



ALARMING GAP
Biodiversity slumps in Western Ghats
Survey hints at nearly 35% shortfall of ecologically critical odonata species
NEWS » PAGE 11

Why is hantavirus drawing attention?
FAQ » PAGE 14

Claude Mythos: a double-edged sword
PROFILES » PAGE 15

Rashid and Gill shine as Titans crush Royals
SPORT » PAGE 17

NEARBY



AAP, Oppn. face off as ED arrests Punjab Minister

CHANDIGARH
The Enforcement Directorate on Saturday arrested Sanjeev Arora, the Industries Minister in the AAP government in Punjab, in an alleged money-laundering case, triggering a political slugfest. » Page 9

Central govt. operationalises Labour Codes

NEW DELHI
In over 30 gazette notifications issued on Friday and Saturday, the Centre fully operationalised the four Labour Codes by publishing rules, ensuring minimum wage and universal social security for all workers. » Page 11

CLASSIFIED » PAGE 8
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

Vijay to take reins today; T.N. set for coalition govt.

Governor appoints TVK chief, who secured support of 120 MLAs-elect, as CM-designate, directs him to seek vote of confidence in House by May 13; nine Ministers to take oath with Vijay today

B. Kolappan
K. Muralitharan
N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president C. Joseph Vijay will be sworn in as the Chief Minister of a coalition government in Tamil Nadu on Sunday, putting an end to almost six decades of alternating rule by the State's two dominant Dravidian parties – Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK).

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar on Saturday appointed Mr. Vijay Chief Minister-designate after he secured the support of 120 MLAs-elect in the 234-member House.

Mr. Vijay will take the



Stage set: Governor Arlekar hands over the letter of appointment as Tamil Nadu CM-designate to TVK chief Vijay on Saturday. PTI

oath at Nehru Stadium in Chennai at 10 a.m. on Sunday. Nine other Ministers, including some senior TVK leaders, will also be sworn in. Mr. Vijay will head the government with the Congress as a partner.

The Governor has also directed Mr. Vijay to seek a vote of confidence in the Assembly on or before May

13. The political uncertainty that prevailed over the last few days ended on Saturday evening, when the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) extended their support to the TVK, taking the strength of its backers to 120. Later, Mr. Vijay called on the Governor at Lok

Bhavan in Chennai, and handed over letters of support from the Congress, Communist Party of India (CP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI (M)], VCK, and IUML.

Though the Congress snapped ties with the DMK to forge a post-poll alliance with the TVK, the other parties said that while they were extending support to the TVK for government formation, they would continue to remain part of the DMK-led alliance.

TVK cadre celebrated the development by distributing sweets and bursting crackers at several places.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 9
PLEAS AGAINST GOVERNOR
» PAGE 9
STORMING INTO POLITICS
» PAGE 15



New chapter: PM Narendra Modi with West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari after the oath-taking ceremony in Kolkata on Saturday. PTI

Suwendu sworn in as Bengal's first BJP CM

Shiv Sahav Singh
KOLKATA

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Suwendu Adhikari was sworn in as the Chief Minister of West Bengal on Saturday.

At the ceremony held in Kolkata, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accompanied Mr. Adhikari to the stage, where Governor R.N. Ravi administered the oath of office and secrecy to West Bengal's first BJP Chief Minister.

Five other BJP leaders were sworn in as Ministers.

Soon after swearing in, which coincided with the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, Mr. Adhikari visited Jorasanko Thakurbari, Tagore's ancestral home, and paid floral tributes before formally beginning his duties. "My official work begins after paying tribute to *Kaviguru*," he said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 9
THE BENGAL PIVOT
» PAGE 15
MORE REPORTS ON
» PAGE 10

Cong. huddle in Delhi fails to solve Kerala CM deadlock

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress's bid to name a Chief Minister for Kerala yielded no consensus on Saturday despite party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, and Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief Sunny Joseph holding over three hours of consultations with the three main contenders – party national general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal and senior leaders Ramesh Chennithala and V.D. Satheesan.

"An appropriate decision will be taken by the high command in due course," Deepa Dasmunsi, Congress's Kerala in-charge, told the media after the meeting in the national capital.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 6

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IN BRIEF



Fire engulfs Doordarshan Bhawan; no casualties

A fire broke out in an electric transformer inside the premises of Doordarshan Bhawan on Saturday afternoon, prompting a swift response from the Delhi Fire Services. According to fire officials, an emergency call was received at 2.05 p.m. Officials said the fire was brought under control by 2.50 p.m. "No injuries or casualties were reported in the incident," an officer said. Authorities are assessing the extent of damage caused to the transformer and nearby electrical infrastructure. The exact cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

Three killed, four injured in truck-auto collision in Nuh

A three-year-old boy and two women were killed and four others seriously injured after a speeding truck rammed into an auto-rickshaw on the Delhi-Alwar road in Haryana's Nuh district on Saturday, the police said. According to the police, around 14 people from various villages in Uttar Pradesh's Agra district were returning from a wedding ceremony in Palam, Delhi, in an open loading auto-rickshaw. At around 2.15 a.m., when the vehicle reached the Rojka Meo area, a speeding truck rammed into it from behind, the police said. The truck driver fled the scene with the vehicle after the accident. An FIR has been registered at the Rojka Meo police station.

Parents accuse police of failing to investigate class teacher's role in 3-year-old girl's rape

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The parents of a three-year-old girl who was allegedly raped by a caretaker inside a private school in Janakpuri during school hours have accused the school administration and the police of failing to investigate the role of the child's class teacher in the case.

The incident took place

on April 30, after which the police registered an FIR on May 1 based on the complaint filed by the child's mother and the child's medical examination.

Police arrested 57-year-old Lalit Kumar on the same day. However, a district court granted him bail on May 7, observing that records indicated he was not present on the school premises after 8.37 a.m.

Delhi govt. declares 673 hectares of Central Ridge land as reserved forest

Newly notified area falls under Western Forest Division; govt. will plant native and environmentally suitable trees wherever vacant land is available in Ridge areas declared as reserved forests, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has declared around 673.32 hectares of the Central Ridge area as 'reserved forest' under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said on Saturday, terming it a "historic milestone" in environmental conservation.

The newly notified area falls under the Western Forest Division of the Forest Department and includes parts surrounding Sardar Patel Marg and the President's Estate. The decision has been approved by Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu and Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, according to sources. However, the mandatory gazette notification was not issued till Saturday evening.

Despite court directions, notification of Delhi's Ridge areas as a reserved forest for stronger legal protection had re-



Green lung: The Central Ridge along Sadar Patel Marg. The CM said the remaining Ridge areas in Delhi would also soon be notified as reserved forests. FILE PHOTO

mained pending for years.

As per the Forest Department, the total area of the Northern, Central, South-Central, Southern and Nanakpura Ridge stretches in Delhi is 7,784 hectares. "With the present notification of 673.32 hectares of the 864-hectare Central Ridge, the current government has so far granted reserved forest status to a total of 4,754.14

hectares of Ridge areas," an official statement said.

Expediting process

Noting that the remaining Ridge areas in Delhi would also soon be notified as reserved forests, Ms. Gupta said the process was being "expedited". She added that around 4,080.82 hectares of the Southern Ridge area had been declared a reserved forest on October

24 last year, and the government will undertake large-scale plantation of native and environmentally suitable tree species wherever vacant land is available in Ridge areas declared as reserved forests.

The Chief Minister said the declaration of the Central Ridge area as a reserved forest completed an important process that had remained pending for more than three decades. The issue had also drawn repeated observations from the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

In a January 15, 2021, order, the NGT stressed an "urgent need" to protect the Ridge and directed authorities to finalise the Section 20 notification within three months for areas where no dispute existed.

In another order dated July 4, 2025, the tribunal noted that the process was being "unnecessarily delayed" and sought affidavits from authorities detailing timelines for issuing the final notification.

DDA to revive city's 77 water bodies in phased manner: L-G

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Saturday said the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) will begin work in a phased manner on the rejuvenation and restoration of 77 water bodies in the Capital.

Mr. Sandhu, who is also DDA Chairman, said all plans related to the restoration will be implemented immediately and timelines must be strictly adhered to. "Following my directions to swiftly implement a concrete plan of action for the revival and restoration of Delhi's priceless yet rapidly deteriorating aquatic assets, DDA is immediately commencing work on 77 water bodies," the L-G posted on X.

Beginning with six water bodies in the north-west district, including Sultanpur Dabas, Rani Khera and Madanpur Dabas, which will be restored within the next 30 days, the DDA plans to revive 48 more water bodies in the next 60 days and the remaining 23 within 90 days, a senior DDA official said. "Work on the remaining water bodies will be undertaken in a phased manner," the official said.



L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu directed officials that timelines must be strictly adhered to. ANI

Dead and deteriorating water bodies will be taken up in the first phase for rejuvenation through dredging, excavation and desilting, besides the clearance of catchment areas to ensure maximum rainwater recharge. "Once revived, the second phase will include strengthening embankments, plantation drives, construction of fencing and beautification work," the official said.

Forty-eight smaller water bodies, including those in outer Delhi and south-west Delhi areas such as Baprola, Ghitorni, Chirag Delhi, Kapashera and Bawana, requiring excavation and desilting will be restored within 60 days. After that, work will begin on 23 larger water bodies in Burari, Mahipalpur, Hiranki, Alipur, Nangli Pur, Samaypur and other areas.

THE HINDU

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PUBLIC NOTICE

WITHDRAWAL OF 2023 FACULTY RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATIONS
Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Council of Sri Padmavati Mahila Viswavidyalayam and the orders issued by the Government vide G.O.Rt.No.67, the permission earlier accorded for filling up 103 vacant faculty positions in the University is hereby withdrawn. Consequently, the faculty recruitment notifications issued on 30.10.2023 for filling up the said posts stand withdrawn.

Candidates who had applied to the 2023 notifications may visit the University website at www.spmv.ac.in for information regarding refund of the application fee. The dates of fresh notifications and other particulars will be announced separately.

Sd/- REGISTRAR (FAC)
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WITHDRAWAL OF 2023 FACULTY RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATIONS
Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Council of Dravidian University and the orders issued by the Government vide G.O. RT.No.68 Higher Education (UE) Department, Dated 06.05.2026, the permission earlier accorded for filling up of 24 vacant faculty positions (regular and backlog) in the University is hereby withdrawn. Consequently, the faculty recruitment notifications issued on 30.10.2023, (1) Notification No.1/DU/Backlog-SC&ST/2023 dated 30.10.2023; (2) Notification No.2/DU/Assistant Professor/Regular/2023 dated 30.10.2023; (3) Notification No.3/DU/Associate Professor/Backlog BC & Regular/2023 dated 30.10.2023; & (4) Notification No.4/DU/Professor/Regular/2023 dated 30.10.2023 for filling up the said posts stand withdrawn. Candidates who had applied to the 2023 notifications may visit the University website www.dravidianuniversity.ac.in for information regarding refund of the application fee. The dates of fresh notifications and other particulars will be announced separately.

Date: 09-05-2026 Sd/- REGISTRAR I/c

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ANANTHAPURAMU - 515003, A.P.

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Withdrawal of 2023 Faculty Recruitment Notifications
Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Council of Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Anantapuramu and the orders issued by the Government vide G.O. Rt. No. 57, Higher Education (UE) Dept., dated 06.05.2026, the permission earlier accorded for filling up of 219 vacant faculty positions in the University vide G.O. Rt. No. 147, Higher Education (UE) Dept., dated 11.10.2023 is hereby withdrawn. Consequently, the faculty recruitment notifications issued vide a) Notification No.1/Sri Krishnadevaraya University/ Backlog-SC&ST/2023, dt. 30.10.2023, b) Notification No. 2/Sri Krishnadevaraya University /Assistant Professor/BC Backlog & Regular / 2023, dt. 30.10.2023 c) Notification No. 3/Sri Krishnadevaraya University/Associate Professor / BC Backlog & Regular / 2023, dt. 30.10.2023 and d) Notification No.4/Sri Krishnadevaraya University/Professor/2023, dt. 30.10.2023 for filling up the said posts stand withdrawn. Candidates who had applied to the notifications-2023 may visit the University website at www.skuniversity.ac.in for information regarding refund of the application fee. The dates of fresh notifications and other particulars will be announced separately.

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Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Council of Sri Venkateswara University and the orders issued by the Government of Andhra Pradesh vide G.O.Rt.No.55 Higher Education (UE) Department, dated 06.05.2026, the permission earlier accorded for filling up 265 vacant faculty positions (regular and backlog) in the University is hereby withdrawn. Consequently, the following faculty recruitment notifications issued on 30.10.2023 for filling up the said posts stand withdrawn:

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1. कार्य का नाम: जयपुर मंडल के जयपुर रेलवे स्टेशन पर एफएलआर लीज देका एवं पार्सल कैंटीन के देकों हेतु ई-ऑफरान।

2. कार्य की अवधि: 1. एफएलआर लीज देका: 03 वर्ष 2. पार्सल कैंटीन: 05 वर्ष 3. लॉट के ई-ऑफरान के पारम की तिथि एवं समय: क्रम 1. लॉट का नाम: एफएलआर लीज देका ई-ऑफरान की तिथि: 11.05.2026 समय: 13.30 क्रम 2. लॉट का नाम: पार्सल कैंटीन ई-ऑफरान की तिथि: 21.05.2026 समय: 12.30 4. वेबसाइट जहाँ से लॉट वाइज ई-ऑफरान के संबंध में जानकारी प्राप्त की जा सकती है: www.ireps.gov.in 675-CQ/26

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Social media, expensive gifts used by Dinesh Karala gang to recruit, influence youth

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Expensive gifts, access to luxury items and exposure to firearms are used as entry points by the Dinesh Karala gang to recruit youngsters in outer Delhi and neighbouring Haryana, say police. The recruits are then gradually drawn into drug consumption and criminal activities.

Gagan, a 17-year-old, was drawn into drug consumption through peer pressure. The desire to "look rich" led him to the strongholds of Rahul Mathur alias Dogra, the most active member of the Dinesh Karala gang. At first, he was gifted a pair of shoes and a designer cap. "A couple of weeks later, a smartphone. A few months later, Gagan was holding a sophisticated foreign-made gun in his hand, in the presence of other gang members," said Shashank Jaiswal, DCP (Rohini).

'Influencing youth'

"Social media is actively used to both intimidate

The police are also monitoring images of youngsters casually holding and posing with weapons on social media

and influence youth into criminal activities. Ammunition is displayed on social media platforms to project a dominant image among rival groups as well as to lure young people into what is perceived as cool," the DCP added.

Pictures of youngsters casually holding and posing with weapons on social media platforms are monitored by the police.

"At least three such accounts have been acted against in the past two months, with FIRs registered under the Arms Act and posts either taken down or accounts deleted," a senior police officer said, adding that in a recent extortion-related firing incident in Rohini, first-time offenders and young individuals were hired using such inducements.

The Delhi police arrest-

ed Mathur and his five associates on April 30. It recovered three sophisticated foreign-made guns. "Foreign-made pistols are not very common, but these have been found with gangsters. These weapons were procured as part of stockpiling or for sale to others for profit, and are intended for future criminal activities," the officer said.

Despite the killing of the main kingpin, Jitender Mann, alias Gogi, in Mandoli Jail in 2021, and several key members operating from abroad, the gang has been exerting significant influence in outer Delhi and neighbouring Haryana through its land-grabbing, arms and drug supply network.

Joint Commissioner of Police Vijay Singh said, as part of various programmes in gang-infested areas such as Begumpur, Prem Nagar, Aman Vihar and Savadha, at least 1,200 youths have been provided vocational training, while 400 have been employed in various fields.

Bureaucratic rejig: 12 IAS officers given key postings

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

As part of a major administrative reshuffle involving 12 IAS and 11 DANICS officers, the Delhi government has posted Navin Kumar Choudhary as Additional Chief Secretary of the General Administration Department.

According to an order issued by the Services Department on Friday, IAS officer Sandeep Kumar has been appointed Principal Secretary of the Public Works Department, a post earlier held by Mr. Choudhary. Vikas Anand, Secretary to the Chief Minister, will also serve as Director of the Union Territory Civil Services, replacing Bipul Pathak, in addition to holding the charge of Secretary, Information and Publicity Department.

DANICS officer Prashant Kumar, currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Public Grievances Commission under the CMO, has also been given additional charge as Director of the Directorate of Information and Publicity.

Timings

DELHI

SUNDAY, MAY 10

RISE 05:34 SET 19:02

RISE 01:15 SET 12:24

MONDAY, MAY 11

RISE 05:33 SET 19:02

RISE 01:47 SET 13:22

TUESDAY, MAY 12

RISE 05:33 SET 19:03

RISE 02:17 SET 14:21

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Delhi Palam Today

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INBRIEF



U.P. CM meets Anandiben amid Cabinet expansion buzz

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath met Governor Anandiben Patel at Jan Bhavan in Lucknow on Saturday evening, fuelling speculation over a possible Cabinet expansion. According to an official statement, the CM presented the Governor with a copy of *Bhartiya Gyan Parampara Avadharna*, written by Lalchand Ram, during the courtesy call. The Chief Minister's Office said the meeting took place at Raj Bhavan. The meeting assumes significance amid prolonged speculation about an expansion of the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet.

Selja concerned over crime against children in Haryana

Congress general secretary and Sirsa MP Kumari Selja on Saturday expressed concern over the rise in crimes against children in Haryana, citing the latest National Crime Records Bureau data that showed the State recording the highest crime rate against children in the country. Ms. Selja said 7,547 cases of crimes against children were registered in Haryana in 2024 - nearly 18% higher than the 6,401 cases recorded in 2023. "These include kidnapping, sexual abuse, violence and murder," she said, alleging that the figures reflect a failure of law and order and growing social insensitivity. The Sirsa MP urged the government to strengthen enforcement in the State. PTI

Congress to issue 'chargesheet' against Punjab's AAP govt. soon

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Congress will soon release a 'chargesheet' against the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government over the "grim state of affairs" in the State, alleging rampant corruption and a deteriorating law and order situation that has left people feeling insecure.

Former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister and Congress general secretary in-



Bhupesh Baghel

charge of Punjab Bhupesh Baghel presided over a meeting of the party unit on Saturday in Chandigarh ahead of the Assembly election due in early 2027.

At review meet, Gaurav asks Congress members to prepare for LS election

Assam unit chief takes responsibility for poll defeat, says party leadership will undertake public outreach programmes, hold extensive discussions with its frontal and affiliated organisations

Press Trust of India
GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Saturday urged party workers to begin preparing for the 2029 Lok Sabha election from now itself. He emphasised on the Congress standing with the people in highlighting their problems.

Addressing party workers after reviewing the reasons for the Opposition party's failure in the State Assembly polls, Mr. Gogoi said the responsibility of standing beside the people of Assam, highlighting their problems and pointing out the wrong policies of the government has now increased significantly.

Mr. Gogoi said that after minutely reviewing organisational matters, the party leadership will soon undertake public outreach programmes and, from next Monday onwards, hold extensive discussions with the party's frontal and affiliated organisations.

Mr. Gogoi entrusted the



Gaurav Gogoi said the responsibility of standing with the people, highlighting their problems has increased significantly. FILE PHOTO

party's general secretary with the responsibility of taking immediate steps in this regard.

Talking to reporters before the meeting, Mr. Gogoi said, "The Congress party has taken the election results very seriously. As president of the Pradesh Congress, I accept the moral responsibility for the overall election results. I have appealed to the central leadership of the party that whatever suggestions they provide in the coming days regarding our organi-

sational foundation or strategies, we will accept those suggestions."

Doubts on EVM

Casting apprehension on the EVMs, he said, "We wanted to know what kind of battery or technology exists inside the EVMs that the charge never decreases. Even after such a long time, the battery percentage does not go down. There are many doubts regarding the voter list. We have repeatedly raised our voice on these issues."

Discussions were also held on the circumstances under which Congress candidates were defeated despite securing higher votes in a majority of constituencies in 2026 compared to 2021, a statement issued by the party said.

"Issues such as the Election Commission allegedly helping the ruling side instead of maintaining neutrality, politicisation of beneficiary schemes, discrepancies in EVMs, and organisational weaknesses of the party were given importance during the discussions," it said.

AICC general secretary Jitendra Singh, who had resigned as party in-charge for the State after the poll results, expressed gratitude to all the candidates "who contested the elections for entering the battle to safeguard democracy despite facing severe challenges".

The Congress managed to win 19 seats in the 126-member Assembly, though it remained the single largest Opposition party.

Stalin urges new govt. to continue the DMK regime's welfare schemes

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

DMK president M.K. Stalin on Saturday said the new government should ensure the continuation of the far-sighted and well-planned schemes implemented by the DMK regime in Tamil Nadu.

In a social media post, Mr. Stalin said people would continue to benefit if the welfare schemes introduced by the DMK government for women, youth, students, children, government employees, and marginalised sections of society were carried forward. "The State will also witness continued development. The new government should take my suggestion into consideration," he said.

Mr. Stalin said he welcomed the statement made by the alliance partners that they would continue to remain in the Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) led by the DMK even though they had extended support to the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) to help overcome the prevailing political crisis.

"The Congress MLAs,



People will continue to benefit if the welfare schemes introduced by the DMK government are carried forward

M.K. STALIN
DMK president

who contested as part of the DMK alliance, did not visit Anna Arivalayam to thank us. The Congress snapped its ties with the DMK overnight. But CPI(M) State secretary P. Shanmugam, CPI State secretary M. Veerapandian, and VCK leader Thol. Thirumavalavan expressed their camaraderie. It reflects their faith in the DMK," he said.

Mr. Stalin also thanked the other alliance partners who stood by him and the DMK.

T.N. heads for coalition govt. as TVK, Cong. seal deal

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu is set to witness its first coalition government in decades, with the Congress party, an ally of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), expected to join the government to be headed by C. Joseph Vijay.

"It will be a coalition government," said Girish Chodankar, the State's All India Congress Committee in-charge.

Asked whether the Congress had sought a share in power, Mr. Chodankar told



S. Rajesh Kumar

The Hindu placed before the TVK leadership, which had accepted it.

"Tomorrow you can see. You can call it a coalition government," he said. Congress leader Rahul



P. Viswanathan

Gandhi will arrive in Chennai to attend the swearing-in ceremony to be held on Sunday. The Congress will be represented by Melur MLA-elect P. Viswanathan in the Cabinet. Congress Legislature Party leader S.

Rajesh Kumar is expected to be included in the expanded Cabinet as three Congress MLAs were elected from his home district of Kanniyakumari.

1952 Congress govt.

The last time Tamil Nadu had a coalition government was in 1952, when Manickavelu Naicker joined the Congress government led by C. Rajagopalachari. However, Naicker subsequently became an associate member of the Congress, causing the arrangement to lose its

character as a coalition government.

Subsequent attempts to form coalition governments in Tamil Nadu, did not fructify. In 2006, although the DMK failed to secure a majority on its own, its alliance partners were not accommodated in the Cabinet headed by late DMK leader Karunanidhi.

Even before the run-up to the 2026 Assembly election, the Congress made a coalition government a precondition for seat-sharing. But the DMK rejected it then.

SPOTLIGHT

Amit Bhelari

As Nishant Kumar moves through Bihar's West Champaran district, stopping at villages to greet crowds, workers from his political party have positioned earthmovers to shower him with marigolds. MLAs greet him along the way; he is hugged and feted. Nishant appears overwhelmed.

He rises in the lift built into his Traveller to greet people, often stepping down to meet them. "Janata se mila ye aapar pyar aur samarthan meri sabse badi taakat hai (This immense love and support I get from the people is my greatest strength)," he says. "I hope this same affection, trust and blessing will continue in the future, so that this journey of harmony and development may move forward continuously."

