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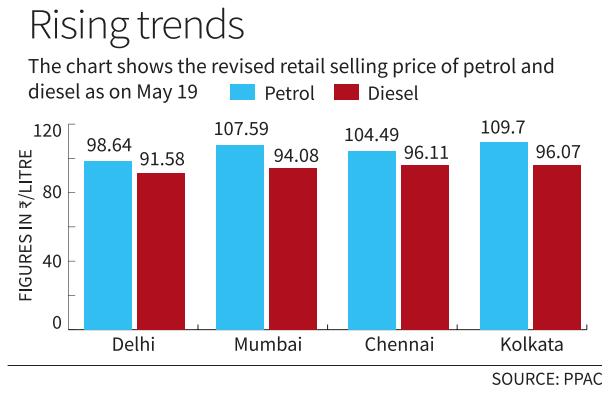


**DEMOCRATIC COEXISTENCE**  
**On Bhojshala, Kamal Maula**  
*Shared use of disputed religious sites should be allowed to continue*  
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**AFGHANISTAN TEST**  
**Rahul reappointed India's vice-captain**  
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## Petrol, diesel prices up 90 paise; second hike within a week



**Saptaparno Ghosh**  
NEW DELHI

Government-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) raised the prices of petrol and diesel on Tuesday by about 90 paise a litre across the country and across all variants. This was the second increase in five days following an increase by ₹3 a litre on May 15 after four years.

On Monday, the government had said that losses

being incurred by oil marketing companies from liquefied petroleum gas, petrol and diesel combined have come down by ₹250 crore to ₹750 crore following the ₹3 increase.

The government said it was not considering a bailout package for companies. Brent crude futures continue to soar amid tensions in West Asia.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 14


## Delhi police suggest larger SC Bench to review UAPA bail curbs

Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju says Supreme Court's May 18 ruling that upheld the 'bail is the rule and jail is an exception' norm overlooked the fact that under UAPA's statutory bail bar, the presumption of innocence takes a 'back seat'

**Aaratrika Bhaumik**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that the question of whether prolonged incarceration and delay of trial could override the statutory restrictions on bail under anti-terrorism laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, may warrant consideration by a larger Bench in view of two "conflicting" judgments rendered by coordinate Benches.

The oral submission was made before a Bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and P.B. Varale at the hearing of bail petitions filed by the 2020 Delhi riots accused Abdul Khalid Saifi and Tasleem Ahmad, challenging the September 2,



Under UAPA's statutory bail bar, the presumption of innocence of the accused takes a backseat. I am not opposing the interim plea, but the issue of statutory restrictions on bail under anti-terror laws requires consideration by a larger Bench in view of the two conflicting judgments

ADDITIONAL SOLICITOR-GENERAL S.V. RAJU  
appearing for the Delhi Police

2025, order of the Delhi High Court denying them bail.

Referring to a judgment delivered a day earlier by a Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan, which held that "bail is the rule and jail is an exception" even in prosecutions under the UAPA, Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Ra-

ju, appearing for the Delhi Police, said that the ruling may not have laid down the correct position in law.

"When there is a presumption in law, as contained in Section 43D(5) of the UAPA, which is a mandatory presumption, and the word used is 'shall', then the presumption of innocence of the accused

## Umar Khalid's petition on bail for 15 days dismissed

**Ishita Mishra**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday dismissed Umar Khalid's 15-day interim bail plea to attend bereavement rituals for his uncle and to

care for his ailing mother. This came a day after the top court voiced "reservations" about its January decision denying him bail.

FULL STORY ON  
» PAGE 16

## IN BRIEF



### TVK committed to two-language policy: Minister

CHENNAI  
T.N. School Education Minister Rajmohan on Tuesday said the TVK government will follow the existing two-language policy of Tamil and English in schools. » PAGE 4

### Punjab gets notice over caste slurs in Census forms

NEW DELHI  
The National Commission for Scheduled Castes has issued a notice to the Director of Census Operations in Punjab over Census 2027 forms in the State listing caste slurs as synonyms for the names of Scheduled Caste communities. » Page 14

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 7

## Too hot to handle



**Out in the open:** Mangoes lying unattended on the roadside in front of the Collectorate in Vijayawada on Tuesday after street vendors suspended business amid a severe heatwave, with temperatures hovering between 40 and 44 degrees Celsius. G.N. RAO

## Top court nod for euthanasia of 'incurably ill, rabid dogs'

**Aaratrika Bhaumik**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to modify its 2025 order directing all States and Union Territories to ensure removal of stray dogs from high-foot-fall public institutions while clarifying that such dogs cannot be "re-released" even after vaccination and sterilisation.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N.V. Anjaria also allowed legally permissible measures, including euthanasia in cases involving "rabid, incurably ill or demonstrably dangerous or aggressive dogs".

FULL STORY ON  
» PAGE 16

## Democracy, rule of law make Nordic nations, India natural partners: Modi

**Suhasini Haidar**  
OSLO

India and the Nordic countries are committed to "democracy, rule of law and multilateralism", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Tuesday, speaking after the Third India-Nordic Summit.

The summit, where Mr. Modi met leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, ended with a decision to upgrade ties between India and the five northern-most European countries to a 'Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership'.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with leaders of Nordic countries at the India-Nordic Summit at Oslo City Hall, Norway, on Tuesday. AFP

In particular, they will work on initiatives for sustainable energy, maritime cooperation and polar research in the arctic region, the leaders said.

"Our shared commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and multilateralism makes us natural partners. And our shared priorities in technology

and sustainability make our relationship full of opportunities," said Mr. Modi, standing with Prime Ministers of Norway (Jonas Gahr Støre), Finland (Petteri Orpo), Iceland (Kristrún Mjöll Frostadóttir), and Sweden (Ulf Kristersson) and Denmark's Acting Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

Mr. Modi held bilateral meetings with all the leaders in the past few days.

During the press statements, each of the leaders spoke about their vision for India-Nordic ties.

CONTINUED ON  
» PAGE 14



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# Delhi sizzles at 45.1°Celsius, IMD warns of week-long heatwave

Season's hottest, Tuesday's temperature 4.7°Celsius above normal for this time of the year; weatherman advises people to take adequate precaution; rising heat leads to increased power consumption, with the season's peak demand at 7,776 MW

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast a seven-day heatwave for the national capital, with temperatures soaring to 45.1 degrees Celsius on Tuesday, the highest this season.

Tuesday's temperature was 4.7 degrees Celsius above normal for this time of the year. The minimum settled at 28.2 degrees Celsius, 1.7 degrees Celsius above normal. "Dry westerly winds prevailed at speeds of 15-25 kmph, gusting up to 37 kmph during the daytime over Delhi. These dry surface winds are likely to continue for the next seven days," the IMD said in a statement, adding that an orange alert has been issued.

The IMD, in an advisory, cautioned people to avoid heat exposure, wear light-



**Heat haze:** Delhiites beating the summer heat with ice candies and a dip in a pond to escape the scorching sun on Tuesday. IMD cautioned people to avoid heat exposure. SHIV KUMAR PUSHAKAR/ANI

coloured, loose cotton clothing, cover their heads with a cloth, hat or umbrella, and drink sufficient water frequently, even if not thirsty.

It also advised keeping fire extinguishers at home and in vehicles.

A heatwave in Delhi is declared when the departure from normal is between 4.5 and 6.4 degrees Celsius, or when the maximum temperature exceeds 45 degrees Celsius. A severe heatwave is declared when the departure from



normal exceeds 6.4 degrees Celsius, or the maximum temperature crosses 46 degrees Celsius.

In May 2025, the highest maximum temperature recorded was 42.3 degrees Celsius. The highest temperature record for May is

47.2 degrees Celsius in 1944. Over the past decade, the hottest May day was on May 30, 2024, when the temperature touched 46.8 degrees Celsius.

**'Rise in power demand'**  
The rising heat has also led to increased power consumption, with Tata Power discom recording the season's highest peak power demand of 7,776 MW on Tuesday.

Last week, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta released the 'Heat Action Plan 2026', which included 'mobile heat relief unit' vans providing cold water, oral rehydration solution, first aid, *gamchas* (towels) and caps to those in need.

The Delhi government has converted schools and community halls near four major hospitals into temporary summer shelters offering free stay and basic facilities, officials said.

# HC issues notice to Kejriwal, others in contempt case; defers hearing on CBI plea

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI



The High Court has given AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, and others four weeks to respond to the notices. FILE PHOTO

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday issued notices to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Durgesh Pathak, Sanjay Singh, Saubh Bharadwaj and others on criminal contempt proceedings initiated over an alleged social media campaign targeting Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma.

A Bench of Justices Navin Chawla and Ravinder Dudeja granted the respondents four weeks to file their response to the suo motu contempt case initiated by Justice Sharma. The court listed the matter for next hearing on August 4. Justice Sharma initiated contempt proceedings after she took exception to alleged defamatory and "vilifying" social media posts targeting her in connection with the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) plea challenging a trial court order discharging Mr. Kejriwal and others in the al-

leged case linked to the Delhi excise policy. The judge pointed to a video circulating online that was "selectively edited to create a misleading narrative".

**'Unrepresented'**  
Another Bench of Justice Manoj Jain deferred the hearing on the CBI's appeal against the trial court verdict till May 25, noting that Mr. Kejriwal, Mr. Sisodia, and Mr. Pathak were unrepresented.

"Let them be informed that the case has been allocated to this court. If they have to say anything or re-

pond to the present petition, let them be served. Once everybody is here, we will draw a schedule of the hearing," Justice Jain said.

During Tuesday's hearing, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, said the trial court's order of discharge "cannot withstand scrutiny of any court in the eyes of law". The judge orally observed that since the matter was already in the public domain, the unrepresented respondents would be aware of the change of Bench.

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

### PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concern that Mr. Sunil Kumar Gupta S/o Sh. Chand Prakash Gupta R/o C-12/2, Loni Road, Delhi, who is original allottee of Flat No.163, Block-C-1, Sector-55, Noida (U.P.) has sold the said flat on General power of attorney basis to the following persons: GPA was executed on in favour of Smt. Anita Dhyani W/o Sh. Nagesh Dhyani R/o C-8/163, Sector-55, Noida U.P. Which is registered at Sub Registrar Noida, Bahi No.4, Jld No.178, Page No.183-192, Serial No.161, Dated 13.02.2023. The agreement to sell was not registered. So it is informed to all concern that the said flat is going to be transferred in favour of Mr. Anoop Kumar S/o Sh. Manmohan R/o C-1/237, Sector-55, Noida (U.P.) If any one has/have any objection he/she may file his/her objection along with the sufficient proof in the Residential Department of the Noida Authority within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.  
Smt. Anita Dhyani

## TENDERS

### SHOP PLOTS FOR SALE

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## PERSONAL

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, TULSI DAS PAPREJA S/o CHUNNI LAL R/o D-338, SECOND FLOOR, ANAND VIHAR, PO-EAST DELHI, I have changed my name from TULSI DAS PAPREJA to TULSI DAS for all future purposes.

I, SAURABH PAPREJA S/o TULSI DAS R/o D-338, SECOND FLOOR, ANAND VIHAR, PO-EAST DELHI, I have changed my name from SAURABH PAPREJA to SOURABH PAPREJA for all future purposes.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My client has disowned their son Sh. Neeraj Kumar Gaur, presently residing at Flat No.2643, Tower F, Gaur City, 7th Avenue, Krishna Chowk, GH-16C, Gaur City-1, Sector-04, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, U.P.201318, due to the disrespectful behavior towards the family.

My clients have severed all connections, relations, ties, and association with their son and have also disowned him from all their movable and immovable properties. Sh. Neeraj Kumar Gaur shall have no right, claim, or interest in any of the properties owned or inherited by my client, whether self-acquired or received by way of gift or otherwise, in any manner whatsoever. Any act done or committed by Sh. Neeraj Kumar Gaur in the past, present, or future, and any person dealing with him, shall be doing so at their own risk and consequences. Sh. Chundi Lal and his family shall not be responsible, in any manner whatsoever, for any act or deed committed by their son, Sh. Neeraj Kumar Gaur.  
CHETAN ANAND YADAV (Advocate)  
House No. 11, Main Market  
DCM Colony, New Delhi-110084

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Last date of submission of online application: 25th May 2026

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Date of publication of result: 05th June 2026

Date of provisional registration and commencement of classes: 1st July 2026

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## MCD to seek land from govt. for dog shelters

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi will seek land from the Delhi government to set up dog shelters in every zone of the city, officials said on Tuesday following the Supreme Court's directions on stray dog management.

The move comes after the apex court, for the first time, permitted euthanasia of rabid, incurably ill or demonstrably dangerous

stray dogs and directed authorities across the country to strengthen infrastructure to tackle the rising stray dog population.

"We are trying to rush it as much as possible. Wherever land is available, we will write a letter to the Delhi government in two or three days," an MCD official said, adding that the civic body was looking at land available with the Delhi government's Animal Husbandry Department.

## Shraddha murder case: court flags slow progress

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday expressed displeasure over the slow pace of proceedings in the Shraddha Walker murder case, saying that the last three months witnessed "complete tardiness", with virtually no progress in the matter.

Additional Sessions Judge Hargurvarinder Singh made the observations during a hearing in which the prosecution sub-

mitted evidence, and witnesses were cross-examined. The court also asked the counsel to "gear up" after the summer vacation.

More than 250 witnesses have already been examined in the case since trial proceedings began.

Aaftab Poonawala allegedly strangled his live-in partner Shraddha at their Mehrauli residence on May 18, 2022, and chopped her body into pieces.

## NAVODAYA VIDYALAYA SAMITI

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## NOTIFICATION

Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti had published a detailed notification dated 10.03.2026 in Recruitment section of its website i.e. [www.navodaya.gov.in](http://www.navodaya.gov.in) and an advertisement in Newspaper 24.03.2026 for inviting applications through proper channel upto 30.04.2026 for appointment to the one(01) post of Deputy Commissioner (Finance) [Pay Level 12 of 7th CPS] in the Samiti on deputation basis.

Due to administrative reasons, the last date for submission of applications through proper channel is extended from 30.04.2026 to 31.05.2026. However the cutoff i.e. 30.04.2026 in respect of eligibility criteria and other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged. For more details, please visit Samiti's website [www.navodaya.gov.in](http://www.navodaya.gov.in).

Issued by Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti

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No.: 364/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2 Date: 19.05.2026

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**छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल**  
पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

**// सर्व संबंधित को सूचना //**

भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय द्वारा जारी ई.आई.ई. नोटिफिकेशन, 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) के तहत सर्व संबंधित को सूचित किया जाता है कि मेसर्स मोंदी बायोटेक प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, ग्राम- भिलाई, तहसील- आरंग, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.) द्वारा Expansion of Grain Based Distillery ENA/ RS/ Ethanol/ Pharma Ethanol and Alcohol Derivative Products- 282 KLD to 600 KLD, Cogeneration Power Plant- 05 MW to 12 MW, Proposed Malt Spirit - 10 KLD, DDGS- 113 TPD to 260 TPD and Carbon dioxide- 197 TPD to 426 TPD के पर्यावरणीय स्वीकृत बावत लोक सुनवाई दिनांक 22/06/2026 को प्रातः 11:00 बजे से स्थान- परियोजना मेसर्स मोंदी बायोटेक प्राइवेट लिमिटेड, ग्राम- भिलाई, तहसील-आरंग, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.) के परिसर में स्थित रिक्त भूमि खसरा नंबर 1175 पर नियत की गई है। यह भी सूचित हो कि लोक सुनवाई के दौरान भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, नई दिल्ली के ऑफिस मेमोरेण्डम F.No. 22-25/2020-IA.III दिनांक 14.09.2020 तथा कोरोना वाईरस के नियंत्रण हेतु रोकथाम हेतु शासन द्वारा जारी समस्त दिशा-निर्देशों का अक्षरशः पालन करया जाना अनिवार्य होगा।

ई.आई.ई. नोटिफिकेशन, 14 सितम्बर, 2006 (यथा-संशोधित) के अनुसार संबंधित व्यक्तियों के अवलोकन / पठन हेतु ड्राफ्ट ई.आई.ई. रिपोर्ट, कार्यपालक सार हिन्दी एवं अंग्रेजी भाषा तथा सी.डी. (साफ्ट कॉपी) डायरेक्टर, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, जोर बाग रोड, नई दिल्ली, वैज्ञानिक ई, भारत सरकार, पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय, एकीकृत क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, अरुण भवन, नार्थ ब्लॉक, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), कार्यालय कलेक्टर रायपुर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी, जिला पंचायत रायपुर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, जिला व्यापार एवं उद्योग केन्द्र, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), मुख्य कार्यपालन अधिकारी, जनपद पंचायत- आरंग, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), मुख्य नगर पालिका अधिकारी, नगर पंचायत कार्यालय, आरंग, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.), कार्यालय संचयन, संचयन, ग्राम पंचायत भिलाई, तहसील-आरंग, जिला- रायपुर, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, न्यू ऑफिस बिल्डिंग, रिंग रोड नं.- 2, टाटीबंध, रायपुर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.) एवं मुख्यालय, छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल, पर्यावास भवन, सेक्टर-19, नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, रायपुर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.) में रखी गई है।

सहस्र संविध  
छत्तीसगढ़ पर्यावरण संरक्षण मंडल,  
नवा रायपुर अटल नगर, जिला- रायपुर (छ.ग.)

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-TENDER NOTICE No. SG-664-03-Tele-2026-27  
Dhanbad, dt-15-05-2026  
E-TENDER IS INVITED ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR THE UNDERMENTIONED WORK.  
SI.No.: 1. Name of the work: Reliability improvement of various telecom gears under ASTE/KQR, ASTE/GMO and DSTE/ W/DHN sections over DNH Division..  
2. Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 4,29,84,381.96.  
3. Earnest Money: ₹ 8,59,700.00.  
4. Date & Time for closing of tender: 05-06-2026 (12:00 Hrs).  
5. Any E-Tender which is sent by Post/Courier/FAX or self. Manual proposals although the letter is on firms letter pad or received in time will not be accepted. The above E-Tenders, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. <http://www.reps.gov.in> Note: Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.reps.gov.in> atleast 10 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum/corrections etc. in response to this E-tender.  
S. D. S. T. E.  
East Central Railway, Dhanbad  
PR/0257/DHN/S&T/T/26-27/32

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
No. DNR/S&T/Sig/2026/5 Danapur, Dtd. 15.05.2026  
Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom), East Central Railway, Danapur Division, for and on behalf of President of India invites tenders on web portal [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) for the following work -  
1. Name of work with its location: Provision of parallel Server and CMU setup as per RDSO guidelines at Data Logger in S&T Control room and strengthening of existing datalogger network & COA of divisional headquarters at Danapur under East Central Railway.  
2. Approx cost of the work: Rs. 10149588.82.  
3. Earnest Money: Rs. 203000/-.  
4. Last Date & Time of submission: Up to 15:00 hrs. on 05.06.2026.  
5. Opening of tender: 15:00 hrs. on 05.06.2026.  
6. Website particulars where details of the work and criteria can be seen: [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in), 7. Address of the office from where detail information can be obtained: Sr. Divnl. Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, East Central Railway, Danapur.  
Note: Any corrigendum if required will be uploaded on above website before 14 days.  
Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer  
East Central Railway, Danapur  
PR/0253/DNR/S&T/T/26-27/36

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**OPEN TENDER NOTICE INVITING ONLINE E-TENDER**  
TENDER Notice No. EL-50-DNR-Open-05-2026-27  
The Divisional Railway Manager, E.C. Railway Danapur for and on behalf of the President of India is inviting online (E-tendering) Open for the reputed contractors working in State/Central Govt having valid Electrical Contractor license for the required voltage level (as per scope of work) issued by State/Central Govt. licensing board for the following work:  
Tender No.: EL-50-DNR-Open-05-2026-27. Name of work with its location: Various Electrical(G) works under different Plan Head (PH)- 53(CAP), 51 (DF-2), 42(CAP), 29(SF), 16(CAP), 51(CAP), 51 (DRF), 31(SF&RRK) over DNR Division. Approx cost of the work- Rs. 7,13,43,930.00 (Rs. Seven Crore Thirteen Lakh Forty Three thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Only). Earnest Money to be deposited- Rs. 14,26,900/- (Rs. Fourteen Lakh Twenty Six Thousand Nine Hundred only). Date & time for online submission and closing of all above tenders- Date & time for online submission of tender 09.06.2026 up to 12:00 hrs. Website particulars, notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where all the above tender form can be seen- CRIS website <http://www.reps.gov.in>. Office of the Sr.DEE (S)/E.C. Ry., Danapur, D.R.M. Building, 1st Floor, East Central Railway, Danapur.  
NOTE: All corrigendum will be uploaded on website before 15 days if required.  
Divnl. Railway Manager (Electrical/G), East Central Railway/Danapur  
PR/0252/DNR/ELECT/T/26-27/48

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# AIADMK functionaries rally behind Palaniswami

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI



AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami emerging from the meeting at the party headquarters. R. RAGU

The AIADMK's district secretaries and headquarters office-bearers on Tuesday reaffirmed their faith in the leadership of general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, even as dissidents, led by S.P. Velumani and C.Ve. Shanmugam, continued to criticise Mr. Palaniswami's style of functioning.

In a release issued after a meeting at the party headquarters in Chennai, the AIADMK attributed the victory of 53 candidates

not mention the number of district secretaries who attended the meeting, as against a total of 82.

Sections of the media reported that former Fisheries Minister D. Jayakumar, also the district secretary for North Chennai (South-East), skipped the meeting. Mr. Jayakumar remained inaccessible.

But Tiruvallur (West) district secretary and former Minister Be. Vee. Ramanah claimed that most of the district secretaries took part in the meeting. The rest were unable to attend due to "logis-

tical reasons", he added.

R.B. Udhayakumar, Madurai (West-Suburban) district secretary, wondered whether it would be proper for anyone to "abandon" their "mother" in times of crisis and go to a "foster mother".

Later in the day, Mr. Palaniswami announced that Perambalur district secretary R. Tamilselvan had been relieved of his responsibility.

### 'Convene meeting'

Meanwhile, Mr. Shanmugam, who addressed the media along with Mr. Velu-

mani, called upon Mr. Palaniswami to convene the general council at the earliest and analyse the reasons for the party's electoral setbacks since the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

He also criticised the party general secretary for the way he "treated" the emissaries of the TVK, the DMDK, and Puthiya Tamilagam while exploring an electoral tie-up.

"He [Mr. Palaniswami] spoke in a manner that gave the impression that they should not have an alliance with us," Mr. Shanmugam said.

## Don't induct AIADMK MLAs into Cabinet: CPI(M) to Vijay

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu CPI(M) secretary P. Shanmugam on Tuesday said his party would reconsider its support to the government led by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay if he inducts AIADMK MLAs into the Cabinet.

## Over 8 lakh women avail 'Pink Saheli' smart cards in Delhi

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Over eight lakh 'Pink Saheli' smart cards have been issued to women in Delhi for availing free travel on city buses, the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement on Tuesday.

"The achievement reflects not only the growing popularity of the scheme, but also the increasing trust that women in Delhi are placing in the city's public transport system and their rising participation in it. Special camps are also being organised continu-

ously to help women get the cards made easily," the CMO statement read.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the government remains committed to prioritising women's safety, convenience and self-reliance, and that the Pink Saheli smart card is not merely a facility for free travel, but has emerged as a means of providing women with a dignified, secure, and digitally empowered travel experience.

The Delhi government had launched the 'Saheli Pink National Common Mobility Card' in March.

**Timings**  
DELHI

**WEDNESDAY, MAY. 20**

RISE 05:28 SET 19:08  
RISE 08:38 SET 23:13

**THURSDAY, MAY. 21**

RISE 05:28 SET 19:08  
RISE 09:49 SET 23:58

**FRIDAY, MAY. 22**

RISE 05:27 SET 19:09  
RISE 10:56 SET 00:00

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Delhi City 43 26  
Safdarjang 43 26  
Palam 44 27

**Delhi Palam Today**  
43°C The dry weather to continue. Day will be very hot and uneasy with moderate winds. A comfortable night.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
44°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very hot and uneasy with moderate winds. Heat wave like conditions may occur.

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**THE HINDU**

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## Rape accused gets grand welcome after bail in Ghaziabad

**Mayank Kumar**  
LUCKNOW

Sushil Prajapati, a former member of the Hindu Yuva Vahini accused of raping a law student, was accorded a grand welcome by his supporters after being released on bail in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad, triggering widespread outrage after a purported video of the incident went viral on social media.

In the viral video, the accused is seen being greeted with garlands and carried on the shoulders of his supporters during a celebratory procession.

Mr. Prajapati got bail after eight months in custody. The video was reportedly shot on May 17 after his release from Dasna jail.

Denouncing the incident, Samajwadi Party pre-

sident Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday said, "Nothing could be more shameful than the way a senior office-bearer, accused of rape, was welcomed with flower showers and garlands after he was granted bail... hailing from a group, which the Chief Minister of the State had recently praised profusely..."

The Congress said the "hero's welcome of a rape accused is not only shameful for a civilised society but also a dangerous trend" having far-reaching consequences.

"We are seeing for the first time in independent India that such antisocial elements are being celebrated with impunity... hints at support from the ruling BJP government," Congress national secretary Shahnawaz Alam said.

## Court refuses to interfere with Yamuna Bazar eviction notices

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday refused to interfere with eviction notices issued to residents of the ecologically sensitive Yamuna Bazar area.

On May 5, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) issued notices to around 310 residential structures in Yamuna Bazar, directing occupants to vacate the area within 15 days, failing which demolition action could be initiated.

Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav said the petition filed by the Yamuna Bazar Residents Welfare Association challenging the notices was not maintainable as it lacked "binding affidavits" from residents to "bear the consequences" of the petition.

"This court is not in-

### The Delhi HC said the plea is not maintainable as it lacks 'binding affidavits' from the residents

clined to entertain the writ petition. This petition is not a PIL and has been filed by the association at the instance of residents. In the absence of authorisation, the petition is not maintainable," the court said while rejecting the plea. The court, however, clarified that the petitioner would be at liberty to file a proper petition with authorisation from residents.

In the petition, the association challenged the "mass eviction" notices issued by the DDMA, asserting that they were based on "generalised assumptions and speculative apprehension".

It said the construction on the ghats was not a "recent encroachment" or in the nature of *jhuggis*, and that records showed the "long-standing continuity and recognition of Panda communities residing and performing religious functions at the said ghats".

### 'Serious threat'

According to the DDMA, Yamuna Bazar is "inundated during the annual Yamuna floods", posing a serious threat to human life, cattle and property.

On May 18, on the directions of the DDMA, the Delhi Development Authority issued a fresh notice directing residents to "voluntarily vacate the government land and remove all encroachments, temporary or permanent structures, and belongings within 15 days from the date of issue of the notice".

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## IN BRIEF



## Sixth tiger dies of suspected CDV in M.P.'s Kanha Reserve

Another tiger has been found dead in Madhya Pradesh's Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR), with the authorities suspecting it to be the sixth death within a month due to the canine distemper virus (CDV), which spreads through dogs. The six-year-old male tiger was found dead on Tuesday in compartment number 156 of Mohgaon beat under the Mukki range. KTR Deputy Director P. K. Verma told *The Hindu* that the initial findings of the post-mortem examination show a serious lung infection in the feline, prompting the suspicion of the presence of CDV, as well as some superficial injury marks.

## Punjabi singer's body found in Ludhiana canal; 2 arrested

The body of a 29-year-old Punjabi singer was found in a canal in Ludhiana, six days after she went missing, police said on Tuesday. Inder Kaur, alias Yashinder Kaur, went missing on May 13 after leaving home in her car to buy groceries. Her brother accused Sukhwinder Singh, his father, Pritam Singh and friend Karamjit Singh of kidnapping her at gunpoint, police said. According to the victim's family, Sukhwinder, who hailed from Moga but lived in Canada, pressured Kaur to marry him despite already being married. Preliminary probe showed Sukhwinder allegedly shot her dead before dumping the body and car into the canal and fleeing to Canada. PTI

## Gehlot accuses Rajasthan govt., Centre of misleading people on inflation, fuel shortage issues

The Hindu Bureau  
JAIPUR



Former CM Ashok Gehlot

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday accused both the Central and the State governments of misleading the people on inflation amid the shortage of fuel and the increasing prices of vegetables, fruits, milk and all other essential commodities. The veteran Congress leader said the government was not making efforts to bring the situation under control.

Mr. Gehlot said the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was engrossed in elections during the last three months despite Congress leader Rahul Gandhi having warned that a "storm of inflation" was coming to the country. "The Prime Minister himself was spreading illusions that everything was fine. As

soon as elections are over, shortage of petrol and diesel has started and the fuel prices have increased," he said.

