implemented with the support of Stanford University's "Pravah" organization and an Artificial Intelligence lab to reduce technical power losses in the APEPDCL region. They explained that a Digital Twin Grid for power supply is being developed for the first time in the country. Officials briefed the Chief Minister on projected electricity demand. They stated that from June 2026 to November 2026, the state's peak electricity demand could reach 12,226 MW, with daily demand ranging between 226 and 261 million units. They added that the highest-ever peak demand of 15,016 MW was recorded on May 21. Electricity consumption up to May 27 reached 7,060 million units. Compared to 2025, power consumption during April-May 2026 increased from 14.48% to 16.77%, officials said. The Chief Minister also stated that a policy has been introduced to encourage the establishment of CBG (Compressed Bio-Gas) plants, which would financially benefit farmers. He directed officials to take proactive steps to ensure that CBG plants begin production quickly.

World Economic Forum Team Meets CM

A delegation from the World

Economic Forum met Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to discuss the action plan for implementing the country's first Thematic Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) established in Andhra Pradesh. An agreement for setting up the C4IR had already been signed earlier between AP Transco and the World Economic Forum. The C4IR will study sectors such as green energy, energy transition, and cyber resilience. During the meeting, the Chief Minister suggested transforming the state into a global hub for green energy, digital transformation, and cybersecurity. He stressed the need to comprehensively study various power generation models and develop the best possible model. He also suggested integrating the Visakhapatnam Data Center Corridor, green hydrogen investments, and renewable energy capacity with the C4IR action plan. The Chief Minister directed C4IR to work with a result-oriented approach and asked officials to ensure that Andhra Pradesh reaches a stage where its progress can be showcased at the next Davos summit. Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, Chief Secretary Sai Prasad, and senior officials from the Power Department, AP Transco, Genco, and Discoms participated in the meeting.



No politics involved: Suvenudu Adhikari announces Bengal census from August 1

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudu Adhikari announced the schedule for the Census in the state and stressed that the exercise is crucial for governance and has no political connection.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvenudu Adhikari on Friday said the Census 2027 would be held in the state between August 1 and February end next year, and asserted that the headcount process has no connection with politics. Stressing the significance of the exercise, he urged people to participate in the process. "The census in Bengal will begin from August 1 and continue till midnight on February end next year. It has no connection with politics," he said. The chief minister said India had made considerable progress in census operations and that West Bengal

needs to catch up with other states. "The country has moved far ahead in census operations, while we have remained behind," Adhikari said. He also referred to alleged demographic change in parts of the state, attributing it to cross-border infiltration. "We have a 600-kilometre-long unfenced border with Bangladesh. As the previous state government did not hand over land to BSF, fencing could not be done, which led to infiltration and a change in the demographic composition in parts of West Bengal," he said. He stressed that accurate census data was essential for governance and planning. "This census drive is very important. I urge everyone in Bengal to take part in it," Adhikari said. The chief minister attended a meeting at the state secretariat Nabanna in connection with the first phase of the 'Census of India, 2027'.

Odisha Police step up anti-crime drive across state

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 29

Odisha Police has intensified its statewide crackdown on crime and criminal activities under a special enforcement drive launched on May 12 following directions from Odisha Director General of Police (DGP) Y.B. Khurania. According to a statement issued by the state police, the drive is being conducted across all police ranges under the supervision of district Superintendents of Police and the Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar-Cuttack. The operation is aimed at executing pending non-bailable warrants (NBWs), arresting absconders, curbing narcotics smuggling, seizing illegal arms, checking illegal mineral transportation, and strengthening enforcement against drunk driving and other unlawful activities. Police sources said the special drive has been implemented under the direct supervision of Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Sanjay Kumar. During the last 18 days, Odisha Police ex-



ecuted 5,703 pending NBWs across the state. Police also arrested 520 accused persons in different criminal cases and produced them before courts. Besides, 957 habitual offenders were booked under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), while action was taken against 2,620 persons under Section 126 of the BNSS. As part of the anti-narcotics drive, police registered 97 NDPS cases and arrested 137 accused persons. During raids conducted at various locations, police seized around 7,398 kg of ganja, 586 grams of brown sugar, 220 grams of heroin, 219 litres of cough syrup, and 1,050 bottles of cough syrup. Police also seized 27 veh-

icles, 14 mobile phones, three pistols, and cash worth Rs 2.92 lakh allegedly used in drug trafficking. Additionally, 2,154 excise-related cases were registered during the period. Special emphasis was also laid on road safety enforcement. Police took action against 3,293 persons for drunk driving and collected fines amounting to Rs 6.46 crore for violations of motor vehicle and road safety rules. The state police has also intensified action against illegal cattle transportation, mining and arms trade during the drive. In the drive against illegal cattle transportation, police registered 29 cases and arrested 13 accused persons. Due to timely intervention by the police, 284 cattle were rescued from 17 vehicles. Odisha Police also intensified action against illegal mining activities. In 654 cases related to illegal mining and mineral transportation, 162 persons were arrested. During the operation, police seized 878 vehicles and machinery, including excavators, trucks, tractors, trippers, power tillers and JCB machines.

Pawan Kalyan orders continuous checks on Godavari pollution

AMARAVATI, MAY 29

With the pollution in the Godavari River reaching an alarming level, Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan on Friday directed the Pollution Control Board to conduct continuous inspections to prevent industrial effluents from being discharged into the river.

According to Pollution Control Board (PCB) officials, pollution entering the Godavari River—originating from municipalities, industrial zones, rural areas, and the aquaculture sector—has reached a critical and alarming stage. Approximately 104 million litres of sewage per day, discharged from municipalities across six districts, is currently contaminating the Godavari River. Of this total, the Andhra Paper Mills alone accounts for the discharge of up to 32 million litres of waste daily. Additionally, another 8.38 million litres of sewage from rural areas, along with substantial quantities of industrial waste, are being discharged into the river on a daily basis. Compounding this situation is



the daily discharge of 13.24 million litres of wastewater from aquaculture operations in the Konaseema and West Godavari districts. Pawan Kalyan, who is also the minister for environment, directed officials to take immediate measures to curb pollution caused by the discharge of sewage, industrial effluents, and aqua-related waste. According to an official release, it has been observed that sewage generated by towns situated along the banks of the Godavari River is being discharged directly into the river without undergoing any prior treatment. Large volumes of sewage are currently flowing into the Godavari from major urban centres, including the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation and the mu-

nicipalities of Kovvur, Narasapuram, and Tanuku. Currently, the Rajamahendravaram Municipal Corporation generates 75 million litres of sewage daily, of which 50 million litres are being discharged directly into the Godavari River. Furthermore, approximately 11.1 million litres of wastewater per day from Tanuku Municipality, 14 million litres from Bhimavaram, 8.5 million litres from Narasapuram, and 6 million litres from Kovvur are being released into the Godavari through drainage channels such as the Yanamadurru and Gostani drains. The daily discharge of sewage into the Godavari River also continues from various other municipalities. Pawan Kalyan emphasised that measures must be implemented to ensure that sewage generated in urban areas is released into the Godavari only after it has undergone proper treatment. To this end, he has issued directives to undertake the construction of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) within the jurisdiction of every municipality, ensuring that their capacity is commensurate with the volume of sewage generated in the respective areas.

Set timelines for completion of Infrastructure projects: CM

AMARAVATI:

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu directed officials to take necessary steps to ensure the timely completion of ports, airports and other infrastructure projects across the state. He stressed the need to establish strict time limits for the completion of all infrastructure works. The Chief Minister reviewed the progress of investments, infrastructure development, and APSRTC during a meeting held at the Secretariat today. The Chief Minister reviewed the status of construction works at Mula-peta, Ramayapatnam and Machilipatnam ports. He also assessed the progress of fishing harbours at Juvvaladinne, Nizampatnam, and Machilipatnam. Officials briefed the Chief Minister on issues related to the construction of Dagadathi, Kuppam and Sriakulam airports, including land acquisition, funding mobilization, and approvals from the Central Government. The Chief Minister also discussed the procurement of electric buses (EV buses)

with officials. During the review, CM Chandrababu stated: "We have already announced inauguration dates for irrigation projects. Similarly, we are directing that major industries coming into the state should be grounded and commence production within 18 months. Infrastructure projects must also be completed with the same sense of urgency. Necessary measures should be taken to expedite the completion of ports, airports, and fishing harbours currently in various stages of development." He further emphasized: "All processes—including approvals, technical clearances, tendering and construction—must be carried out within defined timelines. Equal focus should be placed on mobilizing the required funds for these projects. Plans must also be prepared to optimally utilize RTC assets and further strengthen the corporation. Ministers BC Janardhan Reddy and Mandipalli Ram Prasad Reddy, Chief Secretary G Sai Prasad and senior officials participated in the review meeting.



NIA files chargesheet against 3 Naxal operatives in explosives supply case

NEW DELHI: (MAY 29)

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has chargesheeted three alleged Naxal operatives in a case relating to the supply of explosives and logistical support to cadres of the banned CPI (Maoist) in Andhra Pradesh, officials said on Friday. Two of the accused, Naka David Raj alias Daveedu and Vijay Viswas, have been identified as overground workers (OGWs) of the banned outfit, they said. They were caught red-handed and arrested by local police en route to hand over a consignment of explosives to the third accused, Sodi Kesa, an underground CPI (Maoist) cadre, an NIA statement said.

DK Shivakumar's likely Cabinet takes shape; Siddaramaiah loyalists among ministers

A list of 15 likely names has surfaced for Karnataka's new cabinet under DK Shivakumar, reflecting power balancing, caste equations and continuity.

As Karnataka prepares for a major political transition, with DK Shivakumar set to take over as Chief Minister from Siddaramaiah, the contours of the possible new Cabinet are beginning to emerge, though discussions are still underway. Even as the Congress high command works to ensure a smooth leadership transition, intense deliberations continue over ministerial berths, caste representation, regional balance and the accommodation of loyalists from both the Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar camps. The proposed Cabinet is expected to retain several ministers from the outgoing Siddaramaiah government, signalling an attempt to maintain continuity while also balancing internal power equations within the party.

The likely ministers are:



Yathindra Siddaramaiah: Son of the outgoing Chief Minister, and he had reportedly been pushing for a major role for his son in the new Cabinet, including a key portfolio or a possible Deputy Chief Minister post.

- **AS Ponnanna:** Senior Congress MLA and Siddaramaiah's legal advisor. He has been closely associated with Siddaramaiah and is considered part of his inner circle.
- **G Parameshwara:** Veteran Congress leader and outgoing Home Minister. A prominent Dalit face whose name was also discussed for the Chief Minister's post during the leadership transition.

- **MB Patil:** The outgoing Minister for Large and Medium Industries is a Siddaramaiah aide. A powerful Lingayat leader from north Karnataka and one of the senior-most Congress leaders in the state.
- **Byrathi Suresh:** MLA from Hebbal and outgoing Urban Development Minister. He is regarded as an influential Bengaluru leader in the Congress.
- **HC Mahadevappa:** Senior Dalit leader and outgoing Social Welfare Minister. A long-time Siddaramaiah loyalist and an important Ahinda face in the party.
- **Priyank Kharge:** Outgoing Rural Development and

Panchayat Raj Minister and son of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

- **Krishna Byre Gowda:** Outgoing Revenue Minister and a senior Bengaluru-based Congress leader known for his administrative experience.
- **Santosh Lad:** Another Siddaramaiah loyalist and outgoing Labour Minister and influential leader from north Karnataka.
- **Dinesh Gundu Rao:** Outgoing Health and Family Welfare Minister and former Karnataka Congress president. A senior Congress organisational face from Bengaluru.
- **Lakshmi Hebbalkar:** Outgoing Women and Child Development Minister and influential Congress leader from Belagavi district. Her name has also surfaced in discussions for a Deputy Chief Minister post.
- **Ramalinga Reddy:** Senior Congress leader who handled the Transport and Muzrai portfolios in the outgoing government. A strong Bengaluru-based Vokkaliga

face in the party.

- **Rizwan Arshad:** Congress MLA and one of the party's key minority faces in the Karnataka Assembly.
- **UT Khader:** Karnataka Assembly Speaker and senior Congress minority leader from coastal Karnataka. He has previously served as a minister in Congress governments.
- **Sharath Bachegowda:** Young Congress MLA who earlier served as chairman of the Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation. Seen as an emerging face in the party.

A notable absence was KJ George, the veteran Congress leader and another close Siddaramaiah loyalist, who served as the Energy Minister in the outgoing government.

With Siddaramaiah having already resigned, the Congress Legislature Party is set to convene on Saturday and is likely to take a final decision on the Chief Ministerial post, following which swift moves are expected towards government formation and the oath-taking ceremony.



EDITORIAL ○

The Rise of AI in Everyday India:
Opportunity, Anxiety and
Responsibility

Artificial Intelligence (AI), once considered a futuristic concept, is now becoming an integral part of everyday life in India. From mobile applications and digital payments to online education and governance services, AI is silently shaping how people learn, work, communicate, and access public services. As India rapidly embraces digital transformation, the rise of AI presents immense opportunities. At the same time, it also raises concerns about employment, ethics, and digital preparedness. The challenge before the nation is not whether AI should be adopted, but how it should be used responsibly and inclusively.

In the field of education, AI has opened new possibilities for personalized learning. Students can now access smart learning platforms that adapt to their pace and style of understanding. Language translation tools, virtual tutors, and AI-powered assessments are helping bridge educational gaps, especially in remote areas. Teachers too are benefiting from digital tools that simplify evaluation and lesson planning. However, technology cannot replace the human values that education imparts. Emotional understanding, creativity, and moral guidance still remain the strengths of human teachers. Therefore, AI should be viewed as a supportive tool rather than a substitute for educators.

