

AWAITING MONSOON
IMD unveils model for block-level forecasts
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DATA POINT
Unemployment among youth above average
9.9% of people aged 15 to 29 stay unemployed
OPINION » PAGE 7

LOCAL POLL DEFEAT
British PM Starmer says he will not quit
WORLD » PAGE 14

NEET-UG 2026 cancelled after question paper leak

Inquiry after whistle-blower's message led to the decision, says NTA Director-General; re-test to be conducted in 'minimal possible time'; CBI to probe the leak; Maharashtra police arrest one suspect

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The National Testing Agency (NTA) on Tuesday cancelled the National Entrance-cum-Eligibility Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) conducted on May 3 after evidence emerged that the paper was leaked.

The NTA is expected to announce the schedule for the re-test in seven to 10 days.

The re-test will be conducted in the "minimal possible time", NTA Director-General Abhishek Singh said. No new registration will be required, and no fee will be charged for the re-test; in fact, the NTA has promised to refund fees already paid.

Almost 22 lakh students appeared for this year's



Students' Federation of India members protest against cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

NEET-UG, which is the gateway examination for admission to undergraduate medical programmes across the country.

Four days after the exam was held, a whistleblower's message led investigators to a "guess paper", which included a significant number of ques-

tions in the question paper.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case to probe the alleged paper leak, following a reference from the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, the agency said on Tuesday. The Mah-

arashtra Police said on Tuesday that one suspect has been arrested from Nashik after receiving a request from the Rajasthan Police about an accused involved in the paper leak.

"The exact point where the leak happened will only be disclosed when the CBI inquiry is completed. We have complete footage of up to 1,50,000 CCTVs in strongrooms on the date of the exam and post exam," Mr. Singh said. "However, a whistleblower complaint on May 7 led us to inquire into a hand-written note circulating digitally on messaging groups which matched the NEET main exam question paper."

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MORE REPORTS
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Kerala CM suspense continues amid talks

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

In the prolonged bid to clear the cloud of uncertainty over the Congress's Chief Minister nominee for Kerala, high command leaders including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi opened consultations with top State leaders and former Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) presidents in New Delhi on Tuesday.

While the marathon meeting, which unfolded at Ms. Gandhi's residence, reportedly weighed the chances of senior leaders K.C. Venugopal, V.D. Satheseean, and Ramesh Chennithala, the three names which have been making rounds since the declaration of the results on May 4, K. Muraleedharan, former KPCC chief and MLA-elect, appeared not to rule out the possibility of a dark horse for the post. Faced with a dwindling window of time to make the long-

drawn-out decision, the high command, according to a party insider, is reportedly seeking support of top leaders to restore the period of organisational and alliance stability which delivered the party the momentous win.

Main contenders

Mr. Venugopal, All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary, reportedly backed by a significant number of Congress MLAs-elect; Mr. Satheseean, projected by his camp as the architect of the United Democratic Front's (UDF) historic win; and Mr. Chennithala, touted by supporters as having long organisational and administrative experience and support of powerful social organisations, are the main contenders for the prime post.

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IUML GROWS RESTIVE
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IN BRIEF

China's Foreign Minister to skip BRICS meet

BEIJING
There will be no high-level representation from Beijing at Thursday's meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers in New Delhi due to "scheduling reasons", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday. » **Page 10**

Call all-party meet to discuss impact of war, says Pawar

MUMBAI
NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday demanded that an all-party meeting be called to discuss the instability that has emerged due to the West Asia conflict. » **Page 3**

OPPORTUNITIES » **PAGE 5**

Holding the reins



BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma taking oath as the Chief Minister of Assam in Guwahati on Tuesday. Mr. Sarma, who led the NDA to a third successive government, became the first non-Congress leader to be Assam CM for two straight terms. RITU RAJ KONWAR (REPORT ON PAGE 11)

AIADMK rebel MLAs set to back TVK in floor test today

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

On the eve of the floor test in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Tuesday called on rebel AIADMK leaders led by former Ministers S.P. Velumani and C.Ve. Shanmugam hours after they announced support to his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK).

Earlier, in the Assembly, the newly elected Speaker, J.C.D. Prabhakar, allowed Mr. Velumani to speak immediately after AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami congratulated the Speaker on his election. In the morning, the rebels declared Mr. Ve-



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay with AIADMK MLAs C.Ve. Shanmugam, S.P. Velumani, and C. Vijayabaskar on Tuesday. ANI

lumani the "AIADMK Legislature Party leader". Mr. Palaniswami's supporters, however, said he was the leader of the Legislature Party. The AIADMK led by Mr. Palaniswami would vote against the confidence

motion to be moved by the TVK government, senior leader O.S. Manian said.

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EDITORIAL
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Pricy food, dining out push retail inflation to a 13-month high of 3.5%

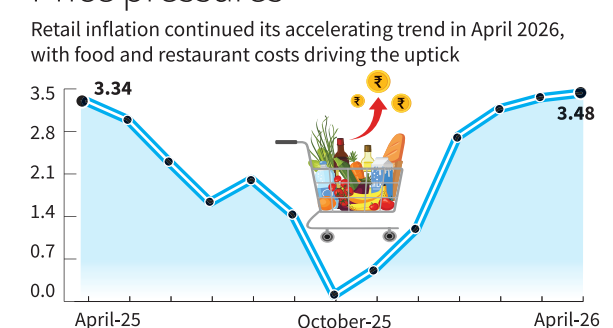
T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation quickened to a 13-month high of 3.5% in April 2026, although still coming in lower than what was expected by most economists. The price rise was largely driven by higher food inflation as well as higher prices at restaurants as they passed on higher fuel prices to consumers.

Data on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for April showed that inflation quickened from the 3.4% registered in March, the first month following the start of the war in West Asia.

"The April inflation reading came in softer than expectations," Upas-

Price pressures



na Bhardwaj, chief economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank, said, a sentiment echoed by Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda as well as Rajni Thakur, chief economist at L&T Finance.

"However, the outlook remains clouded with upside risks amid supply side

disruptions from geopolitics and El Nino," Ms. Bhardwaj said.

Inflation in the food and beverages category climbed to 4% in April from 3.7% in March.

Simultaneously, inflation in the restaurant and accommodation services sector quickened sharply

to 4.2% in April from 2.9% in the previous month.

Ease in transport

Notably, inflation in the transport sector stood at -0.01% in April as compared to 0% in the previous month.

This, according to Ms. Thakur, was more because of the passenger transport services sector rather than the price at which goods were transported.

"While food prices have gone up by around 30 basis points, overall transportation prices have actually eased," Ms. Thakur said. "This is largely on account of easing prices for the services sector, while prices of transport of goods have increased by 7.6% in the month."

Minister Puri hints at fuel price hike as OMCs' mounting losses cause concern

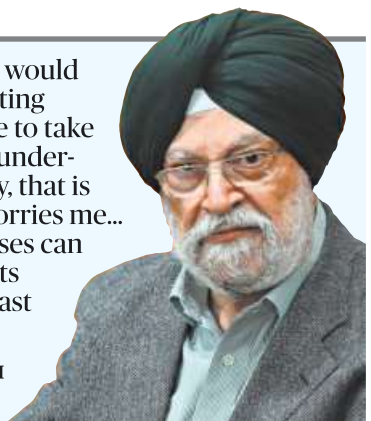
Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday reassured consumers about the adequacy of retail fuels, but indicated that a prolonged West Asia crisis could force the government to pass on the pressure to domestic consumers, even as oil-marketing companies (OMCs) continue to bleed losses from holding petrol, diesel and LPG prices firm.

"How long would oil-marketing companies be able to take it [the losses and under-recoveries], frankly, that is something that worries me," Mr. Puri said at the Confederation of Indian Industries' Annual Business Summit,

How long would oil-marketing companies be able to take it [the losses and under-recoveries] frankly, that is something that worries me... one quarter of losses can wipe out net profits made during the last [financial] year

HARDEEP SINGH PURI
Union Petroleum Minister



2026. At the present rate, under-recoveries are being incurred, and "one quarter of losses can wipe out net profits made during the last [financial] year", the Minister added.

OMCs, as Mr. Puri had also indicated earlier, are staring at under-recoveries of up to ₹2 lakh crore during this quarter, with

losses expected to scale to about ₹1 lakh crore.

As for supply, he said, "[There is] no problem on supply management side, [there is] no shortage anywhere."

"We have 60 days of crude [oil], which is the maximum we need, 60 days of LNG [liquefied natural gas], and we have 45

days of LPG," the Union Minister added.

The Petroleum Minister also informed that India has ramped up its daily domestic production of LPG from 35,000-36,000 tonnes to 54,000 tonnes.

PM's appeal

Stressing that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for diligent use of retail fuel amid the West Asia crisis should be taken as a wake up call, Mr. Puri said there must not be a "bizarre construct" on the austerity appeal.

"If you look at the way it is happening, uncertainty is too mild a word. What he [Mr. Modi] has said is that we have to look at our lifestyle as well. There is no lockdown happening tomorrow," he said.

IN BRIEF



L-G clears first Anti-Narcotics Task Force police station in city

Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Tuesday approved the first Anti-Narcotics Task Force police station in the Capital, saying the city is determined to become free of drug abuse by 2027.

Stray dog killing: FIRs against animal rights activist, guard

Delhi Police has registered two separate FIRs in an incident from Kirti Nagar involving the alleged killing of a stray dog. The police have booked a security guard, Vinod Paswan, for beating the stray dog to death on May 8.

Traders in New Ashok Nagar 'seal' their own shops ahead of action by DDA, MCD

Suruchi Kumari NEW DELHI

Rows of freshly painted brick facades and plywood-covered shopfronts have replaced the bustling shops in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar market in anticipation of a sealing drive.

er bulldozers nor civic officials in sight on Tuesday, when the drive was scheduled, and the area MLA promising a legal challenge to the drive, traders are breathing a sigh of relief.

'Hit the streets': Kejriwal reaches out to students over paper leak

Centre understands only language of agitation, says AAP chief, alleges 'connivance, political patronage at very high level'; student outfits stage demonstrations outside Union Education Ministry HQ, seek Minister's resignation, scrapping of NTA

Mahima Rao NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday hit out at the Centre over the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) 2026 paper leak and called on students to take to the streets over the issue.

The day was marked by demonstrations by several student outfits against the National Testing Agency (NTA) outside Shastrī Bhawan, which houses the Union Education Ministry headquarters.

Students' future The former Chief Minister accused the Centre of jeopardising students' future. "Those who cannot conduct even one examination properly without leaks - how will they run a government?" he said while addressing a press conference at the party



Exam outrage: Student protesters raising slogans outside Shastrī Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI

headquarters.

"I stand with all those [affected] children. I want to tell the students that they will have to come out on the streets. This government understands only the language of agitation. Kejriwal is with you," said the AAP chief.

Claiming that NEET papers have been leaked

thrice earlier - in 2017, 2021, and 2024 - Mr. Kejriwal alleged collusion at a "very high level".

'Previous leaks' "Papers do not get leaked on their own. There is connivance and political patronage. I want to know where are the people who leaked the 2017 paper to-

day. Were they punished? Were those who leaked the 2021 paper punished? Those who leaked the 2024 paper are all out on bail," he said.

Seeking accountability Various outfits, including the Left-aligned Students' Federation of India (SFI) and Congress-backed National Students' Union of India (NSUI), held protests outside Shastrī Bhawan demanding accountability from the NTA.

Aishe Ghosh, the State secretary of SFI (Delhi), said the cancellation of the NEET-UG exam followed a pattern of recurring failures under the NTA. "Since the NTA has taken over the responsibility of conducting national competitive exams such as CUET, NET and NEET, paper leaks have become the norm," she said.

She called for the NTA to be scrapped and for the government to take over the responsibility of conducting examinations. Ms. Ghosh said her organisation will launch a nationwide agitation over the issue in the coming days.

'Scared of reprisal' Mehina Fatima, joint secretary of the SFI, alleged a nexus between the NTA and private coaching centres. "The [affected] students aren't here because they are apprehensive that if they protest against the government, they might not be allowed to retake the exam," she alleged.

NSUI national president Vinod Jakhar demanded the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and a ban on the NTA. "Today's decision to cancel NEET is a victory of student power and of lakhs of aspirants across the country," he said.



Susan Elias

St. Stephen's College gets first woman principal

The Hindu Bureau NEW DELHI

St. Stephen's College on Tuesday announced the appointment of Susan Elias as the 14th principal of the college. She will be the first woman to hold the post since the college's inception in 1881.

Ms. Elias, a PhD from Anna University, has a science background and is currently serving as pro vice-chancellor at the Lucknow campus of Chandigarh University.



Traders outside plywood-covered shopfronts. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

East Central Railway Notice Tender. E-TENDER NOTICE No. SG-664-02-Tele-2026-27. Dhanbad, dt. 08-05-2026. Name of the work: 1) Provision of Communication Media for working of Block, Axle Counter and other telecommunication circuits on wireless channel at Bukra Station (BUKR).

North Western Railway Tender Notice. No. TELUJUN/2026-27/08A GSULECTG-04. Dt. Dated 08.05.2026. Name of the work: 1. Complete details of tenders can be seen on Website No.: http://www.rw.gov.in. 2. Date & time of closing of e-tender: 01.06.2026 up to 15:00 hrs.

Government of Tamil Nadu Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited. Notice Inviting Tender. In continuation of Notice Inviting Tender, Dated: 07.03.2026, ELCOIT Angadi Division invites second call for 'Rate Contract Tender for supply, installation and commissioning of the following items through ELCOIT Angadi e-Commerce portal'.

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युवा, रोजगार एवं कौशल विकास विभाग बिहार कौशल विकास मिशन. सूचना. बिहार कौशल विकास मिशन द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा "RFP for empanelment of Training Partner to implement employment linked Domain Skill Development Program under Labour Resource Department, Govt. of Bihar under the overall framework of Bihar Skill Development Mission (BSDM), RFP No.-BSDM/Training Partner/RFP-120/2025 dated 04.07.2025".

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-7 कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसेज उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय). उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम, की ओर से अयोध्यातारा द्वारा CONSTRUCTION OF EXCELLENCE CENTRE (COMPLETE STEEL STRUCTURE) AT GOVERNMENT POLYTECHNIC KOTANA BARAUT BAGPATH (U.P.).

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-31, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसेज उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय). उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम, की ओर से अयोध्यातारा द्वारा जनपद बुलन्दशहर के कन्दूरवा गाँवी बालिका विद्यालय डिब्बे में बाउण्ड्री वाल का निर्माण कार्य.

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-31, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसेज उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय). उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम, की ओर से अयोध्यातारा द्वारा जनपद बुलन्दशहर के कन्दूरवा गाँवी बालिका विद्यालय गुलाबरी में बाउण्ड्री वाल का निर्माण कार्य.

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BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION. Notice Inviting Tender. B.M.T.C invites tender for procurement of the following Goods & Services through KPP Portal.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority. E-TENDER NOTICE. E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with U.P.Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned.

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Impact of war on economy: Pawar seeks all-party meet

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed to citizens to adopt austerity measures, Nationalist Congress Party (Sharad-chandra Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday warned that such an announcement signals a long-term impact on the Indian economy and demanded that an all-party meeting be convened to discuss the "instability" that has emerged due to the West Asia conflict.

"Due to the sudden nature of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcements, the country's economy is likely to face a far-reaching impact, creating an atmosphere of unease among the citizens, the industry and business sector, and investors," he said. He demanded that the PM call for an all-party meeting considering the seriousness of the issue.

CBI nabs three in graft case in Punjab; AAP's anti-corruption crusade a sham: Oppn. parties

Two middlemen, associate arrested in connection with a bribery case, another suspect on the run; people deserve answers, says LoP Bajwa; BJP's Tarun Chugh calls out AAP's 'hoax of fighting graft'

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday said it has arrested three persons, including two middlemen and an associate, in connection with a bribery case "involving the demand and acceptance of illegal gratification on behalf of officials posted in the Punjab Vigilance Bureau".

'₹20-lakh bribe'

The CBI had registered a case based on a complaint by a Punjab tax officer, which alleged that the accused, Vikas alias Vicky Goyal, and his son Raghav Goyal, demanded ₹20 lakh to secure the closure of a complaint pending against



Cong's Partap Singh Bajwa (left); BJP gen. secy. Tarun Chugh.



the complainant in the office of the Director General of Police (Vigilance), Punjab. The Central agency has also alleged that both the accused were acting as intermediaries for senior Vigilance Department officials, including the Reader to the DGP (Vigilance).

"During verification, allegations were prima facie substantiated. The accused negotiated and reduced the

demand from ₹20 lakh to ₹13 lakh, along with one mobile phone for O.P. Rana, the Reader to the DGP, Vigilance. During trap proceedings on May 11 at Chandigarh, accused Ankit Wadhwa, associate of the accused persons, was apprehended while accepting the bribe and the mobile phone," read the CBI statement.

It added that during the

operation, the accused – Mr. Raghav, Mr. Vicky, and Mr. Rana – ran away after being alerted by their gunmen. After a chase, Mr. Raghav, Mr. Vicky and the two gunmen were apprehended near Ambala. However, Mr. Rana is still absconding, said the Central probe agency.

The Opposition parties intensified their attack on the AAP government, asserting that the party's much-touted anti-corruption crusade had been exposed as a sham. The Leader of the Opposition in the Punjab Assembly, Partap Singh Bajwa of the Congress, said people deserve answers. Bharatiya Janata Party's national general secretary Tarun Chugh called out AAP's "hoax of fighting against corruption".

'Den of thieves': Union Minister criticises BJP civic body in Faridabad

Ashok Kumar
FARIDABAD

In a rare public rebuke of his own government, Union Minister of State for Cooperation and Faridabad MP Krishan Pal Gurjar on Tuesday described the city's BJP-ruled municipal corporation as a "den of loot", admitting that graft is not just embarrassing the government, it is handing fresh ammunition to the Opposition.

"You gorge on the money while the government gets a bad name," Mr. Gurjar told civic officials while chairing a meeting of the District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee.

Former Minister Moolchand Sharma, BJP MLAs Dhanesh Adlakha (Badkhal) and Satish Phagna (NIT) and Congress's Prithla MLA Raghuvir Tewatia were also present.

The MP criticised the corporation's track record:



Trees worth ₹10 cr. have been planted, but no one knows where those are, said Union Minister Krishan Pal Gurjar.

"Trees worth ₹10 crore have been planted, but no one knows where those are. It is published in newspapers every day."

Sitting next to him, Mr. Adlakha termed the civic body a "hub for brokers". He said, "We have also worked in the corporation for 20 years. The roads made 10 years ago are still not damaged, but the roads built over the past decade are broken every few years."

Congress MP Deependra Hooda shared a clip of the meeting on X, taking a swipe at the ruling party.

Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13		
RISE	05:32	SET 19:04
MOON	02:48	SET 15:23
THURSDAY, MAY 14		
RISE	05:32	SET 19:04
MOON	03:20	SET 16:27
FRIDAY, MAY 15		
RISE	05:31	SET 19:05
MOON	03:56	SET 17:36

Delhi Weather

	max	min
Delhi City	39	28
Safdarjang	39	28
Palam	38	26

Delhi Palam Today
37°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be very warm and windy with uneasy afternoon. Night will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
38°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight hot and windy with uneasy afternoon. Night will be comfortable.

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THE HINDU

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Compensate us and we can ban liquor in 2 mins: Farooq to Centre

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

The "controversy" over the liquor issue in Kashmir showed no signs of abating on Tuesday as ruling National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah expressed inability to completely ban the sale of liquor owing to its revenue.

Meanwhile, Opposition parties, including Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and J&K Apni Party, besides Kashmir's chief cleric Mir-

waiz Umar Farooq, have sought a blanket prohibition on the sale of liquor in the Valley.

Morarji Desai's visit

To make a point on how it was not easy to ban liquor in J&K, Mr. Abdullah referred to former Prime Minister Morarji Desai's visit to J&K and his advocacy for a ban liquor in the 1970s.

"Mr. Desai was known for supporting prohibition. My father and then Chief Minister Sheikh Abdullah

The decision by T.N.'s new Chief Minister to close liquor shops should serve as an eye-opener for the J&K government

ALTAJ BUKHARI
J&K Apni Party president

replied that he could consider stopping liquor sales if the Centre compensated the resulting revenue loss," he said, adding that if the

Central government still agrees to compensate for the revenue loss, the J&K government "can stop it in two minutes".

J&K Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari asked the government to take a cue from the Tamil Nadu government. "Tamil Nadu's newly elected Chief Minister Joseph Vijay has shown what true public leadership looks like. Just two days after being sworn in as the CM, he ordered the closure of liquor shops," said Mr.

Bukhari. He said CM Vijay's decision should serve as an eye-opener for the J&K government. "Unfortunately, our political parties are indulging in blame games. The NC says that even the PDP refused to ban liquor when it was in power. That may be true, but it does not mean the NC should follow PDP's path," said Mr. Bukhari.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said J&K is a Muslim-majority region and alcohol consumption "is socially and

religiously discouraged".

'Impact on society'

"Several States in India with non-Muslim majorities have also imposed restrictions or ban on alcohol due to its damaging impact on society. The ongoing campaign against drug networks won't yield the desired results if action is also not taken against liquor," he added.

VIJAY'S CLOSURE ORDERS
» PAGE 4

SCIENCE GALLERY BENGALURU

IN YOUR words

OPEN CALL

How do you capture humanity's relationship with food? We are looking for young writers to submit writings, on how food shapes culture, systems and everyday life, with mentorship from Culinary Anthropologist and Writer, Kurush Dalal.

Shortlisted writers will also showcase their final piece at a public reading in June.

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IN BRIEF



Delhi CM, Ministers to heed PM Modi's call for austerity

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Tuesday said that she, along with her Cabinet colleagues, will minimise the use of vehicles and prioritise car pooling and public transport in adherence with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for collective action in withstanding global economic uncertainties. "The Delhi government is working with full commitment to promote fuel conservation and public transport. I urge all Delhi residents to also join this national effort for energy conservation," she stated in a post on X.

Court records SIT members' statement in wrestlers' case

A Delhi court on Tuesday recorded the testimony of Special Investigation Team (SIT) members while examining the allegations of sexual harassment levelled by women wrestlers against former Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. The court recorded the statement of SIT Inspector Sandeep and directed the Investigating Officer to depose on May 15. Several renowned wrestlers had protested for months in New Delhi in 2023, demanding Mr. Singh's arrest.

Why no FIR in NEET paper leak case: Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

The Opposition Congress in Rajasthan on Tuesday asked why the State police's Special Operations Group (SOG) had not registered a first information report in the alleged NEET-UG 2026 paper leak case despite the detention of about 15 individuals for questioning. The SOG has been probing the matter for five days to trace a suspected network.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which took over the probe following the Centre's direction, registered a case on Tues-



Were the Special Operations Group officers under instructions not to reveal the details?

ASHOK GEHLOT
Former Rajasthan CM

day. While the examination has been cancelled by the National Testing Agency (NTA), the CBI is expected to conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the allegations of paper leak.

The Congress leaders said here that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government had tried to sup-

press the matter for several days instead of finding out the truth. Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the "true face" of the BJP government had been exposed after the entrance exam's cancellation, indicating large-scale malpractices. "It is incomprehensible

why the SOG did not register a criminal case in the matter... Were the SOG officers under instructions not to reveal the details?" Mr. Gehlot said while talking to journalists at his residence.

'Organised irregularities' Leader of the Opposition Tika Ram Jolly alleged that the NEET-UG cancellation was proof of "organised irregularities" in the conduct of the test. He said the State government had put the future of students at stake by hiding the matter out of fear of disrepute and in an attempt to project its clean image.

Bangla Pokkho chief held for spreading 'false information'

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

'Bangla Pokkho' founder Garga Chatterjee was on Tuesday arrested by Kolkata Police's Cyber Cell on allegations of spreading 'misinformation' about EVM manipulations.

Bangla Pokkho is a pro-Bengali advocacy organisation. During the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, Mr. Chatterjee campaigned among the people asking them either to vote for the candidates of the Trinamool Congress or the Left Front but not the BJP claiming that the saffron party is a party of "outsiders".

"The complaint against him was lodged by the District Election Officer of Kolkata north, following which the cyber cell initiated action. He was summoned twice, but he did not appear, and that is the reason he was arrested today [Tuesday]," Kolkata Police Commissioner Ajay Nand told mediapersons.

This is not the first time that Mr. Chatterjee has been arrested by Kolkata Police. In August 2022, he was arrested for allegedly hurting sentiments of Assamese people and creating enmity between communities.

FIR against unknown right-wing activists for assaulting man over 'love jihad' allegations in Bhopal

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh police on Tuesday registered a case against unknown persons, a day after videos showed a man being dragged out of a hotel in Bhopal and assaulted on allegations of 'love jihad', a term coined by several right-wing outfits accusing Muslim men of "luring" Hindu women into relationships with them.