He often echoes his father Nitish Kumar's words. Nitish, with over 40 years of political experience, is now a Rajya Sabha MP and made way for a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate to become Chief Minister of Bihar. He is the national president of the Janata Dal (United), a party formed in 2003.

On the morning of May 3, at Nitish's 7, Circular Road residence, Nishant, 44, bends to touch his father's feet. They hug. Nitish has just vacated the Chief Minister's bungalow, and this public display of affection signifies a passing of the baton. More than that, it is a sign that Nishant is counting on his father's work to win the people's trust.

Nishant began his 'Sadbhav Yatra' from Bagaha in West Champaran. Party workers and supporters welcome him warmly as he passes through five districts before reaching Valmiki Nagar in West Champaran. There, he is welcomed by members of the Tharu community, a Scheduled Tribe living in the Tharuhat region along the Indo-Nepal border.

Bihar JD(U) president Umesh Singh Kushwaha and party leader and Rural Development Minister Shrawon Kumar accompany him. He repeats the line about following in his father's footsteps at every interaction, finishing his speech in less than a minute. Before reaching Valmiki Nagar, he stops at 15 places where party workers greet him.

"It seems he is in training. Why is he scared and tense? His body language shows he is facing the crowd for the first time," says Manoj Patel, a Bettiah resident. "He is not able to handle the crowd effectively. Nitishji should have launched his son in politics five years

Champaran's quiet challenger

With the BJP establishing its first Chief Minister in Bihar, the JD(U)'s previously reticent Nishant Kumar has taken on the political mantle from his father, Nitish Kumar, accepting politics as a full-fledged profession for the survival of the party. The Hindu reports from Nishant's first public outing, and speaks to people on whether he will be able to bolster his father's populist image

ago so that he could have received proper training."

In the background, Nishant says over a loudspeaker: "With immense public support and the blessings of the people, this campaign is not only strengthening harmony within society, but also infusing new energy into the development and unity of Bihar."

No interest in politics

Nishant joined the JD(U) on March 8, 2026, and began meeting party workers and leaders. Earlier, he had often said he had no interest in politics and had chosen the path of spirituality, dedicating his life to ISKCON and the Hare Rama-Hare Krishna movement. Sources close to him say Nishant is a calm person who enjoys listening to spiritual songs and reading religious texts.

At his first public meeting, organised at the Babu Sabhagar auditorium in Bettiah, party workers and leaders hear him speak from a public platform for the first time. Most leaders project him as the next



JD(U) leader Nishant Kumar during his 'Sadbhav Yatra' in Bihar's Bettiah on May 3. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Chief Minister of Bihar, asserting that he is the future of the JD(U).

JD(U) MLC Bhisim Sahani says, "Nitish Kumar is Nishant and Nishant is Nitish Kumar. The land of Champaran will bless him so that he becomes the Chief Minister. Every party worker and leader will stand with him like a rock."

Bhagat Patel, a party worker at the venue, says, "Nitishji has not left us; he is in our hearts. When he became Chief Minister, Bi-

har was handed over to him in bad shape, but with his hard work and dedication, he transformed the State. All party workers want to see Nishantji as the Chief Minister of Bihar in the coming days."

Aarti Devi, Bagaha district president of the JD(U) Women's Cell, says Nitish did much for women's upliftment and calls him the architect of modern Bihar. "Nitishji gave women 50% reservation in Panchayati Raj Institutions and

municipal bodies. He also gave us 35% reservation in the police force and in government jobs. The Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana was the best scheme he started, under which ₹10,000 was promised to women," she says, adding that school uniforms and bicycles distributed to girls also contributed to their emancipation. "We have similar expectations from Nishantji."

'For the first time'

Large numbers of women have gathered to see Nishant. Many hold placards and banners saying "Hamara neta kaisa ho? Nishant Kumar jaisa ho (How should our leader be? Like Nishant Kumar)". Most of the women are seeing him for the first time; many are hearing his name for the first time.

"I was informed that Nitishji was coming here, so I came to see him, but someone else has come. People are saying he is Nitish's elder son," says a woman holding a placard of Nishant.

Nishant is Nitish's only child.

Many local leaders ask why senior party leaders were missing. JD(U) national working president Sanjay Jha, Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan Singh, and Deputy Chief Ministers Vijay Kumar Choudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav were absent on both May 3 and May 4.

Kushwaha calls the yatra historic, asserting that Nishant would shape Bihar politics for the next three or four decades. He says that throughout the journey, every community, particularly the youth, turned out enthusiastically. "The day Nitishji decided to go to the Rajya Sabha, party workers felt only darkness. But Nishantji came forward to remove that darkness with the hope of a new beginning," he says.

After a series of speeches, by the time Nishant rises to speak, almost half of the 2,500-capacity auditorium has emptied. At the beginning of the event, the hall was packed. A party member asks the crowd standing outside to come in. Only then do students wearing Sadbhav Yatra T-shirts enter the auditorium, shouting slogans in support of Nishant.

On stage, before he speaks, Nishant rubs his palms together, shakes his legs and does not smile. "My father, Nitish Kumar, resigned from the post of

Chief Minister and has now become a Rajya Sabha member. We all have to accept his decision. I know very well that everyone is disappointed with my father's decision, but he is still here and continues to guide us," Nishant says.

In his 20-minute speech, he focuses on the work his father did as Chief Minister of Bihar in areas such as roads, electricity, drinking water, agriculture, jobs and women's upliftment. He congratulates the new National Democratic Alliance government and Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary.

Bihar-based political commentator Sanjay Kumar says Nishant has a long way to go in politics and that, at present, he lacks spark.

"In his political life, Nitish never supported dynastic politics, but for the survival of his party, he finally chose to set aside his ideology. Nishant has entered politics very late, but his biggest challenge is to keep the party united and its vote bank consolidated," he says.

On May 8, Nishant was inducted into the Bihar Cabinet as Health Minister. Several JD(U) leaders feel he could have chosen the post of Deputy Chief Minister, but instead opted to begin by earning the trust of the people and the party.

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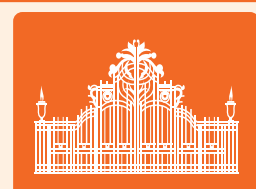
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Cong. meet fails to solve Kerala CM deadlock

Kharge, Rahul hold discussions with the three contenders for three hours; AICC general secretary in charge of Kerala says the high command has time until May 23 to finalise the candidate; party leadership dismayed at the poster wars and public marches across the State and warns of action

Dhinesh Kallungal
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress's bid to name a Chief Minister for Kerala yielded no results despite party president Mallikarjun Kharge and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi holding consultations with the three contenders - AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal and senior leaders Ramesh Chennithala and V.D. Satheesan - for over three hours on Saturday.

Asked to specify further, she said the high command has time until May 23 to finalise the candidate. Flanked by the senior Congress leadership from Kerala, she urged party workers to refrain from the embarrassing public display of their chief ministerial choices.

Competing claims Sources said the high-stakes discussions were marked by intense posturing and competing claims by the contenders. The Central leadership would hold no further consultations with the aspirants,

high command in due course," Deepa Dasmuni, party general secretary in charge of Kerala, told presspersons after the meeting.

Asked to specify further, she said the high command has time until May 23 to finalise the candidate. Flanked by the senior Congress leadership from Kerala, she urged party workers to refrain from the embarrassing public display of their chief ministerial choices.

Competing claims Sources said the high-stakes discussions were marked by intense posturing and competing claims by the contenders. The Central leadership would hold no further consultations with the aspirants,



No solution yet: V.D. Satheesan, Ramesh Chennithala, Sunny Joseph and K.C. Venugopal leave Mallikarjun Kharge's residence. ANI

they said. The high command, it is learnt, will take a final decision after considering the claims of each faction, along with the views of Congress MLA-designates and constituents of the United Democratic Front (UDF).

While the consultations

in New Delhi were led by Mr. Kharge, Mr. Gandhi joined in, hoping to reach a consensus.

Poster wars Senior leaders said Mr. Kharge and Mr. Gandhi were visibly dismayed by the poster wars and public

marches across Kerala over the past few days, rooting for their favourite leaders.

Workers removed the aggressive flex boards, which sullied the party's image in the State, from many parts following the appeal even as new boards supporting other candidates surfaced.

Earlier, Mr. Kharge had also directed the State leadership to take strict action against those violating party discipline and decorum in connection with the Chief Ministerial controversy in Kerala.

Mr. Venugopal has been asserting his claim to the top post by highlighting the support he enjoys among a majority of MLAs in the State, while Mr. Satheesan has continued to press his case by citing the

leadership role he played in securing the party's impressive victory in Kerala. Mr. Chennithala, meanwhile, has been underscoring his seniority within the party as the basis for his claim to the post.

Earlier on Friday, Congress leader K. Muraliedharan said the views of the constituent parties in the UDF along with the opinions of the MLAs, should be considered in the debate over the chief ministerial candidate. The day also saw bitter exchanges between the KSU and the MSF, students wing of the Congress and its UDF partner IUML, after IUML's comments about the selection of Chief Minister drew flak from Congress MLA-elect Mathew Kuzhalnadan.

Protests erupt after Dalit bride forced off mare

Press Trust of India
UDAIPUR

A Dalit bride from a village near Udaipur rode a mare to a protest at the district collectorate on May 7 days after she was allegedly forced to dismount during her wedding procession, triggering protests by Dalit organisations and demands for action against the accused.

Pooja Meghwal, a resident of Hariau village under the jurisdiction of the Dabok police station, alleged that local men stopped her wedding procession on April 29 and forced her to get off the mare, traditionally seen as a symbol of pride during weddings.

"People forced me to dismount the mare. I felt insulted. My family members were assaulted," Ms. Meghwal told reporters.

Villagers said the incident had left the family humiliated and triggered widespread discussion in the area in the days following the wedding.

The issue has since gained attention on social media, with several users sharing accounts of similar caste-based discrimination.

On May 7, members of the Bahujan Samaj Party and people from the Dalit community gathered at the municipal premises in Udaipur before marching to the district collectorate to demand action against the accused.

Protesters alleged that around 12 people were involved in the attack, but only four had been arrested

Ms. Meghwal joined the protest riding a mare once again. Protesters raised slogans against the administration and submitted a memorandum addressed to the Governor, seeking a fair investigation.

Protesters alleged that around 12 people, including some women, were involved in the attack, but only four had been arrested so far. They also questioned the impartiality of the investigation and demanded that the inquiry be transferred to another officer.

Jitendra Hatwal, State president of the Bhim Army, accused the police of making only "token efforts" and demanded strict action against those involved.

He alleged that the bride had been forced to dismount the mare and that stones were thrown at the procession, while several participants were attacked with sticks and rods.

Roshan Meghwal, the vice-president of Bhim Army, said the organisation has demanded the immediate arrest of all nine named accused. Police said an FIR has been registered at Dabok police station and that an investigation is under way.

Tussle over CM fuels meme storm

M.P. Praveen
KOCHI

The ongoing tussle among three Congress Chief Minister aspirants after the United Democratic Front's (UDF) historic Assembly mandate in Kerala has unleashed a tsunami of trolls and memes across social media.

From rib-tickling to downright biting, the menu of satire catered to every palate.

"For the UDF government, the Chief Minister's chair is no longer a chair but a bench," read one

meme, complete with a bench photo, mocking the multiple contenders.

Another showed V.D. Satheesan, K.C. Venugopal and Ramesh Chennithala decked as royalty with the caption: "War paused for the third day since the sun has set," a cheeky nod to the Kuruksheetra war breaks in Hindu epic Mahabharata.

Actor Bijukuttan was featured in a troll as a worried Pinarayi Vijayan, fretting whether he would be caretaker Chief Minister for five years. A film clip of Ganesh Kumar counting



cash cast him as a flex-printing owner. This was an obvious hint at the windfall from the flex war among rival camps of Congress across the State.

The more creative came up with Artificial Intelligence generated videos as

well. A viral video reimagined the Harikrishnans song sequence, swapping Mohanlal and Mammooty with Mr. Satheesan and Mr. Chennithala, before Mr. Venugopal crash-lands, crooning a Bollywood melody.

The Left Democratic Front, which was voted out, wasn't spared either. A clip from the popular movie *Thalavattam* cast Jagathy as a CPI(M) supporter pleading with Mohanlal, showed as a UDF supporter, to spare at least the seats as predicted by exit-polls.

KC(M) blames CPI(M) cross-voting for rout

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

A steering committee meeting of the Kerala Congress (M), held in Kottayam, Kerala, on Saturday to assess the party's electoral route in the Assembly polls, attributed the debacle primarily to cross-voting by Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] cadres and the consolidation of minority communities against the party.

According to KC(M)

chairman Jose K. Mani, the outgoing Left Democratic Front (LDF) government led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had pushed through a flurry of development initiatives, but failed to give those achievements a "popular political face."

"The meeting also took note of massive cross-voting by CPI(M) cadres and the consolidation of minorities against the LDF as key factors behind the electoral setback," he said.

IN BRIEF



Free ride for women: KSRTC introduces gender ticketing

The State-run Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has begun the process to implement gender ticketing in buses across the State on Saturday. A circular was issued on Friday to the public utility officials suggesting measures to introduce a gender ticketing system in buses, which will record if a passenger is a woman, man or child in ticket machines operated by the conductor of the buses. The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) had promised in its election manifesto that free travel would be provided for women.

PM to launch ₹1,535 crore railway projects in Telangana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate key railway infrastructure projects worth around ₹1,535 crore in Telangana on Sunday, aimed at strengthening rail connectivity, easing congestion and improving operational efficiency on major routes. Among the major projects to be inaugurated are multiple sections of the 118-km Kazipet-Vijayawada multi-tracking project. Officials said the multi-tracking project would facilitate faster movement of trains, reduce congestion, improve punctuality and increase freight carrying capacity across the region.

ED arrests three in 2017 Bitcoin scam in Bengaluru

Stepping up the investigation following recent raids, officials of the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Saturday arrested prime accused in the Bitcoin scam case, Srikrishna alias Sriki, along with two others in Bengaluru. The ED arrested Sriki, Robin Khandeval and Sunish Hegde in connection with the alleged cryptocurrency scam. The case is related to a 2017 hacking incident involving national and international websites, in which bitcoins were allegedly stolen by Sriki and his associates.

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay's son booked under POCSO in Telangana

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD/ KARIMNAGAR

The Telangana Police on Friday registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act against Bandi Bhageerath, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay, following a complaint by a 17-year-old girl.

The girl alleged that Mr. Bhageerath sexually assaulted her at a farmhouse in Moinabad on December 31.

Son files complaint Hours before the case was filed on Friday, Mr. Bhageerath lodged a separate complaint at the Karimnagar Town-1 Police Station

alleging that he was being blackmailed and harassed by the girl's family. Police officials said both the complaints were being investigated separately.

The complaint lodged at Petbasheerabad Police alleged that the incident took place during a visit to the farmhouse and that a case was registered after her family approached the police.

Senior official close to the development said that the girl's family arrived at the police station at around 8 p.m. and a manual FIR was registered at around 10 p.m.

In his complaint, Mr. Bhageerath alleged that he had come into contact with the girl through a common

17-year-old says Bandi Bhageerath assaulted her, while he files a complaint of extortion against teenager's family

friend and that they later became part of a larger social circle.

According to the complaint, Mr. Bhageerath alleged that after some time, the girl and her parents began putting pressure on him to marry her.

He claimed that when he refused, the family allegedly threatened to implicate him in false criminal cases, including allegations relating to harassment and physical rela-

tionship. He further alleged that the family demanded money from him and that, fearing consequences, he paid ₹50,000 to girl's father. However, he claimed the demands escalated and that the family later sought ₹5 crore, allegedly threatening that girl's mother would die by suicide if the amount was not paid.

However, the girl's family subsequently approached Petbasheerabad police and filed a counter-complaint, alleging that the girl was a minor and accusing Bhageerath of sexually assaulting her.

Following verification of her age, police booked a case under relevant POCSO provisions.

Three juveniles sent to observation home in 2024 rape case

The Hindu Bureau
PUTTAPARTHI

Three juveniles, who admitted to assisting the accused in a 2024 rape case registered at Chilamathur police station in Sri Sathya Sai district in Andhra Pradesh, were ordered by the Juvenile Justice Board, Anantapur, to be lodged in a government observation home for six months on Friday.

The juveniles were produced before Principal Magistrate R. Harika at a special session in connection with the case, registered under various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). During the hearing, the minors con-

fessed to their involvement in the offence, following which the board directed authorities to shift them to the Government Special Observation Home for Boys in Tirupati. The trio is expected to be brought to Tirupati on Saturday.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) K.V. Mahesh said the juveniles had been found guilty of aiding the main accused in the case. The then Chilamathur Sub-Inspector, Munir Ahmed, investigated the case and filed the chargesheet.

The three juveniles were among four arrested in the gangrape of a woman and her daughter in-law reported in a village in Chilamathur mandal in 2024.

Azim Premji University suspends student over campus violence

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Azim Premji University (APU) has suspended a student for two years and issued written warning to two others, following violent incidents on the campus on February 24 when members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) vandalised the campus property and force-entered the premises protesting a student-led discussion on Kashmir.

"Azim Premji University conducted a thorough inquiry into the events of February 24, 2026. Following a careful review of the investigating committee's recommendations, the university has taken

disciplinary action against three students found to be in serious violation of the university's code of conduct. One student has been suspended for two years, while the other two students have been issued written warnings," said a spokesperson of the university.

An e-mail sent to the suspended student from the Registrar's Office reportedly cited "persistent defiance of institutional processes and guidelines, misrepresenting facts, violating the university code of conduct and failure to follow the university's instructions for de-escalating a volatile situation during an extraordinary event on campus" as the reasons for

the suspension. The suspended student can appeal to the Registrar within a week.

Students protest

Following the suspension notice, more than 40 fellow students gathered in protest and demanded immediate revocation of the suspension.

The protesting students marched to the registrar's office, demanding to meet him. According to the students, the administrators insisted that they send e-mails and obtain prior permission before meeting the Registrar.

Following the violence in February, a reading circle run by the students was charged with an FIR.

Yediyurappa played crucial role in bringing BJP to South: Shah

The Hindu Bureau
CHITRADURGA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday said former Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa's name deserves to be written in golden letters while narrating the history of the BJP in South India.

Mr. Shah was speaking after inaugurating 'BSY Abhimanosava' in Chitradurga, an event marking Mr. Yediyurappa's 50 years in public life. He also said the veteran BJP leader should continue to guide the party in the State.

Mr. Shah, who travelled to Chitradurga after taking part in the oath-taking ceremony of the new Chief Minister of West Bengal in



Amit Shah greets B.S. Yediyurappa in Chitradurga on Saturday.

Kolkata, described Saturday as a significant day for the BJP.

"We won the West Bengal elections with a thumping majority and a BJP Chief Minister has taken oath for the first time in West Bengal today. And this is the day we are cele-

brating 50 years of Mr. Yediyurappa's public life," he said. Mr. Shah said he had noticed that the former Chief Minister would always keep a diary in his pocket in which he would record the problems of people that he noticed during his travels.

Odisha mob lynching case: 11 held so far

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

The number of arrests in Odisha's alleged mob lynching case has risen to 11, even as a key eyewitness alleged that the "assault" took place in the presence of police.

The State government has ordered a Crime Branch probe into the case.

The incident occurred on May 7 when railway constable Soumya Ranjan Swain was beaten to death by a mob. He was accused of attempting to rape a woman on a busy road in broad daylight.

Om Prakash, who was accompanying the deceased at the time, offered a different account of the events. "While we were travelling on a motorcycle around 11 a.m., Soumya lost control of the bike and hit a two-wheeler carrying two women. He slapped one of the women, but did not attempt rape," he said on Saturday. According to him, locals dragged Soumya into a nearby agricultural field, where he was allegedly assaulted.

Elections in India must be held through ballot paper: Akhilesh

BJP is 'stealing' votes, alleges the SP chief, adding 'we must fight against a multi-layered 'election mafia'; questions law and order situation and rising cases of crimes against women in the State

Press Trust of India
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday once again advocated for the use of ballot paper for voting, citing recent election in the United Kingdom as an example, and demanded that elections in India be conducted through ballot paper.

'Are we ahead of U.K.?'

Speaking to reporters at the party office in Lucknow on Saturday, Mr. Yadav said, "An election was held in a very developed country, the U.K., and the voting took place by secret ballot. The entire country voted using ballots. Are we ahead of England? This demand is not new; it has always been a call from the socialists. Like in America [U.S.], Japan, Germany, and England, we believe it is essential for us to cast votes by ballot."



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav on the occasion of Maharana Pratap Jayanti in Lucknow on Saturday. ANI

He added, "You [referring to the Bharatiya Janata Party] have defeated us using electronic voting machines (EVMs). We will defeat you again using EVMs and then remove you from power."

Mr. Yadav alleged that during the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, the BJP "conspired" to delete voters' names. Many people arrived at polling booths only to find their names missing or reassigned to different booths,

leading to manipulated votes, he claimed.

"The SP submitted the deleted voters' names along with affidavits to the Election Commission (EC), but no action was taken against any of the guilty officials. Further, the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was conducted. The voter list released after the SIR also contained a large number of double and triple votes," he said.

He also alleged that the EC is not providing techni-

cal information and training to parties. "The EC does not disclose the type of software it uses. The BJP is stealing votes and rights," he said.

Commenting on the upcoming 2027 U.P. Assembly election, he said, "We must fight against a multi-layered election mafia. All those committed to saving democracy, the Constitution, and the credibility of Constitutional bodies must collaborate."

Promises galore

The SP president also made a string of promises: free education for girls, free treatment for the poor patients, including cancer treatment.

He also expressed concern about the law and order situation in the State.

"Crimes against women and daughters are the highest in U.P. Where has the BJP government's promise of zero tolerance gone?" he said.

Sukhu orders scientific study on recurring cloudbursts

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has called for comprehensive scientific research into the recurring cloudburst incidents in the hill State, emphasising the need to examine key contributing factors, including the role of dams, temperature fluctuations, terrain characteristics, and aerial distance-based patterns linked to frequent cloudbursts across the Himalayan region, a statement issued on Saturday said.

The Chief Minister was presiding over a high-level



Rescue personnel at work following flash floods triggered by a cloudburst in Sainj valley in Kullu in June last year. ANI

meeting focused on disaster risk reduction, resilience planning, and ongoing research efforts being carried out by the Himalayan Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience at the Himachal Pradesh University.

While directing the

centre at the university to conduct the studies, he said that all State-level research and development activities related to disaster studies, hazard assessment, and technical evaluation would be carried out through the centre.

"Cloudbursts have be-

come a frequent phenomenon across the State and people are suffering significant loss of life and property due to such incidents. There is an urgent need to scientifically study the pattern of cloudbursts occurring in Himachal Pradesh," Mr. Sukhu said.

The Chief Minister directed the Himachal Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (HPSDMA) to allocate ₹6 crore for capacity building and strengthening of the centre through specialised training programmes. He also approved an additional grant of ₹10 crore for institutional strengthening and capacity enhance-

ment initiatives, and directed the HPSDMA to provide financial assistance for undertaking Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) studies through the centre at the university, and allocated ₹1 crore for this.

Commending the efforts of the Himachal Pradesh University's centre in advancing disaster risk reduction and resilience across the State, the Chief Minister called for extending similar scientific research to other at-risk regions of Himachal Pradesh with the aim of improving disaster preparedness and resilience planning across the State.

