



STRONG VERBAL ATTACK
Pakistan is 'epicentre of terrorism': Rajnath
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Girls excel in CISCE exams
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MINOR RAPE CASES
Remove time limit on abortions, says SC
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Should the PIL jurisdiction be reconsidered?
Concerns have been raised about misuse
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CRUCIAL WIN
Titans get the better of Royal Challengers
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IN BRIEF



Shah to attend exposition of Buddha's relics

SRINAGAR
Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who arrived in Leh on Thursday, will attend the first international exposition of holy relics of Lord Buddha in India on the occasion of Buddha Purnima. This is Mr. Shah's first visit since street protests over the demands of Statehood left four protesters dead last September. » Page 14

3 children drown in golf course pond at DDA site

NEW DELHI
Three children, including two brothers, drowned in a pond at an under-construction Delhi Development Authority (DDA) golf course in Dwarka's Sector 24, the police said on Thursday. » Page 2

Iran vows to safeguard its nuclear capabilities

Tehran will secure Persian Gulf, implement new rules to manage Strait of Hormuz, says Mojtaba Khamenei; U.S. President had earlier said that he wanted a deal from Iran on the nuclear issue

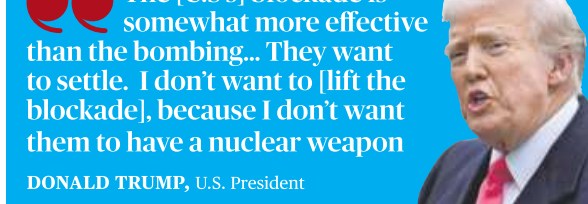
Stanly Johny

Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday that the country would "safeguard" its "nuclear and missile" capabilities and lay down new rules for managing the Strait of Hormuz, hours after U.S. President Donald Trump said a blockade of Iranian ports would remain until a nuclear deal is reached.

"A new chapter for the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz is taking shape," he said in a statement, marking Persian Gulf Day. "The Islamic Republic will secure the Persian Gulf region and dismantle the enemies' exploitative schemes in this waterway. The legal frameworks and implementation of new management for the strait will



MOJTABA KHAMENEI, Iran's Supreme Leader



DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President

bring peace and progress to the benefit of all the region's nations," he said.

The war on Iran, launched by the U.S. and Israel, has turned into a maritime battle of wills after Mr. Trump announced a ceasefire on April 8. While the ceasefire is still

holding, Iran's chokehold of the strait, the mouth of the oil-rich Persian Gulf, remains intact. The U.S. has imposed a blockade on Iran-linked vessels in the Gulf of Oman to exert economic pressure on Tehran. Last week, U.S. media reported that Iran made a

proposal to the U.S. via Pakistan promising to ease its control of the strait in return for the U.S. lifting its blockade. Iran said it would discuss outstanding issues, including the nuclear programme, in the second round.

Mr. Trump, in an interview, said on Wednesday that he wanted a deal from Iran addressing America's core concerns, including the nuclear issue.

"The blockade is somewhat more effective than the bombing... They want to settle. I don't want to [lift the blockade], because I don't want them to have a nuclear weapon," he said.

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SHIP HEADS TO STRAIT
» PAGE 15

Revenue-deficit States may face fiscal stress, says Centre

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

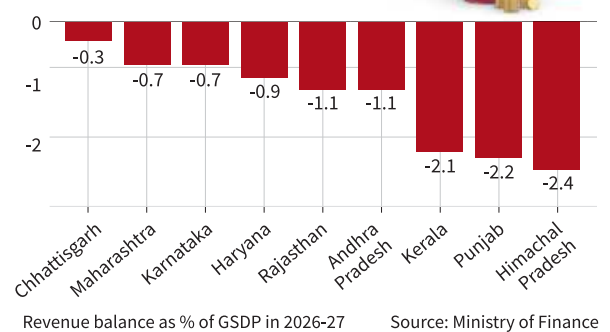
The Union Finance Ministry has warned that States with revenue deficits and high debt burdens will find it harder to deal with fiscal shocks, including from the West Asia crisis, forcing them to either reprioritise expenditure away from productive areas, or approach the Centre for more funds at a time when it is trying to consolidate its own finances.

In its Monthly Economic Review for April, the Department of Economic Affairs in the Ministry said nine of the 18 large States analysed were in revenue deficit as per their own projections for 2026-27. Seven are projected to be revenue surplus, while one is in revenue balance.

A revenue deficit is when expenditure on recurring items such as salaries, pensions, subsidies, and interest payments exceeds the revenue earned from sources such as taxes

In the red

Nine of the 18 large States analysed by the Ministry of Finance are in revenue deficit



Revenue balance as % of GDP in 2026-27 Source: Ministry of Finance

and fees.

The States with projected revenue deficits as a percentage of their gross state domestic products (GSDP) are Himachal Pradesh (-2.4%), Punjab (-2.2%), Kerala (-2.1%), Andhra Pradesh (-1.1%), Rajasthan (-1.1%), Haryana (-0.9%), Karnataka (-0.7%), Maharashtra (-0.7%), and Chhattisgarh (-0.3%).

Tamil Nadu and West Bengal were excluded from the analysis as they have so far presented only

interim budgets for 2026-27.

"Revenue-deficit States are constrained by the debt servicing obligations and carry, on average, significantly higher outstanding liabilities than revenue-surplus States, and many of them spend more than 15% of their revenue receipts on interest payments," the report of the Ministry noted.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 14

Joyous moment



Maiden trip: J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah greeting children at a ceremony to flag off the first direct train service between Jammu and Srinagar, at the Jammu railway station on Thursday. ANI (REPORT: PAGE 15)

Uttam Nagar clash: portions of accused's home razed

Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday demolished portions of a house linked to one of the accused in the Uttam Nagar clash case. The fracas between two families had resulted in the death of a 26-year-old man.

The demolition came a day after the Appellate Tribunal of the MCD dismissed an appeal for stay that was filed by the daughter of one of the accused.

DETAILS ON
» PAGE 2

'Systemic failures' made tribal man take sister's skeletal remains to bank: probe

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

A preliminary inquiry by the Odisha government has indicated systemic failures behind the desperate act of a tribal man who carried his sister's skeletal remains to a bank in order to prove her death.

Asked by the bank to submit proof of his sister's death to withdraw money from her account, Jitu Munda of Diananali village in Keonjhar district exhumed the body of Kalara Munda, who died two months ago, and carried the skeletal remains to the bank on Monday. He wanted to withdraw ₹19,300 that was in her account.

A day after the unsettling visuals posted online sparked outrage across the country, the bank handed over the amount to Mr.



The bank handed over the amount to three legal heirs, including Jitu Munda, in Keonjhar district on April 28. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Munda on Tuesday.

BJD president Naveen Patnaik referred to the incident in the State Assembly on Thursday during a special session on 'Participation of Women in Indian Democracy'. He claimed that officials repeatedly demanded proof of death, reflecting "complete apathy

and zero accountability".

Revenue Divisional Commissioner Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, who is heading the probe, said, "I, along with the District Collector of Keonjhar, examined an hour-long CCTV footage capturing banking inside the Malipasi branch of the Odisha Grameen

Bank on the day (April 27). It shows lapses on the part of the bank authorities."

'Turned away'

"The man stayed inside the bank for a considerable period of time (11.26 a.m. to 11.58 a.m.). He approached the cashier, manager, and other employees. The man grew aggrieved when the bank manager finally turned him away," Mr. Mohapatra said.

He added that the bank authorities knew Mr. Jitu Munda and Kalara Munda. "Both of them had withdrawn money about eight times in amounts ranging from ₹100 to ₹500. When the man came to withdraw ₹19,300, the bank authorities could have been more responsive," he said.

CONTINUED ON
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In dogged pursuit, police arrest theft accused from Shalimar Bagh

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A 45-year-old domestic worker accused of stealing gold jewellery and cash from her employer's house was arrested after a police raid in north-west Delhi's Shalimar Bagh.

According to police, Sonia alias Sonia had "created a fortress" of aggressive dog breeds, including pit-bulls and American bully dogs, at her residence to prevent police entry.

A team from Shalimar Bagh police station conducted a raid and found her hiding under quilts inside the house while the dogs stood guard outside.

A case was registered on April 19 following a complaint by Vijay Pal Gupta, who alleged theft by his housemaid.

As per police, she revealed during interrogation that she had pledged stolen gold jewellery to secure loans. Investigators have so far traced 15 gold loan accounts linked to her.

Gold jewellery weighing several grams has been identified across financial institutions, the police said. Police said her bank account has been frozen, and efforts are under way to recover the remaining stolen jewellery and identify possible associates.

Officials added that the accused is a habitual offender, with several cases filed against her.

Further investigation is going on, police officials said.

3 children drown in golf course pond at DDA site in Dwarka; probe ordered

Deceased include two brothers who left home after an argument with parents, say police; bodies found floating in pond by a guard; DDA forms committee, promises strict action if lapses found

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Three children, including two brothers, drowned in a pond at an under-construction Delhi Development Authority (DDA) golf course in Dwarka's Sector 24, the police said on Thursday.

The deceased were identified as Ravi Jaiswal, 8, Veer Jaiswal, 10, and Harsh, 11. Ravi and Veer had been missing since Wednesday afternoon. A guard alerted the police after he saw the three bodies floating in the pond on Thursday.

Police teams rushed to the spot at 7.07 a.m., accompanied by fire services and ambulances, and retrieved the bodies from the pond. The police said the brothers had left home "in a fit of rage" without informing their parents after "an argument with them". "Father Arvind Jaiswal is a plumber and mother a domestic worker. They are residents of Gola Dairy," a police officer said.

Harsh, a friend of the brothers, often visited their home. His parents are homeless and earn a living by selling balloons at traffic signals. His body was first identified by Mr. Arvind. Police said the children likely entered the golf course by scaling the fence



Death pool: The pond inside where three bodies were found floating on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

from the back, as the site has only one guarded entrance. An investigation is under way to ascertain the circumstances leading to the drowning.

"Seeking heat relief" Identification was delayed as no missing persons report had been filed. The children were finally identified around 2.30 p.m. after an intensive search involving at least 10 police teams.

According to the police, the children's clothes were found outside the pond, suggesting they may have entered the water to bathe seeking respite from the heat.

Anuj Kumar, a resident of Gola Dairy, said, "Initial-



Grief-stricken: Family members and relatives of the deceased outside a police station in Dwarka on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ly, we thought they were children of workers at the golf course who stayed in temporary tents but we would have identified them by now," he said, hours before the victims were identified.

The DDA has formed a three-member committee

to probe the incident. "The incident is deeply saddening. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the bereaved families. The committee has been directed to submit its report within a week. Strict action will be taken based on the findings," it said.

Uttam Nagar clash: portions of accused's home razed day after tribunal junks appeal for stay

Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Thursday demolished portions of a house linked to one of the accused in the death of 26-year-old Tarun Bhutolia, who was killed in a clash between his family and neighbours amid Holi celebrations in Uttam Nagar's JJ colony.

The demolition came a day after the Appellate Tribunal of MCD dismissed an appeal for stay filed by the daughter of one of the accused, who claims ownership of the property, noting the absence of ownership documents and proof that the construction adhered to building by-laws. The family had moved the tribunal on April 28, following an April 13 hearing in the Delhi High Court, which had granted a 10-day stay on demolition and directed the petitioner to seek relief from the tribunal within two weeks.

As per tribunal records, the MCD issued a show-



MCD officials carrying out demolition work in Uttam Nagar on Thursday. ANI

cause notice on March 11, which it said was pasted on the structure after it could not be served via speed post. A demolition order was issued on March 30 for properties C-172 and C-173 in JJ Colony, Hastal, Uttam Nagar, citing unauthorised construction from the ground to the fourth floor, along with projections onto municipal land. The civic body cited that the two plots had been amalgamated and the ground floor violated standard building norms. The appellant's counsel, however, contended that only the sealing or-

der dated March 14 was received and their reply dated April 2 was not considered. "The respondent took a pre-planned unilateral action by sealing the property," the counsel said.

Earlier on March 8, the MCD had demolished portions of another property of the accused, saying "those portions projected on the municipal drains and roads" and that "no notice was required in case of encroachment".

Heavy police presence Officials said due process had been followed and the demolition drive in the area was carried out on Thursday amid heavy police deployment.

While the civic body declined to issue an official statement, a senior MCD official said, "We cannot demolish the whole building because there are other structures close by. But we will leave it in 'unusable' condition."

It remains unclear how much of the structure was demolished.

Students will get textbooks before summer break: govt.

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Thursday assured the High Court that government schools students will receive their textbooks for the current academic session before the beginning of the

summer break. The statement was made before Justice Sachin Datta, who was hearing a plea seeking contempt action against the Secretary (Education) for "deliberate disobedience" of a 2024 order on providing educational material to students in a timely manner.

'No books': AAP stages protest

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Thursday accused the BJP-led Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) of failing to provide textbooks to students in its schools and staged a protest in Shalimar Bagh.

This Labour Day, rate yourself.

Do I call them my "paperwala" or know their name?



Do I ensure my security guard has basic facilities?



Do I think about how my garbage will affect those that collect it?



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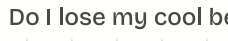
Do they have health support or insurance because of me?



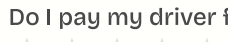
Do I give a poor rating because my ride arrived in 12 minutes, instead of 10?



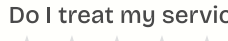
Do I lose my cool because they call to confirm my address?



Do I pay my driver for working overtime?



Do I treat my service provider with dignity?



Our ratings affect their livelihoods. So does our behaviour. Before you give them a rating, ask yourself what yours would be.

International Labour Day | May 1, 2026



EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE
Open e-Tender is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work.
S.N. : 1. Name of the work with its location: Supply installation testing & commissioning of 04 No passenger elevator (Lift) for newly constructed Auditorium and Block C at Palaputra Rail Parisar Digha Patna. e-Tender No. EL-C-N-MHX-ETEN-13-25-26. 2. Approx. cost of the work : Rs. 1,15,68,527.32. 3. Cost of Tender form : Rs. Nil. 4. Availability of Tender : On IREPS website: www.ireps.gov.in The above E-Tender, E-Tendering document along with full information is available on website i.e. http://www.ireps.gov.in. Note: In case of any discrepancies found in tender notice, English version will be final. Tenderers are requested to visit the website http://www.ireps.gov.in at least 15 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum/corrections etc. in response to this E-tender. 5. Earnest money to be deposited : As Per NIT. 6. Completion period of the work : 06 months. 7. Date and time for closing of tender : 18/05/2026 at 12:00 hrs.
Dy. CEE/CON/SPJ/SPJ
PR/0156/CON SPJ/CONST/TT/26-27/36

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE
The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)/ E.C.Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the president of India invites Open Tender from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in e-Tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways:
1. Tender Notice No. : TC-37-2026-SPJ, Name of work : (1) Track Survey by Digital GPS based System for Tamping through ALC and Recording Track Geometry Per Km in the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN-IV/SPJ. (2) Track Survey by Digital GPS based System for Tamping through ALC and Recording Track Geometry Per Km in the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN-III/SPJ. (3) Track Survey by Digital GPS based System for Tamping through ALC and Recording Track Geometry Per Km in the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN-III/SPJ. Tender Value (In Rs.) : ₹1,31,65,200, Earnest Money in Rs. : ₹2,63,300/-, Completion period of Work : 06 Months.
2. Tender Notice No. : TC-38-2026-SPJ, Name of work : Maintenance of new track assets of Supaul-Amha Pipra-Triveniganj Section. Tender Value (In Rs.) : ₹1,19,15,882.25, Earnest Money in Rs. : ₹2,38,300/-, Completion period of Work : 06 Months.
3. Tender Notice No. : TC-39-2026-SPJ, Name of work : Mansi-Saharsa - TTR (TWS +CMSC) 20 sets (1:12) , Tender Value (In Rs.) : ₹68,65,183.91, Earnest Money in Rs. : ₹1,37,300/-, Completion period of Work : 12 Months.
1. Last Date & time for receiving of Tender in E-Tender mode on IREPS web portal : - 22.05.2026 upto 12.00 hours. 2. Opening Date & time for E-Tender: 22.05.2026 after 12.00 hours. 3. Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on Website: www.ireps.gov.in. Amendments/modifications if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be uploaded in the website.
Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord/ ECR/Samastipur
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VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Staff Recruitment Phase 3 (Demo & Interview) for Teaching Staff for the session 2026-2027
Tentative month of Demo/Interview: May 2026 Kind attention DAV CBZ 2026 qualified candidates Applications are invited for various Teaching Posts mentioned below
PGTS Biology, Music (Hindustani Vocal)
TGTS English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Art/Painting, Physical Education, Social Science, Maths cum Science, Music
Primary Teacher English, Science, Computers, Dance, Music, Hindi, General.
Nursery Teacher, Special Educator, Wellness Teacher, Nurse
Candidates who have already applied for various posts in this school and successfully cleared CBT 2026 will be contacted by the school for collecting their CBT PEC for Phase 3 (Demo and Interview).
New applications need to submit for all CBT Posts on or before 07.05.2026 on prescribed proforma form which may be downloaded from the school website. Candidates who have qualified DAV CBT for higher posts may apply for lower posts also if the fulfill other eligibility conditions.
Duly filled application form, along with photocopies of PEC and other certificates & testimonials supporting candidates' qualification and experience and a passport-size photograph, must be submitted to the school office by hand.
registered post, courier by 07.05.2026
Avoid sending applications via email. Final selection will be made on the basis of Demo & Panel interview at School.
Principal Manager

PERSONAL CHANGE OF NAME PERSONAL CHANGE OF NAME
MY REAL name - Suryaprakash Sahu, Mother's name - Visheshwari Sahu (10th Class Marksheet and Name Proof). But Incorrectly mentioned in 12th Class marksheet. As have changed my name to Ravi Suryaprakash and mother's Visheshwari (without added Surname) affidavit date 28/04/2026.
I, RAVI Gokulgandhi s/o Pravin Gokulgandhi born on 09 March 1980 residing at 102 Memphis Towers, The Omaxe Nile, Sector 49, Sohna Road, Gurugram 122018, Haryana, in 12th Class marksheet. As have changed my name to Ravi Pravin Gokulgandhi vide affidavit dated 26 April 2026 executed before Notary Public, Gurugram

LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF THE CIVIL JUDGE (SRD) TURUVKERE
O.S. NO. 110/2025
PLAINTIFF: Fayaz Sab -V/-s-
DEPENDENTS: 1. M. Ashok Reddy, 2. Rafiq Ahmed, 3. Proposal, The Director/ Manager, M/s. RENE Energy, (Rajasthan Four) Private Limited, Corporate Office, 10th floor, DLF Square II, Block, Jacarada Marg, DLF city phase II, Gurgaon, Haryana-122002.
NOTICE
Whereas the above plaintiff has filed this suit against defendants and proposal defendant for sought for the declare the absolute ownership and void the registered safe deed dated: 25/7/2022 executed by 2nd defendant in favour of 1st defendant in respect of suit schedule property.
Hence here by requesting to you appear before this Hon'ble court by personally or their counsel and failing which this case will be heard in your absence.
This case is stand posted on 12/06/2026 at 11:00 A.M.
SCHEDULE
Land bearing SYNO: 47/2 (old number and old No. 47/2/3) now present new phodi SY.NO:47/8 of Gundikavall Gramma, Dandimashvara Hobli, Turuvekere Taluk an extent of 1 acre 35 guntas and 4 Kharas 5 Guntas in total 2 acres and bounded by: East by: Rafiq Sab land, West by: Abdul Hakim land, North by: Aswathnarayana Land, South by Aerodram land.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on this 28/04/2026
By order of the Court, Chief Ministerial Officer, Sr. Civil Judge & J.M.F.C Court, Turuvekere
ASLAM, C.N. GANGARANGIAH
Advocates
7th Cross, C.M. Layout, Kyyathasandra Pin code:57104, Tumkur town. Mobile: 9901017348.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of DESH PRATHAM PARTY. The office of the party is located at SHOP NO. 19, SECTOR-12, R.K.PURAM, NEW DELHI-110022. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as political party under Section 29A of The Representation of the People Act, 1951. Name and Address of the bearers of the Party as follows: PRESIDENT: RAJESH KALIA, R/O SHOP NO. 19, SECTOR-12, R.K. PURAM, NEW DELHI-110022. GENERAL SECRETARY: HARSH DEVGAN, R/O PLOT NO. 70, 2ND FLOOR, POCKET 21, SECTOR-24, ROHINI, DELHI-110085. TRESURER: SUBHASH NAGPAL, R/O K-1, NAVBHARAT APARTMENT, A-4, PASCHIM VIHAR, NEW DELHI-110063. If anyone has any objection to the registration of DESH PRATHAM PARTY (name of the proposed Party) they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party) Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, Vivek Arora, declare loss of Allotment Letter, Consideration Receipts, and Share Certificate bearing number 14117 for 710, Manchhat CGHS Ltd, Plot-42, Sec-10, Dwarka, N, Delhi-75. FIRs No. 3397804/2/025; 3391642/2025 registered. Certified that Documents not mortgaged/pledged/secured to any individual/bank/institution and No encumbrance/claim on them. Any information regarding above, contact within 15 days at: M: 9810324460; Email: iit.vivek@gmail.com

Haryana CM invites Punjab industrialists to set up units

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Thursday invited industrialists from Punjab to set up units in Haryana, as the State government works on a new industrial policy aimed at boosting investment and employment. The outreach comes ahead of the 2027 Punjab Assembly election.

The CM extended what he described as an "open invitation" during a meeting with a delegation of industrialists from Punjab, where he discussed issues related to industry, investment and employment.

"The Haryana government is committed to providing a conducive environment for industries. Haryana has made remarkable improvements in ease of doing business," Mr. Saini said.

Kerala starts sacred groves restoration

Sarath Babu George
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) has initiated a pilot restoration programme for sacred groves in collaboration with the local Biodiversity Management Committees.

Five sacred groves have been selected from Ezhikkara in Ernakulam, Pattanchery in Palakkad, Villiapally in Kozhikode, Iritty in Kannur, and Uduma in Kasaragod for the initial phase of the project.

'Kavu nurseries'

The major activities under the project include biodiversity assessment of the groves and identification of endangered and invasive species, establishment of 'kavu nurseries' for propagating sacred grove plant species, bio-fencing using native plants, removal of invasive species and plastic waste, and rejuvenation of ponds in sacred groves.



Green hub: A sacred grove in Kerala. H. VIBHU

Sacred groves are culturally protected ecosystems that support rare, endemic and medicinal plant species and help conserve soil and water. "However, due to developmental pressures and changing socio-cultural practices, many of these groves are declining in extent and ecological health," an official said.

For ecological restoration, over a hundred native and threatened species have been identified, and nearly 3,000 saplings will be planted at selected sites.

Calcutta HC hears pleas on EC move to deploy Central staff for counting

Separate petitions question CEO's jurisdiction over directive mandating Central govt. staff at counting tables, and last-minute shifting of counting centre; addressing transparency concerns, streamlining arrangements, says EC

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Thursday concluded the hearing of a petition challenging the Election Commission's (EC) directive to depute employees of the Union government and Central public sector undertakings for the counting of votes in the West Bengal Assembly election.

Polling for the 294-member Assembly was held in two phases, on April 23 and April 29, and counting will take place on May 4.

Petitioner's counsel Kalyan Banerjee told the court of Justice Krishna Rao that an EC notification, citing apprehensions over the possibility of ir-



Polling for the West Bengal Assembly was held on April 23 and April 29, and counting will take place on May 4. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

regularities during counting, had mandated that at least one of the counting supervisors and counting assistants at each table would be a Union govern-

ment or Central PSU employee to ensure transparency in the process.

Mr. Banerjee, who is also a Trinamool Congress MP, contended that this

was beyond the jurisdiction of the Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal.

Judicial scrutiny

Seeking dismissal of the petition, the CEO's counsel, Jishnu Chowdhury, told the court that the issue involved judicial scrutiny of the discretion exercised by the EC.

He said the EC, in its wisdom, had selected Central government employees for the task and that the decision was not contrary to any statute.

Another petition was moved before Justice Rao, alleging that EC officials had directed a "last-minute" relocation of the counting centre for the Kasba Assembly seat in south Kolkata.

The counting centre for

the Kasba seat was shifted from Gitanjali Stadium, within the constituency, to Biharil College in Alipore, petitioner Javed Ahmed Khan, the Trinamool Congress candidate, said.

The EC's counsel told the court that the venue was shifted to "streamline" functioning of the counting centres.

Mr. Chowdhury said that earlier there were five counting venues for 10 Assembly constituencies, but now there would be one venue for these seats.

He pointed out that the rules permit a returning officer to alter the counting venue if he or she finds it necessary for any reason. After hearing all parties, the court reserved its order in the two petitions.

CM declares Mizoram insurgency-free as last rebel group surrenders

Press Trust of India
AIZAWL



Chief Minister Lalduhoma said 43 members of the HPC(D) laid down their weapons on Thursday. ANI

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma declared the State "insurgency-free" after the last remaining ethnic insurgent group laid down arms on Thursday.

Although it remained dormant for several years, a faction of the Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) or HPC(D), headed by Lalhmingthanga Sanate, indulged in sporadic criminal activities at irregular intervals, officials said. The Sanate faction was considered the last surviving insurgent group in the north-eastern State.

The HPC(D) had been demanding an autonomous district council for the Hmar community people under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. A total of 43 members of the group, including Sanate, surrendered their weapons to the government during a "homecoming and arms laying ceremony" at Sesawng near Aizawl during the day. The ceremony follows the peace accord signed between the Mizoram government and the HPC(D) on April 14, effectively marking the end of insurgency in the State.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Lalduhoma said that the shadow of HPC(D) insurgency remained in mind whenever peace was spoken of in Mizoram in the past. "We approached negotiations with an open heart to reach an agreement. Our Home Minister and his colleagues worked tirelessly. Today, we have reached our goal. Now,

with a peaceful heart, we can proudly say Mizoram is a truly peaceful State," the Chief Minister said.

Shared Mizo identity

Urging various Mizo tribes to reunite, Mr. Lalduhoma emphasised that no single tribe stands above the identity of being Mizo.

"We are all Mizos. If sub-tribes within the Mizo community try to stand entirely on their own today, it is unlikely they would succeed. We must find contentment in our shared Mizo identity. We will thrive only through unity," he said.

Saying the price of peace is high, Mr. Lalduhoma, who resigned from the Indian Police Service decades ago to mediate peace during the secessionist movement spearheaded by the Mizo National Front, recalled that he left behind and lost many things to ensure peace in the region. He lauded those who surrendered, asserting that only the truly courageous have the strength to lay down arms for the greater good of the community.

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	40	25
Safdarjang	40	25
Palam	39	25

Delhi Palam Today
40°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be hot and uneasy. Night will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
38°C The weather will be slight hot. Night will be pleasant. Spell of dust storm with light rain and thundershower may occur.

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Timings	DELHI	
FRIDAY, MAY. 01	RISE 05:41	SET 18:56
	RISE 18:48	SET 05:03
SATURDAY, MAY. 02	RISE 05:40	SET 18:57
	RISE 19:45	SET 05:37
SUNDAY, MAY. 03	RISE 05:39	SET 18:58
	RISE 20:42	SET 06:14

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)
GMR Vishakhapatnam International Airport Ltd. (GVIAL) invites tender for Package, Hiring of Agency for Housekeeping and Maintenance Services of CSF Complex at Bhogapuram International Airport for a period of 3 years.
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1st - 15th May

Delhi (Municipal Corporation of Delhi)

Houselisting

16th May - 14th June

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A ND-ND

INBRIEF



Rajasthan healthcare system on ventilator under BJP: ex-CM

Senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot on Thursday accused the BJP government of crippling the healthcare system in the State, saying that a once "world-class health model" has been "put on ventilator". In a statement, the former Chief Minister said it is "shameful" that amid severe heat, patients are being forced to bring table fans from home and that treatment under the Rajasthan Government Health Scheme had been affected due to pending dues of around ₹2,200 crore. He further alleged that the government has discontinued the services of thousands of pharmacists and allowed costly medical equipment to go to waste. PTI

Car catches fire on expressway in Rajasthan, five burnt alive

Five members of a family were burnt alive while the driver was seriously injured after a car caught fire on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Rajasthan's Alwar district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place near Maujpur on Wednesday night when the victims were returning from a pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi in Jammu and Kashmir. Additional Superintendent of Police Priyanka Raghuvanshi said fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the blaze was brought under control in 15 minutes, but by then the car was completely gutted. The deceased have been identified as Santosh, his wife Shashi, mother Parvati and daughters Raghani and Sakshi. PTI

Bihar trapped in a vicious cycle of unchecked bureaucracy and rampant corruption: Tejashwi

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

Bihar's Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav on Thursday criticised the BJP-led State government alleging that no work is being done under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) administration. Taking potshots at the NDA, Mr. Yadav said that within six months of the Bihar Assembly election, the State has already witnessed two Chief Ministers.

In a post on X, Mr. Yadav asserted that Bihar finds itself trapped in a vicious cycle of unchecked bureaucracy, rampant corruption, a collapsed law and order system, financial mismanagement, murky governance, indiscipline, a corrupt work culture, poverty, mass migration, unemployment and mistrust.