According to the police, a case was lodged at the Govindpura police station after complaints were received from individuals and community leaders against unidentified persons for beating up Arif Khan, 27, a resident of Bhopal's Jahangirabad area.

Bhopal Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Monika Shukla told *The Hindu* that the police have launched an investigation and the accused are yet to be identified.

On May 11, multiple videos went viral, showing a group of Bajrang Dal activists barging into a private hotel in Bhopal's Gautam Nagar area and thrashing Mr. Khan. In one of the videos, the mob, donning saffron scarves and chanting 'Jai Shri Ram', puts cow



The girl's family and the man decided not to file any complaint... the couple has been given time to think if they want to lodge a complaint

AWADHESH SINGH TOMAR
Govindpura station in-charge

dung on him and slaps him in front of the police, who are trying to intervene. Arguments break out between the police and Bajrang Dal workers. The man was later handed over to the police.

Right-wing activists had alleged that the man was caught with a Hindu woman and was "involved in an of 'love jihad'".

Govindpura station in-charge Awadhesh Singh Tomar said that the incident took place on May 10 and a case has been registered under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Section 299 (Deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious feelings of any class).

No complaints Mr. Tomar said the police are analysing the footage to identify the accused. "We had taken note of the matter. But the girl's family and

the man decided not to file any complaint. Now, we have received some complaints. So an FIR has been filed," he said, adding that the couple has been given time to think if they want to lodge a complaint.

He said Mr. Khan has at least five pending cases against him, including fraud and theft. Another police officer, who requested anonymity, said that while official statements of the woman were not recorded, she admitted to be in a relationship with the man and had gone to the hotel consensually.

Meanwhile, Deepak Bunde, a Bhopal-based lawyer and social activist, has written to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking its intervention and directions for the authorities to prevent incidents of moral policing.

Terming the incident a violation of fundamental and human rights, Mr. Bunde wrote, "Notices should be issued to the Director General of Police, Madhya Pradesh, and the District Magistrate, Bhopal, seeking a report on an impartial probe. Based on video evidence, the accused should be identified, and punitive action against them must be ensured."

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IN BRIEF



Union Minister's son seeks pre-arrest bail in POCSO case

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son Bandi Sai Bageerath moved the Telangana High Court seeking anticipatory bail in a POCSO case registered against him following allegations of sexual harassment of a 17-year-old girl. Since the court is on summer vacation, the bail petition filed by him is likely to be heard by the Vacation Bench on Thursday. The BRS have been staging protests (in photograph) seeking the arrest of Mr. Bageerath.

4 youth killed after lightning strike at Kerala hill viewpoint

Four youngsters were killed and three injured after being struck by lightning while visiting a hill at Mankada, Kerala, on Tuesday. The group had gone to the hill around 5.30 p.m. when it rained and the sudden lightning struck them. The tragedy unfolded at the Panthallur hill viewpoint in Malappuram district. Local residents rushed the victims to the hospital. The victims were from Vellila near Mankada. Hospital sources said the condition of the injured was stable.

Rabies confirmed in stray dog that attacked child in Kerala

A stray dog that entered a house and bit a three-year-old girl near Omalloor in Kerala has tested positive for rabies. The virus was confirmed in tests conducted at an Animal Husbandry department laboratory. In the animal attack reported on Monday, the child sustained bite injuries on her eyes and other parts of her body. Two people were also injured. Residents killed the dog after noticing rabies symptoms. The child and other victims are under treatment.

Cong. leader to continue as Sringeri MLA after SC stays recount result, says Speaker

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU/BENGALURU

Karnataka Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader on Tuesday said that since the Supreme Court had stayed the recount result of the Sringeri Assembly constituency, Congress leader T.D. Raju Gowda will continue as its MLA.



T.D. Raju Gowda had appealed to the SC after a recount of postal ballots was done following a High Court order.

The Supreme Court on Monday provided interim relief to Mr. Gowda by allowing him to continue as MLA for the constituency for the time being.

Mr. Gowda had appealed to the top court after a recount of postal ballots was done following a High Court order.

The recount showed the

numbers lean in favour of his rival and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate D.N. Jeevaraj.

Asked about the dispute that led to Mr. Jeevaraj taking oath after the Election Commission (EC) declared him elected following the recount, Mr. Khader de-

IUML growing restive over delay in naming Kerala CM

Party meeting at Panakkad may witness strong emotions unless Chief Minister is chosen by today, IUML leadership believes the party's contribution to the UDF's victory is being overlooked

Abdul Latheef Naha
MALAPPURAM

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the second-largest constituent of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and a key force behind the front's landslide victory in the April 9 Kerala Assembly election, finds itself in a Catch-22 situation over the delay in finalising the Chief Minister.

Though the IUML leadership has remained cautious and largely silent on the Congress' internal tussle over the top post, discontent is steadily growing within the party. The perceived casual attitude of some Congress leaders has reportedly irked sections of the IUML leadership.



V.D. Satheesan, K.C. Venugopal and Ramesh Chennithala after a meeting with Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday. ANI

A leadership meeting of the IUML, scheduled for Wednesday at State president Syed Sadikali Shihab Thangal's house at Panakkad, is expected to witness strong sentiments.

"As a major UDF partner, we have conveyed our preference when consulted

on the Chief Minister selection. The decision rests with the Congress, and we will abide by it. But this delay has taken away the satisfaction of our victory," said former IUML State general secretary K.P.A. Majeed.

The IUML leadership believes the party's contri-

Cong. indecision a mockery of democracy: LDF

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress party, through its interminable delay in announcing the next Chief Minister, despite the huge mandate it received from the people, is making a mockery of democracy, Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener T.P. Ramakrishnan said.

tribution to the UDF's victory is being overlooked. Beyond helping the front sweep all 16 Assembly seats in Malappuram, IUML support base played a decisive role in the victories of Congress in Thrissur, Thavanur, Ponnani, Palakkad, and Thrithala.

Probe intensified as timer circuit recovered near PM Modi's convoy route in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After explosive materials were found near Kaggalipura on the outskirts of Bengaluru, Karnataka, close to the route of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's convoy on Sunday, investigators have reportedly recovered additional materials believed to be capable of triggering an explosion.

According to sources, the police found not only gelatin sticks but also an electronic circuit and other equipment suspected to be meant for connecting detonators.

The officials suspect that the circuit has a provision for fixing a date and time, raising concerns that it could have been intended for a timed blast. Sources said that if detonators

had been attached and the timer activated, the materials could potentially have caused an explosion.

The recovery of these materials near the Prime Minister's programme route has triggered suspicion over whether there was a larger conspiracy behind the incident. Security agencies are also probing the source of the explosive materials.



Sources said the materials found are capable of triggering a blast. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Last date for Submission of Online Forms 12th June, 2026
Last date for submission of Hard copy 16th June, 2026

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(Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)
Madanapalle - 517325, Annamaya Dist., Andhra Pradesh, India.

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The Honourable Chancellor for MITS Deemed to be University has constituted a Search-cum-Selection Committee to recommend a suitable candidate from amongst experienced and distinguished academicians who meet the qualifications and experience as prescribed in the UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023 read with the UGC Regulations, 2018.

About MITS Deemed to be University: Madanapalle Institute of Technology & Science (MITS), Angalla, Madanapalle, was declared a Deemed-to-be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, Located in Annamaya District, Andhra Pradesh, MITS offers programmes in Engineering, Sciences, Management and Allied disciplines, and aspires to advance new-age multidisciplinary programmes aligned with NEP 2020.

ELIGIBILITY: The candidate shall be a distinguished academicians with a minimum of ten years of experience as Professor in a University system, or ten years of experience in a reputed research and/or academic administrative organisation, with proof of having demonstrated academic leadership. The candidate shall possess the highest level of competence, integrity, institutional commitment and proven governance, strategic management & leadership abilities, and shall be willing to provide vision and direction to MITS in its growth trajectory. The candidate shall be below 63 years of age and the tenure shall be as per the UGC norms.

HOW TO APPLY: Interested candidates are required to email their detailed curriculum vitae - along with educational qualifications, experience, list of publications, administrative roles, references and a digital photograph to leadershipsearch@mits.ac.in on or before **6th June 2026**. A hard copy of the application along with supporting documents shall reach the "Registrar, MITS Deemed to be University, Angalla, Madanapalle - 517325, Andhra Pradesh" on or before 5:00 P.M. on **13th June 2026**, in an envelope prescribed "Application for the post of Vice-Chancellor Confidential".

Shortlisted candidates fulfilling the prescribed qualifications and criteria may be invited for an interaction with the Search-cum-Selection Committee. The University reserves the right to fill, not to fill or extend the date of the advertised post without assigning any reason.

For further information, please visit www.mits.ac.in.

Sd/-REGISTRAR
Advt. 001/2026, dt. 01.05.2026 MITS Deemed to be University

SC upholds right to speedy trial in 1989 Kumbh Mela case

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A nearly four-decade-old criminal case involving five Uttar Pradesh police constables, who allegedly browled over preferential treatment by a canteen cook, has prompted the Supreme Court to reaffirm that the right to a speedy trial is a human right. The court has also ordered a sweeping review of judicial backlogs, vacancies and long-pending bail pleas in Uttar Pradesh.

The case dates back to 1989, when the constables were deployed on Kumbh Mela duty. According to the prosecution, four policemen entered into a verbal altercation with a fifth colleague, accusing the cook of serving him better food. The exchange escalated into a physical fight, leading to criminal charges of 'simple hurt' and intimidation.

The trial was transferred to a Magistrate court in Allahabad in 1991, where it remained pending for over three decades.

During the prolonged proceedings, two of the accused died, Uttar Pradesh was bifurcated in 2000 to create Uttarakhand, and the case drifted through the judicial system with little progress. In 2023, the trial court acquitted two of the remaining accused after noting that the prosecution had failed to produce even a single witness in more than 30 years.

However, proceedings

During the prolonged proceedings, two of the accused died. In 2023, the trial court acquitted two of the remaining accused

against the fifth constable continued after the Allahabad High Court refused to quash the case.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice J.B. Pardiwala, advocate Shashwat Anand, representing the appellant Kailash Chandra Kapri, submitted that his client was 22 years old when the FIR was registered in 1989 and is now 59.

He argued that Mr. Kapri had not received any summons from the court until 2021 and that his fundamental right to a speedy trial had been violated.

Allowing the appeal, Justice Pardiwala held that the right to a speedy trial is an intrinsic part of the fundamental right to life under Article 21 and an essential component of a fair trial.

"The tag of 'accused' deprives a man of the right to live with full human dignity... Speedy trial is an integral part of fair trial," the court observed, adding that the right to a speedy trial is also a human right that cannot be denied in a civilised society.

The judgment further observed that excessive delay in criminal proceedings, including in terror-related cases, may justify the grant of bail.

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Split wide open

The AIADMK seems set on the path of self-destruction

It is no surprise that the AIADMK, the principal Opposition party in the previous Tamil Nadu Assembly, is heading towards a split, having faced a second successive setback in the recent Assembly election, apart from several defeats in parliamentary elections. As of now, the 47 MLAs from the Dravidian major are divided over their support for the leadership of General Secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, who was until recently the Leader of Opposition. On Monday, the two groups made written submissions to Pro-tem Speaker M.V. Karupiah regarding their claims. Though there is no clarity on the strength of the two factions, the dissident group, led by former Ministers C.Ve. Shanmugam and S.P. Velumani, appears to enjoy the support of more legislators. This group has announced its decision to support the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government; Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, by visiting the office of Mr. Shanmugam and meeting him and his colleagues on Tuesday, has indicated where his sympathies lie. This appears to be part of Mr. Vijay's political outreach, as he has met DMK chief M.K. Stalin and several other leaders in the past two days. It carries political significance, as the Chief Minister is due to move a trust vote in the House on Wednesday.

Unlike previous occasions when the AIADMK publicly announced the election of its legislative party leader and other functionaries, there has been no official announcement this time. However, the Palaniswami camp claims that at a May 9 meeting, all 47 legislators gave written consent to the effect that the former Chief Minister is the AIADMK legislature party's leader. It also cites the Supreme Court verdict in the Shiv Sena case (May 2023), which held that "the political party, and not the legislature party, appoints the Whip and the Leader in the House". As Mr. Palaniswami is also the general secretary, his supporters argue that there is no need to take cognisance of the other faction's office-bearer announcements, given that he has appointed his nominee as the legislature party whip. The Palaniswami group also appears to be preparing to move the Speaker for disqualification of rebel legislators under paragraph 2(i)(b) of the 1985 anti-defection law, in case the dissidents violate the whip by voting against the government. One option for the Shanmugam-Velumani faction is to merge with the TVK if it secures the support of 32 legislators, similar to how seven AAP MPs in the Rajya Sabha (out of a total of 10 MPs) recently quit and merged with the BJP — which was approved by the Vice President and the Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan. In the case of the AIADMK, Assembly Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar may soon have to draw on his experience and legal advice to assess the merits of the two groups' claims. Whatever he decides, the churn in Tamil Nadu politics is likely to continue for some time.

Data and justice

As courts adopt AI, care must be taken on the potential for abuse

In the latest step in a long-standing effort to digitise the judiciary, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant announced two initiatives from the Bench, called 'One Case, One Data' (OCOD), a unified judicial data platform, and 'Su-Sahayak', an AI-powered chatbot on the Supreme Court of India website. OCOD promises a unified digital trail for a dispute as it moves through various courts, linkages between court records and litigant actions (such as appeals), easier access to various documents, lower need for manual verification, reciprocal access to High Courts and other courts, and more accurate judicial statistics. It is notable considering the wide variation in software practices and records quality across India's thousands of district and subordinate courts. If the programme succeeds, standardised data could also allow administrators to determine where cases are held up and ease procedural bottlenecks, and improve data-based decision-making overall. 'Su-Sahayak' has been integrated into the Court website's front-end to help users navigate case status, cause lists, orders and judgments, e-services, and frequently asked questions. As with any major state-backed technology rollout in India, questions about interoperability, integrity of legacy records, restricting access to private information, and staff skilling remain. By aspiring to a centralised digital fingerprint for each case, OCOD also bears the risk of misuse.

While the CJI said that these new tools will improve "access to justice", their introduction risks deepening the digital divide. OCOD may require lawyers to maintain digital scanners, cloud backup options, and updated software. Metropolitan corporate firms can easily absorb these costs but independent practitioners in the district and taluka levels will lack the capital. The system may also introduce digital middlemen to help litigants who cannot navigate the e-filing portal, potentially creating a new layer of unregulated costs. While the government has launched assistants with voice-first capabilities, such as Jan Sahayak, 'Su-Sahayak' is primarily text-based and could exclude people who are not comfortable typing or navigating complex website menus. The state and the judiciary must ensure that the AI model is not biased against marginalised communities who were historically disproportionately arrested or denied bail. India's courts have generally been more comfortable with AI for assistance than for substantive reasoning. 'Su-Sahayak' follows SUVAS, to translate judgments, and SUPACE, which processes facts and legal precedents. The line must continue to hold as the judiciary adopts more powerful tools that have already tempted practitioners in other domains to abuse them.

Tamil Nadu's political transition, growth story faultlines



Kalaivarasan A.

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In Tamil Nadu, the electoral triumph of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) under the leadership of C. Joseph Vijay is seen as something that would lead to a break from the 'Dravidian Model of development'. But only time will tell if Mr. Vijay's victory is only an extension of Dravidian politics. Going by the TVK's election manifesto, there is scope for continuity, not a break, from extant economic policy. The party's victory comes at a time when Tamil Nadu is faced with a series of challenges. While some are internal, emerging from chinks in the State's relatively better development outcomes and in its political trajectory, others have been aggravated by external challenges such as the shifts in federal relations and the changes in the global economic order.

Successive Dravidian parties have built an economy that is inclusive, productive, and broad-based. The State has shown that economic growth can go together with social development: simultaneous interventions in growth drivers (infrastructure such as power and transport) alongside investments in affordable health and education. It may not be an exaggeration to say that, even without parental support, the probability of a child surviving, getting fully immunised, being fed nutritious food, getting into school, entering college, and progressing to university is far higher in Tamil Nadu than in many other States in India (perhaps, Kerala is the other).

But now, "there is trouble in paradise". New faultlines have emerged in the Dravidian model. Historically, Tamil Nadu's industrial story has rested on a simple idea: using state policy to stitch together the growth of territorially rooted micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and large electronics and manufacturing firms, so that learning, jobs, and value creation are spread across regions within the State. That model has weakened with the rise in precarity of jobs and sluggish wage growth. The growth — and indeed there has continued to be growth — has not generated jobs or real wage growth. Ex-post welfare transfers have not cut it either. Not to mention, the increased welfare transfers have come at the expense of fiscal prudence.

Jobs and growth

Tamil Nadu is a global manufacturing hub and its industrial policy, irrespective of the political regime, has remained consistent and non-contradictory. It has, therefore, attracted large global investments such as Hyundai, Ford and Nokia in the past, and Foxconn which manufactures Apple iPhones. However, there has been a gap between the investment promised and actualised. As per Centre for Monitoring

The State's development model is under pressure from changing realities, which the new Chief Minister needs to address

Indian Economy Pvt. Ltd (CMIE) data, during 2021-25, announced investments rose to ₹6.80 lakh crore, but completed investments stood lower at ₹1.57 lakh crore. The completion ratio stands at 23.09%, which is lower than before. Even these investments did not generate commensurate jobs. The employment elasticity of new jobs is much lower now than in previous regimes: 0.01 per unit of promised capital, less than one job per crore of investment. The latest Annual Survey of Industries tells us that the ratio of jobs created per unit of capital investment, number of workers to gross capital formation, was 0.58 for Tamil Nadu, 0.34 for Gujarat, and 0.33 for Maharashtra. Historically, Tamil Nadu's uniqueness lies in the pursuit of development that delicately balances the needs of capital with a requisite degree of safeguards for workers. As a result, even when the wage share in national income has been falling across the world due to increases in capital intensity, Tamil Nadu has been able to protect its workers, at least relatively.

The wage levels in Tamil Nadu were higher because of lower levels of contractualisation and the better bargaining strength of labour. Relative to its own past, the State is now witnessing rising contractualisation, declining wage shares, and weakening employment elasticity as capital intensity increases. MSMEs are losing ground and many traditional, labour-intensive clusters face a survival crisis. They are yet to recover fully from successive shocks of demonetisation (2016), Goods and Services Tax (2017) and COVID-19 (2020). U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs have compounded the crisis. The new factories that have come in have weak linkages with the existing small firms. On the other hand, the persisting skill gap in labour market has further limited the ability to generate jobs, adopt new technologies and absorb new entrants.

Aspirations versus achievement

The Dravidian model that generated aspirations among youth has brought new troubles. Its emphasis on education as the route to self-respect translated into broad-based aspirations for success which implied dignity and self-respect. These are values that the Dravidian movement has long stood by. Tamil Nadu is one of the few Indian States that democratised higher education and addressed elite bias. Its gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education is 51%, which means that 51% of all youth in the age group of 18-23 years are engaged in some form of higher education, which is twice the national average of 27.1% and comparable to most European countries. It is also inclusive, as the GER of Scheduled Caste (SC) men and women stands at 38.8% and 40.4%, respectively, much

higher than that of upper-caste youth in many States.

But since education expanded without improvements in quality, its returns have declined, weakening the prospect of mobility and opening new pathways for inequality. With education being decoupled from the job market, the relative position of the first-generation graduate has become increasingly fragile when compared to those with generational wealth. Double-digit growth does not mean anything to new entrants if it does not generate jobs with commensurate wages. Educated youth work as delivery agents and gig workers who are exploited by platform companies. A feeling of betrayal has set in. The welfare that follows is not enough and cannot compensate for the loss of dignity that is endured through joblessness or informality. The new welfarism of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party has ensured a vast social and economic safety net for the underprivileged, but these welfare measures did not resonate with first-time voters in 2026. In the absence of meaningful employment, the youth perceive these as measures that take away dignity.

New policies, delivering dignity

No doubt, Tamil Nadu still does better in most indicators *vis-à-vis* other States. For youth, this is a given. They have been listening to this narrative their entire lives, but that slogan of success does not resonate with their lives. The Dravidian movement took on the old hierarchy but is blind to the new hierarchy, and their own position within it. Thomas Piketty emphasises that besides political equality, voice, power, and participation, and access to basic goods for everyone, the question of dignity is the most severe form of inequality in our times. Tamil Nadu has achieved some degree of equality in basic health, education, food, and transportation through a more generous welfare state. But it has not delivered dignity. So how does one even do that?

Addressing that requires a reworking of the growth strategy to generate decent jobs, better wages and reforming governance to reduce the gap between the governed and the governing, foster associational life among people, and dismantle new sites of hierarchy. In absence of these measures, even welfare, framed in the language of rights, may not work because the line between legitimate welfare and illegitimate bribe, or money-for-votes, has blurred. This often makes youth resentful or confused about what is an entitlement and whether a cash transfer is a right or a bribe. What is thus required is a new set of economic and social policies attentive to these faultlines.

Managing coexistence in human-wildlife conflict zones

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is often framed as a conservation problem. In reality, it is a complex socio-ecological challenge shaped by land use, livelihoods and ecological change. Across continents, interactions between people and wildlife are becoming more frequent and more intense, not because animals are encroaching on human space alone, but because human activity is rapidly transforming natural habitats.

In India, hundreds of people die each year in encounters with elephants, while large numbers of livestock are lost to predators. Similar patterns are reported in parts of Africa, Southeast Asia and Latin America. These conflicts reflect deeper pressures such as habitat fragmentation, agricultural expansion and changing land use. Where biodiversity overlaps with dense human settlement, conflict becomes almost inevitable.

A reflection of ecological imbalance

Geographically, the most severe conflicts occur in South and Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Tanzania face recurring challenges involving elephants, big cats and other large mammals. These species require extensive ranges and seasonal movement corridors. When forests are cleared, roads constructed or farms expanded, these natural pathways are disrupted. Wildlife then adapts, often by moving into agricultural landscapes or peri-urban areas in search of food and shelter.

Importantly, animal behaviour in such contexts is rarely "aggressive" in intent. Crop raiding by elephants or livestock predation by carnivores are adaptive responses to ecological constraints. Monkeys and wild boars exploit easily available food near forest edges, while predators turn to livestock when natural prey declines. These patterns reflect ecological imbalance rather than aberrant animal behaviour.

Global responses to HWC show that coexistence is possible when policy moves beyond reactive measures. In Africa, Botswana and Namibia have implemented



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The approach should be scientifically informed, socially just, and ecologically sustainable

community-based natural resource management systems, where local communities share tourism revenues and gain rights over wildlife use. This aligns conservation goals with economic incentives, reducing hostility toward wildlife. In central America in Costa Rica, ecological corridors are integrated into national planning to maintain habitat connectivity. Finland combines real-time wildlife monitoring with rapid compensation systems, reducing both risk and resentment.

These approaches share three key features: strong local participation, reliable economic support and the use of ecological data for planning; they treat conflict as a shared management issue rather than a law-and-order problem.

The complexities in India

In India, significant efforts have been made to address HWC through compensation schemes, technological interventions and legal frameworks. However, given the scale and complexity of the challenge, there remains scope to further strengthen implementation. Compensation mechanisms, while well-intentioned, can benefit from greater timeliness, enhanced coverage and improved accessibility for marginalised communities. Similarly, measures such as solar fencing and early-warning systems have shown context-specific success, but their effectiveness depends on better coordination and ecological planning.

At the policy level, India's legal framework has played a crucial role in wildlife conservation. Going forward, there is scope to better align these frameworks with the evolving realities of human-wildlife interfaces. As land-use patterns and ecological pressures change, adaptive, locally responsive governance approaches can help strengthen coexistence outcomes.

There is a need to carefully assess the practicality and long-term effectiveness of proposed interventions. Suggestions such as fertility control in wild elephants have

occasionally entered public debate; however, experts note that such measures have limited applicability beyond small, intensively managed populations. In the Indian context, where elephants range across vast and fragmented landscapes, the key challenge remains habitat loss, increasing competition for food and water, and growing human-wildlife interface. Therefore, lasting solutions must focus on habitat restoration, ecological connectivity, and community-based conflict mitigation rather than isolated technical fixes.

Evidence from Bhutan and Nepal shows that locally grounded solutions can reduce conflict. Community-managed forests, coordinated grazing and predator-proof livestock enclosures have shown positive results, supported by stable conservation funding mechanisms.

Focus on education and awareness

Climate change is likely to intensify HWC by altering resource availability and forcing both humans and wildlife to adapt. This adds urgency to the need for a shift in perspective. Wildlife cannot be treated as an external threat to be controlled, nor can human livelihoods be side-lined in the name of conservation.