The impact of AI on employment has become one of the most widely discussed issues across the world. In India, where millions of young people enter the workforce every year, concerns about automation replacing jobs are understandable. Repetitive and routine tasks in sectors such as customer service, data entry, and manufacturing may increasingly be handled by machines. Yet, history has shown that technological change also creates new opportunities. AI is expected to generate demand for skilled professionals in fields such as data science, cybersecurity, robotics, healthcare technology, and digital services. The key lies in preparing the workforce through skill development, vocational training, and continuous learning. Young Indians must be equipped not only with technical knowledge but also with adaptability and problem-solving abilities.

AI is also transforming governance and public administration. Governments are using AI-driven systems to improve traffic management, healthcare delivery, agriculture monitoring, and citizen services. Predictive technologies can help authorities respond more effectively to disasters, disease outbreaks, and resource management challenges. Digital governance, when used efficiently, can increase transparency and reduce delays in public services. However, such systems must ensure privacy, accountability, and fairness. Citizens should have confidence that their personal data is protected and that technology is being used for public welfare rather than unchecked surveillance.

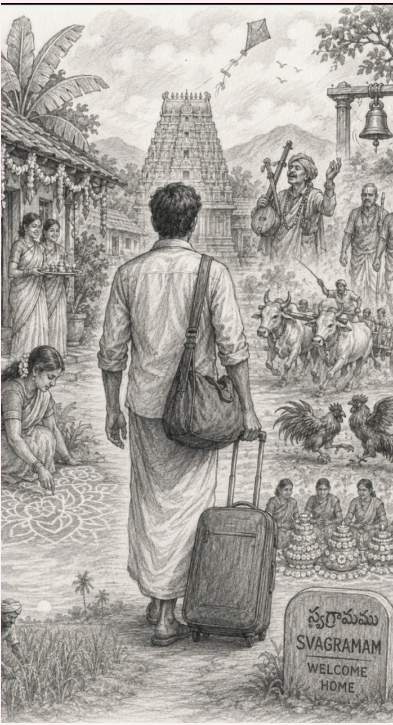
As AI becomes more widespread, digital literacy has emerged as a national necessity. Many citizens still lack awareness about how digital platforms function, how data is collected, and how misinformation spreads online. Without proper awareness, people may become vulnerable to fraud, manipulation, or misuse of technology. Schools, colleges, and community institutions must therefore promote responsible digital education. Understanding AI should not remain limited to experts alone; ordinary citizens too should be empowered to engage with technology confidently and safely.

India stands at a crucial moment in its technological journey. AI has the potential to accelerate economic growth, improve public services, and expand human capabilities. But progress must be guided by responsibility, ethics, and inclusiveness. Technology should serve humanity, not overshadow it. By investing in education, digital literacy, ethical regulation, and skill development, India can ensure that the rise of AI becomes a force for collective progress rather than division. The future of AI in India will ultimately depend not only on innovation, but also on wisdom.



LETTING GO OF ATTACHMENTS

I crossed the seven salted seas,
Through iron cities without trees.
I wore success like borrowed fire,
Yet walked with an unnamed desire.
I gathered crowns from distant lands,
Built strange futures with restless hands.
But beneath applause and golden fame,
My village softly spoke my name.
Years rebirthed this wandering frame,
Yet roots and soil remained the same.
A man may alter tongue and art
Not the homeland stitched within his heart.
One weary dawn, my spirit cried
For dusty paths and countryside.
Not as a victor carved in pride—
But as a lost child coming inside.
Though time had chained my migrant wings,
Memory flew beyond all things.
And there it stood in saffron flame
My village waiting just the same.
Dhanurmasam temple bells
Flowed like rivers through the wells.
Their sacred echoes touched the sky
And washed the exile from my eye.
Marigold garlands crowned each door,
Like suns upon the village floor.
White muggu patterns, finely spun,
Bloomed like constellations in the sun.
Dot by dot and line by line,
Women turned the earth divine.
Street to street the patterns streamed
Like ancient scriptures softly dreamed.
Curtains swayed in jasmine breeze,
Blessings floated through the trees.
Even the wind, with tender care,
Seemed to whisper, "You belong here."
Golden paddy, mountain-high,
Bent beneath the copper sky.
Farmer hands, though rough with pain,
Still carried God within the grain.
Haridasu hymns at dawn
Made every threshold holy ground.
Jangam Devaralu, ash-arrayed,
Walked like saints whom time obeyed.
Village mothers glowed with grace,
Turmeric moonlight on each face.
Gobbemmalu circled bright,
Planets of harvest, earth, and light.
Bull races thundered through the plain,
Awakening sleeping blood again.
Kites climbed high through winds untamed
Like dreams too fearless to be chained.
Cockfight drums and conch-shell cries
Opened buried childhood skies.



Every lane and every tree
Unlocked forgotten parts of me.
Then truth arose, both deep and clear
A warning every youth must hear:
A nation dies not by the sword,
But when it forgets its native word.
When fields are left for hollow fame,
And roots are traded out for name,
The soul becomes a drifting flame
That neither earth nor sky can claim.
Build your dreams, embrace the new,
Let knowledge shape the world in you.
But never cut the living thread
That ties you to your village bread.
For culture is not ashes old
It is the fire our futures hold.
The village is not backward dust
It is civilization's trust.
And as I stepped on sacred land,
I bowed and touched the mother sand.
Not before a throne above
But before my people's timeless love.
For oceans split and empires fall,
Yet roots remember through it all.
The farther destiny makes us roam,
The deeper grows the call of home.

..: Dr. Peruka Raju ..:
National Poet
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OPINION 06
Is the Mindset of Indians Conducive to
Economic Development?

Recently, due to the crisis emerging from the deterioration of global economic conditions, our respected Prime Minister Narendra Modi suggested several measures to tackle the situation. While some people are accepting these measures positively based on their own mindsets, others are criticizing the performance of the central government. However, the real question is whether the mindset of Indians is favourable to economic development or not. Psychological factors play a crucial role in promoting economic development because they influence both individual and col-

and stronger social cooperation. Therefore, trust is considered an important psychological trait that contributes to development.

Trust in Government
Leaders' Words

During major crises such as pandemics, wars, or economic recessions, people in some countries tend to trust their government leaders more than people in other countries. According to reports by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Edelman Trust Barometer, public trust in government is among the highest in the world in countries such as Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Singapore, and Denmark. More than 82% of people in Switzerland expressed trust in their government, while around 76% of people in Finland showed confidence in theirs. In Norway and Denmark as well, this level was recorded at more than 60%. These countries are known for transparent governance, low corruption, strong healthcare systems, and providing clear communication during emergencies. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people in these countries followed government guidelines related to vaccines, lockdowns, and public safety to a greater extent. In Singapore too, high trust in the government continued because of effective crisis management and well-organized policies. In contrast, in countries such as France and Italy, trust in government leadership was much lower, with some surveys reporting it at around 28%. According to experts, people tend to trust leaders more when governments provide reliable information, take quick action, and offer economic support. Studies suggest that high levels of trust strengthen social unity and help governments respond more effectively to crises. Therefore, it can be said that in Northern European and some Asian countries, people rely heavily on government leaders during national emergencies.

Mindset of Indian Citizens

In India, during times of crisis, people often depend on govern-

ment leaders for guidance, safety measures, and emotional support. During the Indian independence movement, Mahatma Gandhi called upon people to follow non-violence and unity. During the 1965 war, Lal Bahadur Shastri gave the slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" and encouraged soldiers and farmers to serve the nation. During the 1971 war, Indira Gandhi urged citizens to remain united and support national security. During the 2001 Gujarat earthquake, government leaders appealed to people to cooperate with rescue teams and donate relief materials. During the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, coastal residents were advised to move to safer areas and support rehabilitation programs. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Narendra Modi announced a nationwide lockdown and urged people to stay at home, wear masks, and maintain social distancing. In all these situations, people cooperated with the government to the best of their ability. During economic crises, governments ask citizens to remain calm and support economic reforms. Therefore, at different periods in India, government leaders have played an important role in guiding and influencing public behaviour during emergencies.

The mindset of Indians is becoming increasingly favourable to economic development because of their strong aspirations for higher education, better jobs, and improved living standards. Indians are rapidly adopting new technologies such as digital payments, online banking, and e-commerce, which is contributing to modernization and economic growth. Family values encourage saving, investing in children's education, and long-term financial planning. The growth of startups and entrepreneurship shows increasing self-confidence, innovative thinking, and willingness to take risks among Indians. According to a 2025 report by the Observer Research Foundation, 98.6% of young Indians believe that India is emerging as a digital superpower, while 96.9% felt that innovations such as Unified Payments Inter-

face (UPI) and Aadhaar have made life easier. After demonetization, the use of cashless payments increased rapidly. At present, India has become the world's leading country in real-time digital payments. According to reports by National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), digital payments in India have increased nearly 160 times over the past two decades. According to Home Credit India's "Great Indian Wallet 2025" report, 73% of people believe they will achieve their financial goals within the next five years, while 57% said their income has increased. This reflects the economic optimism among Indians. The same report states that spending on education increased by 34%, indicating the importance Indian families place on education. The establishment of more than 223,000 startups by 2026 suggests that entrepreneurial spirit and the courage to take risks are growing among Indians.

The Indian family system gives importance to savings, investment in children's education, and long-term security, which contributes to the development of human resources. The large youth population creates favourable conditions for productivity, consumption, and market expansion. Growing interest in travel, improved lifestyles, and digital commerce is also increasing economic activity. Overall, the mindset of Indians is characterized by optimism, a hard-working nature, the ability to adopt technology, and aspirations for progress, which together provide strong support for the country's economic development.



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MSMEs: The Backbone Beneath India's
Growth Story - Beyond Corporate India

India's economic story is often told through stock markets, corporate giants, IT campuses, and billion-dollar startups. Yet the everyday functioning of the economy depends just as much on millions of small businesses operating far from the spotlight. Behind the headlines of rapid growth lies another India powered by workshops, small factories, local service units, food-processing centres, and family-run enterprises. Together, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) form one of the strongest foundations of the Indian economy.

India's economic resilience is sustained not only by billion-dollar companies, but also by millions of small enterprises operating with limited resources and narrow profit margins. With more than 60 million enterprises, over 110 million jobs, and a contribution of nearly 30 percent to India's GDP and around 45 percent of exports, the MSME sector is not merely a supporting pillar. It is one of the country's primary economic engines. Large corporations may shape the direction of growth, but MSMEs are the ones that spread economic activity across regions, communities, and social groups.

The Real Economic Network:

The importance of MSMEs becomes even more visible beyond metropolitan India. In many villages and small towns, a tailoring unit, fabrication workshop, handicraft centre, or food-processing business is not just a commercial activity; it is a source of survival for entire families. These enterprises generate local employment, sustain household incomes, and keep rural consumption alive. They also reduce distress migration by creating economic opportunities closer to home, easing pressure on overcrowded urban centres. In many ways, MSMEs keep local economies functioning even during periods of economic uncertainty. For millions of Indians, MSMEs are not side businesses; they are the difference between economic security and vulnerability.

Changing Social Realities:

The sector has also quietly contributed to social change, particularly through women's participation in the workforce. Across self-help groups, food-processing businesses, handicrafts, and small-

scale services, increasing numbers of women are entering economic activity through MSMEs. In many households, this has altered spending priorities and decision-making patterns. Income earned by women often translates into greater investment in children's education, healthcare, and nutrition. Yet these opportunities remain unevenly distributed. In many rural regions, women entrepreneurs still struggle with limited access to finance, training, markets, and digital infrastructure.

The Burden of Structural
Challenges:

Despite their enormous contribution, MSMEs continue to operate under persistent structural stress. A large section of India's MSME ecosystem still operates informally, limiting access to institutional finance, legal protection, and organised markets. One of the biggest challenges is delayed payments. Many small businesses that appear profitable on paper often face severe cash-flow shortages in practice. Payments from large companies and government institutions are frequently delayed for months, even though regulations mandate clearance within 45 days. For enterprises dependent on continuous working capital, such delays directly affect salaries, production cycles, and day-to-day operations. Access to formal credit remains another major obstacle. India's banking system still relies heavily on collateral-based lending, placing small entrepreneurs at a disadvantage. Since many businesses lack substantial fixed assets, they are pushed outside the formal credit ecosystem and forced to depend on private lenders charging extremely high interest rates. In many cases, entrepreneurs spend more energy managing debt than expanding their businesses.

Technology and
Global Competition:

Global economic changes are reshaping the business environment faster than many MSMEs can adapt. Automation, artificial intelligence, digital commerce, and platform-based supply chains are transforming manufacturing and trade worldwide. However, a large number of Indian MSMEs continue to operate using traditional production methods. Limited awareness, weak digital infrastructure, shortage of skilled

labour, and lack of investment capacity have slowed technological adoption across the sector.

The textile hub of Tiruppur illustrates this transition clearly. Once known for rapid expansion through low-cost manufacturing, the cluster now faces growing pressure from automation-driven competition, stricter global quality standards, and sustainability requirements. Similar pressures are emerging across several industrial clusters in India. The rise of digital marketplaces and platforms such as ONDC has created new opportunities, but many smaller enterprises still lack the technological readiness to fully benefit from them.

The Sustainability Pressure:

Environmental compliance is becoming another serious concern. International markets are steadily tightening sustainability standards, yet many MSMEs do not possess the financial capacity to invest in pollution-control systems, clean-energy infrastructure, or green manufacturing technologies. Compliance demands capital, while non-compliance invites penalties. For already fragile businesses, this creates an additional layer of financial pressure.

India's manufacturing ambitions also face a larger global test. As multinational companies attempt to diversify supply chains under the "China Plus One" strategy, India is increasingly viewed as an alternative manufacturing destination. However, Indian MSMEs continue to lag behind competitors such as China and Vietnam in areas like quality testing, packaging standards, logistics efficiency, and production consistency. The absence of sufficient testing laboratories, certification facilities, and modern support infrastructure remains a serious limitation.

