

**NEGOTIATING DIFFERENCES**  
**'BRICS will reach a common position'**  
Brazil FM Mauro Vieira says despite divisions over West Asia, BRICS remains a platform for dialogue and negotiation  
NEWS » PAGE 10

Why has RSS called for dialogue with Pak?  
FAQ » PAGE 14

CBSE makes three languages compulsory  
NEWS » PAGE 9

Allen, Raghuvanshi and Narine star for KKR  
SPORT » PAGE 17

India rejects CoA's award on Indus Waters Treaty

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

India on Saturday rejected an award reportedly issued by the Court of Arbitration (CoA) at The Hague on Friday, reiterating that it does not recognise the tribunal as legitimately constituted. The award concerned maximum pondage at Indian hydroelectric projects on the Indus river system. "India categorically rejects the present so-called award, just as it has firmly rejected all prior pronouncements of the illegally constituted CoA," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

**'Null and void'** He added that any decision of the body was "null and void." India's decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, he said, remained in force.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 9

**Manipur protest on; Kukis want President's Rule back**

Thousands take to the streets demanding the unconditional release of all hostages; shutdown extended; they demand special security zones in vulnerable areas, stronger protection for civilians

The Hindu Bureau  
GUWAHATI

Thousands of Kuki-Zo people took to the streets in Chura-chandpur and Kangpokpi districts of Manipur on Saturday, demanding the unconditional release of Kuki hostages and justice for three church leaders killed in an ambush by extremists on May 13.

In a memorandum to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, several Kuki civil society groups called for the reimposition of President's Rule in the State. The protest rallies coincided with the extension of a 48-hour total shutdown called by the Kuki Inpi Manipur, the apex body of Kukis.

According to Manipur's Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam, more than 38 Kuki and Naga people were held captives by various



**Mounting tension:** Protesters demanding the release of Kuki hostages and justice for three slain church leaders at Kangpokpi in Manipur on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

groups after the killing of three church leaders. Security forces and community-based organisations helped secure the release of 28 hostages on Friday. Unconfirmed reports said 10 more hostages were released on Saturday, but the Kuki-Zo groups said 14 community members continued to be in captivity.

Protesters at the rally held by the Committee on Tribal Unity demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all Kuki hostages and the "urgent implementation of the charter of demands" submitted to the Centre.

These demands include a National Investigation Agency probe into the kill-

ing of the church leaders, a security for civilians and villages, the establishment of special security zones in conflict-prone areas, and an expedited engagement with Kuki-Zomi extremist groups under the Suspension of Operations pact.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 9

**Full list of Cabinet Ministers by today evening: Satheesan**

The Hindu Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amid intense speculation over Cabinet formation and portfolio allocation in Kerala's new United Democratic Front (UDF) government, Chief Minister-designate V.D. Satheesan indicated on Saturday that the full list of Ministers will be handed over to Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar by Sunday evening.

Mr. Satheesan said the full Council of Ministers would take the oath of office at 10 a.m. on Monday at the Central Stadium here. The State capital witnessed hectic parleys and negotiations through the day, as the Congress-led UDF steered discussions to finalise Ministerial berths. Rumours suggest that the Chief Minister is considering holding on to the Finance portfolio himself.

Speculation is rife that senior Congress leader Ra-



V.D. Satheesan

mesh Chennithala, who was reportedly disgruntled over being bypassed for the Chief Minister's post, will join the Cabinet as Home Minister. Mr. Satheesan and AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal met Mr. Chennithala for conciliatory talks. Speaking to presspersons after the meeting, Mr. Chennithala restricted his comments to one sentence: "I'm always a true Congressman."

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 9

**IN BRIEF**



**'India undergoing unprecedented transformation'**

**THE HAGUE** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India was undergoing an "unprecedented transformation" and its aspirations were "no longer limited to its borders." » Page 10

**Pune biology teacher arrested in NEET case**

**NEW DELHI** The CBI on Saturday arrested a biology lecturer from Pune in connection with the 2026 NEET-UG paper leak case. Manisha Gurnath Mandhare was involved in this year's examination process. » Page 4

CLASSIFIEDS » PAGE 8  
MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

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# Govt. to unveil policy to transform Delhi into logistics hub: CM

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Buoyed by Delhi's top ranking in the national logistics index, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday said the government will launch a new warehousing policy, improve ease of doing business and promote technology-driven governance to transform the Capital into a logistics hub.



CM Rekha Gupta distributing bicycles to students in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

Noting that Delhi has been placed in the 'Exemplary' category in the Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) 2025 Index, Ms. Gupta said the government will build further on the city's existing infrastructure and connectivity network. "The Warehousing and Logistics Policy 2025 will soon be finalised, which will reduce congestion in freight movement, eliminate regulatory complexities, and address gaps in logistics infrastructure," she said.

The LEADS Index, prepared by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, evaluates States and Union Territories (UTs) on parameters such as logistics infrastructure, logistics services, regulatory framework, digital integration, sustainability and stakeholder perception. Under the index, whose results were released earlier this week, States and UTs are classified into four categories - Exemplary, High Performer, Accelerators, and Growth Seekers.

Among the government's priorities, Ms. Gupta

ta said, is increasing women's participation in green warehousing and the logistics sector, besides developing organised transport hubs to reduce unregulated roadside loading and congestion.

### Dedicated corridors

"The government is also working on increasing the use of the metro rail network for light freight transportation during night and non-peak hours to reduce pressure on road corridors," the CM said. She said plans are afoot to develop dedicated freight corridors to separate commercial and passenger traffic on busy roads.

Ms. Gupta said under the Prime Minister Gati Shakti Yojana, the government has prepared a City Logistics Plan, which has already received approval and will soon be notified. "This will make urban freight movement, last-mile delivery systems and urban freight management more streamlined and efficient," she said, adding that the Delhi Single Window System has expedited approvals and permissions related to logistics and industrial investments.

# DU launches registration for 2-year PG courses; applications open till June 7

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi University on Saturday opened registrations for admissions to its two-year postgraduate (PG)

programmes, introducing Digilocker-based auto-integration of candidate credentials to streamline the application process. The registration process will continue till June 7.

The Registrar's Office said students currently studying in the third or fourth year of their undergraduate programmes are eligible to apply for the two-year master's pro-

grammes.

Candidates must fulfil the eligibility criteria for the specific programme they are applying to and should have appeared for the Common University

Entrance Test for Postgraduate admissions in the relevant subjects.

The university also said applications for one-year postgraduate programmes, under the Na-

tional Education Policy 2020 framework, will be invited soon through a separate portal. Candidates have been advised to visit [admission.uod.ac.in](http://admission.uod.ac.in) for updates.

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## INBRIEF



## Delhi L-G launches drive to revive over 100 water bodies

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Saturday launched a drive to restore 101 water bodies across the city by August 30. Mr. Sandhu said the project, to be undertaken by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), aims to revive Delhi's "blue lungs" and strengthen its ecological resilience. "The drive will prioritise functional ecological restoration through deep desilting and catchment clearance to maximise groundwater recharge during the monsoon," he said at the launch event at District Park in Paschim Vihar. Mr. Sandhu, who is also the DDA chairman, directed officials to strictly adhere to timelines.

## U.P. CM lays foundation for Gorakhpur cricket stadium

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday laid the foundation stone for an international cricket stadium in Gorakhpur. The 30,000-capacity stadium will be built on 46 acres at a cost of around ₹393 crore in Tal Nador. A sports complex with indoor and outdoor facilities will also come up on an adjoining 60 acres. Mr. Adityanath said the project would boost infrastructure, promote sports and generate employment. He added that the government was strengthening sports infrastructure, had given jobs to around 550 medal-winning players, with recruitment for another 500 announced.

## Meghalaya CM bats for revival of India-Bangladesh trade ties

India and Bangladesh have initiated dialogue at the "local level" to reset ties, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma has said, while calling for reviving people-to-people engagement and trade between the two countries. Interacting with a group of journalists in Delhi on Friday, Mr. Sangma said it was important to remind people of the historical cooperation between the two countries, including India's support to Bangladesh during difficult times. He also called for more cultural exchanges and reopening of border haats that were shut in the aftermath of the 2024 political unrest in the neighbouring country. He was speaking on the sidelines of the curtain raiser event for the North East India Infrastructure Summit and Exhibition. PTI

## Mann, Congress step up vigil over SIR in Punjab, Haryana

Will not allow even a single genuine vote to be deleted in the State, warns Chief Minister; Congress broadens 'Action and Monitoring Committee' to ensure transparent and seamless revision process

The Hindu Bureau  
CHANDIGARH

Amid announcements of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Punjab and Haryana, political parties in both States have stepped up efforts to monitor the exercise closely.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Saturday said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) would not allow even a single genuine vote to be deleted in the State. In Haryana, the Congress broadened its 'Action and Monitoring Committee' to ensure a fair, transparent and seamless revision process. The SIR will begin in Punjab and Haryana on June 15.

Warning against any attempt to engineer "fake votes" in favour of a particular political party, Mr.



Voicing concerns: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann addressing a press conference in Chandigarh on Saturday. ANI

Mann said that AAP leaders and workers would remain stationed alongside Booth Level Officers (BLOs) at every polling booth across Punjab to monitor the exercise and "prevent any irregularities."

"Names of deceased individuals or those who have permanently shifted abroad after acquiring fo-

reign citizenship should naturally be removed from the voter list, but no genuine resident of Punjab should face harassment or denial of voting rights under any circumstances. Punjab mustn't fall into an atmosphere of mistrust, fuelled by claims of genuine voters being removed from the rolls while fake voters are being ad-

ded. Our booth-level agents and volunteers will remain present," Mr. Mann told mediapersons on the sidelines of an event.

## Action mode

Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee president Rao Narender Singh said that the party remained committed to safeguarding democratic values and that through the committee comprising senior party leaders, it would ensure transparency and fairness in the electoral rolls.

Former Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition in the Haryana Assembly Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the Congress would neither allow the wrongful deletion of any legitimate vote nor permit the retention of any invalid vote. "A strict watch will be kept on the entire revision procedure," he said.

## T.N. portfolios are out: Vijay will hold Home, Sengottaiyan Finance

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI



C. Joseph Vijay

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay will hold the Home portfolio, K.A. Sengottaiyan Finance, and S. Keerthana Industries, as the new Cabinet's portfolio allocations were announced on Saturday.

A Lok Bhavan press release said the Chief Minister had recommended the portfolio and subject allocations for the Council of Ministers to the Governor, who approved them. The Ministers were sworn in along with the Chief Minister on May 10.

Beyond Home, Mr. Vijay will hold portfolios such as Police, IAS and IPS, Indian Forest Service, District Revenue Officers, Special Programme Implementation, Women Welfare, Youth Welfare, Welfare of Children, Aged and Differently-abled Persons, and Municipal Administration.

N. Anand will handle the portfolios of Rural De-

velopment and Water Resources. Aadhav Arjuna gets Public Works Department and Sports Department.

K.G. Arunraj, a former Indian Revenue Service officer, has been allotted the portfolios of Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare; and P. Venkatraman Food and Civil Supplies, Consumer Protection and Price Control. R. Nirmalkumar will handle Electricity and Non-Conventional Energy, Law, Courts, Prisons and Prevention of Corruption, Legislative Assembly, Governor, Elections and Passports.

## Action against AIADMK MLAs who backed TVK certain, says Manian

The Hindu Bureau  
NAGAPATTINAM

Former AIADMK Minister and Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly O.S. Manian on Saturday said action under the anti-defection law would "certainly" be initiated against 25 AIADMK MLAs who, he alleged, acted in support of the TVK despite the party whip.

After touring parts of the Vedaranyam constituency to thank voters following his electoral victory, Mr. Manian told reporters that the Supreme Court, in its 2023 verdict in

the Shiv Sena case, had made it clear that the power to appoint the whip for a legislature party rested with the party's general secretary, which in the AIADMK's case is Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

He alleged that despite directions issued by the whip, 25 AIADMK MLAs acted in favour of the TVK, and therefore, proceedings under the anti-defection provisions would continue against them. "The CM himself meeting the 25 AIADMK MLAs separately stands as evidence of their defiance of party discipline and the whip," he alleged.

## Pune biology teacher held in NEET case

Devesh K. Pandey  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday arrested a biology lecturer from Pune in connection with the 2026 NEET-UG paper leak case.

Manisha Gurnath Mandhare was appointed by the National Testing Agency (NTA) as an expert and was involved in this year's examination process.

"She had complete access to the botany and zoology question papers. During April 2026, she had mobilised prospective NEET examination candidates through Manisha Waghmare of Pune (arrested on May 14) and conduct-



Youth Congress workers protest against Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ed special coaching classes for these students at her residence," the agency said.

According to the CBI, during those classes, Ms. Mandhare explained and disclosed various questions from botany and zoology, had the students note them down in their notebooks, and also marked them in their text-

books. The majority of these questions tallied with the actual question paper of the NEET-UG 2026 examination" the CBI said. The agency has so far arrested nine accused in the case.

In the last 24 hours, the CBI has conducted searches at six locations across the country and seized laptops, bank statements, and mobile phones. The Pune-based chemistry lecturer P.V. Kulkarni was held on the charge of leaking chemistry questions. The agency alleged that he had access to the question papers as he was involved in the examination process on behalf of the NTA.

During the last week of April, he had also allegedly mobilised students with the help of Ms. Waghmare, a beauty salon owner. The "kingpin" conducted special coaching classes for them at his residence in Pune and dictated questions, answer options, and correct responses.

RELATED REPORTS  
» PAGE 10

## SPOTLIGHT

Snehal Mutha

Nagubai Chaudhary, 52, had always believed that the land would take care of her, and it did. For as long as she can remember. But in 2025, unseasonal rains lashed parts of western and central Maharashtra. The flash floods that ensued devastated the kharif crop.

When the land began to dry, Nagubai and her husband, Malinath, 60, had to quickly think of how to survive the season. "We paid to level the damaged topsoil, and sowed onions. They usually give a quick yield. But the crop failed. It created more debt," said Nagubai, wiping her tears with the end of her floral pink saree.

Then, her husband died. She needed to clear a debt of ₹14 lakh, taken to fund farming and the bills from Malinath's hospitalisation.

Nagubai and her husband owned 1.5 acres of land in Chincholi village in Maharashtra's Dharashiv district. She was forced to sell an acre to repay the debts. "I have lost my husband, the land, and a crop," she says.

Maharashtra's Agriculture Department estimated that last year 3 million farmers were affected by floods that devastated 6.5 million hectares of crop area through August and September. The rains flattened soyabean fields in Vidarbha, rotted onions in

Nashik, destroyed pulses in Marathwada, and flooded paddy plots across the low-lying belts.

The Maharashtra government announced a ₹31,628-crore relief package on October 7. In the following months, several farmers say they have no clear idea of how much they are due, despite a government assessment. Nagubai says she was promised only ₹2,500 two months before her husband died. Sitting in a pink small room, one corner of which is designated as a kitchen, she explains: "Even this money is stuck as I still don't have my husband's death certificate."

According to the State Relief and Rehabilitation Department, the compensation for crop loss was ₹18,500 per hectare (1 hectare is 2.5 acres) for rainfed land, ₹27,000 per hectare for irrigated land, ₹32,500 per hectare for horticulture or perennial land (like orchards). In addition, if the topsoil had been washed away, a farmer was to get ₹47,000 per hectare.

To help restore the topsoil, the government promised to employ people through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNRREGA) scheme that guarantees 100 days of work to the unemployed.

Nagubai is now surviving on money left from the land deal, ₹1,500 per month from the Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Anudan Yojana for those below the poverty line, and paid work under MNRREGA. A

## Relief out of reach

Nearly a year after the Marathwada floods in Maharashtra, many farmers affected by the destruction that followed say they are still waiting for parts of the compensation the State government promised



A farmer on his betel leaf farm in Dharashiv district of Maharashtra that faced floods last year. EMMANUAL YOGINI EMMANUAL YOGINI

part of the topsoil of her land was washed away, she says, but she has spent ₹14,000 to restore it. There has been no government help. Several farmers from Marathwada's six most impacted districts, as well as from western Maharashtra's Solapur, say they have not received the whole compensation. Many farmers have now paid from their pockets or taken another loan to improve their lands and get ready for rabi crops.

In Dharashiv, the Maharashtra government identified 7.03 lakh farmers affected by the floods. So far, 5.2 lakh have been compensated, says Collector

Keerthi Kiran Pujar. "The rest will receive the funds after the e-KYC (Know Your Customer) is done. Most of the farmers have received relief. The relief under MNRREGA and topsoil-replacement money will be given as per the claims raised by farmers with the grama panchayat." Mantrala, Maharashtra's administrative headquarters located in Mumbai, has not responded to queries on data from across the affected areas.

During the relief package announcement, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had said, "The package will be distributed to the farmers in 29 (out of 36)

districts, covering 253 (out of 358) talukas and over 2,000 revenue circles before Deepavali (in 2025). However, no one can provide 100% compensation to farmers' financial and mental crisis."

From January to April, 2026, in Dharashiv, 36 farmers took their lives, while from July to December 2025, up to 78 farmers died by suicide, according to the Collector's office.

## The lost farms

A group of farmers from Rajegaon village have gathered at one of the classrooms of the government zilla parishad school. Narayan Deshmukh, 52, sits

on a chair in front of a wall with photographs of India's leaders from different eras: Fatima Shaikh, Savitribai Phule, Indira Gandhi. "Time is ticking. Slowly my land size will shrink. The rain caused heavy damage. What about our lost farmland? The restoration will cost more than the government's aid," he says, then concedes, "But every little amount counts."

Narayan's farm is on the banks of the Terana river, and during the unseasonal rainfall, at least 30 guntas of his 5-acre land were washed away. He says, "It is now becoming a yearly occurrence, as rainfall increases. The government opens the gate of the Terana dam unannounced, and the water enters the field." The other farmers in the group highlighted the same issue.

Dharashiv district comprises eight talukas, including Umarga, where Rajegaon is located. It spans 7,569 sq. ksm and is characterised by semi-arid terrain with hilly plateaus and river valleys. The Manjara, Terna, and Sina rivers overflowed last year, with the excess water entering fields, affected 159 villages across six talukas.

Solapur too experienced this, with soil erosion, sand deposition, and fertility loss, particularly along the river basins. About 186 km from Rajegaon is Beed's Mazalgaon taluka, where Baliram Gholap, 30, who owns 5 acres of land, also says he has not received assistance for the restoration of topsoil.

"I received just ₹1,000. I don't want money. Can the government get the restoration work done?" says Gholap, adding that renting an earth mover costs a minimum of ₹8,000, and 1 brass costs ₹3,000 to 6,000, depending on the quality of soil and the labour.

Gholap incurred a loss of ₹1.5 lakh, used to sow cotton due to unseasonal rainfall.

"If the cotton had been harvested, I would have earned at least ₹3 lakh. I borrowed ₹1 lakh, and now I can't pay the instalments," he says. He cannot afford to farm any more, and now works in a sugar factory for a salary of ₹10,000 per month. If he takes no leave, he gets ₹2,000 more. "I will farm next year, when conditions are favourable."

Another farmer, Samadhan Mhaske from Solapur's Undargaon, which is near the Sina river, wipes his face, and says, "Where is the ₹47,000 per hectare or MNRREGA help? At least 1.5 hectares of topsoil were washed away and huge dunes emerged."

## The hope for insurance

After the unseasonal rainfall and flash floods, the crops vanished overnight and insurance survey teams appeared. In Dharashiv alone there were 49,601 claims amounting to over ₹2,226 crore, as per the Agriculture Department. Many farmers say they are awaiting insurance money.

In Rajegaon, a sun-

scorched farmer in a clean white shirt and brown trousers, Avinash Deshmukh, 42, points to the river flowing near his farm, saying, "It has been nine months and I am still not able to restore the ditches. I did everything by the book: got insurance, paid premiums on time, reported the damage, yet I am still waiting for the insurance money."

To calculate insurance claims, the Maharashtra government uses a combination of the crop cutting experiment (CCE) and satellite imagery. Under CCE, the State conducts sample harvests in selected farms of a village or insurance unit area. They cut crops, weigh the produce, and estimate average yield per hectare, giving them the actual yield (AY) for that area. This AY is compared with the yield threshold (YT), which is calculated beforehand using historical production data. If AY is below YT, farmers become eligible for compensation.

Officials in the Agriculture Department, who do not want to be named, claim that the insurance company says there is a discrepancy between satellite-based yield assessments, which are showing greater crop damage, and CCE data that reflect lower losses.

As farmers wait for the next monsoon, they hope that this time there will be no extreme weather conditions.

snehal.mutha  
@thehindu.co.in

RERA REGISTRATION NO. HRERA-PKL-SNP-591-2024

[https://haryanarera.gov.in/view\\_project/searchprojectDetail/2919](https://haryanarera.gov.in/view_project/searchprojectDetail/2919)

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**UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**PWD (R&B) CIRCLE SOUTH JAMMU**

**TENDER NOTICE INVITING**  
e-NIT No.SESJ/03 of 2026-27 dated 15-05-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of J&K, e-tenders are invited on percentage rate basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K/CPWD / BRO/ Railways/ MES and other State/ Central Government for the work mentioned below:-

S. No	Name of Work	Advertised Cost	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit in the form of CDR/FDR/ BG	Time Allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Strengthening of Piers and abutments of 4th Tawi Bridge on River Tawi at Bhagwati Nagar, Jammu.	Rs. 327.35 lacs	6000/-	2% of the advertised cost Rs. 654700/-	04 Months	At or after 1200 hrs on 02-06-2026	'A' Class

**Executive Engineer, PWD(R&B)Division, Satwari**

**Position of AAA = Under process.**  
**Position of Tech. sanction = Under process.**

The Bidding documents consist of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://jktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:-

1. Date of Issue of Tender Notice	15.05.2026
2. Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 15.05.2026 to 01.06.2026, 1800 Hrs
3. Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	25.05.2026 at 1400 hours in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle South, Jammu
4. Bid submission Start Date	15.05.2026 From 1800 Hrs
5. Bid Submission End Date	01.06.2026 up to 1800 Hrs
6. Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	02.06.2026 at 1200 hours in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle South, Jammu

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of challan through Treasury indicating the name of work and e-NIT No. favouring Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle South, Jammu by crediting to 0059-PWD (Revenue) issued after issuance of e-NIT No. & Date uploading a copy of treasury challan/receipt issued after the advertisement of e-NIT. The date on challan should be between date of start of bid submission and bid submission end date.

2. The date and time of opening of Financial-Bid shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle South, Jammu. The date for same shall be intimated separately.

3. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids

4. **Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process:-**

4.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.

4.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

4.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

4.4 Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in e-NIT and SBD as a part of technical bid.

**Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.**

5. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

6. EMD in shape of FDR/CDR/BG pledged to Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B) Circle South, Jammu should be 2% of the advertised cost & must be uploaded with the bid. The CDR/FDR/BG shall be valid for 45 days beyond the bid validity period. The earnest money shall be forfeited if:

- Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
- Failure of successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period after issuance of letter of acceptance.
- Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement on same day of issuance of allotment of work.

7. Performance Security/Additional performance security:- The successful bidder /contractor shall deliver to the Employer /concerned authority, a Performance Security in any of the required forms for an amount equivalent to 3% of value of contract Within 07 (Seven) days after the date of receipt of the Letter of Acceptance, as per Circular of Worthy Principal Secretary to Government, Finance Department Civil Secretariat Jammu vide No.FD-Codes/441/2021-02-158 dated 08-08-2025 and Worthy Chief Engineer PW(R&B) Department, Jammu's No.CEJ/Tech./J.ZMU/6645-65 dated 11-08-2025.

No.-SESJ/Adm./1364-71  
Dated:-15-05-2026.

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer  
PWD (R&B)Circle South  
Jammu

DIP/J-2160/26

## TMC's fact-finding teams visit areas hit by post-poll violence in Bengal

Shrabana Chatterjee  
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Saturday said its fact-finding teams visited several areas hit by post-poll violence and spoke to the affected families in South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur, and Hooghly districts of West Bengal.

Speaking to reporters, Rajya Sabha MP Dola Sen, who was part of one of the three teams, said "TMC workers as well as common people have come under attack by BJP workers after her party's electoral setback in the recently concluded Assembly election. "Many people have been forced to flee their homes. They [BJP workers] have vandalised several homes and taken over many of our party offices. They are also trying to break all government offices... However, even after so much intimidation, our workers are not scared," Ms. Sen said.

She added that the teams will submit their findings to the government and the Calcutta High Court, which is hearing a writ petition filed by Sirsanya Bandyopadhyay, son of TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee, alleging widespread violence against workers and attacks on party offices following the declaration of the poll results.

Based on the takeaways from the fact-finding teams' visits, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sagarika Ghose said, "Our counting agents were beaten up badly across Bengal and thrown out of counting centres after 2 p.m. on May 4."

Of the 294 Assembly seats in the State, the party managed to win 80 in the election.

### 'Trinamool drama'

West Bengal Minister Ashok Kirtania, however, called the TMC exercise a "drama". "Our Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari has already said in the Assembly that he will ensure the safe return of TMC workers forced to flee home, if any, due to post-poll issues. However, he also said that if any of them were found to be involved in the violence against BJP workers after the 2021 election, they would land in prison," Mr. Kirtania said.

## PM SHRI set to be a tightrope walk for UDF govt. in Kerala

While CM-designate Satheesan had slammed the LDF when it signed on to the scheme in October last year, constrained funds from the Centre are likely to put the pressure on the UDF government

The Hindu Bureau  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Among the many challenges the soon-to-be-formed United Democratic Front (UDF) government in Kerala will face in the school education sector, none will be as daunting and keenly watched as the contentious PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) scheme of the Union government.

With the BJP government in West Bengal not wasting any time in inking the agreement for implementing PM SHRI after coming to power, all eyes are on Kerala, one of the States that have held out so far other than Tamil Nadu.