The way forward lies in designing landscapes that accommodate both. This includes securing wildlife corridors, improving land-use planning, strengthening compensation systems, and involving communities as active partners in conservation. Education and awareness can also play a role in rebuilding tolerance and understanding.

HWC is not an anomaly. It is a predictable outcome of how we use land and resources. The challenge is not to eliminate conflict entirely, but to manage it in ways that are scientifically informed, socially just and ecologically sustainable. If approached thoughtfully, coexistence is not only possible, but it is also essential for the future of both people and wildlife.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEET cancelled

Around 22.79 lakh students appeared for the "common and uniform National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET-UG) for admission to undergraduate medical education in medical institutions across the country". And now, without warning, it stands cancelled. This is not new. Every year, after one of India's most

prestigious and high-stakes examinations, the cycle repeats itself: a paper leak, an administrative lapse, or a "technical glitch," and the future of lakhs of children is put on hold. The real question we must ask is this: Are we truly serious about our students' futures? These young students dedicate years, not weeks, to preparing for a single

examination. They sacrifice their teenage years attending coaching classes. Their families invest savings, hope, and sacrifice. Then, overnight, a headline declares their effort void. Is our system so fragile? A cancelled examination is not merely a bureaucratic error. It is a breach of trust. It tells every student that their time is disposable,

their anxiety is irrelevant, and their future is negotiable.
Shikha Chauhan,
New Delhi

Austerity appeal

The Prime Minister's call for austerity is a clear admission of failure, coming only after the strategic suppression of economic data during the election

cycle. The ground reality is far removed from the government's propaganda. However, we are now at a juncture where the national interest must supersede political accountability. While we must condemn the government's lack of transparency, the duty to preserve resources for future generations now falls upon us. We should adopt

carpooling and fuel conservation not because the "sermon" is flawless, but because the government's failure has left the public as the final line of defence for India's economic future.
Zaid Daraani,
Vitala, Mangaluru

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

How India is governing its water resources

India's water crisis is often described as one of scarcity. Yet the deeper reality is a paradox: the country receives nearly 4,000 billion cubic metres of annual rainfall, but only a fraction of this water is captured, stored or used efficiently, highlighting a deeper institutional challenge. The question confronting policymakers is not merely how much water India has, but how its water is governed. As India works toward the global commitments of the UN (Sustainable Development Goal 6), and the national aspiration of becoming a developed economy by 2047, strengthening the architecture of water governance will be central to sustaining economic growth and social well-being.



Priyanka Vadrevu

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agricultural expansion and rural livelihoods, but it has also resulted in declining water tables across several regions. These realities point to a central conclusion: India's water crisis is as much institutional as it is hydrological.

On water governance
India's water governance operates through a complex, multi-level institutional structure involving the Union government, State governments and local bodies. At the national level, the Ministry of Jal Shakti serves as the nodal authority responsible for water resources, drinking water supply and sanitation. There is also the Central Water Commission which focuses primarily on surface water planning, river basin development and flood control, while the Central Ground Water Board assesses groundwater resources and provides scientific inputs for sustainable aquifer management.

Additionally, the NITI Aayog evaluates water governance performance across States through indicators such as the Composite Water Management Index. This benchmarking mechanism has helped introduce accountability and evidence-based policymaking into the water sector. However, India's federal constitutional structure places most water-related responsibilities with the States. Irrigation, water supply and groundwater regulation fall primarily within State jurisdiction. As a result, State irrigation departments, urban water boards and local governments play a decisive role in implementing water policies. This multi-layered system reflects India's federal design but also creates coordination challenges.

To address institutional fragmentation, the Union government has increasingly relied on national missions that align central funding with State-level implementation. One of the most transformative initiatives has been the Jal Jeevan Mission, launched in 2019, to provide tap connections to rural homes.

Recognising the scale of the task, the mission has been extended until 2028 to enable States to achieve universal coverage.

Groundwater sustainability is being addressed through the Atal Bhujal Yojana, which promotes participatory aquifer management in water-stressed regions. By encouraging community-based groundwater budgeting and monitoring, the programme attempts to correct the long-standing gap in groundwater regulation. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana promotes micro-irrigation technologies and improved water management practices. Given that agriculture consumes the majority of India's freshwater resources, improving irrigation efficiency is essential.

Urban water management is addressed through the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, which aims to expand water supply networks, sewage treatment systems and wastewater reuse in cities. River basin restoration has also gained prominence through initiatives such as the Namami Gange Programme, which combines pollution control, sewage treatment and ecological restoration in the Ganga basin.

A circular water economy
India's water governance is moving toward a more integrated, circular approach. Global best practices underscore the value of wastewater reuse, efficient irrigation, and technological innovation. Expanding wastewater recycling in Indian cities can ease pressure on freshwater resources, while better crop choices and irrigation methods can improve agricultural water productivity. India's water future will depend less on how much rain it receives and more on how well it is governed. By aligning governance with scientific knowledge, technological innovation, and participatory approaches, India can transform its water economy from a cycle of scarcity to a framework of sustainability.

Enduring paradox

India's hydrological arithmetic reveals striking contradictions. The country supports nearly one-fifth of the world's population but has access to only about 4% of global freshwater resources. According to the NITI Aayog Composite Water Management Index, around 600 million people face high to extreme water stress. At the same time, India receives substantial precipitation each year. Hydrological assessments indicate that while total water availability is high, only about 1,100 billion cubic metres are considered usable, due to limitations in storage infrastructure, uneven rainfall distribution and ecological constraints.

The decline in per-capita water availability illustrates this growing stress. In the early years after independence, water availability exceeded 5,000 cubic metres per person annually. Today it has fallen to around 1,400 cubic metres. Groundwater extraction has become the principal coping mechanism. India is now the world's largest groundwater user, accounting for roughly a quarter of global extraction. This dependence has enabled

Global best practices underscore the value of wastewater reuse, efficient irrigation, and technological innovation

The challenge to not breach the limit

Karnataka has rearranged its internal reservation quota to fit within the 50% cap

STATE OF PLAY

Sharath S. Srivatsa

Public recruitment in Karnataka – stalled for over a year on account of reservation issues – is scheduled to start with a new quota matrix. The Karnataka government, amid pressure from job aspirants, announced the kickstarting of the recruitment process to fill up 56,432 posts. This will be one of the largest recruitments drives by the State in recent years.

However, the new matrix has not been without resentment; it has altered the overall quantum of reservation, and has also changed the internal reservation quota for Scheduled Castes (SCs).

Faced with a slew of cases in the Karnataka High Court on the reservation issue, the State government has attempted to overcome the legal challenge through executive decisions. Among the key decisions is the reversal of the quantum of reservation that had been enhanced to 17% for SCs and 7% for STs through the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the Services under the State) Act, 2022. The enhanced quota had breached the 50% cap on reservations fixed by the Supreme Court, and cases were filed against it in the High Court. The government has now reversed the quota to 15% from 17% and 3% from 7% to SCs and STs respectively, bringing the overall quota back to the earlier 50%. The OBCs have 32% reservation quota in the State.

The reduction in ST reservation in particular has disap-



pointed the youth among the community seeking public employment, as their opportunities will now shrink. In Karnataka, the ST list has 51 tribes of which the Nayakas remain the dominant community. Their inclusion in the list during the 1990s contributed significantly to the increase in the ST population of the State. The 2022 legislation had provided for 7% reservation, proportionate to their population, but it is now back to 3%.

Suspect silence

Curiously, leaders from the community in both the ruling Congress and the Opposition BJP have not said much in public on this issue. A proposed protest rally from Chitradurga to Bengaluru by the BJP to condemn the reduction did not take off, apparently due to pressure from their high command. Though the BJP government legislated enhanced reservations in 2022, legal experts believe that it has to be brought under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution to get legal protection, a task that is being seen as difficult for the National Democratic Alliance-ruled Centre. States like Tamil Nadu have been able to breach the limit by bringing their reservation matrix under the Ninth Schedule.

Within the Congress, a few Nayaka leaders believe that the party is not doing enough to protect ST interests, and also not attempting to score pol-

itical points against the BJP by asserting pressure on the Centre. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah – in his list of 18 demands to Prime Minister Modi – sought the inclusion of enhanced reservation under the Ninth Schedule. But many within the party feel that this was not enough.

On the issue of sub classification among the 101 SCs, the State has come up with a new matrix – the fifth such model proposed in one and a half decades, which includes the three proposed just in the last one year. The reduction in the overall reservation to SCs to 15% has not seen much resentment. The Dalit Madiga leaders, who succeeded in stalling the recruitment process till the sub-classification was announced, have not spoken much against the reduction in the overall quantum of reservation.

The new matrix has been arrived at within the 15% cap despite the Karnataka Scheduled Castes (Sub classification) Act, 2025, receiving the Governor's assent (yet to be notified) for internal reservation within the 17% quota.

However, 49 nomadic tribes and 10 microscopic communities, which come under the SC category, have threatened to approach the court again against the new sub classification, seeking a separate category. Though the H.N. Nagmohan Das Commission recommended a separate category for these 59 castes last year, the State government included them in Category 3 along with relatively better-off communities such as the Banjara, Korama, Korcha and Bhovi. The tangled issue of the reservation matrix in Karnataka shows no signs of getting sorted soon.

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India's worker population ratio has climbed since 2022

More women are entering the labour force particularly in rural areas

DATA POINT

Chandrasekar K.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoS&PI) for January-December 2025, marks a significant methodological milestone. For the first time, the revamped PLFS covers both rural and urban India monthly – a departure from the earlier July-June urban-only quarterly cycle. It also offers the most granular all-India portrait of the labour market across urban and rural India in recent years.

India's overall Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) for all ages stands at 44.9%, which means that around four in 10 Indians are either working or actively seeking work. The figure remains broadly stable at 44.7% in 2024 (Chart 2).

In rural areas, women participate at 34.6%, which is modest compared with men, yet reflective of their engagement in agriculture and household-related work. However, in urban areas, women's participation falls to just 22.2%. The challenge becomes even more acute among urban young women. In these urban centres, nearly two in 10 women are employed. Urban men, by contrast, participate at 59.7% – more than twice that rate. This gap points to persistent challenges within India's urban labour market (Chart 1).

The youth unemployment rate for people aged 15-29 is 9.9%, more than three times the national average of 3.1%. For urban young women specifically, the rate is 18.9%, nearly one in five. These are not women outside the labour force, but women actively seeking work and unable to find it.

The PLFS makes this clear – the unemployment rate measures only those within the labour force, suggesting constraints in employment opportunities despite labour-force participation. The chal-

enge becomes even more acute among urban young women (Chart 3).

Educated and unemployed

Next, among persons aged 15 years and above with secondary schooling and more, the unemployment rate is 6.5% – more than double the national average. In urban areas, educated unemployment reaches 7.2%, whereas in rural areas it is 6%. This may indicate that rural educated workers are more likely to remain engaged in low-productivity subsistence activities rather than remain openly unemployed. Between 2022 and 2025, the overall unemployment rate has fallen from 3.6% to 3.1%, yet unemployment among the educated remains persistently elevated. The persistence of educated unemployment suggests that employment generation has not fully kept pace with the growth in the educated workforce (Chart 4).

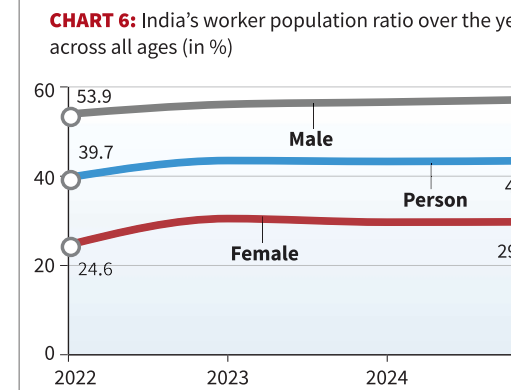
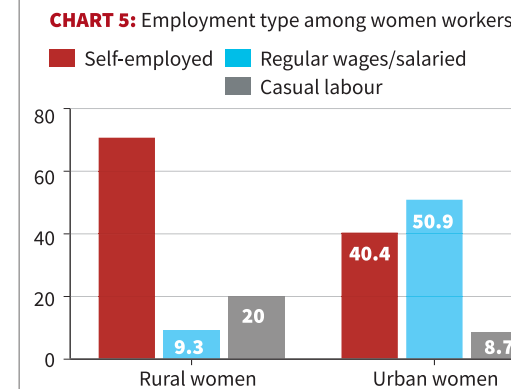
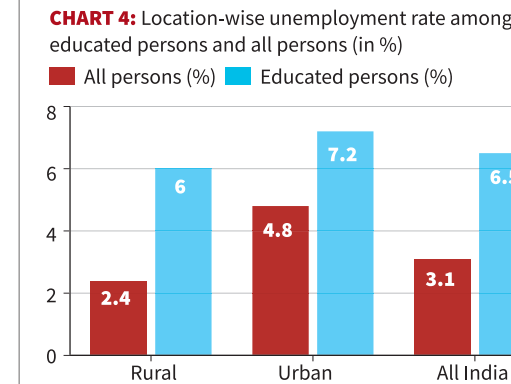
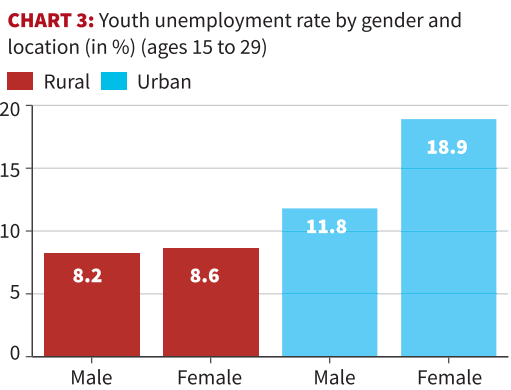
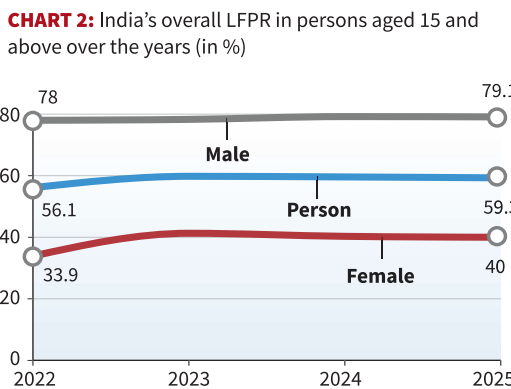
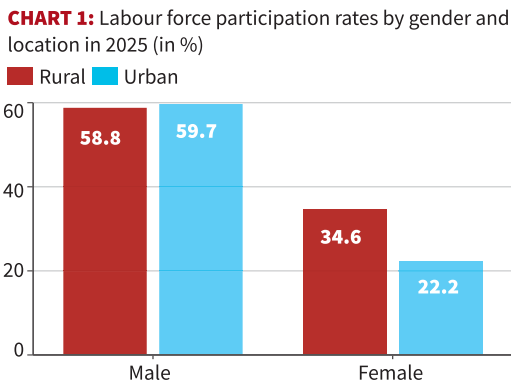
In rural areas, 70.7% of the working women are self-employed – a category that often reflects subsistence activity rather than entrepreneurial choice. In urban areas, 40.4% of working women are self-employed, reflecting a mix of entrepreneurial activity and informal work. Regular wage or salaried employment – often considered a marker of formal work – covers just 9.3% of rural working women, while another 20% are engaged as casual labourers. Urban areas offer a relatively better distribution, with 50.9% of working women in regular wage employment (Chart 5).

The Worker Population Ratio for all persons has climbed from 39.7% in 2022 to 43.5% in 2025. More Indians are working, and more women are entering the labour force, particularly in rural areas where the female WPR rose from 26.9% to 33.8% over the same period (Chart 6).

The writer is an Indian Statistical Service Officer serving as Joint Director in MoS&PI. The views expressed are personal

Job hunting

The data for the charts were sourced from the annual Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2025, published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The data covers the period from January to December 2025. This is India's primary National Statistical Office (NSO) survey tracking employment and unemployment



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 13, 1976

Pak. seeks debt relief, end to textiles quotas

Nairobi, May 12: Pakistan's Minister for Commerce and Industry, Mir Afzal Khan, yesterday called for an end to quantitative restrictions on cotton textile exports which he said hurt his country seriously.

Mr. Khan who was addressing the plenary session of the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) spoke of the plight of developing countries and said debt relief was the quickest and most effective form of providing additional assistance to such countries.

Japan backs U.S. plan

Japan told the session that though not all elements of the integrated programme seemed to be workable, they would be studied seriously from all angles. At the same time, Mr. Toshio Kimura, head of the Japanese delegation, described Dr. Kissinger's proposal for an international resources bank as 'most interesting' and hoped it would be further examined.

Mr. Kimura referred to a series of commodity negotiations in which his country had taken part recently and said Japan would participate actively in the existing inter-government consultations with regard to tea, jute, natural rubber and bananas.

Philippines Foreign Under Secretary Manuel Colliantes said Dr. Kissinger's proposal to negotiate commodity agreements on a case-by-case basis had been tried before and failed. The third world favoured a common six million dollar fund to finance stockpiles of commodities. Mr. Colliantes also said the Philippines had "reservations" about Dr. Kissinger's proposal to establish an international resources bank to promote development of raw materials resources in poor nations.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 13, 1926

New flag design for S. African Union

Capetown, May 12: The Government has accepted the design of now Union flag consisting of a vertical red bar next the staff and horizontal bars of green, yellow and blue. The Union Jack will be flown in addition on state occasions.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Total amount of ethane imported by China in 2026

3.462 million tons. This is more than half the volume for all of 2025, with the U.S. being its sole supplier, Kpler data showed. China boosted U.S. ethane imports to all-time highs in April to capitalise on strong petrochemical margins as the supply of other feedstocks from West Asia was disrupted by the Iran war. REUTERS

Percentage of retail inflation in India in the month of April

3.48 in per cent. Retail inflation rose marginally to 3.48 per cent in April compared to 3.40% in the preceding month, mainly due to an uptick in food prices. Food inflation, as per the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 4.2% last month compared to 3.87% in March. The corresponding inflation rates for rural and urban were 3.74% and 3.16%. PTI

Profit recorded by Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in 2025-26

1.98 in ₹ lakh crore. Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have recorded an all-time high net profit of ₹1.98 lakh crore in 2025-26 fiscal year, marking the fourth straight year of profitability, the Finance Ministry said on Tuesday. The aggregate business of PSBs increased to ₹283.3 lakh crore as of March 31, 2026, a growth of 12.8 per cent over the previous year. PTI

Area of degraded land to be rehabilitated by Indonesia

12 in million hectares. Indonesia is committed to rehabilitate 12 million hectares (29.65 million acres) of degraded land and potentially integrate new tree-planting efforts with its plan to develop carbon offset projects, its Forestry Minister said in a statement on Tuesday. Minister Raja Juli Antoni made the comments at the United Nations Forum on Forests in New York. REUTERS

Persons killed in Lebanon due to Israeli strikes since ceasefire

380 Israeli strikes on Lebanon have killed 380 people since a ceasefire in the Israel-Hezbollah war began on April 17, Lebanon's Health Ministry told AFP on Tuesday. A Ministry official said that "380 people, including 22 children and 39 women, have been killed in strikes on Lebanon since the ceasefire". AFP
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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Addressing India's electrical fire risks

A pre-dawn fire in Vivek Vihar that killed nine, record electricity demand of 256 GW, and numerous air-conditioners switching on simultaneously; highlight a surge in power consumption and raise concerns over the growing risk of electrical fires in India.

EXPLAINER

Kalyan Mangalapalli

The story so far:

Just after 3.48 a.m. on May 3, 2026, fire tore through a four-storey building in Vivek Vihar, East Delhi, killing nine. The suspected origin is an air-conditioner blast or short circuit. Delhi Fire Service data attributes over 80 per cent of fires in the capital to electrical faults; Mumbai Fire Brigade, analysing 26,855 incidents over five years, attributes nearly three in four to the same cause. These are reported attributions, not forensic findings; the gap matters. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recorded 7,566 fire accidents and 7,435 deaths in 2022, with electrical short circuit consistently among the largest single causes, but most incidents land in a catch-all 'other' category, meaning electrical causes are likely under-counted.

India's electricity demand hit 256.11 GW on April 25, 2026, against air temperatures of 47 degrees, roughly double the early-2010s peak. Cooling already pulls about 50 GW at peak; that could rise to 180 GW by 2035. Indians bought 15.4 million ACs in 2025; the IEA expects the installed base to climb from 93 million units in 2024 to 240 million by 2030. Each new unit is a non-linear load plugged into wiring sized, in older buildings, for fans and bulbs.

The vulnerability of older houses to electrical fires

The Forum for European Electrical Domestic Safety (FEEDS) estimates 132 million obsolete electrical installations across the EU, roughly half the residential stock: more than 30 years old and never renovated. The structural problem is the same in any electrifying economy: renovation rates lag behind the build rates of decades past.

India appears to lie in the same category of electrical-fire vulnerability as Europe, but its main issue lies less in the age of its housing stock and more in the combination of rapid load growth, low-voltage installation quality, and weak maintenance. A fan-and-bulb circuit installed in 1985 is now expected to carry a 1.5-tonne inverter AC, an induction hob, a geyser, an EV charger and a string of phone chargers. None of these existed when the wires were sized.

The risks posed by air-conditioners Air-conditioners concentrate every risk mentioned above. They are the largest non-linear load most homes will ever own; start-up current can be six to eight times running current; and they are wired into circuits often shared with other heavy appliances.

There is a second, slower problem: harmonics. Every inverter-driven AC, like every UPS, LED driver, MRI and EV charger, draws current in jagged pulses that inject distortion at multiples of 50 Hz. In three-phase buildings, certain harmonic orders add up in the neutral conductor, a wire never sized to be load-bearing, and quietly heat it. Supporting studies found that high inverter density on Delhi and West Bengal low-voltage networks raised voltage and current harmonic distortion beyond IEEE 519-2014 limits, while a hospital study in Dharwad recorded unbalanced load, non-zero neutral current, and THD above IEEE-519 guidance. Add a loose joint and you have an ignition source against insulation.



Tragic aftermath: A four-storey building in Vivek Vihar, where at least nine people died and two others were injured in a fire that broke out on May 3, 2026. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The causes of an electrical fire

Electrical fire is a category, not a cause. A peer-reviewed 2025 review in *Fire* identifies six recurring failure modes: short circuits, overloads, loose or oxidised connections, series and parallel arc faults, ground faults, and equipment ageing. Behind each lies a small set of root causes: counterfeit wire and breakers, undersized circuits for new loads, missed maintenance, poor switchboard terminations, and harmonic distortion that overheats neutrals in three-phase building connections.

A loose connection at a socket or breaker terminal is the most common ignition point in U.S. residential electrical fires; it produces a hot spot that burns insulation over months before anything visible happens. India's SUM Hospital (2016) and AMRI Hospital (2011) fires, which together killed 117, both began with electrical short circuits.

Prevention and periodic inspections

Japan made periodic inspection of every domestic electrical installation, every four years, mandatory in the early 1960s; South Korea followed in the 1970s. Recorded fire counts in both countries fell by close to 90 per cent. The EU 2024 Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, in Recital 36, recognises heat pumps, solar photovoltaics, batteries and EV chargers as fire-safety risks.

Lessons for Indian electrical safety standards

The Bureau of Indian Standards publishes SP 30:2023 (National Electrical Code of India 2023), NBC 2016 Part 4 covers fire and life safety, and Indian electrical installations often require contractor

completion and inspectorate approval before energisation; in most EU countries, the utilities typically require an inspection report even before meter connection.

Arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) or arc-fault detection devices are designed to detect hazardous electrical arcs and prevent residential fires by interrupting power before the arcing circuit ignites. Though mandatory in U.S. dwellings since 1999, these devices are essentially absent from Indian residences.

While some specialised industrial or high-end retail channels may offer AFCI-related devices, they are not generally mandated for Indian residences by local building or electrical codes in the same prescriptive manner as in North America. FEEDS notes lower-income tenants are systematically the most exposed, because rented apartment stock is more likely to be older.

Shortage of forensic analysis

The Fire and Security Association of India highlighting a 96% shortage of fire infrastructure points to a systemic capacity problem. Overall, India faces a severe shortage of fire-forensic engineers and a heavy reliance on provisional explanations rather than detailed root-cause analysis, even in major incidents.

Safeguards against electrical fires

In the U.S., the plug-in Ting sensor from Whisker Labs samples voltage 30 million times a second and alerts the homeowner when it detects micro-arcing, that can lead to electrical fires. It is in over a million U.S. homes, distributed free to policyholders by insurers including State Farm and Nationwide, who underwrite its

claim of preventing four in five qualifying electrical fires.