"The first year's tenure of



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav

this misguided government formed through conspiracy has already been wasted. It is a matter of deep concern for the people of Bihar that the present government has neither cleared nor defined its goals, programmes and policies," the Rashtriya Janata Dal working president said.

Raising questions over the delay in expansion of the State Cabinet, he pointed out that it has been over a fortnight, but only three individuals are running the government - Chief Minis-

ter Samrat Choudhary and Deputy Chief Ministers Vijay Kumar Choudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav.

The Leader of Opposition alleged that the three leaders are taking "arbitrary decisions in an undemocratic manner".

'For selfish desires'

"Driven by lust for power, leaders of the NDA have kept aside all norms of morality and public decency and have turned the State into an arena of their own selfish desires. Over the past six years, the government has been formed or reshuffled five times; over the last 12 years, this figure stands at 10," Mr. Yadav said.

Targeting former Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, Mr. Yadav said the "power-hungry" Janata Dal (United) president has taken oath as CM eight times without any justifiable cause.

Maharashtra Day cheer: road, borewell reach Naxal-hit hamlets

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit
BINAGUNDA/GADCHIROLI

For the residents of Binagunda, a remote tribal hamlet nestled in Gadchiroli on the Chhattisgarh border, this Maharashtra Day (May 1) brings a sense of relief. In this Naxal-affected district, daily life is beginning to change.

Rama Durva, an elderly tribal resident, no longer has to undertake the arduous trek to Laheri.

Topographical barriers

Located 18 km away, Laheri serves as the primary administrative hub for Bhamragad taluka in Gadchiroli. Previously, the two settlements were separated by the steep mountains and dense forests of Dandakaranya, one of the last regions in the country where Maoism still holds sway.



An electric borewell has been installed in Binagunda. More civic works are under way. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT, VINAYA DESHPANDE PANDIT

This year, when Gadchiroli Police started working to open outposts in the remotest parts of the district to tackle Maoism, they zeroed in on Binagunda as one of the locations for the nine outposts.

In the treacherous terrain, infrastructure is scarce. So in opening an

outpost here, the police's biggest challenge was the lack of roads. Gadchiroli is one of the largest districts in Maharashtra geographically. Binagunda lies 220 km from Gadchiroli city in Bhamragad district.

To open an outpost, the police first built a *kuchha* motorable road through

the dense forests and the steep mountains. This helped them reach Binagunda. "It was a tough task. It took us 10 continuous days of work with heavy equipment under 24-hour police protection," said Assistant Police Inspector Rohan Patil, the in-charge of the Binagunda outpost.

Road for first time

"This is the first time we have a road connecting our village to Laheri. Many years ago, there was a path for the paper mill. But it shut down. Since then, we have had to trek to Laheri. However, now we can go there in vehicles," Mr. Patil added.

Avishant Panda, District Collector of Gadchiroli, said, "There are 10 other villages in Binagunda's vicinity that did not have any

road connectivity. But now, they have a good motorable *kuchha* road. A national highway is also going to come up in the area in the next two years."

The authorities are looking to provide mobile connectivity in the area.

"We are building a bridge as well to make sure that these villages do not get cut off during the monsoon," the Collector added.

Feb. 3 encounter

Within days of the Binagunda outpost's opening, one of the biggest encounters with Maoists took place at Phodewada, barely 5 km from the village.

"The outpost opened on January 24. And the encounter took place on February 3. Several of our C60 commandos were part of that encounter," Mr. Patil said.

Union Minister stalling CBI probe into ex-INLD Haryana chief's murder, alleges family

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Two years after then Indian National Lok Dal's (INLD) Haryana president Nafe Singh Rathee, 66, was shot dead by assailants in Jhajjar district's Bahadurgarh, his family on Thursday alleged that the CBI investigation into the case is being stalled by "pressure from a Union Minister".

Addressing a press conference in Chandigarh, Sheila Rathee, State executive member of the INLD, said she is "not satisfied" with the progress of the probe into her husband's murder. "My grievance is not with the CBI, but with those currently holding power in the Central government," she said.

"Nafe Singh Rathee was the State president of the INLD. He was murdered, yet no action has been ta-

Vijay holds meeting with TVK candidates ahead of poll results

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president C. Joseph Vijay on Thursday held a meeting with key office-bearers and candidates who contested the recently held Assembly election at the party headquarters in Panaiyur on the outskirts of Chennai.

The meeting was attended by party general secretary N. Anand, chief coordinator of the high-level committee K.A. Sengottaiyan, and party general secretary (election campaign management) Aadhav Arjuna, among others.

According to TVK sources, the meeting lasted more than an hour. Mr. Vijay interacted with the candidates, and laid down the procedures they needed to follow during the counting of votes on May 4.

The sources added that Mr. Vijay had asked the candidates to remain confident, and sought feedback on ground reports and victory prospects. Sessions on the counting of votes were held in batches.

The meeting assumes significance against the backdrop of the exit polls released a day earlier for four States, including Tamil Nadu. While many pollsters



TVK president C. Joseph Vijay.

predicted a majority for the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance, a few gave a lead for the TVK.

The TVK contested 233 seats, barring Edappadi, where it extended support to an independent candidate following the rejection of the nomination filed by the party's candidate. Mr. Vijay contested from two seats - Perambur and Tiruchi East.

EPS rejects exit polls

Meanwhile, rejecting the exit polls, most of which predicted a victory for the DMK-led alliance, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Thursday expressed hope that his party would win in 210 constituencies.

"Our party's uniqueness lies in the fact that it has always demolished the exit polls. It would do so in this election too," Mr. Palaniswami said in a statement.



Nafe Singh Rathee's wife Sheila and son Bhupender addressing a press conference in Chandigarh on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ken. Under such circumstances, how can common people expect to get justice?" Ms. Sheila said.

The FIR names nine individuals as accused, including former Bahadurgarh BJP legislator Naresh Kaushik. No arrests have been made so far, she said.

According to the family, while four shooters were involved in the killing, the actual perpetrators are still at large. Only "two dummy shooters" have been ar-

rested, she said.

Nafe's son, Bhupender, alleged that the accused were summoned to the police station only once. He claimed that a CBI official told him in private that "we want to make arrests, but there is pressure from a Union Minister in Delhi".

Mr. Bhupender said, "If the government fails to deliver justice, we will approach the courts. If justice remains elusive, we will turn to khap panchayats."

'No western outfit': Jain temple in U.P. issues dress code for women

Press Trust of India
BAGHPAT

The Digambar Jain temple in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat has issued a dress code for women devotees, asking them to avoid "western outfits", wear "modest clothes" and cover their heads while entering the temple premises.

In a notice issued a few days ago, the temple management said women should not enter the temple in "half-pants, bermudas, mini skirts, or western outfits such as jeans and tops".

The temple in Baraut village is a prominent centre of the Digambar Jain tradition and houses an idol of Parshvanath. It is consi-

dered an important spiritual site, attracting devotees from several States, including Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

'Publicity stunt'

Temple committee member Ankush Jain said the guidelines aim to maintain the sanctity and decorum of the religious site and is not intended to curtail personal freedom. "The decision has been taken to promote a sense of devotion and discipline among devotees," he said.

However, Amit Rai Jain, general secretary of the All India Shwetambar Sthanakvasi Jain Conference, termed the move a "publicity stunt".

IUML to back Satheesan as Kerala CM if UDF wins poll

The Hindu Bureau
KOZHIKODE

Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) Kerala president Syed Sadikali Shihab Thangal has backed V.D. Satheesan as a possible Chief Ministerial candidate if the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) is voted to power in the State.

Mr. Satheesan is the Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly.

Addressing the media in Malappuram on Thursday, he said the UDF would keep in mind "people's



Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Assembly V.D. Satheesan at a roadshow in Kochi recently. PTI

sentiments" while choosing the Chief Minister. "I think Mr. Satheesan enjoys the highest amount of sup-

port as Chief Minister, or that is what is seen in most of the exit poll surveys. That means people have gi-

ven their verdict that way... The Congress high command is supposed to take a final decision on this. I think it will also consider the people's sentiments," he said in reply to a question.

He noted that there had been anti-incumbency feelings against the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in the State, which he said was "evident" in the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the local body polls last year. "The Assembly polls could be a culmination of this,"

he said.

His comment drew a strong reaction from SNDP Yogam general secretary Vellappally Natesan. "The IUML remark shows that if the UDF comes to power, then the League will be ruling, and if that is the case, there will be anarchy in the State," he told reporters.

Asked about the discussions projecting IUML veteran P.K. Kunhalikutty as Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Thangal said the organisation "has never thought about it."

(With PTI inputs)

Siddaramaiah orders suspension of engineer after Bowring tragedy

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A day after seven persons were killed when a compound wall of the Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital collapsed on them, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday ordered the suspension of the executive engineer concerned.

He also directed the authorities to issue a notice to the hospital director.

Further, Lokayukta Jus-

Justice B.S. Patil said Lokayukta had registered a suo motu case and started an inquiry

Justice B.S. Patil said the Karnataka Lokayukta had registered a suo motu case and started an inquiry.

However, the Bengaluru City Police have only filed an unnatural death report (UDR) and not a First Information Report (FIR) against

any authorities for alleged negligence.

Police sources said the 25-year-old wall, built using hollow cement bricks, probably had a weak foundation.

Bodies of two victims, hailing from Assam and Bihar, were flown to their States. The families were also handed compensation cheques of ₹5 lakh each from the State government. Bodies of two women victims from Kerala were sent in ambulances.

Karnataka to redeploy guest faculty without UGC qualifications

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has decided to temporarily appoint guest lecturers, who have been serving for a long time in government colleges but do not possess University Grant Commission (UGC)-prescribed qualifications (NET/SLET/Ph.D.), as "Academic Coordinators".

They will be appointed in government first grade colleges, engineering colleges, and polytechnics, with the aim of safeguarding their interests. The Deputy Secretary of Higher Education issued an order in this regard on Thursday.

Temporary jobs

Speaking to presspersons, Higher Education Minister M.C. Sudhakar said guest lecturers with a mi-

nimum of five years of service experience but do not hold UGC-prescribed qualifications would be appointed "Academic Coordinators" for a maximum period of three years.

"An estimated 3,853 guest lecturers will benefit from this scheme. This will be a temporary arrangement," he added.

They will be given the opportunity to work under the principal on varied duties like laboratory management, examination-related work, academic, psychological, and career guidance for students.

A candidate with five years to 10 years experience will get ₹28,000 per month. A candidate with 10 to 15 years experience will get ₹29,000, and those with 15 years and above will get ₹30,000.

Kharge rejects talk of Karnataka power shift

The Hindu Bureau
KALABURAGI/BENGALURU

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday said the party would resolve the perceived leadership issue in Karnataka at an appropriate time, stressing that there was no immediate question of change of guard.

Interacting with presspersons in Kalaburagi, Mr. Kharge sought to downplay speculation over leadership changes, even as questions were raised

about calls projecting him as Chief Minister face.

"Some may say that I should become the Chief Minister. You may say so, and even the high command may think the same way. In our party, most of the decisions are taken by Sonia Gandhi. But this question does not arise now, as there is already a Chief Minister in Karnataka. When required, Ms. Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and all of us will sit together and discuss. It takes time," he said.

Raids at factory of RS MP an act of 'political vendetta': Punjab BJP

Press Trust of India
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab unit of BJP on Thursday claimed that a raid was conducted by the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) at the factory premises of MP Rajinder Gupta's Trident Group in Barnala, decrying it as an act of political vendetta by misusing government agencies.

Founder and managing director of textiles major Trident Group, Mr. Gupta is one of the seven Rajya Sabha MPs who recently defected to BJP from AAP. Punjab BJP working president Ashwani Sharma alleged that the raid was conducted at the behest of AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, in an attempt to "settle

political scores".

However, there is no official word on the raid operation by the PPCB.

Mr. Sharma reiterated that the BJP Punjab stands firmly against such misuse of authority and will continue to raise its voice to protect democratic values and the interests of the people of Punjab.

MP moves HC

Meanwhile, Rajya Sabha MP Harbhajan Singh, who recently quit AAP and joined the BJP, has moved the Punjab and Haryana High Court seeking directions to the Punjab government to restore his security cover. The Punjab police withdrew his security cover after he, along with six other members of the Upper House, defected to the BJP.

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- ई-श्रम पोर्टल: पंजीकृत श्रमिकों की संख्या के आधार पर उत्तर प्रदेश देश में नंबर वन
- निर्माण कामगार मृत्यु व दिव्यांगता सहायता योजना: पंजीकृत निर्माण श्रमिक की दुर्घटना में मृत्यु पर अत्येष्टि व्यय ₹25,000 एवं परिजनों को ₹5 लाख की सहायता, दिव्यांग होने पर ₹2 लाख से लेकर ₹4 लाख तक की सहायता
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- मातृत्व, शिशु एवं बालिका मदद योजना: 6 लाख+ लाभार्थी
- कन्या विवाह सहायता योजना: पंजीकृत निर्माण श्रमिक की पुत्री अथवा महिला श्रमिक को स्वयं के विवाह हेतु ₹65,000 तथा अंतरजातीय विवाह हेतु ₹75,000 की सहायता

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की हार्दिक
शुभकामनाएं

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और शोध भी हैं।
बुद्ध विचार भी हैं
और संस्कार भी हैं। ”

-नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

नरेन्द्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री

रेखा गुप्ता
मुख्यमंत्री, दिल्ली

DIP/Shabdarth/Display/15/26-27

सत्यमेव जयते
दिल्ली सरकार

नरेन्द्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री

रेखा गुप्ता
मुख्यमंत्री, दिल्ली

॥ श्रमेव जयते ॥

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SPOTLIGHT

Being
Kejriwal

In the 13 years of its existence, AAP has gone through a roller-coaster political ride of contradictions, as it moved away from its core idea of anti-corruption to welfarism, peppered with Hindu symbolism. Along this journey, power has come to be consolidated around one of its founders, Arvind Kejriwal, reports **Nikhil M. Babu**



Arvind Kejriwal speaks to the media after his release from jail. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

On a winter morning in 2013, sporting his then signature Gandhi cap and regular blue sweater, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal took oath as the Chief Minister of Delhi.

Kejriwal had taken the metro to reach the oath-taking ceremony at Ramlila Maidan in the heart of the Capital, a place where AAP was born out of the India Against Corruption (IAC) movement, barely 13 months before.

This was historic not just for Delhiites but also for crores of people across the country, who saw it as India's peaceful revolution. A band of educated people were promising to rewrite the traditional rules of politics.

Kejriwal had studied mechanical engineering at IIT Kharagpur, and his associates – lawyer Prashant Bhushan and psephologist Yogendra Yadav – were among Delhi's professional set. They were offering India's *aam aadmi* (common man) a corruption-free alternative and good governance.

But over the next 12 years, as AAP took over governments in Delhi, which it administered for 10 years, and Punjab, where it is still in power, the party moved away from at least some of its core ideas, built on the plank of honesty. It went on to focus on education, health, and basics like electricity and water.

Along this journey, with almost all his prominent associates leaving the party, power began to be consolidated in the hands of Kejriwal. Now, with Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, and five other MPs quitting and merging with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), questions abound about the future of AAP.

There were early signs that Kejriwal was a politician in the traditional sense. For starters, he said he would not enter politics, but he did; he announced he would never join hands with the Congress or the BJP, but he did; when he needed to, he abandoned the face of the IAC movement, Anna Hazare, to form AAP.

In 2024, when Kejriwal was jailed based on allegations of corruption in Delhi's liquor policy decisions (from which he was later discharged by a trial court), his colleague, Atishi, who took on the Chief Ministership of Delhi, refused to occupy the CM's chair, keeping it for her "guru", as she referred to him. She told the media: "There is only one Chief Minister of Delhi and the CM's name is Arvind Kejriwal."

The *aam aadmi* image

In the run-up to the 2013 election, one of the main things that captured the public imagination was not just the idea of AAP, but Kejriwal himself. He had a distinct appearance compared to khadi-wearing politicians. He embodied a middle-class working citizen with his office-going-style shirt and a plastic pen in his breast pocket, a pair of sandals, and hair neatly parted. It did not stop there.

Kejriwal and the Cabinet taking the Delhi Metro for the oath-taking ceremony was an extension of this image. After being sworn in as Chief Minister, he continued to move around in a blue Maruti Suzuki Wagon R, donated by a party sympathiser. He promised not to move into a government bungalow, and to put an end to VIP culture.

Now, he works his way through Delhi in SUVs that cost about ₹45 lakh and lives in a government bungalow even though he is no longer the Chief Minister. In fact, when he was the CM, his government bungalow was renovated for at least ₹30 crore. The Opposition dubbed his home a "Sheesh Mahal" and used it to relentlessly target him in the run-up to the 2025 Delhi Assembly election.

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Both Kejriwal and his party lost the election, though his house was not the only reason.

One-man army

After coming to power in Delhi in December 2013, the Kejriwal government resigned after 49 days as it was not able to table the promised Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill in the Assembly, lacking the necessary numbers in the House.

The implementation of the Jan Lokpal Bill was the main demand of the IAC movement and was key to the formation of AAP. Kejriwal went back to the people of Delhi and in the election that followed in 2015, they gave him a historic mandate of 67 out of 70 seats, reducing the Congress, which had ruled Delhi for 15 years, to zero.

AAP and Kejriwal seemed untouchable at this point. But within two months, as the AAP chief tightened his grip over the party, founding members Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan were expelled for "anti-party activities". Another founding member, Kumar Vishwas, was sidelined to the point that he eventually left the party. This happened with many others too.

In January 2021, the party quietly amended its constitution, changing a clause that prevented anyone from holding a post for more than two consecutive terms of three years each. This made way for Kejriwal to continue as the national convener, the highest post in the party.

The party's manifesto has been called "Kejriwal's Guarantees" for the last two Assembly elections, in 2020 and 2025.

Even the *de facto* Number 2 in the party, Manish Sisodia, asks for votes mostly in the name of Kejriwal during election rallies.

In the run-up to the 2025 Delhi Assembly election, he addressed the voters of Jangpura, saying, "Arvind Kejriwal has chosen me to contest from the Jangpura constituency as his representative. When all of Delhi is uniting to form Arvind Kejriwal's government, then Jangpura, too, should send a representative of Arvind Kejriwal as its MLA."

When AAP was in power in Delhi, Kejriwal was not accessible to even many of his own MLAs and they would have to go through Sisodia, according to party insiders. All major decisions in the party continue to be taken by Keji-

wal and his inner circle of seven or eight.

After coming back to power in Delhi with a full majority in 2015, one of the first things that Kejriwal did was to give subsidised electricity and 20,000 litres of free water a month to every household. Later in the same year, the Delhi Cabinet approved the Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill, 2015, and it was later passed by the Assembly. The Centre did not approve it, citing lack of prior approval as Delhi is not a full State.

The vanishing anti-corruption plank

Slowly, after self-declarations by the AAP supremo of having established a "corruption-free government" in Delhi, the issue started to take a back seat in Kejriwal's political lexicon. After AAP formed the government in Punjab, they never passed a Jan Lokpal Bill, despite it being a full State not requiring prior permission from the Centre.

As he moved away from being an anti-corruption crusader, Kejriwal's electoral politics crystallised into a promise of welfarism and subsidies, peppered with Hindu symbolism.

Kejriwal did not shy away from saying they were building 'Ram Rajya' in Delhi and even built a 30-foot-high replica of Ayodhya's Ram Mandir in the Capital, using public funds as part of the Delhi government's Deepavali celebrations in 2021.

He and his Cabinet colleagues performed a *puja* at the replica.

During the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, in Delhi's Shaheen Bagh, Kejriwal tactfully stayed away. He even said he would have got the roads cleared of the protesters if his government had control of the Delhi police.

A party volunteer, who has been working with the party for 15 years, said he is disillusioned with these developments. "How does it make sense to say that we should print images of Lakshmi and Ganesh on currency notes as it will aid in the recovery of our economy? Many of us did not expect this from AAP," he said, adding that he is more ideologically aligned with the Congress than with AAP now.

In 2019, AAP voted in favour of the reading down of Article 370, stripping Jammu and Kashmir of Statehood, even as the party argued for

full Statehood for Delhi. In 2020, when communal riots broke out in north-east Delhi, in which 53 people were killed, Kejriwal was criticised for not visiting the area in the initial days of the riots.

National party status

Electorally though, things continued to work for Kejriwal. He returned to power in Delhi in 2020, winning 62 out of 70 seats. AAP swept Punjab in 2022 and later that year won five seats in Gujarat. This performance led to AAP getting the 'national party' status in 2023, in just a little over 10 years since its formation.

Despite losing Delhi in 2025, after allegations of a scam in the Delhi excise policy started to shake the government, AAP's vote share was still 43.57%, which was only 2% less than that of the BJP, which won the election. In contrast, the Congress fell behind the saffron party by almost 39%.

Also, unlike a full State, in Delhi the Central government-appointed Lieutenant-Governor has more powers than a Governor in a full State. Moreover, a change in law by the Union government in May 2023 negated a Supreme Court judgment earlier that year, and gave the control of the bureaucracy in the Delhi government to the Union government-appointed Lieutenant-Governor.

But the depth of the loss and the writings on the wall were very clear for the AAP chief: it could be game over for AAP if they lose Punjab, as it is the only State where the party is in power.

Less than a month after the Delhi election result, Kejriwal shifted his base to Punjab with his trusted lieutenants – former Delhi Education Minister Sisodia and former Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, whom he put in charge of party operations there. He moved into Bungalow No. 50 in Sector 2 of Chandigarh and it emerged as Punjab's power centre, as he pulled in more trusted AAP leaders from Delhi to Punjab.

"A year ago, AAP was in a tough spot. But Sisodia started working in various departments, including education, and Satyendar Jain looked at the drug menace. Since then things have changed a lot for the party," says a party source, who has been working with AAP for a decade.

In February, a special court in Delhi discharged Kejriwal, Sisodia, and 21 others in the Delhi excise policy case. Since the verdict, Kejriwal, who was almost missing from Delhi politics, has been more visible in the national capital, taking the BJP head-on.

It is at this juncture that the seven MPs quit. Their merger with the BJP has been approved by Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan. Chadha used to be Kejriwal's blue-eyed boy and Pathak was the behind-the-scenes organisational man of the party. Both were instrumental in winning Punjab in 2022 and were part of Kejriwal's inner circle, though Chadha has been distant for about two years now.

"Kejriwal tried to stop the defection and he even met three of the MPs, including Sandeep Pathak," a party insider says, adding that they did not think Pathak would switch to the BJP. AAP has challenged the merger of the MPs with the BJP in the Rajya Sabha and is set to move the Supreme Court in the matter.

With the Punjab Assembly election next year, the *aam aadmi* wonders: will the AAP survive this? For Kejriwal this is a familiar question.

It came up when he, Sisodia, and other leaders were arrested in the Delhi excise policy case, it was raised when they lost the Delhi Assembly election, and when Yadav and Bhushan were expelled from the party. Like most politicians, Kejriwal has moved forward, his broom sweeping his past away.



BJP national president Nitin Nambin meets Rajya Sabha members Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal at the party's headquarters in New Delhi. PTI

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Swetta Rao, a self-proclaimed “big girl”, has always been confident in her own skin. “I’m very comfortable with my weight,” says the Indore-based media professional. “I love my body for being supportive, despite all that I’ve put it through.”

But as she crossed over into her forties, she has been forced to confront the impact of her weight on her health. “My knees tend to give up. Then, of course, there is managing my blood pressure,” says Swetta, who has tried working with a nutritionist, the gym, and 10,000 steps a day, but struggled to make a meaningful change. “I lost 15 kg, and then life happened.”

Given her history, Swetta has now decided, with her doctor’s guidance, to give GLP-1 weight-loss drugs a chance, hoping that they will help her manage her health better.

Her decision reflects a larger shift. As more people who once promoted a positive image of larger bodies opt for these drugs, the messaging around size and fitness is rapidly changing. Celebrities like Oprah Winfrey, Rebel Wilson, Lizzo and Meghan Trainor, who are noticeably thinner on GLP-1 weight loss drugs, were once loud cheerleaders for body positivity. The shift raises a question: what happens to body positivity when GLP-1 drugs get easier to access?

Nayantara Menon Bagla, a nutrition and lifestyle coach, believes that the problem lies with the concept of body positivity itself. “I have often felt that the body positivity movement didn’t have the principles that a movement which lasts a long time should have. It was built on these very fragile ideas of acceptance, without being critical enough of health,” she says.

Anshuma Kshetrapal, a Delhi-based drama and movement psychotherapist, believes that equating thinness with health is a misnomer. “It is about removing appearance as a factor of judgment for health,” she says.

The drugs are rapidly changing how obesity is understood. Dr Rajeev Kurapati, a US-based triple-board-certified physician in



Size-zero reloaded

As GLP-1 drugs gain ground in India, they are recasting obesity as a chronic medical condition while raising concerns about misuse

family, obesity, and lifestyle medicine, describes it as a “chronic, relapsing disease”. Author of *The Book of Body Positivity: How We Got It All Wrong and What We Can Do about It*, explains how “That takes the burden off a person and onto the medical community.”

GLP-1 is central to this shift. In Dr Rajeev’s opinion, “if a person is obese and struggling with weight loss, these drugs actually empower them,” he says, cautioning, however, that they have to be used in addition to lifestyle modifications. But given that trends indicate the usage of these drugs is only going to increase, particularly in India as prices fall, will this lead to the collective idolisation of extreme thinness? And how does one prevent the misuse of these drugs, in the pursuit of a dream body, given the country’s inadequate drug regulatory system.

Earlier this month, counterfeit versions of Mounjaro, valued at around ₹56 lakh, were discovered during a crackdown in Gurugram.

In a country where prescription regulations are notoriously weak, the misuse of what should be a highly-regulated drug is inevitable. Already wellness clinics and doctors in cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are creating bridal packages by bundling Mounjaro jabs with skin-lightening Glow IVs, and fairness strips. GLP-1 drugs are also being used before red-carpet appearances, holidays or even just to fit into a pair of old jeans.

Get thin quick scheme
Anshuma worries that these drugs will become “a way of creating a new normal around thinness”. The idealisation of extreme thinness, after all, is deeply political, often linked to more conservative political structures that inherently seek to disempower women. As Nayantara puts it, the glorification of a slimmer, smaller female body is simply one more way of policing it. “Every time there is a surge in women’s voice, and they begin taking up more space in the public

domain, skinny comes back in fashion. If you really think about it, keeping undernourished and obsessed with their size, they do lose sight of the bigger picture, whether it was the heroin chic era of the 90s or the flapper era of boyish bodies,” she says.

Delhi-based Preksha has always believed that all shapes and sizes are beautiful. But the lived experience of having to inhabit a bigger body was not pleasant, from what she remembers. “I even stopped shopping for new clothes at one point,” says Preksha, who believes that many of the body positive influencers ended up struggling with various health conditions. Preksha has finally managed to get her PCOS and sugar under control after losing nearly 30 kgs on Mounjaro, one of several GLP-1 drugs in the Indian market.

“The body dysmorphia continues to kick in on some days,” says Nayantara, who firmly believes that Indian therapists and mental health professionals are going to really pivot to keep pace with these

Weighting in Oprah Winfrey, who is noticeably thinner on GLP-1 weight loss drugs, was once a loud cheerleader for body positivity. GETTY IMAGES / ISTOCK AND REUTERS

new changes in the larger health ecosystem.

Dr Rajeev believes that GLP-1 drugs should be taken only by people who are struggling to lose weight and have medical conditions because of the excess weight. “These drugs help people who are in genuine medical need, but they will create a lot of problems for people who are simply looking for a quick fix to change their looks,” he says. “You may look thinner, but you will still be unhealthy.”

Ahmedabad-based Himani Raj, who has been on Mounjaro since July last year and now runs support groups for Indians on GLP-1, echoes the same view. “Being five or 10 kgs overweight is very different from being 50 or 60 kgs overweight,” says Himani, who weighed over 150 kgs when she started her journey. “There were so many things that came with weight: high cholesterol, triglycerides out of the charts, irregular menstrual cycles, pre-diabetes,” she says. More than her weight, it was about getting those markers under control that emboldened her to try out these drugs, assisted by a good endocrinologist; “an absolute must to consult a doctor” she says.

Her actual experience of using the drug in addition to targeted lifestyle changes, including regular exercise and a high-protein, calorie-controlled diet, has proved to be largely positive, something she has been documenting on her Instagram page, [stealthhealthindia](#). Himani, who has dropped around 32 kgs says, “My pre-diabetes has been reversed, my PCOS is under control: I have better skin and hair health...there is so much more to it than just weight.”



stepout



Classical tunes

A two-day festival brings together leading voices of Hindustani classical music, focussing on the distinct styles of different gharanas. Organised by Pracheen Kala Kendra, the programme features vocal recitals, a jugalbandi, and recognises senior artistes across traditions. *Gharanon Ki Swarnim Raaganjali* takes place on May 1 and 2 at 6.30pm at Triveni Kala Sangam. To register, log on to [pracheenkalakendra.org](#).



Modernist display

A focussed exhibition revisits a pivotal phase in Indian modernism through the work of AA Raiba, bringing together paintings and drawings from the 1950s and 1960s. Known for his strong linear style and independent practice, Raiba’s work reflects a synthesis of multiple artistic traditions. *Master Artist AA Raiba: A Unilateral Eclectic* is on view till June 21, 11am to 7pm, at Thapar Gallery.