The stance of the UDF government on signing up



**Budget blues:** With even payment of salaries for Samagra Shiksha staff becoming difficult, the UDF has its work cut out. FILE PHOTO

for the scheme remains to be seen, particularly as the previous Left Democratic Front (LDF) was left scrambling to save face in the wake of differences within the front on the issue coming out in the open.

The LDF government, after rejecting the scheme on the grounds of ideological opposition to the Na-

tional Education Policy for three years, inked the agreement in October last year, only to see constituent Communist Party of India (CPI) alleging it had been kept in the dark about the significant decision.

While the deal was later put on hold, the LDF had claimed then that with the

Centre linking funds to scheme implementation, it was the only way to secure pending funds. Nearly ₹1,100 crore of Samagra Shiksha funds to the State have been withheld by the Centre since 2023-24.

The UDF too is likely to face the same pressure. Chief Minister-designate V.D. Satheesan had slammed the LDF for capitulating to the Centre's pressure by signing on to the scheme which, he alleged, was an "ideological project to infuse majoritarian nationalism" into students.

With even payment of salaries for Samagra Shiksha staff becoming difficult owing to lack of funds, the UDF sure has its work cut out in the months ahead.

## Minister's son held in POCSO Act case

Lavpreet Kaur  
HYDERABAD

After a week-long manhunt, Bandi Bageerath, son of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay, was arrested by the Cyberabad police on Saturday night, in connection with a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case booked against him at the Petbasherabad police station.

According to Telangana's Cyberabad Police Com-

missioner M. Ramesh, he was apprehended at the TGPA junction around 8 p.m. and was taken to the Narsingi police station first. He was later shifted to Petbasherabad for post-arrest formalities.

Officials said he would undergo mandatory medical examination procedures before being produced before a court for remand. The accused had remained untraceable since the case was registered on May 8 following a

complaint lodged by the mother of a 17-year-old girl, who had accused him of sexually assaulting and emotionally manipulating her daughter over several months.

### Father's statement

Mr. Sanjay, in a statement issued late on Saturday, said, "All are equal before the law. All should abide by the rule of law."

"In fact, I thought of handing him over at the police station soon after a

complaint was lodged. The lawyers, after examining the evidence, said that the case will be quashed and bail will be granted. As a result, a slight delay occurred," Mr. Sanjay said.

The arrest was made after the Cyberabad police's efforts to trace him by deploying five special teams, carrying out searches at residences linked to him in Hyderabad and Karimnagar, and issuing a lookout circular to prevent him from leaving the country.

## 'Poor political representation of Muslims'

The Hindu Bureau  
BENGALURU

Political underrepresentation of Muslims in Karnataka emerged as a concern at a convention organised by the Federation of Karnataka Muslim Organisations in Bengaluru.

A report released at the convention argued that the community's share in elected and nominated bodies remains far below its population proportion. The report noted that Muslims constitute nearly 13% of Karnataka's population, but representation in the 224-member

Legislative Assembly stands at only around 4.4%. In the 75-member Legislative Council too, Muslims hold only about four seats, far below the proportionate share of nine to 10 seats.

The report also raised concerns over low ticket allocation to Muslim candidates.



A.P. CM N. Chandrababu Naidu interacting with a municipal worker during an event in Srikakulam on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## A.P. to give ₹30,000 cash incentive on birth of third child, ₹40,000 for fourth

The Hindu Bureau  
SRIKAKULAM

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday announced a one-time incentive of ₹30,000 to families on the birth of a third child and ₹40,000 for the fourth as part of his government's endeavour to encourage population growth.

"Population is the real wealth in the future. The incentives are a part of the new population management policy that aims to encourage population growth, as the State's development is possible only with availability of human resources," Mr. Naidu said while addressing the Swarna Andhra - Swachh Andhra programme at Narasannapeta in Srikakulam district. He hinted at enhancing the financial assistance being paid under Thalliki Vandana scheme (presently 15,000 per child) that aimed at encouraging parents to send their children to school.

### Reverse migration

Mr. Naidu said he foresees reverse migration to the North Andhra region following significant developmental initiatives taken up

in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, and Anaparthi districts.

The Chief Minister said the State has in the last two years attracted investments worth ₹23 lakh crore with a potential to create job opportunities for 24 lakh people. "People used to migrate to other places due to non-availability of job opportunities locally. Reverse migration will soon start in the State," he said.

Mr. Naidu also appealed to the people to give utmost priority to cleanliness and avoid usage of plastics in day-to-day life. He hinted at banning the single-use plastic that turned into a menace. The Chief Minister later interacted with sanitation workers and requested them to take care of their health during the cleanliness drive.

### Convoy trimmed

His convoy was confined to four vehicles during the Narasannapeta tour following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for conservation of fuel. Many public representatives, including Union Minister for Civil Aviation K. Rammoan Naidu, followed suit and reduced the number of vehicles in their convoy.

**DELHI POLICE**  
SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

**TRAFFIC ADVISORY**  
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Rajghat Power House Road,  
Velodrome Road,  
Service Road of Rajghat & Shantivan Both Sides

**DIVERSION / RESTRICTION ON NEED BASIS**

On need basis, there will be traffic diversions / restrictions on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg and JLN Marg on 17-05-2026 from 05:00 PM to 01:30 AM

No heavy or commercial vehicles will be allowed on the roads from (1) Daryaganj to Delhi Gate Chowk on BSZ Marg (2) Delhi Gate Chowk towards Guru Nanak Chowk on JLN Marg and (3) ITO to Delhi Gate Chowk on BSZ Marg.

Commuters are requested to avoid the following roads from 05:00 PM to 01:30 AM on the day of match when the spectators would be coming to the stadium and congestion is expected:

- J.L.N. Marg from Rajghat to Delhi Gate up to R/A Kamla Market (Both Carriageways)
- Asaf Ali Road from Turkman Gate to Delhi Gate
- BSZ Marg from Delhi Gate to Ramcharan Aggarwal Chowk / ITO Chowk (Both Carriageways)

**ENTRY TO THE STADIUM**

- Gate Nos. 1 to 8 are located on the southern side of the Stadium & entry to these enclosures are from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg.
- Gate Nos.10 to 15 are located on the Eastern side of the Stadium on the road and entry is from J.L.N. Marg Next to Ambedkar Stadium Bus Terminal.
- Gate Nos. 16, 17 & 18 are located on the Western side of the Stadium & entry is from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg near Petrol Pump.

**FREE PARK & RIDE**

For spectators, unlabelled vehicles' park and ride' facility has been created at the following places:-  
Park & Ride Free Parking Mata Sundari Road, Rajghat Power House Road, Velodrome Road, Service Road of Rajghat & Shantivan Both Sides

**PARKING**  
Labelled Vehicles

Limited parking is available for labelled vehicles in the proximity of the Stadium. Display of car parking label on windscreen is mandatory. Vehicle number must be written on the parking label. Those who do not display parking label with vehicle number will not be allowed in the proximity of the stadium.

Car parking label holders are advised to take Ring Road, J.L.N. Marg, Asaf Ali Road or Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, 'U' turn at Delhi Gate is allowed. Entry to parking lots P1, P2, P3, VIP and VVIP shall be from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg only from near the Vikram Nagar Cut, Shaheed Park.

**General Vehicles**

No vehicle shall be allowed to be parked on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, Jawaharalal Nehru Marg & Ring Road from Rajghat to I.P. Flyover (both the carriageways) on the match day. Vehicles parked on these roads shall be towed away and prosecuted as per law.

All the spectators coming in their vehicles shall reach these Park & Ride sites, and avail "Park & Ride" facility or walk down to reach stadium.

**BUS**  
All Buses will Start Their Services 2 Hours Before The Start of The Match And Will Continue Till 12:30 AM

**TAXI**  
Spectators using app based taxi and other taxis should use the service lane on Ring Road between I.P. Flyover & Rajghat crossing for drop & pickup.

**RIDE METRO/FREE SHUTTLE BUS FOR HASSLE FREE JOURNEY**

Free Shuttle bus service provided by DELHI CAPITALS  
Free Parking : 1. Mata Sundari Road 2. Rajghat Power House Road 3. Velodrome Road  
4. Service Road of Rajghat & Shantivan Both Sides

**SECURITY INSTRUCTIONS: Spectators visiting the stadium are requested not to bring the following prohibited items:**

- Explosive/Headphones
- Laptop
- Camera
- Helmet
- Bagpack
- Eatables
- Water Bottles
- Lighter & Match Box
- Knives & Arms

**24 Hours Traffic Helpline: 011-2584444 / 1095**



# Classifieds

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU

# Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

## BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL	
BRIDEGROOMS WANTED	
BRIDES WANTED	
BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED	
Classification Common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms	
ASSAMESE	
AWADHI	
BENGALI	
BHOJPURI	
BIHARI	
CHHATTISGARHI	
ENGLISH	
GUJARATI	
HARYANI	
HINDI	
KANNADA	
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MALAYALAM	
MANIPURI	
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NRI	
COSMOPOLITAN	
DIVORCEE	
PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED	
MARRIAGE BUREAUS	
WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS	

### DOCTOR

#### BRIDE GROOM WANTED

**Tamil Muslim, doing MD (derm), well settled Industrialist family in Chennai.**

**Seeks Medico MD / MS Groom from a well settled family.**

**27yrs / 158cm / Fair**

Contact: Jabbarshahul64@gmail.com

**98840 15371 96000 74295**

#### Seeking a Doctor Groom

An Obstetrics and Gynaecologist 28, 156, Fair, from a respected, education-oriented, tamil (Udayar Hindu) Chennai based family, seeks a groom with matching calibre, from a family of similar standing.

**Family enquiries only**

**Ct: 98410 78080**

DKV, 29 years, Female Radiologist, Divorced, Chennai, prefer, IAS/ Doctor/Officers Contact: 9047119910

Hindu Tamil Pillai, Girl MBBS (25/168) Fair, Chittrai-4 (Swathi-1 Thulam Ras), seeks professional groom preferably Doctor. Ph: 9940533051.

### ENGINEER

#### Wanted Groom-Muslim

1997, 5'6", beautiful, fair, Stanford Master's. Multi-talented/compassionate. Seeks well-qualified groom from Top 15 US schools or Top 15 schools in India.

**(E) uzsh0214@gmail.com**

### GOVT / QUASI GOVT

Alliance invited for educated Brahmin girl, 28, Self-Employed, mutually divorced, seeking well-settled Govt officer / professional groom

8109050829

### MALAYALAM

NAIR DOCTOR Girl DM 32 yrs 161cm seeks Doctor/Professional. Contact 8089584220/9249920550

### NRI

TAMIL MUDALIAR Girl, UAE MNC, 3.5 LPM, DOB: 26/12/94, Caste No Bar, Ct: 8667248379

### TAMIL

PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN Nadar, 31 PG, Employed, fair, beautiful, Girl, Chennai seeks fair, well settled, Religious Christian boy. Ct: 9840345969

CHRISTIAN, DIVORCED, M.tech, 30crores, Looking for 2nd marriage groom in UK for our daughter from any subcaste, 8138900553

CHRISTIAN, MBA, 31, Looking for Govt and doctor professional in R.C.R. nadar, RC pillai, Resc groom in tamilnadu or pondicherry, 7356483111

CHRISTIAN NADAR Dec1996 165cm MBBS MD MRCS working in Apollo Hospital Chennai Seeks Doctor Groom MBBS MD MS. Contact: 9444421884, 8122682017

Groom needed for female 24 yrs 165 cm, M.Tech Software Engg working in Bgl either CSI/Ag., whatsapp bio data: 9566947447

CHRISTIAN, CSI, BE, Entrepreneur, searching for a Rich/Affluent groom from CSI and Christian Nadar from 25-29, 8138900235

RCSC CHRISTIAN, searching for any subcaste, Govt job grooms for my daughter from 32-36. 7356483111

CATHOLIC, MSC, 70 lakhs, UK, searching for a groom in any subcaste from 28-34. 8138900412

SEEKING GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL for 44yrs unmarried Tamil SC Hindu Adi Dravida Female IT professional (20yrs exp) from Chennai holding Singapore PR. Contact +919790921761/+91 7200942776.

HINDU NADAR- Divorcee Unconsummated Marriage - 35 JPMC /IT, Bangsham settled in Chennai. Ct: 8825670049

Hindu, 43 Years, Fair, M.Sc. Divorcee, Son c/o ex, seeks well-settled Groom below 52. Contact: 9791881860

### DOCTOR

ARCOT VELALA Mudaliar girl 28/ Thiruvonnam/ fair/158/ M.Tech MSc (Digit Mktg -Singapore) highly paid seeks Professional groom of well educated & respected family Ct: 9841666230

HINDU, AIDRAVIDAR, 29, Masters Law, Looking for govt staffs in higher designation for my daughter in same caste or equal caste, 8138009235

### TAMIL

VANNAN, 27, BE, 30lakhs, Looking for same caste groom from 27-32 in Tamil or Telugu in overall tamilnadu for our daughter, 8137001255

MUDALIAR, MS, Doctor, 40lakhs, Looking for 32-35 from Same or equal caste in MS, MD, ME for my daughter, 8138900312

VANNIYA GOUNDER, MBBS, 24, Looking for Civil service groom (IAS, IFS, IRS) Grade1 in south india from any caste for my own daughter, 8137003550

PILLAI, 23, MSC, Looking for pillai and mudaliar groom in upper middle/rich and affluent in tamilnadu, 8138900412

HINDU NADAR, - B.E. M.B.A - 30/ 158cm Software Engineer - Udangudi - Seeking Bridegroom Cell: 9626735777

BRIDEGROOM WANTED for a well-to-do hindu family's bride age 43, first marriage, divorce-MSW, want from (FC, BC, MSC), working within india. Ct: 9030359664.

BE/30/155 Pooramam Fair good looking rich Mudaliar with moral values seek suitable groom. 7975421774

ALLIANCE INVITED for Hindu SC girl, 26 yrs, 169 cm, LL.M, 25LPA, Associate in Capital Markets at a top-tier law firm, Mumbai/Chennai. Looking for a well-settled, professionally qualified groom from same community. Ph: 9152236196

Alliance invited from a well settled and educated family for a 37yr old independent, career-oriented woman. Height: 160 cm, highly qualified, currently working as international teacher in Dubai. Legally divorced, no children, seeking mature & responsible groom. Telugu / Tamil pref. Divorcees welcome. Contact: 9445120943. Email: rajanisuganthi@gmail.com

GROOM WANTED SC (AD), 34yrs, ME, well educated family background in Chennai Ph: 9962791888

GROOM WANTED Mudaliyar, 26yrs, BE, Own Transp in Chennai, Affluent family Ph: 6385293227

DEVAR 28 170cm M arch Australia seeks well Qualified Grooms in Australia Devar only Geetham 9884858014

KAMMAVAR NAIDU 26 160cm BE Chennai seeks professionals India / Abroad Naidu Only Geetham 9884858014

LOOKING FOR a suitable Bridegroom for a vanniari girl, aged 28 yrs, B.Com B.L. Hons with ACS & employed in a big Corporate. Similar profile or other Professionals with good family background based in Chennai preferred ct: 9003199945 / 9003035547

VANNIA KULA Kshatriya MD 31yrs Affluent Good Looking Smart Working in Corporate Hospital seeks Well to do groom MD/MS 9840471097

VANNIYA KULA Kshatriyar, 26/5/2, BArch, Star-Karthiga, Rishaba Rasi, Working in Chennai. Seeks Suitable & Qualified Groom. Ph: 9840926156

DKV/SC, 32/ May 94, 167cm, Fair, BE (CS), Parents Hindu / CSI, Seeks Groom Dr./Er. / Abroad. Ct: 8056143638

VANNIYAR, (27/164) LL.M, Beautiful, Working in a Pvt Concern Chennai seeks suitable groom. Ct: 994065572

RISHIBAM, KARTHIGAI 42/152 M.Com, B.Ed, Veg seeks Employed groom Caste No Bar, BC, MBC prefct Ct: 9682809448

SC/AIDRAVIDAR/MS/CS DOB 1983 bride seeks suitable qualified employed bridegroom 8754354205

HINDU NADAR, 43/171, B.Tech, MS, Working in Canada, First Marriage, willing to relocate to US, London. Seeks Bride, Caste No Bar. 8148166505.

FASHION DESIGNER SaivaMudaliar Anusham 33 VeryFair Proprietor Need Veg IT/ Govt Employed Groom 9566268349

ANY VEG (MIN 75K) for salivapillai, age28, salary 1.5L 2 flat owner thiruvathirai, simmam. 9382211111

DOCTOR MD ANS HINDU NADAR 30 YR 170 CM seeks groom DR DR GOVT BANK details 9976610580

WNTD SAIVA Pillai BE SE, Blr, Teetotaler, born 1996+, for S.Pillai Girl 26, BE(CSE), MNC, Strict Veg, No Brkrs. BHP must. 6364789344

DOCTOR PARENTS, 28 yrs Daughter (High - Functioning Special Child) seeks Hindu Nadar Groom from Madurai. Ct: 9443751221

RC TAMIL, 1997/156cm, Radiographer, DRDT, seeks liberal- minded, suitable match, 9443784674, 00447878127414, mselvaraj24@yahoo.com. Caste no bar.

MUDALIAR 25/167, Fair, Beautiful BE, SWE, CTS, 1200000.PA Well-Settled, CNB, 9043991629, 9043987029

MUDALIYAR, ENT Surgeon, looking for a equal caste in Masters, Civil services and Well educated groom for my Daughter from 30-35. 8138900312

DIVORCED BRIDE, UK, looking for a rich and affluent groom in Hindu or Christian from 31-36. 8138900652

GROOM WANTED Naidu, 30yrs, B.Tech, Divorcee, Affluent business family in Chennai: 6385293227

GROOM WANTED CNB, 27yrs, MBBS, MD, well educated family background in Chennai: 6385293227

### TAMIL

BRAHMIN-IYER, 28, MDS, Looking for a Professional groom in Maharashtra, Delhi, Hyderabad for our daughter, 8138900652

BRAHMIN, MODERATE family, MDS, all languages groom, location in Mumbai from 29-32 well educated doctor or other professionals. 8138900533

BEAUTIFUL, CARING 33, 165cm, intelligent (Master's), soft-spoken professional. Cultured, VEG, TamBram. Noted industrialist family. Seeks compatible groom. Call/WA 93456 34365

Tamil Yadava Girl , MBA 24 yrs / 160cm, from an affluent family, fair & good looking Thiruvathirai star

Seeks a Good Looking, well Educated and Settled Groom Age: 25 to 27 years

contact : 9884262668

### BRIDE Groom Wanted for DOCTOR

Bride, 34 yrs, 5'7", divorcee, doctor (MBBS, MD, DM), from an elite business family, Hindu Nadar, based in Tirunelveli,

seeks a suitable groom from an affluent family (caste no bar)

Kindly contact 9994851637/ 9790445335

HINDU SC/AD, 40/163cm fair, B.Tech (CSE), SWP, Moolam, Dhansu, never married, Chennai, seeks Professionally qualified, never married groom below 43yrs from India / Abroad. Caste No Bar. Call / WA: 8754566571

Viswakarma 31 years Central Govt seeking groom from suitable Tamil / Telugu BC family only. Ct: 98401 05941

HINDU SC/AD 25/150cm M.A (International Relations) preparing for Admn Exam seeks Groom Govt/Pvt Employed Groom. 9841697885 / 9841697884 9884858014

### URDU

AGE-35, BE Graduate Working, Divorcee, Muslim Bride, Seeks A Groom in a Good Job. Ct: 9865130076

Sunni Muslim Girl from a respectable and Affluent Family, 2003 born, BE Educated (080-6914 1325)

### TAMIL

Christian, 1991, 162 cm, BDS + MPH, Seeks Groom, Caste, Religion - No Bar. Ct: 94426 95558

NAIDU M. Arch wkg MNC 31/170 Rohini well settled seeks groom from any Telugu/any BC comm 7904100156

NAIDU 25/167, Fair, Beautiful, B.Tech, SWE, HCL, 1200000.PA, Well-Settled, CNB. 9043991629, 9043987029

NAIDU: 25V, FAIR, B.Arch, Doing Father Business, Chennai, Elite Family (100cr), seeks any Telegu Groom Business / Eng - 9962530015

DIVORCEE CHETTIAR (CNB) 27yrs / Beautiful, MBBS, MS, Doctor, Chennai, Elite family Only daughter-seeks groom Doctor/Any PG Degree- 8925019776

Affluent upper middle-class Balija Naidu family seeks a suitable alliance for their daughter, 31 years, 5 feet, wheatish, BE, MS, MBA, presently working in USA. Groom should be well-educated, professionally accomplished, and from a good family background. Ct: 9047010018 / 9787943250

Hyderabad BC Caste 30Yrs Height 5'10" B.Tech., Rich family from an elite business family, Rich Person Hyd. (or) Bangalore. Seeks a suitable groom from any caste. No Bar. Tirupati: 7093722724

SC AD 28/B.E.MS., Software Engr. 6Lakhs p.m./Only One Son Well Settled Family. Seeks Bride. Ph: 7397674481

EZHAVA Boy 28/174cm Midhunam, Coimbatore Based, BE Mech. Eng. Working in Chennai. Seeks suitable Girl from good family, no demands. 9443136400, 9443222000.

SUITABLE GIRL for a Software Developer, born 1997 in a USA, 175cm, Wheatish complexion/ Athletic/ Handsome Tamil Mudaliar. Caste no bar. Ct: 6379372255/ Mail: rs123home@gmail.com

DOCTOR PARENTS, Hindu Nadar, 25 yrs, M.S Gen. Surgeon seeks MBBS Bride. Ct: 94437 5121

### TAMIL

HINDU NADAR 39yr MA, M.Phil, Own Business in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Bride in Nelloa/ Tuticorin 8637660391

PROFESSOR - Govt. College, 45 / Divorcee, Caste, Religion - No Bar. Ct: 94426 95558

VANNIAR GROOM 12.06.1982, B.E, M.B.A (Lon), Divorced, No issue, IT Chennai, 16.5 Lakhs/PA, Seeks Bride CNB (OC, BC, M.B.C Only) Contact: 9944928521 Vellore.

BRIDE WANTED SC (AD), 30yrs, BE, MBA, Well Educated Family in Chennai Ph: 6385293227

BRIDE WANTED 28yrs, civil service, Well Educated Family background, Caste no bar Ph: 6385293227

WELL Settled Tamil based Inter caste (SC+ Brahmin) Dr Couple, looking for suitable Bride for their Son 32 Yrs (Ra-qu-Kethu) Dr MD Pathology KMCH, Cbe. Mob: 9842221324, 9894186469.

MBBS DR, Hindu, BC, 49, Divorced, Rich Family, Caste/Age no bar, seeks Good Bride. Ct: 9952998820

SEEKING EDUCATED Bride for a 39yr/ 171cm Hindu, Chartered Accountant top Firm in Chennai. WA: 8220636792

NAIDU, PHD, Age -42, Never married, Pooramam, 12L / pa, Own House, Sub Caste ok. Ct: 8754756329

MUDALIYAR, KETTAI 40/165, M. Tech, Ph.D., HOD, Pvt. Engg College, Pondy Seeks Bride 31 to 37yrs 9442557578

SC AD 28/B.E.MS., Software Engr. 6Lakhs p.m./Only One Son Well Settled Family. Seeks Bride. Ph: 7397674481

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### URDU

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Sunni Muslim Girl from a respectable and Affluent Family, 2003 born, BE Educated (080-6914 1325)

### TAMIL

MUDALIAR 29/182, Handsome, BE, SWE, IAS Family, looking for a bride in same caste and well educated family. 8137003550

35, 178CM BE, MBA Working in MNC Chennai Senior Consultant Earning 50 LPA Seeks Educated, Employed Girl From a Respectable Family Caste No Bar 9840553601

KONGU VELLALA gounder, 28, USA, MS, IAS Family, looking for a bride in same caste and well educated family. 8137003550

BRIDE WANTED SC (AD), 30yrs, BE, MBA, Well Educated Family in Chennai Ph: 6385293227

BRIDE WANTED 28yrs, civil service, Well Educated Family background, Caste no bar Ph: 6385293227

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Sunni Muslim Girl from a respectable and Affluent Family, 2003 born, BE Educated (080-6914 1325)

### TAMIL

MALE30 GOVT Job Own House & land. No Bro & Sis Seeks Lovable Bride No expectations CNB Salem wtsapp 8300797118

IYER / AVITTAM 1988 B.Com / MBA working in Chennai. Seeks Pure Veg working bride. Ct: 63740 43306.

Pillai 36/177 BE, MBA, SWE MNC, 21LPA, Chennai, seeks suitable Bride, not horoscope Any BC ok. 9500147451

BE IIT 188 cm Height Mudaliar born Nov 91, Wkg in Hyderabad Very High package seeks Bride Telugu, Tamil Allied Castes also Cont: 7382620365

Parkavakula Muppanar 28 Yrs/ 167/ 65/ MNC (Chennai). Ct: 786063395 / Email Id: siva123swaran@gmail.com

Vanniar 1990 Employed US company work from home in Chennai seeks employed hindu bride. 9884904306

Wanted Prof. Qual. Bride for Tamil Boy 1996 Born/ 175 cm / Dr-Surgeon / Chennai Based. Contact: 9940570609

Suitable Bride for Mudaliar Boy 1997 Born/ 178 cm/ MS - USA/ Working USA/ Income 5 Cr Call : 9791791603

### TELUGU

REDDY, SWATHI, 30/183 BE, MS London, Business, divorced seeks educated, good family background girl. Naidu's also welcome. Ct: 9710333159

DR.C.B.SARATHI KUMAR, 35, Naidu Telugu speaking, PHD (Physics) College Professor, well-settled Seeking well-educated, beautiful bride. 9791091658, 8939254271

GAVARA NAIDU 33/155 BSc VC, Elite family, biz, 18L/PA seeks girl any degree, same/ sub caste. 9962302927

**From Page One**

**Call for President's Rule amid Manipur protests**

"The continued captivity of innocent civilians was not merely unlawful detention but an act of terror against a people," KIM president Ch. Ajang Khongsai told the gathering.