The technology is not the bottleneck; the Indian retail and insurance ecosystem is. There is no consumer-priced equivalent on sale in India, and no certification regime telling a buyer in Chennai which IoT energy meter on Amazon India measures harmonics.

An educated consumer's honest options today: insist on ISI-marked wiring, breakers and stabilisers; never run an AC on a shared, undersized circuit; have a thermography scan of the main panel every two to three years; service ACs annually; and treat any flicker or burning smell as a service call.

Potential measures to address fire safety gaps

First, tie IEEE 519-style harmonic compliance and basic power-quality monitoring to building approvals for hospitals, commercial premises, data centres and EV-charging hubs.

Second, introduce a periodic inspection regime for existing installations, on the Japan/Korea/EU model, triggered by major load additions: rooftop solar, EV chargers, battery storage.

Third, build a published forensic chain after major electrical fires, on the MAIB/NTSB model. Fourth, fix the data: a harmonised dataset across DFS, MFB, NCRB and BIS.

As tens of millions of new ACs switch on to combat 47-degree summers, the gap shall be tested again. The hum is already there. The only choice is whether India listens to it before, or after, the spark. *(Kalyan Mangalapalli is an Energy and Emerging Technologies expert.)*

THE GIST

Delhi Fire Service data attributes over 80 per cent of fires in the capital to electrical faults, with rapid load growth, poor installation quality, and weak maintenance increasing fire risks.

Air-conditioners are among the heaviest electrical loads in homes, with start-up currents several times higher than running current, and are often wired into circuits shared with other heavy appliances.

ISI-marked electrical equipment, dedicated AC circuits, periodic thermography scans, annual servicing, and immediate attention to flickering or burning smells can help prevent electrical fires.

ABSTRACT



Beginning in the 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank began structural adjustment programmes across Asia, Africa and Latin America. GETTY IMAGES

The toll of structural adjustments on the global South and a case for accountability

In the 1980s, IMF and World Bank put conditions on financing the global South. Decades later, many countries in the regions struggle with weak public health systems and high levels of poverty. The institutions owe reparations for the damage caused, a new paper argues.

Areena Arora

Jason Hicel, Salmaan Keshavjee, Maxine Burkett and Eugene T. Richardson, "Structural adjustment: damages, reparations and pathways to non-recurrence", *BMJ Global Health*, March 2026.

The 1970s were a good decade for the global South. Between 1960 and 1980, real per capita income grew across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Countries that had recently thrown off colonial rule were investing in public healthcare and education, protecting their industries, and organising production around national development.

Then, beginning in the 1980s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank began structural adjustment programmes across Asia, Africa and Latin America. Decades later, many countries in the impact regions continue to struggle with weak public health systems, stagnant incomes and high levels of poverty.

In a recent paper published in *BMJ Global Health*, economists and public health researchers Jason Hicel, Salmaan Keshavjee, Maxine Burkett, and Eugene T. Richardson argue that the institutions that implemented these programmes now owe reparations.

The repayment burden

Structural adjustment programmes emerged during the debt crises of the late 1970s and 1980s. Many developing countries had borrowed heavily in foreign currencies to finance imports and industrial development. When the United States Federal Reserve raised interest rates in the late 1970s, debt repayments became far more expensive for poorer countries, causing decades-long progress

to unravel.

Countries that had borrowed in U.S. dollars suddenly faced ballooning repayments in a currency they had no control over. To prevent governments in the global South from defaulting on loans owed to American banks, the U.S. worked through the IMF and World Bank to roll over those debts, attaching a set of sweeping economic reforms as conditions that would come to be known as structural adjustment programmes, or SAPs.

SAPs typically demanded three things. First, austerity: slash public spending on healthcare, education, food subsidies, and social security, so that the money saved could flow back to creditors. Second, privatisation; by transferring public services and state-owned industries to private capital. And, third, by deregulating industrial policy, tariffs, capital controls, and labour protections.

Countries had limited room to refuse. Defaulting on loans was risky, and the institutions pushing these conditions controlled international finance.

These SAPs should also be viewed in a longer historical context. After independence, many governments in the global South had used industrial policy and public investment to break away from colonial economic arrangements that kept labour and resources cheap for Western firms. The SAPs effectively reversed these gains, re-cheapening southern labour and re-opening vulnerable markets to the global North.

Social and economic setback

Economic growth in the global South before SAPs averaged around 3.2% annually. But growth slowed sharply, falling to a mere 0.7% during the era of structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s. The South collectively lost an average of \$480 billion per year in

potential national income during this period.

In Latin America, real income per adult fell nearly 15% after 1980 and did not recover to previous levels until 2006. In Sub-Saharan Africa, incomes fell nearly 20% before eventually recovering decades later. In Jamaica, trade and exchange-rate liberalisation in the early 1990s caused food prices to rise sharply after currency depreciation. In China, extreme poverty rose during a phase of market-oriented reforms linked to World Bank adjustment policies.

The effects on health were also severe. A 2017 review found that SAPs imposed by the IMF, World Bank, and African Development Bank had a strong negative impact on child and maternal health. Studies on Sub-Saharan Africa linked adjustment to an additional 85.62 child deaths per 1,000 children and an additional 360 maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births. In Kenya, the authors calculate, 3,05,000 excess infant deaths occurred between 1986 and 2010 relative to the pre-adjustment trend.

The mechanisms are not hard to trace. SAPs cut government spending on health, led to the closure of facilities, and limited the hiring of doctors and nurses. Currency devaluation made imported drugs and medical supplies more expensive. Privatisation and user fees reduced access to essential services, and wage losses made families more vulnerable to disease in the first place.

Structural adjustment also enabled large financial outflows from the global South. The removal of capital controls allowed foreign companies to repatriate profits at up to \$250 billion a year. Trade deregulation enabled further outflows exceeding \$1 trillion per year, mostly to evade taxes. These were surpluses generated within developing countries that were no longer available for

reinvestment in public services or domestic development.

Responsibility for repair

The IMF and World Bank, as the primary architects of these programmes, should bear responsibility for repair. One approach the authors outline would be to quantify wage losses, cuts to public services, and capital outflows attributable to SAPs, adjusted for inflation and due interest. Another mechanism would be to calculate losses to national income against a counterfactual in which the adjustments were never imposed. A third would focus specifically on welfare impacts, such as poverty and mortality, to provide compensation that restores people to the social indicators they would have reached had SAPs never existed.

But reparations face procedural obstacles, put in place by design. The IMF and World Bank enjoy sovereign immunity, shielding them from lawsuits through normal channels. Their governance structure compounds the problem. The Global North, with a mere 15% of the world's population, controls nearly 60% of the voting power in both institutions. The U.S. alone holds a veto.

Beyond reparations, the paper calls for a guarantee of non-recurrence by abolishing structural adjustment conditions on all future lending, democratising both institutions so that aid recipients have a meaningful say in policy, and ending their sovereign immunity status.

If such transformative changes cannot happen from within, these institutions should be replaced entirely. Alternatives are already emerging, including the BRICS New Development Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, established by and for the global South. Neither attaches structural adjustment conditions to finance.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"He has the runs and I am sure he will..."
"...how do you know he has the runs?"
"Just look at the score card. You will see..."

"...oh, you are talking about cricket. I thought you were talking about something else."

"Something else? You don't score runs in football or volleyball, do you?"

"No, you don't. You see, when you say that someone 'has the runs', it means that he has diarrhoea."

"Good grief! You are joking, right?"

"No, I am not. I can say, Gopal had the runs last week."

"I am sure many of our leading cricketers had the runs when Income Tax officials raided their houses."

"You could be right."

"Let's change the topic, shall we? Have you seen Harish recently? Sujatha tells me that he has been called for an interview tomorrow."

"Saw him yesterday."

"How was he?"

"As expected, he was like a cat on a hot tin roof."

"A cat on a hot tin roof! What does it mean?"

"What do you expect a cat to do when it finds itself on a hot tin roof?"

"I guess the poor thing will jump from one spot to another pretty quickly."

"That's right, it will be pretty jumpy. And that's what the expression 'like a cat on a hot tin roof' means. Jumpy or nervous."

"I see. Can I say, Mohan was like a cat on a hot tin roof the day before he got married?"

"Most people are pretty nervous the day before they tie the knot."

"While he waited for the telephone call, he was like a cat on a hot tin roof."

"That's a good example. Can you think of another expression which means nervous?"

"Hmm, let me see. How about 'butterflies in the stomach'?"

"Excellent. When you say you have 'butterflies in your stomach', it means you have a nervous feeling in your stomach. For example, whenever I have to meet my boss, I get butterflies in my stomach."

"I always have butterflies in my stomach just before a physics test."

"Most people have butterflies in their stomach when they make a presentation."

"That's true. Luckily I have never been asked to make one."

"It's also possible to say 'give butterflies in one's stomach' as well. It means to cause someone to have a nervous stomach."

"Watching the horror movie gave Lalitha butterflies in her stomach."

"Listening to our politicians gives me butterflies in the stomach."

"It gives me a headache."

"Give me another expression which means nervous. But something that sounds funny."

"How about 'heebie-jeebies'?"

"What?"

"Heebie-jeebies. When you give someone the heebie-jeebies, you make them extremely nervous."

"My school Principal gives me the heebie-jeebies. How does that sound?"

"Sounds O.K. There's something about a visit to the dentist which gives me the heebie-jeebies."

Published in *The Hindu* on August 8, 2000

THE DAILY QUIZ

The 79th Festival de Cannes kicked off yesterday, and will continue till May 23, 2026. Here's a quiz on one of the world's most prestigious film festivals.

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Mohammed Hidhayat

QUESTION 1

Palme d'Or (earlier Grand Prix), the top prize at the festival, is awarded to the director of the best feature film. Who among the following is not a recipient of the award?
Francis Ford Coppola, Andrei Tarkovsky, Akira Kurosawa, David Lynch, Martin Scorsese and Orson Welles.

QUESTION 2

Name the Indian filmmaker heading the Cannes Critics Week jury this year. Her film won the Grand Prix, the second-most prestigious prize of the festival, in 2024.

QUESTION 3

Jane Campion, Julia Ducourmau and

Justine Triet are the only woman directors to have received the festival's top prize. Name the films for which they won.

QUESTION 4

The 1968 festival was shut down after Jean-Luc Godard, along with François Truffaut, and other prominent filmmakers interrupted and blocked screenings. Why did they do this?

QUESTION 5

Name the only Indian film to receive top honours at the festival. It was screened at the first Cannes Film Festival in 1946.

QUESTION 6

Which restored Malayalam classic is being showcased at Cannes 2026?



Visual question: The official poster for Cannes 2026 features Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis on the set of their 1991 film. Name the movie and its director. AFP

Questions and answers to the previous day's daily quiz:

- This instrument is used to measure earthquakes. **Ans: Seismograph (or seismometer)**
 - This scale is commonly used today to measure the magnitude of an earthquake. **Ans: Moment Magnitude Scale (Mw)**
 - The point inside the Earth where an earthquake originates. **Ans: Hypocentre (or focus)**
 - Name of the boundary where one tectonic plate moves beneath another? **Ans: Subduction zone**
 - The point on the Earth's surface directly above the focus. **Ans: Epicentre**
- Visual: This Italian volcanologist developed the intensity scale for measuring earthquake intensity. **Ans: Giuseppe Mercalli**
- Early birds: Piyali Tuli | Dil Bahadur Airee | Aaradhya Yadav | Ritika | Abhay Krishan

Word of the day

Acrimonious: marked by strong resentment or cynicism

Synonym: bitter

Usage: The debate turned acrimonious as both sides traded sharp accusations.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/76PxNR/acrimonious

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ˌæk.rɪˈmɪ.ə.nɪ.əs/

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

From Page One

NEET-UG cancelled after question paper leak

"The inputs received by NTA, taken together with the findings shared by the law enforcement agencies, established that the present examination process could not be allowed to stand," the NTA Director-General said. "We verified the PDF circulating and found part of allegations true, that of similar questions having appeared in the guess paper. That violated our commitment [of zero error]," Mr. Singh explained.

"The question is not whether the leak was localised or not, it is that if integrity of the process was violated, it was violated. However, we will conduct re-exam in minimal possible time, and we will ensure that nothing of that sort is repeated," he said. The NTA came to the conclusion that the present exam was compromised, Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*. "Any move short of cancelling exams would signal that those who are trying to beat the system, scam the system would have succeeded," he explained.

The CBI has constituted special teams, which have been dispatched to various locations to follow up on leads. It has invoked provisions related to criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust, theft, and destruction of evidence under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Public Examination Prevention of Unfair Means Act.

The Rajasthan Special Operations Group was previously investigating the case. Preliminary inquiry indicated that a handwritten "guess" paper was circulated in Rajasthan's Sikar a couple of days before the examination and most of its questions allegedly matched the actual paper.

The NTA added that though a re-test will cause significant inconvenience to candidates and their families, "the alternative would have caused greater and more lasting damage" to public trust.

Asked whether the NTA would consider holding computer-based tests (CBTs) instead of the paper-and-pen format with an optical mark recognition(OMR)-based answer sheet used in the latest exam — given that the examination has previously been leaked in 2024 as well — Mr. Singh said this was a decision for the Union Ministry of Education alone. "It is a big policy call as nearly 22 lakh medical aspirants appear for exams and we have the capacity to conduct CBTs only for 1.5 lakh students on any given day. This would mean administering exams over multiple days, for instance, say 22 days, introducing different question papers and then normalising scores over multiple variations of question papers. It is a massive task," Mr. Singh added.

(With inputs from Devesh K. Pandey and Snehal Mutha)

Rebel AIADMK MLAs set to back TVK in floor test

In an interview with *The Hindu*, the Speaker acknowledged that he got separate representations from both sides (on the election of Legislature Party leader).

Earlier, Mr. Shanmugam accused Mr. Palaniswami of having attempted to form a government with arch rival DMK's support following the fractured mandate in the Assembly election. "This was a shock to us," he told journalists. Since the AIADMK was established to oppose the DMK, and its politics revolved around this for 53 years, any move to collaborate with its rival would lead to "the party's disappearance," he said. Therefore, it was resolved to extend support to the TVK.

Mr. Shanmugam and Mr. Velumani said the reasons for the party's electoral setbacks must be analysed. "We have requested the general secretary to convene a meeting of the general council," Mr. Shanmugam said, adding, "we are no longer in any pre-poll alliance". Mr. Velumani requested the media not to spread rumours that his group was seeking to create a split in the party. The group said G. Hari (Tiruttani MLA) was elected the deputy leader; C. Vijayabhaskar (former Minister), the whip; and Kamaraj, the secretary.

However, Mr. Manian, a supporter of Mr. Palaniswami, accused Mr. Shanmugam of spreading false information. He dismissed as "entirely baseless" Mr. Shanmugam's claim of alliance talks with the DMK. The rebels were driven by a desire to become Ministers, he said.

Kerala CM suspense continues amid talks

A KPCC insider said Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MP, was also party to the talks on Tuesday.

Speaking to presspersons ahead of the meeting, Mr. Muraliedharan said the AICC's consultation need not necessarily be confined to "three names". He said the era of the triumvirate of K. Karunakaran, A.K. Antony, and Oommen Chandy in the Congress in Kerala was over.

"Second-tier leaders from the time of the three Chief Ministers have reached the top echelons of the party in Kerala. The generational shift gives the high command more latitude to make the right choice," he added.

Mr. Muraliedharan stated that "numbers in the Congress Legislature Party was not the sole criterion for deciding the next Chief Minister." He said the high command would also factor in "popular opinion" in the matter. When asked whether "importing a leader from New Delhi who is not an MLA-elect would risk a byelection," Mr. Muraliedharan told presspersons that the high command would "weigh all aspects."

China's Foreign Minister set to skip BRICS meet in Delhi

Beijing cites 'scheduling reasons' and states that Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong will be present; it expresses readiness to work with all BRICS members to support India as the Chair

Ananth Krishnan
BEIJING

There will be no high-level representation from Beijing at Thursday's meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers in New Delhi because of "scheduling reasons", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday.

The May 14-15 meeting coincides with the visit to China by U.S. President Donald Trump, who lands in the Chinese capital on Wednesday. Foreign Minister Wang Yi will be in Beijing for Mr. Trump's visit. China will not be sending any other high-level official for the meeting, the Foreign Ministry indicated.

"Due to scheduling reasons, Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong will represent Foreign Minister Wang Yi at this Foreign Ministers' Meeting," the Foreign Ministry said, adding that "China attaches great importance to and actively



External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on July 14, 2025. AP

participates in BRICS cooperation, and is always committed to deepening the BRICS strategic partnership and consolidating the positive momentum of unity and cooperation among BRICS countries."

"We stand ready to work with all BRICS members to support India, as the Chair, in successfully hosting the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting and promoting the high-quality development

of 'BRICS Plus' cooperation," the statement said.

Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal said on Tuesday at a weekly press briefing that the meeting scheduled for May 14-15 will be chaired by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. Visiting Foreign Ministers and heads of delegations from member and partner countries, including Russian Foreign Minister Ser-

gey Lavrov and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, will also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "The discussions will focus on pressing global and regional issues of mutual concern among member states of BRICS," Mr. Jaiswal said, adding that the second day would see discussions on reviewing the group's evolution and future direction, and reforms of global governance and the multilateral system. The gathering this week takes place against the backdrop of the crisis in West Asia and divisions within the grouping, leading to doubts over whether the meeting will yield a joint statement. A meeting in New Delhi last month of Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys of the 11-nation BRICS grouping ended without a joint statement, as delegates from the United Arab Emirates and Iran sparred over the war in West Asia.

Responsible nations should reflect on their actions: MEA

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Days after a Chinese engineer told state broadcaster CCTV that Beijing had provided "on-site" technical support to the Pakistan Air Force during Operation Sindoor, the Ministry of External Affairs on Tuesday said that these reports "corroborate" what was known to India.

These comments coincide with the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, which began on May 7, 2025 and continued till May 10, when a ceasefire was announced.

"We have seen reports that corroborate what was known earlier. Operation Sindoor was a precise, targeted, and calibrated response to the terrorist attacks in Pahalgam, aimed at destroying state-sponsored terrorist infrastructure operating out of Pakistan and at its behest," said MEA spokesperson Rand-

hir Jaiswal said during his weekly press briefing.

"It is for nations that consider themselves responsible to reflect on whether supporting or protecting terrorist infrastructure affects their reputation and standing," he added.

As *The Hindu* had earlier reported, CCTV telecast an interview last Thursday with Zhang Heng, an engineer with the Aviation Industry Corporation of China's (AVIC) Chengdu Aircraft Design and Research Institute, a key developer of China's advanced fighter aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicle design. The Pakistan Air Force operates a fleet of Chinese-made J-10CE jets that are produced by an AVIC subsidiary.

"At the support base, we frequently heard the roar of fighter jets taking off and the constant wail of air-raid sirens," Mr. Zhang told CCTV.

Opposition parties are spreading panic over PM's precautionary appeal: BJP

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday accused the Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), and the Samajwadi Party (SP) of spreading panic and misinformation, stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to avoid unnecessary gold purchases and foreign travel was voluntary, precautionary, and aimed at protecting India's economy.

At a press briefing, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said there was no shortage of any essential commodity in the country and that the government had taken effective measures to safeguard oil, gas, and foreign exchange reserves.

Despite 70 days of war, there had been no shortage of oil in the country, and fuel prices had not increased, and the government also reduced excise



Gaurav Bhatia

duty on both petrol and diesel by ₹10 per litre, he said. The government had taken several concrete steps, resulting in a nearly 30% increase in domestic oil and gas production, he added.

However, he pointed out, petrol prices increased by 23% in China, 45% in the United States, and 30% each in Canada and Australia after the outbreak of war in West Asia.

Targeting the Congress, AAP, and SP, the BJP leader said they were "indulging in politics even on issues

Trinamool land policy led to project delays, says Centre

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

One of the key reasons for the delay in land acquisition to erect fences along the Bangladesh border in West Bengal was the policy followed by the former Trinamool Congress government, according to a 2023 affidavit filed by the Union Home Ministry in the Supreme Court.

The Ministry had, through an affidavit, informed the Supreme Court that the West Bengal government had not adopted the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR Act), 2013, under which the government can take possession of any land needed for a public purpose.

According to submissions made before the Calcutta High Court in January this year, the West Bengal Government had handed over 78 km of border land to the BSF over the past three years, while 121 km of

border length was yet to be transferred. Of the 285.25 km border length required by the BSF across the nine districts, including Nadia, North 24 Parganas, Murshidabad, Malda, Dakshin Dinajpur, Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, and Cooch Behar, the State Cabinet had given clearance for 256 km.

Data presented before the court showed that the land purchase, measuring around 269 acres along 48.49 km of border, had been completed but was yet to be handed over to the BSF. The purchase and acquisition of around 1,156 acres remained pending, the data further showed.

While hearing a public interest litigation, the Calcutta High Court asked the counsels of the State and the Union Government "regarding applicability and feasibility of acquisition by invoking Section 40 of the Act of 2013."

Section 40 of the 2013 Act, "in cases of urgency," enables the government to take possession of any land needed for a public use.

CBI takes over probe into murder of Suwendu aide

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Friday took over the probe into the murder of Chandranath Rath, the personal assistant to West Bengal Chief Minister and BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari.

Meanwhile, the Uttar Pradesh Congress alleged that one of the three suspects held in the case had close links with the BJP.

7-member SIT

The CBI filed an FIR and formed a seven-member Special Investigation Team to probe the case.

This comes a day after the West Bengal police's SIT arrested the three suspected contract killers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They were identified as Vicky Maurya, Mayank Raj Mishra, and Raj Singh.

The three were produced before a West Bengal court on May 11 and later sent to 13-day police custody.

Rahul records dissent on selection of CBI Director, calls it biased move

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

A high-powered committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on Tuesday evening to decide on the appointment of the next Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in which Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi submitted a dissent note, accusing the government of "institutional capture" of the agency to target political opponents, journalists, and critics.

The panel, headed by the Prime Minister, includes Chief Justice of India Surya Kant apart from the Opposition leader. The meeting took place at the Prime Minister's residence and lasted over an hour.

The tenure of the current CBI Director, Praveen Sood, is set to end on May 24.



Rahul Gandhi

Mr. Gandhi shared his strongly worded dissent note on his X handle and accused the government of making a "mockery" of the selection process.

"Your government has repeatedly misused the CBI, intended to be India's premier investigative agency, to target political opponents, journalists, and critics. It is to prevent such institutional capture that the Leader of the Opposition is included in the Selection Committee. Regrettably, you have continued

to deny me any meaningful role in the process," Mr. Gandhi said.

Mr. Gandhi said that despite repeated written requests, he was not provided with the self-appraisal reports or 360-degree reports of the eligible candidates.

'Not a rubber stamp'

"Instead, I was expected to examine the appraisal records of 69 candidates for the first time during the Committee meeting. The 360-degree reports were denied to me outright. A detailed review of these records is crucial to assess each candidate's history and performance. This deliberate denial of information, without any legal basis, makes a mockery of the selection process and ensures that only your pre-decided candidate is selected," he said.

The Opposition leader

reminded Mr. Modi that he had recorded his dissent in the previous meeting on May 5 and also written to him on October 21, 2025, suggesting measures for a fair and transparent process.

"By denying the Selection Committee crucial information, the government has reduced it to a mere formality. The Leader of Opposition is not a rubber stamp. I cannot abdicate my constitutional duty by participating in this biased exercise. I therefore dissent in the strongest terms," Mr. Gandhi said.

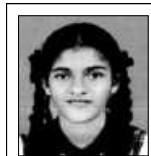
The key committee is responsible for finalising the selection of next CBI Director. The selection is done from a panel of shortlisted officers. Sources indicated that several senior IPS officers from different states are part of the list of officers being considered for the top CBI post.

HC quashes Centre's decision refusing OCI status to journalist

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday set aside the Centre's decision rejecting journalist Siddharth Varadarajan's plea seeking conversion of his Person of Indian Origin (PIO) status to Overseas Citizen of India (OCI). Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav restored

The Wire founding editor's application and asked authorities to take a fresh decision on it in accordance with the law and pass a reasoned order. Also mentioned "there are no reasons assigned in the communications." It clarified that the petitioner can take an appropriate legal remedy in case of any subsequent grievance.



Priyadarshini

APPEAL

I am Priyadarshini, 14 years old and was advised to undergo CARDIAC CATHETERISATION TEST + RYOT'S TEST ANGIOPLASTY + PERICUTANEOUS PULMONARY VALVE IMPLANTATION at The Madras Medical Mission, Chennai. The surgery cost is Rs.16,37,000/- . I completed 10th Std and waiting to continue my education. Please help me with your generous contribution to undergo my treatment. The donations sent through CHIT.DIM.ONFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No. 60182010083310, IFSC No: CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80C IT. Your e-mail ID is requested.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd Public Charitable Trust, Flat No. GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No.13, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401/31523781/7338978027. E-mail ID: womenswelfare Syndicate@gmail.com. Website: www.womenswelfare Syndicate.org.

