

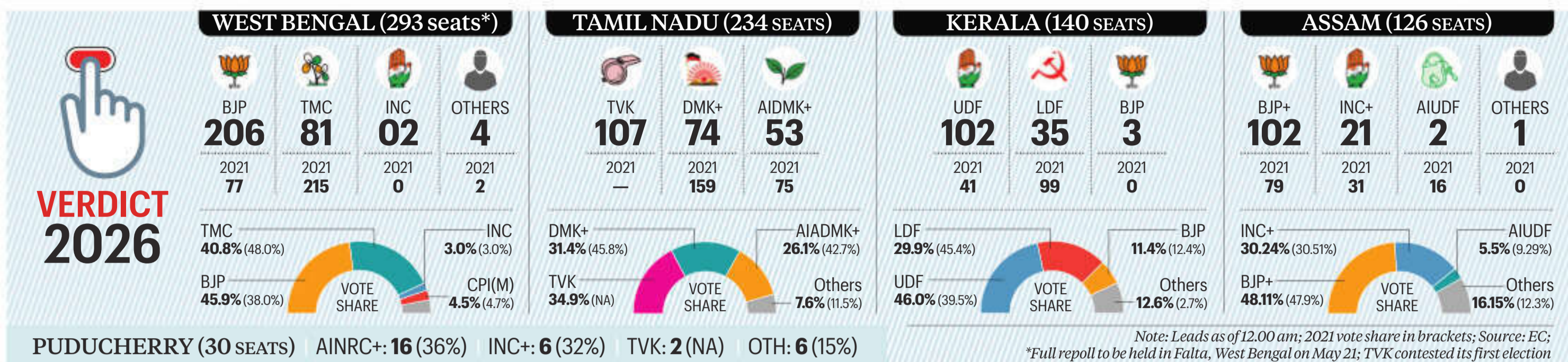
The Indian EXPRESS

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 28 PAGES

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BJP wave sinks Mamata, Vijay rides Tamil tide

Assam returns Himanta, Congress routs Left to reclaim Kerala

From Gangotri to Ganga Sagar, only the lotus blooms: Modi

Manoj C G & Jatin Anand
New Delhi, May 4

STORMING THE last Opposition citadel in the east, the BJP Monday trounced the ruling TMC in West Bengal to end Mamata Banerjee's 15-year rule and returned to power in Assam with a landslide win for a third consecutive term. Banerjee was among the losers, defeated in Bhabanipur by BJP's Suwendu Adhikari who also won from Nandigram. Tamil Nadu delivered the other stunning verdict as actor-turned-politician Joseph Vijay's TVK, a new entrant, neared the halfway mark in the 234-member House, surprising the Dravidian majors and toppling the DMK-led government of M K Stalin who lost from Kolathur. Kerala opted for change, voting in the Congress-led UDF to end the run of the LDF led by Pinarayi Vijayan, the last Left



government in the country. The Union Territory of Puducherry reposed faith in the NDA comprising the All India NR Congress and the BJP. The one unmistakable message from the results of the Assembly elections was that of



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with BJP national president Nitin Nabin at the party headquarters in New Delhi, Monday. PRAVEEN KHANNA

SIR in Bengal: TMC won 13 of 20 seats with highest voter deletions

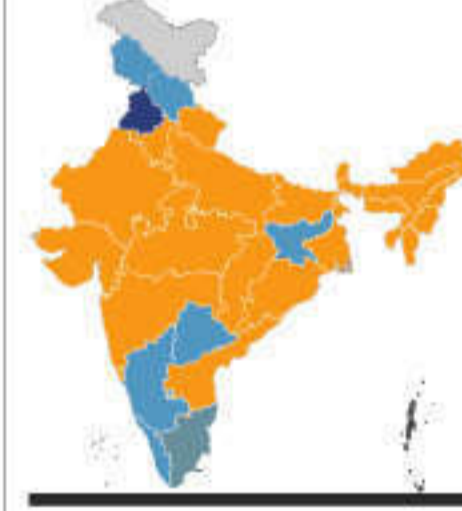
Damini Nath & Sandeep Singh
New Delhi, May 4

HOW DID THE Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls play out in the West Bengal results? While the final numbers are still being firmed up, two early trends are telling: of the 20 seats that saw the highest number of deletions (see charts)

Seats	Votes deleted	2021 winner	2026 winner	2026 margin	Difference*
SAMSERGANJ	74,775	AITC	AITC	7,587	-67,188
LALGOLA	55,420	AITC	AITC	18,960	-36,460
BHAGABANGOLA	47,493	AITC	AITC	56,407	8,914
RAGHUNATHGANJ	46,100	AITC	AITC	40,555	-5,545
METIABURUZ	39,579	AITC	AITC	87,879	48,300

*VICTORY MARGIN LOWER OR HIGHER THAN SIR DELETIONS IN THAT SEAT

• Who has the states
NDA 23 INDIA 6 AAP 1 TVK 1



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ASSAM Polarisation, Himanta's popularity take BJP to absolute majority

Sukrita Baruah
Guwahati, May 4

FOR MANY who had read the writing on the wall during the Assam election, the question was not whether the BJP would return for a historic third term in power, but rather by how much. With Himanta Biswa Sarma at its helm, the party has surged to its strongest position in the state yet, crossing the 100 mark with its allies in the 126-member Assam Assembly. A decade after it first came to power in Assam, which also marked the first time it had ever come to power in a North-eastern state, the BJP has secured an absolute majority in the state. In both 2016 and 2021, it had secured 60 seats on its own and formed the govern-



Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma with party leaders and supporters in Guwahati. PTI

TAMIL NADU First disruption since MGR: How Vijay caught imagination of voters

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, May 4

IN A result that has already rewritten Tamil Nadu's political grammar, actor-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) won 107 seats in the Assembly elections, ahead of the DMK (60) and AIADMK (47), even as Chief Minister M K Stalin lost his Kolathur consti-



TVK chief Vijay celebrates the poll victory, in Chennai. PTI

tuency by 8,795 votes to TVK's V S Babu — marking a rare instance of a sitting Chief Minister being unseated on home turf. In essence, Tamil Nadu is witnessing the rise of its first truly new political force in five decades — not a faction, not a breakaway, not a rearrangement of the familiar Dravidian

Mamata loses her seat, says 'loot, loot, loot... an immoral victory'



CM Mamata Banerjee on way to a counting centre in Kolkata. EXPRESS

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 4
plained to the chief electoral officer, but no action was taken. "Do you think this is a victory? It is an immoral victory, not a moral victory. Whatever the Election Commission has done, along with the central forces, the Prime Minister and Home Minister, is totally illegal. It is loot, loot, loot. We will bounce back," she said. While Banerjee led in the earlier rounds of counting, her final tally was 58,812 votes. Adhikari, the Leader of Opposition in the outgoing Assembly, bagged 73,917 votes. Banerjee reached the counting centre at Sakhawat Memorial Government Girls' High School at about 3.45 pm, and

WEST BENGAL Finetuning message for each region, how BJP breached TMC bastions

Ravik Bhattacharya & Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 4

THE BJP'S decisive victory in West Bengal, ending 15 years of Mamata Banerjee's rule, was emphatic in its spread across the state. If the party held on to its bastion in North Bengal, it made inroads into South Bengal, including the Presidency division which was so far the Trinamool Congress's impregnable fortress. The BJP also regained its dominance in the tribal belt of Janglemahal, changing its messaging as per the issues of the three regions. South Bengal, voted in 2nd phase This region comprises the



BJP's Suwendu Adhikari defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur. PARTHA PAUL

KERALA Congress-led UDF ends Pinarayi's 10-year run, BJP wins three seats

Shaju Philip
Thiruvananthapuram, May 4

THE CONGRESS-led United Democratic Front (UDF) stormed back to power in Kerala, ending a decade in Opposition with a commanding 102-seat victory in the 140-member Assembly. Riding a powerful anti-incumbency wave, the alliance dismantled several CPI(M) bastions, reducing the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF), which was seeking an unprecedented



Congress leader V D Satheesan celebrates his party's victory in Kerala, Monday. PTI

third-consecutive term under Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, to just 35 seats. The LDF defeat means no state in the country now has a Left government — a first in nearly five decades. The BJP, meanwhile, managed to secure three seats to put up its best showing in an Assembly election in Kerala. While CM Vijayan retained his Dharmadam seat, 13 of his Cabinet colleagues were defeated. They included prominent faces of the LDF

First-time, young voters, high turnout: Gen Z, restless, restive and aspiring for opportunities, asked for more

Neerja Chowdhury
New Delhi, May 4

EACH OF the verdicts in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Kerala is distinctive. But taken together, read with their record turnouts, they send a powerful message: the young voters, restless and restive, worried about their present, and wanting a better future, are asserting politically for change. Many of them are unencumbered — or

shrugging — the burdens of the past. In West Bengal, the first-time voter this year would have been an infant when the feisty Mamata Banerjee stormed the Red Fortress in 2011 or transformed the Brigade Parade Ground into a poster of resistance. In Tamil Nadu, the under-30s, fatigued by the DMK-AIDMK binary, which is all they have seen, found in actor Vijay's TVK a new vehicle that could drive



TVK supporters celebrate in Chennai, Monday. PTI

down the road to change. In the south, there is only one other example of a leader occupying the CM's chair within months of forming the party — that was NT Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, also from the world of celluloid, who came to power in the wake of humiliating words uttered by the then PM Rajiv Gandhi against the then CM T Anjaiah. In hindsight, the 2026 election has been about Gen Z. It is also about "Dil Maange More"

Gen Z asked for more

— the upwardly mobile, aspirational Indians wanting “jobs” and economic opportunity.

It’s not as if women in West Bengal were unappreciative of the Rs 1,500 per month they were getting under Mamata’s Lakshmi Bhandar or under the Kanyashree programme. But they wanted more, a sentiment summed up by a Kolkata slumdweller: “My daughter is now a graduate and she should now earn Rs 20,000 but she can’t get a job.” Women today are the most aspirational group in the country and the BJP dented Mamata’s “Mahila” base. Besides the young voter, it is women who turned to Vijay’s TVK, as did Dalits and minorities.

The arithmetic is written on the wall. Going by the Census projections for 20-34 year olds for 2026 (based on the 2011 census) and voters’ data available for 18-19-year-old in all the four states which went to the polls, voters between 18 and 34 would roughly account for a quarter of the voters. Add to this women voters above this age, this makes for a significant figure.

Of course, there were a diverse set of moving parts in the BJP’s machinery that geared towards a win: the SIR exercise, the anti-incumbency of 15 years; public anger against the “TMC goons”; mobilisation in the name of Hindu nationalism on the issue of “ghuspaithiyas”; disaffection of government servants in the wake of the teacher’s scam; the presence of security forces in large numbers; raising “Jai Ma Kali” and “Ma Durga” slogans in addition to “Jai Shri Ram” or eating fish to dispel the anti-Bengali image, and, of course, the sheer hard work and planning the BJP put into organising their election campaign.

Mamata’s pushback with her “pro-poor, pro-women, pro-Bengal” narrative was not enough to stop the push forward by the Bengal which now wanted “more” than what she was offering. She failed to set the narrative for the future — she fought the battle defensively relying on identity politics with nothing to address the flight of young talent or lack of economic opportunities. The Bengal verdict also shows that welfare schemes, important as they are for the poor — no party can do without them — are beginning to be taken for granted. The voter knows that whoever comes to

power will continue them and improve upon them.

This is not to say that the DMK and AIDMK — it made a better showing than expected — or Mamata in Bengal (with 41% following as opposed to 46% for the BJP) do not have their committed adherents.

But 2026 has pitted old politics against new dreams. The new aspirants are impatient for change and asserting themselves politically, able to make a difference between victory and defeat in elections, as seen particularly in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

It goes without saying that the BJP’s victory in West Bengal and Assam will give the party complete control over eastern India. Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken about ruling “Anga (Bihar), Banga (Bengal), Kalinga (Orissa)”. Now they will be leading governments in all these three states, as also in Assam, where the party under Himanta Biswa Sarma has got a convincing victory. It makes the BJP almost a pan India party, except for the South.

But wresting West Bengal, and that too from a mass leader like Mamata, has special significance for the BJP. It will help the party brass still any voices of dissatisfaction against it, within or without.

This could make for greater political stability particularly with difficult times ahead, given the uncertainty over the Gulf war and the likely rise in prices of petrol and other goods — which could fuel popular disaffection.

Election 2026 is equally about the Opposition — which has underscored yet once again the need for it to go back to the drawing board and to decide whether it should unite to take on the BJP in 2029.

Though the Congress has won convincingly in Kerala, the regional satraps have been weakened — be it Mamata or Stalin or Pinarayi Vijayan. This should make it easier for the regional outfits, who are part of the opposition INDIA bloc, to accept the leadership of the larger Congress (which will be called to display a sensitivity and generosity towards these parties).

But the BJP-ruled Centre will not make this easy for the regional satraps and is likely to open cases of corruption against the leaders of the TMC or DMK. This is a moment of reckoning for the Opposition.

[FROM PAGE 1 | FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM]

BJP wave sinks Mamata

a yearning for change. And the incumbents — the TMC to DMK to LDF — bore the brunt. Only Assam and Puducherry bucked the trend.

Hailing the BJP’s performance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described the victory in West Bengal as “historic” and told party workers in New Delhi that “a new chapter has begun in Bengal’s future. It has become ‘bhay-mukt’ (free of fear).”

“Last year, on November 14, when the Bihar results came, from the same venue of the BJP headquarters, I told all of you that Gangaji flows forward towards Ganga Sagar from Bihar. Today, from Gangotri to Ganga Sagar, only the lotus blooms,” he said.

“There should be a change in the political habits of the state. Today when the BJP has won, not *badla* (retribution) but *badlav* (change) needs to be talked about. Not *bhay* (fear), but *bhavishya* (the future) should be spoken of... Let us end this endless cycle of violence,” he said.

“Nari Shakti is another pillar of Viksit Bharat. But the Congress tried to stop it... These parties did not let the Nari Shakti Adhiniyam pass in Parliament. I had cautioned such parties that

they will have to face the ire of women. Today, the Congress, TMC and DMK have been punished by the women of this country,” he said.

BJP president Nitin Nambin said, “From Gangotri to Ganga Sagar, the BJP-led NDA government is being formed. This isn’t just a geographical expansion; it’s an expansion of trust and our ideology.”

The BJP’s victory in West Bengal, 15 years after Banerjee single-handedly breached the red bastion to end the Left Front’s uninterrupted 34-year rule, was stunning in its sweep and scale. The BJP retained its stronghold in North Bengal and breached the TMC strongholds of South Bengal, including Kolkata, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas.

Breaking into Odisha in 2024, the BJP’s victory in West Bengal, the final frontier that it was so desperate to conquer, means the party now has absolute electoral dominance in the east, west and north of the country, effectively relegating the Congress to the south and leaving the Opposition INDIA bloc in disarray.

The Congress, which has

Kerala

government, such as P Rajeev, M B Rajesh, V N Vasavan, V Sivankutty and Veena George, who managed key portfolios. Other senior, high-profile CPI(M) leaders, K K Shailaja and T P Ramakrishnan, were also among those who lost.

In the UDF, winners from the Congress include Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, former Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala and Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Sunny Joseph. Other top UDF leaders elected to the Assembly include P K Kunhalikutty of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), C P John of the Communist Marxist Party Kerala State Committee (CMPKSC), Anoop Jacob of Kerala Congress (Jacob), and Shibu Baby John of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Three CPI(M) rebels, G Sudhakaran, T K Govindan and V Kunhikrishnan, also won as Independents with UDF

backing.

The scale of the UDF’s victory points to a deep and widespread anti-incumbency sentiment against the decade-long LDF rule. Across Kerala, voters appeared to decisively turn against the CPI(M), with the party suffering unexpected defeats in constituencies that even its rivals had not anticipated winning.

The LDF’s campaign, built around highlighting development and highlighting infrastructure projects, appears to have failed to resonate with voters. On the ground, concerns over rising prices, unemployment and distress in the farm sector weighed more heavily on the electorate, creating a silent but decisive undercurrent against the ruling front. These bread-and-butter issues ultimately overshadowed the government’s development pitch. Even the Pinarayi Vijayan factor, which had helped the CPI(M)-led alliance retain power in 2021 after calamities and the pandemic, seemed to

governments in Telangana and Karnataka, heaved a sigh of relief after returning to power in Kerala. But it was routed in Assam by the BJP which won the state in convincing fashion for the third time in a row.

The expansion of BJP’s electoral footprint since 2014 has been no less than spectacular. According to the party, its number of MLAs in states have gone up from 773 in September 2013 to 1,798 now. After the West Bengal victory, the BJP will have 17 Chief Ministers. And for the NDA, that number goes up to 22.

If the BJP scripted history in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu witnessed the dawn of a new era with Vijay’s TVK stunning the DMK and the AIADMK, the two Dravidian parties that had been taking turns to rule the state since 1967.

The mood for change, which translated into a massive anti-DMK vote, was so intense that the ruling party was routed even in its stronghold of Chennai. Stalin lost from Kolathur by a margin of 8,795 votes. His son Udhayanidhi, however, won from Chepauk-Thiruvallikkeni.

Stalin, in a post on X, said, “We bow to and accept the ver-

dict of the people. The DMK’s political journey, he said, “will continue without faltering” and the party “will function as an exemplary Opposition party”.

Vijay’s victory on debut is historic too. It is only the third time in India’s electoral history that a party has captured power less than two years after its formation — the earlier instances being NT Rama Rao’s stunning victory in undivided Andhra Pradesh in 1983, nine months after he launched the outfit, and the Asom Gana Parishad’s capture of Assam in 1985, two months after its formation.

Vijay won from both Perambur and Tiruchirappalli (East) but his party was still short of the halfway mark in the 234-member House.

It means that Tamil Nadu is also heading on a path which it has never taken so far — looking at the possibilities of a hung Assembly, a coalition government or parties providing outside support to the TVK government.

The TVK is said to be in talks with smaller parties, including the Congress, to shore up the numbers. The winds of change blew in Kerala as well where the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government, which had created history by retaining power in 2021, lost to the Congress-led UDF.

Several TMC ministers such as Sashi Panja (Shyampukur), Chandrima Bhattacharya (Dumdum Uttar), Aroop Biswas (Tollygunge) and Bratya Basu (Dumdum) have lost here. Sujit Basu another minister lost from Bidhanagar seat in North 24 Parganas.

The BJP also won 10 and TMC 19 in South 24 Parganas in seats like Gosaba, Sagar, Diamond Harbour.

Apart from the Presidency division, in South Bengal, the BJP made gains in Birbhum, Paschim Bardhaman, Hooghly and Purba Medinipur districts.

In Purba Medinipur, the TMC saw a wipeout, with BJP winning in all 16 seats. In Birbhum, known as a TMC bastion, the BJP won 6 seats and the TMC five. In Purba Bardhaman, the BJP won 14 seats while TMC won two.

In Hooghly district, the BJP won 16 seats and the TMC two.

North Bengal; voted in 1st phase
The BJP held on to its bastion here, winning 40 of the 54 seats in the region, including Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Coochbehar and Kalimpong districts.

The third BJP seat was Chhatnannor in Kollam district, where B B Gopakumar, who had been improving his vote share over the last two elections, managed a victory this time.

But along with all of these, Sarma’s personality was at the centre of the campaign, his aggressiveness tempered with his image as a benevolent “mama (maternal uncle)”, with him leading the alliance from the front. While the BJP will be back in power for the third time now, this was the first time that Sarma had campaigned as a Chief Minister seeking re-election, and he and the party built the momentum for a renewed and stronger wave for the BJP after a decade of its governments in the state.

This sweep has shrunk the Congress down to 19 seats in Assam, with the losses of its Assam face Gaurav Gogoi and the Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing Assembly, Debabrata Saikia, adding salt to its wounds. The Congress-led Opposition front won a total of 21 seats, with its ally Rajgor Dal winning another two seats. Apart from the two main blocs, the AIUDF has won two seats, including by Badruddin Ajmal in Binnakandi — also its worst-ever performance since its formation — and TMC has won Mandia, with ex-Congress MLA Sherman Ali getting elected.

Apart from the Congress’s Joy Prakash Das and Rajgor Dal’s Akhil Gogoi, Opposition parties only won seats where minority voters constitute a bulk of voters, reflecting polarisation.

Assam

Party Liberal (UPPL) in 2021, cobbling together a majority of 86 in 2016 and of 75 in 2021.

However, far from slowing down after a decade in power, it has now secured 82 seats itself. With another 10 from the BPF and another 10 from the AGP, it won a whopping 102 seats in the House. This sweep — in which the NDA parties have won all seats in the state where ethnic Assamese, tribal and Bengali-Hindu voters account for the bulk of the population, barring two of which one has gone to the Congress and the other to Congress ally Rajgor Dal — is not just that of the BJP, but of Himanta Biswa Sarma.

The BJP-led alliance’s appeal in this election a cocktail of a sharp pitch against “illegal immigration” laced with shrill rhetoric against “Miya Muslims”, a term used colloquially and pejoratively to refer to Bengali-origin Muslims; a focus on development projects particularly mega road and bridge infrastructure projects and push for private investment and industry in the state; and a slew of welfare schemes, unprecedented in scale and reach in the state, especially cash transfers targeting women beneficiaries.

Vote against **fanilistry**
If Vijay’s rise is one side of the story, the other lies in the fatigue with established structures. Criticism of the DMK in this election — especially from rival camps and sections of the electorate — has often centred on the perception of consolidation of power within a political family and unease over leadership transitions. The elevation of a younger leadership layer, particularly Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, has drawn scrutiny and, in some quarters, scepticism about political depth and preparedness.

There have also been moments of rhetorical controversy that opponents have amplified to question judgment and sensitivity on matters of belief and public sentiment.

None of this, on its own,

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Finetuning message

state’s power centre with five CMs of the state winning from this region, including the CPI(M)’s Jyoti Basu, his successor Buddhadeb Bhattacharya and now Mamata (Bhabanipur).

This time, three key factors were at play in the region, comprising semi-urban and urban areas, against the TMC: huge anti-incumbency, Hindu vote consolidation, and anger at the party’s “goondagiri”. The BJP reaped the gains of all.

So, in the Presidency division, the BJP won 61 seats out of 111. These include 6 of 11 in Kolkata (Bhabanipur, Rashbehari, Maniktala, Jorasanko, Kashiপুর-Belgachia and Shyampukur), with the remaining 5 set to go to the TMC (Chourangee, Kolkata Port, Ballygunge, Belegata and Entally).

Bhabanipur is Mamata’s constituency where she was defeated by BJP’s Suvendu Adhikari with a margin of 15,105 votes.

In North 24 Parganas, the BJP won 24 seats, compared to the TMC’s nine.

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‘Loot, loot, loot’

spent over four hours there. She alleged irregularities at the counting centre, and claimed that she was physically attacked. She also claimed that CCTV cameras were switched off and her party’s agents were not permitted inside the centre.

“With the help of central forces, they are harassing and torturing our party workers. Our offices have been vandalised and forcefully captured. The SIR was done to target seats where we were strong... The Election Commission is doing whatever it wishes, with the help of the central forces. The state police is dancing to the tune of the central forces,” she

said earlier in the day. Meanwhile, Adhikari dedicated his Bhabanipur victory to “party workers and those who gave their lives for the party and Hindutva”. “Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists, Bengalis, people from Rajasthan all voted for me. Muslims voted for Mamata Banerjee. Ten thousand CPI(M) supporters also voted for me. I thank all of them,” he said.

In 2021, too, Adhikari had defeated Banerjee from Nandigram by 1,956 votes. Banerjee had then won the Bhabanipur seat in a bypoll the same year. On Monday, Adhikari won the Nandigram seat also.

—WITHPTI, ANI

In the tea belt, low wages and closed gardens went against the ruling TMC, even as the Centre rolled out promises.

In Coochbehar, the BJP has long wooed the Rajbongshi community. The Rajbongshi or Koch-Rajbongshi community consists of more than 33 lakh people in the districts of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Malda and Murshidabad districts. BJP won 8 seats in Cooch Behar while TMC won one seat.

The TMC did better in the Uttar and Dakshin Dinajpur districts. While in Uttar Dinajpur, the BJP won four seats compared to the TMC’s five, in Dakshin Dinajpur, BJP won four seats and TMC two. In Malda, once a Congress bastion, the BJP won six seats and the TMC six.

The tribal belt in South Bengal; voted in 2nd phase

The BJP has regained its dominance in the tribal belt of Janglemahal, winning 38 out of 40 seats.

BJP won all four seats in Jhargram district and all 9 in Purulia. In Bankura, it won all 12 seats. In Paschim Midnapore district, the BJP won 13 seats and the TMC two. Among the TMC leaders staring at a defeat was state Forest Minister Birbaha Hansda (Binpur).

The tribal belt did not see any impact of the SIR, with very low deletion of names, but governance issues such as the lack of housing and drinking water dominated in the area once hit by Maoism.

Ahead of the polls, a glut in potato production, leading to a sharp fall in prices, also had an impact here, especially in Bankura.

During the campaign, the BJP, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, highlighted what they called “apman (insult)” of President Droupadi Murmu, a tribal, during her visit to Bengal — a reference to CM Mamata Banerjee and her Cabinet ministers not being present to receive her when she arrived in the state. Murmu had expressed her anguish publicly over this, and alleged that police had changed her programme venue abruptly.

The BJP also successfully wooed the Kurmi community, who have been agitating for long for ST status. The Kurmis held sway in a number of seats along with tribals. The BJP promised them that Kurmali language will be included in the national language list.

Kurmi leader Rajesh Mahato was fielded by the BJP from Gopiballabpur and looked set to win. Kurmi leader Ajit Mahato’s son Biswajit Mahato also seemed headed for victory, on a BJP ticket from Joypur.

What Tamil Nadu is witnessing may not be a wave in the classical sense. It may be something quieter — a reallocation of belief.

Yet, even within that uncertainty, there are clear signs of structural change. TVK candidates have won or led across regions — from Salem West and Virudhunagar to pockets in Coimbatore and the south — signalling not a regional surge but a statewide footprint. In Coimbatore South, for instance, the party pushed DMK’s V Senthil Balaji to a narrow 2,271-vote victory.

During the campaign, the state faced a question it had not had to answer in decades: what happens when a system built over a century encounters a force it did not fully anticipate? The answer arrived today. Or it may unfold over the next five years. But the disruption, for now, is unmistakable.

TMC won 13 of 20 seats with highest deletions

after adjudication, the TMC won 13, the BJP six and the Congress one; and in the 187 seats, which saw over 5,000 names deleted, the BJP won or was leading in 119.

Overall, in these 187 seats — results were available for 170 and leads for 17 — the number of excluded voters was higher than the margin of victory or leads in 47 seats, an analysis by *The Indian Express* shows.

In the BJP’s tally of 119, 28 had a higher number of deletions than the victory margin of the party’s candidates. Of these 28 seats, the TMC had emerged victorious in 26 in 2021, the analysis shows.

Similarly, the TMC won or was on course to win 65 of those 187 seats, of which 18 recorded deletions higher than the victory margin — two seats were won by the Congress and one by Aam Janata Unnayan Party.

The 20 seats with maximum deletions are: Samserganj (74775 deletions, winner TMC); Lalgola (55420, TMC); Bhagabangola (47493, TMC); Raghunathganj (46100, TMC);

Metiaburz (39579, TMC); Farakka (38222, Cong); Suti (37965, TMC); Mothabari (37555, TMC); Jangipur (36581, BJP); Ratua (35573, BJP); Karandighi (31562, BJP); Goalpokhar (31384, TMC); Malatipur (29489, TMC); Chopra (27898, TMC); Sujapur (26829, TMC); Ketugram (26780, BJP); Rajarhat New Town (24132, TMC); Basirhat Uttar (23900, TMC); Manickchak (23726, BJP); Monteswar (23423, BJP).

Results and leads were declared Monday for a total of 293 seats in West Bengal, with re-polling to be held in Falta on May 21.

The Election Commission had ordered the SIR across the country in June last year, starting with Bihar, followed by nine other states, including West Bengal, and three Union Territories.

The exercise differed from the annual and pre-election Special Summary Revisions, with all registered electors as on the date of the SIR announcement required to fill up enumeration forms and provide documents to prove their

• Seats with most deletions during adjudication

Seats	Votes deleted	2021 winner	2026 winner	2026 margin	Difference*
FARAKKA	38,222	AITC	INC	8,193	-30,029
SUTI	37,965	AITC	AITC	12,357	-25,608
MOTHABARI	37,255	AITC	AITC	10,496	-26,759
JANGIPUR	36,581	AITC	BJP	10,542	-26,039
RATUA	35,573	AITC	BJP	32,562	-3,011
KARANDIGHI	31,562	AITC	BJP	19,869	-11,693
GOALPOKHAR	31,384	AITC	AITC	83,790	52,406
MALATIPUR	29,489	AITC	AITC	59,747	30,258
CHOPRA	27,898	AITC	AITC		

DAY AFTER KILLER BLAZE, 4-STORY BUILDING VACATED

3D mapping to find cause of Vivek Vihar fire that killed 9

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 4

A DAY after nine people died in a huge fire, which broke out at a residential building in Shahdara's Vivek Vihar in East Delhi, the entire building was vacated on Monday and an investigation was launched by the Delhi Police to ascertain the exact cause of the blaze.

Police officers said that they might also use 3D laser mapping technology, if required, to understand the circumstances under which the four-storey building caught fire. Police have used similar mapping technologies in major fire incidents earlier, including the Arpit Hotel fire in Karol Bagh and the Anaj Mandi fire in 2019. 3D mapping is a process of obtaining three-dimensional information about the site of an incident, especially when a structure has been severely damaged, with the help of software.

According to a senior officer, the rear portion of the four-storey building was the most affected. The structure, they added, might have been weakened as all three flats on the second, third, and fourth floors were gutted in the fire.

The building, located in B Block of Vivek Vihar, has a parking space on the ground floor and two four-bedroom flats both on the front and rear side on each of the other floors.



Outside the building in Vivek Vihar. ABHINAV SAHA

It was built in 2017 on an 800-square-yard plot. The flats were sold for Rs 3.5-4 crore, police sources said.

The fire turned the world of three families — residing on the front side of the building, however, managed to escape. On Monday, all the families vacated their flats and moved to their relatives' homes for the civic authorities to complete inspections and declare the structure safe. In the afternoon, forensic and crime teams inspected the building and collected samples as part of the ongoing investigation.

Officials said that teams from the Power department and the Delhi Fire Services will soon inspect the site too to help determine the exact cause of the fire.

ing, B-13, is located near the Ghazipur drain.

Toxic gases like hydrogen sulfide, often present in the air near drains, can corrode the copper pipes and condenser in an AC unit. Due to this corrosion, the refrigerant gastends to leak almost every year.

"When the gas leaks, the AC oil also escapes along with it. As a result, the compressor can overheat, increasing the risk of an explosion. Such an explosion could have also led to the fire in Vivek Vihar," the officer said.

The deceased were identified as Arvind Jain (60), Anita Jain (58), Nishant Jain (35), Anchal Jain (33), Akash Jain (1), Shikha Jain (45), Nitin Jain (50), Shailey Jain (48), and Samyank Jain (25). The bodies of Arvind and four of his family members were found on the second floor. Nitin, along with his wife and son, was found dead on the fourth floor, while Shikha was found dead on the second floor.

Prima facie, police suspect that a short circuit on the second floor had triggered the blaze. They have also not ruled out the possibility of a short circuit in an air conditioner that might have caused an explosion and subsequently the fire.

An officer said that AC mechanics and experts suggest that houses located near drains have a higher risk of developing faults or gas leakage. The build-

IN REMEMBRANCE

Corps of Signals salutes its Signallers who left us for their heavenly abode during the month of Apr 2026.

- (a) 15727696Y Lance Naik Prasanth N
- (b) 15717112P Naik Anand Sharma
- (c) 15748395H Signalman Sunil
- (d) 15756188L Signalman Santosh Kumar D
- (e) 15682027L Havildar Hiray Samadhan Ganpat

Deeply mourned by Lt Gen Vivek Dogra, SM, SO-in-C, Col Comdt and all ranks of Corps of Signals.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is hereby informed to all concerns that we M/s. Ninex Developers Ltd. and M/s. Corona Buildcon Pvt. Ltd. (under Joint Development/Marketing Rights) have been granted in-principle approval for Occupation Certificate vide DTCP Memo No. ZP-B11-II/PA(DK)/2026/15342 dated 01.05.2026 for Block A1, B1, C1, D1, E1, Basement-II, EWS-II, Community-II and Convenient Shopping under License No. 16 of 2010 dated 16.02.2010 and License No. 122 of 2012 dated 13.12.2012 in group housing colony at Sector-76, Gurugram.

And whereas in compliance to the said memo, the Directorate of Town & Country Planning, Haryana has guided us to seek suggestion/objection of the allottees of Phase-I i.e. Tower A1, B1, C1, D1, E1 & Community-II in reference to deviations in Development of the project. Accordingly, vide this public notice, objection/suggestions are hereby invited from the existing allottees of Phase-I for the changes made at the site. A copy of earlier approved building layout plan and deviation plan is available for perusal at office of STP Gurugram, at website www.coronaprojects.in, site office and our office at 504, City Court, Sikanderpur Gurugram. Any allottee having any objection/suggestion on changes made in the Building Plan may file his/her objection/suggestion in the office of Senior Town Planner, HUDA Complex, Sector 14, Gurugram or at our office within 30 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the deviations in the layout plan.

Place: Gurugram (under Joint Development/Marketing Rights with Ninex Developers Limited)
Dated: 05-05-2026



CIN: L28922HR1900PLC010901
Regd. Office: O.P. Jindal Marg, Hisar-125 005 (Haryana)
Ph. No. (01662) 222471-83, Fax No. (01662) 220499, Email id. for Investors: investorcare@jindalstainless.com, Website: www.jindalstainless.com

EXTRACTS OF AUDITED CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Sr. No.	Particulars	For the quarter ended			For the year ended	
		31 March 2026	31 December 2025	31 March 2025	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
		Audited (Refer note 3)	Unaudited	Audited (Refer note 3)	Audited	
1	Total income from operations	11,337.19	10,517.55	10,198.32	42,954.86	39,312.21
2	EBITDA	1,454.84	1,407.94	1,060.88	5,560.43	4,666.63
3	Net profit for the period (before tax, exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	1,158.02	1,112.33	735.81	4,300.41	3,346.02
4	Net profit for the period before tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	1,112.32	1,082.28	728.75	4,242.07	3,338.96
5	Net profit for the period after tax (after exceptional and/or extraordinary items)	834.21	827.78	589.96	3,184.57	2,499.72
6	Total comprehensive income for the period (comprising profit for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax))	920.15	836.94	601.62	3,286.57	2,537.18
7	Paid up equity share capital (face value of ₹2/- each)	164.79	164.74	164.73	164.79	164.73
8	Other equity	19,626.49	18,761.56	16,523.21	19,626.49	16,523.21
9	Securities premium account	4,134.58	4,120.72	4,119.73	4,134.58	4,119.73
10	Net worth	19,791.28	18,926.30	16,687.94	19,791.28	16,687.94
11	Paid up debt capital #	99.00	99.00	286.50	99.00	286.50
12	Outstanding redeemable preference shares	-	-	-	-	-
13	Debt equity ratio	0.37	0.35	0.38	0.37	0.38
14	Earning per share (EPS) (face value of ₹2/- each)					
	a) Basic	10.24	10.06	7.18	38.76	30.42
	b) Diluted	10.22	10.05	7.17	38.70	30.41
	(EPS for the quarter not annualised)					
15	Capital redemption reserve	62.50	20.00	20.00	62.50	20.00
16	Debt redemption reserve #	-	-	-	-	-
17	Debt service coverage ratio	4.96	5.18	2.18	4.33	3.28
18	Interest service coverage ratio	10.39	11.25	7.71	10.41	8.11

EBITDA = Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation & amortization and other income
Listed debt

Notes:
1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly / yearly financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and Regulation 52 read with Regulation 63 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ["SEBI (LODR)"]. The full format of the standalone and consolidated quarterly / yearly financial results along with other line items referred in Regulation 52(4) of the SEBI (LODR) are available on the Company's website: (www.jindalstainless.com) and on the websites of Bombay Stock Exchange (www.bseindia.com) and the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd. (www.nseindia.com). The same can be accessed by scanning the QR Code provided below.

2. Standalone financial information of the Company, pursuant to regulation 47(1)(b) of SEBI (LODR):

Particulars	For the quarter ended			For the year ended	
	31 March 2026	31 December 2025	31 March 2025	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
	Audited (Refer note 3)	Unaudited	Audited (Refer note 3)	Audited	
Total income from operations	10,826.47	10,632.35	10,785.53	42,680.22	40,181.68
EBITDA	1,111.16	1,103.44	890.48	4,322.20	3,905.20
Profit before tax (before exceptional items)	932.97	917.02	955.03	3,579.68	3,367.63
Profit before tax (after exceptional items)	1,115.39	891.49	1,106.58	3,736.57	3,519.18
Profit after tax	891.57	866.85	924.94	2,842.95	2,711.19

3. The figures for the quarters ended 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2025 are the balancing figures between audited figures in respect of full financial years and published year to date figures upto the third quarter of years ended 31 March 2026 and 31 March 2025 respectively.