Policy Intentions and
Ground Reality:

The government has introduced several initiatives, including Mudra loans, Stand-Up India, and production-linked incentive schemes. At the policy level, these measures represent important interventions. Yet implementation gaps remain significant. Complex banking procedures, bureaucratic delays, documentation barriers, and lack of awareness continue to prevent many small entrepreneurs from fully accessing these benefits.

What the MSME sector requires today is not temporary relief, but long-term structural reform. Credit systems must gradually move beyond rigid collateral requirements and adopt lending models based on business transactions and cash-flow patterns. Payment regulations need stronger enforcement so that delayed invoices do not cripple small enterprises. Technology adoption should be supported through affordable automation schemes, industrial digital hubs, and accessible training centres.

The road ahead:

Workforce preparedness also deserves urgent attention. India's industrial training institutes, polytechnics, and skill-development programmes need closer alignment with evolving industry requirements. Without a skilled workforce, technological modernisation within MSMEs will remain incomplete. India's economic future cannot depend solely on a handful of large corporations. Its real strength lies in millions of small entrepreneurs working in factories, workshops, villages, and local markets across the country. MSMEs should no longer be viewed merely as sectors requiring subsidies or protection. They must be recognised as central partners in India's long-term economic transformation. If India hopes to achieve inclusive growth, stronger exports, large-scale employment generation, and balanced regional development, strengthening MSMEs is not optional. India cannot aspire to become a global economic power while neglecting the millions of small enterprises that sustain its economy every single day. India's growth story will remain incomplete if the businesses sustaining everyday economic life continue to struggle for survival.



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NEET paper leak: SC stresses on accountability

govt says PM personally supervising situation

NEW DELHI, MAY 29

We should not disappoint our youngsters, the Supreme Court on Friday said while stressing that the real problem relating to medical entrance examination NEET-UG would not stop till "actual accountability arises". Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the apex court that the government is seriously concerned about the concerns of the youths and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is personally supervising the situation so that "there is no lacunae". Mehta told a bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe that some new mechanisms have been put in place for the NEET-UG retest scheduled for June 21. "The real problem won't stop till actual accountability arises," the bench observed. The top court was hearing pleas, including the one seeking a direction to replace or restructure the National Testing Agency (NTA), which is responsible for conducting the NEET-UG, with a robust and autonomous body to conduct the medical entrance

examination. The bench said it is "actually very traumatic" if something like this happens, not just for the students, but also for their families. "Accountability will be effective only when you know on whose shoulders, which individual shoulders, the responsibility lies," it said. The top law officer said, "The buck must stop somewhere". Mehta said the issue relates to youths and the government is seriously concerned about their concerns. "Some new mechanisms are also put in place for the June 21 examination. It may not be appropriate to divulge what is there, otherwise the very purpose will be frustrated. It is being monitored at the highest possible executive level," he said. "The prime minister personally is supervising this so that there is no lacunae," Mehta said. The bench cited the example of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and said there was never a situation like paper leak in the examinations conducted by the commission and the NTA needs to learn from other institutions. "It is



actually very traumatic if something like this happens, not just for the students, but also their families and everybody," the bench said, adding, "They invest so much of emotion". The bench also highlighted the problem that most of the institutions were ad-hoc. "So much so, that you will have the best of the officers working and everybody will depend on that. It is the phenomenon everywhere in our country," it said. "It is not the individual who has the capability, it is the institution which has the capability. That is what you need to prepare," the bench said. It noted that pursuant to its May 25 order, Director (Legal) of the NTA has filed an

affidavit. "We will go through your affidavit and we will keep monitoring it for sometime," the bench said. It also noted that Dr K Radhakrishnan, who is a former chairman of the ISRO and presently working in honorary capacity as the chairman of the high-powered steering committee on NTA Reforms, has also filed an affidavit indicating the implementation of the recommendations of the committee and the future course of action. The bench asked the Centre to file an affidavit indicating how and in which manner the process of conduct and conclusion of the examination, year after year, will be done. It said the Centre

would also indicate the method by which an "institutional memory through continuity of human resource, institutional expertise through deployment of specialised personnel and institutional plurality by composition of experts is put in place". "The endeavour is to ensure that NTA would have the wherewithal, physical as well as intellectual, to ensure that no incidents such as the 2024 or 2026 examinations occur," the bench said. It said the affidavit filed by the Centre within six weeks and posted the matter for hearing in the second week of July. During the hearing, the bench asked Radhakrishnan, who was present in the court, how much monitoring of the implementation has happened. "Also tell us how did this failure occur," the bench asked, adding, "Despite the monitoring on the basis of the high-powered committee's recommendation, if this incident has happened, then there is something wrong with the original recommendation because it did not conceive of a situation which would have arisen". Radhakrishnan said

many of the recommendations were initiated already. He said in 2025, NEET-UG was conducted "almost satisfactorily" and there were a couple of incidents of power failure in some of the examination centres. On May 12, the NTA cancelled the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate), or NEET, held on May 3 amid allegations of paper leak. A re-examination has been scheduled for June 21. The paper leak allegations are under investigation by the CBI. After the questions of NEET-UG were allegedly leaked in 2024, the top court had refused to cancel the test but passed various directions aimed at tackling paper leaks and also a criterion for cancelling public exams. While hearing the pleas on May 25, the top court observed it's sad that the NTA has not learnt lessons from the earlier NEET paper leak. It had sought the response of the Centre, NTA and CBI on pleas for the replacement of the testing agency with a robust and autonomous body to conduct the medical entrance exam.



New Bongaigaon Workshop Advances Modern Coach Rehabilitation under NFR

MALIGAON, 29 MAY, 2026

Northeast Frontier Railway has achieved significant milestones at the Carriage & Wagon Workshop, New Bongaigaon, reflecting its continued focus on modernization, safety enhancement and operational excellence. One of the key achievements of North-east Frontier Railway is the successful initiation of Mid-Life Rehabilitation (MLR) work for Linke-Hofmann-Busch (LHB) coaches at the New Bongaigaon Workshop. This development marks an important step towards enhancing passenger comfort, operational safety and the reliability of modern coaching stock. The first MLR coach is presently in the final stage of completion and is expected to be turned out shortly, marking a significant milestone for the workshop. In another

notable achievement, NBQS has successfully installed and commissioned the LHB Bogie Load Testing facility. With this facility, all critical bogie parameters under load conditions are now being checked and verified before dispatch, ensuring higher reliability, quality assurance and enhanced safety standards for overhauled LHB bogies. Additionally, the workshop has also operationalized the shot blasting machine for LHB bogie frames and bolsters. This initiative has enabled mechanized shot blasting with improved surface finish quality, contributing to better maintenance standards and operational efficiency. These initiatives highlight North-east Frontier Railway's commitment towards adopting advanced technologies, improving maintenance practices and strengthening railway infrastructure across the zone.

Delhi Police arrest 5 Bangladeshi nationals for illegal stay in India

Delhi Police detained five Bangladeshi nationals in Mukherjee Nagar after verifying their visa status. The case has led to deportation proceedings and a wider drive against visa overstayers in the district. Five Bangladeshi nationals were caught in Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar for

allegedly overstaying in India after the expiry of their visas. The action was taken during a special drive launched by the local police against illegal immigrants and foreign nationals residing in the country beyond their permitted stay. According to police, the operation was initiated after

information was received about a minor altercation between two groups in the area. During the incident, local residents reportedly noticed two individuals speaking in Bangla and became suspicious about their presence. The matter was subsequently reported to Mukherjee Nagar police station.

Acting on the information, police formed a dedicated team to verify the identities and residential status of the suspected individuals. During questioning, the two men revealed that they were staying at a rented accommodation in Indira Vikas Colony along with three other Bangladeshi nationals. Fur-

ther investigation led police to the rented premises, where all five individuals were found residing. Enquiries revealed that they had entered India legally from Bangladesh on different dates through the air route but had continued to stay in the country even after their visas had expired. Police said the

five men had allegedly come to Delhi while exploring employment opportunities in Greece. According to investigators, they had been waiting since December 2025 for interview calls or job offers from Greece and remained in India despite the expiry of their visa validity.

Major push towards a healthy Haryana

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini launches healthcare projects worth over Rs 100 Crore

CHANDIGARH, MAY 29 :

Further strengthening the resolve of "Healthy Haryana, Prosperous Haryana" and taking a significant step toward ensuring better healthcare and a dignified life for the people of the state, Haryana Chief Minister Sh Nayab Singh Saini inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for nine major healthcare projects worth over Rs 100 crore at a state-level event held in Panchkula. Haryana Health Minister Kumari Arti Singh Rao and Women and Child Development Minister Smt. Shruti Choudhry were also present on the occasion. Taking a major step toward modernizing and strengthening healthcare infrastructure, the Chief Minister inaugurated 30 health institutions constructed at a cost of Rs 22.29 crore and laid the foundation stones for 16 health institu-

tions costing Rs 21.50 crore. In addition, he laid the foundation stone for a Rest House at the District Civil Hospital, Sonapat, at a cost of Rs 6.45 crore. He also launched "Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar" Clinics (Women Clinics) in 23 district hospitals at an annual operational cost of Rs 0.34 crore. Expanding CT Scan and MRI services under the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, the Chief Minister inaugurated MRI facilities at District Hospitals in Panipat and Kurukshetra at a cost of Rs 12 crore, and CT Scan services at the Sub-Divisional Hospital, Bahadurgarh, and District Hospital, Dadri, at a cost of Rs 10 crore. The Chief Minister also launched Tele-ECG services across 600 health institutions at an annual cost of Rs 3 crore to ensure timely detection and treatment of heart diseases. Under Corporate Social Responsi-



Haryana Chief Minister, Sh. Nayab Singh Saini releasing the Disaster Management Training Booklet for Asha Workers during the Inauguration and launching of Various Projects and Initiatives of the Health Department at Panchkula on May 29, 2026. Health Minister, Ms. Arti Singh Rao, Women and Child Development Minister, Smt. Shruti Choudhry, MLA Smt. Shikhi Rani Sharma and Additional Chief

bility (CSR), healthcare equipment worth over Rs 24 crore including anesthesia workstations, defibrillators, X-ray machines, TrueNat machines, and ICU beds was also dedicated to the public. Further, free dialysis facilities were launched at Maharishi Chyavan Medical College, Koriawas (Narnaul), and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government Medical College, Chhainsa (Faridabad), at an annual cost of Rs 3.60 crore. The Chief Minister also laid

the foundation stone for "Amrit Pharmacies" in 23 district hospitals at a cost of Rs 1.73 crore to provide branded medicines at affordable prices to the general public. Additionally, a special disaster management training programme for 4,600 ASHA workers was launched at a cost of Rs 0.91 crore. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said the day was especially significant as the nation is celebrating 12 years of dedicated public service under

the leadership of Prime Minister Sh Narendra Modi. He stated that the historic transformation witnessed in India's healthcare sector during these 12 years has been unprecedented. Recalling earlier times, he said poor families were often forced to travel to major cities for medical treatment. Illnesses not only caused physical suffering but also severely impacted the financial stability of families. However, today, initiatives such as Ayushman Bharat, Jan Aushadhi Kendras, the Digital Health Mission, the expansion of medical colleges, and advanced diagnostic facilities have brought healthcare services to the doorsteps of the poor. The Chief Minister said he had given a clear target to the Health Department that every district hospital should emerge as the best hospital in its respective city. He expressed sat-

isfaction that rapid and visible improvements are now being seen in district hospitals across Haryana. He further stated that the State Government is continuously working to provide high-end diagnostic facilities in every district. At present, CT Scan services are available in 18 districts, while MRI facilities have already been started in seven districts. Ultrasound and blood analyzer facilities are now available in all districts of the state. He informed that the current financial year's budget includes provisions for CT Scan, MRI, and digital X-ray machines in the remaining districts as well. In addition, the tendering process for introducing MRI services in 13 more district hospitals has already been completed. In the coming years, citizens of Haryana will be able to access world-class diagnostic facilities within their own districts.

Dharmendra Pradhan reviews Samagra Shiksha funds, stresses transparency

NEW DELHI: (MAY 29)

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Friday said a detailed review meeting was held regarding the release and utilisation of funds under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, with a focus on making Samagra Shiksha 3.0 more efficient, transparent and outcome-oriented. He said an integrated approach through convergence of key schemes, including Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), PM-POSHAN (Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman), Understanding of Lifelong Learning for All in Society (ULLAS), PM-SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) and other flagship programmes, will be undertaken from this year to ensure greater coordination and impact across the school education ecosystem. In a post on X, Pradhan said, "Held a detailed review meeting on fund release and utilisation under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, with focus on making Samagra Shiksha 3.0 more efficient, transparent and outcome-oriented."

Congress stuns AAP in Kapurthala civic polls, wins clear majority with 31 seats

Congress upset the ruling AAP by winning 31 seats in the Kapurthala Municipal Corporation as Punjab's civic poll counting continued. The result stood out even as AAP led across the state, sharpening the political stakes before next year's Assembly elections.