During the "mass rally for justice" in Chura-chandpur, the Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights (KWOHR) and other civil society groups submitted a memorandum to Mr. Shah, condemning the killing of three Kuki-Zo religious leaders and raising concerns over continued violence in the region. The KWOHR alleged that the ongoing violence was linked to "proxy attacks" carried out against the Kuki-Zo people, and expressed concern over repeated incidents of violence, displacement, and insecurity in the region.

The KWOHR called for the re-imposition of President's Rule in Manipur, strengthening of security deployment in Kuki-Zo areas, a high-level investigation into the killings and related incidents of violence, and the fulfilment of the long-standing demand for a separate administration for the Kuki-Zo people under the Constitution of India.

**Full list of Ministers by this evening: Satheesan**

Reports suggested that Mr. Chennithala demanded Ministerial berths for Anwar Sadath and T.J. Vinod. Mr. Satheesan said decisions in the Congress and the UDF are made democratically and in consultation with everyone.

Other names from the Congress that were doing the rounds on Saturday included KPCC president Sunny Joseph, K. Muraleedharan, P.C. Vishnunadh, Chandu Oommen, M. Liju, and Bindu Krishna.

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) is reportedly bidding for five ministerial berths, the same number the party held in the last UDF government headed by Oommen Chandy from 2011 to 2016. Mr. Satheesan held discussions with senior IUML leaders, after which IUML general secretary P.K. Kunhalikutty said the UDF could disclose its decisions only after discussions with all the front partners are completed.

The IUML's parliamentary party meet is scheduled for Sunday morning in Thiruvananthapuram, after which there will be more clarity on the IUML Ministers. Another UDF member, the Kerala Congress (Joseph), is understood to be demanding two seats in the Cabinet, while the Communist Marxist Party's C.P. John is also reportedly being discussed as a possible contender.

**India rejects CoA's award on Indus Treaty**

No official communication of the award is publicly available on the website of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, which acts as the secretariat to the CoA. The recent press release listed there is dated May 11, which announced the conclusion of a three-day hearing held on April 28 on Pakistan's request for interim measures and the status of the Treaty itself.

The CoA is a five-member arbitral panel, chaired by Sean D. Murphy, constituted in January 2023. It was set up at Pakistan's request after Islamabad challenged the design of India's Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects. India has refused to participate, arguing that the technical questions involved fall within the remit of a Neutral Expert appointed in parallel by the World Bank. "In its August 2025 Award on Issues of General Interpretation, the CoA ruled largely in Pakistan's favour, restricting how India calculates permissible pondage for run-of-river plants and narrowing the design latitude available under the Treaty. The court most recently concluded a three-day hearing on April 28, 2026 on Pakistan's request for interim measures and on the status of the Treaty itself.

**Karnataka medical colleges to get 1,122 more seats, ₹1,090 cr.**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

The National Medical Commission (NMC) has approved enhancement of medical seats in government medical colleges of Karnataka by 1,122 seats for the academic year 2026-27.

The Union government has also sanctioned ₹1,090 crore for the development of infrastructure in government medical colleges.

As of academic year 2025-26, the State in its 72 government and private medical colleges had 21,672 medical seats, which will go up to 22,794 seats for 2026-27.

be for undergraduate (UG) courses and 572 seats will be for postgraduate (PG) courses. As a result, the State will have 14,495 UG seats and 8,299 PG seats for 2026-27.

The ₹1,090 crore grant will be spent for improving infrastructure for UG and PG students.

Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil on Saturday said "Allocation of over 1,000 medical seats to a single State is a record achievement, and stands as a testament to State's accomplishments."

Karnataka now offers abundant opportunities for those wishing to excel in the medical field, and students should make the best use of this, he added.

**Hindu groups perform puja at Bhojshala amid security**

A day after HC said the disputed complex was a temple, ASI issues directions to provide Hindu communities 'unrestricted access', says conservation efforts should be ensured at the monument

**Mehul Malpani**  
BHOPAL

Hindu groups performed worship at the Bhojshala complex in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh on Saturday with several Hindu devotees thronging the historic site, a day after the High Court declared it a Hindu temple dedicated to Goddess Saraswati and a Sanskrit learning centre.

Members of the Hindu Front for Justice, which represented the Hindu side in the court, Bhoj Utsav Samiti, and the local people performed *Aarti* at the Bhojshala complex even as the situation remained peaceful in Dhar town and nearby areas amid heavy security arrangements put in place.

The Archeological Survey of India (ASI) acknowledged the High Court's verdict and issued directions for its implementation.

In the order dated May 16, the ASI said the Hindu community "shall have an unrestricted access to the Bhojshala Complex in connection with the ancient



**New norm:** People pray inside the Bhojshala complex in Dhar on Saturday, after the High Court declared the site a Hindu temple. PTI

practice of learning and worship of Goddess Saraswati".

The order said the time of entry for visitors and devotees, and permissible activities related to learning and worship would be determined by the superintending archeologist of the ASI, Bhopal, in consultation with the Dhar district administration, while ensuring the conservation and protection of the monument under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958.

"The Bhojshala Complex shall continue to be a

protected monument under the AMASR Act, 1958. This order shall be in supersession of all previous orders issued in this regard," said the order issued by A.M.V. Subramanyam, Director, Monument I, ASI.

While Hindu groups and leaders have termed the High Court's verdict "historic and the result of a 700-year struggle", Muslim representatives termed it "one-sided" and said they would challenge it in the Supreme Court.

**'Will move SC'**  
Abdul Samad, president of the Maulana Kamaluddin Welfare Society, which re-

presented the Muslim side in the court, said, "The court's decision is completely one-sided. We will approach the Supreme Court regarding this matter. In fact, the Hindu side has already reached the Supreme Court [with a caveat] before us, which itself clearly shows that they also had doubts about the judgment and about the intent of the High Court."

Mr. Samad also raised questions at Hindu community members performing worship at the site.

"Nowhere in that order, not even remotely, is it written [in the verdict] that the ASI or the Hindu side is permitted to conduct daily worship at the site. The ASI is acting in direct contravention of the established rules. It is also not stated that the offering of *namaz* should be discontinued and start daily worship," he told reporters.

A caveat has been filed in the Supreme Court by a petitioner from the Hindu side, urging it that no order be passed on any appeal against the High Court's verdict without hearing its side.

**Mosque committee to move SC against Bhojshala verdict**

**Ziya Us Salam**  
NEW DELHI

The Madhya Pradesh High Court verdict on the Kamal Maula-Bhojshala dispute has left the Muslim bodies shaken and uncertain of the way ahead. While the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has rejected the verdict, which declared the place a Saraswati temple and asked the mosque petitioners to look for a separate piece of land, the Kamal Maula Mosque Committee will challenge the verdict in the Supreme Court. The move has the blessings of the AIMPLB.

The Jamaat-e-Islami Hind is looking "at a possibility of appeal". Its leadership feels "this case must not be viewed in isolation but as part of a broader trend wherein disputes over religious sites are being revisited, disregarding the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991".

Around the same time, the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind held a conference in collaboration with the South Asian Minorities Lawyers Association in which a report was presented on the Babri Masjid verdict and

the Places of Worship Act, 1991. The report reiterated that the 1991 Act holds central importance in protecting India's secular structure and constitutional stability by preventing the reopening of historical religious disputes.

The report presents an analysis of important Supreme Court judgments, particularly the *Ismail Faruqui* case (1994) and the *M. Siddiq* (Ayodhya Verdict 2019), arguing that the interpretation in the *Ismail Faruqui* judgment – which stated that a mosque is not an essential part of Islam – had deep implications for subsequent cases.

"Despite Muslims responding to the Supreme Court verdict with constitutional commitment, fresh disputes concerning Gyanvapi, Mathura Eidgah, Kamal Maula Mosque, and other religious places were raised, turning the issue into a matter concerning India's constitutional identity," Jamiat president Mahmood Madani said.

JIH president Sadatullah Husaini said the verdict would have "grave implications" for the "credibility of judicial system... and religious freedom".

**NCB strikes at drug syndicate with first-ever seizure of Captagon; Syrian national arrested**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has busted an international drug trafficking syndicate with the seizure of 227.7 kg of Captagon estimated at about ₹182 crore. A Syrian national allegedly involved in the network was arrested. The contraband was allegedly being routed through India to West Asian countries, particularly Saudi Arabia.

The visa of the arrested accused, Alabras Ahmad, had expired and he had been staying in the country illegally.

Commending the NCB for the breakthrough, Union Home Minister Amit Shah posted on X on Saturday: "Modi govt. is resolved for a 'Drug-Free India'. Glad to share that



**Big catch:** The NCB busted an international drug trafficking syndicate, leading to the seizure of 227.7 kg of Captagon. ANI

through 'Operation Rage-pill', our agencies have achieved the first-ever seizure of Captagon, the so-called 'jihadi drug', worth ₹182 crore."

**Zero tolerance: Shah**  
"The busting of the drug consignment destined for the Middle East and the ar-

rest of a foreign national stand out as shining examples of our commitment to zero tolerance against drugs. I repeat, we will clamp down on every gram of drugs entering India or leaving the country using our territory as the transit route. Kudos to the brave and vigilant warriors of the

NCB," he said. Sharing details of the case, the NCB said it received inputs from a foreign drug law enforcement agency about India being used as a transit for trafficking of Captagon. Subsequently, the Bureau zeroed in on a house in Delhi's Neb Sarai. A search of the house on May 11 led to the seizure of about 31.5 kg of the stuff in tablet form.

**Heading to Saudi Arabia**  
The contraband was concealed in a commercial chapati-cutting machine that was intended to be exported to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. "Preliminary investigation revealed that the Syrian national had entered India on a tourist visa on November 15, 2024, but his visa expired on January 12, 2025. He was illegally

overstaying in India and had taken the said house in Neb Sarai on rent," said the NCB.

Questioning of the accused led to further seizure of over 196 kg of Captagon powder from a container in the Container Facilitation Station (CFS) at Gujarat's Mundra on May 14. It had been imported from Syria, with sheep wool as the declared consignment. Initial findings suggested that the container was to be sent to West Asia, particularly Saudi Arabia and its neighbouring countries, where Captagon abuse has emerged as a serious law enforcement and public health concern. The main ingredient in Captagon is fenethylline, an addictive synthetic amphetamine-type stimulant.



Robert Vadra

**Vadra secures pre-arrest bail in Shikohpur land deal case**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday granted pre-arrest bail to businessman Robert Vadra in a money laundering case linked to the Shikohpur land transaction under investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Special Judge (Prevention of Corruption Act) Sushant Changotra of the Rouse Avenue Court granted the relief to Mr. Vadra on a surety bond of ₹50,000.

Mr. Vadra appeared before the court after summons were issued to him and eight others following the court taking cognisance of the ED's prosecution complaint. The case originates from an FIR registered by the Gurugram Police in 2008 over alleged irregularities in a land transaction involving 3.53 acres in Shikohpur village, Gurugram, Haryana.

According to the allegations, Mr. Vadra, through his company M/s Sky Light Hospitality Pvt. Ltd., acquired the land from M/s Onkareshwar Properties Pvt. Ltd. for ₹7.5 crore. Investigators alleged that the acquisition involved false declarations and that a commercial licence for the property was obtained through influence within the State administration.

The transaction took place during the Congress-led government in Haryana headed by then Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda. In 2012, Sky Light Hospitality sold the land to real estate firm DLF for ₹58 crore.

**NIA files chargesheet in Cambodia-linked trafficking case**

**Devesh K. Pandey**  
NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against five persons, including absconding "mastermind" Anand Kumar Singh, in a case of human trafficking and "cyber slavery" in Cambodia.

Three of the accused named in the chargesheet – Abhay Nath Dubey and Rohit Yadav from Uttar Pradesh; and Abhiranjan Kumar from Bihar – were arrested in February on their arrival in Delhi from Cambodia. The fifth person named Prahlad Kumar Singh is out on bail.

The syndicate was involved in luring Indian youth to Cambodia on the pretext of legitimate jobs and lucrative salaries, as part of an organised human trafficking racket.

"The victims' passports were seized and they were

**The syndicate lured Indian youth to Cambodia on the pretext of offering jobs**

forced to work for scam companies in Cambodia, with any resistance on their part met with mental and physical torture, including electric shocks, denial of food and water, etc.," said the agency.

The NIA alleged that Anand was the kingpin, involved in the recruitment of the youth through various sub-agents and travel agents in India. He worked with his associates in Cambodia to illegally send the victims to that country. He charged \$2,000-3,000 for each person "sold" to a fake company. Efforts are under way to track down the other members of the syndicate, said the agency.

**CBSE makes three-language study compulsory for Class 9 students beginning July 1**

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has made the study of three languages, including at least two Indian languages, compulsory for Class 9 students beginning July 1, according to a circular issued by the Board.

The move is part of the CBSE's alignment of its Scheme of Studies with the National Education Policy, 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2023.

The May 15 circular said students opting for a foreign language may do so as the third language only if the other two are native Indian languages, or as an additional fourth language.

"With effect from July 1, 2026, for Class IX, the study of three languages (R1, R2, R3) shall be compulsory, with at least two lan-



Students may opt for a foreign language only if the other two are Indian languages.

guages being native Indian languages," it stated.

The CBSE said to keep the focus on learning and to reduce undue pressure on students, no Board examination shall be conducted for the third language at the Class-10 level.

"All assessments for R3 shall be entirely school-based and internal. The performance of students in R3 will be duly reflected in the CBSE certificate. It is

clarified that no student will be barred from appearing in the Class X Board Examinations due to R3. Sample question papers, rubrics for internal assessment will be shared by the Board shortly," it added.

# 'BRICS will reach a common position, generate consensus'

Diversity of positions is a positive aspect of BRICS because it's a platform for consultation and political articulation; what we are seeing now is the evolution of the organisation, says Foreign Minister of Brazil; on the large majority of issues, we all have the same position; and I believe those on which we don't have consensus now, we may have later this year, when the summit happens in India, he adds

## INTERVIEW

### Mauro Vieira

Suhasini Haidar

The BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Delhi, chaired by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, ended on Friday with some heat, but not much light in terms of a joint statement. Instead, in a detailed 63-paragraph Chair Statement, BRICS Ministers recorded their support for a number of Indian initiatives, the Palestinian cause and the two-state solution.

However, there was no reconciliation on positions taken by Iranian and UAE Ministers over the war in West Asia that began on February 28.

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, Mauro Vieira, Foreign Minister of Brazil, which hosted the BRICS Summit in 2025, explains why, despite the differences, BRICS continues

to be an important international grouping.

**How broad and wide are the differences between BRICS members? Is it possible to bridge them now?**

I think the diversity of positions is a positive aspect of BRICS because it's a platform for consultation and political articulation, and what we are seeing now is the evolution of BRICS.

We had at the beginning five countries, and now, two years after the expansion, we are still adapting to new methods of work and new kinds of interactions for developing countries.

But, I think that on the large majority of issues, we all have the same position. And I believe that those [issues] on which we don't have [consensus] now, we may have them later this year [September 10-11], when the summit will happen here in India, under the presidency of Prime Minister Modi.

**Even so, would you say the Iran-UAE differences have brought BRICS consensus to a standstill?**

That is the main issue. But it also proves the importance of this group in that, [it is] where you have two countries that have totally different positions, and in a state of war, of military action, one against the other.

But I think that this is also the richness of this grouping, because you have this place and the space to negotiate and talk.

BRICS is also important to have a dialogue with other countries and other groupings, like the G-7 in the developed world.

So, I am very confident that we will reach a common position, and that this platform of negotiation will generate the consensus that's necessary.

**Mr. Jaishankar said that the new BRICS members [Iran, the**



**UAE, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia] need to understand and follow the consensus of old BRICS members [Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa]. In hindsight, do you think, the process of BRICS expansion was pushed through too quickly?**

The original five members of BRICS grouping had been together for nearly 15 years [BRIC began in 2009, South Africa joined a year later to make it BRICS] before we all agreed to the expansion.

One of the important issues was that we should share the same positions on international affairs, such as reform of the [UN] Security Council, which had our consensus, and it has to continue that way with the new members too.

**During the BRICS summit in Rio, there were some very strong paragraphs about the conflict in Gaza and on Israel-Palestine issues – are you hopeful of similar language this time?**

We hope that we can work from here to September, with all the BRICS, and arrive at a text that all agree with. And this is the characteristic of democratic and diplomatic movements and organisations – we have to negotiate and arrive at a common text.

For Brazil, we have criticised enormously the attacks of Israel against civilian populations in Gaza. It led to the death of thousands, including Brazilian citizens, even young children. Others have been imprisoned, and one starved to death. So, we cannot stay silent. We have to criticise. But of course, each country has a different take on this, and some like us are more affected [than others].

**Consensus was also difficult when Brazil hosted the G-20 in 2024, and the BRICS in 2025. Do you think the new conflicts and actions by world powers, including the U.S. in Venezuela, the U.S. and**

**Israel in Iran, and earlier Russia in Ukraine, are making it more difficult to forge joint statements?**

Well, this is destabilising the whole world. You just have to look at the inflation and the cost of oil that's rising globally. We live in a globalised world. In the past, conflicts remained regional, but now everything is globalised, and I think there's a huge impact.

**Since the beginning of U.S. President Donald Trump's second tenure, he has issued statements against BRICS members with 100% sanctions. Why do you think BRICS is targeted and seen as anti-West?**

The only thing I can say is that BRICS is not against the United States or the West or anyone, and the proof is that we have countries from different parts and continents of the

world. BRICS is a grouping of developing countries trying to develop common policies to promote the development of these countries, to have more trade, and to combat many different difficulties in these countries.

**Brazilian President Lula once spoke about the idea of de-dollarisation, alternative payment mechanisms...**

That was a misunderstanding. President Lula never spoke of de-dollarisation or the creation of a BRICS currency. He only spoke about mechanisms of payments in local currencies, which exists between many countries.

They have the option to use local currencies or to go through the big payment systems in Europe and the United States. But nothing is against anyone. It's in favour of the members, in favour of development and social policies, initiatives in the area of medicine, and so on.

## PM stresses close ties as he addresses the diaspora and meets Dutch royalty

India's aspirations no longer limited to its borders, Modi tells Indian community in the Netherlands; in the second leg of his five-nation tour, he meets the King and Queen of the Netherlands and 'exchanges perspectives on boosting ties'; the country hands back Chola dynasty copper plates to India

Press Trust of India  
THE HAGUE

Describing India as a "land of opportunities", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Saturday that the country was undergoing an "unprecedented transformation" and its aspirations were "no longer limited to its borders".

Addressing the Indian community in The Hague, the Prime Minister said that India was dreaming big and its youth aspired to reach the sky.

Mr. Modi arrived in the Netherlands on Friday after a brief stopover in the UAE on the second leg of his five-nation tour to further deepen bilateral cooperation in areas such as trade, technology, defence and renewable energy. The countries in the itinerary include Sweden, Norway, and Italy.

He met King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima and discussed issues of mutual interest. He also held wide-ranging talks with his Dutch counterpart, Rob Jetten, focusing on trade,

investment, and critical technologies.

"Met His Majesty King Willem-Alexander and Her Majesty Queen Máxima at the Royal Palace. It was wonderful exchanging perspectives on boosting India-Netherlands friendship across key sectors like technology, innovation, sustainable growth, commerce and water resources," Mr. Modi posted on X after the meeting.

He said that India and the Netherlands were "connected by shared interests and a shared belief in building a future-ready planet".

Both sides noted the close cooperation in the areas of sustainability, climate action, digital technology, innovation, fintech and blue economy, and expressed commitment towards further strengthening India-Netherlands relations, the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, said in a post on X.

The Prime Minister was paying a second trip to the country after a 2017 tour and comes at what officials described as an "impor-



Warm welcome: Narendra Modi waves at the crowd during a community event in The Hague, Netherlands, on Saturday. ANI

tant juncture" in India-Netherlands ties.

Officials in the Ministry of External Affairs said the visit carries a "rich and substantive agenda" and is expected to consolidate the strategic dimensions of the partnership that have emerged through sustained engagement between the two countries.

India and the Netherlands have significantly expanded cooperation in recent years beyond traditional sectors such as trade, investment and the priority areas of water,

agriculture and health.

Saying that India offers immense opportunities, Mr. Modi invited Dutch companies to design, innovate and manufacture in the country. In his remarks at the CEO Roundtable, the Prime Minister said today's India is a symbol of scale and stability and no country in the world can match its speed in infrastructure, clean energy, and connectivity. This is why India is contributing 17% to global growth, he said.

Mr. Modi, accompanied by Mr. Jetten, also wit-

nessed the signing of an agreement between Tata Electronics and ASML, a Dutch multinational corporation, to support semiconductor fabrication in Dholera, Gujarat.

The Netherlands also handed back 11th-century Chola dynasty copper plates to India, in an event attended by Mr. Modi, signifying the strengthening of ties between the two countries.

The 21 copper plates, belonging to the times of Rajaraja Chola I and brought to the Netherlands in the 1700s from present-day Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu which was then under Dutch control, are considered the most significant surviving records of the Chola dynasty and are among the important artefacts of Tamil heritage held anywhere outside the country. India has been pursuing the return of the plates, known in the Netherlands as the Leiden Plates, since 2012.

**Trust and transparency** Highlighting that India and the Netherlands are working together to create a

trusted, transparent, and future-ready supply chain, Mr. Modi told the Indian diaspora in his over 40-minute speech that the Netherlands would become the "natural gateway" for Indian businesses to enter Europe, and added that the Indian diaspora could serve as a trusted bridge in this journey.

"From energy security to water security, the Netherlands and India are working together. Our cooperation on green hydrogen is very important. And the historic trade agreement between India and the EU will further strengthen the partnership between India and the Netherlands," he added. He urged all "friends of India" in the European country to increase cooperation with India as much as possible. "This will also increase India's potential, and the return on your investments will also be higher. This is Modi's guarantee," he said. The Prime Minister assured the diaspora that the Government of India stood firmly behind every Indian living abroad and remained committed to their welfare.

## NEET row: PM must sack the Education Minister, says Cong.

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI



Rahul Gandhi

The Congress on Saturday demanded the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG paper leak row, with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi alleging that the scandal was the result of a "money-making racket". In a video statement on X, Mr. Gandhi alleged that the leaked question paper had been circulated on WhatsApp two days before the examination, destroying years of hard work of 22 lakh students.

"The Prime Minister should immediately seek the resignation of Dharmendra Pradhanji," Mr. Gandhi said. "This is a nexus between the RSS, BJP and Vice-Chancellors of universities who owe their allegiance to the RSS. It's a result of the nexus to make money," he added.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge claimed that under the BJP government, "Amrit Kaal" was proving to be "Mrit Kaal (era of death)" for students preparing for competitive exams, referring to reports

of suicides by NEET aspirants following the row.

Mr. Kharge alleged more than 90 exam papers had been leaked during the Modi government's tenure, adversely affecting over 90 million students and their families. "The Union Education Minister must resign immediately," Mr. Kharge added.

Congress general secretary, communications, Jairam Ramesh alleged the Education Ministry's "incompetence is matched only by its Minister's arrogance". He cited controversies ranging from the NCERT textbook row, UGC's draft regulations on Vice-Chancellor appointments, NAAC bribery scandal, ICHR controversy, vacancies in higher educational institutions and paper leaks.

## Youth are pillars of country, remarks were at those with 'fake' degrees: CJI

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Chief Justice of India (CJI), Surya Kant, on Saturday issued a statement clarifying that his oral remarks made a day earlier regarding "attacks" on institutions were not directed at youth of the country, but at individuals who had entered professions such as law and media using "fake and bogus degrees".

"I am pained to read how a section of the media has misquoted my oral observations made during the hearing of a frivolous case yesterday. What I had criticised were those who have entered professions



CJI Surya Kant

like the Bar [legal profession] with the aid of fake and bogus degrees. Similar persons have sneaked into the media, social media, and other noble professions as well, and hence,

they are like parasites," the Chief Justice said in the statement on Saturday. He maintained that reports suggesting he had criticised unemployed youth were "totally baseless". "...It is not an exaggeration to say that Indian youth have great regard and respect for me, and I too see them as the pillars of a developed India," he added.

The statement came a day after he made strong oral remarks while hearing a plea seeking contempt proceedings over alleged delay by the Delhi High Court in implementing the Supreme Court's guidelines on the designation of senior advocates.

Refusing to entertain the plea, the Bench, also comprising Justice Joydip Bagchi, expressed concern over the growing number of lawyers allegedly possessing fake or dubious degrees and observed that a probe was warranted.

"There are parasites in society who attack the system... they don't get any employment and don't have any place in the profession. Some of them become media, some of them become social media, some of them become RTI activists, and they start attacking everyone," the Chief Justice had orally remarked.

## Make NTA statutory body accountable to Parliament: doctors' front moves SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The United Doctors Front on Saturday moved the Supreme Court seeking transition of the National Testing Agency (NTA) from a registered society to a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament to ensure constitutional and parliamentary accountability.

The doctors' body said the 2026 paper leak was part of a "recurring, systemic, and catastrophic failure" of the NTA in conducting the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET)-UG. "The NTA's current legal



Youth Congress workers protest NEET paper leak in Delhi on Saturday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

status as an autonomous society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 creates an accountability vacuum," the petition filed through advocates Ritu Reniwal and Mahendra said.

The doctors' body said unlike the Union Public Service Commission or the Staff Selection Commission, the NTA was not directly answerable to Parliament. It operated under the Ministry of Education, which shielded the agency from direct CAG audits and mandatory Parliamentary committee probes.

"The recurrence proves that cosmetic administrative tweaks and expert committees like the K. Radhakrishnan Committee are inadequate without a fundamental legislative overhaul," the petition said.

The doctors' front sought the dissolution of the NTA in its current form

and the enactment of a Parliamentary Act to create a new testing authority.