Seeing art

A new exhibition by Stuart Robertson brings together works created during a residency at Dr Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital. Working across photography, drawing, bronze, and cyanotype, the artist looks at everyday life within the hospital, from medical procedures to quieter, routine moments. The works focus on themes of care, observation, and the idea of sight. *Through The Artist’s Eye* will be on view at Bikaner House until May 3.

A quiet scale shift

In RAJAN ONE, CK Rajan’s small, materially simple artworks open up questions around time, memory and image-making



Geetika Sachdev

At a time when contemporary art often leans towards the monumental, RAJAN ONE at Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke takes a more restrained approach. The exhibition brings together works by artist CK Rajan that build layered ideas from simple materials.

Curated by writer and researcher Grant Watson, the show is the first part of a two-part “selected retrospective” spanning works from 1989 to 2022. This opening chapter focusses on the 1990s – a formative period, but one where many of Rajan’s core ideas were already in place. The work shifts over time, but it never really breaks from itself.

What stands out now is how the works feel – the ageing paper, the ink or the textures of print. Time seems to sit on the surface of the work. “There’s a certain

Memory in art In Search of Utopia, 1989-90, colour pencil on reverse of cigarette packet. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

vintage quality to the earlier works,” says Ranjana Steinruecke, director, Galerie Mirchandani + Steinruecke.

This is especially visible in *Mild Terrors* (1992-96), Rajan’s collage series made from fragments of newspapers and magazines. Small in scale, these works pull from the visual noise of mass media, rearranging it into images that feel both familiar and unsettling. While they are often linked to India’s economic liberalisation in the 1990s, Rajana frames their connection more as a reflection of atmosphere than direct critique.

Across the exhibition, Rajan keeps returning to ordinary materials. In *Search of Utopia* (1989-90), he paints geometric cityscapes onto the inside of cigarette packets.

“There’s always this tension between how small and ordinary the material is and how expansive the idea can be,” says Ranjana.

You see something similar in the *Table Top Sculptures* from the same period. Painted in primary colours, these geometric boxes hold partially hidden objects like a gun, a toy car, or a brick, visible only through small openings. At first they read as formal exercises, but the objects inside shift the mood, hinting at more suggestive narratives. “He wasn’t interested in making something monumental,” she says. Alongside these works are Rajan’s notebooks, where drawing and text come together.

RAJAN ONE also coincides with the publication of Rajan’s first comprehensive monograph, edited by Watson. With essays and archival material, it places the work within a broader context – tracing his training across Thiruvananthapuram, Vadodara and Hyderabad, as well as his exhibition history.

The second part of the exhibition moves to works from 2000 to 2018, where both material and visual language begin to shift. “The later works are more colourful,” Ranjana says. “You see him move into bronze, into a completely different vocabulary.”

On till May 16 at the gallery at CR Tower, Defence Colony.



Where the clues lead

Rajat Kapoor, Vinay Pathak and Ranvir Shorey discuss their murder-mystery *Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa*

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To celebrate a couple’s wedding anniversary, a bunch of friends get together at an old bungalow, and one amongst them gets murdered in the dead of the night. As in any other murder-mystery, everyone is a suspect. But this is not any murder-mystery. Directed by Rajat Kapoor, known for his off-beat storytelling, *Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa* unfolds more like an immersive talkie than a stylistic genre piece. Named ironically after the aggressive murder victim, Sohrab Handa (Vinay Pathak), the film is a psychological study of the bully that he is. However, Handa is riddled with complexities, as the film also

gives space for a softer side to him. “For me, people are not black and white. Everyone is a little grey. I tried to find a shaded human being in all this,” says the actor-filmmaker.

Vinay Pathak is a long-time friend and collaborator of Kapoor, having worked with him in films and plays. Pathak says that he didn’t have to struggle to embody Handa. “Rajat kept the character so cerebral and straight-forward that I didn’t have to bring my own imagination to understand his mind. You know what kind of a person

he is just by reading his lines,” says Pathak.

The film relies on dialogue to create a sense of tension between the characters, as all of them speak over each other, lending a distinct sense of theatricality to the happenings. “It feels like a play as the story is set in one location and takes place in real-time. It is reflected in the camera choices and editing,” Kapoor says. Kapoor credits the actors for being cooperative in the conversation scenes. “We had to do rehearsals of over two-three hours just to understand how actors will be moving in a shot. This is also one of the few films where all actors were together for all of the shooting time of 30 days,” says the filmmaker.

Actor Ranvir Shorey, who

Indie innings

(Left) Rajat Kapoor in *Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa*. ZEE5

plays the role of a professor, says that there were joint readings which helped in bringing out the dynamics of the conversations. “Rajat has become a master of capturing chaos. He manages to get something bigger out of things that may seem small. It is also not easy handling 15 people behind the camera and 15 in front of it.”

Shorey, Pathak and Kapoor go back a long way. The three have been friends before they started working together in plays since 1999. Shorey met Pathak in 1997 and the two have seen each other grow. “We have worked together in television, films, theatre, advertising and also events. I don’t think there’s any medium left in the arts where we haven’t worked together,” Shorey smiles.

Shorey also feels that knowing your collaborators adds a sense of comfort while working. He explains, “It is like doing something you love with somebody you love.”

A glimpse of that easygoing dynamic is perhaps reflected in the authenticity with which each performance comes alive on-screen. *Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa* thrives on what remains of a relationship, whether it is between friends, a couple or a turbulent father-son bond. The film was stuck for over three years after being screened at the MAMI Mumbai Film Festival in 2023. “That’s how it is for independent films. Marketing them is tougher than making them.”

Everybody Loves Sohrab Handa is currently streaming on ZEE5



Gulf within

Differences with Saudi Arabia and Iran's attacks led to the UAE's exit from OPEC

The UAE has withdrawn from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), a cartel that it joined in 1967, and OPEC+. It was OPEC's fourth-largest producer (3.12 million barrels per day) and its third-largest exporter (2.88 mbd) in 2025, behind Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The Emiratis clearly sought to free themselves of production constraints set largely by the cartel's dominant producer, Saudi Arabia. With significant spare capacity, the Emiratis believe that they are better off with the autonomy to ramp up exports, a capability now constrained by the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the largest disruption to oil supply in history, following U.S.-Israel attacks on Iran. Brent crude prices barely budged on the announcement, revealing how heavily the Strait crisis weighs on the market. But once the UAE weathers this crisis, whether through the Strait's reopening, or by routing more crude through a pipeline bypassing Hormuz, analysts estimate that it could lift production by roughly a million barrels a day. While Saudi Arabia, OPEC's bellwether, has remained chary of over-supply and sought to keep prices high, the UAE has long pushed for higher production for revenues that it intends to funnel into AI infrastructure and other diversification projects.

Unsaid in the UAE's move is also its frustration with what it sees as a lack of cartel-wide coordination in responding to Iran's missile and drone attacks on Gulf oil and military facilities; Iran is also an OPEC member. The Emiratis have also differed sharply with the Saudis on external interventions: in Yemen and Sudan. The UAE also seeks closer ties with Israel than most Gulf states, which remain uncomfortable with any thaw given Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza and its attacks on Iran and Lebanon. The U.S., a non-OPEC member, and the world's largest oil producer at 13.6 mbd, has long viewed the cartel's price-setting unfavourably, and President Donald Trump has repeatedly pressed it to pump more. The UAE perhaps calculates that aligning with Washington will yield benefits for its production and pipeline ambitions, though Mr. Trump's transactional and mercurial foreign policy offers little guarantee. The UAE's exit also reflects a structural issue: OPEC's share of global crude dropped to 36.7% in 2025, and with Hormuz shut, pricing power has shifted to American producers in the short term. OPEC will continue, but with a reduced ability to set prices. For net oil-importing countries such as India, however, the immediate threat is not the cartel's unravelling but the "double blockade" in the Strait of Hormuz and the fragile Iran-U.S. ceasefire. Unless a new geopolitical détente emerges between Iran and the Gulf states, volatility will persist, threatening energy security regardless of what unfolds within OPEC.

Embers in the air

Seasonal fires need long-term management, not just preparedness

The Nilgiris district in Tamil Nadu and the adjoining forest divisions of Mudumalai, Coimbatore and Erode have been dealing with wildfires that escalated to being a crisis requiring the assistance of the Indian Air Force. Even so, the intense fires are not anomalous, but an acute manifestation of a seasonal event. Parsons Valley and Pykara in the Nilgiris have been worst-hit while significant blazes were also reported from the Singara and Masinagudi ranges. One major blaze broke out in Wenlock Downs and spread rapidly. February to May is fire season in this region, and in April, officials said that high heat and strong winds created a "conductive environment"; the wind, in particular, carried embers over pre-existing firelines and partly explains why this season has been a breakout. Some fires also burnt hotter and for longer in Pykara because of the accumulated biomass and invasive undergrowth, and took longer to be doused. The Nilgiris feature steep terrains and limited road access, slowing the movement of crew and equipment to particular spots. This said, most fires also have a human hand. Tribespeople gather wood in the area to make brooms — an activity closely monitored by officials — and herders have also been known to burn dry grassland, forcing grasses to regrow and become fodder. The latter together with discarded smoking paraphernalia are known accidental causes. This year, one blaze entered the Coimbatore division after Kerala forest staff began a controlled burn allegedly without coordinating this with Tamil Nadu. Some officials also expressed suspicion that miscreants deliberately set fires in the Reserve, allegedly over the Forest Department's failure to address tiger-related deaths meaningfully, but local communities are usually the first-responders to these fires.

While none of these causes is new, their confluence this year with the hot summer is likely to have stoked the intense fires. Indeed, climate variability — rather than climate change alone — is also raising the baseline risk. Keeping other causes fixed, a hotter, drier summer automatically leads to fires that threaten the best-laid plans more. Even this year, authorities had begun planning in March, setting up control rooms and firelines, ensuring animals' access to water outside human-settled areas, clearing weeds, and mounting awareness campaigns. However, many activities that add to the fire risk remain tied to peoples' livelihoods and traditional practices, so they cannot be eliminated without suitable alternatives. Taken together, managing the region's seasonal fires is becoming less about what can be planned for in the short term and more about what can be factored in over the long term.

This year, May Day arrives not as a commemoration, but as a diagnosis. Within a single fortnight last month, two events clarified the state of Indian labour more sharply than any official review.

On April 10, thousands of garment workers in Noida's Phase 2 Hosiery Complex stepped out of nearly 300 factories and onto the streets, demanding a minimum monthly wage of ₹20,000. On April 14, a high-pressure steam tube ruptured at Vedanta's 1,200 MW Singhitari thermal plant in Chhattisgarh, killing 20 workers and injuring 15. One protest was about the price of labour; the other, about the price of being alive while performing it. Both answer the same question: what has India's labour reform actually produced?

The Noida strike began with a specific arithmetic grievance. On April 9, the Haryana government notified a 35% hike in minimum wages, raising unskilled monthly wages from ₹11,274 to ₹15,220, with effect from April 1, 2026. Across the border in Noida, unskilled workers were earning roughly ₹435 a day, compared to ₹585 in Haryana for identical work. Protesters at the Hosiery Complex — employees of different companies — assembled in B Block, blocked traffic, and refused to disperse without written assurances.

By April 13, the administration had deployed over 1,200 personnel, including the Provincial Armed Constabulary and Rapid Action Force; lathi charges and stone-pelting followed, and nearly 400 people were detained. Under pressure, the Uttar Pradesh government announced an interim 21% hike, setting wages at ₹13,690 for unskilled workers in Gautam Buddha Nagar and ₹16,868 for skilled workers. The workers rejected it; their demand remained ₹20,000.

Between pay and survival

The gap between ₹16,868 and ₹20,000 is not a bargaining position. It is the difference between what a family pays for rent, gas, and school fees in the NCR and what the state is willing to concede as a dignified minimum.

Four days later, the furnace at Singhitari did its own counting. A preliminary report from the Chief Boiler Inspector, backed by the Forensic Science Laboratory in Sakti, Chhattisgarh, attributed the explosion to 'excessive fuel buildup inside the furnace', which produced pressure surges that displaced critical piping. The probe flagged "repeated negligence in equipment upkeep" by Vedanta and its contractor NGSL (NTPC GE Power Services Pvt. Ltd.). A first information report has been registered against Vedanta's Chairman Anil Agarwal, the plant manager, and others under Sections 106(1), 289 and 3(5) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The dead were not Vedanta's own employees; they worked for a subcontractor. This, too, is a pattern.



Rejimon Kuttappan

A workers' rights expert

From Noida's streets to furnace rooms in Chhattisgarh, India's new labour regime delivers for employers — and for workers, what it long warned of

Chhattisgarh alone has recorded 296 industrial deaths over three years. Across India, the Directorate General of Factory Advice Service and Labour Institutes recorded 3,331 factory deaths between 2018 and 2020 — three a day — yet only 14 people were imprisoned under the Factories Act during the same period. The global union IndustriALL counted over 400 workplace fatalities in India in 2024, with the chemical sector alone accounting for 220. In July 2025, an explosion at Sigachi Industries in Telangana had killed 44 people, mostly migrant workers, at a plant that the State fire department found lacked basic fire alarms and heat sensors.

A structural shift

These are not disconnected episodes. They are the operating conditions of an economy that, on November 21, 2025, formally adopted the four labour codes. In a single stroke, and without any transition period, the four codes — the Code on Wages, the Industrial Relations Code, the Social Security Code and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code — replaced 29 central labour laws. The Indian Labour Conference, the country's apex tripartite forum, had not been convened since 2015.

The new regime raises the threshold for prior government permission for layoffs, retrenchment, and closure from 100 workers to 300 under the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, enabling firms below that size — an estimated majority of India's factory units — to retrench workers without administrative scrutiny. A peer-reviewed analysis in the National Library of Medicine archive notes that this merely restores the pre-1982 threshold, reversing an Emergency-era protection enacted after a wave of mass layoffs affected over half a million workers.

The OSHWC Code, 2020, simultaneously raises the statutory definition of a 'factory' from 10 workers in a factory with power to 20, and from 20 workers in a factory without power to 40, lifting an entire tier of smaller workplaces — where India's textile, garment, metal, hosiery, and food-processing clusters are concentrated — out of mandatory safety oversight. Labour economists warn that this technical reclassification has a profound impact on worker coverage, since a majority of India's small manufacturing units employ fewer than 20 workers.

The inspection architecture has been similarly diluted. The OSHWC Code replaces unannounced inspections with an 'Inspector-cum-Facilitator' model, combined with randomised, web-based allocation through the Shram Suvidha portal and employer self-certification — a shift that, as the International Labour Organization's India Labour Inspection Profile notes, may contravene the requirement for independent, unannounced inspections under ILO Convention No. 81.

Procedural hurdles for collective action have also stiffened. Under the IR Code, no worker may

strike without 60 days' prior notice, flash strikes are prohibited outright, and strikes are barred during and for weeks after any conciliation or tribunal proceeding. "Mass casual leave" by more than 50% of a workforce is now deemed a strike. Trade unions argue that, in combination, these provisions make lawful industrial action virtually impossible to organise, completing the regime's pro-employer tilt.

A reform that raises statutory thresholds in almost every operative clause, is not rationalising protection. It is removing it. The enforcement chapters read more like a facilitation framework than a compliance regime.

Ten central trade unions, including the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), observed a "Black Day" on November 26, 2025, calling the codes a "deceptive fraud on the working class". Their objection was not sentimental. When the legal definition of a factory excludes the smallest and most dangerous workplaces; when inspectors announce their visits through a portal; when retrenchment requires no permission below 300 workers; and when strikes are bound by procedural tightropes, the predictable result is the Noida street and the Singhitari shop floor.

The wage stagnation that drove workers from Motherson Sumi and Richa Global into a baton charge, and the deferred maintenance that caused a boiler tube to rupture, are not separate problems. They are two ends of the same system.

Old laws, new realities

There is an honest public case for labour reform. The Factories Act of 1948 is older than most Indian States; the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923 predates the Constitution. A regulatory architecture built for the industrial economy of late-colonial India — of jute mills, textile mills, and railway workshops — cannot plausibly govern a workforce that today includes gig workers, platform workers, and digital-media workers. No serious observer, and no Indian trade union, disputes that consolidation was overdue. The question is not whether the law should have changed; it is what it changed into.

Consolidation is not dilution, and simplification is not exemption.

On May Day, the test for any labour framework is modest: does it allow a worker to earn enough to live, and to live through the shift? In April 2026, the answer from Noida and Singhitari is the same. In Noida, police fired tear gas at factory workers protesting for a living wage as fuel-driven inflation outpaced wages. In Singhitari, a boiler tube burst at a Vedanta power plant on April 14, releasing 600°C steam onto workers eating lunch; 20 were killed, all contract workers employed through a business partner rather than as direct employees. Neither a wage that sustains life, nor a workplace that preserves it. A regime that cannot deliver the second while pricing out the first has not been rationalised. It has been rewritten against the very people it was meant to protect.

India's sprint beyond the dairy red line to the Pacific

India concluded a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with New Zealand in December 2025, at a time marked by fractured supply chains and rising protectionist tendencies among nations. Guided by the vision of "Viksit Bharat", India has recalibrated its foreign trade policy, transitioning from a cautious, tariff-focused negotiator to a strategic, high-velocity partner. This shift characterises a clear departure from the historical "slow burn" model of trade diplomacy. There are six key wins for India in this FTA, as it aligns with the Viksit Bharat blueprint for trade policy based on strategic autonomy and global integration.

India's rapid FTA execution

First, this pact is one of India's fastest-concluded FTAs, with negotiations officially launched in March 2025 and concluded in December 2025. This gives India a first-mover advantage in Oceania while also signalling its swift institutional integration and ambitious posture to other partners. This fresh display of efficiency and the ability to compress negotiation cycle times is a new deliverable from India to its trade partners.

Second, this FTA embeds talent mobility as a core economic pillar with the "Yoga and Māori" reciprocity between the two nations. There are many provisions for human capital outflow, including professional pathways, youth engagement and bi-directional exchange of traditional medicine. The FTA allows for a separate annual quota of 5,000 professional visas for skilled Indian professionals in high-skill jobs



Ritu Srivastava

Associate Professor, Economics, K.J. Somaiya Institute of Management

The Free Trade Agreement with New Zealand reflects India's evolving trade diplomacy strategy

such as IT, engineering, and health care, with a tenure period of up to three years. An annual quota of 1,000 work-and-holiday visas will also be permitted for young Indians, aligning India's workforce with New Zealand's age requirements. Most importantly, it is the first bilateral reciprocity agreement that will allow international recognition of India's Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) system along with the native Māori health practices of New Zealand.

Third, the FTA lays down a commitment of capital inflow of around \$20 billion over a period of 15 years in high-priority sectors such as agri-tech and food processing, renewable energy, education and health-care management, wherein New Zealand's technology and capital will be the much-needed catalyst for growth. This influx will also strengthen the "Make in India" programme.

Strategically shielded

Fourth, India has been so far successful in negotiating for an agreement which protects one of the sensitive sectors of India's economy — "dairy". The mechanics of the pact include the exclusion of fluid milk, cheese, and yogurt from duty concessions. India will grant progressive market access, on a duty-free basis, for infant formula and high-value-added dairy products, over a seven-year period, allowing domestic nutritional firms access to quality raw materials. The pact proposes a "Ring Fenced Value Addition Framework" to boost downstream processing of manufacturing. Under this agreement, New

Zealand firms are permitted to import dairy products from India duty-free for manufacturing purposes, if 100% of the products are exported out of India. The pact uses an advanced tariff rate quota mechanism, providing for a minimum import price and seasonal constraints on select commodities such as apples, honey, and kiwifruit.

The fifth win is that New Zealand has pledged to change its legislation within 18 months. This change will provide Indian Geographical Indication (GI) products with protection such as that offered by the European Union. As a result, brands such as Darjeeling tea and Basmati rice will receive top-quality legal protection in Oceania.

Securing a South Pacific foothold

Last, this FTA with New Zealand is increasingly significant, as it creates a geopolitical hedge for India and opens new markets, with New Zealand serving as a gateway to Oceania and the Pacific Island countries (PICs). By adopting New Zealand's trade regulations and norms, India secures a logistical centre and "regulatory reference point" in the South Pacific. Through this trade agreement, India demonstrates its ability to meet Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) standards and sets a precedent for further negotiations with other partners. The FTA signals India's ability to open and engage in global supply chains while maintaining a balance between market access and domestic protection.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The UAE's move

The United Arab Emirates' shift away from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries should be seen less as a rupture and more as a recalibration of energy sovereignty within an increasingly fragmented geopolitical order. While the broader backdrop includes tensions involving the United States, Israel and Iran, the immediate driver lies in the UAE's effort to align its expanding production capacity with strategic autonomy. Energy is no longer insulated from

security alignments; it now reflects shifting partnerships, contested regional influence, and the desire for fiscal flexibility in an uncertain global economy. For India, the implications are nuanced. A loosening of OPEC discipline may create room for more diversified and competitive sourcing, particularly with the UAE enhancing India's bargaining power in energy procurement. However, this potential advantage is offset by heightened volatility in West Asia, where instability around key maritime routes

such as the Strait of Hormuz can quickly translate into supply risk. India's strategic interest, therefore, lies in balance: leveraging a more fluid oil market to secure diversified, cost-effective supplies while simultaneously strengthening energy security through strategic reserves, supply diversification, and carefully calibrated diplomacy across competing regional blocs. **Vijay Singh Adhikari**, Nainital, Uttarakhand

Exit polls

Far from being harmless

indicators, exit polls have increasingly become tools that distort public perception and weaken democratic seriousness. These polls are often based on questionable sampling methods and incomplete data. Yet, they are presented with an air of authority. This creates a misleading narrative of certainty even before the official results are declared. Such premature conclusions risk influencing public sentiment and may even affect voter behaviour in multi-phase elections. Equally alarming is the role

of the media which amplifies these projections through sensational debates and speculative analysis. Instead of encouraging informed discussion on policies and governance, attention is diverted to a numbers game driven by guesswork. It is imperative that stricter regulations be imposed on the dissemination of exit polls, and that media organisations exercise greater responsibility. Democracy deserves thoughtful engagement, not theatrics built on uncertain

predictions. **Nagarajamani M.V.**, Hyderabad

Teen Digest

Congratulations to *The Hindu* on the launch of *The Hindu Teen Digest*, the "refreshed weekend offering for teenagers". This thoughtful initiative for readers who will be tomorrow's leaders is a commendable investment in the nation's future.

T.S. Karthik, Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the postal address.

Should the PIL jurisdiction be reconsidered?



Anuj Bhuwania
Professor of law and author of 'Courting the People: Public Interest Litigation in Post-Emergency India'



Talha Abdul Rahman
Advocate based in Delhi

PARLEY

Public Interest Litigation (PIL) emerged in the 1970s as a transformative judicial innovation aimed at widening access to justice for the poor and the marginalised. This was achieved by relaxing the strict rules of standing to permit representative actions, and by broadening the scope of judicial notice to allow courts to take *suo motu* cognisance of public issues and convert them into litigation. Over time, however, concerns have been raised about the misuse of this jurisdiction. More recently, during the ongoing proceedings in the Sabarimala reference case, the Union government has urged the Supreme Court to reconsider the PIL framework altogether, citing the rise of “agenda-driven litigation.” Should the PIL jurisdiction be reconsidered? Anuj Bhuwania and Talha Abdul Rahman discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Aaratrika Bhaumik.

Where should courts draw the line on who can file PILs?

Anuj Bhuwania: The evolution of PIL can be traced to the Supreme Court decisions of the late 1970s, such as *Hussainara Khatoon & Ors. vs. Home Secretary, State of Bihar* (1979), which marked a departure from the traditional doctrine of *locus standi*, under which only an aggrieved party could approach the court, towards permitting representative standing. This enabled third parties to institute proceedings on behalf of marginalised groups unable to access justice due to systemic barriers. Over time, however, there has been a discernible shift towards a broader model of citizen standing, where individuals approach the court not as representatives of affected groups but in their own capacity as members of the citizenry. This transition has led courts to engage with issues in an open-ended and, at times, indeterminate manner. In my view, the court's jurisdiction ought, as far as possible, to be invoked by those who are directly affected or, at the very least, by those with a clear interest in the matter.

Talha Abdul Rahman: I do not believe that the rules of *locus standi* should be reverted to their earlier, restrictive form. The structural barriers that justified its relaxation decades ago remain largely intact, and courts continue to be inaccessible to the poor and marginalised. For instance, individuals whose homes are demolished by the state as a purported punitive measure may often lack the means or capacity to seek judicial redress. In such circumstances, if third parties step forward to challenge these demolitions on the ground that due process has



The Supreme Court of India.

not been followed, they ought to be accorded standing. This is not merely a representative action, but an assertion of a constitutional guarantee – that the rule of law must be upheld in its full measure, even where the harm is not personally suffered.

PILs often involve complex, polycentric disputes. Do they risk judicial overreach and the exclusion of key stakeholders?

TAR: The concern is valid. There have been instances where courts, while hearing such matters, have had to respond to executive inaction. This then raises a recurring question: do they possess the institutional competence to navigate such issues? In my view, they do, particularly when assisted by able counsel and robust adversarial presentation. At the same time, courts have also consciously refrained from encroaching upon the domains reserved for the executive or the legislature. For instance, on April 29, the Supreme Court declined to direct the enactment of specific laws on hate speech, instead leaving any legislative redress to the appropriate authorities. This reflects an important reality – there are limits to what the courts can do.

AB: In the past, there have been several instances where courts, while hearing PILs, have proceeded without hearing those directly affected. This was particularly evident in a series of cases before the Delhi High Court in the mid-2000s concerning slum evictions, where PILs filed by resident welfare associations sought the removal of slums, but the slum dwellers themselves were not impleaded as parties. Similarly, the Supreme Court's handling of pollution-related litigation over the past four decades, much of it arising from PILs filed by environmentalist M.C. Mehta, highlights the limits of judicial intervention in addressing



There have been instances where courts have had to respond to executive inaction. This then raises a recurring question: do they possess the institutional competence to navigate such issues?

TALHA ABDUL RAHMAN

problems of such scale and complexity.

How can courts address the rise of ‘ambush PILs’ filed to preclude genuine claims?

AB: Increasingly, there have been instances of litigants rushing to court with poorly drafted petitions, often with the intention of securing an early dismissal and thereby precluding genuine litigants from approaching the court. These petitions are frequently driven by partisan motives. This is deeply concerning, as it risks prompting courts to deal with such matters in a cursory manner, without fully engaging with the complexities they warrant. In my view, this is not merely an issue of abuse of jurisdiction, but a problem rooted in the very nature of PIL itself.

TAR: It is often difficult to distinguish an ‘ambush PIL’ from one that raises genuine grievances. Yet, their proliferation has fostered an environment of suspicion, with courts increasingly questioning the *bona fides* of petitioners. While this may not fully address systemic concerns, there are procedural safeguards. The Supreme Court Rules, 2013, require that a writ petition contain a specific pleading identifying the fundamental rights alleged to have been violated. In the absence of such a disclosure, the Registry may decline to list the petition. Courts have also imposed costs to deter such filings.

Have courts ensured meaningful compliance with the directives issued in PILs?

TAR: Ensuring compliance with the directives in PILs often depends on the Bench. Where a judge is inclined to see a matter through, the case is kept pending, interim directions are issued, and compliance is periodically monitored. However, there has been a growing tendency in the Supreme Court to step back once a final judgment is delivered, leaving enforcement to the High Courts and trial courts. This is where gaps begin to emerge. In my view, the Supreme Court ought to retain some degree of oversight post-judgment, including initiating contempt proceedings for non-compliance.

AB: There are clear violations of several

important directives issued by the Supreme Court in PILs, often without any recourse to contempt proceedings. This tends to create a culture of impunity, allowing authorities to disregard court orders with little consequence. That said, the problem is more endemic and not confined to the PIL jurisdiction.

Should guidelines be laid down on the role of the amicus curiae (a lawyer appointed to assist the court)?

AB: The role accorded to an *amicus* in PIL proceedings raises several concerns. In dealing with complex cases, courts have, at times, expanded the role of the *amicus* to an extent that risks diluting basic procedural safeguards, particularly the right of affected parties to be heard. For instance, in *T.N. Godavarma Thirumulpad vs Union of India*, which originated as a PIL to protect forest areas in the Nilgiris and Kerala, the *amicus*, at various stages, was filing applications for directions and had effectively stepped into the role of the petitioner's counsel. The issuance of guidelines in this regard would be a welcome step.

TAR: Typically, courts appoint lawyers of a certain competence and integrity as *amici*, with the expectation that they will assist the court in navigating the pleadings and arguments in a case. However, the role of the *amicus* is not uniform and can vary across jurisdictions. In my view, an *amicus* should refrain from taking sides and instead assist the court by fairly presenting the arguments on all sides. Given how fluid the role is, clearer guidelines are needed.

What reforms are needed to strengthen the PIL jurisdiction?

TAR: One requirement for entertaining a PIL should be that it is well-researched and confined to challenging enacted laws or executive action or inaction, rather than inviting the court to make policy choices. For instance, a petitioner should not approach the court seeking the enactment of a Uniform Civil Code.

AB: We need to return to the fundamental idea that PILs are an extrapolation of the principle underlying *habeas corpus* – that parties who cannot, for unavoidable reasons, appear before the court are represented by someone else. Only then will PILs retain their legitimacy.