The former Chief Minister said both the Central and the State governments were "spreading falsehood" about the price situation. "There is still time for the government to act and clarify the situation before the public... A situation will arise in the near future that no one can ima-

## 'TVK govt. committed to two-language policy in T.N.'

Existing policy of teaching Tamil and English will be followed, says Minister. His comments assume significance as the Centre had recently sent a reminder on implementation of PM SHRI in the State

N. Sai Charan  
Meghna M.  
CHENNAI

Minister for School Education, Tamil Development, and Information and Publicity Rajmohan on Tuesday said the TVK government will follow the existing two-language policy – Tamil and English – in schools. "Our government will not allow a three-language formula. We will not yield to any indirect pressure, and the TVK will remain steadfast, without any compromise, in its stand on the two-language policy," he told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Rajmohan's comments assume significance as the Union Ministry of Education had recently sent a reminder on the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme in Tamil Nadu.

To a question on the Supreme Court's directive in December 2025, asking the Tamil Nadu government to identify land for establishing Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas, the Minister said the matter was under discussion. "I have been dis-



We will not yield to any indirect pressure, and the TVK will remain steadfast in its stand on the two-language policy in the State

RAJMOHAN  
Minister for School Education

cussing this with officials of the School Education Department. An appropriate decision will be taken," he said.

The Minister said the infrastructure gaps in government schools will be addressed through public-private partnerships. "Education is the foundational strength for the development of Tamil Nadu. While the number of government schools is higher than that of private schools, enrolment in government schools is low. Measures will be taken to address this gap," he said.

When asked whether his government would take steps to bring the Chola-era Anaimangalam copper plates to Tamil Nadu, Mr. Rajmohan, who is also the Minister for Archaeology, said, "The Anaimangalam

copper plates are a treasure of Tamil Nadu."

He added that the government would take steps to bring the artefacts to Tamil Nadu and ensure that they are taken to various prominent places across the State for public display and educational purposes. He also said measures would be taken to house the copper plates in Thanjavur, the capital of King Raja Raja Chola I.

The copper plates, which were in the possession of Leiden University in the Netherlands until a few days ago, were handed over to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his recent visit to the country.

Responding to a question on whether his government would urge the Centre to release the reports on the first two phas-

es of excavations conducted at Keeladi in Sivaganga district by the Archaeological Survey of India's then Superintending Archaeologist Amarnath Ramakrishna, Mr. Rajmohan said the TVK government would leave no stone unturned in preserving and promoting Tamil heritage and culture.

Recalling his journey from being a radio presenter and YouTuber to becoming the School Education Minister, Mr. Rajmohan said he had always been open to learning. "I have journeyed with the media, from working for a news channel and radio, and then moving to YouTube. I will continue to learn with the officials and teachers, while also sharing my own experiences," he added.

## School reopening

Later, while addressing a press conference, the Minister said schools will reopen for Classes 1 to 3 on June 4, and for Classes 4 to 12 on June 1. The Minister also said the results of the Class 10 public examination will be released at Anna Centenary Library at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday.

## Shivraj cites fertilizer crunch, pushes for more organic farming

Press Trust of India  
BHUBANESWAR



Centre making every effort to ensure fertilizer availability, says Union Agriculture Minister

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday acknowledged challenges in procuring fertilizers from the international market, urging States and farmers to increasingly adopt organic farming as an alternative.

Addressing the Eastern Zonal Agriculture Conference in Bhubaneswar, Mr. Chouhan said the Centre was making every possible effort to ensure fertilizer availability for farmers despite global supply constraints.

He said fertilizer cost has also escalated in the international market due to West Asia crisis.

There are about 28 countries from which fertilizers can be imported. The Centre is in contact with these countries and trying to procure wherever they are available and at whatever cost, Mr. Chouhan said.

He stressed the need to prevent the diversion and misuse of subsidised fertilizers during the ongoing supply crunch.

Mr. Chouhan warned that indiscriminate use of fertilisers without soil testing increases input costs and damage soil fertility.

The Minister also called

upon States and cultivators to promote organic farming to preserve soil health for future generations.

"Every farmer should begin organic farming on at least a portion of their land," he said.

## 'New Bills planned'

Mr. Chouhan said the Centre is planning to introduce two new Bills aimed at strengthening the legal framework for ensuring the availability of quality pesticides and seeds.

Expressing concern over the possible impact of El Nino on agriculture this year, he said forecasts indicate a likelihood of deficient rainfall during the middle of the crop season.

"In such a situation, farmers should be advised to cultivate crops that are less vulnerable to rainfall fluctuations," he said.

## 'Alarming rise' in crimes against women since 'new emperor' took oath: Tejashwi

Amit Bhelari  
PATNA



Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav addressing reporters in Patna on Tuesday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Leader of the Opposition (LoP) in the Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday released a list of 50 incidents of crimes against women reported in the State within one month since Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Samrat Choudhary took oath as Chief Minister on April 15.

The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader alleged that there has been an "alarming rise" in crimes against women in Bihar and charged the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the State with "failing to ensure their safety".

## 'Daughters unsafe'

Addressing reporters at his official residence in Patna, Mr. Yadav said under the rule of the "new emperor [Samrat Choudhary] of Bihar", mothers, sisters, and daughters are unsafe.

Providing a chronological account of incidents that took place against women from April 15 to May 15, he said not a single day goes by in Bihar without incidents of murder, rape, molestation, or other crimes against women.

The LoP clarified that the details of the incidents he was presenting were reports published in various newspapers. He urged the people of Bihar to stand up, take a firm stance on such matters, and hold the government accountable

by demanding answers.

Accompanied by women legislators Urmila Thakur, Anita Devi, Murni Rajak, and Karishma Rai, the RJD leader also questioned the NDA government's claim of ensuring women's empowerment.

## 'Politics of tokenism'

He said not only the safety of women but also their health has been compromised in Bihar, with 65% of women suffering from anaemia. "Women are not even being provided with

nutritious food. In the name of women's empowerment, people in power are merely engaging in eye-wash and practising a politics of tokenism," he said.

"This government lured women voters by transferring ₹10,000 into their bank accounts days before the Assembly poll in Bihar. They were promised further instalments of ₹2 lakh after the elections, with assurances that within six months the remaining amount would be credited to their accounts. Six months have passed but where is the second instalment?" Mr. Yadav added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the Mukhyamantri Mahila Roggar Yojana and transferred ₹10,000 each to the bank accounts of 75 lakh women in September 2025.

The LoP alleged that the government is making lofty announcements, yet nothing is being implemented on the ground.

## Bihar CM launches drive to resolve grievances

The Hindu Bureau  
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Tuesday launched the 'Sahyog Shivr' initiative to resolve public grievances at the panchayat level.

"The camps will be held on the first and third Tuesday of every month for the time-bound redressal of people's problems," Mr. Choudhary said while kicking off the drive at Dumri Bujurg panchayat in Saran district. The initiative is part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government's 'Ease of Living' campaign under the 'Saat Nischay-3' programme to deliver services at citizens' doorsteps.

The Chief Minister said officials who fail to dispose of applications received at the camps within 30 days will be "automatically suspended on the 31st day".

## New phones, old woes: anganwadi workers struggle with patchy Internet, digital disconnect in U.P. villages

Ashna Butani  
CHANDAULI



Spotty Internet connectivity is adding to the woes, said workers. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

In the villages of Uttar Pradesh's Naugarh block in Chandauli district, surrounded by forests on all sides, Internet connectivity is still patchy in several areas. While anganwadi workers received new mobile phones this month from the government, accompanied with expectations of conducting a chunk of their work online, connectivity issues were not taken into consideration, they said.

During a meeting at Amdaha village, anganwadi workers from other villages in the block, including Marwatiya, Deori Kalan, and Baghi, said spotty Internet connectivity is adding to

the woes of workers already saddled with unmanageable workloads.

"Sometimes the Poshan Tracker app does not register the faces of beneficiaries due to network issues and we cannot give them the ration they are entitled to," a 50-year old

worker said.

Last year, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) mandated facial recognition authentication for beneficiaries comprising pregnant and lactating mothers as well as children up to the age of six. *The Hindu* reached out to the WCD Ministry with a detailed set of questions but has not received any response till the time of going to press.

Moreover, not everyone is equipped to deal with technology equally, the workers said. One of the younger workers in the block, in her 20s, said many of the older workers call her for help while they are at work but she is hardly able to resolve the issues herself. "The Poshan app

keeps getting updated every few days... but if the workers do not understand the features, how would they coordinate with others?" she said.

They also pointed out that they are unable to use WhatsApp because it is not loaded on the phones, which only have apps such as Poshan, a GPS tracker app, and other State scheme-specific apps. "We have to take our photos on the GPS tracker, which will show our face and our location. Then we send that to our supervisors via WhatsApp group," said another worker.

Several others told *The Hindu* that to keep one phone for WhatsApp and another for Poshan Tracker app is impossible as they

would have to shell out double the money for Internet recharge.

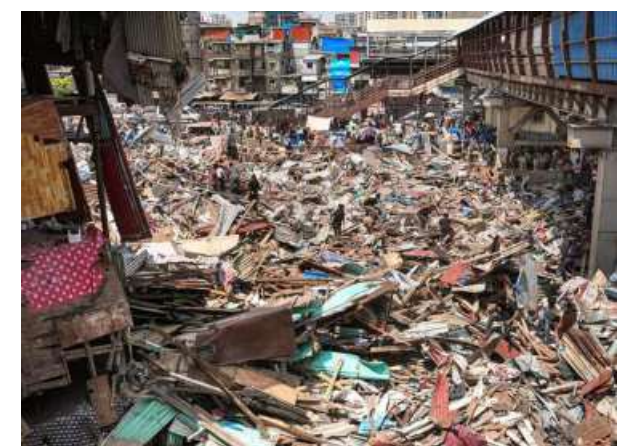
## Stumbling block

The workers pointed out that they are part of various groups where they coordinate with each other and officials such as the 'ICDS Naugarh Daily' group, 'Anganwadi homework group', among others.

Their supervisor, Saroj Giri, acknowledged the technological challenges. "Many of the workers are elderly and are still learning how to navigate the phones. They need WhatsApp too because some of the work comes online and we have to share it with them. We have to follow the government's directions," the supervisor said.

## Railways begins anti-encroachment drive near Mumbai's Bandra station

Snehal Mutha  
MUMBAI



The scene after a demolition drive at Gareeb Nagar slums near Bandra East railway station on Tuesday. PTI

The Western Railway (WR) on Tuesday launched a five-day anti-encroachment drive near Bandra East railway station, following the Bombay High Court's order allowing the railway authorities to remove the illegal structures.

## Heavy security

The drive is set to clear at least 400 unauthorised structures across 5,200 square metres of land. The demolitions were carried out under heavy security. Over 1,000 personnel from Railway Protection Force, the Government Railway Police, the State police were deployed amid opposition from the residents.

"The drive is to be seen

from a wider context as it is deeply related to safety and the augmentation plan of railways," said a WR spokesperson, adding that it was not a sudden plan but has been in process since 2017. According to WR, the

encroached land will be used for the expansion of the fifth and sixth railway lines to run between Santacruz and Mumbai Central and aims to reduce congestion on Mumbai's western railway network.



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**Safe zone:** Food being served to rescued labourers and children at a shelter at Armoor in Telangana's Nizamabad district on Tuesday.

## Over 400 bonded labourers rescued from Telangana kilns

**Lavpreet Kaur**  
HYDERABAD

More than 400 people, including nearly 100 children, kept in "bonded labour-like conditions" in brick kilns were rescued in a large-scale operation in Telangana's Nizamabad district on Tuesday.

The operation was carried out at four brick kilns in Degam village, also known as Degaon, where migrant workers from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Odisha were allegedly being forced to work under exploitative conditions.

Officials said the searches were conducted at two sites belonging to BTR Brick Kiln, identified as the primary location, along with adjoining kilns linked to SSV Brick Kiln.

Armoor Police Inspector Satyanarayana said that by 8 p.m., around 200 persons had already been formally counted, while the process of identifying and verifying all rescued labourers will continue late

into Tuesday night. Several of those rescued were women and children, many showing visible signs of malnourishment.

Preliminary inquiry indicated that the labourers were denied regular wages and instead were issued 'vouchers' that could only be exchanged for essential goods. A labourer from Tamil Nadu said he had been working at the kiln for nearly four years without receiving any direct wages and that his family survived on a weekly grocery voucher worth ₹200.

Labourers also alleged restrictions on movement, inability to freely change employment or negotiate wages, and instances of intimidation, physical violence and sexual abuse.

The operation was initiated following a tip-off from relatives of one of the labourers. The rescued workers were later shifted to a facility, where food and temporary shelter arrangements were made. Rehabilitation measures will follow.

## Consensus eludes portfolio allocation in Kerala Cabinet

Delay in announcing appointments in the Gazette points to haggling among factions in the ruling front; Chennithala and Muraliedharan may hold Home and Health portfolios, respectively

**G Anand**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The newly sworn-in Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) government's attempt to finalise Cabinet portfolios appeared to run into unexpected headwinds on Tuesday.

The UDF hinted on Monday that it had reached a broad agreement among various factions in the Congress and crucial allies on portfolio allocation. Notably, senior Congress leaders Ramesh Chennithala and K. Muraliedharan signalled that they would hold the Home and Health portfolios, respectively.

However, the apparent dawdling in announcing



**Open corridors:** Chief Minister V. D. Satheesan's convoy exiting the Secretariat's north gate, shut for a long time during the LDF government's term owing to frequent protests. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

the appointments in the government Gazette suggests that haggling over ministerial portfolios continued unabated in the UDF.

According to a few UDF insiders, the finalisation of some portfolios appeared to be stalled because of the

Latin Catholic Church's insistence that the Congress retain the Fisheries portfolio, which, according to him, had been tentatively promised to the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML).

They claimed that the IUML had initially agreed

to allow the Congress to hold the portfolio in exchange for the Higher Education Department, which, by some accounts, is promised to Roji M. John, a Congress MLA-elect.

However, the sources claimed that some sections in the IUML had urged the leadership not to concede the party's "legitimate" claim to Higher Education, given the "backwardness" of northern Kerala, chiefly the Malabar region.

Meanwhile, the new government has tasked a special committee chaired by retired civil servant and former Vice-Chairperson of the Kerala State Planning Board K.M. Chandrasekhar, with preparing a White Paper on the State's finances.

## Despite concerns over SIR, parties slow in posting booth-level agents in Karnataka

**Afshan Yasmeen**  
BENGALURU

Even as political parties have raised concerns over the proposed special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, their response in appointing booth-level agents (BLAs) across Karnataka has remained uneven.

Election officials said the BLAs play a key role in coordinating with booth-

level officers (BLOs) during electoral roll revision exercises and in facilitating communication between political parties and election authorities. While the BLAs do not interfere in the registration process, they help identify discrepancies in electoral rolls at the polling station level.

Although one BLA is expected for each polling station, the Congress and the BJP together have so far ap-

pointed only about half the required number of 59,050, according to official data.

The Congress has appointed 28,848 BLAs across Karnataka, while the BJP has named 25,827 agents. The Janata Dal (Secular) has appointed 811 BLAs. Other recognised parties, including the AAP, BSP, NPP and CPI(M), have not reported any appointments so far.

However, representatives of these parties have disputed the official figures. Congress leaders claimed their party was leading in appointments, while the BJP maintained that it had appointed more than 40,000 BLAs. The JD (S) said it had appointed nearly 12,000 BLAs. All three parties alleged that the Election Commission had not fully updated the data submitted by them.

## Azim Premji University 'targeting' students, say professors

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

Over 179 professors, faculty, students, scholars, civil society organisations and citizens, including Zoya Hassan, Professor Emerita, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, have written an open letter to Azim Premji University (APU) seeking revocation of the suspension of a student.

On May 8, APU suspended a student for two years and issued a written warning to two others, after members of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad vandalised campus property in February protesting a student-led discussion on the Kashmir issue.

In the letter, the professors and scholars strongly condemned the "targeting of students by the APU administration", and called upon the university to immediately revoke the suspension order and withdraw all punitive actions against the students.

### 'Harsh punishment'

They also said that such actions will not only jeopardise the academic future and well-being of the students but also undermine the university's role as a space for critical inquiry, democratic engagement, and intellectual freedom. Conversations, debates, and forms of collective engagement on campuses are as important as university education. "While the students at APU may not have followed certain university-mandated administrative procedures, such lapses cannot justify punishments that are so severe," they added.

## Police to move petition for custody of Minister's son

**The Hindu Bureau**  
HYDERABAD

Three days after the arrest of Bandi Sai Bageerath in connection with a Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act case, the Cyberabad police are preparing to file a custody petition seeking his interrogation in the case.

Mr. Bageerath, son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay, was arrested on May 16, nearly a week after a case was registered at the Petbasheerabad police station based on a complaint lodged by the mother of a 17-year-old girl. The complainant accused him of sexually assaulting and emotionally manipulating her daughter over several months. Following the victim's statement, the police added Section 64(2)(m) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhi-



Activists staging a protest in Hyderabad recently, seeking action against Bandi Bageerath. NAGARA GOPAL

ta pertaining to repeated rape and Section 5(1) read with Section 6 of the POCSO Act relating to aggravated penetrative sexual assault.

Meanwhile, investigators have completed the reconstruction of the sequence of events described by the victim by verifying evidence from

multiple locations, including a farmhouse where the victim alleged that she was assaulted on New Year's eve. Police teams verified examined CCTV footage, analysed digital trails and questioned staff members. Investigators suspect that the accused deleted key evidence from his phone before his arrest.

## Police bust modelling job racket in Kerala; 3 held

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOCHI

The Kochi City police have busted a suspected human trafficking racket that allegedly lured women from Kerala to Dubai with promises of modelling opportunities and later sexually exploited them.

The Maradu police have arrested three women so far and a special investigation team has been formed to further probe the case. The arrested include Toicy Sindhu of Guruvayur, Aleena Abraham of Ponguvilla, Thiruvananthapuram and Manjima of Ponnani.

The action against the accused came on complaints given by two victims. They said they were forcibly confined to apartments in Dubai and subjected to repeated abuse.

## Elephant Marthanda dies a day after clash in Kodagu; camp shut

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MYSURU

A day after a clash between captive elephants Kanjan and Marthanda at the Dubare Elephant Camp in Karnataka's Kodagu district, Marthanda, which sustained serious injuries in the fight, died on Tuesday.

The incident claimed the life of a woman tourist from Tamil Nadu who was caught in their tussle in the Cauvery.

The elephant's death cast a pall of gloom over mahouts, kavadis and forest personnel at the popular elephant camp.

Expressing grief over the death of the tourist and the elephant, Kodagu district in-charge Minister N.S. Boseraju said such incidents should not recur in

## TMC-ruled Kolkata civic body issues notice to Abhishek

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress (TMC)-administered Kolkata Municipal Corporation has issued notices to party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee over several properties linked to him. The civic body has sought documents related to building plan approvals and clarification on whether permission was taken for additional construction. Over the past few days, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari has been talking about the properties owned by the TMC general secretary and other party leaders.

On Monday, the CM said he had sought details of the properties of TMC leaders from the Municipal Affairs Department and the Kolkata Municipal Corporation Commissioner.

### Under scanner

"First is Belehata's Raju Naskar, who has 18 properties. Second is Kasba's Sona Pappu, who has 24 properties. Third is Bhatija (nephew in Hindi), Abhishek Banerjee. There are 14 properties registered in the name of the Leaps and Bounds company, four in his name, and six in his father's name. The fourth is the son of Javed (Ahmed) Khan (Trinamool's Kasba MLA), who has 90 properties," said Mr. Adhikari.

Earlier, an FIR was registered at the Bidhannagar North Cyber Crime police station by social activist Rajib Sarkar, who alleged that Mr. Abhishek delivered



Diamond Harbour MP Abhishek Banerjee has found himself at the receiving end of criticism by the BJP since the TMC's loss in the Assembly poll. FILE PHOTO

provocative speeches and threatened Union Home Minister Amit Shah between April 27 and May 3.

On Monday, the Lok Sabha member from Diamond Harbour constituency filed a petition before the Calcutta High Court seeking the quashing of the FIR filed over the alleged inflammatory remarks.

### Hearing soon

Senior advocate and TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee said the matter is likely to come up for hearing later this week before the Bench of Justice Saugata Bhattacharyya. After the defeat in the West Bengal Assembly election, Mr. Abhishek has been at the receiving end of criticism from several leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party, including State president Samik Bhattacharya, who criticised his absence from campaigning in the Falta Assembly constituency, where repolling will be held on Thursday.

**The Hindu Bureau**  
BENGALURU

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## Fisherman families in A.P. get ₹20,000 each

**N.S. Chowdary**  
NELLORE

The Andhra Pradesh government has deposited ₹261.59 crore into the bank accounts of 1.3 lakh fisherman families across the State under the *Matsyakarula Sevalo* scheme.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu disbursed the amount at a programme in SPSR Nellore district on Tuesday.

"As a ban is imposed on fishing in the sea between April 15 and June 15 every year to facilitate breeding, the State government is providing financial assis-

tance of ₹20,000 to each fisherman's family during this ban period," he said.

"The government is providing a diesel subsidy of ₹9 for mechanised boats. In 2026-27, we provided the diesel subsidy worth ₹50 crore to fishing boats," he said.

Referring to the intrusion of fishermen from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry into the territorial waters of Andhra Pradesh, he said, "There is no compromise in protecting the interests of our fishermen. We will chase anyone who illegally enters the territorial water of A.P."

## M.P. woman and husband move HC over age record 'forged' by her father

**Mehul Malpani**  
BHOPAL

A woman from Madhya Pradesh, who went viral during the Kumbh Mela last year, and her actor husband, Farman Khan, have approached the Madhya Pradesh High Court alleging that her father and others forged documents to portray her as a minor after she married a man of another faith in Thiruvananthapuram.

Seeking an urgent hearing, the couple also accused the Madhya Pradesh Police of intimidation and harassment during visits to

**She alleges that her father is trying to portray her as a minor after she married a man of another faith**

Kerala as part of an investigation into a case filed against Mr. Khan, a native of Baghat district in Uttar Pradesh.

The woman, a resident of Khargone, went viral on social media while selling garlands and *rudraksha* at the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad in early 2025. She later went on to work as an ac-

tor. But a controversy erupted after she started dating and eventually married Mr. Khan in March, 2026, with her family alleging that she was only 16 years old and that Mr. Khan had "trapped her in love jihad".

Based on a complaint filed by her father and a probe by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), an FIR was registered against Mr. Khan. The NCST probe claimed that she was 17 years old, as per her birth records obtained from a government hospital in Maheshwar.

Mr. Khan is currently on anticipatory bail from the Kerala High Court.

The petition alleged that the FIR against Mr. Khan was part of a "criminal conspiracy and communal incitement", based on "forged government documents".

The woman claimed that her "genuine birth certificate has been maliciously cancelled on the [M.P.] government portal without notice or authority". The petitioners have sought restoration of the birth certificate and an independent investigation into the alleged conspiracy.

## 2 years after crowdfunding campaign, Kerala native set to be freed

**The Hindu Bureau**  
KOZHIKODE

Kerala native Abdul Rahim, for whom the Malayali diaspora mobilised ₹35 crore in 2024 to save him from death row, is set to be released soon from a jail in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Rahim, a native of Kozhikode was imprisoned and sentenced to death in 2006 for the murder of the 14-year-old differently abled son of his employer. He had claimed that it was an accident. A turning point in the case took place when the Malayali diaspora managed to raise ₹35 crore, the blood money the victim's family had demanded, in May 2024. The victim's family later agreed to cancel the death sentence after receiving the money. The Saudi court revoked the death sentence in July 2024.

However, the Riyadh Criminal Court in May 2025 sentenced him to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment under the Public Rights Act. That term is ending on Tuesday.

His family members have said that Mr. Rahim is expected to be released soon after the completion of further legal formalities.

# Pact with Cong. to continue; focus will be on victory, not seats: SP

Akhilesh Yadav says his party has never betrayed anyone and ensured its allies benefit from the tie-up; inflation, fuel prices, Agniveers, farmers, *Shiksha Mitras* will be face of Oppn., he adds

**Press Trust of India**  
LUCKNOW

**S**amajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav said on Tuesday that the alliance with its partners would continue in future elections, asserting that the formula will be "victory, not seats".

Responding to a query at an event organised by a media publication, Mr. Yadav said his party has vast experience in running alliances and always ensured that its allies benefited from the arrangement. "We have experience of alliances and the party has always ensured gains for its allies. We have never betrayed anyone. The alliance that exists today will continue ahead," he said.



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav offering prasad to people on the occasion of Bada Mangal in Lucknow on Tuesday. PTI

He said future alliance discussions would not revolve around bargaining for seats but around ensuring electoral success.

"Even during the Lok Sabha election, I had said that the issue was not about seats, the issue was about victory. The same formula will work again,"

he said.

Asked about the face of the Opposition, Mr. Yadav said it would be inflation, rising price of fuel, Agniveer youths, farmers, labourers and also 69,000 *Shiksha Mitras* who did not get a permanent job. He added, "What is the need of a face for the Opposi-

tion. Inflation is itself a big face."

**'New PDA'**  
Attacking the ruling party, he said, "Where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ends, PDA (*pichhade, Dalits, alpsankhyak*, an acronym he coined for backwards, Dalit and minorities) starts from there." He said PDA also stands for "Prem, Daya, Apnapan (love, kindness, affection)".

On the NEET paper leak, Mr. Yadav said there were more victims of it than were officially reckoned. "If we take into account five members of 22 lakh NEET-affected students, it will be 1.1 crore people. These are our faces," he said.

# Facing protests, Assam shelve survey for township near Tata semiconductor plant

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

The Assam government has shelved the survey of a proposed satellite township near an upcoming semiconductor plant in Morigaon district following protests from two ethnic groups.

The Tata Group is setting up the ₹27,000-crore semiconductor plant, expected to produce up to 48 million chips per day.

While locals welcomed the plant, Tiwa and Bodo tribal organisations objected to the satellite township plan.

On May 18, Morigaon

District Commissioner Anamika Tewari issued an order stating that the ongoing survey work linked to "rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R)" has been cancelled. The district authorities have been conducting surveys in Sindhisar and Naladhara near Jairoad to prepare an R&R

proposal for the planned township. Residents of these villages in the Gobha Tribal Belt, fearing eviction, protested the survey. Several groups, including the All Tiwa Students' Union, organised protest rallies a few days ago, demanding the cancellation of the township project.

# 2 more held in Odisha mob lynching case; 15 held so far

**Press Trust of India**  
BHUBANESWAR

The Crime Branch of Odisha Police on Tuesday arrested two more persons in connection with the lynching of GRP constable Soumya Ranjan Swain by a mob, taking the total number of accused persons apprehended so far to 15.

The duo had fled from their village and were hiding in a jungle in Nayagarh district, police said.

Swain was beaten to death by a mob on May 7

after a woman accused him of attempting to rape her following a collision between his motorcycle and her two-wheeler.

"Main accused Panchanan Badjena alias Kalia and Ranjit Rana have been apprehended," the Crime Branch said in a statement.

So far, a total of 15 accused persons have been arrested, of which 11 were arrested earlier.

Meanwhile, Swain's father Dushasan Swain has demanded that the case be handed over to the CBI.

**APPOINTMENT**

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Sl. No.	Post	No. of Post
01	<b>PROFESSOR / ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR</b>	02

**Note:** 1. Salary as per the rules of JSSAHER.  
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3. Qualification and experience as per NMC Norms

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**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**

E-Tender Notice No. Com/DNR/GSS/Housekeeping/26  
Divisional Railway Manager (Comml), East Central Railway, Danapur for and on behalf of President of India, invites e-tender from Firms having area of operation with previous experience of similar work for award of Housekeeping Services and Cleanliness activities at eight (08) nos. of Category-1 Goods Sheds under Danapur division for a period of four years (1461 days).

1. Name of the work with its location : Housekeeping Services and Cleanliness activities at eight (08) nos. of Category-1 Goods Sheds under Danapur division for a period of four years (1461 days). 2. Approx. cost of the work : ₹5,46,90,679.53/- (Rupees Five Crore Forty-Six Lakhs Ninety Thousand Six Hundred Seventy-Nine and paise Fifty-Three only). 3. Bid Security/EMD amount : ₹4,23,45,00,00/- (Rupees Four Lakh Twenty-Three Thousand Four Hundred Fifty only) or as stipulated on GeM Bid Document whichever is higher. 4. Date & Time of online tender and opening of Tender : Date and time for closing of tender-upto 14:00 hrs. on 08.06.2026. Date and time for opening of tender-After 14:30 hrs. on 08.06.2026. 5. Website particulars, Notice Board Location where complete details (Notice and tender documents) of tender can be seen : Website particulars - [www.gem.gov.in](http://www.gem.gov.in), Notice Board Locations- Office of the Sr. Divnl. Comml. Manager, East Central Railway, Danapur. Divisional Railway Manager (Comml.) ECR/Danapur PR/0265/DNR/Comml./T/26-27/48

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**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, PHULBANI MINOR IRRIGATION CIRCLE, PHULBANI.**  
No. 496/PMIC, dtd. 12.05.2026 - **1<sup>st</sup> CORRIGENDUM TO BID**

The following modifications are made in respect of BID IDENTIFICATION NO. ACEPMIC-01/2026-27 vide Lr. No.482 dt.06.05.2026 under Phulbani Minor Irrigation Circle, Phulbani. All other terms and conditions stipulated in online Tender Call Notice will remain unchanged.