Congress delivered a major upset to the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the Kapurthala Municipal Corporation elections, securing a clear majority with 31 seats as counting of votes for Punjab's civic body polls continued on Friday. AAP won 11 seats in the corporation, while the BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) secured three seats each and two seats went to others. Counting of votes for the civic body elections began at 8 am amid tight security arrangements. The elections were held on May 26 using ballot papers for 102 municipal bodies, including eight municipal corporations



— Mohali, Bathinda, Abohar, Barnala, Kapurthala, Moga, Batala and Pathankot — along with 75 municipal councils and 19 nagar panchayats. The polls recorded a voter turnout of 63.94 per cent. A total of 7,554 candidates contested the local body elections, which are being viewed as crucial for all major political parties in Punjab — AAP, BJP, Congress and SAD — ahead of next year's Assembly elections. Officials said two micro observers were deputed at each counting centre and worked under the direct supervision of the district general observer. Entry into counting halls remained restricted to authorised persons

only. Across Punjab, the ruling AAP won more than 690 wards and maintained leads in several others as counting progressed. AAP workers celebrated the party's performance by exchanging sweets and dancing to the beats of dhol. AAP leader Manish Sisodia thanked voters for reposing faith in party leaders Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. Claiming a strong mandate for the party, Sisodia said, "People of Punjab have replied to the 'ED party' (BJP). 'ED politics' will not work in Punjab." He also claimed that 1,142 BJP candidates had forfeited their security deposits. The civic

body elections covered 1,897 wards across the municipal bodies. Out of 1,977 wards, candidates in 80 wards were elected unopposed. According to Punjab State Election Commission data, AAP had won 698 wards, while Congress candidates secured victory in 281 wards. Independents won 217 wards, SAD candidates won 150 wards, BJP nominees secured 79 wards and BSP candidates won six wards. AAP registered a dominant performance in several key municipal councils. In Gidderbaha Municipal Council, the party won 17 of the 19 wards, while Congress managed only two seats. Gidderbaha is considered a stronghold of Punjab Congress chief and Ludhiana MP Amrinder Singh Raja Warring. In Dhuri Municipal Council, AAP won 19 wards, while Independents secured two wards. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann represents the Dhuri Assembly constituency. However, Congress performed better in Chamkaur Sahib Municipal Coun-

cil, where it won seven wards. AAP and Independents secured three wards each. Former chief minister Charanjit Singh is a former MLA from the Chamkaur Sahib Assembly segment. Reacting to the results, Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema said the people of Punjab had endorsed the work of the AAP government. He said voters had shown the mirror to opposition parties and asserted that the civic polls were conducted in a transparent and fair manner. The opposition parties had earlier accused the AAP government of misusing official machinery during the elections. The civic polls are being seen as a litmus test for the ruling AAP as it seeks to retain power in Punjab in next year's Assembly elections. While AAP maintained an overall lead across the state, Congress scored a significant victory in the Kapurthala Municipal Corporation by winning 31 seats and comfortably outpacing the ruling party.

10th Song on Pamma's Struggles

Social Work to be Released Soon

New Delhi : The 10th song based on the social struggles and public welfare works of Paramjit Singh Pamma, National President of the 'National Akali Dal', titled 'Pamma Bina Dharna Safal Nah' (No Protest is Successful Without Pamma), is going to be released soon. The lyrics of this song have been penned by the famous writer Balwinder Singh Sodhi, while singer Raish Kaur has lent her voice to it. Pamma has been continuously struggling for the interests of society and the public for the last 32 years. From time to time, several famous singers and writers have created songs about his works and struggles. Multiple documentaries have also been made on his life and social movements, which have been highly appreciated. Whether it is raising a voice against rising inflation, struggling over the issues of children's school fees and college admissions, warning the government



about the spoiling future of youth and children due to online games, or conveying the interests of women and traders to the government—Pamma has been playing an active role on every issue and has always emerged as the voice of the common public. During his social work, he also had to face difficult situations multiple times. Amid continuous struggles and public movements, up to four stents have been placed in his heart, but despite this, he never stopped serving society and raising the voice of public interest. Highlighting this very struggle, this new song will reflect his struggle, passion, and dedication towards society.



Combating Ebola outbreak: Italy sending team of experts to DRC

ROME

Italy's government is urging Europe to step up surveillance coordination at its borders to combat the spread of Ebola, Italy's Prime Minister Georgia Meloni's office said in a statement on Friday.

Italy is sending a team of experts from Rome's Spallanzani infectious diseases hospital to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) "as early as this weekend" to help combat the outbreak and strengthen monitoring and control of the virus, PM Meloni's office added.

"Italy believes that the epidemiological situation in Central Africa linked to the recent outbreak of the Bundibugyo Ebola virus (BVD strain) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and (neighbouring) Uganda requires the utmost attention," read the statement, Adnkronos news agency reported.

For this reason, Meloni has written to the European Union Council President Nikos Christodoulides, European Council President Antonio Costa, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, the statement said.

"The aim is to urge - while respecting national prerogatives on health protection - enhanced coordination of border surveillance through common rules for managing direct and indirect arrivals from the affected areas," the statement went on. Meloni has proposed discussing the issue of border management at the European Council meeting on June 18-19. The government has requested a video-conference of EU health ministers on border surveillance coordination "as early as next week" and for "operational priorities" to be agreed at the EPSCO.

Russian drone attack on Romania threatens Europe's security: Italy

ROME

The overnight Russian drone strike on a residential building in Romania's eastern city of Galati is a threat to European security, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni stated on Friday, deploring the "extremely serious act". "Last night, a Russian drone struck a civilian building in Romania, injuring two citizens on the territory of an allied country and a member of the European Union," read Meloni's statement.

"This is an extremely serious act, which demonstrates that this war of aggression spares no one, continuing to brutally target innocent civilians, disregarding all boundaries, and jeopardising European security," the statement continued, Adnkronos news agency reported.

"My deepest sympathy and solidarity go out to those affected, to the government, and to the entire Romanian people," the statement added. The drone strike on the apartment building in Galati has drawn condemnation from top European officials, and Romania has asked NATO to accelerate the transfer of anti-drone capabilities.

India boosting maritime cooperation with France and Italy to maintain stability in IOR: Report

NEW DELHI

India's growing role in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), backed by deeper partnerships with France and Italy, is not aimed at heightening confrontation but at preserving regional stability. Such cooperation underscored the need to secure vital maritime trade routes, strengthen deterrence, and protect the shared strategic interests of the three countries amid the rising geopolitical competition, a report has stated.

"Indian Ocean politics is undergoing a major strategic churn, underpinned by China's growing footprint, a receding US influence, and the Indian Ocean littoral states' exposure to conflicts in the neighbouring Middle East, which has clearly demonstrated to the littoral states, including India, why security in the Indian Ocean must move to the forefront of strategic calculations," a report in Eurasia Review has detailed.

"Amid multiple ongoing conflicts and renewed international attention on the Middle East and Europe, the Indo-Pacific is already witnessing a relative decline in strategic focus. At



the same time, questions about the US's long-term credibility and commitment continue to shape strategic calculations across Asia. In this environment, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is rapidly emerging as one of the most consequential arenas of geopolitical competition," it added.

The report noted that India's longstanding policy of "multi-alignment and issue-based coalitions" has proved advantageous. Rather than depending on rigid alliance structures, it said, New

Delhi has built flexible strategic ties with countries sharing mutual concerns over maritime security, regional stability, and freedom of navigation. Among the partners, France has grown into one of India's most "consequential and reliable strategic partners".

"This strategic convergence has significantly strengthened India-France cooperation in recent years. President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India earlier this year further reinforced the growing alignment between New Delhi and Paris

on Indo-Pacific security, maritime governance, maritime domain awareness, and defence cooperation. Both countries increasingly recognise that preserving stability in the Indian Ocean requires sustained naval coordination, strategic interoperability, and long-term defence collaboration," the report mentioned.

Along with France, it said, Italy is becoming an increasingly significant European partner for India in the IOR.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recently concluded visit

to Italy has elevated bilateral ties into a strategic partnership, creating new avenues for maritime and defence cooperation.

According to the report, Italy's growing engagement in the Indo-Pacific is closely linked to concern over "maritime trade security, supply chain resilience, energy connectivity, and the protection of critical sea lanes" connecting Europe and Asia. "This is particularly significant in the context of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which aims to connect India to Europe via the Middle East and the Mediterranean. As one of the key European stakeholders in IMEC, Italy increasingly recognises that the security of maritime routes in the Arabian Sea and the wider Indian Ocean is directly linked to Europe's long-term economic and strategic interests," it highlighted.

The report noted that the partnership between India, France and Italy reflects an evolving framework of pragmatic strategic cooperation aimed at preserving stability while steering clear of fixed bloc rivalries.

Hungary secures release of 16.4 billion euros in EU funds after agreement with Brussels

BRUSSELS

Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Magyar announced on Friday that Hungary had reached a political agreement with the European Union on the release of 16.4 billion euros (19.1 billion US dollars) in previously frozen European Union (EU) funds.

The agreement was reached following talks with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in Brussels and would unlock approximately 6,000 billion forints in EU resources, equivalent to about 13 percent of Hungary's gross domestic product, Magyar said.

The package consists of 10 billion euros that can be unlocked under Hungary's revised Recovery and Resilience Plan, subject to the implementation of agreed reforms and investments, as well as 4.2 billion euros in cohesion funds released after progress on governance-related conditions and a further 2.2 billion euros linked to reforms in higher education and academic freedom, according to von der Leyen, Xinhua News Agency reported.

The funding will support projects in energy, transport, housing, digitalisation and small and medium-sized enterprises. Magyar said



the resources would also be available for electricity grid upgrades, railway modernisation, rental housing projects, healthcare and education development, while several billion euros could be claimed for projects already completed or under implementation.

Speaking after the meeting, Magyar described the outcome as a "historic day" for Hungary. "We are taking home the thousands of billions of forints in European Union support that belong to the Hungarian people," he said. Von der Leyen said the agreement followed weeks of intensive cooperation between the European Commission and Hungary's new government on reforms aimed at strengthening anti-corruption safeguards and the rule of law. "We agreed on a robust architecture to ensure that Hungary addresses corruption and rule-of-law concerns," she said.

India and Canada discuss ways to strengthen defence cooperation

SINGAPORE

India and Canada on Friday discussed ways to strengthen defence cooperation while exploring opportunities for deeper collaboration across several other sectors.

The discussions were held during a meeting between Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Canada's Senior Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence Kelvin Brosseau on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. In a post on X, Ministry of Defence's Directorate of Public Relations stated, "Both sides discussed ways to strengthen India-Canada defence cooperation and explored opportunities.

Pakistan: Train services in Balochistan remain suspended for second day

QUETTA

Trains operations in Pakistan's Quetta and other parts of Balochistan remained suspended for second consecutive day on Friday, railway officials said, citing "unavoidable circumstances" for the disruption, local media reported on Friday.

They said the Jaffar Express from Quetta to Peshawar would not depart on Friday while the train from Peshawar to Quetta would be sent back from Jacobabad. Railway authorities stated that train services in Balochistan have remained suspended for the past two days, while the Bolan Mail and Chaman Passenger services to Karachi were stopped, Pakistan-based Geo News reported.

Meanwhile, delays were also reported in several trains de-



parting from Karachi, sparking protests from passengers at Cantt Station. At least 14 people were killed, including three Frontier Corps (FC) personnel, and several others injured in a blast that took place near the Chaman Phatak in Quetta on May 24, according to the Balochistan government spokesperson. Several women and

children suffered injuries in the blast and were taken to hospital. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed responsibility for the blast targeting a military shuttle train near Chaman Phatak. It said that 82 Pakistani military personnel were killed and more than 121 others were injured in the attack, The Balochistan Post reported. In a detailed

statement, BLA spokesperson Jeeyand Baloch said the attack was conducted through what the group termed "highly complex, organised, joint operation" by its Majeed Brigade, the group's "fidayeen" unit, and its intelligence wing, ZIRAB. According to the statement, the target was a military shuttle train carrying Pakistani army personnel from Quetta Cantonment to be attached to the Jaffar Express.

Earlier in February, bus services from major cities of Pakistan to Quetta were suspended due to the security situation in Balochistan, with all buses being stopped at Rakhni. According to officials and transport operators, the suspension of bus services between Quetta and other parts of Pakistan impacted several people in multiple cities, The Balochistan Post reported.

Trump says Iran deal awaits final decision

WASHINGTON

US President Donald Trump said Friday that he was preparing to make a final decision on a potential agreement with Iran, outlining terms that include a commitment by Tehran never to acquire a nuclear weapon and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

In a post on social media, Trump said Iran must accept a permanent ban on nuclear weapons as part of the proposed arrangement. "Iran must agree that they will never have a Nuclear Weapon or Bomb," he wrote. Trump said the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping route for global energy supplies, should be reopened immediately.

"The Hormuz Strait must be immediately open, no tolls, for unrestricted shipping traffic, in both directions," he said.



The President also claimed that mines in the waterway were being removed and that shipping disrupted by a U.S. naval blockade would soon resume.

"Ships caught in the Strait due to our amazing and unprecedented Naval Blockade, which will now be lifted, may start the process of 'heading home!'"

Trump wrote. He said US forces had already removed numerous mines and that Iran would complete the removal or detonation of any remaining devices.

Trump's statement also addressed Iran's nuclear programme. He claimed that enriched nuclear material buried deep underground following a

US military strike nearly a year ago would be recovered and destroyed.

"The enriched material, sometimes referred to as 'Nuclear Dust,' which is buried deep underground with virtually collapsed mountains, caused by our powerful B2 Bomber attack 11 months ago, sitting on top of it, will be unearthed by the United States," he wrote. According to Trump, the operation would be conducted "in close coordination and conjunction with the Islamic Republic of Iran, plus the International Atomic Energy Agency, and DESTROYED."

He said no financial transfers would take place under the arrangement. "No money will be exchanged, until further notice," Trump wrote. He added that "other items, of far less importance, have been agreed to", but

did not elaborate.

The President did not provide details on the status of negotiations or indicate whether Iranian officials had formally accepted the terms he described. He concluded his statement by saying he would be meeting in the White House Situation Room "to make a final determination."

A agreement involving the Strait of Hormuz would be closely watched by governments and energy markets because of the waterway's role in transporting a significant share of the world's oil and natural gas supplies.

For India, developments in the Gulf carry particular significance. India imports a large portion of its crude oil requirements from the region, and disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have historically raised concerns about energy security, shipping costs and inflationary pressures.

Iran obtains concessions through missiles, not dialogue: Tehran's top negotiator



TEHRAN

Iran obtains concessions with missiles not through dialogue, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf said on Friday. "We obtain concessions not through dialogue, but with missiles; in negotiations, we merely make them understandable," Ghalibaf wrote on X.