By Order of the Board of Directors
For Jindal Stainless Limited

Tarun Kumar Khulbe
Chief Executive officer, Chief Financial Officer and Whole Time Director

Atmanirbhar Bharat



Sahkar Se Samriddhi

Under the visionary leadership of

Hon'ble Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi**
and the esteemed guidance of

Hon'ble Union Minister of Home Affairs & Cooperation **Shri Amit Shah**,
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NEET racket busted, doctor among four arrested; MBBS seats 'offered for Rs 25-30L'

18 aspirants rescued a day before NEET

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 4

IN A major crackdown on an organised admission fraud, the Delhi Police's Crime Branch busted a racket that allegedly lured National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) aspirants with false promises of securing MBBS seats. Just a day before their entrance exam, 18 students, including minors, were rescued on Saturday and four accused were arrested, including a doctor, who studied from Kyrgyzstan, and the alleged mastermind of the racket, said officers. The students were rescued during raids at several locations where the accused had taken them on the pretext of providing important questions.

During questioning, investigators found that the accused had allegedly struck deals ranging between Rs 25 lakh and Rs 30 lakh per candidate, collecting cash, original academic documents and blank signed cheques from parents in return for false assurances of guaranteed admission. "This was a well-structured network that preyed upon the aspirations of students and their guardians," said Sanjeev Kumar Yadav, DCP, Crime Branch, adding that timely intervention ensured the safety of all the students involved. The four accused have been identified as Santosh Kumar Jaiswal (50), a graduate and the alleged mastermind and a resident of East of Kailash in Delhi; Dr Akhlaq Alam alias Golden Alam (25), a native of Gopalganj, Bihar, who has completed his MBBS from Kyrgyzstan and is currently preparing for the screening test conducted by the National Medical Commission (NMC) to practise in India; Sant Pratap Singh (59), a B.Tech graduate from Pune and a property dealer-cum-builder



The accused in custody. EXPRESS

based in Lucknow; and Vinod Bhai Bhikha Bhai Patel (52), a Surat-based broker.

The accused had been targeting families, particularly from Gujarat. Elaborating on the modus operandi, the DCP said, "Jaiswal was the main person behind the entire operation. He brought in his associate Vinod Patel, who helped identify and approach families. Akhlaq Alam's role was to prepare the so-called question papers, while Sant Pratap Singh handled logistics, including accommodation and meeting points."

Police said the operation was unearthed following an input from Surat Police about a suspect claiming to arrange medical admissions through technical surveillance. The accused was traced to Mahipalpur in Southwest Delhi, where Crime Branch teams searched nearly 100 hotels before zeroing in on the suspects. Acting swiftly, teams tracked their movement and laid a trap near a hospital in Ghaziabad, rescuing three students and arresting Santosh Jaiswal. Later, raids at a flat in Ghaziabad, which belonged to SP Singh, led to the rescue of 15 more students. A team under the joint leadership of Inspectors Sunil Kalkhande, Yashendra Singh, and Mahipal Singh supervised by Satendra Mohan, ACP, Central Range, was formed to trace the suspects.

Police have recovered 149 pages of fabricated question-answer material, and blank signed cheques.

AS SUMMER IN CAPITAL GETS HARSHER

Govt identifies areas facing water scarcity, draws up plan

Gayathri Mani
New Delhi, May 4

AS SUMMER gets harsher in the Capital, the Delhi government has identified areas facing water shortage, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Monday, adding that "targeted arrangements have been put in place to bridge the gap".

Over 1,200 tankers have been deployed in these parts to strengthen water supply, with an additional 100 kept on standby. Deployment has been tailored constituency-wise, with high-demand areas such as Sangam Vihar, Matiala, Chhatrapur, Deoli, Tughlakabad, Palam, Bijwasan, and Bawana receiving special attention, the CM was quoted as saying in a statement by her office. These parts have persistently faced water-shortage issues during summer year-on-year, said officials, adding that measures are being taken to ensure that the issue does not worsen this year.

The number of operational tubewells has been increased

• BRACING FOR PEAK SUMMER

AREAS FACING SHORTAGE: Sangam Vihar, Matiala, Chhatrapur, Deoli, Tughlakabad, Palam, Bijwasan, Bawana, among others

WATER TREATMENT: plants directed to operate at full capacity

COORDINATION: ON with Haryana to monitor ammonia levels in shared water resources



1,210 tankers deployed | 28 emergency centres set up

from 5,834 to 6,200. Fixed supply points have been increased from 8,700 to 13,000, and filling hydrants from 198 to 202. Detailed planning has been completed at the constituency-level, including allocation of responsibilities, colony-wise supply schedules, tanker route plans and resource deployment, said Gupta.

Across the city, 28 water emergency centres have been

set up at strategic locations to operate round the clock. These centres are equipped with adequate staff, communication systems and CCTV surveillance to ensure swift resolution of supply-related issues, said officials. A central control room, chatbot-based system, along-side public-private-partnership (PPP) mode call centres operating in several areas are among the measures to ensure

summer preparedness, said the CM. The government has tightened monitoring at every level to maintain a smooth and balanced supply, she added.

Moreover, all major water treatment plants — Sonia Vihar, Bhagirathi, Chandrawal, Wazirabad, Haiderpur, Nangloi, Okhla, Bawana and Dwarka — have been directed to operate at the peak capacity. The government is also coordinating with officials concerned in Haryana to ensure that ammonia levels in shared water resources, including Yamuna and Munak Canal, are kept in check, the CM underlined. The remarks came as Gupta held a review meeting with the Water Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh, Chief Secretary Rajiv Verma and senior officials of the Delhi Jal Board.

With regards to complaints, the grievance redressal system has been reinforced with 24x7 helplines (1916 and 1800117118). Complaints are routed directly to the junior engineer and 100% feedback is being ensured, officials said.

Riding a DTC bus? Feedback may be taken to improve connectivity

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 4

THE NEXT time you hop on to a Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) bus, your feedback may be taken to rationalise routes. The DTC will soon kick off a public survey to get feedback from the commuters about their experience of travelling, routes, type of passes they use, and frequency of bus and time of journey, said officials.

The comprehensive study is being undertaken by IIT Delhi under a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Delhi Transport Infrastructure Development Corporation (DTIDC), ensuring a robust, data-driven, and optimised redesign of Delhi's bus network

to improve accessibility and service quality, officials added. The route rationalisation covers 121 routes in the East Zone, 181 routes in the West Zone, and 194 routes in the North Zone, as well as ongoing exercise of the South Zone.

Following the survey, officials said, the department will ensure that they have a pool of suggestions to improve bus connectivity. "The survey is being carried out as part of the ongoing route rationalisation exercise for 12 metre buses, so that the DTC can improve connectivity, and address the daily challenges being faced by the bus commuters," said a DTC official. Under the survey, details such as name, age, gender, number and type of vehicles

owned, trip details and frequency will be collected.

The survey will also shed light on commuter preferences and why people, who don't want to ride public buses, choose a different option for their daily rides. Such commuters will be asked if they face challenges related to last-mile connectivity, access to bus stops, low frequency of buses on their route, unreliable service, lack of information about bus routes, safety concerns, or lack of adequate pedestrian facility to the bus stop and longer travel time.

"The route rationalisation exercise must reflect the on-ground realities of Delhi's public transport system," Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh had said earlier.

Two-year-old drowns in drain while playing near house

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 4

A TWO-YEAR-OLD girl died after falling in an open drain in North Delhi's Burari area on Sunday evening when she was playing outside her house, said police. Prima facie, said officers, no foul play is suspected.

According to the Delhi Police, they initially received information about a missing child at Bhalswa Dairy police station on Sunday.

Acting swiftly, a police team launched an intense search operation in the area along with family members and local residents. During the operation, the toddler was found inside a drain located about 15 metres away from her residence. She was immediately taken to Babu Jagjivan Ram (BJRM) Hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

Police said the body has been preserved at the hospital mortuary for post-mortem examination to ascertain the exact cause of death.

Preliminary inquiry revealed that the child had likely wandered out of the house while playing and accidentally fell into the open drain, leading to drowning.

Family members have not expressed any suspicion of foul play at this stage, officers said. There are several open drains in the area around the house, which have sparked safety concerns following the incident.

• Skywatch



Forecast: May 5, 2026: Cloudy sky. Light to very light rain with thunderstorms and lightning.

MAX: 39-41
1.7 above normal

MIN: 23-25
1.2°C above normal

• Sunrise: 5:37 AM (May 6)
• Sunset: 6:59 PM (May 5)

• Moonrise: 10:30 PM (May 5)
• Moonset: 8:35 AM (May 6)

• AQI Tracker



Ashok Vihar
Satisfactory
AQI: 83

Bawana
Satisfactory
AQI: 71



IGI Airport
Satisfactory
AQI: 76



ITO
Satisfactory
AQI: 73

- Good (0-50)
- Satisfactory (51-100)
- Moderate (101-200)
- Poor (201-300)
- Very Poor (301-400)
- Severe (401-500)

• BRIEFLY



Delhi witnessed a dip in day temperatures after latest rain spell. ANI

CHINESE MANJHA IS BANNED

Five-year-old dies in North East Delhi as Chinese majha slits throat

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD died after his throat was allegedly slit by banned Chinese manjha in North East Delhi's New Usmanpur, police said Monday. Police said they were informed by Jag Praveesh Chandra Hospital on Sunday regarding the admission of an injured child. A team reached the hospital and learnt that he had been travelling with his mother and uncle towards a CNG pump in New Usmanpur on a two-wheeler when the incident happened. Police said he later succumbed to his injuries. A post-mortem examination of the body will be conducted, they said, adding that a case under sections 106 and 223 of the BNS was filed. ENS

Hoax bomb threat to MCD Mayor's office

THE MAYOR'S Office of the MCD received a bomb threat on Monday morning, said officials, adding that the Delhi Police acted promptly and brought the situation fully under control. The threat was declared a hoax and no toward incident was reported. According to an official statement, "The office received an email around 9:19 am, and an unknown source threatened an explosion at 3:11 pm. Considering its seriousness, the Delhi Police was informed immediately without delay."

Upon receiving the information, the Delhi Police carried out a thorough and detailed inspection of the Mayor's Office. Earlier, on April 1, a similar threat was received by the Mayor's Office. A detailed police investigation has been sought by the Mayor's Office in a formal letter to the Commissioner of Delhi Police. ENS

Cop saves life of accident victim at Burari flyover

A TRAFFIC police officer's prompt response helped save the life of a 40-year-old man who was critically injured in a road accident at Burari Flyover in North Delhi, officers said on Monday. The incident took place on May 2 when Inspector Yashpal Bhati of the Northern Range was returning after duty and noticed a scooter rider lying unconscious on the road after crashing into a divider. The victim had suffered severe head and facial injuries, they said. Bhati, along with Constable Sahdev, stopped their vehicle and rushed the injured man to the Trauma Centre at Civil Lines without waiting for an ambulance. The injured was later identified as Vinod Chandra Pujari, a resident of West Vinod Nagar. Police personnel made efforts to contact his family members. "Pujari's condition has stabilised," the medical staff at the hospital said. PTI

ALLEGED KACHHA BANIYAN GANG MEMBERS ARRESTED BY ANTI-TERRORISM SQUAD

Faces masked, clad in undergarments: 6 of notorious gang held for looting jewellery from South Delhi home

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 4

AFTER EXECUTING a robbery worth lakhs of rupees in South Delhi's upscale Malviya Nagar area, six members of one of the Capital's most notorious robbery gangs — the Kachha Baniyan gang — were arrested by Delhi Police on Sunday following an exchange of fire in South Delhi, said officers.

On May 1, six men, dressed in undergarments and wearing

masks on faces, had allegedly entered a flat in Malviya Nagar's Sarvodaya Enclave. "Members of the family were sleeping in two bedrooms. The accused locked both the rooms, and then took jewellery," the officer said. CCTV cameras in the house captured two of them, roaming around in undergarments, said police.

Officers of the Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of Delhi Police (South) subsequently traced the six accused — alleged members

of the Kachha Baniyan Gang — to Ambedkar Nagar, police said.

"When officers reached the area, accused Nirmal Pardi, Devin and Samar opened fire at them. The police team fired in retaliation, and bullets hit the three on legs," an officer said. The accused identified as Kaake, Krish and Shivaji, and their accomplices, were arrested. All of them hail from Madhya Pradesh. Officers suspect the six men were involved in at least four robberies in Delhi

last year.

Members of the Kachha Baniyan gang are largely from the Pardi community, a nomadic tribe originally from parts of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, traditionally known for their hunting skills. The gang became notorious in the 90s and 2000s after a series of robbery-cum-murders were reported across the country, in which the thieves entered homes wearing only undergarments. Among the prominent

cases from Delhi was murder of two people during a robbery in Lodhi Colony in 1991. In 2014, a 21-year-old woman in Narela was killed. Officers said that if gang members were seen roaming in the streets at night, they certainly had zeroed in on their target. Such was the terror — a band of robbers would break inside societies and their plush apartments, rob it clean after taking the residents hostage, and kill them if they didn't cooperate.

VERDICT 2026

Chief Minister, BJP leaders celebrate with jhalmuri, mishti doi and jalebis

Gayathri Mani
New Delhi, May 4

AS THE BJP marched towards its historic victory in West Bengal, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, her Cabinet colleagues, and state party president Virendra Sachdeva celebrated with *jhalmuri* and *rasgulla* on Monday afternoon. *Jhalmuri*, a spicy mix of puffed rice, is perhaps the most common street snack in West Bengal.

CM Gupta had the impromptu *jhalmuri* party with Ministers Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Ashish Joshi, Ravinder Indraj, Kapil Mishra, and Parvesh Sahib Singh at the Delhi Secretariat. "The victory of the Indian people, especially in West Bengal, is special. PM Narendra Modi's model of good governance has triumphed," she said. "...Every state in the country is turning saffron," she posted on X. "With Assam's hat-trick victory [and] the BJP coming to power in Bengal... Heartiest



CM with other BJP leaders celebrate poll results. X / @GUPTA_REKHA

congratulations on the resounding victory."

Voters, the CM said, had moved beyond "empty slogans, divisive narratives and hollow claims of secularism", and were prioritising tangible development, transparency, and results-oriented governance.

On April 19, PM Modi had walked into a nondescript *jhalmuri* stall while campaigning in

West Bengal's Jhargram. He had paid Rs 10 for the snack, and shared the video of his interaction with shopkeeper Bikram Shaw on X. "I ate the *jhalmuri*, but the *jhhaal* (spice) hit the Trinamool," he had said.

CM Mamata Banerjee had mocked the PM's *jhalmuri* break as a scripted drama, and rhetorically asked if he would eat rice and fish, the staple Ben-

gali meal, as well.

At the state BJP headquarters, Sachdeva celebrated with *mishti doi*, the thick, sweet curd that is considered a signature Bengali dessert.

PWD Minister and senior BJP leader Parvesh Sahib Singh organised a *jalebi* party outside his residence by setting up a live *jalebi* stall, along with sweets such as *laddoos*. "It's a very happy moment for all of us because after the TMC won the last time, it used goons against our party leaders," Singh said.

Sachdeva, party national general secretary Tarun Chugh, and other leaders took out a "Bengal Victory March" on Deendayal Upadhyay Marg.

"The defeat of Mamata Banerjee in Bengal and MK Stalin in Tamil Nadu [who lost in the DMK stronghold of Kolathur] is also a defeat for [former Delhi CM] Arvind Kejriwal, because he had... claimed that both governments would return to power," Chugh said.

Sophiya Mathew
New Delhi, May 4

WITH THE Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) surging towards a comeback in Kerala after 10 years, celebrations erupted outside Kerala House in Delhi on Monday. Members of the Kerala NGO Association and party supporters celebrated the early trends with drumbeats, firecrackers, and cups of payasam. Many remained glued to their phones, tracking constituency-wise leads and discussing margins, as excitement built through the morning.

Though exit polls and anti-incumbency signals had hinted at a shift, the sheer scale of the UDF's lead — crossing 100 seats in the 140-member Assembly — caught many by surprise.

As the numbers climbed, so did the buzz. Posters of senior Congress leader K C Venugopal went up near the entrance, drawing cheers, while conversa-



Posters of senior Congress leader K C Venugopal near the entrance to Kerala House in Delhi, Monday. SOPHIYA MATHEW

tions quickly shifted to the next big question: who will be chief minister? "We don't know the CM face yet. Even a woman candidate would be welcome. But among the names, V D Satheesan is the most deserving," one supporter said. "Still, the K C Venugopal camp appears strongest, so Satheesan may have the least chance compared to others

like Ramesh Chennithala." Inside the premises, however, a group of younger supporters was seen raising slogans in favour of Satheesan.

Several attendees also expressed surprise at the scale of the setback faced by CM Pinarayi Vijayan and the Left Democratic Front (LDF). "Even with anti-incum-

ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

Sunetra Pawar wins by 2L votes in Baramati

Manoj More
Pune, May 4



Maharashtra Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar at the memorial of her husband Ajit Pawar in Baramati after her victory in the bypoll on Monday. EXPRESS

AS WIDELY anticipated, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar, also the NCP national president, on Monday won the Baramati Assembly bypoll by a record margin of over 2.18 lakh votes. In the process, she also surpassed her late husband Ajit Pawar's record victory margin of 1.65 lakh votes.

"We have been saying that Sunetra Pawar will win by a record margin of votes and even break Ajit Pawar's record. It has come true. It is a glorious victory which is a tribute from Baramatikars to their Ajitdada, who led our party from the front and served Maharashtra till his last breath," Sunil Tatkare, state NCP president, told *The Indian Express*.

Maharashtra Congress spokesperson Gopal Tiwari said, "Sunetra Pawar was a Mahayuti can-

didate. And was supported by the Maha Vikas Aghadi. It was expected that she would secure a record victory and it has happened."

This is Sunetra's first victory on the Baramati poll terrain. Earlier, in 2024 she had lost the Baramati Lok Sabha election to her sister-in-law Supriya Sule. Later though she was elected to the Rajya Sabha. Sunetra's younger son, Jay, went to Ajit Pawar's memorial to pay his respects after his mother's poll victory. "Everyone took this election into their own hands for their leader, Ajit Pawar. People of

Baramati have always supported my parents," he said.

When he was asked about the possible merger of two NCPs, Jay said, "I cannot decide alone regarding the future path or the merger of the two NCP factions. A merger needs to happen between both parties. Therefore, if the senior leaders of both parties decide something regarding a merger or hold discussions on it, the scenario could look different in the future."

Jay said a 'janata darbar' (public grievance meeting) will be held every Thursday in Baramati. In a social media post, Sunetra expressed her "heartfelt gratitude to all the people of Baramati for electing me with a big margin of votes".

"The trust, love, and support shown by the people of Baramati are extremely precious to me. This was the first election in Baramati held after Ajitdada's death. Today, the absence of his guidance and presence is deeply felt...," she said.

Gujarat BJP cements grip on Umreth with thumping win

Aditi Raja
Vadodra, May 4

TWO MONTHS after the death of veteran BJP MLA Govind Parmar necessitated a by-poll for the Umreth constituency in Anand district, his son Harshad Parmar won the seat, handing the ruling party a thumping win with a margin of over 30,000 votes.

Bagging nearly 59% of the votes, the BJP candidate defeated the Congress's Bhurugurajsinh Chauhan, who secured 54,757 votes. The Umreth seat, carved out

after a delimitation merged it with the erstwhile Sarsa constituency, has witnessed a gradual but firm consolidation in favour of the BJP since 2017, when Govind Parmar defeated the NCP's Jayant 'Bosky' Patel by a significant margin.

A leader of the Kshatriya-Thakor community of Anand district, who had considerable influence in the co-operative sector, Govind Parmar was elected as an MLA in 1995, 1998, 2017, and 2022. In 1995, he was an independent MLA for Sarsa and was re-elected in 1998 on a Congress ticket. He lost the seat in 2002 and 2007.

•BYPOLL RESULTS IN 5 STATES

CONSTITUENCY	WINNER	PARTY	MARGIN
Baramati (Maharashtra)	Sunetra Ajit Pawar	NCP	2,18,034
Rahuri (Maharashtra)	Akshay Shivajirao Kardile	BJP	1,12,587
Bagalkot (Karnataka)	Umesh Hullappa Meti	INC	22,332
Davanagere South (Karnataka)	Samarth Shamanur Mallikarjuna	INC	5,708
Umreth (Gujarat)	Harshadbhai Govindbhai Parmar	BJP	30,743
Dharamnagar (Tirupura)	Jahar Chakraborti	BJP	18,290
Koridang (Nagaland)	Daochier Imchen	BJP	3,123

SOURCE: ECI WEBSITE

Congress wins both seats in Karnataka

Express News Service
Bengaluru, May 4



Karnataka Deputy CMD K Shivakumar and other Congress leaders at a press meet in Bengaluru on Monday. PTI

AFTER AN initial scare in one of the seats, the Congress party on Monday won both the Karnataka Assembly seats which went to a bypoll on April 9.

The Congress candidate from the Bagalkot constituency, Umesh Meti, won by a margin of 22,332 votes against BJP's Veeranna Charantimath. In the Davanagere South constituency, after an initial scare, Congress party's Samarth Mallikarjuna defeated BJP's Shrinivasa Dasakariyappa with a close margin of 5,708 votes.

In Davanagere South, the BJP had secured a lead of over 5,000 votes in the first seven rounds of counting, but the results ultimately swung in favour of the Congress in the rest of the rounds. That Social Democratic Party of India candidate Afsar Kodlipete polled close to 19,000 votes here reflected the anger Congress faced among Muslim voters. In the 2023 Karnataka Assembly elections, SDPI had polled over 1,100 votes here.

The disgruntlement among a section of Muslim leaders of the Congress over the party picking 27-year-old Samarth, a third-generation politician of the Shamanur Shivashankarappa family, appears to have a bearing on the results.

The leaders had sought a ticket for a Muslim candidate, since over a third of the elector-

ate in Davanagere South belong to the community. The disagreement resulted in allegations of 'anti-party activity' and action against Congress MLAs Abdul Jabbar and Naseer Ahmed.

The vote counting at Davanagere South also faced two issues. First, authorities misplaced the keys of a strong room where the EVMs were stored, and the locks had to be broken to access the ballots here in the morning.

Second, three EVMs here also faced technical issues at the end of the counting, after which officials decided to count the VVPAT slips. Since the votes these three machines recorded were less than Samarth's lead, the Congress party had already started the celebrations here.

Karnataka Deputy CM D Shivakumar said the party had expected a better margin in Davanagere South. "In Bagalkot, our margin was less in 2023, and we have won there by a huge margin this time," he added.

Ministry of Culture
Government of India

**Centre for Contemporary Studies
Prime Ministers Museum and Library**
Cordially invites you to a **Panel Discussion on the book
A History of India's Green Revolution: Reign of
Technocracy**
Authored by
Prakash Kumar
Discussants:
Prof. Santosh K. Mehrotra
Former Senior Fellow, PMML
Dr. Atul Bhardwaj
Deputy Director, CMHCS, USI
Moderator:
Dr. Ravi K. Mishra
Joint Director, PMML
05 May 2026 at 3:00pm
Venue:
Seminar Room, Library Building
Prime Ministers Museum and Library
All are Welcome.
Those wishing to have their names added to the email list may please email us at:- rajnishpmml@gmail.com
CBC- 09142/11/0009/2627

Petronet LNG Limited
Regd. Office: Fourth Floor, Tower-I, World Trade Centre, Nauroji Nagar, New Delhi - 110029
Phone: 011-71233525, CIN: L74899DL1998PLC093073
Email: investors@petronetlng.in, Company's website: www.petronetlng.in

NOTICE OF POSTAL BALLOT

Notice is hereby given that the Company is seeking approval of its Members for appointment of a Director on the Board, as detailed in the Notice of Postal Ballot.

Detailed Postal Ballot Notice, together with explanatory statement and instructions for e-voting are available on the Company's website at www.petronetlng.in, websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited at <https://www.bseindia.com>, National Stock Exchange of India Limited at <https://www.nseindia.com> and on the website of e-voting agency i.e. National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) at www.evoting.nsdl.com.

The Postal Ballot is conducted in accordance with Section 110 and other applicable provisions, if any, of the Companies Act, 2013 ('Act') read with the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, ('Rules') and Regulation 44 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs, through General Circular Nos. 14/2020 dated April 8, 2020, 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020, 10/2021 dated June 23, 2021, 20/2021 dated December 8, 2021, 3/2022 dated May 5, 2022, 11/2022 dated December 28, 2022, 09/2023 dated September 25, 2023, 09/2024 dated September 19, 2024, 03/2025 dated September 22, 2025 and other relevant circulars and notifications issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (hereinafter collectively referred to as 'MCA Circulars'), has permitted companies to conduct the postal ballot by sending the notice in electronic form only.

The Company had already intimated of the opportunity being given to its Members and mechanism available to them to register their email addresses, so that various communication(s) can be sent to them through email.

Members who have not registered their e-mail address are requested to get their e-mail registered with the concerned Depository, in case shares held in dematerialized mode or with Registrar and Share Transfer Agent of the Company ('RTA'), Bigshare Services Private Limited in case shares held in physical mode. Post successful registration of the e-mail, Members may request to get postal ballot notice and the procedure for e-voting to enable voting for this Postal Ballot by sending an email to investor@bigshareonline.com.

The postal ballot notice and the e-voting instructions along with the user ID and password have been sent by email to those Members whose email addresses are registered with the Company/ RTA/ concerned Depository Participants and whose names appear in the Register of Members/ List of Beneficial Owners as on **Friday, May 1, 2026 (the "Cut-off date")**. The email process has been completed on **Monday, May 4, 2026**.

The Company has engaged the services of National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) to provide remote e-voting facility to its Members. **The remote e-voting period shall commence from 9:00 a.m. (IST) on Friday, May 8, 2026 and shall end at 5:00 p.m. (IST) on Saturday, June 6, 2026.** The e-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL thereafter. Voting rights of Members shall be in proportion to the shares held by them in the paid-up equity share capital of the Company as on **cut-off date i.e. Friday, May 1, 2026**. Communication of assent or dissent of the Members would take place only through the remote e-voting system. Only those Members whose names are recorded in the Register of Members of the Company or in the Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as on the cut-off date will be entitled to cast their votes by remote e-voting. Once the vote is cast by the Member, he/she shall not be allowed to change it subsequently.

All grievances connected with the facility for voting by electronic means may be addressed to Ms. Pallavi Mhatre, Senior Manager, NSDL at evoting@nsdl.co.in or contact at 022-4886 7000.

The Board of Directors of the Company has appointed M/s Ragini Chokshi & Co., Company Secretaries (Firm Reg. No.: BA-92897) as the Scrutinizer for conducting the Postal Ballot process in a fair and transparent manner.

The resolutions, if passed with requisite majority by the Members through Postal Ballot, shall be deemed to be passed on the last date of the voting period i.e. on **Saturday, June 6, 2026**.

The result of the voting by Postal Ballot will be announced latest by **Tuesday, June 9, 2026** and shall be available on the Company's website at www.petronetlng.in, on the websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE Limited at <https://www.bseindia.com/> and National Stock Exchange of India Limited at <https://www.nseindia.com/> and on the website of NSDL at www.evoting.nsdl.com.

General appeal to Members:

- We solicit your valuable cooperation and support in our endeavour to contribute our bit to the environment. We appeal Members to register/update their email addresses with their Depository Participant (DP) (if shares are held in electronic mode) or RTA/Company (if shares are held in physical mode) for receiving communications from the Company.
- SEBI vide its Circular No. SEBI/HO/MIRSD/MIRSD_RTAMP/CI/2021/655 dated November 3, 2021 (subsequently amended by Circular Nos. SEBI/HO/MIRSD/MIRSD_RTAMP/CI/2021/687 dated December 14, 2021, SEBI/HO/MIRSD/MIRSD-PoD-1/P/CI/2023/37 dated March 16, 2023 and SEBI/HO/MIRSD/POD-1/P/CI/2023/181 dated November 17, 2023) has mandated that with effect from April 1, 2024, dividend to security holders (holding securities in physical form), shall be paid only through electronic mode. Such payment shall be made only after furnishing the PAN, choice of nomination, contact details including mobile number, bank account details and specimen signature. Further, relevant FAQs published by SEBI on its website can be viewed at the following link: https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebi_data/faqfiles/sep-2024/1727418250017.pdf
- Members may please note that SEBI vide its Circular No. SEBI/HO/MIRSD/MIRSD_RTAMP/CI/2022/8 dated January 25, 2022 has mandated the listed companies to issue securities in dematerialized form only while processing service requests viz. issue of duplicate securities certificate; claim on unclaimed suspense account; renewal/exchange of securities certificate/ folios; endorsement; sub-division/splitting of securities certificate; consolidation of securities certificates/folios; transmission and transposition. Accordingly, Members are requested to make service requests by submitting a duly filled and signed Form ISR-4, the format of which is available on the Company's website at <https://www.petronetlng.in/norms-for-processing-investors-service-requested-by-rt-related-forms> and on RTA's website at www.bigshareonline.com. It may be noted that any service request can be processed only after the folio is KYC compliant.
- Members may please note that pursuant to SEBI Circular no. HO/38/13/11(2)2026-MIRSD-POD/ I/3750/2026 dated January 30, 2026, the Company has opened a special window exclusively for the re-lodgement of transfer deeds, which were lodged prior to the deadline of April 01, 2019 and rejected/ returned/ not attended due to the deficiency in the documents/ process/ or otherwise. The special window will remain open from February 05, 2026 to February 04, 2027. Detailed circular is available on the website of the Company at www.petronetlng.in. Lodgement of legally valid and complete documents for transfer of physical shares, where there is no dispute on ownership will be considered. Investors may submit their request latest by February 04, 2027, with the Registrar & Share Transfer Agent (RTA) of the Company. The securities so transferred shall be mandatorily credited to the transferee only in demat mode and shall be under lock-in for a period of one year from the date of registration of transfer. Such securities shall not be transferred/ lien-marked/ pledged during the said lock-in period. Investors must have a demat account and provide the necessary documents as specified in the SEBI circular dated 30.01.2026, while raising request for transfer of physical shares with RTA. Due process shall be followed for such transfer-cum-demat requests.
- Members are requested to update their records by submitting duly filled and signed relevant form along with the relevant proofs listed in the forms, to the RTA of the Company, Bigshare Services Private Limited by post to Office No. S6-2, 6th Floor, Pinnacle Business Park, Next to Ahura Centre, Mahakali Caves Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai-400093.

By order of the Board
For Petronet LNG Limited
Sd/-
(Rajan Kapur)
GGM & President - Company Secretary

Place : New Delhi
Date : May 4, 2026

कार्यालय अधीक्षण पुरातत्वविद, भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण
आगरा मंडल, 22, माल रोड, आगरा | e-mail-circleagra.asi@gov.in, 0562-2227261
निविदा संख्या: 07/34/2024/M

वाहन पार्किंग नीलामी सूचना

सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण, आगरा मंडल, आगरा के अंतर्गत उपमंडल अकबर टॉम्ब, सिकंदरा, आगरा में वाहन पार्किंग हेतु एक वर्ष के लिए वाहन पार्किंग के प्रबंधन एवं संचालन हेतु ई नीलामी के माध्यम से निविदाये आमंत्रित की जाती है। इच्छुक निविदा दाता विस्तृत जानकारी, नियम एवं शर्तें भारत सरकार के CPP Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> से दस्तावेज डॉउनलोड कर सकते हैं और दिनांक 04/05/2026 से 25/05/2026 को 15:00 बजे तक ई टेंडरिंग पोर्टल पर अपनी बोलीयां जमा कर सकते हैं।
अधीक्षण पुरातत्वविद

EXPRESS Careers

IIM MUMBAI
भारतीय प्रबंधन संस्थान मुंबई
Indian Institute of Management Mumbai
(Ministry of Education, Government of India)
विकसित भारत 2047

Advt. No. Admn/Rectt/2026/13 dated 22 April 2026
Advertisement for Non-Teaching Positions

IIM Mumbai invites applications for Non-Teaching positions from eligible candidates.

Advt. No.	Name of Post	Pay Level
Admn/Rectt/2026/13	Assistant (Program)	Pay Level 06
	Assistant (Hostel)	
	Executive Assistant	

For detailed advertisements, please visit <https://iimmbombay.ac.in/careers>
Chief Administrative Officer

TRAFFIC ADVISORY
IPL T20 CRICKET MATCH
DELHI CAPITALS VS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
on 05-05-2026
7:00PM TO 11:30PM

DELHI POLICE SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

ARUN JAITLEY STADIUM, FERESHAH KOTLA GROUND, NEW DELHI

LEGEND
 - PICK UP POINT SHUTTLE SERVICE
 - DROP OFF POINT SHUTTLE SERVICE
 - TAXI (DROP OFF / PICK UP LANE)
 - THOSE NOT HAVING PARKING LABEL TO FOLLOW RED
 - THOSE HAVING PARKING LABEL MAY FOLLOW BLUE ARROWS.
 - Park & Ride Free Parking Mata Sundari Road, Rajghat Power House Road, Velodrome Road, Service Road of Rajghat & Shantivan Both Sides

DIVERSION / RESTRICTION ON NEED BASIS
On need basis, there will be traffic diversions / restrictions on Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg and JLN Marg on 05.05.2026 from 05:00 PM to 01:00 AM
No heavy or commercial vehicles will be allowed on the roads from (1) Daryaganj to Delhi Gate Chowk on BSZ Marg (2) Delhi Gate Chowk towards Guru Nanak Chowk on JLN Marg and (3) ITO to Delhi Gate Chowk on BSZ Marg.
Commuters are requested to avoid the following roads from 05:00 PM to 01:00 AM on the day of match when the spectators would be coming to the stadium and congestion is expected:
J.L.N. Marg from Rajghat to Delhi Gate up to RIA Kamla Market (Both Carriageways)
Asaf Ali Road from Turkman Gate to Delhi Gate
BSZ Marg from Delhi Gate to Ramcharan Aggarwal Chowk / ITO Chowk (Both Carriageways)

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

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

PARKING
Labelled Vehicles
Limited parking is available for labelled vehicles in the proximity of the Stadium. Display of car parking label on windscreen is mandatory. Vehicle number must be written on the parking label. Those who do not display parking label with vehicle number will not be allowed in the proximity of the stadium.
Car parking label holders are advised to take Ring Road, J.L.N. Marg, Asaf Ali Road or Bahadurshah Zafar Marg. 'U' turn at Delhi Gate is allowed. Entry to parking lots P1, P2, P3, VIP and VVIP shall be from Bahadurshah Zafar Marg only from near the Vikram Nagar Cut, Shaheed Park.
General Vehicles
No vehicle shall be allowed to be parked on Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, Jawaharlal Nehru Marg & Ring Road from Rajghat to L.P. Flyover (both the carriageways) on the match day. Vehicles parked on these roads shall be towed away and prosecuted as per law.
All the spectators coming in their vehicles shall reach these Park & Ride sites, and avail 'Park & Ride' facility or walk down to reach stadium.

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

SECURITY INSTRUCTIONS: Spectators visiting the stadium are requested not to bring the following prohibited items:
Explosives/flammables, Laptop, Camera, Helmet, Backpack, Eatables, Water Bottles, Lighter & Match Box, Knives & Arms

24 Hours Traffic Helpline: 011-25844444 / 1095

'DEMOCRACY NOT JUST A SYSTEM, BUT A TRADITION THAT FLOWS IN OUR VEINS'

New dawn: PM calls for 'badlav', not 'badla'

Thanks people of 4 states and one UT on voting for stability of governance amid ongoing global uncertainties

Jatin Anand
New Delhi, May 4

TERMINING THE election results a "historic and unprecedented" day heralding both a new dawn in West Bengal as well as trust in the politics of development in India's democracy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlined the BJP's commitment to delivering on development in line with the vision of a "Viksit Bharat".

Addressing party leaders and workers at the BJP headquarters on Monday evening, the PM expressed gratitude to voters of West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry for putting up a united front amid the global uncertainty triggered by the ongoing West Asia crisis by exercising their franchise in favour of stability in governance.

"For us, democracy is not just a system, it is a tradition that flows in our veins... Today, not only has India's democracy triumphed, its Constitution has also triumphed. Our constitutional institutions have triumphed, our democratic processes have triumphed," he said.

"Today, BJP-led NDA governments are in power in more than 20 states... with the mantra 'nagrik devo bhava' (citizen is God). We are dedicated to serving the people, that is why



PM Narendra Modi felicitates party chief Nitin Nabin at BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Monday as Union Ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and JP Nadda look on. PRAVEEN KHANNA

the people are placing more and more trust in the BJP... where there is BJP, there is good governance... there is development," he said.

The BJP has been given an opportunity to realise the dream of a "strong and prosperous Bengal" envisioned by stalwarts such as Syama Prasad Mookerjee, he said. "A new chapter has been added to Bengal's destiny from today which will be free of fear and full of as-

urance," the PM said.

"Today, I assure each citizen of Bengal — BJP will work for the development of Bengal day and night; women will get an atmosphere of security, the youth will get employment, migration will stop. In the very first Cabinet meeting, the Ayushman Bharat yojana will get approval. The strictest possible measures will be taken against infiltrators," he said. He said the BJP government in

Bengal will work to realise Rabindranath Tagore's dream of 'where the mind is without fear and the head is held high'.

He urged all political players in the state to "move beyond" the vicious cycle of political violence which had engulfed it for decades. "As Bengal enters this new phase, I also appeal to other parties for change in habits. Today, when the BJP has won, not 'badla' (revenge) but 'badlav' (change)

needs to be talked about; not 'bhay' (fear) but 'bhavishya' (future) should be spoken of," he said.

Expressing gratitude to voters, he also took on the opposition for defeating his government's efforts to expedite the implementation of reservation for women in legislatures across the country.