"This statutory shift would ensure direct Parliamentary oversight – the chairperson and functions would be defined by law, making it directly answerable to the legislature. This would ensure financial transparency through mandatory end-to-end CAG audits, statutory penalties for leaks and a legally mandated grievance redressal mechanism, while eliminating outsourcing ambiguities by restricting the role of private vendors in core examination functions," the petition said.

**IN BRIEF**



**Adhikari aide's murder: CBI searches multiple locations**

The CBI conducted searches on Saturday at multiple locations in connection with the murder of West Bengal Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari's aide Chandrakant Rath, officials said. The search operation started late on Friday night, and continued till the early hours of Saturday, they said. The CBI has taken over the probe into Rath's murder from the West Bengal Police following a request from the State government. The agency has formed a seven-member special investigation team under a DIG of Special Crime from Delhi, comprising some of the best investigators drawn from various units of the agency, officials said.

**Mayawati demands extensive relief for storm victims in U.P.**

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Saturday urged the Uttar Pradesh government to provide extensive support to families affected by the recent storm and heavy rain that had resulted in at least 111 deaths across the State. "The State government should come forward with all its generosity to help the people/families affected by the massive destruction of life and property caused by the recent severe storm so that they can gather their ruined/scattered family life and start their life again," she said on social media platform X. The BSP president also criticised the Centre for increasing petrol and diesel prices.

**Middling attendance of MPs for standing committees: data**

An average of 53% of members were present in the meetings of 16 department-related standing committees and the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament to deliberate on various important subjects since their reconstitution last September, according to data on the Lok Sabha website. During this period, five meetings were postponed due to a lack of quorum. A minimum of 11 members must be present for a quorum with a standing committee consisting of 31 MPs – 21 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been raising the issue of ensuring that MPs attend parliamentary committees.

**TCS case: court denies bail to POSH committee member**

A court in Nashik, Maharashtra has denied bail to TCS site head and internal POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) committee member Ashwini Chainani noting that she 'ignored' the complaint of a victim in the alleged sexual harassment-conversion case, and thus 'abetted' the crime. Besides Ms. Chainani, the court on Friday refused grant bail to Tausif Attar, Raza Memon, Shahrukh Qureshi and Asif Ansari in the case. In the reasoned order, Additional Sessions Judge V.V. Kathare said that Ms. Chainani's "silence and insensitivity effectively endorsed the toxic workplace environment". She was arrested on April 10 for alleged abetment under the BNS. PH

**SUDOKU**

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**Barn swallows in Manipur shed their migratory trait**

**Rahul Karmakar**  
GUWAHATI

Descendants of migratory barn swallows may have gradually stopped making long journeys and settled permanently in Manipur's Imphal Valley, a new study suggests.

The finding, published in the *Journal of Wildlife Science*, also says that these fork-tailed birds may represent a mixed population shaped by ancient movements and interbreeding between their different groups over thousands of years.

The authors of the study are Amarjeet Kaur and R. Suresh Kumar of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII). Their study is based on field surveys conducted in 2022 and 2023.

"Birds have shown notable expansions and contractions of breeding rang-

es in response to climate change, land-use transformation, and the creation of novel human-made habitats. Synanthropic species, those closely associated with humans, are often at the forefront of such shifts," the study notes.

The barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) is a widespread synanthropic that has expanded its range across continents. In India, two subspecies of barn swallows are reported to breed in the Himalayas, while one is believed to winter in parts of the country's northeastern region.

The two WII scientists, one from the Department of Habitat Ecology and the other from the Department of Endangered Species Management, did not find any barn swallows in Manipur's hill districts. They found thriving colonies in the Imphal Valley,



**Changing pattern:** During the survey, adult barn swallows were seen at the nesting sites throughout the year. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

recording nests in about 50 homes and buildings across Bishnupur, Imphal East, Imphal West, and Thoubal districts.

**Variety of colours**

They captured 45 individuals – 26 males and 19 females. The swallows showed a variety of colours, ranging from buff to rich chestnut-orange underparts, with differences

in throat and breast markings. Measurements of their wings and tails overlapped with several recognised subspecies, making it impossible to determine which population they belonged to.

During the survey, adult barn swallows were seen at the nesting sites throughout the year, indicating that they do not leave the valley after breeding.

The scientists suggest two possible explanations for why the Imphal Valley birds challenge the understanding of barn swallows.

One is that these birds shed the migratory trait of their ancestors to settle down in the valley that offers ideal conditions – a mild climate, plentiful flying insects, and structures suitable for building their cup-shaped mud nests. The other is the impact of interbreeding of different groups over thousands of years.

The scientists did not rule out the role of local culture in the birds' evolution from temporary to permanent residents. "The Meitei community, a Tibeto-Burman ethnic group native to Manipur, regards the barn swallow as a symbol of Goddess Lakshmi, prosperity, and good fortune. This belief translates

into strong protection of nests and barn swallows within private properties, likely contributing to the persistence of breeding populations in densely inhabited areas in Imphal Valley," they observe.

The researchers note that the study provides the first documentation of a resident breeding population of barn swallows in Manipur, extending the species' known breeding range in the Indian subcontinent.

"It highlights a critical ecological gap in our understanding of avian biogeography in this understudied region and challenges long-standing assumptions about subspecies limits," they state, underscoring the need to use tracking devices and genetic analyses in future studies to find out where these birds came from and how long they lived in Manipur.

**Bengal govt. to reverify caste certificates issued since 2011**

About 1.69 crore SC, ST and OBC certificates have been issued in the State since 2011; about 47.8 lakh certificates were issued under the *Duare Sarkar* camps during the Trinamool regime

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

Observing that the authenticity and genuineness of some caste certificates have been challenged by different quarters, the West Bengal government has decided to conduct a reverification of all caste certificates issued in the State since 2011.

"Considering the importance and sensitivity of the matter, and as directed in a review meeting chaired by the competent authority, reverification of such caste certificates at the level of the respective issuing authorities will be done in accordance with the prevailing norms and statutory provisions," stated a letter issued by the Secretary of Backward Classes Welfare Department to all the District Magistrates on May 14.

About 1.69 crore SC, ST and OBC certificates have been issued in the State



**Secretary of Backward Classes Welfare writes to all District Magistrates on the matter**

since 2011. The notification points out that about 47.8 lakh SC certificates – 32.51 lakh ST certificates and 6.65 lakh OBC certificates – were issued under the *Duare Sarkar* camps during the previous Trinamool Congress regime.

Newly appointed Minister for Tribal Development and Backward Classes

(BJP) government has started investigations into several initiatives undertaken during the Trinamool regime between 2011 and 2026.

The matter of issuing caste certificates to ineligible people had become a major concern in the State's Jangalmahal region (Purulia, Jhargram, Bankura and Paschim Medinipur), and the BJP had promised action against such practices if voted to power.

A separate controversy had also erupted over the inclusion of Muslims on the OBC list of West Bengal during the Trinamool regime.

The West Bengal BJP said the Calcutta High Court had already made it clear that around 75 Muslim castes were included on the OBC list without any proper survey or due process, which the BJP alleged reflected the vote bank politics of former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Since coming to power following its victory in the 2026 Assembly polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party

**Athlete's house attacked in Bengal post-poll violence**

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

Swapna Barman, an Asian Games gold medalist and a candidate of the All India Trinamool Congress in the West Bengal Assembly polls, has become a victim of post-poll violence.

According to reports, a property owned by her, built of corrugated tin and located next to the house in which she currently resides in Uttar Dinajpur district, was set on fire by unidentified miscreants. No one was present inside the property and there were no reports of any injury.

Swapna Barman, the first Indian heptathlete to win an Asian Games gold in 2018, was the Trinamool Congress candidate for the Rajganj Assembly seat in Jalpaiguri district. She lost to the BJP's Dinesh Sarkar by a margin of 21,477 votes.

"Had I known this, I would have never joined politics. Today my house was set on fire," Ms. Barman wrote on social media on Friday.



Swapna Barman

Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee took to social media, and said that BJP supporters set fire to her house yesterday.

"An athlete who brought glory to the nation is being repaid with violence, intimidation and fear - simply because she chose to stand with the Trinamool Congress," Mr. Banerjee said, sharing a video of violence on social media.

Ever since the release of the Assembly poll results, the Trinamool has been alleging post-poll violence against its supporters. The BJP has denied the claims.

**Centre to roll out scheme to educate out-of-school teens**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Centre is preparing to roll out a pilot programme across 10 districts in nine States to proactively connect out-of-school children in the age group of 14-18 with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for distance learning, moving beyond its existing voluntary framework.

A high-level meeting was convened on Saturday under the chairmanship of Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy (DoSEL) under the Ministry of Education, to discuss the implementation strategy for the pilot programmes. It was attended by top officials of NIOS and State Education Departments as well as District Collectors and District Magistrates of the pilot districts.

According to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey estimates, over two crore children in the 14-18 age group are out of school.

The 10 districts are spread across Odisha,



The initiative will track teens who drop out of school for various reasons.

Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi, according to a press statement of the Union Education Ministry.

The initiative will include app-based mapping of out-of-school children in the age group of 14-18 years, monitoring systems, incentive mechanisms, district-level convergence strategies, said a press statement from the Ministry of Education.

Before the pilot programme is kicked off, officials will also ensure enrolment of NIOS Facilitators, distribution of starter kits, and conduct of preliminary surveys.

**Experts say new generation should be trained to acquire multidisciplinary skills**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Unconventional careers are cropping up everywhere and as a result, courses considered soft and less helpful in the job market are being given a rethink and in some cases, rebirth, according to experts.

They were speaking at a webinar, "Careers beyond the obvious: unlocking new pathways in humanities & sciences", organised on Saturday by *The Hindu* and the SRM Institute of Science & Technology (SRMIST) as part of the Future Career Conversations series.

One of the panellists, A. Vinay Kumar, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Science & Humanities, Management), SRMIST, said that when the new generation is being trained for skills, they must be trained to acquire multi-disciplinary skills. The goal is to get them to think through different hats. Mr. Kumar said economic growth always spurred creation of new careers and opportunities: deeper the economic activity,



deeper the career opportunity.

Kamal Karanth, co-founder, XPheno Private Limited, a specialist staffing company de-romanticised portfolio careers, pointing out that it thrived in certain habitats, one of them being the creative fields. Portfolio careers usually emerge after someone has spent considerable time at the "crease", discovered themselves, and has become a specialist.

Mr. Karanth also dwelt on freelance work, sifting fact from fiction. Everyone would want to be their own boss, but hesitate to pay the price: the lack of a steady income. Unlike some economies in the West, Indian economic realities militate against freelance work.

On making internships count, Deepa Sethi, Professor and Executive Chair of

Globe, IIM, Kozhikode, said by being focussed on being impressive, seeking validation, students miss the mark, which is about paying attention. Her advice to students: "do not treat it as a performance, but an opportunity to showcase your learning, apply what you have learnt and also bring some clarity and critical thinking to the table".

A. Duraiswamy, Dean – Faculty of Science and Humanities, SRMIST, noted that interdisciplinary careers are the future. He highlighted proven efforts at SRMIST to work out various combinations of disciplines for optimal learning. He added that for successful completion of a programme, a student would have to rack up a huge chunk of credits from other disciplines. He underlined how courses diametrically opposite in terms of their application are brought together in multi-disciplinary offerings.

This webinar can be viewed at [newsth.live/THSRMHY](http://newsth.live/THSRMHY)

**Tagged Amur falcons set to cross India on return trip**

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

Two of the three Amur falcons which were satellite-tagged in Manipur's Tamenglong district in November 2025, are returning to their breeding grounds in the Far East through India, after migrating to the warmer southern Africa region during the winter.

In a post on X on Saturday, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said, "Having completed more than four months in their non-breeding grounds in southern Africa, two of these Amur Falcons are on their spring migration, returning to their breeding region in Far-East Asia via India."

During their journey from Africa's Somalia to Northeast India, they undertake a non-stop flight of nearly 6,000 km in six days, he said. A tagged young female Amur falcon named Alang is currently headed for India's west coast and is crossing the Arabian Sea, having started from Somalia on Friday morning, the Minister said.

## IN BRIEF



## Tata unit, ASML ink MoU to boost chip making in India

Tata Electronics Ltd. and ASML, a leading semiconductor equipment making firm, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost advanced semiconductor manufacturing in India. Under this, ASML will enable the establishment and successful ramp up of Tata Electronics' 300 mm (12 inch) semiconductor fab in Dholera, Gujarat. The collaboration will focus on deploying ASML's holistic suite of advanced lithography tools and solutions at the fab.

## DRL unveils Semaglutide injection generic in Canada

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) on Saturday said it has launched its generic version of Semaglutide injection used in treatment of type 2 diabetes in Canada. The company is among the first to introduce a generic Semaglutide injection in the Canadian market, following the Notice of Compliance (NOC) received from Health Canada on April 28., Dr Reddy's said. Canada is the first G7 country to grant market authorisation for Semaglutide injection, it added. **PH**

## UrsaCompute mulls \$300 mn boost to India's sovereign AI

UrsaCompute, the AI compute infrastructure arm of Ursa Group, said it planned to invest \$300 million in building sovereign AI compute infrastructure in India, including the deployment of 2,888 NVIDIA Blackwell GPUs. "The deployment aligns with the Government of India's ₹10,372 crore IndiaAI Mission, which aims to strengthen domestic AI infrastructure and reduce reliance on overseas hyperscaler ecosystems for advanced AI workloads," the company said. The Phase 1 deployment will be anchored at ST Telemedia Global Data Centre in Greater Noida and is expected to support high-density AI training workloads and enterprise AI adoption among others.

## NHPC Q4 net jumps 68%, to pay 21 paise/share dividend

State-owned NHPC has posted over 68% jump in consolidated net profit at ₹1,549.42 crore for March quarter 2025-26, supported by higher revenue. It had logged a profit of ₹919.63 crore in the year-ago period, the company said in an exchange filing on Friday. Total income during the period increased to ₹3,120.52 crore from ₹2,557.71 crore in fourth quarter of 2024-25. Annual net profit was at ₹4,220.46 crore against ₹3,411.73 crore. Total income was at ₹12,686.09 crore (₹11,614.61 crore). The board approved final dividend of 21 paise per equity share for FY26. **PH**

## Ratan Tata Trusts says reviewing Charity Commissioner's order

Lalendu Mishra  
MUMBAI

Tata Trusts has expressed surprise at the move by Venu Srinivasan, a long-time trustee of several Tata Trusts, to file a complaint with the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner.

"Sir Ratan Tata Trust was not aware of any complaint having been filed by Mr. Venu Srinivasan, Trustee until the receipt of directions from the Charity Commissioner today (May 15, 2026)," Tata Trusts said in a late-night statement.

"Mr. Venu Srinivasan had previously acknowledged the notice of the board meeting originally scheduled to be held on May 8, 2026, and the notice of the meeting rescheduled to May 16, 2026," the Tata Trusts statement said.

In an email in the late Friday evening (May 15, 2026), the Charity Commissioner, Maharashtra State, Mumbai, had directed the board of trustees of Tata Trusts to defer the meeting scheduled for May



Venu Srinivasan

16, 2026.

In that order, the Charity Commissioner mentioned the complaint filed by Mr. Venu Srinivasan dated April 28, 2026.

## 'Issued ex-parte'

Commenting on the order, Tata Trusts said the direction was issued ex-parte with reference to a complaint dated April 18, 2026, by one Ms. Katyayani Agrawal which was in respect of only Sir Ratan Tata

"Given these facts, we understand that the direction issued is only in respect of Sir Ratan Tata

## Reality check of govt.'s LPG stock claim

Govt. assured people that India had 45 days of LPG 'rolling stock,' implying there was enough stock and no need for panic; this came as a puzzle to many since India had rather limited LPG storage capacity and needs regular shipments to the extent of one shipload of LPG arriving every day

## NEWS ANALYSIS

M. Kalyanaraman  
Debayan Tewari  
CHENNAI

A few days ago, the government assured the people that India had 45 days of "rolling stock" in LPG, implying there were enough stocks and there was no need for panic.

The implication came as a puzzle to many since India has rather limited LPG storage capacity and needs regular shipments from abroad to the extent of an average of one shipload of LPG arriving every day.

## Total LPG capacity

As per government data, India has a total LPG tankage capacity of some 1.6 million tonne of which some 53% is in import terminals, some 31% in bottling plants, 16% in refineries and related facilities.

As per government data, this would account for some 17 days of consumption as per January 1, 2026 consumption figures, assuming all the tanks are



Precious commodity: A worker handles a filled LPG gas cylinder amid reports of nationwide shortage of the cooking fuel. ANI

full, no fresh LPG came in and none were produced in Indian refineries in that period.

## Long-term storage

India has almost negligible long-term storage such as caverns unlike, say, Europe in the case of natural gas.

One could say that a few days can be added to the figure of 17 given the cutbacks in bulk LPG and commercial LPG supplies. There is always LPG currently under transportation as cylinders within In-

dia and that could be considered too.

Yet, this still leaves a large shortfall from the claimed figure of 45 days even if all the tanks are full, unless the government has considered the LPG on ships, which have been ordered and are on their way, as inventory.

It is industry practice to consider certain types of import shipments as inventory though they may not be considered reliable buffer stocks. The term "rolling stock" usually applies to

goods transported by train.

The Hindu has been able to track 15 LPG tankers that left various ports in the U.S. for India using open-source marine traffic data.

Crystal Explorer, which left Houston, was scheduled to arrive in Ennore, Chennai, on Friday (May 15), while the tanker Hannibal reached Mangaluru on Saturday (May 16), as per *marinetraffic.com*.

The tanker Ethane Opal had discharged its cargo and left the Dahej port on Thursday.

The LPG tankers Vega Sky and Jirisan Explorer are scheduled to arrive in Vishakhapatnam and Ennore respectively on May 22, as per *marinetraffic.com*. Jia Yuan (Dhamra) and BW Aries (Vishakhapatnam) are likely to reach India this month.

Future Ace, which set sail from the port of Nederland in the U.S., is now in the Bay of Bengal abutting the Odisha coast. While *marinetraffic.com* did not show its final destination, it is nearing port of Dhamra.

Marine data show that the tankers Gas Planet, Pinza and Shergar, that

have recently left the U.S., are likely to reach Vishakhapatnam in the third week of June. Ethane Pearl and Clipper Guardian are scheduled to dock at Dahej and Haldia respectively by mid-June or thereafter.

The combined deadweight of these 15 ships is 8.38 lakh tonne.

Among the 15 tankers, two vessels — Ethane Crystal (bound for Dahej) and Badrinath (Mangalore) — are going to Port Louis in Mauritius, where they are likely to refuel before heading towards India.

## Boom in marine fuel

According to *Business Insider Africa*, Port Louis has seen a boom in marine fuel sales after the surge in marine traffic around the Cape of Good Hope, effected by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and threats of disruptions in the Red Sea.

On Thursday, LPG tanker Marshall Island-flagged Symi appeared to be sailing in the Gulf of Oman.

The vessel has been in the Persian Gulf since early March, having loaded its cargo at Ras Laffan in Qa-

tar. It was among the 20 ships marked for evacuation by the government since it was critical to India's energy needs.

Reports said another LPG tanker, the Vietnam-flagged NV Sunshine had transited the Strait of Hormuz and has entered India and is now off the Gujarat coast. It too had switched off its AIS while sailing through the chokepoint. The combined dead weight of the two vessels is 81,572 tonne.

## More LPG vessels

The vessels described above could carry some one million tonne of LPG but the list is not comprehensive. There could be more such vessels and spot purchases the government can make from vessels already loaded. India's post-war LPG consumption in March was some 2.4 million tonne — a drop of 6 lakh tonne compared with normal months. Import deficit was about 1 million tonne, made up by higher local output. By this account, 1 million tonne of shipment could add to another 12 days.

## 'Global financial situation extremely arduous'

Mini Tejaswi  
BENGALURU

The global financial environment has become increasingly challenging, with U.S. 30-year Treasury yields crossing 5%, the U.K. 10-year yield rising above 5.2%, and Japan's 30-year yield touching 4%, said V. Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India.

According to him, much of the FDI India attracted over the past two decades came during an era of near-zero interest rates and quantitative easing, when global capital actively sought higher returns in emerging markets.

"With that phase now over, India must compete in a world where 5% risk-free long-term interest rates have raised the benchmark for every dollar of investment entering



V. Anantha Nageswaran

the country," he stated while delivering keynote at the PanIIT Alumni Meet.

## Three major forces

Highlighting the changing global landscape, Dr. Nageswaran pointed to three major forces redefining the world order: intensifying great-power competition, fractures within Western alliances and China's unprecedented manufacturing dominance.

India's goods trade defi-

cit stood at 8.5% of GDP in FY24, and even after excluding oil and coal imports, the deficit stood at 3.5% of GDP, indicating a structural rather than cyclical challenge.

At the same time, foreign direct investment (FDI), after accounting for repatriation and outflows by Indian firms, has reduced significantly, with global investors watching India closely but not committing capital at the scale required, he observed.

## Global flows selective

Dr. Nageswaran noted India's goods trade deficit remained structurally significant and global capital flows were becoming more selective in a high-interest-rate environment.

"India's potential is not a given. It must be claimed deliberately," he said, emphasising the coming de-

cadences would be shaped not by any single government, but by the collective choices of citizens, institutions and industry leaders.

Dr. Nageswaran urged that, "India is at a fork, not in crisis and must move with speed, confidence and strategic clarity."

On manufacturing, he said India must simultaneously focus on labour-intensive sectors such as garments, footwear and food processing while also building capabilities in semiconductors, batteries, advanced electronics and specialty chemicals.

## Energy reserves

Calling for greater urgency in building strategic reserves and accelerating nuclear energy adoption, he said a country aspiring to host semiconductor fabs, battery gigafactories and data centres cannot treat

nuclear energy as a distant horizon.

On the rise of artificial intelligence and its impact on employment, he said, AI would compress routine cognitive work and narrow entry-level hiring, making deep expertise and skilled trades more important.

The country required at least eight million new jobs or livelihoods every year, however trade skills such as electricians, skilled construction workers and technicians will remain among the most protected and essential jobs in the emerging economy.

Stressing India's next 25 years would be determined by collective choices of institutions and individuals, he said the country could no longer afford slow decision-making and delayed execution in an increasingly fragmented world order.

## India curbs some silver imports with instant effect

Reuters

India has curbed imports of certain silver products with immediate effect, shifting them from the "free" to "restricted" category, as per a notification.

The move is part of the government's efforts to curb imports of precious metals to ease pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves caused by higher oil prices.

The restriction on imports applies to certain high-purity silver bars and certain other grades, the notification said.

On Tuesday, India raised import tariffs on gold and silver to 15% from 6% in a move that could dampen demand in the country.

## TCS to focus on industry-specific AI

Lalendu Mishra  
MUMBAI

In a year marred by layoffs, sexual harassment allegations at one of its call centres in India and amid the onslaught of the AI wave, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. (TCS) sounded bullish about its future, with the chairman saying the firm is repositioning itself as an AI and digital transformation partner.

"In fiscal 2026, TCS scaled up execution of the 'Human+AI' operating model and industry specific agent marketplace. Your company generated an annualised revenue of \$2.3 billion in AI services and \$11.5 billion in new-age services, including Cloud, Data, Enterprise Solutions and Cyber Security," Chairman N. Chandrasekarn said in the annual report.

TCS was focusing on acquiring and scaling next-generation capabilities via inorganic initiatives.

Emphasising GenAI and agentic AI were entering a new phase of growth, he said AI would not just be a



TCS scaled up execution of the 'Human+AI' operating model in fiscal 2026.

layer but be the operating foundation.

K. Krithivasan, MD & CEO, TCS said "As customers scale AI, they are looking for partners who can build and manage a unified control plane across the full AI stack — Infrastructure to Intelligence."

He said TCS will focus on four distinct progressions: build industry-specific AI systems, construct India's first high-density AI data centre, strengthen Infrastructure to Intelligence offering and establish secure, resilient, sovereign AI infrastructure.

**RAJASTHAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
**NOTICE INVITING BIDS**

Sealed E-Bids are invited on behalf of Rajasthan Agricultural Research Institute, Durgapura, Jaipur (Rajasthan) for the procurement of E-Tender for Construction of Plant Tissue Culture Lab and Protected Structures with Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment's on Turnkey Basis upto 11.06.2026, 11:00 AM.

Sr. No.	Name of Article	Specifications	Qty	Estimated Price (₹)	Price of Bidding Document (₹)	RISL Fee (₹)	Amount of Bid Security (₹)
1	E-Tender for Construction of Plant Tissue Culture Lab and Protected Structures with Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment's on Turnkey Basis			1597.17 Lakhs	10000/-	2500/-	31,94,340/-

Details may be seen in the Bidding Document at our office or on the website of the State Public Procurement Portal <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>, <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> or our website [www.sknau.ac.in](http://www.sknau.ac.in) and may be downloaded from there or obtained from our office on payment of its Banker Cheque/demand draft. UBN: SKN2627WLOB00437 Raj.Samwad/C/26/2864 Director

**VISVESVARAYA INDUSTRIAL & TECHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM**  
(A unit of National Council of Science Museums)  
Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, P.B No.: 5216, Kasturba Road, Bengaluru - 560 001, Telephone- 080-2286 6200, Fax: 080-22864009/22864119, E-mail: [vismuseum@gmail.com](mailto:vismuseum@gmail.com) Website: <https://www.vismuseum.gov.in/>

**ADVERTISEMENT No. 02/2026**

ONLINE applications are invited from eligible candidates for the following posts:

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Posts & Units Category	Pay Matrix Level (7 <sup>th</sup> CPC)	Age as on 15.06.2026
1.	Education Assistant 'A' (4 Posts)	1 UR: VITM, Bengaluru 1 UR: RSC&P, Calicut 1 UR: RSC&P, Tirupati 1 UR: DSC, Kalaburagi	Rs.29200-92300- (Level-5)	35 Years
2.	Junior Stenographer (1 Post)	1 UR: VITM, Bengaluru	Rs.25500-81100- (Level-4)	25 Years
3.	Office Assistant (Gr.III) (3 Posts)	1 UR } VITM, Bengaluru 1 OBC } 1 UR: RSC, Tirupati	Rs.19900-63200- (Level-2)	25 years
4.	Technician 'A' (3 Posts) Carpenter-01	1 SC: VITM, Bengaluru 1 SC: RSC, Tirupati 1 OBC: RSC&P, Calicut	Rs.19900-63200- (Level-2)	35 years
5.	Artist 'A' (1 Post)	1 SC: VITM, Bengaluru	Rs.19900-63200- (Level-2)	35 years

Usual allowances as admissible under the rules of NCSM. Upper age limit is relaxable for the reserved categories, as per GoI Rules. The last date of receipt of online applications for the posts is **15.06.2026**. For further details please visit our website [www.vismuseum.gov.in](http://www.vismuseum.gov.in)

# SCIENCE

## IIT-M, IISc team makes carbon-free version of ferrocene sandwich

Vasudevan Mukunth

A compound called ferrocene has been a landmark of chemistry for over seven decades. It consists of an iron atom sandwiched between two flat carbon rings. Its discovery launched the field of organometallic chemistry, with numerous applications in materials science and medicine. Since then, chemists have been trying to create a version of this sandwich that contains no carbon atoms.