Ghalibaf, Tehran's top negotiator in ongoing peace talks with Washington, noted that Iran has no trust in the other guarantees or words; only actions are the measure. While outlining Iran's approach to the ongoing negotiations with the United States aimed at ending the war, he said that no action will be taken before the other side acts. He emphasised that "the winner of any agreement is the one who is better prepared for war from the day after."

Meanwhile, the Trump administration claimed that its campaign of military and economic pressure has succeeded in bringing Iran to the negotiating table on its nuclear programme, with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent arguing that Tehran is now discussing issues that previous US administrations could not get it to

address. Bessent told reporters at a White House news conference that recent developments marked a significant shift in Iran's position and suggested that Washington's strategy was producing results.

"President Trump has done something that no other administration is able to do," Bessent told reporters. "We have gotten the Iranians to talk about their nuclear program and to perhaps commit to not having one."

The Trump administration has also laid down three non-negotiable conditions for any agreement with Iran, Bessent said, insisting that Tehran must surrender its highly enriched uranium, abandon any pursuit of a nuclear weapon and restore free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz.

"He's not going to take a bad deal. He's going to make a great deal for the American people," Bessent said. Bessent also claimed that pressure on Tehran had disrupted the Iranian leadership's decision-making process. "The Iranian government, such as it is, is three pillars. It is the elected government, it is the IRGC, and it is the clerics, and they are having trouble communicating," he said.

Australia must deepen defence ties with India to counter Chinese influence: Report

CANBERRA

Australia and India agreed to hold an annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue, joint exercises across numerous domains and closer co-operation on information sharing during the inaugural Defence Minister's Dialogue. Defence partnerships do not move this fast by accident but because the strategic logic demands it, a report has stated.

Released in April, Australia's 2026 National Defence Strategy has stated the Northeast Indian Ocean as part of Australia's primary area of military interest. The strategy has named India as a "top-tier security partner" and the most "im-

portant defence partner" in that region, according to a report in The Australian.

"The reasoning is clear. China's military build-up, described in the strategy as the largest in the world today, is increasingly visible in the Indian Ocean. The People's Liberation Army Navy's submarines patrol the region; Chinese research vessels survey its seabed; Beijing's strategic reach extends well beyond the Malacca Strait.

Australia's trade routes run through these waters, and both countries are resident maritime powers. This shared geography, and shared threat, creates a set of practical opportunities for deeper co-operation," Samuel Bashfield, Research Fellow at

the La Trobe Centre for Global Security and Grace Corcoran, Research Fellow at the Australia India Institute, wrote in The Australian.

"Maritime security is the obvious one, and the most developed. Australian and Indian maritime patrol aircraft now conduct collaborative anti-submarine warfare activities. The two countries are progressing an agreement on air-to-air refuelling. The Joint Maritime Security Collaboration Roadmap, discussed at the October meeting, points towards more sustained co-operation in the maritime domain across the region," it added.

The report highlighted that, for India and Australia,



defence industry is the most consequential opportunity, and the most complex as well. India's defence-industrial sector is a growing ecosystem of public shipyards, large manufacturers, defence start-ups, and Make in India policy, that focuses on technology transfer, local production, and indigeni-

sation as conditions of access. Australian defence industry is small, export-oriented, and generally sells finished capability instead of co-developing it in someone else's industrial policy. The top-down approach would be needed from governments of India and Australia for meeting the unrealised

potential. "As stated in a recent Australia India Institute report, this should be done 'by supporting smaller Australian companies to engage and by the Indian government providing greater clarity on where it perceives the opportunities to lie. They may also need to demonstrate commitment by procuring defence products made by Australia-India joint ventures,' it mentioned.

Australia's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Richard Marles is travelling to India later this week for the second Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue. Marles stated that he is looking forward to meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh during his

visit to India.

"Australia and India are top-tier security partners. I look forward meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to further strengthen our defence partnership following the strong progress we made during his visit to Australia last year," Marles was quoted as saying in a statement released by the Australian Defence Ministry ahead of the visit.

Highlighting that the first Australia-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue was held in Australia last October, the Australian Defence Ministry stated on Thursday that the meeting showcases unprecedented progress in the bilateral defence partnership and

a shared ambition to enhance cooperation.

On May 8, India and Australia held the 10th edition of Defence Policy Talks in New Delhi. The officials of India and Australia welcomed the increased frequency and complexity of joint exercises, according to the statement released by the Ministry of Defence.

"Both sides welcomed the recent advancements in bilateral defence cooperation. The establishment of the annual India-Australia Defence Ministers' Dialogue in 2025 has enhanced consultation and reflected the growing trust between the two countries," the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.



Credit to industry rises at faster 15.1 pc in April: RBI data
MUMBAI: (MAY 29)

Bank credit to industry rose at a faster pace of 15.1 per cent at end-April 2026, compared to 7 per cent in the year-ago period, as per Reserve Bank data released on Friday. The RBI has released data on sectoral deployment of bank credit for April 2026, collected from 41 select banks, which together account for about 95 per cent of the total non-food credit by all commercial banks. "On a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis, non-food bank credit grew 15.8 per cent as on the fortnight ended April 30, 2026, compared to 9.8 per cent during the corresponding fortnight of the previous year (May 02, 2025)," the RBI said.

Govt asks state fuel retailers to build LPG reserves for 30 days of demand
NEW DELHI: (MAY 29)

The government has asked state-run fuel retailers to expand liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) storage capacity to cover at least 30 days of demand, a senior oil ministry official said on Friday, as supply disruptions linked to the West Asia conflict highlight the need for larger reserves. "We are working on the strategic reserves. Oil marketing companies have been asked to work out (a plan) to have LPG reserves for a minimum of 30 days with them, and they are working on it," Sujata Sharma, joint secretary in the petroleum ministry, told reporters. The government has asked state-run oil marketing companies Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) to prepare plans for the additional storage over and above regular commercial inventories.

MONEY MATTERS
Rs 2,248 Crore, 9.7 Crore Lives
Reliance Foundation's Impact Goes Beyond the Numbers

HYDERABAD, 29 MAY 2026

Reliance Foundation stepped up its social spending in FY 2025-26, but the bigger story may lie in what that money delivered on the ground. Rs 2,248 crore spent on corporate social responsibility (CSR) — up from Rs 2,156 crore the previous year — pushing its cumulative post-COVID CSR outlay past the Rs 9,500 crore mark. Since inception, the Foundation has reached over 9.7 crore people across India through initiatives spanning rural transformation, education, health-care, sports, animal welfare, and environment. But behind the numbers lies a more human story — of a dairy farmer in rural India who more than doubled his income, of a first-generation scholarship student whose education is generating Rs 4.4 in social value for every rupee invested,



and of an early warning system that reached fishing communities on the Andhra Pradesh coast before Cyclone Montha made landfall. The Reliance Foundation Scholarship programme, launched in 2020-21, today supports 5,100 students annually. An independent study by Athena Infonomics India found that every rupee invested in the programme generates Rs 4.4 in measurable social value — a return that spans improved employability, higher lifetime

earnings, and broader community uplift. On women's empowerment, the numbers are equally telling. Over 75% of women participants in Reliance Foundation's digital literacy and financial inclusion programme reported greater financial confidence. Half said they were more actively involved in household financial decisions. Two-thirds noted a measurable reduction in gender-based disparities — outcomes that development economists recognise as leading indicators of lasting social change. Anant Ambani received the Global Humanitarian Award for 2025 from the Global Humane Society for his work with Vantara, Reliance's animal rescue and rehabilitation centre that has now cared for over 1.5 lakh animals — making him the youngest and first Asian recipient of the distinction. Foundation Chairperson Nita M. Ambani received both the Global Peace Honour Award and the KISS Humanitarian Award 2025 during the year. Numbers from the Rural Transformation Programme offer some of the most concrete evidence of ground-level impact. Dairy farmers saw daily milk production climb from 6.14 litres to 10.37 litres. Average annual dairy income rose from Rs 79,242 to Rs 1,30,395 — a 64.6% jump. Overall annual household income increased by approximately 56%. Behaviour change metrics are equally striking: 81% of participating farmers adopted artificial insemination, while 98% took up green fodder cultivation. When Cyclone Montha threatened coastal Andhra Pradesh, Reliance Foundation's early warning systems reached fishing and farming communities ahead of the storm — earning a felicitation from the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The Foundation also won eight awards for communication and storytelling, including at the International Innovation SABRE Awards South Asia 2025. Other recognitions during FY26 included the Indian CSR Award 2025 for Best Skill Development Initiative, the 19th CII National Award for Excellence in Water Management, and the FICCI India Sports Awards 2025 for Best Corporate Promoting Sports — High Performance.

Sensex ends 1,000 points as weak monsoon forecast, Iran uncertainty spook investors

Benchmark stock market indices witnessed heavy selling on Thursday, with the Sensex tumbling more than 1,000 points and the Nifty slipping below the 23,600 mark, as investors reacted to concerns over a weaker-than-normal monsoon forecast and lingering uncertainty around the US-Iran conflict.



The S&P BSE Sensex plunged 1,092.06 points, or 1.44%, to close at 74,775.74, while the NSE Nifty50 dropped 359.40 points, or 1.50%, to settle at 23,547.75. Market sentiment weakened after the India Meteorological Department (IMD) projected monsoon rainfall at 90% of the Long Period Average (LPA), raising concerns about a possible impact on agricultural output and food prices. Investors also remained cautious as uncertainty persisted

over the prospects of a lasting peace deal between the US and Iran, despite continued diplomatic efforts. The sell-off was broad-based, with the Nifty Midcap 100 falling 1.33% and the Nifty Smallcap 100 declining 0.85%. India VIX, the market's fear gauge, surged 8.02%, indicating a sharp rise in investor nervousness. Most sectoral indices ended in the red. Nifty Oil & Gas emerged as the biggest loser, falling 2.47%, followed by Nifty Metal, which declined 2.02%. Nifty Auto fell 1.96%, Nifty

Healthcare Index dropped 1.86%, and Nifty Consumer Durables lost 1.62%. The Nifty IT index was the only major sector to buck the trend, rising 0.60% on continued buying in technology stocks. Among Sensex stocks, Tech Mahindra was the top gainer, rising 1.86%. HCL Technologies gained 1.65%, while Larsen & Toubro climbed 1.07%. Asian Paints added 0.17%, and Infosys ended marginally higher. On the losing side, Power Grid Corporation was the worst performer, falling 3.46%. Indigo dropped 3.27%, NTPC declined 2.86%, Mahindra & Mahindra lost 2.72%, and Tata Steel fell 2.72%. Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, UltraTech Cement and Titan Company also witnessed heavy selling. Despite the sharp fall in equities, the Indian rupee strengthened significantly. The rupee ended at 95.00 against the US dollar, gaining 0.7% during the day and recording its biggest single-day rise since April 2. Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said, "The market witnessed broad-based selling pressure following the IMDs monsoon forecasts to 90% of the long period average (LPA), raising concerns among investors. The prospect of deficient rainfall, coupled with the increasing likelihood of an El Nio weather pattern, has heightened fears of elevated food inflation in the coming

Navi Finserv Reports 344.54% YoY Growth in Q4 Profit; FY26 Profitability Rises to ₹292 Crore

BENGALURU, 30 MAY 2026

Navi Finserv Limited reported a strong improvement in profitability for the quarter and financial year ended March 31, 2026, reflecting continued focus on portfolio quality, disciplined underwriting, collections efficiency and technology-led operational scale across its lending business. For Q4 FY26, standalone net profit rose 344.54% year-on-year to ₹134.83 crore, compared to ₹30.33 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Revenue from operations for the quarter increased 44.06% year-on-year to ₹738.19 crore. For the full financial year FY26, standalone net profit rose 31.64% to ₹292.21 crore, while annual revenue from operations grew 8.36% to ₹2,461 crore. Commenting on the performance, Abhishek Dwivedi, MD & CEO, Navi Finserv Limited, said: "Over the last few years, we have stayed focused on building a financial services business with strong operating fundamentals and long-term sustainability at its core. Our performance reflects continued discipline across underwriting, collections, risk management and execution efficiency. As the financial ecosystem matures, we believe institutions that combine technology, responsible growth and operational discipline will be best positioned to build durable customer trust over time." Over FY26, Navi Finserv continued investing in technology infrastructure, automation and data-led underwriting capabilities to improve customer experience and operational efficiency across its lending platform. India's financial services ecosystem continues to see strong structural tailwinds driven by increasing formalisation, deeper digital adoption and broader access to credit. Navi Finserv believes these shifts will continue creating long-term opportunities for technology-led financial institutions focused on sustainable scale and responsible growth.

About Navi Finserv: Navi Finserv is an NBFC registered with RBI and categorized as an 'NBFC-mid layer' pursuant to Scale Based Regulations and a wholly owned subsidiary of Navi Limited (formerly Navi Technologies Limited). Navi Limited (formerly known as Navi Technologies Limited) is a digital-first financial services company on a mission to make finance simple for every Indian. As one of India's fastest-growing financial destinations, Navi offers an easy-to-access suite of financial services (directly and through partners) including loans, insurance, mutual funds, and UPI payments. With millions of users across the country, Navi combines in-house technology with deep consumer insight to create financial solutions that are intuitive, accessible, and reliable. Navi serves customers across their financial journeys with a single, integrated experience. Headquartered in Bengaluru, Navi is committed to building a modern financial destination that is built on transparency, speed, and trust.



Wipro jumps 5%, lifts IT stocks as AI deal sparks sector rally

Wipro shares: Wipro stock gained as much as 4.76% during the day to Rs 211.20, while its American Depository Receipts (ADRs) listed in the US had jumped more than 18% overnight. Wipro shares surged nearly 5% on Thursday, leading a broad rally in information technology stocks after the company announced an expanded artificial intelligence partnership with US-based software firm ServiceNow. The stock gained as much as 4.76% during the day to Rs 211.20, while its American Depository Receipts (ADRs) listed in the US had jumped more than 18% overnight.