"Nari Shakti (women power) is another pillar of Viksit Bharat, but the Congress tried

to stop it... these parties did not let the Nari Shakti Adhiniyam pass in Parliament. I had cautioned such parties they will have to face the ire of women. Today, the Congress, TMC... have been punished. In Kerala, too, the Congress will be taught a lesson next time. The Congress will have to face the repercussions in UP; the Samajwadi Party also will not be able to wash away the sin it committed," he added.



Trinamool MPs Dola Sen, Ritabrata Banerjee, Sagarika Ghose and other opposition members protest at the Parliament House complex, in New Delhi. PTI FILE

In Bengal defeat, Opposition has lost much at the 'trinamool' level

Number of TMC members in Rajya Sabha expected to decline gradually

Asad Rehman
New Delhi, May 4

IN DEFEAT of Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress in the West Bengal Assembly elections, the Opposition lost a state that gave it formidable voices and outspoken critics of the ruling BJP in Parliament and outside. Over the years since the BJP came to power at the Centre in 2014, despite being a party with votes in just one state, the TMC emerged as a weighty constituent in the Opposition ranks and had led it on several key issues inside and outside Parliament.

With the loss in Bengal, the number of TMC members in the Rajya Sabha are expected to gradually decline.

The party's members' fiery and scathing speeches in Parliament not just gathered eyeballs but also became something that the BJP took note of. The TMC led the Opposition INDIA bloc to go after Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar and it worked in tandem with the Congress and other Opposition parties, submitting two notices to impeach Kumar in the run up to the West Bengal elections.

After the notice for impeaching Kumar was rejected by both Houses of Parliament on April 8, the TMC once again convinced the Opposition to submit another notice to remove Kumar in the Rajya Sabha on April 24. TMC leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien coordinated with the bloc constituents on both occasions on notices to remove Kumar.

The Opposition fight against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls — since it began in Bihar — was also led by the TMC inside and outside Parliament. The party has been vocal against the government and the ECI, claiming that the SIR was "being misused to help the BJP". When the

SIR was first undertaken in Bihar, Mamata Banerjee was the first to raise an alarm, calling it NRC through backdoors and the same was parroted by the party MPs in and outside Parliament.

The party went on to meet the CEC on the issue of deletion of voters and Mamata personally argued the case in the Supreme Court, thus becoming the first CM to appear in the top court as a petitioner.

During the special sitting of the extended Budget Session when the NDA government brought Bills to amend the Constitution and pave the way for women's reservation and delimitation in Parliament, TMC's was the strongest pitch, arguing that it already has the highest share of women members — 11 women among its 29 MPs in Lok Sabha (38%) and six out of 13 in Rajya Sabha (45%) — in both Houses of Parliament, while hitting out at the BJP for trying to portray itself as the "champions" of the women's cause.

The glimpses of TMC leaders' "street fighter" image have been visible during demonstrations in the Parliament complex. When the government passed the GRAM G Act, which replaced MGNREGA, the party held an overnight protest on the stairs of the Samvidhan Sadan (Parliament House).

Over the years, the TMC has had some of the best speakers in both Houses of Parliament. With speakers like Mahua Moitra, Abhishek Banerjee, Saayoni Ghosh, Kalyan Banerjee, Derek O'Brien, the party always got eyeballs during important debates and discussions in Parliament. The party may have fewer numbers in Parliament than some other Opposition parties, Congress and the Samajwadi Party, its MPs always left a mark during discussions.

BJP's gains: Expanding footprint, pan India stamp

Liz Mathew & Vikas Pathak
New Delhi, May 4

THESE ASSEMBLY elections were the rare polls in a long time in which two Opposition parties, the Trinamool Congress and DMK, were seen to be having an edge against the mighty BJP. In the end, it was the BJP that emerged stronger.

The BJP's victory in West Bengal even as it retained Assam for the third time marks a new high in the expansion of the party in India. Once considered a force only in the Hindi belt, it has extended its reach to all of Eastern India by seizing the Bengal fortress, after having conquered the West. While the South remains out of reach, the states under the BJP now constitute almost 80% of the population of India, as per the 2011 Census.

Monday's results also mean that the BJP has eradicated virtually all rival satraps who could pose a challenge to its authority, with the defeats of Mamata Banerjee, M K Stalin and Pinarayi Vijayan following

the enfeeblement of Sharad Pawar and Arvind Kejriwal, and the fading away of Nitish Kumar and Naveen Patnaik.

In the South as well, sources said, it is too early to call the BJP's performance a "setback". In Kerala, the party posted its best-ever performance winning three Assembly seats, in Tamil Nadu, the BJP is reportedly keeping a hand stretched to Vijay's TVK, the stunning winner of Monday.

"The BJP had a channel open to Vijay till the last minute, and since his party seems to be not in a position to form a government on its own, we will keep our options open. We can play a constructive role in government formation," a source said.

Though victory in only 1 Tamil Nadu seat will be disheartening for the BJP, and underlines the limitations of the party's Hindutva message in the state, it can draw satisfaction from the fact that Stalin's beligerent anti-delimitation voice will be muted for now. Besides, BJP ally AIADMK looks headed for 48 seats, more than what the



A TMC booth being vandalised in Bhabanipur from where TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee lost. EXPRESS

party was expected to get.

BJP leaders also underlined that the 3 seats in Kerala had to be weighed against the state's fierce bipolar politics, which has for decades swung between the CPI(M)-led LDF and the Congress-led UDF. Before Monday, the BJP's sole electoral wins in Kerala had been its 2024 victory from the Thrissur Lok Sabha seat, and its maiden win from Nemonom in the 2016 Assembly elections. On Monday, state BJP chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar

won Nemonom back.

That only the BJP won as an incumbent on Monday, across four states and the UT of Puducherry, will also be gratifying for the party. If it won Assam for the third time in a row, with a bigger tally than in 2021, its coalition with the All India N R Congress is returning to power in Puducherry.

A senior BJP leader said the results were an early indication that the party was well on its way to reclaiming its premier place in national politics in the

next general elections. "This is the sweetest revenge for the setback we faced in 2024," the leader said.

Another senior leader proclaimed that it was the first time since 1905 (the Bengal Partition, which the British reversed two years later) that Hindu consolidation had taken place in the state. "In fact, Monday's results indicate that wherever Hindu consolidation has taken place, the BJP is the winner — be it West Bengal or Assam," the leader said.

BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, the Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, who is among the leading CM contenders now, said that while there was a clear consolidation of Hindu votes behind the party, the BJP had also managed to create cracks in the Muslim support base of the TMC in the state.

One of the chief architects of the BJP victory in Bengal was Union Home Minister and BJP master strategist Amit Shah, who spent unprecedented pre-poll time in the state after taking several steps to straighten the party's course.

These included appointing as state BJP chief Samik Bhattacharya, an old-timer, last year, thus giving the party a voice and a face among the Bengali genteel class, with Adhikari seen as the aggressive, street leader.

Along with Bhattacharya, Union minister Bhupender Yadav, the BJP Bengal in-charge, gradually brought back disgruntled leaders to the party fold and clawed back a base on the ground against the TMC's pushback.

Visible representation on the ground helped the BJP increase its acceptance, get rid of the outsider tag, and encourage its supporters to come forward, sources pointed out.

With the BJP now in power across UP, Bihar, Bengal, Odisha and Assam, not to mention the West and Central India, the perception that these constitute very different cultural and political zones has been flattened. It also reinforces the BJP's ideological claim that Indian civilization constitutes a single entity.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

HISTORY OF RSS IN WEST BENGAL

Deep cultural roots, limits that don't apply anymore: BJP's moment of triumph

Vikas Pathak
New Delhi, May 4

SYMBOLICALLY CLOSE but socially distant. This was the Sangh Parivar's relation with West Bengal for the last 100 years. With the BJP finally storming the state, which has by and large remained out of bounds for it till 2019, this has decisively changed.

Bengal may have been outside the Sangh Parivar's circle of influence till a few years ago, but it has enjoyed symbolic heft within the RSS family. The national song, Vande Mataram, was composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, a Bengali, in 1875 and has been held in immense importance in all Sangh-associated organisations. This importance has grown particularly after the Congress de-

ecided to accept only the first two verses since 1937 on the grounds that the other verses had a clear Hindu imagery and would be unacceptable to Muslims.

The idea of Bharat Mata, another leitmotif of the Sangh Parivar, also has a Bengali origin. It was first conceived in a Bengali play written by Kiran Chandra Banerjee in 1873, in which, in the context of a famine in Bengal, people get motivated by a goddess to rise in rebellion. Bankim's Vande Mataram carried forward the idea and there was also a suggestion at the time that the word saptakoti, or seven crores, the population of united Bengal at the time, be substituted with trimshatkoti, meaning 30 crores, the estimated population of India at the time, to adapt the song as one symbolising the Indian freedom

struggle. In 1905, Abanindranath Tagore painted the picture of Banga Mata. Later, the idea was popularised across India by Sister Nivedita.

Apart from this, the Sangh Parivar has also drawn inspiration from Swami Vivekananda — the Vivekanand Vihar Manich is seen as linked to the ABVP — and Aurobindo Ghosh. The Sangh's founder K B Hedgewar also had a Bengal connection. He not only studied medicine in Kolkata but also joined the Bengali revolutionary society Anushilan Samiti, much before he founded the RSS.

Despite symbolic inspiration, the RSS and its associates remained a marginal force in Bengal for several decades, primarily because the Bengali bhadralok — a loose term used to describe largely middle-class and



BJP supporters celebrate in Kolkata, Monday. REUTERS

upper-caste Bengali Hindus, though it cannot be pinned down to caste alone — sought to forge a distinctively Bengali Hinduism over time. This made them see themselves as distinct from the Hindus of north India,

leading to a self-image of Bengali exceptionalism.

There is a history to it. While Bengal was one of the nerve centres of the early freedom struggle — though many Bengalis preferred to join govern-

ment jobs, something that earned them the moniker of 'Babu' throughout India — its importance in the freedom struggle slid after the rise of Mahatma Gandhi, who turned what are UP, Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra today into hubs of mass movement against the British from 1920 onwards.

After the death of Chittaranjan Das in 1925, the only prominent Congress leader from Bengal at the national level was Subhas Bose, who also quit the Congress after a dispute with Mahatma Gandhi in 1939. From the 1930s, Allahabad, rather than Calcutta, became the nerve centre of the freedom struggle. Joya Chatterji's book Bengal Divided shows the decline of the Bengal Congress within the Indian National Congress in the last 15 years of colonialism, while

Gyanendra Pandey's The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh tracks the rising prominence of UP in the freedom struggle's later phase.

By the 1940s, the RSS had considerably expanded in UP, as historian Ravi K Mishra has shown in his paper *Colonial Perceptions Of The RSS And Hindu Mahasabha*. It had also entered Bengal by this time, but did not make a significant impact there. That the organisation was a promoter of Hindi became a challenge for its spread in Bengal and the southern states, as it came across as north Indian despite its Maharashtrian origin. This was unlikely to attract Bengalis, despite the propensity of Bhadrakalok Bengalis to turn anti-Muslim in the 1930s and 40s, as Joya Chatterji has shown.

Post-Independence, the

Jana Sangh failed to make a dent in Bengal despite riots in East Pakistan that led to an exodus of Hindus to India and its leader, Syama Prasad Mookerjee, himself being a Bengali politician vocal for the cause of Bengali Hindus in East Pakistan. In 1952, the Jana Sangh won just two seats in Bengal, though its national tally was only three. Like in other states, the Congress was the dominant player in Bengal soon after Independence.

It was the Left rather than the Jana Sangh that was able to carve out a support base among Hindu refugees trickling in from East Pakistan in the 1950s. Historian Ranjana Das, who teaches at Ramjas College in Delhi University, says Left groups carved out a support base among refugees through measures such as supporting squatter colonies.

How Fort Mamata fell

Fifteen years ago, Mamata Banerjee stormed into power in Bengal, ending the three-decade-long Communist rule. Now, as she is on her way out, a look at the factors that proved to be her undoing

IN NUMBERS

TURNOUT

92.47%

Total electors 6,45,61,152
Absolute turnout 5,96,99,697

BIG WINNERS

Suwendu Adhikari, BJP Nandigram and Bhabanipur Margin in Nandigram: 9,665

Dilip Ghosh, BJP Kharagpur Sadar Margin: 30,506

Humayun Kabir, AJUP Rejinagar and Nowda Margin in Rejinagar: 58,876 Margin in Nowda: 27,943

Ratna Debnath, BJP Panihati Margin: 28,836

Agnimitra Paul, BJP Asansol Dakshin Margin: 40,839

Mamata Banerjee, TMC Bhabanipur Margin: 15,105

Shashi Panja, TMC Shyampur Margin: 14,633

Bratya Basu, TMC Dum Dum Margin: 25,273

Sujit Bose, TMC Bidhannagar Margin: 37,330

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Congress Baharampur Margin: 17,548

Tanusree Bose, Kolkata, May 4

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A lonesome journey

The road leading to incumbent West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence in Kolkata wears a deserted look on Monday. PARTHA PAUL

BJP breaches Bengal: Same scale as 2011, but with sharper divides

Vikas Pathak New Delhi, May 4

THE WEST Bengal Assembly polls, which are set to give the BJP its first government in the state, have some similarities with the 2011 polls, when Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC) first came to power...



A TMC worker checks out the election in Kolkata on Monday. PTI

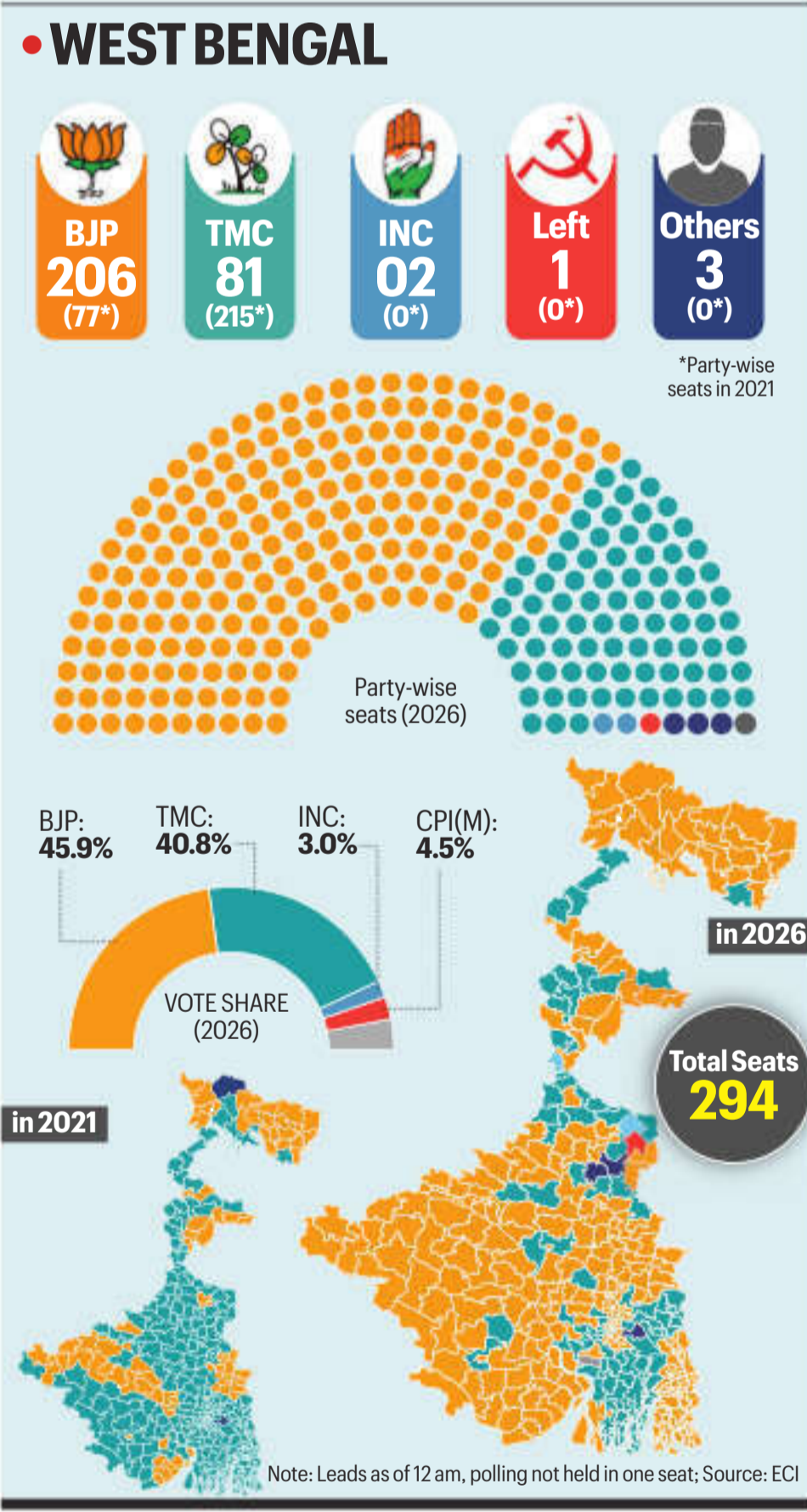
from Panihati. Debnath was well-placed to win her election by late evening. Allegations of violence by TMC workers in the Bengal hinterland and corruption charges against TMC ministers were also flying thick and fast before the elections.

In 2011, it was police violence against anti-land acquisition protesters in Singur and Nandigram that became a major election issue. The alleged murder of an activist Tapsi Mullick, whose badly burnt body was reportedly recovered near the Tata Nano site at Singur in 2006, was dis-

cussed till the next election. Despite these obvious similarities, there are also two crucial differences between the two elections. One, while both Hindu and Muslim votes are believed to have shifted from the CPI(M) to the TMC in 2011, this election seems to be more about Hindu consolidation for the first time in the state.

Muslim votes still seem to have sided with the TMC, but their ability to swing the election in the party's favour has been significantly dented by a counter-polarisation among Hindu voters. While the TMC had sought to rely on Bengali sub-nationalism, it seems to have been trumped by Hindu nationalism combined with serious anti-incumbency.

Another difference is that while the BJP projected no face going into the 2026 Bengal assembly polls, Banerjee was the unequivocal face of the challenge the TMC posed before the CPI(M) in 2011. That election was heavily personality centric while this one has been about parties - the BJP under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah took on the TMC that had Banerjee as its face.



RG Kar, 'syndicate': Five reasons that led to TMC's defeat

Saikat Kumar Bose New Delhi, May 4

AS MAMATA Banerjee stares at a massive defeat in West Bengal, the spotlight is on the key factors that proved to be her undoing 15 years after she ended the three-decade-long Communist rule.

There are striking parallels between this poriborton (change) and the one in 2011, which brought the Trinamool Congress to power. In both, the ruling party's leadership failed to sense the discontent on the ground and act in time. And Mamata Banerjee, like the Communists, underestimated the growing support for the Opposition. The result: a sweep.

This swing was not gradual. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Mamata's party had bettered its tally by 7, winning 29 out of the 42 parliamentary seats in Bengal. The BJP had taken a hit, its tally going down from 18 to 12.

But in the 23 months that followed, some key events are seen to have pushed the Bengal voter to the tipping point:

RG Kar Hospital rape-murder

In August 2024, a few months after the TMC's Lok Sabha high, a doctor was raped and murdered in Kolkata's state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital. The incident sparked massive outrage, and thousands hit the streets in protest against the TMC government.

Her vacillation on the issue played out against allegations of a political nexus between her party and the hospital administration, which was also accused of a cover-up attempt. The government was seen as evading responsibility, and this appears to have resonated deeply with the voters.

Teachers' recruitment scam verdict

Months after the R G Kar incident, the Supreme Court in April 2025 upheld the Calcutta High Court order cancelling the appointment of more than 25,000 teachers appointed by the state School Service Commission. The ruling was a huge loss of face for the Mamata government, bringing back to public memory the visuals of wads of currency notes recovered from premises linked to Partha Chatterjee, Mamata's trusted lieutenant and Bengal's former education minister. The SC made strong observations, say-



A TMC supporter breaks down as another consoles her, in Kolkata on Monday. PTI

ing the entire selection process was "vitiated and tainted beyond resolution". "The credibility and legitimacy of the selection are denuded," the court said in its order.

Governance failures and the 'Syndicate'

Growing resentment against the Mamata government over its governance failures dealt a heavy blow to the TMC. Rivals played up the party's failure to bring heavy industries and create enough jobs in the state. 'Syndicate', or the machinery through which TMC leaders allegedly controlled everything, starting from infrastructure contracts to the film industry, emerged as a talking point. Top BJP leaders spoke of "cut money", the TMC leaders' alleged "cut" in every deal.

Division of minority votes: There is an interesting detail in today's numbers. Both the Aam Janata Unnayan Party, led by former TMC MLA Humayun Kabir, and the Naushad Siddiqui-led Indian Secular Front won, with Kabir bagging the two constituencies he stood from. Both these parties target the minority votes in a state where their support is critical electorally. In effect, this means a breach in the minority vote bank Mamata held.

Lessons Didi did not learn from 2011

Mamata dislodged the Left Front from power after a 34-year rule in Bengal, but today's results show how she ended up repeating many of the mistakes her predecessors made. The biggest among them was the failure to rein in her party. During the Left rule, the party became bigger than the government. Unwittingly, Mamata let the same happen to her party. Governance took a back seat as she started pushing for a national role and even threw her hat in the ring to lead the INDIA bloc. The TMC's stranglehold on all aspects of life, from governance to development to entertainment, alienated the state's voters, especially in urban areas.

A DISTINCTLY BENGALI SPREAD THAT CARRIED ITS OWN POLITICAL MESSAGING

Tasting success: BJP celebrates historic mandate with fish, jhaalmuri

Tanusree Bose Kolkata, May 4

SAFFRON CLOUDS of aabir hung over counting centres across West Bengal on Monday as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was headed for a huge victory in the Bengal Assembly elections 2026. The party's supporters celebrated not just with drums and dancing, but with a distinctly Bengali spread that carried its own political messaging.

At street corners and party offices alike, workers broke into spontaneous celebrations, beating drums, distributing laddoos, and smearing colour on one another. At the BJP's office on 6, Murlidhar Sen Lane in Kolkata,

however, the mood was more local in flavour as supporters tucked in jhaalmuri, echoing a moment from the campaign trail when Prime Minister Narendra Modi had stopped to eat the snack in Jhargram.

That gesture had sparked a political back-and-forth, with Mamata Banerjee calling it stage-managed, and Modi retorting, "Jhaalmuri maine khaya, par jhaal TMC ko laga (It was I who ate the Jhaalmuri but it was the TMC, which felt its heat)".

During the West Bengal election campaign, the Trinamool Congress had warned people that a BJP government would curb consumption of fish and meat—claims the latter's supporters appeared



BJP workers distribute jhaalmuri in Kolkata (left) and New Delhi on Monday. PTI/ABHINAV SAHA

eager to counter. In Alipore, as early leads came in, celebrations featured chicken biryani, fish, and jalebi. "It was a lie spread against the BJP. Everyone can eat whatever they want, be it fish or

meat," said one supporter. Inside the BJP office in Salt Lake, the menu was even more deliberate: rice, dal, vegetables, and quintessential Bengali dishes like fish head curry and katla fish curry, served to nearly

300 people. "In Bengal, every auspicious occasion begins with fish. Today is a very auspicious day for us and that is why the BJP will celebrate it with fish," a senior BJP leader said. Dessert, too, carried re-

gional pride. Alongside laddoos and rosgollas, a senior leader said they have ordered 20 kg of sandesh. "Because sandesh is a traditional sweet of West Bengal and that is how we will celebrate the win".

For state BJP chief Sukanta Majumdar, the symbolism was clear. "Fish and rice are Bengali dishes, and that is what is being served to the people. The TMC used to say that Delhi would bring its culture to West Bengal, but just see now, jhaalmuri has now reached Delhi. This is Bengal," said Majumdar.

In other parts of the country too, BJP leaders and supporters celebrated the victory by savouring Jhaalmuri and Bengali sweets. According to party leader in Karnataka, Jhaalmuri

was served in various parts of the state. "We offered people of Jhaalmuri and Bengali sweets in Mangaluru, Hubballi, Belagavi, Mysuru, Tumakuru and various other places," he said. In New Delhi, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta wrote on X: "Celebrating the victory, with Jhaalmuri and Rasgulla."

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, sharing a picture of jhaalmuri on X, said the occasion calls for celebration with the spicy delicacy.

The celebrations in Dehradun BJP office also included the distribution of jhaalmuri.

In Maharashtra, CM Devendra Fadnis marked the celebrations by partaking jhaalmuri with party workers.

(WITH PTI INPUTS)

'Double-engine' promises to keep

Implementing Uniform Civil Code, checking infiltration from Bangladesh, on top of new government's to-do list

Ravik Bhattacharya
& Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 4

AS THE BJP sweep ends 15 years of Trinamool Congress rule in Bengal, the new government's agenda and priorities look clear — implementing the Uniform Civil Code and taking measures to stop infiltration from Bangladesh. Also, high on the to-do list are the enhanced direct benefit schemes for women and unemployed youth and clearing Dearness Allowance arrears of government employees.

In his victory speech on Monday evening in New Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated implementation of Centre's Ayushman Bharat scheme and steps to check infiltration. The BJP's agenda seeks to shift from the state's existing welfare model to a "high-employment, high-investment" model.

UCC and infiltration

Implementation of the UCC tops the agenda of the new BJP government and it plans to implement it within six months of the government formation.

The BJP has promised a zero-tolerance policy on infiltration. It has promised land allocation for fencing along the India-Bangladesh border within 45 days of forming government.

The state government is also expected to investigate the alleged scams and corruption during the TMC regime. On Monday morning, central forces and state police were deployed at Nabanna (state secretariat) and Chief Secretary Dushyant Nariala in a written order directed complete stop on movement of files out of government offices.

Rs 3,000 to women and unemployed youth

The BJP manifesto promises



Outside Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee's residence on Monday. ANI

a monthly assistance of Rs 3,000 to women as a counter to Mamata Banerjee's Lakshmi Bhandar under which women get Rs 1,500 (for women from SC and ST communities it is Rs 1,700).

The party manifesto promises a monthly assistance of Rs 3,000 to unemployed youth, and speaks of providing 1 crore new jobs and self-employment opportunities. To help candidates who have suffered because of paper leaks and exam cancellations, the BJP has promised to provide age relaxation of up to 5 years for them.

DA arrears

The BJP also promised to implement the 7th Pay Commission within 45 days of forming the government and clearance of pending Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears. Central government employees are getting 60% DA while West Bengal government employees get only 18%. If the state has to clear the DA arrears, it will have to spend Rs 20,000 crore extra per year from the state exchequer.

North Bengal and Darjeeling

The new BJP government is expected to start tripartite talks in presence of the newly appointed interlocutor, Deputy National Security Advisor Pan-

kaj Kumar Singh, to work out the promised 'permanent solution' for the Gorkhaland demand in the Darjeeling Hills. The government will also have to look into recognition of Kurmali and Rajbanshi languages.

Infrastructure development

As part of its thrust on infrastructure development, the party envisages to build modern deep-sea ports in Tajpur and Kulpi to revitalise the state's maritime trade and promote exports, and construct bridges over major rivers.

The BJP has also promised to construct a National Highway connecting the Sundarbans directly to Darjeeling and to operationalise the Purulia, Malda, and Balurghat airports for better regional air connectivity. The BJP has also promised to develop four new cities in North Bengal.

Cultural preservation

In its manifesto BJP has also promised to build a dedicated Vande Mataram museum highlighting its historical significance, and promote the legacy of Rabindranath Tagore by establishing Tagore-inspired cultural centres. The BJP has promised to build a Shaktipeeth circuit.



BJP workers celebrate at the party's Salt Lake office in Kolkata on Monday. PARTHA PAUL

Anti-incumbency and infiltrator claims: What worked for BJP

Jatin Anand
New Delhi, May 4

PLEASANTLY SURPRISED by their seat tally in West Bengal on Monday, the BJP attributed its sweep of the state to several factors broadly falling under five categories:

The women vote

Receiving a fillip from the NDA government's attempts to push through reservation for women in legislature last month, BJP insiders said the narrative around opposition parties being anti-women found "a lot of resonance" on the ground in West Bengal. Party insiders said, the women's vote in the state was expected to have swung up to "at least five percent" in the BJP's favour in the statemen. There were 3.16 crore women voters compared to 3.28 crore male voters among the 6.44 crore electors following the purification of electoral rolls as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

Wooing government employees

Sources said that anti-incumbency, "denial of rights" to government employees, and the Seventh Pay Commission seemed to have struck a chord with "between 20 to 50 lakh" voters. During the launch of the BJP's "Poriborton Yatra", Union Home Minister Amit Shah promised the implementation of the Seventh Pay Commission in the state within 45 days of coming to power.

Centre-led development

From the supposed non-implementation of the BJP-led

Central government's flagship welfare schemes to lack of public and industrial infrastructure in the state under the TMC government, party insiders said the Prime Minister Narendra Modi versus Mamata Banerjee narrative had borne fruit.

According to party insiders, the Centre-led development and infrastructure push had drawn both the middle class as well as first-time voter cohorts.

Security deployment, anti-incumbency

In a state known for political violence during elections, BJP insiders credited the RSS's ability to mobilise "voters irrespective of their ideology", thus "instilling confidence" in the average voter to exercise their franchise "without any fear" in who they wanted to vote for. They also noted the unprecedented deployment of Central forces in the state.

According to the ECI, 500 Companies of CAPFs shall continue to remain deployed in West Bengal for post poll law and order duties even after the completion of counting, till further orders.

SIR/infiltrator claims

BJP insiders credited the SIR with having ensured that "only bona fide voters" were able to exercise their franchise, no matter whose tally their votes were added to. Additionally, the party fanned the narrative around a crusade for the purification of rolls, which were allegedly rife with "outsiders". The new criterion of "logical discrepancies" led to the removal of over 27 lakh names from the roll and over 30 lakh more votes polled, compared to the 2021 elections.

TRUNCING HER NEAREST RIVAL BY 28,836 VOTES

RG Kar victim's mother wins in Panihati: 'It's a fight for justice'

Tanusree Bose
Kolkata, May 4

IF THERE was one image that foretold the backlash against the TMC government in West Bengal, it was the careworn face of that mother on the campaign stage, tears rolling down her cheeks. And if there was one number that did not surprise the Bengal voter, it was her victory margin.

The story of this state election, in many ways, was about the mother of the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder victim. Fieled by the BJP from Panihati in North 24 Parganas, she gathered 87,977 votes, trouncing her nearest rival from the TMC by 28,836 votes — a verdict hailed as "a mother's win".

"I am here to fight for justice for my daughter. I am a candidate to fight for the safety and security of women in this state. That is my only concern," the homemaker had told *The Indian Express* during campaign.

On Monday, she was quoted by ANI as saying: "My daughter



A BJP supporter celebrates in Kolkata on Monday. PARTHA PAUL

and a particular political party's win. We are against mixing the protest with this. We will continue our fight for justice," Dr As-fakulla Naiya, a junior doctor who took part in the protests at the time, told this newspaper.

It was on August 9, 2024, that the body of the victim was found in a seminar room on campus. College authorities initially told her family she had died by suicide. A day later, Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer working for the Kolkata Police, was arrested.

The Calcutta High Court transferred the investigation to the CBI, stating that the police's probe did not inspire confidence. Meanwhile, junior doctors across the state undertook a strike lasting 42 days, demanding a thorough investigation and adequate security at hospitals. And the victim's family accused the TMC government of "shielding the real culprits".

The incident also triggered a nationwide debate about the safety of women and doctors, and sparked outrage over the state government's response.

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He defeated Mamata twice: Suvendu now CM contender

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 4

MONTHS AFTER the Singur agitation began in 2006 and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) sensed that the ground beneath the Left Front government's feet had started shifting, the party found itself in the middle of another agitation, this time in Nandigram in Purba Medinipur district. Here, as the TMC took on the might of the Left and its armed gangs, one party leader stood by Mamata Banerjee and helped marshal the party's forces and the villagers.

On Monday, Suvendu Adhikari, seen as a potential heir to the TMC before their bitter fallout over five years ago, stood vindicated as he defeated the TMC chairperson for the second straight election. This time, from the south Kolkata constituency of Bhabanipur, on Mamata's home turf, five years since besting her in Nandigram itself. Over 18 years since the anti-land acquisition agitation, Suvendu was again at the thick of things as another ruling party discovered that the ground under-



Adhikari on Monday. EXPRESS

neath its feet had vanished. Given the two victories he has notched up against Mamata and retaining Nandigram as well, Suvendu will likely be among the contenders for the top job.

Adhikari and his family have been influential figures in Medinipur politics for decades, with their base in their hometown of Contai. Over the last two decades, the Adhikari family has dominated the politics of Purba Medinipur and surrounding districts, repeatedly winning Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha seats in the area. They helped build a solid base for the TMC, with Suvendu's organisational muscle helping the party win elections in several seats.

Getting the family over to her side helped Mamata add heft to

the TMC's grassroots presence in the region, cutting down to size the CPI(M)'s strongman Lakshman Seth, a former Tamluk MP, who was one of the TMC's primary antagonists during the Nandigram agitation. It was Suvendu who played a key role in the resistance put up by the protesters in Nandigram, adding discipline to the TMC's rank and file.

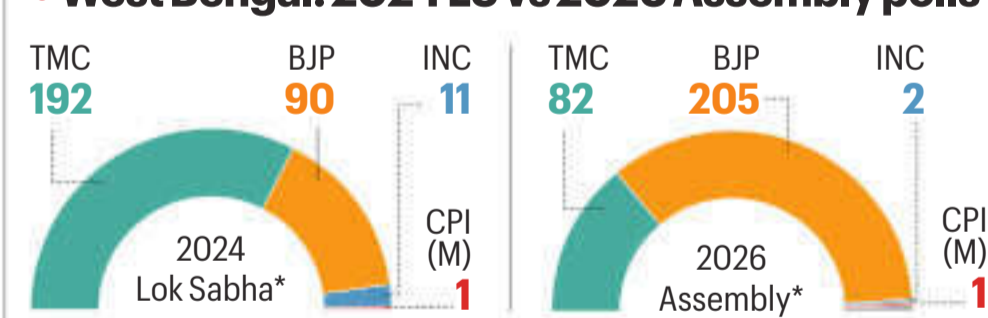
Suvendu rapidly strengthened the TMC's party organisation and increased his own clout beyond Purba Medinipur, extending his sphere of influence in the Jangalmahal districts of Bankura, Purulia, and Paschim Medinipur. Mamata entrusted him with the responsibility of being the TMC's observer in many parts of the state, primarily in Jangalmahal, Malda, and Murshidabad and his influence in the party organisation in South Bengal, especially in Haldia port area.

However, when Mamata appointed her nephew Abhishek Banerjee her second-in-command, it irked Adhikari and he distanced himself from the TMC chief.

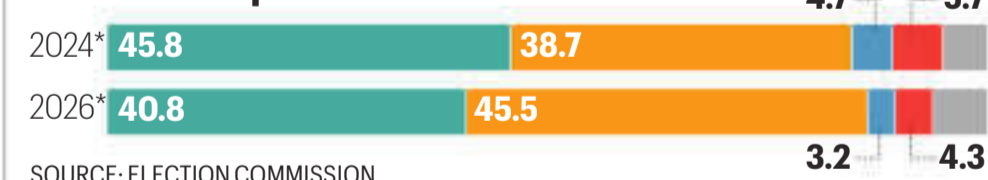
NUMBER SPEAK

In 2024 LS polls, TMC led in 192 Assembly seats; now below 100

West Bengal: 2024 LS vs 2026 Assembly polls



Vote share in percent



SOURCE: ELECTION COMMISSION

Anjishnu Das
New Delhi, May 4

WHEN THE BJP emerged as the principal Opposition in West Bengal after the 2021 Assembly elections, it marked a turning point for the party in the state. Now, the BJP is set to come to power in Bengal for the first time, ending the 15-year rule under the Trinamool Congress (TMC).

Going by the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP is now in a position that had not been anticipated two years ago, when the party slid backwards in the Parliamentary elections compared to 2019.

Until 2021, the BJP's best electoral performance in Bengal had come in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, when it won 18 Parliamentary seats — four short of the TMC at 22 — among the state's 48 total seats. In 2014, it won just 2 seats, compared to the TMC's 34. Across every Lok Sabha election before 2014, the BJP had only won a combined 4 seats.

In the 2021 Assembly polls, the BJP won 77 seats and a 38% vote share, a significant improvement from its 2016 show-

ing of 3 seats and 10.2% vote share. This year, the BJP is on the precipice of winning 200 seats with a 45% vote share, well clear of the TMC at 87 and 41%.

But the 2024 Lok Sabha elections had marked a reversal for the BJP. It fell to 12 seats, with the TMC climbing back to 29. The BJP's vote share, though, remained roughly unchanged from the 2021 Assembly polls at 38.7% in 2024, while the TMC went from 48.02% in 2021 to 45.8% in 2024.

However, at the Assembly segment level in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, the TMC had maintained a formidable lead over the BJP. In 2024, the TMC had led in 192 Assembly segments across Bengal (each Lok Sabha seat comprises a handful of Assembly seats). The BJP had led in 90 Assembly segments, the Congress in 11 and the CPI(M) in 1.

But the BJP has managed to flip Bengal in its favour this time, despite trailing the TMC by 92 Assembly segments in 2024. The BJP is now set to cross the 200-seat mark, reducing the TMC to below 90 seats and nearing the TMC's 2021 tally of 215 seats.