Priyadarshini

Experts say NTA needs to be structurally reformed

As mix-ups recur, the agency faces charges of lax operational capacity, porous cybersecurity, poor crisis communication; experts suggest transition to digital test and decentralisation of admissions

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

With the cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) held on May 3, the National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts it for undergraduate medical admissions, has yet again come under the scanner for its alleged lax operational capacity, porous cybersecurity, and poor crisis communication, according to experts.

Since its introduction in 2013, the NEET is now for the first time facing a full-scale cancellation and re-test, though it has had a rocky run with a limited re-test in 2024 for 1,563 candidates who had received grace marks for loss of exam time at certain centres. There have been allegations of impersonation every year in various States; candidates and coaching institutes paying large sums to obtain leaked question papers and answer keys; photos of papers taken and circulated with gangs distributing prepared answers for students to quickly memorise them; suspiciously high scores and inflation in ranking; and "organised cheating centres".

The NEET is a nationwide entrance exam for admission to over 10 undergraduate medical courses



National Students Union of India members protest over the alleged NEET paper leak in New Delhi on Tuesday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

in India. It is one of the world's largest entrance exams with 20-24 lakh candidates taking it annually for over 2.5 lakh seats across all courses. In 2013, NEET-UG was conducted for the first time. In 2014-15, admissions to medical courses temporarily went back to separate State and private medical entrance exams, but a year later the Supreme Court revived NEET and the exam is now conducted by the NTA, which took over from the Central Board of Secondary Education in 2019.

'Weak link'

Speaking of several risks in the NEET-UG system, Rajeesh Jayadevan, former president of the Indian Medical Association (Kochi), said, "While anti-cheating security measures at examination centres have kept up with

the times, the old school mode of pen-and-paper examination itself appears to be the weak link in the chain. The question paper has to be physically printed, distributed, stored, and transported to individual centres - each is a point of vulnerability where a leak can occur. Even a single photo of the question paper is sufficient to breach the system. Given the high demand and potential for illegal monetary gains, such leaks will likely occur again unless the system is changed."

With numerous other examinations already in the digital format, it's time to upgrade the NEET-UG system to a computer-based platform so that potential points of breach are plugged and the distribution is encrypted, Dr. Jayadevan added. Students of the present generation are

far more digitally literate, and a transition to a digital format should not be difficult, he said. Other experts have called for stronger digital security, decentralisation of admissions, allowing multiple attempts per year, and a hybrid tally, which includes aptitude and school scores.

Merely cancelling the exam cannot be the final solution to such a massive scam, Lakshya Mittal, chairperson, United Doctors Front, said. "Repeated incidents over the years clearly indicate the existence of a deep-rooted nexus and systemic failure which cannot be ignored any longer," Dr. Mittal said.

Doctors and healthcare experts demand a high-level, time-bound, and transparent investigation into the matter.

Previously, following the controversy around the 2024 paper leak and irregularities, the Centre and the NTA introduced a series of reforms, including the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, which criminalises paper leaks, cheating syndicates, impersonation, and organised exam fraud; the creation of a high-level reform committee to review the functioning of the NTA and recommend structural reforms; and a proposed shift to digital/hybrid exams and enhanced cybersecurity measures.

No fee for NEET re-test; registration data and candidature to be retained

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 has left over 22 lakh medical education aspirants and their families anxious about the next steps, including the fresh examination date, admit cards, examination centres, and the counselling timeline.

While the National Testing Agency (NTA) is yet to issue detailed guidelines, here is an explainer on what is known so far.

Why was NEET-UG 2026 cancelled?

The NTA announced the cancellation of the May 3 examination following allegations of irregularities linked to the test.

When will the re-test be held?

The fresh dates have not yet been announced. The NTA has said the examination will be conducted on dates to be notified separately through official channels in the coming days.

Will students have to register again?

No. The NTA has clarified that the registration data and candidature from the May 2026 cycle will be carried forward to the re-conducted examination.

Will candidates have to pay the examination fee again?

Multiple controversies

Since NEET was introduced in 2013, the test has faced multiple controversies, including allegations of paper leaks, impersonation, and aspirant deaths

2013: NEET was introduced as a single entrance examination for medical admissions across India in 2013. However, the Supreme Court struck it down as unconstitutional on July 18, 2013

2016: The Supreme Court revived NEET in 2016 after recalling its earlier judgment

2017: An aspirant, S. Anitha of Tamil Nadu who had challenged NEET in court, killed herself after failing to secure admission. The case led to severe political opposition to the test in the State

2019: A major impersonation racket

was uncovered in 2019, revealing that several candidates had used proxy candidates to write the test and secure admission in medical colleges. Many were arrested and the controversy prompted tighter biometric checks and scrutiny during admissions and examinations

2020: The conduct of NEET during the COVID-19 pandemic sparked nationwide debate. Students and Opposition parties sought postponement, citing public health risks, transport restrictions, and flooding in some regions. The Supreme Court,



however, allowed the examination to be conducted

2022: A controversy erupted in Kerala after female candidates said they were asked to remove innerwear containing metal hooks before entering examination centres

2024: NEET-UG 2024 witnessed massive controversy over alle-

gations of paper leaks and award of grace marks. Questions were raised after an unusually high number of candidates secured top ranks. In July 2024, the Supreme Court declined to order a nationwide re-test, saying there was insufficient evidence to establish a systemic breach affecting the entire examination

No additional examination fee will be charged. The NTA has also said that fees already paid by students will be refunded.

Will fresh admit cards be issued?

Yes. The NTA has said the "re-issued admit-card schedule" will be communicated through official channels.

Will students get the same examination centres?

The NTA has said the examination centres opted for in the May 2026 cycle will be retained for the re-examination. However, the

agency has not yet clarified whether there could be any changes in centre allotment.

Will the examination be conducted again using external agencies?

The NTA has said the examination will be re-conducted using its "internal resources".

Why did the NTA decide to go for a re-test?

According to the agency, the decision was taken "in the interest of students and in recognition of the trust on which the national examination system rests".

"The Agency is conscious that re-conduct will

cause real and significant inconvenience to candidates and their families," the NTA said, adding that allowing the examination process to stand would have caused "greater and more lasting damage" to public trust.

What should students do now?

Candidates and parents have been advised to rely only on official NTA channels for updates regarding re-test dates, fresh admit cards and examination-related instructions.

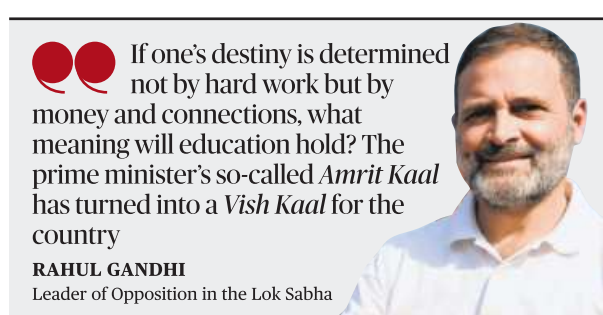
The agency has also asked students to disregard unverified reports in this regard circulating on social media.

Opposition targets 'corrupt' BJP over paper leak

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate amid allegations of paper leak and examination irregularities triggered a political storm on Tuesday, with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP of being "partners in the theft" of students' future.

Opposition parties accused the government of failing to safeguard the future of lakhs of students and demanded accountability from the National Testing Agency (NTA). Congress president Mal-



likarjun Kharge demanded strict action against officials responsible for the leak. "This is also tarnishing the reputation of our students as people may say they passed the exam by copying," Mr. Kharge told presspersons.

In a post on X, Mr. Gandhi said the hard work, sacrifices and dreams of more than 22 lakh students

had been "crushed by this corrupt BJP regime". "Some fathers took loans, some mothers sold their jewellery, lakhs of children stayed up all night studying, and in return, they got paper leaks, government negligence, and organised corruption in education," he said.

Calling the development "a crime against the future

of the youth", Mr. Gandhi alleged that "paper mafias" repeatedly escaped punishment.

"If one's destiny is determined not by hard work but by money and connections, what meaning will education hold? The Prime Minister's so-called *Amrit Kaal* (era of elixir) has turned into a *Vish Kaal* (era of poison) for the country," Mr. Gandhi said.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India demanded structural reforms in the examination system. In separate statements, the CPI(M) and the CPI said lakhs of students had been subjected to severe psychological distress due to repeated irregulari-

ties in examinations.

Former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party national convener Arvind Kejriwal alleged "political patronage" behind repeated paper leaks and said the NEET question paper had leaked four times in the last nine years. "I want to tell the students that they will have to come out on the streets. This government understands only the language of mass agitation," Mr. Kejriwal said.

In a post on X, Trinamool Congress Rajya Sabha member Sagarika Ghose alleged there was "zero accountability" in the Modi government and described the administration as "incapable of daily governance".

Himanta takes oath as Assam Chief Minister for second successive term

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in on Tuesday as the Chief Minister of Assam for the second successive term, a first for a non-Congress leader in the State.

Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Sarma at the College of Veterinary Science playground on the southern edge of Guwahati.

Four others - Rameswar Teli and Ajanta Neog of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) president Atul Bora, and Bodoland People's Front (BPF) leader Charan Boro - were also sworn in as Ministers.

The AGP and the BPF are other constituents in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Himanta Biswa Sarma after the swearing-in in Guwahati on Tuesday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and other Union Ministers, the Chief Ministers of 22 NDA-ruled States and Union Territories, BJP national president Nitin Nabin, top industrialists, and religious leaders, including the seers of 17 Vaishnav monasteries across Assam, at-

tended the swearing-in ceremony.

Among the foreign delegates present on the occasion was Sergio Gor, the U.S. Ambassador to India.

"May the blessings of Maa Kamakhya and Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev (15th-16th century saint-reformer) illuminate the lives of everyone in Assam and open new path-

ways to peace, progress and prosperity. Assam will scale new heights of development in the coming days with their blessings," Mr. Sarma posted on social media platform X ahead of the swearing-in.

'Golden period'

"The NDA's third term will be a golden period for Assam," Mr. Bora said, assuring the people of accelerated development.

This is the NDA's third consecutive term in Assam. It swept the April 9 Assembly election by bagging 102 of the State's 126 seats. The BJP won 82 of these, and the AGP and BJP 10 each.

Sarbananda Sonowal, now a Union Minister, was the Chief Minister for the first NDA term from 2016. The BJP entrusted the reins of the State to Mr. Sarma in 2021.


'Bigger the theft, bigger the reward', says Rahul

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Mounting a scathing attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Election Commission over the appointment of former Chief Electoral Officer of West Bengal Manoj Agarwal as the State's new Chief Secretary, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday alleged that "the bigger the theft, the bigger the reward".


The government had appointed Mr. Agarwal, a 1990-batch IAS officer who oversaw the recent polls in West Bengal, as the new Chief Secretary.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jaiaram Ramesh said that the appointment showed "brazen collusion and connivance" between the EC and the BJP.



CERC
सत्यमेव जयते

CENTRAL ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
6th, 7th, & 8th Floor, Tower-B, World Trade Centre,
Naurojji Nagar, New Delhi-110029



Petition No. 27/TL/2026 Dated: 11.5.2026

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14, 15 and 79(1)(e) of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by **Adani Energy Solutions Limited**, Adani Corporate House, Shantigram, Near Vaishno Devi Circle, S. G. Highway, Khodiyar, Ahmedabad -382421 to establish the transmission project for "Transmission System for Evacuation of Power from potential renewable energy zone in Khavda area of Gujarat under Phase-V (8GW); Part C" (hereinafter referred to as "the Project") on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer Basis consisting of the following elements:

Sl. No.	Name of Transmission Element	Scheduled COD in months from Effective Date
1.	Establishment of 2500 MW, ± 500 kV KPS3 (HVDC) [VSC] terminal station (2x1250 MW) at a suitable location near KPS3 substation with associated interconnections with 400 kV HVAC Switchyard*	48 months from SPV transfer
2.	Establishment of 2500 MW, ± 500 kV South Olpad (HVDC) [VSC] terminal station (2x1250 MW) along with associated interconnections with 400 kV HVAC Switchyard of South Olpad S/s*	
3.	Establishment of KPS3 (HVDC) S/s along with 2x125 MVAR, 420 kV bus reactors along with associated interconnections with HVDC Switchyard*. The 400 kV bus shall be established in 2 sections through 1 set of 400 kV bus sectionaliser to be kept normally OPEN. 400/33 kV, 2x50 MVA transformers for exclusively supplying auxiliary power to HVDC terminal.	
4.	KPS3 - KPS3 (HVDC) 400 kV 2xDC (Quad ACSRS/AAAC/AL59 moose equivalent) line along with the line bays at both substations	
5.	±500 kV HVDC Bipole line between KPS3 (HVDC) and South Olpad (HVDC) (with Dedicated Metallic Return) (capable to evacuate 2500 MW)	

*The 400 kV interconnections (along with all associated equipment/ bus extension, etc.) between HVDC and HVAC switch yards shall be implemented by the TSP.

Note:

- i) The 1250 MW pole-1 shall emanate from 400 kV bus section 1 of KPS3 (HVDC) and terminate at South Olpad S/s. Similarly, the 1250 MW pole-2 shall emanate from 400 kV bus section 2 of KPS3 (HVDC) and terminate at South Olpad S/s.
- ii) HVDC System will be designed with 100% power reversal capability as well as black start, automatic grid restoration and dynamic reactive power support capability.
- iii) The rated power transmission capacity as well as the rated transmission voltage shall be defined and guaranteed at the rectifier DC Bus.
- iv) TSPs of KPS3 shall provide space for scope at Sl. No. 4 as per the above scope.
- v) TSP of South Olpad S/s shall provide space for scope at Sl. No. 2 as per above scope ensuring:
 - (a) indicative total space requirement for HVDC terminal station of size 400 m x 300 m. The AC switchyard connection and DC overhead line shall be from 300 m side of rectangular plot.
 - (b) the width of the approach road and access road shall be at least 10 m for facilitating smooth transportation of HVDC equipment including converter transformer and with access road all around the space for HVDC.
 - (c) the spatial arrangement for proposed space for HVDC terminal and the layout proposed for the current AC GIS transmission scheme is such that Bus duct length required for interconnection between AC GIS station and HVDC terminal is minimum to the extent possible in linear manner and the layout of the AC line termination gantries should be such that there is no crossing of present/ future AC lines and HVDC line near the termination ends of both AC and HVDC yards.
 - vi. Implementation timeline: 48 months from SPV transfer."
2. The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited, vide its letter dated 22.12.2025, has recommended for the grant of a transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.
3. Based on the material available on the record, the Commission vide order dated 9.5.2026 in Petition No. 27/TL/2026, has proposed to issue a transmission licence to the applicant for the establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.
4. A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to **Adani Energy Solutions Limited**, before the Commission can be accessed at the www.adanienergysolutions.com or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
5. Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by **18.5.2026** at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.
6. The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on **19.5.2026**. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

IN BRIEF



Infiltrator killed by Army near LoC in J&K's Poonch district

An infiltrator was killed on Tuesday as the Army foiled an infiltration bid on the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu division in the Pir Panjal Valley. An Army spokesman said soldiers detected "suspicious movement around 300 metres inside own territory in the general area of Krishna Ghati sector along the LoC at around 4 p.m." Troops "responded swiftly and foiled the infiltration attempt, ensuring that there was no breach of the LoC. One intruder has been neutralised," said the Army. Troops continue to dominate the area and maintain a high state of operational readiness across the sector, the Army added.

Hosabale attacks Udhayanidhi over Sanatana Dharma remark

Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale on Tuesday hit out at DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin's remarks on Sanatana Dharma and said just because Mr. Udhayanidhi wants it to end, doesn't mean it will disappear. Responding to the DMK leader's renewed call for the eradication of Sanatana Dharma, Mr. Hosabale described Sanatana Dharma as an enduring civilisational value that cannot be erased by political criticism. He added that it represented the spirit and worldview of India rather than merely a religious practice. "Because I feel there should not be light or I feel there should not be shadows, that doesn't mean they will go away," the RSS leader said.

Four cheetah cubs killed in suspected leopard attack

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Four cheetah cubs were found dead on Tuesday at Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh's Sheopur district, officials said, suspecting that they may have become prey to a leopard. According to officials, the carcasses of the one-month-old cubs partially eaten were found by a monitoring team near the den site in Sheopur Territorial Division. The litter had been born on April 11. "The cubs were last observed alive during the evening of May 11. *Prima facie*, the incident appears to be predation by another animal. The mother cheetah is safe and healthy," Kuno Field Director and Project Cheetah Director Uttam Kumar Sharma said. The deaths hold significance as the four cubs were the first to be born in the open forest since India's reintroduction programme for the big cat species - Project Cheetah - was launched in 2022, as all previous births have taken place inside Kuno's large-ranging enclosures. Madhya Pradesh Chief Wildlife Warden Samita Rajora told *The Hindu* that a thorough investigation was under way into the incident.

IMD unveils 'block-level' monsoon forecast model

It has been a long-standing aim of IMD to provide hyper local forecasts to help farmers time their sowing precisely; however, the system might face a formidable test this year in light of El Nino

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

At the head of the monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday unveiled a new forecast system that will, for the first time, generate "block-level" forecasts of the season's arrival over 15 States. The system comprises about half of India's roughly 7,200-odd blocks. Historically, such estimates are available, at best, over States or at the level of districts. For instance, it is known that the monsoon arrives in Mumbai around June 10 and in Delhi, around June 29. However, the inherent variation of the monsoon is such that even within a district, several blocks and villages remain rainless despite the monsoon having officially "arrived" in the district. It has been a long-standing aim of the IMD to provide hyper-local forecasts to address this shortcoming to enable farmers to time their sowing precisely. At the new system's core are two forecasting models whose predictions are "blended" to sharpen ac-



At the new system's core are two weather forecasting models whose predictions are blended to sharpen accuracy. C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

curacy. From the date of the monsoon's onset in Kerala, it can use AI-based analysis, the IMD's trove of nearly a century of detailed meteorological data and global weather models, to give the monsoon's itinerary with unprecedented granularity, Science Minister Jitendra Singh said at a press briefing. **Forecasts for 4 weeks** This was a system specifically developed at the request of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, whose existing advisory system is built to deliver forecasts in a roughly weekly format. The blending framework, developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, a research institute of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is designed to feed directly into the Ministry's pipeline and issue probabilistic forecasts for four weeks. Currently, this system can be used to provide forecasts to 3,196 blocks across 15 States and one Union Territory. Two trial runs have already been completed successfully, according to a press statement. "These States are part of the monsoon core zone, which are the regions that are largely rainfed and are most sensitive to southwest monsoon

dynamics," M. Ravichandran, Secretary to the Ministry, said at a press briefing. "Of course, going ahead we aim to extend this all over India but that requires more observational data." Mr. Ravichandran told *The Hindu* that the system would face a formidable test this year given that the IMD and global models were expecting "below normal" rainfall in light of a developing El Nino - frequently causing weak monsoon rain in India - from July. On Tuesday, the IMD launched a monsoon forecast model specifically for Uttar Pradesh with a 1-km resolution (indicative of granularity) that is valid for 10 days. This, Mr. Singh said, was because of a very extensive coverage of automatic weather stations in the State that allowed a weather model called Mithuna (which works at a 12.5-km resolution) to be "downscaled" to 1 km. "We are encouraging other States to share their data with us that will allow their forecasts to be generated with higher resolution," Mr. Ravichandran added. The NREGA Sangharsh Morcha and All India Kisan Sabha have called for an all-India strike by Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) workers on May 15, against the government's decision to discontinue the scheme. The Act will stand repealed on July 1, as per a notification issued by the Union government on Monday. Describing MGNREGA as the "only legal guarantee of employment" for rural workers, AIKS said the scheme has served as a crucial lifeline for poor peasants, agricultural labourers, women, and rural youth. It alleged that budget cuts, "exclusionary technological barriers", delayed wage payments, and the VB-GRAM(G) Act were undermining the rights-based character of the programme and weakening rural livelihoods. The organisation endorsed a set of demands raised by workers' groups, including the rollback of the VB-GRAM(G) Act, expansion of MGNREGA to at least 200 days of guaranteed work, and a minimum wage of ₹700 linked to inflation.

Baltimore crash: Indian expert, shipping firm face criminal charges

M. Kalvanaraman
CHENNAI

The U.S. Justice Department has slapped criminal cases against Synergy Marine of Singapore and Synergy Maritime of Chennai, as well as Radhakrishnan Karthik Nair, the Indian technical superintendent of container ship *Dali*, which collided onto a bridge in Baltimore, U.S., in March 2024. They have been charged with conspiracy, wilfully failing to immediately inform the U.S. Coast Guard of a known hazardous condition, obstruction of an agency proceeding, false statements, as well as pollution. Synergy is the manager of *Dali*, manned almost entirely by Indian crew. Synergy and Grace Ocean Pvt. Ltd., the owner of the ship, had agreed to pay nearly \$102 million in October 2024, to resolve a civil claim brought by the department on this matter. The Justice Department has alleged an economic loss of \$5 billion due to the accident that led to the death of six construction workers. The collision was largely due to two onboard blackouts. The first blackout was allegedly caused by a loose electrical wire that snapped, from which *Dali* recovered. The second one was allegedly due to use of an unfit fuel pump for the generators which became starved of fuel and died, leading to loss of power and steering that caused the collision. The Justice department has alleged that information regarding the pump was concealed and false statements were made during the inquiry.

Fresh push for implementation of PM SHRI in Bengal, Kerala, and T.N.

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The Union Ministry of Education has issued a fresh reminder regarding the pending implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme to West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu after Assembly elections concluded in the three States. Launched in September 2022, this five-year initiative aims to transform over 14,500 schools into "exemplar institutions" that lead the way in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Union School Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar stated in his letter to the States, emphasising that 34 States and Union Territories have already moved forward with the scheme. Despite the scheme run-



The PM SHRI initiative aims to transform over 14,500 schools into exemplary institutions, says the Education Ministry. FILE PHOTO

ning well into its third year, West Bengal is yet to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Centre has sent 11 letters to West Bengal, including three letters in 2022, another three in 2023, three in 2024 and two letters in 2025 pushing for implementation of PM SHRI. "The delay in signing the MoU has resulted in postponement of selection and development of PM SHRI schools in the State, affecting the intended benefits to students and consequent strengthening of the education system at large. It may be noted that only a limited time is left for the scheme to complete its five-year duration," the Ministry of Education's letter stated.

The letter to Kerala states that as of November 12, 2025, the Kerala government has kept the MoU in abeyance. The State previously moved to constitute a committee to examine specific implementation concerns. "The communication has led to undue delay in the selection of State government schools... I hope that the matter has been resolved now, as only a limited time is left for the scheme to complete its duration," Mr. Kumar's letter to the Kerala government stated. In the letter addressed to Tamil Nadu, Mr. Kumar said the State had previously provided an undertaking to introduce the PM SHRI scheme for the 2024-25 academic session. However, the process remains incomplete despite 12 official requests from the Centre.

HC seeks Centre's response on plea to broadcast FIFA WC

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked the Centre and Prasar Bharati to respond to a petition seeking the broadcast of the FIFA World Cup 2026, which is scheduled to commence on June 11. The petition by Avdhesh Bairwa, a lawyer, sought directions to the Central government to acquire the broadcasting rights for the opening match, quarter-finals, semi-finals, and the final in favour of Prasar Bharati as an interim measure. By way of final relief, the petitioner sought that rights should be acquired for all 104 matches. The court issued notice on the petition and listed it for hearing on May 20. During the hearing, the court asked the petitioner why his plea should not be treated as a public interest litigation plea. Senior counsel appearing for the petitioner argued that a citizen had the right to have access to such a telecast. While it was not an indefensible or absolute right, a "nudge" from the court would "go a long way", he added. The petition said the FIFA World Cup is one of the most viewed sporting events in the world, and historically, the event has had a commercial broadcaster in India for each edition since 1998. However, no broadcaster has acquired the broadcasting rights for the tournament in India this year, depriving the petitioner of his fundamental right to receive information and to access the telecast of the event, the plea asserted.