To listen to the full interview
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NOTEBOOK

Trade unionists and stories beyond labour rights

Leaders who interact with workers and are engaged in long-term activism often have an astute reading of politics on the ground

Meera Srinivasan

When I first met Bala Tampoe at his sea-facing office in Colombo, my aim was simply to get a perspective on the labour conditions in Sri Lanka from a senior trade unionist. He was 91 then and had led the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) as its General Secretary for 65 years. He spoke at length on the history of the island's labour movement, and about his own journey and disillusionment with the Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP). He took me through historic moments such as the Hartal of 1953 and the systemic attack on labour rights after economic liberalisation in 1977. “Comrade Bala”, as he was widely known, was fiercely critical of the Mahinda Rajapaksa administration's militarised response to the residents of Weliveriya – located in Colombo's neighbouring Gampaha district – who were protesting for clean drinking water. Army personnel opened fire and at least three residents were killed. “In this country if you block a highway even for the most elementary reasons, the penalty is death!” he told me in that interview. I understood the import of his point on military violence in the country's Sinhala-majority south, when Mr. Rajapaksa lost the presidential election in January 2015, after a decade in power. He was defeated not only because minorities rejected him, or because the opposition had wide appeal. In that significant election in post-war Sri Lanka, many within the Sinhalese community had decided they were done with the leader they once backed unconditionally. In retrospect, I felt Mr. Tampoe had begun reading that sentiment in 2013. He passed away in September 2014.

In my reporting experience, I have noticed that many trade unionists, interacting with workers and engaged in long-term activism, have an astute reading of politics on the ground. Their movements may have lost steam over time, but their ability to read political dynamics was intact. That is why I enjoyed talking to Linus Jayatileke, president of the United Federation of

Labour. I first met him in a campaign for land rights for Malaiyaha Tamils in Sri Lanka's hill country. While invested in local struggles, he was also very interested in labour movements elsewhere and constantly looked for information and contacts. He would often point to connections and differences in struggles, offering a sharp political lesson in solidarity and internationalism in a casual chat over tea.

In my early reporting days in Chennai, I encountered R. Geetha of the Unorganised Workers Federation. Regardless of which party was in power, she was focused on foregrounding workers' rights. A great communicator like many other effective leaders, she always had time to break down issues to a clueless cub reporter.

Another story that took me to worker organisations on both sides of the Palk Strait is the fisheries conflict which affected fishermen of northern Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu. Amid reductive takes, leaders of fishermen's societies in Sri Lanka, and those I met through the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) along coastal Tamil Nadu, gave me a far more complex picture of the fisheries ecosystem, the political economy of the sector, and the crucial difference between affluent leaders who own destructive bottom trawlers and daily-waged labourers who risk their lives to bring in high profits for their employer.

Some reporting assignments have also led me to worker unions that are ethno-nationalist or averse to women in leadership positions. Even so, speaking to them has invariably given me useful insights into how a large segment of society is thinking. For reporters, listening to people and getting to know how they are thinking is a vital first step before understanding why they might think so. But there are scores of examples in history that clearly illustrate how we are all better off because of trade unions and worker movements – be it the 8-hour working day, civil rights, universal suffrage, or the abolition of child labour. May Day is a reminder of that.

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PICTURE OF THE WEEK

A barren walk



Scorching heat: People walk across the parched riverbed of the Bharathapuzha at Ottapalam, Palakkad, Kerala on Thursday. In Palakkad, the maximum temperature has crossed 41 degrees Celsius, while readings at two stations are nearing 40 degrees Celsius, indicating conditions akin to a heatwave. K. K. MUSTAFAH

FROM THE ARCHIVES



FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1976

Fire incidents in trains: sabotage not ruled out

New Delhi, April 30: The spate of fire incidents in the suburban trains in Bombay was the subject matter of a short notice question in the Lok Sabha to-day.

The Minister of State for Railways, Mr. Mohammed Shafi Qureshi, who faced a barrage of supplementaries from agitated Congress members assured them that there was as yet no evidence of any sabotage. At the same time, he made it clear to the house that

he did not want to rule out sabotage behind these fire incidents. He told Mr. B. Dhamankar (Cong) who had tabled the question that “special immediate measures” had been taken to prevent fire incidents and to minimise the damage – Samachar.

Mr. Dhamankar said he had made a first hand study of the situation in Bombay and had gathered the impression during a recent tour of his constituency in Thana that these fire incidents had shaken the confidence of the commuters who now tended to become panicky and jump off running trains at the sight of a mere spark. He suggested that the railway administration in consultation with the Home Ministry go deeper into the ramifications of the fire incidents.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 1, 1926

Russo-German Treaty

Rugby, April 30: Sir Ansten Chamberlain referred to the recently concluded treaty between Germany and Soviet Russia. He said, “I am not prepared at the moment to express the considered judgment until I have studied the document very seriously. But I shall study it in the hope that I shall find that the German Ministers who assured us that they would do nothing inconsistent with the achievements of Locarno have kept their word. I shall read the documents with the hope that I may find that the language is appropriate to the purposes which German Ministers sincerely entertain.”

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Dilapidated school buildings demolished in Dehradun

56 The Dehradun district administration has demolished 56 dilapidated school buildings to ensure the safety of students and eight more are likely to be razed within a month, officials said on Thursday. A total of 64 condemned school buildings were identified. PTI

Percentage increase in India's marine fish catch in 2025

3 in per cent. India's marine fish production in 2025 rose by 3% to 35.7 lakh tonnes compared to the previous year, ICAR-CMFRI on Thursday said. According to an assessment by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Tamil Nadu emerged as the top marine fish-producing State. PTI

Percentage growth of Taiwan's economy in the first quarter

13.70 in per cent. Taiwan's economy saw double-digit growth in the first three months of 2026 thanks to robust demand for artificial intelligence technology, data showed Thursday, despite concerns over the West Asia crisis. AFP

Number of Gaza activists 'kidnapped' by Israel

211 Organisers of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla said Israel's army had "kidnapped" 211 activists in a raid in international waters off Greece. Helene Coron, a spokeswoman for the Global Sumud France, that the operation had taken place near the island of Crete. AFP

Number of registered users on PhonePe as of April 29

700 in million. PhonePe announced that it has crossed the milestone of 700 million (70 crore) registered users on as of April 29. This highlights PhonePe's population-scale reach in India and the breadth of its digital platform offerings. PTI
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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How is the next UN chief being chosen?

Why is the role of Secretary-General important? Who are the candidates? What factors shape the choice? Why does this election matter now? What are the candidates' campaign priorities? What happens next?

EXPLAINER

Raja Karthikeya

The story so far:

The election of the next UN Secretary-General is underway. On April 21-22, four candidates – two women and two men – pitched their records of public service and leadership to the UN General Assembly in "informal, interactive dialogues".

Why is the role of Secretary-General important?

The UN Charter defines the Secretary-General as the UN's Chief Administrative Officer, who oversees the work of the UN Secretariat and fulfils "any other functions and duties entrusted" to them by the organisation's principal organs, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. The Secretary-General also has the mandate to bring to the Security Council's attention any issue that threatens global peace and security.

Where needed, the Secretary-General has the authority to appoint "Personal Envoys" (as Antonio Guterres has now done for the current West Asia conflict).

Often described as the world's "chief diplomat," the Secretary-General is the face and voice of the UN, speaking as the world's conscience on issues ranging from the arms race in space and climate change to persistent inequality that hampers economic growth.

How is the Secretary-General elected?

The UN Charter states that the Secretary-General is appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council. This means that the Permanent Members of the Security Council – China, France, Russia, the U.K., and the U.S. – have a significant say in who gets elected.

What considerations play a role?

While the term of a Secretary-General is



Often described as the world's 'chief diplomat,' the Secretary-General is the voice of the UN. REUTERS

technically "discretionary," incumbents have, since 1981, voluntarily limited themselves to two terms. By custom, the post rotates among five regions of the world: Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean. This is the turn of the latter. Within the region, there are dynamics at play, with Spanish-speaking Latin American countries and English-speaking Caribbean nations supporting different candidates.

Who are the candidates?

The four candidates now officially in the race are: Michelle Bachelet, former President of Chile and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights; Macky Sall, former President of Senegal; Rafael Grossi, Head of the International Atomic Energy Agency; and Rebecca Grynspan, Head of the UN Conference on Trade and Development.

Why is this election crucial?

Eighty years after its founding, the UN is facing a deep financial and political crisis. The Secretariat relies on mandatory "assessed contributions" collected from member states. Still, non-payment, partial payment, and delay in payment of dues by

leading contributors have triggered an unprecedented financial situation.

The Security Council is paralysed by acrimony and persistent vetoes by the permanent members. The UN is also struggling to mobilise funds and troops for missions in places such as Haiti, and with host country relations in cases such as in Mali, where the UN mission was forced to withdraw.

Over the past decade, the UN played a key role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, advancing climate action through the Paris Agreement, and promoting sustainable development via the 2030 Agenda. However, recent conflicts in Gaza, Lebanon, Sudan, Ukraine, and Iran have raised questions about its ability to prevent war – a central idea of the UN Charter. There are increasing calls for the UN to "return to basics" by focusing more on conflict resolution. The Sustainable Development Goals are now universal markers of developmental progress but there is rising concern that only 18% of the targets are on track to be met by 2030. Meanwhile, the humanitarian system is under severe strain due to multiple conflicts, intensifying disasters, and pressures on international humanitarian law. The next

Secretary-General will have the unenviable task of not just administering, but rejuvenating the organisation.

What are the candidates' campaign priorities?

During their interactions with the General Assembly, Ms. Bachelet, Ms. Grynspan, and Mr. Sall all emphasised preventive diplomacy – the UN term for preventing conflicts through adroit behind-the-scenes parley with the stakeholders to the conflict. However, their approaches differ. Ms. Bachelet prioritised field presence, while Ms. Grynspan focused on merging the UN's work in the prevention of conflict with its work on human rights. Ms. Grynspan was arguably the most vocal on UN reform, proposing restructuring the Secretary-General's office within the first 100 days if elected. Among areas for priority action, Ms. Bachelet highlighted climate, Mr. Sall highlighted migration, and Mr. Grossi highlighted UN-World Bank relations. Ms. Grynspan stressed the need to protect least-developed nations from funding cuts.

All candidates committed to gender parity, while Ms. Bachelet emphasised improving geographic diversity within the UN workforce, a longstanding demand of developing countries. On the stasis in the Security Council, Ms. Grynspan and Mr. Sall said they would publicly call out permanent members of the council who violate international law, while Mr. Grossi promised to uphold the UN Charter. Ms. Bachelet said she will use the Secretary-General's office to build political viability for Security Council reform.

What happens next?

In the next phase, the Security Council will hold closed-door deliberations and straw polls before recommending a candidate to the General Assembly around October. Once the latter confirms the choice through a simple majority vote, the new Secretary-General will take office on January 1, 2027.

(Raja Karthikeya is a former international civil servant)

THE GIST

The UN is facing a deep financial and political crisis, with Security Council paralysis, funding shortfalls, and rising global conflicts.

The next Secretary-General will have the task of rejuvenating the organisation, focusing on conflict prevention, reform, and advancing sustainable development goals.

What happened to Komagata Maru passengers in 1914?

Why was the Komagata Maru denied entry into Canada? What happened to the passengers?

Prathmesh Kher

The story so far:

In the spring of 1914, a Japanese steamship called the Komagata Maru sailed from Hong Kong toward Vancouver, British Columbia, carrying 376 passengers: 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus from Punjab in British India. They were British subjects hoping to build new lives in Canada. What awaited them was a two-month standoff in the harbour, a brutal denouement on the docks of Calcutta, and a place in the history of both India's anti-colonial movement and Canada's long reckoning with its own past. The episode was recently mentioned by singer Diljit Dosanjh on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*.

Why was Punjab central to events leading up to the voyage?

By 1914, Punjab had become the primary recruiting ground for the British Indian Army. The British had cultivated Punjab

as a loyal province populated by a "martial race," but the relationship was both lopsided and extractive. Rapid agricultural growth combined with easy credit had created a crisis of rural indebtedness, and epidemics of malaria and plague in the early 1900s pushed families toward emigration as the only way out.

Among those who left were the founders of the Ghadar movement, established in 1913 among expatriate Punjabis on the U.S. West Coast, dedicated to the armed overthrow of British rule in India.

The Komagata Maru voyage was freighted with this politics from the start. Ghadar activists boarded the ship in Yokohama, delivering lectures and distributing anti-colonial literature, and British intelligence was watching closely.

What led to the standoff?

The voyage was organised by Gurdit Singh, a Punjabi entrepreneur based in Singapore, who chartered the ship

specifically to challenge Canada's exclusionary laws. Canada had enacted a "continuous journey regulation" in 1908, barring entry to anyone who had not travelled by a single unbroken journey from their country of birth, while also pressuring shipping companies not to sell direct tickets from India.

When the ship arrived at Vancouver's Burrard Inlet on May 23, 1914, immigration officials refused to let it dock. Prime Minister Robert Borden kept the ship anchored offshore, cutting off communication and stalling proceedings. The local South Asian community raised over \$20,000 to take over the ship's charter and hired a lawyer to bring a test case, but the British Columbia Court of Appeal unanimously upheld the discriminatory laws. Officials then withheld food and water. On July 19, an armed police force of 150 men attempted to board the ship; the passengers fought them off. Borden dispatched a naval cruiser. Only 22 passengers, mostly those who could prove prior Canadian

residence, were ultimately permitted to disembark. The ship departed under escort on July 23. British colonial authorities, suspicious of the passengers' politics, refused to let the ship dock in Hong Kong or Singapore. When it finally anchored near Calcutta in late September, police tried to force the exhausted passengers onto trains bound for Punjab. They refused, marched toward the city, and were fired upon. Twenty passengers were killed; many more were imprisoned. Gurdit Singh evaded capture for years before surrendering in 1920 and serving five years in prison.

What happened when the ship returned to India?

In the aftermath, the Ghadar movement surged in recruitment. Some members returned to Punjab in 1915 to attempt an armed uprising, which failed due to informers and mass arrests. Dozens were sent to the gallows. But the movement's martyrs became folklore.

Canada was slow to acknowledge what it had done. An apology delivered at a community festival by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008 was rejected by many as insufficient. It took until 2016 for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to deliver a formal apology on the floor of the House of Commons. The Komagata Maru remains a sharp demonstration of what colonial subjects had long understood: that the British Empire's promises of equal subjecthood were never meant for everyone.

THE GIST

The Komagata Maru carried 376 British subjects from Punjab but was denied entry into Canada under the "continuous journey" regulation, leading to a two-month standoff in Vancouver harbour.

On returning to India, the passengers faced police firing near Calcutta, killing 20 people.

FULL CONTEXT

A century after legal recognition, workers still lack real protection

Since the Trade Union Act first gave workers legal recognition and protection, the law has not lived up to its intent; it preserves rights on paper but, through procedural constraints and silence on platform workers, continues to limit the ability of workers to organise and act

Prathmesh Kher

In 1918, Bahman Pestonji Wadia founded the Madras Labour Union, India's first trade union with regular membership and a relief fund, established to address what he called the "mal-treatment of workers" by European officers. The union he helped build was, in the eyes of British common law, a conspiracy to restrain trade.

In 1921, a Madras court put a price on the act of organising workers against unfair working conditions. £2,000 was awarded against Wadia and fellow unionists for leading a strike against the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills. The management agreed to waive the payment on the condition that Wadia sever all associations with the union he had built. There was no law to protect him. The unionists complied.

But even in compliance, the unionists showed defiance. One of the union leaders, Vengal Chakkarai Chettiar, told the judge in open court: "I am an evangelical worker for the Wesley Mission. I am getting ₹10 per week, with which I am living. I have only my clothes, which I am wearing, and a few spare clothes at home. If necessary, I will remove my clothes and give them to the court. But the amount of compensation ordered by you cannot be recovered from me. At the same time, I cannot be stopped from working for the trade union of workers. Even if my clothes are removed in execution of a decree, I will continue to work for the trade union by wearing my loincloth. If necessary, we will go for work stoppages to win our demands."

The judgment brought into the open something that had been gnawing at the labouring classes for decades. By 1921, India had hundreds of trade unions, yet not one had legal recognition. N.M. Joshi, co-founder and General Secretary of the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), understood the specific nature of the problem. In March 1921, the same month as the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills judgment, he moved a resolution in the Central Legislative Assembly recommending that the government introduce legislation to register and protect trade unions. Five years of legal and political pressure followed before the Act was finally passed in 1926. The Royal Commission on Labour in India, reporting in 1931, described what the struggle had been for: to give trade unions the necessary protection from civil suits and criminal laws relating to conspiracy to enable them to carry on their legitimate activities.

Letter and spirit

The Trade Union Act of 1926 emerged from five years of sustained pressure from the labour movement, from nationalist leaders who understood that organised workers were essential to the freedom struggle, sharpened by the colonial state's calculation that legal frameworks for managing workers' grievances were safer than the revolutionary alternative.

Section 18 of the Act answered the Buckingham and Carnatic Mills judgment directly: "No suit or other legal proceeding shall be maintainable in any Civil Court against any registered Trade Union or any office-bearer or member thereof in respect of any act done in contemplation or furtherance of a trade



GETTY IMAGES

dispute" including inducing breach of employment contract, or interfering with the employer's trade or business. The weapon used to silence Wadia was removed from the employer's hands. Section 17 addressed the criminal threat: no office-bearer or member of a registered union shall be liable under the IPC's criminal conspiracy provision, Section 120B, for agreements made to further legitimate union objects, "unless the agreement is an agreement to commit an offence."

An Indian worker now had legal recognition and legally recognised rights. A union was no longer a conspiracy.

By 1928, the Girmi Kamgar Union in Bombay had over 70,000 members. That year saw 203 strikes involving over five lakh workers. The left wing of the labour movement, strengthened by the Act's protections, was growing fast and fusing with nationalist politics, as it had in 1908, when Bombay's workers struck for six days over Lokmanya Tilak's imprisonment. Two responses came simultaneously from the colonial state.

The Meerut conspiracy case arrested 33 labour organisers, men working openly, in unions the 1926 Act had made legal, and charged them not under Section 120B, where the Act's immunity held, but under sedition provisions the Act had never touched. Then came two bills together. The Trade Disputes Bill banned sympathetic strikes, built in notice periods long enough to make sustained action practically impossible, and made illegal any strike that extended beyond a purely industrial dispute. What had electrified Indian politics since 1908, the joining of workers' grievances to nationalist ones, was now a criminal act. Motilal Nehru named it plainly: "the Slavery of India Bill." The Public Safety Bill went further, giving the executive power to act not on what people did but on what they were deemed to intend, with the Governor General as judge of intention.

On October 30, 1928, months before the bills came to a vote, Lala Lajpat Rai, who had presided over the AITUC's founding session in 1920, led a peaceful protest in Lahore against the all-British Simon Commission. Police Superintendent James Scott ordered a

lathi charge. Rai was beaten across his chest. That same evening, still standing, he addressed the crowd at Mochi Gate: "I declare that the blows struck at me today will be the last nails in the coffin of British rule in India." He died eighteen days later.

At the Bombay Presidency Youth Conference in December 1928, Jawaharlal Nehru told the students: "Ally yourself to the masses of the country, the peasantry and the industrial worker... And if you do so, you will automatically avoid the pitfalls of reformism and petty compromise." By July 1929, with both bills passed and the Meerut accused in custody, his analysis of the Public Safety Bill was unsparing: "This is dangerous enough at any time and in any country to make the Executive Government the judge of what is in the mind of those opposed to it. It is far more dangerous in India, where there is a foreign government." When the government's spokesman claimed that foreign agitators had caused the country's labour unrest, Nehru was contemptuous. "A strike is always unfortunate and deplorable, just as a fever is unfortunate and deplorable, but it is no good cursing the fever. The wise man treats it and tries to remove the causes of it."

Three months before that analysis, on April 8, 1929, Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw smoke bombs and leaflets from the visitors' gallery of the Central Legislative Assembly. The pamphlet named three provocations: the Meerut arrests, the bills, and the death of Lajpat Rai. "The indiscriminate arrests of labour leaders working in the open field clearly indicate whether the wind blows," it read. Then came the sentence that named the whole situation: "It takes a loud voice to make the deaf hear."

Singh was hanged in 1931, aged 23. Dutt was transported to the Cellular Jail in the Andamans to serve a life sentence. The Meerut accused spent years in prison. The Girmi Kamgar Union was broken. The 1926 Act's protections remained on the statute book. The letter never came to match the spirit.

Past as prologue

The Trade Union Act survived independence and was absorbed into the

constitutional settlement. Article 19(1)(c) gave every Indian citizen the right to form associations or unions. Registered trade unions increased by 625% between 1951 and 1979. The ideological fire of the early movement cooled, over time, into wage bargaining. Then in 1991, the New Economic Policy arrived with its logic that labour flexibility was the price of growth.

In 2020, during a Monsoon Session of Parliament conducted under pandemic restrictions, with the Opposition protesting procedural irregularities, the government passed four labour codes consolidating 29 existing laws. One of them, the Industrial Relations Code 2020, absorbed the Trade Union Act 1926. It came into force on November 21, 2025.

The new Code preserves Sections 16 and 17, successors to the 1926 Act's immunity provisions, in language almost identical to the original. A century's worth of protective words, freshly reprinted. But the dissonance between the letter and the spirit continues.

To be recognised as such, a negotiating union must now demonstrate 51% support among workers on the muster roll. In industries characterised by high turnover, casual labour, fixed-term contracts, achieving and maintaining this numerical ceiling is nigh impossible for most unions, and this is precisely in sectors where workers need protection the most. Section 62 requires 60 days' notice before a strike can begin, four times the 15 days the 1929 Trade Disputes Act demanded, the bill Motilal Nehru had already called the "Slavery of India Bill." Workers cannot strike during conciliation proceedings, or for seven days after, or during Tribunal proceedings, or for 60 days after those conclude. Between notice periods and cooling-off clauses, an employer can keep a workforce in procedural suspension without end.

Then there is the silence that reveals more than any provision. The words 'gig' and 'platform' do not appear once in the Industrial Relations Code 2020. NITI Aayog estimated 7.7 million platform workers in 2020. Yet a law that came into force five months ago contains not a single word about the workers who run errands across every city in the country. They are legally classified as independent contractors.

The struggle continues

Despite the hurdles thrown their way, workers continue to organise. The Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union, the Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers, and the All-India Gig Workers Union continue to exist, organise meetings on WhatsApp, and occasionally win. In March 2024, platform worker unions forced Zomato to reverse a policy that segregated delivery fleets by food type. This decision was understood to endanger religious minority and lower-caste riders by making their identities visible in a society marked by discrimination.

The Fairwork India Report 2024 assessed 11 major platforms operating in India and found that none recognised a collective body of workers or a trade union. Four States have now passed social security laws for platform workers, welfare benefits designed, with some care, to make the struggle for collective bargaining seem unnecessary.

The deaf have not learned to hear. The loud voices are still necessary.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"How do you pronounce l...h...a...c...k...a...d...a...i...s...i...c...a...l?"

"The first syllable is pronounced like the word 'lack'. The 'a' in the second syllable is pronounced like..."

"...let me guess. It's probably pronounced like the 'a' in 'China', 'amount', and 'another'. Am I right?"

"Very good. The 'dai' is pronounced like the word 'day'. The 's' that follows sounds like the 'z' in 'zoo', 'zip', and 'zing'."

"And the 'i' is like the 'i' in 'bit', 'kit', and 'pit'!"

"Exactly! And the final 'a' is once again like the 'a' in 'China'. Now then, can you guess which syllable has the stress?"

"Well, when Sujatha used the word, I think she put the stress on 'dai'."

"That's right! The word is pronounced lackadai'sical. Do you know what it means?"

"No, I don't. But it can't be anything good, that's for sure."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because Sujatha said that I was lackadai'sical about a lot of things."

"She is right, you know."

"Thank you very much. Now, can you tell me what the word means?"

"When someone is lackadai'sical about something, he/she does not show any enthusiasm or interest in it."

"You mean like our cricket stars. For all the money they get, they are pretty lackadai'sical on the field."

"They certainly are."

"How does this sound? Many Government officials have a very lackadai'sical approach to their work."

"That's a good example. Here's another one. When I was in school, I had a very lackadai'sical approach to my studies."

"Things haven't changed much, have they? Ha! Ha!"

"That's a good one. By the way, have you decided what you are going to specialise in?"

"I haven't made up my mind."

"...you are still yo-yoing, are you?"

"Still what?"

"Yo-yoing. A 'yo-yo' is..."

"I know what a yo-yo is. It's a toy that kids play with."

"That's right! When someone accuses you of yo-yoing, what they mean is that you are vacillating. You can't really decide what to do."

"...in other words, when I 'yo-yo' I find it very difficult to make up my mind about something."

"Yes, that's right! That's one of the meanings of 'yo-yo'. Here's an example. I wish my boss would stop yo-yoing and make up his mind about what he wants to do about the insubordination problem in our office."

"Your boss yo-yo's quite a bit, doesn't he?"

"He certainly does. And so do you. You always have to yo-yo before deciding on something. Have you decided on which TV to buy?"

"I am still not sure. You see,..."

"...stop yo-yoing, will you? If I were you, I would buy the bigger one. At that price, it's a steal."

"Steal? What do you mean? You want me to steal the thing?"

"No, no! I wouldn't want you to do anything like that. When you say that something was a steal, it means that you got it very cheap. It was a great bargain."

"It was so cheap that you feel you didn't pay anything for it."

"Exactly! It's as if you took the thing from the seller without paying anything for it."

Published in *The Hindu* on June 27, 2000

THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on International Workers' Day and its history

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

International Workers' Day is observed on May 1 in more than 80 countries, but not officially in the X. Name X (a country), which celebrates the same occasion in September — by order of its head of state in 1894 — in order to distance itself from the radical communist ideas associated with the date.

QUESTION 2

International Workers' Day commemorates the _____ affair. On May 4, 1886, a peaceful rally for the eight-hour workday in Chicago turned violent after someone threw dynamite at the police. The name of the incident refers to the square where the incident occurred; the incident is also considered the climax of the Great American Uprising. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 3

The Y adopted the date of May 1 in 1889 as International Workers' Day to honour the events

of Q2. Y was an organisation of socialist and labour parties from various countries. Y collapsed with the start of the First World War, which had tried but failed to prevent through working-class action. Name Y.

QUESTION 4

India celebrates its first May Day in 1923 in P (a city), thanks to the efforts of labour leader Q. Among others, Q advocated socialism in colonial India, articulated Marxist ideas in the public sphere, and cofounded the first organised trade union in India. Name P and Q.

QUESTION 5

In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered a famous speech in which he denounced Joseph Stalin's excesses, behind closed doors. What was the title of Khrushchev's speech?



Visual Question:

Name this activist and Gandhian who helped found the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), considered to be the world's largest trade union of informal women workers. MOHAN JUNEJA (CC BY-SA)

Questions and Answers to the previous day's

daily quiz: 1. What word meaning 'guide' in German was used to refer to Hitler? **Ans: Fuhrer**

2. In 1923, Hitler attempted to pull off a coup and overthrow the Weimar Republic; the attempt landed him in prison. What was it called? **Ans: The Munich Putsch**

3. What is the name of the totalitarian dictatorship set up by Hitler from 1933 to 1945? **Ans: The Third Reich**

4. In 1936, the Nazi regime used this international sporting event for propaganda. It wasn't held again until 1948. Which event was this and what event caused its delay? **Ans: Olympics. World War 2**

5. The Axis Alliance was formed between Hitler, Mussolini, and another leader. Name him. **Ans: Japanese emperor Hirohito**

Visual: If you're a Harry Potter fan, you would have heard of the Chamber of Secrets. But have you heard of the Chamber of Horrors? This statue is found in which museum's chamber of horrors? **Ans: Madame Tussauds**

Early Birds: C. Saravanan | Sunil Madhavan | Arun Kumar Singh | Mohan Lal Patel | Prem Nath Tiwari

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to letters@thehindu.co.in with the subject 'Text & Context'

From Page One

Iran vows to safeguard its nuclear capabilities

Iran has always maintained that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes. Mr. Trump, who ordered U.S. bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities in June 2025, had then said he had "obliterated" the nuclear programme.

Mr. Khamenei on Thursday said Iranians would safeguard all of the country's technological advances, including the nuclear and missile programmes. Iranians "will regard all their national identity capacities – spiritual, human, scientific, industrial, and foundational and cutting-edge technologies, from nano and bio to nuclear and missile – as their national capital, and will safeguard them just as they do their maritime, land, and air borders," he said in the statement.

He added that the U.S. presence is the "most important factor of insecurity" in the region. "America's illusory bases lack even the ability to ensure their own security, let alone any hope that America could provide security for the region's dependents and Americanophiles."

U.S. Central Command stated on Wednesday in a social media post that it had reached a "significant milestone after successfully redirecting the 42nd commercial vessel attempting to violate the blockade". There are "41 tankers with 69 million barrels of oil that the Iran can't sell", it said.

Oil prices soared to four-year highs on Thursday, with the global benchmark Brent spiking more than 7% to \$126.41 a barrel for June delivery.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said the Persian Gulf is an "inseparable" part of Iran's identity, adding that the U.S. blockade is "doomed to fail". "As we have repeatedly announced, the presence and interference of foreigners will not help improve security in the region but will create tension and disrupt lasting peace in the Persian Gulf," he said in a statement. Mr. Pezeshkian added that Iran would adhere to "the principles of freedom of navigation and maritime safety, except for hostile countries".

