



**ONE MORE TERM**  
**CBI Director Praveen Sood gets extension**  
NEWS » PAGE 10



**DRAGGING ON**  
**Congress puts off decision on Kerala CM**  
STATES » PAGE 5



**SLIGHT FALL**  
**CBSE Class 12 pass percentage dips by 3%**  
NEWS » PAGE 12



**TESTING TROUBLES**  
**Reputation at risk for NTA**  
*Leaks and breaches have destroyed the agency's credibility*  
EDITORIAL » PAGE 6



**JUNIOR COACH**  
**HI not to renew Sreejesh's contract**  
SPORT » PAGE 17

**IN BRIEF**



**Workers' stir: NSA invoked against two for violence**

**NEW DELHI**  
The U.P. police on Wednesday invoked the National Security Act (NSA) against two persons - Satyam Verma and Akriti Choudhary - accused in the April 13 violence during a workers' stir in Noida. » Page 2

**Kolkata tannery fire: owners held, building razed**

**KOLKATA**  
West Bengal CM Suwendu Adhikari on Wednesday said the police have arrested the owners of a tannery in Kolkata, a day after a fire at the premises killed two persons. He also ordered the demolition of the building. » Page 3

**FIR lodged over SP leader's remark against Brahmins**

**LUCKNOW**  
The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Wednesday faced flak after a video allegedly showing party leader Rajkumar Bhati making derogatory remarks against Brahmins went viral. An FIR was lodged in the matter. » Page 4

# Vijay wins floor test with 144 votes; AIADMK divided

TVK-led government secures confidence vote in Tamil Nadu Assembly with 25 AIADMK MLAs voting in its favour; rift widens in AIADMK as Palaniswami removes 26 rebel functionaries

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay comfortably won the trust vote in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly on Wednesday with the support of the Congress, CPI, CPI(M), VCK, and IUML, as well as that of 25 rebel AIADMK MLAs and the lone AMMK MLA.

The confidence motion moved by Mr. Vijay was put to vote by Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar after the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam legislators and the lone Desiya Murpokku Dravidar Kazhagam MLA, Premallatha Vijayakant, walked out.

The vote came despite AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami's opposition to allowing S.P. Velumani, rebel AIADMK leader and his confidant until a few days ago, from speaking on the party's behalf.

The rift in the AIADMK widened on Wednesday night with Mr. Palaniswami removing 26 rebel district secretaries, including 12 legislators, from their positions.

Among those who were sacked from their posts were Mr. Velumani and



**Support check:** Chief Minister Vijay delivering a speech in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on Wednesday. ANI

C.Ve. Shanmugam, both former Ministers.

**Deepening fault lines**  
Earlier in the day, Mr. Velumani's camp pledged support to Mr. Vijay as the government secured 144 votes in the floor test.

While 22 MLAs from Mr. Palaniswami's camp opposed it, four Pattali Makkal Katchi MLAs and the lone Bharatiya Janata Party MLA 'abstained' from voting.

Reiterating that this was "the common people's rule," Mr. Vijay said the government was for the good of everyone and the

public would realise this as time goes by.

"This is not a government to show power or authority, or hatred. People and public welfare are important. It is the sole objective of this government," he said.

**'People's faith'**  
Thanking everyone in the Assembly, Mr. Vijay said the people had reposed faith in the TVK-led government, just as they did in 1967 and 1977 to usher in "governments of the common people."

The "whistle revolution" had secured over

34.92% of votes to elect the TVK as the single-largest party in less than three years of its formation.

"The majority was missed by a thin margin. If anyone thinks that this is a minority government, we are happy. This is a minority government, which will truly safeguard the rights of the minorities," he said, adding that his government was for everyone which has been reflected in the confidence motion. The Chief Minister further promised a democratic, secular regime rooted in social justice.

# Government doubles duty on imports of gold, silver

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has doubled the effective tax paid on the import of gold and silver to a total of 18.4% from the previous 9.2%. The changes, which came into effect on Wednesday, were made through two separate notifications issued late on Tuesday night.

According to sources in the government, the decision was taken against the backdrop of the impact of the West Asia crisis on India's current account deficit (CAD). The CAD is the margin by which a country's total imports of goods, services, and transfers exceeds its exports.

However, industry players and experts, said this "retrograde" and "blunt" decision is not likely to impact Indians' demand for gold.

It will not only encourage a shift to smuggling, since the Indian appetite for gold is largely cultural, but will also have other negative effects on employment, they said.

The Ministry of Finance has not yet released an official statement on the duty hikes or its justifications.

Previously, the basic customs duty on gold and silver stood at 5%, with a 1% Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC), and a 3% Integrated Goods and Services

## Bullion burden

The decision comes soon after Prime Minister Modi's austerity appeal to the public to reduce gold purchases

Tax	Earlier	Now
Basic customs duty	5%	10%
Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess	1%	5%
Integrated Goods and Services Tax*	3%	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>~9.2%</b>	<b>~18.4%</b>



Note: IGST is applicable on the assessable value of the gold, which includes the Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) value and the basic customs duty

Tax (IGST) rate on the total assessable value of the imports, which includes the cost, insurance, and freight price, and the applicable basic customs duties, taking the effective import tax to about 9.2%. Now, the customs duty has been hiked to 10%, and the AIDC has become 5%, taking the effective tax rate, including the IGST, to about 18.4%.

The decision comes soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's exhortations to the public to reduce gold purchases for at least a year, among other actions, to help protect India's foreign exchange reserves and the rupee exchange rate.

**'Prudent management'**  
"The current geopolitical situation has created significant volatility in global crude oil markets and international shipping routes," a government source explained. "As a large importer of crude oil,

India remains vulnerable to elevated energy prices and supply-side disruptions, which can increase the import bill, exert pressure on inflation, and the CAD."

"In such circumstances, prudent management of the country's external sector becomes essential," they added.

They further said that the government was prioritising India's foreign exchange resources towards essential imports such as crude oil, fertilizers, industrial raw materials, defence requirements, critical technologies, and capital goods. "In contrast, precious metals, while culturally and financially significant, are predominantly consumption and investment driven in nature," they said. "Such imports involve substantial outflow of foreign exchange."

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10

# CBI arrests five, conducts raids across India in NEET leak case

**Devesh K. Pandey**  
**Snehal Mutha**  
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested five persons and conducted searches at locations across the country in connection with alleged irregularities related to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG) paper leak. Three brothers - Mangilal Biwal, Vikas Biwal and Dinesh Biwal - were



A man arrested in the NEET-UG paper leak case being taken to a court in Jaipur. PTI

taken into custody from Jaipur, Yash Yadav was picked up from Gurugram, and Shubham Khairnar from Nashik in Maharashtra.

tra, it said. The Maharashtra Police detained two more suspects in the case and handed them over to the CBI.

The police nabbed Manisha Waghmare, a beauty salon owner, from Bibwe-wadi, and Dhananjay Lokhande, an ayurveda practitioner, from Rahuri in the early hours of Wednesday.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10  
**RELATED REPORTS ON**  
» PAGE 11

# MSP for kharif crops hiked; farm groups flag trade deal impact

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday announced the minimum support price (MSP) for kharif crops for the 2026-27 season, with the MSP for paddy increased by ₹72 per quintal to ₹2,441 for the common variety.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the revised

MSPs would ensure returns of about 50% over the cost of production of each crop.

For A-grade paddy varieties, the revised MSP is ₹2,461 per quintal.

Farmer organisations criticised the new rates, saying they do not factor in the possible "disastrous impact" of the India-U.S. trade deal and other free trade agreements on the agriculture sector.

# Three tribal church leaders killed in Manipur ambush

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI/NEW DELHI

Suspected armed extremists ambushed a team of tribal church leaders in Kangpokpi district of Manipur on Wednesday, killing three of them and injuring four. The victims, members of the Thadou Baptist Association of India (TBAI) and the United Baptist Council, were travelling in two vehicles from a Baptist convention in Chura-chandpur to Kangpokpi when they were attacked.

The incident occurred on Tiger Road between Kotlen and Kotzim villages around 10 a.m. One of the survivors told

security personnel that the assailants came on foot and slipped away after firing a volley of bullets for three or four minutes from the hillside of the road that connects the Kuki-dominated Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts, bypassing the non-tribal Meitei-majority Imphal Valley.

Those who lost their lives were TBAI president Reverend Vumthang Sitluh, finance secretary Rev. Kaigoulun Lhouvum, and Pastor Paogoulun Sitluh.

## Peace efforts

The TBAI president had recently led a delegation of Kuki Christian leaders to adjoining Nagaland to



Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh and his team holding a discussion with doctors at the hospital where the injured were admitted. PTI

broker peace between the Kukis and Tangkhul Nagas in the restive Kamjong and Ukhrul districts of Manipur.

While three of the four

injured were rushed to a private hospital in Imphal for treatment, a fifth survivor, who managed to escape, was later tracked and rescued from the hills, an

official told *The Hindu*.

"Some eight to 10 armed men are suspected to have opened fire on two vehicles with automatic weapons, most likely AK-47 rifles. They were likely hiding in the hills," the official said.

According to a statement issued by the Indian Army, joint columns of security forces assisted in evacuating the injured to the nearest medical facility. "The joint columns are undertaking extensive search and area domination operations," an official monitoring Manipur said.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 10



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## IN BRIEF



## Logistics policy in final stage of rollout, will create jobs: CM

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Wednesday said the Logistics and Warehousing Policy, 2025 – aimed at making freight movement faster, more efficient and cost-effective – is in the final stage of rollout. “Ancillary sectors such as packaging and IT-enabled services will see job growth. To build a skilled workforce, the government will roll out training programmes with incentives of up to ₹5,000 per employee,” stated a release issued by the CM’s Office.

## NDMC starts work from home, fuel conservation initiatives

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on Wednesday announced work-from-home arrangements for one-third of its employees with immediate effect, along with measures to conserve fuel, including travel allowances for public transport use, in adherence with Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s call for collective action in withstanding global economic uncertainties. Preference would be given to those commuting from distant areas in private vehicles. Sanitation and Public Health Departments have been exempted from the order.

## Protests continue over NEET row

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Protests over the NEET-UG paper leak intensified across the Capital on Thursday, with several student and youth organisations, including the RSS-linked Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), taking to the streets demanding accountability

and action against those responsible.

The Congress-backed National Students’ Union of India alleged that the Centre had turned national examinations into a “business of corruption”.

The ABVP staged a protest outside the National Testing Agency’s office, questioning the credibility of the country’s entrance

## NSA invoked against 2 for violence during workers’ stir in Noida

Satyam, Aakriti played significant roles in spreading disorder, says Police Commissioner; all 67 arrested for violence, arson are outsiders, she adds

**Shrimansi Kaushik**  
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh police on Wednesday invoked the National Security Act (NSA) against two persons – Satyam Verma and Aakriti Choudhary – accused in the April 13 violence that unfolded during workers’ protests in Noida.

Commissioner of Police of Gautam Buddha Nagar Laxmi Singh told *The Hindu* that the police have “strong electronic and videographic evidence” against Mr. Verma and Ms. Choudhary, and 65 others arrested for the violence.

“None of those arrested are workers. They are not Noida residents, but outsiders, who tried to incite violence during the protest,” the officer added. “Initially, 353 individuals were arrested from the spots where vandalism and arson were reported. Many



Violence unfolded during workers’ protests in Noida on April 13. PTI

of those held under preventive detention were released the same day,” Ms. Singh said.

The NSA enables the detention of an individual for up to a year without trial.

As per a statement from the Police Commissioner’s Office, the roles of Mr. Verma and Ms. Choudhary “were found to be significant in the violence, arson, and spread of disorder during the workers’ protest. They attempted to disrupt public order by provoking people in various areas”.

Mr. Verma, a journalist associated with Janchetta Books and Jagaruk Nagrik Manch, was arrested from Lucknow on April 17 while Ms. Choudhary, a post-graduate from Delhi University, was arrested on April 11, as per the FIR.

## ‘Names added later’

Their lawyer, Choudhary Ali Zia Kabir, claimed: “Satyam was not present in Noida at the time of the protests. The police registered FIRs first against unknown persons and added their names later.”

## L-G reviews desilting progress, pushes for ‘walk to work’ infra

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Wednesday reviewed desilting projects for drains managed by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and directed officials to complete the work by June 15, warning that no laxity in quality or timelines would be tolerated.

Chairing a review meeting, the L-G assessed the progress of desilting and flood-prevention measures across six DDA zones – East, South, North, Narela, Rohini and Dwarka – which together account for nearly 495 km of drains under its jurisdiction. Officials said a Central Flood Control Room is also being set up to monitor waterlogging and drainage issues during the monsoon.

According to officials, Dwarka accounts for the longest stretch of DDA-managed drains at 192.33 km, followed by the South Zone (156.225 km) and Rohini (69.115 km).

Mr. Sandhu said the DDA should set an example for other civic agencies.



The L-G said creating integrated spaces where people can live, work and shop will pave the way for a greener city. ANI

The L-G also reviewed the implementation of transit-oriented development (TOD) policy to advance the concept of creating ‘walk to work’ communities across Delhi.

The TOD policy aims to promote high-density, mixed-use development along the metro and Regional Rapid Transit System corridors.

“Developing vibrant, integrated station hubs where citizens can live, work and shop without relying on private vehicles will pave the way for a greener, more sustainable and future-ready Delhi,” added Mr. Sandhu.

## CBSE Class 12 results: Delhi records 92% success rate

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded a pass percentage of 92.10 in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class 12 results announced on Wednesday. The city’s overall pass percentage fell from the 95.18% recorded the previous year.

Delhi West (92.34%) and Delhi East (91.73%) stood fifth and sixth respectively among all regions.

Of the 3,00,732 students who appeared in the East and West regions, 2,76,583 passed the exams.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta congratulated the students. “Students from across the country have achieved this milestone through hard work and discipline. This success is the result of your dreams,” she posted on X.

“Students whose results did not match their expectations should not be disappointed,” said the CM.

She added, “Every experience in life offers an opportunity to grow, learn and improve. Keep moving forward with confidence, success awaits you.”

## City sees highest crimes against minors, lowest chargesheeting rate

**Ashna Butani**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi recorded the highest number of crimes (7,662) against children among 19 metro cities, but also saw the lowest chargesheeting rate (the percentage of total cases in which chargesheets were filed) of 31.7%, according to the National Crime Records Bureau’s (NCRB) Crime in India 2024 report.

In 2023, the city recorded 7,731 crimes against children and the same chargesheeting rate of 31.7%.

As per data, 4,491 cases were closed as a “mistake of fact or law or civic dispute”, and 7,547 cases were quashed, including 125 at the investigation stage. An officer said missing children are often difficult to locate due to the

lack of information.

“In my experience, all cases of missing children are registered under sections pertaining to kidnapping and abduction. Sometimes, when the child is not traced and the accused is also untraced, the investigation cannot proceed further without additional information, and hence no chargesheet is possible,” the officer said.

Another officer said that kidnapping and POCSO cases often involve complex questions over the consent of minors: “Many are elopement cases where a minor has voluntarily left home. Initially, these are registered as kidnapping following complaints by parents.”

Amod K. Kanth, a former police officer and chairperson of the Delhi Com-

mission for Protection of Child Rights, said the number of crimes reported against children should also be viewed as evidence that the police are seriously registering FIRs, especially under the POCSO Act.

However, he added, “The pendency of cases is high, and this speaks volumes about the lack of investigation.”

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**Calendar of Events:** 1) The Tender Document can be Downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> 2) Date of Pre Bid Meeting on 18-05-2026 at 15.00 Hours. 3) Last Date and Time for Receipt of Tenders: 22-05-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 4) Date of Opening of Technical Bid: 25-05-2026 after 16.00 Hours. Further details can be had from the above office.

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### 33 killed as storm, rains lash U.P.; CM orders relief

**Press Trust of India**  
BHADOHI/FATEHPUR

At least 33 people were killed on Wednesday after a storm accompanied by heavy rain caused widespread damage in five districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Bhadohi, Fatehpur and Budaun, officials said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to provide compensation to people affected by unseasonal rain, thunderstorms and lightning strikes.

**Timings**  
**DELHI**

<b>THURSDAY, MAY. 14</b>		
RISE	05:32	SET 19:04
RISE	03:20	SET 16:27
<b>FRIDAY, MAY. 15</b>		
RISE	05:31	SET 19:05
RISE	03:56	SET 17:36
<b>SATURDAY, MAY. 16</b>		
RISE	05:30	SET 19:05
RISE	04:36	SET 18:48

<b>Delhi Weather</b>	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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## Tannery blaze in Kolkata: owners arrested, building demolished after CM's order

**Shrabana Chatterjee**  
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari on Wednesday said the police have arrested the owners of a tannery in Kolkata's Tiljala area, a day after a fire at the premises killed two persons and injured several others. He also ordered the demolition of the building, saying it lacked sanctioned plans and basic fire safety measures.

"What the committee report has found indicates an impending disaster. This illegal factory or workshop had no sanctioned building plan and lacked even basic fire and electrical safety measures," Mr. Adhikari told reporters af-



West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari in Kolkata on Wednesday. PTI

ter reviewing a probe report into the incident.

**'Zero tolerance'**  
The building was razed under heavy police deployment, with the area cordoned off by Kolkata Police.

The Chief Minister said there would be "zero tolerance" towards illegal activities and corruption linked to unlawful factories.

"We have asked the electricity supplier to stop power supply to the premises permanently and directed discom CESC to disconnect electricity to illegal factories in the Tiljala, Kasba, and Mominpur areas," Mr. Adhikari said.

He added that the Kolkata Municipal Corporation had been instructed to seek assistance from Kolkata Police and ensure the structure was demolished within a day.

Tuesday's incident occurred within four months of another illegal structure being gutted in a massive fire in Anandapur in east Kolkata.

## Water woes, overcrowding in hostels trigger NLSIU protests

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

After months of complaints against water shortage, power cuts and overcrowding in hostels, students of the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, began protests on the campus.

The students first staged a protest around 10 p.m. on Tuesday, again on Wednesday from 1 p.m., and later at 3 p.m. They told *The Hindu* that the protests were not triggered by a sudden disruption, but by



Students of NLSIU Bengaluru staging a protest on the campus on Tuesday night.

"frustration over long-pending issues".

A common concern was the irregular water supply in hostels. They said taps in bathrooms would go dry abruptly. Even coolers did

not have drinking water at times.

Students also alleged overcrowding, particularly in women's hostels. A final-year student said that while men's hostels had 18 bunk beds, women's hostels had 93. They questioned the state of hostel infrastructure despite the "high fees", ranging between ₹4.5 lakh and ₹5 lakh.

The students said the Registrar and the Vice-Chancellor visited them at 4 p.m., heard their concerns and left shortly. However, they did not speak to the students, they said.

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Pro Vice-Chancellor,  
(Science & Humanities, Management),  
SRM Institute of Science  
& Technology



**Dr A Duraisamy**  
Dean - Faculty of Science  
and Humanities, SRM Institute  
of Science and Technology



**Prof Deepa Sethi**  
Executive Chair of Globe,  
IIM, Kozhikode



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## IN BRIEF

**Bihar Cabinet hikes DA for State govt. staff, pensioners**

The Bihar Cabinet on Wednesday approved a 2% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) for its employees and pensioners getting revised salary/pension as per the 7th Pay Commission's recommendations. DA has been hiked from 58% to 60%, which will be payable with effect from January 1, 2026. Similarly, it also hiked DA by 5%, from 257% to 262%, for its employees and pensioners getting revised salary/pension as per 6th Pay Commission's recommendations. Employees/pensioners getting salary/pension as per the 5th Pay Commission's recommendations will now get 9% DA hike from 474% to 483%. A total of 19 decisions were taken at the Cabinet meeting.

**Amul, Mother Dairy increase milk prices by ₹2 per litre**

Amul and Mother Dairy - India's largest dairy product retailers - on Wednesday hiked milk prices by ₹2 per litre, intensifying inflationary pressures already fuelled by the conflict in West Asia and squeezing household budgets. The increase in milk prices, the second by the two dairy cooperatives in 13 months, is expected to prompt similar hikes by regional dairy companies. The price increase will be effective from May 14, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation, which markets milk and milk products under the Amul brand, and Mother Dairy said in separate statements. PTI

**BJP, Congress attack SP over party spokesperson's remark on Brahmins; FIR registered**

**Mavank Kumar**  
LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Wednesday faced the ire of both ruling and Opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh after a video allegedly showing party spokesperson Rajkumar Bhati making derogatory remarks against the Brahmin community during a recent event went viral.

State BJP president and Union Minister Pankaj Chaudhary termed the comments "indecent and vulgar". "This is not just the statement of one person but also testimony to the 'DNA' of the SP and its corrupt mentality of 'divide and rule'," he said.

Mr. Chaudhary alleged that while the SP has been trying to "fragment the social unity of U.P. for decades, the BJP works to respect all castes". "We will



Rajkumar Bhati

never allow the plans of these disruptive forces to divide society to succeed."

**'Real character of SP'** Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said "the real character and disgusting thinking of the SP has once again been exposed".

"The indecent remarks are not only condemnable but also reflect the mentality of the SP," he said.

State Congress chief Ajay Rai demanded strict disciplinary action against Mr. Bhati. "The abusive language used is highly

**DMK boycotts floor test, urges Vijay to continue Dravidian model schemes**

LoP Udhayanidhi Stalin accuses the TVK govt. of 'conspiring with corrupt elements'; says people are already losing faith in it; asks Vijay to 'rule the State for real, not through reels on Instagram'

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

**D**MK MLAs led by Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin boycotted the confidence motion moved by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay and staged a walkout from the Assembly on Wednesday.

In his speech, Mr. Udhayanidhi said the majority did not vote for the TVK. Out of 4,93,25,000 votes, the TVK had polled only 1.72 crore, and the remaining voters, constituting 65% of the electorate, rejected the party, he said.

The people were already losing confidence in the TVK as it failed to achieve the magic number of 118 for a majority in the Assembly, the DMK leader said. Though the Communist parties, the VCK, and the IUML extended support to the TVK to prevent President's Rule, they clearly stated that they remained in the Secular Progressive Alliance led by the DMK, he said.

As the leader of an Op-



**House matters:** Leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly Udhayanidhi Stalin with DMK legislators at the Secretariat in Chennai on Wednesday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

position party, he had the responsibility of laying out what transpired in the last 10 days, Mr. Udhayanidhi said. "You got the mandate claiming to be secular, but you have co-opted an MLA who fought on the ideologically opposite NDA ticket without the knowledge of his party chief," he said.

"Then, the AIADMK, the big party in the NDA, split. One faction has offered support to this government," he said. "An incident that happened next is the latest twist. One new sofa goes to the house of

one of the factional leaders. The new Chief Minister follows the sofa. There is nothing new to this government. On the contrary, your rule is like what we saw in the movie *Pushpa*. During elections, you called them corrupt forces and now, you are being questioned on social media as to what kind of government would join forces with corrupt elements. Is this your clean government?" he said.

The new government's actions raised suspicion among the people, he said.

After borrowing MLAs, the Chief Minister, realising that he was not in a position to fulfil all his fake promises, was diverting public attention by blaming the previous DMK government, he added.

**'Public sentiment'**

As people have already begun regretting electing the TVK to power, the DMK MLAs would boycott the trust vote to reflect the public sentiment, he said. "After we walk out, the numbers in the House would reduce, and you would win the confidence motion. At least afterwards, work to restore the faith people had in you," he said.

Asking the CM to continue the previous DMK government's Dravidian model welfare schemes for all sections of society, he said: "Rule the State in the real world and not through reels on Instagram."

Earlier, DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant warned the government against setting a dangerous precedent of horse-trading in the State.

**Rebel MLAs were promised Cabinet berths for backing TVK govt., says EPS**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI



AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami in Chennai on Wednesday.

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Wednesday said he had information that some party MLAs were promised berths in the Tamil Nadu Cabinet and postings as the heads of various boards and corporations for backing the ruling TVK.

His speech in the Assembly during the discussion on the confidence motion moved by the TVK government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay assumes significance against the backdrop of a split in the AIADMK Legislature Party. While 25 rebel MLAs, headed by S.P. Velumani, backed the motion, 22 others, led by Mr. Palaniswami, voted against it.

**'Promise to people'**

"The AIADMK MLAs were elected only after meeting the people and seeking their support in the name of MGR [M.G. Ramachandran] and *Amma* [Jayalithaa]. A total of 47 MLAs have been elected on behalf of the party. I have been functioning as the general secretary. It is

quite common in any party to have differences of opinion. In such a situation, how is it fair for the Chief Minister to get the support of one group? This should not become a wrong precedent. It will lead to horse-trading. When we met the people during the poll, we sought their mandate on the promise that the AIADMK-led alliance would win and the AIADMK would form the government," Mr. Palaniswami said.

"All 47 MLAs were elected on the 'Two Leaves' symbol. The people voted for them, believing that they would ensure the formation of an AIADMK government," he added.

**Assam feels safer with BJP in power in adjoining West Bengal, says Himanta**

**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

A day after taking oath as Assam Chief Minister for the second straight term, Himanta Biswa Sarma said his State feels safer with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in power in adjoining West Bengal.

He told journalists on Wednesday that the political alignment between the two neighbouring States would go a long way in improving coordination to face shared challenges, specifically that of "illegal immigration" from Bangladesh. Together, Assam and West Bengal share a 2,479.7-km border with Bangladesh out of a total length of 4,096.7 km.

"The two States have historically faced several common issues, particularly in law and order and inter-State coordination. Now that we have the same government in West Bengal, Assam is feeling much



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma with his West Bengal counterpart Suwendu Adhikari in Guwahati on Tuesday. (@HIMANTABISWA/X)

safer because of the common issues we face," Mr. Sarma said, indicating the challenges faced from across the India-Bangladesh border.

**'Work more closely'**

"There were instances where criminals could cross over to West Bengal in the past, and cooperation was not always easy. The new political scenario will enable both State gov-

vernments to work more closely in areas of governance, security, and development," he said.

Referring to the participation of West Bengal's leadership in his swearing-in ceremony on Tuesday, Mr. Sarma said it reflected the beginning of a stronger regional cooperation. "The presence of the West Bengal Chief Minister at the oath-taking ceremony and the warmth shown by the

people of his State project a bright future for the Northeast," he added.

**Firm on UCC**

The Chief Minister asserted his government's commitment to implementing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), a key promise in the BJP's election manifesto.

"Along with the UCC, we will try 100% to implement every word we mentioned in our election manifesto," he said.

The UCC is one of the BJP's major ideological commitments nationally. It envisages a common set of civil laws governing matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and adoption for citizens adhering to all religions.

During Mr. Sarma's first term at the helm, the State government launched a drive against child marriage and polygamy, and repealed the Assam Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act of 1935.

**T.N. govt. revokes order appointing astrologer as aide to Vijay**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government on Wednesday revoked the appointment of astrologer Rickey Radhan Pandit Vetrivel as Officer on Special Duty (Political) to Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay. The decision followed criticism from various quarters, including in the Assembly earlier in the day.

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government had on Tuesday appointed Mr. Vetrivel to the post.

**Severe criticism**

The appointment drew severe criticism, even from allies of the TVK. DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant, too, opposed the decision in the Assembly.

**Dissolve NTA, allow States to conduct exams again: Vijayan**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] Polit Bureau member and former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has demanded that the National Testing Agency (NTA) be dissolved in light of the cancellation of NEET-UG 2026.

He also called for handing back the responsibility of conducting examinations to the respective State government agencies.

Mr. Vijayan described the controversy surrounding the NEET and allegations of question paper leaks as "extremely serious and condemnable".

**'Limited' religious symbols to be allowed with uniforms in Karnataka institutions**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Karnataka Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa announced on Wednesday that the government has withdrawn the 2022 order on uniforms and dress code in educational institutions and replaced it with a fresh order allowing students to wear "limited" traditional and faith-based symbols along with prescribed uniforms in schools and colleges across the State.

The May 13 order revokes the previous BJP government's February 5, 2022 directive that required students to wear prescribed uniforms. It had become the basis for



What the government has done is withdraw the earlier order and replace it with one that explicitly allows limited faith-based symbols, including sacred threads, headscarves, along with uniforms

**MADHU BANGARAPPA**,  
Karnataka Minister for School Education and Literacy

restrictions that later triggered the hijab row.

However, Mr. Bangarappa did not directly state that the 'hijab ban' has been revoked. "What the government has done is withdraw the earlier order and replace it with one

that explicitly allows limited faith-based symbols, including sacred threads and headscarves, along with uniforms," he said.

**Decision after row**

The move comes weeks after three students at a college in Koramangala were asked by authorities during the Common Entrance Test to remove 'janivaras' (sacred threads) before entering the examination hall. The incident was reported on April 24.

The Minister said schools and colleges are not just places for academic learning but spaces where students should also learn Constitutional values such as equality, dignity, fraternity, discipline, mutual respect, rational

thinking, and scientific temper.

Educational institutions must promote a secular outlook, he said, adding that secularism did not mean opposing individual beliefs. Instead, it meant equal respect for all religions and traditions.

"Since the implementation of the 2022 order, we have been receiving concerns about students wearing faith-based symbols such as 'janivara' and headscarf. After reviewing the issue, we concluded that institutional discipline can be maintained without restricting such symbols as long as they do not interfere with identification of students, safety, teaching or public order," Mr. Bangarappa said.

**Activists rue 'drastic' budget cut for millet promotion in Odisha**

**Satyasundar Barik**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Right to Food Campaign, a network for furthering food rights, expressed concern over "drastic" reduction in budget for promoting millet, a climate resilient crop grown primarily by tribals, by the Odisha government.