Sl.No. of TCN	Name of the work	Available amount in lakh vide Column No.3 & 4 of TCN		Modified value may be treated as	
		Col No.3 Approx. Cost in lakhs	Col. No.4 EMD/Bid Security (Rs.)	Approx. Cost in lakhs in Col No.3	EMD/Bid Security (Rs.) in Col. No.4
1	Renovation to Kanganinalla MIP in Phulbani Block of Kandhamal District under DPIW Scheme for the year 2025-26.	235.90	2,36,000/-	230.91	2,31,000/-
2	Construction of Mahibila Check Dam near village Mahibila of Baragaon GP in Kantamal Block of Boudh District.	123.18	1,23,500/-	123.19	1,23,200/-
3	Construction of canal Lining of "Right Main Canal from RD 250M to RD 1710M & Left Main Canal from RD 0 Mt to RD 1000Mt of Kupati MIP at Kupati in Bhanjanagar Block under MMGLY Scheme.	166.22	1,66,500/-	166.20	1,66,200/-

Other details can be seen in the online bidding documents from the e-Procurement market place : <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>  
Additional Chief Engineer, Phulbani M.I.Circle, Phulbani  
32001/243/2627 OIPR-32001/32521/1726-27/0092

**CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research**  
(Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)  
Barwa Road, Dhanbad (Jharkhand)

**Advt. No. : CIMFR-02/2026**

CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research, Dhanbad, a premier research institute under Council of Scientific & Industrial Research, an autonomous body under Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Govt invites application from Indian nationals for the following posts of Technician/Gr. II, Level-02 (7th CPC).

Designation	No. of Posts & Reservation	Scale of Pay as per 7th CPC	Upper Age Limit not exceeding (as on the last date of submission of application as mentioned in the advt.)
Technician-1 Group-II (1)	30 (including PwBD: 02 & ESM: 03) {UR: 10, EWS: 05, OBC: 02, SC: 02, ST: 11, PwBD: 02 (one each HH & VH with low vision) & ESM: 03}	Level-2 (Rs. 19,900-63,200)	28 Years

Last date for submission of application is **19-06-2026 till 05:00 P.M.** For details including eligibility conditions, Reservation status and terms & conditions etc., please refer to Website [www.cimfr.res.in](http://www.cimfr.res.in). Any addendum/modification/notifications in connection with this advertisement shall be posted on our website only.

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Controller of Administration

# OPPORTUNITIES

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For detailed notification and online application, please visit:  
[www.lifecarehll.com/careers](http://www.lifecarehll.com/careers)  
Last date for submission of online application: **03.06.2026**

**एचएलएल लाइफकेयर लिमिटेड**  
(भारत सरकार का उद्यम) **HLL Lifecare Limited**  
(A Government of India Enterprise)  
CIN: U25193 KL 1966 GOI 002621

Corporate & Regd. Office: Poojappura, Thiruvananthapuram-695 012, Kerala

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HLL invites applications for the following positions:

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<b>Deputy Manager (Procurement Services Division)</b>	Nagpur		1
<b>Associate Manager (Procurement Services Division)</b>	Thiruvananthapuram, Delhi	Fixed Term Contract Basis	2
<b>Junior Manager (Procurement Services Division)</b>	Rajasthan, Odisha		4
<b>Procurement Assistant</b>	Assam, Delhi, Kashmir, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram		5

Apply Online : [www.lifecarehll.com/careers](http://www.lifecarehll.com/careers)  
Last Date for Submission of Application : **03.06.2026**

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- Fleet Supervisor

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Last date of receipt of applications 10th June 2026.

**SBI**  
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Phone: 022-22820427

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**DATE FOR FILING ONLINE APPLICATION & PAYMENT OF FEES: FROM 13.05.2026 to 02.06.2026.**

Place: Mumbai  
Date: 13.05.2026  
General Manager (RP & PM)

**GENERAL**

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# WORLD IBD DAY



## Medication Safety During Pregnancy



**Dr Pankaj Puri**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any families fear that IBD medicines will harm the fetus and suggest stopping all drugs. This is dangerous, as a flare-up is often riskier for the baby than the medicine.

**Tips:** Never stop your maintenance medication without consulting your doctor. Most modern IBD drugs are considered safe during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

**Conclusion:** A healthy mother is essential for a healthy baby; keep your inflammation under control throughout your journey.

## The Truth About "Heat" in Foods



**Dr S K Thakur**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**I**n Indian traditional thought, some foods are considered "Garam" (hot). While interesting, IBD inflammation is a cellular process, not just "body heat."

**Tips:** Instead of avoiding "hot" foods blindly, keep a food diary to see what actually irritates your bowel. Science-based triggers vary from person to person.

**Conclusion:** Base your diet on your personal experience and clinical advice rather than general myths.

## Fiber is Your Friend



**Dr Deepak Lahoti**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any patients come to me complaining of bloating and irregular cycles. Often, the culprit is a diet heavy in processed flour (maida) rather than whole grains.

**Tips:** Add more fiber to your plate. Switch to whole-wheat rotis, include green leafy vegetables, and eat whole fruits instead of drinking juices. Fiber adds bulk to your stool, making it easier to pass.

**Conclusion:** Small changes in your diet lead to big changes in your health. Eat fresh, stay light!

## IBD and Breastfeeding



**Dr Dinesh Kr Singal**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**N**ew mothers often worry that their IBD medication will pass through breast milk and affect the infant.

**Tips:** Most maintenance medications for IBD are compatible with breastfeeding. The benefits of breastfeeding often outweigh the tiny amounts of medicine that might reach the baby.

**Conclusion:** Continue to nurture your child while staying on your treatment plan; both are possible with expert advice.

## IBD and the Menstrual Cycle



**Dr Nishant Nagpal**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any Indian women notice that their IBD symptoms, like bloating and diarrhea, worsen just before or during their periods. This is due to hormonal shifts that affect gut sensitivity.

**Tips:** Keep a "symptom calendar" to track flares against your cycle. During these days, stick to extra-gentle foods like khichdi and prioritize rest to manage the double load of cramping.

**Conclusion:** Understanding the link between your hormones and your gut helps you prepare better for monthly fluctuations.

## The Risk of "Home Remedies"



**Dr Hitendra K Garg**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**T**aking advice from neighbors to eat raw garlic or neem to "cleanse" the gut can backfire. These can be very harsh on an already inflamed intestinal wall.

**Tips:** Before trying any "Gharelu Nuskhe" (home remedies), ask your specialist. What works for a normal stomach might be harmful for an IBD gut.

**Conclusion:** Your gut is sensitive; treat it with the gentleness that medical science recommends.

## The Gut-Brain Connection

**D**id you know your gut and brain are constantly talking? Stress doesn't cause IBD, but it sends signals that can make your intestines cramp and bleed more.

**Tips:** When you feel a "gut feeling" of anxiety, practice five minutes of deep belly breathing. This calms the Vagus nerve, which connects your brain to your digestive system.

**Conclusion:** A calm mind is a powerful ally in keeping your gut symptoms under control.



**Dr Sudeep Khanna**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

## The Water Secret



**Dr J S Bhogal**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**C**onstipation is a common struggle for many Indians, often caused by our changing lifestyles. It isn't just a stomach issue; it affects your whole day's energy.

**Tips:** The simplest remedy is hydration. Ensure you drink at least 8-10 glasses of water daily. Warm water in the morning can act as a natural stimulant for your bowels.

**Conclusion:** Don't let discomfort hold you back. Start your day with water for a smoother tomorrow. If symptoms persist, always consult a professional.

## Avoiding the "Why Me?" Trap



**Dr Vinod Arora**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**C**hronic illness often leads to feelings of "Why did this happen to me?" This "victim mindset" can lead to depression, which further weakens the immune system.

**Tips:** Practice daily gratitude. Write down three things that went well today, even if they are small. Shifting your focus from "illness" to "wellness" changes your biology.

**Conclusion:** A positive outlook doesn't cure IBD, but it makes the journey significantly easier to manage.

## Meditation: The Mental Medicine



**Dr Shekhar Singh Jadaun**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**C**linical studies show that regular meditation can actually lower the inflammatory markers in the blood of IBD patients. Start with just 5 minutes a day using a simple guided app or focusing on your breath.

**Tips:** Consistency matters more than the duration when you are starting out.

**Conclusion:** Meditation is a "prescription" for your mind that has no side effects and costs nothing.

## Managing "Period Pain" vs. IBD Pain



**Dr M Qaleem**  
Surgical Gastroenterologist

**I**t can be difficult to distinguish between menstrual cramps and IBD abdominal pain. Often, they occur together, leading to significant distress.

**Tips:** Avoid taking NSAIDs like Ibuprofen or Mefetal for period pain, as these can trigger IBD flares. Stick to Paracetamol or use a warm heating pad for relief.

**Conclusion:** Choosing the right pain management is crucial to avoid accidentally worsening your gut inflammation.

## Can IBD Turn into Cancer?

**A** common fear is that chronic inflammation leads to cancer. While there is a slightly higher risk after 8-10 years of disease, it is highly preventable.

**Tips:** The best way to prevent cancer is to stay in "deep remission" and have regular surveillance colonoscopies as recommended by your gastroenterologist.

**Conclusion:** If you control the inflammation, you effectively control the long-term risks. Knowledge is your best protection.



**Dr Harender Singh**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

## Does Sugar Cause IBD?



**Dr Hitesh Singh**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**W**hile sugar doesn't "cause" IBD, a diet high in refined sweets (like mithai and sodas) can feed "bad" bacteria in the gut, leading to increased bloating and inflammation.

**Tips:** You don't have to quit sugar entirely, but limit processed sweets. Use natural sweetness from fruits like bananas or small amounts of jaggery (gur) instead.

**Conclusion:** Moderation is key; reducing refined sugar helps maintain a healthier bacterial balance in your digestive tract.

## When to See a Specialist



**Dr Ashish Garg**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**W**hile lifestyle changes help, IBS-C requires professional monitoring. "Alarm symptoms" like sudden weight loss or blood in stool are not typical of IBS.

**Tips:** Maintain a symptom log to show your doctor. If home remedies don't provide relief within two weeks, seek a gastroenterologist's advice.

**Conclusion:** Self-care is important, but a doctor's guidance ensures your treatment plan is safe, effective, and tailored to your specific needs.





# WORLD IBD DAY



## Fiber is Your Friend



**Dr Ashok Goyal**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any patients come to me complaining of bloating and irregular cycles. Often, the culprit is a diet heavy in processed flour (maida) rather than whole grains. **Tips:** Add more fiber to your plate. Switch to whole-wheat rotis, include green leafy vegetables, and eat whole fruits instead of drinking juices. Fiber adds bulk to your stool, making it easier to pass. **Conclusion:** Small changes in your diet lead to big changes in your health. Eat fresh, stay light.

## Meal Timing Matters



**Dr Gaurav Sharma**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**O**ur body follows a circadian rhythm. Irregular eating habits disrupt the "migrating motor complex," the internal wave that clears the gut. **Tips:** Eat your largest meal at lunch when digestion is strongest and keep dinner light and early, ideally before 8 PM. **Conclusion:** Regulating your clock is as important as regulating your plate; consistency helps your gut predict and perform its duties.

## IBD is Not Just an "Allergy"



**Dr Satender Pal Singh**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any Indian patients mistakenly believe IBD is a simple food allergy. In reality, it is an autoimmune condition where your body's defense system mistakenly attacks your own gut. **Tips:** Don't waste time on "allergy tests" that promise a cure by cutting out random foods. Focus on medical treatments that calm the overactive immune system. **Conclusion:** Understanding that IBD is an internal immune issue helps you choose the right scientific treatment path.

## Protein and the Gut



**Dr Hardik Ahuja**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**W**hile protein is vital, high-protein diets without enough plant fiber can severely slow down transit time in IBS-C patients. **Tips:** Balance your paneer or chicken dishes with double the amount of cooked vegetables. Opt for plant-based proteins that come with built-in fiber. **Conclusion:** Nutrition is about balance; ensuring your protein intake doesn't "clog" your system is crucial for daily comfort.

## Is Milk Always the Enemy?



**Dr Rohit Sharma**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any believe everyone with IBD must quit dairy. While some are lactose intolerant, many Indian patients tolerate curd, paneer, and even boiled milk quite well. **Tips:** Try "A2" cow milk or goat milk, which are often easier to digest. If you have no symptoms after drinking milk, there is no medical reason to stop it. **Conclusion:** Dairy is a vital source of Calcium; only remove it if it clearly triggers your symptoms.

## Are Probiotics a Cure?



**Dr Pallavi Garg**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**W**hile probiotics are popular in India, they are a "support" tool, not a replacement for IBD medication. They help balance gut bacteria but won't stop a flare. **Tips:** Use doctor-recommended probiotic strains rather than generic store-bought ones. Fresh, homemade curd remains the most natural and affordable source. **Conclusion:** Use probiotics to maintain gut health, but always keep your primary IBD medicines as the priority.

## The "Morning Tea" Myth

**W**hile a hot cup of tea might seem to help your morning routine, excessive caffeine actually dehydrates the colon, making stools harder to pass later in the day.

**Tips:** Replace your first cup of tea with a glass of warm water and a few soaked almonds or raisins.

**Conclusion:** True bowel regularity comes from hydration, not caffeine dependency.



**Dr Rishi Raman**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

## The Fiber Balance



**Dr Ankita Narula**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**F**iber is essential for IBS-C management, but the Indian diet often lacks the right kind. Soluble fiber absorbs water, making stools softer and easier to pass. **Tips:** Gradually add Isabgol (Psyllium husk) or oats to your routine. Avoid sudden high doses of raw salads, which can cause painful gas. **Conclusion:** Strategic fiber intake acts as a natural broom for your system, providing relief without the harshness of chemical stimulants.

## Planning a Safe Pregnancy



**Dr Shubham Prasad**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**A** common myth in India is that women with IBD cannot have healthy babies. In reality, most women with IBD have successful pregnancies if the disease is in remission. **Tips:** Plan your pregnancy at least six months in advance with your gastroenterologist. Ensuring you are in a "remission phase" before conceiving is the best gift for your baby. **Conclusion:** With medical guidance, IBD does not have to stand in the way of your dream of motherhood.

## Genetic Myths and Marriage



**Dr Saksham Seth**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**M**any Indians fear that IBD is 100% hereditary and will always pass to children. While there is a small genetic link, it is not a "guaranteed" inheritance.

**Tips:** If you are planning a family, speak to your doctor about "Pre-conception counseling." Most people with IBD have perfectly healthy children.

**Conclusion:** Don't let fear of genetics stop you from living a full, happy family life.

## The Importance of Small Meals



**Dr Ankita Gupta**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**L**arge, heavy meals (like a full thali) put significant pressure on the digestive system, which can trigger cramping and urgent bowel movements in IBD patients.

**Tips:** Instead of three large meals, eat five to six small, nutrient-dense snacks throughout the day. This keeps your energy up without overworking the colon.

**Conclusion:** Spacing out your food intake is a simple but effective strategy to manage daily discomfort.

## Dealing with "Body Image"

**I**BD treatments, like steroids, can cause weight gain or a "moon face," while flares can cause drastic weight loss. This can be very hard on your self-esteem.

**Tips:** Remind yourself that these physical changes are temporary and a sign that your body is fighting to heal. Focus on what your body can do, not just how it looks.

**Conclusion:** Your value is not defined by a scale or a side effect; be kind to your reflection.



**Dr Ankur Jindal**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

## Watching for Blood



**Dr Anuj Pahuja**  
Consultant Gastroenterologist

**S**eeing blood in stools is often mistaken for piles (hemorrhoids) in Indian households. While piles are common, blood is also a major red flag for Ulcerative Colitis.

**Tips:** Check if the blood is mixed with mucus or accompanied by an urgent need to go. If you feel tired or look pale (anemic), see a doctor immediately.

**Conclusion:** Never assume rectal bleeding is "just piles"; a professional diagnosis can save your life.

## Tea, Coffee, and Dehydration



**Dr Sachin Jain**  
Surgical Gastroenterologist

**W**hile many Indians use strong tea or coffee to "trigger" a bowel movement, caffeine is a diuretic that actually removes water from the colon. This makes the stool harder over time.

**Tips:** If you must have your morning chai, follow it immediately with two glasses of plain water. Try switching to herbal infusions like ginger or fennel tea which soothe the gut.

**Conclusion:** Relying on caffeine for regularity is a temporary fix that creates a long-term cycle of dehydration and constipation.





## First and foremost

Shared use of disputed religious sites should be allowed to continue

The mixed architecture of the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, has fed uncertainty about its religious identity for more than a century, with the dispute intensifying around the time of the Ram Janmabhoomi mobilisation. The Archaeological Survey of India arranged in 2003 for people of different faiths to take turns using it until a petition in the Madhya Pradesh High Court sought a new survey to determine its 'true' character. The High Court obliged in 2024. The Supreme Court also allowed the survey to proceed with safeguards. On May 15, the High Court ruled that the complex had been a Hindu temple and suggested that the Muslim side seek alternative land from the State, while insisting that it was only determining its religious character. The finding, following from Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant's revival of the Bhojshala proceedings in January, was based on the value of archaeological evidence and the Court's 2019 Ayodhya judgment, especially the principles of "preponderance of probability" and "faith and belief." While the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991 had frozen the religious character of all places of worship as on August 15, 1947, the case proceeded through a loophole in Section 4(3) exempting "ancient and historical monuments" under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958. Given the High Court's determination, this is a procedural side door that hollows out the Act's spirit.

The CJI's involvement also amounts to the Supreme Court staying civil suits while allowing PILs to achieve functionally identical outcomes. The courts may believe that they are neutral adjudicators but they are operating in politically polarised terrain. Groups such as the 'Hindu Front for Justice', which initiated parts of the Bhojshala litigation, are politically backed entities using judicial findings to consolidate agitation around contested religious sites. Archaeological ambiguities in mediaeval structures are not new; however, adversarial litigation, in the form of courts asking what was there 'first', can introduce arbitrary bounds favourable to the majoritarian political climate. A likely question is: why draw the line at mediaeval conquest and not go back to pre-Hindu histories? The Bhojshala ruling indicates that the Ayodhya verdict has paved the way to repeatedly challenge the status of minority religious sites if they are also protected by the Survey, extending a record that already includes Gyanvapi, Shahi Idgah, and the Bijamandal complex. The 1991 Act needs to be enforced strictly, with no terminations of religious character except when pertaining to title disputes already pending at the time of its enactment. Equally, shared use should be the norm as democratic coexistence outweighs any questions relating to 'first' ownership.

## Watch, but do not wait

Extra caution should guide international responses to the Ebola outbreak

With unusual alacrity, WHO declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern over the Ebola outbreak in central Africa, not even waiting for the advice of an emergency committee of expert panellists, as is convention. WHO has nevertheless been feted for swift action by global health experts, given that there are several unknowns arising from the current strain responsible for the outbreak – the uncommon Bundibugyo strain. This strain has caused fewer outbreaks in the past and the efficacy of usually effective countermeasures such as vaccines (highly effective against the common Zaire strain) and other therapies, are currently untested with Bundibugyo. The new Ebola outbreak was notified in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda. It is said to be smaller and confined to a limited cross-border region between the two nations, but there are still concerns that because of the ongoing conflict and displacement in the region, cases might go undetected, leading to a spread, and impairing access to care. According to WHO, as on May 16, 2026, eight laboratory-confirmed cases, 246 suspected cases, and 80 suspected deaths have been reported in the DRC's Ituri province. Two lab-confirmed cases (including one death) with no apparent link to each other have been reported in Kampala, Uganda. WHO has listed a clutch of factors – high positivity rate of the initial samples (eight positives among 13 samples); the confirmation of cases in Kampala; increasing trends in syndromic reporting of suspected cases; and clusters of deaths across Ituri province – that point towards a potentially much larger outbreak than what is being detected.

At any rate, WHO has rightly taken a risk-averse pathway, when dealing with a condition that has a 50% fatality rate. While it says that mortality rates can range between 25% and 50% depending on the viral strain, access to medical care, and speed of treatment, there are unknowns this time arising out of the Bundibugyo strain. Ebola is contagious, can spread from person to person, with exposure to body fluids and contaminated surfaces, and can be vicious; and the horrific 2014-16 outbreak which swept across Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, resulted in over 28,600 reported cases and 11,325 deaths. By issuing the highest level of global alert early on, WHO has solicited the co-operation of the world in handling the crises. Outbreak control activities at this stage must unfailingly include effective patient and contact tracing, intensive support for every patient, safe and dignified burials, vaccinations, if they work, and social mobilisation to spread information about the disease among the public.

After a nine-year hiatus, United States President Donald Trump once again set foot on Chinese soil, and the "Beijing Moment" immediately went viral around the world. Why did this historic meeting draw such widespread attention? What were the important outcomes achieved? And what does it mean for the future development of China-India relations? I would like to share my observations and thoughts with our Indian friends.

First, why has the China-U.S. Summit captured the world's attention? The world today is fraught with turmoil and instability. The more complex and grave the global situation becomes, the greater the need for a stable and constructive China-U.S. relationship.

Just as Robert Kuhn, President of the Kuhn Foundation of the U.S. said, "In an uncertain world, a handshake between Chinese and American leaders is the 'hard currency' the global market needs most." This statement captures the shared aspirations of the international community. As noted by some Indian media outlets, this leaders' meeting could be the most significant encounter between Chinese and American leaders since Chairman Mao Zedong met President Richard Nixon in 1972.

### Support for a new vision

Second, what are the outcomes of the China-U.S. handshake? A key outcome of this summit is that the two leaders agreed on a new vision of building a constructive China-U.S. relationship of strategic stability, providing strategic guidance for bilateral relations over the next three years and beyond. Both sides will support this new vision with tangible cooperation.

Economic and trade cooperation is the "ballast stone". Among those accompanying Mr. Trump on his visit to China were 17 American business titans, including Tesla CEO Elon Musk, Apple CEO Tim Cook and Citi Chair and CEO, Jane Fraser. During the interviews with the media at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, they stated that the successful meeting between the two leaders has injected new impetus into U.S.-China economic and trade cooperation and provided certainty for the global economy.

After multiple consultations, the two economic and trade teams produced generally balanced and positive outcomes, including establishing a



Xu Feihong

Chinese Ambassador to India

board of trade and a board of investment, addressing each other's concerns regarding market access for agricultural products, and expanding two-way trade within the framework of reciprocal tariff reductions. These efforts have stabilised economic and trade ties as well as market expectations.

Sci-tech cooperation is the "bellwether". During this visit, the news that "NVIDIA founder and CEO Jensen Huang made a dramatic, last-minute entry into Beijing aboard Air Force One" spread far and wide. This intriguing detail precisely illustrates that "decoupling and severing of supply chains" is unworkable, mutual support and common progress are the right way forward.

The *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman also wrote an article calling on China and the U.S. to work together to address the first era in human history in which common development and prosperity can only be achieved through global governance, innovation, and cooperation. Coordination between China and the U.S. on Artificial Intelligence (AI) is crucial to the future of both countries and the destiny of humanity. It is hoped that the U.S. will work in the same direction with China, making AI a new frontier for China-U.S. cooperation and a new ladder for human progress.

People-to-people exchanges are the "lubricant" of bilateral relations. During the summit, both leaders emphasised the importance of promoting such exchanges. This reflects not only the consensus between the two leaders, but also the shared aspirations of the two societies. President Xi Jinping had announced an important initiative in 2023 to invite 50,000 young Americans to China over a five-year period. Over the past three years, more than 40,000 American youths have participated in exchange and study programmes, significantly boosting interactions between the two peoples, especially among young people. A poll by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs showed that 53% of Americans favour friendly cooperation and engagement with China.

### The Taiwan question

Sensitive issues are the "red line". The Taiwan question was an important topic taken up at the summit. President Xi emphasised that the Taiwan question is the most important issue between China and the U.S. If it is handled properly, the

overall relationship will be stable. Otherwise, the two countries will have clashes and even conflicts, and the entire relationship will be in great jeopardy. "Taiwan independence" and cross-Strait peace are as irreconcilable as fire and water. China and the U.S. both agree on the vital importance of safeguarding cross-Strait peace and stability. The U.S. must exercise the utmost prudence in handling the Taiwan issue. In an exclusive interview with Fox News, Mr. Trump made it clear that "we are not looking at somebody say 'let's go independent because the United States is backing us'. I'm not looking to have somebody go independent and we're supposed to travel 9,500 miles to fight a war." This demonstrates that the U.S. has understood China's position and responded to China's concerns.

**China-U.S. stability supports Asia**  
Third, what does the China-U.S. rapprochement mean for China-India relations?

Some people worry that the rapprochement between China and the U.S. may compress India's diplomatic and strategic space. Such concerns are unwarranted. The remarkable achievements of China and India are built on the hard work and wisdom of their own peoples, and are by no means the result of others' generosity, much less subject to the ups and downs of any single bilateral relationship.

The strategic stability of China-U.S. relations provides positive and stable expectations for the world, which will benefit India, Asia, and the world as a whole.

China deeply understands India's aspiration for national rejuvenation and sincerely supports India's foreign policy of strategic autonomy. We stand ready to work with the Indian side to strengthen high-level exchanges, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, enhance people-to-people exchanges and promote multilateral coordination within mechanisms such as BRICS, so as to achieve the sustained, healthy and stable development of bilateral relations.

The way for major countries to get along well lies in seeking common ground while reserving differences and coexisting peacefully. The path to regional prosperity lies in common progress and shared flourishing. Perhaps this is the very lesson drawn from this China-U.S. summit.

# India's EV ambition needs a grid strategy to match

Every time crude prices spike as a result of tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, India's import bill bleeds. The latest escalation in West Asia has prompted two-wheeler commuters in Patna and Pune to browse electric vehicle (EV) prices with genuine intent. Short daily commutes, immediate fuel savings, and low switching costs mean that two-wheelers will lead India's electric transition – and rightly so. But the visibility of this shift risks obscuring where the deeper infrastructure challenge truly lies: not in scooters, but in the grid that must eventually power freight.

**The arithmetic of a second power system**  
India has approximately 420 million registered vehicles. Full electrification of this fleet across all vehicle categories, accounting for their vastly different energy intensities and annual usage would require generating an additional 900 TWh to 1,100 TWh per year. Even at 50% fleet conversion by 2047, a moderate assumption, the additional demand is roughly 500 TWh, equivalent to roughly a third of India's current annual electricity generation. Electrifying Indian transport means building a substantial expansion of the power system, approaching the scale of the one that took seven decades to construct.

It is tempting to assume that two-wheeler-led adoption keeps grid impact gradual. Voters experience the transition as scooters on their streets; governments announce it as subsidies at rallies. But even 309 million electric two-wheelers – the largest vehicle class – would add only about 55 TWh-75 TWh (based on 5,000 km-7,000 km annual use at 0.035 kWh/km), less than 7% of total projected EV demand at full conversion. The political visibility of two-wheelers is thus inversely proportional to their grid impact.

The data in this article is based on the author's estimates, derived from fleet-scale modelling using VAHAN National Register data, the Parivahan analytics portal, CSTEP freight electrification research, and ICCT heavy-duty vehicle analysis. Goods vehicles are segmented into HGV and MGW categories with differentiated energy intensity and annual mileage. The figures cited reflect the mid-range of three scenarios, with full-conversion estimates noted as upper bounds. The heavier lift belongs to freight and here the numbers are stark. A single heavy goods vehicle produces emissions equivalent to roughly 25 passenger cars. India has approximately 6.26



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million heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), each consuming 1.2 to 1.5 kWh per kilometre over 60,000 km a year. Electrifying them alone would require 450 TWh to 565 TWh annually. Add nearly a million medium goods vehicles (MGVs) at lower but still significant energy intensities, and total freight electricity demand approaches 500 TWh to 600 TWh – several times the two-wheeler total, from barely 2% of the registered fleet.

When policymakers speak of "electrifying India's roads," they are largely speaking about electrifying India's supply chains.

This is already visible on the ground. Across several States, fleet operators seeking high-tension depot connections face long delays. The challenge is not only technical but also financial: discoms, already burdened by significant accumulated losses, face distribution upgrades that they have not budgeted for.

What happens at seven in the evening? Annual demand figures tell only half the story. Grids are stressed not by yearly consumption but by instantaneous demand. If millions of vehicles charge during the evening peak, modelling suggests additional loads of several hundred gigawatts even under managed conditions. Without management, the risk extends to grid instability, supply disruptions, and tariff spikes affecting all consumers, not just EV owners.

The tools exist: time-of-use pricing, workplace charging during solar hours, battery storage at hubs, and swapping networks for lighter vehicles. Several States have introduced early EV tariff frameworks. But no national standard ensures that chargers installed today can respond to grid signals. Every conventional charger installed now is a retrofit cost later.