Iran's Parliament Speaker and chief negotiator Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf signalled that Tehran would not give up its control over the Strait of Hormuz.

'Revenue-deficit States may face fiscal stress'

Of all the States analysed, Punjab has the highest projected ratio of interest payments to revenue receipts of 22.8%. "States simultaneously running a revenue deficit and high outstanding liabilities have fewer degrees of freedom to respond to fiscal shocks," the report said. "Specifically, they may have to resort to expenditure restructuring or may demand higher central transfers to meet the present unforeseen shocks."

The eight States with projected revenue surplus as a percentage of their GDPs are Odisha (3%), Jharkhand (2.5%), Uttar Pradesh (1.6%), Goa (1.3%), Gujarat (0.8%), Uttarakhand (0.6%), Telangana (0.3%), and Bihar (0.1%).

'Systemic failures' blamed for tribal man's plight

Mr. Mohapatra said there were delays in issuance of a death certificate. "Death certificate was applied for on March 30, 2026 with an affidavit, which was not at all required in hospital. The death certificate should have been issued by April 4, but it did not happen. After the unfortunate incident happened, the death certificate was issued to Mr. Munda," he said.

Mr. Mohapatra said recommendations would be sent to the State government to strengthen the system in banks to assist people belonging to weaker sections.

MP Engineer Rashid out on interim bail, meets father

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief and Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid, who was granted interim bail by the court, on Thursday met his critically ill father in a Srinagar hospital.

Mr. Rashid arrived on Thursday afternoon and directly headed for the hospital.

He met his father at the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital.

"Adhering strictly to the directions and restrictions laid down by the Delhi High Court, Mr. Rashid did not address the media or interact with anyone other than his immediate family during the visit," said a spokesperson of the AIP.

India halted Sindoore on its own terms: Rajnath

Defence Minister says Pakistan, an 'epicentre of terrorism', is emerging as the global hub of 'international terrorism'; he says Indian forces have the surge capacity to scale up operations

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched a strong verbal attack against Pakistan on Thursday, accusing it of consistently backing terrorism and emerging as the global hub of "international terrorism", while asserting that India's counter-terror actions were decisive and strategically calibrated.

Speaking at the National Security Summit 2.0 organised by the news agency ANI, Mr. Singh said that India had voluntarily halted Operation Sindoore on its own terms and not due to any operational limitations. He underlined that India was fully prepared for a prolonged conflict if the situation had demanded it.

The Defence Minister's remarks come a day after the Congress criticised his earlier statements at a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meeting in Bishkek, accusing him of giving a "clean chit" to Pakistan and terming his comments



Strong stance: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh speaks at an event in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

"anti-national." Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif was also at the meeting as an SCO member country.

Nuclear threats

Drawing a sharp contrast between the two neighbours, Mr. Singh said that while India has earned global recognition for its information technology, or IT prowess, Pakistan has gained notoriety for what he described as another form of 'IT' – international

terrorism. He stressed that India's approach sends a clear message that there will be no distinction between terrorists and those who sponsor them.

The Defence Minister also highlighted India's military preparedness, saying that the country's defence ecosystem has demonstrated its ability to meet both peacetime and wartime demands.

He revealed that during Operation Sindoore, India faced nuclear threats but

chose to dismiss them, acting firmly in the national interest.

"India did not stop the operation due to any lack of capability. We stopped it voluntarily, on our own terms. Our forces had, and continue to have, the surge capacity to scale up operations whenever required," Mr. Singh said.

Ideological fight

Emphasising the broader fight against terrorism, Mr. Singh said it must be tackled across operational, ideological, and political dimensions.

He described the ideological and political support systems behind terrorism as its real source of strength, comparing it to the mythical "nectar" that sustains evil.

Reiterating India's firm stance, Mr. Singh said the military's surgical strikes, air strikes, and Operation Sindoore reflect the country's unwavering commitment to counter terrorism. "This is not just a security issue, but a fight to uphold humanity and its core values," he added.

Delhi court grants regular bail to I-PAC director

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Patiala House Court on Thursday granted regular bail to Vinesh Chandel, director and co-founder of Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC), a political consultancy firm, after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) did not raise any objection to the plea.

Mr. Chandel was arrested by the ED on April 13, days before the West Bengal Assembly polls. He is accused in a money laundering case linked to an alleged coal scam in the State. His bail came a day after polling concluded in Bengal on April 29.

Additional Sessions Judge Amit Bansal noted that counsel for the applicant has referred to PMLA Section 45 and has submitted that the Special Public Prosecutor has been given the opportunity to oppose the bail, but he has not done so.

Shah to attend first-ever exposition of Buddha's relics on Ladakh visit

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who arrived in Leh on Thursday, will attend the first international exposition of holy relics of Lord Buddha in India on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

Mr. Shah was welcomed by top officials, elected representatives and the local people, with many dressed in traditional attire. "He [Mr. Shah] will be paying respects to the holy relics of Lord Buddha tomorrow [May 1] on the occasion of the 2,569th Buddha Purnima. The Home Minister's visit and his vision for the development of Ladakh shall motivate us to work for fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Ladakh," the Union Territory's Lieutenant-Governor, Vinai Kumar Saxena said.

This is Mr. Shah's first visit since street protests over the demands of Statehood and inclusion in the



Home Minister Amit Shah being welcomed by Ladakh L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena and other dignitaries in Leh on Thursday. ANI

Sixth Schedule left four protesters dead and over 80 injured last September.

The Centre has already announced May 22 as a fresh date to resume Delhi-Ladakh talks on the demands of the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, conglomerates of socio-religious-political groups of the region. The talks hit a roadblock after the protests and the arrest of climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was championing the causes of State-

hood and Sixth Schedule.

Meanwhile, five more districts have been created in the region, in an apparent outreach ahead of the talks.

"This visit marks a significant moment for Ladakh, underlining the continued focus and engagement of the Central leadership with the region's development and aspirations," Jamyang Tsering Namgyal, senior BJP leader and former MP from Ladakh said. He said Mr.

Italy told to avoid sharing of defence tech with Pakistan

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held bilateral talks with his Italian counterpart, Guido Crosetto, at the Manekshaw Centre on Thursday, urging Italy to refrain from sharing sensitive defence technologies with Pakistan.

Sources in the Defence Ministry said Mr. Singh had asked Italy to stop any potential defence technology collaboration with Pakistan, emphasising India's security interests. The Italian side, according to sources, said certain defence technologies offered to India would remain exclusive and not be shared with other countries.

During the meeting, both leaders reaffirmed that the India-Italy Strategic Partnership is anchored in shared values of peace, stability, freedom and mutual respect.

In a post on X, the Defence Minister said he and his Italian counterpart had discussed a wide range of regional and global issues, including the current situation in West Asia. The two Ministers discussed avenues to further develop

mutually beneficial defence industrial cooperation under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat programme and Italy's defence cooperation initiatives.

The Defence Ministry said a Bilateral Military Cooperation Plan for 2026-27 was exchanged, outlining future engagements between the armed forces of both countries.

Both sides also highlighted convergence between the two ancient maritime nations on key issues, including enhanced information sharing through the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region.

Mr. Crosetto paid homage to fallen soldiers at the National War Memorial and inspected a tri-service Guard of Honour at the Manekshaw Centre.

Meanwhile, the Indian Coast Guard hosted an Italian delegation, including senior representatives from Fincantieri Shipyard, at Coast Guard Headquarters.

Both sides deliberated on the indigenous development and co-development of niche technologies in alignment with the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

Island project has strategic value, says ex-IAF chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Greater Nicobar Island project is "important for India's military footprint" in the area, a former chief of the Indian Air Force said on Thursday, as part of the BJP's pushback against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's comments against the project and its harmful ecological impact.

Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria (ret), who is now a member of the BJP, pointed to the strategic importance of having a port near the route of China's energy shipments, with the conflict in West Asia demonstrating the impact of such maritime leverage. He said that environmental concerns are taken on board as a matter of course when such projects are mooted. "There are statutory clearances and committees are made. They look at all the factors and all are mitigated," he said.

MP Engineer Rashid out on interim bail, meets father

The Hindu Bureau
SRINAGAR

Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief and Baramulla MP Engineer Rashid, who was granted interim bail by the court, on Thursday met his critically ill father in a Srinagar hospital.

Mr. Rashid arrived on Thursday afternoon and directly headed for the hospital.

He met his father at the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital.

"Adhering strictly to the directions and restrictions laid down by the Delhi High Court, Mr. Rashid did not address the media or interact with anyone other than his immediate family during the visit," said a spokesperson of the AIP.

Tigress, four cubs die in past two weeks at Kanha Tiger Reserve

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

A tigress and her four cubs died in Madhya Pradesh's Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR) in the past two weeks, with the mother and a cub passing away on Wednesday, officials said.

So far, 27 tigers died in the State in 2026.

The five animals died due to a lung infection, prompting the State's wildlife officials to launch an investigation into the deaths as they suspect an outbreak of canine distemper virus (CDV), which spreads through dogs.

According to officials, the 10-year-old female tiger and her 18-month-old cub had been under quarantine since April 26 and died during treatment.

The two had been tranquillised and brought in for



So far, 27 tigers have died in Madhya Pradesh in 2026.

treatment after three of her cubs were found dead between April 17 and 25 in the Sarhi range of KTR.

CDV confirmed Chief Wildlife Warden Samita Rajora told *The Hindu* that the presence of CDV had been confirmed in the third cub that was found dead while samples of the mother and a cub who died on Wednesday had been sent for testing.

"The first two carcasses were found late in decomposed state and the local

officials initially suspected that since their mother was sick and could not hunt, they had died of starvation. But when the third cub was found, I was coincidentally there and suspected that this could be something serious," Ms. Rajora said, adding that the carcass of the third cub was sent to School Of Wildlife Forensic And Health (SWFH), Jabalpur.

Ms. Rajora said the SWFH found that the cub was suffering from severe respiratory issues, heat strokes and pneumonic conditions, and confirmed the presence of CDV.

She said various preventive measures had been taken in the area to curb the spread of the virus in other tigers and animals and that regular monitoring was being conducted to keep an eye on them.

SC issues notice on petition for 'revenue judicial service cadre'

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday sought a response from the Centre and States on a plea to establish a separate 'revenue judicial service' cadre for adjudication of land disputes exclusively.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant issued the notice to the Centre and States on the petition filed by petitioner-advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, which has also sought a direction to prescribe uniform minimum legal qualification and judicial training module for public servants adjudicating land cases.

"The court may also direct and declare that the

adjudication of title, succession, inheritance, possession and property rights by revenue officers without formal legal education and judicial training is legally impermissible," the petition said.

The plea sought a direction to the High Courts to "supervise and monitor" the adjudication. "The adjudication of complex land disputes by revenue/consolidation officers without formal legal education and judicial training is arbitrary, irrational and violates Article 14 of the Constitution. Presently, there is no minimum legal qualifications and judicial training for consolidation officers who exercise powers equivalent to civil courts," Mr. Upadhyay submitted.

Delhi HC freezes Sunjay Kapur's assets

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court froze the assets of the late businessman Sunjay Kapur on Thursday, amid an ongoing inheritance dispute over his estate, between his widow Priya Kapur, his children with his former wife Karisma Kapoor, and his

mother Rani Kapur.

Justice Jyoti Singh passed the interim order while hearing a plea by Ms. Kapoor's children, who challenged the purported last will of their late father. "Plaintiffs have made out a *prima facie* case that the assets need to be protected, pending disposal of the suit," Justice Singh said.

APPEAL

Master Samar Goswami, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, UHID NO.14187280, 11 years is Diagnosed Suffering from Beta Thalassaemia Major, who requires Matched Sibling Donor Stem Cell Transplant as Curative Therapy. The Estimated cost of the Transplant is Approximately Rs.22,00,000/-.

Please send donation however small by Cheque/D.D/M.O Fav. Save Poor Lives A/c Samar Goswami. Our A/c Details: S/B A/c No. 20090913487, S.B.I. R.A.Puram, IFSC CODE:SBIN001855. Please Donate by G-pay No.9884607377, UPI Id: savepoorlives@oksb. Donations are exempted under 80G of I.T.ACT.

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SC reserves verdict on Pawan Khera's bail petition

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Pawan Khera in the Supreme Court on Thursday accused Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma of playing the "Constitutional Rambo or Constitutional cowboy" by using the State's power of arrest to personally humiliate him.

The Assam Police have registered a criminal case against Mr. Khera for his remarks in a press conference against the Chief Minister's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma. The Congress leader had alleged that Ms. Sharma held multiple passports and considerable assets abroad.

Mr. Khera, who is facing charges of forgery, criminal conspiracy, and defamation, has appealed to the Supreme Court for anticipatory bail.

He had moved the court urgently on Sunday, a couple of days after the Gauhati High Court denied him relief.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Justice J.K. Maheshwari, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the State of Assam, said Mr. Khera's custodial interrogation was imperative.

The Bench reserved Mr. Khera's plea for pre-arrest bail for judgment after hearing submissions from both sides for about an hour.

EC set to implement QR code-based access at counting centres

Poll body launches new photo identity cards with QR codes for persons authorised to enter counting halls, including officials and candidates

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Thursday introduced a QR code-based photo identity card system to eliminate the possibility of any unauthorised persons entering counting centres.

After its introduction during the counting to be held on May 4 for the Assembly elections in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry and the byelections in seven Assembly constituencies across five States, the system will be extended to all future general and byelections to the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies, the EC said in a statement.

A three-tier security mechanism has been prescribed for verification of identity at counting centres. At the first and second tiers, photo identity cards issued by the Returning Officer (RO) shall be checked manually. At the third and innermost security cordon near the counting hall, entry shall be permitted only after successful verification through QR code scanning. The new QR code-based



Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar with the two Election Commissioners at the ECINET launch on January 22. ANI

cards will be applicable for categories of persons authorised by EC to enter counting centres and halls, including ROs, Assistant Returning Officers (AROs), counting staff, technical personnel, candidates, election agents and counting agents, among others.

The EC has also introduced a module on the ECINET 2.0 platform for the QR code-based cards.

A media centre will be set up near the counting halls in each centre for the facilitation of authorised presspersons. Entry of presspersons will continue to be permitted on the basis of authority letters issued by the EC in accor-

dance with the existing instructions of the commission.

All Chief Electoral Officers (DEOs), District Election Officers (DEOs), ROs and AROs have been directed to ensure strict compliance with these instructions to uphold the highest standards of transparency, security and efficiency in the counting process.

The DEOs and ROs have been directed to make all necessary arrangements for the effective implementation of this system, including deployment of trained personnel at designated checkpoints to ensure seamless and secure access control.

Alleging EVM tampering, Mamata visits counting centre in Kolkata

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Thursday landed up at the Sakhawat Memorial School in south Kolkata, the counting centre for the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency, raising suspicion of malpractice and tampering with the voting machines. The school houses the strong room for EVMs of the polls which were held on April 29.

Ms. Banerjee reached the centre in the evening, ignoring torrential rain in the city and was still seated inside till reports last received. Kolkata Mayor and Trinamool Congress candidate for the Kolkata Port



Trinamool Congress candidates Kunal Ghosh (second from left) and Shashi Panja (centre) and others stage a demonstration. PTI

seat Firhad Hakim reached the spot but failed to meet the Chief Minister who was already inside the strong room along with her election agent. "I reached here upon learning that the Chief Minister has arrived.

But I couldn't meet her since she was already inside the premises, exercising her right as a candidate to visit strong rooms. I wasn't allowed there. I will not be able to confirm what exactly is transpiring

inside," Mr. Hakim said.

The development took place at a time when party candidates from two north Kolkata seats, Kunal Ghosh and Shashi Panja, staged a sit-in protest outside Khudiram Anushilan Kendra premises, alleging irregular activities and tampering with EVMs stored inside strong rooms of the facility, triggering face-offs between Trinamool Congress and BJP supporters.

In a video message, Ms. Banerjee had earlier urged Trinamool leaders, workers and polling agents to maintain a 24-hour vigil of the EVM strong rooms, stating she suspected BJP had plans to tamper with the machines before counting began on May 4.

Make right to vote a fundamental right: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday said the right to vote was "under threat" and should be made a fundamental right, even as it dismissed exit polls as a "racket" lacking credibility and transparency.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said the time had come to accord voting the status of a justiciable right.

He also criticised the

Election Commission, alleging that it had become "compromised" under Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, and reiterated the Opposition's demand for his removal.

"The right to vote is a statutory right, not a fundamental right. Fundamental rights are justiciable. The time has come to include the right to vote as a fundamental right for Indian citizens," he said.

Recalling debates in the Constituent Assembly, he

said Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who headed the Drafting Committee, and Jagjivan Ram had warned that governments in the future might attempt to disenfranchise voters. "Once and for all, include the right to vote as a fundamental right," he said.

Slamming the process of special intensive revision (SIR), Mr. Ramesh alleged irregularities in electoral rolls, claiming that large numbers of voters' names had been deleted in some States. "The grandson of

Nandalal Bose, whose illustrations adorn the original Constitution of India, could not vote," the Congress leader said.

'No faith in exit polls'

On exit polls, Mr. Ramesh said he had "no faith" in them, calling them a "racket". "Nobody knows who is conducting these surveys or what their sample base is," he said, citing the 2021 West Bengal Assembly election as an example where projections went wrong.

BJP, BJD and Congress resort to political one-upmanship over women's reservation

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The Bharatiya Janata Party, Biju Janata Dal and Congress resorted to political one-upmanship as a special session of Odisha Legislative Assembly on Thursday discussed the participation of women in Indian democracy in the wake of the Nari Shakti Vandan Amendment Bill failing to pass in Parliament.

Speaking at the Assembly, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said, "Today, women in Indian democracy are not just voters but active participants. At the grassroots level, around 14.5 lakh women are serving as elected representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions, proving their capabilities."

"The Nari Shakti Vandan Act aims to further strengthen this representation. Prime Minister Narendra



Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi during the special session of the State Assembly in Bhubaneswar on Thursday. PTI

Modi had taken steps to implement it for the 2029 general elections, but the Opposition stalled it, reflecting their narrow mindset. However, this is only a temporary delay," said Mr. Majhi.

He assured that from 2029, reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies would certainly be implemented.

"Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik had written to me requesting a special session for detailed discussion on this Bill and had ex-

pressed concerns about seat allocation. However, [Union] Home Minister [Amit Shah] clarified in Parliament that the number of Lok Sabha seats will increase to 850. Accordingly, the number of seats in the Odisha Assembly would also increase by 50%," Mr. Majhi pointed out with regards to the issue of delimitation.

"The concerns of the Opposition are completely unfounded and would not have affected their inter-

ests," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Patnaik said, "The BJD had supported the women's reservation Bill which was passed unanimously in Parliament in 2023 and even today we demand that it be implemented immediately. Odisha under [late CM] Biju Patnaik was one of the first States to implement 33% reservation for women in all local bodies in Odisha. In 2011, my government had increased it to 50%," said the former CM.

'Only lip service'

Charging the BJP of paying lip service on women's rights, creating false narratives on the issue and trying to fool the public, he said the party had done nothing else in Odisha.

"Linking the women's reservation Bill, which is already passed in Parliament, to the delimitation Bill is a

clandestine act to push [through] delimitation without discussion of facts. It is a matter of concern that the BJP is spreading misinformation on such an important issue that affects the distinct identity and political voice of Odisha," he said.

The women's wing of Congress staged a demonstration outside the Odisha Legislative Assembly alleging that the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was misleading the country on women's reservation.

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhakta Charan Das said the BJP government made false claims about Nari Shakti Vandan amendment Bill. He said the Congress was demanding implementation of 33% reservation for women, which was passed in 2023, under the existing strength of Parliament.

SC asks petitioner to turn in first-generation copy of leaked Manipur audio to forensic lab

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court of India on Thursday asked a petitioner-NGO, Kuki Organisation for Human Rights, to hand over to the national forensics lab a "first generation copy" of the full leaked audiotapes allegedly implicating former Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh in the ethnic violence that rocked the State in 2023-24.

The forensic reports have so far returned inconclusive about the authenticity of the tapes.

A Bench headed by Justice Sanjay Kumar said it would be "pointless" to give "the copy of a copy of a copy" of the audio tapes to the forensic lab.

Justice Kumar said the sanctity of the evidence "degenerated" every time



N. Biren Singh

a copy was made.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, for the NGO, agreed to look up the first generation copy (or the first copy taken from the original recording) of the audiotapes. He said the original device cannot be handed over as that would reveal the identity of the whistle-blower.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati,

for the State of Manipur and the Centre, said the forensic lab would need six weeks to test the recording and prepare a report.

On December 15 last year, the court had questioned why the entire available leaked audio clips were not sent for forensic examination. The court had conveyed its unease at the affidavit filed on behalf of the petitioners on November 20, 2025, that stated that "only select clipings were sent" for forensics.

The petitioner has sought an independent SIT probe into the matter.

More than 260 people were killed and thousands displaced since the ethnic violence broke out between the Imphal valley-based Meitei and neighbouring hills-based Kuki communities in May 2023.

Railway Minister flags off first Jammu-Srinagar direct train

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Thursday flagged off the first direct train service between Jammu city and Srinagar city, describing it as "India's first experience with railway operations at such high altitudes", and "a gamechanger for the region's economy".

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah called it "a historic day".

"The introduction of the expanded Vande Bharat service further strengthens this historic corridor, improving travel comfort, meeting rising passenger demand, and reinforcing



Passengers arrive at Srinagar by the Vande Bharat Express flagged off by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. IMRAN NISSAR

all-weather connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar," Mr. Vaishnaw said, crediting Prime Minister Narendra Modi for realising the dream of railway connectivity in the Kashmir Valley.

The focus, in the future, would be on strengthening maintenance systems, and deploying advanced technologies for bridges and tunnels to ensure safety and reliability in the Himalayan terrain, he said.

Empty LNG ship from Dahej heads into Strait of Hormuz for loading in the UAE's Das Island

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

In a development that has given hope of normalcy returning across the Strait of Hormuz, LNG carrier *Umm Al Ashtan*, which had departed from Dahej in Gujarat after unloading its cargo there, is heading up towards crossing the strait. The vessel, which had finished cargo operations early in March and had been drifting, is likely to cross the strait early on Friday and make way to Das Island, an LNG terminal in the UAE.

This is among the first instance since the war started that an empty ship



Some Indian-flagged oil tankers have passed through the Strait of Hormuz and are seen docked at a Mumbai offloading terminal. AFP

in ballast condition is sailing upstream of the Strait of Hormuz to load cargo even as hundreds of loaded ships are still stuck west of the strait inside the Persian Gulf.

The passage of *Umm Al Ashtan* indicates that LNG production is starting at Das Island, which has a capacity of 6 million tonnes per year, almost 1% of global LNG manufacturing ca-

capacity. Shipping industry sources, however, say that a sure sign of normalcy would be when the dozen LNG carriers that loaded in Qatar start heading out.

Umm Al Ashtan is managed by Adnoc Logistics and Services, belonging to the well-known Adnoc Group of Abu Dhabi. It has a cargo carrying capacity of 73,100 tonnes and has delivered cargoes to India.

In another India-related LNG shipping, *Mubaraz*, an LNG tanker, after loading in Das Island, has transited and is currently en route to China but currently cruising on the west coast of India. *Mubaraz* had switched off its auto-

matic identification system (AIS) as it transited the strait and sailed into the Arabian Sea. The AIS was switched on as it neared the Indian coast.

Mubaraz, carrying some 59,000 tonnes of LNG and owned by Adnoc's shipping company, was originally scheduled to deliver to India. It was among the 22 energy-carrying ships that the government had earmarked for evacuation to India.

In another positive development, *Idemitsu Maru*, carrying 2 million barrels of crude oil, also transited the strait recently and is headed to Nagoya, Japan.

IN BRIEF



Four killed, 12 missing as boat capsizes in MP's Jabalpur

Four persons were killed and 12 were missing after a cruise boat capsized in bad weather and heavy rain in the Bargi Dam in Jabalpur of Madhya Pradesh on Thursday. According to the police, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department cruise boat, carrying 29 passengers and two crew members, got stuck in the reservoir when the weather changed unexpectedly in the evening. Pramod Verma, Inspector-General of Police, Jabalpur, told *The Hindu* that 15 persons had been rescued while 12 remained missing. Four bodies have been recovered. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav expressed grief over the accident, and said efforts were on to find those missing.

HC asks Gandhinagar IIT to 'show sympathy' to student

Two days after taking exception to the attire of a postgraduate student at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, observing that people "must maintain dignity and decorum" of the court, the Gujarat High Court on Wednesday advised the institute to "show sympathy" towards the student in her 20s. Justice Nirzar Desai observed that people in their early 20s may not fully understand the consequences of their actions, and that a student may sometimes cross the line for various reasons. The court pointed out that the student had already complied with certain measures, including performing community service and vacating the hostel.

India's first green methanol plant to turn Kutch's most invasive weed into marine fuel

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

A plant that has been ranked as one of the "top 100 invasive species in the world" and has for decades threatened biodiversity in Kutch's Banni grasslands, may soon be harnessed for the production of green methanol and fuel for ocean-going ships.



Prosopis juliflora has crowded out native grasses over thousands of kilometres in Kutch. FILE PHOTO

The Mexican-origin shrub called *Prosopis juliflora*, known as *Gando Baval* in the region, *Vilayati Keekar* in North India and *Seemai Karuvelam* in Tamil, has crowded out native grasses over thousands of kilometres in Kutch. The plant was first introduced by the British in the 1920s to 'green' Delhi and by the Gujarat Forest Department in 1961 to halt the encroaching salt desert in the Rann. This weed is to become the feedstock for In-

dia's first green methanol production plant.

Methanol is used as a fuel in shipping often as a replacement to what is called 'bunker oil'. Conventional methanol is produced from fossil fuels such as gas or coal gasification. Green methanol uses biomass from agricultural residue as source material as in the case with the *juli-*

flora.

The project, sited at the Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) in Kandla, will produce five tonnes of methanol a day and is being built by Pune-based Thermax Energy with gasification technology from Vadodra's Ankur Scientific, and will be owned by the port authority. Both companies are betting that the Go-

vernment of India's policy to convert ports along the western coast into "green ports" will create demand for a fuel that the global shipping industry is being obliged to adopt under International Maritime Organization (IMO) rules.

Greenhouse gas cuts

Methanol made from renewable feedstocks can cut a vessel's CO₂ emissions by up to 95% and NO_x (nitrogen oxides) by up to 80%, according to the Methanol Institute, while eliminating sulphur oxides and particulate matter.

Ankur Jain, who heads Ankur Scientific, said his company's role lies in the first stage of a two-step process. "The starting point for most fuels and chemicals is going to be syngas because syngas typically has hydrogen, CO and CO₂," he told *The Hin-*

du. Gasification, he explained, sits between combustion and pyrolysis. "You are heating it in the absence of oxygen, taking it out, improving its quality, burning them a bit and then breaking them down into hydrogen and CO (carbon monoxide) or syngas," he said. Thermax will handle the second step, converting that syngas into methanol.

"It [*juliflora*] is one of the best feedstocks because it is hardwood, dense, has a good energy profile, and low in acids," Mr Jain said, adding Gujarat already wants the species cleared. The plant will be certified to run on other agricultural residues such as bagasse and cotton stalk, which Mr. Jain estimates could, at their maximum potential, displace up to a third of India's oil imports.

Lift abortion time limit for minor rape survivors: SC

SC says state and doctors cannot make decisions for minor rape survivors, it should be left to the parents or survivors; CJI calls for amendment to ensure such cases are completed within a week

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

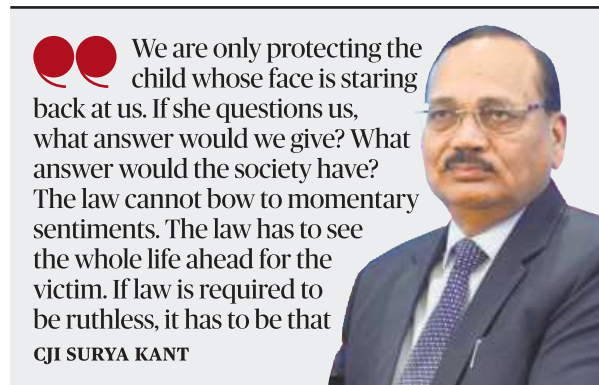
The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Union government to amend the abortion law to remove the time limit on medical termination of unwanted pregnancies in the case of minor rape victims.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Joyimalya Bagchi made the observation while refusing to entertain a curative petition filed by the government against a recent decision of the top court allowing a 15-year-old rape survivor to terminate a 30-week pregnancy.

Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati, accompanied by specialists from AIIMS, said they were against the termination considering the health and well-being of both the teenager and the "unborn child". One of the specialist doctors said the court was wrong to consider this as a foetus-child (rape survivor) issue.

"This is a child-child issue," the doctor submitted in court.

The court said it was not for the doctors or the state



CJI Kant says the child's victimisation cannot remain with her for the rest of her life as a scar

to choose what was best for the rape survivor. The decision should be left to the parents of the survivor and the survivor herself.

"Let not medical personnel become the masters of the will of the people. The people would decide," Justice Bagchi said.