A government order states that ₹415 crore has been sanctioned for 2026-27 against last year's ₹600 crore, a dip of nearly 31%. The move comes despite the scheme achieving 93% utilisation rate in 2025-26, demonstrating robust on-ground demand and delivery capacity, the campaign said on Wednesday.

"The State government has quietly approved an annual action plan for

Shree Anna Abhiyan, reducing funding, withdrawing ground-level support agencies from 13 different blocks, and imposing a financial blackout on tribal-dominated District Mineral Fund (DMF) districts of Keonjhar and Sundargarh," said Bidyut Mohanty, a lead member of the network.

**'No financial allotment'**

"The order explicitly states that no financial allotment or provision will be made to the DMF districts of Keonjhar and eight blocks of Sundargarh. Several vulnerable sections of tribals live in these districts," Mr. Mohanty said.

According to the campaign, since 2017-18, the scheme has relied on facilitating agencies (one per

block), farmer producers organisations (FPOs) and community resource persons (CRPs) to bridge the gap between government programmes and small and marginal farmers.

"The new order withdraws FPOs and CRPs, but instead of reforming the mechanism, the government has chosen to abandon field-level support entirely, handing responsibilities back to overstretched departmental functionaries," said an activist.

"Rather than addressing the institutional bottlenecks that held back infrastructure components, the government has penalised tribal and smallholder farmers by slashing the scheme's overall budget," Mr. Mohanty said.

# Congress defers Kerala CM announcement once again

**The Hindu Bureau**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Congress high command has deferred announcing the party's Chief Minister designate for Kerala, ostensibly until Thursday.

The test of nerves centred on the Congress' so far unsettled leadership question in Kerala, despite a historic win in the Assembly polls, appeared set to go down to the wire with a high-level meeting between Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Rahul Gandhi and Congress national president Mallikarjun Kharge in the latter's residence in New Delhi on Wednesday ending without an announcement. The anticipation for the momentous proclamation from New Delhi appeared to reach a feverish pitch in Kerala, with sizeable crowds of Congress workers congregating outside the residences of the three top contenders for the post - All India Congress Committee general



**On tenterhooks:** Workers wait outside KPCC headquarters Indira Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

secretary K.C. Venugopal, senior leader Ramesh Chennithala in Alappuzha, and former Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan at Paravur in Ernakulam.

A KPCC insider, citing media reports that Mr. Venugopal was party to the summit meeting, said the high command seemed to be attempting to take the Congress Legislature Party into confidence in a bid to strike a middle ground between the respective factions. Notably, the high command has summoned

the Congress MLAs-elect to Indira Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram today.

Meanwhile, anonymous posters condemning Mr. Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MP, for allegedly supporting Mr. Venugopal appeared in the latter's constituency in Wayanad.

At Kottoor in Kozhikode district, members of the Congress ward committee threatened to quit en masse if the high command pushed ahead with Mr. Venugopal's candidature.

# Protection to religion not just for 'essential practices', has wider ambit, Centre tells SC

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Constitution presumes that every religious practice is protected unless it violates public order, morality, and health, the Centre told the Supreme Court on Wednesday.

Appearing before a nine-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant in the Sabarimala review hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the protection afforded to religion was not re-

stricted to "essential religious practices" alone, but had a wider ambit.

Mr. Mehta, who opened the rejoinder in the constitutional reference hearing, said the burden was on the challenger to show that a religious practice breached public order, morality, and health.

He further submitted that fundamental rights in the Constitution have been interpreted expansively by the court in the past.

Only Article 25 (right to reli-

gion and freedom of conscience) and Article 26 (freedom of denominations or any section thereof to manage their own religious affairs) were given restrictive meanings by the court.

"Articles 25 and 26 were the only fundamental rights the court gave restricted meanings, saying the rights would be protected to the extent of 'essential religious practices' only," Mr. Mehta submitted.

He pointed out that the phrase 'essential religious

practices' is absent in the text of the Constitution, arguing that it was sheer judicial creativity at work.

## Interconnected rights

Mr. Mehta added that Articles 25 and 26 are interconnected, not isolated silos, submitting that an individual's freedom of conscience and the right of a denomination to manage its own affairs are interconnected. Article 26 is only a manifestation of the individual right in a collective form, he said.

# Muslims stage protest against assault on man in Bhopal; 3 arrested

**Mehul Malpani**  
BHOPAL

Three persons were arrested on Wednesday and security beefed up in various parts of Bhopal, a day after members of the Muslim community staged demonstrations protesting the assault on a man by Bajrang Dal activists over allegations of 'love jihad' on May 10, officers said.

According to police, three men were arrested following an FIR filed after stone-pelting was reported during a protest in the old city area on Tuesday while the police are working to identify and detain more people. Ayush Gupta, DCP, Bhopal zone 1, said adequate security arrangements have been made in sensitive areas to prevent any untoward event.

# Minister's son skips summons in POCSO case amid protests

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Even as Bandi Sai Bhagirath, son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, failed to appear for questioning in connection with a case registered against him under the POCSO Act, several women protested outside the Petbasheerabad police station in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Women gathered near the police station holding flags, banners and placards demanding justice in the case. Police personnel were seen dispersing the crowd amid heavy security arrangements in the area.

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Government of Karnataka  
**DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**  
6th Floor, 2nd Stage, M.S. Building,  
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Veedhi, Bangalore-560 001.

**No. ED/56/UBV/2026(Part-1) Date: 13.05.2026**

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION**  
**Selection of Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University, Bangalore**

The Higher Education Department, Government of Karnataka invites application for the selection of Vice-Chancellor of Bangalore University, Bangalore as per section 14(2) of Karnataka State University Act 2000 from eligible and distinguished Academicians/Professors. Applications should be submitted within 30 days (including general holidays) from the date of this advertisement to the "Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department, 6th Floor, Gate No. 03, Room No. 601 (R & I Section), M S Building, Bengaluru 560001". Soft copy of the application in PDF format should be sent to email : [busearchcommittee2026@gmail.com](mailto:busearchcommittee2026@gmail.com). The application form is available on Higher Education Department website <https://hed.karnataka.gov.in>.  
Sd/-  
**Secretary to Government**  
Department of Higher Education

DIPRI/CP/630/Zen/2026-27

**GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION**  
**MECHANICAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT**

**e-Tenders is invited for the following works by Superintending Engineer (Mech), as per Tender Condition**

Name of the Work	Approximate value of Works (Rs.)	EMD (Rs.)
M.E.D.C.No.M1/0426/2026 Purchase of 30 numbers of CNG operated HMV Tipper (8.5 Cu.M capacity) (As per Tender Condition)	9,60,00,000/-	9,60,000/-
M.E.D.C.No.M1/0496/2026 Purchase of 10 Nos of Battery Operated Mechanical Sweeper Mounted on LMV vehicle (As per Tender Condition)	9,00,00,000/-	9,00,000/-

**Last Date and Time for bid Submission : 01.06.2026, 3.00 P.M**  
**Tender Opening Date and Time : 02.06.2026 @ 3.30 P.M**  
For further details please visit : <https://tntenders.gov.in>  
DIPRI/1890/TENDER/2026 **Superintending Engineer (Mech)**

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION VIJAYPUR**

**ABBREVIATED NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
e-NIT No. 08 of 2026-27 Dated: 09-05-2026  
For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works

S. No	Particulars of the work	Estimated Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of Tender Doc. (in Rs.)	Earnest money (in Rs.)	Time allowed for completion	Class of Contractor
1	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Khara Madana Sandhi road, Barghat link road.	2.26	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
2	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Kaluchak to Purmandal road in km. 11th to 22th.	2.07	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
3	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on link road Deon, Kund Village road including Purmandal Bus Stand and other allied links road.	2.07	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
4	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Madana-Sumbli road, Badder Ali and other allied links road.	2.05	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
5	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Megh Nallah, Pring Nallah and other allied links road.	2.25	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
6	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Mandat to Quet link road, Karnal to Baladev link road and other allied links road.	2.15	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
7	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Barjani to Shah Talab including all links km. 1st to 3rd.	2.22	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
8	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Kaluchak to Purmandal road in km. 1st to 10th.	2.22	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
9	Restoration of road by way of slip clearance, drain clearance, RBM filling and P/L crated walls during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027 on Shah Talab to Badhori Fallah Chowk including all allied links km. 3rd to 6th.	2.22	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
10	Restoration of road from Nagrota to Utterbehani road by way of slip / drain clearance and RBM filling during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027	2.15	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
11	Restoration of various roads in Panchayat Palli, Kartholi and Municipal areas at Bari-Brahman.	2.13	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
12	Restoration of various roads in Panchayat Palli and Tarore.	2.13	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
13	Day to Day Maintenance of Executive Engineer Office Vijaypur for the year 2026-27	2.27	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
14	Day to Day Maintenance of J.E Quarter (Sub-Division Office Vijaypur) for the year 2026-27.	2.13	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
15	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road from Ramgarh to Nanga, Abtal Camp to Bakhe Chak, Link road to Nathwal, Ramgarh to Palota, Link road to ChC Ramgarh during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.90	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
16	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of Gurha Morh Vijaypur to Gurha Sathia road upto Amshia Satti and its allied links, Link road Badwal to Sangwal and its allied links, Link road to all Mandies of Gurha Sathia etc during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.97	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
17	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road 17 Miles to Nathwal and its allied links, Link road to Rajinderpura Bagoona to Raya Chowk and its allied links, Link road to Village Rajinderpura and its allied links etc. during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.97	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
18	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road Tarore to Dera Patti and its allied links, Raya Central University road and its allied links i.e (Link to Ranji Ashram, Link to Upper and Lower Patti, Internal links of Raya and Suchani during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	2.03	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
19	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road from Bandral to Gho-Rakhwalan, Link road to Karallan Shamsan Ghat, Trindi Village, Ramgarh to Radwan, Maha Adda to Radwan, Link road to Chak Doultan, Link road to Gurwal and allied links during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.95	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
20	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road from Abtal to Chamliyal, Chamliyal to Narayanpur, Mahrajpur to Chamliyal, Mahal Adda to Abtal and allied links during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.94	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
21	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road from Koulpur to Pekhri, Keso to Nanga, Link road to Rangoor, Khanpur, Babral, Bandral to Keso during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.91	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
22	General Upkeeping / Maintenance of link road from Vishkarma Temple to Sazadpur, Link road Channi Marhasa to Chak Doulat road, Link to RK Degree College, Link road to Convent High School Gagnori and Circular road from National Highway to Swankha More road along the Canal during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027.	1.99	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"
23	Restoration of CU road by way of const. of Drain / Nallah on CU road on Km. 6th RD-(5/20) near OHT Vijaypur during the year 2026-27 upto ending March 2027	2.42	600	2% of Adv. Cost	Upto 31 March 2027	"A, B, C & D"

**Position of AAA :- Accorded**  
**Position of T.S :- Sanctioned**  
**Project Authority :- Under Non-Plan 2026-27.**

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	09-05-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 11-05-2026 to 25-05-2026
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	13-05-2026 at 1400 Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Vijaypur
4	Bid submission Start Date	11-05-2026 at 1800 Hrs
5	Bid Submission End Date	25-05-2026 upto 1700 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	26-05-2026 on or after 1400 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Vijaypur
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

The tender is available at [website http://tntenders.gov.in](http://tntenders.gov.in) all other terms & conditions can be seen on the above website.  
No. PWD/V/1030-36, Dt. 09-05-2026  
Executive Engineer,  
PWD (R&B) Division, Vijaypur  
DIP/J-2000/26 May 13 2026

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**OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**  
**DEATH**

**A. MALLICK BADSHA (88)**, Retired Press Aid, The Hindu, Chennai passed away on 13th May 2026. Address: 33/45, New Farrance Road, Dashamakkan, Perambur Barracks, Chennai-600012. Contact: 9840442591

**TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT**  
**Mr. N SELVA KUMAR**  
**PH: 9820350726**  
[selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in](mailto:selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in)  
**THE HINDU**  
India's National Newspaper

**CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
Pune Division  
**E-TENDER NOTICE No.: PA.LD.C.T.2026.02**  
Date: 12-05-2026

Divisional Electrical Engineer (Construction) Central Railway, Private Road, Pune-411001 (Phone No. 020-26105192) for and on behalf of President of India invites open tenders on line through web site [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) in the prescribed form, from reputed Contractors for the following work-  
**Name of work:** Design, supply, erection, testing & commissioning of 2x 25 kv AC OHE in connection with Tuljapur-Osmanabad section (42 TKM) New Line project of Central Railway Estimated Cost: Rs.17,83,24,868.26 (Rupees Seventeen Crores Eighty Three Lakhs Twenty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Eight and paise Twenty Six Only).  
**Bid Security:** Rs.35,66,500.00 (Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs Sixty Six Thousand Five Hundred Only). Payment of Bid security shall be made either in cash through a payment gateway or submitted as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents. The Bank Guarantee bond shall be as per Annexure-VIA and shall be valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period. **Cost of tender forms:** NIL  
**Completion period:** 09 months (Nine) months including monsoon period  
**Validity of offer:** 90 days from date of opening of Tender **Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of tender:** The tender document could be uploaded on or before 03.06.2026 upto 15.00 hours. The tender will be opened at 15.00 hours on the same day in this office. **Website Notice Board location for complete information:** The Tender Notice & Tender Document can be seen from the CRIS website address [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). **System of Tendering:** The tender documents shall be submitted ON LINE only by following the guide line on the CRIS website given above.

IANJ/29 DEE (Construction), Pune  
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## Testing troubles

Leaks and breaches have destroyed the National Testing Agency's credibility

Once bitten, twice shy: this saying surely does not apply to the National Testing Agency (NTA). Given the number of times that the Agency has run into trouble in the conduct of common entrance exams, it would have been logical to expect those at the helm to have learnt their lessons. However, this week's cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG affecting over 22 lakh students is a serious blow to the agency's reputation. The NTA, on May 12, 2026, announced the cancellation of the exam held on May 3, amid allegations of paper leak, as the government tasked the CBI with carrying out a comprehensive inquiry. The decision followed investigations revealing that a 'guess paper' – a collection of predicted, high-importance questions created to help students prepare – matched numerous questions in chemistry and biology. Media reports said that this material had reached coaching hubs in Rajasthan nearly a month ahead, and had been sold to aspirants for huge sums. This led to investigations by the Rajasthan Police Special Operations Group and 15 people were arrested. In the face of such obvious fraud, the NTA maintained the line that the decision to cancel the exam was taken "in the interest of students and in recognition of the trust on which the national examination system rests". The question though, is: does the NTA still enjoy that trust? NEET has been dogged by controversy right from the start, with several States opposing the format. But even after it was rolled out across the country, the NTA, as the agency conducting the exam, has suffered several dents to its credibility, with various charges and controversies coming up with depressing regularity. This includes the 2019 impersonation scam in Tamil Nadu where students used proxies to write the exam; the 2022 controversy of frisking girl examinees in Kerala, and the 2024 paper leak and grace marks controversy.

The K. Radhakrishnan committee, which was constituted to recommend reforms in the examination process, recommended a restructuring of the NTA, and creating strong institutional linkages with State and district authorities in order to produce a secure test administration apparatus. Among others, it also made recommendations for multi-stage testing, hybrid use of papers and computers, and a series of measures to prevent breaches and malpractices. It would be a crime to allow the NTA to continue with its inept conduct of common entrance exams, impacting the future of several lakhs of students. NEET was introduced as a measure to bring into play a single, standardised, and transparent entrance exam for medical admissions. But the transparency that it has so far shown is of an entirely different kind: leaks and breaches of confidentiality.

## Elusive peace

Europe must push for a negotiated settlement to the Ukraine war

On May 9, speaking to reporters after the Moscow Victory Day parade, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said the war with Ukraine was "coming to a close", and, for the first time since the war began in February 2022, indicated that he would be willing to meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy if talks were aimed at finalising a long-term peace deal. His comments underscore the pressure that he faces, both domestically and on the battlefield, as the war, which he launched as a 'special military operation', drags into its fifth year. Mr. Putin had said in 2022, months after the invasion began, that Russia would do "our best to stop this as soon as possible". Yet, the war continued, with Russian troops making incremental advances in eastern and southern Ukraine. Those gains, however, have now largely stalled. While the front-line has barely shifted this year, both sides have carried out devastating drone and missile strikes. In the early years of the war, the Russian public was largely insulated from its consequences. That is no longer the case. Today, Ukraine is capable of striking deep inside Russian territory. Tax increases, rising prices and a deepening gloom in the business sector have fuelled public frustration, affecting Mr. Putin's approval rating. At the same time, hardline nationalist sections are demanding a more forceful response to Ukraine's attacks, adding to the pressure on the Kremlin.

Russia has so far ruled out a lasting ceasefire. Instead, it seeks a comprehensive peace agreement – Ukraine must remain neutral, withdraw from the Donbas region, sanctions on Russia must be removed and a new security arrangement between Moscow and NATO. While Russia has genuine security concerns, amplified by NATO's unchecked eastward expansion, clinging to maximalist demands while fighting a seemingly endless war will not make Russia stronger. Mr. Putin launched the war expecting a swift victory. His forces have captured over 20% of Ukrainian territory, but at a tremendous cost. It is time that he shifted focus from continuing a war with no clear endpoint to finding a path to peace. Ukraine has demonstrated that it can withstand an invasion by a great power. But Kyiv, too, lacks a realistic pathway to victory. Russia, despite mounting challenges, retains the military capacity to inflict greater damage, and if the war drags on, Kyiv risks losing more territory. Europe must also realise that the Ukraine war has weakened the continent economically and politically, leaving it more dependent on the U.S. even as Washington is drifting away. The four-plus years have shown that there is no military solution to this conflict. What is needed instead is a serious push by all sides toward a negotiated settlement.

# Just war, power balance and modern conflict

Alexander Pope's famous line, "Now Europe balanc'd, neither side prevails: For nothing's left in either of the scales", reminds us that peace without war is perhaps best achieved when there is a balance of power. Hugo Grotius's concept of a just war was swallowed by the ambiguities of international law and the realpolitik of national self-interest. Special treaties of 1815 and 1839 guaranteed Switzerland and Belgium protection from attack but provided less protection for the latter. The Hague Convention III of 1907 established procedures requiring a formal declaration of war or an ultimatum before hostilities could begin. The Covenant of the League of the Nations (Article 12(1)) believed that antecedent arbitration or judicial settlement and a three month cooling period would obviate war. The Kellogg-Briand Pact (1928) condemned recourse to war and to settle controversies which were prescribed to be achieved by pacific means.

### The issue of 'self defence'

There are ambiguities in Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter which, in one interpretation, invalidate the "threat or use of force (not war)" against the territorial integrity or political independence of a state. Was this too limited? Certainly, 'self defence' finds a prominent place in Article 51 of the UN Charter to recognise an "inherent right of individual or collective self defence ..... (against) armed attack".

There are textual differences on anticipatory self defence against any imminent danger of attack. The words of the French text invokes this using the word "dans le cas où un Membre est l'objet d'une agression armée" to support the right to self defence before the attack, unlike the Spanish: "en caso de ataque armada", suggesting, as in the English, self defence if the armed attack occurs. This has direct relevance to the U.S. aggression against Iran and Tehran's right of self defence. Article 51 should not be seen as an exception to Article 2(4) seeking to abolish war.

No doubt, collective defence treaties such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are permitted under Article 53, which, in turn, allows NATO to trigger collective self-defence under Article 5 if a member is attacked. This fully explains the remonstrance of NATO countries not to join U.S. President Donald Trump: "This is not our war". However, the United Kingdom provided support to America through the use of its bases, while Spain denied the U.S. the use of its airspace.

This bilateral attack by the U.S. and Israel on Iran was justified by claims that Iran was developing a nuclear bomb, even though its nuclear facilities had been open to international



Rajeev Dhavan

Senior Advocate of the Supreme Court of India

inspection. But the U.S. and Israel want Iran to become defenceless and surrender all its missiles and weaponry as well. If any country should do this, it should be Israel.

The realities of just wars have been diluted out of any respectable meaning with the fall of the Soviet Union. The balance-of-power protections outlined in Pope's poem have disappeared. The nub of all this is the concept of anticipatory self defence which the U.S. unswervingly has used in its attack on Vietnam, Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq, Venezuela, and now Iran. Under the doctrine of state responsibility, the U.S. used any excuse to retaliate against the Latin American states in the 19th century if its citizens were threatened claiming that international law sanctioned these because it had the 'responsibility' to protect its citizens.

In the famous Caroline incident of 1837, where an American ship was smashed over the Niagara Falls, the British claimed self defence. America's Daniel Webster (lawyer and diplomat) contemporarily warned against its unchecked disproportionate uses. For Mr. Trump, no law has any meaning. America can no longer claim its role as the peacekeeper of the world.

### The West Asia war

But let us turn to the West Asia war. Israel's pretence of self-defence against the state of Iran is thin. Its responses in Gaza, Iran, Lebanon and Syria involve territorial aggression and are illegal and genocidal. Mr. Trump's imperialism is guided by Israel. One recalls seeing a T-shirt in Jerusalem with the legend: "Don't worry America, Israel is behind you". It is difficult to understand how survivors of the Holocaust can inflict such inhumane violence.

At the root of the conflict are three important aspects. The first, the Gulf countries have never had the military prowess to defend their oil interests, property and the excessive lifestyle of governing elites. West Asia was broken into a number of nations whose military defence came from imperial nations – earlier from England, and now America. In this helpless situation, they are unlikely to give up their defence arrangements with the U.S. even though its leaders or even populace do not want adverse relations with neighbouring Iran. They are cautious. Eventually, they will side with the U.S. after Iran's counterattack on their military and energy installations and on the opening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Second, the U.S. wants to control, with the Strait firmly under its control. This is the third phase objective of the 'undeclared' war after the first and second phases of the war targeted military and then energy recourses. Mr. Trump

Modern geopolitics challenges traditional notions of lawful and just wars

# The Xi-Trump summit — shadow boxing on Iran

An American President stuck in an unwinnable and unpopular war, undertakes a risky trip to Beijing to seek Chinese intervention for a desperately needed off-ramp. The hosts feign sympathy and help, albeit in a layered, unhurried manner. They are subtle and discreet in proposing a hefty quid pro quo. Over the next few months, things are sorted out: the White House disengages from a sticky mess, quietly letting the "vanquished" opponent prevail. Long sceptical and often hostile, Washington becomes a reluctant believer in China's "peaceful rise".

### The 1972 summit

Is this a likely pre-script for Donald Trump's visit to Beijing that begins today? It may turn out to be. But it does sum up the first United States-China bilateral Summit in February 1972, when a Vietnam-mauled President Richard Nixon met Chairman Mao. As the post-visit Shanghai Communiqué panned out, the U.S. recognised the long-reviled Communist People's Republic as the sole China, gave it a P5 status, and threw Taiwan under the bus. Subsequent western capital and technology surge propelled China's phenomenal economic and geostrategic take-off.

In return, China abandoned Hanoi, enabling the U.S. to extricate itself from a haemorrhaging war. Vietnam, too, emerged as a victorious and unified nation. So, while other stakeholders benefited, China hit a jackpot.

Half a century later, history may be tantalisingly close to repeating itself in Beijing on the first such visit by an American President since 2017 for a summit. It would have a comprehensive agenda, from bilateral (trade/tariff, economic, tech-transfer, and Taiwan) to various global issues.

The U.S.-Iran war is likely to figure prominently in Beijing because an early face-saving exit from the West Asian imbroglio is currently Mr. Trump's top priority. The Iran war



Mahesh Sachdev

Retired Indian Ambassador with an interest in West Asia and oil matters

has had huge economic and geostrategic costs, including to his legacy.

Waging a clever asymmetric strategy, Iran has converted a military debacle into a strategic win with a chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, staunching crude supplies and causing economic pain globally. Its refusal to capitulate to Mr. Trump's conditions has denied him an off-ramp, denting his approval at home as he faces an uphill battle in the upcoming Congressional midterm election.

### China as Iran's anchor

China is Iran's largest economic partner, buying over 80% of its oil exports, estimated at up to \$45 billion in 2025. The additional non-oil bilateral trade is estimated to be over \$9 billion and is suspected to include many of the crucially needed Chinese war materials. Pakistan, an 'ironclad' friend, keeps China informed about the U.S.-Iran negotiations. The Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, visited Beijing on May 6 for bilateral discussions, without the traditional joint communiqué. These factors make China the most prominent foreign determinant for Iran, with Beijing the go-to destination with a key to the Iranian imbroglio. Thus, despite Mr. Trump's assertion to the contrary, he may need Chinese President Xi Jinping's help to cobble a modus vivendi with Iran.

Against this backdrop, observers discern several competing tendencies during the last week: the Trump team was keen to finalise the negotiation road map with Iran before the Beijing Summit to keep China out.

However, Iran delivered an uncompromising response after 10 days, which was rejected by Mr. Trump. The U.S. "Operation Freedom" to jump-start the Strait of Hormuz navigation was a non-starter. The Trump administration has officially "terminated" the Iran war to avoid running afoul of the War Powers Act. Suspended negotiations, problematic military option,

wants a negotiated unilateral surrender though his objectives change by the day. If the Strait is to be released from Iran's control, a limited aerial and a ground attack on Kharg Island and southern Iran will alter the war irrevocably.

The third question concerns who will be responsible for the reconstruction of Iran after the conflict ends, and whether reparations will be provided by the U.S., or by China and Russia, to restore the country and the balance of power.

The talks in Islamabad/Pakistan were bound to fail. The conditionalities of both parties were incompatible. The only issue that should have been discussed was the limited logistics of ceasefire. Other issues did not have a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Each issue needed to be discussed, step by step in later meetings. Nuclear energy is resolvable by oversight. Iran was open to inspection but this was defeated in Mr. Trump's first term. Giving up missiles altogether is unreasonable for either side.

Reducing America's military presence in the Gulf and West Asia will take time and require a multi-lateral meeting of the Gulf states. The answer to the Strait of Hormuz is neither Mr. Trump's impending war, nor a negotiation between America and Iran. It requires a multilateral discussion initiated by the United Nations or a consortium of nations, including all affected countries, including China, not just Pakistan as a proxy. They have to join the peace initiative anew. Otherwise it is Munich of 1938 all over again. Pakistan has played its part. A wider initiative is needed to look for a solution not thwarted by conditionalities, proxies, or Mr. Trump's mood and zeal for war.

### People and a moral voice

The UN has become meaningless as a peace keeper. Perhaps Mr. Trump wants to lead a U.S.-aligned international council that includes participation from some Gulf countries. We are also witnessing the WTO, which was created to defend America's imperial economic interest, descending into chaos along with climate change treaties.

The post-World War II which envisaged a human rights-based democratic order has been exposed as a moral façade for global predation and has failed to protect people humanely, while providing moral excuses for imperial actors. Too many sins are created in the name of democracy and human rights.

But to return to the concept of a just war, unsupported by a balance of power to preserve world peace: the concept of a just war has become meaningless except as a much-needed moral voice. This moral voice rests with the people of the world – all of us, not our rulers.

Beijing summit tests diplomacy over Iran and global geopolitical order

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NEET and the NRI aspirant

I am writing this letter not only as a NEET UG 2026 candidate but also as an Indian student currently residing in the United Kingdom who travelled internationally to appear for this examination, only to watch it collapse because of failures entirely outside the control of students. I had secured opportunities to study medicine at reputed European universities. Despite that, I chose to

defer those opportunities because I wanted to pursue medicine through India's system. To do this, I travelled to India at considerable personal and financial cost as there are no NEET centres in the U.K. This journey took place during a period of heightened anxiety surrounding international movement. For months, I studied relentlessly, often for 16 hours a day. What makes this issue even more

important is the current NMC regulation requiring NEET qualification even for foreign medical admissions. Students abroad are legally compelled to depend on an examination system that has repeatedly faced allegations of compromise and cancellation. We have no alternative route despite having opportunities elsewhere. I believe this perspective deserves national attention because the burden on overseas

Indian students has largely gone unreported.  
**Vedika Rai,**  
Buckinghamshire, U.K.

### Austerity appeal

The Prime Minister's call to reduce fossil fuel use —

though somewhat belated — can help develop pathways to cut greenhouse gas emissions from petrol and diesel vehicles used for short-distance commuting. Walking and cycling have largely been forgotten in

Indian cities, mainly due to the lack of proper footpaths and cycling lanes. The Centre should allocate special funds for developing such infrastructure. Since political parties understand the reasons behind the appeal, they are unlikely to gain much mileage by politicising the issue.

**A. Venkatasubramanian,**  
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

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

### Corrections & Clarifications

A sentence in the Editorial, "Split wide open" (May 13, 2026), should have read, "It appears that the Palaniswami group ... of the 1985 anti-defection law in case the dissidents violate the whip to vote against the government."

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# The 'cinematisation' of politics

Throughout the recent election season in Tamil Nadu, there was an unmissable air of restlessness and frenzy among youth voters. Most youth – the largest share of the vote bank that led to actor-turned-politician Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) winning over 100 seats – seem to have looked at the elections as one that would lead to "a change."

Tamil Nadu, of course, has seen its share of youth revolution in politics. The very Dravidian government that Mr. Vijay defeated was built by a student political movement more than six decades ago. But unlike the 1960s, this new "change" wasn't built up through protests against an oppressive force; it largely transpired on social media, in the minds of youth, amid a pandemic of political indifference.

## A narrative of change

During the election campaign, two statements largely captured the opposing viewpoints netizens had about Mr. Vijay's TVK; one was that "Vijay doesn't understand that politics isn't cinema" and two, "we need Vijay because we need a change." There's more to these statements than what meets the eye. The question is not whether politics is cinema but about how politics needs to become cinema, which Mr. Vijay understands. And change? The youth don't necessarily crave for a change – what they crave for is a narrative; some purpose that empowers them with direction.