### What the grid actually needs

EV charging at this scale places two distinct demands on the generation system. The first is sheer volume. Hundreds of terawatt-hours of new supply. The second is reliability: freight depots, highway chargers, and urban networks need power around the clock, not only when the sun is up or the wind blows. Any credible strategy must address both.

Each major source brings a distinct strength. Solar and wind power offer the lowest marginal cost and fastest scalable deployment but operate at 25%-30% capacity factors, requiring storage or complementary generation for reliability. Nuclear power provides high-capacity-factor, low-carbon

baseload independent of weather, but with long build cycles and high upfront costs. Pumped hydro and batteries bridge variability and demand, while gas can manage short-term peaks during the transition.

What does not belong in this mix is expanded coal use. If incremental terawatt-hours come mainly from coal, India merely replaces oil dependence with coal dependence – importing from Australia and Indonesia instead of the Gulf, without emissions gains. The logic of electrification breaks if the grid is not cleaner than the fuel it replaces. A diversified clean portfolio, where each source plays to its strengths, could cut required new capacity by half or more. For highway corridors and urban hubs needing firm baseload, micro modular nuclear reactors offer a weather-independent solution located close to demand centres.

There is a downstream dimension as well. Hundreds of millions of EV batteries will eventually reach end-of-life, and India does not yet have recycling infrastructure at anywhere near the required scale. Without it, the transition risks creating a new waste crisis even as it solves an energy one.

### Steps to take

There are four things that would make a difference. The draft National Electricity Policy includes EV demand projections, but they do not yet drive capacity planning. Making EV load a primary variable modelling 30%, 50%, and 100% fleet electrification by 2047 would give the sector clarity. Smart-charging capability must be mandated for all new infrastructure at the equipment standard level.

The Golden Quadrilateral and Dedicated Freight Corridors need a joint power-mapping exercise before electric trucks reach commercial scale. An inter-Ministerial mechanism bridging transport, power, and distribution finance would ensure that no part of the system plans in isolation. And strengthening discom finances through a reformed Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) with EV-readiness benchmarks is essential to making last-mile delivery viable.

The commuter in Patna choosing an electric scooter this week is making the right call. The question is whether planning is keeping pace with the ambition. India's EV transition is inevitable. The task now is to build the grid that makes it sustainable.

India's electric vehicle (EV) future depends on a strong and clean energy electricity grid

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Reforming poll landscape

We are undertaking many reforms to correct unacceptable practices. Why not amend the Representation of the People Act to curb the unchecked growth of political parties? India has one of the world's highest numbers of political parties, many controlled by families,

communities, or narrow regional interests. Pre-election alliances with tiny parties that lack even basic electoral presence encourage the mushrooming of such entities, often for ulterior motives. One solution is to require every newly registered party to contest independently in its first

election and secure at least 10% of the total votes polled. Failing that, its registration should be automatically cancelled. Pre-poll alliances should also be barred. All parties recognised by the Election Commission of India should contest independently with their allotted symbols. Only after results are declared

should parties be allowed to form alliances to secure a governing majority.  
**Dhanasekharan V.,**  
Chennai

**Academic quality**  
There is a growing rush in Indian universities to increase research papers, PhDs, and patents, especially in private

institutions where rankings are a key selling point. The article, "Quality over quantity" (EducationPlus page, May 18), is right in that patents are rarely transferred effectively to industry. Universities engage too little with industry, while industries often treat universities as manpower suppliers. They

seldom approach faculty with real-world problems, perhaps due to weak protection of intellectual property rights. In addition, PhD thesis evaluation is often not rigorous enough.  
**P. Radhakrishnan,**  
Coimbatore

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

# Examining the Tadmetla encounter inquiry

The High Court of Chhattisgarh recently rejected an appeal against the acquittal of 10 accused persons involved in a brutal attack on the security forces in Sukma on April 6, 2010. On this fateful day, 75 personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) of the 62nd battalion and one policeman of the district force, were killed near Tadmetla. The vehicle sent for rescue was also blasted with a remotely triggered Improvised Explosive Device (IED). A case was registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Arms Act, and Explosive Substances Act, against unknown Naxalites at the police station in Chintagufa. However, the High Court held that there was a lack of evidence, incomplete circumstantial proof, procedural lapses in the investigation, and a failure to establish guilt beyond reasonable doubt, despite the gravity of the offence.



**R.K. Vij**  
Former IPS officer

conduct training courses for the police personnel to enhance their investigative competence, and to periodically check compliance with the Court's directives.

There is no gainsaying that the investigation was poor. It appears no special attention was given to the case which had shaken the conscience of the nation. Neither was an SIT formed nor was the case supervised by a senior police official. Even the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967 or the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act, 2005, were not invoked. Despite these deficiencies, one circumstance which the courts failed to consider was the hostile environment in which the investigation was carried out.

**Less than ideal environment**  
The Tadmetla massacre occurred in April 2010 when the Maoists' annual Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC) against the security forces was underway. The TCOC was started by the Maoists after the formation of the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) in 2000; it generally lasts for about three months. The main objective for conducting a TCOC is to target the security forces in order to loot their weapons. While the mandate of the PLGA battalion was to strike anywhere, as decided by the party's top leadership, the general area of movement of the battalion was in South Bastar, which included the southern areas of the Sukma, Dantewada and Bijapur districts. With hundreds of militias positioned all around for passing information about possible police movement to their larger military formations, finding independent witnesses to testify against the Maoists would have been nearly impossible.

The severity of the problem can be understood from the fact that there are still no less than 12 security camps (including five police stations and seven standalone CRPF camps) on the Dornapal-Jagargunda road in

Sukma which is hardly 58 km long. The Chintagufa village falls about halfway on this road.

**Rushed investigation**  
Tadmetla was perhaps a case which had a hurried investigation. The case was charge-sheeted without unearthing the names of the main perpetrators of the attack. Later inputs revealed that the attack was spearheaded by the commander of the PLGA battalion, Madvi Hidma. The secretary of the central regional bureau, Katakam Sudarshan, and a special zonal committee member, Haribhushan of the north Telangana special zone, were among the key planners of the attack. No less than 300 cadres including members of battalion-1, the central regional company, company-2 (of the west Bastar division), and local platoons participated in the attack. At least eight Maoists were also killed in the encounter.

Surprisingly, only some militias were arraigned in the charge-sheet. Catching a top leader (or their surrender) could have been very helpful in exposing the entire plot. The investigating officer could have toiled more to unearth the truth. It is a different matter that most of the senior cadres now have surrendered; succumbed to an illness (Katakam Sudarshan and Haribhushan); or been killed (Hidma).

The investigation of grave offences, particularly involving banned organisations such as the CPI (Maoist), requires special skills. The investigating officer needs to know the structure as well as the modus operandi of the outfit. The focus should be more on collecting scientific evidence when there is a high probability of witnesses turning hostile, and knowing that the witness protection mechanism has not acquired roots in the criminal justice system. While some of these issues have been addressed in the new criminal laws, their implementation lies entirely with the investigating agencies.

**Lapses in the investigation**  
The High Court said that there was no independent corroboration in support of the confessional statements of the accused persons. All the prosecution witnesses had turned hostile. The accused persons were not identified by any of the witnesses and no Test Identification Parade (TIP) was conducted. Though the death of the deceased persons had been due to the burns and injuries sustained in firing and explosion, there was no evidence to link that with the accused persons.

No incriminating material (weapon or explosive) had been seized from any of the accused. There was no Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) report to prove that the materials seized from the site, such as tiffin bombs and grenades, were explosives. The Court regretted that there was no record of the prosecution sanction required under the Arms Act for the seized prohibited weapons. In the end, the Court asked the Director General of Police to

The investigation of grave offences, particularly involving banned organisations such as the CPI (Maoist), requires special skills

# A test for political accountability

A POCSO case against a Minister's son has spiralled into a scandal in Telangana

## STATE OF PLAY

**Ravi Reddy**

The arrest of Bandi Sai Bageerath, the son of Union Minister for State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar, under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, has spiralled into one of the most serious political crises the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has faced in Telangana.

What began as a complaint by the mother of a minor girl has snowballed into a controversy that has dented the party's credibility, weakened Mr. Kumar's standing, and handed the Opposition a potent issue just as municipal elections are approaching.

Public outrage has intensified over delays in FIR registration, counter-complaints by Mr. Bageerath alleging a "honey trap," and allegations that political influence was used to delay his arrest. The BJP's carefully cultivated narrative on women's safety has been undermined by this scandal. This episode will potentially have long-term consequences for its plans to expand in the State.

## Political positioning

The Bharat Rashttra Samithi (BRS) moved swiftly to exploit the controversy. The party accused the BJP of shielding Mr. Sanjay's son, and exposed, what it termed, the BJP's "double standards."

The ruling Congress Party, initially criticised for delays in registering the FIR, also pivoted quickly. Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy intervened, urging Mr. Kumar to ensure that his son cooperated with the police while stressing that "running away is not a solution." By reframing the issue



around moral accountability, he effectively put the spotlight on Mr. Kumar, portraying him as evasive. Highlighting the eventual registration of the POCSO case against Mr. Bageerath, Mr. Reddy sought to deflect criticism over the delay and redirect attention back to the BJP leader.

The timing also proved politically explosive, coming just days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Hyderabad. BRS cadres took to the streets, ensuring that the controversy dominated headlines. For the BRS, the controversy provided an opportunity to erode the BJP's moral authority and regain ground in urban constituencies where the party had been making inroads. The BRS consistently linked the case to what it portrayed as the BJP's broader governance style, accusing it of hypocrisy and insensitivity toward victims.

Caught off guard, the BJP attempted to contain the fallout by insisting that Mr. Kumar had no role in the incident, drawing a distinction between his public office and private life. However, internally, senior leaders advised the Union Minister to ensure full cooperation with the investigation, recognising that any perception of evasion could further damage the party's credibility.

The police too came under scrutiny as the victim's mother alleged that she had to wait for hours before her com-

plaint was formally registered. Police officials defended their handling of the case, citing the need for careful verification as the alleged incident dated back to December 2025.

Further, the timing of the controversy has overshadowed the BJP's political messaging. In municipal elections, where perception and local sentiment play a critical role, such controversies can erode trust among key voter groups. Women voters, a decisive constituency in urban areas, may view the episode as undermining the party's claims on safety. Unless the BJP convincingly distances itself from the controversy, its credibility is sure take a beating.

**Beyond politics**  
The case also draws attention to Telangana's troubling record on child sexual offences. According to NCRB data, 6,113 crimes against children were reported in 2023-24, with 84% of them involving sexual offences and kidnappings under POCSO provisions. Between 2020 and May 2025, as many as 16,994 POCSO cases were registered, yet only 188 resulted in convictions. This back-droop amplifies the political fallout of the case – it is not an isolated controversy but one that taps into widespread public anxiety about child safety.

More than a criminal case, this has evolved into a test of accountability. It underscores how swiftly a personal controversy can escalate into a full-blown political crisis. For the BJP in Telangana, the challenge goes beyond immediate damage control – it must rebuild trust in an environment where perception often outweighs policy. How the party responds may well determine its future in Telangana.

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# Understanding the political voice of India's workforce

The workforce of India remains mostly politically passive, especially among vulnerable groups, despite holding balanced views on welfare and governance

## DATA POINT

**Kirti Sharma**  
**Krishangi Sinha**

May 1, celebrated globally as International Workers' Day, traditionally turns attention to wages, rights, and working conditions. Yet, an equally important dimension often goes unnoticed – how India's workforce participates in politics. Occupation-wise data from the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll National Election Study 2024, reveals a layered story. The composition of the workforce itself highlights deep structural divides, particularly along gender lines (Table 1). Across most occupations, men dominate, especially in business (87%), skilled work (84%), and semi-skilled work (82%). Even within salaried employment, men constitute nearly four-fifths of the workforce. In contrast, unpaid domestic roles remain overwhelmingly feminised, with 95% of housewives/househusbands being women. The student category offers a glimpse of a more balanced future, with a relatively closer gender split of 58% male and 42% female. Such structural inequalities in the workforce raise an important question: do these groups also differ in how actively they engage in politics?

Despite being central to the economy, most occupational groups exhibit low levels of political participation as highlighted in Table 2. A majority across nearly all categories describe themselves as "not at all active" in politics, specifically 60% among salaried workers, and 82% among housewives/househusbands. Even among the most engaged groups, those reporting high levels of participation rarely exceed 10-13%. This suggests that large sections of the workforce, particularly those with fewer resources or greater domestic responsibilities, remain distanced from active political processes. The issue is not merely awareness,

but the capacity and opportunity to participate meaningfully. However, low participation does not necessarily imply weak or uninformed political opinions. To understand this, it is useful to examine workers' policy preferences.

When it comes to welfare preferences, the workforce demonstrates a nuanced and pragmatic outlook as shown in Table 3. Across occupations, the most preferred option is not an either-or choice between direct cash transfers and subsidies, but a combination of both. Roughly one-third of respondents in each category support a hybrid model that provides both income support and subsidised essentials. While a smaller proportion favours only direct cash transfers (around 19-23%) or only subsidies (around 30-35%), the dominant preference reflects a desire for both flexibility and security. This indicates that workers are not guided by rigid ideological positions but by practical considerations shaped by everyday economic realities.

Table 4 shows that across occupational groups, the largest share of respondents consider both Central and State government performances equally important while making electoral decisions, with proportions ranging from 37% to 45%. Although certain groups such as farmers and students show a slightly greater inclination towards evaluating the Central government, the overall trend suggests that voters are capable of assessing governance across multiple levels. Rather than relying on singular narratives, the workforce appears to adopt a more comprehensive approach to political accountability. It remains largely politically passive, particularly among vulnerable and unpaid groups, yet demonstrates thoughtful and balanced preferences when it comes to welfare and governance.

*Kirti Sharma and Krishangi Sinha are researchers with Lokniti, CSDS. Views are personal and do not express the views of the institution.*

## Workers and politics

The data for the charts were sourced from the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll National Election Study 2024



**After the vote:** Voters show their ink-marked fingers after casting their votes for the Lok Sabha elections, in May, 2024. ANI

**Table 1:** Workforce composition by gender across occupations

Occupation	Gender	
	Male	Female
Professional	64	36
Salaried	78	22
Business	87	13
Skilled worker	84	15
Semi-skilled worker	82	18
Farmer	74	26
Housewife/ Househusband	5	95
Student	58	42

**Table 2:** Political participation levels across occupational groups

Occupation	Political participation*		
	Highly active	Somewhat active	Not at all active
Professional	12	28	60
Salaried	13	27	60
Business	10	28	61
Skilled worker	11	30	59
Semi-skilled worker	9	26	65
Farmer	9	25	65
Housewife/ Househusband	4	15	82
Student	9	23	68

**1** Across most occupations, **men dominate** participation, especially in business, skilled work, and semi-skilled work

**2** A majority across nearly all categories describe themselves as "**not at all active**" in politics

**3** Between cash transfers and subsidies, the most preferred option, across occupations, is not an either-or choice but a **combination of both**

**4** The largest share of respondents consider both Central and State government performances **equally important** while making electoral decisions

\*Political participation refers to involvement in election-related activities such as attending campaign meetings and rallies, taking part in processions or *nukkad natak*s, participating in door-to-door canvassing, distributing election pamphlets or putting up posters, and sharing campaign messages of political parties or candidates on platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook

**Table 3:** Welfare preferences: Direct cash transfers vs subsidies

Occupation	The government should deposit money in people's bank accounts rather than give wheat/rice, gas cylinders etc. at a lower price			
	Should deposit money	Give wheat/ rice etc.	Should do both	Should do neither
Professional	21	32	34	10
Salaried	23	32	34	8
Business	22	30	38	7
Skilled worker	19	33	38	5
Semi-skilled worker	21	34	36	4
Farmer	21	35	33	5
Housewife/ Househusband	20	32	35	4
Student	19	34	37	5

**Table 4:** Voting priorities: Central vs State government performance

Occupation	Priority in voting decision: Central government performance vs State government performance			
	Central govt.	State govt.	Both govts. equally	Neither govt.
Professional	25	18	41	12
Salaried	24	19	45	8
Business	26	19	43	8
Skilled worker	24	20	41	9
Semi-skilled worker	24	20	37	13
Farmer	27	24	37	7
Housewife/ Househusband	22	20	40	8
Student	27	16	45	7

Note: All figures are in per cent. In Table 2, figures might not add up to 100 due to rounding off. In Tables 3 and 4, the rest did not respond.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

### The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 20, 1976

## Indian Almanac popular abroad

Calcutta, May 19: The Indian almanac is becoming popular abroad.

The Indian Astrological Society here has been receiving queries on astronomical calculations and the do's and don'ts prescribed for specific days in the almanac.

Mr. Nirmal Chandra Lahiri, President of the Society, told Samachar that the inquiries were such as a New Yorker's wish to know some auspicious day for a visit to India and the query from the disciples of the Gaudiya Math in Britain about the days of Ekadadi in different months.

Spokesmen of several publishing houses told Samachar: "We are not aware of any other Indian publication having a higher sale than that of the almanac year after year."

In West Bengal alone, about 7,00,000 copies of almanac were sold during the Bengali year ending April 13, this year. The year before 6,00,000 copies were sold.

Records showed that some Western countries were importing copies of different Indian almanacs for use by their people. In Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar, the sales vary from 5,00,000 to about 6,00,000 copies. Almost identical sales were reported from Tamil Nadu, Andhra, and Karnataka.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 20, 1926

## Labour emigration to Malaya

Negapatam, May 19: Labour Emigrants are now embarking from this port, through the Federated Malaya States Government Emigration Depot for the estates and rubber plantations in Malaya, on an average of 6,000 persons a week. Three steamers a week have been sailing from this port for the last one month and more for Malaya to convey these Emigrants. Yet above 2,000 people are left behind in the Emigration Depot every week for want of accommodation on board the steamers. Every train coming to Negapatam brings a big batch of labourers recruited by the Kanganis or recruiting agents and their number is increasing every day. A large number of labourers is also coming here independent of the Kanganis and get admission into the Emigration Depot, which gives them a free passage to Malaya.

# Text & Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

## Persons arrested in Turkiye on suspicion of ties with the IS

**110** Turkish counter-terror police on Tuesday arrested 110 people on suspicion of activities in support of the Islamic State (IS) group in an operation largely targeting Istanbul, the Anadolu state news agency said. The suspects are accused of organising classes in illegal associations, educating young children with IS ideology, and seeking to recruit new members. AFP

## Reported deaths in Eastern Congo due to Ebola outbreak

**131** At least 131 deaths and over 500 suspected cases have been reported in the ongoing Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo, the Congolese Health Ministry said on Tuesday, as details emerged about the government's delayed response. Health authorities say the current outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rare variant of the Ebola disease. PTI

## Worth of MoUs signed by Maharashtra in nuclear energy sector

**6.5** in ₹ lakh crore. The Maharashtra government on Tuesday signed memoranda of understanding (MoUs) to attract investments worth ₹6.5 lakh crore in the nuclear energy sector. The MoUs were signed with NTPC Limited, Adani Power Limited, Reliance Industries Limited and Lalitpur Power Generation Company Limited. PTI

## Cuts in public sector jobs by New Zealand govt. to slash spending

**14** in per cent. New Zealand's government will lay off nearly 9,000 workers, amounting to 14 per cent of public sector jobs, by mid-2029 as part of a bid to slash billions in spending, Finance Minister Nicola Willis said on Tuesday. The cutbacks would save 2.4 billion New Zealand dollars (USD 1.4 billion) during that period, the minister said. PTI

## Amount sought by Malaysia from Norway over axed defence deal

**250** in \$ million. Malaysia's defence minister on Tuesday said a notice has been sent to Norway seeking compensation of more than 1 billion ringgit (\$251.76 million), after Oslo abruptly cancelled export approvals for a naval strike missile system intended for Malaysian combat ships. REUTERS  
COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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# Decoding the Musk vs. Altman verdict

OpenAI was founded as a nonprofit aiming to build ethical, open-source artificial general intelligence. Years later, Elon Musk filed a lawsuit accusing CEO Sam Altman, OpenAI president Greg Brockman, and Microsoft of manipulating him into donating to a public-interest organisation which later created a for-profit subsidiary.

## EXPLAINER

Areena Arora

In 2015, a small group of researchers and technology entrepreneurs gathered in San Francisco to create what they described as a gift to humanity, eventually to turn into enemies defining the future of artificial intelligence (AI) in a courtroom.

OpenAI was founded on the premise that if artificial general intelligence (AGI) was coming regardless, it was better to have safety and ethics-conscious researchers build it. AGI is the kind of AI that can match or surpass human cognition. The group decided to create the initiative as a nonprofit and if the technology ever arrived, it would belong to everyone, as open source. OpenAI's CEO Sam Altman even went as far as to design the company's board such that it could fire him too if he ever came in the way of its core mission. That founding promise, to build ethical AGI, years later brought Elon Musk and Mr. Altman to a federal courthouse in California.

Mr. Musk brought forward the lawsuit against Mr. Altman, accusing him, OpenAI president Greg Brockman, and Microsoft, of manipulating him into donating to a public-interest organisation only for it to later attach a for-profit subsidiary and accept billions from Microsoft.

On May 18, a nine-person jury took less than two hours to throw out Mr. Musk's case against Mr. Altman. The verdict did not settle the question of whether OpenAI broke faith with its founding mission but instead, it was settled on a procedural issue - that Mr. Musk had waited too long to sue. In the American legal system, civil claims must be filed within a fixed window of time, crossing which the claim becomes invalid. The jury said Mr. Musk's claim fell outside the statute of limitations. The judge concurred, but Mr. Musk's lawyers have signalled that they might appeal. The merits of the case were



Elon Musk's attorney Marc Toberoff outside the federal courthouse in California on May 18. REUTERS

never discussed.

### The nonprofit debate

Trial testimony and evidence showed OpenAI's leadership had anxiously tracked Google's acquisition of another AI research giant DeepMind in 2014.

OpenAI's executives argued that the nonprofit structure was not sufficient to compete with bigshots like Google.

Mr. Musk was the company's biggest early donor, contributing around \$38 million. But, the economics of building AGI turned out to be brutal. Training large models requires computing infrastructure that costs billions of dollars. By 2019, a year after Mr. Musk's departure from the OpenAI board, the company decided it could not remain competitive as a pure nonprofit. It attached a for-profit subsidiary to the existing organisation, with the nonprofit retaining oversight and a capped return structure for investors.

Microsoft came in with an initial investment that year, and kept coming, eventually investing more than \$135 billion and holding a significant share in

OpenAI. This is the transformation Mr. Musk's lawsuit sought to attack, from nonprofit to a commercially driven AI laboratory he had set out to oppose.

### Claims that did not make it to trial

The bit that went to trial eventually was a much smaller subset of the original claims Mr. Musk had filed in 2024. Several of his claims were dropped or narrowed before the trial even began.

Mr. Musk claimed that Microsoft's investment in OpenAI had aided it to breach its charitable mission. But, despite a Microsoft executive testifying that the company had invested billions in OpenAI, the jury dismissed the claim.

Mr. Musk also filed an antitrust claim against OpenAI and Microsoft, alleging that the two companies were colluding to dominate the AI market. This claim has not reached the jury yet. Judge Gonzalez Rogers heard arguments and signalled she was sceptical, noting the aggressive competition already playing out across the AI industry. OpenAI on its part filed a countersuit accusing Mr. Musk of running

a years-long harassment campaign against the company. That case is separate and still ongoing.

### Key takeaways from the proceedings

The legal question the jury resolved was procedural. But the three weeks of testimony preceding the verdict were pure Silicon Valley tech theatre.

Mr. Musk's lawyers assembled a long roster of witnesses who testified that Mr. Altman is not trustworthy. Mira Murati, who served as OpenAI's chief technology officer, told the court that Mr. Altman had lied about a safety review in the past. Ilya Sutskever, one of the company's founding researchers, had spent more than a year building a case for Mr. Altman's removal from the company, assembling a 52-page memo that described a pattern of dishonesty and internal manipulation.

In November 2023, OpenAI's board briefly fired Mr. Altman and reversed course within days. Mr. Altman returned and Mr. Sutskever eventually left the company.

OpenAI's lawyers demonstrated that while still on the board in 2017, Mr. Musk himself had pushed to restructure OpenAI as a for-profit entity, including an attempt to fold it into Tesla under his control.

Mr. Musk's argument that he had always opposed commercialisation now sat awkwardly alongside evidence that he had sought to commercialise the company himself, especially on the condition that he be in charge.

The immediate winner from the latest verdict is OpenAI. The lawsuit had cast a shadow over the company's plans for its upcoming IPO that could value it at close to a trillion dollars. There is a larger question the verdict leaves entirely unanswered. The trial showed how OpenAI's founding principles were abandoned in pursuit of competition. The nonprofit structure still exists, and the OpenAI nonprofit now controls assets of more than \$200 billion. But what that oversight means in practice was not explored in court.

## THE GIST

By 2019, OpenAI decided it could not remain competitive as a pure nonprofit and attached a for-profit subsidiary to the existing organisation. This was the transformation that Elon Musk sought to challenge in court.

The verdict did not determine whether OpenAI had abandoned its founding mission, but instead rested on the procedural finding that the lawsuit fell outside the statute of limitations.

# China's new worldview and the future of global politics

Through its initiatives and its critique of the current order, China is seeking to lead multilateralism

Avinash Godbole

U.S. President Donald Trump completed his visit to the People's Republic of China on May 14 and 15, 2026, a first in nine years. The entire world watched this visit with great anticipation. However, it appears that the visit was a stalemate and little was achieved by way of progress, and the two sides are not even closer to returning to the state of managed rivalry. China frames it as "constructive strategic stability", but it seems to be unwilling to make any concessions to achieve that and puts the burden of instability squarely on the U.S.

### China's strategic outlook

One of the expressions used by Chinese President Xi Jinping right at the start of his readout, that the "transformation not seen in a century is accelerating across the globe", merits special attention. While

this is not the first time Mr. Xi has used this expression in front of the U.S. President, its last usage led to a binary in which the ball was in the American court to choose whether they wanted confrontation or cooperation. This time, it's a choice on whether or not the two sides can avoid a Thucydides' trap that would eventually lead them towards conflicts or confrontations.

This term made its first appearance in December 2017, during China's ambassadorial work conference, when Mr. Xi said that the world is undergoing "profound changes unseen in a century". It reflects China's assessment that the global power transition has entered its most decisive stage and China's eclipsing of the U.S. is a matter of time. Chinese analysts have assessed that China's GDP is set to bypass the United States by 2030.

The reference to a century is what makes it especially curious. China seems to be thinking that a century ago, driven

by the decline of Europe across two world wars, global power made a transatlantic shift, making the U.S. the most powerful country in the world, and made liberalism its most central standpoint. Before that, the 19th century saw a different form of globalisation in the rise of colonialism and imperialism. In a similar fashion, China's rise is projected as inevitable and its rise as a norm-building power even more certain. It underpins China's confidence in ascending to what it calls its rightful place in the international system.

It seems that China views Brexit and the first election of Donald Trump as U.S. President - driven by a conservative, insecure, to a large extent supremacist and deglobalisation-driven agenda as signs of the inevitable decline of the West, the roots of which were seen in the 2008 financial crisis. After this, China emerged as a new voice of globalisation and began strongly criticising the West for its withdrawal from globalisation, just as the

prosperity was beginning to spread away from traditional centres of power.

### Reshaping global dynamics

Towards the goal of its rise, China has accelerated its assault on the current international order through initiatives like the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security initiative (GSI). China is using these to discredit the U.S. led order by portraying it to be divisive and disruptive, while presenting its own approach to global security as driven by "common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable" security. Through its initiatives and critique of the current order, China is seeking to and in some cases is, leading multilateralism and south-south cooperation, while undercutting norms of the liberal order.