In a new study in *Science*, researchers from IIT-Madras and the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, announced they had finally achieved this goal: a stable, carbon-free analogue of ferrocene using boron rings and osmium. “Just as ferrocene started a new era in organometallics, these results will start a new era in inorganic-ferrocene-like materials and will be a part of textbooks of inorganic chemistry,” study co-author and IIT-Madras pro-

fessor Sundargopal Ghosh said. “Our efforts are on to study the reactions of these new compounds.” Boron is next to carbon on the periodic table and can form similar ring structures. While scientists had created sandwiches containing both carbon and boron, a purely inorganic version has been elusive. The team turned to computer modelling to predict which metal would best stabilise a boron sandwich, and zeroed in on os-

mium. To create the complex, the team reacted a polymeric osmium-bromine precursor compound with an excess of a borane-dimethyl sulphide reagent. Then they heated the mixture to 100 °C for eight hours and isolated the product as a colourless solid. Finally, they used X-ray diffraction and nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy to check the atoms’ arrangement. The X-ray analysis revealed a perfect sandwich,

with a single osmium atom between two parallel, five-membered boron rings. But unlike the flat carbon rings in ferrocene, the boron rings used bridging hydrogen atoms between the boron atoms. These bridges redirected the ring’s electron orbitals towards the metal, creating a bond even stronger than the one in ferrocene. This could pave the way for new catalysts that are stable at much higher temperatures.

According to the paper, the discovery establishes that the sandwich architecture is not exclusive to carbon-based organic chemistry. “With the renaissance in the 2D chemistry of boron during the last decade, the possibility of metal sandwiched/intercalated bilayers and multilayers will be a reality soon,” Eluvathingal D. Jemmis, IISc chemistry professor and one of the corresponding authors, said.

## SNAPSHOTS



### Older dawn of horse-riding could have changed Eurasia

Scientists have challenged the claim that horse riding began after 2100 BC. They have reported archaeological evidence showing humans rode horses at least 1,000 years prior after analysing three early horse populations in Eurasia. Those at the Botai site indicated horse use by 3500 BC; skeletons of Yamnaya individuals in 3200-2600 BC revealed physical changes due to habitual riding. Early riding allowed these people to manage large herds and migrate vast distances, reshaping Eurasia’s genetic map.



### More selective breeding can help pugs breathe easier

Researchers examined data from over 4,000 bulldogs, French bulldogs, and pugs to analyse brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome, a disorder afflicting flat-faced dogs. They found a genetic link between nostril shape and overall breathing quality and that respiratory function is moderately heritable, meaning careful, selective breeding can improve dogs’ health. The authors also recommended breeders use the Respiratory Function Grading Scheme to identify healthier parents and to pick traits over appearance.



### Humans’ mercury footprint was evident millennia ago

A Greenland ice core has revealed a 12,000-year record of mercury deposits. Scientists found human impact began earlier than believed. The core showed levels started rising in the Bronze Age due to mining in Eurasia. Accumulation further intensified in the 13th century and exploded in the industrial era. The findings suggest humans have disrupted the mercury cycle for two millennia and that current models are wrong to focus on the last five centuries.

# Constant mechanical force may be why heart cancer is so rare

With every contraction, heart muscles generate compressive forces that cells must withstand; for cancer cells, this creates a hostile environment that limits their ability to multiply, new research has found

Anirban Mukhopadhyay

The human heart beats more than 1 lakh times a day, pushing blood through the body. Every second, it encounters circulating cells, including cancer cells that travel through the bloodstream. Yet tumours of the heart are strikingly rare.

For decades, explanations based on genetics, immune surveillance, and the biology of heart cells have not cracked this puzzle. New research in *Science* has now suggested that the force of each heartbeat may itself limit the growth of cancer cells in the organ.

“Patients on heart-assist devices showed signs that their heart cells could start dividing again,” Giulio Ciucci, a postdoctoral researcher at the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Trieste, Italy, and co-author of the study, said about the study’s origin.

The researchers introduced cancer-causing mutations across multiple organs in mice, expecting tumours throughout the body. Tumours formed in several tissues but not in the heart. Then, the team surgically implanted a second heart into another part of the body and connected it to blood vessels so it remained alive and beating, but no longer pumped blood through its left ventricle under normal mechanical load. This allowed it to receive blood without experiencing the forces generated by each heartbeat. In these ‘un-

## Beaten back

Forces generated by a beating organ can alter gene activity in cancer cells

- The human heart is rarely affected by cancer despite being exposed to circulating tumor cells
- New research suggests that the physical force of every heartbeat directly limits the growth of cancer cells
- Experiments on mice showed that cancer cells multiplied rapidly when the heart stopped beating its normal load
- Mechanical stress also reshapes chromatin structure in the nucleus to activate genes that restrain cancer cell division
- Physical forces reach the nucleus through the internal cytoskeleton to influence how DNA is organised and used
- Researchers hope to identify specific physical signals that lead to new treatments for other cancer types

The human heart beats more than 1 lakh times a day, pushing blood through the body under constant physical strain. ROBINA WEERMEIJER



loaded’ hearts, cancer cells that had struggled to grow began to expand rapidly, in some cases occupying large portions of the tissue. They used lab-grown heart tissues made from living cells arranged into small, beating strips. These could be constrained to either contract or remain relaxed. Again, reducing mechanical activity allowed cancer cells to proliferate more easily, reinforcing the pattern.

With every contraction, heart muscles generate compressive forces that cells must withstand. This could create a hostile environment for cancer cells that limits their ability to multiply. That is, the heart’s constant motion of circulating blood incidentally also creates physical conditions unfavourable for cancer to grow. The effect was striking

because it seemed to extend into the cell’s nucleus. Chromatin is the name for DNA inside the cell, in its ‘packaged’ form. Some parts are tightly packed while others are more open, making the genes in those regions easier to activate. The researchers found that mechanical stress changed which parts of the DNA became easier for the cell to access. In beating heart tissue, regions linked to slowing or restraining cell division became more accessible, while signs of active proliferation declined. These changes suggested that mechanical force shifted cancer cells away from rapid growth.

To understand how, the researchers investigated how mechanical forces might propagate inside the cell. Their experiments pointed to a pathway in-

volving the cytoskeleton – the cell’s internal support structure – and connecting proteins that link the cytoskeleton to the nucleus. The findings suggested stress from the heart could reach the nucleus through these physical connections, influencing how DNA is organised and used.

This idea is now new – but how cells sense and process these forces remains unclear, per Jan Lammerding, professor of biomedical engineering at Cornell University.

“Several previous studies have shown that the mechanical environment can lead to changes in chromatin organisation inside the nucleus, which then influence gene expression and cell fate,” he said. “It’s still uncertain whether the nucleus detects mechanical stress directly, or whether signals

are first picked up elsewhere in the cell and then relayed inward.”

The new study provides evidence that forces generated by a beating organ can indeed alter chromatin organisation and gene activity in cancer cells through physical connections in the cell.

If mechanical forces can influence gene activity in heart tissue, similar effects could be at play in other organs where cells are constantly stretched, compressed or exposed to physical strain, Dr. Ciucci said. Mechanical signals generated by blood flow are already known to guide how heart and blood vessel cells grow and function, C.C. Kartha, ex-professor of eminence at the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Thiruvananthapuram, said. These signals travel through molecular pathways that connect the cell surface to the nucleus.

What the “significant and stimulating” observations from this study show, he said, is that some of these pathways may also act to suppress cancer cell growth in the heart, helping explain why tumours rarely take hold there.

But he cautioned that the picture is not straightforward. In other settings, mechanical cues from the tumour environment can promote cancer progression and metastasis: “It would be important to identify which specific physical signals lead to these different outcomes.” (Anirban Mukhopadhyay is a geneticist by training and science communicator from New Delhi)

## Focused ultrasound offers new ways to treat eye disease



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. Balasubramanian

A normal human hears sound in the frequency range 20 hertz (Hz) to 20 kilohertz, and the normal loudness, measured in decibels (dB), is between 30 and 70 db. Higher volumes, e.g. 85 dB and above, can lead to hearing damage. Ultrasound is defined as sound frequencies far beyond the audible range, and is expressed in kilohertz (kHz) or megahertz (MHz).

Regardless of its intensity, ultrasound is inaudible to the human ear. Ultrasound’s very short wavelength allows it to travel through biological tissues. It is also propagated as a mechanical wave, where

one molecule pushes against the next, and therefore it travels at a faster speed in stiff and incompressible tissues such as bone, but is slower in tissues such as fat. This property is used to generate ultrasound ‘images’ of human fetuses. (Ultrasound is much safer than X-rays, whose ionising effects can damage DNA.)

At a low intensity, low frequency ultrasound (200-700 kHz) allows the modulation of neural activities in mouse brains. W.J. Tyler et al. of Arizona State University showed this in 2008. Similarly, M. Menz et al. pointed out in 2013 that neural stimulation in the retina of a test amphibian (salamander) occurred when ultrasound of 43 MHz was applied (*Journal of Neuroscience*, 33, 4550). At such a high frequency, constant pressure is applied on the surface of the



Scientists are attempting to restore vision using ultrasound when the optic nerve is impaired. Representative image. UNSPLASH

retinal tissue, which results in the activation of the retinal ganglion cells that send signals to the brain.

This phenomenon recently sparked interest in the potential of ultrasound stimulation and sonogenetics to restore vision (Jie Ji et al.; *Neural Regen. Res.* 20: 350). Sonogenetics makes use of the non-invasive nature of ultrasound to modulate the activity of small groups of neurons in living

organisms. Genetic engineering is first used to deliver a gene that makes a mechanosensitive protein in a neuron’s cell membrane. The neurons can then be activated on demand by ultrasound waves.

The eye, in particular, is easily accessible to ultrasound and the lens, cornea, retina, and the vitreous humour are easily studied using ultrasound.

Of particular interest are attempts to restore vision when the optic nerve is impaired. This happens in degenerative conditions such as glaucoma and the ensuing optic neuropathy, and infectious diseases that affect the brain (e.g. meningitis). In these conditions, ultrasound stimulation of the visual cortex in the brain can lead to some restoration of vision (Chen Gong et al., *Bioengineering* 10:577, 2023).

High-intensity focused ultrasound waves have other therapeutic uses, too. For example, in cancer treatment, precision focusing on a tumour can cause the temperature in these cells to rise rapidly to 65-85 °C, effectively killing these cells while leaving the surrounding tissue unharmed.

All these studies have used animals as models. Has anyone actually used

sound waves to treat retinal disorders in human patients? The answer is yes. In 2025, Wang et al. from Chongqing Medical University in China did so with 16 glaucoma patients, using ultrasound, and with success. Further, an agency called Focused Ultrasound Foundation from Charlottesville, Virginia, in the U.S., has also developed a device called ‘Eye Tech Care’ that the Foundation has claimed can focus ultrasound on the ciliary body, decreasing the intraocular pressure and thus treating glaucoma. This technology, however, needs to be cleared by the U.S. National Health Agency.

(The author thanks Dr. Srinivasu Karri of the Hormel Institute, Minnesota, USA, for access to several references)

dbala@lvpei.org



## Question Corner

### Clouds of ash

How do volcanoes affect the earth’s atmosphere?

Volcanoes change the earth’s atmosphere by releasing gases and particles in large quantities. When a volcano erupts, it blasts sulphur dioxide high into the sky. Since aerosols scatter sunlight, a powerful eruption can end up cooling the earth’s surface for many years. Large eruptions also spew clouds of ash and dust that block sunlight around the eruption site, while most of the ash falls back down in a few weeks. Eruptions also release carbon dioxide. While modern human activity produces much more

carbon dioxide than volcanoes, eruptions throughout history have helped drive long-term warming trends. They also emit compounds that can create acid rain or damage the protective ozone layer. Taken together, volcanic eruptions have influenced the earth’s climate. Recently, researchers used satellites to study the 2022 Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha’apai eruption. They found the volcano released quantities of methane into the stratosphere, where volcanic ash triggered chemical reactions that turned the methane into formaldehyde.

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

## Why has Air India cut international flight operations?

Why has it been so severely impacted?  
Which routes have been affected? How are other international airlines coping?

**Jagriti Chandra**

**The story so far:**

Last week, Air India announced sweeping international schedule cuts between June and August, including a nearly 40% reduction in North America operations and significant cuts across SAARC and Southeast Asia.

**Which international routes have been affected?**

According to airline sources, a total of 145 weekly flights across North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, SAARC, and the Far East have been removed, resulting in an overall 27% reduction in international flight operations.

In North America, Air India's most critical international market, weekly flights will be reduced from 51 to 33, which is a 39% decline. Services on routes such as Delhi-Chicago, Delhi-Newark and Mumbai-New York are being temporarily suspended, although the airline has added four extra Mumbai-Newark flights, taking that route to seven weekly services.

In Europe, schedule changes have been made on routes to Paris, Copenhagen, Milan, Vienna, Zurich, and Rome where altogether 34% of flights have been withdrawn. But services to London, Manchester, and Amsterdam remain unaffected.

The impact of the war in West Asia has extended well beyond westbound routes, with services to Southeast Asia, SAARC, and the Far East seeing the sharpest reductions.

About 57% of flights to places including Kathmandu, Dhaka, Colombo, Bangkok, Shanghai, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, and Ho Chi Minh City have been withdrawn. Services to Singapore have also been cut considerably, with 21 weekly flights connecting Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai to the country being withdrawn.

Further east, Delhi-Melbourne and Delhi-Sydney flights have reduced from seven to four flights per week.

**What are the reasons for these cuts?**

The reductions in flight capacity are a direct fallout of the West Asia conflict, which has forced airlines operating between Asia and Europe to avoid the conflict-hit airspace for safety reasons. As a result, Air India has been forced to adopt longer flight paths, increasing travel times to North America by nearly five to six hours. The revised routes now include refuelling stops in Vienna and Copenhagen.

For Indian carriers, the disruption has been compounded by Pakistan's ban on the use of its airspace by Indian airlines since Operation Sindoor in April 2025. This puts them at a clear disadvantage compared to European peers such as Lufthansa.

**Have other airlines been affected?**

The sharp reduction in international flights is not limited to Air India alone. IndiGo saw a 21% reduction in its international flights in April, while carriers such as SpiceJet, Akasa Air, and Air India Express recorded cuts of more than 50%, albeit on a much smaller international network base. However, Air India has borne the biggest brunt of the disruption as it remains the only Indian carrier operating flights to North America and dominates Indian operations across several European destinations, where IndiGo is still a relatively new entrant.

By April, jet fuel prices had already risen by 130% amid escalating tensions in the Gulf, creating another major challenge for airlines, where fuel accounts for nearly 40% of operating costs. And while airlines have imposed fuel surcharges and raised fares to offset rising costs, they are increasingly concerned about the point at which higher ticket prices could begin to deter passengers from travelling.

The network rationalisation is therefore an attempt by the Air India Group to stem mounting losses as operational pressures intensify. Air India posted a loss of ₹26,700 crore in FY2025-26 amid multiple headwinds, including the Pakistan airspace ban and travellers avoiding the airline in the aftermath of the crash in Ahmedabad on June 12 last year.

**What are the global trends?**

The regional conflict has hit the Gulf carriers the worst, with the International Air Transport Association reporting a 61% decline in international passenger traffic carried by them in March. Beyond the Gulf, the Lufthansa Group cancelled 20,000 short-haul flights operated by its subsidiary, Lufthansa CityLine, until October to save jet fuel while also moving to consolidate operations and improve the efficiency of its long-haul connections.

Qantas has announced a 5% reduction in domestic capacity and a 2% cut in international flights in response to soaring jet fuel prices. While it has added capacity on select Europe routes, it has also scaled back elsewhere, including withdrawing its Bengaluru-Sydney service.

## Why is the Prime Minister advocating austerity?

What are the seven set of suggestions that Prime Minister Narendra Modi made for the public?  
How has the war in West Asia impacted various sectors in India and how will these cutbacks help?  
What measures is the government taking?

**T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan**

**The story so far:**

Over the past week, a series of nudges, policy changes, and public messages have sought to influence the behaviour of Indian consumers, companies, and farmers. At the heart of this push is an effort to reduce India's imports of oil and petroleum products, gold, and fertilizers, and involve everyone from the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues to industry leaders and associations.

**What was the Prime Minister's message?**

On May 10, during a speech in Secunderabad, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid out a seven-fold set of suggestions for the Indian public to help the economy and the government's finances weather the storm created by the war in West Asia.

The Prime Minister asked Indians to prioritise working from home; reduce petrol and diesel usage by using public transport and electric vehicles; reduce the use of cooking oil; stop buying gold for at least a year; buy Indian-made products rather than foreign ones; pause foreign travel; and adopt natural fertilizers instead of using imported chemical ones.

The Opposition, along with several other commentators, questioned the timing of his appeals, coming as they did right after the conclusion of Assembly elections in some key States. Neither the political leadership nor the bureaucracy mentioned any impending problems in the run-up to the elections. The critics point out that in fact, the Prime Minister and several of his Cabinet colleagues flew across the country to campaign in Tamil Nadu, Kerala,



A display board showing the rates of gold and silver in a jewellery showroom in Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu, on May 14. R. VENGADESH

India's Current Account Deficit is set to grow to about 2.5% of the GDP in this financial year, from 1.4% in the quarter ended December 2025

West Bengal, and Assam, where they also organised several road shows. These questions relate more to the timing of the message than to whether remedial action is needed at all.

**Why are these cutbacks needed?**

It is now well established that the war in West Asia has created a global energy crisis. One of the aspects of this crisis is that the prices of oil and gas have shot up. A year ago, the price of Brent Crude – one of the benchmarks for oil – stood at \$65 a barrel; it is now around \$110.

India imports 85-90% of its oil requirement. This means that any time the price of oil goes up internationally, the country's import bill increases. Oil alone makes up about 17% of India's total goods import basket. That is why three out of Mr. Modi's seven suggestions were aimed at reducing fuel usage and oil imports.

The war has also led to an increase in the price of gold as investors flock to it as a 'safe haven' asset in times of uncertainty. Indians have a cultural affinity for the yellow metal that defies any price movement. While the price of gold increased by 45-60% over the last year, the volume of India's gold imports fell only about 5% in the same period. The value of these imports increased 24%. In other words, the higher price only impacted the demand for gold at the margins; the bulk of purchases has continued.

A third major trend is the depreciation of the rupee. The currency breached the ₹96-to-a-dollar mark on May 15 before closing a little higher at ₹95.96. A year ago, the currency was trading at about ₹85 to a dollar. Throughout this period, the Reserve Bank of India has been stepping in to stabilise the fall of the rupee and reduce volatility, mainly by selling the dollars in its reserves and absorbing rupees in the market. As a result, the Reserve Bank of India's foreign exchange reserves fell to \$552.4 billion as of May 8, 2026, from \$581.4 billion a year earlier – a decline of about \$29 billion.

Foreign Institutional Investors have been pulling out large sums from Indian markets. When they do this, they sell in rupees and are repatriated in dollars, creating another significant channel of dollar outflows.

Taken together, all this means that India's Current Account Deficit (CAD) – the amount by which its imports of goods and services exceed exports – is set to grow to about 2.5% of the GDP in this financial year from 1.4% as recently as the quarter ended December 2025.

A sustained high CAD has several serious knock-on effects for the economy and has led to several crises for the Indian government since Independence. It is therefore clear why the government is seeking to act now to prevent

such an outcome.

**Has the government also taken some measures?**

Over the last week, the government has taken several measures to support these efforts. Effective from May 13, it doubled the effective tax to be paid on the import of gold and silver to a total of 18.4% from the previous 9.2%. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade has also tightened the conditions under which gems and jewellery exporters can import gold duty-free. On May 16, the government also restricted the import of silver.

The prices of petrol and diesel were hiked on May 15 by ₹3 a litre each, in an attempt to reduce demand. The price of CNG was increased by ₹2 per kg. A rough calculation by *The Hindu* shows that this would earn oil marketing companies an additional ₹4,400 crore per month. However, this is not much when compared to the loss they are currently bearing, which the government said amounts to about ₹1,000 crore a day on petrol, diesel and LPG. This means further fuel price hikes could be imminent.

Notably, in a rare occurrence, Mr. Modi himself took to social media to deny a news report that the government was considering imposing a temporary cess on foreign travel.

Mr. Modi and several of his Cabinet ministers have also reduced the sizes of their convoys.

**Will these steps work?**

Several of the measures called for by the Prime Minister and implemented by the government might work at the margins, but some might lead to negative consequences as well. For instance, higher fuel prices may deter unnecessary travel, but unless offices implement a 'work from home' policy again, employees will have no option but to travel to work and bear the higher cost. Overall, higher fuel costs are inflationary in nature. Further, the diesel and CNG price hike is likely to make public transport costlier.

History has shown that higher gold prices do not necessarily deter purchases and can, in fact, lead to an increase in smuggling, as happened in 2013 when import duties were raised.

Asking farmers to switch to natural fertilizers and hold off on buying chemical ones is a workable medium-term strategy, but would be disruptive in the short term. Agricultural output, already expected to be under strain due to a below-normal monsoon and stronger El Nino this year, will suffer further.

An analysis by *The Hindu* has also shown that the growth in foreign spending by Indians is not on travel, which is contracting, but on foreign equity, debt, and immovable assets.

Short of draconian measures, there are few short-term measures that will effectively solve the CAD issue. Various governments have struggled to make India more competitive on exports. Unless that changes, and dollar inflows rise substantially, such crises are likely to recur.

## Why has RSS called for dialogue with Pakistan?

What did RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale say about ties with Pakistan and what reactions did his remarks trigger in India and Pakistan? Can his statement be read as reflecting government policy?  
What has the RSS's stance on talks with Pakistan been?

**Nistula Hebbar**

**The story so far:**

Last week, Dattatreya Hosabale, the second in command in the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS), the ideological mothership of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), said in an interview to news agency Press Trust of India (PTI) that India should persist with attempts at a dialogue with Pakistan. His statement triggered reactions from Pakistan, leaders of political parties in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), India's former Chief of Army Staff, and from the Opposition.

**Why have Mr. Hosabale's remarks made news?**

There have been a lot of comments on not just the substance of the remarks, but also their timing, coming as they do close on the heels of the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, which followed the 2025 terror attack in Pahalgam in J&K that left 16 people dead. The Narendra-Modi led National Democratic Alliance government has consistently held that there can be no dialogue as long as Pakistan-backed terror groups continue to carry out attacks in India. In the light of the filial relationship between the RSS and the BJP, Mr. Hosabale's views have therefore raised queries as to whether the Union



RSS leader Dattatreya Hosabale speaking to PTI in New Delhi. PTI

RSS office bearers maintain that the context of Hosabale's remarks had more to do with the organisation's long-held beliefs than with any immediate preoccupation with dialogue and discourse

government was being provided political cover to change its stance on talks with Pakistan.

**What has been the RSS's record with regard to talks with Pakistan?**

RSS office bearers maintain that the context of Mr. Hosabale's remarks had more to do with the organisation's long-held beliefs than with any immediate preoccupation with dialogue and discourse. They point out that Mr. Hosabale's remarks, taken in full, made it clear that while there was no trust in Pakistan's political and military leadership, people-to-people contact remains the most crucial aspect of engagement, in keeping with the RSS's own ideas about civil society engagement. The remarks are therefore not comments on what the government should or should not do, but relate instead to what the RSS has been saying for a while.

**What has the RSS said about relations with Pakistan in the past?**

In April 1964, Deendayal Upadhyaya and Ram Manohar Lohia issued a joint statement on relations with Pakistan. At the time, the latter, while canvassing support from Opposition parties for an anti-Congress front, had reached out to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the political wing of the RSS and the precursor to the BJP.

Both Lohia and Upadhyaya agreed that the division between India and Pakistan was historically proven to be based on artificial grounds (reflected in the RSS's conception of an Akhand Bharat or undivided Indian subcontinent) and the governments of the two countries always indulged in *tooti baatchheet* (piecemeal dialogue) and *toota vichar* (piecemeal thinking) instead of establishing a comprehensive framework for talks. The concept of Akhand Bharat as a loose Hind-Pak Mahasangh also finds mention in the statement.

This may be too far in the past. But even more recently, the RSS, and indeed Mr. Hosabale himself, has advocated for dialogue. In 2015, at the conclusion of an RSS-led Samanvay Baithak or coordination meeting with all its frontal organisations, Mr. Hosabale had, in an answer to a question, said: "India is part of SAARC and has family-like cultural relations with neighbouring

countries, be it Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan or Bangladesh. It was one body which was divided to form Pakistan and Bangladesh. It is natural that people living there are part of the same family. Sometimes relations [go bad], like it happens between brothers and so we also discussed how we can improve our relations with those who are historically and geographically attached to us."