Sociologically speaking, life in 2026 cannot get any more routine for a youth of the State. They work a nine-to-five job, and endlessly scroll through various social media platforms. Beyond personal goals, life hardly allows one a purpose, let alone a larger-than-life vision for a revolution. But cinema does. Cinema offers an augmented reality where purpose is celebrated. This is why we live in a time when escapist cinema is so



**Bhuvanesh Chandar**

frenzied, and political news consumption has declined.

Throughout the election season, a large chunk of TVK followers were repeatedly criticised as "tharkuri," meaning 'imbecile', for their alleged lack of political insight or their inability to articulate why they wanted to vote for Mr. Vijay. "Anna [older brother] will do us good," they said. How or from what? They never bothered, as was evident from the many videos that went viral. However, it would be unfair to blame these youths, as what we are seeing is political indifference and political illiteracy that came from the State's inability to educate the youth in their language. Depoliticised campuses have long been the cause of this aversion to politics.

This lack of purpose is why propaganda on social media and movies work – audiences need to feel a win, and cinema offers a narrative. And a narrative is what the politician in Mr. Vijay – a face they have seen so often serving them with a purpose – offered them when he took to the stage and tagged the government of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) as "theeya sakthi" (evil force). The narrative was clear. Mr. Vijay had to win, and it didn't matter why the DMK had to lose.

## Need for dramatic change

This need for a purpose through a narrative has now reshaped politics as we know it. Mr. Vijay, by his credit, seems to have learnt this from his decades in the film industry – for an actor to win, politics must become his playground; politics must become cinema. Which is why Mr. Vijay's election campaign, which ranged from urging children to ask their parents to vote for the TVK to repeatedly symbolising the DMK as a villain, seemed straight out of the climax of a summer blockbuster. If anything, the DMK did not lose to an actor who sold dreams, but to a strategist who offered the satisfaction of a social media campaign win. This is also

why Mr. Vijay's victory feels so personal to most of his voters. What they have done is essentially beat the force that was unofficially declared unbeatable.

For the interest of these youth 'audiences' in politics to sustain, politics needs to become more. They need to see variety in politics, and stability can seem boring. Development shouldn't just improve upon something; it should demolish something pre-existing, for the lack of dramatic flair would simply be akin to death.

There must be development, but through a steady supply of 'something different'. Because "we need a change." In fact, if anything, this statement from supporters of the TVK says enough about the crisis of 'purposelessness'. For example, many TVK supporters wished for a government change due to the many crimes against women in the last five years. This is one definition of 'change' they have attested to. Now, all one must do to check if this was a genuine concern is to see if similar social media campaigns hold the TVK accountable should there be crimes against women during their reign. If not, perhaps, like most election manifestos these days, 'change' is just a pre-election commodity. Crimes against women do not need a mere change in government – it needs a government that acknowledges the deep-seated patriarchy in society and takes steps towards abolishing the socio-political factors that lead to sexual assaults. Until then, a change in this regard wouldn't be concrete.

How Mr. Vijay and the TVK define this victory and govern in the years to come remains to be seen. For the social media warriors who voted for them, this victory is a respite under the punishing sun. Who cares if there's a happily ever after? We don't bother about what happens to the hero after the climax.

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# The law does not favour AIADMK rebels

The divide needs to be evaluated under the anti-defection law

## STATE OF PLAY

**K.Venkataramanan**

As many as 25 of the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)'s 47 legislators voted in favour of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) government in the confidence vote moved by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay. This has further deepened the crisis within the party that finished third in the recent Assembly election. The party's general secretary, Edappadi K. Palaniswami, and 21 of his supporters voted against the TVK government.

A key question is whether the dissidents have incurred disqualification under the anti-defection law. Mr. Palaniswami is in an unenviable position. If he seeks the rebels' disqualification, the move may lead to a formal split in the party, and may result in byelections that would lead to further marginalisation. On the other hand, even if he doesn't, the other faction, led by former ministers S.P. Velumani and C. V. Shanmugam, may gain the upper hand within the party structure. However, what stands in his favour is that the dissidents are in no position to save themselves from disqualification, as they do not have the requisite two-thirds' strength to claim that they have merged with another party. The 2023 judgment of a Constitution Bench on related questions arising from the anti-defection law is also not in their favour.

The verdict in *Subash Desai vs. Principal Secretary to the Governor*, delivered in May 2023, deals squarely with the fate of dissident legislators who are numerically larger than the MLAs loyal to the original party leadership. A key



ruling in the judgment is that it is the political party and not the legislature party that appoints its whip and gives the direction to vote in a particular manner or abstain. Therefore, any claim by another faction that it has its own whip and its own direction to vote cannot be countenanced by the Speaker. The second principle in the judgment is that the numerical strength of respective factions is irrelevant. "The percentage of members in each faction is irrelevant to the determination of whether a defence to disqualification is made out," the five-judge Bench said. However, the Court also recognised that the Speaker may have to determine which of the two factions constitutes the original party and he may examine the party's own constitution and other regulations that spell out its structure. "The Speaker must not base their decision as to which group constitutes the political party on a blind appreciation of which group possesses a majority in the Legislative Assembly," it said. The structure of leadership outside the House is also a relevant consideration.

The Speaker's determination on which group constitutes the party is only a *prima facie* finding, and would not have any impact on the Election Commission's power to adjudicate the question under Paragraph 15 of the Election

Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, which deals with recognition to parties and allotment of symbols.

Mr. Palaniswami will have to decide whether to seek the disqualification of those who voted against him. The 10th Schedule gives a political party the option of condoning such a vote within 15 days. In 2017, he did not seek action against 11 AIADMK legislators of the O. Panneerselvam faction when they voted against him. A related question is whether a whip was issued and received by all members of the AIADMK. In the 2017 example, Mr. Panneerselvam and his supporters claimed that they had not received it as they were not part of the group of MLAs housed in a resort by the party leadership. Under the rules governing the question of disqualification in the Assembly, each party has to submit a list of its members and designations within 30 days of the first sitting of the House. It is not known whether this was done. The appointment of a member as the Whip, as well as the existence of a 'direction' to the members on manner of voting (the word 'whip' is not used in the Tenth Schedule) and its communication to all members will all be questions of facts that may require adjudication.

The AIADMK members who voted for the TVK have rendered themselves vulnerable to disqualification by violating a party direction. However, they may depend on the Speaker's indulgence in not acting on disqualification petitions, if any, and may raise disputes on facts such as which of them is the authority and whether one was issued at all. The Speaker will have to bear in mind the law laid down by the Court while deciding these questions.

# China's economic strengths now rival that of the U.S.

Beijing continues its economic rise and has now become a diplomatic powerhouse

## DATA POINT

**Sambavi Parthasarathy**

U.S. President Donald Trump commenced his highly anticipated three-day visit to China on May 13, amid the ongoing Israel-U.S. war with Iran, and a year after Mr. Trump imposed steep import tariffs on several countries. China was one of the countries on which the U.S. imposed the highest tariffs.

Mr. Trump's previous visit to Beijing was in November 2017 during his first term as U.S. President. Interestingly, it was a few months after his 2017 visit that he started a trade war with China by levying high import tariffs on various products to fight the latter's "unfair trade practices" and address the huge trade imbalance between the two countries. China retaliated with its own tariffs.

Though Mr. Trump escalated this trade war between the two countries in his second term with a further increase in tariffs, he will be visiting China after having backed down following Beijing's retaliatory tariffs and steps taken by it to restrict vital rare earth exports to the U.S.

A look at multiple economic indicators over the years shows that China is catching up at a steady pace with the U.S., considered the world's lone superpower both economically and militarily since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Today, China's economic strength has grown dramatically to rival that of the U.S.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the U.S. in 1990 was about 15 times the size of China's economy. By 2025, according to the International Monetary Fund's data, the U.S. GDP was only 1.5 times larger than that of China (Chart 1).

Despite growing into an economy comparable in size to the U.S., China has managed to maintain a strong GDP growth rate of at least 5% even after it became a \$10 tril-

lion economy in 2014, barring the exceptions of 2020 and 2022. Since becoming a \$10 trillion economy in 2000, the U.S. economy's growth rate last crossed the 3% mark in 2005. The only exception was 2021 because of the negative growth caused by the COVID-19 pandemic the year before.

The gap is even starker when it comes to labour productivity growth – that is, output per worker. Besides being far higher than the U.S.'s, China's growth rate of labour productivity is at a level that the U.S. has not come close to in the past 25 years (Chart 2).

In many key export sectors, China now occupies the place once held by the U.S. While China's share in global exports across sectors such as electronics and minerals has grown, the U.S.'s share has seen a gradual decline (Chart 3). China's share in global vehicle exports has grown from less than 1% in 1995 to over 13% in 2024.

China has also massively increased its spending on R&D, which assumes significance in the backdrop of the race between the two countries in AI. According to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), China overtook the U.S. in R&D expenditure for the first time in 2024. The U.S. spent \$781.8 billion while China spent \$785.9 billion, which is a 20-fold jump from the \$41 billion spent in 2000. Between 2000 and 2024, Beijing's share in global R&D expenditure increased by 23 percentage points while that of the U.S. declined by 9.71 percentage points (Chart 4).

The Asian giant is using its economic growth to increase its diplomatic influence. According to Aid-Data, China was the world's largest official creditor in 2023, having lent about \$140 billion to public and private sector borrowers. The U.S. is the largest recipient of China's official sector credit. Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index ranked Beijing's 'diplomatic influence' and 'economic relations' higher than those of the U.S. for 2025.

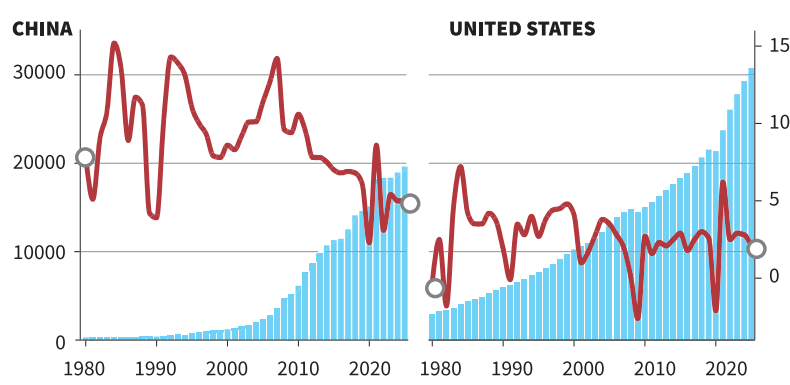
## Tipping the scales

The data for the charts were sourced from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Labour Organisation, Harvard Growth Lab's Atlas of Economic Complexity and World Intellectual Property Organisation

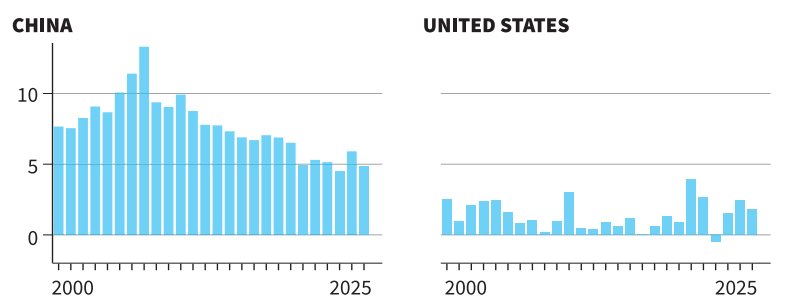


**CHART 1:** The Gross Domestic Product in current prices

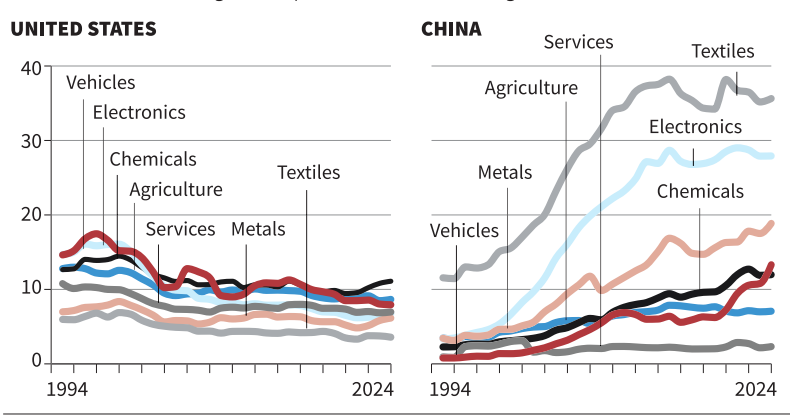
● Growth rate (%) (RHS) ■ GDP (\$ billion) (LHS)



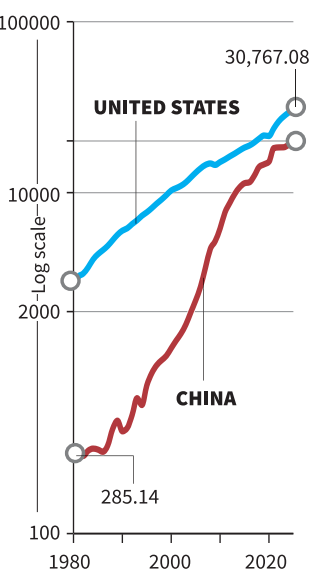
**CHART 2:** Annual growth rate of output per worker. Figures in %



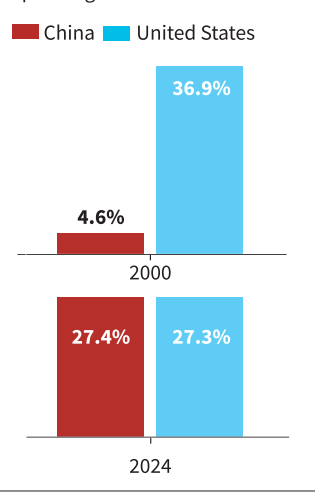
**CHART 3:** The share in global exports for select items. Figures in %



**A comparison of China and U.S.'s GDP since 1980 (Figures in \$ billion)**



**CHART 4:** The share in global Research and Development spending



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 14, 1976

## Archipelago status for Andaman to be sought

New Delhi, May 13: India will continue to try in world forums for the archipelago status for Andaman which will entitle it to exercise control over the 12-mile territorial sea and enjoy rights in regard to living and non-living objects in the 200-mile economic zone around the island.

Mr. H.R. Gokhale, Union Law Minister, who has just returned here after attending the New York conference on the law of the sea, said to-day that the Indian stand on the rights of the coastal States on archipelago has not been accepted. India, he said, would continue to work through bilateral talks, to secure acceptance for its viewpoint. The big powers, he noted, had combined to deprive the coastal countries of their rights in regard to their islands and were prepared to treat only the archipelago States as an independent entity. "It is a very vital issue for us and we are not happy about the position that has emerged so far. We will continue to fight," he said.

About the outcome of the New York conference, Mr. Gokhale mentioned that on the positive side was the near-universal acceptance of the idea of the territorial water (with the limit extended to 12 miles) and that of the economic zone 1200 miles beyond the territorial waters. On the negative side, he listed, besides the differences over archipelagos, disagreement over the rights of the landlocked countries. India and some others wanted the landlocked countries to have access to the sea, though transit arrangements could be made only through negotiations with the coastal States on reciprocal basis. Some others were not prepared to recognise this right.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 14, 1926

## Merchandise marks bill

London, May 12: The House of Commons, by 221 votes to 65 passed the second reading of the Merchandise Marks Act, which Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister defined as enabling the purchaser to know whether he was buying British products, British agricultural produce and Empire produce.

Mr. Sidney Webb moved the rejection on the ground that the Bill would create obstacles to the importation of certain classes of goods, increase prices, and encourage monopolies.

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

**NEWS IN NUMBERS**

**Amount approved by Bangladesh for mega river project**

**2.8** in \$ billion. Bangladesh approved on Wednesday a mega river project worth \$2.8 billion that authorities hope would help the country address its persistent water crisis. The project highlights Dhaka's efforts to secure water supplies for its agriculture-dependent economy. AFP

**People affected by disasters in Arunachal from January to May**

**32,800** A series of disasters, including storms, landslides, floods, forest fires and heavy rainfall incidents, have affected over 32,800 people across Arunachal Pradesh during the period between January and May 13 this year. PTI

**Percentage increase in U.S. wholesale prices in April**

**6** in per cent. Wholesale prices in the U.S. rose sharply in April, pushed by a surge in energy costs related to the Iran war, registering their highest 12-month increase in more than three years. The Producer Price Index rose 6.0% for the 12 months ending in April, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) said. AFP

**Percentage increase in Pakistan's external debts in FY2025-26**

**3.60** in per cent. Pakistan's external debts have risen by 3.6% to reach Pakistani rupees (PKR) 22,959 billion in FY 2025-26, according to a report. The State Bank of Pakistan released the statistics, revealing that the total debt has surpassed PKR 80 trillion rupees. PTI

**Financial assistance received by Delhi RWAs and NGOs**

**13.36** in ₹ crore. The Delhi government released over ₹13 crore in 2025-26 for maintenance of 1,643 parks through RWAs and NGOs, marking the highest financial assistance since 2008-09, according to official data. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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## Why did NTA's 'Zero Error' policy fail?

Why has NEET landed in controversy again? How has NEET faced repeated paper leak allegations? Why are paper leak concerns persisting despite NTA's safeguards? What reforms were proposed after the 2024 row? Can NEET shift to a computer-based format?

**EXPLAINER**

Maitri Porecha  
Srinidhi Madurai K.

**The story so far:**

Nine days after nearly 22 lakh medical aspirants wrote the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), which paves the way for admission to medical colleges, they were in for a rude shock. On May 12, the National Testing Agency (NTA) stated that the exam had been 'compromised,' and that there would be a re-test.

The decision has created a furore among students across the country, with the Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) moving the Supreme Court with a plea to either replace NTA or conduct major restructuring reforms.

**What controversies has NEET faced over the years?**

The decision to conduct re-examination for nearly 22 lakh students is unprecedented in NEET's history, but concerns over paper leaks are not new. In 2024, the declaration of the NEET-UG results coincided with the announcement of national election results. For the first time, 67 out of the top 100 scorers received full marks. In comparison, only two students achieved full marks in 2023, while none did so in 2022. A high concentration of students achieving full marks led to massive rank inflation, with multiple aspirants who had scored high marks competing for a single seat in reputed medical colleges.

In 2024, 13 lakh students qualified and were competing for approximately 1.1 lakh MBBS seats across government and private medical colleges. Allegations of a paper leak later surfaced, with investigations revealing that 155 students had allegedly benefited from leaked question papers. Students had then demanded a re-examination, but their request fell on deaf ears.



Nearly 22 lakh medical aspirants wrote the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test. K.V.S. GIRI

**Why has NTA's 'Zero Error' promise fallen short?**

With repeated cases of paper leaks surfacing year after year, the NTA appears not to have learnt from its chequered past. The overhaul of NTA merely remained lip service. After the 2024 debacle, IAS officer Subodh Kumar Singh, then Director General of the NTA, was removed from the post and transferred to the Ministry of Steel as Additional Secretary. He is currently serving as Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh.

Following his transfer, the NTA remained without a full-time chief for over a year, with retired 1985-batch IAS officer Pradeep Singh Kharola holding 'additional interim charge'. In March this year, former IndiaAI Mission CEO Abhishek Singh took charge of NTA and declared that there would be a 'Zero Error, Zero Tolerance' policy.

After the NEET-UG 2026 examination was conducted on May 3, the NTA underscored on social media the "smooth manner" in which the exam had been held across 5,432 centres, with 22.79 lakh candidates appearing. It stated that more

than two lakh personnel were involved in conducting the examination.

The agency also claimed that there was end-to-end secure handling of confidential materials under sealed protocols, GPS-enabled vehicles with police escorts for the movement of examination material, CCTV surveillance at all examination centres (up to 1,50,000), with feeds linked to centralised control rooms, mandatory frisking through high-sensitivity metal detectors before entry, with strengthened manpower and equipment at every centre, Aadhaar-based biometric authentication to prevent impersonation and real-time monitoring through centralised control systems.

Mr. Abhishek Singh told *The Hindu* that the NTA had blocked 120 Telegram channels for circulating fake question papers and rumours, aimed at defrauding candidates.

Despite these measures, investigations by the Rajasthan Police revealed that a "guess paper" containing 120 out of 410 questions from the final examination had allegedly been circulating for nearly a month before the exam, a massive

oversight by the NTA.

**What did the Radhakrishnan panel recommend?**

Following the NEET-UG 2024 controversy, the Ministry of Education formed a high-level committee headed by former ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan. However, the committee's recommendations were not followed in letter and spirit by either the NTA or the Ministry.

The report, submitted in October 2024, highlighted the pen-and-paper testing (PPT) model as 'a major security risk.' It recommended a transition to Computer-Based Testing (CBT) format, similar to the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main, which is also conducted by NTA.

The committee also recommended Computer-assisted Secure PPT, where encrypted papers are delivered digitally to exam centres and printed locally just before the test. NTA has made no claim of implementing it. Instead, it relied on GPS vehicles and police escorts.

Mr. Abhishek Singh said that the NTA has the capacity to conduct CBT tests for only about 1.5 lakh students in a day. He added that shifting NEET to CBT mode is a 'high-level ministry call' involving both the Ministries of Health and Education.

In 2024, the NTA floated a tender to increase its capacity of computer labs, but the process could not be finalised. In 2026, the NTA has around 552 CBT centres, which are primarily used for JEE and CUET examinations. Since the Radhakrishnan Committee report came out in 2024, the NTA has not been able to augment its infrastructure to add more centres.

Multiple proposals to administer NEET-UG exams online were sent to the Ministry of Education, but in vain, officials at the NTA told *The Hindu*. "Talks for administering the NEET-UG in CBT mode have been ongoing for at least five years now. The recent paper leak fiasco should serve as an eye-opener to change the format of the exams," an official said.

**THE GIST**

▼ The NTA announced a re-test for nearly 22 lakh NEET aspirants after the exam was found to be "compromised", triggering outrage and fresh concerns over paper leaks.

▼ Despite "Zero Error, Zero Tolerance" claims and multiple security measures, a "guess paper" containing 120 of 410 questions allegedly circulated before the exam, renewing calls for reforms and a shift to computer-based testing.

## What has the IMD announced ahead of this year's monsoon?

Why are the 15 States in the monsoon core zone the first to receive block-level forecasts?

Jacob Koshy

**The story so far:**

The India Meteorological Department on Tuesday unveiled a new forecast system that, for the first time, will generate block-level forecasts of the monsoon's arrival. The system covers 15 States and one Union Territory, taking in 3,196 blocks – roughly half of India's 7,200-odd blocks. Until now, monsoon onset estimates have been available at best at the State or district scale.

**Why does this granularity matter?**

The conventional district-scale forecast obscures a basic feature of the Indian monsoon: its patchiness. The arrival dates familiar to most people – around June 10 for Mumbai, June 29 for Delhi – describe the monsoon reaching a city or a district boundary. But within the same district, several blocks and villages can remain rainless even after the monsoon has

officially "arrived." For a farmer deciding when to sow, knowing that the monsoon has reached the district headquarters is of limited use if her own block is still dry. Hyper-local forecasts have been a long-standing aim of the IMD precisely to close this gap and help farmers time their sowing.

**How does the new system work?**

At its core are two forecasting models whose outputs are "blended" to sharpen accuracy. From the date of the monsoon's onset over Kerala, the system draws on AI-based analysis, the IMD's trove of nearly a century of meteorological data, and global weather models to project the monsoon's itinerary at a much finer scale than before.

The blending framework was developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, a Pune-based research institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences. It issues probabilistic forecasts for the next four weeks.

**Why these particular 15 States?**

The States covered are part of what meteorologists call the monsoon core zone. As M. Ravichandran, Secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, put it at a press briefing, these are "the regions that are largely rainfed and are most sensitive to southwest monsoon dynamics." They are also the regions where forecast errors translate most directly into crop losses. The ambition is eventually to extend block-level forecasts across all of India, but Mr. Ravichandran said this would require a denser network of observational data than is currently available in many States.

**How well will it work in its first season?**

The system has cleared two trial runs, but this year will be a stiff test. The IMD and global models are expecting "below normal" rainfall from July onwards, in the light of a developing El Niño – a pattern in the Pacific Ocean that has frequently

coincided with weak monsoon rains in India. Forecasting a weak, erratic monsoon at block resolution can be harder than forecasting a robust one.

**What is the separate announcement about Uttar Pradesh?**

The IMD also launched a 10-day monsoon forecast model specifically for Uttar Pradesh at a resolution of 1 km – meaning the model resolves weather features down to that scale. This was possible because of Uttar Pradesh's unusually extensive network of automatic weather stations, whose observations allowed a weather model called Mithuna, which natively runs at 12.5 km, to be "downscaled" to 1 km. Mr. Ravichandran said other States were being encouraged to share their station data with the IMD so that similarly high-resolution forecasts could be produced for them.

**What is the broader picture?**

Two trends are converging. One is a push, driven by the agriculture ministry, to make forecasts agriculturally actionable rather than merely meteorologically accurate. The other is the IMD's increasing willingness to combine traditional physics-based models with AI and to lean on State-level observational networks where they exist. Block-level forecasting is the first concrete product of that combination – and the 2026 monsoon, El Niño and all, will be its proving ground.

**THE GIST**

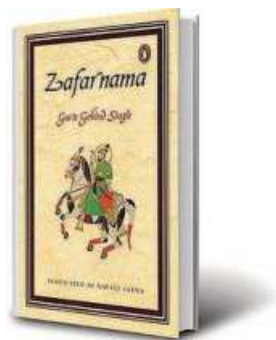
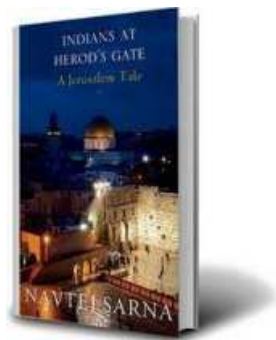
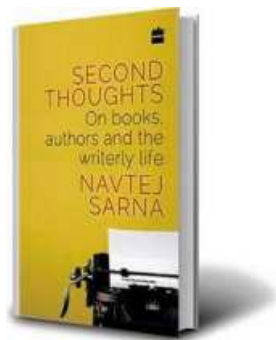
▼ The IMD has launched a new block-level monsoon forecast system using AI-based analysis, meteorological data and global weather models to provide hyper-local forecasts for farmers in the monsoon core zone.

▼ The 2026 monsoon will test the new blended forecasting framework as India faces the possibility of below-normal and erratic rainfall linked to a developing El Niño.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**



Navtej Sarna. FILE PHOTO



**FROM THE ARCHIVES**

**Know your English**

**S. Upendran**

**What is the origin and meaning of the expression “to kick the bucket”?**  
**(Subhashini, Chennai)**

The idiom “to kick the bucket” means “to die” and it is normally used in very informal contexts. You will never find a newspaper headline screaming, “Local M.P. kicks the bucket”. Similarly, it would be unwise to ask someone “I understand your father kicked the bucket yesterday. How did it happen?” The idiom should not be used with people who have suffered a recent loss in the family. Here are a few examples.

*Sumitha told me that our former Principal kicked the bucket last week.*  
*Several people in their family kicked the bucket last year.*

People have come up with different theories as to how this expression came into being. One of them is the following. In the old days, when someone wanted to commit suicide or when people wanted to hang someone, they made use of a bucket – an article that was readily available in all houses. What they used to do was to tie a rope to a tree and under the rope they used to place an empty bucket. The bucket was then turned upside down and the man who was to be hanged was made to stand on it. The noose was slipped around the victim’s neck and the bucket was then kicked away. Result? A slow and painful death.

**How is the word “collage” pronounced? (Basheer Kutty, Kollam)**

The “o” in the first syllable is like the “o” in words like “hot”, “pot”, and “cot”. The “a” in the second syllable is like the “a” in “bath”, “path”, and “cart”. The final “ge” is like the “s” in “measure”, “treasure,” and “pleasure”. The stress is on the second syllable. Some people pronounce the “o” in the first syllable like the “a” in “China”. Both pronunciations are acceptable.

A collage is a picture that you create by sticking various materials/objects onto a hard surface. People often make use of pieces of cloth, paper, and metal to create this picture.

**Which of the following sentences is correct? “None of them is any good” or “None of them are any good”? (P. Vani, Pollachi)**

Both are acceptable. There was a time, however, when it was recommended that the word “none” be followed by a singular verb. But times have changed; it is now possible to use either a singular or a plural verb when “none” refers to a countable noun. For example, it is possible to say:

*None of the telephones is/are working.*  
*None of the students have/has turned up.*

People who are extremely fond of grammar insist, even today, that a singular and not a plural verb should follow “none”.

**What is the meaning of “Que sera sera”? (M. Mrinalini, Nellore)**

It means, “what will be, will be”. There is a well-known song by that title. Here are a few lines from it.

*When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother what will I be?  
Will I be pretty? Will I be rich?  
This is what she said to me.  
Que sera sera, whatever will be will be,  
The future is not ours to see,  
Que sera sera, what will be, will be..*  
Published in *The Hindu* on August, 15, 2000

# Navtej Sarna and the craft of turning history into story

The diplomat-writer, who recently won the Sahitya Akademi Award, has authored a dozen books marked by meticulous research, careful cross-checks, and a smooth narrative style

**Ziya Us Salam**

Navtej Sarna’s *Second Thoughts: On Books, Authors and the Writerly Life* (2015) is replete with nuggets, as the writer-diplomat knits together seemingly disparate anecdotes to open a window into the world of writers. Among the writers he features is the redoubtable Khushwant Singh. Known for his love of a drink, Singh was also a deeply disciplined writer who penned at least three or four pages every day. “It is work, my writing that keeps me going. Writing is a solitary profession,” he says in conversation with Sarna.