The state and the doctors could take them through the medical procedure and provide them expert help in the form of counsellors, the court said. "You will help parents

and children by having an informed discussion on the medical procedure for ending the foetus' life and consequences... If anyone can come back to us for a review of our decision in this case, it is the parents or the child... The state cannot file a review. It has no locus standi. It is not for AIIMS to choose, it is for citizens to choose and the AIIMS to medically implement their choice," Justice Bagchi told the Centre and the AIIMS doctors.

misation cannot remain with her for the rest of her life as a permanent scar. "We are only protecting the child whose face is staring back at us. If she questions us, what answer would we give? What answer would the society have? The law cannot bow to momentary sentiments. The law has to see the whole life ahead for the victim. If law is required to be ruthless, it has to be that CJI SURYA KANT

Ms. Bhati said the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Amendment Act of 2021 has increased the time limit for legal abortion from 20 to 24 weeks for survivors of rape, minors, and women with disabilities. "You should amend the law to remove any time limit on medical termination of unwanted pregnancy caused by the rape of a minor. You should also bring an amendment not only in the MTP Act, but also in the penal law, making it mandatory to complete the trial in such cases in a week. The entire property of the accused should be given to the victim," Chief Justice Kant observed.

Severe trauma

Chief Justice Kant said the 15-year-old had already undergone the trauma of rape. She cannot be compelled to carry and give birth to a child. Her victi-

₹10,000 airfare increase for Haj pilgrims draws flak

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A decision by the Haj Committee of India, which functions under the Union Minority Affairs Ministry, to raise Haj airfare by ₹10,000 a pilgrim this year has led to discontent among applicants and sharp reactions from political leaders.

An April 28 circular has directed the pilgrims to make an additional payment of ₹10,000 by May 15, regardless of their point of departure. This decision follows requests from airlines to revise base fares due to increasing aviation turbine fuel prices, which have been affected by the situation in West Asia.

'Cannot blame airlines'

Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju took to social media to clear the air on the airfare hike.

"Amid a sharp global rise in Aviation Turbine Fuel prices, driven by ongoing geopolitical tensions, airlines sought a steep hike of \$300-\$400 per pilgrim. We also can't blame airlines for the rise in ATF price. Through negotiations, we ensured the increase was restricted to just \$100, saving each pilgrim a significant amount," he posted on X.



Pilgrims gather at Mount Arafat in Saudi Arabia. REUTERS

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi took to social media criticising the move. "The Haj Committee is demanding an additional ₹10,000 from Haj pilgrims as 'differential airfare'. This is despite collecting ₹90,844 per pilgrim a couple of months ago departing from Mumbai Embarkation Point. This is almost double the prevalent rates for individual travellers. Are pilgrims being punished for going through the Haj Committee? This is just exploitation and nothing else," he said.

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Imran Pratapgarhi termed the move as unjust.

Haj flights began on April 24. According to the Haj Committee, 1.75 lakh pilgrims from across the country are undertaking the pilgrimage this year.

99% pass in CISCE exams; southern region tops in 12th standard, west in 10th

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) on Thursday announced the results of the ICSE (Class 10) and ISC (Class 12) main examinations for 2026 with girls outperforming boys in both classes.

"The results indicate consistently high levels of achievement, with overall pass percentages remaining above 99%. The ISC (Class XII) examination recorded an overall pass percentage of 99.13%, with girls securing 99.48% and boys 98.81%," an official release by the CISCE stated.

"Similarly, the ICSE (Class X) examination recorded an overall pass percentage of 99.18%, with girls achieving a pass rate



Students celebrate after the declaration of the results. PTI

schools, with 258,721 candidates - 137,503 boys (53.15%) and 121,218 girls (46.85%).

Joseph Emmanuel, chief executive and secretary of CISCE, said: "The declaration of results represents not just an academic outcome, but a reflection of the dedication, perseverance, and resilience demonstrated by our students."

The northern region recorded the highest participation in both the examinations. In the ISC exam, the southern region emerged as the top performer with a pass percentage of 99.87%, followed by the western region at 99.55%. In the ICSE exam, the western region led with 99.85%, closely followed by the Southern region at 99.81%.

THE CROSSWORD+ 14782 (set by Arden)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>

SCAN TO PLAY

Across

- Man in the White House blasted and told to sit on his haunches (6,5)
- Opens bowls out - googly for Marsh (3)
- Periodical with nice centrespread, enchanting (5)
- Look, try how to make it fit for flying (9)
- Gin bottles - I'm good working on beds (9)

Down

- Mother's getting old - it's playing havoc (8)
- West African country in a soup (8)
- Small becomes large - it's still money (5)
- One stops running trains for royalty (7)
- Honest state gets conservative support (7)
- For a supporter it's an unknown expletive (9)
- It's crazy, taking half an hour is a let-down (6)
- The Greek has cross eyes like the 'old faithful' in Yellowstone (6)
- Cautionary signal before Green and Red is called floating gold (9)
- Said to be wanting - making some dough? (8)
- Winger's way to block merchant's rise (8)
- Envoy's detailed charter (7)
- Girl in central information commission is model (7)
- Characteristic of a religious order to keep quiet (6)
- One from North Africa is right, repeatedly (6)
- Stand inside a select group (5)

SUDOKU

	2	7			5	1	6	
5		3			7		8	
							3	
		2	4					
		4	5	3	9	8		
					2	3		
6								
4		2				5		3
5	8	7				2	9	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

S	R	M	N	E	G	O	U	H	A	T	E				
P	L	A	C	E	R	A	T	E	S						
L	A	D	R	O	N	E	A	G	A	I	N	S	T		
A	H	N	T	E	N	C	O								
S	L	E	I	T	E	R	E	D	L	E	A	D			
H	A	T	E												
T	B	U	G	O	U	C	A	N	G	E					
S		A		R	T										
P	R	A	R	A	B	O	N	P	R	A	R	V	E	N	U
A	L	E	R	E	P	R	A	T	E	N	A	G	E	O	
R	A	T	E	R	E	N	E	N	E						
P	L	A	N	G	E	N	T	S	I	N	G	E			
L	E	R	S	T	G										

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	3	9	8	7	1	5	4	6
5	7	6	9	3	4	8	2	1
4	1	8	2	5	6	3	9	7
9	5	7	4	2	3	6	1	8
8	2	3	6	1	7	4	5	9
1	6	4	5	9	8	7	3	2
6	8	1	3	4	2	9	7	5
7	4	5	1	6	9	2	8	3
3	9	2	7	8	5	1	6	4

FAITH

Chanting God's name

Velukkudi Sri Krishnan Swamy in his discourse on "Thirunama Prabhavam" emphasised the unique spiritual power of chanting the Lord's name. He spotlighted Srirangam's spiritual prominence and Tondaradipudi Azhvar's unwavering devotion to Lord Ranganatha, shown especially in the Azhvar's work "Thirumaalai," where the glory and transformative effect of the divine name are central.

In the verse "Pachaimaa Malai Pol Meni," the Azhvar asserts that chanting Lord Ranganatha's divine name brings greater bliss than even ruling Indraloka. This anchors the main point: Nama Sankirtanam surpasses all other forms of happiness, both worldly and heavenly. Three reasons underscore the essential nature of chanting the divine name: the commands of the Sastras, the tradition of elders, and the endorsement of noble people - all of which highlight its supreme value.

Great souls teach that the Vedas always proclaim the ultimate truth, and they repeatedly affirm the power of the divine name. The Vedas, Puranas, and Upanishads consistently emphasise this, guiding us to value and uphold the chanting of the name and to follow the path set by revered elders. These sacred texts nurture devotees by urging them to love chanting the divine name. Swami Periyavachan Pillai explains that since God's physical presence might go unrecognised, He mercifully grants access to His grace and presence through His name, making chanting a direct connection to the Lord. Scriptures present Lord Vishnu as ultimate protector while giving the divine name equal importance. Especially in Kali Yuga, chanting the divine name emerges as the simplest path to liberation.

IN BRIEF



Federal Bank to buy Standard Chartered card unit in part

Federal Bank said it will acquire a part of Standard Chartered Bank's credit card portfolio in India to expand its customer base in big cities. Standard Chartered is selling a portfolio comprising single-product relationships and transactions which will help it sharpen its focus on the affluent segment, as per an official statement. The portfolio to be acquired comprises up to 4.5 lakh credit cards against Federal Bank's existing base of 8 lakh non co-branded cards and 13 lakh co-branded cards. Federal Bank's non-co-branded credit cards receivables would increase by an anticipated 90%, it said. The deal does not require regulatory approvals and is expected to close within the calendar year 2026. The statement refrained from disclosing the final deal amount. PTI

'Apartment prices rise 8-20% in Jan.-Mar. across top 7 cities'

Apartment prices rose 8-20% in January-March across seven major cities due to rise in input costs and rates could appreciate further although at a slower pace, according to JLL. Real estate consultant JLL India released its data, stating the sales of apartments rose 8% in January-March to 70,631 units across seven cities from 65,222 units in the year-ago period. New supply of apartments increased 13% to 90,023 units. The seven cities are Delhi-NCR, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad and Kolkata. Mumbai includes Mumbai city, Mumbai suburbs, Thane city and Navi Mumbai while Delhi-NCR includes Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Sohna. The data includes only apartments. Row houses, villas, and plotted developments are excluded. PTI

'Auto PLI puts startups at cost disadvantage'

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

EV startups have once again called for a tweaks to the auto production linked incentive (PLI) scheme, urging more flexible eligibility criteria that reward innovation rather than reinforcing an imbalance that leaves them at a cost disadvantage compared with legacy OEMs.

"An EV policy architecture that defines champions primarily through legacy scale, not even scale within the EV industry, can create an unintended imbalance. It places emerging EV manufacturers at a 13 to 16% cost disadvantage at a stage where they are continuing to invest heavily in capability building," wrote Tarun Mehta, co-founder & CEO at Ather Energy.

His post on X comes in response to a report in *The Hindu* that the government does not plan to introduce a separate auto PLI scheme for startups, citing their limited capital, market access, R&D capabilities.

He underlined that a significant share of innovation in indigenous platforms, battery technologies, software, and local value creation is being driven by EV-focused firms well-positioned to set global standards in design and technology.

Tweaks to PLI scheme, through more flexible eligibility criteria, aligned with localisation and the intensification of R&D efforts, would help build "long term capability, not just near-term scale," he said.

The Centre earmarked about ₹42,500 crore for the PLI. To qualify, vehicle makers must meet a minimum global revenue threshold of ₹10,000 crore and commit ₹3,000 crore for investment in India.

Foreign investors dump ₹60,847 cr. in April, devaluing rupee

This was the primary reason for the rupee depreciating further, touching a low of ₹95 a dollar before closing just short of that on Thursday

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Foreign investors sold ₹60,847 crore in stocks of Indian listed companies as of April 2026, continuing the two-year trend of capital outflow, data from the National Securities Depositories Ltd. (NSDL) show.

The outflow makes it the third in the first four months of the calendar year. There was a net inflow of ₹22,615 crore in February 2026. It was then followed by the highest ever outflow of more than ₹1.1 lakh crore in March 2026. The April sell-off is, however, much lower than the month before.

In the four months of calendar year 2026, ₹1.9 lakh crore worth of foreign money exited from Indian equities alone.

This is what had primarily led to the rupee touching a low of ₹95 a dollar before closing just short of that on Thursday. The rupee-dollar pair depreciated 5.5% between January 2026 and April 2026, backed by increasing import bills due to the West Asia crisis and the continued foreign money outflow from domestic capital markets.

"The interaction bet-



Money matters: The rupee-dollar pair depreciated 5.5% between January 2026 and April 2026, backed by increasing import bills. AFP

Continued FII outflow would mean the foreign exchange rate can touch ₹96 a dollar

ANINDYA BANERJEE,
Head of Commodity and Currency Research, Kotak Securities

Ministry of Finance observed in its monthly Economic Review. A continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz would mean a heightened oil price and continued FII outflow would mean the foreign exchange rate can touch ₹96 a dollar. A break over that would lead to the rupee depreciating to ₹97 a dollar, said Anindya Banerjee, Head of Commodity and Currency Research, Kotak Securities. He further said that the rupee appreciating more than ₹94.8 is not likely without a "significant dip in oil prices."

The outlook for rupee and the foreign money's sensitivity to India's foreign exchange rate may make their immediate return unlikely in the context of global geo-politics.

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DIPAM gives nod for NLC arm's listing; ₹4,000 cr. IPO in FY27

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has given the green light for listing of Neyveli Lignite Corp. India's (NLC India) renewable energy arm, NLC India Renewables (NIRL), a senior government official privy to the development told *The Hindu*.

The official further said that NIRL would be debuting on the bourses with its ₹4,000-crore IPO within the ongoing financial year. "Last week, DIPAM had given their go-ahead for

NIRL's debut on the bourses is premised on augmenting its current renewable energy capacity

the listing of NIRL. We expect the listing to be completed within FY 2027 itself," the official stated.

As also confirmed by the senior official, the latest development implies that three of India's State-owned mining companies - Bilaspur-headquartered South Eastern Coalfields Ltd. (SECL) and Sambalpur-headquartered Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL),

- and now NIRL, are all set to hit Dalal Street within the ongoing financial year. NLC India's board had given its in-principle approval to list their renewable energy arm on January 12 this year.

This was in line with the targets laid out as per the National Monetisation Pipeline.

NIRL's debut on the bourses is premised on further augmenting its current renewable energy capacity.

The renewable energy arm of NLC India is eyeing 10.11 GW of renewable capacity by 2030 and 32 GW by 2047.

Invest India facilitated grounding of \$6.1 bn projects in 2025-26

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Invest India, the national investment promotion and facilitation agency of the Government, has facilitated the grounding of 60 projects worth over \$6.1 billion during 2025-26, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade of India (DPIIT) Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia said on Thursday.

Chemicals, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, and food processing

sectors accounted for approximately 65% of the grounded investments, he added.

"The \$6.1 billion grounded by Invest India in FY 2025-26 reflects the strength of India's regulatory environment and the depth of its economic transformation," Mr. Bhatia said at a press briefing.

"DPIIT remains committed to further simplifying processes and ensuring that investments translate into jobs, innovation, and long-term value," he said.

Fertiliser output steady despite West Asia crisis

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday said domestic urea production has reached 37.49 lakh tonnes in March-April, nearly matching last year's levels despite the West Asia crisis, while securing 37 lakh tonnes of imported urea to meet the shortfall ahead of the Kharif season.

Total domestic fertiliser production stood at 62.37 lakh tonnes during March-April, while imports were at 15.39 lakh tonnes.

उत्तराखण्ड जल प्रबंधन एवं नियामक (संशोधन) अधिनियम-2016 (उत्तराखण्ड अधिनियम संख्या-24 वर्ष 2013) के अधीन उत्तराखण्ड जल संसाधन प्रबंधन और नियामक आयोग के अध्यक्ष की नियुक्ति हेतु विज्ञापन।

उत्तराखण्ड जल प्रबंधन एवं नियामक अधिनियम-2013, दिनांक 01.09.2015 से लागू/प्रवृत्त है। उक्त मुल अधिनियम का संशोधन यथा उत्तराखण्ड जल प्रबंधन एवं नियामक (संशोधन अधिनियम-2016) दिनांक 31.03.2016 से प्रभावी है। उत्तराखण्ड जल संसाधन प्रबंधन एवं नियामक आयोग की स्थापना दिनांक 08 जुलाई, 2016 से की गयी है।

उक्त अधिनियम में उत्तराखण्ड सरकार द्वारा राज्य के भीतर जल संसाधन को विनियमित करने, विवेकपूर्ण और पौषणीय प्रबंधन, पर्यावरण एवं आर्थिक दृष्टि से पौषणीय राज्य के विकास हेतु जल संसाधन के आवंटन और अनुकूलन उपयोग को सुगम बनाने एवं सुनिश्चित करने, कृषि, आधुनिक, पेय, विद्युत और अन्य प्रयोजन के लिए राज्य जल नीति के अनुसार उपयुक्त नियामक उपकरणों के माध्यम से जल उपयोग हेतु प्रसार अकायित करने एवं सामाजिक न्याय-स्वामियों के बाढ़ रक्षा एवं जल निकास सफलता द्वारा लाभार्थित मृमि पर उपकार की दर निर्धारण करने के लिए उत्तराखण्ड जल संसाधन प्रबंधन और नियामक आयोग की स्थापना का प्राविधान है। यही आयोग "उत्तराखण्ड विद्युत उत्पादन पर जलकर (संशोधन अधिनियम, 2016 की धारा 26(1) में उल्लिखित कार्यों का भी निष्पादन करेगा।

उत्तराखण्ड सरकार उत्तराखण्ड जल प्रबंधन एवं नियामक संशोधन अधिनियम-2016 की धारा 3(4) के अन्तर्गत प्रस्तर-4 में दिये गये विवरण के अनुसार अध्यक्ष की नियुक्ति करना चाहती है। उत्तराखण्ड सरकार द्वारा उत्तराखण्ड जल प्रबंधन एवं नियामक (संशोधन) अधिनियम 2016 की धारा- 6 की उपधारा 1 के अधीन एक चयन समिति का गठन किया गया है। प्रमुख सचिव/ सचिव, सिंचाई विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड शासन के द्वारा चयन समिति की तरफ से अध्यक्ष के पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु प्रार्थना पत्र आमंत्रित किये जाते हैं।

2. अध्यक्ष हेतु अर्हता निम्नानुसार होगी :-
ऐसे व्यक्ति को अध्यक्ष के पद पर नियुक्ति के लिए विचार किया जायेगा, जो निम्नलिखित पात्रता रखते हों-

क्र.सं.	पद नाम	पदों की संख्या	अर्हता
1	अध्यक्ष	एक	अध्यक्ष ऐसा व्यक्ति होगा, जिसके पास न्यूनतम 25 वर्ष के प्रशासनिक अनुभव के साथ किसी मान्यता प्राप्त विश्वविद्यालय/संस्थान की स्नातक उपाधि हो और उसने राज्य सरकार के मुख्य सचिव या भारत सरकार के सचिव का पद या उसके समकक्ष कोई पद अवश्य धारण किया हो और जल संसाधन से सम्बन्धित विभागों का अनुभव रखता हो।

- अध्यक्ष सत्तर वर्ष की आयु प्राप्त कर लेने के पश्चात पद धारण नहीं करेगा/ करेगी।
- वह अपने कार्यकाल के दौरान कोई अन्य पद धारित नहीं करेगा/ करेगी।
- अध्यक्ष की पदावधि उत्तराखण्ड जल प्रबंधन और नियामक अधिनियम 2013 की धारा-7 के अनुसार रहेगी।
- उपरोक्त के क्रम में पूर्ण आवेदन पत्र प्रमुख सचिव/ सचिव, सिंचाई उत्तराखण्ड सरकार पदेन सदस्य सचिव, चयन समिति, उत्तराखण्ड जल संसाधन प्रबंधन एवं नियामक आयोग के नाम संबोधित किया जायेगा।

- आवेदन पत्र में निम्नलिखित सूचना एवं संगत अभिलेख संलग्न कर प्रेषित करने होंगे-
1) नाम
2) जन्म तिथि, जन्म स्थान और अधिनियम प्रवृत्त होने की तिथि को आयु।
3) वर्तमान में धारित पद या सेवानिवृत्ति से पूर्व धारित पद या अन्य विवरण।
4) शैक्षिक योग्यता।
5) अनुभव का विवरण।
6) पूर्व में धारित पदों का पदावधि सहित विवरण।
7) अनुशासनिक कार्यवाही/ सतर्कता जांच/ अभियोजन यदि कोई हो तो उसका विवरण।
8) ऐसा कोई व्यक्ति जिसेके अध्यक्ष के रूप में चयन के लिए विचार किया जाये, चयन समिति को निम्नलिखित के सम्बन्ध में अनिवार्य रूप से सुनिश्चित करेगा-
(क) निम्नलिखित में से किसी व्यवसाय को कर रहे किसी कार्यालय, नियोजन या परामर्शदात्री अनुबन्ध या व्यवस्था का जो उस व्यक्ति या उसके नातेदार के नाम से हो या उनमें से किसी के स्वामित्व में या अन्यथा नियंत्रण में किसी फर्म, व्यक्तियों के संघ या निगमित निकाय के नाम/ माध्यम से करता हो :-
(एक) मूल-जल अपयोजन, जल वितरण, मूल-जल का निकाला जाना या जल समारण।
(दो) जल उद्योग से सम्बन्धित मशीनरी, संयंत्र, उपकरण, उपकरण या उनका संयन्धन।
(तीन) उपयुक्त खण्ड (एक) और (दो) में निर्दिष्ट किसी कारोबार के लिए कोई व्यवसायिक सेवायें उपलब्ध कराने वाली कोई इकाई।
(ख) ऐसे अन्य विवरण और सूचना जैसा कि चयन समिति द्वारा विहित किया जाय।
(ग) पत्र व्यवहार का पता/ दूरभाष संख्या/ मोबाईल नं०/ ई-मेल इत्यादि।

3.2 यदि अध्यक्ष के रूप में नियुक्त किये जाने वाला कोई व्यक्ति राज्य या केन्द्र सरकार या किसी सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के निगम या किसी सरकारी निकाय के अधीन कोई पद धारण करता है, या वह किसी अन्य व्यक्ति, सरकारी, प्राधिकरणों, सार्वजनिक या निजी क्षेत्र या अन्यथा द्वारा सामुदायिक सेवा में नियोजित किया गया या बनाया गया हो तो वह प्राधिकरण में कार्यभार ग्रहण करने के पूर्व उस सेवा से अपना त्याग पत्र प्रस्तुत कर देगा या स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति प्राप्त कर लेगा।
3.3 किसी कार्यालय नियोजन या परामर्शदात्री अनुबन्ध या व्यवस्था जो सतही जल अपयोजन, जल वितरण, मूल-जल का निकाला जाना या समारण जल उद्योग से सम्बन्धित मशीनरी, संयंत्र, उपकरण, उपकरण या साज-सज्जों का विनिर्माण, विक्रय, पट्टा, भाड़ा या उनकी आपूर्ति या उनका संयन्धन आदि जो उसके या उसके किसी नातेदार के नाम से हो या उनमें से किसी के स्वामित्व में या किसी फर्म के नियंत्रण में हो का विस्तृत विवरण पत्र द्वारा देना होगा।
4 कोई सूचना या तथ्य ना छिपाये जाने की घोषणा-
उपरोक्त निर्दिष्ट विस्तृत विवरण एवं बायोडेटा के साथ प्रमुख सचिव, सिंचाई, उत्तराखण्ड शासन को सम्बोधित आवेदन-पत्र पंजीकृत स्पीड पोस्ट द्वारा प्रमुख सचिव/ सचिव, सिंचाई एवं बाढ़ प्रबंधन विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड शासन, 4 सुभाष रोड, देहरादून-248001 अथवा ई-मेल pssecretary76@gmail.com पर दिनांक 15 मई, 2026 को सांय 6.00 बजे तक प्राप्त हो जाने चाहिए। निर्धारित तिथि के उपरांत प्राप्त होने वाले आवेदन-पत्रों पर विचार नहीं किया जायेगा।

नोट :- उत्तराखण्ड जल संसाधन प्रबंधन एवं नियामक आयोग में अध्यक्ष पद हेतु पूर्व में दिनांक 28.02.2026 को प्रकाशित विज्ञापित के सापेक्ष जिन आवेदकों द्वारा आवेदन किया जा चुका है, उन्हें पुनः आवेदन करने की आवश्यकता नहीं होगी।
सुभाष चन्द्र प्रमुख अभियन्ता सिंचाई विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड, देहरादून।

Soban Singh Jeena Government Institute of Medical Science & Research Almora
Near Vikas Bhawan, Pandeykhola, Almora, Distt-Almora-263601 (Uttarakhand)
E-mail - principal.gmcalmora@gmail.com <http://www.ssjismralmora.org>
मोबाइल नं. - 9412410759 फ़ोन नम्बर-05962-230557

Letter No. 1826/GMCA-IG-1/Advertisement/2025-26 Date:-30th April, 2026

Walk-In-Interview

A Walk In interview for various post of "Professor, Associate Professor & Assistant Professor" at Soban Singh Jeena Government Institute of Medical Science & Research Almora will be held on 07-05-2026 at 10:00 am on wards in "Office of the Principal, Soban Singh Jeena Government Institute of Medical Science & Research Almora". Registration will be done on the day of interview till 1:00 PM only. The post will be filled on yearly renewal contract basis for a maximum period of 03 (three) years or till regular appointment are made. For further details please visit our website:-
<http://www.ssjismralmora.org>, www.medicaleducation.uk.gov.in & www.hnbumu.ac.in

Principal
SSJ Govt. IMSR Almora
Almora

भारतीय समुद्री विश्वविद्यालय
INDIAN MARITIME UNIVERSITY
(Central University, Govt. of India)
CHENNAI CAMPUS

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ADMISSIONS OPEN - AY 2026-27

Indian Maritime University, Chennai Campus, invites applications for the **Post Graduate Diploma in Maritime Law (PGDML) - Batch-2**, an online program crafted for graduates, practicing advocates, maritime professionals, defence personnel, port officers and experienced seafarers.

Eligibility

- Graduates from any discipline (or)
- Seafarers / CoC holders with 2+ years sailing experience are eligible for individual certificate courses and the PGDML upon successful completion (with graduation at enrolment).

For details, contact: pgdml@imu.ac.in
Visit our Website: www.imu.edu.in

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Deputy Registrar (Admin.)

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STATEMENT OF AUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2026

(₹ in Crores)

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated		
		Quarter ended 31.03.2026	Year ended 31.03.2025	Quarter ended 31.03.2026	Quarter ended 31.03.2025	Year ended 31.03.2026
(Audited)						
1	Total Revenue from Operations	1,502.05	1,353.99	5,542.06	1,693.30	1,530.59
2	Net Profit for the period (before tax and exceptional item)	203.06	162.10	749.63	212.80	164.25
3	Net Profit for the period (before tax)	231.86	174.60	767.41	212.80	164.25
4	Net Profit for the period (after tax)	179.88	134.37	580.38	161.36	124.49
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	160.91	123.58	576.54	162.15	109.39
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Re 1 each fully paid up)	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01
7	Earnings Per Share (EPS) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (Face value of Re 1/- each) (not annualised) (in Rs.)					
	(a) Basic	8.56	6.39	27.62*	7.68	5.92
	(b) Diluted	8.56	6.39	27.62*	7.68	5.92

* Annualised

Notes:
1 The above is an extract of the detailed format of the standalone and consolidated financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites, www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com and on the Company's website www.sundram.com. The full financial results can also be accessed by scanning the QR Code provided below.
2 The Statutory Auditors have carried out an audit for the year ended March 31, 2026 and have issued an unmodified report thereon.

Place : Chennai
Date : April 30, 2026

For Sundram Fasteners Limited
Suresh Krishna
Chairman

KYIV

Zelenskyy says he's seeking details of Putin's May 9 ceasefire proposal



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is seeking details of a short-term truce Russia proposed to U.S. President Donald Trump, he said on Thursday. Russian President Vladimir Putin proposed a May 9 ceasefire to coincide with Victory Day in Russia in a phone call with Mr. Trump the previous day, according to the Kremlin. AP

BRUSSELS

EU says troop deployments in Europe is also 'in U.S. interest'



EU spokeswoman Anitta Hipper on Thursday said the U.S. was "a vital partner in contributing to Europe's security and defence". She added, "The deployment of U.S. troops in Europe is also in the U.S. interest in support of its global role." This comes after U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to cut force numbers in Germany. AFP

BEIJING

China FM says Taiwan is 'biggest risk point' in U.S.-China relations



In a call with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Thursday urged the U.S. to maintain "stability" between the two countries and help promote "world peace". According to a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement, Mr. Wang also said Taiwan posed the "biggest risk point" to their relationship. AFP

NEW YORK

Mamdani calls on King Charles to return India's Koh-i-Noor diamond



New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani called for King Charles to "return" the prized Koh-i-Noor diamond, which the British Empire took from the Indian subcontinent in the 1800s, during the king's U.S. state visit on Wednesday. Mr. Mamdani said this when asked what he would discuss with Mr. Charles if he had the chance. AFP

In new salvo, Trump tells Merz to focus on Ukraine

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump renewed his criticism of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Thursday, telling him to focus on ending the Ukraine war instead of "interfering" on Iran.

Mr. Trump's second broadside of the week against Mr. Merz came a day after he said he was considering the redeployment of some of the tens of thousands of U.S. troops stationed in Germany, a key NATO ally.

"The Chancellor of Germany should spend more time on ending the war with Russia/Ukraine (Where he has been totally ineffective), and fixing his broken Country, especially Immigration and Energy," Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social network.

He said Mr. Merz should spend "less time on interfering with those that are getting rid of the Iran Nuclear threat, thereby making the World, including Germany, a safer place!"

Mr. Merz on Monday said Tehran was "humiliating" the U.S. in negotiations to end the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran.

Israel raids Gaza flotilla, 'kidnaps' crew members

Organisers say Israeli forces stormed at least 22 of the aid flotilla's 58 boats 'in complete violation of international law', at a distance of 1,000 km from Gaza Strip; the crew was of many nationalities

Agence France-Presse
ATHENS

Organisers of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla on Thursday said Israel's army had "kidnapped" 211 activists, including a Paris city councillor, in a raid in international waters off Greece.