Maharashtra ex-IMA chief held over illegal tests-abortion racket

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

The police have arrested Ravindra Kute, the former president of the Indian Medical Association's Maharashtra chapter, for his alleged involvement in performing illegal tests and abortions, an official said on Saturday.

The arrest follows a probe into a racket, involving a network of agents and doctors violating the Pre-Conception and Pre-

Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, he said.

Dr. Kute was arrested in Rahata on Wednesday and has been remanded in police custody, the official said. A probe revealed that he allegedly performed illegal abortions on several women, he said. The official said the police have so far arrested 12 people.

The IMA Maharashtra, meanwhile, has clarified that it does not protect any member violating laws governing sex determination.

Rajasthan set to become global hub for agro-based industries, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Rajasthan is set to become a global hub for agro-based industries and value-added products, offering immense investment potential in food processing,

cold chains, and spice parks, Chief Minister Bhanu Lal Sharma has said. This would give a new impetus to job creation, he said.

Mr. Sharma was addressing an investor meet in Hyderabad on May 8,

ahead of the Global Rajasthan Agritech Meet (GRAM)-2026 to be organised in Jaipur later this month.

The State government was providing investors with a "favourable ecosystem", he said.

NCP (SP) leader 'attacked' with ink by right-wing preacher and aides

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) spokesperson Vikas Lawande was on Saturday "attacked" with black ink by right-wing preacher Sangram Bhandare and his aides in Maharashtra's Pune district.

The incident took place at Mhatobachi Alandi around 10 a.m. A purported video of the incident that went viral on social

media shows a group of men approaching the leader and demanding an explanation for his comments.

Mr. Bhandare later said on social media that the "attack" was in response to Mr. Lawande's recent remarks against Hindu spiritual leaders related to the Warkari movement. "For the past few days, Mr. Lawande has been making derogatory remarks, calling our gurus corrupt and Manuvadi. How can we tol-

erate these insults?" said Mr. Bhandare. He, however, dismissed allegations of pointing a gun at the politician.

After the "attack", Mr. Lawande went to the Loni Kalbhori police station to report the incident and demanded action against his assailants. "At least 10 to 15 men attacked me and pointed a gun at me," he alleged.

Mr. Lawande has recently been vocal against religious leaders.

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From Page One

Vijay to take reins today; T.N. set for coalition govt.



Supporters wait to greet Vijay following his meeting with the Governor in Chennai on Saturday. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

The TVK, which won 108 seats in the recent Assembly election, has an effective strength of 107 as party president Mr. Vijay was elected from two constituencies. He will have to vacate one seat. The party secured support of five Congress MLAs-elect and two each from the CPI, CPI(M), VCK and IUMML, all of whom had contested as part of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA).

Support to TVK to avoid President's Rule

By the CPI and CPI (M) already expressing support for the TVK, the TVK had been awaiting the VCK's decision. It was expected that the VCK would extend support around noon, but the formal letter was handed over to TVK general secretary (election campaign management) Aadhav Arjuna only in the evening.

Later, speaking to reporters at the VCK headquarters, party founder-president Thol. Thirumavalavan said, "Since the time of the People's Welfare Front, the Left and the VCK have been functioning together based on ideology. Therefore, in the context of this political crisis, the Left and the VCK consulted and decided together, keeping a long-term vision in mind."

Mr. Thirumavalavan said the decision to support the TVK was taken after consulting the party's high-level committee. "The basis of this decision is to prevent President's Rule from being imposed in Tamil Nadu by using this political crisis, and we do not want to be an obstacle to the TVK forming the new government."

Mr. Thirumavalavan also made it clear that his party would extend unconditional support to the government from outside.

When asked if the alliance with the DMK would continue, he said, "We are still in the DMK-led alliance. But as a political party, we have used our independence to take this stand. I don't think this will affect our relationship."

Suvendu sworn in as Bengal's first BJP CM

Clad in a saffron kurta and a dhoti, Mr. Adhikari took the oath in Bengali amid loud cheers from supporters at a grand ceremony at Kolkata's Brigade Parade Ground. Chief Ministers from almost 20 BJP and NDA-ruled States attended the event, along with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and several other Union Cabinet Ministers.

Mr. Modi bowed to the crowd as a mark of gratitude for the mandate the BJP secured in the recently concluded Assembly election. The party won 207 of 293 constituencies that went to the polls, while the Trinamool Congress was reduced to 80 seats. Mr. Adhikari was elected the leader of the BJP legislature party on Friday.

Those who took oath as Ministers in the new Cabinet included Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Ashok Kirtania, Kshudiram Tudu, and Nisith Pramank.

In a social media message, Mr. Modi wished Mr. Adhikari, a "fruitful tenure". Congratulating the new Ministers, the Prime Minister said, "They will further strengthen West Bengal's journey of development."

Mr. Modi described the oath-taking ceremony on *Pochishe Boishakh* (25th day of Baisakh), the birth anniversary of Tagore, as a "pleasant coincidence". The stage was adorned with a large portrait of Tagore.

Invoking Swami Vivekananda, the newly elected Chief Minister cited the monk's words, "*Charaiveti, Charaiveti* [keep going]", as he called upon people to work towards building a new Bengal. "Let us rebuild Bengal," he said.

Later, he also held a meeting with senior civic and police officials, including Chief Secretary Dushyant Narijala, Director-General of Police Siddh Nath Gupta, Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Nand and took stock of the law-and-order situation.

Mr. Adhikari is the ninth Chief Minister of the State and will preside over the 18th West Bengal Legislative Assembly. He is also the first Chief Minister from rural Bengal in nearly five decades, coming after leaders like Mamata Banerjee, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Jyoti Basu and Siddharth Shankar Roy, all from Kolkata.

Congratulatory messages poured in from across several quarters, including from the Bangladesh Awami League, which stated, "The mandate of the people of West Bengal is a unique recognition of Shri Suvendu Adhikari's strong leadership."

Former Union Minister and High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Dinesh Trivedi, who participated in the swearing-in ceremony, said the State was witnessing "real independence".

Meanwhile, Subrata Gupta, who had served as the Election Commission's special roll observer for the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, has been appointed as an advisor to the Chief Minister.

Second plea filed in SC against T.N. Governor

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A writ petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Saturday to declare a May 7 press release by Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Arlekar, denying the claim made by Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) party president C. Joseph Vijay to form the government, as unconstitutional and arbitrary.

The petition filed by retired IPS officer M. Ramasubramani, through advocate G. Siva Bala Murugan, submitted that the Governor's refusal to invite Mr. Vijay, as the head of the single largest party which emerged after the Assembly election, was a hostile move against parliamentary democracy.

"It is well-settled that in a parliamentary democracy governed by the Constitution, the question whether a political party or coalition commands majority support can only be determined on the floor of the House and not by way of subjective satisfaction, private consultations or roving enquiry undertaken at Lok Bhavan..." he submitted.

This is the second petition filed in the top court in as many days against the Governor's position that Mr. Vijay should provide MLAs' physical letters of support.

AAP, Opposition face off as ED arrests Punjab Minister

State Industries Minister Sanjeev Arora held over 'large-scale money laundering'; CM Mann comes to Minister's defence even as Opposition parties slam AAP over its failure to deliver honest governance

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday arrested Sanjeev Arora, the Industries Minister in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab, in an alleged money-laundering case involving him and associated entities, triggering a political slugfest.

He was taken into custody after the ED searched the premises of the Minister and his associates in relation to a case registered under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, an official said. Searches were held at five locations across Delhi, Gurugram, and Chandigarh, including the official residence of Mr. Arora. Office premises associated with Hampton Sky Realty Ltd. and other linked entities were also searched.

According to an official, the Central agency suspects Mr. Arora of involvement in large-scale money laundering through fake Goods and Services Tax (GST) purchases of mobile phones by his company, amounting to more than ₹100 crore, and the subsequent export of the devices to "round-trip" illegitimate



In the dock: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, right, with Sanjeev Arora, in this file photo. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

funds from Dubai to India. In April, the ED had searched the Minister and his associates under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). He was searched in 2024 also in connection with a money-laundering case over alleged misuse of industrial land for residential projects. He was then a Rajya Sabha member.

Nothing was seized: CM

Reacting to the searches, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said, "The ED has raided Sanjeev Arora's residence three times in a year and twice within a month without recovering anything." Mr. Mann questioned why such searches were being carried out on

individuals allegedly involved in land-related scams under probe by the ED. Taking a dig at the Chief Minister, he said that if the government were truly honest, it would have acted against the alleged corruption itself instead of defending those involved.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, Congress's Partap Singh Bajwa, said Mr. Arora's arrest had once again exposed the serious corruption allegations surrounding the AAP.

"This is not an isolated case, as several senior AAP leaders and individuals close to the Punjab government have repeatedly come under the scanner of investigative agencies... Every time corruption allegations emerge, AAP leaders conveniently hide behind the excuse of 'political vendetta' instead of answering direct questions," he said.

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal termed the ED's action a political warning to Punjab. Mr. Kejriwal alleged that the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were trying to challenge the State through the ED. However, he said, the people of Punjab had not bowed in the past and would teach them a lesson in the 2027 Assembly election.

Myanmar extremist group frees Naga woman

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Assam Rifles personnel on Saturday secured the release of a Tangkhul Naga woman from Manipur who was abducted by members of the Kuki National Army-Burma (KNA-B) and Village Volunteers Eastern Zone during a pre-dawn attack on Tangkhul Naga villages in Kamjong district along the India-Myanmar border on May 7.

A spokesperson for the paramilitary force said the release of Olina Ningshen, 45, was secured from the abductors at a place south of Z. Choro village "under the watch" of Assam Rifles, intelligence, and other agencies.

According to a statement issued by the paramilitary force, the abducted woman's husband, the village headman, and members of civil society organisations (CSOs) were present during the release.

"After the release, the family and CSOs were taken to unit headquarters at Chassad [near the international border] for the formal handing over and documentation," the statement said.

The locals were later moved to their village, Khangphat Khn.

The abducted woman and others were provided medical and psychological assistance.

India test-fires Agni missile that can deploy multiple warheads

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India has successfully test-fired an advanced Agni missile with the strategic ability to deploy multiple payloads to separate targets simultaneously – a milestone that places the country among a select league of global powers.

The testing of the missile with Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicle (MIRV) system was carried out from Odisha's A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Island on Friday, according to the Defence Ministry.

The MIRV feature ensures that a single missile can deploy multiple warheads at different locations simultaneously.

The missile was flight-tested with multiple payloads, targeted to different targets spatially distributed over a large geographical area in the Indian Ocean Region, the Ministry added.

Incredible capability

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has complimented the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Indian Army, and the industry partners concerned on the successful flight-test of the missile.



An image from the flight trial of an advanced Agni missile on Friday. DEFENCE MINISTRY

This will add an incredible capability to the country's defence preparedness against the growing threat perceptions, he said.

The Ministry said the telemetry and tracking was carried out by multiple ground and ship-based stations. "These systems tracked the entire missile trajectory from lift-off till the impact of all payloads. Flight data confirmed that all mission objectives were met during the trial," it said.

"With this successful trial, India once again demonstrated the capability to target multiple strategic targets using a single missile system," the Ministry said in a statement.

Lt. Gen. N.S. Subramani named next CDS; Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan to be Navy chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Saturday announced two major appointments, naming Lieutenant-General N.S. Raja Subramani (retd) as the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan as the next Chief of the Naval Staff.

According to the Ministry of Defence, Lt-Gen. Subramani will succeed General Anil Chauhan, whose tenure as the CDS ends on May 30. Along with the role of the CDS, he will also serve as Secretary, Department of Military Affairs.

Currently serving as Military Adviser in the National Security Council Secretariat since September 2025, the senior officer has earlier held key positions, including Vice Chief of Army Staff and General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Central Command.

Commissioned into the 8 Garhwal Rifles in December 1985, Lt-Gen. Subramani is a graduate of the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy. He has also attended the Joint Services Command Staff College in



Lieutenant-General N.S. Raja Subramani (retd) and, right, Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan.



the U.K. and the National Defence College in New Delhi.

During a distinguished career spanning over four decades, he commanded formations in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, the Central Sector and along the Western Front, including the prestigious 2 Corps. He has also served in several important operational, instructional and strategic staff appointments. For his distinguished service, he has been awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Sena Medal, and Vishisht Seva Medal.

Vice-Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, who has been appointed as the next Chief of Naval Staff, will succeed Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi, who re-

tires on May 31.

He currently serves as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command. Commissioned into the Indian Navy in 1987, he is a specialist in Communication and Electronic Warfare. Over the course of his Naval career, he commanded several frontline warships, including *INS Mysore* and aircraft carrier *INS Vikramaditya*, and held key appointments in operations, personnel and training.

A recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, and Vishisht Seva Medal, the Vice-Admiral has also served as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff and holds multiple postgraduate degrees, including a Ph.D. in International Studies.

Indian sailor killed in dhow fire near Strait of Hormuz

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

An Indian sailor was killed and several others injured after their wooden dhow caught fire near the Strait of Hormuz, government sources said on Saturday.

Seventeen other Indian crew members were rescued following the incident on Friday, they said, noting that the exact cause of the blaze is still being ascertained. The crew members were rescued by a vessel that was passing by in the area, the sources said.

The incident came amid increasing hostilities between Iran and the U.S. in the strait, a vital maritime chokepoint between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman through which a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes.

If confirmed as a casualty of the ongoing conflict, this latest death brings the total number of Indian fatalities to nine since hostilities broke out.

Officials from the Indian Consulate in Dubai met the rescued Indian nationals on Friday night, said another source. The consulate is also in touch with the dhow owner and is extending all possible assistance, the sources said.

The Hindu's campaigns shine at INMA Global Media Awards

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Hindu's media campaigns earned global recognition at the prestigious INMA Global Media Awards 2026, with "The Hindu Written By Journalists", a brand campaign, winning the first place in the Best Brand Awareness Campaign category, and "The Hindu Made Of Chennai", a city celebration

campaign, securing the third place in the Best Event to Build a News Brand category.

'Connecting deeply'

The INMA Global Media Awards celebrate excellence and innovation across the news media industry, recognising best practices in news brands, audience engagement, subscriptions, product development, advertising,

commerce, and newsroom transformation.

Commenting on the achievement, L.V. Nava-neeth, CEO of The Hindu Group, said, "These recognitions underscore our commitment to creating meaningful campaigns that connect deeply with audiences while reinforcing the strength and relevance of our brands through creativity, innovation, and impactful story-

telling." "Written By Journalists" is a brand campaign by The Hindu that spotlighted the importance of credible, fact-based journalism, created by experienced journalists at a time when misinformation and unverified content are increasingly prevalent.

Through impactful storytelling and sharp messaging, the campaign reinforced the value of trusted

journalism and The Hindu's editorial legacy.

"Made of Chennai" is a city-centric initiative by The Hindu that celebrates the stories, culture, creativity, and spirit of Chennai.

The media campaign brought together citizens, creators, entrepreneurs, artists, and change-makers through experiences and conversations that reflected the city's identity and

emotional fabric. Suresh Nambath, Editor, The Hindu, said, "These recognitions reflect what The Hindu has stood for over the years: credible journalism, public trust, and a deep connection with the communities we serve. Whether through 'Written By Journalists' or 'Made of Chennai', it is encouraging to see these values resonate on a global platform like the INMA."

Regional, caste balance shapes BJP's first Cabinet in Bengal

Party gives ministerial berths to representatives of the Matua, tribal, OBC, Rajbanshi, Brahmin, and Kayastha communities, with Agnimitra Paul being the sole woman in Cabinet; decision on expansion to be taken after swearing-in of MLAs-elect

Shiv Sahay Singh
Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has weighed regional and community considerations while allocating ministerial berths in its first Cabinet in West Bengal.

Along with Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari, five other MLAs were administered the oath of office and secrecy by West Bengal Governor R.N. Ravi on Saturday.

The new Ministers – Dip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Ashok Kirtania, Kshudiram Tudu, and Nisith Pramanik – represent different regions and different caste combinations aimed at social and geographic balance.

Mr. Adhikari is a Brahmin, Mr. Ghosh hails from the OBC community, Ms. Paul is a Kayastha, Mr. Kirtania is a prominent Matua face, and Mr. Tudu represents the tribal belt of Janglemahal. Mr. Pramanik is seen as an influential Rajbanshi leader from north Bengal.



Taking charge: Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulates West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari and members of the State Cabinet in Kolkata on Saturday. REUTERS

Mr. Ghosh, who was elected from Kharagpur Sadar, is a former West Bengal BJP president and one of the most vocal party leaders in the State. Under his leadership, the BJP had won 18 out of 42 Lok Sabha seats from West Bengal.

A fashion designer-turned-politician, Ms. Paul

is a prominent woman face of the BJP and had become the party's voice both inside and outside the State Assembly from 2021 to 2016. She has been re-elected from the Asansol Dakshin Assembly seat.

Mr. Kirtania, who has been elected from Bongaon Uttar, is a representa-

tive of the Matuas, a community of Hindu namasudras which has overwhelmingly supported the BJP. All these Ministers represent south Bengal.

Tribal representative
As the tribal face in the State Cabinet, Mr. Tudu

took his oath in the Santali language. He was elected from Ranibandh in the Bankura district.

Mr. Pramanik, who was the Cooch Behar MP from 2019 to 2024, won the Assembly election from Mathabhanga and is the Cabinet's only face from north Bengal.

Scope for expansion
Article 164(1A) of the Constitution mandates that the total number of Ministers, including the Chief Minister, cannot exceed 15% of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly.

As there are 294 seats in the West Bengal Assembly, the highest number of Ministers that can be appointed is 44.

There is a lot of scope for expansion of the Council of Ministers, but a decision will be taken after the swearing-in of all the newly elected MLAs.

The BJP won 207 seats in the 294-member House, ending the 15-year rule of the Trinamool Congress and reducing it to just 80 seats.

People celebrate with sweets and colour as 'Kanthi's son' takes oath

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Kanthi, the hometown of Suwendu Adhikari in Purba Medinipur district, erupted in joy on Saturday as he was sworn in as the Chief Minister of West Bengal.

His parents and relatives thanked the people of the State for choosing "Kanthi's son" for the top post.

His father, Sisir Adhikari, said his son was the "correct choice" made by the people of the State, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the BJP. "Medinipur has always made a massive contribution to the State's politics. My son has overcome many hurdles and led many movements. He is our pillar of support," said Mr. Sisir, a veteran politician. He said his son should serve the people wholeheartedly and focus on the development and growth of the State.

Massive celebrations were seen in Kanthi as local residents, neighbours, and relatives of Mr. Adhikari came out on the streets. People played with colours, had sweets, chanted "Jai Shri Ram" slogans, and



Women cheer during the swearing-in ceremony of Suwendu Adhikari in Kolkata on Saturday. PTI

blew conch shells. "Our dream has finally come true. We cannot describe our pride in words," a neighbour said.

Gayatri Adhikari, mother of Mr. Adhikari, said: "I am very happy, but the people of Bengal are happier than me." She asked her son to work for the poor and take steps to curb atrocities against women.

Family stronghold
The 57-year-old BJP leader comes from a family of politicians. His father started his political career in the Congress. He served as the Union Minister of State for Rural Development during the second United Progressive Alliance government

and was the MP from Kanthi between 2009 and 2024. His two brothers, Dibyendu Adhikari and Soumendru Adhikari, are also active in politics. Together, the four members of the family have represented the Kanthi Lok Sabha constituency and the Kanthi Dakshin Assembly constituency for decades.

It is after almost six decades that the State has got a Chief Minister from the rural heartland.

The last four Chief Ministers – the Congress's Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the CPI(M)'s Jyoti Basu and Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, and Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee – hailed from Kolkata.

A united platform against BJP must be created, says Mamata

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee updated her social media bio on Saturday to "Founder Chairperson All India Trinamool Congress. Chief Minister of West Bengal (15th, 16th and 17th Vidhan Sabha)", even as the BJP's Suwendu Adhikari changed his bio to "Chief Minister of West Bengal".

This assumes significance as even after her electoral defeat, Ms. Banerjee had refused to turn in her resignation as the Chief Minister, which is the protocol. She lost the Bhabanipur Assembly seat by 15,115 votes to Mr. Adhikari, who was sworn in as the Chief Minister of the 18th Legislative Assembly of West Bengal on Saturday.

A day after the BJP's landslide victory in Bengal was declared on May 4, Ms. Banerjee held a press conference to say that there was no question of her resigning as she "did not lose the elections", and it was only a forcible attempt to defeat her.

However, her term officially came to an end on May 7, and Governor R.N. Ravi dissolved the 17th Legislative Assembly, bringing her 15-year rule to an end. The Trinamool chairperson had held the Chief Minister title since 2011, when she overthrew the 34-year-old Left Front rule in the State and assumed office.

United front

On Saturday, Ms. Banerjee urged Opposition parties across the country to present a united front, saying that this was the only way to fight the BJP. "A united platform can be created where all political parties that are against the BJP should unite. Along with the national parties, I would urge the Leftists and the ultra-Leftists to unite in Bengal as well as in Delhi," she said, during her speech celebrating Rabin-drath Tagore's birthday at her home. She was alleg-



Mamata Banerjee

edly denied permission to hold the celebrations publicly.

She also urged student bodies and NGOs to come together and organise a united front against the BJP and the "reign of terror they have unleashed". Ms. Banerjee added that she was available for further discussions on the matter if they desire. "It needs to be remembered that our first enemy is the BJP," she reiterated.

'Irregularities in polls'
Earlier, Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee questioned the credibility of the Election Commission of India. He accused the poll body of functioning in a "partisan" manner and alleged large-scale irregularities in the election process.

"Democratic institutions that are meant to function impartially appeared compromised, raising serious concerns about the fairness, credibility and transparency of the electoral process in West Bengal," he wrote on his social media profiles.

The Diamond Harbour MP also said that it was an extremely difficult election for the Trinamool as over 30 lakh voters were allegedly disenfranchised from the electoral rolls. Noting that the party had fought tooth and nail against the compromised poll body, he vowed to continue to stand by the people of the State.

The Trinamool Congress has chosen Ballygunge MLA Sobhandeb Chattopadhyay as the Leader of the Opposition.

Ministers, Ambassadors, and artists to join The Hindu Huddle in Bengaluru on June 5, 6

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

This year's *The Hindu Huddle* theme, "A World in Transition", reflects the rapid changes unfolding around us – from geopolitical shifts and artificial intelligence-driven disruptions to evolving ways of learning, communicating, working, and addressing mental health.

A marquee event of The Hindu Group, *The Hindu Huddle* will be held in Bengaluru on June 5 and 6. It brings together meaningful debates and conversations on this era of uncertainty, creating space for listening, reflection, and authentic exchange.

This edition will bring together leading Indian and global voices to discuss some of today's most important issues, includ-



ing the role of regional parties in strengthening India's democracy, diplomacy in times of conflict, women's representation in Parliament, India

and China's role in shaping a new global order, balancing ecological restoration with development, the use of chatbots in mental health, the influence of OTT platforms on acting careers, and the future of work.

Fruitful conversations
Speaking about this edition, Narayan Lakshman, Opinion Editor, *The Hindu*, and Curator, *The Hindu Huddle*, says, "*The Hindu Huddle* has already made a name for itself over four previous editions. Presently, it is a cosmopolitan city like Bengaluru, and exemplifying *The Hindu's* contemporary spirit of journalistic inquiry, *The Hindu Huddle* is known for consistently bringing cutting-edge dialogues to our audiences, with experts from across the world en-

gaging in fruitful conversations for change."