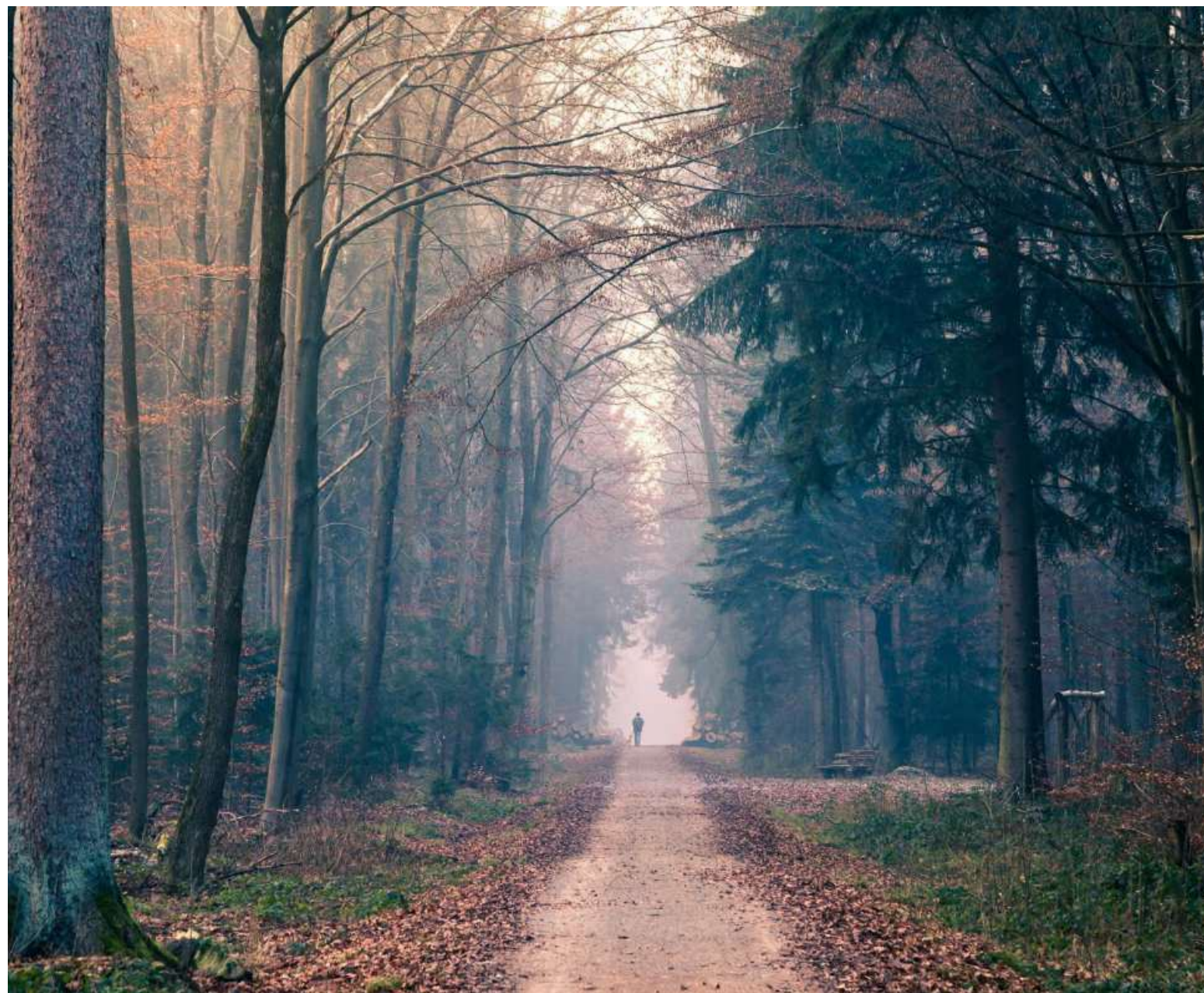
For countries like India, this increased power rivalry makes life more difficult. In the phase where there was a managed competition between the U.S. and China, other countries worked their way to hedge their bets between the two. However, now they are facing trade wars and tariffs, supply chain volatilities, the risks arising from the U.S.-Israel war on Iran and overall strategic instability. Add to it the rapid rise of artificial intelligence and its potential impact on the job markets, and the result is a volatile mix. (Avinash Godbole is a Professor and Associate Academic Dean, JSLH, JGU. Views expressed are personal.)

## THE GIST

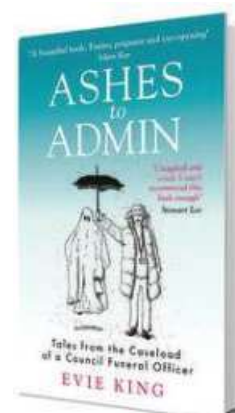
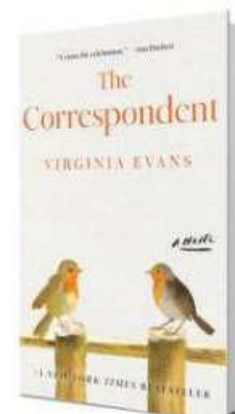
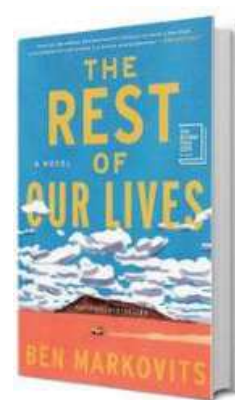
China has accelerated its challenge to the current international order through initiatives such as the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative

During the phase of managed competition between the U.S. and China, many countries sought to hedge their bets between the two powers. However, they now face trade wars, supply chain volatility and risks from the West Asia crisis, among other factors; creating a volatile mix.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



GETTY IMAGES



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

“Hi, come on in. Haven’t seen you in a while. What have you been up to?”  
 “Oh, nothing much.”  
 “Some things never change, eh? Weren’t you supposed to go to Hyderabad to write some test or something?”  
 “The test has been postponed because of the floods. I wasn’t planning on going, anyway. My father has discouraged me to write the exam this year. He feels...”  
 “....discouraged me from writing.”  
 “What?”  
 “You do not say ‘discouraged me to write’. Instead you...”  
 “... wait a minute. It’s O.K to say ‘He encouraged me to write’, right?”  
 “That’s right. The word ‘encouraged’ can be followed by ‘to’. But ‘discouraged’ is followed by ‘from’ and not ‘to’. You encourage someone to do something and you discourage someone from doing something.”  
 “I see. So I have to say, the little boy was encouraged to go to school, but the young girl was discouraged from going to school.”  
 “After the scandal many students were discouraged from talking to the Principal.”  
 “The money lender discouraged the poor farmer from applying for a bank loan.”  
 “Sounds like the kind of stuff we see in our movies.”  
 “I am sure it happens in real life as well.”  
 “I am sure it does.”  
 “How about this example? When I was young, I was encouraged to play tennis and football.”  
 “Sounds good. I am sure you were discouraged from seeing movies.”  
 “You are absolutely right. Hey, look at the time. I’ve got to go.”  
 “What’s the hurry?”  
 “I’ve got to meet Sujatha. I’ve promised to her that I would meet her at 6-00.”  
 “I have ‘promised her’, not ‘promised to her’.”  
 “But I have heard many people say it.”  
 “It’s true that many people say it. But it’s wrong. When you use ‘promise’ as a verb, you ‘promise someone’, you do not ‘promise to someone’. For example, Madan promised Kajol that he would be on time for the function.”  
 “Anjali promised to have everything ready by 2-00 o’clock today.”  
 “My friend Ramesh promised to help me with the homework.”  
 “That was nice of him. Now then, shall...?”  
 “...wait a minute! You said that the word ‘promise’ is not followed by ‘to’, right?”  
 “That’s right.”  
 “But what about this sentence? ‘I made a promise to him’. In that sentence...”  
 “....the word ‘promise’ is being used as a noun, and not a verb. I said that you cannot ‘promise to someone’. You can promise someone something, but...”  
 “...So sentences like ‘Bala promised to Geetha’ and ‘Anand promised to Sunita’ are wrong.”  
 “Yes, they are wrong. You can ‘promise to do something’. For example, I promised to meet him at 8-00 in the morning.”  
 “I promised to read the book. How does that sound?”  
 “Sounds great.”

How death leaves behind unfinished plans and unanswered questions

In some books, neat endings and the ticking off of bucket lists are narrative devices meant to reassure us that death brings with it a reckoning. But several recent novels are less inclined to offer such comfort, instead confronting readers with the uncertainty and disorder surrounding death

Nistula Hebbar

Nothing brings as much clarity to the mind as proximity to death. As people approach the end of their lives, they write wills and make final confessions and wishes – attempts to clear away the emotional and material detritus of a life. But unlike that other inevitability in life; taxes, death does not always arrive with a neat balancing of accounts. More often, it is messy: both in form or in the many ways it approaches us, and in the things left behind – untended apologies, undeclared love or forgiveness, unoffered explanations.

In films and some books, however, neat endings and the ticking off of bucket lists are narrative devices meant to reassure us that death brings with it a reckoning, an opportunity to leave behind a well-balanced account of one’s life. Some recent reads, however, are far less interested in offering that kind of comfort.

Altering the course

In *The Rest of Our Lives*, Ben Markovits’s 2025 novel that was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, the messiness of it all is laid bare in all its uneasy glory. What begins as a midlife crisis road trip gradually circles back to a New York hospital, ending in a deliberately nebulous fashion.

In language that is plain but packs a punch, the book takes us through what appears to be a midlife crisis of the protagonist Tom. His wife, Amy, had an affair in the past.

Tom promised himself then that he would leave his wife once his last child, Miri, goes off to college. “What we obviously had,” says Tom in the book, “even when things smoothed over, was a C-minus marriage, which makes it pretty hard to score much higher than a B overall on the rest of your life.”

Tom takes off on a road trip, first to drop his daughter off at college, and later to visit his brother, his son, and an old girlfriend – an almost self-meditative way of assessing his life, trying to resolve some things before embarking on his new spouse-less life. The book ends abruptly when Tom’s facial swelling turns out to be a cancer diagnosis. It takes him to the radiation department of a hospital, with his wife in attendance, his plans of leaving her clearly upended.

Much was written by reviewers about the abruptness of the ending, but it carried, in a way, a hint of *vérité* – of life and death simply happening to you unexpectedly, disrupting well-laid-out plans.

The unsent letter

In a way, the book differs from *The Correspondent* by Virginia Evans, also

published in 2025. An epistolary novel, it is a life told through the letters of Sybil Van Antwerp, a woman in her 70s. Through lengthy and frequent correspondence, she does not leave much unsaid to her family and friends, unlike Tom in *The Rest of Our Lives*.

Sybil was a lawyer who clerked for a judge for much of her career, and even manages to find some closure in an old case she handled, marked by a miscarriage of justice.

It is her one unsent letter, hidden in the pages of Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca*, found after her death by her neighbour Theodor, that solves a mystery running like a thread through the novel. The letter is addressed to Sybil’s former husband Daan, who has already died by the time it is discovered.

It explains, or tries to, the reasons their marriage imploded, the fractured relationships she had with her other children, and why, despite Daan’s request, she could not bring herself to meet him at the end of his life. There are some secrets that do follow people into the grave, even for those who appear as open and reflective as Sybil in her correspondence.

It is the people left behind who need closure, as they continue to live with the questions that each death leaves unanswered. If Sybil’s story explores closure through writing, Evie King’s book

shows what happens when closure becomes an administrative task.

Quiet departures

In *Ashes To Admin: The Caseload of a Council Funeral Officer*, the protagonist, King herself, is a council case worker in charge of pauper’s graves – or, as she keeps saying throughout the book, funerals for people who die alone, whether poor or rich, who have outlived or are estranged from all their kin.

In case after case she handles, King speaks of her attempts to construct a life, a kinship and friendship network that preceded these lonely deaths. In some instances, she finds family members still living, or even a club of bike enthusiasts who can swell the numbers at the funeral parlour.

In each funeral she oversees, however, the deaths affect her and she realises she needs closure. “Befriend death, turn a light on, extinguish those shadows and live well; because that’s the bit that matters,” she says, embracing life.

How we handle the one certain thing in life – death – is never neat, yet it is something we all share as a human experience, even as we encounter it separately.

The transformative power of literature can illuminate that condition, but there is no manual to take us across the finish line.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Here is a quiz on the events that happened on May 20:

Sindhu Nagaraj

QUESTION 1

On this day in 1873, which clothing company’s founders were granted a patent for trousers reinforced with rivets—the origin of what we now call “jeans”?

QUESTION 2

Which American actor born on this day is known for his roles in films *‘You Can’t Take It with You...’*, *‘The Philadelphia Story...’*, among others?

QUESTION 3

This Asian country became independent

on this day in 2002. On May 20, 2002, this became the first new sovereign state of the 21st century. Name the country.

QUESTION 4

This English philosopher and political economist conceived of liberty as justifying the freedom of the individual in opposition to unlimited state and social control. Who was he?

QUESTION 5

This French novelist and playwright, whose magnum opus is *‘La Comédie humaine...’*, was born on this day in 1799. Who was he?



Visual question: Identify this singer, who is known as the Goddess of Pop? AFP

Questions and Answers to the previous day’s daily quiz: 1. The motif of this satellite is present on ₹2,000 banknotes. Ans: Mangalyaan

2. The national emblem featured on all the banknotes. Ans: Lion capital of Ashoka

3. Mahatma Gandhi first appeared on banknotes on this occasion. Ans: 1969; it was Gandhi’s 100th birth anniversary

4. This denomination currency, mostly used by businessmen and traders for high-value transactions, was introduced during the British Raj and permanently withdrawn from circulation by the Morarji Desai government.

Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan wanted to re-introduce it, but the idea was shelved. The denomination was \_\_\_ Ans: ₹10,000

5. This denomination shows the Konark sun temple. Ans: ₹10

Visual: Identify this location and also the denomination on which it is found. Ans: Sanchi stupa, ₹200

Early birds: Rajib Ganguly | Tamanjit Bisla | Neil Lall | Erfanally Oosmany | Barnali Biswas

Please send in your answers to [dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in](mailto:dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in)

Word of the day

Decrepit:

worn and broken down by hard use

Synonyms: derelict, run-down

Usage: The decrepit building was on the verge of collapse.

Pronunciation: newsth.live/ejeKIM/decreept

International Phonetic Alphabet:

/dɪˈkɹeɪp.ɪt/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) with the subject ‘Text & Context’

## From Page One

## Police suggest larger SC Bench to review UAPA bail

"My Lords may consider interim bail, I am not opposing that...but the issue requires consideration by a larger Bench in view of the two conflicting judgments," he added.

The judgment by the Bench headed by Justice Nagarathna was delivered on May 18 while granting bail to Jammu and Kashmir resident Syed Iftikhar Andrabi in a narco-terror case investigated by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). In its ruling, the Bench voiced "serious reservations" about the January 5 judgment denying bail to Jawaharlal Nehru University scholars Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the alleged larger conspiracy case linked to the 2020 Delhi riots, including the foreclosure of their right to seek bail for a year.

The Bench underscored that the January 5 verdict had failed to correctly apply the binding principles laid down by a larger three-judge Bench in *Union of India v. K.A. Najeeb* (2021), which held that prolonged incarceration and delay in trial can override the statutory restrictions on bail under Section 43D(5) of the UAPA.

Taking note of the submissions, the top court posted the matter for hearing on May 20 to consider the interim bail pleas.

## Petrol and diesel prices up 90 paise a litre

According to government data, India's crude oil basket until May 15, since the start of the month, has averaged \$106.69 per barrel. Further, in the morning hours of Tuesday, Brent crude futures (July) were trading 0.15% higher at \$109.34 per barrel.

Sourav Mitra, partner for oil & gas at Grant Thornton Bharat, said while the latest increase provides "incremental relief" to the country's oil-marketing companies, it may not be sufficient to fully cushion the existing stress.

"With crude sustaining above \$100 per barrel and the Indian rupee weakening, both of which increase the landed cost of imports, OMCs continue to operate under materially significant cost pressure, with currency depreciation alone potentially offsetting a substantial amount of gains from the price revisions," Mr. Mitra said.

India's crude oil basket until May 18, since the start of the month, has averaged \$107.3 per barrel, according to government data. Further, in the early evening hours of Tuesday, Brent crude futures (July) were trading 1.06% lower over their previous close at \$110.9 per barrel.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Prashant Vashisht, senior vice-president and co-group head, Corporate Ratings at ICRA Ltd., held that should benchmark Brent crude futures oscillate between \$105 and \$110 for every barrel, based on a 10-year average between the price of crude oil and the refined petroleum products, the latest price increase would help curtail the existing losses of OMCs from domestic LPG, petrol and diesel to ₹450 crore per day.

Further, responding to a query about adjusting for OMC losses and fears about inflation, Mr. Vashisht held, "The losses being made at present are unsustainable. The OMCs are opting for graded increases so that there is no shock," he said.

## Nordic nations, India natural partners: Modi

His meeting with Ms. Frostadottir, one of the world's youngest leaders, was a first since she was elected in 2024, and Mr. Modi is understood to have invited the Icelandic leader to visit India next year.

"The world needs more close *sambandh* (relations)," Ms. Frostadottir said during the press meet, referring to the word that holds the same meaning in Hindi and Icelandic.

Warning that geopolitical uncertainty would continue for the foreseeable future, Mr. Orpo said that India and the Nordic countries must continue the conversation on global turbulence and announced that the next India-Nordic Summit would be hosted by Finland. Increasing trade – given that Denmark, Sweden, and Finland are part of the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement announced in January 2026, and Norway and Iceland are part of the India-European Free Trade Agreement – was also part of the discussions. India at present does a combined trade of \$19 billion with the five Nordic countries combined, a relatively low figure compared to other European countries and regions.

The summit was Mr. Modi's last engagement before leaving for Italy for the last leg of his six-day, five-nation tour to the UAE and Europe.

A joint statement issued by all the leaders noted that India and the Nordic countries need to deepen their engagement to address global challenges, and all five Nordic leaders backed India's bid for a permanent seat in a reformed UN Security Council, and welcomed India's application for Nuclear Suppliers Group membership.

"As leaders of vibrant democracies and large open market economies, they underscored their shared interest in fostering a robust and resilient global order based on international law that promotes peace, stability, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development," the joint statement issued after the summit said. It committed to upholding international law including the United Nations Charter, and shared values including "democracy, freedom, human rights, gender equality".

## Hope India can push for Ukraine truce: Norway PM

Store says Modi can use channels to Russia to help bring a ceasefire; he says the Nordic country respects India's energy needs but there has to be 'more pressure on Russia to come to the table'

**Suhasini Haidar**  
OSLO

Norway hopes India will use its channels with Russia to push for a ceasefire in the war in Ukraine, said Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store. Speaking to Indian journalists here in Oslo during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to Norway, Mr. Store indicated that while the two sides had differences on the issue, he understood India's need to source energy.

The Norwegian government has built a fund for Ukraine and sent military support in the conflict, and has consistently pushed for more sanctions against Russia.

Mr. Store said it was useful to exchange views with Mr. Modi on Tuesday on geopolitical issues, and he had "respect" for the reasons for India's position on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. He also said that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval had met their Norwegian counterparts for further discussions on the issue.

"India is a huge country and has needs for its energy supplies. And Norway being an energy exporter,



**Growing ties:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, in Oslo, Norway on Monday. PTI

we should respect that," Mr. Store said in response to a question from *The Hindu*, but added that there had to be "more pressure on Russia to come to the table and make real effort to end this war".

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, India has increased its intake of Russian oil manifold, with Russian crude that once made up less than 1% of India's imports reaching a high point of 40% of the whole.

Mr. Store's comments came shortly before the U.S. government announced it would extend its sanctions waivers on the import of Russian oil for a third month during the war in West Asia, while India said it would continue

its oil imports from Moscow.

"We believe that when Russia can feel that energy [exports] are also being restricted – their sales – that creates pressure on Russia. At the same time, I know that the Indian Prime Minister and Indian leadership have channels with the Russian leadership, and I hope to see that they can use them to get a ceasefire going," Mr. Store continued, when asked about his comments during a joint press appearance earlier in the day, where he referred to issues where "Norway and India do not always see eye to eye".

However, he denied that the differences had impacted the bilateral relationship between India and

Norway in any negative way.

## On the Arctic Council

Mr. Store was also asked about whether the divide over Russia would affect India's engagement with the eight-nation Arctic Council that includes all Arctic states: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the U.S. India has been a permanent member of the grouping that discusses trade routes, climate change and ocean management since 2013.

"We wish to see that India, with its science can also be part of the research on Arctic climate, which is important for India," he added.

The meeting is taking place a year after it was originally scheduled, as Mr. Modi had to cancel his visit after the terror strikes in Pahalgam and the four-day India-Pakistan conflict.

Mr. Store said that all countries must take a firm position against terrorism. "We have to stand together against [terrorism], to fight it in its darkest shapes, but also to prevent it. And for that, we need political cooperation and today's visit has confirmed that Norway and India are getting closer," Mr. Store said.

## Church leaders begin peace mission in Manipur

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

A 10-member team of church leaders representing four national and global organisations began its peace mission in Manipur by meeting leaders of an apex Naga body, as its Kuki counterpart extended its shutdown by another 48 hours from Tuesday midnight.

The church leaders represent the Manipur Convention, the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI), the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation, and the Baptist World Alliance. They met leaders of the United Naga Council (UNC) in Senapati, one of four hill districts caught in a conflict between the primarily Christian Kuki-Zo and Naga communities.

Rev Namseng R. Marak, the secretary general of CBCNEI, told presspersons that the focus of the meeting was on defusing the present crisis arising out of the hostage situation following the killing of three Thadou church leaders on May 13. A section of Thadou claims it is a tribe independent of the Kuki tag.

"This is a difficult moment for the affected families. We appeal to all communities to exercise restraint, remain patient, and move forward in the spirit of forgiveness and peace," he said, hoping that the Kuki and Naga communities would uphold "brotherhood and humanity" for the restoration of peace in Manipur.

A.C. Thotso, the member-secretary of the UNC's Working Committee, welcomed the church leaders' peace initiative. He said the matter would be considered by the decision-making bodies of the organisation, while reiterating that "peace can prevail only when truth is acknowledged".

## Modi and Meloni outline road map for India-Italy strategic partnership

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, in a joint op-ed across several news platforms, outlined an expanded road map for cooperation between the two countries across sectors, including trade, technology, energy, space, and security, against the backdrop of an emerging "Indo-Mediterranean" corridor.

"The relationship between India and Italy has now reached a decisive stage. In recent years, our ties have expanded with unprecedented momentum, evolving from a cordial friendship into a special strategic partnership grounded in the values of freedom and democracy



Giorgia Meloni

and a common vision for the future," said Mr. Modi and Ms. Meloni in the op-ed titled "A Strategic Partnership for the Indo-Mediterranean".

"Both India and Italy are located at the very heart of two crucial hubs of the global economy – the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean – regions that cannot be viewed as separate

spheres, but instead as increasingly interconnected spaces," it said.

"As a matter of fact, we are witnessing the emergence of what might be termed the Indo-Mediterranean, an important corridor for trade, technology, energy, data and ideas tying the Indian Ocean to Europe. It is precisely within this interconnected space that our bond naturally evolves into a special strategic partnership – one that bridges two continents and shapes new global dynamics," said the op-ed.

In this context, it added, the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) represents a vision aimed at connecting the regions through modern transport and infrastruc-

## Modi skips questions from press; Store says 'different traditions'

**Suhasini Haidar**  
OSLO

The External Affairs Ministry defended India's record on democracy on Monday, for the second time during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's European tour, over Mr. Modi's decision not to take questions from the press. Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store called the practice a "different tradition" from Nordic countries that he had to "respect".

During the joint press appearance with his counterpart, Mr. Modi was confronted by a Norwegian journalist who asked him to respond to media questions, as was the norm in the European country. Later in the day, after the same journalist confronted the External Affairs Ministry on the issue, as well as on human rights during a briefing, a senior Ministry official said India was a "civilisational country".

"We hear a lot of people asking why this, why that, but let me tell you this. We are one-sixth of the total population of the world, but not one-sixth of the problems of the world," said Secretary (West) Sibi George. "We have a Constitution which guarantees the fundamental rights of the people. We have equal rights for the women of our country, which is very important," he said.

Earlier in the day, Helle L yng Svends, a correspondent for the *Dagsavisen*, stood up after the press statements made by Mr. Modi and Mr. Store in Oslo. "Prime Minister Modi, why don't you take questions from the free press in the world," she said, then following him out of the room, adding, "Do you deserve the trust of our... [government]?"

On Tuesday, leaders of Nordic states and Mr. Modi also addressed the press at the end of the India-Nordic Summit, but did not take questions. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Store said he had to respect the wishes of other leaders from countries of "different traditions". "All my Nordic colleagues have talked to journalists from different news [media] outlets, but I have to respect that India may have different traditions. That's for [Indians] to resolve," he said.

During the PM's visit to the Netherlands on Saturday, Dutch journalists had similarly raised objections to the practice of no questions with Mr. George during a press briefing.

"We face these kind of questions basically because of the lack of understanding of the person who asks the question," Mr. George had replied, citing India's historic democratic freedoms and human rights record.

## U.S. approves \$198-mn deal for Apache support

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Department of State has approved a possible Foreign Military Sale to India for follow-on sustainment support and related equipment for AH-64E Apache attack helicopters at an estimated cost of \$198.2 million.

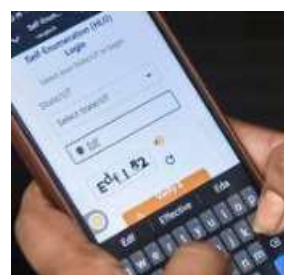
According to the notification issued by the U.S., India has requested Apache helicopter sustainment support services, along with contractor-provided engineering, technical and logistics support services. The package also includes technical data, publications, personnel training, and other related elements of logistics and programme support.

## SC Commission issues notice to authorities in Punjab over caste slurs in Census forms

**Abhinav Lakshman**  
NEW DELHI

Noting that Census 2027 forms for Punjab list caste slurs as synonyms for the names of Scheduled Caste communities, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has issued a notice to the Director of Census Operations in Punjab as well as the State government's Social Justice Department as part of its investigation into the issue.

The notice was based on a complaint from National Safai Karmachari Commission Vice-Chairperson Hardeep Singh Gill. The Union government's self-enumeration website for Census 2027 lists offensive words for the Valmiki community in Punjab, Mr. Gill told *The*



Self-enumeration website lists offensive words for the Valmiki community, says complaint.

*Hindu*, citing the use of words like "Chura" and "Bhang".

In fact, Census officials may simply be following the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, notified by the President of India, which repeatedly lists these offensive words as synonyms for the caste name "Balmiki" in the SC

lists for Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Chandigarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. In other States, including Delhi, "Bhang" is listed by itself as a caste name, despite being considered a slur by many.

Mr. Gill said these words are prohibited under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

In its notice, the NCSC enclosed Mr. Gill's complaint and said that it has "decided to investigate/inquire" into the issue as per its Constitutional powers. It has asked for an action-taken report from both the Director of Census Operations and the Punjab government within 15 days.

## Nalanda a civilisational symbol, says P.K. Mishra

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The 21st century should be a period of "intellectual decolonisation" that will help in the recovery of civilisational self-confidence, said P.K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, at the third convocation of Nalanda University held in Bihar's Rajgir on Tuesday.

"There are universities that are institutions. And then there are universities that are civilisational symbols. Nalanda belongs to the latter category," he said.

Mr. Mishra congratulated the graduating students and urged them to "work without walls", calling them to follow the true lesson of ancient Nalanda's wisdom of openness.

**APPEAL**

Praveen Kumar is 18 years old suffering from "Relapsed T Cell - Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia". He needs reinduction Chemotherapy followed by an Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplantation at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. The total expenditure is Rs.16,00,000/- His father is a daily wage earner and their family cannot afford this huge cost. Please support for the treatment. Donations sent by Ch.D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch.D.D./NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/c No.60182010063310, IFSC No.CNFR0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE is exempted under 80G IT.

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WWS

## Trinamool candidate opts out of Falta contest

The Hindu Bureau  
KOLKATA

Jahangir Khan, Trinamool Congress candidate in the Falta Assembly constituency in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, has said that he is withdrawing from the repolling being held for the seat on Thursday.

“Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari has announced a special package for the development of Falta. In the interest of Falta’s development, I am withdrawing from this election,” Mr. Khan said at a press conference.

Since the official deadline for withdrawal of candidature has passed, the name and party symbol of the Trinamool Congress candidate will remain on the EVM even if Mr. Khan does not contest.

A Trinamool Congress statement said Mr. Khan made a personal choice and it was not the party’s decision.

Polling was held in Falta in the second phase of the West Bengal Assembly election on April 29. After large-scale irregularities were reported, the Election Commission ordered repolling.

# Congress targets Modi over fuel price increase

Kharge says giving free pass to Adani, ‘robbing’ the people was PM’s ‘compromised model’; Rahul wonders if Modi’s request led to Adani group’s removal from a Norwegian wealth fund blacklist

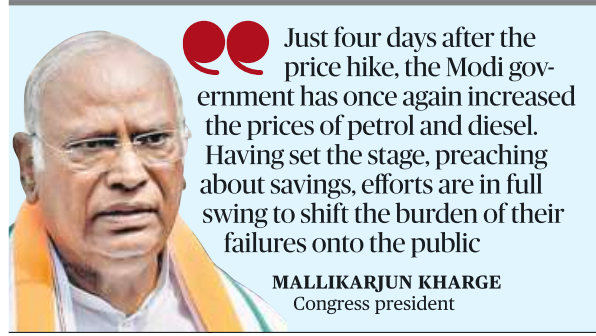
The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday stepped up its attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his visit to Norway and the latest round of increase in fuel prices.

Party president Mallikarjun Kharge said giving a free pass to Gautam Adani and “robbing” the common people was Mr. Modi’s “compromised model”. Mr. Kharge’s comments came after petrol and diesel prices were raised by around 90 paise per litre.

His party colleague and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, wondered if the Prime Minister’s personal request led to the Adani group being removed from a Norwegian wealth fund blacklist.