Similar sentiments were expressed in 2017 as well, after another joint meeting between the BJP and the RSS.

**What were the reactions to Mr. Hosabale's recent comments?**

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs welcomed the remarks, calling them a "positive development" and hoping that "sanity will prevail in India". In J&K, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said that he is "glad that somebody is now thinking that war is not an option." Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti said "talks are the only headway" to address the issues between the two countries. India's former Chief of Army Staff, General Manoj Naravane (retd.), also welcomed the statement as a positive sign for engagement between the two countries, especially at a delicate time in bilateral relations. The Congress criticised the remarks, with MP Manish Tewari asking: What has "materially changed since the Baisaran [Pahalgam] massacre?"

**Can Mr. Hosabale's statement be extrapolated to reflect government policy?**

The answer is complicated. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a product of the Sangh Parivar and has publicly acknowledged this fact. His government has been one of the most intensely ideological in India's history, fulfilling some of the core issues on the RSS agenda including the reading down of Article 370 and the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

With regard to the relationship with Pakistan, matters stray into a territory that is more dynamic, and affected by both internal and external events. The RSS's views have been quite consistent for a long time; therefore, governmental intervention, which also depends on immediate circumstances, may not usually follow the same trajectory. What the comments suggest is that whenever or if ever Mr. Modi seeks to initiate dialogue with Pakistan, he will have political cover from the ideological parent of the BJP.

# PROFILES

## The 'Nehruvian' revivalist

**V.D. Satheesan**

A self-described supporter of Nehruvian socialism, the Congress leader who steered the party-led alliance, out of power for a decade, to an emphatic victory over the Left Democratic Front in Kerala is now set to take the reins of the State

**K.S. Sudhi**

A few months before the Assembly polls, V.D. Satheesan, the then Opposition Leader of the Kerala Legislative Assembly, created a political flutter by declaring that he would opt for political exile if he failed to bring the party back to power. The announcement was greeted with usual cynicism.

Many political observers even dismissed it as an astute move of a canny politician to energise the party and its rank and file for the crucial election. A few months after the declaration, Mr. Satheesan is set to assume office as Kerala Chief Minister, after leading the Congress-led alliance to victory over the Left Democratic Front (LDF) and outmanoeuvring two senior colleagues in the race for the top post.

The Congress, after being out of power for a decade, and Mr. Satheesan could ill-afford a defeat in the election as it would have spelt doom for both the organisation and himself, especially at a time when the national leadership of the Congress had reposed much faith in him to revive its fortunes in the State. Five years ago, the party appointed him as the Leader of the Opposition, overlooking the claims of Ramesh Chennithala, his one-time leader.

Mr. Satheesan, who has been consistently representing the Paravur Assembly constituency in Ernakulam district for six terms, began his political career with a defeat in his debut contest in 1996 when he lost to P. Raju of the CPI.

The young lawyer of the Kerala High Court refused to leave the constituency despite losing the election. The next five years saw Mr. Satheesan carefully nurturing his relationship with the voters of the constituency, who presented him with his first electoral victory in 2001. Mr. Satheesan never had to look back.

A post-graduate in Law and Social Work, Mr. Satheesan learned the early lessons of social and political engineering under the tutelage of

former Minister G. Karthikeyan, whom he reveres as his guide and philosopher and fondly called GK. Mr. Satheesan remembers that it was GK who bargained with the party leadership to field him as a candidate in Paravur Assembly Constituency.

Mr. Satheesan was often seen as a loner in the party. However, he never shied away from speaking his mind. His candid approach won him more foes than friends in the organisation, which was then divided into two opposing camps, the 'I' faction led by former Chief Minister K. Karunakaran and the 'A' group, the loyalists of another former Chief Minister and Union Minister A.K. Antony. Though Mr. Satheesan was identified with the 'I' faction during his early years of political career, he quickly moved away from the factions to assert his independent identity.

### Pressure group

While being a junior Opposition legislator in the State Assembly, he joined hands with younger colleagues to form a pressure group, the Green MLAs, who espoused the cause of environmental protection. The youngsters highlighted several environmental concerns of the State, which caught the attention of Kerala, an environmentally sensitive State.

The five years of his political life as the Leader of the Opposition saw the emergence of an aggressive leader, who confronted the CPI(M) on the floor of the House. Reinventing the battle-weary organisation and its disillusioned cadres following two back-to-back electoral defeats was no easy task. A few prominent leaders left the organisation for the BJP after declaring that the days of the party were numbered in the State.

Several social groups, especially the minority communities, that once stood with the Congress had deserted the party. The United Democratic Front (UDF) was in shambles. The Kerala Congress (Mani), one of the founding members of the alliance, had shifted its allegiance to the LDF. Prominent Hindu social and caste organisations, the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

Yogam (SNDP) and the Nair Service Society (NSS), had publicly castigated him for his anti-communal stance.

Yet, Mr. Satheesan never gave up. Losses and defeats never doused his fighting spirit. He was often heard making light of the losses he encountered in his early political life including the president's posts of the Kerala Students Union, the Indian Youth Congress and the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. He watched from the sidelines the ascent of his juniors to the leadership roles both in the organisation and the government.

Though it was widely expected that Mr. Satheesan, who outsmarted many of his colleagues in the Opposition benches, would join the 2011 Oommen Chandy government, luck didn't favour him.

Inspired by his calls for public resistance against the reported wrong policies of the 2021 LDF government, the Congress workers stormed the streets, women and youth activists defied water cannons and baton charges, threw themselves in front of the cavalcade of the Chief Minister and the State Ministers and staged black flag protests during the last five years

of the LDF government.

Mr. Satheesan made good use of his tenure to bolster the electoral alliance with the tagline, Team UDF. The efforts proved useful at the most needed time, the selection of the Chief Minister, as all the front partners supported his claim. The political leader, who never refrained from publicly admonishing the erring party functionaries, also invested heavily in the young brigade of the party, which eventually saw at least 30 young leaders make their political debut in the 16th Legislative Assembly. The elections witnessed the Congress-led UDF winning 102 seats in the 140-member legislative Assembly and thus ending its political wilderness in the bipolar polity of the State. The party nearly tripled its strength in the house as its 63 candidates got elected.

### Ideological framework

Mr. Satheesan also provided an ideological framework to his fight against the Left parties by claiming that the Congress was the true leftist organisation as the Left reportedly watered down its policies.

"We are the Nehruvian Left," he once asserted. The move came at a time when the CPI(M) was facing increasing instances of organisational schisms. The canny politician in Mr. Satheesan extended his support to the rebels, which saw two CPI(M) rebel leaders from Kannur and a former Minister from Alappuzha district win their seats. Several Congress candidates emerged victorious in constituencies which were once considered the Left citadels.

An avid reader of both fiction and non-fiction, Mr. Satheesan often found time for literary and political conversations. Mr. Satheesan steps into the organisational vacuum created by the deaths of popular Congress leaders such as Karunakaran and Oommen Chandy, and the retreat from active politics of A.K. Antony - leaders who had endeared themselves to the masses with ease. And he carved out a niche for himself in the faction-ridden State unit of the party without identifying himself with any group or creating a fan base for himself.

### THE GIST

A post-graduate in Law and Social Work, V.D. Satheesan learned the early lessons of social and political engineering under the tutelage of former Minister G. Karthikeyan

Though Satheesan was identified with the 'I' faction of the Congress during his early years of political career, he quickly moved away from the factions to assert his independent identity

Satheesan, who has been consistently representing the Paravur Assembly constituency in Ernakulam district for six terms, began his political career with a defeat in his debut contest in 1996

## From loyalist to rebel

**S.P. Velumani**

Once seen as Edappadi Palaniswamy's trusted lieutenant, the AIADMK legislator and former Minister is now leading a revolt within the party following its electoral defeat

**T. Ramakrishnan**

In India's electoral politics, it is not uncommon for trusted lieutenants to turn against their mentors. A case in point is 57-year-old S.P. Velumani, Tamil Nadu's former Local Administration Minister in the AIADMK government, who is now leading colleagues against the party's general secretary and former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami.

In the formative years of Mr. Velumani's career, the goodwill he reportedly enjoyed from V.K. Sasikala, the confidante of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, and Ravanan, a relative of Ms. Sasikala who oversaw party affairs in the western region, helped him secure a political breakthrough. When Jayalalithaa returned as Chief Minister in May 2011, he was inducted into the Cabinet.

Mr. Velumani's exit from the Cabinet in January 2012 almost coincided with the arrest of Ravanan by the Coimbatore Rural Police in connection with a criminal case. He was reinducted into Jayalalithaa's Cabinet in May 2014, and entrusted with key portfolios, including Local Administration and Rural Development, positions he held for seven years at a stretch.

The high point of his career came after Mr. Palaniswami became Chief Minister in February 2017. In



ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R. KUMAR

fact, after the Supreme Court upheld Ms. Sasikala's conviction in a disproportionate assets case involving Jayalalithaa, Mr. Velumani was among those who reportedly persuaded Ms. Sasikala to choose Mr. Palaniswami for the top post. Her original choice, K.A. Sengottaiyan, now a Minister in the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam government, had declined to take up the job.

### Driving force

Once Ms. Sasikala began serving her prison term in Bengaluru, Mr. Velumani quickly emerged as one of the driving forces behind the Palaniswami camp. Their roots in Tamil Nadu's western belt and affiliation to the Kongu Vellala Gounder community complemented the two leaders politically. Soon, Mr. Velumani came to be called the 'Man Friday' of Mr. Palaniswami, who, in turn, allowed greater space to the former to operate politically in the region. Over time, Mr. Velumani earned the sobriquet 'Coimbatore's

Chief Minister'. From 2018 onwards, allegations were made by anti-corruption activists and his political adversaries that his relatives and aides secured high-value contracts awarded by local bodies. After the DMK formed the government in May 2021, the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, which conducted searches at 42 properties in Coimbatore district, named him as an accused in an additional affidavit filed before the Madras High Court last year. The case pertains to alleged irregularities in the award of contracts by the Greater Chennai and Coimbatore Corporations.

Mr. Velumani has remained a popular figure in his constituency, owing to the network he built and the way he cultivated support among electors in Thondamuthur. However, this time, he returned to the Assembly with a margin of less than 15,000 votes - a sharp decline from his earlier winning margins of around 40,000 to 60,000 votes.

Talks of a rift between the former Minister and his "benefactor" began circulating immediately after the party's debacle at the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Mr. Velumani had said his party would have won 35 to 40 seats in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry if it had faced the electorate in an alliance with the BJP.

In the run-up to the Assembly elections, the general expectation was that the AIADMK would not return to power but do well in the western belt. But the party's performance in the region proved disastrous. In Coimbatore district, Mr. Velumani was the only AIADMK candidate to win, in sharp contrast to the previous election when the party and its ally, the BJP, secured all 10 seats. It was in these circumstances that Mr. Velumani, along with party colleagues, including former Law Minister C.Ve. Shanmugam, raised the banner of revolt against Mr. Palaniswami and supported the TVK government.

Apparently, their game plan did not work, as the rebels could muster the support of only 25 legislators out of the AIADMK's 47, falling short of the required 32. Of late, Mr. Velumani has adopted a more conciliatory tone, stating that Mr. Palaniswami is the general secretary. Whether Mr. Velumani can bounce back or fade into oblivion remains to be seen.

## Test in turmoil

**NEET-UG**

Following a question-paper leak, this year's medical entrance exam, taken by over 22 lakh students, has been cancelled and rescheduled

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**

On May 12, the National Testing Agency (NTA), acting on inputs from central and law-enforcement agencies about a possible paper leak and examination irregularities in the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test - Undergraduate (NEET-UG), 2026, cancelled the entrance exam.

This isn't the first time that the exam or the agency conducting it has come under scrutiny over allegations of malpractice. However, this is the first time the annual, all-India medical entrance examination, conducted for admission to over 10 medical courses, has been cancelled. A re-test has now been scheduled for June 21.

Through this exam, students compete for over 2.8 lakh seats for bachelor courses in dental surgery, veterinary science and animal husbandry, nursing, physiotherapy and audiology and speech-language pathology, among others. MBBS remains the most sought-after course, with around 1.29 lakh seats available. Admission to top government medical colleges typically requires a score of 650-720 marks.

The NEET-UG question paper consists of 180 compulsory questions with +4 marks awarded for every correct answer and -1 mark for every incorrect answer. NEET-UG is con-



ANI

ducted in 13 languages and is an objective-type (multiple-choice) examination where each question has four answer options. The exam contains MCQs from Physics, Chemistry, Botany, and Zoology.

This year, NEET-UG was held on May 3, with about 22.79 lakh candidates registering for the exam, of whom around 22.05 lakh appeared. The exam was conducted at 5,432 centres across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad.

Following the paper leak, confirmed by the Central Government, it has been alleged that about 120-140 questions in the leaked question paper matched those in the actual NEET-UG 2026 exam. NTA Director General Abhishek Singh said the exam "cannot be permitted to stand" and that the decision to cancel it was taken to preserve the transparency, fairness, and credibility of the process.

The idea of an all-India common medical entrance exam was first proposed by the Medical Council of In-

dia (MCI) in 2010. A decade later, the MCI was dissolved amid allegations of corruption and lack of transparency, and replaced by the National Medical Commission.

### Legal challenges

NEET, introduced to create a standardised, single admission test for medical institutions across India, was first conducted in 2013. The exam immediately faced legal challenges from several States and private colleges, prompting the Supreme Court to temporarily cancel it.

In 2016, the Supreme Court restored NEET, and since then it has been the mandatory entrance for admission to government, private, deemed, and central medical institutions, including the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

Besides the legal battles, NEET also faced allegations of language and syllabus disparities, paper leaks and grace-mark disputes in 2024. The K. Radhakrishnan committee, set up af-

ter the 2024 allegations, identified weak links in the system such as overdependence on outsourced staff and private centres, weak CCTV and surveillance systems, insecure transport and storage of question papers, and the risk of conducting a massive pen-and-paper exam for over 20 lakh students on a single day. It also recommended biometric verification, encrypted digital paper delivery and hybrid/online testing models.

Following the 2026 NEET-UG controversy, proposed changes for next year's exam include a likely shift from the offline Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) format to a Computer-Based Test (CBT) mode. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced on May 15 that the government plans major reforms to improve security and transparency.

The K. Radhakrishnan committee has also recommended that the NTA, established in 2017 by the Central Government as an autonomous testing organisation under the Ministry of Education, needs restructuring, along with tighter centre-level security for the exams it conducts. The NTA conducts several exams, including Joint Entrance Examination (Main), Common University Entrance Test, UGC - National Eligibility Test, and several recruitment and fellowship tests.

## BEIRUT

## Israel strikes southern Lebanon day after extension of ceasefire



Israel launched a series of air strikes on southern Lebanon on Saturday, despite the extension of the truce between the two countries. On Friday, the two countries agreed to extend a ceasefire, by another 45 days. Israel says it is targeting Hezbollah but the strikes were preceded by an evacuation warning. AFP

## RAMALLAH

## Israel killed man in West Bank camp, say Palestinian officials



Palestinian health officials said Israeli forces killed a man on Saturday in Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, while the military said troops fired as he tried to "infiltrate" the area. The Health Ministry in Ramallah identified the victim as 34-year-old Nour al-Din Kamal Hassan Fayyad. AFP

## BANGKOK

## A cargo train hits public bus at Bangkok rail crossing, killing eight



A train crashed into a public bus on Saturday in Thailand's capital, Bangkok, killing at least eight persons. Thai news reported the crash happened in the late afternoon near an airport railway station in the central area. The city's emergency services said at least eight persons were killed and over 20 others were injured. AP

## DHAKA

## Bangladesh anti-terrorism force arrests ex-soldier after attack plot



Bangladesh anti-terrorism police are questioning an ex-soldier, arrested after a manhunt that began last month following warnings of attacks targeting airports, Parliament and places of worship, police said on Saturday. The police said 23-year-old Mohammad Rahed Hossain Mahed was linked to a radical Islamist group. AFP

# Putin to visit China on May 19, hot on heels of Trump's trip to Beijing

Putin and Xi will work to 'further strengthen the comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation'; the visit follows Trump's China trip, which did not resolve tensions over Ukraine or Iran; China has not condemned Russian invasion

Agence France-Presse  
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin will travel to China on May 19 for a two-day visit, hot on the heels of U.S. President Donald Trump's trip to Beijing, the Kremlin said on Saturday.

During the trip, the Russian leader will discuss with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping how to "further strengthen the comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation" between Moscow and Beijing, according to a Kremlin statement.

Mr. Putin and Mr. Xi will "exchange views on key in-



Close ties: Xi Jinping shakes hands with Vladimir Putin following their talks at the Kremlin, in Moscow in 2025. REUTERS

ternational and regional issues" and sign a joint declaration at the conclusion of their talks, it added.

As part of the visit, Mr. Putin is also scheduled to

discuss economic and trade cooperation with Chinese Premier Li Qiang.

The announcement of Mr. Putin's trip comes just after Mr. Trump wrapped

up on Friday the first visit to China by a U.S. President in nearly a decade, with the grand reception belying a roster of unresolved trade and geopolitical tensions, including over the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

Although Mr. Trump and Mr. Xi discussed the more than four-year-long conflict — as well as the U.S. leader's stalemated war with Iran — the Republican President took off from China without appearing to secure a breakthrough on either front.

Negotiations to end the fighting in Ukraine, brokered by the United States, have appeared stalled

since the beginning of the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran which broke out on February 28. Before Mr. Trump arrived in China, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked the U.S. leader to raise the matter of how to stop the conflict during talks with Mr. Xi.

Moscow has ruled out a ceasefire or comprehensive negotiations with Ukraine unless Kyiv caves to the Kremlin's maximalist demands.

While China has regularly called for talks to end the fighting, it has never condemned Russia for sending troops into Ukraine and presents itself as a neutral party.

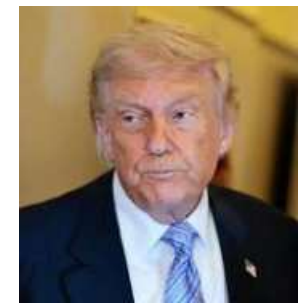
# IS leader killed in Nigeria in joint operation: Trump

Associated Press  
WASHINGTON

U.S. and Nigerian forces killed a leader of the Islamic State group in Nigeria in a mission carried out on Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump said.

Mr. Trump announced the joint operation in Africa's most populous country in a late-night social media post. He said Abu Bakr al-Mainuki was second-in-command of the Islamic State group globally and "thought he could hide in Africa, but little did he know we had sources who kept us informed on what he was doing".

Al-Mainuki was viewed as the key figure in IS organising and finance, and had been plotting attacks against the United States and its interests, according



Donald Trump

to an official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Nigerian President Bola Tinubu confirmed the operation and said Al-Mainuki was killed alongside "several of his lieutenants, during a strike on his compound in the Lake Chad Basin".

The joint operation is the latest by both countries since their new security partnership that kicked off last year after Mr. Trump

claimed Christians were being targeted in Nigeria's security crisis and threatened U.S. military intervention. Residents and security analysts have said Nigeria's security crisis affects both Christians, predominant in the south, and Muslims, who are the majority in the north.

According to the spokesperson for the Nigerian military task force that carried out the Friday operation, the mission was a "highly complex precision air-land operation" and was carried out during three hours of darkness early Saturday without any casualties or loss of assets.

The Friday night operation was the latest instance in a string of covert missions abroad that Mr. Trump has announced this year.

# Streeting 'will run to replace Starmer' as Prime Minister

Agence France-Presse  
LONDON

Wes Streeting, who resigned as U.K. Health Secretary this week, announced on Saturday he will run to replace Keir Starmer as Labour leader and Prime Minister, after the party suffered disastrous local election results.

Mr. Streeting quit the government on Thursday with a withering assessment of Mr. Starmer's leadership. The 43-year-old MP did not immediately trigger a leadership contest. Later that day, Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham unveiled a bid to become an MP which, if successful, would allow the



Wes Streeting

56-year-old to stand in that contest.

While still not announcing he has kickstarted the formal leadership challenge process, Mr. Streeting confirmed on Saturday he will vie to replace Mr. Starmer and become the centre-left Labour's new leader.

# 'European countries in talks with Tehran for Hormuz transit'

Agence France-Presse  
TEHRAN

Iranian state television said on Saturday that European countries were in talks with Tehran over transit for ships through the Strait of Hormuz.

"Following the passage of ships from East Asian countries, notably China, Japan and Pakistan, we received information today indicating that Europeans have also begun negotiations with the Revolutionary Guards navy" to get permission to pass, state television reported, without specifying which countries.

Iran has largely blocked shipping through the vital

strait since the outbreak of war with the United States and Israel on February 28. A fragile ceasefire has been in place since April 8.

Iran has in recent days allowed passage for dozens of ships including from China "after an agreement on Iran's strait management protocols," the Islamic Republic of Iran Guard Corps, the ideological arm of Iran's military, said in a statement.

On Saturday, Ebrahim Azizi, head of the Iranian parliament's national security commission, said Iran "has prepared a professional mechanism to manage traffic" through the strait, adding that it will be "unveiled soon".

# Pakistan is set to raise its IMF-backed defence Budget by nearly PKR 100 bn

Press Trust of India  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is expected to raise its defence Budget by about PKR 100 billion in the upcoming fiscal year as the government prepares its Budget under an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed reform programme that projects a sharp rise in revenues, according to a media report.

The Dawn newspaper, citing the IMF staff report issued after the completion of the third review of the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and the second review of the \$1.4 billion Resilience and Sustainability Facility (RSF), reported that defence expenditure for 2026-27 was estimated



More funding: Pakistani army soldiers sit in a vehicle as they patrol at D Chowk near the President's House in Islamabad. REUTERS

at Pakistani rupees (PKR) Rs 2.665 trillion, up from PKR 2.564 trillion this year.

The IMF projected Pakistan's total federal revenues for 2026-27 at PKR 17.144 trillion — that's more than PKR 2 trillion higher than the current fiscal year

and represents a 13.5% increase, the report said.

It said Pakistan had also committed to increasing the combined expenditure of the federal and provincial governments by 0.2% of GDP to a total of PKR 4.227 trillion, while digitis-

ing all federal and provincial government payments by June 2027.

As part of wider reforms linked to the IMF programme, the government will identify the 10 top corruption-prone institutions by the end of this year for detailed analysis and audit. The provincial anti-corruption agencies are also expected to be strengthened.

The government has also given an undertaking not to introduce new incentives for special economic zones, export processing zones, and special technology zones, while phasing out existing incentives by 2035 to create what the report described as a level playing field for all.

THE HINDU GROUP

# WHEN THE WORLD BRINGS UNCERTAINTY

# CONVERSATION BRINGS CLARITY

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One nation's military conflict sparks shortages in another. One government decision threatens the world's climate balance. One community's demand triggers unrest across regions.

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Taj West End, Bengaluru

**STRONG BACKING**

**Bethell is a world-class player: RCB bowling coach Salvi**



FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Jacob Bethell has proven himself on the world stage that he is a great batter. And in this format (T20), he is a world-class player. So, it doesn't matter what position he is batting in. He is such a mature player who adapts himself. So, it (poor form) is not a problem for us — Omkar Salvi, Royal Challengers Bengaluru bowling coach.

**DIFFERENT APPROACH**

**Kings' physio Leipus turns up for pre-match media interaction**



R.V. MOORTHY

Punjab Kings sent out head of sports science Andrew Leipus for the pre-match press meet ahead of its tie against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Despite limited knowledge of the team's tactical prep, the physiotherapist assured Kings were in high spirits in spite of their poor run. "The guys have stuck together. They are up for it".

**VALUABLE TIP**

**You don't captain when you bat: Sangakkara's advice to Parag**



FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Riyhan Parag has three roles: captain, leader and batter. While captaincy and leadership go hand-in-hand, he just has to enjoy his batting. The conversation is about making sure that he's batting as Riyhan Parag the batter. You don't captain when you bat — Kumar Sangakkara, Rajasthan Royals head coach and director of cricket.

**A POINT TO PROVE**

**Axar is desperate to do well for Capitals and himself, says Bell**



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Delhi Capitals assistant coach Ian Bell brushed aside concerns over skipper Axar Patel's inconsistent campaign. "He's more disappointed than anyone. He's desperate to do well for this franchise and for himself. We know what he can do at his best, and we've got to keep supporting him through that," said Bell.

# Allen, Raghuvanshi and Narine help Knight Riders stay alive

The opener slams a 35-ball 93; the No. 3 batter adds 108 off just 52 deliveries for the unbroken third wicket with Green to take the home team to 247; poor catching hurts Titans; the wily spinner returns figures of two for 29 to thwart the visitor

IPL-19

Sports Bureau  
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders rode on blistering knocks by Finn Allen (93), Angkrish Raghuvanshi (82 not out), and Cameron Green (52 not out) to get the better of Gujarat Titans by 29 runs in a high-scoring IPL 2026 contest at the Eden Gardens here on Saturday.

After logging its highest total of the season (247 for two), with some assistance from the visiting side's fielders' largesse, KKR restricted GT to 218 for four to stay alive in the race for the playoffs.

Allen took his time to understand the conditions — as the ball held on to the wicket a bit in humid conditions — before unleashing his strokes. Using his timing and fast hands, predominantly on the outside, he cashed in on two lives, on 14 and 33, to hammer the GT bowlers.

Sai Kishore had Allen, who added 44 with skipper Ajinkya Rahane and 95 with Raghuvanshi for the first two wickets, caught at deep midwicket.

Raghuvanshi, enjoying a lucky DRS call early on, played some superb shots — including a brave scooped six off Kagiso Rabada. He displayed awareness and temperament to get to his fifth half-century this season.

Raghuvanshi, who had a reprieve on 52 off Rabada, later took 24 off a 25-run penultimate over bowled by Mohammed Siraj. Cameron Green, who was let off by Arshad Khan on 23 off Rashid Khan, impressed with his pulled hits to the boundary. He formed an unbeaten 108-run stand off 52 balls with Raghuvanshi.