THE CROSSWORD+ 14792 (set by Dr. X)

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

Across

- American throttled by armed culprit violently - it could result in death penalty (7,6)
- Brief, sporadic fights (5)
- Falls down badly, loses consciousness primarily after consuming drink (9)
- Revives tipsy marines with tea (10)
- Fun in Gujarat's first sanctuary (4)
- Support copper beginning to berate beastly youngster (4,3)
- Gasp about diamond's size (7)
- Finest century, extremely impressive in final (7)
- Involve head of radiology in treatment of emboli (7)
- A little malfunction in opening umbrella (4)
- Moving injured girl at once (10)
- Remove coach after losing one game (9)
- Lyric poet in neighbourhood is terrific (5)
- Forbid foolish attendant picking up dope for transient visitor (4,2,7)
- A Tibetan monk embracing a bishop in American state (7)
- How patient after surgery might be laughing uncontrollably (2,8)
- Cocaine found in a car travelling to capital city (5)
- Supple batter turned and smashed ball over English umpire's foot (9)
- Stern parent (4)
- Stored fodder in citadel is nearly over (7)
- Flasher in spot, without pants or belt (6,5)
- Find out and be incensed by drunk husband chasing girl inside (3,3,5)
- Like a film with some new rumba moves (10)
- Gambler turned richer (6,3)
- Musical instruments in church mass on island in Asia (7)
- Thinking of love and longing (7)
- Nearly all going topless on island near a port city of ancient Rome (5)
- Exercised in shade, Sun's coming up (4)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle

C	R	C	S	E	F	E	T	A
O	B	T	I	N	E	N	K	E
W	I	S	T	O	M	E	N	C
P	E	C	S	G	L	E	T	A
L	A	S	T	I	K	A	B	A
Y	S	O	N	T	O	G	E	L
L	I	F	E	S	E	N	T	E
C	O	E	O	M	N	C	E	T
O	F	E	S	T	A	N	A	M
H	T	E	R	A	N	D	S	
T	G	A	N	A	S	T	A	L
N	O	M	E	N	T	A	I	C
G	O	P	H	E	R	G	R	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Mother of true Aishwaryam

Everyone prays for wealth to lead a comfortable life. Do we ever stop to ask ourselves what true wealth is? Is it integrity, is it following daily rituals, is it raising one's children to know right from wrong and stressing the importance of embracing a dharmic way of life as ordained in our scriptures? Acharyas, such as Swami Vedanta Desikan (Sri Stuti), Alavandhar, Ramanuja (Saranagati Gadyam) and many others, say that one has to pray to Mahalakshmi, surrender to Her in order to gain gnana, the only meaningful wealth in this life, said Damal Perundeivi. Mahalakshmi is the pivot around which everything revolves and only with Her glance upon oneself can one get Perumal's grace. Narayana Bhattadri says that during *Pralayam* (dissolution of creation), He turns into a child, floats on a leaf and observes everything. During creation, He crafts everything and subsequently seeks approval from Thaaayar. How does She respond? Only through Her eyes. She looks around with Her encompassing eyes and Her compassionate heart. This characteristic of Hers is proved time and again. For instance, When Perumal manifested as Rama, Thaaayar came down as Sita to help Him vanquish Ravana. She showed Her compassion when Ravana abducted her and held her captive in Ashok Van in Lanka. She promised liberation to her jailors and kept her word, when Rama defeated Ravana and rescued her. Her compassion is limitless. It is this attribute of Hers which makes Her recommend a true devotee to Perumal, recommending that He overlook the *doshas* (faults) in the devotee. Bhakti is the true wealth and that comes only with Her grace.

IN BRIEF



Adani Ports to invest \$1.36 bn in Europe expansion

Adani Ports said on Tuesday it will deepen its European footprint by building offshore capabilities with U.S. engineering firm Oceaneering International, committing \$1.36 billion in capital spending through fiscal year 2031. The country's largest private port operator said it is targeting marine revenue of ₹60 billion (\$627.43 million) from the expansion. As part of the planned expansion, its marine services unit Astra Offshore will develop a fleet of 200 vessels with specialised offshore capabilities. The deal reflects Adani Ports' strategy to scale up its global footprint and tap rising offshore logistics demand in Europe, as it seeks to diversify beyond its core domestic port business and build a meaningful presence in maritime services. The move also comes after the ports operator forecast slower core earnings growth in fiscal 2027. **REUTERS**

PSBs clock 4th straight year of profits, FY26 net grows 11%

Public sector banks (PSBs) have recorded an all-time high net profit of ₹1.98 lakh crore in 2025-26 fiscal year, marking the fourth straight year of profitability, the finance ministry said on Tuesday. Improved asset quality, healthy credit expansion and higher income contributed to improved profitability of PSBs during 2025-26, the ministry said. Aggregate operating profit reached ₹3.21 lakh crore, while aggregate net profit increased by 11.1% y-o-y to a historic high of ₹1.98 lakh crore, marking the fourth consecutive year of aggregate profitability for PSBs. The aggregate business of PSBs increased to ₹283.3 lakh crore as on March 31, 2026, registering growth of 12.8% over the previous year. Aggregate deposits rose 10.6% year-on-year to ₹156.3 lakh crore, reflecting continued depositor confidence and strong resource mobilisation by PSBs. **PTI**

Indices slide almost 2%, rupee touches new low on West Asia

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

India's equity investors dumped stocks for the fourth consecutive day, pulling Nifty 50 and Sensex down by over 1.8% closing at 23,379.55 and 74,559.24 respectively on Tuesday. The rupee, meanwhile, closed at a new low of ₹95.6 a dollar. PM Narendra Modi had appealed to the citizens to cut down on foreign travel, reduce use of petroleum products by working from home and pausing gold purchases by an year. Brent Crude futures meanwhile increased 3.7% to \$107.4 on Tuesday. The market rout was broad-based with 2,750 stocks declining on the Nif-



Market mayhem: FI have sold more than ₹2 lakh crore worth Indian equities as of Tuesday. **REUTERS**

ty 50 and just 590 advancing. Further, all 21 sector-based indices declined with many of them crashing by more than 2%. Foreign Institutional Investor interest in Indian equities, measured by net outflows, has been hitting new lows, crossing over ₹2 lakh crore as of Tuesday.

Govt. unveils insurance pool for Indian vessels amid West Asia crisis

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Amid rising risks to shipping on escalating West Asia tensions, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) unveiled Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool (BMIP) holding a sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore for continuous stream of maritime coverage. The pool would cover all risks associated with maritime operations such as hull and machinery, cargo, protection and indemnity (P&I) and war risk for Indian-flagged vessels. The Union Cabinet accorded approval for this proposal on April 18. It observed increased geopoliti-



Choppy waters: Cargo ships sailing in the Gulf, near the Strait of Hormuz. **REUTERS**

cal instability impacted maritime trade, translating into higher insurance costs and uncertainty in its continued availability. The Cabinet had also made "high dependence of Indian vessels" on International Group of Protection and Indemnity (IGP&I) for P&I

What trade deals promise are far from reality: CEA

There is a 'substantial' gap between what FTAs promise and what regulations currently permit, warns CEA Anantha Nageswaran, days after EU envoy's similar statement on compliance issues

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) create value only once they are implemented not when they are signed, Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran asserted on Tuesday, warning that there is a "substantial" gap between what the trade deals promise and what the regulatory frameworks actually allow. Mr. Nageswaran's comments come days after the European Union's Ambassador to India too warned that compliance issues could still derail the benefits of the India-EU FTA. During his speech at the Confederation of Indian Industry's Annual Business Summit 2026, Mr. Nageswaran said that the nine trade agreements and comprehensive economic



Chief Economic Advisor V. Anantha Nageswaran at the CII's Annual Business Summit 2026, in New Delhi on Tuesday. **ANI**

partnerships that India had entered into in the last five years "represent the most concentrated burst of trade diplomacy in independent India's history". **Statements of intent** He added that the frameworks with the United Kingdom, European Union, EFTA, U.S., Oman, New Zealand and Australia

were not merely commercial arrangements. "They represent a diversification of economic relationships that is simultaneously a statement of strategic intent that India will expand its economic footprint across multiple geographies, reducing dependence on any single market or corridor," he said. However, he also not-

ed that such agreements created value only at implementation, not at signing. "The gap between the frameworks we have concluded and the depth of integration they would actually permit if the regulatory standards and procedural barriers on both sides were seriously addressed remains substantial," Mr. Nageswaran noted. "The imperative is to close that gap with the same urgency that was brought to the conclusion of the agreement themselves," he added. At a separate industry event last week, the EU's Ambassador to India Hervé Delphin pointed out that customs procedures or conformity requirements should serve their purpose and not be used as trade barriers.

'India-Oman FTA on track for June 1 start even as deal with Chile hit hurdles'

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) will "probably" be implemented on June 1, 2026, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday, following a meeting with the negotiating team from Oman. He added that the India-Chile Free Trade Agreement negotiations have hit some hurdles due to the difference in the sizes of the economies involved. "I had a very good meeting with the Oman team today and most probably the Oman FTA will come into effect from June 1, 2026," Mr. Goyal told reporters on Tuesday on the sidelines of the CII Annual Business Summit 2026.



Piyush Goyal

ed. The India-Oman CEPA was signed on December 18, 2025. However, in contrast, the Commerce Minister indicated that talks with Chile were running into some trouble. "With regard to Chile, I had a very good meeting with the foreign minister," Mr. Goyal said.

'Productive meeting' Earlier in the day, he posted on social media that he had held a "productive" meeting with Pankaj Khimji, Adviser for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in Oman. "Discussions focused on strengthening India-Oman economic cooperation, enhancing connectivity & logistics linkages, facilitating trade flows, and exploring new avenues for bilateral partnership under the India-Oman CEPA framework," Mr. Goyal had post-

'Some challenges' "There are some challenges, given the very different sizes of the economies and different scales of opportunities that both countries offer to each other." While he said that the two sides were trying to bridge that gap through "innovative solutions", he also did specify certain things that Chile could offer India to encourage it. "If we get a good deal on critical minerals and other important concessions, then maybe there is a very good possibility that we should be able to finalise an FTA with Chile too," Mr. Goyal said.

'Power, Finance ministries have accepted policy for linking fiscal incentives with RE adoption'

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Seeking to encourage States to sign power purchase agreements (PPAs), renewable energy adoption would be linked to fiscal incentive for States, Prahlad Joshi, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) said at the

Confederation of Indian Industry's Annual Business Summit 2026. "Renewable energy adoption is being linked with the fiscal incentives for the States," he said, adding, "The new policy which has been accepted by [Union] finance and power ministries both. Broadly, this is encourag-

ing States to [sign] more PPAs." Mr. Joshi also mentioned that the government was working "very seriously" on addressing present issues relating to power generation from renewable sources. "This energy is affordable, reliable and that is why we are working it out.

Some of the constraints we are facing today, with respect to grid and transmission, we are working on that too." The Union MNRE Minister also said that while global investments in the renewable space had declined 7%, India had observed "strong investment flows" in the sector.

Indices slide almost 2%, rupee touches new low on West Asia

EXIM Bank plans \$10.5 billion fundraise

Reuters
MUMBAI

The Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank) plans to raise about \$99,500 crore (\$10.5 billion) in fiscal 2027 through domestic and overseas borrowing, its managing director said, as the bank looks to strengthen its funding profile. The spread on the bank's 10-year bond issued in January has narrowed to 70 basis points from 86 bps over the past three months, strengthening its confidence to pursue foreign-currency borrowing in this environment, managing director Harsha Bangari told Reuters on Monday.

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कौशल, नियोजन एवं उद्यमिता विभाग,
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E-mail- scheme_doi@rajasthan.gov.in
No: DTE/T-4(SCHEME)/PMPES/4324(3)/2026/61144 दिनांक: 07.05.2026
Corrigendum- VII
ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 01/2025-26 में निम्नानुसार संशोधन किये जा रहे है:-
S.N. UBN No. Corrigendum
01 TET2526SLOB00140, TET2526SLOB00141, PM SETU कर्मचारी जॉर्नल RFP के क्रम में दिनांक 01.05.2026 का अंशों में TET2526SLOB00142, TET2526SLOB00143, Pre-Bid Meeting में Bidders से प्राप्त TET2526SLOB00144, TET2526SLOB00145, TET2526SLOB00146, TET2526SLOB00147 Queries से संबंधित Responses सौलन है।
अन्य नियम एवं शर्तें पूर्ववत् रहेंगी।
DIPRC/8155/26 निदेशक (प्रशिक्षण)

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No.MD/ACCTS/WKR-11/2025/567
Date : 08/05/2026
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Name of the work : Manning, Maintenance and Commercial Operation of PPA Slipway and Other Ancillaries on payment of Licence Fee for a period of 05 (Five) years. Reserved Price : Rs.3,69,39,980/- plus GST as applicable for 05 years. Last Date & time of submission of tender through on-line bidding is 17:30 hours on 01/06/2026. Date & time of opening of Technical Bid is 11:30 hours on 01/06/2026. For details, please log on to the Website: <https://eprocure.gov.in/>
Deputy Conservator, PPA
PPA/PR/09/2026-2027.L11/05/2026

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➤ Associate Professor ➤ Deputy Librarian
➤ Assistant Professor
Last Date to apply online: 02.06.2026 (upto 05 PM)
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शिक्षण का हिंदी कालांतर विचारविमलता की केवलद्वार पर चलते हैं।

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice
Tender No : 01/2026-27/ KWA/PHC/ TLVA(RTI)/02/2026-27/KWA/PHC/TLVA (RTI),05/2026-27/KWA/PHC/TLVA (RTI) JIM-1) Providing 1348 FHTCs in Naranamoozhy Pt 2) JWSS to Kulanada-Mezhuvil-design, Construction And Commissioning of 11 MLD WTP O & M for 3 years, RWPM, CWP, Pumpssets and transformer, 3) WSS to Kulanada-Mezhuvil-Construction of 12 LL, OHSR in Mezhuvil Pt, Supply and laying 250 mm CWP from WTP to OHSR at Madhavarkattu 4) WSS to Myyara - Construction of GLL OHSR, TLL GLSR, pump house at Pezhumpara, Supply and Laying of Pumping Main, Supply and Erection of Pumpssets, etc at Vadasseriarka Pt, EMD: Rs. 200000-500000, Tender fee: Rs. 19518 to 13010, Last Date for submitting Tender : 29-05-2026, 02:00 pm. Phone: 8547638027
Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
Supervising Engineer
PH Circle, Pathanamthitta
KWA-JB-GL-6-14-2026-27

TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED (A Government of Andhra Pradesh Undertaking & An ISO 27001-2022 Certified Company)
e-Procurement Tender Notice
The APTRANSCO invites bids online for Spec No.PMM31-e-36/2026, Nature of Work: Supply of various 220kV C&R Panels with BCUs under System Improvement & RMI works of APTRANSCO. Date & Time of availability of Tenders: 12.05.2026 at 05:00 PM. Web: <https://tender.aeprocurement.gov.in>. R.O. No.GMCC/APTRANSCO/31/26-27 Sd/- Chief Engineer/Transmission

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA
email- serwsbd2003@yahoo.com
Letter No. 2071 Date: 08/05/2026
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH GePNIC e Procurement Notice
1. Name of the work : Construction of Road Works -03 Nos.
2. Class of contractor : "B" Class, "A" Class & Special Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.
3. Estimated Cost : Various from Rs.287.44 Lakhs to Rs.685.38 Lakhs (Approximately).
4. Details of projects : As per Annexure attached.
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender online for bidding From To Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification Date & Time of opening of tender Technical Bids Financial Bids
1 Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda. 2 CERWCSBD - Online - 03/2026-27 15.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M. 04.06.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. 03.06.2026 up to 2.00 P.M. 05.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M. To be intimated separately
5. The details of works can be seen from the web site <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>
6. Any Corrigendum/ Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender web site.
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda. 25001/120/2627 OIPR-25001/25182/1/26-27/0008

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Date: 16 - 30 May 2026 Time: 06.00 P.M - 09.00 P.M
Fees: ₹ 1,130/- (inclusive of GST) Duration: (6 Days) (only Sat & Sun)
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Sd/-, Registrar

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Tender No. Description Due date
262713 000867 Procurement of Screens for Paper Machine #2 in TNPZ Unit-I. 27.05.2026
262723 000517 Procurement of LATEX 2 - PRE COAT - (SBR BINDER) for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPZ Unit-II. 21.05.2026
262723 000528 Procurement of CATIONIC ROSIN for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPZ Unit-II. 21.05.2026
262723 000519 Procurement of LUBRICANT for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPZ Unit-II. 22.05.2026
262723 000520 Procurement of WATER RETENTION AGENT for Board Machine (CCK) of TNPZ Unit-II. 23.05.2026
Corrigendum if any will be issued in TNPZ Website and NIC Portal only. For further details, please visit websites : www.tnpz.com / <https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgeppapp>
DIPR/1872/Tender/2026 TNPZ - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper

WASHINGTON

'Pakistan parked Iranian planes on its airfield to escape U.S. air strikes'



Pakistan, which is playing a mediator role to end the U.S.-Iran war, allowed Iranian military aircraft to park on its airfield to shield them from American air strikes, according to a U.S. media report. The CBS News report prompted Republican Senator Lindsey Graham to call for dumping Pakistan as mediator in the conflict. PTI

BEIRUT

Hezbollah chief says group's arms not part of Israel-Lebanon talks



Hezbollah chief Naim Qassem said on Tuesday that his Iran-backed group's weapons were not part of upcoming negotiations between Lebanon and Israel, and vowed his fighters would turn the battlefield into "hell" for Israeli forces. Mr. Qassem on Tuesday called for a "withdrawal from the direct negotiations". AFP

GENEVA

UN slams death toll of children from Israel's West Bank operations



The United Nations condemned on Tuesday the toll from swelling Israeli military operations and settler attacks in the occupied West Bank on children, with 70 Palestinian children killed since early 2025. Israeli soldiers or settlers have killed at least 1,070 Palestinians, including many militants, according to a tally. AFP

PESHAWAR

Bomb rigged to rickshaw explodes in Pakistan bazaar, killing at least 9



A bomb rigged to a rickshaw exploded in a bazaar in northwest Pakistan on Tuesday, killing at least nine persons and wounding more than two dozen others, police said, in the latest sign of escalating violence in the region bordering Afghanistan. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing. AP

Russia, Ukraine end truce after trading new attacks

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russia ended a three-day ceasefire with Ukraine on Tuesday by launching a wave of more than 200 attack drones that damaged energy facilities and apartment buildings, killing one person, Ukrainian officials said.

Moscow's army announced Kyiv had also restarted its retaliatory attacks on Russia, saying its air defence units had downed 27 Ukrainian drones after the ceasefire expired.

U.S. President Donald Trump had announced the pause on Friday, hours before Russian leader Vladimir Putin presided over a scaled-down military parade in Red Square to mark the anniversary of victory in the Second World War. "Russia itself chose to



Gaining control: A firefighter attempting to extinguish a fire at the site of an air strike in the Dnipro region of Ukraine. AFP

end the partial silence that had lasted for several days. Overnight, more than 200 attack drones were launched against Ukraine," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on social media.

He wrote that Russian forces had launched more than 80 aerial bombs near the front and more than 30 air strikes in attacks across seven regions that damaged energy facilities,

apartment buildings, a kindergarten and a train.

"Russia must end this war, and it is Russia that must take the step toward a real, lasting ceasefire. Until that happens, sanctions against Moscow must remain in place," Mr. Zelenskyy added.

Even before the truce expired, the two countries had traded accusations of attacks on civilians that violated it.

British PM Starmer says he will not quit after Labour's local poll losses

Among those considered challengers to Starmer are former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, Health Secretary Wes Streeting and Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham; PM says, 'the country expects us to get on with governing'

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer pushed back against over 70 MPs in his party, resisting calls to step down after the Labour Party lost big in council elections in England and assembly elections in Scotland and Wales last week.

"The Labour Party has a process for challenging a leader and that has not been triggered," the Prime Minister said at a Tuesday morning Cabinet meeting, as per No. 10 Downing Street. "The country expects us to get on with governing. That is what I am doing and what we must



Next in line: People take photographs of a betting company's odds on contenders to be the next leader of the Labour party. AFP

do as a cabinet," he added.

A number of MPs publicly asked Mr. Starmer to resign over the course of Monday, after the Prime Minister delivered a speech in the morning, viewed by some in Labour

as his final attempt to salvage his premiership. Several senior officials and one junior Minister had resigned in connection with Mr. Starmer's leadership.

Key Ministers – Home Secretary Shabana Mah-

mood, Defence Secretary John Healey, Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, and Foreign Yvette Cooper reportedly asked Mr. Starmer to agree to an orderly exit and leadership transition. As per party rules, 20% of the party's MPs – or 81 MPs at present – must provide in writing their support to replace the leader. However, Mr. Starmer's opponents have not coalesced around a replacement for him.

Among those considered challengers to Mr. Starmer are former Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner, Health Secretary Wes Streeting and Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham. Mr. Starmer has argued that changing the

leader would cause chaos, referring to the multiple changes in No. 10 during the 14 years of Tory rule, which saw five Prime Ministers. Some of Mr. Starmer's supporters echoed this view on Tuesday.

"This is not a game," says Housing Secretary Steve Reed, adding that the instability had consequences for people's lives. "We must unite behind the Prime Minister," Mr. Reed wrote on X.

Mr. Starmer had led Labour in a landslide victory in the July 2024 general election. The Prime Minister has argued that more time is required to see the changes that voters asked for in the last general election.

Amid recovery fuelled by worker remittances, Sri Lanka remains wary of West Asia conflict

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Heavily reliant on worker remittances from West Asia for its economic recovery, Sri Lanka has expressed "grave concern" over the escalating conflict in the region.

Migrant workers sent a record \$8 billion in remittances last year, boosting foreign reserves and helping recovery from the country's 2022 economic crash. A total of 3,10,915 Sri Lankans left for foreign employment in 2025, according to Central Bank data, working mainly in domestic service, caregiving, construction, and agriculture. The UAE, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia were the largest sources of remittances, along with the U.K., which included funds routed through other countries.

"Sri Lanka expresses its grave concern regarding the recent hostilities in the West Asian region," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism said on May 6. Pointing to a large Sri Lankan expatriate population whose safety is a "matter of paramount concern," the Ministry called for "maximum restraint" from all parties, without naming any party to the conflict.

Since late February, when the U.S.-Israel combine launched its war on Iran, triggering a series of retaliatory attacks, Sri Lanka's migrant workers have been living in precarity. Even so, they contributed \$815 million in remittances in March, recording a year-on-year growth of 17.5%. "Cumulatively, remittances during the first quarter

of the year recorded a notable growth of 26.5% on a year-on-year basis," the Central Bank said. Despite tensions and grave risks in the West Asian region, workers' remittances in this period far exceeded earnings from the exports and tourism sectors, two other key foreign exchange earners.

In April 2026, the International Monetary Fund, which steers the island's recovery programme, including through painful austerity measures, noted that Sri Lanka's "ambitious reform agenda" continued to deliver "commendable outcomes". It pointed to 5% growth in 2025, positive inflation, and an increase in gross official reserves to \$7 billion at end-March 2026.

Overseas jobs Although hostilities in West Asia are impacting Sri Lanka "directly and indirectly" – such as fuel price hikes, soaring air ticket prices – they have not affected remittances from workers, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Employment Arun Hemachandra told *The Hindu*. "We sincerely hope there is stability in the [West Asian] region and workers can continue going overseas. We also hope there are no huge job losses like we saw during the pandemic," he said.

Sri Lankan missions in the region have been instructed to offer more support and emergency assistance to workers through helplines. "We are also engaging closely with our multilateral partners such as the International Labour Organization and the



The Sri Lankan government is trying its 'level best' to motivate workers abroad, says Arun Hemachandra. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

International Organization for Migration," he said, adding that the government was trying its "level best" to motivate workers abroad and those seeking employment overseas.

The Anura Kumara Disanayake administration aims to send 4,00,000 workers abroad this year, continuing its predecessor government's policy of encouraging labour migration to bolster foreign reserves amid the tentative recovery. With the conflict in West Asia persisting, however, it remains unclear if it may be "practically possible" to meet that target, the Deputy Minister said. As of May 5, as many as 82,302 people have registered for overseas employment, officials said. Since the 2022 economic crisis, Sri Lanka has seen a sharp increase in passport applications as families try sending a member abroad, hoping their earnings will help with the rising living costs at home.

Asked why tens of thousands of workers are scrambling for jobs overseas, leaving behind their families and enduring exploitative working conditions, while the government claims it has

stabilised the economy, Mr. Hemachandra said the government was presently focusing on "macroeconomic stability".

On the heels of a grave economic crash and dollar shortage, the country may have to encourage overseas employment "in the short term", he said, insisting this was not the government's long-term strategy. "When the macroeconomic condition becomes normal, subject to the macroeconomic condition becoming normal, we believe there would be a change in this trend. People would opt for foreign employment not owing to a crisis, but as a matter of choice," he added, suggesting that the ongoing recovery programme prioritised macroeconomic fundamentals over people's daily hardships.

Rights defenders and labour activists also point to the apparent contradiction in the government continuing to send workers to Israel while pledging support for the Palestinian cause. Some 30,000 Sri Lankan workers are in Israel, employed in construction, as caregivers, and in agriculture. Queried about the go-

vernment's position, Mr. Hemachandra said Sri Lanka has historically stood for the Palestinian cause.