Helene Coron, a spokeswoman for the Global Sumud France, told an online news conference that the operation had taken place near the Greek island of Crete, at an "unprecedented" distance from the Gaza coast.

Yasmine Scola, an activist on board the flotilla, said her colleagues had been "kidnapped" by Israel.

Israel's Foreign Ministry had earlier put the number of those detained at 175.

Ms. Coron said those intercepted included Paris Communist local councillor Raphaëlle Primet and 10 more French nationals.

"We don't have the information for the other nationalities, but the boats were mixed in terms of na-



A file photo of boats of a Gaza-bound aid flotilla making a symbolic leave from Barcelona's Port Vell on April 12. AFP

tionality, so there were crew members from all 48 delegations," she said.

Rome, in a government statement, called for the immediate release of "all the unlawfully detained Italians".

30 boats on route

The organisers of the latest flotilla of pro-Palestinian activists seeking to break Israel's blockade on Gaza announced early on Thursday that their boats had been surrounded by Israeli military ships while off the coast of Crete.

"At the time of publishing this statement (06:30

am Paris time, 04:30 GMT), at least 22 of the flotilla's 58 boats have been stormed by Israeli forces in complete violation of international law," the Global Sumud Flotilla said in a statement.

According to an AFP verification, based on tracking data from the organisers, the boats were intercepted in the Greek exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

Around 30 boats from the flotilla are still en route, most now in Greek territorial waters south of Crete, according to the same source.

U.K. police probe stabbing attack on two Jewish men

Associated Press
LONDON

The British government on Thursday said the country is facing an antisemitism emergency and pledged to increase security for Jewish communities after a string of arson attacks and a double stabbing that have sparked fear and anger among U.K. Jews.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said "an attack on our Jewish community is an attack on all of us" after two Jewish men, aged 34 and 76, were stabbed and seriously injured in Golders Green, an area in north London that is an epicenter of Britain's Jewish community. Both men are in a stable condition.

But some in the community turned their anger on a government they say is failing to tackle antisemitism. Starmer was heckled by about 100 protesters holding signs saying "Keir Starmer, Jew harmer" when he visited Golders Green on Thursday.

Police have arrested a 45-year-old man on suspicion of attempted murder and labeled the stabbing attack as an act of terrorism. Detectives are working to determine a motive and whether there is any



People protest near the scene where two people were stabbed on Wednesday in Golders Green, London, on Thursday. AP

link to Iranian proxies.

The suspect, whose name hasn't been released, had "a history of serious violence and mental health issues" and may have been involved in an "altercation" in another area of London hours before the Golders Green attack, the force said.

Rising attacks

In 2020 he was referred to the government's Prevent program, which tries to steer individuals away from extremism. The police force said his file was closed later the same year, and did not disclose the reason for the referral.

Britain's Jewish community, which numbers about 300,000 people, has faced growing attacks online and in the streets.

The number of antisemitic incidents reported across the U.K. has soared since the attack by Hamas-led militants on southern Israel on October 7, 2023, and the subsequent war in Gaza. Last October, an attacker drove his car into people gathered outside a Manchester synagogue on Yom Kippur and fatally stabbed one person.

Since the start of the Iran war on February 28, there have been a string of arson attacks on synagogues and other Jewish sites in London.

Police say 28 people have been arrested over those attacks, which did not cause any injuries. A handful have been charged and one teenager has been convicted after pleading guilty.

Lebanon says Israeli strikes killed 9 people

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Israeli strikes on south Lebanon killed nine people including two children, Lebanon's Health Ministry said on Thursday, shortly after the President decried what he described as ongoing Israeli violations of a nearly two-week ceasefire.

Israel has pressed its attacks on Lebanon as the fragile ceasefire, announced after a round of direct talks between the Lebanese and Israeli ambassadors in Washington, neared its two-week mark.



Mourners carry the coffins of civil defence members killed in a strike by Israel on Majdal Zoun town during their funeral on Thursday. AFP

on south Lebanon led, in an initial toll, to nine martyrs, among them two children and five women, and 23 wounded, among them eight children and seven

women," the Ministry said in a statement.

Speaking to a delegation from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

President Joseph Aoun had earlier slammed "continuing Israeli violations" in south Lebanon.

He said these were occurring "despite the ceasefire, as do demolitions of homes and places of worship, while the number of killed and wounded rises day after day".

On Thursday, an Israeli army spokesperson called for the evacuation of eight southern villages ahead of planned military action there.

Lebanese state media reported a series of Israeli airstrikes across southern Lebanon on Thursday.

Myanmar coup-leader turned president orders Suu Kyi to be moved to house arrest

Agence France-Presse
YANGON

Myanmar's junta-chief turned president on Thursday ordered deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi to be moved to house arrest, five years after sweeping her into detention in a 2021 coup.

A statement from the office of Min Aung Hlaing said he had "commuted the remaining sentence" of the 80-year-old Suu Kyi "to be served at the designated residence".



Aung San Suu Kyi

al League for Democracy (NLD) party told AFP that she would likely be kept sequestered at an address in the capital Naypyidaw.

A Naypyidaw police source said security forces had been ordered to "enforce restrictions" in areas of the capital on Thursday night. "The 'designated residence' mentioned in the order will remain under their direct custody and control," they said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official statement al-

so did not make clear how many years remain in Suu Kyi's sentence.

In New York, United Nations spokesman Stephane Dujarric told reporters the move was "a meaningful step towards conditions conducive to a credible political process".

As military chief, Min Aung Hlaing toppled Suu Kyi's elected government five years ago, detaining her on a host of charges which rights groups say were confected to sideline her.

TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
Nanthancode, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 003
e-mail : itdvision.tdb@kerala.gov.in
www.travancoredevaswomboard.org

Expression of Interest (EOI)

For Supply, Installation and Commissioning of High-Speed Coin Counting and Segregation Machine at Sabarimala.

The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from reputed, experienced and technically qualified manufacturers, system integrators and solution providers for the design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a High-Speed Coin Counting and Segregation Machine for use at Sabarimala Temple.

For more details visit official website:
<http://travancoredevaswomboard.org/>

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE
Bangalore - 560012

IISc/CCMD/Tenders/2026-27 Date: 29.04.2026

Tender Notification- IISc/ Tender-CIV-05/2026-27

Indian Institute of Science invites bids in two cover system through e-procurement platform <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Any specialised firms company registered under KPWD / CPWD/ railways/ MES/ central PSUs/ or any Government department of **Class I/Class A Civil Contractors** are eligible to apply for the work of "Renovation of CHEP rooms (C005, C006, C101) in old IPC building in IISc Bangalore." Estimated Cost of Project is **Rs.32,13,637/-**. Last date of receipt of application is **19th May 2026 at 15:30 Hrs.** Any other details can be obtained from the office of the Centre for Campus Management & Development, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on all working days or e-mail: office.ccmd@iisc.ac.in Sdl/, Registrar

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE
Bangalore - 560012

IISc/CCMD/Tenders/2026-27 Date: 29.04.2026

Tender Notification- IISc/ Tender-ELE-03/2026-27

Indian Institute of Science invites bids in two cover system through e-procurement platform <https://eprocure.gov.in>. Any specialised firms company registered under KPWD / CPWD/ railways/ MES/ central PSUs/ or any Government department of **Class I/Class A Electrical Contractors** are eligible to apply for the work of "Providing 120KVA UPS and Replacement of Main LT Panels for Main Building at IISc Bangalore." Estimated Cost of Project is **Rs.98,30,769/-**. Last date of receipt of application is **19th May 2026 at 15:30 Hrs.** Any other details can be obtained from the office of the Centre for Campus Management & Development, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on all working days or e-mail: office.ccmd@iisc.ac.in Sdl/, Registrar

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE TECHNOLOGIES, ANDHRA PRADESH
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ADMISSION NOTIFICATION FOR INTEGRATED UNDER GRADUATE PROGRAMS -2026-27

No.1/RGUKT-AP/UG/Admissions/2026 Date: 01-05-2026

Online applications are invited from eligible candidates for Admission into the Six Year Integrated B.Tech Programme in RGUKT-AP campuses located at Nuzvid, Idupulapaya, Ongole and Srikakulam for the academic year 2026-27. Interested candidates can apply for admission online through AP online center / Meeseva / University website www.rgukt.in.

Candidates can submit online applications from **10:00 AM on 01.05.2026**. The last date for submission of online applications is **30.05.2026 up to 05:00 PM**. For more details, please visit the University website: www.rgukt.in
DIPR 5055PP/CL, Dt.30-04-2026 Sdl/- Convener

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER TENDER NOTICE

ADV.No.05/03/CE/TTD/2026-27 & NIT No.71 to 72 /SE-I/TTD/ 2026-27 dt:29-04-2026

Name of work: Providing Permanent shelter & Queue lines with Toilets for SSD (Slotted Sarva Darshan) waiting pilgrims at west side of Alwar tank area at Tirumala. Amount:800.00 Lakhs. Mixed Tender Time for Completion :6months. 2) Processing and disposal of the Legacy Mixed Municipal Solid Waste of more than 25 years near Kakulamuttupeta, Tirumala through Bio- remediation & Bio-mining as in where is basis.Open Tender Time for Completion 12 months.

NOTE: For full details, log on to the Website <https://www.tirumala.org>.
TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.35) Date:30-04-2026 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

भारतीय वानिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद
(An Autonomous Body of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)
पोस्टाडॉ च्या कार्यालय, देह्रादून - 248006 (उत्तराखण्ड)
P.O. New Forest, Dehra Dun - 248006 (Uttarakhand)

विज्ञापित संख्या 02 / 32-1 / महानिदेशक / 2026-मा.वा.अ.शि.प.
Advt. No. 02/32-1/Director General/2026-ICFRE

महानिदेशक, भारतीय वानिकी अनुसंधान एवं शिक्षा परिषद के पद को प्रतिनियुक्ति के आधार पर सातवें सी.पी.सी. के वेतन मैट्रिक्स का स्तर-17 पर भरने हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किए जाते हैं। आवेदन प्राप्त करने की अंतिम तिथि 01.06.2026 है तथा अण्डमान निकोबार द्वीप समूह एवं लक्षद्वीप के अर्थस्थियों के लिये 15.06.2026 होगी।

उपरोक्त पद हेतु इच्छुक अर्थस्थों भा0वा0अ0शि0प0 की वेबसाइट <http://www.icfre.org> में दिये गये विस्तृत विज्ञापन के अनुसार आवेदन कर सकते हैं।

Applications are invited for filling up the post of Director General, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education on deputation basis in pay level -17 of 7th CPC Pay Matrix. The last date for receipt of application is 01.06.2026 and for candidates residing in Andaman Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep the last date will be 15.06.2026.

The interested candidates may apply for the aforesaid post as per detailed advertisement available on ICFRE website <http://www.icfre.org>

सचिव, भा0वा0अ0शि0प0
Secretary, ICFRE

STEPPING UP

It's about coming in and delivering when needed, says Holder



VIJAY SONEJI

I felt our energy was good. After the first couple of overs, everyone was a little edgy but credit to Kagiso Rabada for turning it around. Happy to contribute and help the team get over the line. More or less about coming in when needed, and delivering — GT's Jason Holder, the Player-of-the-Match against RCB.

PUNISHMENT

Royals captain Parag fined for vaping in the game against Kings



PTI

Rajasthan Royals captain Riyan Parag has been fined a quarter of his match fee for vaping in the dressing room. Images of Parag using an e-cigarette during Tuesday's match against Punjab Kings were broadcast live. E-cigarettes are banned in India under a 2019 law that prohibits their manufacture, import, sale and storage.

HUGE FACTOR

Starc's availability should help our team: DC bowling coach Munaf



FILE PHOTO: SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Delhi Capitals bowling coach Munaf Patel said the availability of Mitchell Starc should help the team. "Our fast bowlers have struggled in the PowerPlay, and Starc could make a difference. He is our best bowler, so he should be playing, but I can't confirm whether he will play in the match against Rajasthan Royals".

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

'We need to remember Bumrah has been No. 1 for a good period'



PTI

When a cricketer is not doing well, we look at every single aspect. It is no different for Jasprit Bumrah. We need to remember what good he has done. He has not been up to the mark, but he has been No. 1 for Mumbai Indians and India for a good period of time — MI batting coach Kieron Pollard on the pacer's indifferent form.

Holder in the thick of it as GT gets the better of RCB

The all-rounder scalps two besides taking three catches to help the home team bowl out the defending champion for 155; Gill, Buttler and Tewatia shine for the Gujarat outfit in a tricky chase

IPL-19

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

It is difficult to cut an imposing figure in an arena as gigantic as the Narendra Modi Stadium. It is even tougher when more than 90,000 fans turn it into a raucous theatre where every creature can feel small and diminished.

But Jason Holder, the Barbados-born burly man of 6'7" frame, managed that Herculean feat with an all-round performance to carry Gujarat Titans to an important four-wicket victory over the in-form Royal Challengers Bengaluru in IPL 2026 on Thursday.

Diving effort

The 34-year-old bowled four first-rate overs (4-0-29-2), took three sharp-catches — including a diving effort at fine-leg to send back RCB skipper Rajat Patidar — and was involved in a calming 30-run stand for the sixth wicket with Rahul Tewatia (27 n.o., 17b, 4x4) as GT chased down 156 in the 16th over.

After typically classy knocks from Shubman Gill (43, 18b, 4x4, 3x6) and Jos Buttler (39, 19b, 2x4, 4x6), the GT middle-order had the soft-landing it needed to make its presence felt — 64 runs required from 75



Having a field day: Gill got Titans off to a blazing start. Arshad struck telling blows and got ample support from Rashid. Holder, too, made a big impression. VIJAY SONEJI

balls with seven wickets left. But it huffed and puffed, with Washington Sundar and Shahrulkh Khan both failing to anchor the pursuit, before Holder (12, 10b, 1x6) and Tewatia saved the day.

Earlier, put in to bat, RCB's all-conquering lineup was dismissed for the first time this season by a

wholesome Titans bowling effort.

Imperious Kohli

When the imperious Virat Kohli (28, 13b, 5x4, 1x6) hit Kagiso Rabada for five consecutive fours in the second over — a front-foot pull, a lofted shot over mid-off, a drive past backward point, a steer to third-

man and a drive through cover — RCB seemed pumped up.

But that was a high point the outfit rarely scaled for the rest of the innings. Jacob Bethell spooned a catch to short mid-wicket before Kohli was bounced out by Rabada.

Devdutt Padikkal (40,

24b, 5x4, 2x6) helped collect 59 from the PowerPlay, but RCB's hopes of using that as a launchpad never materialised as it was reduced to 126 for eight by the start of the 15th over.

All-rounder Venkatesh Iyer was even brought in as the Impact Player, but the left-hander could only manage a 15-ball 12.

From the last 32 balls, RCB scored just 29 runs, returns that seldom win T20 matches.

Next assignment

GT: May 3 vs. PBKS Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.
RCB: May 7 vs. LSG Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Jacob Bethell c Rashid b Siraj 5 (5b, 1x4), Virat Kohli c Rashid b Rabada 28 (13b, 5x4, 1x6), Devdutt Padikkal b Rashid 40 (24b, 5x4, 2x6), Rajat Patidar c Holder b Arshad 19 (15b, 2x4, 1x6), Jitesh Sharma c Buttler b Holder 1 (3b), Tim David c Holder b Rashid 9 (6b, 1x6), Krunal Pandya c Holder b Arshad 4 (4b, 1x4), Romario Shephard c Sai Sudharsan b Holder 17 (15b, 2x6), Venkatesh Iyer (Impact Player for Bethell) c Sai Sudharsan b Arshad 12 (15b, 1x4), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 15 (15b, 2x4), Josh Hazlewood run out 0 (1b); Extras (lb-3, w-2): 5; Total (in 19.2 overs): 155.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-34 (Bethell, 2.4 overs), 2-35 (Kohli, 3.2), 3-79 (Patidar, 7.4), 4-80 (Jitesh, 8.1), 5-91 (David, 9.4), 6-96 (Krunal, 10.3), 7-126 (Padikkal, 13.6), 8-126 (Shephard, 14.1), 9-155 (Venkatesh, 19.1).

TITANS BOWLING

Siraj 4-0-38-1, Rabada 4-0-44-1, Holder 4-0-29-2, Arshad 3.2-0-22-3, Rashid 4-0-19-2.

GUJARAT TITANS

Sai Sudharsan c Jitesh b Bhuvneshwar 6 (5b, 1x4), Shubman Gill c Kohli b Bhuvneshwar 43 (18b, 4x4, 3x6), Jos Buttler b Bhuvneshwar 39 (19b, 2x4, 4x6), Washington Sundar lbw b Shephard 12 (12b, 1x6), Shahrulkh Khan c Hazlewood b Shephard 8 (8b, 1x4), Rahul Tewatia (Impact Player for Siraj) (not out) 27 (17b, 4x4), Jason Holder c Padikkal b Suyash 12 (10b, 1x6), Rashid Khan (not out) 7 (6b, 1x4); Extras (w-4): 4; Total (for six wks. in 15.5 overs): 158.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-42 (Sai Sudharsan, 2.6), 2-57 (Gill, 4.6), 3-92 (Buttler, 7.3), 4-109 (Shahrulkh, 10.1), 5-111 (Washington, 10.3), 6-141 (Holder, 13.5).

RCB BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 4-0-28-3, Hazlewood 4-0-56-0, Suyash 3.5-0-44-1, Shephard 4-0-30-2.

Toss: Gujarat Titans.

Player-of-the-Match: Holder. Gujarat Titans won by four wickets with 25 deliveries remaining.

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Punjab Kings	8	6	1	1	13	1.043
Royal Challengers	9	6	3	0	12	1.420
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	6	3	0	12	0.832
Rajasthan Royals	9	6	3	0	12	0.617
Gujarat Titans	9	5	4	0	10	-0.192
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.121
Delhi Capitals	8	3	5	0	6	-1.060
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	2	5	1	5	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	8	2	6	0	4	-0.784
Lucknow Super Giants	8	2	6	0	4	-1.106

Capitals need to turn it up against humming Royals

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR

About 300 kms separate Delhi and Jaipur. The difference in quality of the cricket played by the franchises from the two northern Indian cities has been greater this IPL season.

While Rajasthan Royals is well placed to claim a berth in the playoffs, Delhi Capitals is lying in the bottom half. And after that nightmare of a match at home against Royal Challengers Bengaluru earlier this week, Axar Patel's men have to come up with a much better effort against Royals at the Sai Mansingh Stadium here on Friday.

Lightning usually doesn't strike twice, and Capitals' batting lineup is strong enough not to collapse for another score like 75. In just the previous match, K.L. Rahul alone had made more than double that total. Capitals made in excess of 260 against Punjab Kings, but still lost. When you cannot defend that big a score in one game and then get bowled out for an embarrassingly low total in the next, you certainly have to



Talk-time: Capitals skipper Axar catches up with RR's Shanaka and Bishnoi ahead of Friday's match. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Today's match

RAJASTHAN ROYALS vs DELHI CAPITALS

Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 30

RR 15 | DC 15

PREVIOUS MEETING

Match tied (DC won the Super Over), 2025

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOTSTAR

do something. And time is running out. Delhi should be hoping for another major innings from Rahul, and from Nitish Rana, too. The two men had destroyed the Punjab Kings bowling in some style.

On the bowling front, there is some good news. Mitchell Starc is available

Players ought to maintain team culture: Sangakkara

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR

While most things have gone right for Rajasthan Royals on the field this IPL, the same cannot be said about what has happened off it. First, there was the incident of team manager Romi Bhinder using his mobile phone in the dugout during the match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Bhinder was fined ₹1 lakh and issued a warning by the BCCI's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit. Royals made the world's richest cricket body even richer on Thursday, with captain Riyan Parag being fined 25% of his match fee for vaping in the dressing room during the match against Punjab Kings.

Royals head coach Kumar Sangakkara admitted the controversies didn't really help them. "Such controversies are no positives for the team and all I can say is that both issues have been addressed by the BCCI and the franchise," he said on the eve of RR's match against Delhi Capitals.



Royals head coach Sangakkara. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"It is a reminder to the players that they have to maintain the team's culture."

About the match, the former Sri Lankan captain said he was expecting a tough challenge from the Capitals, despite their poor run of late. "And it looks like another good pitch out there," he said. "We don't expect anything less than the best out of DC."

Parag may not be in great form, but Sangakkara pointed out the importance of his knock in the victory against Punjab Kings. "His little innings (29 off 16 balls) shifted the momentum our way".

'MI not ready to throw in the towel yet'

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Kieron Pollard isn't ready to concede the IPL season just yet. Even as Mumbai Indians slumped to a sixth defeat in eight games, the batting coach struck a note of defiance, insisting the fight within the group remains intact.

"We need to play that complete game of cricket to win a match because it's getting difficult, the way the game is going," Pollard said after MI's loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad.

"But what I can safely say, in the dressing room, the spirits of the guys — they are willing and wanting to fight."

It has been a campaign of near-misses and moments gone wrong.

"These things happen. You could have been worse off. At the end of it, we are playing a game of cricket. There are a lot of other things more serious in life," he said. "Two teams play. You win some, you lose some. We have been on the losing side. So yes, we have accepted that."

Impact Index

- 1** Mumbai Indians has used 22 players, the most by a team this season
- 5** Ricketton and Jacks are the fifth pair of MI openers this season. The last time it used as many was in 2016
- 5** The number of sixes Bumrah conceded against SRH, his joint worst after the five he was hit for in 2015 (vs. Delhi Daredevils)
- 32** The sixes count in the MI-SRH contest, the highest in an IPL game at Wankhede
- 54** Bumrah's costliest spell since 2021 (56 vs. CSK)

- 92** Runs conceded by MI in the PowerPlay, its joint most after the one against DC in 2024
- 100** SRH became the eighth team to register 100 IPL wins
- 123** Ricketton's is the highest individual score for MI in the league, bettering Jayasuriya's unbeaten 114 in 2008
- 243** MI's best total when batting first
- 244** SRH's chase was the fourth highest in IPL history, and the highest at the Wankhede

Compiled by Anirudh Velamuri

Indian men pip Slovakia; women edge past Ukraine

WORLD TEAM TT

Press Trust of India
LONDON

The Indian men's team staged a spirited comeback to edge Slovakia 3-2 in a gripping Group 7 tie of the ITTF World team table tennis championships here on Wednesday.

India thus climbed to the top of the group table and strengthened its chances of advancing.

In the women's section, India rose to the occasion, pipping Ukraine 3-2, to go atop Group 6.

The results:
Men: India bt Slovakia 3-2 (Manush Shah lost to Lubomir Pistej 8-11, 11-5, 11-8, 5-11, 6-11; Manav Thakkar bt Jakub Zelinka 11-6, 11-8, 11-6; Harmeet Desai lost to Wang Yang 14-6, 5-11, 9-11; Manav bt Pistej 11-3, 11-3, 11-3; Manush bt Zelinka 11-8, 11-8, 11-7).
Women: India 3 bt Ukraine 2 (Manika Batra bt Tetyana Bilenko 11-9, 7-11, 11-6, 11-5; Yashaswini Ghorpade lost to Margaryta Pesotska 11-7, 11-8, 1-11, 9-11, 9-11; Diya Chitale bt Veronika Matiunina 11-6, 11-8, 11-6; Manika lost to Pesotska 9-11, 11-5, 8-11, 6-11; Yashaswini bt Bilenko 11-7, 11-9, 9-11, 11-7).

INBRIEF



PSG's Hakimi to miss CL second leg due to injury

Paris Saint-Germain defender Achraf Hakimi will miss the return leg of the Champions League semifinal against Bayern Munich because of a right thigh injury, the French club said. He sustained the injury during the first leg. He will be out of action for several weeks.

West Bengal gymnasts win junior women's team gold

West Bengal claimed the junior women's team gold medal in the National artistic gymnastics championships in Bhubaneswar on Thursday.

The results: Women: Team: Junior: 1. West Bengal (Ahana Neogi, Anusha Howlader, Paromita Bera, Shreya Ghosh, Sneha Das, Tora Sani) 172.433, 2. Maharashtra (Dhanishtha Ugalmugle, Ishwari Patil, Pagel Shah, Rudrani Mithawala, Sakshi Dalvi, Toree Sen) 160.164, 3. Tripura (Ankita Das, Aradhya Deb, Dowel Acharjee, Sanchita Nama, Shreyanshi Roy, Sreeparna Debnath) 155.166.

Ikwaput helps East Bengal defeat Sethu in IWL

East Bengal FC completed a double over Sethu FC in the Indian Women's League (IWL) after it registered a 1-0 victory at the East Bengal Ground in Kolkata on Thursday. Fazila Ikwaput's 64th-minute strike proved enough for the league topper to bag three points.

The results: East Bengal FC 1 (Fazila Ikwaput 64) bt Sethu FC 0; Nita 1 (Aruna Bag 85-og) drew with Kickstart 1 (Kiran Pinda 49); Gokulam Kerala 3 (Asem Roja Devi 45+3, Emueje Ogbiagbevha 79, Shilji Shaji 87) bt Sesa 0; Sreebhumi 2 (Sibani Devi 71, Rimpa Haldar 80) drew with Garhwal United 2 (Esther Tingjoukim 7, Elizabeth Danso 8).



Former England defender Young announces retirement

Former England defender Ashley Young has announced his retirement from football at the age of 40. Young played for the likes of Manchester United and Inter Milan, and has spent this season at second division Ipswich. He won league titles in England and Italy, as well as the FA Cup and Europa League. He was part of the England squad at the 2018 World Cup. In a much-travelled career, Young also played for Watford, Aston Villa (in two stints), and Everton.

Mainoo signs new contract with Manchester United

Kobbie Mainoo has signed a new contract with Manchester United that will keep him at the club until 2031, bringing an end to months of uncertainty over his future.



Head coach Scott Parker leaves Burnley

Scott Parker has left his position as head coach of Burnley following the club's relegation from the Premier League. Burnley said in a statement that Parker and the board had "mutually agreed that his time at Turf Moor would conclude" following one season back in the English top division.

LIVE TELECAST

IFL: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.
ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
IFL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
Formula One: Miami GP (Sprint Shootout): F1 TV, F1 TV Pro App & FanCode, 2 a.m. (Saturday)

Arsenal and Atletico trade penalties in a nervy semifinal first-leg draw

Gyokeres' first-half penalty puts the Premier League leader ahead before Alvarez pulls the host level from the spot in the second half; the visiting side makes its displeasure known after a late penalty decision is overturned following a lengthy VAR review

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agence France-Presse
MADRID

Julian Alvarez's penalty secured Atletico Madrid a 1-1 draw against Arsenal in a nervy Champions League semifinal first leg clash on Wednesday.

Viktor Gyokeres sent the Premier League leader ahead from the spot just before the interval after he was fouled, but Alvarez followed suit 10 minutes into the second half after Ben White's handball.

Arsenal was upset at a late penalty decision being overturned following a VAR review when David Hanco made contact with Eberechi Eze in the area.

Solid defending

Atletico had the better for long periods but Arsenal's solid defending helped it leave the Spanish capital in a good position to return to the Champions League final 20 years after its last appearance. Atletico captain Koke said his side could be proud of how it played in the second half.

What the game lacked in the dizzying goal rush of Paris Saint-Germain's 5-4

Records galore | New marks were set during the Champions League semifinal first legs

1 The PSG-Bayern encounter was the first instance of five goals being scored in the opening period of a Champions League semifinal

1 Argentine striker Alvarez became the first Atletico player to net 10 goals in a single CL campaign. He

converted a second-half penalty on Wednesday

1 Arsenal forward Gyokeres is the first Swedish player to get on the scoresheet in a CL final-four fixture. The penalty conversion was his first knockout goal in the competition

9 PSG and Bayern combined for nine goals in the first leg, the most in a CL semifinal. The previous best was seven (on four occasions)

13 Arsenal extended its unbeaten CL streak to 13 matches this season

23 PSG left-back Mendes, at 23y 313d, is the youngest Portuguese player to make 50 CL appearances

100 The win over Bayern was the Paris side's 100th in the competition



Mirror image: Gyokeres fires the Gunners in front before Alvarez returns the favour for the Rojiblancos. AP



win over Bayern Munich in the other semifinal the night before, it replaced with tension and a desperation not to fall behind.

Toilet paper rained down from the stands of the Metropolitan stadium minutes before kick-off, in

a striking – if wasteful – display, which invited cynical jokes from some quarters about the calibre of the spectacle ahead.

In a tussle between arguably the continent's two biggest teams never to lay a finger on the trophy neither

wanted to blink first.

Atletico still has an old-style defensive reputation but pinned Mikel Arteta's miserly Arsenal back in the early stages, with David Raya tipping Alvarez's shot around the post.

The Gunners, a long

way from Arteta's eve-of-the-game demand they dominate proceedings, looked to smash and grab.

Arsenal next takes on Fulham as it continues its battle with Manchester City for the Premier League title, while with little to

play for in LaLiga Simeone will rotate heavily, before this tie is decided in London.

The result (semifinal, 1st leg):

Atletico Madrid 1 (Alvarez 56-pen) drew with Arsenal 1 (Gyokeres 44-pen).