BJP WINS SIX OF THE 11 ASSEMBLY SEATS IN KOLKATA

How Mamata's urban bhadralok bastion was besieged by BJP

Sweetie Kumari
Kolkata, May 4

ANCHORED IN the ethos of quintessential Bengali bhadralok and intellectual elite, the high-profile urban constituencies in Kolkata, long considered a secure turf of Mamata Banerjee, have, for the first time in decades, shown visible cracks with the BJP making inroads in the TMC's urban fortress, winning six out of the 11 Assembly seats in the city. Bhabanipur in south Kolkata witnessed the biggest upset with CM Mamata losing to her aide-turned arch-nemesis Suvendu Adhikari by a margin of 15,105 votes.

Not far from Bhabanipur,

Rashbehari too voted for the BJP. Swapan Dasgupta defeated TMC heavyweight Debasish Kumar by 20,865 votes. In Tollygunge, the cradle of Bengali film industry, former TMC minister Aroop Biswas lost to BJP's Papia Adhikari by 6,013 votes. In Shyampukur, another TMC minister, Shashi Panja, lost to BJP's Purnima Chakraborty by 14,633 votes.

In the northern limits of the city, the story was no different. TMC's Atin Ghosh, who had won comfortably in 2021, lost to BJP's Ritesh Tiwari by a margin of 1,651 votes in Kashipur-Belghachia.

This churn in the "Greater Kolkata" region was not acci-



Swapan Dasgupta won from Rashbehari in South Kolkata. EXPRESS

dental, but a meticulously crafted strategy of the BJP, aimed at dismantling its "outsider" tag with a well-calibrated

effort towards cultural assimilation paired with development pitch.

A key moment of the stra-

tegic recalibration came on Bengali New Year on April 15, when the BJP, labelled *bohiragato* (outsiders) by Mamata, used the occasion to deepen its Bengali cultural roots. BJP leaders were seen playing *dhaak*, walking with fish in their hands, and actively taking part in the Poila Baisakh festivities.

To further this Bengali imagery, the BJP even adopted "fish and rice", the quintessential Bengali staple, in a bid to position itself as a party culturally aligned with the *bhadralok* identity and challenge the TMC's emotional pitch of Bengal's *ashmita* (pride).

Another key element was the BJP's political messaging, Dur-

ing the poll campaigns, Union Home Minister Amit Shah repeatedly asserted that, if voted to power, the party would appoint a "bhumi Putra" (son of the soil) as the next CM, countering Banerjee's core theme that the BJP is a party of "outsiders" from Delhi or Gujarat.

On the other hand, running simultaneously with the cultural outreach was the BJP's emphasis on a "New Bengal", with the party's election campaigns directly addressing the urban voter's anxieties, such as investment, job opportunities, and economic revitalisation, projecting Kolkata as a global hub for industry rather than just a centre for heritage.

Numbers game for Vijay now

• IN NUMBERS

TURNOUT

85.1%

Total voters

5,67,74,436

Turnout (approx.)

4,83,15,045

BIG WINNERS



Win Margin
53,715
Perambur

27,416

Tiruchirappalli East

Vijay, TVK

Perambur, Tiruchirappalli (E)

In his electoral debut, Vijay looks all set to be the next Chief Minister

K Vijay Dhamu, TVK

Royapuram

Winning margin: 14,249

The former auto driver staged an upset and beat DMK's Subair Khan

V Sathyabama,

Tiruppur (North)

Winning margin: 69,992

Once a salon owner, he defeated AIADMK's M S M Anandan

V S Babu, TVK

Kolathur

Winning margin: 8,795

Babu, a former DMK leader, beat M K Stalin in his stronghold.

BIG LOSERS



Lost By
7,643

Duraimurugan, DMK

Katpadi

The veteran minister finished third in a seat he had won five times.

M K Stalin, DMK

Chief Minister, Kolathur

Losing margin: 8,795

Stalin lost both his stronghold seat and the chief ministerial post

Palanivel Thiaga Rajan, DMK

Madurai Central

Losing margin: 19,128

Tamil Nadu's IT Minister lost to TVK's Madhur Badhurudeen.

R B Udhayakumar, AIADMK

Thirumangalam

Losing margin: 23,807

Ex-minister lost despite winning the seat in back-to-back polls

I am one who acts with the understanding that ideals and policies are what matter most, not just victories and defeats.

MK STALIN, OUTGOING TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER



Thalapathy's circle takes shape as tally settles; coalition math begins in TN

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, May 4

AS THE contours of Tamil Nadu's most unexpected verdict sharpened through the day, power began to gather—quietly, almost cautiously—around Vijay's residence in Panayur here.

At 106 seats in all, with some of them still leading, the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) may fall short of the 118 required for a majority. With the DMK and AIADMK far behind at 73 and 55 seats, respectively, the TVK's narrow gap to a win prompted fever from across parties by Monday evening. The Congress, expected to win around 5 seats, along with the VCK (2), CPI (2) and CPI(M) (3) are emerging as potential partners. Senior leaders in the TVK indicated that the party would look "beyond the AIADMK and BJP" for support—an early signal of the ideological and political lines it may seek to draw.

Inside Panayur, however, the scene was less crowded than the moment might suggest. The core group around Vijay remains small, almost deliberately so. Among those coordinating with officials and shaping early decisions are Bussy Anand, Aadhav Arjuna, C T R Nirmal Kumar, K

Sengottaiyan, and Rajmohan—a mix of leaders with political experience and some recent entrants to the public imagination. Alongside them are some newer figures who rose to prominence during the campaign: Prabhu Parvesh, VS Babu (who defeated Chief Minister M K Stalin from Kolathur) as well as J C T Prabhakar (Thousand Lights seat) and P Venkataraman (Mylapore), who breached long-held DMK bastions in Chennai.

For a party that itself did not expect to be in a position of power quite so soon—senior insiders admit that as late as Sunday night, expectations hovered around 60 seats and Leader of the Opposition role for Vijay—the transition has the feel of a system catching up with an outcome. Government machinery, for its part, has begun moving with procedural calm. Senior police officials, including Additional and Joint Commissioners and a Deputy Commissioner for Law and Order, visited Panayur to establish contact points and brief the TVK's inner circle on security and transition protocols.

"Once there is clarity on the majority, the Chief Secretary and DGP will call on him formally," a senior official said, describing the current phase as



TVK chief Vijay shows his poll certificate in Chennai on Monday. PTI

"preparatory, not declaratory". If the numbers stabilise quickly, an informal timeline circulating among officials suggests a swearing-in as early as Friday. Yet beneath the apparent speed lies a slower, more complicated question: how a party with limited administrative experience will assume control of a deeply institutionalised state.

Senior bureaucrats expect a period of adjustment. "It will take at least three months for systems to stabilise," a senior IAS officer said, pointing to the need to align police, revenue and administrative hierarchies with a new political centre. TVK sources suggested that Congress and VCK could be offered Cabinet roles—which would mark the Congress's return to the state Cabinet for the first time since 1967—while other parties like the CPI, CPI(M) and IUML may extend support from outside.

In a different part of the city, a stillness seemed to envelop the outgoing CM's residence. Stalin remained at home through the morning, with no political visitors, before making a brief visit to the DMK headquarters, Anna Arivalayam, in the evening. Tamil Nadu, after half a century of political familiarity, appeared to be preparing for something it has not had in a long time: A government led by someone who did not rise through the system, but arrived outside it and was let in.

NDA retains Puducherry, but lottery kingpin's son & TVK spring surprises

Arun Janardhanan
Puducherry, May 4

IN PUDUCHERRY, Chief Minister N Rangasamy's AINRC-led NDA crossed the majority mark Monday, securing another term in office in the 30-member Assembly and giving the ruling alliance a clear enough verdict in a UT famous for narrow margins and restless loyalties.

The majority mark was 16, and live reports placed the NDA past that line, with AINRC remaining the principal pillar of the alliance and the BJP adding crucial support. Rangasamy, the old survivor of Puducherry politics, retained Thattanchavady by 4,441 votes, anchoring the ruling alliance's claim of continuity. The result was also shaped by a record turnout, about 89.87%, suggesting that the electorate had turned out in unusual numbers not to overthrow the government, as the Opposition had hoped, but to reorder the margins around it.

Jose Charles Martin, founder of the Latchiya Jananayaga Katchi and son of lottery businessman Santiago Martin, won Kamaraj Nagar, defeating Congress's P K Devadoss. Martin polled 16,592 votes against Devadoss's 10,205, giving the NDA ally a high-profile entry into the Assembly. The seat had earlier been with the BJP, making the transfer within



Chief Minister N Rangasamy's AINRC-led NDA is on course to pass the majority mark in the 30-member Assembly

the alliance politically neat, if not exactly ordinary.

Vijay's TVK made its Puducherry debut with two wins. B Ramu won Manavelly, defeating outgoing Speaker Embalam Selvam of the BJP, while A K Sai J Saravanan Kumar won Thirubuvana by 701 votes. In several other seats, TVK candidates polled enough votes to exceed or disturb winning margins, suggesting that Vijay's party may not yet control the house but has learned how to shake the furniture.

DMK's Vignesh Kannan won Raj Bhavan by just 287 votes against BJP's V P Ramalingame. DMK also wrested Nellihothe from the BJP, while Congress won Oussudu. Independents produced their own rebellions: V Vigneshwaran defeated the sitting AINRC MLA Chandrapriyanga in Nedungadu, and T Ashok Kumar won Mahe.

Vijay's charisma, urban unrest, fall of Dravidian majors — key takeaways of landmark verdict

Electorate was ready for disruption — TVK's win & Stalin's defeat prove that

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, May 4

THE TAMIL Nadu Assembly election has thrown up more than a stunning outcome. It has produced a rupture, one that unsettles a political order that had appeared resilient for decades, even amid defeats.

With Tamil superstar-turned-politician Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) emerging as the single largest party close to the magic mark of a majority and the incumbent DMK and the principal Opposition AIADMK pushed into unfamiliar terrains, the verdict is less about who won and more about what has shifted. Here are some key takeaways that define this election. For the first time in decades, both Dravidian majors, DMK and AIADMK, have faced not just opposition, but something deeper—a quiet rejection. This was not always visible in campaign rhetoric. It did not manifest as a loud anti-incumbency wave. Rather, it revealed itself in voting behaviour across regions and demographics, especially in urban belts.

For some voters, the DMK appeared to be too entrenched— a party of governance, but also of consolidation. For others, the AIADMK had yet to regain its organisational confidence post-Jayalalitha. The result was not

a dismissal of Dravidian politics, but a rejection of its current custodians. And Vijay became the vessel for such sentiments.

Yearnings for change, new face

Tamil Nadu has periodically seen a change of guard. But this election was different in the clarity of its choice. Voters did not merely have strong sentiments for change; they appeared to invest in it. Vijay emerged as a rare figure—a political outsider who could function as a unifying presence across caste, class and regional divides, at least in perception. His appeal cut across groups that do not always move together: young first-time voters, sections of women electorate, floating urban electors and even a chunk of elders who opted to give Vijay a chance to take the helm. This was less a mandate for a poll manifesto than a vote for possibilities.

For years, the space outside the DMK-AIADMK binary was occupied, unevenly, by smaller outfits, especially one like the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) led by Tamil nationalist Seeman. This election appears to have closed that space. Seeman not only failed to expand his party's footprint but also lost electoral ground, including his own seat.

The symbolic significance of the poll results is clear: the pro-

test vote that once flowed toward smaller ideological formations has now consolidated behind a more viable challenger. In effect, the "third space" has been replaced by this new force.

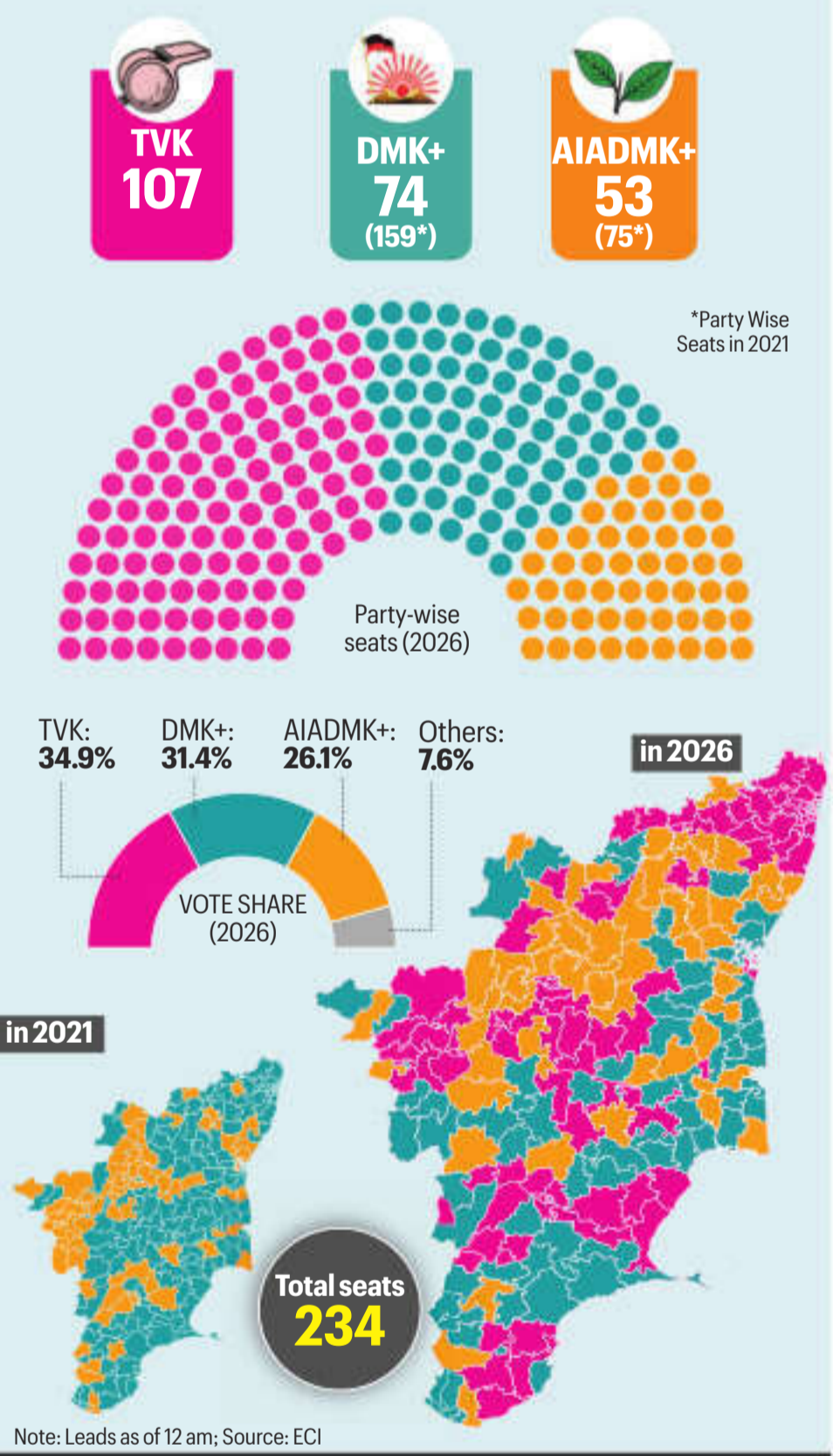
If there is one geography that captures the scale of disruption in this election, it is Chennai. For decades, the state capital has oscillated within limits—occasionally shifting, but rarely resulting in a dominant player's collapse. In 2021, the DMK swept all 16 seats in the city, reaffirming its urban dominance.

This time, that fortress has fractured. With the TVK sweeping most of Chennai and leaving the DMK with only a handful of seats, such as Chepauk and Harbour, the city has become the epicentre of change. Constituencies like Anna Nagar, T Nagar, Villivakkam and Velachery, once predictable in their political alignments, turned into decisive battlegrounds.

Urban voters—particularly the young, salaried and aspirational classes—appeared to have driven this shift, questioning not just governance but political status quo. Vijay's rise raises a structural question: can emotional mobilisation translate into stable governance? The TVK's spread across regions suggests his broad-based appeal. But electoral success in the state has historically depended on tightly organised vote conversion of the kind built over decades by the Dravidian parties.

Tamil Nadu has not abandoned its political memory. This election has reinterpreted it.

• TAMIL NADU



Rajini, Kamal hail Vijay's win

Chennai: Leading actors, including superstar Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan congratulated TVK chief Vijay on Monday for his party's victory.

"My congratulations to Thiru Vijay, President of the victorious TVK, and to the members of his party, on their resounding vic-

tory..." Rajinikanth posted on X. Haasan said, "My congratulations to... Vijay and the members of his party, who have earned the people's trust and achieved a great victory."

Actor Dhanush, too, said on X, "My heartfelt congratulations to Vijay sir." PTI



TVK chief Vijay's family members celebrate in Chennai, Monday. PTI

Vijay unplugged: A 'what if' who emerged as an unscripted force

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, May 4

FOR YEARS, Joseph Vijay was described as a possibility. A conversation that surfaced before film releases, an afterthought in political speculation, a "what if" that Tamil Nadu had grown used to entertaining and then discarding. On Monday, that conversation ended.

What followed is not merely an electoral victory, but the arrival of something the state has not seen in five decades—a new political force that did not emerge from a split, an inheritance or an ideological school, but from a man who stepped in from outside and was carried forward by recognition before organisation. It is tempting, and perhaps inevitable, to reach for MG Ramachandran. The parallels are visible: cinema, charisma, emotional memory, the conversion of screen presence into political capital. But the resemblance holds only up to a point. MGR was shaped inside the Dravidian movement before he broke away from the DMK to float the AIADMK. Vijay arrived without that scaffolding.

He did not grow into politics. He crossed over. And he did so in a way that, until now, seemed improbable. His campaign was sparse to the point of absence. By most accounts, he travelled outside Chennai for barely 13 or 14 major campaign days, covering a limited number of districts. He avoided the exhausting grammar of Tamil Nadu elections—the relentless touring, the district-by-district immersion, the prolonged negotiations with local structures. For critics, this was evidence of unreadiness. For supporters, it became something else: scarcity as mystique. If politics is often about vis-

ibility, Vijay inverted it. He appeared just enough to be seen, and withdrew enough to be desired. To understand that dynamic, one has to step back from politics and look at the life he was leaving behind—or perhaps carrying with him. Vijay was not just a film star. He was, for decades, an industry. A production ecosystem. A circulation of labour, capital and expectation that extends far beyond the screen: distributors, theatre owners, technicians, daily-wage workers, marketing networks. To reduce that to "a man who lived in a caravan" is to misunderstand scale.

Long before Vijay asked for votes, he had built a relationship. That relationship was not political in the conventional sense. It was built through films—through the lover who arrives late but stays, the man who dances with improbable ease, the character who speaks in punchlines that can be lifted out of context and still feel complete. Over time, those roles created something deeper than fandom: a sense of familiarity. This election suggests that many decided it was enough. There are attempts now to quantify the phenomenon, but it may also miss the central point: there may not be a single explanation. Part of it is generational. For younger voters, Vijay is the first major political figure who does not belong to an inherited past. And part of it is timing. He arrived when the space was open enough to be noticed, but not empty to be obvious. What is clear is this: Tamil Nadu has made a choice that is both decisive and ambiguous. It has elevated a man who did not follow the traditional path, and in doing so, reopened a political imagination that had seemed settled.

• STALIN WAITED DECADES TO INHERIT AUTHORITY. VIJAY NEEDED ONE ELECTION TO SHOW HOW FRAGILE INHERITED AUTHORITY HAD BECOME

Beyond anti-incumbency, DMK loss a vote against dynasty politics

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, May 4

WHEN LOOKING at the reasons why M K Stalin lost, it is worth remembering how long he waited to win.

Stalin did not seize the DMK but inherited it slowly, almost painfully, after decades inside the party, without revolt, without splitting it, and without challenging his father and former CM M Karunanidhi's authority in public. His rise was patient, disciplined, and organisational. That is why Monday's verdict appears to be so brutal to his supporters. The DMK losing power would have been explicable. Stalin himself losing Kolathur, a seat he had held since 2011 and won by a huge margin in 2021,

suggests something larger than routine anti-incumbency. TVK's VS Babu defeated him by nearly 9,000 votes, making it one of the rare defeats of a sitting Tamil Nadu CM in his own constituency. Along with him, several senior ministers, including Durai Murugan, P Geetha Jeevan, Ma Subramanian, TM Anbarasan, Nazar, Mathiventhan, and T R B Raja, lost.

"We bow to and accept the verdict of the people. Congratulations to the victors!" Stalin posted on X, accepting the will of the electorate. "In the past five years, we have created numerous projects and provided good governance to the people of Tamil Nadu. We have elevated Tamil Nadu in every way. In the electoral arena, we sought votes



MK Stalin at DMK headquarters in Chennai on Monday. PTI

only by speaking of our achievements. We campaigned for votes to ensure the welfare schemes we delivered to the people would continue. I expressed

my heartfelt thanks to all the people of Tamil Nadu who supported and voted for the secular progressive alliance led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

"I governed not just for those who voted, but also for those who forgot to vote. I have been true to all the people. I have acted according to my conscience. I have toiled beyond my strength. To my beloved comrades of Leader Karunanidhi, who toiled in the field just as I did and who are inseparable from my soul, my deepest gratitude from the heart! Thanks to the leaders, officials, and workers of the friendship movement who stood shoulder to shoulder with us—all of them! In my political public life, I have seen great victories; I have also faced defeats. There-

fore, I am one who acts with the understanding that ideals and policies are what matter most, not just victories and defeats. Thus, the political journey of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam will continue without faltering. The DMK, which has so far functioned as an exemplary ruling party for the people—henceforth will function as an exemplary opposition party."

Stalin's government had flaws: police missteps, administrative drift, avoidable controversies, and a perceived lack of command over sections of the state machinery. But those alone did not seem enough to explain such a sweeping rebuke. There was no single, roaring anger, but contempt gathered around corruption, not always

proved but widely believed. In Tamil Nadu politics, perception can travel faster than documents. Vijay's campaign repeatedly invoked the "Rs 10" slogan linked to alleged overcharging at TASMAL liquor outlets, targeting former excise minister V Senthil Balaji. Reports had earlier recorded AIADMK's charge of daily TASMAL corruption running into crores, which Balaji denied. The Karur rally tragedy, where Vijay's criticism of Balaji as a "Rs 10 minister" became part of the political memory of the campaign, only amplified that charge.

Stalin waited decades to inherit authority. Vijay needed one election to show how fragile inherited authority had become.

Hattrick for BJP, Sarma at helm

BJP, which contested 90 seats, won 82, while its allies BPF and AGP bagged 10 constituencies each. The saffron party secured a majority on its own for the first time in the state

IN NUMBERS

TURNOUT

85.96%

Total voters
2,50,21,408
Turnout (approx.)
2,15,08,402

Win Margin
89,434

Himanta Biswa Sarma (BJP)
Jalukbari

The Assam CM won the Jalukbari constituency for a sixth consecutive time and led the BJP to a hattrick in Assam

Pradyot Bordoloi (BJP)
Dispur

Margin: 49,667
After his defection from Congress, Bordoloi won comfortably

Akhil Gogoi (Rajior Dal)
Thavanur

Margin: 17,272
The only one of the 'three Gogoi's' to pull off a win

Badruddin Ajmal (AIUDF)
Binnakandi

Margin: 35,380
Though AIUDF had its worst ever performance, he managed to win

Atul Bora (AGP)
Bokakhat

Margin: 60,537
Bora has registered an individual win and saw BJP increase its tally

BIG LOSERS

Losing Margin
23,182

Gaurav Gogoi (Congress)
Jorhat

Gogoi was the Congress's face in the election. His loss to BJP MLA Hitendra Nath Goswami is a huge blow to the him and the party

Kunki Chowdhury (AJP)
Guwahati Central

Losing margin: 61,921
The 27-year-old was an underdog, yet her battle was closely watched

Debabrata Saikia (Congress)
Nazira

Losing margin: 46,701
Saikia had represented the seat for three consecutive terms

Lurinjyoti Gogoi (AJP)
Khowang

Losing margin: 9,984
The head of the AJP has yet again failed to register an electoral win

Pramod Boro (UPPL)
Tamulpur

Losing margin: 26,743
With the BJP dropping his party, Boro and UPPL now have no seats



Victory dance

BJP supporters celebrate at the party office in Guwahati on Monday. ANI

Amid divide, NDA sweeps heartland, Congress pockets state's minority belt

Sukrita Baruah
Guwahati, May 4

ASSAM'S POLITICAL map has never looked starker. With the NDA bagged 102 of 126 seats, the only ones it has not won — barring two — are seats where minority voters form the bulk of voters.

The converse is just as stark. The Congress won 19 seats. Of its winning candidates, 18 are Muslim leaders. With the number of seats across the state where Muslim candidates are likely to win pared down to around 22 from around 35 after the 2023 delimitation exercise, these seats have largely gone to the Congress, reflecting the pattern established in the 2024 Lok Sabha election of minority voters consolidating behind the grand old party. Apart from these Congress wins, the only victories for non-NDA parties are Akhil Gogoi in Sivasagar and Mehboob Muktar in Dhing from the Rajior Dal; Badruddin Ajmal in Binnakandi and Mazibur Rahman in Dalgaoon from the AIUDF; and Sherman Ali in Mandia from the Trinamool Congress.

This means that apart from Akhil Gogoi and the Congress's Joy Prakash Das in Nowboicha — both located in North and Upper Assam — the BJP and its allies, the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), have won all



Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with State BJP president Dilip Saikia celebrates the party's victory in the Assembly elections at BJP State office in Guwahati on Monday. ANI

seats where ethnic Assamese communities, tribal communities, and Bengali Hindus form the bulk of voters. And apart from the two seats won by the AIUDF, the Mandia seat, and one win likely to be pulled off by the AGP's Jibesh Roy in Bilasipara, all 'minority seats' have been won by the Congress-led alliance.

The picture is a near-complete two-way split in representation.

The situation had been considerably more mixed in 2021, when the two major blocs were the BJP-AGP alliance with the

Bodoland party UPPL on one hand, and a Congress-AIUDF-BPF alliance, which also included Left parties, on the other. As a result, the BJP had won 60 seats, the AGP 9, and the UPPL 6. The Congress had won 29, the AIUDF 16, and the CPI(M) one, and its allies had also won four tribal-majority seats that had been won by the BPF. Rajior Dal's Akhil Gogoi had won Sivasagar as part of a third front.

Even in Central and Lower Assam, the Congress-led alliance had included MLAs such

as Diganta Barman from Barkhetri, Sibamoni Borah from Batadraba, Nandita Das from Boko, and the CPI(M)'s Manoranjan Talukdar from Sorbhog.

Now, the UPPL — which has been dropped as an ally by the BJP — has failed to win even a single Bodoland seat on its own; and the AIUDF, no longer allied with the Congress, has been reduced to just two seats in the Assembly — its worst-ever performance since its formation.

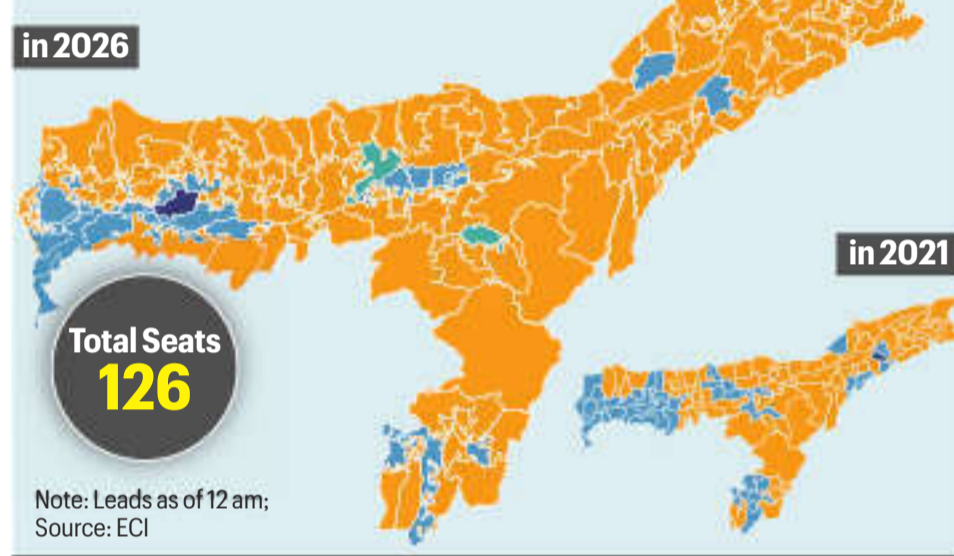
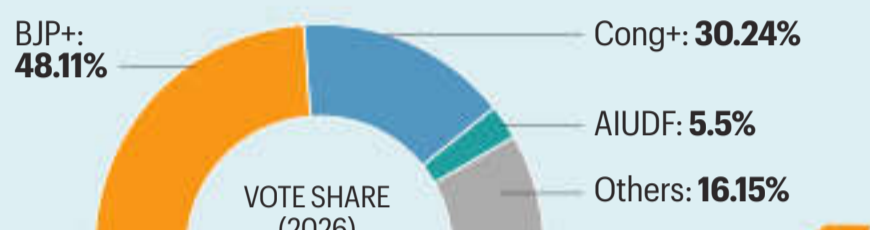
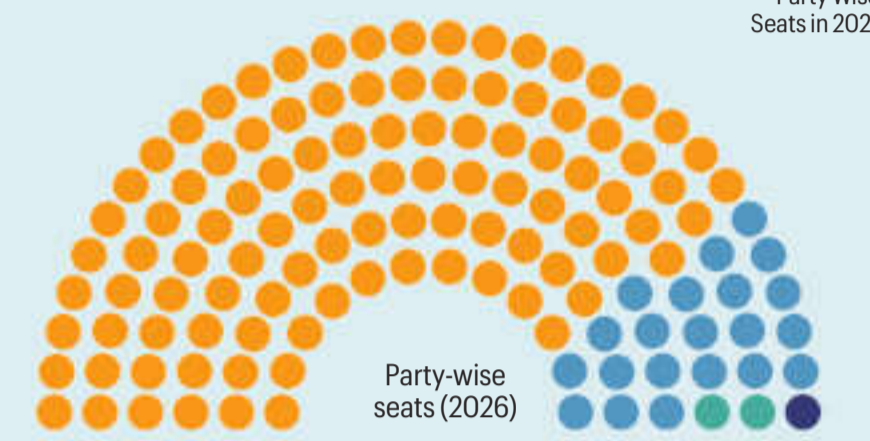
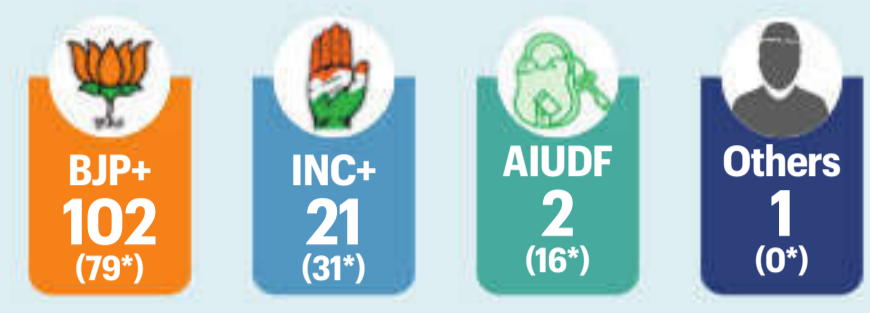
The Congress's performance in Upper and North

Assam — home to ethnic Assamese communities and a large tea tribe population, and considered the 'Assamese heartland' — had been seen as grim in 2021. There were then 42 seats across these districts, of which the Congress had won only five. In this election, the number of seats in the region increased to 43 after the 2023 delimitation. The Congress focused efforts to reverse its fortunes here, including through a tie-up with regional parties Rajior Dal and the Assam Jatiya Parishad. However, it has won only one seat — Nowboicha — this time. The Rajior Dal has also won just one seat, retaining Akhil Gogoi's Sivasagar, while the AJP has failed to open its account, with even its president Lurinjyoti Gogoi losing from Khowang.

Not only are the numbers dismal, two of the Congress's most prominent leaders in Assam — the party's face in the state, Gaurav Gogoi, and Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing Assembly, Debabrata Saikia — have lost from the Jorhat and Nazira seats in Upper Assam, leaving the party without its leading faces in the next Assembly.

The Congress and its alliance are set to have no presence in Assam's tribal belts of the Bodoland region, or in the tribal-majority hill districts of Karbi Anglong, West Karbi Anglong, and Dima Hasao.

ASSAM



Himanta factor to Gogoi's loss: Five key takeaways from Assam elections

Sukrita Baruah
Guwahati, May 4

THE BJP has retained power in Assam with a bigger mandate than it has ever had in the state. Here are the key takeaways from the 2026 Assam Assembly election:

Absolute majority

A decade after it first came to power in Assam, the BJP is stronger than ever. It has clinched its first-ever absolute majority in the state by cornering 82 of the total 126 seats. It had won 60 seats in each of the two previous elections. This time, along with its allies AGP and BPF, the NDA has won 102 seats in the state.

Himanta factor

The Himanta Biswa Sarma factor in the BJP's unprecedented sweep is undeniable. This was the first election where he was seeking re-election as a Chief Minister, and he led the campaign from the front. Turning 10 years of BJP rule around to a strongest-ever performance for the party in the state, his relentless rise as a political force continues.

Congress debacle

The Congress has registered its worst-ever performance in

the state, winning just 19 seats and being further cornered into becoming a party that only receives the support of the minority voters. It has won only one out of the 43 seats in Upper and North Assam, and has lost in all tribal seats.

Gaurav Gogoi's loss

Adding insult to the Congress's injury is party state chief Gaurav Gogoi's loss from the Jorhat, which is part of the Jorhat parliamentary constituency, which he represents.

AIUDF's rout

While the BJP has won all but two of the state's seats where ethnic Assamese, tribal and Hindu voters make up the bulk of the electorate, the AIUDF has been relegated to just two seats in the Assam Assembly. It had won 16 seats in the 2021 election, and this is its worst performance since its formation in 2005. The outcome this time shows a continuation in the pattern of consolidation of Muslim votes behind the Congress, which was seen in the 2024 LS election when AIUDF supremo Badruddin Ajmal suffered a resounding loss to the Congress. However, Ajmal himself continues to cling to his political presence, registering an individual win from the Binnakandi seat.

Congress turncoats ride BJP wave, big win for Bordoloi

Sukrita Baruah
New Delhi, May 4

IN THE run up to the Assam Assembly polls, nothing had generated more buzz than the dramatic turn of events leading to veteran Congress leader Pradyot Bordoloi turning into a BJP candidate just two days after quitting the grand old party.

Bordoloi pulled off a massive victory from the prestigious Dispur constituency against his Congress rival Mira Barthakur Goswami by 49,667 votes.

Nagaon MP and ex-minister Bordoloi was the most prominent among a slew of Congress turncoats who joined the BJP



Pradyot Bordoloi

ahead of the state elections. The BJP fielded him from Dispur just a day after he switched to the party in March. This move had caused some friction within the BJP, leading to the exit of a senior party leader Jayanta Kumar Das, who went on to challenge Bordoloi as an Independent from

the seat. However, Jayanta's rebellion and the challenge mounted by Congress candidate Goswami, the Assam Mahila Congress leader, could not counter the BJP wave that ensured Bordoloi's success.

Another prominent Congress turncoat ahead of the elections was Bhupen Borah, former Assam Congress president, who crossed over to the BJP in February. He won from the Bihpuria constituency by over 8,000 votes against the Congress's Narayan Bhuyan. Congress turncoat Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha, the former Assam Congress working president, also seems to be headed towards a big win.

Deeptiman Tiwary
New Delhi, May 4

AS EARLY counting trends point to a decisive victory for the BJP led by Himanta Biswa Sarma in Assam, the mandate is set to mark not just a second consecutive term in office for the Chief Minister but also the consolidation of one of the most consequential political careers in the BJP's contemporary landscape.

For Sarma, 57, this is more than an electoral win; it is a reaffirmation of a political method built on organisational control, ideological repositioning, and an instinctive grasp of power.

A Congress insider for nearly

two decades, Sarma's shift to the BJP in 2015 has since acquired the quality of political folklore. Within five years of that switch, he had not only helped the BJP capture Assam for the first time in 2016 but also emerged as its principal strategist in the Northeast — a region marked by ethnic complexity and shifting alliances. His elevation to Chief Minister in 2021, replacing Sarbananda Sonowal despite the latter leading the party to victory, was read as an acknowledgement of his contribution to the party as well as a signal of Sarma's growing proximity to the BJP's central leadership, particularly Amit Shah.

That proximity has been

both political and personal. Within party circles, Sarma is often described as a "problem solver", a leader who delivers, negotiates, and executes without hesitation. Sources say that right from the initial years that Sarma spent in the BJP, Shah developed a marked fondness for the wily politician. Once, after a meeting with Sarma in his North Block office, Shah is learnt to have told the next BJP leader who met him, "The great thing about this boy is he never says no to anything. He just finds a way to make things happen."

Sarma's role in stitching together alliances across the Northeast, managing fragile coalitions, and even facilitating

political realignments has made him indispensable to the BJP's expansionist project. From Assam to Manipur and beyond, Sarma has been at the centre of the party's efforts to convert a historically peripheral region into a stable electoral base.

This victory, which would mark the BJP's third successive win in Assam with Sarma as its principal architect, strengthens his claim as a national-level political operator.