Mr. Gandhi’s remarks referred to the decision of Norway’s sovereign wealth fund, the world’s largest with assets estimated at \$1.2 trillion which is managed by the Norges Bank, to exclude Adani Green



Just four days after the price hike, the Modi government has once again increased the prices of petrol and diesel. Having set the stage, preaching about savings, efforts are in full swing to shift the burden of their failures onto the public

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE  
Congress president

Energy Ltd. (AGEL) from its portfolio earlier this year over concerns relating to alleged financial wrongdoing.

“We get very good information these days. Modi ji, did Norway agree to your personal request to remove Adani from their pension fund blacklist,” Mr. Gandhi asked in an X post, sharing an image of a report on the sovereign fund’s decision and the Prime Minister’s Norway visit – the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years.

And amid the controversy involving a Norwegian journalist, attempting to ask a question to Mr. Modi after a joint briefing with

the Norwegian Prime Minister, Mr. Gandhi put a separate X post. “When there is nothing to hide, there is nothing to fear. What happens to India’s image when the world sees a compromised PM panic and run from a few questions?”

“False assurances” Mr. Kharge widened the attack by linking the Adani issue to the latest fuel price hike, accusing the government of being engrossed in elections and giving false assurances.

“Robbing the common people and giving Adani a free pass from America – this is Modi’s compro-

mised model,” the Congress chief alleged in a post on X, referring to the reported decision of the U.S. Department of Justice to drop criminal charges against industrialist Gautam Adani and his nephew Sagar Adani.

The Congress president said the BJP government lacked “foresight and leadership”, and asked why consumers were being burdened with fuel price increases if oil imports were continuing from Russia.

“Modi ji, who fills the air with false pride about being the ‘vishwaguru’, has begged and pleaded with America for a one-month extension on ‘permission’ to buy Russian oil. Every time he does this, he hurts the pride of 1.4 billion Indians,” Mr. Kharge said.

“Just four days after the price hike, the Modi government has once again increased the prices of petrol and diesel. Having set the stage, preaching about savings, efforts are in full swing to shift the burden of their failures onto the public,” he added.

## Congress, its leaders must stop being ‘obstructionist’, says Finance Minister

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI



Nirmala Sitharaman

If the Congress and its leaders cannot “contribute positively” to the nation, they should stop being “obstructionists”, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday.

In a post on social media, she also went on to list the Narendra Modi government’s achievements under various social sector schemes, asking if these were aimed at benefiting the Adanis or Ambanis.

“Since 2014 we continue to serve every sector and every section of our society through our policies and initiatives,” Ms. Sitharaman said. “Farmers, the poor, women, youth, MSMEs are at the core of our governance structure.”

The Finance Minister asked whether the 58 crore Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana accounts that have been created were for

ple,” the Finance Minister asserted. “If @INCIndia [the Congress] and its leaders cannot contribute positively to nation-building, they should stop being obstructionists. A responsible opposition does not engage in fear mongering.”

Earlier in the day, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had attacked the government, saying that “a ferocious economic storm is looming over our heads”. “In 12 years, what Modi ji built as a structure – it was only for Adani and Ambani,” Mr. Gandhi said at an event in Rae Bareilly. “And now, that very structure is about to come crashing down. The blow won’t land on them – they have escape routes.”

“The blow will land on you – on the youth, the poor, the middle class, the farmers, the labourers, the small traders – who were never even part of that structure,” he added.

## Ensure foolproof NEET on June 21, says Pradhan

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

Education Minister calls for holding the test in a secure and seamless manner

Chairing a review meeting on preparations for the June 21 National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) for medical admissions, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday directed authorities to conduct the re-test in a “foolproof” manner “under strict security protocols”.

The test held on May 3 was cancelled as the questions had leaked, leading to an uproar and federal investigations.

An Education Ministry statement said Mr. Pradhan chaired a “high-level review meeting” with senior officials of the Minis-

try, and “stressed the need for complete integrity and transparency in the conduct of the examination”. The Minister said all “gaps” in the earlier test should be identified and “comprehensively addressed and eliminated”.

The statement said Mr. Pradhan said “coordination meetings” should be held with District Magistrates and Superintendents of Police across the States to “ensure robust monitoring and effective implementation of examination

arrangements”. It said the Education Minister called for conducting the test in a “secure, seamless, and foolproof manner under stringent security protocols”. “While underscoring that vigilance and security at examination centres must remain uncompromised, Mr. Pradhan also instructed officials to ensure adequate arrangements for students, including transportation, drinking water and other essential facilities,” the Ministry said.

The leak of the May 3 test questions affected over 20 lakh students.

The CBI on Tuesday searched the residences of three students in Nagpur and Chandrapur districts in Maharashtra.

## SHANTI Act liability absurdly low: plea in SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday appeared wary about rocking the boat on a new nuclear law which caps liability at less than ₹4,000 crore even as the petitioner, a retired bureaucrat, reminded the court of its own 40-year-old judgment that held that the “larger and more prosperous” an enterprise carrying on a hazardous activity is, the greater must be the compensation for causing an accident which may affect thousands of lives.

“Name a single country which does not fulfil its energy needs through nuclear plants,” Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, heading a three-judge Bench, asked petitioner E.A.S. Sarma.

Mr. Sarma, represented by advocates Prashant Bhushan and Neha Rathi, has challenged the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act of 2025, primarily on the ground that it allowed private sector and foreign corporations to operate nuclear power plants in India



and has further capped the liability of these operators at an “absurdly low level and exempted the supplier from any liability”.

But the Bench adopted a cautionary note about examining the legality of the Act, terming it a “sensitive legislative policy issue”.

Mr. Bhushan submitted

that Article 21 (right to life) could not be sacrificed on the altar of policy.

Justice Joyimalya Bagchi queried whether the petition was challenging the very act of foreign corporations setting up nuclear power plants in India or if it was limited to the quantum of financial liability post a nuclear accident.

Mr. Bhushan argued that both were interconnected, the compensation threshold had been lowered to minimise liability in order to attract foreign private investors in the nuclear sector.

He said the Supreme

Court’s 1986 judgment in the Oleum gas leak case had made a strong statement against cutting corners on liability to attract investments through hazardous industry. Forty years ago, the court had extended the ambit of Article 12 of the Constitution to include private corporations engaged in dangerous and hazardous activity under the definition of ‘state’ for the purpose of enforcing fundamental rights, particularly Article 21, in case of accidents.

Chief Justice Kant listed the case for the second week of July.

## SC notice on petition that U.P. crushed labour stir

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday decided to examine a petition alleging that the State of Uttar Pradesh weaponised its police machinery to infiltrate and crush a legitimate labour agitation in Noida to shield corporates indulging in “rampant wage theft”.

A Bench headed by Justice B.V. Nagarathna issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh government, the State police, and the Union government for their response on a petition filed by Shakambhari, whose 60-year-old activist husband, Satyam Verma, was arraigned in three different first information reports, and slapped with the National Security Act to frustrate his chances for bail.

“The State has weaponised its police machinery to arbitrarily crush a legitimate labour agitation in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, shielding corporate entities from liability for rampant wage theft, and maliciously criminalising the working class and civil society members through dragnet criminal proceedings,” advocates Shaikh Alam and Paras Nath Singh submitted.

## Former Union Highways Minister and Army veteran B.C. Khanduri passes away

The Hindu Bureau  
DEHRADUN

Major-General B.C. Khanduri (retd), 91, who died from age-related ailments in Dehradun on Tuesday, donned several hats in his life. From soldier to parliamentarian, Union Minister and twice Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, he carried into public life the bearing of a military officer and built a reputation around restraint, integrity, and administrative rigour.

Mr. Khanduri was born in Dehradun in 1934, and his transition from the armed forces to politics in the early 1990s was not so much a leap as an extension of his belief in institutional order and public duty. He entered parliamentary politics from the Garhwal constituency and went on to become one of the BJP’s most recognisable faces in Uttarakhand.

His national imprint was perhaps strongest during his tenure as Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways in the government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He



1934 – 2026

not always kind to Mr. Khanduri’s style of functioning.

His insistence on discipline and procedural order occasionally sat uneasily within the compromises of political life. Despite this, even his critics often acknowledged the personal austerity and integrity he brought to public office.

Mr. Khanduri, popularly known as “General Sahab”, was widely respected across political lines. His demise has been condoled by politicians, activists, and people from all walks of life.

President Droupadi Murmu condoled Mr. Khanduri’s passing and in a post on X, remembered him for his honest, simple, transparent, and development-oriented approach to public service.

Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan paid tribute to Mr. Khanduri. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in a post on X that he made invaluable contributions that would always be remembered. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama expressed grief over the death of the leader.

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अलपकालिन ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या 01 (सिविल)/2026-27

(बालिका सैनिक स्कूल के निर्माण कार्य हेतु)

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\*3 seats each reserved for students under Special Scholarship Scheme for J&K and Ladakh and other seats includes all reservation categories.

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## INBRIEF



## National security linked to economic growth: Army chief

India's long-term economic growth and global rise will depend on strong national security, Chief of the Army Staff Uday Shankar Dwivedi said on Tuesday, underlining that security has become the foundation for prosperity in an uncertain global environment. Addressing a seminar at the Manekshaw Centre, General Dwivedi said the world order is witnessing growing geopolitical competition, weaponisation of supply chains and technological dependencies that directly affect economic stability and national decision-making. "Security is no longer a cause that prosperity must bear. It is the precondition for prosperity to commence its progressive journey," he said.

## Shias in J&amp;K divided over moon sighting for Id-ul-Azha

A section of Shias in Kashmir has decided to observe Id-ul-Azha, an Islamic festival in honour of the willingness of Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son, on May 28 instead of May 27, when Sunnis and another section of Shias will observe the festival in Jammu and Kashmir. The moon sighting grouping, Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, of the All J&K Shia Association (AJKSA) said it carried out "a careful observation and found that the crescent moon of Zul Hijjah was not sighted (on May 18) either by the AJKSA Ruet-e-Hilal Committee or by other moon sighting committees across India".

## EPF details to be made available on WhatsApp

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has decided to allow the use of WhatsApp for subscribers to use various services, including viewing PF balances, last five transactions, and claim status. The service will be available to all subscribers of the EPFO within a month.

Talking to presspersons here on Tuesday, Union Labour Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the EPFO would also allow soon the use of UPI payment gateways to withdraw provident fund and transfer it directly to their bank accounts. He said the testing had been completed.

## Fall in court cases

Mr. Mandaviya added that the EPFO's "dedicated missions" such as "Nidhi Aapke Nikat (NAN)" programme resulted in the decrease in the number of cases pending with various consumer courts.

A senior official said when a member sends a WhatsApp message to the EPFO asking for assistance, the EPFO would verify if the message was from the specific member's registered mobile linked with the Universal Account Number (UAN).

## SC allows euthanasia of 'rabid, dangerous' dogs

The top court refuses to modify its November 7, 2025, order for removal of stray dogs from high-footfall public institutions; directs establishment of at least one ABC centre in every district

Aaratrika Bhaumik  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to modify its November 7, 2025, order directing all States and Union Territories to ensure the removal of stray dogs from high-footfall public institutions, including educational institutions, hospitals, bus depots, and railway stations, while clarifying that such dogs cannot be "re-released" into these institutional areas even after vaccination and sterilisation.

A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and N.V. Anjaria observed that a "harmonious" reading of the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules, 2023, together with their parent statute, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, did not support the contention that stray dogs possess an "indefeasible or absolute right" to occupy or remain in all categories of public spaces irrespective of their nature or use.

"The right to live with dignity under Article 21 necessarily encompasses the right of every citizen to move freely and access pu-



The top court says it cannot remain a passive spectator when preventable threats to human life continue to proliferate. FILE PHOTO

blic spaces without living under a constant apprehension of physical harm, attack or exposure to life-threatening events such as dog bites in public areas. The State cannot remain a passive spectator where preventable threats to human life continue to proliferate..." the Bench observed.

## ABC centres

The court noted that there had been a "discernible absence of sustained, systematic and incremental efforts" on the part of States and Union Territories to expand and strengthen the infrastructure required to manage the steadily increasing stray dog popula-

tion. Accordingly, the Bench directed States and Union Territories to establish at least one fully functional Animal Birth Control Centre in every district, equipped with adequate veterinary infrastructure, trained personnel and surgical facilities. It said the number of centres should be expanded, wherever necessary.

The court directed the States and Union Territories to ensure adequate availability of anti-rabies vaccines and immunoglobulin in government medical facilities and to establish effective public health response mechanisms to address dog-bite incidents. While underscor-

ing that when the safety and lives of human beings are weighed against the interests and welfare of sentient beings, the "constitutional balance" must necessarily tilt in favour of the preservation of human life, the Bench also permitted municipal authorities to adopt legally permissible measures, including euthanasia in cases involving "rabid, incurably ill or demonstrably dangerous or aggressive dogs".

"In areas where the population of stray dogs has assumed alarming proportions and where incidents of dog bites or aggressive attacks have become frequent and pose a continuing threat to public safety, the concerned authorities may, subject to due assessment by qualified veterinary experts... take such measures as may be legally permissible, including euthanasia in cases involving rabid, incurably ill or demonstrably dangerous/aggressive dogs", the Bench said.

The court directed all High Courts to initiate *suo motu* proceedings to oversee compliance with its August and November 2025 directions.

## Court chides Education Secretary over lapses in audit

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday criticised the Union Education Secretary for failing to comply with its earlier order directing the Centre to provide logistical support to a committee assisting the court in a matter concerning the audit of private universities.

A Bench of Justices Ashanuddin Amanullah and N.V. Anjaria had earlier issued a contempt notice to Vineet Joshi, Secretary, Department of Higher Education, while hearing a matter relating to the implementation of its April 20 order directing the Centre to provide office space, stenographic assistance, and logistical arrangements to a panel headed by former Indian Legal Service officer R.M. Sharma.

"Mr. Joshi, why did you not take this matter seriously? Is this the manner in which orders of the Supreme Court are to be treated so lightly?" Justice Amanullah orally observed while addressing Mr. Joshi.

The observations were made during the hearing of a petition filed by a student of Amity University alleging harassment after she sought a change of name in university records.

## NHRC asks Centre to review changes to trans law, 'revisit' concerns from community

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission of India has asked the Union government to "review" laws to "ensure gender inclusivity", including the most recent amendments to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act.

The NHRC noted that the amendments removing transgender person's right to a "self-perceived gender identity" had caused concern among community members, adding, "It may be appropriate for the authorities to consider revisiting these concerns."

It has also recommended that the population enumeration phase of the ongoing Census 2027 exercise should include distinct categories for "intersex",

## Panel says students should be admitted to educational institutions based on self-identified gender

"transmen", and "transwomen", so that accurate disaggregated data can be gathered and maintained.

**Self-identification focus**  
In a detailed advisory issued on Monday, the NHRC said that transgender and gender-diverse students should be admitted to educational institutions based on self-identified gender, and recommended that elderly transgender persons be enrolled for identity certificates based on self-identification.

The new amendments removed a clause that cod-

ified transgender people's right to a "self-perceived gender identity", and provided for a medical process through which gender certificates are to be issued.

The Social Justice Ministry justified the change, claiming that "self-identification" was creating hurdles in identifying the "real beneficiaries".

The NHRC called for a review of other laws like the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, which it said should be amended to "incorporate gender-inclusive procedures and recognition of self-identified gender". It also called for reviewing the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act to "explicitly include gender non-conforming children", and provide for "gender-affirming placements".

## Delhi court dismisses Umar Khalid's petition seeking bail for 15 days

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Tuesday dismissed an interim bail application filed by Umar Khalid, who had sought temporary release to attend the bereavement rituals of his uncle and assist his mother during her scheduled medical procedure on June 2.

Mr. Khalid has been in jail for over five years in the case on an alleged "larger conspiracy" behind the 2020 Delhi riots.

This comes a day after the Supreme Court voiced "serious reservations" about its January judgment refusing bail to Mr. Khalid and co-accused Sharjeel Imam, including the foreclosing of their right to seek bail for a year.

On Tuesday, Additional Sessions Judge Sameer Baj-

pai of the Karkardooma Courts rejected Mr. Khalid's request for a 15-day interim bail.

The court observed that previous instances in which Mr. Khalid and co-accused persons had been granted interim bail without violating conditions could not be treated as grounds for granting relief in every subsequent request.

The court further observed that attending the Chehlum ceremony of his uncle was not of such pressing necessity. "As far as the surgery of the mother of the applicant is concerned, the applicant has himself stated that he has five sisters. Although, as per the applicant, his sisters do not live nearby, they are definitely expected to come and help their mother," the court added.

## Model Twisha Sharma's death: husband remains absconding as both families trade charges

The Hindu Bureau  
BHOPAL

Samarth Singh, the husband of model Twisha Sharma, who recently died in Bhopal allegedly by suicide, remained absconding in a dowry harassment case.

Both the Sharma and Singh families traded charges about what may have led the 33-year-old to take her own life, and the model's kin demanded a second independent post-mortem examination.

Mr. Singh, a lawyer and the son of retired judge Giribala Singh who is also an accused in the case, has been at large since a first information report (FIR) was lodged on May 15. The police have announced a reward of ₹10,000 for information about him.



Navnidhi Sharma and Rekha Sharma, the parents of the deceased Twisha Sharma. PTI

On Monday, a local court rejected his plea for anticipatory bail, though it had been earlier granted to his mother, Ms. Singh.

Twisha was found hanging in her home on May 12. She was declared brought dead to the hospital, prompting doctors from AIIMS, Bhopal to alert the police. Based on allegations by Twisha's family, an FIR was lodged against Mr. Singh and his mother.

Twisha's sister-in-law

Rashi Sharma accused Ms. Giribala Singh of "character assassination and attempts to defame the deceased", denying her claims about Twisha's mental health. The Sharma family has moved a local court demanding a second independent post-mortem examination suspecting that the first report "may be tampered with due to the influence of the accused family". "We are planning to move the High Court soon to seek an independent post-mortem," Ms. Rashi said.

Assistant Commissioner of Police, Misrod, Rajnish Kashyap, who is leading the SIT, said that multiple teams have been formed to nab Mr. Singh.

(For those in distress, counselling is available at TeleMANAS-14416)

**THE CROSSWORD+ 14798** (set by Gussalufz)

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

SCAN TO PLAY

**ACROSS**

- I.A.S.-mess-rejected paneer is cooked for groom (5)
- Think, essentially during rehabilitating, dad's peer lost hope (9)
- Therefore, time to get into fried roti and rice dish (7)
- Caught hint of lightheartedness in tear-jerking piece (7)
- "Am like this" statement of kinky person's sex life (4-10)
- Has secretly grown stronger (4)
- Internal communication terminals? Never send shocking letters (5,4)
- Brought balance to English squad? Lie, unfortunately (9)
- So savage, revolting! (4)
- Typical daily routine, retired father's habit (14)
- Muslim League Dr. regularly rejected separation theory? (7)
- Call mum, son's misbehaving (7)
- Thought Tendulkar initially did umpiring all around (9)
- Jam? Badgers not sure (5)

**DOWN**

- Whisper: "Is cop ethically carrying navy instrument?" (9)
- Greek character cycled solo, drinking sip after exercising (7)
- Tune cocktail, adding minute bit of ground spice (6)
- Dung drips, pong spreads (9)
- Film mount (5)
- Cadet, set target somewhat westward; confirmed? (8)
- Nocturnal creature gallivanting on a croc (7)
- Outstanding tenor song (4)
- Put right colour on unfinished sweet after flipping (9)
- Arrays of small pipes constraining toilet area (9)
- Philanthrope, gangster, one inspired by faith (8)
- Never listened to you (reportedly) and her frolicking (7)
- Fury wife unleashed on staff, blowing top for dirty room (7)
- Stabilise tree stump, cutting 40% off (4,2)
- Around peak of Olympus, encountered heavenly sight (5)
- Feature gains depth deleting tense reference entry (4)

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

**Solution to previous puzzle**

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

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**FAITH**

**Continuous meditation**

Abhirami Bhattar's meditation on Ambal was continuous. It is difficult for us to focus on something. Even if we turn our thoughts towards God, it is with a view to reaping some immediate benefits. If we do not see any results at once, we give up meditating on God altogether. But Abhirami Bhattar never gave up his meditation, said M.A. Manickavelu in a discourse. Bhattar knew that constant worship would liberate him from the cycle of births and deaths. That focus, and the belief that meditation will help are necessary for meditation to bring us rewards.

There is a story about a man who began to dig a well in his land. He dug 10 feet and when there was no trace of water, he began to dig in another place. Here too he found no water at a depth of 10 feet. He then moved on to yet another place, and so on, until he had dug six wells each of 10 feet depth. His efforts went to waste, because there was no water in any of the wells. But another man dug in one place, and was not bothered when he found no water at 10 feet or even 50 feet. He went on digging, until he found water at a depth of 60 feet. The first man had also dug up to 60 feet, although not in one place. The cost to both was the same, but while the persevering man had a well full of water, the impatient man had nothing to show for his expense. Intermittent meditation will be like the efforts of the impatient man. Bhattar says *anbar koottam thannai villen*, meaning he will not part from the devotees of Abhirami. She is the *antaryami* present inside everyone in this world and beyond. She is sweet like honey and like nectar. The joy that you get when you worship Her is intoxicating.

**IN BRIEF**



**Rupee slips 50 paise to 96.7, lowest-ever versus U.S. Dollar**

The rupee descended for the eighth consecutive session and ended 50 paise down at lowest-ever level of 96.70 against the U.S. dollar on Tuesday, weighed down by soaring crude oil prices, persistent foreign capital outflows and a resilient dollar buoyed by global risk-aversion. Rupee, Asia's worst-performing currency, has lost ₹2.48 or 2.64% versus the greenback in the past eight sessions since the closing level of 94.22 recorded on May 7. Forex traders attributed the domestic currency's steep fall to rising crude oil prices and global supply chain disruptions due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. PTI

**Adani Enterprises stock up 1% as U.S. drops bribery charges**

Adani Enterprises' stock improved 1.3%, closing at ₹2,725 a share, a day after the U.S. Department of Justice dropped charges of bribery against the group and its promoters for a settlement. The stock opened at ₹2,734.70 a share, hit a high of ₹2,774.50, and slipped to ₹2,697.00 before reaching the day's close. The stock was trading over 2% above the previous close, but a generally sobering market sentiment due to the Iran-U.S. conflict may have pared some gains for the Apple to airports conglomerate's flagship stock. Shares of other group companies Adani SEZ and Ports, Adani Green or Adani Power, did not gain.

**India meets record peak power demand of 260.45 GW**

Amid rising power demand with soaring temperatures across the country, India was able to meet a peak power demand of 260.45 GW during solar hours at 3:40 p.m. on Tuesday, the Union Power Ministry informed. This surpassed the previous peak of 257.37 GW scaled on Monday. According to ministry data, thermal accounted for 61.5% of the power generated at the peak hour, solar 22%, wind 6.7%, hydro 5.3% and nuclear 2.7%. "This capacity to deliver on rising power demand is not a story of overnight transformation but one of sustained focus on generation, transmission and distribution over the past few years," the ministry said.

**LPG: Ship scarcity hits U.S. imports**

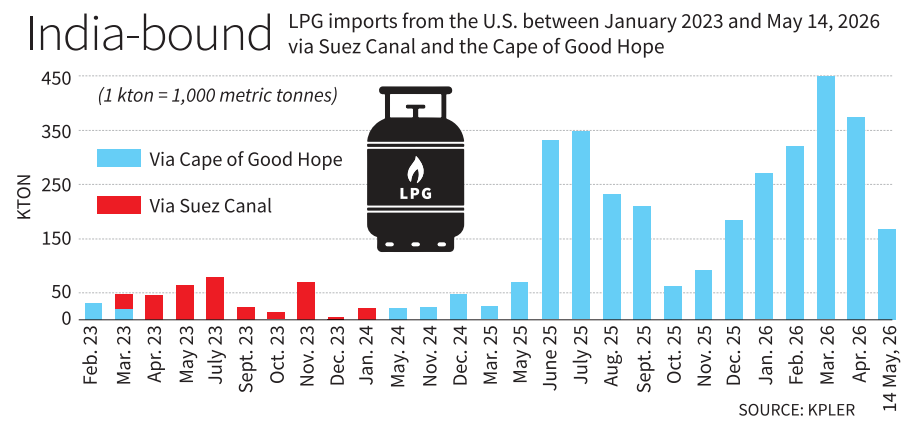
In March, 4.5 lakh LPG shipments left the U.S. for India, up from 3.2 lakh and 2.7 lakh tonnes in previous months, as per data from Kpler; subsequent months saw shipments drop to 3.72 lakh tonnes and 1.67 lakh tonnes due to less carrier availability

**Kalyanaraman M. Debayan Tewari**  
CHENNAI

With the Persian Gulf, from where 60% of India's LPG consumption came shut, the U.S. has emerged as a major LPG supplier. In March, 4.5 lakh LPG shipments left the U.S. for India, up from 3.2 lakh and 2.7 lakh tonnes in previous months, as per data from Kpler, a source of global trade intelligence. India imported nearly 10 lakh tonnes in March.

In April, however, shipments that left the U.S. for India dropped to 3.72 lakh tonnes and for the half-month in May, it was 1.67 lakh tonnes, as per Kpler.

The reason for less lifting in subsequent months, shipping experts say, is less gas carrier availability due in-part to ships taking the Cape of Good Hope route around Africa rather than the shorter Suez Canal



route. "U.S-India voyages via Suez Canal have been absent since January 2024, dropping in the aftermath of the increase in Houthi attacks on commercial shipping in the Red Sea waterway since end of 2023.

The preference for the Cape of Good Hope route is more likely driven by risk management, avoiding any elevated risk insurance premiums and the potential for renewed security threats in the Red Sea/Bab

el-Mandeb area, where commercial shipping has previously faced disruptions," says a Kpler statement mailed to *The Hindu*.

LPG ships are being re-routed to the U.S. which is much farther away from Persian Gulf for major markets such as India, Japan and China. "Around 40% of US-Asia LPG cargoes are now being re-routed via the Cape of Good Hope. This has materially increased tonne-mile de-

mand, adding 20 days or more to voyage durations, effectively tightening vessel availability and pushing freight rates sharply higher across all major routes," says Manish Sejwal, senior vice president for commodity markets at Rystad Energy.

**'More priority for LNG'**  
Mr. Sejwal talks of Panama Canal congestion as well. The reason for that is increased Liquefied Natural

Gas ship crossings. LNG ships have more priority than LPG ships at the canal, resulting in LPG carrier congestion.

India had built a conveyor belt of ships serving the Persian Gulf with some 20 Indian-flagged ships it could command at will.

This number was sufficient for round-trips from Qatar to Mumbai that would take some 10 days, and 20 days for Kolkata. But for 90-day U.S. voyage round trips, India needs several times more Indian-flagged LPG carriers to serve Indian needs smoothly.

While India has sent four of its Very Large Gas Carriers (VLGC) that returned from Persian Gulf after the war started to the U.S., it has had to ramp up its command of foreign-flagged ships, too. India is picking up more spot cargoes and hence the drop in arrivals from United States Gulf Coast, say experts.

**Maintaining crude oil stock for over a month: IOCL**

**Saptaparno Ghosh**  
NEW DELHI

Indian Oil is maintaining crude oil stock for more than a month, while inventories of liquified petroleum gas (LPG) have been affected though they too are being maintained to ensure that are adequately available across the country, its Director of Finance Anuj Jain told investors in an analyst call on Tuesday.

"We do not have any shortage of either crude oil or LPG. Crude oil inventories are still being maintained for over a month," Mr. Jain stated, adding, "LPG inventories has come down but it is still being managed so that we have enough LPG availability on a pan-India basis."

Mr. Jain informed investors that the Delhi-headquartered refiner had also diversified spot procurement of natural gas from Indonesia, Nigeria, Angola and Oman.

**Ease business norms, Norway firms tell PM**

**Suhasini Haidar**  
OSLO

India can improve 'ease of doing business' by streamlining regulatory frameworks and addressing 'ground level challenges', Norwegian industry leaders told PM Narendra Modi at the India-Norway Business and Research Summit held here on Tuesday.

The event was part of Mr. Modi's day-long bilateral agenda in Norway, where he and Norwegian PM Jonas Gahr Store met about 250 participants, including CEOs of 50 firms, where Indian and Norwe-



Mr. Modi and Mr. Store at the India-Norway business summit.

gian businesses signed 19 B2B Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). Mr. Store, turned to a few businesspersons from each side to speak about their experiences and ways in which processes could be improved.

**SC tells SpiceJet to move HC for relief**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court asked SpiceJet to move the Delhi High Court for extension of time to deposit ₹144 crore in connection with a dispute with media baron Kalanithi Maran and Kal Airways.

Appearing before a bench, Spicejet counsel, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said the West Asia crisis impacted the airline's operations and finances and sought three months to deposit the amount.

**StanChart to cut over 7,000 jobs globally by 2030 on AI**

**Lalendu Mishra**  
MUMBAI

British bank Standard Chartered (StanChart) as part of its plans to 'invest ahead of long-term trends [automation, AI] to maintain strong growth, boost productivity, further improve the quality of earnings, and maximise competitive advantages' is cutting more than 7,000 corporate jobs globally in the next four years.