**The architects:** Allen and Raghuvanshi lit up Eden with some dazzling strokeplay before Narine scalped Gill to turn the contest in favour of KKR. K.R. DEEPAK

During GT's chase, Sunil Narine dismissed Nishant Sindhu for one after opener Sai Sudharsan retired hurt.

KKR, despite losing Matheesha Pathirana to a hamstring issue, applied the brakes in the Power-Play (56 for one).

GT skipper Shubman Gill (85) proved his class yet again to score his fifth fifty in this edition. Excelling on either side,

**SCOREBOARD**

**KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS**  
Ajinkya Rahane b Siraj 14 (14b, 1x4, 1x6), Finn Allen c Rashid b Sai Kishore 93 (35b, 4x4, 10x6), Angkrish Raghuvanshi (not out) 82 (44b, 4x4, 7x6), Cameron Green (not out) 52 (28b, 3x4, 4x6); Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-4): 6; Total (for two wks. in 20 overs): 247.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-44 (Rahane, 4.3 overs), 2-139 (Allen, 11.2).

**TITANS BOWLING**  
Siraj 4-0-50-1, Rabada 4-0-40-0, Holder 4-0-39-0, Rashid 4-0-57-0, Sai Kishore 3-0-38-1, Arshad 1-0-22-0.

**GUJARAT TITANS**  
Sai Sudharsan (not out) 53 (28b, 6x4, 3x6), Shubman Gill c Anukul b Narine 85 (49b, 5x4, 7x6), Nishant Sindhu c Pandey b Narine 1 (4b), Jos Buttler c sub (Ramandeep) b Saurabh 57 (35b, 5x4, 2x6), Rahul Tewatia (Impact Player for Siraj) c Raghuvanshi b Green 2 (4b); Extras (b-1, lb-8, w-11): 20; Total (for four wks. in 20 overs): 218.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-49 (Nishant, 4.1), 2-177 (Gill, 16.2), 3-207 (Buttler, 18.5), 4-218 (Tewatia, 19.6).

**KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING**  
Saurabh 2.4-0-23-1, Green 3-0-25-1, Tyagi 4-0-59-0, Pathirana (Impact Player for Allen) 1.2-0-9-0, Narine 4-0-29-2, Varun 4-0-47-0, Anukul 1-0-17-0. **Toss:** GT; **PoM:** Narine. **KKR won by 29 runs.**

**Next assignment**

**KKR:** May 20 vs. MI Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.  
**GT:** May 21 vs. CSK Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

Jos Buttler supported Gill as the duo collected 128 runs off 73 balls.

A limping Varun Chakravarthy, nursing a foot injury, bowled well until Gill gathered 22 runs off his final over.

The wily Narine scalped Gill in the 17th over to put the pressure back on GT.

Sai Sudharsan returned to join Buttler. But the two could not achieve the target as GT's wait for a playoffs berth lingered on.

# Will PBKS overcome its hoodoo against RCB?

Abhishek Saini  
DHARAMSHALA

Five losses on the bounce have left Punjab Kings with the unenviable task of taking down defending champion Royal Challengers Bengaluru to keep its playoffs hopes alive.

In what could be the defining game of their IPL 2026 season here on Sunday, the baggage of an unfavourable head-to-head record and a string of losses at the HPCA Stadium only add to the Kings' quandary.

Since 2023, PBKS has just one win in seven games at the venue. And Virat Kohli's crowd-pulling presence might leave it with thin support at its 'adopted' home. It will also have to put the horrors of consecutive playoffs losses to RCB behind it.

In the first of those defeats, in the first Qualifier in 2025, Josh Hazlewood and Bhuvneshwar Kumar had torn through PBKS' top-order. Bhuvneshwar, surfing the high of a purple patch, could again disrupt up front, having had the better of Prabhsimran Singh four times in nine innings.

"For us, Bhuvneshwar did well last season also. This season, it is a different role for him. He is a world-class bowler and you know what skill set he has. He is just enjoying his bowling and expressing himself freely," said Omkar Salvi, RCB's bowling coach.

Though just one win away from sealing a top-four spot, RCB has its own



**Interesting match-up:** The battle between Kings' Vyshak and Royal Challengers' Padikkal could be riveting. R.V. MOORTHY

**Today's matches**

 <b>Dharamshala, 3.30 p.m.</b> <b>HEAD-TO-HEAD</b> Played: <b>37</b> PBKS <b>18</b>   RCB <b>19</b> <b>PREVIOUS MEETING</b> RCB won by six runs, 2025	 <b>Delhi, 7.30 p.m.</b> <b>HEAD-TO-HEAD</b> Played: <b>31</b> DC <b>16</b>   RR <b>15</b> <b>PREVIOUS MEETING</b> DC won by seven wickets, 2026
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LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1, 2 & JIOHOTSTAR

batting frailties to tend to. Kohli comes on the back of a record-extending ninth IPL century, but his back-to-back ducks in the preceding two games give PBKS a plan to attack him with seam.

just 14.17 this season, which has left RCB without the explosive starts that it was accustomed to with Phil Salt. Down the order, Jitesh Sharma's woeful run is probably the biggest concern for RCB as it gears up for post-season.

Jacob Bethell averages

# It has been a crazy season: DC's Bell

Anirudh Velamuri  
NEW DELHI

Not much has gone right for Delhi Capitals this IPL season. After cruising to a win over Mumbai Indians in its backyard, DC, for most part, has been either comprehensively outplayed or left to endure heartbreaks.

Assistant coach Ian Bell didn't sugarcoat reality. "It has been a crazy season. We scored 264 (vs. Punjab Kings) and followed that up by getting all out for 75 (vs. Royal Challengers Bengaluru). You can't win

competitions if you're that inconsistent. In front of your home fans, you want to make it a fortress." Bell termed "instability" as the defining factor between Capitals and the teams in the top four.

"The combinations haven't quite worked for us. Players need to take the opportunities and turn them into match-winning performances."

He also marked DC's prime target for Sunday. "When you play Rajasthan Royals, he (Vaibhav Sooryavanshi) is the prized wicket."

**Points table**

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Royal Challengers	12	8	4	0	16	1.053
Gujarat Titans	13	8	5	0	16	0.400
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	7	5	0	14	0.331
Punjab Kings	12	6	5	1	13	0.355
Rajasthan Royals	11	6	5	0	12	0.082
Chennai Super Kings	12	6	6	0	12	0.027
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	5	6	1	11	-0.038
Delhi Capitals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.993
Mumbai Indians (E)	12	4	8	0	8	-0.504
Lucknow Super Giants (E)	12	4	8	0	8	-0.701

E: Eliminated

# Suryakumar's place in T20I squad under the scanner

Amol Karhadkar  
MUMBAI

Suryakumar Yadav's prolonged lean patch with the bat could have ramifications beyond the IPL, with his T20I captaincy and even his place in the squad will come under scrutiny ahead of India's tour of Ireland next month.

The Hindu understands that India's T20I succession plan is expected to be informally discussed during the senior national selection committee meeting in Guwahati on May 19.

It will be the first in-person meeting of the selection panel since India's T20 World Cup triumph on March 8 under Suryakumar's leadership.

Suryakumar's "evident struggles" with the bat — first during the World Cup and now in the IPL — have prompted some within the decision-making group to acknowledge that the transition process may need to begin sooner than later.

# Capitals run into inconsistent Royals in a do-or-die clash

Anirudh Velamuri  
NEW DELHI

The IPL playoffs are drawing closer, but certainty remains elusive. Delhi Capitals stands with its backs against the wall, clinging to fading hopes and fragile momentum. At the same time, for Rajasthan Royals, the fear is not immediate collapse but the slow, familiar unravelling of another promising season.

Under the lights at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here on Sunday, these two sides and their desperation will take centre-stage.

Still alive but barely so, the equation is simple for the Capitals: win both remaining matches and hope



**Time to shine:** Capitals will expect Rahul to fire on all cylinders at the top. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

results elsewhere fall into place.

Even perfection may not suffice, with an unhelpful Net Run Rate of -0.993 leaving them with little

control over their fate.

Their hopes rest heavily on a top-order searching for rhythm, particularly K.L. Rahul. Elegant for much of the season, Rahul

arrives at a critical juncture carrying the weight of four consecutive low scores. The team will also welcome David Miller's return to the line-up.

This clash could be the turnaround, with Royals' domestic pacers having struggled under pressure. Tushar Deshpande has leaked 12.1 runs per over this year and Sandeep Sharma 10.9, while Brijesh Sharma has oscillated between incisive and expensive.

Even Jofra Archer, usually the great disruptor, has looked vulnerable recently, conceding 12 an over (with two wickets) across his last three outings.

Should that trend continue, the home side will back itself to post a formidable total or chase one down confidently.

RR, meanwhile, needs to arrest a repetitive second-half slide urgently. While Vaibhav Sooryavanshi saddles with the load, Yashasvi Jaiswal has faded: 132 runs at 18.9 across his last seven innings after a blistering start.

Dhruv Jurel has followed a similar arc, averaging just 19.7 over the same stretch.

Combined with an inconsistent middle-order, RR's drift down the table begins to look less surprising and more inevitable.

## IN BRIEF



## Manchester City beats Chelsea to win FA Cup

Manchester City beat Chelsea 1-0 on Saturday to win the FA Cup and complete a domestic cup double. Antoine Semenyo scored in the 72nd minute to ensure City prevailed after two successive FA Cup final defeats.

## Son to lead South Korea at his fourth World Cup

Son Heung-min was named in South Korea's squad for his fourth World Cup on Saturday.

**The squad:** Goalkeepers: Jo Hyeon-woo, Kim Seung-gyu, Song Bum-keun; Defenders: Kim Moon-hwan, Kim Min-jae, Kim Tae-hyon, Park Jin-seob, Seol Young-woo, Jens Castrop, Lee Ki-hyuk, Lee Tae-seok, Lee Han-beom, Cho Yu-min; Midfielders: Kim Jin-gyu, Bae Jun-ho, Paik Seung-ho, Yang Hyun-jun, Eom Ji-sung, Lee Kang-in, Lee Dong-gyeong, Lee Jae-sung, Hwang In-beom, Hwang Hee-chan; Forwards: Son Heung-min, Oh Hyeon-gyu, Cho Gue-sung.

## Delhi aims to bounce back against Inter Kashi

Neither Sporting Club Delhi nor Inter Kashi has enjoyed a riveting run in the Indian Super League this season. Both teams will hope to derive some solace when they face each other at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday. While Inter Kashi is languishing at 10th with 12 points from 11 matches, the host is 11th with 10 points. For SC Delhi, Matija Babovic, who has netted five goals and contributed an assist, is vital in front of goal. He will be supported by centre-forward Joseph Sunny and winger Mohammed Aimen. SC Delhi head coach Tomasz Tchorz wants his players to be at their best on Sunday. The club suffered its first home defeat of the season when it lost to Odisha on May 8. "Inter Kashi has shown throughout this season that it is a very competitive team. It has some problems as we all know, but I think this might also serve as motivation for the players because they want to play for their future," Tchorz stated. Inter Kashi goes into this fixture on the back of a commendable goalless draw against third-placed Mohun Bagan Super Giant. In his pre-match press conference, coach Abhijit Mondal emphasised the need for his team to maintain that same character in the national capital.

## Ton-up Litton helps Bangladesh score 278

Wicketkeeper-batter Litton Das hit a sublime century as Bangladesh recovered from early trouble on the opening day of the second and final Test against Pakistan at Sylhet on Saturday. He hammered 126 off 159 balls with 16 fours and two sixes to help Bangladesh post 278 in its first innings before Pakistan reached 21 without loss at stumps.

**The scores:** Bangladesh 278 in 77 overs (Litton 126, Khurram Shahzad 4/81, Abbas 3/45) vs Pakistan 21/0 in 6 overs. **Toss:** Pakistan.

## Kunal cracks unbeaten century for Sporting CC

Kunal Sangwan starred with an unbeaten 105 as Sporting CC defeated Gemini CC by six wickets in the 51st all-India Tyagmurthi Goswami Ganesh Dutt Memorial cricket tournament at S.G.T.B. Khalsa College ground in New Delhi on Saturday.

**The scores:** Gemini 276 in 39.1 overs (Vishant Bhati 45, Samarth Singh 43, Adwitiya Popli 62, Pratap Basista 35, Rohan Nagar 44, Susheel Kumar 3/44, Lalit Yadav 3/39) lost to Sporting 277/4 in 31.1 overs (Kunal Sangwan 105 n.o., Hardik Sharma 44, Rishabh Drall 82 n.o.).



## Delhi FC crowned I-League 2 champion

Delhi FC was crowned champion of I-League 2 and secured promotion back to the Indian Football League after playing out a 1-1 draw with United SC in Kalyani. Delhi finished with 17 points from eight matches, thanks to five wins.

# Clinical Smith too good for Sekulic

In doubles, the unseeded Poonacha-Myneni combo notches up a first tournament win by getting the better of Biryukov-Lomakin

## TENNIS

**Ashwin Achal**  
BENGALURU

**A** clinical Keegan Smith outclassed Philip Sekulic 6-2, 7-5 in the final to emerge as the Karnataka Open ATP Challenger singles champion at the S.M. Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Saturday.

The Indian duo of Niki Poonacha and Saketh Myneni took top honours in doubles, defeating Petr Bar Biryukov-Grigoriy Lomakin 6-2, 6-3 in the summit clash. The unseeded Poonacha-Myneni notched up a first tournament win together. The occasion was particularly sweet for Poo-



**Triumphant:** Singles champion Smith and doubles titlists Poonacha and Myneni. K. MURALI KUMAR

nacha, who claimed a maiden Challenger title in his home city.

"We decided to play together just last week," 38-

year-old Myneni said.

Myneni stated that the pairing worked well because Poonacha's aggressive game complements



his measured style.

Poonacha and Myneni took home \$2,980 and 50 ATP points.

In the singles, Smith's

all-round game won the day. The 6'7" American showed fantastic court coverage to frustrate Sekulic (world no. 357). When top-

seed Smith came to the net, his soft touch – evidenced by a delicious backhand half-volley in the first set – drew applause from the crowd.

Sekulic's electric forehand, which worked so well in his semifinal win over Kriish Tyagi, could not find the mark on Saturday. Smith (world no. 289) did not make it easy either, keeping his returns deep and flat.

Smith claimed \$9,500 and 50 ATP ranking points, while Sekulic collected \$5,500 and 25 ATP points.

**The results (final):** Keegan Smith (USA) bt Philip Sekulic (Aus) 6-2, 7-5.

**Doubles:** Niki Poonacha & Saketh Myneni bt Petr Bar Biryukov & Grigoriy Lomakin (Kaz) 6-2, 6-3.

# Bengaluru FC brings CFC's dismal season to an end with a 2-1 win

## ISL

**Joan Mathew Jacob**  
CHENNAI

Chennaiyin FC did not have a smooth ride into the sunset as it ended its already dismal Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 campaign with a 1-2 loss against Bengaluru FC at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Saturday.

Daniel Chima Chukwu and Ryan Williams traded strikes in the first half, before debutant Serto Worneilen Kom bagged a late winner, leaving Chennaiyin in 13th in the table with just nine points.

In sweltering conditions, Bengaluru asserted control courtesy of its four-man midfield with Braian



**On a high:** Kom, right, peels off in celebration with Williams after scoring Bengaluru's winner. R. RAJU

Sanchez and Soham Varshneya testing the opposition goalkeeper.

But for all its dominance, it was Chennaiyin that surprisingly broke the deadlock. Chima started the swift move by winning the ball in the middle of the pitch and distributing it before running up to take

up position inside the box. The ball, meanwhile, made its way around to Mandar Rao Dessai, who was played through on the left wing before laying it on a plate for Chima.

Bengaluru was desperate for an equaliser before the break, and this time its hunger was rewarded as

William pulled off a crisp one-touch move with Larremtuanga Fanaai to set himself up for an easy finish from close range.

The visitors sealed the game in the closing stages of a drab second half after Williams breached the box before cutting the ball back to Fanaai. Pritam Kotal stood strong to block his shot, only to see the loose ball smashed into an empty goal by substitute Kom, who took advantage of a snoozing defence.

Bengaluru kept its mathematical title chances alive and temporarily leads the standings with 23 points.

**The results:** Chennaiyin FC 1 (Chima 34) lost to Bengaluru FC 2 (Ryan 43, Kom 89). **At Fatorada:** Odisha FC 2 (Suhair 71, Kartik 90+6) lost to Punjab FC 3 (Kippen 69, Osuji 89, Ramirez 90+4).

# No coach, no problem for improving Pukhraj

## S. Shrivathsan

Things are finally falling into place for Indian golfer Pukhraj Singh Gill.

The 29-year-old, who by no means burst onto the scene, has been seeing the fruits of his labour over the last nine months. Pukhraj emerged as the Indian Golf Premier League (IGPL) Order of Merit winner in its inaugural season in 2025 and added a bullet point to his CV with his maiden Asian Development Tour (ADT) victory in Kuala Lumpur last week.

The Ludhiana man felt that his first title outside India would be a morale-booster. "It is a huge motivation because I have accomplished something



**On the rise:** Pukhraj feels his first title outside India would be a morale-booster. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that I set out to achieve. I feel that my two professional wins have come in quick succession (he emerged victorious in the IGPL Invitational Jamshepur in November), and I see the transition from a national to an international

event," Pukhraj told *The Hindu* during a virtual interaction.

"...I am getting closer to becoming an 'overall player'; I sense that I have the ability to play nationally and internationally. That is very assuring," added

Pukhraj, who hails from a sporting family.

The "winds of change" began to blow about three years ago.

"I have not had a coach for three or four years now. It took me a while to learn about my style and find the mindset with which I could play my best. It took me two or three years, up until 2023. After that, I started playing much better as I felt that I grew both mentally and physically. The last two or three years have been very good in terms of consistency."

His next objective? Sustaining the good run and earning an Asian Tour card. "I am on track for that," said Pukhraj, showing the drive to soar high.



**Going toe to toe:** McNealy fired a three-under par 67 to match Smalley, right, on four-under 136 at the midway mark. GETTY IMAGES

# McNealy and Smalley share the lead at difficult Aronimink

## PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

**Agence France-Presse**  
PHILADELPHIA

Americans Maverick McNealy and Alex Smalley shared the lead after Friday's chaotic second round of the PGA Championship as cold conditions contributed to carnage at Aronimink. Six others were only one adrift after 36 holes with seven more, including top-ranked defending champion Scottie Scheffler, just two strokes off the lead entering the weekend.

McNealy, never in the top 25 after 36 holes in 14 prior Major starts, fired a three-under par 67 to match Smalley on four-under 136 at the midway mark. McNealy, a back-nine starter whose best Major finish was 18th at last month's Masters, holed out a 54-foot bunker shot for eagle at the par-five 16th, then made birdie putts from 12 and 18 feet on the first two holes.

The world No. 33 squandered the solo lead, however, with three-putt bogeys at the sixth and

par-three eighth holes.

Smalley fell out of the solo lead with three bogeys in a row but a closing birdie put him on 69.

Sharing third on 137 were Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, the 2021 Masters champion, plus Americans Chris Gotterup and Max Greyselman, South African Aldrich Potgieter, Australian Min Woo Lee and German Stephan Jaeger, who made 18 pars.

Joining Scheffler in ninth on 138 were Cameron Young, Justin Thomas and Harris English plus Sweden's Ludvig Aberg and South Korean Kim Si-woo. Scheffler tumbled from a share of the lead with three bogeys in his first four holes but closed with a birdie at nine to shoot 71.

**Leading scores (second round, par-70):** 136: Maverick McNealy 69-67, Alex Smalley 67-69. 137: Max Greyselman 68-69, Christopher Gotterup 72-65, Min Woo Lee 67-70, Stephan Jager 67-70, Hideki Matsuyama 70-67, Aldrich Potgieter 67-70. 138: Kim Si-woo 71-67, David Puig 71-67, Ludvig Aberg 72-66, Justin Thomas 69-69, Harris English 71-67, Scottie Scheffler 67-71, Cameron Young 71-67.

# Star Glory bags feature event

BENGALURU: S. Narredu trained Star Glory (Yash up) won the B.T.C. Charitable Trust Trophy (1,400m), the main event of the races held here on Saturday (May 16). The winner is owned by Mr. Daulat Chhabria & Mr. S. Narredu. Trainer: S. Narredu. Winner: Three races on the day.

**THE RESULTS**  
1. QUASAR PLATE (DIV. II), 1,400M: ACANTHA (Trevor) 1, Art Of Romance (Kiran Rai) 2, Star Comet (Rayan) 3 and Real Happiness (A.A. Vikrant) 4. 1/2, 2-1/2 and 1/2. Im 27.28s. Rs. 20 (w), 12, 12 and 19 (p). SHP: 33, THP: 42, FP: 79, Q: 40, Trinella: 320/192, Exacta: 1,768/1,118. Favourite: Acantha. Owners: Mr. Chethan Neelakanta & Mr. Y.S. Harsha. Trainer: K. Purshotham.

2. ICH DIEN PLATE (1,400M): SUPREME SUCCESS (Suraj) 1, Royal Jewel (Akshay K) 2, Vafadar (Aditya W) 3 and Magna Carta (Vinod Shinde) 4. 2/14, 3/4 and 3/1. Im 27.45s. Rs. 23 (w), 11, 11 and 14 (p). SHP: 26, THP: 35, FP: 38, Q: 19, Trinella: 103/60, Exacta: 304/135. Favourite: Royal Jewel. Owner: Mr. K.N. Ramaraju. Trainer: S. Narredu.

3. QUASAR PLATE (DIV. I), 1,400M: BAASHA (S. Sachin) 1, Exceed (J. Chinyo) 2, Noble Cause (L.A. Rozario) 3 and Feeling Good (Suhas K) 4. 1-3/4, 3-1/4 and 3. Im 26.13s. Rs. 34 (w), 16, 10 and 32 (p). SHP: 30, THP: 54, FP: 107, Q: 43, Trinella: 685/433, Exacta: 1,782/520. Favourite: Exceed. Owner: Mr. Santhosh. P. Trainer: Joseph B. Awale.

4. B.T.C. CHARITABLE TRUST TROPHY (1,400M): STAR GLORY (Yash) 1, Global Influence (Suraj) 2, Don Carlos (Akshay K) 3 and Ricardo (Aleemuddin) 4. 1-3/4, Snk and 8. Im 25.37s. Rs. 79 (w), 24 and 10 (p). SHP: 23, THP: 23, FP: 148, Q: 74, Trinella: 357/267, Exacta: 338/120. Favourite: Global Influence. Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria & Mr. S. Narredu. Trainer: S. Narredu.

5. STAR CONTENDER PLATE (1,200M): SHINING WAYS (Suraj) 1, Regal Beauty (Akshay K) 2, Burevestnik (Shreyas S) 3 and Personal Legend (A. Ramu) 4. 1, 2 and 1. Im 13.44s. Rs. 41 (w), 13, 18 and 11 (p). SHP: 51, THP: 40, FP: 281, Q: 133, Trinella: 847/355, Exacta: 9,665/6,903. Favourite: Burevestnik. Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr.

Teja Gollapudi, Dr. Prabhakar Chowdary Tripuraneni & Mr. Ashok Ranpise. Trainer: S. Narredu.

6. MANIFOU PLATE (1,200M): SOLARA (Akshay K) 1, Darrington (Arvind K) 2, Hushed (Rafique S.K.) 3 and Khazana (Neeraj) 4. 2-1/2, Snk and 2-3/4. Im 13.38s. Rs. 17 (w), 10, 14 and 76 (p). SHP: 28, THP: 151, FP: 36, Q: 25, Trinella: 911/708, Exacta: 1,866/417. Favourite: Solara. Owners: M/s. DT Racing & Breeding LLP, Mr. Mukul A. Sonawala, Sarainaga Racing Pvt Ltd & Mr. S.R. Sanas. Trainer: S. Attaolahi. Jackpot: Rs. 17,682; Runner up: 4,021; Mini Jackpot: 9,090; Treble (Q): 550; (ii): 1,471.

## LIVE TELECAST

**IPL:** Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.

**ISL:** Sony Sports Ten 2, 5 & Fan-Code, 5 & 7.30 p.m.

**Premier League:** SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 5, 7.30 & 10 p.m.

# Moonveil, Iron Mirage may fight out the finish of the War Hammer Million

BENGALURU: Moonveil and Iron Mirage may fight out the finish of the War Hammer Million (1,400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Sunday. There will be no false rails.

**1. NEWMARKET PLATE (1,200m),** rated 00 to 25, 5-y-o & over, 3.00 p.m.: 1. Windcleaver (6) Vishwa V 62.5, 2. Days Date (4) Vishal 62, 3. Mega Success (11) Arul J.H. 59.5, 4. Mericle Beauty (7) Kiran Rai 58, 5. Sling Shot (1) Faizan Khan 58, 6. Breeze Bluster (3) Vaibhav 57, 7. N R I Millennium (2) Arshad 56.5, 8. Double Scotch (10) I. Chisty 55, 9. N R I Gold (9) Aditya W 54.5, 10. Embosom (5) Vinod Shinde 54 and 11. Emerald (8) Sai Kiran 52.5.

**4. WAR HAMMER MILLION (1,400m),** 3-y-o, (Terms), 4.30: 1. Iron Mirage (2) Akshay K 57, 2. Whistling Glory (3) A. Prakash 57, 3. Deep Respect (5) Suraj 55.5, 4. Monstra (4) L.A. Rozario 55.5 and 5. Moonveil (1) Trevor 55.5.

**5. TRACK LIGHTNING PLATE (1,400m),** maiden 3-y-o only (Terms), 5.00: 1. Legacy Field (2) Akshay K 56, 2. Super Charm (1)

Spirit (5) Kiran Rai 53, 7. Absolute Thunder (2) Sai Kiran 52.5, 8. Double Your Money (3) Rafique S.K. 52.5, 9. Tiger Bay (4) Trevor 52.5 and 10. Turf Paradise (7) Ashhad Asbar 52.5.