Speakers at *The Huddle* this year include Union Ministers Hardeep Singh Puri and Nitin Gadkari; Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah; former President of the Maldives, Mohamed Nasheed; Chief Economic Adviser Anantha Nageswaran; MPs Aparajita Sarangi, Thamizhachi Thangapandian, Sagarika Ghose, and Shrinikant Shinde; Chinese Ambassador Xu Feihong, EU Ambassador Hervé Delphin, Brazilian Ambassador Kenneth Felix Haszcynzki da Nobrega, Australian High Commissioner Philip Green, and former Ambassador Nirupama Rao; artists and curators Seema Kohli, Shilo Suleman, Abhishek Poddar, and Ranvir Shah; and mental health advocates Amit

Malik and Amrita Tripathi.

Like the previous edition, *The Hindu* is also taking *The Huddle* to the youth. Sessions have been curated specifically for young minds. In the run-up to the main event, *The Hindu* will be hosting mini-Huddles – thought-provoking discussions on topics that matter – across colleges in various cities.

As Mr. Lakshman says, "As a brand, we have stood firm through the vicissitudes of time and flux in the media ecosystem, to deliver a premium product that puts the interests of the reader, the viewer, and the listener above all else. *The Hindu Huddle* is back with a bang, and it will be an ideas conclave like no other."

The presenting partner for *The Hindu Huddle* is the Sami-Sabinsa Group.

Sheikh Hasina congratulates new Bengal Chief Minister

Kalol Bhattacharjee
NEW DELHI

Deposed Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has congratulated the new Chief Minister of West Bengal, Suwendu Adhikari. In a message issued via Awami League officials, Ms. Hasina said on Saturday that Bangladesh always wished for prosperity and peace in West Bengal under the leadership of Mr. Adhikari.

"The verdict of the people of West Bengal is a clear reflection of their deep trust and admiration for Shri Suwendu Adhikari's strong and people-oriented leadership. West Bengal holds a unique place in the history of the sincere friendship between Bangladesh and India," Ms. Hasina said in a statement.

Parties are equal partners in INDIA bloc, says U.P. Congress president Ajay Rai

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Under the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) in Uttar Pradesh, parties are equal partners and there are no smaller or larger partners, Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai said on Saturday. "We are in an alliance and will unitedly defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)," Mr. Rai told *The Hindu*.

"Any decision on behalf of the Congress will be taken by the high command. The Congress party is strengthening its organisation at the booth level in all 403 Assembly seats to defeat the BJP," Mr. Rai said, when asked whether "equal partners" meant the demand for equal sharing of seats during the Assembly election.



Ajay Rai

Mr. Rai's comment holds significance as Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav, on Friday, made a cryptic post on social media platform X. "We are not the ones who leave you in difficult times," Mr. Yadav said, along with a picture of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader and outgoing Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. The Congress-DMK alliance came to an

end after the Assembly election in Tamil Nadu.

The SP is the largest constituent of the INDIA bloc in Uttar Pradesh and will act as the fulcrum to defeat the BJP in U.P., Sunil Singh Yadav 'Sajan', the SP spokesperson said, adding that broader clarity prevails between the leadership of both parties on how, and what, was needed to defeat the BJP in U.P.

"Both Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadavji have joint clarity on how winning each seat is necessary to defeat the BJP. The question is not about smaller or larger partner, the issue is which party is capable of defeating the BJP on a particular seat... With 37 MPs and over 100 MLAs, the SP's strength is tested and trusted. Unitedly with our partners, we will defeat the BJP," Mr. Sajan said.

Rahul slams Bihar govt. over police action against protesting teacher aspirants

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Saturday took a dig at the Bihar government over a police baton-charge on aspirants protesting against the delay in notifying the BPSC TRE-4 examination.

In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi said that when the youth hit the streets to demand their rights, they are not given jobs in their hands, instead, lathis are rained down on their backs. He further said that India's youth are fed up with the Bharatiya Janata Party's lies. On Friday, a large number of teacher aspirants gathered at JP Roundabout and headed towards the office of the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC), demand-



Rahul Gandhi

ing the notification for the TRE-4 recruitment.

During this incident, the police carried out a baton-charge, in which several aspirants, including women candidates, sustained injuries. The aspirants alleged that the notification was not released as per the scheduled date, leaving the future of thousands of candidates in the darkness.

"Yesterday in Patna, teacher aspirants who

were peacefully protesting for their right to employment were brutally beaten by the Bihar Police – again. BJP's response to unemployed youth: Lathis. Unemployment is the biggest disease in India today, and its most devastating impact is falling on the youth of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh," he said in the post.

"Millions of youths, holding degrees and skills in hand, are wandering from door to door. But the BJP government neither cares for them nor for you. When youth take to the streets to demand their rights, they are not given jobs in their hands – instead, lathis are rained down on their backs. India's youth are fed up with the BJP's lies – they will no longer stay silent, and the Congress stands with them," he added.

IN BRIEF



Delhi HC protects personality rights of Shashi Tharoor

The Delhi High Court has protected the “personality rights” of Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, observing that the MP is a “respected and recognised public figure” who enjoys rights over all facets of his personality. In an order passed on May 8, Justice Mini Pushkarna restrained various persons and entities from reproducing, misappropriating, or imitating any facet of Mr Tharoor’s persona including his visual likeness and image, distinct voice, signature oratorical cadence and manner of speaking, and highly refined vocabulary.

CBI facilitates return of fugitive from Portugal

The CBI has facilitated the extradition from Portugal of an accused wanted in multiple cases by the Haryana police. In coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs, Abhay, alias Abhay Rana, was extradited to India on Saturday. He is allegedly part of an organised crime syndicate and faces charges of attempted murder and issuing death threats. According to the CBI, the accused and his associates allegedly threatened local businessmen through social media platforms, including WhatsApp calls, demanding ransom payments. Those failing to comply were allegedly assaulted by members of the syndicate.

CBI searches 17 locations in Reliance ADA Group cases

The CBI on Saturday searched 17 premises in Mumbai in connection with three cases registered against Reliance ADA Group companies Reliance Telecom Ltd., Reliance Commercial Finance Ltd. and Reliance Home Finance Ltd., and their directors. “Searches have also revealed that multiple intermediary companies were operating from the same address,” it said. Over the past few months, the CBI has registered seven cases against the Group entities, based on the complaints lodged by various banks and LIC in connection with alleged frauds involving thousands of crores of rupees. The total quantum of alleged loss in these cases is ₹27,337 crore, it said.

ED arrests three accused in DJW-SEPL loan case

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested three accused in a case alleging that DJW Electric Power Projects Private Limited fraudulently took loans from various entities. Those arrested have been identified as two company directors, Dandamudi Venkateswara Rao and D. Shanthi Kiran, and Mr. Rao’s brother D. Avanimindra Kumar. The ED had secured their custody till May 12 from the court concerned. The agency has alleged laundering of about ₹284 crore in the matter. Its investigation is based on a case registered by the police in Gurugram, against DJW Electric Power Project. The total loan amount involved in the alleged fraud was about ₹58 crore.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Centre operationalises Labour Codes, publishes Rules; trade unions protest

The Codes will replace 29 labour laws that governed provisions, including wages, social security, working hours, retirement benefits, and trade union rights; officials maintain the Rules have been published with ‘minor amendments’ to the draft rules pre-published in December 2025

A. M. Tigeesh
NEW DELHI

In over 30 gazette notifications issued on Friday and Saturday, the Union government fully operationalised the four Labour Codes.

Officials maintained that the rules had been published with “minor amendments” to the draft rules pre-published in December 2025.

The government had announced the implementation of the four Labour Codes from November 21, 2025. With the notification of the Rules, the Codes will replace 29 labour laws that governed provisions, including wages, social security, working hours, retirement benefits, and trade union rights.

Soon after the publication of Rules, members of 10 central trade unions held protests across the country, burning copies of it. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh said it was studying the Rules and would soon come up with a comment on them.



Protesters called for the withdrawal of Labour Codes at a recent rally in Delhi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The Opposition parties alleged that the publication was a direct attack on the rights of workers.

All stakeholders had been given one month’s time to submit responses on the draft Rules, a senior government functionary said.

“We have gone through all the responses and considered some of the suggestions, and amended the Rules accordingly,” the official said, adding that the amendments were minor.

the rate of wages for an hour and multiplied by twenty six for fixing the rate of wages for a month...”

Minimum wages

On the controversial subject of minimum wages, the Rules of the Code on Wages said the criteria shall be separately specified by the Union government by a special or general order, and the rate of wages for a day is fixed, and “such amount shall be divided by eight for fixing

the rate of wages for an hour and multiplied by twenty six for fixing the rate of wages for a month...”

For fixing the floor wage, the Union government, according to the Rules, may consult a Central Advisory Board, taking into account the minimum living standard, including food, clothing, housing, and any other factors considered appropriate by the

Union government from time to time. The number of hours of work for a normal working day “for an employee whose wage period is on a daily basis” shall be eight hours. For other employees, the total number of weekly working hours shall not exceed 48 hours. The Rules mandate that every employer shall issue wage slips, electronically or in physical form to the employees.

The Rules for Code on Social Security changes 12 rules, including the Employees’ State Insurance (Central) Rules, 1950 and the Employees’ Provident Funds Appellate Tribunal (Conditions of Service) Rules, 1997.

The Code on Industrial Relations says where there is only one registered trade union operating in an industrial establishment having its membership not less than 30% of the total workers employed in the industrial establishment, the employer of such industrial establishment shall recognise such trade union as the sole negotiating un-

ion of the workers. Commenting on the Rule, senior leader of Centre of Indian Trade Unions R. Karumalaiyan said the Union government had ignored the amendments moved by the CTUs.

“We had submitted amendments seeking clarity on working hours, trade union rights, minimum wages, floor wages, and protection of social security. This government has ignored all our suggestions, forcing us to go on protests,” Mr. Karumalaiyan said.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said in a statement that the Union government “deceptively waited” till the Assembly election in four States and a Union Territory were over before notifying the Rules. “Within just four days after the announcement of results, they have now operationalised the Labour Codes. This exposes the deceptive modus operandi of the BJP-led Union government,” the CPI(M) said, urging States to reject the Rules.

Tiger sighted in Arunachal wildlife sanctuary after nearly two decades

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

A tiger has been photographed by a camera trap in Arunachal Pradesh’s D’Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary for the first time in almost two decades, bringing cheers to wildlife enthusiasts, conservationists, and officials.

The 190-sq. km sanctuary near Pasighat, the East Siang district headquarters, was believed to have lost the species years ago. The first-ever camera-trap photograph of the striped cat has established its return to the protected area.

The sanctuary is named after Daying Ering, a former Union Minister and chairman of the Ering Commission, which influenced the Panchayati Raj system in India.

Kempi Ete, the Divisional Forest Officer, said forest



The image of the tiger captured in a camera trap inside the D’Ering Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

officials and frontline staff documented indirect signs of tiger presence over the past year. Multiple rounds of systematic monitoring and camera trapping were undertaken to verify these observations.

Although earlier efforts yielded no photographic evidence, monitoring continued with renewed intensity and persistence. In the latest phase of surveys,

camera traps installed at strategic locations successfully captured images of a tiger, conclusively establishing its presence in the landscape.

The surveys, conducted with technical support from the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), also recorded other animals, including the critically endangered Chinese

pangolin and the endangered hispid hare.

“The return of the tiger after nearly two decades reflects the resilience of the ecosystem and the cumulative impact of sustained conservation efforts on the ground. This achievement belongs equally to our forest officials, frontline staff, Eco-Development Committee members and the community-based organisations that have continuously supported conservation initiatives in the landscape,” Ms. Ete said.

Local MLA Oken Tayeng said that the tiger’s return indicated a “healthy sign” and improving ecological conditions in the sanctuary. He stated it could improve tourism prospects and create employment opportunities for youth living in fringe villages around the protected area.

‘Dragonfly, damselfly species missing in the Western Ghats’

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

A recent study has revealed an “alarming gap” in biodiversity across the Western Ghats, with researchers able to document only about 65% of the dragonfly and damselfly species historically recorded in the region, pointing to a potential shortfall of nearly 35% of these ecologically critical insects.

The survey recorded 143 odonata species – 76 dragonflies and 67 damselflies – of which 40 were endemic to the Western Ghats. The study was carried out across 144 sites spanning five States, namely, Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, and Gujarat between February 2021 and March 2023.

Three species – *Elatoneura souteri*, *Protosticta sanguinostigma*, and *Cyclogomphus ypsilon* – are currently classified as vulnerable, while most of the observed species fall under the “data deficient” and “not evaluated” categories on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species, indicating significant gaps in scientific understanding.

Emphasising the urgency of expanding research, Pankaj Koparde, Assistant Professor, MIT-World Peace University Pune, said, “This study is a result of one of the most extensive Odonata surveys across the Ghats. Our surveys could recover only 65% of the known Odonata fauna of the Ghats, indicating plausible loss of species and habitats.”

The Western Ghats is a 1,600-km mountain chain along India’s west coast and a globally recognised biodiversity hotspot. The survey team, headed by Professor Koparde, suggests the Odonata species are highly sensitive to environmental changes as they depend on freshwater ecosystems for reproduction, and are widely regarded as “indicator taxa,” meaning their presence, or absence,



The study was carried out across 144 sites spanning five States. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

directly reflects the ecological health of water bodies. So, the missing species may be early indicators of deeper ecological stress.

The study claimed there are multiple threats across the Western Ghats, including linear infrastructure development, hydropower projects, severe pollution, large-scale land-use changes, unregulated tourism, recurring forest fires, and growing impact of climate change which is further fragmenting and degrading these ecosystems.

Key findings

According to the IUCN Red List, of the 143 recorded species, 100 species are classified as ‘Least Concern’, 22 species as “data deficient” and 16 as “not evaluated”. Two species fall in the “near threatened” category, while two others are listed under “vulnerable” category.

The presence of 22 species listed under “data deficient” category suggests the need for extensive surveys across the Western Ghats to uncover the status and distribution of many lesser known species.

The study also uncovers the richness of Odonata species in several localities across the five States, many of which were previously unexplored. The findings demonstrate that the diversity and degree of endemism are greater in the southern Western Ghats compared to the northern part of the region. This can largely be attributed to the availability of suitable microhabitats and perennial streams in the southern Western Ghats.

Focus on mental and emotional well-being of new mothers: doctors

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

While caring for the newborn and physical recovery of the new mother is important, it is equally critical to focus on the mental and emotional well-being of every woman post-delivery, doctors at a webinar said.

While discussing post-partum care for mothers at a webinar, which is part of *The Hindu’s* wellness series and presented by Kauvery Hospital to mark Mothers’ Day, doctors from the hospital said the mental health of new mothers is often overlooked in Indian households even though a majority of women face post-partum depression. Childbirth is not the end of care for a woman but the beginning of a journey that requires emotional adjustments due to hormonal changes.

“The moment the baby



is born, attention shifts to the newborn. The multiple challenges the mother could be facing is rarely given attention,” said K. Thendral, clinical lead and senior consultant, obstetrics and gynaecology, Kauvery Hospital. She said the post-partum phase often comes with transformations due to hormonal changes, and the woman goes through joy and love, exhaustion and uncertainty, all at the same time. It leads to heightened anxiety and stress due to expectations, pressure of breastfeeding, and sleep deprivation, Dr. Thendral noted.

Lactating period is be-

neficial for both the mother and the child, but if women develop painful, red, and swollen breasts, headache, breathing difficulty, fever, and suffer heavy bleeding and foul-smelling discharge, they should report to the gynaecologist, she said.

‘Family support crucial’

P. Sathya Sudhakar, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, Kauvery Hospital, Salem, said serious mood disorder, loss of identity, feeling of isolation, and stress that affect most mothers in the first few days are not signs of weakness. “It is natural to have baby blues. Supportive and understanding families can help in treating the symptoms,” she said. Support strategies, including early identification of post-partum symptoms, a supportive network, and professional help, can make a difference, she ob-

served. She warned that serious problems can arise if common symptoms, like feeling of emptiness and worthlessness, involuntary crying, irritability, fatigue, loss of interest in activities, and difficulty in bonding with the baby, persist.

Manjeswari G., psychologist and sexual health therapist, Maa Kauvery, Trichy, said the mental load of motherhood makes intimacy feel different. It is natural for parents to feel overwhelmed after childbirth, and mothers should be emotionally supported, mentally cared for, sexually respected, and gently empowered. She said women could be facing vaginal dryness, low sexual desire, and emotional disconnect. “Instead of judging her, the family needs to understand her,” she maintained. She recommended yoga and pelvic floor exercises for post-partum fitness.

IN BRIEF



Malhotra urged to intervene to correct promotion policy

The RBI officers' union has written a letter to RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, seeking his intervention to correct the promotion policy and restore a time-bound system. RBI officers across various regional offices and the central bank's headquarters in Mumbai staged protests on Friday against recent policy changes that link promotions to vacancy availability, replacing the earlier time-bound promotion system. Reserve Bank of India Officers' Association (RBIOA), in a letter dated May 8, expressed disappointment and anguish over the decision of the central bank to proceed with the revised promotion policy without adequately considering the serious concerns, objections, and constructive suggestions repeatedly placed by the association on behalf of the officer community. PTI

CCI orders probe into liquor giant Pernod's dealings

The CCI on Friday ordered an investigation into French liquor group Pernod Ricard over alleged exclusive deals with retailers to promote its brands at the expense of rivals, a regulatory order showed. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has been reviewing allegations since 2024 that Pernod, whose brands include Chivas Regal and Absolut vodka, colluded with retailers in New Delhi to boost its market share. The complaint alleges that Pernod provided \$24 million in corporate guarantees to its bankers in 2021 to help city retailers secure loans, with retailers in turn ensuring 35% of the stock in their shops comprised Pernod brands. The CCI said it found merit in the allegations, noting in its order that "the non-dealing in the product of the competitors ... is likely to result in distortion of demand by way of moving retail demand away from the competing brands." Pernod told Reuters it "unequivocally denies any wrongdoing".

From a garage venture to an industry bellwether: Biocon under Kiran Shaw

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU



Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

Biocon founder and chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's recent announcement of a phased, five-year succession plan, involving naming her niece, Claire Mazumdar, as her successor marked a pivotal generational leadership shift for the enterprise she founded in 1978 in Bengaluru and eventually emerged as a bellwether of the Indian biotechnology industry.

The succession announcement came alongside a significant corporate restructuring at Biocon, including the merger of its generics and biologics businesses under a single platform. Biocon had earlier said, by March 31, 2026, it would be integrating its generics and biosimilars businesses into a unified global biopharma platform to accelerate growth and simplify its structure and streamline its product offerings. This move was aimed to consolidate Biocon Biologics into the parent company increasing the focus on diabetes, oncology, and immunology. Other areas of Mazumdar-Shaw's focus included: cancer therapeutics, biologics, immunotherapy, novel drug discovery and affordable insulin and diabetes care, apart from nanotechnology, precision medicine and translational research.

As a precursor to the gradual succession plan, Mazumdar-Shaw appointed Shreehas Tambe as CEO and Managing Director in April 2026 to strengthen leadership at Biocon during the transition. While maintaining a strategic vision and ensuring close family presence in the business, through niece, Claire,

she returned to India to discover breweries were not hiring woman brewmasters. The seed for Biocon started evolving from this experience and in 1978, at 25, in partnership with Ireland's Biocon Biochemicals, she started Biocon in her garage in Bengaluru with a modest initial capital of just ₹10,000. Even during the late '90s, no media person who met her missed her stories about her entrepreneurial struggles for capital, bank loans and permissions. Banks were reluctant to lend to women entrepreneurs back then. However, later on, she became successful through lobbying with the Karnataka government and receiving KIADB land to set up Biocon ventures, research infrastructure, Biocon Park, health-care infrastructure etc. She also runs the Mazumdar Shaw Cancer Center in Bengaluru.

She has tried hard to convince successive governments in the State to make them understand how biotechnology as an industry was unique, unlike IT, and required long-term thinking and quality infrastructure for research for it to take off. Mazumdar-Shaw's start-up venture Biocon, after multiple decades of struggle, has truly emerged as the country's bellwether of the biotechnology industry and became a global player in biosimilars manufacturing.

Under Kiran's leadership, Biocon evolved in phases from enzymes and fermentation capabilities in the 1980s and '90s, biopharmaceuticals, insulin, statins and novel biologics in 2000s, biosimilars, oncology and advanced bio-

FPIs' stake in Indian equities hits 14-year low

FPIs were net sellers in Indian equities in four of the five trading sessions during the week ended May 8; on an aggregate basis, combining stock exchange and primary market flows, FPI equity outflows for the week stood at ₹14,207.20 crore; weekly trend reflects a broader structural shift

Anupama Ghosh
MUMBAI

Foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) share in Indian equities has fallen to a nearly 14-year low, even as domestic institutions have quietly emerged as the market's largest stakeholder — a structural shift unfolding alongside another week of sustained foreign selling.

As per NSDL data, FPIs were net sellers in Indian equities in four of the five trading sessions during the week ended May 8.

On Monday, they pulled out ₹8,035.69 crore through stock exchanges. Tuesday offered brief respite, with FPIs turning net buyers worth ₹2,969.02 crore. Selling resumed on Wednesday with outflows of ₹3,399.03 crore, followed by the week's steepest single-day sell-off on Thursday at ₹5,697.61 crore. By Friday, selling had nearly tapered off, with net outflows narrowing sharply to ₹69.31 crore, as gross purchases of ₹18,514.38 crore almost matched gross sales of



FPI ownership in Indian equities has dropped to 14.7%

₹18,583.69 crore. On an aggregate basis — combining stock exchange and primary market flows — FPI

equity outflows for the week stood at ₹14,207.20 crore. The weekly trend reflects a broader structural shift.

According to JM Financial's monthly tracker for April 2026, FPI ownership in Indian equities has dropped to 14.7% — the lowest since June 2012 — from 19.9% a decade ago. In contrast, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) now hold 18.9% of Indian equities, overtaking FPIs for the first time since December 2024 and steadily widening the gap. V K Vi-

jayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments Ltd., said, "This takes the total FPI sell figure through exchanges in 2026, so far, to ₹2,18,540 crore," he said, while noting that primary market investment by FPIs has remained resilient, with "total investment of ₹12,340 crore, so far, this year." N. ArunaGiri, CEO of TrustLine Holdings, said, "At a time when Korea received nearly \$4 billion and Taiwan around \$5.5 billion in flows, India is still not getting its due share of

emerging market allocations. This clearly indicates that FPIs currently do not find India as attractive from an allocation perspective," he said.

The impact, he added, is visible in market behaviour. "Large caps have relatively underperformed, while strong domestic flows have continued to support the SMID segment." Analysts said India's underperformance in attracting foreign flows is partly structural.

(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)

Growers seek status quo on import duty on natural rubber

The Hindu Bureau
COIMBATORE



Domestic rubber prices have shown a "modest upward trend" in recent months

The United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI) has urged the government to maintain status quo on the import duty on natural rubber as a section of the rubber user industry has sought reduction of the import duty on key inputs and raw materials.

Ajoy Thipaiiah, the association's president, said in a statement that the rubber plantation sector sustains nearly 13.2 lakh growers and provides employment to about 4.2 lakh workers.

India presently has about 9.4 lakh hectares under natural rubber cultivation and the production in

FY26 is estimated at approximately nine lakh tonnes.

The domestic rubber prices have shown a "modest upward trend" in recent months due to geopolitical developments and production shortages both globally and domestically.

However, Indian rubber prices remained subdued in comparison with international prices over the last two years. The prices of major inputs such as fertilisers, plant protection chemicals, and skilled labour have increased at 8-12% over the past decade.

Santosh Kumar, chairman, Rubber Committee of the Association, added that imports of natural rubber and compound rubber have increased considerably over the years. Of particular concern is the growing share of compound rubber imports, accounting for nearly 40% of total rubber imports. Most of this is imported from ASEAN countries duty free, he said.