Among the many memorable moments Sarna recounts is Singh’s recollection of the poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz: “Faiz was two years my senior in Lahore, at Government College. I met him later when I went to Pakistan. I went for breakfast with him and he was drinking whisky. Then I came back for lunch and he was drinking whisky. But he was never drunk.” And then there was the poet Ahmed Faraz, who, according to Singh, “when he came to my room to have some whisky, dipped his cigarette in his drink and said that this way he can enjoy both together!”

Unlike Singh, known for his irreverence, E.M. Forster waxes eloquent on the good old *paan*, “the heart-shaped leaves that yearn towards the sun.” The *paan*, Forster observed, is a “nucleus for hospitality, and much furtive intercourse takes place under its little shield”.

The stories, though entirely different, are linked together like a train compartment. Sarna pens little stories and interviews which most others would not dip their fingers into.

**Drawing from history**

That is typical Sarna. Many summers ago, he wrote *Indians at Herod’s Gate* (2014). He wandered through Old Jerusalem to write the unique story of the centuries-old Indian connection to the ancient city. The subject was both demanding and uplifting. With finesse, Sarna related the story of Sheikh Nazir Ansari, a police inspector’s son from Saharanpur who went on to revive the Indian hospice in Jerusalem; this is the place where the 13th-century mystic and preacher Baba Farid had spent 40 days in prayer. How did Baba Farid reach Jerusalem, a place held sacred by Muslims, Jews, and Christians? Sarna explains, “At 16, under the tutelage of Bakhtiar Kaki, who advised him to discover the world and meet mystics, Baba Farid went to Baghdad, Mecca and Medina, before reaching Jerusalem.”

*Indians at Herod’s Gate* remains not only one of Sarna’s best books - he has authored around a dozen - but probably the best one in capturing the challenges of diversity in a land steeped in history.

Much like *Indians at Herod’s Gate*, Sarna’s *Crimson Spring* (2022) is also based on history: the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. He is reported to have evinced a wish to write about the massacre, the

Indian soldiers who fought in World War I, and the revolutionaries who died in the quest for freedom. He fulfilled his wish with *Crimson Spring*, a compelling novel that brings all these themes together. Sarna weaves in both well-known and lesser-known strands of history. Writing about the night of the slaughter, he says, “The sun went down in an ocean of blood and the night that enveloped Jallianwala Bagh was death itself, visiting each shadow, teasing out and trapping each escaping life. The stray dogs, too, were soon out, sniffing blood and then warm, unresisting flesh.” It is this book that won him the 2025 Sahitya Akademi Award for Literature (English), announced in March this year.

This ability to weave in facts in a seamless narrative first came to the fore in 2003, when he wrote *The Book of Nanak*. In it, he managed to appeal to readers who were not necessarily followers of Guru Nanak, while remaining faithful to the words and values of the founder of Sikhism.

To this day, the book is talked about, much like *The Exile* (2008), a poignant novel based on the life of Maharaja Duleep Singh, the exiled last Maharaja of Punjab. Singh, a prince, was forced into exile by the British. He tried to fight back to reclaim his empire and remains a tragic figure in history. Once again, moving between historical fact and the freedom granted by fiction, Sarna keeps the reader hooked. *The Exile* has enriched many a home.

**The power of brevity**

Another notable work of Sarna’s is *Zafarnama: Guru Gobind Singh* (2011). Sarna translated the *Zafarnama*, which contains 111 stanzas and messages sent by the tenth Sikh Guru to the Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb. Without getting mired in historical detail, he conveys the conflicts of the time in language marked by striking brevity.

This ability to say so much in so few words, to weave fact with fiction, is the result of years of silent and sustained labour for Sarna, a career diplomat who had to divide his time between professional commitments and a personal calling.

His craft clearly rests on meticulous research, painstaking cross-checks, and a smooth narrative style. But beyond technique lies an honesty to his subject and his craft, which are what consistently set him apart.

That sensibility is evident across his work. In *We Were Not Lovers Like That* (2016), for instance, he brings alive a human story rich in foibles. The protagonist is no hero in the conventional sense, but an ordinary man marked by human frailty, and yet quietly distinct. Sarna’s command over detail and narrative holds the reader with rare luminosity. Love, loss and longing: the book had it all. When it first appeared, readers could scarcely wait for his next. He has kept that anticipation alive year after year, as seen in the response to his latest, *A Flag to Live and Die For* (2026).

**THE DAILY QUIZ**

Recently, there has been news of a hantavirus outbreak aboard a cruise ship. Here is a quiz on the virus and other viruses that cause diseases in humans

**Sindhu Nagaraj**

**QUESTION 1**  
Hantaviruses are naturally found primarily in which group of mammals?

**QUESTION 2**  
Smallpox was an infectious disease caused by \_\_\_\_ virus, which belongs to the genus Orthopoxvirus. Fill in the blank.

**QUESTION 3**  
This is a virus belonging to Reovirales, an order of segmented, non-enveloped, double-stranded RNA

viruses. It is an arbovirus, being primarily transmitted to humans from the bite of infected mosquitoes of the genus Culex. Which is it?

**QUESTION 4**  
This virus causes a type of viral hemorrhagic fever. It is endemic in West African countries, especially Sierra Leone, the Republic of Guinea, Nigeria, and Liberia. Which is it?

**QUESTION 5**  
This is the main cause of hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) in East Asia. It is transmitted by the striped field mouse. Name the virus.



**Visual Question:** Identify the infection caused by this virus (from the image). What is the name of the cancer that may be an eventual result of this?

**Questions and Answers to the previous day’s daily quiz:** 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. **Ans: Andrei Tarkovsky**  
2. Name the Indian filmmaker heading the Cannes Critics Week jury this year. Her film won the Grand Prix in 2024. **Ans: Payal Kapadia**  
3. Jane Campion, Julia Ducournau and Justine Triet are the only women directors to have received the festival’s top prize. Name the films for which they won. **Ans: The Piano (1993); Titane (2021); Anatomy of a Fall (2023)**  
4. The 1968 festival was shut down after Jean-Luc Godard interrupted and blocked screenings. Why did they do this? **Ans: To show solidarity with the students and workers’ strike in France**  
5. Name the only Indian film to receive top honours at the festival. **Ans: Chetan Anand’s Neecha Nagar**  
6. Which restored Malayalam classic is being showcased at Cannes 2026? **Ans: John Abraham’s Amma Ariyan**  
Visual: 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. **Ans: Thelma & Louise; Ridley Scott**  
**Early Birds:** Tito Shiladitya | Erfanally Oosmany | Sukdev Shet | Arjun Debnath | Prem Nath Tiwari

**Word of the day**

**Spiel:**  
plausible glib talk

**Synonyms:** presentation, speech, talk, pitch

**Usage:** *The waiter gave us a long spiel about the specials.*

**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/spiel

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /ˈspiːl/

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

## From Page One

## Govt. doubles import duty on gold, silver

Industry players, economists, and investment advisors have said that the decision is not likely to impact Indians' demand for gold, and would instead increase smuggling.

"Our consistent position is that hiking import duties rarely curbs gold imports – it merely inflates prices," the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council said in a statement. "Despite gold prices doubling recently, imports have not declined proportionally. Such measures often fuel smuggling and escalate export costs."

This sentiment was echoed by Sachin Sawrikar, founder and managing partner at Artha Bharat Investment Managers, who termed the import duty hike as a "blunt instrument that history tells us rarely achieves its intended purpose."

"India's appetite for precious metals is structural, not cyclical; it is woven into savings culture, festive demand, and portfolio behaviour across hundreds of millions of households," Mr. Sawrikar cautioned. "When the price of the legal channel rises this steeply, a well-established informal trade, call it grey-market or smuggled supply, simply fills the gap."

Another fear among experts is the impact this decision would have on the domestic industry and all those it employs.

"Trying to micromanage consumer and industry behaviour via trade policy has substantial trade offs that we have to be careful about," Rahul Ahluwalia, Founder-Director of Foundation for Economic Development, said. "In this case, it may negatively affect employment and exports in the jewellery sector and the ability of Indians to invest in one of the best performing asset classes at a time of global uncertainty."

## CBI arrests 5, conducts raids in NEET leak case

Several other suspects are currently being examined, the CBI said. The agency is probing whether the brothers from Jaipur had procured the "guess paper", in which about 120 questions matched the actual question paper, from the Gurugram-based ayurvedic medicine student Yash Yadav. It is suspected that the paper was passed on to a counselling agent in Sikar, Rajasthan, from where it was sold to a large number of people through encrypted messaging applications.

Earlier, the Rajasthan Special Operations Group (SOG) picked up 15 people for their suspected roles in the paper leak. On the SOG's request, the Nashik Crime Branch had detained Shubham Khairnar, a 30-year-old Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery student from Nandgaon. He had allegedly bought the "guess paper" and sold it for profit.

The CBI registered the case on Tuesday following a written complaint from the Department of Higher Education, Education Ministry.

"Based on emerging leads, further searches and investigative actions are under way. During the searches and arrests, several incriminating materials and electronic devices, including mobile phones, have been seized. The agency is also coordinating with the Special Operations Group, Rajasthan, which had conducted a preliminary enquiry in the case," said the agency, adding that the leads are being followed through "extensive technical and forensic analysis".

In Maharashtra, a senior police officer from Ahilyanagar said the CBI had sought assistance to track Mr. Lokhande and take him into custody. "I have no idea about the link between the arrests in Pune and Nashik, or the detained person's role. We are not part of investigation," he said.

So far, three people have been arrested from Maharashtra. On Tuesday, the Nashik Crime Branch had detained Mr. Khairnar from Indiranagar. He was later remanded in CBI custody for two days.

Mr. Lokhande, a native of Mahegaon Mahaduk in Rahuri, graduated in BAMS from Mangaluru and has been practising in Pune. The role of Ms. Waghmare is not yet clear. However, the Pune Police suspect she may have links with Mr. Lokhande. They have seized her phone and laptop.

## 3 tribal church leaders killed in Manipur

Several Thadou (a section claims it is a distinct community and not a constituent of the Kuki group of tribes), Kuki, and Zomi organisations have announced a "total shutdown" in Kangpokpi, Churachandpur, and other districts to protest the killings. The shutdown is for three days.

## CM checks in

Condemning the incident, Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh said he visited the injured at the hospital to ensure they get the highest standard of care. He said the government would bear their medical expenses.

He assured the people that the government would use every resource to bring the perpetrators and their handlers to justice.

A statement issued by the Senapati district unit of the United Naga Council said about 20 Nagas of Konsakhul village were held hostage by people from Leilon Vaiphei village soon after the ambush.

In the same district dominated by the Nagas, the chairman of a Kuki village urged the Senapati police to release 23 Kuki labourers "detained" by locals.

## Khera appears before Crime Branch for questioning

The Hindu Bureau  
GUWAHATI

Congress leader Pawan Khera on Wednesday appeared before the Assam Police's Crime Branch in Guwahati for questioning in connection with a case filed against him by Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, the wife of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Mr. Khera had claimed before the elections that Ms. Sharma held multiple passports and possessed assets abroad. She rejected the allegations and responded with a criminal case, accusing him of defamation, forgery, and criminal conspiracy.

"Mr. Khera arrived with his legal team and is participating in the questioning process. Officials are examining the basis of the allegations and the supporting material presented by him," Congress's legal representative Reetam Singh said. He stated that Mr. Khera was not expected to be arrested as the Supreme Court had granted him anticipatory bail on April 30.

Senior Congress leader Ripun Bora, who visited the Crime Branch office, said Mr. Khera would leave for Delhi after the inquiry.

## CBI Director Praveen Sood gets another one-year extension

Tenure to extend for a year beyond May 24; Centre's decision comes after panel meeting on Tuesday; Rahul accuses govt. of 'institutional capture'

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director, Praveen Sood, has been given another one-year extension, as approved on Wednesday by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) based on the recommendations of the Selection Committee.

The ACC order stated that Mr. Sood's tenure has been extended for a year beyond May 24, 2026. The 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer was earlier granted one-year extension in May 2025 after completion of his two-year term as CBI chief.

On Tuesday, a high-powered committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met to decide on the appointment of the next CBI Director. During the meeting, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi submitted a dissent note, accusing the government of "institutional capture" of the agency to target political opponents, journalists, and critics.



Praveen Sood was earlier granted one-year extension in May 2025 after completion of his two-year term as CBI chief. PTI

Mr. Gandhi shared his dissent note on his X handle. "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 Opposition is included in the Selection Committee. Regrettably, you have continued to deny me any meaningful role

in the process," he said.

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

"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," said Mr. Gandhi.

## SC questions HC ruling on law college attendance norms

Aaratrika Bhaumik  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed serious reservations over a November 3, 2025, ruling of the Delhi High Court, which held that law students should not be barred from appearing in examinations solely on account of attendance shortages. The court said that such a view risked turning law college hostels into "just boarding and lodging facilities", with students no longer feeling compelled to regularly attend classes.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and Vijay Bishnoi said it would "lay down the correct law" while issuing a notice on a plea filed by Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS) challenging the High Court judgment.

The Bench, however, declined to stay the operation of the ruling. "We are not suspending that order. We will hear the matter, decide and lay down the



The Bench, however, declined to stay the operation of the High Court ruling.

correct position of law," the Bench observed.

During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the university, contended that the Delhi High Court ruling had effectively diluted attendance requirements and was posing significant challenges for law colleges across the country.

"The High Court says no attendance is required anywhere. People don't want to go to college. I am wondering why we went to college then," Mr. Rohatgi said.

## Don't be 'self-centred', RTE is for benefit of children: SC says in TET review case

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked teachers not to be "self-centered" and think only about their job security, but spare a thought for children in need of quality education, a right protected under the Constitution and the Right to Education Act.

The court's oral observations came while hearing a series of petitions filed by the States of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and teachers' associations from West Bengal and Kerala, seeking a review of a September 2025 judgment requiring in-service teachers of Classes 1 to 8 in non-minority schools across the country to clear the Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) in two years or be "compulsorily retired".

Tamil Nadu had argued that the judgment affected about four lakh teachers in the State alone. If implemented on the ground, the

Court notes it had only reinforced the requirement of a minimum qualification

State would have to bear witness to "classrooms without teachers", it had contended.

"The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act [Right to Education Act, 2009] exists for the children. Do not be self-centered to say 'I will only get orders from the court protecting my security of tenure, but will not think about the children'," Justice Dipankar Datta, heading a Bench comprising Justice Manmohan, addressed the review petitioners.

Justice Datta referred to Section 23(2) of the 2009 Act, which gave teachers five years' time to get the "mandatory" qualification of TET in cases of shortage of trained teachers and the

## 'Iran is working on a Hormuz protocol to cover safety costs'

Kalol Bhattacharjee  
NEW DELHI

Iran has provided "free of charge services" to international shipping in the Strait of Hormuz for decades but is now working on a "protocol" to include a financial component covering costs it incurs to make navigation safe in the Persian Gulf region, said Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi here on Wednesday.

Speaking to a select group of journalists at the Embassy of Iran, Mr. Gharibabadi, who is here for the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting, avoided naming the UAE directly and said "a neighbouring country that is also a member of the BRICS" is thwarting a joint statement at the meeting by trying to introduce language that seeks to condemn Iran's military strategy against U.S. and Israeli attacks.

"So far, Iran has provided free-of-charge services in the Strait of Hormuz. In fact, these services were provided by both Oman and Iran. Now we are working on a protocol and arrangement covering navigation, pollution of the

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister says the Strait of Hormuz will remain open to ships linked to India

Strait and rescue (in case of accidents). The protocol has not been finalised yet and we are working at expert level," he said.

He said that though the arrangement will be "non-discriminatory", Iran will not cooperate with countries that are found to be supporting the U.S. and Israel. He accused the two countries of starting the war on February 28 amid negotiations on Tehran's nuclear capabilities.

Mr. Gharibabadi said the Strait of Hormuz will remain open to ships linked to India, but said marine traffic will be affected if the U.S. resumed its attacks on Iran. He said Iran is not a member of 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and can go ahead with its "protocol" on the chokepoint. The remarks came just days after U.S. President Donald Trump rejected Iran's proposals calling them "totally unacceptable".

## Centre clears funds for semi high-speed rail project

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Wednesday approved a semi high-speed double line rail project linking Sarkhej in Ahmedabad to Dholera, which lies about 100 km away, for a total cost of ₹20,667 crore.

"It will be Indian Railways' first semi high-speed project, planned with indigenously developed technology," the Railway Ministry said, adding that it will serve as a pioneer initiative, acting as a reference model for the phased expansion of semi high-speed rail across the country.

The project will facilitate faster travel between Ahmedabad, the Dholera special investment region, the upcoming Dholera Airport, and the NHMC. It will also enhance connectivity to 284 villages, with a total population of about 5 lakh, and expand the existing network of Indian Railways by about 134 km.

## Fix panic buttons, tracking devices in public transport vehicles: SC to States

Aaratrika Bhaumik  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed all States and Union Territories to urgently implement the provisions of the Central Motor Vehicles (CMV) Rules, 1989 mandating the installation of speed governors, vehicle location tracking devices and emergency panic buttons in passenger transport vehicles.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan observed that these safety requirements were being widely flouted across the country.

"We direct all States and Union Territories to strictly enforce the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 by en-



Vehicle makers must be told to make sure that panic buttons are installed, the court said.

suring the installation of vehicle location tracking devices and panic buttons in a time-bound and verifiable manner in both new and existing public service vehicles," the Bench said.

The directions were issued in a public interest litigation filed by Coimbatore-based surgeon S. Rajasekaran, who drew attention to India's alarming rate of road fatalities and the "utter callous and casual attitude" of State authorities towards road safety measures.

Senior advocate Gaurav Agarwal, assisting the court as *amicus curiae*, submitted that according to data placed before Parliament in 2024, speed-limiting devices had been installed in less than 5% of transport vehicles, while vehicle location tracking devices were present in fewer than 1% of such vehicles. Describing the figures as "disturbing", the Bench directed that fitness certificates or permits should not be issued to public service

vehicles found in violation. It ordered States and Union Territories to file fresh status reports indicating compliance.

The court also directed the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways to hold consultations with vehicle manufacturers to ensure all new vehicles were fitted with speed-limiting devices, vehicle location tracking devices, and panic buttons at the manufacturing stage itself, while States were ordered to retrofit existing vehicles with these devices.

It further directed States and Union Territories to integrate compliance data with the centralised VAHAN portal for real-time monitoring.

## Curb dissemination of porn through apps, HC tells Google, Apple

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked Google and Apple to strictly act against the dissemination of obscene pornographic content through mobile applications hosted on their online platforms.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.K. Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said that in the present legal framework, the social media intermediaries have to play the "most vital role". It also asked the Centre's Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) to check the dissemination of such content.

The court was hearing a petition by Rubika Thapa.

"We can't permit a whole generation of the country to be ruined. We understand all kinds of freedom under Article 19 [of the Constitution] but that does not mean that we allow [dissemination of vulgar content]," the court orally remarked.

The court also issued notice to the Central government, Google LLC, Apple, and CERT-In on the petition and sought an action-taken report from the platforms.

The plea highlighted that the offending mobile applications were easily available to children.

# 'Unfair, stressful': students in a rage over NEET saga

With no re-test date announced and over 20 lakh students in limbo, many grapple with uncertainty, pressure and possibility of delayed admissions; describing the cancellation a major failure of examination system, they seek free transport for the re-test; calling for strict action, educators, unions say aspirants should be counselled and given time to recover before reappearing for the re-test

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

With no re-test date announced for the cancelled National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), students, parents and educators have expressed anger, frustration, and anxiety over additional study load and pressure, and the possibility of delayed admissions resulting in less time for course work.

While they welcomed the exemption of fee for the retest, many called the cancellation a major failure of the examination system.

Over 20 lakh students have to take the re-test for more than 10 medical courses, competing for over 2.5 lakh seats.

Describing the entire episode as unfair and stressful, several people are demanding transport support for students when

they retake the exam.

The Tamil Nadu Consumers Federation said that free bus and train travel should be provided to NEET aspirants. Students travel beyond their own States, or districts within their respective States, to take the exam, bearing significant expenses to appear for the test, the federation's general secretary, K. Thirunavukkarasu, said. "This time, they will have to be compensated for their travel expenses."

P.D. Satya Sree, who completed her Class 12 this year and had been preparing for NEET, said the cancellation had left her shocked and emotionally drained.

"Not just me, many of my friends who appeared for NEET this time are struggling to process this. We don't know how to start preparing all over again," she said, adding that the uncertainty and



**Uncertain future:** Members of a student organisation protesting against the cancellation of NEET-UG in Hyderabad on Wednesday. NAGARA GOPAL

pressure has taken a heavy emotional toll on students for various reasons.

### Every mark matters

Albin Benoy, a student from Odisha, said the cancellation has come as a blow. "With the examination now set to be conducted

again, I do not know how I can return to Kerala and resume coaching at such short notice," he said. Students were also anxious about the nature of the repeat examination.

"There is concern about the difficulty level of the retest. In a highly competi-

tive exam like NEET, even a single mark can determine the college a student gets, and shape their entire future," Mr. Benoy said.

For Mounika U., a long-term aspirant, the cancellation has been emotionally devastating. "Months and years of my prepara-

tion have gone to waste because of a system failure. I did nothing wrong," she said. Although she is willing to take the examination again, she questioned who could guarantee a fair and transparent process.

Describing the cancellation of the test as an injustice, particularly to those who were expecting top ranks based on the provisional answer key released shortly after the test, George Thomas, director of Brilliant Study Centre at Pala in Kerala, said that the uncertainty has also created severe financial anxiety for families who had already stretched their resources for coaching, tuition, and hostel expenses.

A NEET(UG) trainer from Secunderabad, G. Vijay Kumar, said the alleged paper leak and subsequent cancellation would have serious consequences, particularly for long-term aspirants. "It is difficult to

counsel such young students when a prestigious national entrance examination itself becomes a failure. There is immense pressure and an emotional impact on students," he said. Aspirants should be counselled and given adequate time to recover before reappearing for the examination, Mr. Kumar added.

### 'Abolish the exam'

The All India Students' Federation Andhra Pradesh vice-president, M. Saikumar, has demanded permanent abolition of the nationwide NEET.

He also called for immediate closure of the "incompetent" National Testing Agency, holding it responsible for repeated failures.

Protests were held near the Telangana Secretariat by the Student Islamic Organisation of India along with several aspirants. "Repeated failures send a mes-

sage that the government is incapable of conducting the examination in a fair and transparent manner," they said.

The Students' Federation of India (Telangana), which led demonstrations in Hyderabad, termed the controversy an "administrative failure". Its leader, T. Nagaraju, said the present scandal was a repeat of past incidents because strict action had not been taken after the 2024 paper leak.

"While the officials, middlemen, and coaching mafia responsible for the leak must be arrested immediately, the demand by individual States to conduct their own entrance examinations is important. Policies that are helping education become a corporate business must also be withdrawn," the student leaders said. (With inputs from State bureaux)

## NTA, govt. did not want to cancel NEET in 2024, cited student welfare in the SC

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

A decision taken by the National Testing Agency (NTA) with the approval of the Centre to scrap NEET-UG, upsetting the future of over 22 lakh students nationwide, is diametrically opposite to what it had said and promised in the Supreme Court amid the backlash over the NEET (UG) paper leak in 2024.

Two years ago, the Centre and the NTA had told the court cancelling the test would be a drastic and ill-advised move, jeopardising careers of lakhs of students. They had urged segregation rather than cancellation in 2024, reasoning that students "innocent of wrongdoing should not pay a price for those who are actually found to be involved in irregularities".

The government had argued in 2024 that cancelling the test would be like

### In its 2024 order, the court enumerated four consequences of the cancellation of the entrance test

treating "unequals equally" and that innocents and wrongdoers would be made to suffer the same consequences. "Public bodies, after all, had to act fairly and reasonably," the Centre said.

The Centre had promised the court that the enactment of the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 was solid evidence of its "seriousness about safeguarding the sanctity of exams".

Not more than two years have passed since these assurances and a statement issued by the NTA on Tuesday said that "inputs" and "investigative findings" necessitate the cancellation of the test.

The court did not cancel the 2024 test. It had held that cancellation would require the high-threshold proof of "systemic breach in the sanctity of the examination". It is not certain if the 2026 paper leak shows such a systemic breach.

### Four consequences

In its 2024 order, the court enumerated four hard-hitting consequences of the cancellation of the NEET exam.

These were disruption of the admission schedule for the commencement of courses, setting back the entire process by several months; cascading effects on the course of medical education; impact on the availability of qualified medical professionals in the future; and a grave disadvantage to students from marginalised communities and weaker sections for whom reservation has been made in the allocation of seats.

## 'Transport, storage, human handling are weakest links in holding NEET'

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**  
NEW DELHI

The K. Radhakrishnan Committee, constituted following the controversies surrounding malpractice in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate medical admissions in 2024, identified local transport and storage and human handling as some of the weakest links in the conduct of the test. The committee formed in June 2024 submitted its report in October the same year.

In its report, the committee said the test should be conducted in phases and a computer/hybrid mode should be brought in instead of relying entirely on a pen-and-paper mode. The committee sought an overhaul of the National Testing Agency (NTA) while reducing paper leak risks, minimising logistical vulnerabilities, improving encrypted delivery, and enabling better audit trails. It said the NTA should bring in permanent professional



The committee had sought feedback from stakeholders, especially students and parents. FILE PHOTO

staff, reduce dependence on outsourced manpower, and have stronger accountability mechanisms.

Now, two years later, the Centre is yet to fully implement the recommendations. NEET-UG is India's largest entrance examination conducted in a single day and in a single shift and attended by nearly 25 lakh candidates.

The report called for efforts to prevent impersonation by fake candidates to crack down on organised cheating networks and blacklist

centres. Digital surveillance, CCTV use, and command-and-control monitoring could strengthen these efforts, it said.

### Sought feedback

As part of the report-making process, the committee had sought feedback from stakeholders, especially students and parents. More than 37,000 responses were collected, a bulk of them from Class 12 students.

The committee explained that while doing away with third-party in-

volvement in the exam process is recommended, a district-wise assessment of infrastructure – especially in rural areas – is equally important. It said that a computer-based test could reduce paper leak risk and enable better audit trails.

"The NTA may target developing at least 1,000 secure Standard Testing Centres in the country, in a phased manner, in reputed government institutions. This process may require a 'war-footing' approach," the committee said, adding that it envisaged a future where the NTA could offer a nimble, zero-error, adaptive, and integrative process.

The committee also said that India could emerge as a global leader in educational testing. "Any test-conducting agency that learns to operate nationwide testing in India successfully gets to train a robust model that can work at scale in varied conditions and contexts elsewhere in the world," the committee said.

## Plea seeks SC direction to restructure or replace NTA

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on Wednesday seeking a direction to the Centre to "replace or fundamentally restructure" the National Testing Agency (NTA) following the cancellation of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate medical admissions. The test, conducted on May 3, was cancelled due to a question paper leak.

The Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) pressed for the need for a "more robust, technologically advanced and autonomous body for conducting NEET".

It said the court should intervene and appoint a high-powered monitoring committee chaired by a retired apex court judge and with members including a cybersecurity expert and a forensic scientist to supervise the re-conduct of the exam and ensure there were no further leaks.

## Cong. takes a swipe at RSS leader over Pak. remarks

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday took a dig at senior RSS functionary Dattatreya Hosabale over his remarks advocating dialogue with Pakistan.

Reacting to Mr. Hosabale's remarks in an interview to PTI Videos, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the RSS leader's recent interactions in the U.S. seemed to have had an impact on his outlook. He took a swipe at TV channels and supporters of the ruling dispensation, saying they would have "frothed, fumed, and fulminated" had similar remarks been made by leaders outside the ideological fold of the RSS.

Mr. Hosabale had said there should "always be a window" for dialogue with Pakistan and stressed the importance of people-to-people engagement in easing tensions between the two countries.

## Modi cuts size of his convoy after making an appeal to save fuel

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has substantially downsized the strength of his convoy, days after making an appeal to the people for the rational use of fuel-powered vehicles amid the West Asia crisis, a move subsequently followed by Chief Ministers in several States ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Mr. Modi's fleet size has been reduced while ensuring that all essential components of his security arrangements remain in accordance with the Special Protection Group (SPG) protocols. After his appeal during a recent speech in Hyderabad, the decision was reportedly implemented during his visits to Gujarat and Assam. He has also asked for already available electric vehicles to be part of his convoy.

Following Mr. Modi's appeal, Uttar Pradesh Chief



Narendra Modi

Minister Yogi Adityanath directed a 50% reduction in the number of escort vehicles for himself and his Cabinet colleagues. He has requested people to reduce fuel consumption and avoid unnecessary purchase of gold, as suggested by Mr. Modi. The BJP-led governments in Delhi, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Bihar have also taken similar decisions.

Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghvi has cancelled his planned visit to the U.S.

## Kharge slams Modi over 'stagnant' pensions

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday accused the Narendra Modi government of preaching austerity to citizens while spending lavishly on publicity and political spectacle, even as pensions for the elderly, widows, and people with disabilities remain stagnant.

In a post on X, Mr. Kharge alleged that the Centre had failed to raise old-age pensions for the past 12 years despite soaring inflation, thereby eroding the economic dignity of vulnerable sections of society.

Citing expenditure figures, he said the Centre had spent ₹5,987.46 crore on advertisements and publicity campaigns.

"This cruel BJP model strips disadvantaged citizens of their economic dignity while spending extravagantly on political spectacle," he said.