Wipro said the partnership would help organisations reduce procurement bottlenecks, improve service quality and issue resolution in telecom operations, and strengthen cybersecurity response systems through AI-driven workflows. The rally in Wipro quickly spread across the broader IT sector. Infosys jumped 3.80%, Tata Consultancy Services gained 1.70%, HCL Technologies rose 1.46%, and Tech Mahindra advanced 0.91%. The Nifty IT index climbed more than 2%, making it one of the top-performing sectoral indices of the day. The strong gains in IT heavyweights also helped support the broader market. At a time when several banking, industrial and consumer stocks were trading in the red, buying in Infosys, TCS, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra and Wipro helped keep benchmark indices in positive territory. Apart from the AI partnership, investor sentiment has also been supported by Wipro's upcoming share buyback. In April, the company's board approved a Rs 15,000 crore buyback at Rs 250 per share. Wipro plans to repurchase up to 60 crore equity shares, representing more than 5% of its equity capital. The record date for the buyback has been fixed as June 5. With a sharp ADR rally, fresh optimism around AI-led growth opportunities and continued interest ahead of the buyback, Wipro has emerged as one of the best-performing large-cap IT stocks in recent sessions.

Absolut maker fights Delhi ban over Rs 3,000 crore tax dispute

The Delhi High Court has rejected Pernod Ricard's plea to resume liquor sales in the capital. The order adds to a separate customs dispute that has put nearly Rs 3,000 crore at stake. Absolut Vodka maker faces Delhi ban, Rs 3,000 crore tax battle in India Absolut Vodka may remain unavailable in Delhi for the foreseeable future after the Delhi High Court rejected Pernod Ricard's plea to restart sales in the city. The setback comes at a difficult time for the French liquor company, which is also battling a tax dispute involving a demand of nearly Rs 3,000 crore, reported news agency Reuters. The latest setback came on Friday when the Delhi High Court rejected Pernod Ricard's plea seeking permission to resume sales in the national capital. The ruling means the company's brands, including Absolut Vodka and Chivas Regal, are unlikely to return to liquor store

shelves in Delhi anytime soon. Pernod Ricard's products have been unavailable in Delhi since 2023 as the company remains caught in the investigation linked to Delhi's 2021 excise policy. The dispute centres on whether a company named as an accused in the case can continue to receive a licence to sell liquor in the city. Delhi authorities had earlier rejected Pernod Ricard's



licence application, citing what they described as serious allegations made by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED). According to authorities, the company allegedly colluded with retailers to illegally increase its market share in 2021. Pernod Ricard did not immediately comment on the High Court verdict. The Delhi market is particularly important for the liquor giant.

India is Pernod Ricard's largest market globally by volume, and before sales were halted, Delhi accounted for roughly 5% of the company's nationwide sales. The legal setback in Delhi comes at a time when the company is already facing another major challenge involving customs duties on Scotch whisky imports. The dispute has been running for several years.

Indian Engineers Drive AI Innovation in Samsung Galaxy S26 Series

GURUGRAM, INDIA – MAY 29, 2026:

Samsung's Research & Development centre in Noida (SRI-Noida) has made significant contribution in the development of AI features for the Galaxy S26 series, Samsung's flagship smartphone launched earlier this year. "We started working on AI around three years ago. For Galaxy S26, we developed the Now Nudge and Now Brief features in close collaboration with the Suwon R&D office in South Korea," said Kyungyun Roo, Managing Director of SRI-Noida. Now Nudge provides proactive and relevant context-aware suggestions, while Now Brief surfaces timely reminders for important events. Some of the other AI features co-developed by SRI-Noida engineers for the Galaxy S26 series smartphone are Creative Studio, Call Screening and Direct Voicemail. Creative Studio



helps users create images, transform photos, design stickers, and make wallpapers on the S26 series, while Call Screening is like a personal assistant — AI can answer, transcribe and filter calls. "The Direct Voicemail feature was developed basis feedback from Indian customers. We developed it for the Galaxy A series first and this year, it debuted on the flagship Galaxy S26 series also," Roo said. Established in 2007, SRI-Noida's key focus areas include AI, technical development and service development related to smartphones, tablets and wearables. Roo said the opinion and feedback of Indian consumers are important and play a meaningful role in the development of new features, such as the Privacy Display that debuted on the Galaxy S26 Ultra and has become immensely popular since then. "In India, many OTPs come, and the traditional film used on top of the display blocks all the things. But our new Privacy Display only enables the notification area so it is quite beneficial for Indian users. I live in India, and so many OTPs come, and the OTPs are filtered well," Roo said. Learning and development is a priority for all SRI-Noida employees, who have been trained in Machine Learning and AI, thanks to a tie-up with top IITs. "We also have an engineer exchange programme with South Korea through which some of our engineers go there and some of the South Korean engineers come here. We collaborate closely as a global one team," Roo added.

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Toyota launches electric Urban Cruiser Ebella at Rs 23.6 lakh

BENGALURU, MAY 29:

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) on Friday announced the price of its all-electric SUV, the Urban Cruiser Ebella E3, at Rs 23.60 lakh (ex-showroom), marking a major step in the company's multi-pathway strategy towards sustainable and carbon-neutral mobility. The Urban Cruiser Ebella E3 comes equipped with a 61 kWh battery pack, delivering 128 kW of power and 189 Nm of torque. The company said the vehicle combines bold SUV styling with advanced electric mobility technology and premium cabin comfort. Built on Toyota's 'Urban Tech' design philosophy, the electric SUV features a hammer-head-inspired front fascia, aerodynamic silhouette, LED lighting setup, dual-tone exterior options and 18-inch alloy wheels. Inside the cabin, the Urban Cruiser Ebella offers ventilated front seats, ambient lighting with 12 colour



choices, sliding and reclining rear seats, panoramic roof and a JBL premium sound system. The SUV also gets a 10.25-inch digital instrument cluster and a 10.1-inch infotainment system with wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto connectivity. On the safety front, Toyota has equipped the vehicle with Level 2 Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS), seven airbags, a high-tensile body structure and a 360-degree camera. The company is offering an 8-year battery warranty along with assured buyback programmes, Battery-as-a-Service options and special finance schemes to enhance ownership experience. Toyota said it has strengthened its EV support network with more than 500 BEV-enabled service touchpoints and over 2,500 trained EV technicians across the country. Customers will also get access to 45-minute express maintenance services. The Urban Cruiser Ebella supports both AC and DC fast charging and includes smart connected features such as remote charging operations, charging schedules and battery monitoring through Toyota's i-Connect platform. The electric SUV will be available in five monochrome and four dual-tone colour options.



Under-construction or ready-to-move home

Which saves me more money in the long run?

Buying a home is exciting, but one question often leaves buyers confused: should you go for a cheaper under-construction property or pay more for a ready-to-move home? Let's have a look. We have all heard this line at some point: "Buying a

house is the biggest investment of your life." Fair enough. But what people rarely tell you is that buying a house can also become one of life's biggest financial dilemmas. I found myself thinking about this recently. If I were buying a home today, would

I go for an under-construction property because it looks cheaper on paper? Or would I stretch my budget a little and pick a ready-to-move home that offers certainty from day one? At first glance, the answer feels simple. A lower price

tag sounds tempting. But the deeper I looked, i.e., rent, GST, EMIs, tax benefits, delays and even legal headaches, the more complicated the maths became. So, when it comes to your money, which option truly makes more sense?

THE LOWER PRICE TRAP: IS CHEAPER ALWAYS BETTER?

Let us begin with what draws most buyers towards under-construction homes: affordability. The entry price is usually lower, payment schedules are more flexible and there is often hope that by the time the project is complete, the property value would have risen. It sounds like a smart financial move. But there is another side to the story. Akash Pharande, Managing Director, Pharande Spaces, says the decision largely depends on what a buyer values more — immediate certainty or long-term gains. "Properties that are still under construction usually come with lower entry prices, more flexible instalment arrangements, and often better appreciation prospects by the time the whole project gets finished," he says. At the same time, he points out that ready-to-move homes offer something equally valuable: predictability. "Ready-to-move homes give immediate possession, zero construction worries, and in many cases GST is not applied, so your overall budgeting feels a bit more stable and predictable." That made me think. Perhaps paying more upfront is not always about spending extra. Sometimes, it is simply the price of avoiding uncertainty.

THE HIDDEN COST NO-BODY MENTIONS: RENT PLUS EMI

Here is where the real financial stress often begins. Imagine booking an under-construction flat while continuing to live in a rented apartment. For several months, or in some cases, years, you may end up juggling rent along with pre-EMIs or home loan repayments. Suddenly, the "budget-friendly" home no longer feels so affordable. Pharande admits this can become a genuine challenge for salaried buyers. "For lots of salaried buyers there can be this short-term double financial load, especially when buying a home that is still under construction. They end up paying rent alongside dealing with pre-EMI or EMI responsibilities during the building period," he explains. While staggered payment plans offered by developers and banks can reduce some pressure, he says buyers still need to examine their cash flow carefully before committing. Tax expert and CA Nishant Shankar puts it even more bluntly. "A buyer may continue paying rent while simultaneously servicing pre-EMI

interest or EMIs on the home loan, creating a temporary double cash-flow burden. This can significantly strain finances, especially if possession gets delayed," he says. His advice is straightforward: be realistic about how long you can sustain both expenses without disrupting other financial goals.

TAXES CAN QUIETLY CHANGE THE ENTIRE EQUATION

One thing I realised while speaking to experts is that many buyers focus heavily on the purchase price but ignore tax implications. That can be an expensive mistake. According to Shankar, ready-to-move homes enjoy a clear edge when it comes to immediate tax relief. "In a ready-to-move property, tax benefits on both principal repayment and home loan interest generally begin immediately," he says. Under-construction properties work differently. "Principal repayment benefits typically begin only after possession, and interest paid during construction can be claimed in instalments after possession," Shankar explains. And then comes GST — a factor

many buyers underestimate. Under-construction homes generally attract GST, typically 5% for non-affordable housing and 1% for qualifying affordable housing.

Ready-to-move properties with a completion certificate, however, do not attract GST. That difference alone can noticeably alter the total cost of ownership.



ARE BUYERS PAYING MORE FOR PEACE OF MIND?

Sometimes I wonder if people buying ready homes are not really paying more for property — they are paying for peace of mind. You know exactly what you are getting. You can physically inspect the house, understand the neighbourhood, assess connectivity and even check practical things like sunlight and ventilation. Mohit Gawri, Vice President, Rise Infra ventures Limited, believes buyers need to stop looking only at headline prices. "Under-construction homes may appear more affordable upfront. Issues such as time delays, increased costs, and continuous expenditure on rent and EMIs cut down their economic benefit considerably," he says. For first-time buyers with limited savings, he believes certainty matters more than discounts. "A ready-to-move home offers something equally valuable: financial predictability. You know exactly what you are paying, when you are moving in, and what you are moving into," Gawri says. And honestly, predictability feels ordinary — until uncertainty arrives.

BUYING AN UNDER-CONSTRUCTION HOME MEANS BUYING A PROMISE

That said, under-construction homes are not necessarily a bad bet. In fact, for financially disciplined buyers with a longer investment horizon, they can still work well. Pharande believes tighter regulations and improved project monitoring have reduced risks compared to earlier years. "This worry is way less now than it used to be, mostly because there is tougher regulatory supervision under RERA and also better project lending practices," he says. Still, Shankar offers a reminder worth paying attention to: "In under-construction purchases, you are effectively buying a promise, not a completed as-

set." And promises, especially expensive ones, deserve scrutiny. Experts suggest checking the developer's track record, RERA compliance, delivery history, legal approvals and customer reviews before signing anything. Repeated delays, unclear approvals and overly aggressive discounts should immediately raise red flags.

DELAYED POSSESSION? BUYERS HAVE LEGAL RIGHTS

Many homebuyers assume delays are simply part of the property business. But legally, buyers are not helpless. Under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (RERA), homebuyers can seek compensation, interest for delays or even refunds if possession timelines become unreasonable. A major Supreme Court ruling in Pioneer Urban Land & Infrastructure Ltd. v. Govindan Raghavan reinforced that buyers cannot be forced to wait endlessly for possession, mentioned Shankar. Still, he adds an important caveat: compensation does not automatically mean recovery of every financial cost, especially separate home loan interest burdens.

SO, WHICH ONE WOULD I CHOOSE?

If my budget was fixed and the goal was simple self-use, I would probably lean towards a ready-to-move home. There is comfort in certainty. But if I had financial flexibility, patience and confidence in a reputed developer, I would not dismiss an under-construction property either. The lower entry price and future appreciation potential can still make financial sense. Because at the end of the day, buying a home is not just a financial transaction. It is a life decision. And perhaps the smartest home is not the cheapest one or even the most luxurious, but the one that lets you sleep peacefully without turning your finances into a constant source of stress.

Remote work is back in focus

Will it redefine how India chooses homes?



Flexible work is again influencing how Indian homebuyers assess where to live. The shift could move demand beyond office hubs towards space, practicality and quality of life. The next big shift in India's housing market may not come from prices, policy, or supply. It may come from something far more routine: the daily commute.

As a flexible work and remote-first thinking return to the conversation, alongside a broader push toward reducing unnecessary travel, the role of the office in everyday life is quietly being redefined. And when the role of the office changes, the logic of where we live begins to change with it. This is not unfamiliar territory. Just a few years ago, remote work transformed homes into multi-functional spaces—offices, classrooms, and lifestyle hubs. What followed was not just a temporary adjustment but a structural shift in how buyers evaluated homes. What is different now is that this transition may be more measured and more permanent.