Techno Sportswear to expand to Odisha

M. Soundariya Preetha
COIMBATORE

Activewear manufacturer Techno Sportswear, which has manufacturing facilities in Tiruppur and Erode districts of Tamil Nadu, will expand to Odisha, said its MD and co-founder Sunil Jhunjhunwala.

The company received \$25 million in private equity from A91 Partners in May 2024. It had invested in plants in Perundurai and Vijayamangalam under the Production Linked Intensive Scheme of the Central Government and manufactures 25 tonnes of fabric a day. "We clocked ₹600 crore topline in 2025-2026 and are looking at ₹1,000 crore this year," he said. The company has invested during the last couple of years to have an integrated production facility. It has set up a polyester filament yarn knitting and fabric processing facility in Perundurai and a garment unit at Vijayamangalam.

"We have signed an MoU with the Odisha government. The State has a port, workforce, and raw material availability. We are looking at starting a garmenting unit there," he said. While the company is expanding its domestic presence through online and offline retailing, it has also registered its brand in more than two dozen countries. It wants to strengthen its production and tap the export potential initially in the West and South East Asian countries, he said.

Employing about 2,000 people, Techno Sportswear has 51 own stores and will add another 80 this fiscal, said CEO Puspita Maity.

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, गोरखपुर
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Gorakhpur
(स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय भारत सरकार द्वारा स्थापित एक स्वायत्त निकाय)
(An autonomous organization under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)

Last date of online Receipt of Application: 08/06/2026 Dated: 09/05/2026

FACULTY APPOINTMENTS
Professor/Additional Professor/Associate Professor/Assistant Professor

Offline applications from eligible Indian citizens/other citizens as permissible under the applicable Act/Rules are invited to fill up following faculty posts in All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh):

Sr. No	Subject	Professor	Additional Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor
1.	Anaesthesia	01 (OBC)	01 (OBC)	-	02 (01-SC, 01-OBC)
2.	Biochemistry	01 (ST)	-	-	-
3.	Cardiology	01 (UR)	-	01 (OBC)	-
4.	Cardiothoracic Surgery	-	-	02 (UR)	01 (SC)
5.	Dermatology	-	01 (OBC)	-	01 (OBC)
6.	ENT	01 (SC)	01 (SC)	01 (ST)	-
7.	Forensic Medicine and Toxicology	01 (OBC)	-	-	-
8.	Gastroenterology (Medical)	01 (EWS)	-	02 (01-OBC, 01-UR)	01 (OBC)
9.	General Medicine	01 (UR)	-	02 (01-UR, 01-SC)	04 (03-EWS, 01-OBC)
10.	General Surgery	01 (01-SC)	-	-	-
11.	Hospital Administration	01 (UR)	-	02 (01-OBC, 01-UR)	-
12.	Medical Oncology	-	-	-	01 (OBC)
13.	Microbiology	01 (ST)	01 (OBC)	-	-
14.	Neonatology	-	-	-	01 (ST)
15.	Nephrology	-	01 (UR)	02 (01-SC, 01-EWS)	01 (UR)
16.	Neurology	-	-	02 (01-OBC, 01-UR)	01 (SC)
17.	Neurosurgery	-	-	01 (01-ST)	-
18.	Nuclear Medicine	01 (OBC)	01 (OBC)	01 (UR)	01 (OBC)
19.	Obstetrics and Gynaecology	-	-	01 (01-ST)	-
20.	Ophthalmology	01 (EWS)	01 (UR)	-	-
21.	Orthopaedics	-	-	01 (UR)	-
22.	Paediatrics	-	01 (OBC)	-	-
23.	Pathology	01 (SC)	01 (SC)	-	-
24.	Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	01 (UR)	-	-	-
25.	Physiology	-	-	01 (OBC)	-
26.	Psychiatry	01 (OBC)	01 (UR)	-	-
27.	Pulmonary Medicine	-	-	01 (SC)	01 (UR)
28.	Radiology	-	01 (OBC)	02 (01-UR, 01-SC)	04 (02-OBC, 01-SC, 01-ST)
29.	Radiotherapy	01 (SC)	01 (UR)	01 (UR)	-
30.	Surgical Gastroenterology	-	-	02 (01-ST, 01-EWS)	01 (OBC)
31.	Surgical Oncology	-	-	-	01 (UR)
32.	Transfusion Medicine and Blood Bank	01 (OBC)	-	01 (UR)	01 (OBC)
33.	Trauma and Emergency Medicine	-	-	-	03 (01-UR, 01-SC, 01-ST)
34.	Urology	01 (EWS)	-	02 (01-UR, 01-SC)	-
Total		18	12	28	25
Grand Total				83	

Note: 7 Seats (1-Professor, 1- Additional Professor, 2- Associate professor & 3- Assistant Professor) are Horizontally reserved for PwBD Candidates.

The above vacancies are provisional and subject to variation. The Executive Director, AIIMS, Gorakhpur reserves the right to change the number of the vacancies including reserved vacancies as per the Govt. of India rules/circulars. Application form along with department wise details of seats, reservation, terms and conditions etc. of the various posts are available on institute's website www.aiimsgorakhpur.edu.in All the applicants are advised to check AIIMS, Gorakhpur website www.aiimsgorakhpur.edu.in on regular basis for any further updates.

SD/-
Executive Director
AIIMS, Gorakhpur

SCIENCE

Uttarakhand flood maps may be underestimating risk, study warns

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Flood hazard assessments for Uttarakhand have routinely underestimated the danger to its towns and villages because they have leaned on long-term average rainfall figures rather than the extreme downpours that actually trigger disasters, according to a study in *Current Science*. The findings arrive at a moment when the Himalayan State is grappling with what climate scientists de-

scribe as a sharpening pattern of cloudbursts, glacial lake outbursts, and flash floods.

The study, led by researchers at the Malaviya National Institute of Technology, Jaipur, tracked how flood hazard zones have intensified in 2017-2021. Areas classified as 'high' or 'severe hazard' zones rose noticeably over that period, with 2021 showing the largest extent of 'high-hazard' land. Across all the years examined, more than 90% of

Uttarakhand fell within moderate or high-hazard categories.

The researchers mapped flood hazard zones the State using a Geographic Information System, a popular digital mapping technology used by planners everywhere. They combined six factors to assess where floods are most likely: elevation, slope, drainage density, topographic wetness, land use, and rainfall. Each factor was assigned a weight reflecting its influence on

flooding. Slope, elevation, and rainfall were judged the most important; land use, drainage density, and wetness were treated as secondary.

The map was then drawn once using the highest rainfall recorded in a given year and once using the average of those annual peaks across three decades. The contrast was stark. When the heaviest yearly rainfall was used, severe and high-hazard zones expanded across the State. When long-term av-

erages were used instead, those zones appeared to shrink. The authors argued that conventional methods relying on average values may give planners a false sense of safety.

Risky terrain

The findings carry weight in a State that has witnessed a series of catastrophes over the last two decades, from the Malpa landslide of 1998 and the Kedarnath disaster of 2013, in which Uttarakhand received 375% of its bench-

mark monsoon rainfall, to the Chamoli flood of 2021. Climate scientists have linked the rising frequency of extreme rainfall in the Himalayas to a warming atmosphere. Built-up areas, the study noted, have also expanded across the State, leaving less land able to absorb sudden runoff. The authors recommend flood maps be redrawn around extreme rainfall scenarios rather than long-term averages, and that buffer zones be created around the most vulnerable terrain.

SNAPSHOTS



Small camera reveals hidden world on Arctic seafloor

Researchers have caught a glimpse of life on the Arctic seafloor using a portable camera. After they deployed the device 260 m into a Greenlandic fjord, they saw a bustling ecosystem previously hidden from view. There were hundreds of small organisms, including shrimp-like amphipods and tiny jellyfish, and a snailfish swimming backwards and a narwhal. Using red LED lights, which many deep-sea creatures can't see, the researchers observed these animals without scaring them away.

Hope for pancreatic cancer as new drug shows promise

Pancreatic cancer has been one of medicine's most unforgiving challenges, often offering little time and few options; new results from a phase 3 trial suggest daraxonrasib could be a 'game changer' with mild to moderate side-effects

Arun Panchapakesan

In 1988, a landmark paper in *Cell* said that in around 95% of pancreatic cancers, a gene called *KRAS* carried mutations at a particular location. It was one of the first demonstrations of a mutation with near-universal frequency identified in a cancer.

Cancer is uncontrolled cell division. In a healthy individual, cells grow and divide in a tightly controlled cycle, with specific signals telling the cell when to divide or not. If something goes amiss in this process, cells can repair themselves or undergo programmed cell death. In cancer, this balance is disturbed, causing unregulated cell division. As a result, mistakes tend to accumulate in the DNA, leading to tumours that can invade surrounding tissues and spread to other organs.

The 1988 *Cell* paper showed the *KRAS* gene acts as a switch, regulating whether a cell divides. The *KRAS* protein – the product of the gene – exists in either an 'off' state, which suppresses cell division or an 'on' state that promotes it. The mutations reported in the study locked *KRAS* in its 'on' state, driving uncontrolled cell division, leading to pancreatic, colorectal, and lung cancers.

Pancreatic cancer is particularly deadly because it is usually detected late, when the disease has already spread to neighbouring tissues.

There are very few surgical options; even after

Lock it off

Daraxonrasib could be useful to treat a variety of cancers

- In 1988, scientists discovered mutations in the *KRAS* gene drove uncontrolled cell division in most pancreatic cancers
- Pancreatic cancer remains difficult to treat because it is usually detected late and resists standard chemotherapy
- The *KRAS* protein was long considered undruggable because its smooth surface lacks pockets for traditional small-molecule drugs
- Daraxonrasib works by locking various RAS proteins into a nonfunctional state to inhibit unregulated cancer cell division
- Recent clinical trials showed daraxonrasib significantly reduced tumour size in most patients with advanced pancreatic cancer
- The FDA has granted daraxonrasib priority status because it offers a promising new treatment for aggressive pancreatic cancers

Data presented in April suggested daraxonrasib may be more effective than previous treatments for pancreatic cancer. SCIENTIFIC ANIMATIONS, INC. (CC BY-SA)

surgery, recurrence is common. Standard chemotherapy is also not very effective.

For decades, the medical fraternity considered *KRAS* to be an attractive drug target. However, it proved exceptionally difficult to inhibit because most small-molecule drugs work by fitting into well-defined pockets or grooves on a protein's surface, blocking its activity, whereas *KRAS* has a relatively smooth, compact surface with few binding sites.

Despite this difficulty, several research groups attempted to target the *KRAS* gene, but nearly all efforts fared poorly in clinical trials. As a result, *KRAS* was long labelled "undruggable".

In June 2024, a California-based company called Revolution Medicines reported a molecule later

called daraxonrasib. It works by targeting a range of the RAS family of proteins, including *KRAS*, when they are in their 'on' state and signalling the cell to divide. Daraxonrasib first binds to another protein called cyclophilin-A, then locking it with *KRAS* into a nonfunctional state.

Since daraxonrasib inhibits multiple RAS variants, it could be useful to treat a variety of cancers.

In a phase 1/2 clinical trial, researchers evaluated daraxonrasib for safety and its ability to shrink tumours in patients with advanced cancers driven by RAS mutations. Results from these tests were encouraging enough for the drug to move forward into a phase 3 trial, where investigators tested daraxonrasib's actual effectiveness.

These results were presented at a meeting of the

American Association of Cancer Research in April. The findings suggested daraxonrasib may be more effective than previous treatments for pancreatic cancer. In 51% of patients, it reduced the size of tumours, and in 97% it caused their cancers to either shrink or not grow further.

However, daraxonrasib also had many side effects. Nearly all patients experienced mild to moderate effects, including skin rash, diarrhoea, mouth sores, nausea, and fatigue. However, importantly, no life-threatening side-effects were reported in any patients.

While the peer-reviewed data are still awaited, the early results have generated considerable excitement in the cancer research community. Many researchers are already

calling daraxonrasib a potential "game changer", particularly for cancers like pancreatic cancer, where treatment options are limited.

The strong clinical results have also led the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to include daraxonrasib among eight other therapies in the first-ever group of drugs to receive "National Priority Voucher" status. The FDA created this designation for highly promising drug candidates that address urgent national health needs.

The voucher also allows the FDA to shorten what would typically be a year-long review process to just one or two months. The results of the FDA review are awaited as well, and there is growing optimism that it will be positive. Meanwhile, the FDA has also given Revolution Medicines 'expanded access' to use daraxonrasib with patients who lack other treatment options.

For many decades, pancreatic cancer has stood as one of medicine's most unforgiving challenges, often offering little time, few options, and even less hope. Today, that narrative may finally be beginning to change. For a scientist, daraxonrasib is not a cure in the real sense of the word, at least not yet – but for patients and their families around the world, it is a long-awaited ray of hope.

(Arun Panchapakesan is an assistant professor at the Y.R. Gaitonde Centre for AIDS Research and Education, Chennai)



AI tool excels at identifying cells, even 'new' ones

A powerful AI tool called TranscriptFormer can identify cell types with extreme accuracy, even of species it hasn't seen before. Scientists trained it on 112 million cells from 12 species, spanning 1.5 billion years of evolution. It could rapidly detect disease states in human cells and naturally uncover complex biological patterns, such as how species are related, without new instructions. The model is a new way for comparing biology across all living beings.



Vulnerable communities in Nepal need insect pollinators

A study in Nepal has found that insect pollinators are essential for both human health and financial survival. Researchers tracked the diets and incomes of smallholder farming families and found that insects are responsible for 44% of a family's farming income and over 20% of its intake of vital nutrients, like vitamin A and folate. The native honeybee was the single most critical species. The study also found that actively managing these species could reverse malnourishment trends.

Do you need a paid AI subscription plan?



John Xavier

For a section of people, their monthly subscription budget got a new line item. The AI tools they once experimented with for free are now costing them money. And they now scroll past monthly billing reminders with the same resignation they once reserved for streaming services.

OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, Mistral, and xAI – each has its own price ladder, and its own gentle suggestion that the free version is merely a waiting room. But is the lobby experience good enough for most people? Every major AI platform has converged on roughly \$20 a month for its entry paid tier – ChatGPT Plus, Claude Pro, and Google AI Pro have all landed at this price with al-

most eerie synchrony. Mistral undercuts them at \$14.99. SuperGrok goes the other direction at \$30, and if you want Grok's frontier multi-agent system, that's \$300. Above \$20, ChatGPT and Claude both offer \$100 and \$200 tiers for users who need more runway.

The marketing pitch for each paid tier follows the same basic script: more access, more power, better models, faster responses.

But what about the free tiers?

Google's free Gemini includes Deep Research, NotebookLM, a capable model in Gemini 2.5 Flash, and even limited video generation credits. Claude's free plan gives you Sonnet – a model that handles most everyday writing, summarisation, and analysis tasks. ChatGPT's free tier still provides GPT-5.3, image generation, and web search. Mistral's free plan



GETTY IMAGES

caps you at roughly 25 messages a day, but those messages are processed at full quality with no speed throttling.

For the regular user, the free tiers deliver. So, paying \$20 a month for such use cases is, bluntly, an unnecessary subscription.

For developers, data scientists, and technically proficient users, paid AI subscriptions provide a new class of features.

Claude Code is an autonomous agent that plans, writes, tests, and debugs

across entire codebases. It can consume the equivalent of \$1,500 in API compute for a flat \$200 monthly fee, making it one of the most cost-efficient tools in a developer's arsenal.

ChatGPT's Codex agent, unlocked with Plus, can read and edit files, run tests, and commit to GitHub with minimal supervision. Google's Jules agent works asynchronously in the background, fixing bugs while you sleep.

This is the hidden two-tier structure that none of

the marketing materials state clearly: these platforms are priced like consumer subscriptions but deliver their real value as developer tools.

So who should actually pay? If you're a developer writing production code daily, the \$20-\$100 tier is almost certainly worth it, compounding productivity gains from AI coding agents. If you're a privacy-conscious professional, Mistral Pro at \$14.99 with its No Telemetry Mode offers something the American platforms don't: a contractual guarantee that your data isn't being used to train the next model.

The subscription industrial complex depends on the fear and anxiety that the free version is just slightly too limited to be useful. It manufactures friction at the edges by setting rate limits for messages and downgrading the model. And it mostly

works, because the drag is real enough to be felt, even when it's rarely actually encountered.

The deeper irony is that as competition intensifies, the free tiers will keep getting better. The companies are caught in a race to the bottom that slowly undermines their own paid conversion logic. It is unlikely that the company will entirely remove the paid tiers. But, for now, unless you write code professionally, the free tier is almost certainly enough.

Or, if you're genuinely tempted, pick one platform that matches your workflow and subscribe to that one. The one thing guaranteed to leave you worse off than the free tier is paying for four subscriptions simultaneously and feeling virtuous about it.

The AI companies will call that a power user. Your bank account will call it something else.



Question Corner

Flooding with light

On hotter days, why does the sky seem more grey than blue?

The sky's blue is due to Rayleigh scattering – when molecules in the air scatter light of shorter wavelength (blue) much more efficiently than that of longer ones. On hotter days, however, there can be other things in the air that can affect how light is scattered.

Warmer air can hold more moisture. So on a hotter day, the air can have a combination of higher humidity, in the form of water vapour and fine droplets, and more dust, aerosols, and other particulate matter that convective currents driven

by the heat have lifted. These larger particles scatter all wavelengths of light more equally, not just blue, an effect called Mie scattering. Rayleigh scattering happens only when the object scattering the light is much smaller than the light's wavelength. As a result of Mie scattering, the sky's colours are 'washed out' into a pale grey haze. Human perception also plays a small role. On hot and bright days, the overall luminance of the sky increases, forcing our eyes to adjust.

Readers may send their questions / answers to science@thehindu.co.in

What is India's first orbital data centre satellite?

What is an orbital data centre? Why are global firms interested? What does the Pixxel-Sarvam partnership involve?

Jacob Koshy

The story so far:

On May 4, Pixxel, a Bengaluru-based imaging satellite company, said that it would partner with the AI firm Sarvam to launch what is being described as India's first 'orbital data centre' satellite, named Pathfinder. This is expected to be a 200 kg-class satellite scheduled for orbit by the fourth quarter of 2026. It will carry datacentre-class GPUs (graphics processing units) alongside Pixxel's hyperspectral imaging camera, the company's bread-and-butter business.

What is an orbital data centre?

It is a constellation of satellites carrying the same kind of GPUs found in terrestrial data centres. It can train and run AI models in orbit rather than only relaying data to ground stations. Such a centre can do more demanding work than the low-power "edge" processors that conventional satellites use for tasks like signal compression. Edge computing on earth refers to the practice of running computation close to where data is generated rather than in a centralised cloud, and the same logic, applied in orbit, is what space-based compute promises to extend.

Pixxel's Pathfinder is being built as a single-satellite demonstrator, designed to test whether ground-grade hardware can be made to function reliably in the harsh, hot environment of low Earth orbit.

An orbital data centre can do more demanding work than the low-power 'edge' processors that conventional satellites use for tasks like signal compression

Why are global firms suddenly interested?

Three factors have converged in the past two years, prompting large tech companies to strive towards making such

centres real. Data centres are being constrained by limits on energy availability, land, water, and local regulation, all of which have been amplified by the demands of AI. In the right orbit, solar power is effectively continuous and offers free electricity, which proponents regard as the strongest argument for moving computation to space.

Earth observation satellites also generate detailed, heavy image files that are expensive to download; processing the data in orbit and beaming down only the conclusions has long been seen as a way to ease that bottleneck.

The third factor is competitive positioning. SpaceX CEO, Elon Musk, said on X in 2025 that "simply scaling up Starlink V3 satellites, which have high-speed laser links, would work. SpaceX will be doing this." He also argued that "Starship (the company's most powerful rocket) could deliver 100GW/year to high Earth orbit within four to five years if we can solve the other parts of the equation." Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin, Microsoft's Azure Space, and Lonestar Data Holdings have already begun pilot deployments. None of these efforts has yet produced a commercial-scale orbital data centre.

What are the challenges?

The GPU chips powered by electricity from solar panels become hot. Now space may be cold, and common sense may suggest it a natural sink for the heat. However, space is also empty and its vacuum eliminates convection. This is the mechanism by which warm air on earth is normally carried away from terrestrial servers; in orbit, a hot GPU chip is effectively an oven unable to fan away its own waste energy, with no air to carry it off. The only solution to this is radiation, which requires that heat be pumped through ammonia-filled loops to deployable panels, where it can be radiated as infrared light into space. The history of crewed spaceflight is studded with reminders of how unforgiving this regime can be.

Radiation damage is the second problem, and one that has shaped the design of every long-duration mission flown to date. 'Bit flips' – where bits and bytes of computers randomly change – and long-term semiconductor degradation are caused by cosmic rays, and radiation-hardened chips, which govern most space hardware, typically lag commercial GPUs by years. Power requires storage for eclipse periods, and maintenance is effectively impossible without robotic servicing, so redundancy must be designed in from the start.

What does the Pixxel-Sarvam partnership actually involve?

The Pathfinder satellite will be designed, built, launched, and operated by Pixxel. Sarvam, an Indian AI firm will provide what it describes as the AI backbone, with full-stack language models being run on the satellite's GPU layer for both training and inference. Pixxel's hyperspectral camera will be carried on the same platform, giving the mission an immediate use case: imagery captured in orbit can be analysed in orbit, with only the conclusions transmitted to Earth. The Pixxel team has several experts who have worked with the Indian Space Research Organisation and have experience in thermal management in space.

What is the Governor's role in a hung Assembly?

Why did the Governor refuse to swear in TVK party president Vijay as the new Tamil Nadu Chief Minister for many days? What is the primary objective of the Governor in such situations? What has the Supreme Court ruled in the past? Is the floor test the best way of proving majority?

Krishnadas Rajagopal

The story so far:

Despite the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) emerging as the single largest party in the 2026 Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, Governor Rajendra Arlekar refused to swear in party president C. Joseph Vijay as the new Chief Minister for several days. The Lok Bhavan insisted that Mr. Vijay prove majority by handing over physical letters of support from at least 118 MLAs in the 234-seat Legislative Assembly. On May 9, Mr. Vijay met the Governor for the fourth time and staked claim to form the government. He is scheduled to take oath at 10 a.m. on Sunday.

What is the role of the Governor in the formation of a new government if there is a hung Assembly following an election?

The Governor appoints the Chief Minister under Article 164 of the Constitution. The Constitution does not provide a settled procedure for a Governor to choose a Chief Minister in a hung Assembly though constitutional conventions dictate that the Governor's actions must be guided by sobriety.

The primary objective of the Governor, as a constitutional head of the State, is to ensure the formation of a stable government. To this end, the Sarkaria Commission; the five-member Committee of Governors appointed by the President pursuant to the decision taken at the Conference of Governors held in New Delhi in November 1970; and conventions evolved through successive Supreme Court rulings provide that the personal bona fide or any ipse dixit of Governors is irrelevant.

The Lok Bhavan must proceed legally and explore all possibilities with political parties,



TVK chief Vijay meets Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar at Lok Bhavan in Chennai on Friday. PTI

The Supreme Court has time and again held that the House, and not Lok Bhavan, 'is the place where democracy is in action'

groups, and independent MLAs within a reasonable time to maintain the constitutional machinery in the State. Only if all alternatives fail, and to avoid any violence to correct constitutional practice, should a Governor, as a last resort, initiate the process for declaration of President's rule in the State under Article 356 of the Constitution.