## TVS MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED



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CIN: L35921TN1999PL0022945

### STATEMENT OF STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated					
		Quarter ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Year ended				
		31.03.2026	31.03.2026	31.03.2026	31.03.2026				
		(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)				
1	Total Income from operations	12,807.63	9,550.44	47,270.32	36,251.32	15,052.73	11,542.00	56,069.52	44,089.01
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional Items)	1,358.40	1,009.56	4,944.89	3,521.54	1,298.13	992.88	4,871.82	3,505.35
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional Items)	1,358.40	1,009.56	4,903.52	3,521.54	1,298.13	992.88	4,821.74	3,505.35
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	997.70	760.68	3,615.22	2,633.89	819.55	697.51	3,186.43	2,379.81
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (Loss) (after tax))	1,026.04	800.98	3,780.58	2,666.08	1,019.00	733.01	3,693.34	2,427.03
6	Paid up Equity share capital (Face value of Re.1/- each)	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	-	-	11,186.79	9,849.71	-	-	9,516.74	8,455.87
8	Security Premium Account	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9	Networth	11,348.62	10,006.97	11,348.62	10,006.97	9,187.21	8,481.39	9,187.21	8,481.39
10	Outstanding Debt	2,733.36	1,441.38	2,733.36	1,441.38	27,697.48	23,500.76	27,697.48	23,500.76
11	Outstanding Non-Convertible Redeemable Preference Shares	1,900.35	-	1,900.35	-	1,900.35	-	1,900.35	-
12	Debt Equity Ratio (Times) (Debt includes NCRPS)	0.24	0.15	0.24	0.14	2.60	2.76	2.60	2.76
13	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Re. 1/- each) (not annualised)	21.00	15.78	76.09	54.81	16.24	13.41	3,693.34	46.42
	(i) Basic & Diluted (in Rs.) from continuing operations	-	0.23	-	0.63	-	0.23	-	0.63
	(ii) Basic & Diluted (in Rs.) from discontinuing operations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	(iii) Basic & Diluted (in Rs.) from continuing and discontinuing operations	21.00	16.01	76.09	55.44	16.24	13.64	3,653.53	47.05
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Debtenture Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiary) (Times)	3.82	7.13	4.77	5.18	2.12	2.34	3.03	2.88
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiary) (Times)	29.37	37.16	29.64	29.61	18.50	18.06	17.75	14.36
18	Current Ratio (Times)	0.54	0.61	0.54	0.61	0.97	1.12	0.97	1.12
19	Long term debt to working capital (Times)	-	-	-	-	2.46	1.81	2.46	1.81
20	Bad debts to Accounts Receivable ratio (Times)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	Current liability ratio (Times)	0.88	0.84	0.88	0.84	0.70	0.60	0.70	0.60
22	Total debts to total assets ratio (Times)	0.12	0.09	0.12	0.09	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.58
23	Debtors Turnover ratio (Times)	28.08	28.08	28.08	28.08	25.66	24.80	25.66	24.80
24	Inventory Turnover ratio (Times)	20.37	16.64	20.37	16.64	14.31	11.46	14.31	11.46
25	Operating Margin (%)	13.1	14.0	12.9	12.3	11.3	12.1	11.5	10.8
26	Net Profit Margin (%)	7.8	8.0	7.6	7.3	5.4	6.0	5.7	5.4

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.tvsmotor.com).
- Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.
- The Detailed Financial Results of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2026 can be accessed through the QR code.



For TVS Motor Company Limited  
Sd/-  
Sudarshan Venu  
Chairman

Date: 13.05.2026

## IN BRIEF



## Consider requests on CCTV funds for police stations: SC

The Supreme Court on Wednesday urged the Union government to consider requests from States for the disbursement of funds for installing CCTV cameras and creating a centralised monitoring dashboard across police stations. A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath asked the Centre to ensure the implementation of the Assistance to States and Union Territories for Modernisation of Police scheme, under which the Ministry of Home Affairs has undertaken to provide funds for installing CCTV infrastructure in police stations across States and Union Territories. The order was passed in a *suo motu* proceeding initiated last year.

## SC praises decision by kin to donate Harish Rana's organs

The Supreme Court on Wednesday expressed appreciation for the family of Harish Rana, the first person in India to be permitted withdrawal of clinically assisted nutrition and hydration, for their "selfless" decision to donate his corneas and heart valves. A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan said such "generosity" would ensure that Rana's legacy lives on through the lives he saves. "Harish left his mortal world on his own terms, surrounded by love and compassion. Even in the face of their own loss, his family chose generosity through the selfless decision to donate his corneas and heart valves..." the Bench said.

## Accused in terror-financing case arrested after extradition

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday arrested an alleged "narco-terrorist", Iqbal Singh, after securing his extradition from Portugal following sustained diplomatic and legal efforts. The NIA alleged that Singh, alias Shera, was a mastermind in a major Hizb-ul-Mujahideen terror-financing case. He was brought to Delhi and taken into custody. The accused had fled to Portugal in 2020. A non-bailable arrest warrant was issued against him in October 2020, followed by an Interpol Red Notice in June 2021. According to the NIA, Shera was a key conspirator and handler of an India-based narco-terror module engaged in smuggling heroin from Pakistan.

## Prateek Yadav, younger son of Mulayam Singh, passes away

Prateek Yadav, younger son of Samajwadi Party (SP) founder Mulayam Singh Yadav and husband of BJP leader Aparna Bisht Yadav, passed away at 38, in Lucknow on Wednesday morning after falling ill. He was rushed to the Civil Hospital in Lucknow, where doctors declared him brought dead. He was the stepbrother of Akhilesh Yadav, the president of the Samajwadi Party. The postmortem conducted at King George's Medical University (KGMU) revealed that Mr. Yadav died due to a massive blockage in the blood vessels of the lungs. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited Mr. Yadav's residence, and, in a post on X, expressed his grief.

## CBSE Class 12 results record slight dip in pass percentage

National pass percentage stands at 85.2%, 3.19 percentage points down from last year's; girls record a 88.86% rate, outperforming boys; Thiruvananthapuram region records over 95%

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Wednesday released the Class 12 Board examination results, which recorded a slight dip in the overall pass percentage from last year's results.

The national pass percentage stands at 85.2%, a drop of 3.19 percentage points from last year's 88.39%. A total of 17,68,968 students appeared in the examination.

Girls have once again outshone boys. "The pass rate for girls reached 88.86%, surpassing boys



**Jubilant faces:** Students in Patna celebrate their success after the CBSE Class 12 results were announced on Wednesday. ANI

(82.13%) by a significant margin of 6.73%," a CBSE release said.

The Board has maintained its tradition of not

releasing an official merit list to curb "unhealthy competition", it said. Over 94,000 students scored above 90%, with more

than 17,000 candidates securing marks above 95%. Among the regions, Thiruvananthapuram leads the charts with a 95.62% pass rate, followed closely by Chennai and Bengaluru. Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh has the lowest at 72.43%.

Up to 1.63 lakh students placed in the compartment category, or those wishing to improve their scores in a single subject, can appear for the supplementary exams scheduled for July 15, the CBSE said.

The Board will soon release the schedule for students who wish to apply for marks verification or a photocopy of their evaluated answer books.

## Maharashtra ATS questions 57 over 'links' with gangsters

The Hindu Bureau  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has interrogated 57 persons across the State as part of an operation against networks linked to Pakistan-based "gangsters", including the Shahzad Bhatti gang and the Dogra gang. Officials said the focus is on identifying sleeper cells, local operatives, and support systems that may facilitate arms smuggling or conspiracies.

The operation began at around 8 a.m. on Wednesday. ATS teams conducted searches in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Nalasopara, Mira Road, Akola, Nanded, Nashik, and Jalgaon.

Officials said the ATS plans to question persons who are in contact with these "gangsters" through social media platforms or are considered followers or sympathisers of the networks. Intelligence inputs received over a period of time indicated that "gangsters" operating from across the border were using social media to recruit youths from Maharashtra, officials added. ATS teams seized laptops, mobile phones, pen drives, and other devices. They are examining bank accounts and financial transactions to determine if funds were routed from Pakistan through hawala channels.

## PCOS gets a new name; change seeks to aid faster diagnosis and treatment

Ramya Kannan  
CHENNAI

The Endocrine Society, a global organisation of scientists and physicians devoted to hormone-related conditions, has decided to rename Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) as Polycystic Metabolic Syndrome (PMOS).

What's in a name, you might ask. But there is good reason why this name change is important. In an article published in *The Lancet*, the authors Helena J. Teede et al, argue that the term PCOS is inaccurate as it refers to cysts in the ovaries and, if diagnosis is based on this, contributes to delays in diagnosis, treatment, and stigma. Instead, they explain that "accuracy is improved by omitting cysts and by capturing endocrine, metabolic, and ovarian dysfunction". A "global implementation strategy, including a transition period, education, and alignment with health systems and disease classification" is reportedly under way.

A. Jaishree Gajaraj, senior obstetrician-gynaecologist based in Chennai, says this is a welcome move that will definitely help improve the perception of this condition, and will help clinical practice



PCOS is estimated to affect 170 million women during their reproductive years alone.

as well. "Unfortunately even doctors seem to think cysts in the ovary alone is PCOS, and there is a lot of erroneous self-diagnosis as well these days," she said.

PCOS is estimated to affect 170 million women during their reproductive years alone. It is diagnosed, based on women over 20 meeting at least two of the following International Guideline criteria: irregular or absent ovulation (oligo-ovulation), meaning periods that are infrequent, too long between cycles, or absent; high male hormone levels (hyperandrogenism), with either visible signs such as excess hair growth, acne, or hair loss; or blood tests; and polycystic ovaries detected as small follicles, on ultrasound scans or high Anti Müllerian Hormone levels in the blood.

However, as the paper

says: "The broad clinical features of the condition are not captured in its current name, as although arrested follicular development is common, ovarian cysts are not increased. These factors delay diagnosis - with up to 70% of the affected individuals remaining undiagnosed."

The authors write that PCOS has long been "primarily perceived as a gynaecological or ovarian disorder". The reproductive focus of the name can reinforce stigma, particularly in sociocultural contexts where fertility carries high value.

However, mounting research, evidence synthesis, and International Guidelines have shown that PCOS is underpinned by "endocrine disturbances in insulin, androgens, and neuroendocrine and ovarian hormones." Further, they emphasise that the multi-pronged features that underline the condition must be folded in for a diagnosis. They can be metabolic, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, and abnormal levels of fats in the blood, they could also be reproductive - causing irregular menstrual cycles, infertility, pregnancy complications, and endometrial cancer. They can also manifest as psychological features.

## Nicobarese oppose proposal for three wildlife sanctuaries

Abhinay Lakshman  
NEW DELHI

Even as the Calcutta High Court is set to hear challenges to the Centre's Great Nicobar Island (GNI) project over allegations that the Forest Rights Act was violated while obtaining locals' consent for it, the tribal council in Nicobar has now flagged further violations of the law in the government's notification of three wildlife sanctuaries in the Little Nicobar, Menchal, and Meroe islands.

While acknowledging that its ₹92,000-crore development project to build an international container transshipment port, an airport, and a greenfield tourist township on the Great Nicobar Island would impact coral colonies, and nesting habitats of the leatherback turtle and the megapode, the Union government, in October 2022, notified the three sanctuaries to conserve these species, in parts of the Little Nicobar Island, Meroe Island and Menchal Island - all north of GNI.

## Community in the dark

However, since August 2022, the Tribal Council of Little and Great Nicobar has been writing to the Union government and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&NI) administration, flagging that the process to notify these sanctuaries had been initiated without giving notice to members of their community who have lived on and maintained these islands for generations.

In a letter to the Assistant Conservator of Forests of the Nicobar Forest Division, the tribal council on April 23 this year, reiterated that the three sanctuaries on Little Nicobar Island and the Meroe and Menchal islands were announced without any consultation with the residents and traditional owners and caretakers of the islands. The council noted that of these three sites, Meroe and Menchal islands are of "high cultural and spiritual significance" to the Nicobarese; they believe the sites are home to the spirits of their ancestors.

The council was responding to a notice for a meeting of the committee constituted to determine the eco-sensitive zone around these three sanctuaries - the Leatherback Turtle Sanctuary in parts of LNI, the Megapode Sanctuary in all of Menchal



The sanctuaries will come up on Little Nicobar, Meroe, and Menchal islands. GETTY IMAGES

Island, and the Coral Sanctuary on the entire Meroe Island. In the letter, the council said its chairman was not consulted before the committee was formed - he was merely informed that he was part of the committee, that too a month later.

## 'Scrap decision'

The council said the notification for these sanctuaries should be revoked and the committee on eco-sensitive zones be dissolved, as they were against the wishes of the community. The sanctuaries would encroach upon their pre-existing rights on these lands, which they have been exercising to hold ritual hunts, maintain plantations, worship their ancestors, and conserve wildlife species around them, it said.

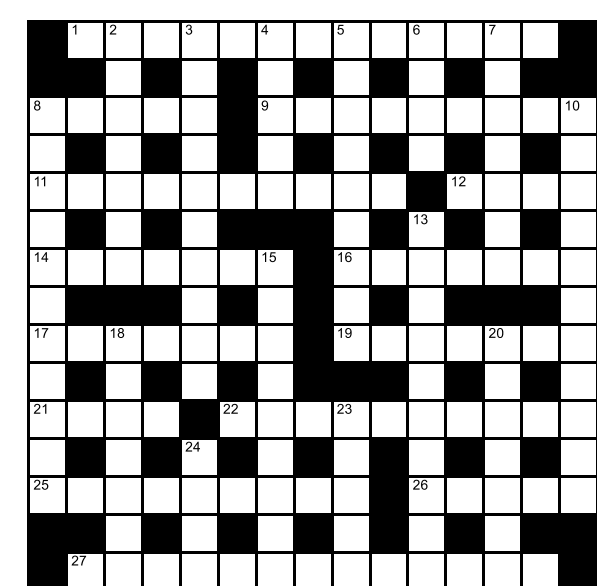
In response to the concerns raised by the tribal council, the Nicobar administration, in May 2025, issued a "clarification" noting that the declaration of the three sanctuaries would not affect the "hunting rights conferred on the Scheduled Tribes of the Nicobar Islands".

## Appeal to Minister

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Congress leader and former Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh wrote to Tribal Affairs Minister Jial Oram, asserting that consent procedures under the Forest Rights Act were violated in the case of the GNI project.

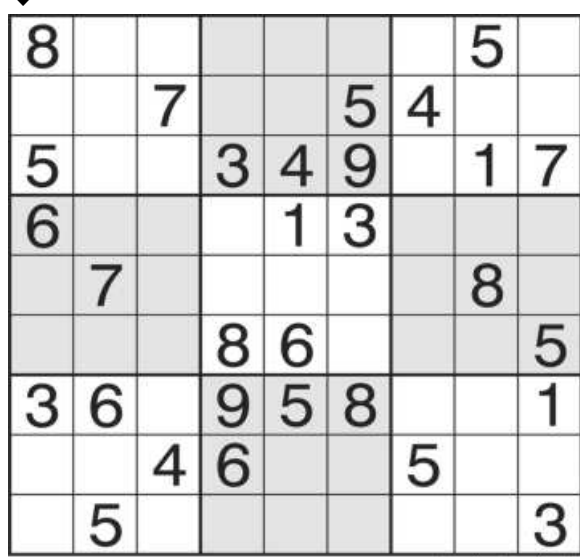
He noted that the consent should have been obtained from the Tribal Council and not the Gram Sabhas, and also questioned how the government-controlled Andaman Adim Janjati Vikas Samiti could grant consent for the project on behalf of the Shompen, a particularly vulnerable tribal group. Mr. Ramesh asked Mr. Oram to direct the A&NI administration to withdraw the clearances issued under the law.

**THE CROSSWORD+ 14793** Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>



- Across**
- Bans pesticide, nasty stuff (4,3,6)
  - Dim lights entirely at first in pub (5)
  - Dribbling with energy in east European arena (9)
  - Be very surprised by awful heat on set around afternoon (3,4,3)
  - Beat culprit stealing bags in retreat (4)
- Down**
- Thought creatively and edited a novel (7)
  - Most resilient secret agents collaring gang leader in tunnel (10)
  - Bags filled with special egg holders (5)
  - Girl transported by plane has broken bones (9)
  - Wife entertained by show about sheep (4)
  - Victory secured by deceit, rogue's expelled (7)
  - Stabbed with rake, ripping the stomach (11)
  - Start to roll joint with member in merry social event held on lawn (6,5)
  - One inspired by macho stud's unusual knack of making money (5,5)
  - Revolutionary plan to catch brilliant Mafia boss in European region (9)
  - Ancient chamber containing large bag (7)
  - Musician in Paris, playing in hotel bar (7)
  - Take a sedative to stay relaxed (5)
  - Starts to beat leader of cocaine cartel (4)

## SUDOKU



**Solution to previous puzzle**

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

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

## FAITH

## Tiruvaimozhi: revered work

In a pasuram about Lord Azhagar of Thirumalirunjalai, Nammazhvar says the Lord Himself sings the verses in praise of Him. This gives us an idea about the greatness of Tiruvaimozhi, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. Tiruvaimozhi will always remain a revered work. There is a story about a king, who was against Vaishnavism. He went about pulling down all Vishnu temples. When this king died, his son became the king. The new king knew that his father had been foolish. He told his ministers that Vaishnavism could not be destroyed as long as the Ramayana and Tiruvaimozhi were around. We have bodies made of five elements. The rains nourish crops and grass. We eat that which grows on the earth. We drink the milk of cows, which feed on grass. To cook our food we need fire. But in the case of Nammazhvar, he never ate or drank anything that depended on the elements. He said the food he ate, the water he drank, the betel leaves he chewed were all nothing but Kannan (Lord Krishna).

There are many Upanishadic truths in Tiruvaimozhi. For instance, he says God exists if you say he does. He also exists if you say He doesn't! If you say God doesn't exist, then you will be asked, "How do you know?" If the answer to that question is "He is not here," then it can be asked, "Does this mean He is elsewhere?" If you reply that He is not here at present, then the question asked will be, "How do you know He wasn't there in the past, and won't be there in future?" The very fact that you are talking about God shows He exists. You cannot talk about something that does not exist. This is what Nammazhvar means when he says God exists when you deny His existence.

## 'India should have stepped into vacuum left by U.S.'



The session on 'India's Diplomatic Balancing in West Asia: Strategic Autonomy, Energy Security & Global Responsibility', moderated by Suhasini Haidar, Diplomatic Editor, *The Hindu*. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

India should have stepped into the vacuum when the United States, which played a dominant role in the West Asia region as the guarantor of security, lost its credibility in the region, said Talmiz Ahmad, former Ambassador to Oman, UAE, and Saudi Arabia, and Professor of International Studies, Symbiosis International University, Pune. He was speaking at Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS), which is hosting *The Hindu* Diplomacy and Sustainability Dialogues 2026.

The former Ambassador was speaking on the topic 'India's Diplomatic Balancing in West Asia: Strategic Autonomy, Energy Security and Global Responsibility' on Wednesday.

Answering a question posed by Suhasini Haidar, Diplomatic Editor, *The Hindu*, over whether he felt India has followed a "balanced" West Asia policy, Sunjay Sudhir, former Ambassador to UAE and Maldives and Distinguished Fellow, IIM Ahmedabad, said that the policy has been rather "pragmatic".

Commenting on India's role in the crisis in West Asia, Gulshan Sachdeva, Jean Monnet Chair, School of International Studies, JNU, said that India had taken a side in West Asia even before the war had begun.

"I would say that our assessment was not really correct. We thought that it was going to be a short and an easy war and they (U.S. and Israel) were going to win. We are trying to, perhaps, balance since then..." he said, adding, "Our one relationship with Israel should not become a liability, not only in West Asia, but in the entire Global South. In the long run, things are going to settle." T.C. Karthikeyan, Professor of Politics and International Relations, Director - Centre For Public Policy and Administration, Saveetha School of Law, added, "Whenever nations face economic hardships, some people may emerge saying they can offer all the solutions. We have to be mindful of the emergence of dictatorships. India should play the role of a facilitator."

## 'Iran war shows military force alone is no solution to conflicts'

Iran's insistence on a permanent solution of the issues involved has put the focus once again on political resolutions of wars and conflicts, in the region and beyond, says former diplomat T.S. Tirumurti at the Diplomacy and Sustainability Dialogues

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

The United States-Israel-India war has clearly exhibited that military action alone was not enough to find resolution to conflicts and that a political follow-up was pertinent, T.S. Tirumurti, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York, said in Chennai on Wednesday.

Speaking at the inauguration of Diplomacy and Sustainability Dialogues 2026, jointly organised by Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS) and *The Hindu*, the former Ambassador said, "...what has changed is that the Iran war has shown us once again that military force by itself cannot be a solution unless followed up with a political solution, whether in Ukraine or in Gaza or in Iran. With the U.S. and China having almost parallel visions of the world order, political resolution of conflict is one area which has been receiving less and less attention, especially from the P5 countries - the permanent five countries of the United Nations."

**On political resolutions**  
The Iranian insistence on a permanent solution of the issues involved, he said, has put the focus once again on political resolutions of wars and conflicts, both in the region and beyond.

Referring to the various conflicts and proxy wars in Africa fought by external players, historical conflicts in West Asia, including the Palestinian issue, and threats and conflicts in Latin America, Mr. Tirumurti said that terrorism has added one more layer of conflict by State or by non-State actors.

"We ignore all of them at our own peril. It is time



The inaugural session of Diplomacy and Sustainability Dialogues 2026 featured former diplomats and experts. L.V. Navaneeth, CEO, The Hindu Group, N.M. Veeraiyan, Chancellor, SIMATS Chennai, Suhasini Haidar, Diplomatic Editor, *The Hindu*, were present. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS



we took the right lessons from the Iran war," he warned.

### 'New world order'

Talmiz Ahmed, former Ambassador to Oman, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia, and Distinguished Professor of International Studies, Symbiosis International University, Pune, said the expression "we are in the cusp of a new world order" was something international relations experts were grappling with of late; and that it was a coming together of a "large number of significant changes".

"It will take some effort on your part to realise that many of the things that are given in your life are changing and are likely to change very significantly," Mr. Ahmed said pointing at what he called a "seismic change in political order"

in Tamil Nadu, and the government elected in Delhi 12 years ago that was re-vamping the basis of the idea of India enshrined in the Constitution. Quoting Lord Byron, he said, "...first freedom, then glory, then wealth, vice, corruption, barbarism at last...we are looking at the age of barbarism. This is what explains the extraordinary violence that has been wreaked all across West Asia with total impunity."

Sunjay Sudhir, former Ambassador to the UAE and Maldives, and Distinguished Fellow, IIM Ahmedabad, said that the West Asia conflict has had a deep impact on India that was visible in its GDP, inflation, fall of the rupee, and the current account deficit, and was also having a deep cascading effect on its industries, especially petrochemicals and fertilisers. "When the war ends, when there is this so-called settlement that satisfies all sides, I think it will be a big challenge for us, because not only is there a new axis forming - Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt - but with the politics of the Gulf Cooperation



Through activities connected with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we are committed to developing socially responsible students

N.M. VEERAIYAN  
Chancellor, SIMATS Chennai

Council (GCC) itself changing, I think that will put our diplomacy to a big test," he added.

N.M. Veeraiyan, Chancellor, SIMATS Chennai, said that the university believed in the principle of providing more than education, equipping students to contribute to society through innovation, research, policy, and sustainable development. "Through activities connected with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), we are committed to developing socially responsible students, ethical leaders, and researchers who can solve real world problems by themselves," Dr. Veeraiyan added.

In his welcome address,

L.V. Navaneeth, CEO, *The Hindu* Group of Publications, said dialogues such as these create informed public discourse, bringing together voices that helped society think deeper, engage better, and understand the larger forces shaping the future.

"At a time when the world is witnessing deep geopolitical shifts, economic uncertainty, energy insecurity, and increasing sustainability concerns, conventions such as these become not just relevant but a necessity," Mr. Navaneeth added.

Earlier, setting the stage for the deliberations, Dhanraj Ganapathy, Dean of Sustainability, SIMATS, said that India's position in the present geopolitical context was very "delicate" and it needed to tread cautiously while choosing between "the worse and the worst". SIMATS, he said, would consolidate the day's deliberations in the form of a document and present it to the Government of India.

S. Sundaresan, Vice-President, Advertisement Sales - South, *The Hindu*, proposed a vote of thanks at the end of the event.



The escalating Iran-Israel-USA conflict signals the dangerous breakdown of deterrence in West Asia. India was uniquely positioned to play a stabilising diplomatic role. India's long-standing civilisational ties with the Gulf, coupled with its growing global stature and energy dependence on the region, made neutrality not merely desirable but strategically necessary

ASHWANI KUMAR  
Vice-Chancellor, SIMATS



India's approach to the West Asia crisis reflects a delicate diplomatic balancing act aimed at protecting its strategic, economic, and geopolitical interests.

The greatest risks for India include pressure from competing global powers to take sides. India has managed to maintain balanced relations across West Asia while safeguarding its national interests and diplomatic flexibility

DHANRAJ GANAPATHY  
Dean of Sustainability, SIMATS

## India should formulate a regional policy for West Asia: T.S. Tirumurti

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

It is important to have a separate regional policy that accounts for the contradictions in a region, as a regional policy is not an aggregation of excellent bilateral policies, said T.S. Tirumurti, former Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, New York, at Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Sciences (SIMATS), near Thandalam, which hosted *The Hindu* Diplomacy and Sustainability Dialogues 2026.

In conversation with Stanly Johny, International Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*, on the topic 'India's Global Future: Leadership, Diplomacy and Sustainability in Times of Conflict', the former Ambassador said: "Right now, you have a huge problem between Saudi Arabia and the UAE. But India has excellent relations with both. So, how are you going to manage those contradictions? That comes only if you have a well-thought-out regional policy, which will also include Iran."

Asked to elaborate on tackling multiple crises arising out of the West Asia region, especially energy crises and so on, Mr. Tiru-



Former diplomat T.S. Tirumurti in conversation with Stanly Johny, International Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*, during a session at the Diplomacy & Sustainability Dialogues 2026. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

murti said: "There are two important aspects to it: strategic autonomy and pro-activeness. Strategic autonomy is enlarging your space and taking independent decisions for your country based on your national interest. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru exercised strategic autonomy by stating, 'I don't want to join either of the two'. And countries actually came and joined India in non-alignment (movement). We naturally became the leader of the Global South."

He added: "In the present context, we have multi-alignment. We have two superpowers who actually engage very closely with each other but they are also adversaries. In multi-

alignment, the point is it helps us get strategic autonomy, but it doesn't help us get leadership in geopolitics." The former diplomat added that leadership is important because geopolitics affects economy, business, technology, and everything else.

Speaking about the perils of not playing a proactive role, Mr. Tirumurti said, "If you do not take a proactive role [in conflicts], other countries like Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Pakistan will fill this space. So, you are actually ceding space to other countries. We should continue to stick to our policy of strategic autonomy but be proactive."

Explaining how Pakistan found itself at the

centre of the conflict between the United States, Israel, and Iran, the former Ambassador said, "A regional security architecture for that region (West Asia) should include Iran. Just as Russia should be included in Europe's security architecture. The blocking of [Strait of] Hormuz is going to change their thinking about security. In future, they will look at land connectivity, pipelines, and how to avoid it (blockades). De-risking supply chains will be a major aspect going forward," he said.

Explaining how the U.S. could not meet its objectives in the Iran conflict, he said, "By having a regime change, they wanted to stop this [radical] ideology and stop the proxies from getting any help from Iran. All of us know none of this has happened. Not only are Iran's Revolutionary Guards there, they also have become stronger... The most important thing that has happened due to the Iran war is that it has exposed the security umbrella of the United States and has shown the Gulf States are extremely vulnerable. When it comes to nuclear [weapons], all the stockpiles remain with Iran."

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

As the West Asia crisis impacts fertilizer supply globally, India should shift its long-term focus to gradually move away from the older model of fertilizer-dependent agricultural practices while not forgetting lessons learnt from the Sri Lankan experience, according to Sudha Meiyappan, Member, Economic Affairs Committee, Southern India Chamber of Commerce And Industry (SICCI).

Participating in a panel discussion on the topic 'Impact of West Asia Crisis on Economic Disruptions and Sustainability: Implications for India' here on Wednesday, she said that in the long run, India should seek to make agriculture sustainable by adopting natural farming, agro-forestry, and various other forms of sustainable movements that are taking place in the sector. She, however, put forth a caveat that India should take care to pick up lessons from the Sri Lankan experience.

The island country had made a sudden shift to organic farming with a ban on fertilizer imports leading to a drop in production of food grains causing eco-



The session on 'Impact of West Asia crisis on Economic Disruptions & Sustainability: Implications for India' moderated by Kunal Shankar, Deputy Business Editor, *The Hindu*. J. JOHAN SATHYADAS

nomical disruption and social unrest.

The panel discussion was part of the Diplomacy and Sustainability Dialogues 2026 jointly organised by the Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technological Sciences (SIMATS) and *The Hindu*.

Ms. Meiyappan said that in the short term, India should continue to follow the current policies while focussing on a transition to sustainable practices in the long term. "In the short term, you continue doing what you are doing today. You don't change to organic today, but over the long term, you slowly, gradually veer away...not organic per se, but something that's more climate resilient, more sustainable in nature. You can't get rid of

fertilizers but [determine] how much you are using and for what crop you are using and where the crop is being grown," she said, responding to a question from the moderator Kunal Shankar, Deputy Business Editor, *The Hindu*.

She also warned that India was looking at curtailment of personal consumption by virtue of general price rise due to the increase in fuel prices, even without the announcement from the Prime Minister. Gold prices, for example, went beyond the threshold of being a safe haven even before the war. After the announcement, the artisans and the local shops selling gold will be impacted heavily, Ms. Meiyappan added.

Col. Rajeev Agarwal

(ret'd), Senior Research Consultant, Chintan Research Foundation, said that the Iran war has given clear dimensions to projects like India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) while it has exposed the vulnerability of the existing trade routes and connectivity. Choke points and conflict zones, he said, would always make trade connectivity and supply lines vulnerable. An alternative is required that bypasses both these chokepoints and conflict zones. Projects like IMEC, with certain modifications given the geopolitical changes, could provide such a framework.