Sarma's rise is not merely organisational. It is also ideological. A long-time Congress leader who had a bitter parting with the party's high command, Sarma since his entry into the BJP has recast his political identity

through a muscular articulation of Hindutva, often marked by sharp rhetoric targeting Bengali-origin Muslims and a hardline administrative approach on issues such as "illegal infiltration". This repositioning has helped him bridge the gap between his Congress past and the expectations of the Sangh ecosystem.

Sarma has also cultivated a parallel persona — that of the accessible "mama" or benevolent uncle, a leader who promises welfare benefits, jobs, and direct engagement. This duality, of welfare populism coupled with ideological aggression, has defined his tenure and appears to have resonated with a significant section of the electorate.

Pinarayi era ends, Kerala turns the page

• IN NUMBERS

TURNOUT

78.27%

Total electors
2,71,06,059
Absolute turnout
2,12,15,912

BIG WINNERS

Win Margin
20,600

V D Satheesan, Cong Paravur

He defeated CPI's legislator E T Taison, who was deputed from his seat of Kaipamangalam.

Win Margin
5,087

Fathima Thahilya, IUML Perambra

First woman from IUML to win Assembly polls. She defeated CPM heavyweight T P Ramakrishnan

Sandeep Varier, Cong Trikaripur
Margin: 4,431

Allotted a CPI(M) stronghold, he defeated the LDF's V P P Mustafa

V S Joy, Cong Thavanur
Margin: 14,647

First Christian to win from Malappuram in a general assembly poll

Muhammed Shiyas, Cong Kochi
Margin: 8,188

Defeated sitting MLA K J Maxi in a Christian-majority seat

BIG LOSERS

Losing Margin
16,312

P Rajeev, CPI(M) Kalamassery

Rajeev was the Industries Minister and was instrumental in pushing for industrial growth in Kerala

Losing Margin
29,252

K Surendran, BJP Manjeshwar

Surendran lost for the fourth time from the same seat mainly due to its changing demographics

P K Shyamala, CPI(M) Taliparamba
Losing margin: 12,551

Wife of M V Govindan was defeated by rebel T K Govindan

K K Shylaja, CPI(M) Peravoor
Losing margin: 14,453

Shylaja, who was shifted from her Mattanur seat, lost in Peravoor

K B Ganesh Kumar, CPI(M) Pathanapuram
Losing margin: 8,310

Ganesh Kumar lost a seat he had been representing since 2001

Breached CPM citadels to the Vijayan factor: What scripted Cong-led UDF's epic comeback

Shaju Philip
Thiruvananthapuram, May 4

THIRTEEN MEMBERS of the 21-member LDF cabinet led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan were defeated in the Kerala Assembly elections as the ruling front suffered a major setback across the state.

Here are the key takeaways from the Kerala elections:

Vote against Vijayan's leadership

One of the factors that worked against the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) is the Pinarayi Vijayan factor. The two-term Chief Minister was the sole face of the LDF's campaign, effectively turning the election into a referendum on his leadership and style of governance.

Across all 140 seats, the LDF projected Vijayan, eclipsing individual candidates. For voters, the choice became one of supporting or opposing him. Even in constituencies where LDF candidates or sitting legislators had strong track records and clean images, the Vijayan factor appears to have worked against them. Rather than evaluating individual candidates, voters seem to have cast their ballots based on their approval or disapproval of the CM.

Anti-incumbency

The results also indicate that the electorate rejected the CPI(M)'s claim that the Vijayan government was not facing anti-incumbency. Even after setbacks in the December local body elections, the party had maintained there was no public resentment. Mega projects, welfare measures and new financial assistance schemes failed to counter growing voter dissatisfaction. A sense of fatigue among voters appears to have translated into a call for change. Kerala has historically alternated between the LDF and UDF, with 2021 being an exception in the aftermath of the pandemic. Despite a decade of governance, there was a visible urge among voters to unseat the LDF.

Minority votes

The consolidation of minority votes seems to have played a decisive role, with the Con-

gress benefiting from concerns that a third consecutive UDF defeat could create space for the BJP to expand in the state. Voting patterns among Muslims in Lok Sabha elections since 2014 have consistently favoured the Congress, seen as a stronger force than the CPI(M) in countering the BJP.

This trend appears to have carried over into the Assembly polls. Allegations of a CPI(M)-BJP understanding also seem to have worked in the Congress's favour. The CPI(M)'s attempts to consolidate Hindu votes after its rout in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections may have further alienated Muslims. The party's perceived soft stance towards Hindu leader and SNDP Yogan general secretary Vellappally Natesan, who repeatedly targeted Muslims, along with tensions in Muslim-majority Malappuram and the IUML factor, contributed to the drift of Muslim votes away from the CPI(M).

Resentment within the Left vote bank

The LDF's defeat in its strongholds like north Kerala, and the sharp decline in its vote share elsewhere, point to growing resentment within its traditional support base. This discontent was not evident during campaigning, which was dominated by development narratives and the party's organisational strength. The verdict suggests that Left voters rejected the CPI(M)'s strategy of prioritising a third consecutive term over ideological consistency. In its bid to retain power, the party faced allegations of diluting its secular stance by accommodating minority-bashing rhetoric from figures like Natesan. Secular Hindu voters, too, appear to have turned away amid allegations of a tacit understanding with the BJP.

Rejected development narrative

The fact that most Cabinet ministers lost the polls underscores the limited impact of the CPI(M)'s development plank. Beyond welfare schemes involving direct cash transfers, the LDF highlighted infrastructure projects, roads and highways, amplified through social media



Leader of Opposition in Kerala Assembly and UDF candidate from Paravur constituency V D Satheesan with supporters in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. PTI

campaigns. However, the results suggest this narrative failed to translate into votes.

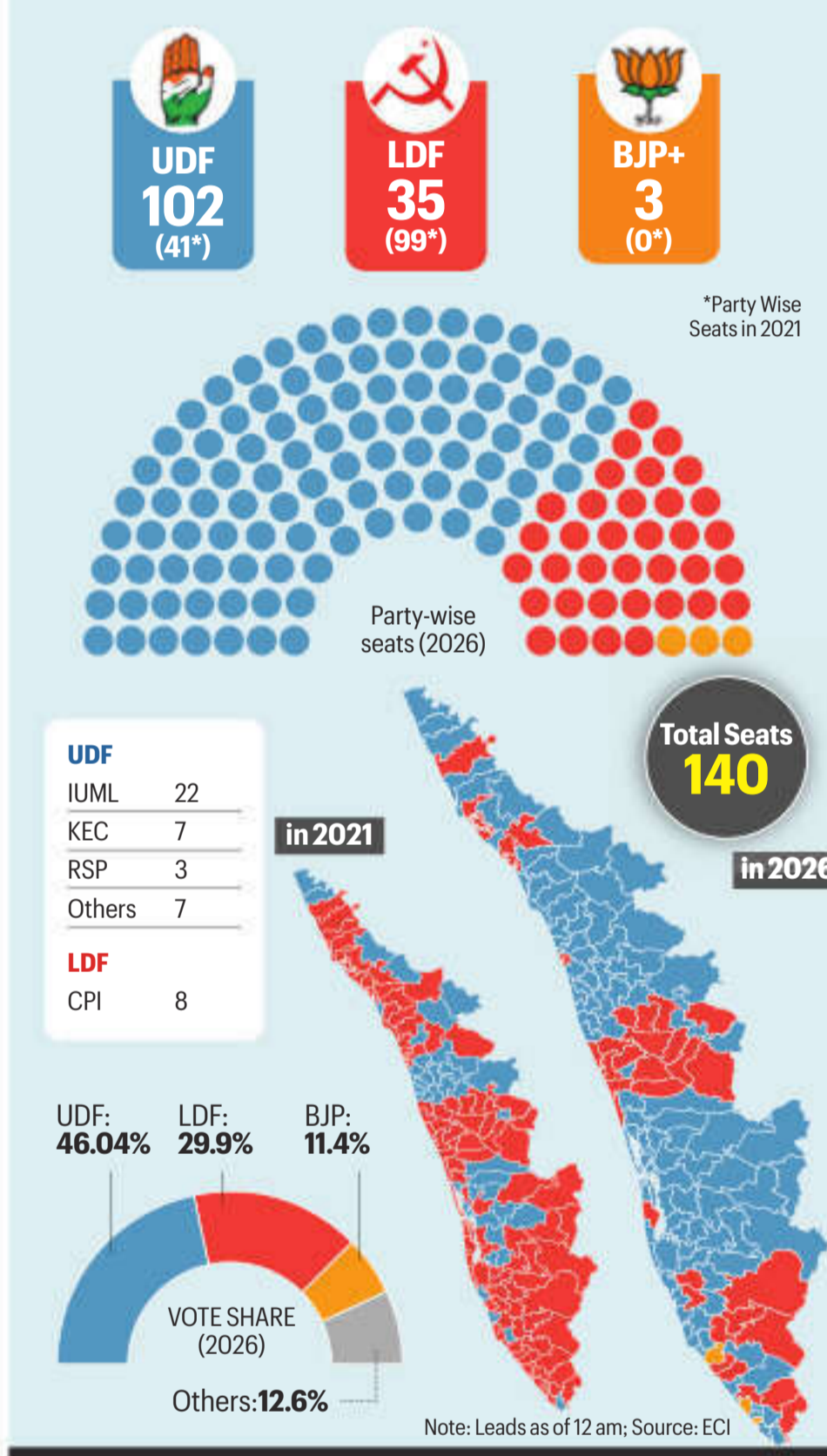
Christians back UDF

The Congress also regained significant support among Christian voters in Central Kerala, a segment that had drifted away in 2021. The BJP's outreach to Christians appears to have fallen short. At the same time, a narrowing of differences between Christian and Muslim communities contributed to a consolidation of support for the UDF in several constituencies. The controversy surrounding the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) during the campaign reportedly created hesitation among sections of Christian voters considering a shift towards the BJP.

Sabarimala theft case

The alleged theft of gold from Sabarimala temple artefacts appears to have worked quietly against the LDF, even though the BJP largely sidelined the issue during campaigning. The CPI(M) countered by alleging that the Congress had misused funds meant for rehabilitating Wayanad landslide victims. While this became a major issue in the final phase of campaigning, it failed to influence voters. It appears that Hindu voters chose not to split their opposition between the Congress and the BJP, focusing instead on defeating the CPI(M).

• KERALA



NO 'POLITICAL EXILE'

Master strategist who went for broke: VD Satheesan, LoP to architect of win

Six-time MLA is widely considered to be a front-runner for the CM post

Shaju Philip
Thiruvananthapuram, May 4

WHILE SPEARHEADING the Congress-led UDF's campaign in the Kerala Assembly elections, Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, 61, had declared that "If the UDF does not win 100 seats (of the state's 140), I will quit politics and go into exile."

His several Congress colleagues had then raised doubts about Satheesan's claim, but when counting of votes ended Monday, the LoP had the last laugh. The UDF won 102 seats, which marked its best-ever tally in the state.

In the election, Satheesan, 61, has also won from his Paravur constituency in Ernakulam for sixth consecutive term. While there are several chief ministerial aspirants in the Congress, he is widely considered to be a key front-runner in the race for the top post now.

In February this year, he had taken out a statewide tour in a bid to galvanise the Congress's rank and file for the high-stakes elections.

Satheesan was appointed the LoP after the Congress lost the previous elections in 2021, when the incumbent CM Pinarayi Vijayan had led the CPI(M)-headed LDF to its second successive victory.

For Satheesan, the task of reviving the UDF after its crushing 2021 defeat was daunting. His priority was to boost the morale

of the workers of the party and allies. His first test of leadership was in the by-elections to the Assembly seats, such as Thrikakara, Puthupally, Palakkad, and Nilambur, which were held from 2022 to 2024. He also led the UDF to landslide wins in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and 2025 local body polls.

During the campaigning, while most of the Congress leaders in the fray were confined to their seats, Satheesan criss-crossed the state.

His strong secular stand drew the ire of prominent community leaders like Vellappally Natesan. While other Congress leaders remained silent, his unflinching position against polarisation in society boosted his appeal cutting across sections and communities.

In his role as a Congress legislator over the years, Satheesan has led multiple debates, emerging as the voice of Opposition against the Left dispensation.

For questioning various development claims of the Vijayan government, Satheesan often faced severe attacks from the Left supporters on social media. When the Congress got embroiled in various scandals during the UDF government's tenure from 2011 to 2016, Satheesan had been a rebel voice in the party. He also stood for green politics and spoke against party leaders turning "subservient" before community leaders.

CHURNING WITHIN THE CADRE

Rebels rewrite script, CPM loses its bastions

Shaju Philip
Thiruvananthapuram, May 4

THREE CPI(M) rebels who broke ranks with the party on the eve of the Assembly elections and contested as UDF-backed Independents have delivered major upsets in the party's citadels in Kerala. Besides, massive vote erosion was recorded in several traditional CPI(M) strongholds.

The unprecedented fight by rebels G Sudhakaran (Ambalapuruzha), T K Govindan (Tali-paramba) and V Kunhikrishnan (Payyannur) symbolised and represented the churning

among cadre against alleged nepotism, financial misappropriation and criminalisation within the CPI(M).

The CPI(M) lost the Payyannur seat to rebel leader V Kunhikrishnan for the first time since the constituency was formed in 1967. He defeated CPI(M)'s sitting legislator T I Madhusoodanan by a margin of 7,487 votes. Madhusoodanan had won the seat in 2021 with a record margin of 49,780.

"I wanted people to correct the party leadership. This verdict shows that people and cadre have corrected the CPI(M). Besides, the UDF also extended support to me, lead-



G Sudhakaran, T K Govindan and V Kunhikrishnan

ing to my victory. I wanted to end the degeneration of the CPI(M)," Kunhikrishnan said.

Kunhikrishnan, 74, a district committee member of the CPI(M) in Kannur, had raised a revolt against the alleged misappropriation of funds collected for the family of a worker killed in political violence.

In the nearby Taliparamba constituency, another rebel, T K Govindan, defeated P K Shyamala, wife of CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan. T K Govindan won by a margin of 12,568 votes in the seat where M V Govindan had a victory majority of in 2021. Govindan, a senior leader with a long stint

as a party district secretariat member, fought the election opposing what he termed the conversion of the constituency into the family stronghold of the state secretary. Tali-paramba has remained unbeaten for the CPM since 1977.

In the Ambalapuruzha Assembly seat, 79-year-old G Sudhakaran defeated CPI(M)'s sitting MLA H Salam by a margin of 27,935 votes. A two-term former minister, Sudhakaran had earlier represented Ambalapuruzha. Sudhakaran told the media, this verdict is a strong reply to those who thought the party's their private family property.

• HER VICTORY AGAINST LDF CONVENER T P RAMAKRISHNAN CAME IN A SEAT THAT CPI(M) HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY WINNING SINCE 1980

Fought for gender parity in IUML, she is its 1st woman MLA

Shaju Philip
Thiruvananthapuram, May 4

THE INDIAN Union Muslim League's (IUML's) Fathima Thahiliya has scripted history on Monday, becoming the party's first woman legislator and emerging as a giant killer, defeating Kerala's ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) convener T P Ramakrishnan in the CPI(M) stronghold of Perambra in Kozhikode district.

A lawyer by profession and a councillor in the Kozhikode Municipal Corporation, Thahi-

liya's victory came in a seat that the CPI(M) has been consistently winning since 1980.

During the run-up to the election, the United Democratic Front (UDF) — Kerala's Opposition alliance comprising the Congress, the IUML, and other small constituents — had complained to the Election Commission, alleging that the LDF had been unleashing a communal campaign against Thahiliya.

Among 27 candidates fielded by the IUML, she was one of the two women candi-

dates. In Kerala's election history, before this time, the IUML had only ever fielded two other women candidates, and neither of them won.

Thahiliya rose to prominence in the IUML in 2022, seeking gender justice within the party. Known as a reformist voice in the IUML, she was the founding state president of Haritha — the women's wing of the Muslim Students Federation. Established in 2012, Haritha created a platform for women supporters of the IUML on college campuses. Under her



IUML's Fathima Thahiliya. X/@THAHILIYA

leadership, Haritha played a key role in expanding the MSF's influence across campuses.

Thahiliya's political journey took another turn when Haritha leaders raised allegations of sexual harassment against senior MSF figures. When the party leadership allegedly attempted to suppress the issue, she chose to speak out, leading to her removal as MSF national vice-president and the eventual disbanding of Haritha.

She was of the view that it was not about challenging authority in the party, but

about ensuring dignity and space for women within politics. Thahiliya represents a new kind of political figure in Kerala — young, articulate, and unafraid to challenge both opponents and those within her own party. Her journey also signals a broader shift in the IUML, with questions of gender, women's representation, and internal democracy gaining traction in the party's political discourse.

Thahiliya is the secretary of the Muslim Youth League, the youth wing of the IUML.

Chandrasekhar has wrested back the seat from sitting CPI(M) legislator V Sivankutty.

The BJP's third seat came from the Chathannoor constituency in nearby Kollam district, where B B Gopakumar's consistent work at the grassroots level paid rich dividends to the party. Gopakumar had lost the elections at the constituency in 2016 and 2021.

Although the BJP had handed 19 seats to Twenty20, the party floated by the KITEK group, the alliance did not improve the BJP's fortunes. In the Kunnathunad seat, the stronghold of Twenty20, the Congress's V P Sajeenderan won with 70,292 votes. The BJP's Christian outreach in the state also did not help the party electorally in central Kerala.

The Indian EXPRESS
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RAMNATH GOENKA
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BECAUSE THE TRUTH
INVOLVES US ALL

Assam-Bengal template will go national. It fuels support for BJP, not resistance



PRATAAP BHANU MEHTA

INDIAN POLITICS is a story of vanishing exceptionalisms. The two most entrenched and enduring regional formations have collapsed. Kolkata has fallen; Chennai has cracked. Kerala, true to form, has seen anti-incumbency; the BJP's hold over Assam endures. These results consolidate the unprecedented national electoral prowess of the BJP and the ideological supremacy of Hindutva. It would be churlish to deny the unprecedented power of the Modi-Shah duo in the annals of electoral politics.

Even in a state that prided itself on being as distinctive as Bengal, the BJP has brought about a near-impossible electoral realignment. Even by the standards of its storied history, the BJP's victory in Bengal is a remarkable tribute to its unmatched combination of ambition, perseverance, and political ruthlessness. It is, in a literal sense, a triumph of the will. It has not been stopped by any conventional electoral arithmetic, institutional propriety, identities like language, region or caste, or the embeddedness of a towering figure like Mamata Banerjee.

Defeat in retrospect always seems overdetermined. The fatigue, boredom, the corruption and nepotism, creeping thuggishness, the limits of welfare politics, and regional symbolism created background conditions for a BJP victory. But they would not have translated into victory if three things were not in place. After all, there is no evidence that the BJP will address better many of the discontents that fuelled it to power. The sheer determination of the BJP,

the energy of the Modi-Shah duo to persist in hostile terrain, is remarkable. Then there is the belief that politically salient identities are not given. A new Hindu consciousness can be reconfigured through sheer mobilisation to the point where Hindu-Muslim polarisation nearly displaces all other axes. Longstanding grievances are now processed through that template. And finally, something that will be studied for a while, the employment of institutional tactics, from the use of the Election Commission to the taming of the Supreme Court, to create a narrative of the cleaning of the electoral process and a violence-free election. The actual effects of the SIR process will be studied over time. But what was remarkable about it was that the inconvenience and pain it imposed seemed to become a source of the BJP's strength rather than a cause for punishment. Whether or not it decisively tilted the electoral outcome, it became handy for mobilisation and a demonstration of its institutional capture. The Assam-Bengal template will go national. It seems to fuel support for the BJP rather than resistance.

The victory of the Vijay-led TVK is no less a vanquishing of another exceptionalism. Anti-incumbency is the norm in Tamil Nadu. But still, the TVK's victory is unprecedented in the way in which it breaks the duopoly of the DMK and AIADMK. What is remarkable about it is that it breaks the standard assumption that the only way a party can win a regional setting is by playing the re-

If Bengal's history is any guide, the TMC will fade away faster than its vote share suggests, and the DMK is not a Dravidian force in the way it was. The BJP now has an opening in Punjab, and the lesson of Tamil Nadu is that the South is open territory

gional pride card more strongly — there is nothing natural about that regionalism. But it is also a warning that even relatively successful states like Tamil Nadu, trailblazers in industrialisation and welfare politics alike, are in the grip of dissatisfaction and restlessness, in this case powered by young people. Vijay has done what stars before him, like Vijayakanth, were not able to do, without much of a party organisation or a social movement. Is this form of politics a new canary in the mine?

The BJP has demonstrated a triumph of the will. But its triumphs, while a testament to its furious energy and political imagination, also carry a shadow for Indian democracy. This victory consolidates Amit Shah's position as a national leader and his lead over rivals by a mile: Total command over the party organisation, and an ability to deliver wins in all kinds of contexts, including a straight two-cornered context. It is also a new experiment for India. When one party acquires this degree of organisational dominance and ideological ascendancy, all countervailing

forces and voices of dissent will gradually fall away. If Bengal's history is any guide, the Trinamool will fade away faster than its proportion of vote share suggests, and the DMK is not a Dravidian force in the way it was. The BJP now also has an opening in Punjab, and the lesson of Tamil Nadu is that the South is open territory. The Congress might elicit in the fact that all its INDIA bloc rivals

have fallen away. But Congress is nowhere near even putting up a minimal resistance and is no match for the BJP's ruthlessness. Its lack of leadership, backward-looking ideas of caste and region, and utter listlessness mean that the regional vacuums will be filled by the BJP more than Congress. Hindutva is now the reigning ideology and identity of the new India. This is not a moment that can be analysed purely in contingent political terms; it is part of the inner conflict over the idea of India since 1857. Much of the template of that conversation over India's identity was laid in 19th-century Bengal, beginning with Bankim. It is only the myopia of the Left and Centre parties that they assumed that regions are irrevocable natural formations that can be opposed to Hindutva. The idea that "Kali" would be pitted against "Ram" was the kind of cultural nonsense where the Left began to believe its own cultural illiteracy. For now, Hindutva is producing a culturally hierarchical order, where the claims of identity imperil India as a zone of freedom. The check on this ideology is not going to be external. We are on a wing and a prayer that the consolidation of this form of Hindutva does not result in deeper exclusion and violence, which is typically the denouement of such nationalisms. For now, India is in the grip of Hindutva supremacy; it has been sold as a utopian dream. There is no rival. What this supremacy does, or what brittleness it masks, only time will tell.

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Verdicts frame people's push for change — BJP seized that impulse, rivals paid for their standstill

THE RESULTS of the Assembly elections in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, Assam and Kerala, were undoubtedly shaped by factors that were state-specific. But if there is a binding theme, it is this: The BJP's growth and spread beyond its traditional bastions into new arenas and areas coincides with the declining fortunes of its political opponents. The BJP's energetic rise is also directly the cause of the Opposition's waning, but that may not tell the full story.

Be it the rout of Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal and M K Stalin in Tamil Nadu now, or Nitish Kumar bowing out with Lalu Prasad's RJD failing to hold up its end in Bihar, or the eclipse of Naveen Patnaik in Odisha, or the BJP's longtime ally-turned-rival Uddhav Thackeray presiding over the Sena's splintering in Maharashtra, or the signs of implosion in Arvind Kejriwal's AAP, or be it Congress's seemingly unchecked slide despite its Kerala victory — the downward trajectory of the party on the other side of the BJP is not just because of the BJP, its undimmed aggression and its vast resources. It is also due to the inertia and do-nothingness of the Opposition party, its sameness and staleness in a time when a young and aspirational electorate is on the move, both literally and as part of shifting imagined communities. Quite simply, the BJP's success lies, fundamentally, in constantly finding new ways of speaking to this people, by adding to its layered appeal. And the Opposition's failure comes from its increasing political solipsism, its turning away from the challenges of change, its glib recourse to apocalypse-mongering.

Essentially, the verdicts in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu and Kerala frame the people's push for change. The BJP seized the impulse and built on it in West Bengal, while a new player came in to reap the disillusion with the five-decade-old alternation of parties in Tamil Nadu. Congress benefited from the desire for change in Kerala, while in Assam, the only exception to this story, it failed to become a receptacle for it.

THE outcome in West Bengal, which has been, by far, the most dramatic in this round of elections, with Tamil Nadu coming in second, was made possible, above all, because Mamata Banerjee ignored the warnings. Her party, the TMC, which she led into power by uprooting a 34-year-old Left regime, did not heed the sound of the BJP's footfall, first with only three seats in 2016, which shot up to 77 in the 2021 Assembly elections. It refused to brace for the competition by reflecting on its own shortcomings — be it the failure of its government to pull Bengal out of its economic slump, or its inability to check the corruption and unaccountability growing within the party. Inheriting the "party-society" model from Left rule, the TMC nurtured a network of political entrepreneurs that smudged the lines between party, institution and government like the Left's Syndicate, but unlike it, without any constraints of ideology.

The TMC's standstill laid the ground for the BJP, whose unrelenting determination to capture the state of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, and to stitch the east to its conquests in the country's north and west, has finally met with success. It rides on a Hindu consolidation around the spectre of the "ghuspaithiya", projection of Banerjee's politics as "minority appeasement", and a combination of its criticism of Banerjee's governance with an identity politics that was subterranean during Left rule and had risen to the surface under Didi, who opened the floodgates to it.

How the SIR, which in West Bengal, more than in any other state, became an exclusionary exercise, contributed to the outcome, will be known in days to come. The 27 lakh excluded in the controversial second round of deletions, whose appeals are still pending (less than 2,000 were reinstated by the tribunals), are a challenge for the new government to address urgently. For now, however, the spotlight must rest on the scale of the BJP's Bengal's victory.

THE sweep of newcomer Vijay and his party TVK, is at once a rare and familiar phenomenon in Tamil Nadu's politics. Another star is reborn as a leader — in the footsteps, arguably, of MGR and J. Jayalalitha, Vijayakanth and Kamal Haasan. But Vijay is also unique. His immersion in Dravidian politics is less explicit and his appeal to the young and to women much more direct. He makes what was for about 50 years a bipolar contest into a triangular fight. Vijay's newness, his straddling of the caste and religious divides, also means that his difficulties begin now — they will lie in delivering on the vaulting expectations that have led to this wide yearning for change, this anti-incumbency verdict in a state that, ironically, ranks among the fastest-growing states in the country.

In Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma's return is a testament to a politics that is astute in seeing and filling a gap — but also divisive. Sarma has further stamped the BJP's imprimatur in the northeastern state, which also lay outside its traditional geography, and where it has nibbled into Congress and co-opted the AGP. But his unabashedly communal dog-whistle politics — under cover of a campaign against the illegal Bangladeshi Muslim immigrant — presents a challenge in a diverse state of many identities and ethnicities.

In Kerala, the return of the United Democratic Front is a moment to savour for Congress, but it basks in the victory at its own peril. By all accounts, it was a verdict, most of all, against the leadership of Pinarayi Vijayan, who centralised all power unto himself and stunted his own party, evident in the CPM's defeat in erstwhile bastions. Congress must also be acutely conscious that its Kerala win does not give it a secure grip in a state that is traditionally known to change its government every five years.

GOING ahead, the victors' challenge looks formidable. In West Bengal, the BJP has added a state to its kitty that has a strong sense of its cultural exceptionalism and its political history — it will need to tread carefully. In Tamil Nadu, the new player must learn the rules of the game, while playing it differently, lest his sheen wear off too quickly. Congress must own the victory in Kerala that has been handed to it. In Assam, the new Sarma government must lower the polarising pitch. All four new governments must learn to address those who voted for them, and also those who didn't.

Welfare alone doesn't win elections — it's just the floor



BHANU JOSHI

THE VOTES are in. The BJP won in Assam and West Bengal. The DMK, which built India's longest-standing welfare-transfer regime, has lost Tamil Nadu to a new entrant. The UDF has won in Kerala. The familiar explanation will return: Welfare delivered the vote, or could not save the incumbent. Around it will sit the larger argument: Is what we are watching redistribution or freebies?

That debate has its uses, but is now mis-describing the ground. The DMK's loss is the sharpest reminder that welfare alone does not deliver elections. It has become the floor. There is a very thin mechanism for why a transfer would deliver a vote on its own when every party promises it and the next government will continue it. What converts delivery into durability is what each party assembles around it. A decade of fieldwork in Bihar, Bengal and Assam gives three answers; the Tamil Nadu verdict adds a fourth.

Bihar is where the floor proposition is most visible. Nitish Kumar's welfare record is substantial: Bicycles and scholarships for girls, prohibition, Jeevika self-help groups, old-age pensions, and the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana. Approval on individual schemes exceeded his government's overall performance. By the textbook of incumbency, he should have won on delivery alone. Yet since 2015, he has changed alliance partners three times, each switch a recognition that welfare alone would not keep him there. A student we met in Arwal in 2015 had taken the scholarship, ridden the bicycle to college, and was supporting the BJP-led NDA anyway. Asked why, she answered: "What else matters?" Welfare had given her the floor; she was asking for the ceiling. Kumar's tenure was organised around alliances and demographic recalibration to address what welfare cannot supply: Opportunity, jobs, a politics of forward movement.

Bengal's second leg has always been organisation. In a Nadia village in 2016, an older woman told us why she voted Trinamool: "Earlier you had to know someone in the party to get your work done. Now they ask for bribes outright, but work gets done." The TMC's welfare regime has since become more elaborate and universal: Kanyashree, Lakshmi Bhandar, allowances for unemployed, all rule-based and routed through banks. But welfare alone has not held the TMC together; organisation has. The *dallatrantra* the Left perfected and Mamata Banerjee inherited turned a rule-based transfer

Welfare without embeddedness, in an alliance, in an organisation, in a project of incorporation, does not by itself deliver. What wins elections is what each party assembles above it

into a personal gift, and helped keep the BJP's polarisation push from translating into power in 2021. By 2026, both legs were strained. Universalisation has hollowed the cadre's distributive function: Unable to distribute differentially, the local worker shifts to attribution and gatekeeping. The BJP, organisationally thin in Bengal, has substituted federal institutions (paramilitary, EC scheduling, the SIR) and pushed communal mobilisation harder than in 2021. The 2026 contest was welfare plus a strained organisation against welfare plus polarisation propped up by central institutions.

Assam in 2016 looked entirely different. In a freshly resettled village in lower Assam, a young man told us he had switched from AIUDF to AGP overnight: "We have to stay here. We need to be on the winning side." The politics was volatile, candidate-driven, transactional. We were back in Dibrugarh, Golaghat and the Barpeta-Bajali belt this April, and that texture was gone. The women's self-help group has become the routine site of political contact. Allowances for unemployed youth and tea-garden workers sit alongside; the road, the school and the medical college are spoken of in the same breath as the SHG transfer. Around this floor, the BJP has assembled a project of incorporation: Peace accords with insurgent groups, thousands of former combatants returned to the mainstream, and citizenship politics. Welfare brings households in as beneficiaries; incorporation decides which are treated as securely inside the political community and which remain suspect.

Tamil Nadu, where I have not done fieldwork, is the cleanest test of the floor. The DMK's regime is one of the most elaborate in the country and the one the others copied. By the textbook of welfare delivery, it should have won. It did not. Welfare alone, even from the regime that originated it, did not produce durability against a new entrant tapping different cleavages.

None of these is a handout: Voters reward delivery and punish parties that stop at the floor. None is simply redistribution either; welfare is doing political work that runs beyond the transfer of resources. Welfare without embeddedness, in an alliance, in an organisation, in a project of incorporation, does not by itself deliver. What wins elections is what each party assembles above it.

The writer is visiting assistant professor at Ashoka University and co-founder of Data Action Lab for Emerging Societies (DALES)

In Kerala, a delicate balance has been preserved



K K KAILASH

IMAGINE A glass filled to the brim with water, where a single additional drop risks triggering an overflow and irreversible change. Kerala's closed party system has been balanced at this tipping point for more than a decade. In this election, too, the question was whether that next drop would finally fall and disrupt the established order.

While this election was, on the surface, about whether the LDF would secure a third term or Congress would ride the wave of anti-incumbency, the question at the back of the mind, especially for those outside Kerala, was if the BJP would breach the carefully managed surface tension. The UDF's victory has put that question to rest, for now. Yet, the question of how the closed party system survives in Kerala, especially in the wake of the verdict in Tamil Nadu, is important. In the absence of survey data, we must rely on election results to infer how parties interpret electoral signals.

For the current generation of the BJP's central leadership, high symbolism and winning have been everything. Any win in Kerala has more symbolic than practical value. It allows supporters across the country to believe they are part of some unstoppable force. More importantly, it helps maintain the party's leadership status quo. While the BJP did concentrate on its core constituency, it focused more on development and governance, with its manifesto linking policy proposals to central government programmes and positioning the campaign as a showcase of the PM's record. In a highly centralised party, state elections are adjusted to serve a larger narrative the central leadership wishes to project.

For the CPM, this was a consolidation and maintenance election. Stung by its losses in 2019 and 2024 and unsettled by the BJP's growing popularity, it decided vote chasing was the optimal strategy. It tried to be electorally attractive by pushing its ideology to the background and foregrounding its leader. However, adopting the position of the very party to which it assumes it has lost its voters is not the best strategy. The CPM softened its stance on the entry of women of all ages into the Sabarimala temple, organised events like the Global Ayyappa Conclave, and facilitated the Maha Magha Mahotsavam, dubbed Kerala's Kumbh Mela. This reactive repositioning risks legitimising and popularising the discourse the BJP is trying to mainstream. Comparative studies show such shifts are unlikely to yield electoral gains.

Of all three coalition-makers, this election mattered most to Congress. A third straight loss would have led to cadre disillusionment, may have fragmented the UDF, and dented Congress's image as the national alternative. This might have created more room for the NDA to consolidate anti-Left and disaffected anti-Congress votes. Unlike the CPM, Congress adopted a mobilising strategy and avoided overreaching. Its local unit appeared to have greater autonomy than the BJP. It maintained its traditional position of accommodation, working to retain support among its core constituencies, the minority communities, and emphasising a pragmatic economic policy. More importantly, it did not attempt to either dilute or reinforce its conservative positions.

In a federal system, empowering local party units may be a more suitable strategy, as it gives the organisation flexibility. Kerala's Congress unit has enjoyed and fiercely defended this autonomy, which is arguably its most potent asset and a structural obstacle to the unravelling of Kerala's closed party system.

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40 YEARS AGO May 5, 1986



Akali Dal crisis

DEVELOPMENTS IN the crisis-ridden Akali Dal following police action in the Golden Temple have taken a new turn with a large number of pro-Barnala legislators leaving for some unknown destination in Himachal Pradesh. The dissident Akali leaders, Parkash Singh Badal, G S Tohra, former SGPC president, and Amrinder Singh, released a list of 29 party legislators who have condemned the police action.

Khaleda Zia reappears

THE MYSTERY which shrouded the "disap-

pearance" of opposition leader Khaleda Zia, ended on the fifth day when she re-appeared at the Dhaka district bar library. She said she had been detained by police and was kept in an "unknown place" near Savar, 15 miles from Dhaka. This contradicted the government's continuous denial that she had been arrested. The BNP chief disappeared while she was returning from a rally in Jamalpur.

Afghan leader Karmal resigns

BABRAK KARMAL was relieved as the Afghan ruling party leader. Karmal, who came to power in December 1979, resigned

health grounds, Tass reported from Kabul, quoting the Bakhtar news agency.

Bus accident kills 44

ALTOGETHER 44 persons, including 27 men, 13 women and four children, were killed near Kheel, about 40 km from Itanagar, according to official sources. The ill-fated Arunachal Pradesh State Transport bus in which they were travelling fell into a deep gorge while negotiating a difficult curve on the high-altitude road. Sixty-three others were admitted to Ramakrishna Mission and Naharlagun general hospitals. The condition of eight was serious.



● **WHAT THE OTHERS SAY**
Trump should not shift on Taiwan
when he visits Beijing.
— *The Guardian*

Opposition should go back to drawing board, reimagine politics, rewire machine



DESHKAAL
YOGENDRA YADAV

IT IS a moment of reckoning for the democratic Opposition. A moment to reflect. A moment to face some harsh truths. A moment to ask some hard questions.

Let there be no doubt about it: The window of opportunity offered by the stunning outcome of the Lok Sabha elections two years ago, ever narrowing since then, is firmly shut now. The conquest of Bengal is a leap forward in the BJP's quest for total power. It is also a leap backwards in whatever remains of electoral integrity in contemporary India. Unless the Opposition goes back to the drawing board to reimagine its politics, revise its strategy and rewire its election machine, democratic competition is all but dead. Unless someone or something steps in to rebalance the electoral playing field and restore a semblance of fairness, elections may no longer be the arena for the articulation of popular will. And that is bad news, not just for the Opposition but also for the rulers.

Let the outcomes in Kerala and Tamil Nadu not distract us from this stark truth. All that has happened in Kerala is a resumption of a deferred oscillation in power. The routine desire for change and an accumulated unease with the LDF government finally caught up with it. The UDF was the natural beneficiary, with some arrears for the delayed transition added to its victory margin. The Opposition may take solace in the fact that the BJP has not expanded its vote share, but such consolation tends to be temporary in the face of the ruling juggernaut. If anything, the UDF's over-dependence on minority votes should worry it in the long run.