"We will continue to apply disciplined workforce planning, aided by a reduction in corporate function roles of 15% by 2030. We



Standard Chartered logo is seen in this illustration.

are scaling practical uses of automation, advanced analytics and artificial intelligence to streamline processes, improve decision-making and enhance both client service

and internal efficiency," the bank said.

Those impacted will be from the pool of 52,000 people who work globally in corporate functions. The lender has a total global workforce of 82,000.

The move will lead to staff cuts in India as well. The lender has an employee base of more than 30,000 in India in corporate functions and Global Business Service Division. Though the exact number of job cuts in India is not known, those affected will be re-skilled and re-deployed. But there is no official confirmation on this.

**TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS - TIRUPATI**  
CHIEF EDITOR OFFICE e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE  
Roc.No. TTD-95021(31)/03/2026-Chief Editor Dt: 18.05.2026  
e-Tenders are invited for supply of Pre-Gumming Address Label Blank for Chief Editor Office, TTD, for a period of one year. For Tender notice and details please log on to the web site <http://www.tirumala.org> and <http://tender.ap.eprocurement.gov.in>. For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264543, 2264363.  
TTD-40021(31)/1/2026-PRO SEC(Adv.No.51) Date:19-05-2026 EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd**  
(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking) Sankaramangalam, Kollam 691583  
Phone: 0476-2651215 to 217 e-mail: [md@kmml.com](mailto:md@kmml.com)  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
For more details please visit E-Tendering Portal, <https://tenders.kerala.gov.in> or [www.kmml.com](http://www.kmml.com)

No.	Tender ID	Item
1.	2026_KMML_851022_1	For Supply of Zirconium Ortho Sulphate-15 MT
2.	2026_KMML_851365_1	Supply of 1 MT Polypropylene Jumbo Bags
3.	2026_KMML_849948_1	Revamping of PIT type furnace 6x60 kW =480 kW
4.	2026_KMML_851731_1	Supply of spare parts for N301 acid fume scrubber
5.	2026_KMML_851738_1	Supply of Stretch Wrapping Film-5175 kg

Chavara 19.05.2026 Sd/- Managing Director for The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd.

**AJMER VIDYUTA VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED**  
Corporate Identification Number (CIN)-U40909R200055016642  
Regd. Off: Vidya Bhawan, Panchsheel Nagar, Makarwall Road, Ajmer-305 004, (TURNS KEY WORKS CIRCLE)  
Phone: +91145-2644507, Fax: +91145-2644507, Email: [sew@vvnvl.com](mailto:sew@vvnvl.com), Website: [www.vvnvl.com](http://www.vvnvl.com)  
No.:- AVVN/SE (TW)/XEN (TW)/H/AEN (TW)/NIT /TN-465/LRC/D. 233 Date :- 14/05/2026  
**NIT No./ PACKAGE No.:- AJD/SE/TW/TN-465 (Lot-1 to 7)**  
E Bids in two parts (Technical Commercial bid and Price Bid) are invited from eligible contractors for short term NIT against package nos. AJD/SE/TW/TN-465 (Lot-1 to 7) for awarding contract of construction of various 33/11 KV GSS and associated 33KV & 11 KV line and Erection of New 33 KV line interconnections on Labour Rate, for Deedwana-Kuchaman/Bhilwara/Pratapgarh/Sikar/Banswara under domain of Ajmer Discom. UBN:- AVV2627W50B00015  
All the details regarding tender is available at our website <http://energy.rajasthan.gov.in/avnvl> and [www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in). Further in future corrigendum/extension, if any shall be published only at [www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in](http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in).  
Superintending Engineer (TW)  
Raj.Samwad/C/26/3083 AVVN, Ajmer

**क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय (केरल)/REGIONAL OFFICE (KERALA)**  
कर्मचारी राज्य बीमा निगम/Employees' State Insurance Corporation  
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web: [www.esic.gov.in](http://www.esic.gov.in) / Ph. 0472-2331080 / 2331151 / 2331412 / 2331413 (Ext-200)

**ഒടന്റഡ്വർ അറിയിപ്പ്/बोली आमंत्रण सूचना/ NOTICE INVITING BID**  
ESIC केरल के क्षेत्रीय निदेशक, लक्षद्वीप के कवरती, अगली और मिनिकॉय द्वीपों में ESIC MITRA सेवाओं को लागू करने के लिए मानवशक्ति और हार्डवेयर की अर्थात् हेतु GeM पोर्टल पर ऑनलाइन बोली आमंत्रित करते हैं।  
Regional Director, ESIC Kerala invites online bid in GeM portal for hiring manpower and hardware to implement ESIC MITRA services in the Kavaratti, Agatti and Minicoy islands of Lakshadweep.  
**GeM Bid Number** Last Date & Time Bid Opening Date & Time  
GEM/2026/B/7498964 09-06-2026 (01:00 PM) 09-06-2026 (01:30 PM)  
बोली दस्तावेजों/अधिक विवरण के लिए, कृपया GeM पोर्टल पर जाएं/For bid documents/more details please visit GeM portal ([www.gem.gov.in](http://www.gem.gov.in)).  
19.05.2026 -Sd-  
रूप/Thiruv /क्षेत्रीय निदेशक/Regional Director

**भारत सरकार / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, अंतरिक्ष विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF SPACE**  
विक्रम साराभाई अंतरिक्ष केंद्र / VIKRAM SARABHA SPACE CENTRE  
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तिरुवनन्तपुरम / THIRUVANANTHAPURAM - 22 / (फोन नं. / Ph. No. 0471 - 2564568 / 5669 / 4537 / 4545)  
दिनांक/Dated : 19-05-2026  
**ई-निविदा आमंत्रित करते हुए सूचना / BRIEF NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**  
भारत के राष्ट्रपति की ओर से निम्नलिखित कार्य के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा ऑनलाइन मद-दर निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। On behalf of the President of India, online item-rate tenders are invited through E-tendering for the following work.  
1. 70 एकड़, वीएसएससी, तुंबा में एनसीएलवी कार्यालय के लिए एक्सप्रेस भवन (चौबी मंजिल) का उद्घाटन विस्तार (सिविल तथा विद्युत कार्य) / Vertical Extension of STS Building (Fourth Floor) for NGLV Office at 70 Acres, VSSC, Thumba (Civil & Electrical works) / NIT No. VSSC/CMG/C0107/2026-27 Dt. 18.05.2026 (पी. ए. सी. /P.A.C.-R : 543.06 लाख/ILakhs)  
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**Identification No.- Online Tender: Bridge NCB No.04 for 2026-27**  
Letter No. :- 2254 / WE Date. 14/05/26

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- Total No. of Work : As per annexure
- Estimated Cost : As per annexure
- Eligible Class of Contractor : As per annexure
- Period of Completion : As per annexure
- Other Details :-

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		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Circle, Balasore.	NCB No.- 04 of 2026-27	25.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	11.06.2026 5.00 P.M.	10.06.2026 Up to 5.00 P.M.	12.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

• Further details can be seen from the website : [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)  
Sd/- Er.Durjoydhan Behera  
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Balasore.  
25001/189/2627 OIPR-25001/25105/1/26-27/0004

**State Project Management Unit, Department of Rural Development, Government of Uttarakhand (SPMU-RD),**  
Uttarahat, Sahasradhara Road, Near IT Park, Dehradun - 248001  
Contact Details: 0135-6633451, [ddugky.ukrd@gmail.com](mailto:ddugky.ukrd@gmail.com)  
Letter No.:- 86/N/36/DDU-GKY2.0/2026 Date: 19/05/2026

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Sd/-  
(Anuradha Pal), IAS  
Project Director  
DDU-GKY, SPMU-RD  
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		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bids
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda	CCERWCSBD - Online - 19/2026-27	20.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	09.06.2026 at 05.00 P.M.	08.06.2026 up to 2.00 P.M.	10.06.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	To be intimated separately

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## JERUSALEM

## Israel Finance Minister says ICC seeks arrest warrant against him



Israel's far-right Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich said on Tuesday that the International Criminal Court prosecutor had requested an arrest warrant against him. Mr. Smotrich accused the Palestinian Authority of pushing for the latest judicial procedure, calling the moves against him "a declaration of war". AFP

## LAGOS

## Nigeria says its joint strikes with the U.S. have killed 175 IS militants



A joint operation against Islamic State militants by Nigeria and the United States has killed 175 of the militants over the past few days, the Nigerian military said on Tuesday. It added that the strikes also destroyed weapons, checkpoints and financial networks of the militants across the northeastern region of the country. AP

## BEIJING

## China denies Xi told Trump that Putin 'regrets' invasion of Ukraine



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun on Tuesday denied suggestions that President Xi Jinping told his American counterpart Donald Trump during his visit that Vladimir Putin might "regret" his invasion of Ukraine. "The information you mentioned does not match the facts and is completely fabricated," he said. AFP

## PARIS

## European Union denounces new U.S. waiver of Russian oil sanctions



The European Union criticised on Tuesday the latest U.S. waiver of sanctions on Russian oil, announced while G-7 Finance Ministers were meeting to tackle multiple economic challenges. "From the EU point of view, we do not think that this is a time to ease pressure on Russia," EU economics commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis said. AFP

# U.S. may need to attack Iran again if no deal is reached, says Trump

'I'm saying two or three days, maybe Friday, Saturday, Sunday, maybe early next week, a limited period of time, because we can't let them have a new nuclear weapon,' says U.S. President; Iran state media call Trump's pause a 'retreat' based on 'fear'

Associated Press  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that the U.S. may need to hit Iran again and he was only an hour away from deciding on a strike before he postponed the attack.

"I was an hour away from making the decision to go today," Mr. Trump told reporters at the White House.

He said Iran's leaders are "begging" to make a deal, but a new U.S. attack would happen in the coming days if a deal is not reached. "Well, I mean, I'm saying two or three



Locked and loaded: Damage at a fishing pier, reportedly due to the U.S.-Israeli air strikes, in the port of Qeshm island in Iran. AP

days, maybe Friday, Saturday, Sunday, something, maybe early next week, a limited period of time, because we can't let them have a new nuclear wea-

pon." "There seems to be a very good chance that they can work something out. If we can do that without bombing the hell out of them, I'd be very happy,"

Mr. Trump said at the White House on Monday evening, after first making the announcement in a social media post.

He said America's allies in the Persian Gulf asked him to wait for two to three days because they feel they are close to a deal with Iran. Mr. Trump has been threatening for weeks that the ceasefire reached in mid-April could end if Iran did not make a deal, with shifting parameters for striking such an agreement. Over the weekend he warned, "For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them."

Shortly after Mr. Trump's post, Iranian state TV called it a "retreat" based on "fear" in its broadcast ticker and on its X account.

It reported earlier that defence systems were activated late Monday on Qeshm Island in the Strait of Hormuz. It added the situation was "under control" there, the largest Iranian island in the Persian Gulf, home to about 150,000 people and a water desalination plant.

Iran has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for the shipment of oil, gas, fertilizer and other petroleum products.

# Putin trip aims to show ties with China unshakeable

Agence France-Presse  
BEIJING

Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Beijing late on Tuesday for talks with his Chinese counterpart and "long-time good friend" Xi Jinping, intending to show their ties are unshakeable days after a visit by Donald Trump.

The confirmation of Mr. Putin's trip came just hours after Mr. Trump wrapped up his visit on Friday, the first by a U.S. President to China in nearly a decade and one aimed at stabilising their turbulent relations.

Mr. Putin and Mr. Xi are set to discuss how to "further strengthen" Russia and China's strategic partnership and "exchange views on key international and regional is-



Vladimir Putin

Beijing, the main buyer of sanctioned Russian oil.

Among topics Mr. Xi and Mr. Putin could discuss is construction of the major "Power of Siberia 2" natural gas pipeline from Russia to China through Mongolia – a land alternative to crude imported by sea from the West Asia – which Moscow is keen to get under way.

Setting warm tones for the visit, the two leaders exchanged "congratulatory letters" on Sunday to mark 30 years of their countries' strategic partnership.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun lauded on Tuesday "the enduring friendship between China and Russia".

The two leaders are also expected to sign a joint declaration after the talks.

# U.S.-Iran negotiations need 'more time' to reach deal, says Qatar

Agence France-Presse  
DOHA

Qatar said on Tuesday that U.S.-Iran negotiations, mediated by Pakistan, required more time to reach a deal, a day after President Donald Trump said he had postponed planned attacks to give the process a chance.

"We are supportive of the diplomatic effort by Pakistan that has shown seriousness in bringing parties together and finding a solution, and we do believe it needs more time," Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari said at a press conference.

On Monday, Mr. Trump said that he had suspended



Majed al-Ansari

the attack after the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates asked him to give negotiations a chance.

"We want to protect the people of the region from being basically the main losers of any escalation in the region," Mr. al-Ansari said.

# Police investigating mosque shooting in U.S. as hate crime

Agence France-Presse  
SAN DIEGO

Police were investigating a shooting in the U.S. state of California as a hate crime on Tuesday after a pair of teenage gunmen killed three persons at a mosque complex.

Tearful women emerged from a centre set up to reunite families caught up in the shooting, and yellow police tape blocked access to the Islamic Centre of San Diego, where the victims were found on Monday.

Police said emergency response teams found the victims, all men, outside the sprawling complex, before later finding the sho-

oters, aged 17 and 18, dead in a car from apparent self-inflicted gunshot wounds.

"We are actively investigating this as a hate crime," San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl told presspersons. "There was definitely hate rhetoric that was involved."

The Islamic centre describes itself on its website as the largest mosque in San Diego County, which is in southern California.

Mr. Wahl said a security guard at the Islamic centre was among the three victims, adding that his response had helped prevent a deadliest attack.

"His actions were heroic, and he undoubtedly saved lives today."

# WHO worried about 'scale and speed' of deadly Ebola outbreak as 131 killed

Agence France-Presse  
KINSHASA

The World Health Organization on Tuesday voiced concern about the "scale and speed" of an Ebola outbreak that has killed an estimated 131 people in the Democratic Republic of Congo and warned it could be lengthy.

The UN health agency has declared the surge of the highly contagious haemorrhagic fever an international health emergency and called an urgent meeting on the crisis.

No vaccine or therapeutic treatment exists for the Bundibugyo strain of Ebola which is responsible for the outbreak declared in the east late last week.



A woman washes her hands at the Grande Barrier border, following confirmation of an Ebola outbreak in Goma, on Monday. REUTERS

Ebola has killed more than 15,000 people in Africa in the past half-century.

With the recent cases largely concentrated in difficult-to-access areas hit by long-running conflicts, few samples have been laboratory-tested and figures are

based mostly on suspected cases.

"We have recorded roughly 131 deaths in total and we have around 513 suspected cases," Congolese Health Minister Samuel Roger Kamba said.

"The deaths we are re-

porting are all the deaths we have identified in the community, without necessarily saying that they are all linked to Ebola."

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said he was "deeply concerned about the scale and speed of the epidemic".

Speaking from the DRC, Anne Anca, the WHO's representative, told presspersons in Geneva that a vaccine candidate called Ervebo was among those being looked at but it was likely to take at least "two months for it to be available".

The DRC's deadliest Ebola outbreak, between 2018 and 2020, claimed nearly 2,300 lives from 3,500 cases.

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**NEEDLESS PRESSURE**

**'I feel sad for players who go to podcasts and talk what they think'**



FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Virat Kohli warned players against making big claims on podcasts. "I feel quite sad for players who go to podcasts and talk what they think. Then they come to competitions and find themselves in tremendous pressure because you've said something you have to live up to," he said at the RCB Innovation Lab Indian Sports Summit.

**DOUBLE BLOW**

**De Kock and Bawa to miss remainder of IPL 2026**



EMMANUAL YOGINI

MI wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock and pace-bowling all-rounder Raj Angad Bawa were on Tuesday ruled out of IPL 2026 due to injuries. De Kock has been on the sidelines with a tendon injury in his left wrist. Bawa, meanwhile, suffered a ligament tear in his right thumb during MI's previous match against PBKS.

**AGARKAR'S BACKING**

**'Prince has the necessary skills to succeed with the white ball'**



FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

Prince Yadav has shown a lot of promise through the domestic season. I think he had a really good Vijay Hazare Trophy. Obviously, bowled well in the IPL. But we have seen that he has grown a lot as a bowler over the last year or so and has the necessary skills to succeed with the white ball — Ajit Agarkar, chief selector.

**RACE AGAINST THE CLOCK**

**Will act accordingly if Rohit and Hardik are not fit in time: Agarkar**



FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

If they tell me a certain guy is fit, I have to trust that person when we pick him. And maybe in two weeks' time, if we are told that those two guys (Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya) haven't quite made it fitness-wise, we will take a call accordingly. I just go by what the physio tells me — Ajit Agarkar.

# Sooryavanshi's stunning knock takes Royals closer to playoffs

The teen sensation smashes 93 off just 38 balls to set up a facile win; stand-in skipper Jaiswal and Jurel also get going in the chase; LSG opens Marsh and Inglis' fireworks in vain; a victory over MI would seal the Rajasthan side's qualification

**IPL-19**

**P.K. Ajith Kumar**  
JAIPUR

That boy. He has done it again. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi came up with another sensational innings to power Rajasthan Royals to a seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants in a must-win IPL 2026 tie at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on a warm Tuesday night. His 93 off 38 balls (7x4, 10x6) helped the Royals chase down the target of 221 with five balls to spare.

A win against Mumbai Indians in their last match on Sunday in Mumbai will take them to the playoffs. The victory against LSG in front of a full house came after three defeats in a row. And those thousands of fans were fortunate to witness that incredible show by Sooryavanshi.

**Breathtaking stuff**

It was breathtaking stuff, truly. The way he hit sixes into the stands, on either side of the wicket, was something you very rarely get to see.

There was this six over extra-cover off Prince Yadav, which he followed it up with a hit deep into the stands over mid-wicket. And before that, there was this ramp shot against the same bowler: there was a touch of genius about that stroke.

Sooryavanshi's innings came to an end when he was caught at long on off Mohsin Khan, who would have heaved a sigh of relief as he failed to run the batter, earlier in the over, despite having all the time in the world.

**Early burst**

The wonderkind, however, had done his job. It was Yashasvi Jaiswal, the

**SCOREBOARD**

**LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS**  
Mitchell Marsh run out 96 (57b, 11x4, 5x6), Josh Inglis b Yash Raj 60 (29b, 7x4, 3x6), Nicholas Pooran c Ferreira b Yash Raj 16 (11b, 2x6), Rishabh Pant run out 35 (23b, 2x4, 2x6), Abdul Samad (not out) 0 (0b), Ayush Badoni b Archer 0 (1b); Extras (lb-3, nb-1, w-9) 13; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 220.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-109 (Inglis, 8.2 overs), 2-151 (Pooran, 12.2), 3-215 (Pant, 19.1), 4-220 (Marsh, 19.5), 5-220 (Badoni, 19.6).

**ROYALS BOWLING**  
Archer 4-0-39-1, Sushant 4-0-46-0, Sandeep 3-0-43-0, Brijesh 4-0-44-0, Yash Raj 4-0-35-2, Shanaka 1-0-10-0.

**RAJASTHAN ROYALS**  
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Pant b Akash

43 (23b, 8x4, 1x6), Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (**Impact Player for Yash Raj**) c Samad b Mohsin 93 (38b, 7x4, 10x6), Dhruv Jurel (not out) 53 (38b, 3x4, 3x6), Lhuan-dre Pretorius run out 7 (6b), Donovan Ferreira (not out) 16 (10b, 1x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-3, w-10): 13; Total (for three wkts. in 19.1 overs): 225.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-75 (Jaiswal, 6.3), 2-180 (Sooryavanshi, 13.6), 3-196 (Pretorius, 16.2).

**SUPER GIANTS BOWLING**  
Akash 3-0-54-1, Mohsin 4-0-31-1, Maykan 4-0-50-0, Prince 4-0-43-0, Digvesh (**Impact Player for Inglis**) 4-0-38-0, Shahbaz 0.1-0-6-0.

**Toss: RR; PoM:** Sooryavanshi. *Royals won by seven wickets with five balls remaining.*

**Points table**

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Royal Challengers (Q)	13	9	4	0	18	1.065
Gujarat Titans (Q)	13	8	5	0	16	0.400
Sunrisers Hyderabad (Q)	13	8	5	0	16	0.350
Rajasthan Royals	13	7	6	0	14	0.083
Punjab Kings	13	6	6	1	13	0.227
Chennai Super Kings	13	6	7	0	12	-0.016
Delhi Capitals	13	6	7	0	12	-0.871
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	5	6	1	11	-0.038
Mumbai Indians (E)	12	4	8	0	8	-0.504
Lucknow Super Giants (E)	13	4	9	0	8	-0.702

Q: Qualified | E: Eliminated

**Next assignment**

**LSG:** May 23 vs. PBKS Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.  
**RR:** May 24 vs. MI Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.

Sooryavanshi smashed seven fours and 10 sixes. The left-hander added 75 with fellow-opener Jaiswal. Jurel guided Royal home with an unbeaten 53.

stand-in captain, that first provided the fireworks in Royals' chase. He hammered a 23-ball 43 (8x4, 1x6) and put on 75 for the first wicket with Sooryavanshi, who then was involved in a 105-run association with Dhruv Jurel (53 n.o., 38b, 3x4, 3x6) that would more or less ensure Royals' easy victory.

Earlier, Mitchell Marsh's 96 (57b, 11x4, 5x6) and his

opening wicket stand of 109 with fellow Australian Josh Inglis (60, 29b, 7x4, 3x6) helped LSG to 220 for five after being put in.

**Losing momentum**

The visiting side failed to keep the momentum though, and a superb final over from Jofra Archer saw it lose three wickets for an addition of five runs.

Then, that boy took centre-stage. And how.



**Simply exquisite:** Sooryavanshi and Marsh produced an exhibition of incredible hitting. R.V. MOORTHY

# Rahul renamed vice-captain for one-off Test against the Afghans

**Amol Karhadkar**  
MUMBAI

K.L. Rahul has been reappointed vice-captain of India's Test squad, while the spin duo of Manav Suthar and Harsh Dubey along with lanky pacer Gurnoor Brar have earned their maiden Test call-ups for the one-off Test against Afghanistan to be played at New Chandigarh from June 6 to 10.

Prince Yadav, one of the standout performers of the ongoing Indian Premier League season, has received his maiden ODI call-up for the three-match series to follow beginning on June 14. The senior national selection committee, chaired by Ajit Agarkar, met in Guwahati on Tuesday to pick the squads.

"There are a couple of guys who are injured who were part of the one-day squad before. With Gurnoor, we have seen a lot of promise over the last season and a half now. Tall guy with a bit of pace," Agarkar said. "Keeping the South African World Cup in mind, we are obviously going to try a few guys who at that point might be useful if they keep developing," he added.

The Test squad does not feature Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja, with both



Rahul. FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

players having been rested, as clarified by Agarkar during a virtual media interaction. Rahul thus replaces Rishabh Pant as vice-captain. Pant has also lost his place in the ODI squad to Ishan Kishan, although Agarkar stressed that there was "no doubt" over Pant's credentials as a match-winner in Test cricket. "KL has been Test captain before. Rishabh was vice-captain and we want him to be the best batter that he can be. So, no, there is no other reason," Agarkar said.

Apart from Jadeja, Axar Patel is another notable absentee from the squads. Agarkar said Jadeja remains the No. 1 spinner for Tests.

"Jadeja has just been rested for this Test. He is aware of it. That's why he is not in the team. He still remains a very integral part of the Test team. We know what Jadeja or Axar can do.

"This is the time we try and give some opportunity to some of the other guys. With regards to Tests, he still remains our number one spinner," Agarkar said.

Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya, both dealing with fitness concerns during the ongoing IPL, have been included in the ODI squad for the series starting June 13, subject to fitness clearance.

**The squads: One-off Test:** Shubman Gill (Capt.), K.L. Rahul (Vice-capt.), Yashasvi Jaiswal, B. Sai Sudharsan, Rishabh Pant (wk), Devdutt Padikkal, Nitish Kumar, Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Manav Suthar, Gurnoor Brar, Harsh Dubey, Dhruv Jurel (wk).

**The dates:** June 6 to 10 (New Chandigarh).

**ODI:** Shubman Gill (Capt.), Shreyas Iyer (Vice-capt.), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (wk), Ishan Kishan (wk), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, Hardik Pandya, Prince Yadav, Prasidh Krishna, Harsh Dubey, Gurnoor Brar, Arshdeep Singh, Nitish Kumar. (\* subject to fitness clearance).

**The schedule:** June 14 (Dharamshala), June 17 (Lucknow), June 20 (Chennai).

# 'Knew that selectors were closely watching'

**Vivek Krishnan**  
NEW DELHI

Gurnoor Brar came to know of India's squad for the one-off Test against Afghanistan just like the vast majority: via the BCCI's social media post a little after 4 p.m. on Tuesday. Never mind that Gurnoor was one of the 15 members chosen for the red-ball assignment in New Chandigarh.

Following his maiden Test call-up, there were no imminent plans for a grand celebration on his part.

"I'm just about to head out for training with Gujarat Titans," the right-arm pacer from Punjab told *The Hindu* over the phone with a chuckle.

The 25-year-old, who stands at an imposing 6'5", has been rewarded for possessing attributes that appear ideal for the classical version.

Having been involved in the India-A set-up since September 2025, Gurnoor, whose First Class record reads 52 wickets in 18 appearances, sensed he was on the radar of the national selectors.

"I knew the selectors were closely watching. It was in my mind that I could get a chance," he revealed.

The desire to don the whites at the highest level has spurred Gurnoor from the outset.

"Playing Test cricket for



Gurnoor. K. MURALI KUMAR

# Nabi was close to Test call-up, says Agarkar

**Amol Karhadkar**  
MUMBAI

Ajit Agarkar, the chief selector of India's men's cricket team, has stated that Mohammed Shami was not considered for the Afghanistan series since the veteran pacer is ready only for T20 cricket for now. Agarkar also mentioned that Auqib Nabi came very close to his maiden Test call-up.

"As far as we have been told, at this point, his body is allowing him to [play only the shortest format]... I know he has played the domestic season this year. But the information that I have got is that at this point, T20 cricket is what he is ready for. So, there was no discussion regarding Shami's selection," Agarkar said on Tuesday.

With Harshit Rana and Akash Deep injured and the selectors deciding to rest Jasprit Bumrah, Auqib Nabi - the Jammu & Kashmir medium-pacer who was one of the stars of the Ranji Trophy season - was expected to earn a maiden call-up to the Test squad. However, the selectors went for Gurnoor Brar as the back-up pacer.

"You do not necessarily pick a lot of seamers when you pick a Test team in India. And Nabi was close," Agarkar said.

# KKR has everything to play for as it faces MI



KKR will be keeping a close eye on Varun's fitness. K.R. DEEPAK

**Y.B. Sarangi**  
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders, one of the five teams vying for the remaining solitary playoff berth, will try to exact revenge on Mumbai Indians at the Eden Gardens here on Wednesday and stay alive in IPL 2026.

KKR must have regained some self-belief after defeating Gujarat Titans in its previous outing.

The host, which has struggled through the season due to injuries to its key players, will be keeping a close eye on spinner Varun Chakaravarty and pacer Matheesha Pathirana. Varun bowled against

**Today's match**

Kolkata Knight Riders vs Mumbai Indians  
Kolkata, 7.30 p.m.  
**HEAD-TO-HEAD**  
Played: 36  
KKR 11 | MI 25  
**PREVIOUS MEETING**  
MI won by six wickets, 2026  
LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOTSTAR

GT despite nursing a foot injury while Pathirana pulled his hamstring midway through an over in the same match.

Sunil Narine, who not only dries up runs but also provides crucial break-

throughs, has been KKR's trump card. All-rounder Cameron Green is a decent back-up seamer, while left-arm pacer Saurabh Dubey provides variety.

With opener Finn Allen rediscovering his touch, Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Green making healthy contributions, and Rinku Singh performing well in the middle-order, KKR would be secure about its batting.

However, skipper Ajinkya Rahane will be expected to raise his game.

The already-eliminated MI will be without any pressure as its sole motive will be to win the remaining two games and finish

on a high. A side, which has logged several impressive totals and consists of destructive batters such as Ryan Rickelton, Rohit Sharma, Tilak Varma and Sherfane Rutherford, should make life difficult for the KKR bowlers.

Regular skipper Hardik Pandya could return to the XI.

With an attack comprising Jasprit Bumrah, Deepak Chahar, Shardul Thakur, Corbin Bosch and A.M. Ghazanfar, in addition to Hardik, MI can dent KKR's remote chances.

The home team needs to produce something special to check MI and keep its fans happy.