S. Pandiaraj, professor of International Law and Trade, Saveetha School of Law, said that India's stand in foreign affairs should be pragmatic but also operate in a way that would not forsake the values and principles that it always stood for, whether it was the 1955 Bandung Conference or the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

"The transactional approach, the give and take approach would only take us up to a point and not beyond. So, India should be careful in terms of treading various passages," Dr. Pandiaraj observed.

## IN BRIEF



### HPCL Q4 net zooms 46% on improved refining margins

State-owned refiner Hindustan Petroleum's net profit in the March-end quarter zoomed more than 46% from the comparable period last year, aided by a 69% improvement in gross-refining margins (GRM) during the reported period that did not entirely see the impact of escalating tensions in West Asia, and their impact on fuel supplies. The refiner's net profit accelerated to ₹4,902 crore during the reported quarter from ₹3,355 crore in the comparable period last year.

### Oil India net rises 12.5% on better crude price realisation

State-owned explorer Oil India reported net profit in the March-ended quarter rose 12.5% on a year-on-year basis, fuelled by a 5% improvement in average crude price realisation and 6% increase in crude oil production. Standalone profit after tax stood at ₹1,790 crore, against ₹1,591 crore in the year earlier period. Oil India produced 0.891 MMT of crude oil from matured and old oil fields. Its board recommended a dividend of ₹1 for each equity share.

### Bharti Airtel posts ₹7,325 cr. Q4 net profit; ARPU flat

Bharti Airtel reported a 39% year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit (before exceptional items) at ₹7,245 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, compared with ₹5,222 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal. The profits are 34% lower year-on-year if the one-time Indus Towers consolidation last year is taken into account. India business posted quarterly revenues of ₹39,566 crore, an increase of 7.7%.

## India-Sri Lanka forum identifies logistics, pharma among six areas for cooperation

**Chinmay Rajendrakumar Gaikwad**  
MUMBAI



Krishan Balendra

The India-Sri Lanka Business Forum, organised by the CII in partnership with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in Mumbai, has identified six areas for collaboration: ports, transport and logistics, pharmaceuticals, online payments, travel, and the existing free trade agreement (FTA).

Officials from both sides said these sectors offered immediate investment and trade opportunities.

The forum offered Indian businesses direct engagement with a Sri Lankan delegation representing diverse industries. This would help the two countries strengthen economic engagement and explore new avenues of cooperation across priority sectors.

#### Ports and logistics

Krishan Balendra, chairman of The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce and John Keells Holdings plc, said logistics firms from both countries could form joint ventures for warehousing and cold storage. Transport links, including shipping routes and rail connectivity to Indian ports, were also discussed. Sri Lankan buyers expressed interest in sourcing generic drugs from India's pharma clusters in Mumbai and Pune.

Anurag Agarwal, co-chairman of CII WR sub-committee on International Trade & Investment, and CEO of Polycab India, noted that the existing FTA al-

lows zero or low duties on many drug formulations. Both chambers agreed to share lists of registered pharmaceutical companies. India's FDA-approved drugs are already trusted in Sri Lanka, and a faster clearance mechanism was proposed.

Sri Lanka is also said to explore cross-border digital payment links with India. The Ceylon Chamber stated that UPI-like systems could reduce transaction costs for tourists and traders. Indian fintech firms were invited to pilot such services in Colombo and Kandy. Travel circuits now include electronic visa on arrival for Sri Lankans landing in Mumbai.

#### FTA review

The existing FTA, covering over 4,000 products, will be reviewed to add pharmaceutical raw materials and logistics equipment. Shiran Fernando, Secretary General and CEO of The Ceylon Chamber, said a joint working group on trade facilitation would meet in August 2026.

The forum was addressed by H.E. Maheshini Colonne, High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to India and Duminda Hulangamuwa, Senior Economic Advisor to the President of Sri Lanka among others.

# Indian-manned ship owner, operator to pay \$2.25 billion

Highest-ever shipping damages payout against Grace Ocean and Synergy Marine, the owner and operator, respectively, of container ship Dali that rammed into a bridge in Baltimore in 2024

**M. Kalyanaraman**  
CHENNAI

The State of Maryland has reached a \$2.25 billion settlement with Grace Ocean Private Limited and Synergy Marine Pte Ltd., the owner and the operator, respectively, of the Indian-manned container ship Dali that rammed into a bridge in Baltimore in March, 2024.

Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown said: "This \$2.25 billion settlement reflects the full measure of accountability we were able to secure from the vessel interests - and our pursuit of justice is not finished." This may imply any claims Maryland may pursue against others, such as the manufacturer of the ship.

Synergy sources confirmed the settlement but did not want to discuss insurance contribution. In October, 2024, the federal Department of Justice had settled with the two companies for \$102 million, covering claims from federal agencies.



Cargo ship Dali stuck under a part of the Francis Scott Key Bridge after the ship hit the bridge in March 2024. FILE PHOTO

The total loss, as estimated by the U.S. government, runs to some \$5 billion. Insurance experts had earlier predicted that the Dali accident will equal or surpass the then highest-ever marine insurance payout in the case of the Costa Concordia cruise vessel capsizing in 2012.

Ahead of the settlement announcement, the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) said it was pressing criminal charges against Synergy Marine of Singapore, Synergy Maritime of Chennai and their employee Radhakrishnan Kar-

thick Nair, technical superintendent of Dali.

Synergy has, however, disputed the version of the DoJ on the cause of the accident.

According to the department, the accident was largely due to two onboard blackouts before the ship rammed into the bridge. First blackout was allegedly caused by a loose electrical wire and the second allegedly by generators getting starved of fuel and stopping because of the use of a wrong fuel pump.

Synergy has, however, said the root cause of the

accident was the loose electrical wire, attributed to the manufacturer's latent defect. The settlement with the two companies leaves open claims Maryland may have against the manufacturer of the ship, Hyundai Heavy Industries.

Synergy, in a statement, said: "DOJ is criminalising a tragic accident. The DOJ's reference to the vessel's use of the flushing pump is wholly irrelevant to the cause of the allision and runs contrary to the conclusions reached by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board following a comprehensive 20-month maritime accident investigation. When the allision occurred, the vessel was approximately three ship lengths away from the Francis Scott Key Bridge, transiting at approximately 8.5 knots."

"Both the NTSB and well-respected maritime experts have conclusively determined that the accident was inevitable due to the loose wire, which was in no way attributable to Synergy's operation of the vessel," the statement says.

## Cabinet approves ₹37,500 cr. package to boost coal gasification

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav briefing the media on the coal gasification scheme.

Providing a fillip to India's pursuit of coal gasification, the Union Cabinet Wednesday approved a ₹37,500-crore package to boost the sustainable alternate mining method.

The package seeking to promote surface coal gasification entails conversion of coal into syngas or synthetic gas, which could also be further used to produce downstream products like urea - about one-fifth of whose requirement is met through imports.

"India's import bill for key substitutable products LNG, urea, ammonium nitrate, ammonia, coking coal, methanol, DME and others stood at approximately ₹2.77 lakh crore in FY2025, a vulnerability further exposed by the ongoing geopolitical situation in West Asia," according to a Cabinet announcement.

With the scheme, India is targeting gasification of approximately 75 million tonnes of coal and lignite. This would contribute to the 100 MT target set for 2030. Further seeking to provide long-term certain-

ty for investment in this sector, the government also extended the coal linkage tenure up to 30 years within an accompanying component of the scheme entailing production of syngas leading to coal gasification.

More importantly though, the scheme would accord a financial incentive of up to one-fifth of the cost of plant and machinery.

In terms of project size, the scheme caps a financial incentive of ₹5,000 crore for a single project, and for any single product-centred project, except that for SNG and urea, it extends up to ₹9,000 crore.

A single entity would be able to avail a maximum of ₹12,000 crore across all project categorisations.

## Air India slashes North America flights by 40%, global network by 27%

**Jagriti Chandra**  
NEW DELHI

Air India on Wednesday announced sweeping international schedule cuts between June and August, in-

cluding a nearly 40% reduction in North America operations and significant cuts across SAARC and Southeast Asia, resulting in an overall reduction of about 27% in the air-

line's international network capacity. The airline announced a net reduction of 145 weekly flights across North America, Europe, South East Asia, SAARC and Far East between June

and August 2026. Air India sources said this amounted to an overall 27% reduction in flights. North America, Air India's most critical international market, will see weekly flights reduced

from 51 to 33, a 39% cut.

Services on routes such as Delhi-Chicago, Delhi-Newark and Mumbai-New York are being temporarily suspended, although the airline has added four ex-

tra Mumbai-Newark flights, taking that route to seven weekly services.

In Europe, cuts have been made on routes to Paris, Copenhagen, Milan, Vienna, Zurich and Rome.

### ENTERPRISE CONNECT

### A Business Initiative

#### PNB Organises Pan-India Mega Agriculture Outreach Programme "PNB Krishi Aarambh"

Punjab National Bank successfully organised the Mega Agriculture Outreach Programme - "PNB Krishi Aarambh" across the country. Demonstrating strong leadership engagement, the outreach was spearheaded by Top Management along with other senior leadership of the bank. Aimed at strengthening financial inclusion in the agriculture and allied sectors through direct outreach and engagement with rural communities. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ashok Chandra, MD&CEO, PNB, said: "We have always remained committed to strengthening India's rural economy and empowering the farming community through inclusive and accessible financial solutions. With the pan-India launch of 'PNB Krishi Aarambh' across more than 240 locations, we aim to deepen our outreach, accelerate quality agriculture credit growth and further strengthen our connect with farmers, SHGs, agri-entrepreneurs and allied sectors. This initiative reflects our strong commitment towards sustainable agriculture financing and Priority Sector Lending goals. Through focused schemes, digital initiatives and cluster-based financing models, PNB is working towards creating long-term value for rural communities while supporting inclusive economic growth across the country."

#### NBCC Marks New Milestone with Foundation Stone for IIFT Campus in Delhi



NBCC (India) Limited on May 5, 2026 laid the foundation stone for a new campus of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) at Maidangarhi, New Delhi. The project, is being executed on a design, engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) basis, carries a sanctioned cost of around Rs. 350 crore. The ceremony was presided over by Dr. K.P. Mahadevaswamy, Chairman & Managing Director of NBCC (India) Ltd., who served as the Chief Guest. The function was also attended by Dr. Suman Kumar, Director (Commercial), alongside senior dignitaries, institutional stakeholders, and officers from NBCC. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mahadevaswamy emphasised that this project is not merely an expansion of IIFT's physical footprint, but a long-term investment in the institution's ability to compete and collaborate on the world stage.

The new IIFT campus is being developed on a 7.55-acre site in South Delhi, strategically located near Chhatrapur with excellent connectivity to key parts of the city, including metro stations, arterial road networks, and the Indra Gandhi International Airport. Envisioned as a mod-

ern and integrated academic hub, the campus will have a total built-up area of nearly 54,000 sq. m. The project aims to provide a holistic environment that fosters academic excellence, research innovation, and global engagement.

#### International Leadership Summit 2026 Concludes at South Asian University

Summit brings together national leaders, policymakers, industry experts, and academicians to deliberate on leadership, technology, geopolitics, and the future of work. New Delhi, 7 May 2026: The International Leadership Summit (ILS) 2026, jointly organised by the Faculty of Management at South Asian University and New Delhi Institute of Management, concluded today at the SAU Auditorium, New Delhi, following two days of deliberations on the theme "Leading Through Change: Geopolitics, Technology, and Institutional Leadership." The summit brought together policymakers, ministers, diplomats, industry leaders, defence experts, academicians, and management practitioners to discuss leadership in an era shaped by technological disruption, geopolitical shifts, and institutional transformation. The summit was inaugurated on 6 May 2026 by Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Hon'ble Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India, who graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The ceremony commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Following the Presidential Address by Prof. K. K. Aggarwal, Hon'ble President, SAU, who spoke on the University's role as an inter-governmental institution of the SAARC nations and emphasised the need to strengthen leadership capacity across South Asia.

#### Flexible Workspaces Dominate Office Demand in India: myHQ Report

Flexible workspaces now account for 73% of office-related searches in India, while traditional office leasing contributes less than 27%, according to a report released by myHQ. The report, titled "How India Searches for its Office Needs?", highlights a major shift in workplace demand towards flexible and on-demand office formats. Coworking searches are now generating nearly five times more demand than traditional office searches. The study found rising demand for specific workspace solutions, with meeting room searches increasing 187% over the last three years, virtual office searches growing 99%, and day-pass searches rising 20%. Utkarsh Kawatra, Co-Founder and CEO of myHQ, said search behaviour now reflects a shift from searching for offices to searching for workspace solutions tailored to specific needs. The report also noted growing interest in green-certified office parks, increased participation of women in workspace enquiries, and rising international demand led by the United States, United Kingdom, and United Arab Emirates.

#### REC Limited Extends CSR Assistance to Sankara Eye Hospital in Bihar

REC Limited marked a significant milestone in healthcare accessibility with the

inauguration of the Sankara Eye Hospital in Saharsa, Bihar. Funded through a ₹11.55 crore CSR grant under the flagship initiative "Bringing Vision to Bihar," the facility was opened to the public in a high-profile ceremony. The hospital was inaugurated by Shri Giriraj Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister, alongside Shri TSC Bosh, Director (Projects), REC Limited, and other senior government dignitaries. The new facility is set to transform the ophthalmic landscape of Northern Bihar. Over the next five years, the project is structured to deliver 1.5 Lakh Outpatient Consultations, Providing comprehensive screenings and specialized eye care, 40,000 Cataract Surgeries, a dedicated mandate to provide free and subsidized services to underserved and economically marginalized communities. REC Limited's financial support has equipped the hospital with modern medical infrastructure.

#### District West Strengthens Heatwave Response Through Mobile Relief Units



As Delhi continues to witness rising temperatures and severe heatwave conditions, the Delhi Administration has intensified on-ground relief measures through the deployment of Mobile Heat Relief Units (MHRUs) under the Delhi Heat Wave Action Plan-2026. The Mobile Heat Relief Units were launched on 6 May 2026 by the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi across all revenue districts of Delhi to provide immediate relief and support to citizens during the peak summer season. In District West, the MHRU is operational at identified vulnerable and high-footfall locations including labour chowks, markets, hospital areas, slum clusters and major public congregation points across Rajouri Garden, Janakpuri and Vikaspuri subdivisions between 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM every day. The Mobile Heat Relief Units are equipped to provide safe drinking water, ORS support, heatwave awareness assistance and basic first aid services. The Administration has also issued a detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to ensure hygiene, water safety, accountability and uninterrupted functioning of the units. District Magistrate (West), Shri Hari Kallikhat, IAS, along with ADM and area SDMs, Speaking on the initiative, the District Magistrate emphasized that the administration remains committed to protecting vulnerable populations from heat-related illnesses through timely intervention, public awareness and accessible relief services. Citizens have been advised to avoid direct exposure to sunlight during peak afternoon hours, remain hydrated and seek immediate medical attention in case of symptoms such as dizziness, dehydration or heat stroke.

**MOSCOW**

**Russia renews hardline demands for ending war, rules out ceasefire**



Russia on Wednesday renewed its hardline demands for ending the Ukraine war, ruling out a ceasefire or comprehensive negotiations with Ukraine unless it withdrew from the eastern Donbas region. Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy has rejected Russia's demands, saying ceding to them would be tantamount to surrender. AFP

**BEIRUT**

**Israeli drones hit highway south of Beirut, killing 12, including children**



Israeli drones struck three vehicles on the main highway south of Beirut on Wednesday, killing 12 people, including a woman and her two children, the Lebanese Health Ministry said. The Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah infrastructure in several areas in southern Lebanon, hours after telling residents to evacuate. AP

**JERUSALEM**

**Netanyahu's office says he visited UAE secretly during the Iran war**



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said on Wednesday that he secretly visited the United Arab Emirates during the Iran war. Mr. Netanyahu met with UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan during the visit, the Israeli leader's office said. The UAE has not commented on the reported visit. AP

**MANILA**

**Gunshots at Philippine Senate as lawmaker wanted by ICC holds out**



Multiple gunshots prompted Philippine senators to shelter in their offices late Wednesday, as former President Duterte's top enforcer Dela Rosa sought refuge in the Senate complex to avoid ICC arrest for alleged crimes against humanity. No casualties were reported and search for gunmen were ongoing, an official said. AFP

**King's speech outlines U.K. govt. agenda as Starmer's future hangs in the balance**

The UK's commitment to NATO is 'unbreakable', says the monarch; prior to the speech, the Prime Minister held a meeting with his Health Secretary, Wes Streeting, that lasted under 20 minutes; Streeting is expected to launch a leadership challenge as early as Thursday, report British media

**Sriram Lakshman**  
LONDON



King Charles III with Queen Camilla during the State Opening of Parliament at the Palace of Westminster in London. AP

In an annual ritual dating back hundreds of years, Britain's monarch King Charles III on Wednesday opened the current session of the U.K. Parliament by setting out the government's agenda for the year ahead.

The affair involves an MP being taken hostage, ceremonially, and kept at Buckingham Palace to guarantee the monarch's safety while he is in Westminster. However, it was British Prime Minister Keir Starmer's political safety that was in question — with more than a quarter of his MPs asking for his resignation on Tuesday, days after

Labour sustained heavy losses in the local and regional elections across the U.K.

Prior to his arrival in Parliament, the Prime Minister held a meeting with his Health Secretary and

possible replacement, Wes Streeting, that lasted under 20 minutes. Mr. Streeting represents the part of Labour Party that is closer to the centre, with Energy Minister Ed Miliband and former Deputy Prime Minister

Angela Rayner on the "soft left" of the party. Mr. Streeting's allies believed he would launch a leadership challenge as early as Thursday, according to reports in the British press.

**Starmer seeks time**

Mr. Starmer has argued that given the challenging domestic and global environment, he needed time to deliver the "change" Britons voted for in 2024, when he led the Labour party in a landslide election victory.

"An increasingly volatile world threatens the United Kingdom — the conflict in the Middle East, only the most recent example," the King said, as Mr. Starmer

stood in the central hall of the British Parliament, a troubled look on his face.

"Every element of the nation's energy, defence and economic security will be tested," the King said.

The government would take steps to bolster energy and economic security as well as the defence of the U.K., the King announced. There was also a reference to "decency, tolerance and respect for difference under our common flag".

Mr. Starmer has argued that he is the man to keep the nativist Reform U.K. in check, as it made significant electoral gains last week across England, Scotland and Wales. Labour lost votes to Reform on the right and the Greens on the

left in England, and Plaid Cymru a centre-left nationalist party in Wales.

Among the plans announced in the speech were legislation to strengthen ties with the European Union (EU) and infrastructure spending within the U.K.

The U.K. government would be an advocate for tackling climate change and poverty globally, the King said.

The U.K.'s commitment to the West's military alliance — NATO — was "unbreakable", the King said. The alliance's future has been on shaky ground after U.S. President Donald Trump repeatedly threatened to pull America out of the group.

**Trump to begin talks with Xi on Iran war, trade, U.S. arms sales**

**Associated Press**  
BEIJING



Donald Trump

U.S. President Donald Trump arrived in Beijing on Wednesday for his hotly anticipated talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the Iran war, trade and U.S. arms sales to Taiwan.

The meat of the summit doesn't start until Thursday, when the leaders hold bilateral talks, and take part in a formal banquet.

The President was greeted by Chinese Vice President Han Zheng; Xie Feng, China's ambassador to Washington; Ma Zhaoxu, executive vice minister of foreign affairs; and the U.S. envoy to Beijing, David Perdue.

"We're the two superpowers," Mr. Trump told presspersons as he departed the White House. "We're the strongest na-

tion on Earth in terms of military. China's considered second."

The visit occurs at a delicate moment for his presidency as his popularity at home has been weighed down by the U.S. and Israel's war with Iran and rising inflation.

The Trump administration hopes to begin establishing a Board of Trade with China to address differences between the countries.

**In Qom, Indian volunteers serving shariat amid war fears and protests**

**DISPATCH FROM IRAN**

**Saurabh Shukla**  
**Saurabh Shahi**  
QOM



Symbol of solidarity: Indian volunteers near one of their shariat stalls in Qom, Iran. SAURABH SHUKLA

The air in Iran's holy city of Qom carries many scents these days — smoke from recent attacks, dust from restless streets, and the sharp bitterness of a nation living under the shadow of war. But amid the tension, another fragrance quietly drifts through the crowds gathering every evening: chilled Indian shariat.

As thousands of Iranians pour onto the streets after sunset — some protesting, some mourning, some simply searching for solidarity — a small roadside stall has begun drawing unusual attention. Above it flutters the Indian tricolour. Behind it stand young Indian students, researchers, and businessmen, handing out glasses of pineapple shariat to exhausted strangers under the blazing summer heat.

In a city shaken by political uncertainty and emotional exhaustion, this modest stall has become something larger than a refreshment counter. For many here, it is a symbol — that while governments may change positions and diplomacy may fluctuate, ordinary people can still choose compassion.

Qom is home to one of the largest Indian communities in Iran. Nearly 3,000 to 3,500 Indians live in the city, many of them students enrolled in religious seminaries and universities. Others are researchers, traders, or retirees who have spent years building lives here.

When tensions escalated and advisories urged Indian nationals to consider leaving, several members of the community decided to stay back. Some stayed because Qom had become home. Others believed leaving during a crisis would send the wrong message to the people among whom they had lived for years.

Every evening now, many of these Indians gather funds among themselves, buy drinks and supplies, and set up makeshift stalls across protest routes and crowded public spaces.

"We wanted people to know they are not alone," says Haider Abbas, a student from Ahmedabad. "We came here to express grief over the martyrdom of our leaders and to show that we are standing firm. Service is the least we can do in these times."

**Not just geopolitics**  
For many Indians in Qom, the conflict is not viewed merely through the lens of geopolitics.

Abid Raza Naushad Rizvi, a research scholar living in the city, describes it in deeply moral terms. "This is not just a war between two countries," he says.

"People here see it as a battle between truth and falsehood, oppression and resistance, humanity and cruelty. Anyone who believes in justice cannot remain emotionally distant from what is happening."

Such views are common among sections of Qom's deeply ideological atmosphere. Yet, despite the charged rhetoric, the Indian volunteers insist their work is focused on humanitarian support, not political mobilisation.

In recent months, certain diplomatic developments had created unease among some Iranians regarding India's political positioning. Conversations in cafes and markets occasionally reflected disappointment and suspicion. But those emotions, several locals say, softened after seeing Indian volunteers actively participating in relief and solidarity efforts on the streets. Nazir Abbas Rizvi, a research scholar originally from Lucknow, recalls receiving a handwritten letter from an Iranian woman.

"She wrote that when the war began and India's official position appeared to change, she became upset with Indians," he says.

"But after seeing Indian stalls on the streets and watching Indians serve people every evening, she realised that ordinary Indians still stood with the people of Iran."

On crowded evenings in Qom, volunteers carry giant steel containers filled with pineapple syrup and ice. Plastic cups are passed rapidly from hand to hand as crowds move through the streets. Many Iranians stop first because they notice the Indian flag. Others stay back to talk.

"These are civilisational ties," says Abid Rizvi. "India and Iran have centuries of cultural connection. Our country also fought colonial rule and understands the value of independence and resistance."

**Shadow of uncertainty**

Although a ceasefire currently holds, fear has not disappeared from Qom. People still speak in hushed voices about the possibility of renewed attacks. Security remains tight in sensitive areas.

And yet, amid all this, life continues. Markets reopen every morning. Seminars conduct classes. Children play in narrow alleyways. And each evening, Indian volunteers return to their stalls with coolers full of shariat.

The Indian tricolour fluttering over a shariat stall in Iran may not alter the course of geopolitics. But on the streets of Qom, where fear, grief, and uncertainty currently define daily life, it has managed to create something equally powerful: trust. (Saurabh Shukla and Saurabh Shahi are senior editors with The Red Mike)

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BID NO: GEM/2026/B/7528966 DATED 11.05.2026  
The Above RFP tender document is available and can be downloaded from the following websites [www.iob.bank.in](http://www.iob.bank.in) & [www.gem.gov.in](http://www.gem.gov.in) For Tender details and future amendments, if any, keep referring to the following website [www.gem.gov.in](http://www.gem.gov.in)

**OFFICE OF THE ROURKELA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION: ROURKELA**  
**INVITATION FOR BID**  
No. 6021 Dated 08.05.2026  
**Bid Identification No.- MC/RMC/39/2026**  
The Municipal Commissioner, Rourkela Municipal Corporation on behalf of Rourkela Municipal Corporation invites bids for works on percentage rate basis in double cover on online Mode. Bid Identification No. MC/RMC/39/2026 for 01 no. Civil work with value of Rs. 60.25 Lakh.  
1. Bid documents will be available in website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in) from 11.05.2026.  
2. Bids must be submitted on "online" on or before 29.05.2026 by 17.00 hours.  
3. Bids shall be opened at 11.00 hours on 30.05.2026 in the office of the undersigned in the presence of the bidders or their authorized agents.  
4. Other details will be available in the web site [tendersorissa.gov.in](http://tendersorissa.gov.in)  
Municipal Commissioner,  
Rourkela Municipal Corporation  
OIPR-13001/13131/11/26-27/0026  
13001/458/2627

**Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited**  
(Wholly owned by Govt. of Karnataka undertaking)  
(CIN-U04010KA2002SGC030438)  
**TENDER NOTIFICATION** (Through KPP Portal)  
BESCOM invites tenders through KPP Portal from eligible Bidders against Enquiry No.: BESCOM/2026-27/SE0460 for Upgradation of Existing ESRI Licenses in GIS DAS Proxy Server from ArcGIS 9.3 to ArcGIS 10.8 including Supply, Configuration at BESCOM Data Centre for 2 Years. Bid documents available from: 15.05.2026, 04:00 PM Onwards.  
The tenders can be obtained through KPP Portal Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from 18-05-2026 after 16.30 Hours. 2) Last Date for Receipt of Queries: 21-05-2026 upto 15.00 Hours. 3) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 21-05-2026 at 15.30 Hours. 4) Last Date for Uploading the Filled Proposals is 29-05-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 5) Date of Opening of Technical Proposals is 30-05-2026 after 16.30 Hours through KPP Portal. Further details can be had from the above office.  
Sd/- General Manager (ICT & MIS.),  
BESCOM, 5th Floor, Belaku Bhavana,  
K.R. Circle, Bengaluru - 560 001.  
For Electricity related complaints call : 1912  
Download BESCOM Mitra Mobile APP.

**KARNATAKA STATE WAREHOUSING CORPORATION**  
Ugrana Bhavan, No.43, Primrose Road, Bangalore-560025.  
Fax: 080-29533673, Phone No: 080-29533679  
Email : [kswc.eng@gmail.com](mailto:kswc.eng@gmail.com)  
**E-TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
No: KSWC/ENG/44/F-54/2026-27 Date: 13.05.2026  
1. The Managing Director, Karnataka State Warehousing Corporation, Bangalore invites e-tender for Selection of Solar Power Developer for Development, Installation of Rooftop Solar PV System of KSWC Warehouses at 52 Centres in Karnataka on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) Mode of PPP.  
2. Prescribed EMD should be paid through online while submitting the tender.  
Name of the work: 1) Cluster 1 - North Karnataka for 23 Locations of Newly Constructed Warehouses Centers of KSWC in various part of Karnataka. Amount put to tender : Rs.174.22 Crores. EMD : Rs.87,11,000/- 2) Cluster 2 - South Karnataka for 29 Locations of Newly Constructed Warehouses Centers of KSWC in various part of Karnataka. Amount put to tender : Rs.122.40 Crores. EMD : Rs.61,20,000/-  
3. E-Tendering should be submitted in two cover system containing "Technical Bid and Financial Bid". Financial bids of the bidder those who qualify in Technical bid will be opened.  
**CALENDER OF EVENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Pre-Bid Meeting	28.05.2026 at 15.00 Hours
2. Date of Uploading Queries Clarifications	04.06.2026 up to 17.00 Hours
3. Last date for receipt of Tender	04.07.2026 up to 17.30 Hours
4. Opening of Technical Bid	08.07.2026 at 15.00 Hours
5. Opening of Financial Bid	Will be intimated to the Qualified Bidders

4. The responses prepared by the Bidder and all correspondence and documents relating to the bids exchanged by the Bidder/ Developer will be in English.  
5. Managing Director reserves the right to accept/reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons.  
6. Interested bidders may obtain further information at Employer's address indicated in the invitation of tender during office hours.  
Sd/-  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
DIPR/CP/638/AKAR/2026-27

**BENGALURU WEST CITY CORPORATION**  
Office of the Executive Engineer,  
Mahalakshimpuram Division, 12th Main, 11th Cross,  
West of Chord Road, BWCC, Bengaluru.  
No: EE/MLP/TEND/E-PROC/03/2026-27 Date: 13-05-2026  
**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)  
Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the Executive Engineer, Mahalakshimpuram Division, BWCC, Bengaluru for the work mentioned below from the registered Contractors of BWCC or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES / BBMP or any State Government Organizations.  
(Standard Tender Document - KW-4)

Sl. No.	Name of the Work
1	Improvements to Roads and Drains in Vrushabhavathinagara Ward No. 47. Approximated Amount Put to Tender (Rs. in Lakhs): 247.93, EMD Amount (Rs. in Lakhs): 3.72

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from 18-05-2026 after 16.30 Hours. 2) Last Date for Receipt of Queries: 21-05-2026 upto 15.00 Hours. 3) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 21-05-2026 at 15.30 Hours. 4) Last Date for Uploading the Filled Proposals is 29-05-2026 upto 16.00 Hours. 5) Date of Opening of Technical Proposals is 30-05-2026 after 16.30 Hours through KPP Portal. Further details can be had from the above office.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer  
Mahalakshimpuram Division, BWCC.