The Constitution has not defined the 'reasonable time' a Governor could take to explore possibilities for forming a responsible and stable government. But the Governor cannot wait indefinitely, and in the process, lay the field open for horse-trading. In fact, the Supreme Court has interpreted in the *B.R. Kapur* (2001) and *Rameshwar Prasad* (2006) judgments that the Governor could dissolve a Legislative Assembly under Article 174(2)(b) even before the first meeting of the State Legislature, to avoid a breakdown of the constitutional machinery due to parties' inability to stake claim to form a meaningful government for want of requisite strength. The Governor cannot be in limbo, neither being able to appoint a government nor exercise the power of dissolution.

What is the hierarchy or order of preference to extend an invitation to form a government?

The Sarkaria Commission Report of 1988, endorsed by the Supreme Court, has recommended that a Governor should first invite the pre-poll alliance which has won a majority. However, in Tamil Nadu, no such alliance has a clear majority. The next option is to invite the single largest party that could demonstrate majority support.

A nine-judge Bench in the *S.R. Bommai* judgment (1994) reasoned that the Constitution does not create an obligation that the political party forming the government should necessarily have a majority in the Assembly. "Minority governments are not unknown. What is necessary is that that government should enjoy the confidence of the House," the Supreme Court said.

The third in the order of preference is a post-poll alliance of parties that can demonstrate a majority in the Assembly. The use of this third option has become more frequent in recent times, with coalition governments becoming the norm. The Court had found nothing wrong in ideologically similar parties engaging in mutually convenient post-poll alliances to cross the Rubicon of the 'golden majority' in the House.

If none of these options work, the Governor can recommend President's rule, although this is an extreme measure. The Court has advised

that a "constitutional machinery in the State should, as far as possible, be maintained". This advice has assumed new relevance in recent years, with Governors seen as using their discretionary powers to recommend President's rule to "promote the political interests of the party in power at the Centre."

Has the floor test been a constant, objective means to prove majority?

Critics have said Governor Arlekar's insistence on physical letters of support is the sole reason for the deadlock in Tamil Nadu. A writ petition has been filed in the Supreme Court, arguing that the Governor is "duty-bound" to invite Mr. Vijay to form the new government, swear him in, and immediately subject his claim to a trust vote on the floor of the Assembly.

The Committee of Governors had also concluded that the test of confidence in the government should normally be left to a vote in the Assembly.

Though the *S.R. Bommai* judgment includes a paragraph indicating that a floor test should be confined to testing the strength of an incumbent Chief Minister who is alleged to have lost majority support, and not used in the formation of a new government after elections, successive Supreme Court precedents have nevertheless relied on the floor test as the most objective and transparent way to ascertain majority. These judgments also highlighted that the fate of the electorate's mandate must not be left to the personal discretion of the Governor.

What are some instances where floor tests rescued the constitutional machinery in States?

Repeated occasions of the Court ordering floor tests to assess a claim to govern, whether by an existing or incoming government, has made it the touchstone for ensuring a stable government. In 2017, the Court declined to stay the swearing-in of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Manohar Parrikar as Goa Chief Minister at the head of a post-poll alliance, but reduced the 15-day window allowed to him to prove majority over the Congress, which was the single largest party, and ordered a floor test in 48 hours. Mr. Parrikar won the floor test. The Court intervened in Karnataka the next year after the Governor invited B.S. Yediyurappa to form the government while giving him 15 days to prove majority. On a challenge by the Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) combine, the Court allowed the swearing-in but cut short the time for the floor test to 24 hours and said it must be conducted on live camera and not by secret ballot. Mr. Yediyurappa resigned before the trust vote.

The Supreme Court has held that the House, and not Lok Bhavan, "is the place where democracy is in action." That is, the decision on who should govern must not be left to the subjective satisfaction of the Governor but be determined on the floor of the House.

Why is hantavirus drawing global attention?

What is hantavirus? What happened on the expedition cruise ship MV *Hondius* early this month? How does hantavirus spread? Why are health agencies monitoring recent cases? What are the symptoms and treatment options? How concerned should the public be?

Athira Elssa Johnson

The story so far:

Following a hantavirus outbreak on the MV *Hondius* expedition cruise ship in early May, in which three deaths were reported and at least five others were infected, global attention has once again turned to the group of viruses. Hantavirus had made headlines last year following the passing of Betsy Hackman, wife of renowned American actor Gene Hackman.

What happened on the ship?

The Dutch expedition cruise ship was travelling from Ushuaia in Argentina across parts of the South Atlantic towards Cape Verde and the Canary Islands when cases were identified among both the passengers and the crew.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said 147 passengers and crew were onboard, and 34 passengers and crew had previously disembarked. It said that as of May 8, there were eight cases (six confirmed and two probable cases) reported. Three of them died (two confirmed and one probable) after contracting the Andes strain of hantavirus. Several others were hospitalised with symptoms including fever and breathing difficulties.



MV *Hondius* docks off Cape Verde's Praia port on May 4, as health authorities investigate suspected hantavirus cases. REUTERS

WHO has stated that hantavirus does not spread easily between humans like airborne viruses such as influenza or SARS-CoV-2

After confirmed and suspected cases had been identified among passengers after they left the ship and travelled to different countries, health authorities in Singapore, Switzerland, South Africa, Spain, and the U.S. began tracking and monitoring passengers.

What is hantavirus?

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses mainly carried by rodents such as rats and mice. Human beings can get infected after coming into contact with infected rodent urine, saliva, or droppings, especially while cleaning or disturbing contaminated areas, which can release virus particles into the air.

Hantavirus infections can affect either the lungs or the kidneys. Some strains can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, a severe respiratory illness, while others can lead to haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome, affecting the kidneys and blood vessels. WHO states that even though most hantaviruses do not spread from one human to another, the Andes virus strain found in parts of South America has shown some human-to-human transmission, usually among close contacts.

Why are health agencies concerned now?

The outbreak linked to the MV *Hondius* cruise ship drew attention because passengers travelled across several countries before the infection was identified. WHO reported that cases were characterised by fever, gastrointestinal symptoms, pneumonia, respiratory distress, and shock. Reacting to fears of another pandemic, officials from WHO and the Disease Control and Prevention have stressed that hantavirus spreads very differently from viruses such as COVID-19 and is far less transmissible.

What are the symptoms?

WHO states that symptoms usually appear between one and eight weeks after exposure. Early symptoms are often flu-like and can include fever, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, chills, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and dizziness.

In severe cases, the infection can affect the

lungs, causing coughing, chest tightness, breathing difficulty, and fluid build-up in the lungs. Some forms of the disease can also affect the kidneys and blood vessels, leading to kidney complications or bleeding problems. Since the symptoms can resemble illnesses such as influenza, COVID-19, dengue, or pneumonia, diagnosis may sometimes be delayed. Even though infections remain rare overall, severe respiratory forms of hantavirus infection can be dangerous, particularly without early medical care.

Who is at risk?

People living or working in rodent-prone environments face the highest risk. Farmers, forestry workers, campers, construction workers, and people cleaning poorly ventilated or abandoned buildings are vulnerable. Health agencies also advise caution while handling pet rodents or entering rodent-infested spaces.

Is there a treatment or cure?

WHO notes that early diagnosis and timely medical attention can significantly improve outcomes. Prevention is important, particularly through rodent control, proper sanitation, and safe cleaning practices in potentially contaminated environments.

Currently, there is no specific antiviral cure or approved vaccine for hantavirus infection. Treatment mainly focuses on supportive medical care, including oxygen therapy, fluid management, and intensive care support during severe illness. Some patients may require mechanical ventilation.

Could this become another pandemic?

Public health agencies say current evidence does not suggest a COVID-19-like global pandemic scenario. WHO has repeatedly stated that the overall risk to the wider public remains low and that hantavirus does not spread easily between humans like airborne viruses such as influenza or SARS-CoV-2.

The outbreak has also drawn attention to zoonotic diseases – infections that spread from animals to humans – and highlighted the importance of staying prepared as global travel and human-animal interactions increase. At the same time, WHO and other health agencies have stressed that stronger surveillance, quicker reporting, testing systems, and coordination between countries are helping health authorities respond effectively.

PROFILES

The star who stormed into politics

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam

The political organisation built by actor-turned-politician Vijay, which emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly, declares itself as a secular movement, rooted in the Tamil experience, and committed to social justice and equality

Ramya Kannan

In Tamil Nadu, reel is often indistinguishable from real, particularly in politics. In a State where people have gotten used to film folding into politics and vice versa, in fitting fashion, the website of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) runs an AI-generated scene of war in the background. The ground shudders as a general rides in on horseback and dismounts, in a classic introductory scene for the hero, the rescuer, the commander who will vanquish all evil — C. Joseph Vijay.

Just over two years old, the TVK, which was formed in February 2024, has managed a cinematic transformation, going on to seize an impressive number of seats (108) in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in its political debut. Essentially emerging from Vijay's extensive fan-based network, the TVK has since declared itself as a secular organisation, rooted in the Tamil experience, and committed to social justice and equality.

While the party was questioned several times by its fierce critics about its ideological stance, it positioned itself as a movement with a stake in equality. It went with the opening lines of Tirukkural 972: *Pirappokkum ella uyirkkum*, meaning "all are born equal". The party also created a motley pantheon of sorts, installing social reformist leader Periyar, former Chief Minister Kamaraj, the father of the Constitution, Ambedkar, freedom fighter Velu Nachchiyar, and Gandhian and social activist Anjalai Ammal on a pedestal.

While his entry into politics was rumoured for long, it was on February 2, 2024, when people least expected it, that Vijay launched his political party, christening it the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, sticking to the Tamil identity and playing on his name: Vijay — for victory. He chose to launch in Chennai, the fortress of the party's Enemy No. 1 — the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK).

Vijay had decided to take the bull by its horns in a State that understood a jallikattu metaphor very well. The city repaid him richly — the TVK won in 14 of Chennai's 16 seats, even defeating

incumbent Chief Minister M.K. Stalin in his Kolathur base, a seat he had won three times before.

During the launch, Vijay perorated, to raucous applause and whistling from his fans: "It is a fact that everyone is yearning for governance that is selfless, transparent, corruption-free, and without caste or religious bias. What is important is that such politics is in tune with the Tamil culture of equality and political traditions of the State, and within the framework of the Indian Constitution."

Political and ideological rivals

He declared he would contest only in the 2026 Assembly elections, and would skip the Lok Sabha polls of 2024. He pointed to the DMK as his political rival and the BJP, his ideological rival. Vijay went on to rail against Stalin and the DMK, accusing them of indulging in dynastic politics and corruption, promising a "change" from all that. The TVK, he claimed, would defeat the behemoth Dravidian duopoly, set store by people-centred politics, fight against corruption, drugs and unsafe spaces for women, and create job opportunities.

He went on to refer to Stalin as 'Stalin Uncle' in an obvious effort to underline his relative youth, hailing the younger demographic. He urged children to ask their parents and grandparents to vote for 'Vijay mama'. The election symbol allotted to the TVK by the Election Commission of India, the whistle, too, worked its charm, with its entrenched emotive connect to the people of the State.

Vijay or the TVK may not have tasted power or been through the hamster wheel of governance, but he had actually announced his political ambition with the launch of Vijay Makkal Iyakkam (VMI), an organisation of fans with a welfare motive, in 2009. In Tamil Nadu, the *narpani mandram* is an established tradition — it is basically a welfare club of fans who come together to carry out outreach activities in the name of the star.

Over 80,000 fan clubs were set up under the VMI, a base that would grow to outpace the mightiest of political parties in Tamil Nadu. While they implemented the regular welfare



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

measures that *narpani mandrams* are usually involved in — distribution of computers to students, setting up free canteens, and blood donation camps — Vijay bid them to stretch a bit. They came together to launch disaster relief work during cyclones and floods in the State; some of the members contested as Independents in the 2021 local body polls and emerged victorious.

He himself stretched beyond the remit of a welfare/fan club president — in January 2017, he extended support to the massive protests that shook the State against the ban on jallikattu, the bull taming sport. Taking on the role of the anti-establishment hero he had been building himself up as, through

his movies, he visited the venue on the Marina in Chennai, masked up.

He also met with political party leaders over the years, including the Congress' Rahul Gandhi, the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his term as Gujarat Chief Minister, and social activist Anna Hazare. Vijay met the family members of S. Anitha, a topper in the Class XII examination, who ended her life after she failed to clear the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), at their home in Ariyalur. He also visited the families of the victims of the anti-Sterlite protests, again in their homes, in Thoothukudi. This was something he failed to do,

inexplicably, after the Karur stampede.

During his rally in Karur, in September 2025, 41 persons, including children, died in a stampede that occurred when his caravan belatedly pulled into Velusamyapuram on the narrow Karur-Erode highway. His actions after this were unusual — he left the place overnight and brought the family members of the victims to Chennai to meet him, instead of meeting them in their homes. In a later rally, he would rhetorically ask: "What did I do wrong in Karur?" turning the tables on the State government.

Walking on fire

Rambunctious crowds lined the pathways whenever he made a public appearance, dangerously throwing themselves at his convoy. Even during the heat of the campaign where the leaders of other political parties went to the nooks and crannies of the State, Vijay's appearances were few and far between. But that was a choice he had made, to adopt a strategy that was dissed as 'lazy' before the elections, but remarked upon with admiration after his win: A man, who seemingly was a loner, had no use for traditional electoral campaign methods. Instead, he turned to social media, setting, for his cadre, a task to build a whirlwind engagement agenda online. An army of official and unofficial supporters built up a storm — one that eventually put him ahead of all his rivals.

The TVK has indeed emerged the disruptor Vijay promised it would be. In some ways, it has already reshaped the power map in Tamil Nadu, but the sequence of events in the days after the declaration of results has turned out to border the farcical. While the TVK holds 108 seats (and 35% vote share), the highest any party has scored this election, it fell short of the absolute majority of 118 in a 234-seat legislature. After a week of negotiations, he managed to get support and bring his tally up to an acceptable 120 seats. Vijay, a political novice, has been thrown willy-nilly into the smouldering coal bed of politicking and political jockeying. How will a hero, used to setting the screens on fire, take to walking on fire? As the plot thickens, stay tuned.

THE GIST

The TVK has created a motley pantheon of sorts, installing social reformist leader Periyar, former CM Kamaraj, Ambedkar, freedom fighter Velu Nachchiyar, and social activist Anjalai Ammal on a pedestal

Vijay had actually announced his political ambition in 2009 with the launch of Vijay Makkal Iyakkam (VMI), an organisation of fans with a welfare motive

Over 80,000 fan clubs were set up under the VMI, a base that would grow to outpace the mightiest of political parties in Tamil Nadu

The Bengal pivot

Suvendu Adhikari

Mamata Banerjee's former trusted lieutenant has unseated her from power and become West Bengal's first BJP Chief Minister

Shiv Sahay Singh

Weeks before Suvendu Adhikari defected from the Trinamool Congress to join the BJP in December 2020, several senior Trinamool leaders tried to persuade him to stay. But Mr. Adhikari's close aides knew that he had made up his mind: he wanted to become Chief Minister of West Bengal — an ambition he could never realise had he remained with the Trinamool.

Mr. Adhikari was the most promising of the second generation of Trinamool leaders until Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee emerged on the political scene. At the age of 27, Abhishek was elected MP from the Diamond Harbour Lok Sabha seat in 2014. By then, Mr. Adhikari had emerged as a prominent Trinamool leader who challenged the organisational might of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) during the Nandigram protests.

Mr. Adhikari comes from a political family in West Bengal's coastal Purba Medinipur district. His father Sishir Adhikari was associated with the Congress and then with the Trinamool when the party was set up in 1998. It was the fight against land acquisition at Singur and Nandigram that cata-

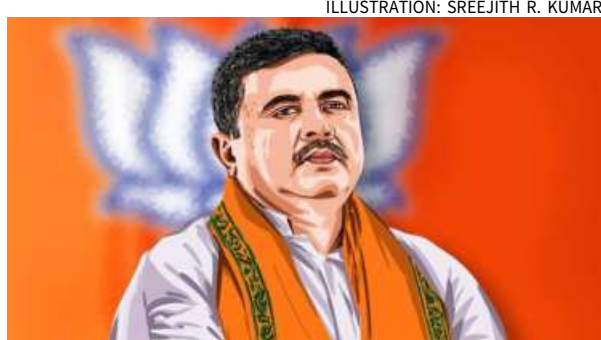


ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

pulted Ms. Banerjee and the Trinamool to power in 2011, ending 34 years of Left Front rule in West Bengal. Mr. Adhikari was at the forefront of these protests. From the victims of Nandigram shooting in 2007 to those killed in communal violence in Murshidabad in 2025, many families of victims say that Mr. Adhikari stood by them when few others did.

Growing influence

After the Trinamool came to power in 2011, Mr. Adhikari started extending his political influence across south and central Bengal, bringing MLAs, civic bodies and strongholds of the CPI(M)-led Left Front and the Congress into the Trinamool's fold. In 2016, he joined the Cabinet headed by Ms. Banerjee and became one of the most influential Ministers, in charge of the Transport and Environment Department.

The most challenging part of Mr. Adhikari's polit-

ical journey came after he left the Trinamool. After defeating Ms. Banerjee in Nandigram in the 2021 Assembly polls by a margin of 1,956 votes, he faced a barrage of criminal cases by the West Bengal Police.

The State police filed so many cases against him that the Calcutta High Court, in an unprecedented order, directed that no new FIRs be filed against Mr. Adhikari and stayed proceedings in all pending cases. The affidavit filed by the BJP leader before the Election Commission in 2026 referred to 29 cases.

By his own admission, the BJP leader had to approach the Calcutta High Court on 111 occasions after the police denied him permission to hold public meetings. In campaign rallies, he repeatedly said West Bengal would go the way of Bangladesh if the Trinamool were to be voted to power again in 2026.

Mr. Adhikari has not been a stranger to controversies. His name figured

in the Narada sting videos in which several Trinamool leaders were seen accepting cash on camera before the 2016 Assembly polls. More recently, after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, he triggered another controversy when he said there was no need for the BJP Minority Morcha as Muslims did not vote for the BJP. If Ms. Banerjee was a student of the Left Front's brand of politics, Mr. Adhikari is a student of Ms. Banerjee's — populist, relentless, unforgiving, and unafraid to deploy the administrative apparatus against political adversaries. Once her closest aide, he went on to become her fiercest rival.

By defeating Ms. Banerjee in her Bhabanipur bastion by 15,115 votes in the 2026 Assembly election, Mr. Adhikari cemented his claim to the Chief Minister's post in West Bengal.

At 57, Mr. Adhikari will take charge of West Bengal at one of its most challenging moments — when the State is in urgent need of industry and jobs, its social fabric deeply polarised, and concerns over law and order persist. One of West Bengal's most popular leaders, Mr. Adhikari brings decades of electoral experience and some administrative experience. But he will need considerable political skill and far-sightedness to put the State back on track.

Double-edged sword

Mythos

The Anthropic AI model can not only identify vulnerabilities in cyberspace that humans may have missed, but also generate ways to exploit them, potentially even for non-experts

V. Nivedita

In cybersecurity, speed is everything. The faster a vulnerability is found and rectified, the safer the data is. For years, human expertise was needed to do this. Now, Artificial Intelligence can identify hidden vulnerabilities and write the code to patch it in hours, compressing a process that once took teams of experts days or weeks. But, what happens when the same AI increases the risk?

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned that while AI could strengthen cyber defence, it could also make cyberattacks faster, cheaper, and accessible even to non-experts. The risks are particularly serious for the financial sector, which relies heavily on shared digital infrastructure like software, cloud services, payment networks, and interconnected databases.

In a new report, the IMF singled out Anthropic's Claude Mythos Preview to show how quickly risks are rising. Mythos is a large language model developed with general-purpose reasoning, coding, and autonomous tasks.

In April, Anthropic announced that Mythos would not be released publicly because of its ability to identify unknown flaws in IT systems, which could



REUTERS

potentially be exploited by hackers. But on April 22, it confirmed it was investigating reports that unauthorised users had gained access to Mythos.

Mythos can find 'zero-day' or undiscovered vulnerabilities in real open-source codebases. It has also demonstrated capabilities to reverse-engineer exploits in closed-source software, and turn N-day, or known but not yet widely patched, vulnerabilities into exploits. In short, Mythos can not only identify vulnerabilities that humans may have missed, but also generate ways to exploit them, potentially even for non-experts.

"The vulnerabilities it finds are often subtle or difficult to detect. Many of them are ten or twenty years old, with the oldest we have found so far being a now-patched 27-year-old bug in OpenBSD — an operating system known primarily for its security," Anthropic said in a blog. The company also re-

vealed how quickly these capabilities emerged. Anthropic said its engineers were able to ask Mythos to find vulnerabilities and produce a complete, working exploit in just one night. "In other cases, we've had researchers develop scaffolds that allow Mythos Preview to turn vulnerabilities into exploits without any human intervention," the company wrote.

Fears of cyberattacks

More worryingly, the company revealed that these capabilities were not intentionally trained into the system. The blog noted that Mythos was able to develop these capabilities "very quickly" even though the AI was not trained specifically for them. "Rather, they emerged as a downstream consequence of general improvements in code, reasoning, and autonomy."

The challenge is that AI is already deeply embedded within the financial

system. Powerful systems like Mythos raise fears that cyberattacks could become more scalable, automated, and accessible.

The IMF has urged governments and regulators not to treat AI "as a purely technical or operational issue" and instead build resilience through supervision, coordination, and preparedness. Governments are beginning to respond. Regulators and financial authorities across the world are warning that AI could amplify cyber risks in critical sectors.

In India, after reports emerged that unauthorised users may have gained access to Mythos, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman convened a meeting with Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, bankers, and other stakeholders to assess the risks posed by AI and its implications for financial data security.

Mythos reveals a deeper problem in the system. The IMF points out that the risks are not limited to the financial sector alone. Sectors like energy, telecommunications, and public services are also vulnerable. Dependence on a small number of software platforms, cloud providers, and AI models could further increase the impact because many sectors rely on the same infrastructure.

BEIRUT Israeli strikes kill four near Beirut, at least 13 in southern Lebanon



Three Israeli drone strikes on vehicles just south of Beirut on Saturday killed four persons while a series of air strikes on southern Lebanon killed at least 13, including a man and his 12-year-old daughter, state media and the Health Ministry said.

JERUSALEM Israel to release two Gaza flotilla activists from prison: rights group



Israel will release two foreign activists taken off a Gaza-bound aid flotilla from detention on Saturday, the rights group representing them said.

PARIS 39 in custody in Paris over banned far-right and anti-fascist marches



Thirty-nine people were taken into custody in Paris on Saturday in connection with "banned protests by far-right and anti-fascist groups".

COLOMBO Top Sri Lankan Buddhist monk arrested over alleged sex abuse



Sri Lankan authorities arrested a senior Buddhist monk on Saturday for the alleged sexual abuse of an 11-year-old girl, marking the highest-profile case involving clergy in the country.

Deal hangs in balance amid renewed clashes in the Gulf

A U.S. fighter jet fired on and disabled two Iranian-flagged tankers that Washington accused of challenging its naval blockade; Trump says he is expecting Tehran's response to the U.S. proposal

Agence France-Presse TEHRAN

Iran questioned the seriousness of American diplomacy on Saturday in the wake of renewed naval clashes in the Gulf, while keeping Washington waiting for a response to its latest negotiating position.

U.S. President Donald Trump had said on Friday that he was expecting Iran's response to Washington's latest proposal on a deal to extend a fragile truce and launch peace talks - "supposedly tonight".

But, if Iran did send the talks' Pakistani mediators a response, there was no public sign of this, and Tehran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi called into question the reliability of the U.S. leadership, in a call with his Turkish counterpart.