**1. KNOTTOY CRIESE, 2. TIGER BAY, 3. DREAM WALKIN'**

**3. AIHOLE PLATE (1,200m),** rated 60 to 85, 4.00: 1. Stellantis (5) Shreyas S 60, 2. Dun It Again (3) Suhas K 59, 3. N R I Ace (1) Arshad 58, 4. Regal Reality (6) Akshay K 57.5, 5. Royal Deccan (4) Antony 57 and 6. Monterio (2) L.A. Rozario 56.

**1. REGAL REALITY, 2. ROYAL DECCAN**

**4. WAR HAMMER MILLION (1,400m),** 3-y-o, (Terms), 4.30: 1. Iron Mirage (2) Akshay K 57, 2. Whistling Glory (3) A. Prakash 57, 3. Deep Respect (5) Suraj 55.5, 4. Monstra (4) L.A. Rozario 55.5 and 5. Moonveil (1) Trevor 55.5.

A.A. Vikrant 56, 3. Theos (4) Yash 56, 4. Cantarina (7) Suraj 54.5, 5. Exotic Black (6) L.A. Rozario 54.5, 6. Mystic Dew (8) Antony 54.5, 7. Portieux (5) Neeraj 54.5 and 8. Starzella (3) Trevor 54.5.

**1. LEGACY FIELD, 2. STARZELLA, 3. CANTARINA**

**6. RACING PATRONS PLATE (1,400m),** rated 40 to 65, 5.30: 1. Forseti (11) Faizan Khan 62, 2. Silicon Star (8) Antony 58, 3. Badshaah (3) A. Hangal 57, 4. Master Way (12) Suhas K 55, 5. N R I Victory (4) I. Chisty 55, 6. Elysiium (2) Akshay K 54.5, 7. Finley (9) Shreyas S 54.5, 8. Hazel (6) Trevor 54, 9. Eternal Glory (1) Yash 53.5, 10. Lauterbrunnen (5) M. Rajesh K 53.5, 11. Agera (7) L.A. Rozario 53 and 12. Double Vision (10) Neeraj 53.

**1. ELYSIUM, 2. SILICON STAR, 3. HAZEL**

Day's best: LEGACY FIELD  
Double: REGAL REALITY - ELYSIUM  
Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Mini Jkt: 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (i): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6.



**Marathon:** Satwik and Chirag displayed remarkable composure under pressure. AFP

# Satwik-Chirag pair makes the title clash

The Indian duo registers a three-game win over Malaysia's Sze Fei and Izzuddin in a contest lasting an hour and 22 minutes

**BADMINTON**

**Press Trust of India**  
BANGKOK

R. Satwiksairaj and Chirag Shetty stormed into the men's doubles final with a riveting three-game win over Malaysia's Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin at the Thailand Open Super 500 badminton tournament, here on Saturday.

World No. 4 Satwik and Chirag, who won the title in 2019 and 2024, displayed remarkable composure under pressure to outclass the World No. 9 pair 19-21, 22-20, 21-16 in a contest that lasted an hour and 22 minutes.

It will be their third final

appearance at the \$500,000 tournament and the first of the season.

"It feels good. We didn't start the year that well, we were also not good mentally because of that. As players, we are very very driven and we really wanted some answers. The Thomas Cup bronze medal boosted our confidence and now we are playing our first final of the year," Chirag said. "Hopefully, we can win the title."

The Indian pair will have to recover from the 82-minute contest when they face Indonesia's Leo Rolly Carnando and Daniel Marthin.

Chirag said gaining a healthy lead midway through the decider helped him settle down

mentally. "I felt quite calm on court, especially in the third game. After 5-5, we went into the interval leading 11-5 and that really boosted my confidence," he said.

Satwik credited India's Thomas Cup triumph in 2022 for changing the team's mentality and helping the pair grow in confidence.

"I was telling the players during the Thomas Cup (in Denmark) that one podium finish can change someone's life.

"That's exactly what happened for us after the Thomas Cup (2022). From there, there was no looking back. Our mentality changed and we started playing really well after that," he said.

# Double delight for Joshna and Velavan

**SQUASH**

**S. Prasanna Venkatesan**  
CHENNAI

Velavan Senthilkumar and Joshna Chinappa completed a double each in the third HCL National doubles squash championships at the Indian Squash Academy here on Saturday, clinching the mixed doubles title after winning the men's and women's crowns respectively.

After top seeds Joshna and Rathika Seelan secured the women's title with a comfortable 11-8, 11-4 win over the unseeded pair of Janet Vidhi and Pooja Arthi, Velavan and Abhay Singh claimed the men's title for the third straight time.

Abhay and Velavan won the opening game 11-8 after Suraj Kumar Chand and Rahul Baitha fought back from 5-8 to 7-8.

The pair took control of the second game after an even start, with Abhay's

delicate drop into the corner and Velavan's crisp backhand winner helping them build a 5-2 lead. Suraj and Rahul briefly fought back to 4-5, but Abhay and Velavan maintained the pressure with controlled rallies and sharp winners to seal the game 11-5.

In the mixed doubles summit clash, Joshna and Velavan took the opening game 11-7 after leading 7-3, with Abhay and Rathika narrowing the deficit to 7-8. Abhay and Rathika led 7-4 and later 9-7 in the second game, but Joshna and Velavan fought back strongly, levelling 9-9 before taking the final two points – including a crucial stroke award – to clinch the game 11-9.

**The results (finals): Men:** Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar bt Rahul Baitha and Suraj Kumar Chand 11-8, 11-5. **Women:** Joshna Chinappa and Rathika Seelan bt Janet Vidhi and Pooja Arthi 11-8, 11-4. **Mixed:** Joshna Chinappa and Velavan Senthilkumar bt Rathika Seelan and Abhay Singh 11-7, 11-9.



**Champions:** Joshna, Velavan, Abhay and Rathika. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# Villa humbles Liverpool, seals CL qualification

**EURO LEAGUES**

**Agence France-Presse**  
BIRMINGHAM

Aston Villa secured Champions League football with a 4-2 win over Liverpool on Friday that leaves the Reds still at risk of missing out on Europe's elite competition next season.

Liverpool slips to fifth and remains just four points ahead of Bournemouth, which has two games remaining.

Harry Kane scored a hat-trick as Bayern Munich celebrated its 35th Bundesliga title with a 5-1 win over Cologne.

Stuttgart secured Champions League qualification and St. Pauli and Heidenheim were relegated elsewhere on an action-packed final matchday.

**The results: Premier League:** Aston Villa 4 (Rogers 42, Watkins 57, 73, McGinn 89) bt Liverpool 2 (Van Dijk 52, 90+2).

**Bundesliga:** Borussia M'gladbach 4 (Bolin 14, Tabakovic 23, Diks 81, Hack 90+1) bt Hoffenheim 0; Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Remberg 78-og) drew with Hamburg 1 (Vieira 61); Bayern Munich 5 (Kane 10, 13, 69, Bischof 22, Jackson 83) bt Cologne 1 (El Mala 18); Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Burkardt 72-pen, 90+2-pen) drew with Stuttgart 2 (Andres 10, Nartey 45+4).

Freiburg 4 (Beste 24, Matanovic 26, Ginter 47, Scherhant 75) bt RB Leipzig 1 (Ouedraogo 33); Heidenheim 0 lost to Mainz 2 (Tietz 7, Amiri 43); St. Pauli 1 (Ceasay 57) lost to Wolfsburg 3 (Koulierakis 37, Vasilij 64-og, Pejcinovic 80). Union Berlin 4 (Ilic 10, 42, Schafer 54, Jeong 89) bt Augsburg 0; Werder Bremen 0 lost to Borussia Dortmund 2 (Guirassy 59, Couto 90+5).

# SKASports picks up minority stake in SPL's FC Jurong



**New alliance:** Koh Mui Tee, vice-chairman FC Jurong, Daisuke Korenaga, chairman FC Jurong, along with Rohit Ramesh and Sudhir Menon, both directors at SKASports. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**S. Dipak Ragav**  
CHENNAI

SkaSports Investments Private Limited, a fully Indian-owned organisation, has acquired a minority stake in NSG Global Pte Ltd, the parent and management company of top division Singapore club Football Club Jurong (FC Jurong) playing in the Singapore Premier League (SPL).

The club, known currently as Albirex Niigata Football Club (S), plays its matches at the Jurong East Stadium and is one of the eight teams that forms the top division SPL.

The club was founded in 2004 and is a six-time SPL champion. The club has officially announced a name change to FC Jurong for 2026, which will take effect from the 2026-27 season.

Sharing his thoughts on the investment, Rohit Ramesh, director of SkaSports, said: "We are excited to partner with FC Jurong and begin this journey together. This partnership is built on a shared vision to strengthen the club's foundations, enhance its overall value and support its continued progression as a competitive

and forward-looking football institution in Singapore."

Sudhir Menon, director of SkaSports, said, "We are delighted to come on board and be part of FC Jurong's journey. This is an exciting opportunity to work alongside a strong management team and build on the momentum already in place, with a clear focus on unlocking long term growth, international opportunities and elevating the club's presence in Singapore and the wider region."

Meanwhile, Daisuke Korenaga, chairman of NSG Global Pte Ltd & FC Jurong, said, "Our partnership with SKA Sports represents an important step for FC Jurong as we seek to grow beyond Singapore and expand across Asia."

"Based in Singapore, a hub of Asia where companies and cultures from around the world intersect, we aim to build a unique growth model for FC Jurong by combining Japan's accumulated expertise in club management and player development with the tremendous growth potential of India, home to nearly 1.5 billion people."

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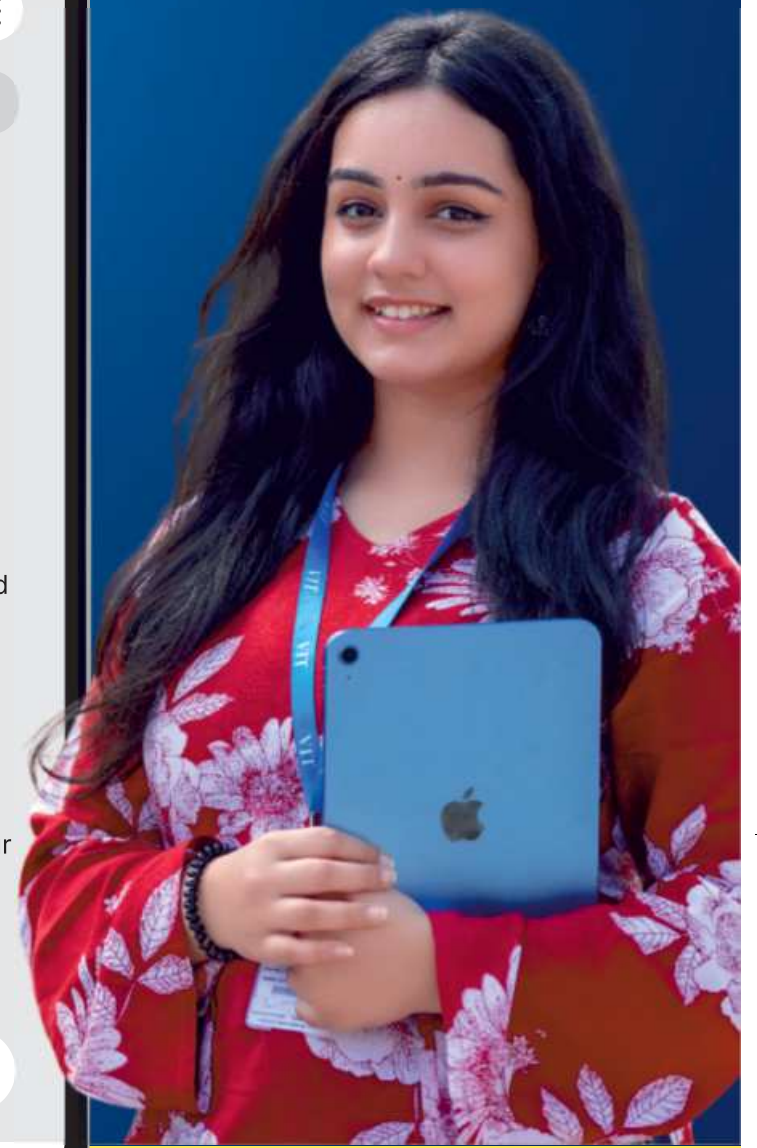
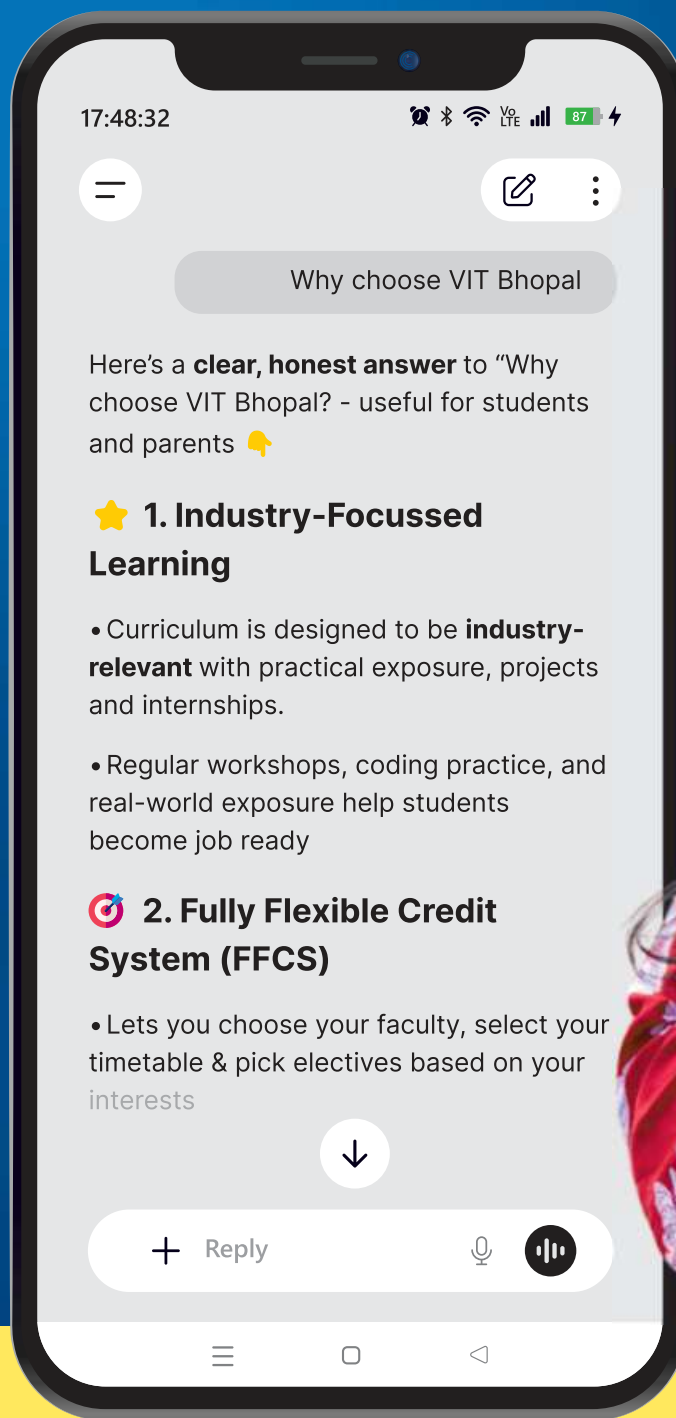


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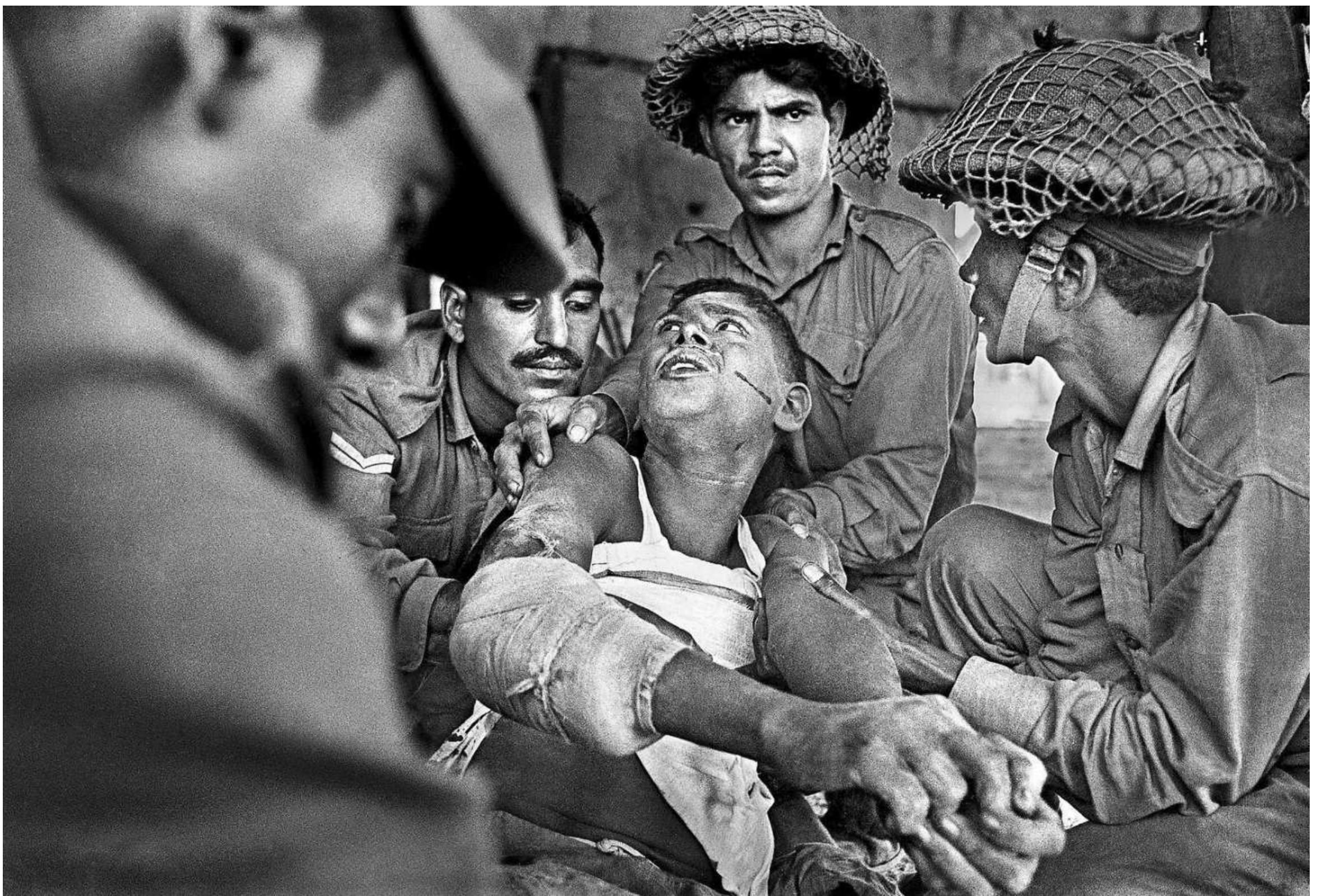
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**Hustle and bustle:** Traffic at Chawri Bazaar, Delhi in 1965. Horse-drawn carriages and workers manning handcarts crowd the streets.



**Formidable power:** Congressmen look on as Indira Gandhi, India's first woman Prime Minister, reviews documents at her office in 1967.



**The other side of war:** A wounded soldier from the Pakistan Army found on Indian territory being taken for treatment in 1971.

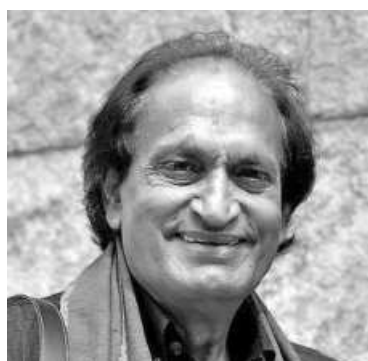
ALL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF THE RAGHU RAI FOUNDATION

# Symmetry and soul

The master chronicler didn't just document India with his lens; he taught his audience how to see it; his black-and-white statements live on, preserving the soul of a nation

**W**hen one speaks of India and photography, the sentence feels incomplete without taking Raghu Rai's name. His work became emblematic to the medium, not merely because he recorded India, but because he revealed it – with patience, poetry and an instinctive sense of order.

In the years that he was active, from the mid-1960s to the time of his passing, he captured on camera, an India, the way he saw it: from its leaders and labourers, musicians and mourners, to its monuments and markets. Like all great photojournalists, he captured situations as they unfolded, yet he brought to them a symmetry that was unmistakably his own. The blacks in his black-and-whites worked hard, and were not happenstance, they were statements.



**RAGHU RAI (1942 - 2026)**

There was endless patience in his eye. In Pt. S. Balachander's open fingers receiving the veena that is set off against cotton-white clouds in Mahabalipuram, in Mother Teresa's quiet piety among the diseased and deprived in Kolkata, in Indira Gandhi's stately presence with her Council of Ministers in 1967, Rai found not just faces, but destinies.

Be it the devastating Bhopal gas leak, the *sur* and *taan* of Kishori Amonkar, or the Indian soldiers tending to a wounded Pakistani counterpart unsure of

his fate, Rai transcended the medium. His Taj Mahal series remains among the most luminous tributes to the monument.

A Padma Shri awardee, Raghu Rai inspired generations of photojournalists and countless others to see India anew. His masterclass ended on April 26, 2026, but his images will continue the conversation.



**Blinded by gas:** Victims of the Bhopal disaster in 1984. The chemical leak killed thousands and left the survivors with lifelong physical and neurological disabilities.



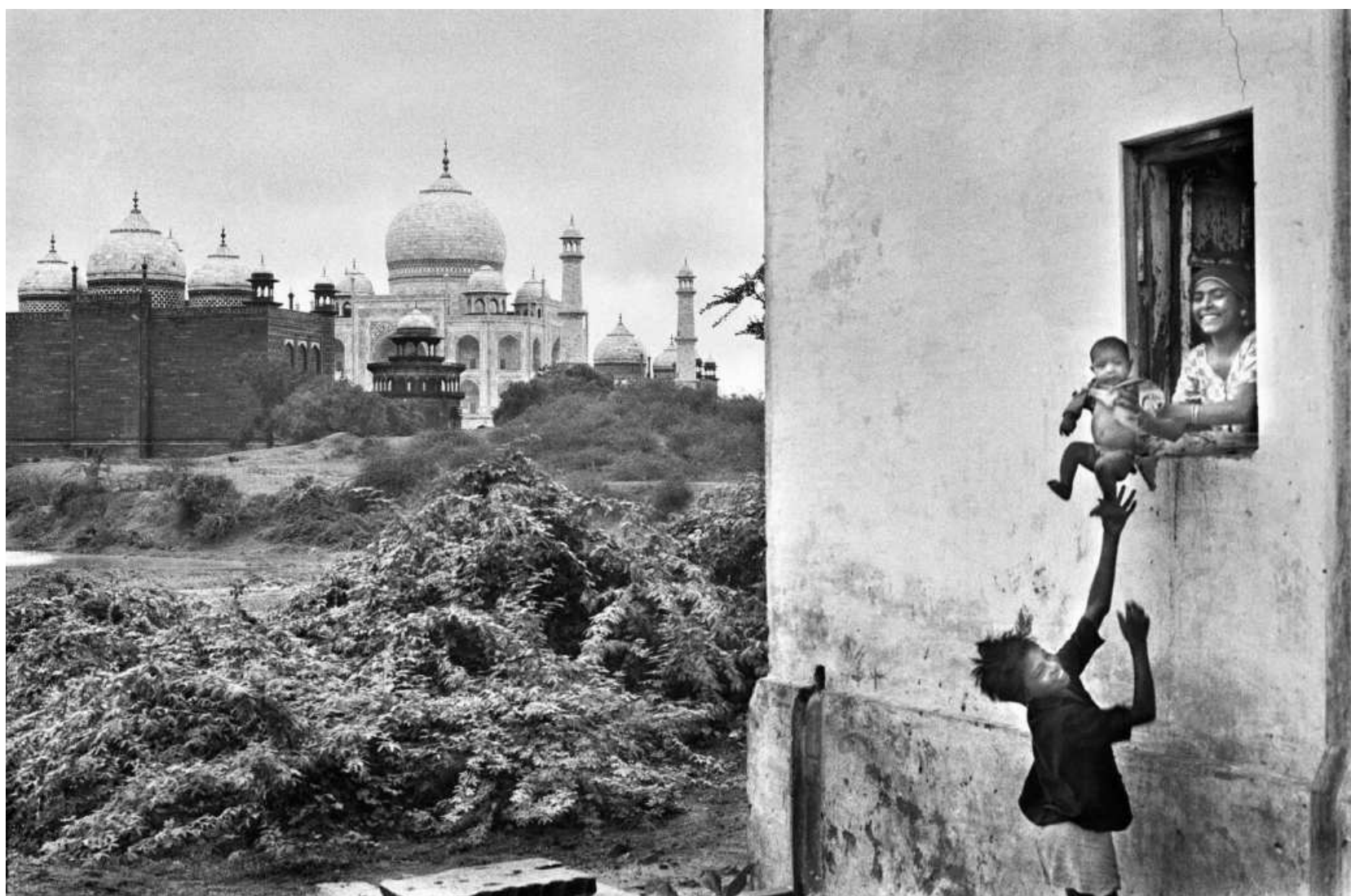
**At her peak:** Indira Gandhi photographed against the Himalayas in 1972.



**Tender bond:** Mother Teresa holds a child in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in 1979.



**Reverent embrace:** Veena maestro S. Balachander unites with his instrument in the historic town of Mahabalipuram in 1988.



**Fresh angle:** A view of the Taj Mahal, 1977. Rai's photo series is considered one of the greatest tributes to the monument.



**Classical tunes:** Vocalist Kishori Amonkar during a concert in Mumbai in 1988.