"Our party [Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna – JVP or People's Liberation Front] has also always been in solidarity with Palestine," he said.

'No contradiction'

Pointing to Sri Lanka's past diplomatic relations with Israel and the opportunities for workers, where the "pay is high and working conditions are good", he said: "This government at no point thought of stopping those things... because already many people were on the waiting list and hoping to go. After we came to power, we addressed concerns of irregularities and fraudulent practices and streamlined the process. On the other hand, we separated our Free Palestine stand and our diplomatic relationship with Israel as two different things. I think any country should have that choice. And when take the opportunity to send workers to Israel, that does not change our stand on Palestine," he said, adding: "There is no contradiction in that."

Meanwhile, authorities are also exploring "non-Middle Eastern" markets such as Romania and South Korea and focusing on skilled migration. "When we develop more skilled migration programmes, I am sure that people who go for those jobs will get back in a very reasonable period. Then they could contribute to the Sri Lankan economy directly while being in the country," he said.

Iran says U.S. must accept peace plan or face 'failure'

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's chief negotiator said on Tuesday that Washington must accept Tehran's latest peace plan or face failure, after U.S. President Donald Trump warned the truce in the West Asia war was on the brink of collapse.

The war, which erupted more than two months ago with U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, has spread throughout the West Asia and roiled the global economy despite the ceasefire, impacting hundreds of millions worldwide.

Both sides have refused to make concessions and repeatedly threatened to



Resolute stance: A billboard reading 'The Strait of Hormuz remains closed' at the Revolution Square in Tehran. AFP

resume fighting, but neither appears willing to return to all-out war.

"There is no alternative but to accept the rights of the Iranian people as laid out in the 14-point proposal. Any other approach

will be completely inconclusive; nothing but one failure after another," Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said in a post on X. "The longer they drag their feet, the more American taxpayers will pay for it."

Iran warns of enriching uranium to 90% purity

Reuters
DUBAI

Iranian parliamentary spokesperson Ebrahim Rezaei said on Tuesday that the country could enrich uranium up to 90% purity, a level considered weapons-grade, if Iran is attacked again.

"One of Iran's options in the event of another attack could be 90% enrichment. We will review it in the Parliament," Mr. Rezaei posted on X.

The fate of around 400kg of uranium enriched to 60%, a short technical step from roughly 90% weapons-grade material, remains unclear.

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NOTIFICATION INVITING TENDER (NIT) (Through KPP portal)

No: BESCOM/CGM(Proj)/DGM-1/AGM-1/BC-14/26-27/CYS-51
BESCOM Invites a tender for the work of "Replacement of existing HT/LT OH line into covered conductor/AB Cable in Bevoor, Channapatna Urban & Channapatna Rural sub-divisions in Ramanagara Division, Ramanagara Circle, BESCOM" on Total Turnkey basis under Percentage Quoting basis.

Tender Enquiry No: BESCOM/2026-27/EL/WORK_INDENT1100 (1) Availability of Bid documents: **18-05-2026** onwards. (2) Last date for submission of bid Queries: **30-05-2026** before **17:00** Hrs. (3) Pre-Bid meeting: **01-06-2026 @ 11:00** Hrs. **Venue of Pre-Bid meeting:** O/o Chief General Manager (Ele), 4th Floor, Project Section, B Block, Corporate office, BESCOM, K. R Circle, Bangalore- 560 001. (4) Last date for bid submission: **18-06-2026 @ 15:00** Hrs. (5) Opening of Technical Bids: **19-06-2026 @ 15:30** Hrs.

The bid documents can be downloaded and necessary assistance can be obtained through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP) from the website. <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

KPP Portal Help Desk: Phone No: **+91-8046010000** **+91-8068948777** E-mail: support@eprocelpdesk.com

Aspiring bidders needs to be registered on Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP). Bidders can take the assistance from the KPP during office working hours.

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CONFIDENCE-BOOSTER

Management and seniors have been supportive: DC's Madhav



R.V. MOORTHY

This is my second season in the IPL, and I feel that I have become quite used to this environment. The team management and seniors have been super supportive. I can go to them anytime to ask anything. I consider myself a complete all-rounder, so I need to be sharper — Delhi Capitals' Madhav Tiwari.

LAST-MINUTE PLAN

Decision to bowl full quota with pacers was spontaneous: Bahutule



FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

There was definitely a thought during the timeout, but the ball was seaming. The conditions were suitable for the fast bowlers. The decision to continue with the pacers was spontaneous; we wanted to see how we could get wickets — PBKS spin-bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule on why leggie Yuzvendra Chahal did not bowl against DC.

TEAM SPORT

Everyone is playing for each other in RCB: bowling coach Salvi



EMMANUAL YOGINI

Bowling coach Omark Salvi reckoned RCB's tight win over MI in its previous game would be a shot in the arm for the side's confidence. "After such a game, the team's camaraderie is definitely reflected. Everyone is playing for each other. There is trust that one of them will win the match for the side. It is a great thing for RCB," Salvi said.

GAME-CHANGER

'Allen is realising his dream with a significant impact on our batting'



EMMANUAL YOGINI

Finn Allen's challenge is balancing his extraordinary ball striking against top bowlers in varied conditions while building consistency. Batters must stay free but calculated. I've loved working with him previously and now in the IPL, where he is realising his dream with a significant impact on our batting — KKR's Shane Watson.

Rabada and Holder rip through SRH as GT goes top

The pacers take three wickets each to help the home team defend 168 in style, bowling out the visitor for 86 in 14.5 overs; Sai Sudharsan and Washington's gutsy half-centuries prove invaluable

IPL-19

Pranav Rajiv
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans' irrepressible new-ball attack outclassed Sunrisers Hyderabad's marauding top-order in a much-anticipated IPL 2026 clash as the home team stormed to a convincing 82-run win at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Tuesday.

Titans pacers Kagiso Rabada (three for 28) and Mohammed Siraj (one for 11) ripped through SRH's batting spine, reducing the away side to 32 for four in the PowerPlay in its ill-fated 169-run chase on a sluggish black-soil surface.

Jason Holder (three for 20) and Prasidh Krishna (two for 23) continued the chokehold into the middle overs to set up Titans' sixth consecutive win against SRH, a result which also lifted the side to the top of the standings.

Playing an equally important role as the home quicks were B. Sai Sudharsan and Washington Sundar, who scored battling half-centuries to construct



Putting on a clinic: Rabada and Holder finished the job after Washington and Sai Sudharsan's measured innings gave Titans a fighting chance. VIJAY SONEJI

Titans' winning total. The southpaws put on 60 runs for the fourth wicket to wrest control of the game after the SRH pacers dominated the PowerPlay, restricting Titans to 34 for two.

Sai Sudharsan had kick-started things with a polished cover drive against Nitish Kumar in the second over. His first six came only in the 11th over — a full-blooded slash over backward point against Eshan

Malinga. The Titans opener soon got to his fifty with a thumping sweep shot against left-arm wrist-spinner Shivang Kumar that rocketed to the square-leg fence. Meanwhile, Washington

had started with clean, textbook shots for boundaries. But he tweaked his approach in the death overs, bringing out acrobatic scoops and off-balance slog hits to ensure a strong fin-

ish. GT pacers outdid their SRH counterparts in extracting the best out of the sticky bounce on offer. Rabada and Siraj teed things off by suffocating SRH's top-order with a constricting line and a me-

SCOREBOARD

GUJARAT TITANS
B. Sai Sudharsan c Praful b Sakib 61 (44b, 5x4, 2x6), Shubman Gill c Klaasen b Praful 5 (7b, 1x4), Jos Buttler c Kishan b Praful 7 (11b, 1x4), Nishant Sindhu c Klaasen b Cummins 22 (14b, 3x4, 1x6), Washington Sundar c Kishan b Sakib 50 (33b, 7x4, 1x6), Jason Holder (not out) 11 (10b), Rahul Tewatia (not out) 4 (1b, 1x4); Extras (lb-2, w-6): 8; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 168.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-15 (Gill, 2.2 overs), 2-26 (Buttler, 5.1), 3-64 (Sindhu, 9.3), 4-124 (Sai Sudharsan, 16.2), 5-164 (Washington, 19.5).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Cummins 4-0-20-1, Nitish 3-0-27-0, Praful 3-0-17-2, Malinga 4-0-46-0, Sakib 4-0-37-2, Shivang 2-0-19-0.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Travis Head (Impact Player for Sakib) c Nishant b Siraj 0 (4b), Abhishek Sharma b Rabada 6 (4b, 1x6), Ishan Kishan c Buttler b Rabada 11 (7b, 1x4, 1x6), R. Smaran c Gill b Rabada 9 (15b, 1x4), Heinrich Klaasen c Buttler b Holder 14 (16b, 2x4), Salil Arora c Buttler b Prasidh 16 (13b, 3x4),

Nitish Kumar c Washington b Holder 2 (4b), Pat Cummins c Siraj b Prasidh 19 (9b, 1x4, 2x6), Shivang Kumar c Buttler b Holder 4 (6b), Praful Hinge st. Buttler b Rashid 3 (8b), Eshan Malinga (not out) 0 (3b); Extras (lb-1, w-1): 2; Total (in 14.5 overs): 86.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-0 (Head, 0.4), 2-6 (Abhishek, 1.4), 3-23 (Kishan, 3.1), 4-32 (Smaran, 5.5), 5-56 (Salil, 9.4), 6-56 (Klaasen, 10.1), 7-60 (Nitish, 10.4), 8-72 (Shivang, 12.2), 9-82 (Cummins, 13.4).

TITANS BOWLING
Siraj 3-1-11-1, Rabada 4-0-28-3, Holder 4-0-20-3, Prasidh (Impact Player for Tewatia) 3-0-23-2, Rashid 0.5-0-3-1.

Toss: Sunrisers Hyderabad. **Player-of-the-Match:** Rabada. **Titans won by 82 runs.**

Next assignment

GT: May 16 vs. KKR Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.
SRH: May 18 vs. CSK Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

RCB stands in the way of KKR's fifth straight victory

Anish Pathivil
RAIPUR

Royal Challengers Bengaluru will look to ride the wave of its exhilarating last-ball win in front of its adopted home crowd at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium when it faces Kolkata Knight Riders here on Wednesday.

In a season with fine margins and unpredictable outcomes, the positive result helped RCB get some breathing space in the playoff race.

A victory against the 2024 winner in the following encounter will be crucial before RCB's last two games against teams vying for the top spot (Punjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad).

Despite the mediocre batting effort against Mumbai Indians, there were plenty of positives the defending champion could take home. The significant one being Romario Shephard's spell (3-0-18-1) through the middle overs. Before the last game, as the team's sixth bowling option, the West Indian had been leaking runs at 12.94 and had managed only five wickets in nine matches.

The Knight Riders have been quietly making up places in the shadow of those in the playoff struggle. After all looked lost following a six-game winless start to the season, the side



Positive takeaway: RCB will be buoyed by Shepherd coming into bowling form against MI. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Today's match
RCB vs KKR
Raipur, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 35
RCB 15 | KKR 20
MEETINGS IN 2025
Match abandoned
RCB won by seven wickets
LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOTSTAR

has conjured up four back-to-back wins to remain in the fight. A main characteristic of these victories has been a concerted bowling effort in comparatively

We cannot overthink or overanalyse: Bahutule

S. Shrivathsan
DHARAMSHALA

In an action-packed tournament like the IPL where matches come thick and fast, teams hardly have time to rest on glory or dwell on defeats.

Hence, it did not come as a surprise when Punjab Kings spin-bowling coach Sairaj Bahutule emphasised that the struggling side should not "brood over" recent losses.

"Obviously, everyone is disappointed, but we cannot overthink and overanalyse. In a couple of days' time, we will be playing Mumbai Indians here (on Thursday). It is important to take the learnings from this game," Bahutule said after Delhi Capitals handed PBKS its fourth defeat on the bounce on Monday.

"We will certainly look into phases of our bowling and the fielding part. We almost had the game [in the bag], but we did not execute the skills in the last five overs. If we had taken the two catches, DC may not have reached the target," he added.

Although nothing seems to be going right for Kings, Bahutule remained positive about Shreyas Iyer and his men turning the corner.

"We are still in the hunt to qualify [for the playoffs]. There are going to be a lot of ups and downs. We have to put these [losses] behind



Shreyas' Punjab Kings has lost four games in a row. R.V. MOORTHY

us and move ahead," said Bahutule.

Among those who rubbed salt into the wound was young Capitals all-rounder Madhav Tiwari. The 22-year-old, making his first appearance of the season, crucially struck twice with the ball before acing the chase with an unbeaten eight-ball 18.

"I just tried to control my nerves and do the basics well (while batting). I was in the zone and wanted to win. We (Ashutosh Sharma and him) had a clear understanding of what was needed. The ball was coming onto the bat nicely, and we felt quite comfortable."

In PowerPlay era, the safe score concept is becoming obsolete

Natalia Hannah Rice

When Punjab Kings overhauled Delhi Capitals' 264 at the Arun Jaitley stadium last month, completing the highest successful chase in the history of T20s, the margin of surprise was minimal. A target of 265 should have been unquarrelable. It proved anything but that.

Prabhsimran Singh's assault at the top and Shreyas Iyer's composed authority in the middle had reduced a landmark total to a footnote.

The chase was completed with seven balls to spare. IPL 2026 had already conditioned its audience to expect the extraordinary. This season has produced a statistical anomaly that would have been unimaginable five years ago. Sunrisers Hyderabad currently leads the way in this list, smashing records in recent seasons with massive totals (287 and 286).

SRH chased down 244 against Mumbai Indians at Wankhede, Rajasthan Royals successfully pursued 223 against PBKS at New Chandigarh, and as recently as Monday, DC hunted down 211 against PBKS at Dharamshala. What was once a match-winning total has now become merely competitive. Several factors have converged to produce this batting revolution.

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Gujarat Titans	12	8	4	0	16	0.551
Royal Challengers	11	7	4	0	14	1.103
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	7	5	0	14	0.331
Punjab Kings	11	6	4	1	13	0.428
Chennai Super Kings	11	6	5	0	12	0.185
Rajasthan Royals	11	6	5	0	12	0.082
Delhi Capitals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.993
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	4	5	1	9	-0.169
Mumbai Indians (E)	11	3	8	0	6	-0.585
Lucknow Super Giants (E)	11	3	8	0	6	-0.907

E: Eliminated



Priyansh and Prabhsimran... making the first six overs count.

Pitches across many IPL venues are flatter, offering minimal lateral movement and little assistance to seam bowlers. Smaller boundary dimensions at several grounds have also significantly increased six-hitting rates. Batting line-ups now ex-

tend deep, also aided by the Impact Player rule, reducing the dependence on tailenders. PowerPlay batting, once relatively measured, is now built around relentless aggression. The first six overs have become decisive, and openers are expected to attack from the very first ball, often scoring at rates of 12 or even 13 runs per over.

In successful 200-plus chases this season, the average scoring rate in the first six overs has climbed to 13.81, an increase of nearly 21% from last year.

On average, winning chasing sides complete more than 37% of their target before the PowerPlay ends.

The consequences are profound. Captains winning the toss no longer take comfort in posting 210. In this season of IPL, the very concept of a safe score has ceased to exist.

IN BRIEF



Rana bowls Bangladesh to a facile victory with a five-for

Seamer Nahid Rana claimed five for 40 on an eventful final day to bowl Bangladesh to a 104-run victory in the opening Test against Pakistan in Mirpur. The hosts, who set a victory target of 268, bundled the visitors out for 163, prising out seven wickets in the final session, to go 1-0 up in the two-Test series on Tuesday.

The scores: Bangladesh 413 in 117.1 overs & 240/9 decl. in 70.3 overs (Mominul 56, Shanto 87) bt Pakistan 386 & 163 in 52.5 overs (Fazal 66, Rana 5/40).

Lakshay punches his way to the 75kg category final

Lakshay Phogat beat South Korea's Seungmin Lee by a unanimous 5-0 decision to book his place in the 75kg category final at the Asian under-17 boxing championships in Tashkent on Tuesday. Four other Indians secured bronze medals after losing in the semifinals.

The results (semifinals): 46kg: Abdulloh Nuraliev (Uzb) bt Narendra Nella 5-0; 50kg: Suld Usukhbaatar (Mgl) bt Yash Yadav 4-1; 54kg: Abdulosit Yursunboev (Uzb) bt Nivesh Pal 5-0; 70kg: Abduvohid Abdumajidov (Uzb) bt Naman 3-2; 75kg: Lakshay Phogat bt Seungmin Lee (Kor) 5-0.



Dembele voted Ligue 1's Player of the Year again

Paris Saint-Germain forward Ousmane Dembele was on Monday named the Ligue 1 Player of the Year for the second year running, after leading the club to the brink of a 14th French title and the Champions League final. The 28-year-old becomes just the fifth player to win back-to-back awards, the last being Zlatan Ibrahimovic in 2014.

National doubles squash from May 13 to 16 in Chennai

The HCL National doubles squash championship 2026, organised by Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) in association with HCL Technologies, will be held from May 13 to 16 at the Indian Squash Academy (ISA) in Chennai. The tournament will serve as the National selection event for the second Asian doubles championships, scheduled in Malaysia from June 18 to 21. Several leading Indians, including Abhay Singh, Joshna Chinappa, Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu, Velavan Senthilkumar, Rathika Seelan, and Rahul Baitha, are set to participate. The championship, now in its third edition, will offer a total prize purse of ₹3.3 lakh across categories and is expected to feature many of the country's top doubles squash talents.

South Africa names squad for ICC Women's T20 WC

Cricket South Africa announced a 15-member squad for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, set to take place in England and Wales from June 12. Laura Wolvaardt will lead the side.

The squad: Laura Wolvaardt (Capt.), Tazmin Brits, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Shabnim Ismail, Sinalo Jafta, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Sune Luus, Karabo Meso, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Kayla Reyneke, Tumi Sekhukhune, Chloe Tryon, and Dane van Niekerk. **South Africa's fixtures:** June 13: Vs. Australia (Old Trafford); June 17: Vs. Pakistan (Edgbaston); June 21: Vs. India (Old Trafford); June 25: Vs. Netherlands (Bristol); June 28: Vs. Bangladesh (Lord's).

Triumphant coach Flick extends contract with Barca

Barcelona coach Hansi Flick confirmed on Tuesday that he has signed a new two-year contract with the club, with an option for a third season. The 61-year-old secured a second-consecutive La Liga title with the club on Sunday.

Sandeep back with a bang, wins Greco Roman 60kg title

The Haryana grappler edges past Delhi's Harsh in a keenly fought final; Manjeet downs Umesh for the 82kg crown; Ankita stuns Olympian Sonam; Asian bronze medallist Hansika withdraws

WRESTLING

Y.B. Sarangi
NANDINI NAGAR (U.P.)

Sandeep of Rohtak (Haryana) returned from a three-year hiatus to make his mark by winning the Greco Roman 60kg title at the Senior Open Ranking wrestling tournament on the Nandini Nagar Mahavidyalaya campus, here on Tuesday.

An Armyman who was injured and resumed training in November 2025, Sandeep fought six bouts over two days because of the delayed action but carried out his plans well to emerge the champion. In a keenly-fought final, he edged past Delhi's Harsh 3-1. Sandeep gained a 3-0 lead in the first period by scoring because of his opponent's passivity and then effected a takedown. He gave away one point in the second period due to his own passivity but relied on strong defence to stay ahead till the end.

"Yesterday, I fought two



Holding on: Sandeep, foreground, had the final say against Harsh. SANDEEP SAXENA

bouts and today four. It's difficult to manage without food. My endurance helped," said the former National champion Sandeep, reflecting the difficulty the wrestlers face due to erratic schedule in hot and humid conditions.

Manjeet secured a hard-fought 4-2 win over Umesh for the 82kg crown.

In the women's section,

Olympian Sonam Malik (65kg), who underwent a left knee surgery and made a comeback after four years, was stunned 3-2 by Ankita in the first round.

Asian bronze medallist Hansika Lamba withdrew after injuring herself during a 57kg bout.

The results (finals): Men: Greco Roman: 55kg: Sanjeev

(Har) bt Sushil Kumar (Har) 9-0; 60kg: Sandeep (Har) bt Harsh (Del) 3-1; 63kg: Vijay (Har) bt Vinay (Mah) 9-0; 67kg: Nishant (Har) bt Vikas (Chd) 7-2; 72kg: Suraj (SSCB) bt Gaurav Duhoon (UP) by injury; 77kg: Vikas (Har) bt Sunny Baisla (UP) 8-0.

82kg: Manjeet (Har) bt Umesh (Har) 4-1; 87kg: Tejpal (Mah) bt Sagar (Har) by injury; 97kg: Ashish (Har) bt Abhimanu (Pun) by injury; 130kg: Mehar Singh (Har) bt Vipin (Har) by injury.

Satwik-Chirag pair advances

BADMINTON

Press Trust of India
BANGKOK

Top seeds Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty survived a stiff challenge before defeating Indonesia's Muh Putra Erwiansyah and Bagas Maulana in a thrilling three-game opener of the men's doubles competition at the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament here on Tuesday.

The world No. 4 Indian pair registered a 19-21, 23-21, 21-10 win over Muh and Bagas in 64 minutes. The Indians will face Malaysia's Bryan Jeremy Goonting and Muhammad Haikal next.

However, A. Hariharan and M.R. Arjun went down 18-21, 20-22 against Taiwan's Chen Zhi Ray and Lin Yu Chieh in 35 minutes.

In women's doubles, the Panda siblings Swetaparna and Rutaparna lost to Taiwan's Chu Yun Yang and Chih-Chun Lin 21-9, 21-11.

Earlier, Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia, who returned after recovering from an injury, defeated Manav Choudhary 21-19, 21-18 in a men's qualifying match. In mixed doubles qualification, M. Jaglan and L. Jaglan lost 11-21, 18-21 to Chinese Taipei's Tsai Fu Cheng and Sung Yu Hsuan, while in women's qualification, Thailand's Y. Ketklieng beat India's A. Shahapurkar 21-5, 21-7.

The results (main draw): Men's doubles: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Muh Putra Erwiansyah & Bagas Maulana (Ina) 19-21, 23-21, 21-10; Chen Zhi Ray & Lin Yu Chieh (Tpe) bt A. Hariharan & M.R. Arjun 21-18, 22-20.

Women's doubles: Chu Yun Yang & Chih-Chun Lin (Tpe) bt Swetaparna & Rutaparna Panda 21-9, 21-11.

Manish ends a long win drought, enters the pre-quarterfinals

TENNIS

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Manish Sureshkumar's last win in an ATP Challenger tournament match came in November 2019. A relieved Manish managed to break the long drought in the first round of the Karnataka Open ATP Challenger here on Tuesday with a 6-4, 7-6 (7) win over American qualifier Ronit Karki.

Manish (World No. 829) stayed consistent with his groundstrokes to outclass Karki, the 2025 Wimbledon junior finalist.

"Normally I like to play long rallies, but here that it not possible because the ball travels faster and longer. Having good ball control really helps in these conditions," the 26-year-old Manish said.



No sweat: Manish took out American qualifier Karki in straight sets. K. MURALI KUMAR

In another round-of-32 clash, Japan's Kokoro Isomura defeated an inconsistent Karan Singh 7-6(6), 6-3.

Karan made far too away unforced errors, and was tentative with his volleys.

Playing in the familiar setting of his home stadium,

Not the end of the road for Vinesh: WFI

Y.B. Sarangi
NANDINI NAGAR (U.P.)

Even after rendering Vinesh Phogat ineligible to compete and serving her a show-cause notice, the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) said that this is not the end of the road for the two-time World Championships medallist.

WFI president Sanjay Singh said Vinesh needed to go through the procedure.

"This is not the end (of the road for her). Let her reply. A WFI committee will be formed. Whatever the committee decides, it will be informed to her," Sanjay told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

Sanjay added Vinesh, who was found ineligible to make a comeback at the Open Ranking event here on Tuesday, would not be eligible for the Asian Games trials in New Delhi on May 30 as well.

"In no way she can participate in the Asian Games trials. She is not eligible to compete in any WFI event. Later, if she is eligible as per the criteria, then she can compete in the trials for the Worlds."

About the timing of her ineligibility and show-cause, the WFI chief said:



Vinesh. SANDEEP SAXENA

Sanjay said Vinesh would not be eligible for the Asian Games trials in New Delhi on May 30

"Whenever an athlete approaches the federation to take part in a competition, the federation checks her eligibility only then.

As for the show-cause, she took retirement immediately after (getting disqualified from) the Paris Olympics (for jumping the weight limit of 50kg).

"How can I serve a notice to someone who has retired? What about fighting in two weights (at the trials)? Now she is putting the responsibility on the ad-hoc committee (which conducted the trials). When I asked her about this, she grimaced.