Didn't have any expectations: Kothari after defending World billiards title

Y. B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Sourav Kothari said the bubble of numbness around him, following the death of his father and former World champion Manoj Kothari in January, insulated him from pressure and helped him retain his IBSF World billiards title in Carlow, Ireland.

In a repeat of last year's World championships final, Kothari defeated Pankaj Advani 1133-477 to defend his crown. Kothari, who was close to his father-cum-coach, described his achievement as 'bittersweet.'

"I didn't have any expectations. The world around me has suddenly become a little empty, I've just become numb. That probably helped me win this world title," said Kothari at a virtual press conference, organised by the Sports Authority of India



Looking ahead: Kothari hopes cue sports will feature in the 2030 Commonwealth Games in India. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

(SAD), on Thursday.

About his Carlow campaign, Kothari – who clinched the National title within weeks of his father's demise – said, "It's contrasting. Last year no one really threatened me. This year, in every match, starting from David Causier (757-498) in the quarterfinal, Dhvaj Haria (633-443) in the semis and (Advani in

the) final, my opponents started with a bang. Luckily, I came from behind. In the final, Pankaj made a 167 break and I replied with a 485 break, which took me one hour and two minutes."

The 41-year-old Kolkata cueist said even though he missed his daily routine of neck and back exercises, he managed to pull off the

crucial break. He revealed that his decision to walk from the hotel to the venue, despite wearing leather shoes and nursing a dodgy left-foot, every time in the 'crisp and pollution-free air' of the countryside was also beneficial.

"It was a good 20-minute walk. It helped me so much."

Kothari hoped that cue sports would feature in the 2030 Commonwealth Games to be hosted by India.

"We are back in the Asian Games in 2030. Our federation, the Billiards and Snooker Federation of India (BSFI), is trying to get the sport into the 2030 Commonwealth Games.

"We've won multiple gold medals at the Asian Games. It will be great, not just for our sport but also for India's medal tally, if we are included in the Commonwealth Games," said Kothari.

Burevestnik primed to deliver

BENGALURU: Burevestnik, who has been well prepared, may score in the International Labour Day Trophy (1,100m), the main event of the opening day's races to be held on Friday. False rails width about 7 mts from (1,600m) to the winning post will be in position.

1 CAMINO PLATE (DIV. II), (1,200m) rated 00 to 25, 3-00 p.m.: 1. Tyarara (6) Antony 62, 2. Zayana (4) Pavan 61, 3. Star Of The Future (11) Ryan 60.5, 4. Jolie's Star (8) P. Mani 60, 5. Rising Form (5) J. Chenoy 59, 6. Miracle Beauty (10) Kiran Rai 58, 7. N R I Millennium (7) Arshad Alam 57.5, 8. Mystical Queen (9) Asirvatham 57, 9. Dr. Colchester (1) R. Pradeep 55.5, 10. Embosom (3) Jagadeesh 54 and 11. Emerald (2) Rozario 53.5.
1. TYARARA, 2. ZAYANA, 3. EMERALDO

2 EPSOM PLATE (DIV. II), (1,300m), rated 20 to 45, 3-30: 1. Imperador (2) K. Mukesh Kumar 60, 2. Adornment (10) Akshay Kumar 59, 3. Vibrant Queen (7) Rozario 56, 4. Joyful Spirit (6) R. Vaibhav 55.5, 5. Stalingrad (5) Arvind 55.5, 6. Frederika (1) A. Asbar 55, 7. Hushed (3) A. Ramu 53.5, 8. Queendom (8) Shreya 53.5, 9. Glaze (9) G. Praveen 53 and 10. Femme Fatale (4) Kiran Rai 52.5.
1. QUEENDOM, 2. ADORNMENT, 3. STALINGRAD

3 CAMINO PLATE (DIV. I), (1,200m), rated 00 to 25, 4-00: 1. Windcleaver (7) V. Vishwa 62.5, 2. Zephyrine (6) Pavan 62.5, 3. Agrima (9) P. Trevor 61, 4. Imperial Star (1) G. Praveen 61, 5. Ladyness (2) P. Mani 61, 6. Royal Jewel (3) Shareef 61, 7. Vision Dream (4) Anish 61, 8. Enjoyable (11) Kiran Rai 60.5, 9. Infinite Spirit (8) R. Vaibhav 60.5, 10. Blue Saint (10) B. Paswan 58.5 and 11. Recreator (5) Arshad Alam 50.
1. AGRIMA, 2. ZEPHYRINE, 3. ROYAL JEWEL

4 PATTADAKAL PLATE (1,400m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 4-30: 1. Thrill Of Brazil (11) K. Mukesh Kumar 61, 2. El Alamein (9) Neeraj 60.5, 3. Belavita (2) S. Sachin 60, 4. Ebotse (6) Aleemuddin 60, 5. Golden Time (1) Razzio 59.5, 6. Gandolfini (10) Akshay Kumar 58.5, 7. Stentorian (8) Prabhakaran 58.5, 8. Sundance Kid (3) R. Pradeep 56.5, 9. The Golden Dream (7) Kiran Rai 56.5, 10. She Rules (4) Lakshman S 56, 11. Absolute Katrina (5) J. Chenoy 55.5 and 12. Turkoman (12) J.H. Arul 54.
1. THRILL OF BRAZIL, GANDOLFINI, 3. GOLDEN TIME

5 INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY TROPHY (1,100m), hidden 3-y-o only (Terms), 5-00: 1. Burevestnik (5) P. Trevor 56, 2. Legacy Field (7) Akshay Kumar 56, 3. Nimbus Speed (2) Rayan 56, 4. Brave Heart (4) D. Patel 54.5, 5. Charming Prospect (9) A. Ramu

54.5, 6. County's Mcqueen (3) Antony 54.5, 7. Deep Respect (6) Suraj Narredu 54.5, 8. First Choice (8) J.H. Arul 54.5 and 9. Portieuc (1) K. Mukesh Kumar 54.5.

1. BUREVESTNIK, 2. LEGACY FIELD, 3. DEEP RESPECT

6 USHA STUD PLATE (1,400m), rated 40 to 65, 5-30: 1. Magnus (5) Neeraj 60, 2. Eagle Eye (11) P. Trevor 58.5, 3. Tolkien (2) Akshay Kumar 58, 4. Winfield (9) Antony 57, 5. D Fronx (1) Ashhad Asbar 56.5, 6. Aherne (12) J. Chinoy 56, 7. Flaming Sword (3) Rozario 56, 8. Finley (4) Indrajeet 55.5, 9. Moon Star (10) K. Mukesh Kumar 55.5, 10. Double Vision (6) Jagadeesh 53, 11. Sassy (7) Kiran Rai 51 and 12. Stravinsky (8) Arshad Alam 50.5.
1. EAGLE EYE, 2. TOLKIEN, 3. WINFIELD

7 EPSOM PLATE (DIV. I), (1,300m), rated 20 to 45, 6-00: 1. Zilfee (5) Rivan 60, 2. Hazel (1) Akshay Kumar 59.5, 3. Oxytocin (6) Kiran Rai 59.5, 4. Rocking Star (4) Rozario 58, 5. Carat Love (2) R. Pradeep 57.5, 6. Elveden (8) Antony 56, 7. Larissa (3) P. Trevor 54, 8. Auctav (9) Lakshman S 52.5 and 9. Magestic Perona (7) Suhass 51.5.
1. LARISSA, 2. ROCKING STAR, 3. ELVEDEN

Day's Best: EAGLE EYE Double: BUREVESTNIK – LARISSA Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7; Mini Jkt: 4, 5, 6 & 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 & 4; (ii): 5, 6 & 7

Haryana and SSCB dominate in National u-17 wrestling

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Haryana stamped its authority in the National under-17 wrestling championships, topping both the women's wrestling and freestyle events, while Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) led the way in Greco-Roman in the three-day event that concluded at Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar on Thursday.

Haryana secured the women's wrestling title with 215 points and added the freestyle crown with 205 points. SSCB, dominated Greco-Roman, finishing on top with 136 points.



Smashing form: Ayush has won all three of his matches. INSTAGRAM/BAI_MEDIA

India locks horns with Taiwan for a place in the semis

THOMAS CUP

Press Trust of India
HORSENS (DENMARK)

India will aim to stay on course for a second title when it faces a formidable Taiwan in the quarterfinals of the Thomas Cup here on Friday.

In the other quarterfinals, China will meet Malaysia, Japan will take on France, while Thailand faces host Denmark.

India progressed to the last-eight stage after finishing second in Group A. India made a strong start to its campaign with a 4-1 win over Canada, followed by a 5-0 sweep of Australia, before going down 2-3 to China.

Taiwan is also a formidable side, led by World No. 6 Chou Tien Chen. Alongside him, World No. 8 and reigning All England champion Lin Chun-Yi and World No. 21 Chi Yu Jen add depth to the singles line-up.

In doubles, the side boasts of the World No. 14 pair of Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin, and World No. 16 duo of Lee Jhe-Huei and Yang Po-Hsuan.

India, on the other

hand, has looked in good touch, with both singles and doubles combinations performing well.

Ayush Shetty has carried forward his form from the Badminton Asia Championships, where he finished runner-up, winning all three of his matches. Old warhorses H.S. Prannoy and K. Srikanth have shared the third singles responsibilities, with the latter producing a fine come-from-behind win over China's Lu Guang Zu on Wednesday.

Prannoy had played a similar role during India's title-winning campaign in 2022. Though All England finalist Lakshya Sen lost two three-game thrillers, he has impressed with his performances.

The doubles pair of R. Satwiksairaj and Chirag Shetty won their opening two matches before narrowly losing to China's Liang Wei Keng and Wang Chang. The second doubles pair of A. Hariharan and M.R. Arjun have also won two of their three matches so far and will be keen to help India reach the semifinals.

Besides winning the title in 2022, India has won the bronze medal in 1952, 1955 and 1979.

R. Kaushik

To say that IPL 2026, which has sauntered past the halfway stage of the league phase, has been dominated by the bat will be a massive understatement. The first 42 matches, including Gujarat Titans' four-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Ahmedabad on Thursday night, have produced 35 scores of 200 and more, 10 of those coming in successful chases.

Last Saturday, Punjab Kings topped their own previous mark of 262 by mounting the highest successful chase in all 20-over cricket, hunting down Delhi Capitals' 264 for two with so much to spare. Centuries have started to come thick and fast – Sanju Samson alone has two of them – and 15-ball fifties no longer hold the same wonderment and awe even when they cascade from the blade of a 15-year-old. After all, Vaibhav Suryavansi has three of those this season, delivered with nonchalance and chutzpah as he has taken on and destroyed some of the best in the business, among them Jasprit Bumrah, Josh Hazlewood and Pat Cummins.

Bumrah has had a tournament to forget thus far, his travails mirroring those of his team's. Five-time former champions Mumbai are just off the foot of the table, Wednesday's six-wicket defeat by SRH their sixth loss in eight outings. Bumrah, astonishingly, has taken a mere two wickets from 30 overs. Just sit back for a second and allow that to sink in – a wicket every 90 deliveries for arguably the greatest all-format bowler of all time. We are talking about a champion who has 185 IPL wickets (19.01 balls per scalp) and 121 wickets from 95 T20Is (SR: 16.6). The Player-of-the-Tournament when India won the T20 World Cup in 2024, the Player-of-the-Final when they retained that crown in Ahmedabad this March. Bumrah hasn't been at his best, perhaps overreaching with every passing wicketless outing, of which there have been six, and has been mercilessly punished.

He has gone at 8.80 runs per over, perfectly acceptable for almost everyone else but somehow off when it comes to Bumrah, whose career T20 economy (in 278 matches) is a frugal 6.96 and whose T20I economy is even more impressive, at 6.51 runs per over.

What must irk Bumrah more is that his decidedly sub-par returns have come in a tournament where, around the batting carnage, pace bowlers, his comrades in arms, have tasted reasonable success – reasonable being a relative term, given the boundary-fest. Yuzvendra Chahal, the pixie leg-spinner, is the leading wicket-taker in IPL history; four of the top five most prolific IPL bowlers are all spinners (Sunil Narine, Piyush Chawla and R. Ashwin being the other three), the domination of spin only broken by Bhuvneshwar Kumar, who is second behind Chahal (228) with 215 victims. But this season, the balance is unquestionably skewed towards the faster bowlers, with spinners primarily forced to play second fiddle. Last season, even though they failed to reach the final, Gujarat Titans boasted the Purple Cap winner in Prasad Krishna (25 wickets), but he was run very close by Noor Ahmad (24), the left-arm wrist-spinner, even though Chennai Super Kings took home the wooden spoon. Keeping Noor spinning company among the ten highest wicket-takers were Sai Kishore (19), Varun Chakaravathy and Krunal Pandya (17 apiece). This year, Noor has picked up seven wickets from eight matches, Varun has seven from six and, shockingly, Tamil Nadu left-arm spinner and State skipper Sai Kishore hasn't played a single game.

There are only two spinners in the top 10 – leggie Ravi Bishnoi (11) and Noor's Afghanistan colleague A.M. Ghazanfar (10), slotting in at eighth and ninth places respectively. Otherwise, the leaderboard is replete with fast bowlers, who have brought their skill and craft and guile and nous and experience into play even when the odds have been stacked against them. The seasoned Bhuvneshwar, now 36, holds the Purple Cap with 17 wickets while Eshan Malinga, the Sri Lankan who has been such an influential figure in SRH's march to the third position, is next with 15. Then come the fiery Jofra Archer and Anshul Kamboj with 14 apiece. Prince Yadav, Prasad and Mohsin Khan round off the top 10 in the company of Kagiso Rabada, the South African who topped 150 kmph in all six deliveries of an over against Royal Challengers Bengaluru last week and is enjoying himself in a Gujarat attack that, apart from Prasad, includes Mohammed Siraj too.

Hunting in pairs

It is said of fast bowlers that they hunt in pairs, and this edition has illustrated that perfectly. No one has exemplified that better than Bhuvneshwar and Josh

The pace revolution in the IPL

The wicket-takers' leaderboard is replete with fast bowlers, who have brought their skill and craft and experience into play even when the odds have been stacked against them



Training sessions tend to be more feel-good outings for the batters while the bowlers bowl well within themselves for the most part, saving their best for the 24 deliveries in a match scenario

Hazlewood, who have been the standout performers for RCB, primarily in the PowerPlay. At the Arun Jaitley Stadium in the national capital on Monday, they ran amok against Delhi Capitals who, in their previous outing, had stacked up 264. Each of them took three wickets apiece within their first two overs, reducing Delhi to a scarcely believable 8 for 6. And they did so not with any great trickery but by sticking to the tried and the tested, bowling an almost Test-match line and length to cut a swathe through a shell-shocked top order.

Bhuvneshwar produced the perfect yorker off the second ball of the contest to knock out debutant Sahil Parakh's middle pole, the start of undiluted mayhem. It wasn't the first time in the season that the two pacers with a combined age of 71 left a lasting impression.

Despite missing RCB's opening two games, Hazlewood has taken eight wickets to back up Bhuvneshwar's incisiveness. Their allies have been seam and swing, and hitting the hard lengths as opposed to the express pace with which Archer and his Rajasthan Royals colleague Nandre Burger have terrorised batters.

Archer has taken a wicket with the first ball of the innings thrice already – it should have been four had Dhruv Jurel behind the stumps not dropped a sitter offered by Priyansh Arya – and has brooked careful watching every time he has gracefully loped in and let the ball go. More than anyone else, he has hit what the pundits call the 'hard' length, from where it is impossible to tee off for even the more accomplished. That explains his impressive economy of 8.27, which too has been trumped by Bhuvneshwar (7.54).

These are bowlers who bowl in the most demanding phases of the match – in the first six overs, when only two fielders are permitted beyond the 30-yard circle, and towards the final stages when every ball is like a free hit.

That they have been able to hold their own, and at times dominate the batters, is tribute to both their immense skills and their strength of character and conviction. They have kept pace with the demands of the modern game by expanding their repertoire and constantly adding new tricks to their armoury, reiterating that the process of learning never stops.

While most of the fast bowlers in the leading wicket-takers' list are seasoned internationals, Prince doesn't fall in that category. Before this season, the 24-year-old had played only 21 T20 games, six of them last season for Lucknow Super Giants when he only picked up three wickets. Prince had come into prominence with his exploits in the Delhi Premier League and was procured by LSG for a modest ₹30 lakh at the mega auction towards the end of 2024.

That seems like a bargain buy right now. Prince can work up reasonable pace – in the last 130s – and has a multitude of

variations. Until he went wicketless against Kolkata Knight Riders on Sunday, he had tasted at least one success in each of the previous seven fixtures. His economy is a commendable 8.06, which is made even more admirable by the fact that LSG are rock-bottom with just two wins from eight games and with a net run-rate of -1.106.

Dale Steyn, the great South African paceman who is revelling in his current avatar as a wonderful analyst and reader of the game, had an interesting take while explaining the successes of the fast bowlers, pointing out that batters today don't practice enough against this kind of bowling. "Watching Bhuvni, Hazlewood, throw KG and Archer in there too, there's a genuine fear from batters not because they're scared, but they know exactly where these greats are going to bowl but don't practice enough in that area to have answers," Steyn, who took 97 IPL wickets in 95 matches, said on X. "The fear is technical skill, too deep into the tournament to change now, watch these bowlers continue to dominate. It's called a HARD length for a reason..."

Batters' problems

Clearly, Steyn doesn't need any validation, but those who have watched teams practice before matches can easily relate to what he is saying. At net sessions in the lead-up to and on the evening before a game, balls fly everywhere at training and even a second's lack of focus – from those not batting and the few who have been able to secure entry to watch practice from the stands – can lead to disastrous consequences. There is a concerted effort to hone range-hitting abilities; there is an almost unwritten competition with regard to who can smite the ball the longest, who can put the ball on the roof. Not too many batters are confronted with the indeterminate-length balls aimed at the body that preclude freeing of the arms and therefore the resultant towering blows. Training sessions tend to be more feel-good outings for the batters while the bowlers bowl well within themselves for the most part, saving their best for the 24 deliveries in a match scenario.

On flat tracks where the ball comes evenly on to the bat and which take a lot of pace off the ball once it bounces, it is still possible to make late improvisations but when there is a bit of life, like there has been at Lucknow's Ekana International Stadium, there is nowhere for the batters to hide. As the tournament wears on, it is likely that the pitches will get a little tired and there won't be as much for the Bhuvneshwars and the Hazlewoods, the Archers and the Rabadas, to work with. But then, given how skilled they are, they have already shown that they don't need too much extraneous assistance, haven't they?

THE GIST

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HEALTH

How residential segregation shapes public health access in India

Neighbourhoods with higher concentrations of Dalit and Muslim communities are significantly less likely to have schools, health centres, piped water, sanitation, or electricity; this means limited access to care, as well as higher risks of disease, delayed treatment, and worse health outcomes

Christiane Ratna Kiruba

As a child travelling to her grandparents' home, Nancy Angeline remembers getting off at a bus stop that was never quite her destination.

The bus would halt at Valliyur—a village with paved roads, shops, a school, and a health centre. From there, she walked in near darkness, under starlight, past the last row of houses and across an invisible boundary into her grandparents' home.

Magzhchipuram, where they lived, was a Dalit Christian settlement—physically separated from the village, neglected, and socially excluded. The line drawn was not geographical; it was caste.

Only decades later, as a community medicine doctor, did she find a name for it: residential segregation. With it came a sharper realisation—this separation shaped not just where people lived, but who could access healthcare.

What Nancy experienced reflects a bigger, largely invisible pattern.

A working paper, 'Residential Segregation and Unequal Access to Local Public Services in India', by Sam Asher et al, analysing over 15 lakh neighbourhoods, finds high levels of segregation among Muslims and Scheduled Castes—closely tied to unequal access to basic services.

In urban areas, segregation indices range from 0.52 for Muslims to 0.59 for Scheduled Castes—meaning over half would need to relocate for full integration. Nearly one in four urban Muslims lives in neighbourhoods that are more than 80% Muslim.

Neighbourhoods with higher concentrations of these communities are significantly less likely to have schools, health centres, piped water, sanitation, or electricity. These disparities are often invisible at district or State levels, where policy is made, but stark at the neighbourhood level—clusters of just a few hundred households. Inequality in India is not only widespread; it is spatially organised and hidden in plain sight.

During her community medicine training, Nancy returned to villages as a researcher. "In many places, the Anganwadi, school, and primary health centre would all be in the main village—and inaccessible to those in Dalit settlements," she says.

Healthcare infrastructure is typically placed based on centrality and connectivity—locations with roads, buses, and ambulance access. But in caste-segregated geographies, these "central" points are usually dominant caste areas, leaving Dalit settlements excluded by default.

Health camps, too, are often held in dominant caste spaces—temples, central squares, community halls—where Dalit residents may not be allowed or, feel safe entering. Village health committees, meant to guide local planning, are frequently dominated by upper-caste men, shaping where these services are placed.

Nancy recalls a case that continues to stay with her from her work in a village. A child with severe malnutrition lived in a Dalit settlement. When she urged the mother to take the child to the Anganwadi



Living on the margins: In urban areas, segregation indices range from 0.52 for Muslims to 0.59 for Scheduled Castes—meaning over half would need to relocate for full integration. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

to access free meals, the response was not what she expected. "It was not that she did not want care," Nancy says. "She told me it was unsafe for her to go to that part of the village as a Dalit woman. Every time she went, she was humiliated." The mother's refusal, she realised, was not a failure of awareness or intent—but of dignity.

Dynamics across India

These dynamics extend beyond Tamil Nadu. Tanya Tanisha Mohanty, an English literature scholar who has done field work on women in villages in Odisha, describes how social identity continues to shape not just where people live, but also who they can ask for care or support from.

In one cluster of villages near Patia, she recalls, a single clinic served multiple surrounding settlements. Yet since the clinic was located within an upper-caste area, access to it was regulated. Dalit residents could only visit on specific days and within fixed hours and these restrictions were even displayed on the clinic board.

"These timings were set so that upper-caste residents would not be offended," she says. "If you had an emergency outside that window, you simply could not go."

For those needing urgent care—particularly pregnant women or those with acute conditions—this effectively placed healthcare out of reach.

Access to medicines, too, followed informal hierarchies. In some cases, intermediaries would procure medicines from nearby towns, but distribution was uneven or came at higher costs.

These patterns are not limited to caste. In urban and peri-urban India, Muslim-majority neighbourhoods often face similar spatial exclusion.

Shakeeb Ahmed Khan, a physiotherapist who has worked extensively in Muslim-majority areas,

Neighbourhoods with fewer services, poorer infrastructure, and limited access to care face higher risks of disease, delayed treatment, and worse health outcomes

recalls supervisors telling him these neighbourhoods would have higher disability due to consanguineous marriages—a reflection of entrenched bias against the Muslim community. But prevalence data did not support these assumptions.

"People who deliver healthcare to these areas also carry their biases and assumptions with them," he says.

In parts of Nagpur, he notes, Muslim-dominated areas had weaker infrastructure, fewer amenities, and limited services. Healthcare access followed similar lines. Health centres in marginalised areas were often understaffed or non-functional, forcing residents to travel farther for care, while centres in more affluent areas were better resourced.

"There was an implicit understanding that if you want better care, you would go to a PHC in a better neighborhood," he says. Over time, he says, many residents adapt. "People focus on work and on earning more to access private facilities. They also try to get what they can, within what is available."

These implications for public health are profound. Neighbourhoods with fewer services, poorer infrastructure, and limited access to care face higher risks of disease, delayed treatment, and worse health outcomes.

Despite decades of welfare programmes, Indian public policy has rarely treated residential segregation as a driver of inequality. Most interventions assume services within a village or district

are equally accessible. In reality, access depends on where services are located—and who can enter those spaces. There have been moments of recognition. The Sachar Committee Report noted that many Muslim communities live in segregated, under-serviced localities. But such insights have not translated into policy frameworks that account for segregation itself.

Policy in practice

These patterns are also shaped—and at times reinforced—by policy.

Laws such as the Gujarat Disturbed Areas Act restrict property transactions in notified areas. Initially introduced to prevent distress sales of property in areas of sectarian violence, it is now used to make it difficult for Muslims to buy homes in Hindu-majority neighbourhoods, thereby deepening segregation. Rajasthan has seen similar moves through administrative and policy directions. In Assam, although no equivalent legislation exists, a series of eviction drives and administrative controls over land have reshaped settlement patterns, disproportionately affecting minority communities.

Together, these measures risk formalising existing divides, contributing to the ghettoisation of minority communities, a trend that accelerated over the past decade, as noted by many researchers.

Large structural changes are needed to dismantle geography as a barrier for healthcare delivery. In the meantime, however, the public health system must recognise the existence of these barriers at the level of neighbourhoods and work on solutions to actively redistribute care to reach those kept at the margins. (Dr. Christiane Ratna Kiruba is an internal medicine doctor, with a passion for patient rights advocacy. christianezdennis@gmail.com)

THE GIST

A working paper analysing over 15 lakh neighbourhoods, finds high levels of segregation among Muslims and Scheduled Castes—closely tied to unequal access to basic services

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THE HEALTH QUIZ

Over 90% of people around the world will experience a headache at some point in their lives. How much do you know about them? Here is a quiz on everything related to headaches

Zubeda Hamid

QUESTION 1

What is the most common type of headache condition?

- Nicotine headache
- Sinus headache
- Tension-type headache
- Migraine

QUESTION 2

What do you call a type of brief, severe, frequently recurring headache, focused on one side of the head or around one eye? They are relatively uncommon affecting fewer than 1 in 1000 adults.

QUESTION 3

Which type of headache ranks third in accounting for overall neurological disease burden as

measured by age-standardised disability-adjusted life years?

QUESTION 4

Migraines are hereditary. Is this statement true or false.

QUESTION 5

Rebound headache is a commonly-used term for a headache due to the overuse of _____

QUESTION 6

What food, popularly known as 'food of the Gods' is believed to trigger migraine in some people?

QUESTION 7

Mucus building up in your _____ can cause a headache, where you face hurts.

Answers to previous edition's quiz:

1. Repeated untreated middle ear infections in childhood can lead to long-term hearing problems. True or False.

Ans: True 2. A persistent ringing or buzzing sound in the ears without an external source is called _____. **Ans: Tinnitus**

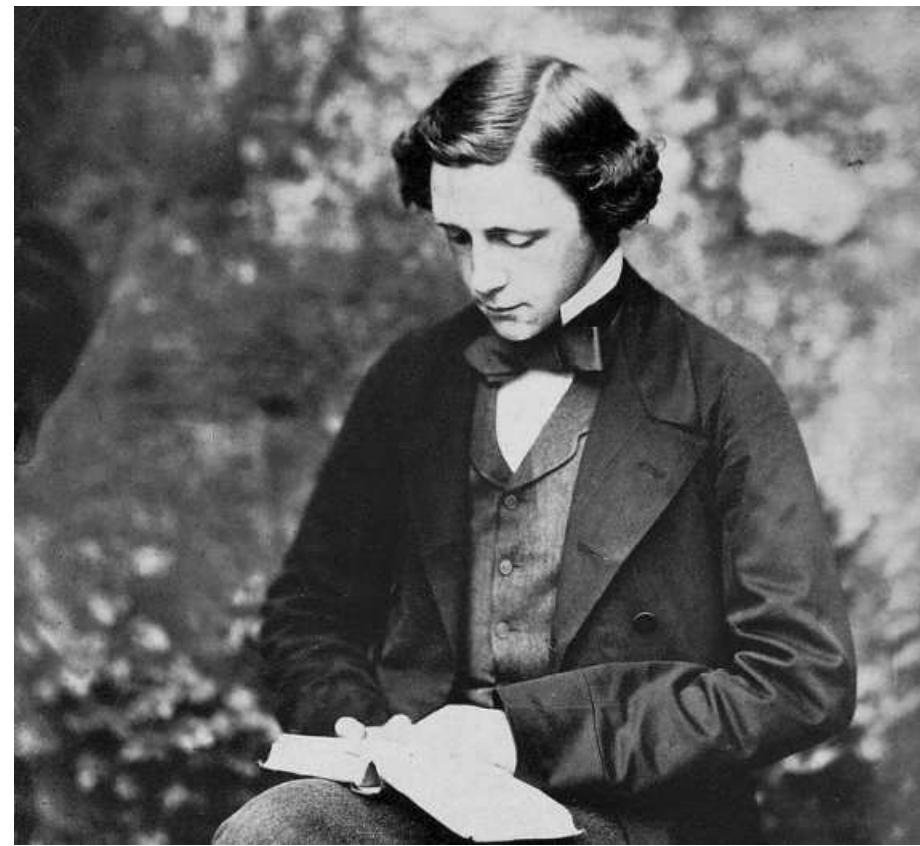
3. A routine test used to check a person's hearing ability? **Ans: Audiometry** 4. Name one sign that may suggest a child has hearing difficulty. **Ans: Frequently asking for repetition/Turning one ear toward the speaker**

5. Hearing loss that develops after long-term exposure to loud sounds is called _____. **Ans: Conductive**

Visual: Injury to which inner ear structure would most directly impair the ear's ability to convert sound vibrations into signals transmitted to the brain? **Ans: The cochlea**

Winner: Prem raj P.

Visual question: It is a popular theory that the English author in this image suffered from migraines and that influenced his dream-like, size-distorted characters in a famous children's novel. Name the author **WIKIMEDIA COMMONS**



Please send in your answers to health@thehindu.co.in