Dramatic and awe-inspiring as the success of Vijay's TVK in Tamil Nadu is, it is no model to be replicated elsewhere. The DMK's dominance, with the attendant hu-

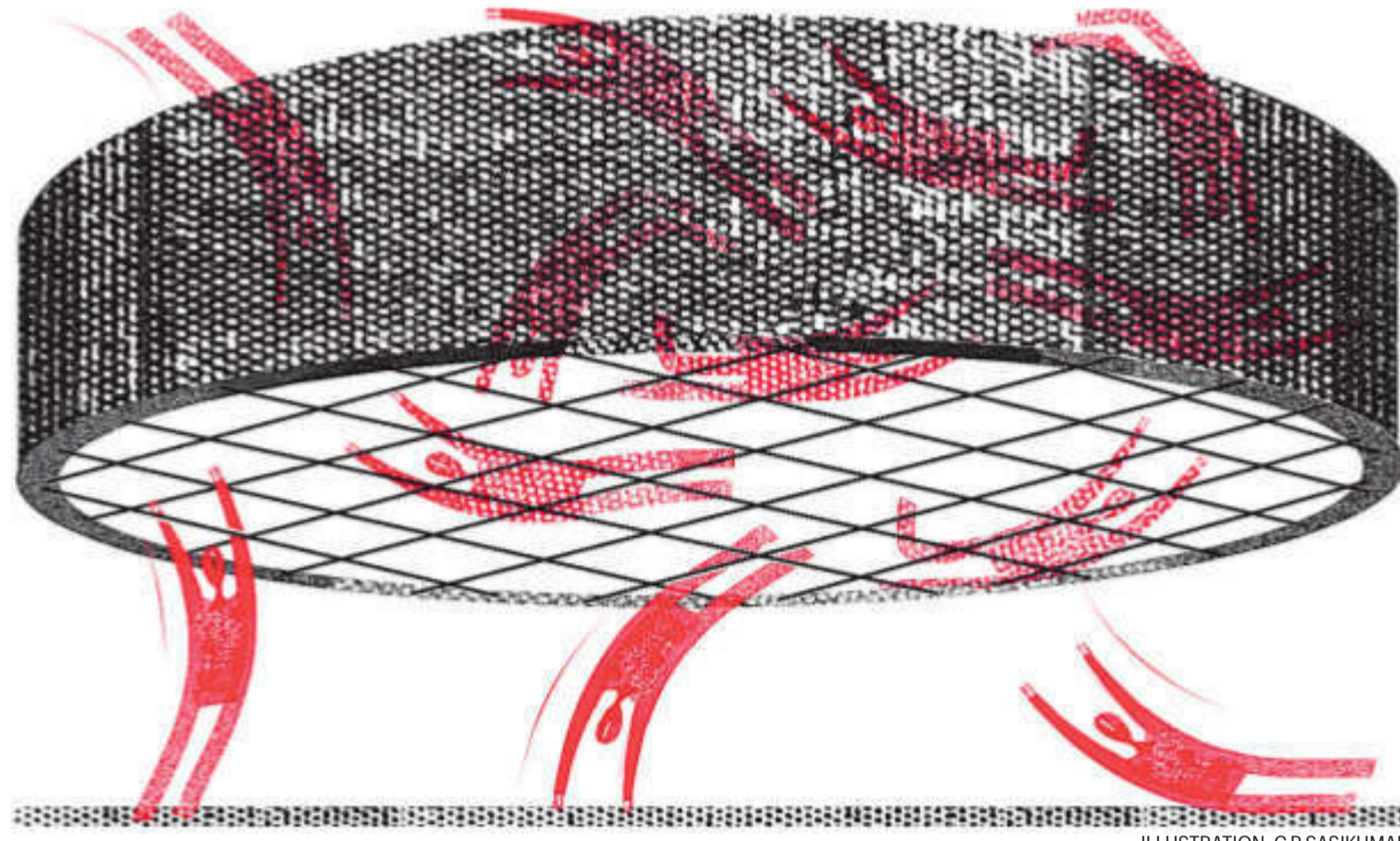


ILLUSTRATION: C.R. SASIKUMAR

bris and complacency, created a need for an alternative. The ever-crumbing and rebuilt AIADMK did not fit the bill, also as it was seen to be a franchise for the BJP, which went against the political culture of the state. The vacuum had to be filled by someone who fitted into Dravidian ideology but differed from the DMK's political model. Following the well-trodden path laid down by MGR, a film star offered a charming and fresh alternative. It is important to note that while Vijay framed the DMK as the "political opponent", he identified the BJP as an "ideological opponent", declaring himself to be a follower of Periyar, Kamaraj and Ambedkar. Such a space is unique to this state.

Let the Opposition not hide behind any pretexts in Assam. True, the BJP had used the EC to gerrymander the constituency boundaries in a communal pattern to its advantage at an unprecedented scale in India's electoral history. The BJP awarded itself about 10 seats before any vote was cast. Also, the Assam CM unleashed brazen communal hatred against the "miyan" community while the EC

The outcome was not a simple reflection of popular will. The BJP's victory was curated by the central government and the EC. The BJP was in shambles in Bengal after the setback in 2024 and was in no shape to take on the TMC

and the SC watched. Yet that does not take away from the fact that the Opposition did not show any political will to take on the ruling party. The BJP government, especially the CM, was mired in charges of corruption. Zubeen Garg's death was a raw emotional issue that went against the government. Yet the Opposition never looked like it had got its act together. It was a textbook case of how to lose an election.

The Opposition in Bengal did not suffer these frailties. No one could accuse Mamata Banerjee of giving a walkover to the BJP. She had a strategy, the stamina and the system to take on the BJP's steamroller. Yes, the Opposition was not united, but it worked to her advantage to have the Left contest separately. Congress damaged the TMC only marginally. Bengal thus was a test case for the Opposition, a state every Opposition leader must have watched with trepidation.

Let's not beat around the bush: Such a massive reversal in electoral fortunes could not have happened without significant "anti-incumbency", a euphemism for popular unease and unhappiness

with the government, that remained underestimated. People's anger was not so much against Banerjee herself as against her local leaders and the quality of governance the people received. True, similar and worse levels of governance went unpunished in other states, but the BJP and its loyal media had something to pounce upon. The Opposition must honestly introspect on its own governance record — not just in West Bengal but also in Punjab, Karnataka, Telangana and Himachal — before it draws any plans for national politics.

Finally, let us acknowledge the most unsettling truth of the West Bengal elections. The outcome was not a simple reflection of popular will. The BJP's victory in the state was curated by the central government and the EC. The BJP was in shambles in Bengal after the setback in 2024 and was in no shape to take on the TMC. The central government and the pro-BJP media propped it up. The Centre choked the West Bengal government of resources, shutting down programmes like MGNREGS and PM Awas Yojna. The EC watched as the BJP launched a vicious communal campaign, more effective in Bengal than in Assam. Above all, unlike any other state, the EC took extraordinary steps to delete 27 lakh names (of the total 90 lakh deletions) of those who had filled enumeration forms and submitted their citizenship documents. Every independent investigation shows these deletions to be wrongful and targeted. These deletions amount to 4.3 per cent of the votes cast in the state. The BJP's lead over the TMC is 4.6 per cent. The question is inescapable: If these 27 lakh persons were allowed to vote, how would it have affected the outcome?

That is the hard question that the Opposition must face together: Have Indian elections fallen below the minimum acceptable threshold of electoral integrity? How can the Opposition refuse to legitimize curated election results without seeming to run away from the battleground? When and where does the Opposition draw the line, if not now, if not after West Bengal?

The writer is member, Swaraj India, and national convenor, Bharat Jodo Abhiyaan.
Views are personal

Bengal win shows demographic anxieties cannot be ignored



RAKESH SINHA

THE WEST Bengal assembly results bear an unequivocal message from the state's people against appeasement politics. The Trinamool Congress government not only practised Muslim appeasement, it also failed to address the anxieties of Hindus about the state's demographic transformation. The change is a result of a gap in the fertility rates between the Hindus and Muslims, as well as the influx of people from Bangladesh. Mamata Banerjee, who once fought against Left coercion and won the hearts of the people, lost sight of socio-economic realities and slipped into vote-bank politics. The BJP, in contrast, acknowledged the state's realities and articulated its politics accordingly. Credit goes to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving direction to the party's campaign in a state where it lacked strong leadership as well as cadres. In the past, this prevented the consolidation of votes in the party's favour. By leading the campaign, Modi turned a disadvantage into an advantage.

In other states, the BJP has dismantled the tradition of one or two state leaders being seen as faces of the party. Its success rate has been more than expected. West Bengal is the latest example of the strategy's success.

The victory is special for the RSS fraternity in its centenary year. Its founder, K B Hedgewar, was a part of the revolutionary organisation, Anushilan Samiti, as a medicine student in Kolkata. West Bengal has always been a priority area for the party. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, a prominent Hindu Mahasabha leader and later the founder president of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, was from West Bengal. In the 1952 Lok Sabha elections, Mookerjee and Durgacharan Banerjee from the BJS emerged victorious, and the party secured 5.6 per cent of the vote in the state assembly polls. However, Mookerjee's martyrdom, while he was endeavouring to ensure the complete integration of J&K into the country, created a leadership void. For decades, the BJS and its successor, the BJP, remained only a symbolic force in West Bengal.

The abrogation of Article 370 was a tribute to both Mookerjee and his mother, Jogmaya Devi, who did not get any answer to the question she asked then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru about the controversial death of her son.

The defeat of the Red-Green ideological club is the completion of the political cycle that began with the participation of BJS candidates in the 1952 elections. The BJP's vote share today is almost nine times what it was in the 1952 elections. The victory gives immense psychological satisfaction to the votaries of Hindutva across the country. It will become part of the RSS's centenary celebrations.

Bengal is the home of intellectual giants who made their mark in the anti-imperialist movement. It came under a communal cloud, particularly Muslim polarisation, instigated by the viceroy Lord Curzon. The partition of Bengal in 1905 was an attack on its identity. The Muslim League's Direct Action Day in 1946 led to the killing of innocent Hindus and left a terrible memory in people's minds. These wounds wouldn't have festered had the political class been alert to what had divided the people in the past. Instead, they perpetuated Curzon's policies for the sake of power.

No society can remain impervious to the challenges posed by changing demographics. In *A Dying Race*, U N Mukerji wrote, "Can the figures of the last Census be regarded in any sense as the forerunner of an Islamic or Christian revival which will threaten the citadel of Hinduism. Or will Hinduism hold its own in the future as it has done through the long ages of the past?" He was referring to the 1901 Census. But the warning fell on deaf ears in the era of Mahatma Gandhi and the Nehrus. Post-Independence politics also ignored demographic imbalance.

The BJP has successfully aroused the consciousness of the Hindus. In the 2016 elections to the West Bengal Assembly, it secured 10.3 per cent of the vote, which increased threefold in 2021. Now it has more than 45 per cent of the vote.

Modi symbolises two things. One, he is a guilt-free votary of anti-appeasement politics and can strike a chord with common people. This is also a message to the intellectual class of the country that they remain disconnected from the psychology and aspirations of the people. Two, Modi symbolises time-bound and target-oriented development. He has lifted the country's development process from the complexities of ideologies.

The people of Bengal have expressed their aspirations for better governance and the reversal of pre-Partition politics. They have sent a strong message to parties — anti-Hindutva politics has no future.

The writer is a former Rajya Sabha member from the BJP

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SC on abortion

A HUMANE abortion law must begin by trusting the person whose body, future, and dignity are most directly at stake ("On abortion, SC places the woman at the centre", *IE*, May 4). The Supreme Court's approach rightly moves the issue beyond medical paternalism and moral panic, especially for minors and survivors of sexual violence. Yet judicial compassion cannot substitute for a clear statutory framework. Gestational limits, doctors' discretion and fear of criminal liability still make timely care uncertain, uneven and often traumatic. Parliament should revise the MTP law to make informed consent the rule, medical oversight the safeguard, and delay the exception.

Veda Chidanand, Bengaluru

Ethanol push

INCREASING ETHANOL blending can reduce dependence on imported crude oil, lower emissions, and support farmers by creating new demand for crops ("The next fuel shift: More ethanol in the tank", *IE*, May 4). However, concerns regarding engine compatibility, infrastructure readiness, and water-intensive crop production must be addressed. A balanced approach is essential to ensure that environmental benefits are not offset by agricultural or economic challenges. The government must focus on innovation, proper regulation, and awareness.

Vaibhav Kochar, Ludhiana

INDIA'S ETHANOL push is sensible insurance against oil shocks, but must not become another subsidy-driven shortcut ("The next fuel shift: More ethanol in the tank", *IE*, May 4). Flexible vehicles and dedicated pumps can widen consumer choice, while cheaper domestic blends may ease pressure on oil companies and imports. Yet the policy's credibility will rest on engineering readiness, transparent pricing and feedstock discipline. Engines, warranties and corrosion standards must be settled before motorists are made testers. The real opportunity lies in resilient crops, waste-based alcohol and predictable taxation.

Babu Crishna, Bengaluru



A R VENKATACHALAPATHY

THE DMK, which, according to many pollsters, was set to win comfortably, if not by itself, but at least with the support of its admittedly grumpy alliance partners, has barely pipped the AIADMK to the second position. Chief Minister MK Stalin has lost his pocket borough of Kolathur. A lone exit-poll pundit who predicted a TVK victory was mocked by all-knowing political analysts. Even though technically it is a hung assembly, it is nothing but a tsunami in favour of C. Joseph Vijay and his fledgling party. What explains this shocker, and how did political analysts and academics miss this phenomenon?

Riding on a slew of welfare measures and the momentum of three consecutive electoral victories, the DMK clearly misread the depth of the anti-incumbency sentiment. The unseemly hurry to anoint Udhayanidhi Stalin as heir apparent fuelled charges of dynastic politics. The resentment of government employees, extensive use of outsourcing to constrict tenured employment, the ham-handed handling of unionisation efforts, and the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources such as river sand may all have come to a boil now. More proximate causes would include the less-than-smooth negotiations with alliance partners resentful of its big-brother attitude. Yet, the DMK's vote share sits almost level with the TVK. This is less a rejection than a finely balanced contest where a slender shift in votes has

Could 2026 be the inflexion point in the history of the Dravidian movement? After nearly 60 years, a Dravidian party will not be forming a government in Tamil Nadu

produced a dramatic electoral outcome.

If this was the state of the ruling alliance, the AIADMK hardly covered itself with glory. For most of the five years in Opposition, Edappadi K Palaniswami exhausted his energies gaining control of his party and keeping an ever-ambitious BJP in check rather than calling out the ruling party.

Unlike his predecessor Rajinikanth, who harboured similar dreams, age and time are on Vijay's side. It could be argued that the DMK shielded Udhayanidhi in this election campaign, fearing a walkover. Pushing 50, but still sprightly, Vijay has enviable charisma that has captured the imagination of a cross-section of people, cutting across caste, class and religion. Evidently, he has capitalised on an amorphous desire for change in the electorate, who saw an alternative to Dravidian parties for the first time in decades. Though the final margin appears to be not more than a few percentage points, the TVK has inflicted severe damage on the DMK. Even the citadel of Chennai, which has weathered many an anti-DMK storm, has fallen to Vijay's battering ram.

Could 2026 be the inflexion point in the history of the Dravidian movement? After nearly 60 years, a Dravidian party will not be forming a government in Tamil Nadu. What will be the future of "the Dravidian model" that explains the staggering growth of the state on all development parameters? If the DMK claimed all the credit for this

In Tamil Nadu, bugle call of the superstar-outsider

model, curiously, the AIADMK, which helmed the state for more years than its rival, disowned it. Vijay's development programme or ideological proclivities are unknown; at best, all one can hope for is a benign populism. What of the future of the Dravidian movement? Will the DMK revive itself? Given that age and health are not on Stalin's side, does Udhayanidhi Stalin have it in him to lead the charge? Will there be a churning within the DMK? Will the AIADMK return to its roots, or will it let the BJP capitalise on the fall of the Dravidian Babylon? These larger questions will have to wait.

For now, what will be the shape of the new government? Even though the TVK is shy of a majority, the *vox populi* is resounding. Vijay remains nominally secular, making it easy for Congress (which, in any case, played footsie with the TVK during seat negotiations) and other parties in the DMK-led alliance, such as the communist parties, and the DMDK (with the possible exception of the Dalit party, Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi) to lend support.

A rank outsider, Vijay has a tough job at hand. At least 100 greenhorn legislators are set to enter the august assembly hall. Apart from his trusted but untested lieutenants, he will necessarily have to rely on experienced administrative and police hands. The shooting floor is chaotic. But the director has blown the whistle. The clapperboard has clacked. Let the show begin.

The writer is co-editor of The Cambridge Companion to Periyar



AKHIL RANJAN DUTTA

WITH THE BJP's hat-trick in Assam, the state has consolidated its position as an enduring fortress of Hindutva. The BJP-led alliance has relied on long-term, deeply embedded strategies spanning civilisational, infrastructural and aspirational narratives. Central to this is the party's "rainbow alliance", which continues to co-opt diverse ethnic communities through targeted, community-specific initiatives.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has played a pivotal role in this consolidation. He has demonstrated a keen understanding of Assam's geographical constraints and its historical and cultural aspirations, linking these

effectively to the ideological core of Hindutva and a market-driven political economy. He has also managed a complex political terrain marked by discontent among Assamese nationalists over the unresolved National Register of Citizens and the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. The decade-long grassroots expansion of the Sangh Parivar across socio-cultural and developmental spheres has further strengthened the BJP's position. At the same time, a fragmented Opposition, last-minute defections of Congress leaders, and an over-reliance on civil society to broker alliances weakened any credible challenge.

The Sarma government has pursued its civilisational agenda with clarity, often targeting minority Muslims as encroachers and threats to indigenous culture. The 2023 delimitation exercise formed a key part of this

strategy. It increased SC and ST constituencies while significantly benefiting Bodo land, where the number of seats rose from 11 to 15. At the same time, delimitation was strategically executed in Muslim-majority districts such as Barpeta, Darrang, Dhubri, Goalpara, Karimganj, and Hailakandi.

The BJP has complemented its ideological position with expansive welfare and development initiatives. It has rolled out a wide range of subsidy-based and entrepreneurial schemes such as Nijut Moina and Nijut Babu. These schemes help soften ideological

The BJP has complemented its ideological positioning with expansive welfare and development initiatives

boundaries and broaden electoral appeal.

Women have been a central focus of the BJP's outreach. The Orunodoi scheme, under which around 40 lakh women receive Rs 1,250 monthly, has been particularly significant. In March, beneficiaries received a consolidated Rs 9,000 payment covering four months of assistance along with a Bihu bonus — an intervention that likely had a tangible electoral impact. The promise to raise this assistance to Rs 3,000 and extend coverage to 15 lakh more households reinforces the party's welfare plank.

Coordination between the state and the Centre has also bolstered public perception. Assam's decision to constitute the Eighth Pay Commission for state employees — the first in India — signals administrative responsiveness. Meanwhile, infrastructure expansion under programmes like Bharatmala

and Asom Mala has improved connectivity and stimulated rural economies in districts such as Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, and Majuli.

The BJP has also paid careful attention to community-specific interventions, particularly among tea tribes. Land entitlement initiatives and enhanced political representation at both state and national levels have helped consolidate its base in Upper Assam.

The BJP-led alliance's victory in Assam reflects a calibrated strategy that blends religious polarisation with welfare delivery and infrastructure development. By sustaining aspirations across social groups while integrating diverse ethnic and tribal communities into its fold, the party has translated its political approach into electoral dominance.

The writer teaches Political Science at Gauhati University

CONGRESS THANKS KERALA FOR ITS WIN, EXPRESSES DISAPPOINTMENT AT OTHER RESULTS

3 key CMs out, Opp bloc shrinks, next worry — Punjab, Himachal

Manoj CG
New Delhi, MAY 4

THE CONGRESS cancelled a press conference scheduled for Monday evening, with leaders such as Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge and Jairam Ramesh choosing to take to social media to thank the people of Kerala for its victory in the state, while admitting disappointment over the election results elsewhere.

The posts on X summed up the day for the Opposition, with the Congress's return in Kerala barely offsetting the loss of three big names across three states — leaving the INDIA bloc staring down the barrel, struggling to navigate a political landscape characterized by intense voter polarisation even as its leaders battle a credibility crisis.

Mamata Banerjee and MK Stalin, two of the most vociferous Opposition voices, were topped by the BJP and Vijay's TVK in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, respectively. While the victory in Kerala was a respite for the Congress, it was at the expense of another towering Opposition figure, Pinarayi Vijayan. The fact that it now has no counterweight within the INDIA bloc — a victorious Mamata would have again demanded that the Congress hand over the leadership mantle — may delight some Congress hearts. But they will be few and far between, with the Pyrrhic nature of this relief hard to ignore under the BJP's yawning shadow.

The BJP conquered Bengal, its last frontier in the East, after Odisha in 2024, and didn't just retain Assam, but also increased



Counting of votes at the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata on Monday. PARTHA PAUL

its seats in the state. The wins come on the heels of BJP victories in Maharashtra, Delhi, Haryana and Bihar over the past two years, and the party now has 17 CMs — resembling an era when Congress had complete electoral hegemony — with absolute dominance just not in the East, but also the Hindi heartland in the North, and the West.

The non-BJP parties now rule just six states and the Union Territory of J&K. And three of these states — Karnataka, Telangana and Kerala — are in the South, confining the Congress, the main Opposition, as a force in only the region, in a way. The states which are with the Opposition in the North now — Jharkhand, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh — apart from J&K, together account for 37 seats, or about 7% of the total, in the Lok Sabha. In Tamil Nadu and Bengal alone

that it lost Monday, the Opposition held 69 of 81 Lok Sabha seats.

But the defeat of Mamata and Stalin goes beyond that, as they punched much above their weight in numbers at the Centre. Led by them, their parties took on the Modi government on issues ranging from federal infringement to fiscal autonomy, with Vijayan too weighing in on issues.

E.

Their shrunken stature follows on the back of fading of other non-BJP regional satraps in recent years. If NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar and the Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray have been battered by splits in their party, with the rival factions aligning with the BJP, the SP's Akhilesh Yadav, the RJD's Tejashwi Yadav and AAP's Arvind Kejriwal are struggling after repeated electoral setbacks. This leaves the Opposition with very

few credible faces who can rally parties and articulate the Opposition voice. BJD's Naveen Patnaik, who could have been one such voice, has proved time and again that he is more comfortable sitting on the fence.

JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar, meanwhile, is well and truly ensconced in the NDA camp now. The Opposition seems to be struggling even on issues to frame its narrative around. The ones it has variously latched on to — from the contentious SIR exercise to the fear of infringement of federal principles, to a pushback against BJP-style nationalism, to "misuse" of Central agencies by the Modi government — don't seem to be resonating on the ground. In fact, having reduced the BJP to 240 seats in Lok Sabha, largely on account of fears that a dominant Centre would tinker with the Constitution — which the Opposition identified and amplified — the

latter has struggled to come up with a message that is as potent.

The Congress could still look at Kerala for a silver lining, but the slide of the Left, which has been the Congress's ideological journeyman lately, continues. With the loss in Kerala, the Left does not have a single CM in India for the first time since 1977.

The next worry for the Opposition is not too far away, with two of the states ruled by it, Punjab and Himachal, going to polls next year. The AAP will struggle to hold on in Punjab after repeated battering, the latest just last week, with seven of its Rajya Sabha MPs — six of them from Punjab — deserting the AAP and merging with the BJP. In Himachal, the Congress government has been struggling against depleted finances and an administration seen as floundering. The other five states which go to polls next year — UP, Goa, Gujarat, Manipur and Uttarakhand — are anyway with the BJP now.

Another problem the INDIA bloc faces are the strains within, which the electoral losses will exacerbate. The Congress national leadership has been partial towards Vijay, and if the party decides to lend the TVK support, the Congress's alliance with the DMK will suffer a rupture.

Their relationship has been showing friction for a while now, with Rahul Gandhi and Stalin, once quite warm towards each other, not sharing the stage. It is well-known that Gandhi had been open to exploring a seat-sharing pact with Vijay, but that Congress president Kharge and the TN leadership had joined hands to stall it.

'Congress in Kerala has stayed united and it will be on choice of CM too'

CONGRESS LOK Sabha member from Thiruvananthapuram **Shashi Tharoor** spoke to **Nidheesh M K** hours after the United Democratic Front's historic victory in the Kerala Assembly elections. He spoke on the delay in naming the next chief minister, Kerala's fiscal crisis, and what the mandate means for the INDIA bloc. Edited excerpts of an interview:



EXPRESS interview SHASHI THAROOR CONGRESS LEADER

People of Kerala want to know who is going to be their next chief minister. What's the delay?

The fact is that Congress has such an abundance of talent in Kerala — so many people with the experience, the seniority, the years in politics to be a credible CM contender — that no one can give you a simple answer. What'll happen, I have no doubt, is that very quickly we will see party headquarters consulting with the elected MLAs — maybe as early as tomorrow. Once they've got their feedback, they'll make a decision with the high command in Delhi. It'll come pretty quickly.

How long will this take? Two days? A week?

The message is very clear that we don't want to drag this out in an unseemly way. The intention is to get this done fairly and quickly. The problem is exactly what you described — there are so many aspirants...

The party will always have to take various factors into consideration. Whatever they decide; I hope they'll be able to speak to whoever doesn't make it in ways that keep them on board. What's very impressive about Congress in this election is the extent to which party unity was accomplished. Every bypassed aspirant, every MP who wanted to be an MLA — they rallied behind the selected candidate and campaigned for them. It was amazing evidence of party unity, and I hope we'll see the same unity once the decision on CM is made.

Nobody, including people inside Congress, could predict the enormity of this victory. Why?

Satheesan would point out that he predicted it — and he's right. Today's number is historic, and beyond the expectations of the vast majority of observers. To get to 100 is a miracle. When you give that kind of vote to a party or coal-

tion, what you're saying is — 'take the state and change it'.

Apart from Kerala, there are not many positives for Congress in other states. In Tamil Nadu, your party had turned down TVK's offer for an alliance and now TVK is the single largest party. Isn't it regrettable?

There's no shame in having remained a loyal ally to the party you've been with for many years. Having said that, once government formation comes up, there may be other possibilities. TVK so far appears to be somewhat short of a majority and will need allies. The INDIA bloc parties are there — Congress has five seats, IUML has two, CPI has two. There are numbers available that could be discussed.

Governments being voted out... Do you see a broader trend?

The last elections were just after COVID. After COVID, there was a need for reassurance — people wanted stability, not change. Today, that is absent. People have looked at this government's functioning on its own terms, and very clearly found it wanting.

There's always been a whisper campaign that if UDF comes to power, it will be at the mercy of vested interests, minority community organisations; all sorts of community pressures.

Look at a situation analogous to the BJP in Delhi — where the central party in the coalition is so overwhelmingly strong that the allies are not in a position to dictate terms. Can any ally dictate terms to the Congress with the numbers Congress has today? You need

71. Congress's numbers are strong enough that it can carry the day on pretty much any policy initiative it considers important. The implication that we're going to be held to ransom by anybody doesn't hold up against the real mathematics.

What about Kerala's fiscal situation? Will that be the defining challenge?

Getting on top of the fiscal crisis is going to be a major priority. This is a state currently surviving only on liquor excise, remittances, and lotteries. That is no basis to run a government. By September they're out of money — borrowing to pay salaries and bonuses. There has to be what I call a 1991 moment in Kerala's economics. We need to identify real sources of revenue generation: bringing in investment, making genuine ease of doing business a reality, transforming how we approach growth. And we must do that in a way that generates jobs, because our young people are fleeing to other states and to the Gulf. Kerala has the highest youth unemployment rate in India after Kashmir. With all the talent, the education, the workforce — we should be absolutely thriving.

What changes do you see for the INDIA bloc after today?

The wind and the sails we have out of Kerala should carry us forward, including towards Punjab. Though BJP can also say they've emerged from today with a confidence boost, after Bengal and Assam. And TVK — Vijay might yet be invited to join the INDIA bloc. He's not being excluded. Today is too early for apocalyptic conclusions. It seems to have been a day from which both the government and the opposition can take heart.

Security forces to stay back amid post-poll violence fears in Bengal

Deeptiman Tiwary
New Delhi, May 4

WITH POST-poll violence a recurrent feature of West Bengal's electoral cycle, security forces deployed for the Assembly elections have been asked to stay back for an extended period to prevent any breakdown of law and order. Following a landslide victory in which the BJP has crossed the 200-seat mark, defeating the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the party leadership is learnt to have instructed its cadres to maintain restraint.

"The forces that have been stationed in the state will remain there for a few days. It is important to ensure the law and order is not disrupted by either the TMC or the BJP workers. There is a culture in Bengal to target rival cadres, and even supporters, after elections," a security establishment officer said, adding while the strength of deployment would be gradually reduced, "a sizeable force will re-

main in state for next few weeks to ensure political targeting of opponents does not take place".

According to sources, even as the BJP leadership has issued appeals for calm, local police and Central forces have been asked to stay on alert. "The TMC is unlikely to create trouble as they have been decisively defeated. However, there is fear that some BJP cadres may engage in triumphant violence. The BJP cadres have not been imported from outside. They are groomed in the same culture of violent electoral dynamics of the state. While it would be difficult to create mischief in urban areas, it is not easy to maintain comprehensive vigil of rural areas," another officer said.

The scale of deployment was unprecedented. The EC had sent more than 2.5 lakh personnel from (CAPFs) to the state — a significant commitment given that the total strength of CAPFs is just over 9 lakh, with roughly a third engaged in border duties.

Central forces guard Nabanna as Chief Secy orders no files are to be removed

Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 4

WEST BENGAL Chief Secretary Dushyant Narijala on Monday afternoon ordered all department secretaries not to remove or take away any "important file or paper" from the state secretariat Nabanna or other state administration offices in Kolkata.

The circular was issued around 3 pm as soon as it became clear that the BJP was coming to power with a landslide victory, ending the TMC's 15-year-long rule in the state.

"All Departmental Secretaries and Heads of Offices are requested to ensure that no important paper or any file is removed/damaged, or otherwise taken out from the offices. No unauthorised copying/scanning shall be permitted. Further, all files/important papers/communication shall be properly accounted for," the order read.

Warning of strict action, the order said, "The Head of Departments and Departmental Secretaries shall personally ensure that this is followed in



Central forces personnel guard Nabanna, the West Bengal secretariat, on Monday afternoon. PARTHA PAUL

letter and spirit. Personal responsibility shall be fixed for any instance of deviation."

Soon after the order was circulated and emailed to all the departments, Central forces were deployed outside the state secretariat Nabanna, as well as other secretariat offices in Bikash Bhavan, Jhalasampad Bhavan, New Secretariat buildings, and other important installations of the state administration.

A senior police officer told *The Indian Express* that the cir-

cular was issued by the chief secretary on the orders of Governor R N Ravi.

"The Governor asked the chief secretary to ensure all files and documents of the government are secured. Soon after that, the chief secretary issued the circular and ordered the deployment of Central forces at all government offices. In all government offices, security personnel are frisking all government employees who are going back home after their duties.

As superstar-turned-politician Vijay steals show in TN, a look at key debuts in states — MGR to NTR

Anjishnu Das
New Delhi, May 4

AS SUPERSTAR-turned-politician Vijay's TVK makes a stunning debut in the Tamil Nadu Assembly polls — surging towards a win with leads in 107 seats, just short of the 118-seat majority in the 234-member House — it unsettled the state's political landscape centred on Dravidian ideology. However, history shows that the electoral debuts of parties in states across the country have rarely been smooth sailing.

An analysis of 38 parties' debuts in the Assembly polls, 13 in Tamil Nadu and 25 in other states, shows that only a handful of parties have found success in their first bid, and fewer have been able to convert it into a long-standing political presence.

Tamil Nadu debuts

Vijay's entry to the Tamil Nadu fray is the continuation of an established tradition in the state — of film industry giants

looking to convert their popularity into political influence. While the incumbent DMK's founder CN Annadurai and its five-time chief minister M Karunanidhi, and the Opposition AIADMK's founder M G Ramachandran, the actor-turned-politician popularly known as MGR, and six-term CM J Jayalalithaa are among the success stories, many actor-led parties have failed to make an impact in the past.

For instance, in 2005, actor 'Captain' Vijayakanth launched the DMDK and contested 232 seats in 2006. At the time, Vijayakanth was also viewed as a "disruptor", but could win just 1 seat — his own seat Vridhachalam with a 40.4% vote share. However, his party fell flat, securing just 8.38% of the vote share across the state.

Since its debut, the DMDK has seen its vote share continuously dwindle, to as low as 0.43% in 2021 even as it remained a much sought after ally.

Another notable films-to-politics shift was made by actor



TVK supporters celebrate as party chief Vijay leads in vote counting for TN Assembly poll results, in Chennai, Monday. PTI

Kamal Haasan, who launched the MNM in 2018. But contesting 180 seats in 2021, the MNM failed to make a dent, drawing a blank and securing 2.62% of the overall vote share.

Though the NTK does not have its roots in the film industry, it was launched in 1958 by Dina Thanthi newspaper founder S P Adithanar and is now headed by actor-politician

Seeman. In its debut election in 1962, the party contested 16 seats but failed to win any.

It had secured a state-wide vote share of 0.93%, or 12.56% in just the 16 seats it contested. Just years later, the party was disbanded, and only revived by Seeman in 2010. In the revived NTK's debut poll in 2016, it again failed to win any of the 231 seats it contested, securing just 1.06% of the overall vote share.

Of the 13 Tamil Nadu electoral debuts analysed, just five parties managed to win any seats. Though the AIADMK contested its first election in 1977, as a breakaway faction of the DMK. The AIADMK contested 200 seats, winning 130 and securing a 35.36% en route to forming its first government — making it the most successful debut in Tamil Nadu till then.

However, going by strike rates (or the share of winning seats among total contested), the G K Moopanar-founded Tamil Maanila Congress (M), also notched a hugely successful

electoral debut in 1996.

Ahead of the 1996 Assembly polls, unhappy with the Congress's decision to ally with the AIADMK, Moopanar split from the party and allied his new outfit with the DMK. Contesting 40 seats as a DMK ally, Moopanar's party won 39 seats for a 97.5% strike rate. While the party secured 9.3% of the state-wide vote share, it received a remarkable 55.21% share of the total votes in its 40 seats.

Debuts in other states

Among 25 selected parties that have made their Assembly election debuts since the 1980s — ranging from the actor-turned-politician N T Rama Rao or NTR's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in 1983 to political strategist Prashant Kishor's Jan Surraaj Party in 2025 — 11 were involved in government formation after their debuts, all but two parties managed to win at least one seat, and 11 parties won at least one-third of the seats they contested.

First time in 5 decades: No Left government in India as Communists lose Kerala

Manoj CG
New Delhi, May 4

IT IS a political plight generations of comrades have not seen or experienced. With the CPI(M)-led LDF suffering a defeat in Kerala, India will not have a Communist chief minister for the first time in five decades.

The Left bloc was in power in West Bengal from 1977 to 2011. It ruled Tripura from 1993 to 2018. And in Kerala, it returned to power every five years and convincingly broke the trend in 2021.

While Mamata Banerjee and the Trinamool Congress ended the 34-year Guinness record-worthy Left Front rule in West Bengal in 2011, the 25-year-old Left Front rule in Tripura came to an end with the BJP surprisingly decimating it in 2018. The BJP repeated the feat in 2023.

The Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left Democratic Front government in Kerala, which came to power in 2016, was the last Communist outpost that crumbled today. For the first time since 1977, there will be no Communist chief minister in India.

This will further erode the Left bloc's uncanny political ability to intervene in national politics. All these years, the leaders of the CPM and CPI — along with the RSP and Forward Bloc — ensured that the Left bloc punched much above



UDF supporters celebrate during the result declaration day of the Kerala Assembly elections, at Kochi, Kerala, on Monday. PTI

its electoral heft in national politics. Its political heft came largely from the three states of West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. The Left now has one MP from these three states.

After reaching dizzying heights in 2004, the Left has been in a steady decline at the national level since the 2009 Lok Sabha elections.

The collapse has been dramatic as its electoral footprint shrank and shrank. The four Left parties had won 59 Lok Sabha seats in 2004, emerging as a major political force, an alternative voice and the architect of the UPA I government. The CPM alone had 43 MPs then. The political discourse during the

UPA 1 from 2004 to 2009 largely centred around the Left and its interventions, including its objections to the Indo-US civil nuclear deal and various economic initiatives of the Manmohan Singh government. The Left finally withdrew support to the UPA government in 2008.

Lok Sabha elections the next year saw the Left slumping to 24 seats. It crashed to 10 in 2014 and 5 in 2019. The CPM and CPI have six MPs in Lok Sabha now. The CPI (ML) Liberation has two MPs from Bihar.

Of the six CPM-CPI MPs, four won with the help of the DMK in Tamil Nadu and one with the support of the Congress in Rajasthan.



Post-poll Plan

AS THE early trends indicated the Congress-led UDF would emerge victorious in the Kerala Assembly polls, the party announced a press conference at its Akbar Road office at 5 pm, to be addressed by Congress's communication department head Jairam Ramesh. But as poll results of other states started coming in, Ramesh and other senior Congress leaders were summoned by party chief Mallikarjun Kharge at his residence to discuss the next steps to be taken in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, where the party is mulling lending support to Vijay-led TVK. With Ramesh attending Kharge's meet, the press conference had to be cancelled.

Jhalmuri Treat

TO CELEBRATE its thumping victory in West Bengal, the BJP has invited party supporters to its Delhi headquarters for a 'jhalhuri' treat. Those in Bengal have been asked to join a 'maach-bhaat' feast at the party office. The celebratory mood was also reflected from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's traditional Bengali attire — beige dhoti and white kurta — which he wore to the BJP office in the Capital. BJP's Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandwal has invited mediapersons to a 'jhalhuri programme' at his residence in the Capital on Tuesday.