## MILESTONE MAN

### Kohli becomes first Indian batter to score 14,000 runs in T20s



EMMANUAL YOGINI

Virat Kohli on Wednesday became the first Indian to score 14,000 runs in T20 cricket, achieving the feat in the IPL 2026 clash between RCB and KKR in Raipur. He is the sixth batter — after Chris Gayle, Kieron Pollard, Alex Hales, David Warner and Jos Buttler — to cross the mark in the shortest format.

## CHAMPION PLAYER

### Bumrah is a fantastic person to be around: fellow MI pacer Bosch



FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

Bumrah is probably one of the calmer people I've met. He knows that he hasn't been at his best, but he is a class above the rest. You can see the standards he sets for himself; he's still among the best in the competition in terms of economy. He's a fantastic cricketer, a fantastic person to be around — Corbin Bosch on Jasprit Bumrah.

## OPPORTUNITY

### Chennai Super Kings ropes in Noronha in place of Ramakrishna



FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

CSK has signed Karnataka's Macneil Noronha as a replacement for the injured Ramakrishna Ghosh. Noronha will join CSK for ₹30 lakh. The all-rounder was recently awarded the M.A. Chidambaram Trophy at the Naman awards for being the highest run-getter in the 2024-25 Col. C.K. Nayudu Trophy.

## MORE WOES

### Injured Super Kings pacer Overton to return to the UK



AFP

Chennai Super Kings all-rounder Jamie Overton, who has a right thigh injury, will be returning to the UK for further assessment and management, the team said on Wednesday. It is another blow for the Super Kings who have grappled with injury issues in IPL 2026 as the Englishman was one of the star performers with 14 scalps.

# Kohli's masterful knock powers Royal Challengers to the top

The Bengaluru opener, who was dismissed for a duck in the last two games, roars back with an unbeaten century to guide his side to a facile win over Knight Riders; his 92-run partnership with Padikkal puts the home team on the road to victory

IPL-19

Anish Pathiyil  
RAIPUR

A wristy flick past mid-on off his second ball, and all the doubts about Virat Kohli's lack of runs vanished into thin air.

The Royal Challengers Bengaluru veteran, who was dismissed for nought in the last two encounters, stamped his class at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium here on Wednesday. His calculated unbeaten 105 helped the side overhaul Kolkata Knight Riders' 92 for four with five balls to spare.

The pursuit began with fluency despite the early dismissal of Jacob Bethell, who was caught and bowled after pulling a shot into his helmet.

Kohli's positive start at the other end rubbed off on Devdutt Padikkal as the southpaw struck two consecutive boundaries. The Knight Riders did not help their case with two dropped catches. Kohli's fierce slap through covers burst through the fingers of Rovman Powell, while Vaibhav Arora was guilty of dropping a dolly, offered by Padikkal, at deep square-leg.

The duo's 92-run association ended when the No. 3 batter carved one straight to skipper Ajinkya Rahane at cover. But the break in momentum made no difference to Kohli, who pressed on the accelerator to get to his ninth IPL century and seal RCB's eighth win.

Earlier, after KKR was asked to bat first on a pitch that was under covers for a considerable period, open-



Marauder: Kohli's ninth IPL hundred contained 11 fours and three sixes. EMMANUAL YOGINI

ers Rahane and Finn Allen fell after brisk starts. Bhuvneshwar Kumar removed Allen with a length ball that cramped him for room and forced an edge to the wicketkeeper. Rahane was undone by a Josh Hazlewood bouncer that

skidded through.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi managed to keep the runs flowing with boundaries through the leg-side as Cameron Green settled in.

The acceleration came after the introduction of the lone spinner, Krunal

Pandya, with the duo collecting two towering sixes over midwicket. But Green was castled by Rasikh Salam after a 68-run partnership.

Raghuvanshi looked largely untroubled en route to a 32-ball half-century, his

## SCOREBOARD

**KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS**  
Ajinkya Rahane c & b Hazlewood 19 (13b, 3x4, 1x6), Finn Allen c Jitesh b Bhuvneshwar 18 (8b, 3x4, 1x6), Angkrish Raghuvanshi run out 71 (46b, 7x4, 3x6), Cameron Green b Rasikh 32 (24b, 3x4, 1x6), Rinku Singh (not out) 49 (29b, 3x4, 2x6); Extras (lb-1, w-2); 3; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 192.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-23 (Allen, 2.3 overs), 2-48 (Rahane, 4.4), 3-116 (Green, 12.2), 4-192 (Raghuvanshi, 19.6).

**RCB BOWLING**  
Bhuvneshwar 4-0-34-1, Duffy 4-0-48-0, Hazlewood 4-0-35-1, Rasikh 4-0-35-1, Krunal 4-0-39-0.

**ROYAL CHALLENGERS**  
Jacob Bethell c & b Tyagi 15 (12b, 2x4, 1x6), Virat Kohli (not out) 105 (60b, 11x4, 3x6), Devdutt Padikkal (Impact Player for Duffy) c Rahane b Tyagi 39 (27b, 7x4), Rajat Patidar c Rahane b Narine 11 (8b, 1x6), Tim David c Pandey b Tyagi 2 (3b), Jitesh Sharma (not out) 8 (5b, 1x4); Extras (lb-4, w-10); 14; Total (for four wkts. in 19.1 overs): 194.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-37 (Bethell, 3.2), 2-129 (Padikkal, 13.1), 3-157 (Patidar, 15.6), 4-180 (David, 17.5).

**KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING**  
Saurabh Dubey (Impact Player for Allen) 2.1-0-21-0, Vaibhav 4-0-48-0, Tyagi 4-0-32-3, Narine 4-0-31-1, Green 2-0-22-0, Anukul 3-0-36-0.

**Toss:** RCB; **PoM:** Kohli. RCB won by six wickets with five deliveries to spare.

## Next assignment

**KKR:** May 16 vs. GT  
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.

**RCB:** May 17 vs. PBKS  
Dharamshala, 3.30 p.m.

# Misfiring PBKS faces MI, aims to snap four-game losing run

Abhishek Saini  
DHARAMSHALA

Punjab Kings will be desperate for a turnaround when it takes on Mumbai Indians in an IPL 2026 fixture at the HPCA Stadium here on Thursday.

After leading the standings for nearly four weeks, PBKS slumped to fourth place on the back of four straight defeats. Another slip-up will leave it in a scrap for the final playoffs spot.

Fifties from skipper Shreyas Iyer and Priyansh Arya against Delhi Capitals were reminiscent of the batting flourish that was the backbone of Kings' early success.

But its bowling lapses continue to cost it.

PBKS leaked 73 runs off four overs at the death against the Capitals, and has the worst economy rate in this phase this season (11.66).

The silver lining, though, has been Arshdeep Singh delivering again up-front. He has three wickets at an economy of 8.15 in the last three games after a horrid run which got him just four wickets in eight games before that.

"Arshdeep is a terrific cricketer. And these big cricketers rise at the right moment. I think now is the right time and our coach Ricky Ponting always speaks of peaking at the right time, at the back-end



Fingers crossed: After rain curtailed training, Kings and Mumbai Indians will hope weather doesn't affect the match. R.V. MOORTHY

## Today's match



Dharamshala, 7.30 p.m.

## HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 35

PBKS 18 | MI 17

## PREVIOUS MEETING

PBKS won by seven wickets, 2026

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JOHOTSTAR

of the tournament," Punjab Kings' assistant bowling coach Trevor Gonsalves said. Odds would favour Punjab

to get its act together against a Mumbai Indians side that is already out of the reckoning for the playoffs.

Its listless run was already a mood dampener this season, and MI has been handed another cruel blow with stand-in captain Suryakumar Yadav unavailable for the game.

The best chance MI has of getting out of its rut is to take on the misfiring Punjab bowlers.

Ryan Rickelton and Rohit Sharma have nailed their role in setting the pace this year, adding 380 runs in six innings at a run rate of 11.76.

# Profligate bowling and shoddy fielding hurting Punjab Kings

S. Shrivathsan

Punjab Kings, a team that looked like an unstoppable force about three weeks ago, is now struggling to get a 'W' next to its name.

In a matter of a few matches, PBKS, which made a rousing start to IPL 2026, has seen its cracks exposed. The Shreyas Iyer-led side masked its weaknesses by consistently out-batting opponents in the first half of the 19th edition, but since the time the rivals uncovered them, the Punjab outfit has been on a downward spiral.

The 2025 runner-up has plenty of holes to plug in the bowling and fielding departments. The bowlers have leaked runs at approximately 10.6 runs per over, the worst average economy rate in the league as of Tuesday. Kings have conceded 200 or more seven times already this season, besides the 195 they gave away against Mumbai Indians.

Wicket-taking is another area that requires immediate repair. Only left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh (13) has scalped 10 or more so far. Compared to the rest of



Not sharp enough: Jansen's bowling has lacked bite this season. R.V. MOORTHY

the top-four teams — Gujarat Titans, Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Sunrisers Hyderabad — that have at least three bowlers with 10 or more scalps, PBKS has been well behind par.

Arshdeep, despite being the side's top wicket-taker, is battling for consistency, while his pace partner Marco Jansen has hardly posed a threat. Leggie Yuzvendra Chahal is not trusted enough in spite of being the lone specialist spinner for most part of the

campaign. Poor fielding, especially dropped catches which have proved harmful, has also massively contributed to PBKS' downfall. If Kings' butter-fingered fielders had come up with an improved show against Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals, the team may not find itself in the dire situation it is in now.

PBKS has to act quick and smart if it harbours hopes of advancing to the playoffs.

# Rabada in rhythm and Titans on the rise

Pranav Rajiv  
AHMEDABAD

Kagiso Rabada could hit the good length with his eyes closed. Probably.

His ability to consistently zone in on that part of the pitch, at high pace, has been the cornerstone of his reputation as one of the best pacers in the world.

In IPL 2026, Gujarat Titans has leaned heavily on Rabada's metronomic skillset to seize an early advantage with the ball. The South African pacer has already claimed 16 wickets in the PowerPlay in IPL 2026. Only one bowler has ever taken more such wickets in an IPL season — Mohammed Shami (17) in 2023.

On Tuesday, Rabada

once again delivered the decisive opening knockout punch. He snared three vital wickets in the PowerPlay to derail Sunrisers Hyderabad's chase and set Titans on the way to a massive win.

Rabada and his new-ball partner, Mohammed Siraj, bowled unchanged through the PowerPlay, persisting with a nagging off-stump line.

The Titans duo maximised the dampness of the Ahmedabad surface by targeting the hard lengths, often slanting deliveries away from the all-rounder SRH top order.

It was an exhibition of unerring pace bowling by two of its best exponents in modern-day cricket. This has been a recurring theme for Titans in IPL



Rabada. VIJAY SONEJI

2026, particularly at their home ground in Ahmedabad.

"Siraj and Rabada have been hitting their lengths very well. That is the advantage of having proper

## Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Royal Challengers	12	8	4	0	16	1.053
Gujarat Titans	12	8	4	0	16	0.551
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	11	4	6	1	9	-0.198
Mumbai Indians (E)	11	3	8	0	6	-0.585
Lucknow Super Giants (E)	11	3	8	0	6	-0.907

E: Eliminated

Test bowlers," pointed out GT spinner R. Sai Kishore.

In IPL, rarely do pacers get the right conditions to utilise this Test-match length. When they do, like on Tuesday, it allows them to strike up something important — rhythm.

"Rhythm is everything," explained Rabada after receiving the Player of the Match award on Tuesday. When a bowler like Rabada enters that flow state, it is inevitably perilous for opposition batters, as SRH found out.

# Sreejesh no longer National junior coach

The former goalkeeper questions the preference for foreigners; asks why home-grown coaches aren't chosen to develop Indian hockey

**HOCKEY**  
**Uthra Ganesan**  
NEW DELHI

A Junior World Cup (JWC) medal after nine years apparently isn't good enough for Hockey India with the federation deciding not to renew P.R. Sreejesh's appointment as the chief coach.

Sreejesh, who was handed charge of the junior men's side soon after his retirement post the Paris Olympics, had been without contract since December 2025. India won bronze playing at home, its first medal since the 2016 title triumph.

"It seems like my coaching career comes to an end after 1.5 years, during which we played five tournaments and secured five podium finishes, including a Junior World Cup bronze medal. 'I have heard about coaches getting fired after bad performances. But this is the first time I am experiencing being removed to make way for a foreign coach... can't Indian coaches develop Indian hockey?' Sreejesh questioned in a social media post on Wednesday.

"(Hockey India president) Dilip Tirkey told me that Craig Fulton prefers a foreign coach because it will help in coordination and developing a streamlined, uniform structure between junior and senior sides. I only want to know



**Fruitful stint:** India finished on the podium all five times when Sreejesh was at the helm. FILE PHOTO: G. MOORTHY

why he cannot coordinate with an Indian coach?" Sreejesh told *The Hindu*.

"I was told, 'we need someone experienced' but did they not think of it when they first gave me the responsibility? I had zero experience back then! Then they said, 'we will give you the development side' but doesn't lack of experience matter for the development side and do we even have a well-defined one?" Sreejesh further questioned.

While HI hasn't made any official announce-

ment, it has been learnt that the federation has expressed its preference for Frenchman Aymeric Bergamo, who led France to third place at the 2021 JWC.

**Bergamo in contention** Interestingly, that is the only achievement with a national team for Bergamo, who has since been associated with various European club sides. Hockey India officials refused to speak on the matter with secretary-general Bhola Nath Singh saying, "I do not wish to comment."

## Hockey India refutes Sreejesh's charges

**Sports Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Hockey India (HI) on Wednesday refuted the charges made by former India goalkeeper P.R. Sreejesh over his removal as the head coach of the junior national team.

Stating that Sreejesh's coaching term officially concluded as per contract in December 2025, it said as per protocol, the position was advertised and applicants were shortlisted and finalised as per a proper merit-based selection process.

"A coach with distinguished qualification has been selected as a result of this process and will be announced shortly," the HI said in a statement.

"We had offered Sreejesh the position of coach of the development team... this would have furthered his experience and exposure as a coach.

"However, he did not accept this position despite being asked to reconsider the decision. In no terms has it ever been conveyed to him that there has been any preference for a foreign coach by the chief coach," the HI further said.

"We are collectively working towards the vision of our government to build a pathway towards 2036 and a big part of that process is to develop our Indian coaching talent.

"Development of the grassroots and home-grown coaches has always been central to the interests of Hockey India as a national sports federation."

# In a first in Indian squash, National coach Harinderpal dons player's hat

**K. Keerthivasan**  
CHENNAI

Since taking over as the coach of the Indian senior squash teams in September last year, Harinderpal Singh Sandhu has been busy designing training camps for the country's top players and mentoring them.

But the 37-year-old has put the player's hat on again, partnering youngster Om Semwal in the men's section of the National doubles championships here. It is the first time in Indian squash history that a National team head coach is competing in an open National event.

Cyrus Poncha, secretary of the Squash Rackets Federation of India, said there was nothing wrong with Harinder's involvement as a player in the tournament.

"Harinder sought per-



**Bracing for action:** Harinderpal and Om get ready for the challenge ahead. R. RAGU

mission to participate. We've got to remember that at the 2022 Asian Games, he won the mixed doubles gold medal with Dipika Pallikal. I would see it more as a positive experience that he can offer other players. Even if he wins the tournament, he will not be considered for selection," said Poncha.

Harinder entered the doubles championships with Om after his original partner, Ramit Tandon, withdrew because of injury. He, however, could not take the court on Wednesday as Jinash and Reyansh handed Harinder and Om a walkover.

Harinder, who has largely limited himself to spar-

ring sessions since becoming a coach, is excited to compete again. "I want to share my experience with everyone. Doubles tournaments don't really happen throughout the year," he said.

Meanwhile, all seeded pairs across categories were handed first-round byes.

**The results: Men: Round of 16:** Shubham & Vedant Patel bt Akashay Deepak & Parthiban 11-8, 10-12, 11-2; Mathew Godwin & Navaneeth Prabhu bt Vidik Karkashe & Yash Sonwani 11-4, 11-6; Ravi Dixit & Vikas Mehra bt Ajinkya Shinde & Omkar Avhad 11-3, 11-4; Guhan Senthilkumar & P.R. Sandhesh bt Naman Surana & Pranav Agarwal 11-1, 11-2; Harinderpal Singh & Om Semwal w/o Jinash & Reyansh.

**Women: Group B (round robin):** Janet Vidhi & Pooja Arthi bt Kriya Saravanan & Nandikasree (retired). **Mixed: Round of 16:** Ravi Dixit & Janet Vidhi bt R. Dinesh & Ananya Narayan 4-11, 11-5, 11-8.

# Five Indians advance in singles at Thailand Open

**Press Trust of India**  
BANGKOK

P.V. Sindhu, Lakshya Sen and K. Srikanth progressed to the singles second round on a mixed day for India at the \$500,000 Thailand Open Super 500 badminton on Wednesday.

**The results: Men:** K. Srikanth bt Loh Kean Yew (Sgp) 21-14, 21-15; Kodai Naraoka (Jpn) bt Ayush Shetty 21-13, 17-21, 21-4; Koki Watanabe (Jpn) bt Tharun Manneppalli 21-12, 21-16; Lakshya Sen bt Jason Teh (Sgp) 21-16, 21-17; **Women:** P.V. Sindhu bt Tung Ciou-Tong (Tpe) 21-9, 21-12;

Pornpawee Chochuwong (Tha) bt Unnati Hooda 11-21, 21-17, 21-16; Chen Yu Fei (Chn) bt Anmol Kharb 19-21, 21-13, 21-18; Hina Akechi (Jpn) bt Tanvi Sharma 21-17, 21-8; Devika Sihag bt Natsuki Nidaira (Jpn) 21-19, 13-21, 21-15; Malvika Bansod bt Wen Yu Zhang (Can) 13-21, 26-24, 21-13; Thalita Wiryawan (Ina) bt Isharani Baruah 15-21, 21-19, 21-15.

**Mixed doubles:** Tsai Fu Cheng & Sung Yu-Hsuan (Tpe) bt Ashith Surya & Amrutha Pramuthesh 24-22, 21-11; Mathias Christiansen & Alexandra Boje (Den) bt Tanisha Crasto & Dhruv Kapila 21-9, 21-15; Supak Jomkoh & Ornricha Jongsathapornpan (Tha) bt Rohan Kapoor & Ruthvika Gadde 21-15, 21-10.



**Easily done:** Sindhu took out Ciou-Tong in quick time. INSTAGRAM@BAL\_MEDIA

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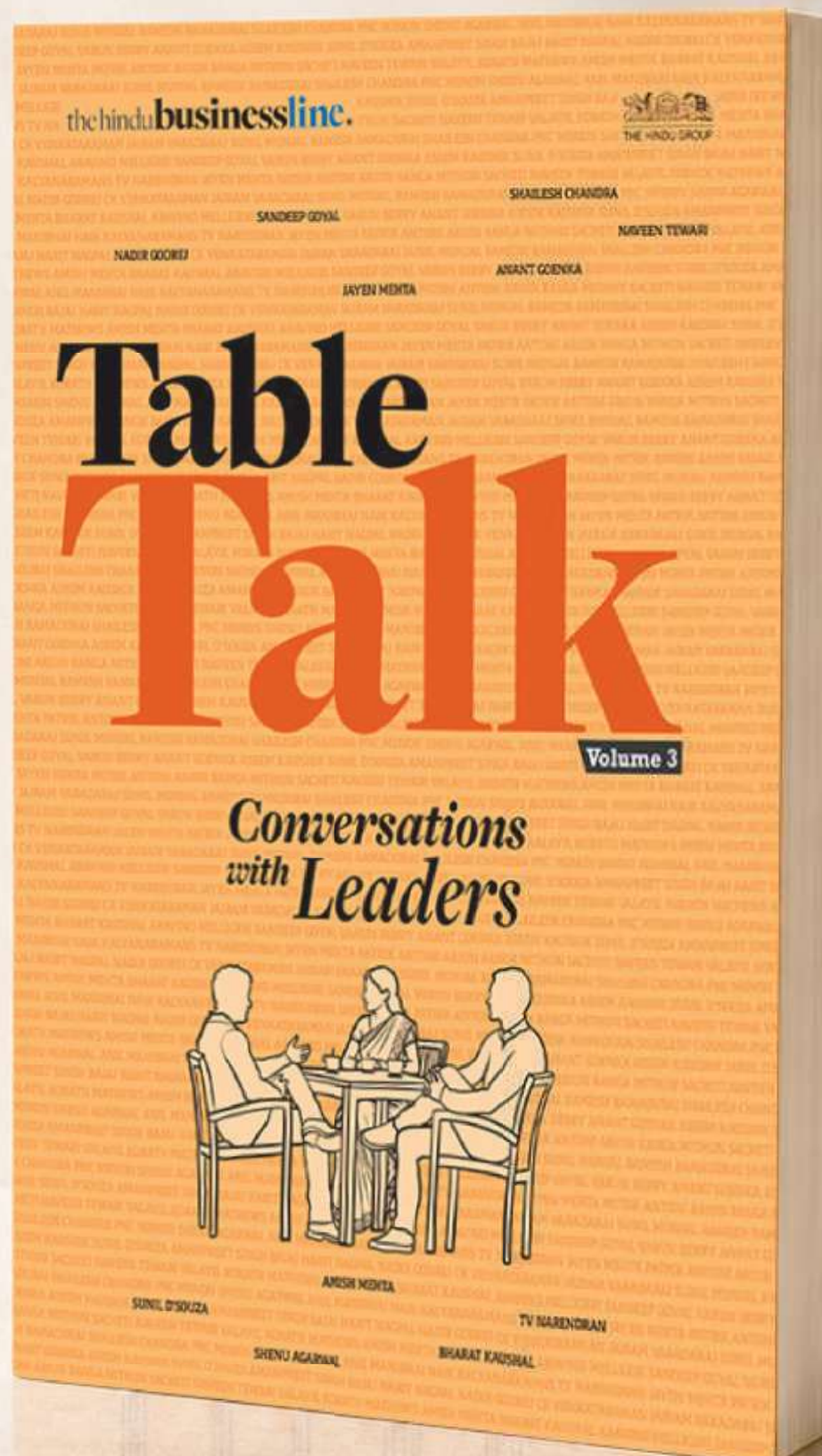
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## INBRIEF



## Gyaneshwari bags two medals at Asian senior weightlifting

India's Gyaneshwari Yadav won two medals in the 53kg category at the 2026 Asian senior weightlifting championships in Gandhinagar on Wednesday. Gyaneshwari won a silver in the snatch section with a lift of 88kg and an overall bronze in the event with a combined lift of 194kg. The gold was claimed by Jinlan Zhao of China with total lift of 216kg, while silver went to Vietnam's Hoai Huong Nguyen (total 195kg).

## East Bengal retains the IWL crown

East Bengal successfully defended its Indian Women's League (IWL) title after the match between Sethu FC and SESA FA ended in a 1-1 draw in Kolkata on Tuesday. Later in the day, the Moshal Girls eased past Nita Football Academy 2-0 with Soumya Guguloth bagging a brace. Gokulam Kerala FC secured a 1-0 win over Sribhumi FC. Following the conclusion of Matchday 12, champion East Bengal sits at the top of the table with 33 points. Sethu occupies the second spot with 23 while Kickstart follows in third with 19 points. Nita FA and Gokulam are locked on 16 each. SESA is eighth with three points.

## ROUND-UP

## Ibrahim, Madhav lead the way

NEW DELHI: Riding on half-centuries by Ibrahim and Madhav Kaushik, Khushal Cricket Coaching Centre defeated Pusa Youngsters Cricket Club by nine wickets in the 51st All India Goswami Ganesh Dutt Memorial Cricket Tournament at S.G.T.B. Khalsa College ground on Wednesday.

**The scores:** Pusa Youngsters Cricket Club 168 in 36 overs (Abhishek Raikwar 67, Shivam Nagar 33, Sampark Gupta 3/34) lost to Khushal Cricket Coaching Centre 169/1 in 17.1 overs (Ibrahim 84 n.o.,

Madhav Kaushik 80).

## Shivam shines

Shivam Chaudhary starred with an unbeaten 103 to help Rajnigandha Achievers clinch an eight-wicket victory over Essex Farms in the 41st All India Laxman Das Chhabra Memorial Cricket Tournament at St. Stephen's ground on Wednesday.

**The scores:** Essex Farms 151 in 34.4 overs (Kavya 40, Krish Yadav 50, Aman Mishra 37, Prashant Chaudhary 3/27, Shivam Chaudhary 3/25) lost to Rajnigandha Achievers 153/2 in 14.2 overs (Shivam Chaudhary 103 n.o.).

## LIVE TELECAST

**IPL:** Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.  
**LaLiga:** FanCode, 10.30, 11.30 p.m. & 1 a.m. (Friday).

## Atletico beats Osasuna, Betis qualifies for CL

## LALIGA

Agence France-Presse  
BARCELONA

Atletico Madrid consolidated its fourth place in LaLiga with a 2-1 victory over Osasuna on Tuesday while Real Betis beat Elche to guarantee itself a Champions League spot.

Atletico's English forward Ademola Lookman opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 15th minute after Javi Galan was carded for handball.

Alexander Sorloth made it two with 20 minutes to play, the Norwegian heading in from close range past Aitor Fernandez.

Kike Barja made the

game tighter than it should have been at the end with an injury-time strike to pull a goal back for Osasuna.

But Atletico held on for a result that leaves the Madrid side fourth on 66 points behind newly crowned champion Barcelona (91pts), Real Madrid (77) and Villarreal (69), all three with a game in hand.

Elche lost 1-2 to Real Betis. Betis' win means it qualified for next season's Champions League by finishing at least fifth.

**The results:** Celta Vigo 2 (Jutgla 4, 48) lost to Levante 3 (Arriaga 43, De la Fuente 57, Brugue 63). Real Betis 2 (Hernandez 9, Fornals 68) bt Elche 1 (Fort 41). Osasuna 1 (Kike Barja 90+1) lost to Atletico Madrid 2 (Lookman 15-pen, Sorloth 71).



**How things stand:** Atletico is fourth with 66 points. X@ATLETI

## Itisha rallies to down Pooja in 76kg final

World under-23 bronze medallist Nishu posts a 9-3 win over Himanshi to take the 53kg crown; World championships participant Vaishnavi gets the better of Anjali to clinch the 62kg title

## WRESTLING

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

Young Itisha Choudhary warded off a strong challenge from Pooja to take home the women's 76kg gold medal at the senior Open ranking wrestling tournament on the Nandini Nagar Mahavidyalaya campus here.

## Keen contest

In a keenly fought final bout, Itisha took a one-point lead before Pooja levelled the scores.

Itisha gathered two more points to reclaim her advantage and used her strong defence to emerge the winner.

World under-23 bronze medallist Nishu posted a 9-3 victory over Himanshi to take the 53kg crown.

In 57kg, where Vinesh



**Complete dominance:** Reena, right, recorded a 10-2 victory over Kajal in the 57kg title bout. SANDEEP SAXENA

Phogat had registered but could not participate after being rendered ineligible by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), World under-20 silver medallist Reena emerged as the champion.

In a one-sided final, Reena recorded a 10-2 victory over Kajal Choudhary.

World championships participant Vaishnavi Patil (62kg) defeated Anjali 8-6 to claim the yellow metal in another Olympic weight class.

**The results (finals):**  
**Women: 50kg:** Ankush (Har) bt Rachana (Har) 4-3; **53kg:** Nishu (Har) bt Himanshi (Har) 9-3. **55kg:** Nisha (Har) bt Naina (Har)

**10-8; 57kg:** Reena (Har) bt Kajal Choudhary (U.P.) 10-2. **59kg:** Sito (Har) bt Simran (Har) 10-2; **62kg:** Vaishnavi Patil (Mah) bt Anjali (Har) 8-6. **65kg:** Anjali (Chd) bt Dishun (Har) 10-0. **68kg:** Anshu (Har) bt Bhateri (SSCB) 16-6; **72kg:** Bipasha (Del) bt Riya Kaushik (Har) by fall; **76kg:** Itisha Choudhary (UP) bt Pooja (Har) 3-1.

## Tyagi and Manish move into the last-eight stage

## TENNIS

**Ashwin Achal**  
BENGALURU

Kriish Tyagi and Manish Sureshkumar kept the Indian hopes high with victories in the round-of-16 of the Karnataka Open ATP Challenger at the S.M. Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Wednesday.

It was a milestone moment for the two as they entered a Challenger quarterfinal for the first time.

Wild card entrant Tyagi posted a fluent 6-4, 6-4 win over Japan's Yuta Kawahashi.

The 19-year-old, fairly new to the senior ranks, showed good composure in crunch points and excelled with a strong forehand, hitting down-the-line winners at will.



**In control:** Tyagi showed good composure in the crunch points against Kawahashi. K. MURALI KUMAR

Manish overcame qualifier Alastair Gray, who retired midway through the second set due to an illness. Manish's dependable groundstrokes helped him win the first set 6-4, before his opponent began to wane.

Gray struggled to chase

the ball down, bringing a premature end to the match. Earlier, Mukund Sasikumar went down to second-seed Hamish Stewart 4-6, 4-6.