DEMAND REMAINS STRONG, BUT THE DECISION FRAMEWORK IS CHANGING

Early signals suggest that demand itself is not weakening. As per ANAROCK data, housing sales across India's top seven cities—MMR, NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, and Kolkata—rose by around 7–9% year-on-year in Q1 2026 to over 1.01 lakh units, re-

flecting steady underlying demand even as work patterns and commute realities continue to shift. But beneath that stability, the way people make decisions is beginning to evolve. Earlier, the home-buying question was straightforward: "How close is the office?" Today, it is becoming, "How often do I need to go there at all?" That single shift is beginning to rewrite the housing decision.

FROM COMMUTE-DRIVEN TO LIFESTYLE-DRIVEN CHOICES

If office attendance is no longer a daily requirement, proximity starts to lose its absolute hold. It doesn't disappear, but it competes with other priorities. Space, flexibility, layout, and quality of life are gaining importance. At the same time, the cost of commuting is becoming more visible. Long travel times, rising fuel expenses, and unpredictable congestion are no longer just inconveniences; they are influencing financial and lifestyle trade-offs. What this creates is a gradual move from commute-optimised buying to lifestyle-optimised buying.

HOW HOMEBUYER PREFERENCES COULD EVOLVE

This shift is likely to show up in how buyers evaluate homes. Space could again become a priority, but this time for a purpose that matters. Buyers may be looking for homes that are more practical than just bigger, with layouts that allow for focused work, adaptability and longevity. At the same time, the acceptable radius for homebuying may expand. When commuting is only necessary a few days a week, a greater distance from the workplace is more ac-

ceptable in exchange for bigger homes, better communities, or better living environments. The decision, in essence, is not just about getting to the office faster; it's about living better.

A POTENTIAL SHIFT IN WHERE DEMAND FLOWS

As this mindset evolves, demand may start to grow beyond the traditional office-centric areas. Peripheral suburbs, integrated townships and plotted developments could see better traction.

More importantly, Tier-2 cities could be back in the spotlight — not as a stop-gap alternative but as a viable long-term option. With better infrastructure and more economic activity, these cities are better able to meet the needs of people who live and work there. Flexible work only strengthens their argument.

From the developer perspective, it's a step towards practicality. Projects may increasingly focus on usability over excess—homes designed for everyday living, not just for looks.

This includes flexible layouts, work-friendly spaces and community infrastructure to support more time at home. The emphasis may also shift toward affordability alignment and execution discipline, rather than purely premium positioning or speculative expansion.

As flexible work reshapes how people structure their week, it is also reshaping how they define a "good home." And in that shift, the next phase of India's housing market will be driven less by proximity alone and more by how people balance work, life, and time.



IPL 2026
Rishabh has recognised that it's time to move on



NEW DELHI: Lucknow Super Giants' Director of Cricket Tom Moody said Rishabh Pant's decision to step down as the side's captain in the Indian Premier League (IPL) has come after he recognised that it's time to move on from captaincy for now and focus as a player after two difficult seasons. Pant, 28, was bought for Rs 27 crore by LSG at the mega auction held in 2024, making him the most expensive purchase in IPL history. But under him, LSG had a disappointing time, getting 10 wins and 18 losses in two seasons, where they finished seventh and tenth, respectively. Pant himself didn't set the stage alight with the bat, as seen from his modest returns of 269 runs in 2025 and 312 in 2026. "At the end of the day, Rishabh has recognised that it's time to move on from captaincy for now and focus as a player."

ASIAN U20 ATHLETICS
Pooja improves women's national high jump record in HK



HONG KONG: India's talented high jumper Pooja improved the national and meet record on the second day of the 22nd Asian U20 Athletics Championships being held in Hong Kong, on Friday. On her way to winning the gold medal with a jump of 1.93m, Pooja improved the decade-old national record of 1.92m set by Sahana Kumari in 2012. Pooja's performance on Friday was also better than the previous Asian U20 meet record of 1.90m set by Svetlana Radzivil of Uzbekistan in 2006. Race walker Nitin Gupta set the ball rolling by winning first position in the men's 5000m race walk. His gold-medal-winning time was 19:47.49 seconds. The talented race walker, however, fell short of his own Asian U20 record of 18:47.37.

'I never knew how long I could last': Nadal opens up on career-long battle with pain

NEW DELHI

"I've had to make decisions about my health, where you are on the borderline between right or wrong," the 39-year-old admitted to the BBC. "But if I hadn't explored all that, I probably would have had 10 fewer Grand Slams...This is the reality." Nadal suffered the first diagnosis of the rare Muller-Weiss syndrome just two months before clinching his first French Open crown at just 19. He sustained a broken bone during the 2005 Madrid Open final, which was a rare illness that is partially attributed to the intense physical training of his childhood with his uncle Toni Nadal, immediately jeopardising his health.

Instead of accepting that the chronic condition meant that his career was over, Nadal proceeded to rack up a remarkable 13 additional Grand Slams over the course of nine years, and in doing so, he secured no less than one Grand Slam trophy a season, cementing his status as the greatest clay court player to ever play the game. But on the inside, the trophies and cele-



brations hid continuous doubts about what the future held. "Tennis became a race against time," Nadal confessed to the BBC. "Always doubting my head about how long I can last with this foot? I never knew how long my career would last." "I always thought, maybe it's the last year, so there's no time to stop." The continued physical effort of competing at the very highest level also led to two serious health problems: a recurring tendinitis in his left knee and intestinal perforations caused by the excessive use of painkillers. During some matches, Nadal had no choice but to rely on specifically administered anaesthetic injections just to make it on court, and he readily admitted that his victory in the 2022 French Open – his final career.

IPL 2026: Gill's hundred leads GT into final against RCB with seven-wicket win over RR

NEW CHANDIGARH

Shubman Gill's majestic 104 off 53 balls and a record 167-run opening partnership with B Sai Sudharsan powered Gujarat Titans to their highest successful chase in the IPL, as they overhauled Rajasthan Royals' 214 in Qualifier 2 to book a spot in the title clash, where they will take on defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

On a tricky two-paced pitch with variable bounce, RR rode on Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's sparkling yet mature 96, Ravindra Jadeja's attacking 45, and Donovan Ferreira's whirlwind 38 not out to post 214/6 in their 20 overs at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium.

But Gill stepped up when it mattered the most to score his fifth IPL century, laced with 15 fours and three sixes coming at a strike-rate of 196.23. Though the rest of the GT batters finished off the chase, the game will be remembered for Gill's brilliant hundred, where he didn't mistime much and was at his classy best - finding the gaps with ease and being elegant in his pulls and

lofts to bring RR's season to an end. Sudharsan, meanwhile, hit 58 off 32 balls, before he extraordinarily fell hit wicket for a second consecutive time - losing control of the bat and hitting the stumps. GT's chase of 215, completed with eight balls to spare, is their highest successful run-chase as their usual template of Gill and Sudharsan scoring plenty of runs clicked yet again.

The win now sends them into their third IPL final, where they will face RCB at their home ground, the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad. The clash is a repeat of Qualifier 1, with the league's top two sides contesting for their second IPL title.

Electing to bat first, RR were jolted early by losses of Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel before Jadeja provided impetus before retiring hurt with an elbow injury and returned later to make 45 off 35 balls. Ferreira then tore into Rashid Khan in the final over, bringing 27 runs, including smashing four sixes, to hit 38 off just 11 deliveries, while Sooryavanshi's knock, different in nature from his Eliminator knock of 97, was just as impactful as



his 96 off 47 balls was studded with eight fours and seven sixes.

It also made Sooryavanshi the quickest batter to reach 1000 IPL runs and become the new holder of the record of most boundaries hit by a batter in a single edition of the IPL. The teenager reached his fifty in 31 balls – his slowest half-century in the IPL, but added 46 runs in the next 17 deliveries.

The hallmark of his knock was playing as per the situation with remarkable maturity and range of strokes, though he fell one hit

short of a century once again. At 9/2, Jadeja, promoted up the order, joined Sooryavanshi to steady the ship. The left-hander counter-attacked, pulling Siraj for boundaries and a six, while Sooryavanshi, troubled by bouncers and not finding his usual timing, launched Rabada over the sight screen for a 91-metre maximum. The pair rebuilt briskly and hit boundaries well before Jadeja retired hurt due to an elbow issue.

Rashid's introduction backfired as Riyan Parag and Sooryavanshi

hammered him for 18 runs in the ninth over. Jason Holder, however, pulled things back with wickets of Parag and Dasun Shanaka in quick succession, while Jofra Archer's cameo was brought to a stiff end by Prasidh Krishna to leave RR at 120/5. Sooryavanshi dropped once on 46 by Sudharsan, capitalised with clean hitting. After bringing up his fifty, he accelerated with audacious strokes - with a forehand slap off Holder and a towering pull off Siraj being the standout shots.

Jadeja returned after treatment and added crucial runs, even as Sooryavanshi cleared Washington Sundar twice for sixes in the 17th over. He looked set for his second IPL hundred of this season, but mistimed the upper cut and was caught at third man off Rabada.

Ferreira then took centre stage. After taking two fours off Prasidh, he unleashed a stunning assault on Rashid in the final over - smashing four consecutive sixes, including an inside-out loft over extra cover and a slog sweep over mid-wicket, as his late surge lifted RR past the 210-run mark. GT's chase began with Sudharsan and Gill taking

down Jofra Archer, as 19 runs came off it. Gill then hit back-to-back boundaries against Archer in the latter's next over to set the tone of a masterful run chase. Nandre Burger leaked more runs, including Sudharsan being dropped on 14 by Donovan Ferreira. Gill's timing was impeccable, driving and pulling with authority, while Sudharsan matched him stroke for stroke.

By the end of the Power-play, the pair had taken GT to 69 for no loss. Gill continued to dominate, cutting and lofting Brijesh Sharma and Yash Raj Punja with elegance, as he brought up his fifty in 30 balls. Sudharsan too reached his fifty in 26 deliveries with a lofted six off Punja.

The partnership continued to flourish with breathtaking and well-timed boundaries, which meant the asking rate never went out of control, before Sudharsan's innings ended bizarrely, hit wicket for the second time in successive matches – this time off Brijesh Sharma. Gill, meanwhile, brought up his hundred with a lofted extra cover drive off Ravindra Jadeja and celebrated with his trademark bow.

Shooting World Cup Munich: Suruchi defends her gold, Esha wins silver as India rises to top of the tally



NEW DELHI

It was double delight for India on competition day four of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol leg in Munich, as Suruchi Inder Singh struck gold and Esha Singh silver in the women's 10m air pistol, helping them rise to the top of the medal tally. Suruchi shot 242.1 to defend the gold she won last year at the Olympic Shooting range, while her senior teammate shot 241.2 to settle for silver. Korean Choo Gaeun won bronze.

India now has two gold and one silver at the year's second ISSF World Cup leg, with the two mixed events in rifle and pistol, left to be played on Saturday (May 30, 2026).

Earlier in the day, the duo just about made the final, claiming the last two qualification spots. Both shot 578, pipping the reigning Olympic champion Oh Yejin by a point. Choo topped the field with a 583, while London Olympics silver medalist Celine Goberville of France and Bulgarian Miroslava Mincheva (580), the reigning European champion and winner of the bronze medal in the 25m pistol two days back, were among the others to go through.

Suruchi had a slower start compared to Esha, coming in at fifth after the first series of five single shots. Esha was third behind Celine

and Choo at this stage. As the final warmed up, Suruchi began finding her range, Esha and Celine were blowing hot and cold, and Choo was threatening to pull away. At the end of the 14th, Suruchi, with three straight scores above 10, was challenging Choo for gold. Celine and Esha had weakened to fourth and fifth. The 15th and 16th were the most dramatic,

with Celine and Esha coming up to joint third first and then Celine bowling out in sixth as the two Indians got up to medal position behind Choo. The pressure then got to Choo as Suruchi and Esha were hardly missing the 10-ring. Suruchi overtook her after the 19th, and Esha ensured she took bronze after the 20th.

Esha had 1.2 to make up on Suruchi over the last two shots. That became 1.3 before the 24th and final shot, and despite a 10.7 from Esha, Suruchi's 10.3 would help her defend her Munich gold comfortably. "I don't have any pressure, anytime," said the youngster, after claiming a fourth World Cup and fifth ISSF gold in two years. Esha too won a creditable second medal in the competition, after winning gold in the women's 25m pistol with a world record score on Wednesday.

Tomar disqualified for weapon discrepancies

In two other men's events on the roster, India missed out, one in very unfortunate circumstances. In the men's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P), Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar shot a 592 to qualify in sixth place, but was disqualified after his weapon was deemed to have discrepancies in dimensions in a random post-competition check. Rudranksh Patil shot 585 to finish 53rd.

French Open: Andreeva advances, Muchova crashes out; China's Wang Xiyu reaches last 16 for first time



PARIS

Mirra Andreeva continued her impressive run in the French Open at Roland Garros, advancing to the fourth round after defeating Marie Bouzkova, even as Karolina Muchova, a top-10 seeded player, was knocked out at Stade Roland Garros in Paris on Friday.

Andreeva's win marks her tour-leading 32nd victory of the season and her 18th win on clay. She will now face Switzerland's Jil Teichmann, who secured the ninth top-10 victory of her career with an upset over Muchova.

Andreeva, whose best Grand Slam result came at the French Open when she reached the semifinals in 2024, defeated Marie Bouz-

kova 6-4, 6-2 in 1 hour, 35 minutes. The victory improved the 18-year-old Russian's record against Bouzkova to 5-0 on the WTA Tour Driven by Mercedes-Benz, with all five wins coming in straight sets.

With the win, Andreeva became the youngest woman to reach the Round of 16 at Roland Garros in three consecutive seasons since Martina Hingis from 1997-99. The victory was also her tour-leading 32nd match win of the season and her tour-leading 18th win on clay. Bouzkova, meanwhile, exited in the third round in Paris for the third straight year. The loss also marked her 11th consecutive defeat against a top-10 opponent.