UP discontinues prepaid power meters after wide protests

Maulshree Seth
Lucknow, May 4

THE UP government on Monday announced to discontinue the prepaid electricity meter system in the state, saying all smart meters will now function as postpaid connections.

In a post on X, Energy Minister A.K. Sharma outlined a series of relief measures for electricity consumers, saying, "The consumer is God... In view of the technical difficulties arising for electricity consumers from smart/prepaid meters, an important decision has been taken today to provide them significant relief."

Sharma said monthly billing will resume as earlier, with bills for the 1st to 30th of each month to be sent via SMS or WhatsApp within 10 days. Consumers have been asked to pay within the stipulated time and ensure their phone numbers are updated to receive official communications, he informed.

33 yrs on, Gujarat court convicts 12 in arms landing case linked to Dawood

Aditi Raja
Vadodra, May 4

MORE THAN three decades after Pakistan-linked arms landing on Gujarat coast helped facilitate the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts and other communal discord across the country, a TADA court in Jamnagar on Monday convicted 12 conspirators, establishing official involvement of the Pakistani marine and other military officers in the smuggling operation tied to fugitives Dawood Ibrahim and Tiger Memon.

The verdict, delivered by Special Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act Judge Robin P Mogera, brings partial closure to a case registered in July 1993 that involved a decades-long investigation and trial. Also, the court acquitted 17 others accused in the case.

Judge Mogera pronounced the long-awaited verdict in the case registered on July 15, 1993,



The convicts in police custody in Jamnagar on Monday. EXPRESS

under multiple sections of the TADA Act, the Indian Penal Code, the Arms Act, and the Explosives Substances Act.

The convicted accused include Osman Umar Koreja Mohammad Ali Mohammad alias Mamdu, Harun Adam Sanghar Vadhre, Ahmed Ismail Oliya, Arif Abdul Rehman alias Arif Lambu Lakhani, Ifteqar Mo-

hammad Ahmad Yunus Ansari, Mohammad Ayub Abdul Kayyum Ansari alias Ayub Taklo, Lakhman Hardas Ahir Vasra, Mohammad Salim alis Salim Kutta, Umarmiyan alias Mamumiya Ismailmiyan alis Panjumiya Saiyyed Bukhari, Istiyaq Ahmad Mohammad Yunus Ansari, and Kadir Ahmad Amim Ahmed Shaikh.

While Salim Kutta and Mamumiya Panjumiya were sentenced to seven years imprisonment, the remaining were awarded a five-year jail term. All 12 convicts were sent to judicial custody after the verdict was pronounced, special PP Gokani said.

Meanwhile, Dawood Ibrahim, Tiger Memon (Ibrahim Kaskar, Chota Shakeel, Anwar Samba, whose last known location was Karachi, are among the 15 accused who have been declared proclaimed fugitives by the court under TADA Section 8(3)(A) and are believed to be in Pakistan and the UAE.

'Aim of spreading communal terror'

The case pertains to a "meticulously planned conspiracy", which the prosecution proved was "hatched at the Dubai residence of fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim" to smuggle a large cache of

weapons and explosives, including RDX, into India by sea, with an "aim of spreading communal terror" in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992.

Special Public Prosecutor Tushar Gokani said, "The prosecution succeeded in proving all the facts regarding how the conspiracy was hatched at Dawood Ibrahim's residence in Dubai and how it was executed with the help of Pakistan. During the evidence in the case, it came to light that officers of Pakistan's Marine Security as well as military officers were also involved in the conspiracy to transport the weapons."

"The investigation carried out by retired IPS officers PK Jha (who passed away in 2008) and Satish Verma, and current CBI special director Manoj Shashidhar, brought out chilling facts of the case... All witnesses spoke in one voice to support the prosecution's case," Gokani added.

Bihar bridge collapse: Govt seeks Army & BRO help, orders probe

Santosh Singh
Patna, May 4

HOURS AFTER the collapse of the Vikramshila bridge, Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary Monday sought assistance from the BRO and the Army to rebuild it.

A span of the Ganga bridge — which connects South Bihar to the Kosi and Seemanchal regions — collapsed, forcing traffic to be diverted to the Munger-Khagaria bridge over the Ganga. Nawal Kishore Choudhary, District Magistrate, Bhagalpur, said the collapse occurred in two stages — initial structural failures at bridge number 133 around 11.55 pm, followed by a total span collapse at 1.07 am that split the 4.7-km bridge into two.

"No untoward incident was reported as an alert had been sounded. We have diverted Bhagalpur traffic towards Munger while traffic on the otherside has been diverted towards Khagaria," he said. Two engineers from the Road Construction Department have been suspended for "ignoring red flags", and a probe has been ordered.

Opened under the Rabri Devi government in 2001, the 4.7-km bridge falls under the National Highways wing of the Bihar



The partially damaged Vikramshila Setu in Bhagalpur on Monday. PTI

Road Construction Department and the Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Limited. With repairs likely to take a few months, and a parallel four-lane bridge under construction expected to be operational only later this year, buses and freight trucks will have to take a longer route to Jharkhand via North Bihar, Kosi and Seemanchal.

Choudhary spoke to Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, seeking permission for the BRO and the Army to take up reconstruction. Meanwhile, Chandrasekhar Singh, chairman of the Bihar Rajya Pul Nirman Nigam Ltd, said the damaged portion would be repaired within three months.

"It could have been a major

incident as there is a huge traffic rush on the bridge but for alertness of Bhagalpur district administration. A span of the bridge has been damaged and caved in the river but the pillar is completely safe," he said.

He admitted that concerns about the bridge's safety had been flagged earlier.

"We had received information around a month ago about some minor problem (cropping up in the bridge). A team from RCD and Pul Nirman Nigam was sent to study and give its recommendations. We also sought advice from IIT Patna, and it was found that both the pillars and the bridge are intact, although a false wall had been damaged," Singh said.

Bihar cleric death in Bareilly: Murder FIR on wife's complaint

Manish Sahu
Lucknow, May 4

DAYS AFTER the body of a 30-year-old cleric, Tauseef Raza, was found on the railway tracks in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly, police said they have lodged an FIR under sections of murder based on a complaint by his wife.

In her complaint, Raza's wife, Tabassum Khatoon, alleged that some passengers in his coach brutally assaulted him and threw him from the moving train, killing him, and making it appear like an accident.

"We have registered the case and have begun the investigation," said Circle Officer, Government Railway Police, Anil Kumar Verma.

Raza, who was from Bihar's Kishanganj district, was an imam at a mosque in Siwan. He had travelled to Bareilly to attend the Urs.

According to police, the complainant said that on April 26, after attending the festival, her husband boarded a train from Bareilly Junction to Siwan. Around 9.45 pm, he called her and said that some people in the train coach were

assaulting him without any reason. He asked her to contact someone known to them in Bareilly and to inform the police. On hearing this, she claimed to have switched on the video call mode on her phone and allegedly saw several people brutally attacking her husband, police added. Soon after, her husband's phone was switched off.

In her complaint, Khatoon claimed she kept trying to call him but could not reach him, after which she informed her family about the incident. The next morning, she claimed she tried her husband's phone again and the call was answered by police personnel, who told her that her husband's condition was critical.

Later, when her family members contacted the police, they were told that Raza had died. Two family members then travelled to Bareilly and brought his body home for the last rites.

Khatoon said her husband was the family's sole breadwinner. She also claimed to have recorded a 30-second audio clip and a 2-minute 53-second video call of the incident.

Elgar Parishad case: HC grants bail to Gadling

Omkar Gokhale
Mumbai, May 4

THE BOMBAY High Court Monday granted bail to the Elgaar Parishad case accused Surendra Gadling, the only accused remaining in jail in the case. However, he is likely to remain in custody at Taloja Central prison, as he has not got bail in the 2016 Surajgarh arson case and his plea is pending in the Supreme Court.

A division bench of Justices Ajay S Gadkari and Kamal R Khata granted bail to Gadling on the grounds of his long in-

carceration of over eight years and parity with other accused. He was booked for various offences, including those under the UAPA.

Fourteen of the 16 accused arrested in the Elgaar Parishad case are already out of jail. One of the accused, Father Stan Swamy, died in custody in 2021. One year after his 2019 arrest in the Elgar Parishad case, Gadling was picked up in the 2016 arson case from Gadchiroli.

While trial is yet to start in Elgaar Parishad case, the court has framed charges against Gadling in arson case.

'Reflective of caste bias': SC quashes bail conditions set by Odisha courts

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 4

THE SUPREME Court Monday declared "null and void" bail conditions imposed by various courts in Odisha that required accused persons to clean police stations. Terming such orders "obnoxious" and reflective of "caste bias," the top court warned that such practices bring a bad name to the Indian judiciary.

The apex court had taken suo motu cognisance of news reports regarding bail orders issued against activists involved

in anti-mining protests. The reports highlighted that the accused primarily belonged to Dalit and Adivasi communities.

One specific order from the Odisha HC, dated May 28, 2025, directed an applicant to clean the premises of the Kashipur police station every morning between 6 am and 9 am for two months. Similar conditions were found in seven other orders from trial courts. "Such conditions, far from advancing the cause of justice, strike at the dignity of the accused and proceed on the premise of guilt,

which is completely impermissible in law," the bench observed.

Addressing Odisha Advocate General Pitambar Acharya, Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant remarked, "Directing the accused to clean the police station for two months, this should not be a condition a judiciary registered against him for murder, rape, and offences under the Cow Slaughter Act. He had reportedly been released from jail around five months ago.

On Saturday, police found the bodies of Khatoon's four minor children — aged 14, 12, 10, and 8 — on a bed inside their locked home. They were suspected to have been drugged before being bludgeoned to death. Initially, police suspected that Khatoon was behind the killings. They earlier said she was in distress after she found out on a trip to Saudi Arabia, where her husband was work-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the North Tech Symposium 2026, in Prayagraj on Monday. PTI

Op Sindoor biggest example of hi-tech warfare, says Rajnath

Amrita Nayak Dutta
New Delhi, May 4

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh Monday said Operation Sindoor served as an irrefutable proof that India not only understands the evolving nature of warfare, but is deploying technological advancements with confidence.

Addressing the inaugural session of the three-day North Tech Symposium, organised by the Indian Army's Northern and Central Commands and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, in Prayagraj, Singh also highlighted the criticality of sustained focus on research and cultivating the element of surprise to stay future-ready in the present era of intense technological revolution.

Lauding the defence forces and the industry for thoroughly analysing the evolving circumstances and ensuring India's preparedness, he said, "Operation Sindoor demonstrated

the valour and capabilities of our defence forces to the world. Cutting-edge indigenous equipment, including advanced missile systems such as Akashteer, Akash missile system, and BrahMos, was used during the operation."

He added, "It served as irrefutable proof that we not only understand the evolving nature of warfare but are deploying technological advancements with unwavering confidence."

On the rate of technological change in modern-day warfare, he said, "In the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the nature of warfare transformed from tanks and missiles to game-changer drones and sensors within a span of merely three or four years." "Furthermore, things that are part of day-to-day life are turning into deadly weapons. The pager attacks in Lebanon and Syria have prompted a reassessment of modern warfare methods. In such a situation, we need to be prepared," he added.

Man accused of killing woman, her 4 children shot in UP encounter

Manish Sahu
Lucknow, May 4

IN A dramatic twist to the deaths of four children and their mother in Uttar Pradesh's Ambedkar Nagar, police Monday shot dead their 19-year-old neighbour in an encounter alleging he was behind their murders. Police initially suspected the mother, 35-year-old Ghasia Khatoon, had allegedly killed her children; her body was found in a drain on Sunday afternoon.

Police said during their investigation, they uncovered the involvement of Khatoon's neighbour, Aamir, who was a frequent visitor to their house. Police added that Aamir had a criminal record with cases registered against him for murder, rape, and offences under the Cow Slaughter Act. He had reportedly been released from jail around five months ago.

On Saturday, police found the bodies of Khatoon's four minor children — aged 14, 12, 10, and 8 — on a bed inside their locked home. They were suspected to have been drugged before being bludgeoned to death.

Initially, police suspected that Khatoon was behind the killings. They earlier said she was in distress after she found out on a trip to Saudi Arabia, where her husband was work-

ing, that he had married a Pakistani woman. But on Sunday evening, police found her body in a drain near her house.

Sources said police began suspecting the involvement of another person after Khatoon's post-mortem report indicated that her death was caused by ante-mortem injuries — she had suffered a head injury, suspected to have been inflicted by a blunt object.

In the early hours of May 4, police said they received information that the suspect likely involved in the killings was in Sudari Afzalpur village and teams were dispatched to the spot. When officers attempted to apprehend him, police claimed the suspect allegedly opened fire. Police fired back in self-defence, injuring the suspect. Two policemen — a sub-inspector and a constable — also sustained injuries.

The three were immediately rushed to a hospital, where the suspect, Aamir, was declared dead on arrival.

Police claimed when they searched the body, they found yellow earrings and silver anklets belonging to Khatoon in his pocket. SP, Ambedkar Nagar, Prachi Singh said Aamir's name cropped up during probe. She said the ornaments recovered belonged to the deceased woman.

● AICC TECH & DATA CELL CHIEF SAYS CONGRESS & OPPOSITION MUST DISCARD THE PAST AND EMBRACE FRESH IDEAS, FRESH PEOPLE, FRESH LEADERS, FRESH NARRATIVES, FRESH STYLES

'Had Cong tied up with Vijay, we would have swept Tamil Nadu, won Puducherry'

THE CHAIRMAN of the All India Congress Committee (AICC)'s professional wing and technology and data cell, **Praveen Chakravarty**, had triggered a controversy ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections by stating that the debt situation in the DMK-ruled state was "alarming". He had then faced heat from both the DMK, a key Congress ally, as well as a section of his own party. There was also a buzz that he along with some other Congress leaders had sought an alliance with superstar-turned-politician Vijay's TVK for the elections while pitching for a share in power. With Vijay scripting a stunning electoral debut for the TVK which is poised to clinch Tamil Nadu, Chakravarty speaks to **Manoj CG** on a range of issues related to the outcome of the current round of the state Assembly polls. Excerpts:

to have been generally a mood for change everywhere. Now the mood for change has taken different shapes and norms. In some states it has gone to the other alternative that was available. In states like Tamil Nadu, it has gone to a completely new party. But the overall sense is that there is a mood for change and just disenchantment with the current political status quo.

BJP's electoral juggernaut seems to be unstoppable. After limiting the BJP to 240 seats in LS in 2024, the Opposition somehow has not been able to capitalise on that. It has since lost polls in several states. Now, BJP retained Assam and conquered Bengal. How demoralising is this for the Opposition as a whole?

I have been a very strident advocate for change both within political parties as well as the Opposition as a whole. And, it really keeps coming down to that. Un-

less we change and are ready to discard the past and embrace fresh ideas, fresh people, fresh leaders, fresh narratives, fresh styles... (But) we are constantly being held back by our past. And that I think is a big problem. And I hope it is really high time we take this lesson and learn it.

Can you elaborate on this change?

Change in everything, right from our political strategies such as alliance in Tamil Nadu to a change in our narrative, to a change in our style. I can only speak for the Congress party. I am not speaking for the INDIA alliance. We need a somewhat fresher kind of people making decisions at the party level, at the senior most party level. We just need to have some more freshness in the party in everything, be it decision makers, be it narratives, be it political strategy. Tamil Nadu is a great example of what it shows. The same old tired narrative of

EXPRESS interview



PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY
CHAIRMAN, AICC TECH & DATA CELL

'we'll announce some schemes, we'll give some money to voters, we will get this, we will get that...' — that is not going to cut ice anymore.

So the Congress and Opposition need to reinvent themselves?

It needs freshness. It basically needs to open its windows and allow some fresh air inside. Right now they are all operating in stuffy rooms, operated by the same people for the last two,

three decades.

How do you analyse the Tamil Nadu poll outcome, which seems to be a kind of watershed moment?

The Tamil Nadu outcome is a very resounding message of what we saw somewhat in, say Nepal or Bangladesh or Sri Lanka, which is the younger generation saying that enough is enough, we want a change. In some sense it's not very dissimilar to the Punjab 2022 verdict, but it is much larger. How else do you explain 80, 85, 90% of people below the age of 40 saying it is not about caste, it is not about our geography, it is not about our ideology, it is not about who our parents voted for, it is not about whether you are giving some cash for women's schemes. We want a new politics.

There's recently a debate within Cong on whether the party should continue its alliance with DMK. Do

you think Congress should have tied up with the TVK?

I had no doubt in my mind, which is what I have been maintaining for the last nine months: Had the Congress and TVK come together, it would have been close to a two-thirds majority in Tamil Nadu. We would have won Tamil Nadu and we would have won Puducherry. Please understand what was the lost opportunity. Had we won Tamil Nadu and Puducherry with the TVK alliance... we have won Kerala, we are already in power in Telangana and we are in power in Karnataka — we would have dominated the south of India and that was the opportunity that we lost.

Why did it happen?

Again, there is a need for some freshness in thinking. Freshness in ideas, freshness in political strategy. It cannot be so-called senior leaders who have already had their benefits, ensured their families have also en-

joyed and continue to kind of call the shots based on what they have experienced 20 years ago.

Was it a decision primarily pushed through by the state Congress leadership? There is a talk that Rahul Gandhi was open to exploring the possibility of an alliance with the TVK.

One thing is very clear. Everybody knows and agrees that if Mr Rahul Gandhi and Mr Vijay had come together on a platform... there would have been a wave across Tamil Nadu. He (Vijay) is extremely popular, which means it would have strengthened the Congress. Mr Rahul Gandhi's first and foremost goal is to strengthen the Congress. So obviously he was very open to the idea of how to strengthen the Congress. That's all I can say.

Why do you think it was a lost opportunity?

I think it's a lost opportunity

Six states will go to polls next year. What do you think Congress should do?

Please allow freshness in ideas, political strategy, people. Please allow that. That is more important. It is much, much more important to show that the Congress is adapting to the changing India rather than being stuck in the past.

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Addressing the Crisis of Late PH Diagnosis in India



Dr. Sai Kiran Chaudhary
Pulmonologist, Delhi

In my clinic, I often see patients who have traveled hundreds of kilometers, clutching a folder full of inhalers and cough syrups that haven't worked. By the time they reach a specialist, they are often gasping for air even while resting. These patients are the face of a silent crisis: the delayed

diagnosis of Pulmonary Hypertension (PH) in India.

PH—high blood pressure in the lung arteries—is a devastating condition that leads to right-sided heart failure. While global data suggests a "diagnostic gap" of two years, in the Indian context, this delay is often significantly longer, sometimes spanning five years or more.

The Barriers to Breath

The reasons for this delay are multifaceted. First is the "Masking Effect." In a country where tuberculosis (TB), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and asthma are rampant, the early symptoms of PH—shortness of breath and fatigue—are almost always misattributed. Many of my patients have undergone months of anti-TB treatment for "breathlessness" before

anyone looked at their heart.

Second is accessibility. While India's urban centers boast world-class cardiac facilities, the "gold standard" diagnostic tool—a Right Heart Catheterization—is rarely available in rural or tier-2 city hospitals. Even a basic screening tool like an Echocardiogram (heart ultrasound) may not be performed with the specific protocols needed to detect high lung

A Heart Under Siege

When we catch PH late, the heart has already begun to "remodel." The right ventricle thickens and stretches to push blood through narrowed lung vessels. If we wait until a patient shows blue lips (cyanosis) or heavy leg swelling (edema), the damage to the heart may be irreversible. Early diagnosis doesn't just improve quality of life; it prevents premature death.

The Path Forward: Education and Integration

To fix this, we need a two-pronged approach:

1. Primary Care Training: We must train our frontline "family doctors" to suspect PH when a patient's "asthma" doesn't respond to standard inhalers.

2. Affordable Screening: Expanding access to affordable echocardiography in smaller towns is essential.

India is now entering an era where advanced PH medications are becoming more locally available and affordable. However, the best drug in the world is useless if the heart has already given up. We must bridge the diagnostic gap. If you are breathless, don't just settle for another inhaler—ask for a heart check. Your life may depend on it.

Heritable Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

In the world of cardiovascular medicine, we often focus on lifestyle—diet, exercise, and smoking cessation. However, for a specific group of patients, the challenge is not found in their habits, but in their DNA. This is the reality of Heritable Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (HPAH), a rare but serious condition that causes the arteries in the lungs to thicken and narrow, seemingly without external cause.

As a specialist, I often see the confusion on a patient's face when they are diagnosed. Unlike common high blood pressure, HPAH specifically targets the "pulmonary circuit"—the path between the heart and lungs. When these vessels narrow, the right side of the heart must pump with extreme force to move blood. Over time, this leads to heart failure.

The Genetic Trigger

The most common culprit in HPAH is a mutation in the BMPR2 gene. Think of this gene as a regulator that tells the cells in your lung's blood vessels when to stop growing. When the gene is mutated, the cells multiply uncontrollably, "clogging" the pipes from the inside. While HPAH is genetic, it is also unpredictable. Not everyone who carries the mutation will develop the disease—a phenomenon we call "reduced penetrance." This is why family history

is our most vital diagnostic tool. If a relative has been diagnosed with unexplained breathlessness or heart failure, clinical screening for the rest of the family can be a literal lifesaver.

Science Meets Hope

For decades, a diagnosis of HPAH was met with limited options. Today, the landscape has shifted dramatically. While we cannot yet rewrite a patient's genetic code, we have sophisticated

therapies—including prostacyclins and endothelin receptor antagonists—that dilate the lung vessels and ease the heart's burden.

Furthermore, we are entering an era of "precision medicine," where treatments are being developed to target the specific signaling pathways affected by these genetic mutations.

A Call for Awareness

The greatest barrier to treating HPAH is a late diagnosis. Symptoms like fatigue, fainting, and shortness of breath are often misattributed to asthma or poor fitness.

If you have a family history of pulmonary hypertension, I urge you to speak with a cardiologist or pulmonologist. We can't change your blueprint, but with early detection and modern science, we can certainly change your outcome.



Dr. Praveen Kumar Pandey
Pulmonologist, Delhi

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension in Women



Dr. Hemant Kalra
Pulmonologist, Delhi

Heart disease is often portrayed as a "man's disease," but in the realm of Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH), the narrative shifts dramatically. PAH is a rare, progressive disorder characterized by high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs. While it can affect anyone, women are diagnosed at nearly four times the rate of men.

Understanding the Burden

In a healthy body, the right side of the heart pumps blood through the lungs to pick up oxygen. In a patient with PAH, the walls of the pulmonary arteries become thick, stiff, or narrowed. This creates a bottleneck, forcing the heart to work overtime to push blood through. For women, this diagnosis often strikes in the prime of life—typically between the ages of 30 and 60. Because the primary symptoms—shortness of breath, fatigue, and dizziness—are

easily mistaken for asthma, poor fitness, or even anxiety, many women face a "diagnostic gap," waiting years for a correct identification of the disease.

The Biological "Paradox"

Researchers are still unraveling why women are more susceptible. The leading theory involves the complex interplay of estrogen. While estrogen generally protects the heart, certain metabolites of the hormone may trigger the abnormal cell growth in lung arteries seen in PAH. Interestingly, while more women get the disease, they often have better survival rates than men—a phenomenon medical professionals call the "Estrogen Paradox."

Moving Toward Early Detection

The stakes of delay are high. Without treatment, the persistent strain on the heart can lead to right-sided heart failure. However, the medical landscape is changing. Over the last decade, we have moved from having zero treatments to a robust suite of therapies, including oral medications, inhaled options, and continuous infusions that help dilate blood vessels and improve quality of life.

The message for the public is clear: persistent breathlessness is not a normal part of aging or stress. If you find yourself struggling to keep up with daily activities that were once easy, advocate for your health. A simple echocardiogram can often be the first step in catching this silent strain before it catches up to you.



Non-Responders in Vasoreactivity Testing



Dr. Bimit Kumar Jain
Cardiologist, Delhi

For patients diagnosed with Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH)—a serious condition where high blood pressure affects the arteries in the lungs—one of the most pivotal moments in their medical journey happens during a specialized

diagnostic procedure called a vasoreactivity test.

Performed during a right-heart catheterization, this test involves administering a short-acting medication (usually inhaled nitric oxide) to see if the lung's blood vessels can relax and open up. In the medical world, we are looking for "responders." But for the vast majority of patients—roughly 90%—the results label them as "non-responders."

What Does it Mean to be a Non-Responder?

While the term might sound discouraging, being a "non-responder" is not a failure of the patient or a sign that the disease is untreatable. Rather, it is a vital piece of biological data that dictates the entire roadmap of a

patient's care.

A positive response indicates that the high pressure in the lungs is "reversible" or flexible. These rare patients can often be treated effectively with simple calcium channel blockers (pills commonly used for systemic high blood pressure).

A non-responder, however, has blood vessels that have likely undergone structural changes—such as thickening or scarring—meaning they no longer "relax" instantly when prompted. For these patients, standard blood pressure pills will not work and could even be dangerous.

Accuracy in Treatment

Identifying a non-responder is a success in precision medicine. It allows specialists to bypass ineffective treatments and immediately start

"targeted" PAH therapies. These modern medications—which can be oral, inhaled, or infused—work through different pathways to slow disease progression and improve quality of life.

The Path Forward

If you or a loved one are labeled a non-responder, it is important to remember that the goal of the test was never to "pass," but to "pathfind." Being a non-responder simply means your condition requires a more specialized, sophisticated toolkit.

The field of pulmonary hypertension has advanced rapidly. Today, being a non-responder is merely the first step toward a personalized treatment plan designed to help you breathe easier and live longer.

Autoimmune Diseases and Pulmonary Hypertension



Dr. S K Dutta
Cardiologist, Delhi

Autoimmune diseases occur when the body's immune system mistakenly attacks its own tissues. Conditions such as scleroderma, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis have been associated with an increased risk of pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), a subtype of PH. In these cases, chronic inflammation can damage blood vessels in the lungs, causing them to narrow, stiffen, or develop scar tissue, which

elevates pressure within the pulmonary arteries.

Scleroderma is particularly notable in this context. Studies indicate that approximately 10–15% of people with scleroderma may develop PAH, making regular monitoring critical. Similarly, lupus and mixed connective tissue diseases can trigger vascular changes that raise pulmonary pressures. Early identification is vital because symptoms often appear gradually and can be mistaken for general fatigue or shortness of breath, delaying diagnosis.

Diagnosis typically involves imaging tests, such as echocardiography, to evaluate heart and lung function, and may include right heart catheterization to directly measure pulmonary artery pressure. In patients with autoimmune conditions, doctors often recommend routine screening, even when symptoms are mild, to detect PAH at its earliest stage.

Treatment strategies aim to address both the underlying autoimmune disease and the

pulmonary hypertension. Immunosuppressive medications may reduce inflammation, while targeted PAH therapies—such as vasodilators, endothelin receptor antagonists, or phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors—can help relax pulmonary vessels and improve blood flow. Coordinated care between rheumatologists and cardiologists or pulmonologists is essential to manage these complex cases effectively.

Experts emphasize that awareness is key. Individuals with autoimmune conditions should be vigilant for signs such as unexplained shortness of breath, chest discomfort, fatigue, or swelling in the legs. Early evaluation and intervention can significantly improve quality of life and long-term outcomes.

As research continues, understanding the intersection between autoimmune diseases and pulmonary hypertension is shaping better screening protocols, personalized treatments, and hope for patients living with both conditions.

Symptoms of Idiopathic PAH



Dr. Ashish Jain
Cardiologist, Delhi

In the world of rare diseases, "idiopathic" is a term we use when a condition arises without a clear, identifiable cause. For patients with Idiopathic Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (IPAH), this means their lung's blood vessels begin to thicken and narrow for reasons that remain, for now, a medical mystery. Because the disease often strikes otherwise healthy individuals—frequently women in the prime of their lives—recognizing the early symptoms is a race against time.

The Great Masquerader

The primary challenge with IPAH is that

its symptoms are "non-specific." In my practice, I have seen many patients who were initially told they simply had asthma, were out of shape, or were suffering from anxiety. The heart and lungs are incredibly resilient, often compensating for high pressures until the disease is significantly advanced.

Early Whispers of the Disease

The hallmark of IPAH is exertional dyspnea—a medical term for shortness of breath during physical activity.

- **Breathlessness:** It starts with a flight of stairs or a brisk walk. Unlike common fitness issues, this breathlessness doesn't improve with training; it slowly worsens.
- **Fatigue:** A deep, persistent exhaustion that sleep cannot fix. This happens because the heart is working "overtime" just to circulate oxygenated blood.
- **Dizziness:** Feeling lightheaded or "graying out" during exercise is a sign that the heart is struggling to maintain blood flow to the brain.

When the Heart "Shouts"

As the pressure in the pulmonary arteries climbs, the right side of the heart begins

to fail. This leads to more visible and severe symptoms:

- **Chest Pain:** Often felt as pressure or tightness during exertion.
- **Palpitations:** A racing or thumping heart rate.
- **Edema:** Swelling in the ankles and legs as fluid backs up in the circulatory system.
- **Syncope (Fainting):** This is a critical warning sign. Fainting during activity suggests the heart can no longer meet the body's basic oxygen demands.

Why Every Breath Matters

In 2026, we have more tools than ever to treat IPAH, but they are most effective when started early. If you find yourself struggling to keep up with activities that were once easy, or if you experience unexplained fainting, do not dismiss it. A simple screening, beginning with an echocardiogram, can be the difference between years of decline and a proactive, managed life. When it comes to your heart and lungs, "listening" to the subtle signs is the most important thing you can do.

Treatment Options for PAH



Dr. Vivek Nangia
Pulmonologist, Delhi

In the realm of cardiovascular medicine, few conditions have seen as dramatic a transformation in treatment as Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH). Often described as "high blood pressure in the lungs," PAH was once a diagnosis with few answers and a grim outlook. Today, however, we are in an era of targeted therapy where the goal has shifted from mere survival to an active, fulfilling life. The core challenge of PAH is the narrowing of the pulmonary arteries—the "pipes" that

carry blood from the heart to the lungs. As these vessels tighten and stiffen, the right side of the heart struggles to push blood through, leading to breathlessness and heart strain.

The Three Pillars of Therapy

Modern treatment is built on three biological pathways that control how blood vessels relax or constrict. Think of these as the "control switches" for the lungs:

1. **The Nitric Oxide Pathway:** We use medications (like PDE5 inhibitors) to boost the body's natural ability to relax blood vessels.
 2. **The Endothelin Pathway:** We block "endothelin," a substance the body produces in excess in PAH patients that causes vessels to tighten.
 3. **The Prostacyclin Pathway:** We replace a naturally occurring lipid that helps keep vessels open and prevents them from thickening.
- From "One Drug" to "Triple Therapy" Perhaps the most significant shift in journalism and medicine alike is the move

toward Initial Combination Therapy. We no longer wait for a patient to "fail" on one medication before adding another. By attacking the disease through multiple pathways simultaneously—often starting with two or three drugs right at the time of diagnosis—we can stop the progression of the disease much more effectively.

The Future: Beyond Vasodilators

The frontier of PAH research is now moving toward "disease-modifying" therapies. We are investigating drugs that don't just relax the vessels but actually help repair the cellular damage within the vessel wall. Furthermore, for patients where medication is not enough, surgical options and lung transplantation remains a vital, life-saving backstop.

While PAH remains a chronic and serious condition, the "silent strain" is being met with a loud and sophisticated medical response. If you find yourself breathless during routine tasks, do not dismiss it. Early intervention is not just an option; it is the key to rewriting your story.

Right Heart Catheterization in PH Diagnosis



Dr. Mohit Bhagwati
Cardiologist, Delhi

In the world of cardiovascular medicine, we rely heavily on non-invasive tools. We can peer at the heart's valves with ultrasound and trace its electrical rhythm with an EKG. However, when it comes to Pulmonary Hypertension (PH)—a dangerous elevation of blood pressure in the lung's arteries—there is a point where pictures are no longer enough. To truly understand what is happening inside the heart-lung circuit, we must go to the source. This brings us to the Right Heart Catheterization (RHC). While the word "catheterization" often evokes images of intense emergency room dramas, the RHC is

a sophisticated, elective diagnostic tool that remains the "gold standard" for confirming a PH diagnosis.

Beyond the Ultrasound

Many patients ask why a simple echocardiogram isn't sufficient. While an ultrasound can estimate lung pressure, it is often imprecise. An RHC provides the definitive, "real-time" pressure readings required to differentiate between types of PH. This distinction is critical; treating the wrong type of pulmonary hypertension can not only be ineffective but potentially harmful.

What to Expect: The Procedure

The procedure is typically performed in a specialized "cath lab." Unlike left-heart catheterization (used for heart attacks), which usually enters through the groin or wrist to look at the coronary arteries, an RHC involves threading a thin, flexible tube called a Swan-Ganz catheter through a vein—usually in the neck or the groin. Under live X-ray guidance, the catheter travels into the right atrium, through the right ventricle, and into the pulmonary artery.

Why the Data Matters

During the procedure, we measure several key metrics:

- **Mean Pulmonary Arterial Pressure (mPAP):** To confirm the presence of hypertension.
- **Pulmonary Capillary Wedge Pressure:** To determine if the high pressure is caused by lung disease or by a backup from the left side of the heart.
- **Cardiac Output:** How well the heart is actually pumping blood to the rest of the body.

Safety and Clarity

While no invasive procedure is without risk, the RHC is generally considered very safe when performed by experienced specialists. The minor discomfort of the entry site is a small price to pay for the clarity it provides. It transforms a "suspected" condition into a concrete roadmap for treatment, allowing us to prescribe life-saving medications with surgical precision. If your specialist has recommended this "deep dive" into your heart's mechanics, know that it is the most vital step toward breathing easier.

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Exercise Intolerance in Pulmonary Hypertension



Dr. Ashish Singhal
Cardiologist, Delhi

frustrated by a body that no longer keeps pace with their spirit. This isn't just "being out of shape"; it is a complex physiological phenomenon known as exercise intolerance.

What is Pulmonary Hypertension?

To understand why exercise becomes a mountain, we must look at the "plumbing" of the heart and lungs. In a healthy system, the right side of the heart pumps blood easily through the pulmonary arteries to the lungs to pick up oxygen. In PH, these arteries become thick, stiff, or narrowed.

As the resistance increases, the right heart must work overtime to push blood through. During exercise, a healthy heart increases its output to meet the muscles' demand for oxygen. In a PH patient, the narrowed vessels act like a bottleneck. The heart hits a "ceiling," blood flow

levels off, and oxygen delivery to the muscles falters.

The Warning Signs

Exercise intolerance often begins subtly. Patients may notice:

- **Breathlessness (Dyspnea):** Feeling "winded" by activities that were previously easy.
- **Early Fatigue:** A heavy, leaden feeling in the legs during movement.
- **Lightheadedness:** A sign that the brain isn't receiving enough oxygenated blood.

Because these symptoms mimic asthma or general aging, PH is frequently misdiagnosed in its early stages. However, the distinction is vital: while asthma affects the airways, PH affects the blood vessels.

Moving Forward: The Role of Supervised**Activity**

Historically, doctors told PH patients to avoid exertion entirely. We now know that complete inactivity leads to muscle wasting, which actually makes the intolerance worse.

Today, the medical standard is supervised pulmonary rehabilitation. Under clinical watch, patients engage in tailored, low-impact movements that strengthen peripheral muscles, allowing the body to use available oxygen more efficiently.

If you find that your "engine" is stalling during routine activities, don't dismiss it. Early diagnosis through an echocardiogram or right-heart catheterization can lead to life-changing therapies. Living with PH is a marathon, not a sprint, and understanding your limits is the first step toward reclaiming your quality of life.

The Vital Role of Hospitals in PH Awareness

In the quiet corridors of our modern medical centers, a silent crisis is unfolding. Pulmonary Hypertension (PH)—a life-threatening condition characterized by high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs—is often called a "hidden" disease. Because its symptoms, such as breathlessness and fatigue, mimic common ailments like asthma or even poor fitness, patients frequently cycle through multiple doctors for years before receiving an accurate diagnosis.

The Hospital as an Educational Engine

Hospitals occupy a unique position in the community. They are the primary contact point for patients experiencing acute respiratory distress. By implementing specialized screening protocols in emergency departments and primary care clinics, hospitals can catch PH in its infancy. Awareness begins with the medical staff. Specialized hospitals are now investing in "PH Core Teams," ensuring that radiologists, cardiologists, and pulmonologists are trained to spot the subtle signs of right-heart strain on routine imaging. When a hospital prioritizes internal education, the "diagnostic gap"—the

time between the first symptom and the start of treatment—is drastically reduced.

Bridging the Gap to the Public

Beyond the wards, hospitals serve as essential platforms for public health campaigns. Through community seminars, support groups, and free screening events, healthcare institutions can demystify the "why" behind chronic shortness of breath.

A hospital-led awareness initiative does more than just share facts; it provides a direct pathway to specialized care. By hosting multidisciplinary clinics where patients can see several specialists in one day, hospitals remove the logistical barriers that often prevent people from seeking help.

A Call to Action
The role of the hospital is evolving from a reactive institution to a proactive

guardian of lung health. However, awareness is a two-way street. If you or a loved one experiences unexplained breathlessness that persists despite standard treatments, look to your local medical center for resources. We have the technology to diagnose PH and the therapies to manage it, but these tools only work if the patient walks through our doors. In the fight against Pulmonary Hypertension, awareness is the most powerful medicine we have.