**The results (round-of-16):** Hamish Stewart (GBR) bt Mukund Sasikumar 6-4, 6-4; Ognjen Milic (Srb) bt Joshua Charlton (Aus)

3-6, 6-4, 6-3; Keegan Smith (USA) bt Dominik Palan (Cze) 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; Ilya Ivashka bt Kokoro Isomura (Jpn) 6-1, 6-2. Maximus Jones (Tha) bt Amit Vales (Isr) 6-2, 6-7 (5), 6-4; Manish Sureshkumar bt Alastair Gray (GBR) 6-4, 3-2 ret.; Kriish Tyagi bt Yuta Kawahashi (Jpn) 6-4, 6-4; Philip Sekulic (Aus) bt Christopher Papa (USA) 6-2, 6-3.

## Indian wrestlers should be positive and courageous: Alka

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

Alka Tomar, the first Indian woman to land a World championships medal, feels the country needs to focus on winning more wrestling medals at the 2032 Olympic Games and increase it further in 2036, as India is keen to host the mega event after 10 years.

The year 2032 is a personal target for Alka, who runs an academy of under-14 kids at Sisolia in Meerut district and wants to see her wards make their mark in the Olympics.

She says the country would also benefit if it focuses on a similar goal.

"We are hoping to host the Olympics... we would like to do well there. Our target should be the 2032 and 2036 Olympics. Every wrestler needs to develop a positive mindset," Arjuna award winner Alka told *The Hindu* while witnessing nearly 1200 wrestlers, reflecting the country's depth in talent, compete at the open ranking tournament here.

As wrestling is expected to return to the 2030 Commonwealth Games, India, as the host, should try to secure as many medals as possible and boost its tally, feels Alka.

A 2010 Delhi Commonwealth Games champion, Alka fondly remembers her famous upset win over multiple Olympic medallist Tonya Verbeek of Canada in the 59kg final and wants her wards to learn from



Alka Tomar. SANDEEP SAXENA

her strong mindset.

"I still get goosebumps. My guruji had told me to forget that I was fighting an Olympic medallist. Tonya's coach had told my coach that she would wrap up the bout in one-and-a-half minutes. Tonya had beaten me earlier. I trained well and was prepared. I just applied a technique (from a difficult position) and pinned her. With the home crowd backing vociferously, it was a surreal feeling," said Alka.

## Strong resolve

Even her 2006 Worlds bronze medal, despite fitness issues, was the result of Alka's strong resolve. She gave eventual champion Ayako Shoda a run for her money before losing, but secured a podium finish to end India's 39-year wait.

Alka wants her trainees to get inspired by her stories and heed her advice to excel.

"I tell them about fighting spirit and not to take any shortcuts (doping)," said Alka.

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## LALIGA

Agence France-Presse  
BARCELONA

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**Eye on the prize:** Scheffler is keen to get back to the top. AP

## 'Bittersweet' runner-up run inspires Scheffler

## PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

**Agence France-Presse**  
PHILADELPHIA

Top-ranked defending champion Scottie Scheffler has turned "bittersweet" feelings over three consecutive runner-up finishes into inspiration ahead of the PGA Championship beginning on Thursday.

The 29-year-old American captured his 20th career PGA Tour crown at the American Express in January. Since then, however, Scheffler has had to settle for second place at the Masters, Heritage and Dorland tournaments.

The results left him somewhat pleased yet unsatisfied. "I would say that they were a little bitter-sweet," Scheffler said. "Finishing second hurts. But when you're looking at things to work on, there's a lot less to clean up when you're finishing second than when you're 30th."

With four titles and 16 top-10 finishes in his last 20 major starts, Scheffler has arrived at Aronimink well prepared to add to his trophy cabinet. Scheffler and second-ranked Rory McIlroy have together won four of the past five majors, but they never had a Sunday battle down the back nine for a title victory.

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## STATEMENT OF STANDALONE &amp; CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated					
		Year ended		Year ended					
		31.03.2025 (Unaudited)	31.03.2025 (Audited)	31.03.2025 (Unaudited)	31.03.2025 (Audited)				
1	Total income from operations (including discontinued operations)	346.41	294.72	516.34	637.30	15,587.53	11,800.32	58,154.50	44,993.16
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional items) (including discontinued operations)	312.24	264.04	373.42	410.09	1,404.33	958.83	5,169.14	3,616.12
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional items) (including discontinued operations)	312.24	264.04	373.10	410.09	1,404.33	958.83	5,118.74	3,616.12
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	268.90	241.58	322.30	352.16	865.36	643.96	3,390.19	2,408.25
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income / (Loss) (after tax))	269.25	240.22	317.29	349.73	1,064.83	682.84	3,889.32	2,458.30
6	Paid up Equity share (Face value of Rs.5/- each)	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12	10.12
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	-	-	1,744.31	1,601.02	-	-	6,455.61	4,677.27
8	Securities Premium Account	36.42	36.42	36.42	36.42	36.42	36.42	36.42	36.42
9	Networth	1,750.83	1,604.56	1,750.83	1,604.56	5,070.00	3,685.20	5,070.00	3,685.20
10	Outstanding Debt	1,593.08	943.81	1,593.08	943.81	36,156.34	32,488.03	36,156.34	32,488.03
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Shares of Holding Company	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12	Debt Equity Ratio (including exceptional item)	0.90	0.45	0.90	0.45	4.88	5.93	4.88	5.93
13	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Rs. 5/- each) (not annualised) (in Rs.)	132.91	119.40	159.30	174.06	209.62	139.87	838.12	575.41
	(i) Basic	132.91	119.40	159.30	174.06	209.62	139.87	838.12	575.41
	(ii) Diluted	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
15	Debtenture Redemption Reserve	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiaries) (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiaries) (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
18	Current Ratio (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
19	Long term debt to working capital (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
20	Bad debts to Accounts Receivable ratio (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
21	Current liability ratio (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
22	Total debts to total assets ratio (Times)	0.44	0.34	0.44	0.34	0.56	0.60	0.56	0.60
23	Debtors Turnover ratio (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
24	Inventory Turnover ratio (Times)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
25	Operating Margin (%)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
26	Net Profit Margin (%)	77.62	80.42	62.45	54.68	5.54	5.45	5.91	5.35

Notes:

1 The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulations 33 & 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock exchange websites ([www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com)) and on company's website ([www.tvsholdings.com](http://www.tvsholdings.com)).

2 Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.

3 The Detailed Financial Results of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2026 can be accessed through the QR code.



For TVS Holdings Limited  
Sd/-  
Venu Srinivasan  
Chairman

Date: 13.05.2026

Devvanshi Bihani

**T**hree weeks ago, the Indian men's badminton team had left for Denmark with barely any national conversation around them. When they returned home with a Thomas Cup bronze medal – only India's second medal in the tournament's 78-year history – that had hardly changed.

No crowds waited at the airport. No frenzy surrounded the team that had just fought its way into the final four of badminton's biggest team championship. The moment dissolved into the rumble of trolley wheels, the mechanical hum of conveyor belts and the clipped repetition of arrival announcements. Somewhere between the baggage belts and sliding glass doors, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy posted what many interpreted as an expression of disappointment.

"Back home now. As usual, no one knows what happened over the past two weeks, and it seems like no one really cares," he wrote on *Instagram* alongside a picture of the team at the airport.

The post quickly travelled across social media, triggering debate over whether Indian athletes outside cricket received enough recognition. A few days later, as the discussion spiralled beyond his original point, Satwik felt compelled to explain himself.

"We don't want money or grand parades," he wrote in a statement. "We just want to know that our country is watching and that our efforts are seen." The clarification carried the exhaustion of an athlete trying to explain why silence can hurt more than criticism.

Satwik stressed that his comments were never meant to diminish achievements in other sports, nor were they driven by personal fame. The point, he said, was simple: India needs to build a culture that "encourages and celebrates every win, big or small. Whether it is a World Cup medal or a podium finish in a global championship like the Thomas Cup, these moments represent years of sacrifice and hard work," he wrote.

And perhaps that silence revealed that India still does not fully understand what the Thomas Cup represents. It is badminton's equivalent of the FIFA World Cup in prestige, and structurally closest to tennis' Davis Cup – a competition that measures not just individual brilliance, but the collective strength of a nation's badminton system.

One superstar cannot win it alone. Teams need depth across singles and doubles, tactical versatility, endurance, and the ability to withstand pressure across multiple ties against the sport's traditional powerhouses.

Historically, those giants have almost always been China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Japan. India spent decades looking at that table from the outside.

### Transition

That reality has changed dramatically over the last five years. India's stunning Thomas Cup triumph in Bangkok in 2022 altered the imagination of Indian badminton forever. But in many ways, the bronze medal in Horsens this year may have been just as significant in understanding India's place in world badminton. While the gold could still be seen as a magical fortnight where everything aligned perfectly, this bronze felt like confirmation that India genuinely belongs among badminton's elite team nations and that the triumph in Bangkok was no one-off.

India entered the tournament seeded eighth. Several countries looked stronger on paper. Thailand had World No. 2 Kunlavut Vitidsarn. Indonesia brought one of the deepest men's squads in the competition. Japan remained a perennial powerhouse. Chinese Taipei fielded two top-10 singles players in Chou Tien Chen and Lin Chun-Yi.

India, meanwhile, arrived with a squad in transition. Lakshya Sen carried significant expectations after his strong start to the year and deep run at the All England. Satwik and Chirag were returning from an injury-hit phase, while India's second doubles combination of M.R. Arjun and Hariharan Amsakarunan still lacked the assurance of a guaranteed point in big ties.

Much of the intrigue centred around Ayush Shetty, then 20, who had arrived at the tournament on the back of a breakthrough run to the Badminton Asia Championships final and was increasingly being seen as India's emerging singles force. H.S. Prannoy and K. Srikanth, the two most experienced players in the squad, entered carrying both the physical wear and tear of years on tour and the responsibility of guiding the team.

Yet, over the course of the week in Denmark, India rediscovered something that has increasingly become the identity of this team: resilience under pressure.

India's group-stage clash against China carried enormous symbolic weight. Four years after India's famous 3-2 win over China during its title-winning 2022 campaign, the tie once again felt like a measuring stick against badminton's greatest powerhouse, built on relentless depth, ruthless systems and an endless conveyor belt of elite players.

This time, though, India pushed them all the way again.

Lakshya fought Li Shifeng fiercely.



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# A bronze that confirmed India's elite status

The nation may have won the 2022 Thomas Cup title, but by following it up with another podium finish, it showed that the earlier achievement was no flash in the pan

Satwik and Chirag saved multiple match-points before narrowly losing to Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang. And then came Prannoy, producing what felt like one final vintage act of defiance in the dead rubber against Lu Guangzu.

### Going toe-to-toe

India lost the tie 2-3, but walked away looking less like outsiders and more like a side capable of going toe-to-toe with the sport's traditional superpower.

The real breakthrough came in the quarterfinal against Taiwan, which possessed elite singles depth and a dangerous doubles combination. Anxiety surrounded Ayush, who was set to face Lin Chun-Yi, the All England champion who had beaten him in the Orleans Masters semifinals in March 2025.

Lakshya set the tone. Against the vastly experienced Chou Tien Chen, he clawed his way back from the brink, saving two game-points in the second set before turning the match around. Then Satwik and Chirag survived a ferocious contest to put India 2-0 ahead. Which meant everything suddenly rested on Ayush. That alone said something about how quickly India's badminton landscape is changing.

Four years ago, Ayush had watched India's Thomas Cup triumph on television. In Horsens, he walked on to the court carrying the weight of a nation's semifinal hopes. Yet, while the rest of India seemed tense, Ayush looked remarkably calm. He absorbed Chun-Yi's relentless attack, defended brilliantly and repeatedly found ways to wrest back control of points.

When the winning point landed, India had secured another Thomas Cup medal.

And in that moment, the tournament became about more than bronze.

Ayush's emergence symbolised continuity. India was no longer dependent on one golden generation

peaking together. Beneath Lakshya, Satwik, Chirag and Prannoy, another layer was already forming. That is what strong sporting nations do. They renew themselves before decline arrives.

By the time India reached the semifinal against France, the Forum Horsens arena had found its two loudest teams of the tournament and the atmosphere reflected the stakes for both the countries.

The Indians beat dafis in the stands while the French responded with synchronised claps and booming songs. The noise ricocheted through the arena like a festival procession trapped inside a badminton hall. Both benches roared through every point, every retrieval and every momentum swing, turning the semifinal into one of the most emotionally charged ties of the week.

### A story of its own

France, though, had arrived in Horsens with a story of its own.

By reaching the last four, France had already guaranteed itself a first-ever Thomas Cup medal. A landmark moment for a nation that has steadily built one of the strongest men's singles programmes in world badminton over the last few years. Along the way, France achieved a historic 4-1 upset victory against 14-time champion Indonesia and defeated Japan in the quarterfinals.

The rise had been driven by the extraordinary depth in singles: World No. 4 Christo Popov, his older brother Toma Junior Popov, and the explosive Alex Lanier, all ranked inside the world's top-17.

The semifinal eventually exposed the fine margins India had been operating under throughout the tournament. Lakshya missed the tie after injuring his elbow during his diving retrievals in the quarterfinal against Chen, a setback compounded by painful blisters on his feet. Without their first singles player –

and one of the team's most reliable big-match performers – India's chances of reaching a second Thomas Cup final were significantly reduced against a French side built around the formidable trio of Popov brothers and the World No. 10.

That absence also thrust an even greater responsibility onto Ayush. Until then, Ayush had won all his matches in the tournament and emerged as one of India's breakout performers. But against Christo, the youngster ran into a different level of intensity and speed.

Afterwards, Ayush admitted that the Frenchman had "outclassed and outpaced" him, adding that ties like these against elite opponents were part of the learning curve.

Lanier's relentless power and pace eventually proved too much for Srikanth, though the former World No. 1 still produced flashes of the anticipation and touch that once made him a world-renowned attacking player. With India 0-2 down, the responsibility shifted to Prannoy.

Up against the higher-ranked Toma Junior, Prannoy fought doggedly, pushing through long rallies and physical strain in an attempt to keep India alive. But the Frenchman closed out the tie in straight games even before doubles could become a factor. Satwik and Chirag never got the opportunity to influence the contest.

The 0-3 scoreline ended India's campaign, but not the significance of its achievement. France may have gone on to make history with its first-ever Thomas Cup final, but India's bronze still carried enormous weight. This was a team seeded eighth, managing injuries, relying on an ageing core while simultaneously ushering in a new generation. Despite that, India finished on the podium in badminton's toughest team championship.

And perhaps that's what Satwik was trying to say all along.

### THE GIST

▼ The Thomas Cup bronze proved that India was not reliant on just one golden generation of players

▼ If the stunning Thomas Cup triumph in Bangkok in 2022 altered the image of Indian badminton, the latest success was a worthy follow-up act

▼ This was a team seeded eighth, managing injuries, relying on an ageing core and simultaneously ushering in a new era

# How new fossils, latest technology are tracing the origins of snakes

Scientists estimate that ancestors of the wildly diverse group of living snakes emerged around 160 million years ago, but they have not figured out what the first snakes were like; these mysterious, ancestral snakes should sit at the base of the snake family tree, but their fossils have not been found

## Amber Dance

**B**ack when dinosaurs stomped the earth, mammals scurried about in their shadows. Those furballs, hiding in underground burrows, provided a fresh niche for a novel reptile: the snake. Skinny snakes could squeeze into mammals' holes and gobble them up.

At least, that is how the dawn of snakes is imagined by Marc Tollis, an evolutionary biologist at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. No one knows for sure. Like the creatures, the snake fossil record is long and thin, leaving gaps in snaky history. Major questions, such as where they got their start and who their closest relatives are, remain unanswered.

Today, new fossils and modern techniques are updating the story of snakes. Starting about 125 million years ago, snakes used their flexible body plans to diversify like crazy, conquering regions that now make up six continents, plus the Indian and Pacific Oceans – and Mr. Tollis would not be surprised to find snake fossils in once-balmy Antarctica, either.

There are serpents slithering across the land, burrowing into the soil, swimming in the sea and gliding between trees, even catching rides on trains and, yes, planes. There are threadsnakes just a few inches long and thin as spaghetti, and pythons that exceed 20 feet. There are snakes that chase prey and snakes that lie in wait to ambush it, snakes that strangle their meals and others that immobilise their dinner with venom. Snakes that lay eggs, snakes that bear live young, snakes that reproduce without males.

It is an impressive smorgasbord of abilities for what is, essentially, a freaky offshoot on the lizard family tree. Serpents are basically predatory tubes, Mr. Tollis notes. They cannot walk or chew their food. These seem like seriously limiting factors.

"Despite that, snakes are some of the most successful animals," marvels Mr. Tollis, who co-authored an overview of early snake and lizard evolution in the 2025 *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics*. "They definitely have superpowers that we would normally associate with the fantastic."

## By sea, by land, or below?

There are more than 4,000 described living species of snakes, accounting for about one-third of the larger lizard group, and probably hundreds more awaiting official discovery, says Alex Pyron, an evolutionary biologist at George Washington University in Washington, DC. Scientists estimate that the ancestors of this wildly diverse group emerged around 160 million years ago, but they have not figured out what the first snakes were like – land snakes, sea snakes, underground snakes?

These mysterious, ancestral snakes should sit at the base of the snake family tree, but their fossils have not been found. The oldest snake fossils known come from a variety of environments, making it hard to determine which kind of habitat snakes wriggled out of, says Tiago Simões, a co-author on the *Annual Review* paper and an evolutionary biologist at Princeton University in New Jersey.

One longstanding hypothesis is that snakes got their start underground. The original idea was based, in part, on blind snakes that are the lowest branch on the family tree of living snakes. But blind snakes are quite specialised for the anthills and termite mounds they inhabit, says Catie Strong, a vertebrate palaeontologist and graduate student at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

They have weird, alien-looking skulls fit for their subterranean environment and insectivore diet. For example, Ms. Strong says, a "pronounced underbite" helps keep dirt out of their mouths. While training with vertebrate palaeontologist and evolutionary biologist Michael Caldwell at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, Ms. Strong concluded, as have others, that these hyperspecialised critters cannot correspond to the root of the snake family tree.

In the late 20th century, evidence suggesting a marine origin floated up. Scientists described snakes that lived nearly 100 million years ago in West Asia, when that land was underwater. Mr. Caldwell and colleagues also linked the snake clan to mosasaurs, extinct aquatic reptiles, raising the possibility that snakes emerged in the water. But favour for that hypothesis has sunk: There are other snakes that predate those aquatic snakes and were clearly terrestrial, says Mr. Simões.



**Slithering around:** Starting about 125 million years ago, snakes used their flexible body plans to diversify, conquering regions that now make up six continents, plus the Indian and Pacific Oceans. KNOWABLE MAGAZINE

Modern-day Patagonia has yielded a trove of additional snake fossils, such as *Najash rionegrina*, dated to about 95 million years ago, and *Dinilysia patagonica*, from about 80 million years ago, when that environment was desert-like. *Dinilysia* probably lived aboveground, but the situation with *Najash* is trickier, says Mr. Simões.

*Najash* has skull and spinal features that, to its discoverers, suggested it spent some time underground. But both of these Patagonia species were "big-bodied snakes," adds Mr. Caldwell, similar to modern-day pythons. Like pythons, they might have hid out underground, but hunted on the surface, he speculates.

Additional evidence for a mixed dry land/underground origin comes from predictions about early snakes' brains. Scientists used 3D X-ray imaging to analyse the braincase – the part of the skull protecting the brain – of nearly 60 snakes and lizards, plus a few snake fossils. From those inner contours, they could infer the brain's shape. The researchers identified burrower brain anatomy: Diggers usually possess, for example, a small, flattened, triangular cerebellum, a brain section involved in movement. When the researchers used their data to predict the ancestral snake brain shape, they wound up with some burrower-like features, including that little cerebellum, but other features inconsistent with underground living.

Bringing the evidence together, Ms. Strong thinks that snakes evolved on land, maybe a sandy environment like the one *Dinilysia* and *Najash* inhabited. This, she suspects, also set them up to navigate underground on occasion.

## A better way to slither

Another major event in snake evolution was, of course, the shedding of their legs. This is not as innovative as it might seem; among lizard-kind, several long, skinny

groups have kicked their legs to the curb. When crawling underground or moving through grass, limbs are literally "a drag," says Daniela Garcia Cobos, an evolutionary biologist and graduate student at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Snakes do seem to have been among the first lizards to master this streamlined shape.

Mr. Pyron estimates this change happened between 150 million and 125 million years ago, but scientists have not pinned down exactly when or where.

## Headly changes

In any case, what distinguished snakes from all other legless lizards were the other changes they made, says Mr. Pyron. To investigate further innovations, Mr. Pyron and collaborators embarked on a massive reptile census, published in *Science* in 2024. They measured the skulls of thousands of snakes and lizards. They examined stomach contents of museum specimens and pored over written dietary records. They amassed data from 5,400 genes from more than 1,000 snake and lizard species.

When they lined up those features, snakes stood out. About 125 million years ago, the group underwent sudden, significant changes to their skulls, diets and spines, positioning them to diversify and spread. Snakes' biggest claim to evolutionary fame is their weirdly flexible craniums, made of bony pieces connected by soft tissue; Mr. Caldwell thinks this key alteration happened even before they gave up their legs. Snakes first changed up their braincase. In most lizards, this looks like a sandwich: bone on top, bone on the bottom, brain within and open on the sides. But in snakes, it is more like a wrap, a bony tube only open toward the face and spine. Protecting the brain that way meant snakes were free to let the rest of the skull's bones move about. And boy, did they.

Those skull changes enabled new diets with the evolution of the serpentine jaw. While jaw anatomy varies within the group, in many snakes, the lower and upper parts are connected by stretchy ligaments, enabling a wide gape. The two sides of the lower jaw can splay apart, further expanding the snake's maw. The palate at the top of the mouth has right and left parts that move independently to convey food throatwards. That is how a python can swallow a pig. Indeed, the *Science* team found that snakes, as a clan, can eat pretty much anything that moves. There are snakes that nosh on gooey slugs and armoured snails, slippery eels and even other serpents.

Around the same time, snakes grew longer, adding hundreds of vertebrae between their necks and nether regions. "Being elongate allows you to locomote more quickly and efficiently," says Mr. Caldwell. Extra belly flesh supplies more surface area to push along the ground or climb tree trunks. For aquatic snakes, increased length enables more efficient weaving back and forth.

In sum, these changes to body, head and diet meant the evolving serpents were flexible not just in form, but also in lifestyle. Snakes adapt rapidly to new environments, says Frank Burbrink, curator of herpetology at the American Museum of Natural History and a co-author of the *Annual Review* article. In other words, these evolutionary superstars were primed to make the most of any habitat they slithered into.

## Making up for absent fossils

The fragmented skulls and body length that were so beneficial for snakes' spread create a headache for palaeontologists: Dead snakes go to pieces, making complete fossils scarce and leaving many questions unanswered. For example, researchers know serpents are related to groups containing iguanas and Komodo dragons, as well as possibly those mosasaurs, but it is not certain which are their closest cousins. Knowing that would help to predict what snake ancestors should look like, says Susan E. Evans, a palaeontologist at University College London.

When fossils falter, genetics can come to the rescue. Already, genetic analyses have forced a reshuffling of the lizard family tree; trees based on body shape alone turned out to be "totally wrong," says Mr. Pyron.

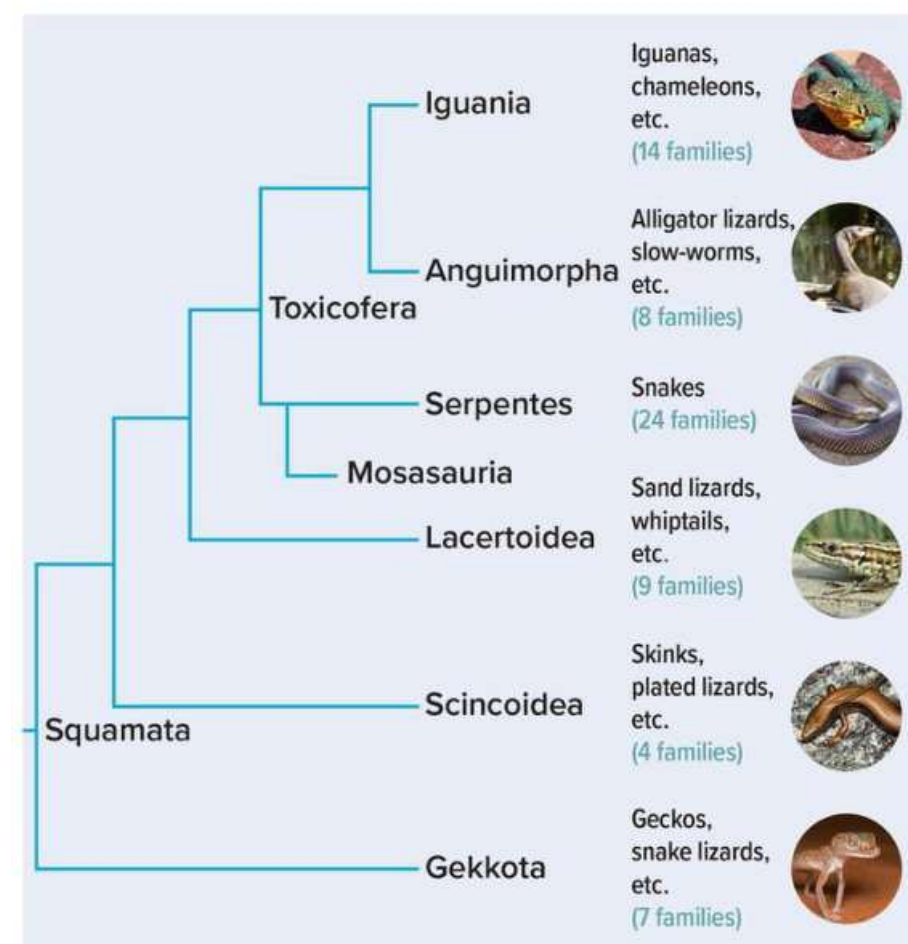
Genes have also illuminated how snake bodies build some of their special features. The lack of legs is linked to lost function in a limb-promoting sequence called *ZRS*.

Mr. Burbrink, Mr. Pyron and Mr. Simões are now sequencing whole genomes of more than 100 snakes and lizards, which will double the number of high-quality genomes available. With that plus additional data on living and fossil reptiles, they expect to build better family trees and further investigate the genes behind a snake's sinuous shape.

Still, Ms. Evans says, scientists really need more fossils to fill in the twists and turns in the serpents' tale.

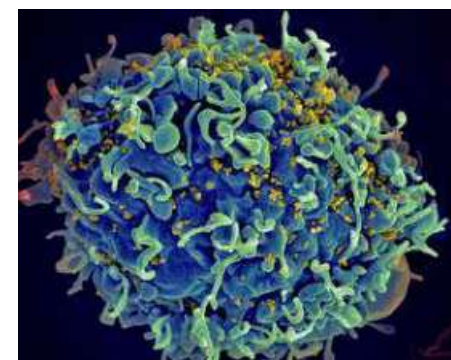
As palaeontologists keep digging, Mr. Burbrink counsels us to take a moment to marvel the next time we come across a garter snake or other modern wriggler: "You are looking at the culmination of more than 100 million years of evolution." (*Amber Dance* is special contributor, Knowable Magazine. This article is republished from Knowable Magazine with permission.)

## Evolutionary tree of lizards and snakes



SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM EVOFOSSIL.COM

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This coloured electron microscope image provided by the U.S. NIH shows a human T cell (blue) under attack by HIV (yellow). AP

## Revving up immune cells might help fight HIV: study

### Associated Press

**S**cientists are tweaking a powerful cancer therapy in hopes it could fight HIV instead, by supercharging patients' own immune cells.

On Tuesday, researchers said a single dose of those revved-up cells strongly suppressed HIV in two people – one for nearly a year and the other for nearly two years – without requiring their usual medicines.

Larger and longer studies are needed to prove if what's called CAR-T cell therapy might really offer long-lasting help for HIV, cautioned Dr Steven Deeks of the University of California, San Francisco, who led the research.

"We find the fact that two people have had such a really sustained response provocative," he said. "There is a real need for a one-and-done, safe and scalable cure ... and this is one of the

### Researchers have long hunted an elusive cure, pursuing such clues as a rare gene mutation that makes some people naturally resistant to HIV

strategies that we're pursuing." The data is being presented at a meeting of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy in Boston.

There are nearly 40 million people living with HIV around the world. Today's medicines have turned the virus that causes AIDS from a fast killer into a manageable chronic disease, often keeping the virus at undetectable levels, but only if people can afford the drugs and stick with them. The virus hides out in reservoirs in the body and rebounds fast if people stop treatment.

Researchers have long hunted an elusive cure, pursuing such clues as a rare gene mutation that makes some people naturally resistant to HIV or how a handful of HIV patients who also had certain cancers were declared cured or in long-term remission after receiving a stem cell transplant, something too risky for most people.

CAR-T therapy involves taking immune soldiers called T cells out of a person's blood, genetically engineering them into "living drugs" and infusing them back into the patient. They're widely used to cure certain types of cancer and are being studied for other diseases.

For HIV, scientists at the nonprofit drug developer Caring Cross created CAR-T cells with dual features. They're programmed to better find and kill HIV-infected cells – and engineered with protection against infection by the very virus they're supposed to fight.

With that added armor, they should be able to reproduce enough to keep HIV in check, said Caring Cross executive director Boro Dropulic.

Deeks' early-stage experiment tested different dosing strategies in people who stopped their HIV medicine the day they received their CAR-T cells. There were no serious side effects. The first three recipients showed no response and resumed their usual medicines.

Six others received a small amount of chemotherapy to make space for the new T cells. Those two strong responders saw their HIV drop to undetectable levels, inching up only occasionally when the CAR-T cells presumably got to work again. A third patient had a temporary response and resumed regular HIV treatment.

Those three patients all had started their original HIV treatment soon after they'd been infected, Deeks said. That makes sense because people treated early tend to have less HIV hiding in the body and a healthier immune system.

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