"The recent escalation of tensions by American forces in the Persian Gulf



A banner depicting the U.S. President which reads, 'There is no need for a video, I will do what ever you say' in Tehran on Saturday. AFP

and their numerous actions in violating the ceasefire have added to suspicions about the motivation and seriousness of the American side in the path of diplomacy," he said, according to an Iranian account of the call published by the ISNA news agency.

Iran's ports. The U.S. action prompted Iranian retaliatory attacks. An Iranian military official told local media the country's navy had "responded to the violation of the ceasefire and to American terrorism with strikes" and "the clashes have now ceased".

sea lane that Iran is seeking to control to extract tolls from foreign vessels and to wield economic leverage over the U.S. and its allies. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated on Friday that it was "unacceptable" for Tehran to control the key oil route.

Washington has sent Iran, via Pakistani mediators, a proposal to extend the truce in the Gulf to allow for talks on a final settlement of the conflict launched 10 weeks ago with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei said on Friday that the proposal was still "under review".

Qatar's Prime Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, met with U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance in Washington on Friday and discussed the Pakistani-led efforts to broker a permanent peace.

Army fighting 'aggressive' NATO-backed force: Putin

Agence France-Presse MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday that his soldiers in Ukraine were fighting an "aggressive force" backed by all of NATO and described his war goals as "just", in a combative address to the annual Victory Day parade on Red Square.

Mr. Putin has made the memory of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War a central narrative of his 25-year rule, and authorities typically mark the parade with pomp and grandeur.

But a spate of Ukrainian long-range attacks in recent weeks prompted the Kremlin to ramp up security measures and downsize this year's celebrations.

The parade was vastly scaled back compared to previous years, with no military hardware on display for the first time in nearly two decades and only a handful of foreign dignitaries in attendance - most of them leaders of Russia's close allies.



Members of a military band stand next to a screen broadcasting Vladimir Putin's address during the parade on Saturday. AFP

agreed to observe a three-day ceasefire over the event, following a last-minute appeal from U.S. President Donald Trump. Moscow had threatened a "massive" strike on central Kyiv if Ukraine disrupted the proceedings.

In an address to the parade, attended by Russian military units as well as soldiers from North Korea, Mr. Putin invoked the Soviet victory to rally support for his army in Ukraine.

'Past inspiring present' "The great feat of the generation of victors inspires the soldiers carrying out the goals of the special mil-

itary operation today," Mr. Putin said.

"They are confronting an aggressive force armed and supported by the entire NATO bloc. And despite this, our heroes move forward," he said.

"I firmly believe that our cause is just," he added later.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said that the U.S. was in a hurry to clinch a peace deal to end the Ukraine war but that getting to any sort of agreement was a very long way off because the issues were so complicated and talks were basically on hold.

Rubio defends U.S. sanctions targeting Cuban conglomerate

Associated Press HAVANA

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday defended the Trump administration's decision to slap new sanctions on Cuba, the largest of which is against Grupo de Administracion Empresarial S.A. (GAESA), a business conglomerate operated by the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces.

In remarks to the press on Friday, Mr. Rubio said the sanctions were not on

the Cuban people and he referred to GAESA as a company that "is taking anything that makes money in Cuba and illegally putting it into the pockets of a few regime insiders".

Economist Pavel Vidal said that the measures are "very concerning" for an economy already "practically paralysed".

The U.S. has blocked fuel shipments to Cuba since January, further escalating the island's years-long economic crisis.

UN mission in Congo warns of wave of attacks in east

Agence France-Presse KINSHASA

The UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo warned on Saturday of a "deadly" wave of attacks in the country's restive east targeting civilians.

"Dozens of civilians have been killed in recent days" in areas in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, MONUSCO said. Local sources said ADF fighters killed at least 36 people in two days.

U.K.'s Starmer vows to 'listen to voters' after election drubbing

Agence France-Presse LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised on Saturday he would "listen to voters" after his Labour party received a historic drubbing in local and regional elections.

A disillusioned electorate backed hard-right and nationalist parties in Thursday's ballots - Mr. Starmer's biggest electoral test since Labour ousted the Conservatives in 2024.

"The right lesson is to listen to voters," but it "doesn't mean tacking right or left", Mr. Starmer, who has faced calls to re-



Keir Starmer

biggest share of seats in those elections. With almost all votes tallied, the results were grim for Labour.

Clive Betts, the party's joint longest-serving MP, urged the Cabinet to take decisive action on Mr. Starmer's premiership.

Mr. Starmer has vowed to remain as Britain's Prime Minister but admitted the party had failed to sustain the public's trust that it was doing enough to deliver change.

His government had "made unnecessary mistakes" and failed to give the public "hope", he wrote.

KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd. Tender Notice for Transportation of Aluminium Trihydrate-1152MT and Supply of Tickle Condenser.

U.T. OF LAKSHADWEEP LAKSHADWEEP DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED. Employment Notice for Chief Engineer (Civil) on deputation basis from Central / State Governments and PSUs.

राजस्थान घरेलू प्राधिकरण. ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 06/2026-27. Construction of Raja Khemkaran Panorama.

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, देवघर. ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES DEOGHAR. Recruitment Cell AIIMS Deoghar.

தமிழ்நாடு உடற்கல்வியியல் மற்றும் விளையாட்டுப் பல்கலைக்கழகம். TAMIL NADU PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS UNIVERSITY. Admission Notification - Regular Programme 2026-2027.

REAPING THE FRUITS

Prince has worked extremely hard, says LSG bowling coach



All the credit should go to the bowlers. My job is like a mirror. (To) show them where they are and where they need to do to improve. And unless they put in the hard yards, they are not going to reap the benefits. We had lot of discussions and he (Prince Yadav) has worked extremely hard — LSG bowling coach Bharat Arun.

UNPLAYABLE DELIVERY

Don't think anyone can bowl it at will: Bharat on Prince's 'dream ball'



LSG bowling coach Bharat Arun hailed Prince Yadav's delivery to dismiss Virat Kohli in the match against RCB, saying even the maestro was amazed with it. Arun said: "I don't think anyone can bowl it at will, but if you are consistently working on your swing, it can be possible. And it was a dream ball".

GOOD CHEMISTRY

Noor and Akeal help each other out on the ground: CSK's Sriram



Noor Ahmad and Akeal Hosein share a good rapport and help each other out on the ground... they're well prepared in terms of being tactically aware. Noor's rhythm is pretty good now and he's sorted out his run-up. These minor tweaks are working really well for him — CSK assistant bowling coach Sridharan Sriram.

EVER-READY

Important to be prepared in Impact Player era: Rutherford



MI's Sherfane Rutherford stressed it was important for players to be prepared in the Impact Player era, despite their selection being at the mercy of the management. "It is important to keep our minds in the right place, keep working. In the nets, I work on different scenarios so that I am not surprised when it comes to game day."

Gill and Rashid sizzle in Titans' thumping victory over Royals

The skipper smashes 84 off 44 deliveries and puts on 118 for the opening wicket with Sai Sudharsan as the visitor amasses 229 for four; the leggie bamboozles the Royals batters with a four-for after Rabada and Siraj account for the JaiSoorya pair

IPL-19

S. Prasanna Venkatesan
JAIPUR

Beneath the buzzing halogen glare, Shubman Gill (84, 44b, 9x4, 3x6) and Sai Sudharsan (55, 36b, 6x4, 2x6) batted with demontor-like cold efficiency, the Rabada-Siraj combine turned the PowerPlay into a high-velocity ambush, and Rashid Khan's stump-bound middle-over alchemy spelled doom as Gujarat Titans beat Rajasthan Royals by 77 runs in their IPL 2026 clash at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here on Saturday.

Chasing 230, RR kept losing wickets and struggled to stay in the hunt.

Mohammed Siraj's 147 kph short ball climbed off the surface, hurrying Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (36) into a top-edged dismissal. Kagiso Rabada bullied Yashasvi Jaiswal (three) with a 152 kph bouncer, forcing a catch off a jammed-up pull.

Rashid returned to his hyper-kinetic hornet mode, offering neither loop nor parabolic flight. He made the ball fizz off the deck, seeking the stumps with a street-smart, predatory hunger. He castled Dhruv Jurel (24), Donovan Ferreira (four), and Shubham Dubey (15), and trapped Ravindra Jadeja (38) plumb in front.

Earlier, Gill was, as he often is, an upright study in perpendicular grace. Not for him the brutal hack or the bare-knuckle blow.



On fire: Gill put the Royals bowlers under pressure from the start. Rashid derailed the home team in the chase, with Jurel being one of his four victims. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



His innings was midnight-magic, a sorcery of timing. It was signature Gill: the late-meeting clarity, the glass-cut contact, the velvet-gloved punch, and the thread-through precision.

When Tushar Deshpande banged it in, Gill simply marched down and knifed him past backward point for a four. Jofra Archer went short outside off, and he rose on his toes to thread the ball between point and cover for a four.

Two deliveries later, front

foot planted and maker's name flashing, he lifted Archer gloriously over mid-off for a six.

Archer was then driven straight back over his head, Brijesh Sharma creamed past mid-off, and even Jadeja was charged at and carved over extra cover for fours. The reverse over short third for a four against Yash Raj and an extra-cover six off Brijesh only completed the exhibition.

Sai Sudharsan was, on the other hand, an upright

study in calm proportion. He was all quiet craft, a calibration of touch and tempo.

It was Sai Sudharsan distilled: the early-reading clarity, the under-the-eyes contact, the risk-shaving control, and the unhurried accumulation.

Next assignment

GT: May 12 vs. SRH
Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

RR: May 17 vs. DC
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT TITANS

Sai Sudharsan c Archer b Yash Raj 55 (36b, 6x4, 2x6), Shubman Gill c Deshpande b Brijesh 84 (44b, 9x4, 3x6), Jos Buttler c Ferreira b Jadeja 13 (10b, 1x4, 1x6), Washington Sundar (not out) 37 (20b, 2x4, 3x6), Jason Holder c Jaiswal b Brijesh 7 (7b, 1x4), Rahul Tewatia (not out) 14 (4b, 2x6); Extras (b-1, lb-1, nb-1, w-16): 19; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 229.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-118 (Sai Sudharsan, 10.5), 2-150 (Buttler, 13.2), 3-185 (Gill, 16.2), 4-205 (Holder, 18.1).

ROYALS BOWLING

Archer 3-0-46-0, Deshpande 4-0-52-0, Brijesh 4-0-47-2, Yash Raj 4-0-37-1, Jadeja 4-0-34-1, Ferreira 1-0-11-0.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Nishant b Rabada 3 (4b), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (Impact Player for Yash Raj) c Arshad b Siraj 36 (16b, 3x4, 3x6), Dhruv Jurel b Rashid 24 (10b, 1x4, 3x6), Shimron Hetmyer c Holder b Rabada 6 (7b, 1x4), Ravindra Jadeja lbw b Rashid 38 (25b, 3x4, 2x6), Donovan Ferreira b Rashid 4 (2b, 1x4), Shubham Dubey b Rashid 15 (14b, 1x4, 1x6), Dasun Shanaka c Gill b Holder 16 (11b, 2x4), Jofra Archer c Buttler b Holder 5 (6b, 1x4), Tushar Deshpande c Washington b Holder 1 (3b), Brijesh Sharma (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-1, w-2): 3; Total (in 16.3 overs): 152.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-38 (Sooryavanshi, 2.5), 2-40 (Jaiswal, 3.3), 3-68 (Hetmyer, 5.4), 4-87 (Jurel, 7.3), 5-91 (Ferreira, 7.5), 6-115 (Shubham, 11.4), 7-136 (Jadeja, 13.5), 8-141 (Archer, 14.5), 9-151 (Shanaka, 16.1).

TITANS BOWLING

Siraj 4-0-55-1, Rabada 3-0-33-2, Sai Kishore (Impact Player for Tewatia) 1-0-8-0, Rashid 4-0-33-4, Washington 2-0-10-0, Holder 2.3-0-12-3.

Toss: Royals.

Player-of-the-Match: Rashid. Titans won by 77 runs.

Fascinating contest on the cards as CSK meets LSG

Tarun Shastry
CHENNAI

With changing equations and restless anticipation becoming the flavour of the season almost by the minute, Chennai Super Kings will look to bring certainty and provide a clearer narrative to its IPL 2026 campaign when the Men in Yellow host Lucknow Super Giants at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Sunday.

Emboldened by the presence of two unswerving allies in confidence and momentum, besides a vociferously passionate fanbase to count on, Super Kings will be raring to pounce on an opponent which is coming off a victory over defending champion Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Lucknow's recent surge has been powered by strong individual form. Mitchell Marsh's commanding century in the previous outing set the tone at the top, while Nicholas Pooran and Rishabh Pant have begun to rediscover fluency, restoring both intent and balance to the middle-order.

On the bowling front, LSG has a mix of expe-



Extra element: Rain in the lead-up to the game has added another layer of intrigue. R. RAGU

rience and variation. Mohammed Shami can make inroads with the new ball, while Prince Yadav's energy and wicket-taking ability could prove decisive in the middle overs. However, the rest of the bowling unit will need to sustain pressure consistently to keep the opposition batting in check.

Skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad and Sanju Samson will be key to the batting fortunes of Super Kings. The 20-year-old Kartik Sharma's confidence will be sky-high after guiding his side home in the last two games. The bowlers led by Anshul Kamboj, Akeal Hossain and Noor Ahmad will

be crucial if the team aims to continue its journey upward.

There is much at stake for both sides, albeit to varying degrees. A victory would significantly strengthen the home team's hopes of securing a playoff berth and could further inspire Ruturaj & Co to raise their level. Meanwhile, the visitor, languishing in 10th place, will be determined to put on a show in its remaining games and finish the season strongly.

Rain in the lead-up to the game has added another layer of intrigue, and if the weather stays clear, an absorbing contest could be on the cards.

Prince and Mohsin have it in them to play for India: Arun

C. Shyam Sundar
CHENNAI

Prince Yadav has been a shining light in a rather tepid IPL 2026 for Lucknow Super Giants.

The pacer has not only claimed 16 wickets, but also showed he could deliver in different phases of the game, an indication of his progress.

LSG bowling coach Bharat Arun reckons Prince has it in him to step up and don the national colours if he continues to keep improving.

A product of tennis-ball cricket, the 24-year-old has made heads turn with impressive spells and sent maestro Virat Kohli packing in LSG's previous game against Royal Challengers Bengaluru with a peach of a delivery.

"Last year, Prince showed glimpses of what he could achieve," said Arun on the eve of LSG's match against Chennai Super Kings at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

"So, actually this year during the camps that we had, we discussed his strengths. See, under pressure, sometimes a bowler goes blank. But under pressure, the one who is confident of executing his strengths is going to be most successful in execution.

"One reason for me joining LSG was due to the fact



Genuine wicket-taker: Prince has demonstrated he could deliver in different phases of the game. R.V. MOORTHY

RCB takes on MI, looks to return to winning ways

Anish Pathivil
RAIPUR

For the first time in two seasons, there seems to be some wear and tear in the otherwise well-oiled Royal Challengers Bengaluru machinery.

The defending champion looked set to comfortably finish in the top two and seal its place in Qualifier 1 after six wins in its first eight games. But back-to-back losses have pulled the side right into the multi-team melee for playoff qualification.



The master's voice: Jacks is all ears as Kohli elucidates a point. EMMANUAL YOGINI

shifts to the Chhattisgarh capital for the first time since 2016.

The small sample space of six games indicates that the venue hasn't been high-scoring, with 160 proving to be a winning total. But, in this era of blazing PowerPlay starts and persistent hitting through

the middle overs, it remains to be seen if it will offer a fair contest between bat and ball.

Hardik injury worry

After missing the previous encounter due to a back spasm, MI skipper Hardik Pandya is yet to be declared fit for the upcoming

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	7	4	0	14	0.737
Gujarat Titans	11	7	4	0	14	0.228
Punjab Kings	10	6	3	1	13	0.571
Royal Challengers	10	6	4	0	12	1.234
Rajasthan Royals	11	6	5	0	12	0.082
Chennai Super Kings	10	5	5	0	10	-0.151
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	4	5	1	9	-0.169
Delhi Capitals	11	4	7	0	8	-1.154
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	0	6	-0.649
Lucknow Super Giants	10	3	7	0	6	-0.934

ing game. The final call will be taken before the toss, the team management said. Suryakumar Yadav, who had flown back home for the birth of his child, will join the team on the day of the match.

Rain affects training

A short but intense burst of rain hit the stadium on the eve of the encounter, causing a slight delay to the

practice sessions.

A returning drizzle forced the teams to shut shop earlier than planned. Conditions are expected to be much better come matchday.

MI, especially, will hope that the rain stays away. Anything less than two points will mean the side will miss out on the playoffs for the fourth time in six seasons.

Caps race is turning heads

What truly sets this year's competition apart from past seasons is the absence of a runaway leader in batting or bowling; the contests in both disciplines look set to go down to the wire

IPL-19

Natalia Hannah Rice
CHENNAI

The race to the Orange Cap in IPL 2026 remains finely poised, with the leading run-scorers separated by slender margins as the league stage hurtles towards the decisive stretch. No batter has managed to establish outright dominance, underscoring the tournament's unpredictable nature so far.

Heinrich Klaasen of Sunrisers Hyderabad currently leads the standings with 494 runs from 11 matches. His teammate Abhishek Sharma has 475 in 11 outings. K.L. Rahul (Delhi Capitals) sits third with 468 (11 matches).

Gujarat Titans skipper Shubman Gill is in fourth spot (462, 10 matches). Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, who has emerged as one of the breakout stars of the competition, and GT's Sai Sudharsan are in tied fifth place (440 in 11 games each). With such narrow margins separating the leading batters, the Orange Cap is likely to change



Top of the charts: The consistent Klaasen is the Orange Cap leader while the incisive Rabada has the Purple Cap. NAGARA GOPAL & ANI



hands several times before the league phase concludes.

The Purple Cap contest is proving just as enthralling. "Titans' spearhead Kagiso Rabada is on top with 18 wickets (11 matches).

Royal Challengers Bengaluru's Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Chennai Super Kings' Anshul Kamboj are level on 17 wickets apiece (10 matches each) while Prince Yadav (Lucknow

Super Giants) and Eshan Malinga (Sunrisers) remain close behind with 16 scalps each. Prince has played 10 games and Malinga 11.

Notably, the Purple Cap leaderboard has been dominated entirely by pacers, with no spinner managing to break into the top five. This trend highlights the decisive influence fast bowling has had on the tournament.

What truly sets this

year's competition apart from past seasons is the absence of a runaway performer in either discipline. The batting and bowling charts have fluctuated constantly throughout the campaign.

With several high-stakes matches still to come, both races appear set to remain fiercely competitive until the very end, ensuring that every performance carries added significance.

Constructive criticism necessary, says Shedge

S. Shrivathsan

Punjab Kings all-rounder Suryansh Shedge had to bide his time in the first month of IPL 2026, when the Shreyas Iyer-led side operated like a winning machine.

In that phase, the 23-year-old constantly kept reminding the PBKS decision-makers of the value he could bring to the table. And when the opportunities came his way after slices of luck – Shashank Singh's absence due to a hamstring issue and Nehal Wadhwa's wretched batting run – Shedge showed his wares with the willow.

The youngster stressed that approaching every practice session with the "right attitude" helped him get going.

"Even though I was not playing, I was working as hard as I possibly could every day. That is what made me ready for my entry into the XI," Shedge said during a virtual interaction on Saturday. He rescued a sinking ship with a 29-ball 57 against Gujarat Titans and followed it up with a 25 against Sunrisers Hyderabad. "A lot of cricketers start thinking negatively when they are on the sidelines. But I looked at it as an extra month of prepara-



Shedge. FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

tion. I was learning, watching games and finding ways to improve."

The Mumbai lad revealed that meaningful chats with Shreyas and head coach Ricky Ponting kept him in the right frame of mind.

"Shreyas bhai and I talk a lot about cricket. Constructive criticism is necessary sometimes, and only a healthy team environment can give you that."

"With Ponting sir, the talks were about how I was batting in the nets. After the fourth or fifth game, he said that he totally understood how I was feeling. He asked me to focus on my preparation so that I am switched on when I get a chance. That heart-to-heart talk helped me a lot".

Never felt I was under more pressure due to price tag: Green

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

As the Indian Premier League's (IPL) most expensive overseas recruit ever at ₹25.2 crore, Australia's Cameron Green had many more eyeballs fixed on his exploits for Kolkata Knight Riders this season.

A patchy start to the tournament, coupled with KKR's streak of losses, meant Green was in the firing line, but the all-rounder from Perth – an imposing presence at 6'6" – has got better as the competition has progressed.

The 26-year-old has contributed 232 runs and four wickets in 10 matches for the three-time champion. While he would have certainly liked to make more of an impact, he hasn't felt any additional pressure because of his price tag.

"The support staff never put any pressure on me. They have been awesome to me since day one. I was never made to feel that there was any extra pressure compared to anyone else," Green said after Knight Riders defeated Delhi Capitals on Friday (May 8, 2026).

"There's always pressure on the international



Green. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

guy. You have to be performing at all times because the guys on the bench are also ready to go. But, no, I'll probably have the support staff to thank for that."

KKR's hopes of reaching the playoffs appeared derailed when it went winless in its first six matches. Now, a run of four victories on the trot has given Ajinkya Rahane and Co. a fresh lease of life. Asked for his view on the resurgence, Green argued that the belief was always intact.

"I didn't think the belief was ever gone. We've had a really good culture this whole tournament," he opined.

IN BRIEF



Abbas and Awais lead Pakistan's fightback

Pakistan clawed back into the first Test against Bangladesh thanks to stellar performances from Mohammad Abbas (five for 92) and Aizan Awais (85 batting) on day two in Dhaka on Saturday.

The scores: Bangladesh 413 in 117.1 overs (Mominul 91, Shanto 101, Mushfiqur 71, Shaheen 3/113, Abbas 5/92) vs. Pakistan 179/1 in 46 overs (Awais 85 batting, Imam-Ul-Haq 45).

Indian u-15 girls storm into eight finals at Asian boxing

India's u-15 girls delivered commanding performances in the semifinals at the Asian Boxing Championships, with eight boxers advancing to the finals across weight categories in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) on Saturday.

The results: Girls: Semifinals: 33kg: Akshita bt Ayazhan Marat of (Kaz) RSC; **35kg:** Malika Moldogazieva (Kgz) bt Jiya 4-1; **37kg:** Anzee bt Sarvinoz Riskulova 5-0; **40kg:** Soniya bt Diana Mendigarayeva (Kaz) 5-0; **43kg:** Tanvi bt Sezim Nurlubek (Kaz) RSC; **46kg:** Hanshika Attri bt Yuhui Cheon (Kor) RSC; **49kg:** Zebiniso Abdullayeva (Uzb) bt Khushi Rana 5-0; **52kg:** Samal Tolepbergen (Kaz) bt Krihshka 5-0; **58kg:** Sunaina bt Ardak Abdikhon (Kaz) RSC; **61kg:** Bhumika bt Chiao-Ying Chang (Tpe) RSC; **64kg:** Tannvi bt Yasmin Jautkhanova (Kaz) 4-1; **67kg:** Nurgul Sakhi (Kaz) bt Aashvi RSC; **70+kg:** Zahro Daniyoroova (Uzb) bt Manvi 5-0. **Boys: Quarterfinals: 50kg:** Yash Yadav bt Kubanychbek Bolushov (Kgz) 4-1; **54kg:** Nivesh Pal bt Shingen Kanai (Jpn) 5-0; **60kg:** Emir Mukhit (Kaz) bt Karung Albertson 5-0; **66kg:** Islam Suleimanogly (Kaz) bt Ranveer 5-0; **70kg:** Naman Kumar bt Ruzibek Miravotov (Tjk) 5-0; **75kg:** Lakshay Phogat bt Cheng-En Li (Tpe) 5-0; **80kg+:** Sabryzhan Sagym (Kaz) bt Siddhant 5-0.