"She is a senior athlete, she should know the rules."

Leeds holds Tottenham, keeps the relegation battle brewing

EURO LEAGUES

Agencies
LONDON

Mathys Tel was the hero and villain as Tottenham drew 1-1 at home against Leeds on Monday – a result that leaves its Premier League future hanging in the balance.

The Frenchman broke the deadlock early in the second half to ease the tension at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, but then gave away a penalty with a wild attempted clearance.

Spurs are now two points clear of West Ham, which was denied a stoppage-time equaliser by VAR on Sunday in a 1-0 defeat by Arsenal – a potentially season-defining decision at both ends of the table.

That result at the London Stadium ensured that Leeds and Nottingham Forest were safe from relegation while Wolves and



Firing home: Calvert-Lewin's second-half penalty denied Tottenham full points. REUTERS

Burnley have already been relegated.

The point lifts Spurs to 38 points – two clear of West Ham, which is in 18th spot and has an inferior goal difference.

When Roberto De Zerbi was appointed as Spurs boss at the end of March to replace sacked interim boss Igor Tudor, Tottenham had gone 13 league games without a win, dating back to December.

Spurs still have potentially tough games to come against Chelsea and Ever-

ton, whereas West Ham faces Newcastle and Leeds.

Meanwhile, Napoli's bid to reach next season's Champions League was still in the balance after falling to late 2-3 home defeat to Bologna in Serie A.

Jonathan Rowe lashed home an acrobatic volley in the first minute of stoppage time to leave Napoli, in second, three points ahead of fourth-placed Roma with two matches to play.

A win would have been enough for a spot in Eu-

rope's top club competition due to Napoli's better head-to-head record with Roma this season. Napoli can still be caught by both Roma and Como, which is five points behind Antonio Conte's team.

The results: Premier League: Tottenham 1 (Tel 50) drew with Leeds 1 (Calvert-Lewin 74-pen).

Serie A: Napoli 2 (Di Lorenzo 45+1, Santos 48) lost to Bologna 3 (Bernardeschi 9, Orsolini 34-pen, Rowe 90+1)

LaLiga: Rayo Vallecano 1 (Alemao 86) drew with Girona 1 (Stuani 90).

Draw denies Bagan chance to top table

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan Super Giant missed the chance to move clear at the top of the table when it was held 0-0 by Inter Kashi FC on Tuesday.

The result left Bagan level on 22 points with East Bengal FC after 11 matches but the latter stays ahead on goal difference.

The two are now set for a virtual title decider in the 'Kolkata derby' on May 17.

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Ankit Pratap and Dhananjai sizzle

Ankit Pratap Singh's unbeaten 115 and Dhananjai Singh's six for 36 played pivotal roles in SRK Technology XI's five-wicket victory over Friends XI Cricket Club in the 51st all-India Tyagmurthi Goswami Ganesh Dutt memorial cricket tournament at S.G.T.B. Khalsa College ground on Tuesday.

The scores: Friends XI 246 in 34 overs (Musaif Ajaz 61, Harshit Sethi 54, Sanskar Rawat 40, Dhananjai Singh 6/36) bt SRK Technology XI 248/5 in 31 overs (Ankit Pratap Singh 115

n.o., Shaurya Saran 53).

Yash scores century

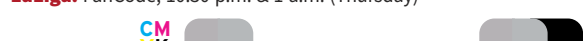
Yash Dabas led the way with a knock of 119 as Telefonken Cricket Club eased past Friends Cricket Club by 58 runs in the 41st all-India Laxman Dass Chhabra memorial cricket tournament at St. Stephen's ground on Tuesday.

The scores: Telefonken 306/6 in 40 overs (Yash Dabas 119, Parikshit Sehrawat 50, Bharat Sindhvani 71, Yash Bansal 34) bt Friends 248 in 36.3 overs (Arya Singh 34, S. Manav 77, Niradesh Baisoya 51, Namit Gupta 3/53).

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

LaLiga: FanCode, 10.30 p.m. & 1 a.m. (Thursday)



Sooryavanshi has ticked all boxes

In a wide-ranging conversation, Irfan Pathan breaks down the biggest talking points of IPL 2026: Pant's struggles, Bumrah's form and the rise of young Indian pacers. He also explains the art of swing bowling, the importance of red-ball cricket, and why he believes the 15-year-old is ready to play for India



INTERVIEW

Irfan Pathan

Anirudh Velamuri

Few cricketers understand the art of fast bowling and the tactical side of the game like Irfan Pathan. Once the poster boy of India's pace revolution, he has now transitioned into one of the sport's more respected analysts.

Part of the broadcasting caravan in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), the 41-year-old doesn't shy away from tough questions: whether it's assessing Rishabh Pant's under-fire captaincy, identifying the next generation of fast-bowling superstars, or explaining what makes Bhuvneshwar Kumar a perennial threat. A conversation with him is an education.

In an online interaction, Irfan delved into the biomechanics of swing bowling, the struggles of elite players like Jasprit Bumrah, the importance of red-ball experience for T20 success, and more. Excerpts:

What do you make of Sunrisers Hyderabad's inexperienced but spunky pace attack this season?

When they started, obviously not many people would've thought that they will be in this position in the standings. Even I thought their bowling might be under pressure.

They started with Jaydev Unadkat and Harshal Patel, and it didn't work. They then went with youngsters with their variation and high-paced deliveries which has really clicked for the side. Pacer Sakib (Hussain) and Shivang Kumar with his wrist-spinning ability are two big finds for SRH.

Pat Cummins is a great leader and you

could see it in SRH's home match against Punjab Kings, where Sakib bowled a full toss no-ball and Cummins immediately had a word with him. Sakib bowled his nearly full quota of overs, and Cummins used him at the back end of the game as well. Good resource utilisation.

If you were mentoring SRH's bowling unit, what would you focus on?

Varun Aaron and the support staff at SRH are doing a wonderful job. If you ask me, I would keep an eye on Sakib's alignment. It is slightly across his body, which might be affecting his control. I would ask him to bowl from the centre of the box rather than going too close towards the stumps to allow him to hit stump lines.

Everyone talks about being close to the stumps, but it's not for all. One size doesn't fit all. There are side-arm bowlers, there are front-arm bowlers. I will not change his action. I will work on that at the end of the season or maybe after the season.

Shivang is another; his lengths need to be monitored. When bowling against overseas batters, he bowls very full, and they are going across him. They don't play the spin and hence get dismissed.

I would encourage him to have that control in his length, especially against the Indian batters who are really good at playing over covers. I am sure Varun must be doing all this already.

Do you think Rishabh Pant's underwhelming season as captain and batter might impact his spot as India's backup ODI 'keeper too?

I had high hopes for his captaincy, but the last two seasons haven't delivered. We'll gauge the pressure after the IPL, but with a few games left and three solid innings behind him, he still has a prime opportunity to find form and secure wins.

That said, given the expectations Lucknow Super Giants had after picking him in the auction, you want to register performances where you win games single-handedly for your team. That hasn't been the case for Rishabh and hence he is under pressure slightly.

About a place in the ODI squad... we will only know after the IPL. You never know, he may come back and win two games from here. Or this run could continue and



Titans are a very interesting and solid team. They rely heavily on their pace department and have a bowler (Rabada) who delivers at speeds of 150kmph... they also have Siraj, who moves the ball both ways, and Prasad. They are putting grass on the pitch to give some help for the bowlers

he might not score or win games. Both are possibilities. I don't think selectors will make any decisions now, though.

Axar Patel's captaincy with Delhi Capitals has also come under the scanner...

When performances don't happen, we always look at the captain. Rishabh has faced the same, where we see the team's run and say leadership could have been better. When Chennai Super Kings was struggling, the same happened to Rituraj Gaikwad. Now CSK has started winning, so people are praising him. This is natural when you don't get results as captain. Axar is in the same boat.

One thing is, when he's leading the side, his bowling takes a backseat. He's someone who can regularly bowl in the PowerPlay. I remember a game against RCB where he came on late. He is sometimes not able to put his bowling forward as he's focused on drawing out results from the others. He shouldn't neglect his own bowling, because he's a wonderful bowler. His batting, too, has dipped for the most part this season. There's too much on his plate and that's probably not working for him.

What do you think Delhi Capitals' biggest problem has been this season?

Delhi, last year as well as this year, is a top-four team. They have very experienced and talented players like K.L. Rahul, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Mitchell Starc and others.

Two things have been big factors for Delhi Capitals. One, I think the decision-making could've been better in games. Your decisions at the toss, for instance, need to be sound.

Secondly, Kuldeep Yadav is not in great form. Delhi depends on him, especially on turning tracks. An economy of over 10 is not what a team will expect from its main spinner.

In a high-scoring slam-bang league where teams are scoring 80-90 runs in the PowerPlay, Gujarat Titans seems to have a different approach. Your thoughts?

Gujarat is a very interesting and solid team. They're relying heavily on their pace department. They have one guy in Kagiso Rabada who bowls at speeds of 150kmph and then there's Mohammed Siraj, who can actually move the ball both ways. They have Ashok Sharma who has a good high pace, and then there's Prasad Krishna when he gets a look in too.

They are putting grass on the pitch to give some help for the bowlers. Their pool had good Test bowlers - Rabada, Siraj and Prasad, who has also become a good Test bowler now. We shouldn't forget Rashid Khan too.

When you have a high-quality bowling unit, you want to make the best of it. For that, you need something to help them. And Gujarat certainly knows they need to put something on the pitch. There is grass there and some cracks too.

They're going to expect that it's not going to be very high-scoring games. And for exactly that reason, they have three guys who are technically really, really good. Jos Buttler comes from England and understands how to handle the swing and seam conditions. They have Shubman Gill and Sai Sudarshan too, both technically very sound.

When you have three top guys who can handle seam movement and pace, their approach is very simple. With the ball, they want something on the pitch. With the bat, they don't want to lose wickets early on. Once they don't, things become easier for them.

From a tactical point of view, Gujarat Titans is proceeding according to its strength, which is their bowling. When it comes to making the most of conditions, Gujarat is one of the best.

Another frontline name who has struggled is Jasprit Bumrah while Bhuvneshwar Kumar has been



There is a lesson for fast bowlers coming through today. Don't leave red ball cricket. Because there you bowl in the morning, afternoon and evening. There are two or three spells you bowl, so your body actually gets ready to bowl those four overs in tough, under-pressure situations.

outstanding for RCB. How do you view these two veterans?

Bhuvni has an outstanding repetitive action despite the fact that he swings the ball both ways.

People talk about the swing in his wrist. But the wrist starts with the base. Your base is like a building's foundation. If the foundation is strong, then your building will go up and remain strong. Same thing with Bhuvni. Whenever you see his base or front foot, it falls on the same spot when he bowls outswingers or inswingers. It never slips.

Right now, he's fit also. He's taking care of his body. He understands the importance of that. He has not stopped playing red ball cricket either. You then know where to hit the length because there are so many spells to bowl.

That is a lesson for fast bowlers coming through today. Don't leave red ball cricket. Because there you bowl in the morning, afternoon and evening. There are two or three spells you bowl, so your body actually gets ready to bowl those four overs in tough, under-pressure situations.

As for Bumrah, I'm honestly not too worried about his form. The numbers might not be great for him. But even the greats go through a phase he is going through right now. It's affecting the team's results as well, which is understandable.

My solution would be to ask him to rest now. Recover mentally and physically. Maybe it's more mental than physical. Once he and those around him manage his body well, he will be fine.

We've never seen a talent like him. I have played professional cricket for more than 20 years and have seen a lot of cricket. I have been in broadcasting for 10 years now. He is special, and there is no doubt about it.

Kolkata Knight Riders made a poor start to the season and are now pushing for a playoff spot. What a turnaround!

If you look at Ajinkya Rahane's captaincy in the last few games, he has done really well. He has actually manoeuvred the bowlers really well. But KKR's problem is the ability, or lack of, to play spin in the middle overs.

In the past, they had Yusuf Pathan and Gautam Gambhir, who played spin really well. Under Gambhir, 160 was very defensible, especially with Sunil Narine and others coming into the game. They had the batters adept at sweeping against the spin.

They had a quality player like Shreyas Iyer, who, when he came in the middle overs, could tackle spinners well. They got the results and won the trophy as well. They need to address this in the big auction when it comes around.

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has once again been the talk of town. Do you think he's ready to play for India?

He is ready because it's not just about the IPL. He has played cricket throughout the year and has made runs in different conditions. He made runs in the U-19 World Cup final. Wherever he gets a chance, he makes runs - in India and abroad. In the IPL, we've seen him take on some high-quality bowlers - Bumrah for example - with no hesitation.

What do you want to see as a selector? What he does in tough conditions, in front of big bowlers... Does he go on the back-foot to them? What does he do in tough conditions? He is ticking every box that a selector might have as it stands.

Besides Sooryavanshi, which emerging player has impressed you so far?

There are many, but I want to focus on the pacers. Prince Yadav has made a massive impact. Anshul Kamboj is another who has become a star for CSK. The way his Test debut went, where he struggled to find rhythm, could have dented his confidence. But he has learned from that and moved forward. Ashok Sharma and Gurjapneet Singh have been good, too. This season, good-quality fast bowlers have come up.

Away from the on-field action, how are you enjoying life as an analyst and commentator?

I'm absolutely loving it. I am not doing regular commentary now, I am doing something called *Champions wali commentary* for JioHotstar. It is especially great for guys like me who love to analyse everything and look into the finer details. We explore tactics, the technical aspects, the biomechanics, and more, and I think this is my zone.

Cancer immunotherapy may reshape brain's barrier to metastasis

Scientists have found that drugs called PD-1 inhibitors can make the blood-brain barrier more permeable, a process mediated by the DKK1 protein; this finding explains why some patients develop brain metastases during treatment and suggests new ways to improve drug delivery to the brain

Shweta Yogi
PUNE

Drugs that enhance the body's immune response against cancer may also be altering one of its most tightly guarded boundaries: the blood-brain barrier (BBB).

A recent study published by Yuval Shaked at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology and his team, in *Cancer Discovery*, finds that PD-1 inhibitors, a widely used class of cancer immunotherapy, can prompt immune cells to produce a protein that makes the barrier more permeable. This could potentially change how cancer and its treatments affect the brain.

Many conventional anti-cancer drugs cannot cross the BBB, which is a tightly packed lining of cells that controls what passes from the bloodstream into brain tissue, limiting their effectiveness against brain tumours.

So the brain was long thought to be largely insulated from the immune system, but growing evidence shows it can mount meaningful immune responses. In this context, immunotherapy works by activating circulating immune cells that can cross the BBB and target tumour cells within the brain.

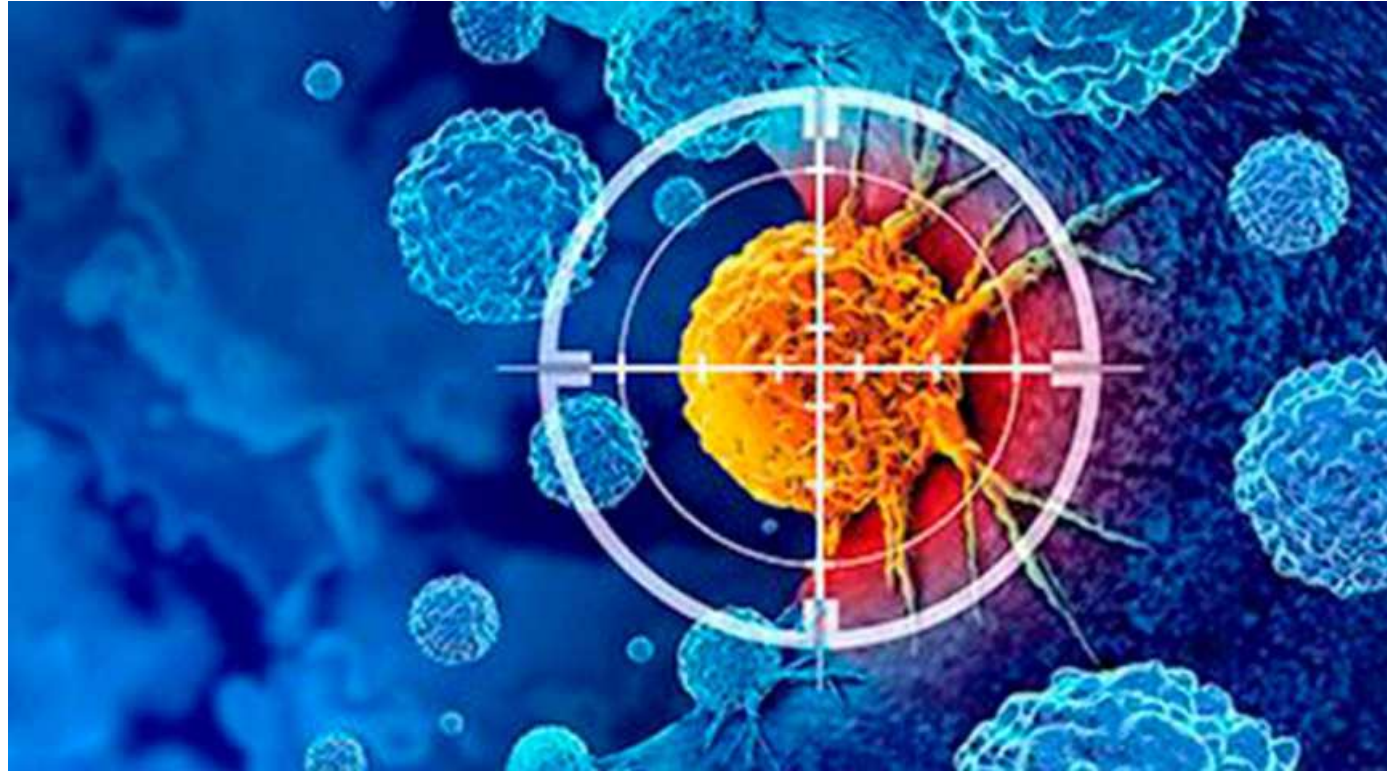
A type of immunotherapy called immune checkpoint inhibitors (ICIs) block signals that prevent immune cells from attacking tumours, allowing the body's natural defences to respond more strongly. While ICIs have been shown to reduce tumour burden within the brain, responses among patients with brain metastases vary and the reasons remain unclear.

"Our work focuses on understanding how cancer treatments affect the body, not just the tumour. In some cases, therapies can trigger responses in normal host cells, such as immune cells, that unintentionally make the environment more favourable for cancer growth," Abhilash Deo, a postdoctoral researcher at the Shaked Lab and the study's lead author, said.

Brain environment

To understand how immunotherapy affects the brain immune environment, researchers examined brain tissue from mice with breast tumours treated with anti-PD-1 therapy. They observed a loss of cells that maintain blood vessel stability, weaker barrier proteins, and higher immune cell entry into the brain, suggesting that the BBB was becoming leaky.

Mice treated with anti-PD-1 also showed an increase in brain metastases, likely due to the compromised barrier. Notably, these effects were observed only with



A type of immunotherapy called immune checkpoint inhibitors block signals that prevent immune cells from attacking tumours, allowing the body's natural defences to respond more strongly. Representative illustration. GETTY IMAGES

anti-PD-1 and not with other ICIs, highlighting a unique host response induced by treatment.

"Our data show that anti-PD-1 therapy can boost anti-tumour immunity in the brain, but in resistant cancers, it may also increase metastasis by altering the host immune environment," Dr. Deo said. "This could help explain why patients with brain metastases show varied responses to immunotherapy."

According to Nirmal Raut, medical oncologist at the Bhaktivedanta Hospital and Research Institute in Thane, treatment responses to ICIs vary widely among patients with brain metastases, ranging from complete remission to rapid disease progression (seen in about 20% of cases after treatment starts).

"We often see discordant responses, where disease outside the brain is controlled, but new brain lesions appear, or vice versa, suggesting that the brain-immune ecosystem is distinct from the rest of the body," he added.

Dr. Raut noted that even when a tumour responds to treatment in organs such as the lung or liver, the BBB can act as a sanctuary where sub-therapeutic drug levels allow cancer cells to survive and evolve.

When untreated animals were injected with plasma from mice treated with anti-PD-1, the researchers observed BBB leaks, suggesting that treatment-induced ICIs were disrupting the barrier. Comparing plasma protein profiles of treated and untreated animals, the team identified several proteins linked to BBB

disruption. Among these, removing a protein called DKK1 reduced BBB leakage.

Importantly, these findings were reflected in patient data. MRI scans of patients with lung cancer who received anti-PD-1 therapy showed increased cancer spread within the brain. Higher levels of plasma DKK1 were also linked to a greater occurrence of brain metastases and a shorter period before the disease worsened, particularly among patients who responded poorly to treatment.

"This aligns with the idea that elevated DKK1 may point to a more permissive brain environment for metastasis," Dr. Raut said. He added that the increased contrast seen on some MRI scans after starting immunotherapy may not always indicate "pseudoprogression" or inflammation but could instead reflect actual BBB leakage caused by activated immune cells.

Double-edged role

Chakor Vora, a medical oncologist at the Renu Cancer Centre, Pune, explained that most chemotherapeutic drugs can't cross the BBB, posing a major challenge in treating brain metastases.

Opening of the BBB following anti-PD-1 therapy may therefore improve their delivery to the brain. The researchers found that anti-PD-1 therapy followed by cisplatin chemotherapy improved survival in mice with brain metastases as well as increased drug accumulation in the brain, highlighting a double-edged role.

Dr. Raut said that among patients who don't respond to treatment, opening the

BBB using anti-PD-1 therapy could inadvertently allow circulating cancer cells also to enter the brain, potentially increasing the risk of new metastases.

"However, for patients with resistant disease, this same vulnerability could be exploited to improve drug delivery to the brain," he said.

Rahul Solanki, a medical oncologist and a physician of nuclear medicine in Adelaide in Australia, added that once cancer has spread to the brain, the BBB may already be disrupted, and such patients are often excluded from clinical trials. Since medical workers can't measure drug levels in the brain, DKK1 may be a promising biomarker that could help identify patients at higher risk of developing brain metastases during treatment.

"Patients with advanced cancer but without active brain metastases would be better candidates to understand how anti-PD-1 therapy affects treatment response and the risk of metastasis," Dr. Solanki said.

"We typically use a combination of chemotherapy and immunotherapy in high-risk patients with brain metastases, who test positive for immune biomarkers. However, these findings need to be validated in larger studies involving human patients," Dr. Vora stressed.

"If these findings are confirmed in larger human trials, they could change how we sequence treatment," Dr. Raut added.

(Shweta Yogi is a freelance science writer. shweta2192@gmail.com)

THE GIST

Many conventional anti-cancer drugs cannot cross the blood-brain barrier, which is a tightly packed lining of cells that controls what passes from the bloodstream into brain tissue

This limits their effectiveness against brain tumours and the brain was long thought to be largely insulated from the immune system

Immunotherapy works by activating circulating immune cells that can cross the blood-brain barrier and target tumour cells within the brain

BIG SHOT



Charred sky: Mayon volcano spews ash as seen from Daraga, the Philippines, on May 2. The same volcano erupted destructively in 1814, burying the town of Cagsawa and, together with the eruption of Mt. Tambora a year later, contributed to making 1816 the 'Year Without a Summer'. AP

QUESTION CORNER

Follow the nose

Q: Why are some people mosquito magnets?

A: Scientists are now making progress in deciphering the complex chemical cocktail that makes particular people more enticing to these disease-spreading bloodsuckers.

A range of sensory cues can cause mosquitoes to pick one human over another — mainly the smell and heat our bodies give off, and the carbon dioxide we exhale. Female mosquitoes — which are the only ones that bite — detect these signals with finely-tuned receptors, then choose their target accordingly.

The idea that mosquitoes prefer particular blood types "has no scientific basis," Frederic Simard of France's Institute of Research for Development said. Odour, however, matters greatly: "A soup of molecules produced by our microbiota is more ... appealing to mosquitoes."

Humans release between 300 and 1,000 different odorous compounds, research has shown, but scientists are only just beginning to understand which ones attract mosquitoes.

In a recent study, researchers released *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes on 42 women in a lab. The mosquitoes detected 27 odorous compounds. The women the mosquitoes most liked to bite produced a compound made by



A range of sensory cues can cause mosquitoes to pick one human over another — mainly the smell and heat from the body. GETTY IMAGES

the breakdown of a skin oil called sebum.

Drinking beer has also been linked to attracting mosquitoes because it raises body temperature, increases the amount of exhaled CO₂ and changes skin odour, according to several studies.

For a 2023 study in the Netherlands, 465 volunteers put their arms in cages filled with female *Anopheles* mosquitoes, which can spread malaria. The volunteers who had drunk beer in the previous 24 hours were 1.35-times more attractive to the mosquitoes.

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