## INBRIEF



### Tajjul claims four, Bangladesh closes in on series sweep

Left-arm spinner Tajjul Islam claimed four wickets as Bangladesh moved within three wickets of a series sweep against Pakistan after reducing the tourists to 316 for seven on the fourth day of the second Test in a chase of 437 at Sylhet. Mohammad Rizwan was batting on 75 with Sajid Khan on eight at stumps.

**The scores:** Bangladesh 278 & 390 in 102.2 overs vs Pakistan 232 & 316/7 in 86 overs (Rizwan 75 batting, Masood 71, Agha 71, Tajjul 4/113).



### Wrist injury forces Alcaraz to withdraw from Wimbledon

Carlos Alcaraz's hopes of regaining his Wimbledon title have been dashed with the two-time champion announcing on Tuesday he is withdrawing as he recovers from a wrist injury. "Unfortunately I am not yet ready to play and that is why I am obliged to withdraw from both Queen's and Wimbledon," said Alcaraz, who lost to world No. 1 Jannik Sinner in last year's final.

### NADA slaps three-year doping bans on Ankit, Jayesh

Ankit of Services Sports Control Board and Jayesh Patil of Railways have been handed three-year bans by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) after testing positive for the banned substance meldonium. Ankit had finished third at the 69th National Cross Country Championships, while Patil finished fifth. Both athletes accepted the charges, resulting in a one-year reduction in their period of ineligibility.



### Tennis icon Billie Jean gets college degree at 82

Billie Jean King celebrated earning a college degree 65 years after she first took classes. The 82-year-old sports and equality icon received her bachelor's of art in history from Cal State Los Angeles on Monday. "It's never too late, whatever age you are, whatever your abilities are, go for it if you want it," she said. "It means a lot more to me than I thought. I am so glad I did it. My hope is that one other person will go back to school."



### Guardiola to leave Man City at end of the season: reports

Pep Guardiola is set to bring his trophy-laden decade in charge of Manchester City to an end this weekend, according to multiple reports on Monday. Guardiola, 55, has won six Premier League titles and City's first Champions League crown among 20 trophies since arriving in England in 2016. *The Daily Mail* and *The Athletic* reported that Guardiola will step down after Aston Villa visits the Etihad. City has made no comment on the speculation.

## LIVE TELECAST

**Bangladesh vs Pakistan:** 2nd Test, Day 5, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.  
**IPL:** Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.  
**Europa League (final):** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Thursday).

# Don't want to be dependent on cricket all my life: Kohli

Let's see what happens in a few years' time and where life takes me, says the superstar at the RCB summit; the 37-year-old feels longevity across formats is the true marker of a player

## IPL-19

**Ashwin Achal**  
BENGALURU

Once he leaves the cricket field, Virat Kohli believes in disconnecting from the sport.

The India and Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) star is keen to follow this direction once his playing days come to an end.

"I, for one, am not in a space where I want to have more things connected to cricket beyond my playing days. I don't want to be dependent on cricket all my life, because there's so much more to understand, learn and grow with," Kohli said at the third edition of the RCB Innovation Lab Indian Sports Summit, here on Tuesday.

"This should not be the only limiting factor, at least in my experience. Let's see what happens in a few years' time and where life takes me," Kohli, who plays only ODIs for India, said at the Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence.

The instant fame and financial windfall that



**Two of a kind:** Kohli interacts with badminton ace Sindhu. K. MURALI KUMAR

comes with performing in the IPL carries massive appeal, but not so for Kohli. The 37-year-old explained that the true marker of a cricket career is longevity across formats.

"A lot of people relate drive to money nowadays. For me, it's not the only factor. When a format that gives you the hype, recog-

Or, you can say, I want to play for 15-20 years. I want to get the recognition and respect of the cricketing world, of my own heroes. That's a very different zone. You have to be very driven to say, 'I'm going to commit to this for the next 10-15 years. It is going to be very, very hard but I'm all for it,'" Kohli said.

## Ancelotti bets on Neymar for WC despite three-year absence

**Agence France-Presse**  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil superstar Neymar was handed a dramatic recall by coach Carlo Ancelotti to the country's World Cup squad on Monday, returning to the national team after a near three-year absence.

Meanwhile, veteran Portugal striker Cristiano Ronaldo will lead his country after coach Roberto Martinez named the 41-year-old in his squad on Tuesday.

**The squads: BRAZIL:**

**Goalkeepers:** Alisson, Ederson, Weverton; **Defenders:** Alex Sandro, Danilo, Leo Pereira, Bremer, Douglas Santos, Gabriel Magalhães, Ibanez, Marquinhos, Wesley; **Midfielders:** Bruno Guimarães, Casemiro, Danilo, Fabinho, Lucas Paqueta; **Forwards:** Endrick, Gabriel Martinelli, Igor Thiago, Luiz Henrique, Matheus Cunha, Neymar, Raphinha, Rayan, Vinicius Junior.

**PORTUGAL: Goalkeepers:** Diogo Costa, Jose Sa, Rui Silva, Ricardo Velho; **Defenders:** Diogo Dalot, Matheus Nunes, Ruben Dias, Nelson Semedo, Joao



Neymar. AP

Cancelo, Nuno Mendes, Goncalo Inacio, Renato Veiga, Tomas Araujo; **Midfielders:** Ruben Neves, Samu Costa, Joao Neves, Vitinha, Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva; **Forwards:** Cristiano Ronaldo, Joao Felix, Francisco Trincao, Francisco Conceicao, Pedro Neto, Rafael Leao, Goncalo Guedes, Goncalo Ramos.

**SCOTLAND: Goalkeepers:** Craig Gordon, Angus Gunn, Liam Kelly; **Defenders:** Grant Hanley, Jack Hendry, Aaron Hickey, Dom Hyam, Scott McKenna, Nathan Patterson, Anthony Ralston, Andy Robertson, John Souttar, Kieran Tierney; **Midfielders:** Ryan Christie, Findlay Curtis, Lewis Ferguson, Ben Gannon-Doak, Billy Gilmour, John McGinn, Kenny McLean, Scott McTominay; **Forwards:** Che Adams, Lyndon Dykes, George Hirst, Lawrence Shankland, Ross Stewart.

## Pragg splits points with So, stays joint second

**Press Trust of India**  
BUCHAREST

Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa played out his fourth draw, signing peace with Wesley So in the fifth round of the Super Chess Classic, a part of the Grand Chess Tour.

Vincent Keymer maintained his half-point lead, moving up to 3.5. Praggnanandhaa shares the second spot with Anish Giri and Jordan Van Foreest.

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and So share fifth place on 2.5 points each, while Fabiano Caruana and World Championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov trail closely on two points, with the latter having one game in hand.

**The results (round 5):** Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (2.5) drew with Jordan Van Foreest (3); Wesley So (2.5) drew with R. Praggnanandhaa (3); Bogdan-Daniel Deac (1.5) drew with Fabiano Caruana (2); Ailreza Firouzja (1) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (2); Anish Giri (3) drew with Vincent Keymer (3.5).

## From drift to direction: Carrick's United revival

**Natalia Hannah Rice**

Manchester United's season had taken on a familiar, unsettled quality when Michael Carrick stepped into the managerial role in January. The dismissal of Ruben Amorim, following months of inconsistent results and mounting discontent, had left the club once again at an uncertain crossroads, a position it has occupied with uncomfortable regularity in the years since Sir Alex Ferguson's retirement.

United's resurgence under Carrick has drawn inevitable parallels with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's interim spell in 2018-19. Both former United players inherited sides midway through troubled campaigns and restored optimism through improved results, with Solskjaer winning 14 of his first 19 games and guiding United to a sixth-place finish before earning the role permanently.

Carrick's impact, while less frenetic in style, has been similarly significant.



**Rising high:** Havertz towers over the Burnley defence to head home Arsenal's winner. AP

## Arsenal on the verge of Premier League glory

**Agence France-Presse**  
LONDON

Arsenal is on the brink of ending a 22-year wait to win the Premier League after beating Burnley 1-0 on Monday to open up a five-point lead at the top.

Kai Havertz headed in the only goal but was also lucky to avoid a second-half red card that could have swung the title race back in Manchester City's favour. Arsenal will secure the title with victory at Crystal Palace on Sunday.

**Hope for City**

However, the narrow margin of victory against a Burnley side that has long since been relegated does offer City hope.

An Arsenal draw at Selhurst Park would allow City to snatch the title on goal difference if Pep Guardiola's team wins its final

two matches.

Roared on by an expectant capacity crowd in its final home game of the season, Arsenal was tipped to put the Claret's to the sword with ease.

Burnley has taken just two points from its last 10 matches but made Arteta's men work for the three points on another nervy night at the Emirates.

Leandro Trossard struck the post from the edge of the area before Bukayo Saka saw a penalty appeal waived away as he attempted to turn in Havertz's low cross.

Arsenal was forced to rely on its set piece threat once more to prise Burnley open.

Havertz rose highest to power in Saka's delivery on 37 minutes as it scored from a corner for the 18th time in the league this season.



Carrick has brought with him a clarity of purpose that had been conspicuously absent. AFP

United's resurgence under Carrick has drawn inevitable parallels with Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's interim spell in 2018-19

United, sixth in the Premier League table when he assumed charge, has since registered 11 victories from 16 matches and collected 36 points. The team has shown greater defensive discipline and a more coherent structure in possession. Kobbie Mainoo, among others, has flour-

ished under the renewed confidence that has taken hold at Carrington.

The season's most significant outcome has already been secured. A third-place finish in the Premier League guarantees United's return to the UEFA Champions League, no small achievement for a side that spent much of the campaign adrift from its stated ambitions.

The club's hierarchy has moved to formalise the arrangement. Carrick has signed an initial two-year contract through 2028, with the option of a further year, terms that reflect measured confidence rather than unconditional endorsement, given the scale of the task ahead.

Whether this marks the beginning of a sustained recovery remains uncertain. Solskjaer too revived optimism during his early months at Manchester United. The question now is whether Carrick can build something more enduring than what Solskjaer ultimately managed.

## Wildcard entrant Manish puts it across top seed Smith

## TENNIS

**Ashwin Achal**  
BENGALURU

Wildcard entrant Manish Sureshkumar stunned top seed Keegan Smith 6-4, 2-6, 6-2 in the first round of the S.M. Krishna Memorial Open at the S.M. Krishna Tennis Stadium here on Tuesday.

Manish, the World No. 737, pulled off the biggest win of his career, against Karnataka Open ATP Challenger winner Smith.

"I'm kind of getting used to the level now, because the pace is different," Manish, who reached the quarterfinal of



**Great going:** Manish pulled off the biggest win of his career. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the Karnataka Open last week, said. "I think he had the pressure, not me, because I was the underdog. I decided that I'm going to

play freely - go for my shots, and not give away easy points," Manish added.

Kriish Tyagi, who made

a semifinal run last week, defeated Kuan-Yi Lee 7-6 (8), 7-6(4).

Mukund Sasikumar and Sidharth Rawat also notched up victories.

**The results (Indians unless specified): Round-of-32:** Alastair Gray (Gbr) bt Aradhya Kshitij 6-1, 6-2; Leo Vitthontien (Jpn) bt Digvijaypratap Singh 6-3, 6-4; Mitsuki Wei Kang Leong (Mas) bt Karan Singh 5-7, 6-3, 6-2; Mukund Sasikumar bt Maximus Jones (Tha) 7-6(5), 7-6(5); Hamish Stewart (Gbr) bt Aditya Vishal Balsekar 6-4, 6-7(2), 6-4; Kriish Tyagi bt Kuan-Yi Lee (Tpe) 7-6(8), 7-6(4); Ilya Ivashka bt Prajwal Dev 6-3, 6-2; Manish Sureshkumar bt Keegan Smith (USA) 6-4, 2-6, 6-2; Sidharth Rawat bt Omar Jasika (Aus) 7-6(4), 6-3; Naoya Honda (Jpn) bt Nitin Kumar Sinha 6-4, 6-1.

## England sweats on Sciver-Brunt's fitness ahead of T20 WWC

**Agence France-Presse**  
LONDON

England captain Nat Sciver-Brunt could miss next month's T20 World Cup after the all-rounder was ruled out of her side's warm-up series against New Zealand and India.

Sciver-Brunt tore her left calf while playing for the Blaze in domestic cricket earlier this month and was subsequently ruled out of the three-match ODI series against New Zealand.

England had hoped she would be ready to return for T20 matches against New Zealand, with that series starting in Derby on

Wednesday, but a new scan has seen her ruled out of all three games, as well as the subsequent campaign against India.

Tournament host England begins its T20 World Cup against Sri Lanka at Edgbaston on June 12, leaving Sciver-Brunt in a race against time to lead the side as it goes in search of a first major trophy since lifting the 2017 50-over World Cup on home soil.

In addition to her leadership skills, Sciver-Brunt has long been a key player for England, both as the team's leading batter and a medium-pace and it is a significantly weaker side without the 33-year-old.

# Lack of infrastructure a major challenge at grassroots level

With Punjab FC enjoying immense success in age-group tournaments organised by the All India Football Federation, Giuseppe Cristaldi, who is Technical Director, Youth Programme, at the club, threw light on the role that he is hoping to play in shaping a better future for the sport in this country



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## INTERVIEW

### Giuseppe Cristaldi

Vivek Krishnan

At a juncture when the Indian Super League seems to be in the midst of an existential crisis, the feeling of doom and gloom about football in India may be all-pervasive. But in these bleak times, it is the exuberance of youth that one must lean towards for hope.

In this regard, Punjab FC has been making strides at the grassroots level, with its youth teams winning the premier tournaments that fall under the aegis of the All India Football Federation over the past two seasons.

The northern club, which has its academy in Mohali, has won the AIFF Elite Youth League two seasons in a row, and has emulated the same feat in the AIFF Junior League too. In addition, a few players from Punjab's academy were recently picked in the Indian team for the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) U-20 Championship. Defender Pramveer Singh was even called up by head coach Khalid Jamil to the senior India set-up last year.

The man orchestrating Punjab's success in the junior age-groups is Italian Giuseppe Cristaldi, whose official designation is Technical Director, Youth Programme. Having worked on youth development at clubs like Inter Milan and Empoli, the 39-year-old has brought his knowhow to Punjab since the start of the 2024-25 season. In an interview with *The Hindu*, Cristaldi offered his views on the progress of Punjab's academy, the different facets of youth development, and the structural issues that the game faces at the grassroots level in this country. Excerpts:

**Punjab has won the AIFF Elite Youth League and the Junior League two years in a row. How do you reflect on the job done at the youth level so far?**

First of all, I have to say that winning is always nice. This is a very important aspect. At the same time, at the youth level, it's not the most important thing. At our level, the priority is the players' development. It is about how they develop in order to play professional football at club level and hopefully for the senior national team.

So this has to be the priority, not only for Punjab FC but for every academy in India.

Having said that, nobody plays to lose. Whoever says winning is not important, even at the youth level, is lying. The titles are something that we are very proud of. It reinforces the good job that the club is doing at the youth level.

**Beyond the titles, how do you measure whether the club is on the**

**right track in terms of youth development?**

Analysing the performances of the teams is very important for us. Another important thing in youth football is the involvement of all the players in the different competitions. In the Junior League that we just won, and even in the Elite Youth League, you will never find the same line-up from one match to another.

We need to understand how many players can contribute to the team in a competition. We usually give a chance to all the players who are part of the squad.

In the semi-final of the Junior League against Bengaluru FC, for example, we played two players who had played zero minutes in the competition until that moment.

Maybe the game will not go well, but this is a risk that we have to take as a youth setup. And then, of course, we have to make an evaluation based on the performances. But if we don't give opportunities to the players, how can we know if they are going to be good or not for the future? So this is something that for us is very, very important. I don't want a player at the end of the season to have played only a few minutes. It will not allow us to make a realistic and concrete evaluation of the future potential of the player.

**What is the key to youngsters developing in the right way?**

One of the main problems of Indian football is at the grassroots level. Players have to start when they are very young - when they are seven, eight or nine years old. Those are the golden years. After you pass that age, to learn certain basic movements, coordination, agility and balance, which then influence the technical aspects, become a little bit more complicated.

In the ISL, we see certain players have a bad first touch. Because those are all things that they should have learnt when they were young. If we are talking about a player who is now 26 or 27, it is likely that the work done was not correct 15 or 16 years ago.

There are many factors that can influence this. So something that we should start doing in India is to start working in a better way at the grassroots level.

When players are in their formative years, it is important that things like agility, balance and technical ability are worked on. You can start to work on tactics with players at a later stage.

**It's often felt in India that there is a need to train the coaches before training the players. How have you gone about conveying your ideas to the coaches at the academy?**

I have to say that I have been very lucky to have found a group of coaches who are very professional and knowledgeable. So, it has been very easy for me to



bring in my ideas and share them with the coaches. I don't want to call it philosophy because it is a word that I don't like to use. Philosophy is something that we can leave to other areas. Football is a sport. It's fun, it's engaging.

We have at least one coaching meeting per week. I follow the training sessions of all the coaches. We are constantly sharing ideas and information. The value of Indian coaches sometimes is underestimated. There are some good-quality coaches. They just need to be given certain tips to go in the right direction.

**How are the kids selected in the academy?**

There are certain rules of the AIFF that we need to follow. A certain number of players have to come from the state of origin of the club. We want to keep a Punjabi identity as well. I am happy to say that the Player-of-the-Tournament in the Junior League was Jasmeet Singh from Punjab. But we also have players from Kerala, Kolkata, North-East. We often organise trials all over the country. As we speak, we are having trials in 12 different States.

Our recruitment comes from scouting during competitions as well. We see certain players in other teams that we believe can be part of our academy. So, obviously, in discussion with their clubs, we see if there is the possibility of those players joining us.

**When Punjab won the Dream Sports Championship last year, Norwich City was one of the teams. Minerva's youth side was in the news for beating Liverpool in April. How valuable is the exposure that Indian teams get from travelling to Europe or playing against clubs from there?**

Well, I believe that the exposure abroad is very good for Indian kids just for the experience firstly. It's a life experience, which is very important.

But at the same time, we have to un-

derstand what kind of competitions we are going to play in. It is useless to put a team in a competition where the level is not challenging or not right. Just winning trophies doesn't serve the purpose.

If we play an under-15 or under-16 tournament that is seven-a-side or nine-a-side, it is not useful. It is fine for younger age categories. So, the format of the competition and opponents we play against are very important for us to decide whether we should participate in a competition.

**Quite a few players from the academy were part of the Indian team for the SAFF U-20 Championship in March and April. How satisfying was that?**

It's a great reward. Ultimately, all the players want to represent the national team. We had seven players called up to the India U-20 side for the SAFF Championship. There was one who got injured and could not participate in the competition. Almost 30% of the side was from our academy. It is encouraging for the future because it means we are working in the right direction as an academy. It is not just a credit to the recruitment. It also shows that the players are growing under our system in the correct way. We want to see more of this in all the age categories of the national team and hopefully in the senior national team as well.

**The ISL seems to be staring at an uncertain future. Should kids from Indian academies aspire for more than just playing in the ISL?**

A few years back, I felt India had taken a big step forward. As a football fan, I was admiring what India was trying to do with the ISL. There were players like Lucio, Alessandro Nesta, Marco Materazzi, Roberto Carlos, Robert Pires and Alessandro Del Piero involved. These were world-class players.

The ISL has deteriorated. We know about the problems of the league. For our players in the academy, the ISL is a realistic target. But I tell the kids in my meetings that they should target reaching a level where they are good enough for top leagues in Asia and even maybe leagues in Europe. They should have the ambition to reach a high level in their professional career.

With such a big population, it is always statistically possible for someone from India to break through to the top leagues in Asia or even somewhere in Europe. That has to be the big target for the Indian ecosystem. We need to create opportunities for players to dream about playing abroad. How much time it takes to reach that depends on many things. But this has to be the aim. This is how the Indian national team will benefit. If someone makes that jump and brings back knowledge that they can share with others, the level of everyone in the Indian system will go up.

**What are the things impeding youngsters in India?**

One of the things is football culture. In India, youngsters idolise cricketers mostly. In countries like Italy, England, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, you are bombarded with football from the time you are born.

Everyone has two legs, two arms, one head and one brain. So, everyone is exactly the same from the physical point of view. But the football culture counts for sure. In Europe, kids play on the streets and study football closely. When I was eight or nine years old, I knew the intricacies of the different tactical formations at Inter Milan, which was my favourite club. We knew these kind of things from a young age. This is obviously a big advantage. So, there is a big gap from the cultural point of view.

I don't believe there are issues at a physical level. When we say India, it's a very broad category. Even in India, we all know that a player from the North-East is completely different to a player from Punjab or Goa or Kerala. India is a pot of everything. So, the country has everything from a physical perspective.

**What are the major challenges at the grassroots level?**

Infrastructure is a problem. Many clubs don't have proper facilities where the kids can develop properly. If a football ground isn't good, the ball will not bounce properly. To develop the technical part will be more difficult for players in these circumstances.

The professional level of the coaches, especially those working at the grassroots level, is another problem. Many of the coaches work part-time. It affects the quality of the sessions, and the effort that they exert cannot be up to standard simply because they don't have time and have to feed the family. This will then reflect in the knowledge received by the players.

**When you see an ISL game, what is more glaring - the lack of technical ability or tactical awareness?**

From the tactical point of view, the ISL is behind, especially in certain phases of the game.

Technically, there are good-quality players around. But they have missed out on the opportunity to be better because they have not worked on the basics that are needed in their foundational phase. They are not able to perform in the way that they potentially could. This leads to mistakes that we see often in ISL, which you don't expect in a professional top-tier league.

The quality of the overseas players is not at the same level as it was a few years ago. When the likes of Del Piero and Pires were involved in the past, the Indian players were learning by just training with them. That was a big learning experience. With that not being the case anymore, it reflects in the level of the league.

# Revealed: how humans evolved in the past 10,000 years alone

Even though some of the human remains the scientists examined were 18,000 years old, they were able to obtain enough genetic material to meaningfully calculate gene frequencies for the last 10 millennia alone; the study is in fact the largest survey of ancient human genomes to date

D.P. Kasbekar

**P**eople who lived and died thousands of years ago have left behind their skeletal remains as a legacy. In recent years, scientists have isolated and sequenced the DNA from more and more of these remains.

A team of researchers led by scientists at the Harvard Medical School in the U.S. has compared 15,836 ancient DNA sequences from across Western Eurasia with the sequences of 6,438 modern people from the same countries. (Western Eurasia includes Europe, Russia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Iran.)

The comparison revealed evidence that for many genes for which two sequence variants have been known, one variant had undergone a sustained increase or decrease in frequency relative to the other over the past eight to 10 millennia.

Using new statistical methods coupled with computer simulations, the team found that these changes in frequency can be attributed in many cases to natural selection rather than to processes like genetic drift and population migration. The findings were reported on April 15 in *Nature*.

The oldest remains examined were dated to 18,000 years ago – yet the scientists were able to obtain enough genetic material to meaningfully calculate gene frequencies for the last 10 millennia alone. The study is, in fact, the largest survey of ancient human genomes to date.

## Carbon dating

Scientists figure out how ancient a skeleton is by measuring the relative amount of carbon-14, also known as radioactive carbon, in its bones and teeth. Carbon-14 is a carbon isotope generated when cosmic rays collide with nitrogen atoms in the earth's upper atmosphere. Its chemical properties are identical to that of the non-radioactive isotopes carbon-12 and carbon-13.

When an individual is alive, the fraction of carbon-14 in the body is the same as that in the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and in the plants and animals consumed as food. This level begins to drop after death. Radioactive decay turns carbon-14 back into nitrogen and there is no way to replenish its level.

Carbon-14 decays with a half-life of 5,730 years. That is, the fraction of radioactive carbon relative to non-radioactive carbon halves every 5,730 years. So after 50,000 years, the fraction of radioactive carbon 14 remaining in the bones and teeth is only two-thousandth that at the time of death.

An instrument called a mass



Around 8,000 years ago, humans began to select for gene variants in several genes that produce lighter skin tones and pigmented hair. DIGITALE.DE/UNSPLASH

spectrometer is used to measure the relative amounts of each carbon isotope, then estimate the age of its source.

## Blood types, gluten, colours

The human body has two copies of a gene called *ABO*. Each copy comes in three variants, called A, B, and O. Which combination of variants we have determines our blood type. These blood types appeared very early in evolution and we share them with other great apes.

The researchers found that over the last 6,000 years, the B variant has been occurring more commonly among the West Eurasians, with a concomitant decrease in the A variant. The A and B variants are associated with opposite effects with respect to many traits. Therefore, it may be that a population benefits by maintaining an optimal balance to respond to changing pathogenic exposures.

Similarly, a variant of the *HLA-DQBI* gene makes people susceptible to coeliac disease. In individuals with two copies of this variant, the gluten in wheat, barley, and rye triggers the immune system to attack the small intestine, leading to diarrhoea, vomiting, and abdominal pain.

In the past 4,000 years, the frequency of occurrence of the disease-causing variant has increased from 0% to 20%. Since agriculture also began 10,000 years ago, the researchers have clarified that the increase was “not a phenomenon only or largely of the rise of agriculture”

## Perhaps the most interesting signals of ancient selection were found in the gene combinations today associated with 'modern' traits such as performance on intelligence tests, household income, years of schooling, and healthy lifestyle

even as they admit what could have driven the increase remains unknown.

Also around 8,000 years ago, humans began to select for gene variants in several genes that produce lighter skin tones and pigmented hair. The researchers have suggested this was an adaptation in response to having to synthesise more vitamin D in regions with low sunlight, especially among farmers whose diets supplied little of it.

## Ancient genes, modern traits

Possessing two copies of the  $\Delta 32$  variant of the *CCR5* gene makes an individual completely resistant to HIV-1 infection. The frequency of this variant among Western Eurasians increased from 2% to about 8% between 6,000 and 2,000 years ago. This predated the origin of HIV, however, which happened only in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Put another way, other unknown ancient pathogens must have driven this increase, as scientists have previously hypothesised.

Perhaps the most interesting signals of

ancient selection were found in the gene combinations today associated with ‘modern’ traits such as performance on intelligence tests, household income, years of schooling, and healthy lifestyle (e.g. faster walking pace). Smoking was unknown to Eurasia until Christopher Columbus introduced tobacco from the Americas less than 600 years ago. The study found that the gene variants associated today with smoking were selected against even in those ancient times. However, it is not clear what traits governed the selection in that time.

As the researchers wrote: “it will be of interest to apply similar approaches to ancient DNA time series over longer times and to other world regions. This would allow more generalizable insights by identifying which patterns of selection are shared and which are distinctive to Holocene West Eurasia.”

South Asians have genetic contributions from ancestors from Iranian Neolithic Farmers and western steppe herders; from indigenous Eastern Eurasian ancestors, including ancient ancestral South Indians; and East and Southeast Asian and Australasian ancestors. A comparable ancient DNA study of our ancestors is likely to be just as fascinating. But we need to first start assembling our own legacy: the remains of our ancestors from thousands of years ago.

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## THE GIST

A team of researchers led by scientists at the Harvard Medical School in the U.S. has compared 15,836 ancient DNA sequences from across Western Eurasia with the sequences of 6,438 modern people from the same countries

The comparison revealed evidence that for many genes for which two sequence variants have been known, one variant had undergone a sustained increase or decrease in frequency relative to the other over the past eight to 10 millennia

The researchers found that over the past 6,000 years, the B variant of the *ABO* gene has been occurring more commonly among the West Eurasians, with a concomitant decrease in the A variant

## BIG SHOT



A model skeleton of *Nagatitan chaiyaphumensis*, Thailand's largest dinosaur, is pictured at the Thainosaur Museum in Bangkok on May 15. Scientists identified the massive new dinosaur from remains discovered in Thailand, with the creature estimated to have weighed as much as nine adult elephants. AFP

## WHAT IS IT?

# Zwan-Wolf effect: stream diverter

Vasudevan Mukunth

**T**he solar wind is a stream of charged particles flowing outwards from the sun. As the solar wind nears the magnetic field of a planet, it becomes compressed near the magnetic boundaries. This creates a difference in pressure, or pressure gradient, that squeezes the charged particles along the magnetic field, away from the stream. As a result, closer to the stream is an area with a lower density of charged particles. This is called the Zwan-Wolf effect.

In a new study published in *Nature Communications*, researchers from France, the U.K., and the U.S. used the NASA MAVEN spacecraft to find evidence of the Zwan-Wolf effect at Mars. The finding is important because Mars does not have a strong, global magnetic field like the earth. The researchers did say in their paper that the Zwan-Wolf effect is likely continuously active at Mars but that it might be too weak most of the time to be detectable by other scientific instruments.

MAVEN had recorded the data containing the effect in December 2023, when a powerful solar storm called a coronal mass ejection struck Mars. The event created intense magnetic structures in Mars's magnetic field that moved downwards into the planet's ionosphere. These structures squeezed the charged particles in the ionosphere towards the planet's unlit side, reducing



A NASA illustration depicting the MAVEN spacecraft orbiting Mars. AP

the local density of the particles by around 50%. According to the researchers, the findings indicate that even “unmagnetised” planets like Mars can experience complex magnetic phenomena like the Zwan-Wolf effect.

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