Chotrani beats Abhay in World C'ships first round

Indian world No. 45 Veer Chotrani defeated his higher-ranked compatriot Abhay Singh 14-12, 8-11, 5-11, 11-7, 11-2 in the men's opening round of the World Squash Championships in Giza, Egypt. Kareem El Torkey of Egypt defeated Ramit Tandon 11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 11-0, while France's Victor Crouin beat Velavan Senthilkumar 11-8, 11-8, 11-3.

LIVE TELECAST

Archie WC: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 7.30 & 11.30 a.m.
Bangladesh vs Pakistan: 1st Test, day 3, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.
IFL: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.
ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 5 & 7.30 p.m.
LaLiga: FanCode, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Monday)
Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 6.30 & 9 p.m.

SNAPSHOTS

Sahil Jadhav bags bronze medal

SHANGHAI: World University Games champion Sahil Jadhav secured a bronze in compound men's individual competition at the Archery World Cup Stage-2 on Saturday. The 25-year-old Jadhav lost 146-147 to France's Nicolas Girard in the semifinal but bounced back to beat Denmark's Martin Damsbo 147-144 in the bronze medal match to ensure his maiden World Cup stage podium finish.

Jaiswal and Shafali get NADA notices

NEW DELHI: Indian cricketers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shafali Verma have been issued notices by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for not being available for scheduled dope tests last year, leading to their first whereabouts failure. It is reliably learnt that the two players, who are a part of NADA's Registered Testing Pool (RTP), did not explain the reasons for the missed tests.

AICF promises to pay dues to GM Abhijeet
Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta, left frustrated by the delay in receiving prize money for his Odisha Open title earlier this year, has now received an assurance from the All India Chess Federation that the issue will be

resolved and "necessary action" will be initiated to clear his dues. Abhijeet was forced to seek intervention from the Sports Ministry after repeated letters to the AICF failed to secure his payment even four months after his triumph. It has been learnt that the Odisha association's bank account has been frozen due to infighting.

Indian shooters' medal drought continues

ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN): Neeru Dhanda finished seventh in the women's trap final at the ISSF Shotgun World Cup as India's medal drought in the competition continued on Saturday. The 25-year-old was the first to be eliminated in the eight-shooter final after managing seven hits in the opening 10-shot elimination stage.

Australia's Penny Smith clinched gold with a perfect 30 to set a world record. Spain's Fatima Galvez won silver with 25, while Zuzana Rehak Stefeceková of Slovakia bagged bronze. In men's trap, Shaphath Bhadrwaj, with 118 (25, 25, 21, 22, 25), was the best-placed Indian at 16th.

Gukesh recovers ground

WARSAW (POLAND): D. Gukesh endured a shaky start in the blitz section but recovered ground with a commanding victory

over Jan-Krzysztof Duda in the ninth round of the Super Rapid and Blitz Poland.

After finishing the rapid section with nine points out of a possible 18, Gukesh collected four more points from the opening nine blitz rounds to take his tally to 13 out of 27 at the halfway stage of the blitz competition. Hans Moke Niemann of the United States continued to lead the table despite a very mediocre show on the first day of blitz.

The results: 18th round: D. Gukesh (13) bt Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol, 12.5); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 15) drew with Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 15); Hans Moke Niemann (USA, 16.5) lost to Radoslaw Wojtaszek (Pol, 10); Wesley So (USA, 16) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 12); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 12.5) drew with Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 12.5).

Essex Farm rides on Kavya's ton

NEW DELHI: Opener Kavya's knock of 133 helped Essex Farm Cricket Club chase down 309 against Delhi Blues Cricket Club with five wickets in hand in the 51st All India Tyagmurthi Goswami Ganesh Dutt Memorial cricket tournament at the S.G.T.B. Khalsa College ground on Saturday.

The scores: Delhi Blues CC 308/8 in 40 overs (Shreshth Yadav 100, Saliil Malhotra 110, Vaibhav Sood 43, Aashish Meena 4/53) lost to Essex Farm CC 309/5 in 29.4 overs (Kavya 133, Dweep Gahlot 73, Ashish Tanwar 39).

WFI shoots down Vinesh's comeback

Y.B. Sarangi
NANDININAGAR (U.P.)

The Wrestling Federation of India on Saturday showcased double World championships medallist Vinesh Phogat on different grounds, including her failure to stick to the weight restriction at the Paris Olympics, anti-doping issues (multiple whereabouts failures) and participating in two weight categories during the trials for an Olympic qualifier.

Besides, the WFI shot down Vinesh's attempt to come back to competitive wrestling – at the Senior Open Ranking tournament starting on the Nandininagar Mahavidyalaya campus here on Sunday – following her post-Paris "sabbatical." It said Vinesh informed the world body, United World Wrestling (UWW), about her return less than six months ago, the minimum stipulation for a retired athlete to make a comeback.

It's learnt that there is a written record of Vinesh's retirement and her decision to return to competition.

In the 15-page showcase, the WFI highlighted the issue of Vinesh failing to meet the weight stipulation on the second day after reaching the 50kg final at the Paris Olympics. It said Vinesh was "duty-bound" under UWW rules



Vinesh Phogat. FILE PHOTO: SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

to stick to the limit and her disqualification resulted in a loss of medal, negative publicity and reputational damage to the WFI.

The WFI said Vinesh committed whereabouts failures, including twice in 2024 and the one on December 18, 2025, soon after she informed authorities concerned about her resumption of training with an eye on Los Angeles 2028.

The federation said it must satisfy itself that Vinesh had not committed any anti-doping rule violation that would render her ineligible to participate in any event, including the Open Ranking event "which is in any case prior to your six months completion from your date of resumption."

Meanwhile, the Open Ranking event here will provide a chance to several talented wrestlers to enter the National camp.

Sreeshankar eyes a good showing

K. Keerthivasan
CHENNAI

The sixth leg of the Indian Athletics Series, beginning at the Nehru Stadium here on Sunday and part of the 16-leg nationwide circuit running from April to September, will be a huge preparatory exercise for athletes like star long jumper Murali Sreeshankar and others.

The Athletics Federation of India has made participation mandatory in a minimum of two domestic meets to be considered for the National Federation Cup in Ranchi from May 22 to 25 (it is the final selection trials for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games to be held in July-August).

"Heading up to Federation Cup and rest of the season, so obviously the target is to be in good shape for the main events, including the CWG and Asian Games," he told media after his training session on Saturday.

Sreeshankar, a silver medallist in the 2022 CWG, said the recent training stint in South Africa was competitive. "I trained for three weeks in the North West Academy of Sport in Potchefstroom and did 8.12m in a meet in Pretoria. The cold weather in South Africa and Glasgow CWG will be similar, which might help me," he said.

It's Lux Aeterna vs Promise of the future

BENGALURU: Lux Aeterna and Promise of the future may fight out the finish of the Capricorn Stud Plate (1,300m), the feature event of the races to be held here on Sunday (May 10). False rails (width about 5.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1. ROYAL CHALLENGE PLATE (1,500m), rated 00 to 25, 3.00: 1. Agape (7) Akshay K 61, 2. Palma (4) Laxman S 61, 3. Enjoyable (8) Kiran Rai 59.5, 4. Priya (2) Indrajeet K 59.5, 5. Lex Luthor (6) Rayan 58.5, 6. Makoto (5) M. Rajesh K 58.5, 7. Double Scotch (3) Jagadeesh 56 and 8. Dr. Colchester (1) Arul J.H 54.5.

2. RAZEN PLATE (Div. II), 1,400m, rated 20 to 45, 3.30: 1. Refined Aggression (2) Trevor 60, 2. Agrador (4) Antony 58.5, 3. Dr Ash (3) M. Rajesh K 56.5, 4. Higgs Boson (6) Sidharaju P 54, 5. Chinky Pinky (1) Shreyas S 53.5, 6. Hold Your Breath (5) Kiran Rai 53, 7. My Solitaire (7) Jagadeesh 52.5 and 8. Pursuit Of

Wealth (6) Rafique S.K 52.5.

3. AGUMBE PLATE (1,200m), rated 50 to 65, 5-y-o & over, 4.00: 1. True Punch (II) Suraj 61, 2. Battle Lass (5) A. Hangal 58.5, 3. Silicon Star (12) G. Vivek 58, 4. Senior Cherie (6) Antony 56.5, 5. Felisa (1) Pavan 55, 6. Kabali (2) S. Sachin 55, 7. Master Way (9) Suhass K 55, 8. Dynamic Force (3) Arul J.H 54.5, 9. La McQueen (7) Aleemuddin 54, 10. Scarlet Lady (10) S. Shareef 54, 11. Eclipse Pulse (4) Ashhad Asbar 53.5 and 12. Basilica (8) Trevor 53.

4. MOTHER'S DAY TROPHY (1,500m), rated 40 to 65, 4.30: 1. The Leader (6) Akshay K 60.5, 2. Maana (1) Antony 55.5, 3. Sunshine (7) Suraj 54, 4. Aquastic (5) Yash 53, 5. Corinthian (8) Trevor 53, 6. Storm Shadow (3) Neeraj 52, 7. Mystical Air (4) Shreyas S 51 and 8. Sassy (2) M. Rajesh K 50.

1. SUNSHINE, 2. MAANA, 3. THE LEADER

5. CAPRICORN STUD PLATE (1,300m), rated 60 to 85, 5.00: 1. Irish Coffee (2) Arul J.H 60, 2. Promise of the future (4) Pavan 59, 3. Stellanis (7) Indrajeet S 58, 4. Efficacy (3) Shreyas S 57, 5. Jersey King (6) Suraj 57, 6. Victoria Doreesaani (5) L.A. Rozario 54 and 7. Lux Aeterna (1) Trevor 53.5.

6. RAZEN PLATE (Div. I), 1,400m, rated 20 to 45, 5.30: 1. Unforgettable Star (2) A.A. Vikrant 62.5, 2. El Rey (5) Trevor 62, 3. Oxytocin (6) Kiran Rai 59.5, 4. Stravinsky (7) M. Rajesh K 59.5, 5. Valliant Stream (8) Akshay K 59.5, 6. Choti pari (4) Laxman S 59, 7. Glorious Strides (9) Darshan 57.5, 8. Divo (3) Jagadeesh 54 and 9. Prince Of Wales (1) Mukesh K 53.

1. VALIANT STREAM, 2. EL REY, 3. PRINCE OF WALES
Day's best: SUNSHINE
Double: SENIOR CHERIE - VALIANT STREAM
Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Mini Jkt: 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (1): 1, 2 and 3; (11): 4, 5 and 6.

BENGALURU: S. Attaollahi-trained Kalamitsi (Trevor up) won the Kunigal Stud Trophy (1,200m), the main event of the races held on Saturday (May 9). The winner is owned by Mr. Solomon Benveniste, M/S. Deciding Factor LLP, Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd, Mr. Hemang D. Doctor & Mr. Lokesh Ahuja. Jockey Trevor went on to complete 2000 wins on Final Call.

1. CHANTILLE PLATE (1,500M): (SLEDGE) (Akshay K) 1, Assurances (Suraj) 2, Alamgir (Pavan) 3 and Star Of India (Neeraj) 4. 3-3/4, 1-1/2 and 1-1/4. Im 33.32s. ₹25 (w), 10, 14 and 11 (p). SHP: 37, THP: 37, FP: 134, Q: 60, Trinella: 288/62, Exacta: 519/210. Favourite: Alamgir. Owners: Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala, Mr. Girish Mehta, M/S. DT Racing & Breeding LLP & So Blest Trading Co. Pvt. Ltd. Trainer: Dariusz Byranyi.

2. RABINDRANATH TAGORE JAYANTI TROPHY (1,300M): RODNEY (Pavan) 1, Circle Of Dreams (Akshay K) 2, Waitara (Neeraj) 3 and Thessalian (Antony) 4. 1.5 and Hd. Im 19.01s. 756 (w), 15, 10 and 19 (p). SHP: 44, THP: 38, FP: 98, Q: 30, Trinella: 431/256,

Exacta: 2,317/1,456. Favourite: Circle Of Dreams. Owners: M/S. Rapar Galloping Stars LLP rep. by Mr. Rajendran & Mr. Francis Arun Kumar. Trainer: Irfan Ghataila.

3. DUPONT PLATE (1,200M): JALWA (Asirvatham) 1, Annabelle (Aleemuddin) 2, Razzmatazz (S. Sachin) 3 and White Secret (A. Ramu) 4. 1-3/4, 1 and 1. Im 15.48s. ₹219 (w), 37, 12 and 13 (p). SHP: 32, THP: 39, FP: 896, Q: 287, Trinella: 2,685/732, Exacta: 16,847/21,660. Favourite: Annabelle. Owners: Mrs. Mahima Shailesh, Dr. Dayananda Pai P, Mr. Naveen Preben Gowda & Mr. Kaardam Patel. Trainer: Azhar Ali.

4. KUNIGAL STUD TROPHY (1,200M): KALAMITSI (Trevor) 1, Ricardo (Aleemuddin) 2, Excellent Lass (Yash) 3 and Never Give In (Antony) 4. 1/2, 2 and 3/4. Im 12.71s. ₹47 (w), 18 and 25 (p). SHP: 35, THP: 52, FP: 340, Q: 129, Trinella: 229/78, Exacta: 515/416. Favourite: Excellent Lass. Owners: Mr. Solomon Benveniste, M/S. Deciding Factor LLP, Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd, Mr. Hemang D. Doctor & Mr. Lokesh Ahuja. Trainer: S.

Attaollahi.

5. DEAN STEPHENS MEMORIAL TROPHY (4,000M): SIEGE STORM (Akshay K) 1, Ashwa New York (Yash) 2, The Archer (Trevor) 3 and Atman (G. Vivek) 4. 4-1/2, 3/4 and Nk. Im 25.85s. ₹20 (w), 11, 8 and 13 (p). SHP: 55, THP: 47, FP: 193, Q: 128, Trinella: 321/79, Exacta: 1,389/829. Favourite: Siege Storm. Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. S.R. Sanas, M/S. DT Racing & Breeding LLP & Mr. Ashok Rampise. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

6. AZHAR PLATE (1,200M): FINAL CALL (Trevor) 1, Flash (Md. Ashraf Reza) 2, Roadrunner (Laxman S) 3 and Ebote (Aleemuddin) 4. Shd, 1/2 and 2-1/4. Im 14.38s. ₹13 (w), 12, 26 and 18 (p). SHP: 99, THP: 46, FP: 186, Q: 129, Trinella: 736/228, Exacta: 3,768/1,614. Favourite: Final Call. Owners: Mr. P.J. Vazifdar, Mr. M. Rishad, Mr. Kersi H. Vachha, M/S. DT Racing & Breeding LLP, Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala & Mr. S.R. Sanas. Trainer: James Mckeown. Jackpot: ₹18,304; Runner-up: 7,409; Mini Jackpot: 6,094; Treble (0): 4,927; (1): 363.



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Manchester City stays on Arsenal's tail

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse LONDON

Manchester City kept its slender Premier League title hopes alive as Jeremy Doku inspired a 3-0 win against Brentford on Saturday. Pep Guardiola's side struggled to prise open Brentford for almost an hour.

But Doku's latest dazzling strike broke the deadlock before Erling Haaland bagged his 26th league goal this season.

Omar Marmoush wrapped up an essential City victory in stoppage-time.

City closed to two points behind leader Arsenal, putting pressure back on Mikel Arteta's team to win at third-bottom West Ham on Sunday.

Earlier, Liverpool missed the chance to all but secure Champions League action next season after a

1-1 draw against Chelsea, while Manchester United was frustrated in a goalless stalemate at Sunderland.

The results: Premier League: Liverpool 1 (Gravenberch 6) drew with Chelsea 1 (Fernandez 35); Brighton 3 (Hinshelwood 1, Dunk 5, Minteh 86) bt Wolves 0; Fulham 0 lost to Bournemouth 1 (Rayan 53); Sunderland 0 drew with Manchester United 0; Manchester City 3 (Doku 60, Haaland 75, Marmoush 90+2) bt Brentford 0.

LaLiga: Elche 1 (Rodriguez 72) drew with Alaves 1 (Martinez 51-pen); Sevilla 2 (Castrin 82, Adams 90+1) bt Espanyol 1 (Dolan 56); Atletico Madrid 0 lost to Celta Vigo 1 (Iglesias 62).

Bundesliga: RB Leipzig 2 (Schlager 45, Orban 54) bt St. Pauli 1 (Ceasay 86); Stuttgart 3 (Demirovic 5, Mittelstadt 45+7-pen, Undav 58) bt Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Garcia 1); Augsburg 3 (Gregoritsch 24, 72, Fellhauer 42) bt Borussia M'gladbach 1 (Reyna 90+2); Hoffenheim 1 (Toure 26) bt Werder Bremen 0; Wolfsburg 0 lost to Bayern Munich 1 (Olise 56).

Serie A: Cagliari 0 lost to Udinese 2 (Buksa 56, Gueye 90+6); Lazio 0 lost to Inter Milan 3 (Martinez 6, Susic 39, Mkhitarjan 76).



Man of the moment: Doku celebrates after netting City's opener. AFP

Ma tujhe salaam



Amul Makes mothers happy

Williams' goal helps BFC score over JFC

ISL

Sports Bureau

Ryan Williams' goal gave Bengaluru FC a 1-0 win over Jamshedpur FC in their ISL fixture at the JRD Tata Sports Complex in Jamshedpur on Saturday.

The win pushed BFC (20 points) to fourth place, one point behind leaders Jamshedpur FC, Mohun Bagan and East Bengal.

For Jamshedpur FC, the loss robbed the side of the chance to take the sole lead on the points table.

BFC and Jamshedpur FC have one match remaining, while Mohun Bagan and East Bengal are better placed with three outings in hand.

BFC head coach Pep Munoz was a relieved man, recording his first win in charge.

Williams broke the deadlock in the 38th minute, when he latched on to a cushioned header from teammate Lalremtluanga Fanai at the edge of the box.

Williams took a quick,

low strike, which evaded a crowd of defenders and beat Jamshedpur FC goalkeeper Albino Gomes at the near post.

Pratik Chaudhari held firm for Jamshedpur FC in defence, making two vital blocks. Chaudhari managed to slot one in as well, but the goal was disallowed.

In Margao, FC Goa and Mohun Bagan Super Giant were involved in a fiercely contested 1-1 draw. Jamie MacLaren opened the scoring for the visitors early in the second half, but substitute Ronney Willson Kharbudon struck back to win a crucial point for the Gaurs.

Bagan broke the deadlock in the 55th minute following a defensive lapse. Experienced defender Sandesh Jhingan failed to receive the ball, allowing it to roll into the path of a lurking MacLaren, who calmly slotted the ball past Bob Jackson.

The results: Jamshedpur FC 0 lost to Bengaluru FC 1 (Ryan Williams 38).

At Margao: FC Goa 1 (Kharbudon 67) drew with Mohun Bagan Super Giant 1 (MacLaren 55).

A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

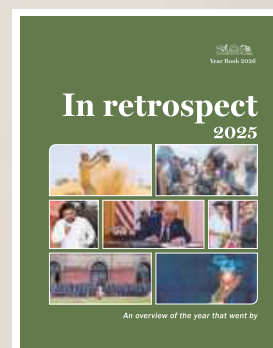
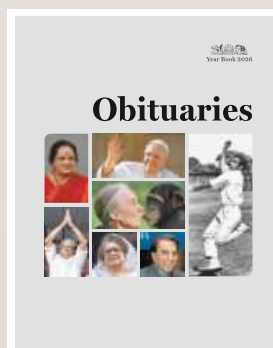
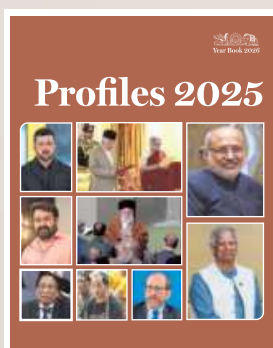
The Hindu Year Book 2026

provides chronological, contextual, and factual information on the key events that occupied public attention between January and December 2025.

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Verdant meadows: A woman farmer picks collard greens (haakh) from a field in old city of Srinagar.



The emerald staple: Collard greens are considered an indispensable part of every household in Kashmir.



Kashmir's finest: Drew drops on a haakh field in Srinagar. The most coveted produce comes from the fertile, loamy soils found in the interior areas of the summer capital.



A band apart: Kashmiri haakh is characterised by its thinner, more tender leaves and a pungent, earthy aroma.

A humble leaf that whispers home

A resilient food crop grown year-round across the Valley, the distinct Kashmiri collard green is more than just a vegetable, it is a cultural culinary experience that transcends social and economic boundaries



Imran Nissar
imran.nissar@thehindu.co.in

Collard greens (*haakh*) is the soul of every dining table in Kashmir. It is not just a vegetable but a cultural culinary experience that transcends social and economic boundaries.

Kashmiri *haakh* is distinct from other collard varieties found across the globe, characterised by its thinner, more tender leaves and a pungent, earthy aroma that defines the Kashmiri kitchen.

Haakh is a resilient crop, grown year-round across the Valley. However, the most prized produce comes from the fertile, loamy soils of the Dal Lake and the floating gardens (*radh*) as well as several fields in the interiors of downtown Srinagar.

Haakh is an indispensable part of every kitchen garden both in Srinagar and all other districts of the Valley.

The edible leaves thrive in Kashmir's cool climate, and "frost-bitten" *haakh* in winter is considered a delicacy, as the cold lends the leaves

a subtle sweetness. The trade of *haakh* is a sunrise ritual. Farmers transport bundles in *shikaras* (traditional wooden boats) to the floating vegetable markets on Dal Lake at dawn. From there, it travels to local market hubs. It is almost always sold in tied bunches, often with the roots intact to maintain freshness.

The Kashmiri philosophy of cooking *haakh* emphasises simplicity to preserve the vegetable's chlorophyll and natural bite. Unlike heavy meat dishes, *haakh* is usually prepared as a light, soupy stew. The process involves sautéing the leaves in smoking-hot mustard oil, which is non-negotiable for the authentic pungent flavour.

While *haakh* is commonly cooked without any addition, it is also prepared with smoked fish (*hogada*), dried cheese (*chaman*), or mutton.

Served alongside steaming mounds of Basmati or local white rice, *haakh* is the ultimate comfort food in the rich tapestry of Wazwaan-dominated Kashmiri cuisine.



A wellness bundle: A vendor packing collard greens for a customer in Srinagar. It is almost always sold in tied bunches, often with the roots intact to maintain freshness.



Hawking haakh: A vendor carries collard greens on a bicycle in Srinagar early in the morning.



Food for soul: The Kashmiri philosophy of cooking *haakh* emphasises simplicity to preserve the vegetable's colour and natural bite.



Trading hands: A vendor on the banks of Dal Lake. Farmers transport bundles in boats to the floating vegetable markets. From there, it travels to local market hubs.



A gentle green embrace: Unlike heavy meat dishes, *haakh* is usually prepared as a light, soupy stew. The edible leaves thrive in Kashmir's cool climate, and "frost-bitten" *haakh* is considered a delicacy.



Culinary maelstrom: A traditional chef (*waza*) preparing a vegetarian delicacy with *haakh* alongside non-vegetarian dishes. While collard greens are commonly cooked without any addition, they are also prepared with smoked fish (*hogada*), or mutton.