Andreeva will next face Switzerland's Jil Teichmann, who rallied from 1-5 down

in the second set to upset Muchova 6-1, 7-5 in 1 hour, 52 minutes, and reach the fourth round at Roland Garros for the second time in her career.

Teichmann returned to the tour in April after taking time away from competition since September last year. Playing just her seventh tournament since her comeback, the former world No. 21's best result of the season came in Rabat last week, where she reached the semifinals.

Now ranked No. 170 in the world, Teichmann secured the ninth top-10 victory of her career with the win over Muchova. Teichmann is one of three Swiss women to reach the third round in Paris this year, alongside Belinda Bencic and Viktorija Golubic - the first time Switzerland has

had three women reach that stage at a Grand Slam in the Open era. For Muchova, the defeat was her first this season against a player ranked outside the top 50 after entering the match with an 11-0 record against such opponents.

Wang Xiyu advances

China's Wang Xiyu advanced to the last 16 of the women's singles for the first time in her career with a 6-3, 7-5 victory over Ukraine's Yulia Starodubtseva on Friday. Wang made a sluggish start and fell 0-3 behind in the opening set before turning the match around. The Chinese player broke Starodubtseva in the fourth game and quickly seized the momentum, reeling off six consecutive games to take the set 6-3.

French Open: In epic comeback, Fonseca rallies from two sets down to stun Djokovic in Round 3

PARIS

Brazilian youngster Joao Fonseca scripted an epic comeback at the French Open on Friday, fighting back from a two-set deficit to stun three-time champion Novak Djokovic in a five-set thriller in the third round at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris.

Fonseca, the 19-year-old #Next-GenATP, looked down and out as Djokovic surged ahead by winning the first two sets. But the Brazilian rallied brilliantly to win the next three sets to shock the record 24-time major champion 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5, 7-5 in one of the matches of the fortnight at the clay major. With Jannik Sinner already sent packing, Djokovic's defeat stripped the clay court major of another touted title contender, further leaving the men's singles draw open.

It was curtains for Djokovic as Fonseca prevailed in four hours and 53 minutes to inject even further intrigue into one of the most wide-open Grand Slam tournament draws in recent memory.

Fonseca was just five points from defeat when serving at 3-4, 15/40 in the fourth set, but the 28th seed



fended off those two break points and rode that momentum to force a decider. Djokovic at times appeared to be struggling physically between points, but the 39-year-old nonetheless quickly carved out an early 3-1 lead in the fifth set.

Fonseca fought back again, winning six of the final eight games to notch a famous victory, his second against a Top-10 opponent after his upset of Andrey Rublev at the 2025 Australian Open. With victory in

his first tour-level meeting with Djokovic, Fonseca became the first teenager to defeat former World No. 1 Djokovic at a Grand Slam event. Now into the fourth round at a major for the first time, the Brazilian will take on 15th seed Casper Ruud or 24th seed Tommy Paul for a quarter-final spot in Paris.

Fonseca struck two fewer winners (68 to 70) and nine more unforced errors (47-39) than Djokovic, according to Infosys stats, but

his ability to raise his game at key moments was crucial, perhaps best showcased by the way he closed out his win. Djokovic threatened to force a deciding tie-break after earning a break point with his opponent serving for the match, but Fonseca promptly sent down three aces to complete a memorable win. It was just the second time that Djokovic lost from two sets up, with the other also coming at Roland Garros, against Jurgen Melzer in 2010.

After setback in SC, WFI insists Vinesh can participate only in 50kg in Asian Games trials

NEW DELHI

With the Supreme Court refusing to stay the Delhi High Court order allowing Olympian Vinesh Phogat's participation in the Asian Games selection trials, the Wrestling Federation of India has insisted that she will be allowed to participate only in the 50kg weight category, in which he took part in Paris two years back.

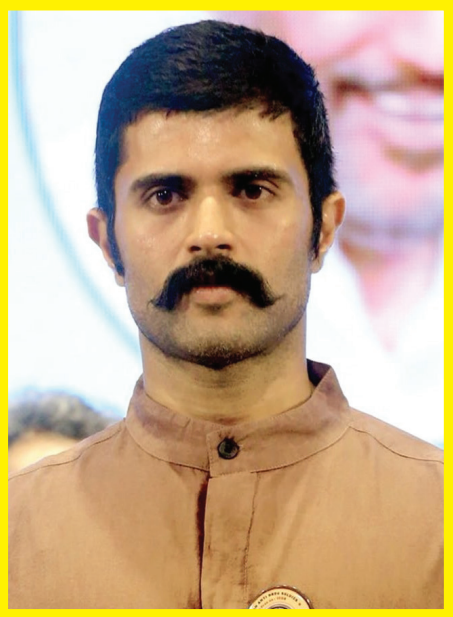
The WFI had approached the SC seeking a stay on the Delhi High Court order, but with the SC refusing to stop Phogat's participation in the trials, the federation seems to have thrown another spanner in the works by insisting that she take part in the 50kg and not 57 kg, to which she switched recently. "Vinesh Phogat will have to participate in trials in the 50kg category, the same weight class in which she competed at the Paris Olympics. As an iconic wrestler, she will be allowed to take part in the selection process, but only in the 50kg division. The weigh-in is scheduled for early morning," WFI sources told IANS.

The WFI seems to have resorted to this rule on the eve of the start of the competition, likely hoping that Vinesh fails to make the weight in the weigh-in on Saturday morning. Starting in the 48kg weight category, Vinesh moved up to 51kg and then settled in 53 kg, in which she won two World Championships medals and also at the Tokyo Olympics. However, she participated in both the 53 and 50kg categories.

Bollywood's Maddock Films eyes Vijay Deverakonda project

Maddock Films has emerged as one of Bollywood's most successful production houses in recent years. With blockbuster franchises and hits such as "Stree," "Stree 2," "Bhediya," "Munjiya," and "Thamma," producer Dinesh Vijan has turned Maddock into one of the most sought-after banners in Mumbai. After recently collaborating with Rashmika Mandanna, the production house is now reportedly looking at a project with Vijay Deverakonda.

Vijay Deverakonda was recently spotted at the Maddock Films office in Mumbai. He was accompanied by filmmaker Vikram Kumar of "24" and "Ishq" fame. According to industry buzz, Vijay has given the nod to a script narrated by Vikram Kumar, and the duo is said to be pitching the project to Maddock Films as a pan-India venture. At present, Vijay Deverakonda has a packed slate of films in various stages of production. These include "Ranabaali" and "Rowdy Janardhana." He also recently launched a new project with "Hi Nanna" director Souryuv. If all goes as planned, the Vikram Kumar film could become the fourth major project on Vijay's lineup.



Naga Chaitanya wins interim relief in personality rights case

Actor Naga Chaitanya has secured interim relief from the Delhi High Court in a personality rights case concerning the unauthorized use of his name, image, and likeness across merchandise platforms, AI-generated content, and online videos.

The matter came up before Justice Jyoti Singh after Senior Advocate Vaibhav Gaggar, representing the actor, argued that several websites were exploiting Naga Chaitanya's name alongside explicit search terms to drive traffic and circulate objectionable content. The court was also shown instances of unauthorized merchandise featuring the actor's likeness.

Taking note of the allegations, the court issued summons to the defendants and directed them to file their responses. Naga Chaitanya also sought a dynamic injunction to curb the emergence of new infringing websites and URLs.

The matter will be heard further after the defendants submit their responses.

From cricket, basketball to volleyball

Pan-India star Ram Charan hilariously shared that while academics were never really his strong suit, he made sure to shine on the field as he professed his love for sports.

Ram's upcoming film "Peddi" is a sports action drama, where his character acts as a "crossover athlete" who aces three sports such as cricket, wrestling and sprinting.

Talking about his love for sports in real life during a tete-a-tete with IANS, Ram, who is one of the highest-paid actors in Telugu cinema, shared that he went from captaining volleyball and basketball teams to playing cricket and participating in track and field events.

"I used to love sports. I used to be a volleyball captain, probably the shortest basketball captain also. I used to play cricket. I used to do track and field. So, I used to love sports. I mean, my grades were not so great. So, I must be excelling in one of them, right?," Ram Charan told IANS.

The 41-year-old star, who is recognised for his impeccable dancing skills, pushed him-

self physically and mentally to ace his role in Peddi, which also led to an injury. The actor was seen with a bandaged wrist during the interview and shared that he sustained the injury while shooting a scene.

Asked how much is too much for an actor to invest in a role?

Ram, whose tryst with cinema began in 2007 with Chirutha, said: "I think it's wonderful the way we all prepared for this role, her role and mine especially. It's about two and a half years ago was my last film and now we're back with Peddi, bigger, stronger and more confident," replied a very calm Ram. The Telugu film Peddi is directed by Buchi Babu Sana. The film also stars Boman Irani, Shiva Rajkumar, Janhvi Kapoor, Jagapathi Babu and Divyenndu. The film is finally releasing on June 4.



SINGING FOR A CAUSE

In a career spanning six glittering decades, Bollywood's ultimate 'Dream Girl' is ready to conquer a new frontier. Veteran actress and MP Hema Malini is set to make her live stage singing debut at 'The Dream Girl's Diamond Jubilee Concert' on July 10 in Mumbai. Organized in aid of the Cine & TV Artists' Association (CINTAA), the grand musical evening is themed 'Legends Ki Kahani, Legends Ki Zubaani'. Backed by a 15-piece live orchestra, Hema Malini will narrate her cinematic journey and sing unforgettable tracks from her iconic films, concluding with a special surprise song for the grand finale.

Industry Icons Rally for a Cause

At a star-studded press conference held at the CINTAA office, the official trailer and poster were unveiled in the presence of industry stalwarts including Poonam Dhillon, Padmini Kolhapure, Anu Malik, Suresh Wadkar, and key CINTAA committee members.

The press meet quickly turned into a nostalgic celebration. Padmini Kolhapure, who announced she will be performing a tribute to Hema Ji and Dharmendra, shared fond memories: "The first time I worked with her was on Dream Girl, and later in Ek Paheli. She is so beautiful inside and out."

A Night of Music and Philanthropy



The charity gala will double as a welfare drive, with a significant contribution made on behalf of Hema Malini toward supporting entertainment fraternity workers. A power-packed lineup of legendary vocalists will lend their voices to the evening, including:

Sudesh Bhosale, Kavita Krishnamurthy Subramaniam, Anup Jalota, Shabbir Kumar & Vijaya Pandit. The celebrations will also mark the launch of a new biographical book, co-authored by Hema Malini and RJ Anirudh Chawla.

Pooja Hegde Stuns in Cool Denim Outfit

Pooja Hegde has faced a tough time at the box office recently with several flops in Telugu, Tamil, and Hindi films. However, her upcoming movie Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai, releasing on June 5th, is giving her and her fans a lot of hope and excitement. The film is already creating massive buzz online. The songs and trailer are trending big time, and audiences are loving what they see. It looks like this movie has all the ingredients to become a big hit and bring Pooja back strongly into the spotlight.

Meanwhile, Pooja is leaving no stone unturned in her promotions. She is stunning everyone with her back-to-back stylish looks. In her latest pictures, she looks absolutely gorgeous in a cool denim outfit, keeping it chic and effortlessly stylish. Fans are rooting hard for her!

SK's Sigma Release Date Locked

Sundeeep Kishan teams up with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay's son, Jason Sanjay, for the latter's directorial debut Sigma, which has now finalized its release date.

The film is set to hit theatres on July 31st, as officially announced by the makers through a gripping, action-driven poster.

The poster features Sundeeep Kishan holding a large metal shovel over his shoulder, its blade stained with blood.

He stands in a dimly lit industrial backdrop, sporting a gritty look and

an intense expression.

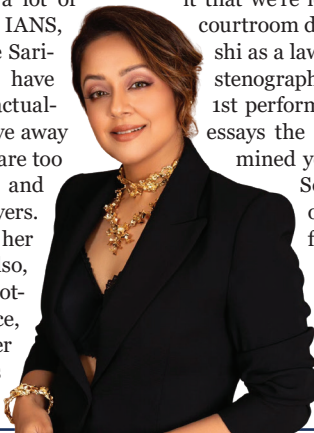
Billed as an action-adventure comedy, Sigma is being mounted on a grand scale by Subaskaran's Lyca Productions, one of South India's leading production houses.

Faria Abdullah plays the female lead opposite Sundeeep Kishan, while Raju Sundaram appears in a key role. Catherine Tresa is set to deliver a special dance number.

The makers previously unveiled an action-packed teaser showcasing the world of Sigma. With the release date locked, the team is gearing up to intensify promotional activities.

Jyotika talks about emoting through silences for 'System'

Actress Jyotika, who is receiving a lot of positive response to her work in the recently released streaming film 'System', has spoken about the importance of silences for her part in the film. The actress spoke with IANS along with her co-star Sonakshi Sinha during the promotions of the film in Mumbai. She shared that her character of stenographer comes with a lot of depth. Jyotika told IANS, "For me, I really like Sarika as a character I have not played before, actually. I don't want to give away too much, but there are too many shades to her and there are a lot of layers. So, those layers in her attracted me a lot. Also, there's a lot I'm emoting through silence, which was another factor, which was very challenging



as an actor". She further mentioned, "We've seen courtrooms and also other films which have been projected very well. So each time it's like learning for us also. Ke isse type ka court is like this, supreme court is like this, and the general court is like this. So it's always a learning from other films. I've really not been to an actual court. So it's just through films and how real they're showing it that we're learning". 'System' is a courtroom drama, and sees Sonakshi as a lawyer, and Jyotika as a stenographer. It marks Sonakshi's 1st performance as a lawyer. She essays the role of Neha, a determined young lawyer played by Sonakshi Sinha, taking on a tough challenge from her father (played by Ashutosh Gowariker) to be worthy of a partnership in his firm. The film marks her 2nd OTT film after 'Kakuda'.