Dr. Manish Jain
Cardiologist, Delhi

Ways to Spread Awareness About Pulmonary Hypertension



Dr. Akshay Budhbraja
Pulmonologist, Delhi

"Breathless No More" digital campaign. By using augmented reality (AR) filters that simulate the sensation of breathing through a narrowed straw, advocates are helping the general public and primary care physicians—empathize with the physical toll of the condition.

Beyond digital platforms, grassroots "Phitness" walks and "Purple Lip" social media challenges have raised millions for research into 2026's breakthrough therapies. These events do more than fundraise; they create a visible community for a disease that is often invisible to the naked eye. Furthermore, new "CME" (Continuing Medical Education) modules are being rolled out this quarter to help general practitioners identify "red flag" symptoms earlier in the diagnostic process.

The significance of these efforts is reflected in the data: 2026 has seen a 12% increase in early-stage referrals compared to three years ago. As public knowledge grows, the transition from "rare mystery" to "recognizable condition" becomes a reality. By spreading awareness, society isn't just sharing information—it is actively shortening the distance between a patient's first symptom and their first life-saving dose of medicine.

Research for Better Medicines

— Public Awareness Initiative —

Acute Responders in Vasoreactivity Testing



Dr. Puneet Khanna
Pulmonologist, Delhi

Vasoreactivity testing is performed during a right heart catheterization, a procedure in which a thin tube is inserted into the heart to measure pressures in the pulmonary arteries. During the test,

doctors administer medications that temporarily relax the blood vessels, observing how the arteries respond. Patients whose pulmonary artery pressures drop significantly in response to the medication are classified as acute responders.

This distinction carries important clinical implications. Acute responders are more likely to benefit from certain medications, particularly calcium channel blockers, which can improve blood flow and reduce strain on the heart. For these patients, targeted therapy can lead to better long-term outcomes, including improved exercise capacity, quality of life, and survival rates. Experts note, however, that acute

responders represent a small fraction of those with PAH. Studies indicate that only about 10% of patients show a positive response during vasoreactivity testing. This highlights the need for comprehensive assessment, as most patients will require alternative therapies such as prostacyclin analogs, endothelin receptor antagonists, or phosphodiesterase-5 inhibitors to manage their condition effectively.

While the test is generally safe, it requires skilled medical supervision because the medications used can temporarily lower blood pressure or trigger other heart-related changes. Physicians carefully weigh the benefits and risks before recommending the

procedure, especially for individuals with advanced disease or other underlying health issues.

Understanding vasoreactivity and the concept of acute responders underscores the personalized nature of modern PAH care. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, physicians can use diagnostic testing to identify which patients are likely to respond to specific treatments, ultimately improving outcomes.

As awareness of PAH grows, vasoreactivity testing remains a cornerstone in the effort to deliver precise, effective, and individualized care, offering hope to patients and families navigating this challenging disease.

Common Symptoms of Pulmonary Hypertension



Dr. S. S. Murthy
Cardiologist, Delhi

In the quiet onset of pulmonary hypertension (PH), the body's warning signs are often whisper-thin. A flight of stairs that feels slightly steeper than usual or a

lingering sense of exhaustion is frequently dismissed as aging or stress. However, medical experts warn that "pushing through" these symptoms can be a fatal mistake.

Pulmonary hypertension is a complex physiological state where blood pressure rises abnormally within the arteries of the lungs. Unlike systemic hypertension, PH occurs deep in the pulmonary circuit. As these arteries narrow, the right side of the heart must work exponentially harder to pump blood, eventually leading to right-sided heart failure. The primary challenge remains the "nonspecific" nature of early symptoms, which mirror asthma or poor fitness. According to 2026 clinical data, the average diagnostic delay remains nearly two years. Key symptoms include:

- **Progressive Breathlessness:** Shortness of

breath during routine activities.

- **Chronic Fatigue:** Overwhelming tiredness that does not improve with rest.
- **Dizziness or Syncope:** Fainting spells, especially during exertion.
- **Edema:** Swelling in the ankles, legs, or abdomen.

"Early detection is the single most important factor in preserving quality of life," says Deb Brown of the American Lung Association. Recent breakthroughs, including the Phase 3 success of therapies like ralinepag, offer new hope for altering the disease's trajectory. The significance of early action is clear: patients diagnosed while symptoms are mild have significantly higher five-year survival rates. If breathlessness persists, a simple echocardiogram can be the first step in a journey that saves a life.

Eisenmenger Syndrome Explained



Dr. Suman Jatain
Cardiologist, Delhi

To understand Eisenmenger Syndrome, one must first understand the "shunt." Many children are born with holes in the heart, such as a Ventricular Septal Defect (VSD). Normally, the left side of the heart pumps oxygen-rich blood to the body, while the right side sends oxygen-poor blood to the lungs. Because the left side is stronger, a hole usually causes blood to leak from left to

right. This floods the lungs with excess blood. If left uncorrected, the delicate vessels in the lungs respond to this high-pressure "over-circulation" by thickening and scarring. Over years, the resistance in the lungs becomes so high that the pressure on the right side of the heart exceeds the left.

The result is a right-to-left shunt. Oxygen-poor blood now bypasses the lungs entirely, flowing directly into the body's arterial circulation. This is the hallmark of Eisenmenger Syndrome.

Recognizing the Signs

The most striking symptom is cyanosis—a bluish tint to the lips, fingers, and toes, caused by the lack of oxygen in the blood. Patients often experience:

- Significant fatigue and shortness of breath.
- "Clubbing" (widening) of the fingertips.

- Increased risk of blood clots and fainting.

Because the body is starved for oxygen, it compensates by overproducing red blood cells. While this sounds helpful, it makes the blood thick and viscous, increasing the risk of stroke.

A Modern Outlook

Decades ago, an Eisenmenger diagnosis was a terminal sentence. Today, the narrative is changing. While the condition remains irreversible—meaning surgery to close the original hole is no longer an option once the syndrome has set in—advanced pulmonary vasodilators can now ease the pressure in the lung vessels.

Living with Eisenmenger Syndrome requires a delicate balance of medical management and lifestyle adjustments. While it is a serious journey, modern specialized care is helping patients live longer, more active lives than ever before.

Pulmonary Hypertension vs High Blood Pressure



Dr. Chayan Vermani
Cardiologist, Delhi

For the average patient, "high blood pressure" suggests a familiar routine: less salt, more exercise, and a standard arm cuff. However, when the word "pulmonary" is added, the medical stakes shift dramatically. Despite the linguistic overlap, systemic hypertension and pulmonary hypertension (PH) are entirely different biological entities. Understanding

the gap between them is not just a matter of semantics—it is often a matter of survival. Systemic hypertension affects the vast network of arteries carrying oxygen from the heart to the body. In contrast, PH occurs exclusively in the short loop of vessels connecting the right side of the heart to the lungs. Because these arteries are deep within the chest, PH cannot be detected by a standard blood pressure cuff, allowing it to hide behind symptoms like fatigue and breathlessness for years.

The human heart functions as two pumps. The left side is a high-pressure powerhouse, while the right side is a delicate pump designed for low-pressure environments. "The danger of PH is that it forces a low-pressure pump to do a high-pressure job," explains Dr. Elena Rossi, a senior cardiologist. "When lung arteries narrow,

the right ventricle strains to push blood through, eventually leading to heart failure."

The diagnostic disparity is stark. While systemic hypertension is screened at every routine check-up, PH requires specialized imaging or a right heart catheterization. According to 2026 clinical data, nearly 70% of PH patients are misdiagnosed initially, often told they simply have asthma or are "out of shape."

As we look forward, the outlook is brightening. New "triple therapy" regimens and genetic screening are moving PH from a fatal diagnosis to a manageable chronic condition. However, the message for the public remains: if you are breathless despite a "normal" blood pressure reading on your arm, the pressure that matters most may be the one you cannot see.

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension and Other Lung Diseases



Dr. Kamanshish Das
Pulmonologist, Delhi

Although PAH itself is uncommon, it is closely linked with several other lung and respiratory diseases. Conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), interstitial lung disease, and sleep-related breathing disorders can contribute to increased pressure in the pulmonary arteries. In some cases, long-term lung damage from these illnesses reduces oxygen levels in the blood, which can trigger changes in

the pulmonary vessels and lead to pulmonary hypertension.

One of the challenges with PAH is that its symptoms often resemble those of other lung conditions. Patients may experience shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, chest discomfort, or swelling in the ankles and legs. Because these symptoms are common in many respiratory illnesses, diagnosis can sometimes be delayed. Early detection, however, is critical for managing the disease and preventing complications.

Medical experts emphasize the importance of regular monitoring for patients who already have chronic lung diseases. People diagnosed with COPD or other serious lung conditions should undergo routine check-ups, including heart and lung function assessments, to identify any signs of developing pulmonary hypertension. Diagnostic tools such as echocardiograms, lung function tests, and specialized imaging studies can

help physicians evaluate pulmonary artery pressure and overall heart health.

Treatment for PAH varies depending on the underlying cause and severity of the condition. In some cases, medications that relax blood vessels and improve blood flow in the lungs can help manage symptoms. Oxygen therapy, lifestyle adjustments, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs may also be recommended to improve quality of life. For patients with advanced disease, more specialized treatments may be required.

Healthcare professionals stress that awareness is key. Recognizing symptoms early and understanding the link between lung diseases and pulmonary hypertension can help patients seek medical attention sooner. With timely diagnosis, proper treatment, and ongoing care, many individuals with PAH can manage the condition more effectively and maintain a better quality of life.

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Fatigue in Pulmonary Hypertension Patients



Dr. Shadab Samad
Cardiologist, Delhi

more pervasive, often misunderstood symptom that dictates the daily lives of patients: profound fatigue.

Pulmonary hypertension occurs when the blood vessels in the lungs become narrowed, blocked, or destroyed. This slows blood flow through the lungs, causing blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries to rise. As a result, the right side of the heart must work significantly harder to pump blood.

Why the Exhaustion?

The fatigue associated with PH isn't the typical tiredness one feels after a long day at the office. It is a systemic "cellular" exhaustion. When the heart cannot efficiently oxygenate the body, the muscles and vital organs are starved of the fuel they need to function. This creates a persistent state of lethargy that rest rarely cures.

Furthermore, the body's compensatory mechanisms—such as an increased heart rate—can leave patients feeling physically drained even while sitting still. Secondary factors, including sleep apnea, side effects from potent medications, and the psychological toll of managing a chronic illness, often compound this exhaustion.

Managing the "Energy Envelope"

In the medical community, we often advise patients on "energy conservation" or the "Spoon Theory." This involves viewing energy as a finite currency to be spent wisely.

- **Prioritization:** Choosing which tasks are essential.
- **Pacing:** Breaking activities into smaller, manageable segments.
- **Planning:** Scheduling high-effort tasks for times of day when energy

levels are naturally higher.

A Message to the Public

Because PH is often an "invisible illness," patients frequently face skepticism from others who see a person who "looks fine" but is struggling to stand in a grocery line. Greater public awareness is vital.

Advancements in vasodilator therapies and specialized exercise rehabilitation have improved the quality of life significantly over the last decade. However, acknowledging the crushing weight of fatigue is the first step toward better support. If you or a loved one experiences disproportionate tiredness alongside breathlessness, consult a specialist. Early diagnosis remains our most powerful tool in lightening the load.

Future of Pulmonary Hypertension Care in India

For years, a diagnosis of Pulmonary Hypertension (PH) in India felt like a silent sentence. Patients often spent months, if not years, misdiagnosed with common asthma or general fatigue before discovering that the high pressure in their lung arteries was straining their hearts to the point of failure. However, as we move into 2026, the landscape of PH care in India is undergoing a profound transformation, shifting from late-stage crisis management to a future of precision, accessibility, and hope.

From Imports to "Atmanirbhar" Innovation

Historically, the cost of specialized PH medication was a barrier that few Indian families could scale. Today, the tide has turned. India has emerged as a global hub for affordable PH therapy, with domestic pharmaceutical giants manufacturing everything from Endothelin Receptor Antagonists (ERAs) to PDE5 inhibitors. The Union Budget 2026 has further accelerated this through the "Biopharma SHAKTI" initiative. With a ₹10,000 crore commitment to domestic biologic production, we are moving toward a reality where advanced, life-saving

therapies—once only available via expensive imports—are produced right here in India. This, coupled with the recent customs duty exemptions on rare disease medicines, is significantly easing the "out-of-pocket" burden on patients.

Digital Health and Holistic Care

The future is also digital. Under ABDM 2.0 (Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission), we are seeing the rise of patient-controlled health records that allow for seamless monitoring of a patient's progress across different cities.

Furthermore, Indian researchers are leading the world in "integrative" PH care. Ongoing multi-centre trials on yoga as a supportive therapy for PAH are proving that while modern medicine saves lives, holistic wellness improves the

quality of those lives. While challenges in rural infrastructure remain, the message for 2026 is clear: In India, Pulmonary Hypertension is no longer an invisible battle fought in the dark. With early detection and affordable, home-grown innovation, our patients can finally breathe a little easier.



Dr. Shree Vashista
Cardiologist, Delhi

Severe Symptoms of PH



Dr. Avi Kumar
Pulmonologist, Delhi

noticeable, often "pitting" swelling in the ankles, legs, and eventually the abdomen (ascites).

- **Cyanosis:** A bluish tint to the lips or fingertips indicates that oxygen levels in the blood have dropped to critical levels.
- **Chest Pain (Angina):** This occurs when the overworked heart muscle itself is not receiving enough oxygen, signaling extreme cardiac strain.

The Turning Point in Care

When a patient presents with these severe markers, our clinical approach shifts from "monitoring" to "aggressive stabilization." We often utilize a Risk Stratification model, looking at the size of the right ventricle and the levels of heart-stress proteins in the blood.

For patients in this high-risk category, oral pills alone are often insufficient. We move toward advanced therapies, such as continuous intravenous or subcutaneous infusions of prostacyclins. These medications act as a constant "open valve" for the lung arteries, significantly reducing the workload on the heart.

A Message of Urgency

If you experience fainting or swelling alongside breathlessness, do not wait for your next scheduled check-up. Severe PH is a medical emergency that requires a specialized care team. With the aggressive, multi-pathway treatments available in 2026, even patients with advanced symptoms can find a path back to stability—but only if we act before the heart reaches its limit.

The Right Heart Under Siege

Pulmonary Hypertension occurs when the arteries in the lungs become thick and narrow. To compensate, the right side of the heart must pump with increasing force. When the condition reaches a "severe" stage, the heart can no longer keep up. This is known as right-sided heart failure, and its symptoms are distinct and demanding.

Red Flags: The Symptoms of Severity

While mild PH might only cause shortness of breath during a jog, severe PH manifests during the simplest tasks, such as dressing or speaking.

- **Syncope (Fainting):** This is perhaps the most alarming "red flag." Fainting during physical exertion suggests that the heart is unable to pump enough oxygenated blood to the brain.
- **Significant Edema:** When the right heart fails, fluid backs up into the body. This causes

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Tracking Disease Progression in PH



Dr. Stuti Gupta
Pulmonologist, Delhi

The "Traffic Light" System: Risk Stratification

In 2026, we no longer guess how a patient is doing based on how they look in the exam room. Instead, we use Risk Stratification—a comprehensive

scoring system that categorizes a patient's status into "Green" (Low Risk), "Yellow" (Intermediate Risk), or "Red" (High Risk).

Our goal is simple: to get every patient into the "Green" zone and keep them there. To do this, we monitor three primary pillars of health:

1. **Functional Capacity:** We track how much physical activity a patient can perform before reaching their limit. This is often measured by the Six-Minute Walk Test. A stable or increasing distance is a sign of success; a decline is an early warning.
2. **Right Heart Function:** Using an echocardiogram or cardiac MRI, we look for changes in the shape and strength of the right ventricle. If the

heart begins to enlarge, it tells us the "plumbing" in the lungs is becoming more resistant.

3. **Biomarkers:** We use blood tests to measure NT-proBNP. Think of this as a chemical "distress signal" sent by the heart muscle when it is stretched too thin.

Why "Stable" Isn't Always Enough

A common pitfall in PH care is accepting a "stable" condition when a patient is still in the intermediate-risk (Yellow) category. Modern journalism standards and medical ethics both point to a clear truth: stability at a high-risk level is not a success.

If a patient's markers suggest they are not in the "Low Risk" zone, we must be proactive. This often means

"escalating" therapy—adding a second or third medication that targets a different biological pathway in the lung's blood vessels.

The Patient's Role in the Map

Monitoring is a partnership. We ask patients to track their daily weight and recognize "red flags" like increased swelling or lightheadedness. By combining these home observations with our clinical tests, we can catch progression in its infancy.

In the fight against PH, information is our most powerful medicine. By tracking every variable, we transform a frightening diagnosis into a manageable journey, ensuring that your heart remains strong enough for the road ahead.

PH with No Known Cause



Dr. Diwakar Kumar
Cardiologist, Delhi

When we use the word "idiopathic," it is a humble medical admission: we know what is happening, but we don't yet know why.

A High-Pressure Mystery

In a healthy body, the pulmonary arteries are flexible and wide, allowing blood to flow easily from the heart to the lungs to pick up oxygen. In patients with IPAH, these arteries undergo a mysterious transformation. The lining of the vessels begins to thicken and scar, narrowing the path for blood flow. Imagine trying to force the contents of a fire hose through a straw. The right side of the heart, which pumps this blood, must strain against immense resistance. Over time, this constant "heavy lifting" causes the heart muscle to enlarge and eventually fail.

The Face of the Disease

IPAH is famously difficult to catch early. Because it often strikes young, otherwise healthy individuals—predominantly women in the prime of their lives—it is frequently misdiagnosed as asthma, anxiety, or poor physical conditioning. Patients often describe a "wall" they hit during

physical exertion. A flight of stairs becomes an Everest; a walk to the mailbox feels like a marathon. Other red flags include fainting spells (syncope), chest pain, and swelling in the legs.

Turning the Tide

While the "why" remains elusive, the "how to treat" has evolved remarkably. We have moved from a time of limited options to an era of targeted molecular therapies. By using medications that mimic natural substances to dilate blood vessels, we can now significantly reduce the workload on the heart. Furthermore, genetic research is beginning to pull back the curtain. We now know that some "idiopathic" cases are actually linked to specific gene mutations, such as BMPR2, which may be triggered by environmental factors we are still identifying.

The journey with IPAH is a marathon, not a sprint. While we continue to search for the ultimate cause, our current goal is clear: early diagnosis and aggressive treatment to ensure that "no known cause" no longer means "no known hope."

Regular Monitoring in Connective Tissue Disease Patients



Dr. Manisha Mendiratta
Pulmonologist, Delhi

For many patients diagnosed with Connective Tissue Diseases (CTD)—such as Scleroderma, Lupus, or Mixed Connective Tissue Disease—the primary focus is often on the visible: the skin rashes, the joint swelling, or the Raynaud's phenomenon in the fingers. However, as a specialist, my deepest concern is often for what we cannot see. One of the most serious complications of CTD is Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension (PAH), a condition where the blood vessels in the lungs become

thick and narrow, forcing the heart to work dangerously hard. Because these changes happen internally and gradually, regular monitoring is not just a medical recommendation—it is a life-saving necessity.

The Window of Opportunity

The challenge with PAH in the context of CTD is that it is a "silent progressor." In its early stages, a patient may feel perfectly normal. By the time symptoms like significant breathlessness, chest pain, or fainting occur, the heart may already be under severe strain. Our goal is to find the "window of opportunity"—the period where the disease has started but hasn't yet caused irreversible damage. This is why we implement a rigorous screening protocol. For a patient with Scleroderma, for example, an annual Echocardiogram and Pulmonary Function Test (PFT) are essential, regardless of how "well" the patient feels.

Beyond the Breathless Moment

Monitoring isn't just about catching the disease; it's about managing it with

precision. Today, we use a "multi-modal" approach to tracking health:

- **The Six-Minute Walk Test:** Measuring how far a patient can walk to assess functional capacity.
- **Biomarkers:** Using blood tests like NT-proBNP to detect early signals of heart stress.
- **Right Heart Catheterization:** The "gold standard" to confirm pressure levels when screenings show a change.

A Proactive Partnership

A decade ago, a PAH diagnosis alongside a connective tissue disease was met with limited options. Today, the narrative has changed. We now have a variety of targeted therapies—oral, inhaled, and intravenous medications—that specifically relax the lung vessels and "un-squeeze" that metaphorical hose. The message for patients is one of empowered vigilance: Communicate any new shortness of breath to your specialist immediately. With early detection and modern dual-therapy approaches, we aren't just treating a set of symptoms; we are protecting the heart and extending vibrant, active lives.

Why Regular Follow-Ups are the Lifeline for PH Patients



Dr. Vidya Nair
Pulmonologist, Delhi

In the management of chronic illness, there is a dangerous temptation to equate "feeling fine" with "being fine." For patients living with Pulmonary Hypertension (PH), this assumption can be a critical error. PH is a dynamic, evolving condition where the pressure in the lung's arteries can shift quietly, long before the patient feels a single new symptom. As a physician, I view regular follow-up appointments not as mere "check-ins," but as essential recalibrations of a life-saving

treatment plan.

The Hidden Progression

Pulmonary Hypertension is often described as a "progressive" disease. This means that even with the best medications, the heart and lungs are in a constant state of adaptation. The right side of the heart is incredibly resilient, often thickening its walls to push against high lung pressures. However, this compensation has a limit. By the time a patient notices increased shortness of breath or swollen ankles, the heart may already be reaching a breaking point. Regular follow-ups allow us to use objective tools—like the Six-Minute Walk Test (6MWT), NT-proBNP blood markers, and Echocardiograms—to catch these subtle shifts in "real-time."

Precision Medicine in Practice

The treatment for PH has transitioned from a "one-size-fits-all" approach to highly personalized therapy. During a follow-up, we aren't just checking vitals; we are assessing Risk Stratification. We categorize

patients into low, intermediate, or high-risk groups based on their test results.

If a patient moves from "low" to "intermediate" risk, we don't wait for them to feel worse. We act immediately, perhaps by adding a second or third class of vasodilator medication. This proactive "escalation of therapy" is what has transformed PH from a rapidly terminal diagnosis into a manageable chronic condition.

A Partnership for Longevity

Beyond the data, these visits are a space for dialogue. We discuss side effects, mental health, and lifestyle adjustments. PH management is a marathon, and the "coach" (the medical team) and the "athlete" (the patient) must stay in constant communication to adjust the pace. To my patients, I say this: Your follow-up is your most powerful medicine. It is the early warning system that protects your heart and ensures that your "good days" continue for years to come.

PH in Connective Tissue Diseases



Dr. Anish
Pulmonologist, Delhi

inflammatory process can target the microscopic blood vessels in the lungs.

The Internal Pressure Cooker

In patients with CTD, the walls of the pulmonary arteries can become thick, stiff, and narrow. To visualize this, imagine trying to pump water through a garden hose that is being squeezed tight. The heart's right ventricle must push harder and harder to move blood through the lungs to pick up oxygen. This constant strain eventually causes the heart muscle to weaken. Because the symptoms—shortness of breath, dizziness, and mild swelling in the ankles—often mimic general fatigue or the underlying CTD itself, PAH is frequently "the great masquerader," staying hidden until it has reached an advanced stage.

Why Screening Saves Lives

The marriage of rheumatology and cardiology has never been more vital. In conditions like systemic sclerosis (scleroderma), the risk of developing high lung pressure is significant enough that

we now recommend annual screening, even if the patient feels perfectly fine.

We utilize a non-invasive tool called an echocardiogram to estimate lung pressures, often followed by a "gold standard" right-heart catheterization if the results are concerning.

A Brighter Outlook

A decade ago, a PAH diagnosis alongside a connective tissue disease was met with limited options. Today, the narrative has changed. We now have a variety of targeted therapies—oral, inhaled, and intravenous medications—that specifically relax the lung vessels and "un-squeeze" that metaphorical hose. The message for patients is one of empowered vigilance: Communicate any new shortness of breath to your specialist immediately. With early detection and modern dual-therapy approaches, we aren't just treating a set of symptoms; we are protecting the heart and extending vibrant, active lives.

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Awareness Gaps in Pulmonary Hypertension


Dr. Gyan Bharti
 Pulmonologist, Ghaziabad

providers continue to delay diagnosis, putting patients at risk of serious complications.

One of the key challenges is that early symptoms of PH—shortness of breath during routine activities, fatigue, dizziness, or swelling in the ankles—are often nonspecific and easily attributed to aging, obesity, or other common conditions. As a result, many patients are diagnosed only after the disease has progressed, when heart and lung damage may already be significant.

Healthcare providers also face obstacles. Because PH is rare, with prevalence estimated at fewer than 50 cases per million adults, many physicians may see only a handful of patients with the disease in their careers. This can lead to misdiagnosis or delays in referral to specialized centers that provide comprehensive care for

pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) and other subtypes.

Research highlights that increased awareness among primary care physicians and cardiologists could significantly improve outcomes. Early identification allows for timely interventions, including medications that dilate pulmonary arteries, lifestyle modifications, and in some cases, surgical procedures. Prompt treatment can slow disease progression, enhance quality of life, and reduce the risk of heart failure.

Public awareness is equally important. Patients who recognize the significance of persistent shortness of breath, chest discomfort, or unexplained fatigue are more likely to seek medical evaluation before the condition becomes severe. Advocacy groups and patient organizations have emphasized education campaigns to highlight the

warning signs and promote screening, particularly for high-risk groups such as those with autoimmune diseases, congenital heart defects, or a family history of PH.

Experts agree that bridging the awareness gap requires a multi-pronged approach: continued physician education, patient outreach, and improved access to specialized care centers. By addressing these gaps, the medical community hopes to reduce delayed diagnoses, improve treatment outcomes, and empower patients to recognize and act on early warning signs.

Ultimately, increasing understanding of pulmonary hypertension—both among clinicians and the general public—is essential to saving lives and improving quality of care for those living with this challenging condition.

Heart Check-ups for Children with Congenital Defects

For a parent, few phrases are more daunting than "your child has a heart defect." Yet, thanks to decades of monumental shifts in pediatric cardiology and surgical techniques, the narrative has changed. Today, the vast majority of children born with Congenital Heart Defects (CHDs) do not just survive; they grow, play, and transition into adulthood. However, this success story comes with a crucial caveat: a "repair" is rarely a "cure."

The Myth of the "Fixed" Heart

The most common misconception I encounter is the belief that once a child undergoes surgery or a catheter procedure, their heart is "fixed" for life. While these interventions are life-saving and often restorative, the heart of a child with a CHD remains structurally different. As the child grows, their heart must adapt to physical changes, hormonal shifts during puberty, and the increasing demands of athletic or daily activities. Regular check-ups are not merely a formality; they are a proactive defense against silent complications, such as:

- **Arrhythmias:** Abnormal heart rhythms that can develop years after surgery.
- **Valve Function:** Repaired valves may leak or narrow over time.
- **Ventricular Health:** Monitoring how well the heart muscle pumps under pressure.

What to Expect During a Check-up

Modern pediatric cardiology focuses on non-invasive monitoring to keep the experience as stress-free as possible for the child. A standard evaluation typically includes:

1. Pulse Oximetry and Blood Pressure: Simple tests to check oxygen saturation and cardiovascular strain.

2. Electrocardiogram (ECG): Assessing the electrical activity of the heart.

3. Echocardiogram: Using ultrasound waves to create a real-time "movie" of the heart's structure and blood flow.

A Lifelong Journey
 As these children reach their teens, the focus shifts toward transition of care. It is vital that patients understand their own anatomy so they can advocate for themselves as adults. We are no longer just treating babies; we are managing a growing population of "Grown-Up Congenital Heart" (GUCH)


Dr. Gaurav Kumar
 Cardiologist, Ghaziabad

patients. Early detection of minor changes during a routine check-up can often be managed with medication or minor adjustments, preventing the need for major emergency interventions later. For every child with a CHD, the goal is not just a long life, but a high-quality, active one. Your cardiologist is your partner in ensuring that their heart keeps pace with their dreams.

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension and Other Lung Diseases


Dr. Eshutosh Chandra
 Chest Physician, Ghaziabad

Early detection, however, is critical for managing the disease and preventing complications.

Medical experts emphasize the importance of regular monitoring for patients who already have chronic lung diseases. People diagnosed with COPD or other serious lung conditions should undergo routine check-ups, including heart and lung function assessments, to identify any signs of developing pulmonary hypertension. Diagnostic tools such as echocardiograms, lung function tests, and specialized imaging studies can help physicians evaluate pulmonary artery pressure and overall heart health.

Treatment for PAH varies depending on the underlying cause and severity of the condition. In some cases, medications that relax blood vessels and improve blood flow in the lungs can help manage symptoms. Oxygen therapy, lifestyle adjustments, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs may also be recommended to improve quality of life. For patients with advanced disease, more specialized treatments may be required. Healthcare professionals stress that awareness is key. Recognizing symptoms early and understanding the link between lung diseases and pulmonary hypertension can help patients seek medical attention sooner. With timely diagnosis, proper treatment, and ongoing care, many individuals with PAH can manage the condition more effectively and maintain a better quality of life.

Although PAH itself is uncommon, it is closely linked with several other lung and respiratory diseases. Conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), interstitial lung disease, and sleep-related breathing disorders can contribute to increased pressure in the pulmonary arteries. In some cases, long-term lung damage from these illnesses reduces oxygen levels in the blood, which can trigger changes in the pulmonary vessels and lead to pulmonary hypertension. One of the challenges with PAH is that its symptoms often resemble those of other lung conditions. Patients may experience shortness of breath, fatigue, dizziness, chest discomfort, or swelling in the ankles and legs. Because these symptoms are common in many respiratory illnesses, diagnosis can sometimes be delayed.

Advances in Pulmonary Hypertension Diagnosis


Dr. Ankit Bhatia
 Pulmonologist, Ghaziabad

improving the ability of physicians to identify PH earlier, offering patients a better chance at effective treatment.

Traditionally, PH diagnosis relied heavily on invasive procedures such as right heart catheterization, which directly measures blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries. While accurate, the procedure carries risks and may not be performed until symptoms are pronounced. Today, non-invasive imaging methods, including advanced echocardiography and cardiac MRI, allow doctors to assess heart and lung function with greater precision and safety. These tools can detect subtle changes in heart size, function, and blood flow that indicate early stages of the disease.

In addition to imaging, biomarkers—specific proteins or molecules found in the blood—are becoming increasingly useful for identifying pulmonary hypertension. For example, elevated levels of brain natriuretic peptide (BNP) or N-terminal pro-BNP can signal heart strain caused by PH. Combining biomarker analysis with imaging improves diagnostic accuracy and helps physicians

monitor disease progression over time.

Genetic testing is also playing a growing role, particularly in pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), a subtype of PH. Mutations in genes such as BMPR2 can increase susceptibility, enabling targeted screening for at-risk individuals, especially those with a family history of the disease.

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are emerging as powerful tools to enhance PH diagnosis. By analyzing large datasets of imaging and clinical information, AI algorithms can identify patterns that may escape conventional analysis, facilitating earlier detection and personalized treatment strategies.

Despite these technological advances, experts caution that awareness remains crucial. Because early symptoms are often subtle, individuals experiencing unexplained breathlessness, fatigue, or swelling should seek medical evaluation. With earlier detection and continued innovation in diagnostics, the outlook for patients with pulmonary hypertension is improving, offering hope for more timely treatment and better long-term outcomes.

Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a serious condition in which the blood pressure in the lungs' arteries becomes abnormally high, placing strain on the heart and potentially leading to heart failure. Early detection is critical, yet the disease often goes undiagnosed until symptoms become severe, including shortness of breath, fatigue, and swelling in the legs or ankles. Recent advances in diagnostic techniques are

Early Warning Signs of Pulmonary Hypertension


Dr. Manish Kumar Sharma
 Pulmonologist, Ghaziabad

Silent Signals: Recognizing the Early Warning Signs of Pulmonary Hypertension

A subtle symptoms such as persistent breathlessness and fatigue may indicate a serious heart-lung condition often diagnosed too late. Pulmonary hypertension (PH), a

potentially life-threatening disorder affecting the arteries of the lungs and the right side of the heart, often begins with mild symptoms that many people dismiss as everyday fatigue or lack of fitness. Health experts warn that recognizing these early warning signs is critical, as delayed diagnosis can allow the disease to progress to severe heart complications.

Pulmonary hypertension occurs when the blood pressure in the pulmonary arteries—the vessels carrying blood from the heart to the lungs—rises abnormally. This increased pressure forces the heart to work harder to pump blood, eventually weakening the heart muscle. Although considered a relatively rare disease, pulmonary arterial hypertension is estimated to affect 3 to 10 people per million each year, while broader forms of pulmonary hypertension are more common among patients with heart or lung disease.

The earliest and most frequently reported symptom is shortness of breath during routine activities, such as climbing stairs or walking briskly. Unlike normal breathlessness after exertion, the symptom may gradually worsen and eventually appear even during rest. Persistent fatigue, reduced stamina, and dizziness are also common early indicators.

"Because the symptoms are vague and easily mistaken for other conditions like asthma or general deconditioning, pulmonary hypertension is often diagnosed late," say cardiologists specializing in pulmonary vascular diseases. In many cases, patients experience symptoms for months—or even years—before receiving an accurate diagnosis.

Other early warning signs may include chest discomfort, heart palpitations, or fainting during physical activity. As the disease progresses, patients may

develop swelling in the ankles or legs due to fluid retention, along with a bluish tint to the lips or skin caused by reduced oxygen levels in the blood.

Pulmonary hypertension can arise from several underlying conditions, including chronic lung diseases, congenital heart defects, autoimmune disorders such as lupus, and sleep apnea. In some cases, the cause remains unknown.

Doctors emphasize that early medical evaluation is essential if symptoms persist. Tests such as echocardiography, imaging scans, and specialized heart-pressure measurements can help confirm the diagnosis.

With growing awareness and improved treatments, outcomes for patients with pulmonary hypertension are steadily improving. However, specialists stress that early detection remains the most important step in slowing the disease and improving long-term quality of life.

Early Detection of Idiopathic PAH


Dr. Rajesh Kumar Gupta
 Pulmonologist, Ghaziabad

Understanding the "Invisible" Killer

IPAH occurs when the small arteries in the lungs thicken and narrow for no known reason. This increases resistance to blood flow, forcing the right side of the heart to work harder. Over time, the heart muscle weakens, leading to right-heart failure.

Because the symptoms—shortness of breath, fatigue, and chest pain—mimic common ailments like asthma or anxiety, the average delay in diagnosis

is often two to three years. By the time a patient is correctly diagnosed, the disease has often progressed to an advanced stage.

Why Early Detection is a Game Changer

In the past, an IPAH diagnosis was a grim prognosis. However, the medical landscape in 2026 has shifted dramatically. While there is currently no cure, we now have a suite of targeted therapies—including prostacyclin analogues and dual endothelin receptor antagonists—that can slow disease progression and significantly improve quality of life.

The catch? These treatments are most effective when started before permanent remodeling of the heart occurs. Early intervention doesn't just add years to life; it adds life to years.

Red Flags to Watch For

If you or a loved one experiences the following, it is time for a specialist

consultation:

- Unexplained shortness of breath during routine activities.
- Swelling (edema) in the ankles or legs.
- Bluish tint to the lips or skin (cyanosis).
- Fainting spells during physical exertion.

A Path Forward

Diagnosis usually begins with a simple, non-invasive echocardiogram to estimate lung pressure, followed by a right heart catheterization to confirm the diagnosis.

We must move past the "wait and see" approach. If your breathing feels "off" and standard treatments for asthma or fitness aren't working, advocate for your heart. Early detection is the most powerful tool we have to turn a life-threatening diagnosis into a manageable chronic condition.

Treatment Options for PAH


Dr. Saurabh Biswas
 Cardiologist, Ghaziabad

carry blood from the heart to the lungs. As these vessels tighten and stiffen, the right side of the heart struggles to push blood through, leading to breathlessness and heart strain.

The Three Pillars of Therapy

Modern treatment is built on three biological pathways that control how blood vessels relax or constrict. Think of these as the "control switches" for the lungs:

- **The Nitric Oxide Pathway:** We use medications (like PDE5 inhibitors) to boost the body's natural ability to relax blood vessels.
- **The Endothelin Pathway:** We block "endothelin," a substance the body produces in excess in PAH patients that causes vessels to tighten.
- **The Prostacyclin Pathway:** We replace a naturally occurring lipid that helps keep vessels open and prevents them from thickening.

From "One Drug" to "Triple Therapy"

Perhaps the most significant shift in journalism and medicine alike is the move

toward Initial Combination Therapy. We no longer wait for a patient to "fail" on one medication before adding another. By attacking the disease through multiple pathways simultaneously—often starting with two or three drugs right at the time of diagnosis—we can stop the progression of the disease much more effectively.

The Future: Beyond Vasodilators

The frontier of PAH research is now moving toward "disease-modifying" therapies. We are investigating drugs that don't just relax the vessels but actually help repair the cellular damage within the vessel walls. Furthermore, for patients where medication is not enough, surgical options and lung transplantation remains a vital, life-saving backstop.

While PAH remains a chronic and serious condition, the "silent strain" is being met with a loud and sophisticated medical response. If you find yourself breathless during routine tasks, do not dismiss it. Early intervention is not just an option; it is the key to rewriting your story.

Breathlessness in Pulmonary Hypertension


Dr. Akhilesh Kumar
 Cardiologist, Ghaziabad

It begins subtly. Perhaps you feel a bit more winded than usual after climbing a flight of stairs, or you find yourself pausing for air during a brisk walk. Many dismiss these early signs as a lack of fitness or the natural progression of age. However, when breathlessness persists, it may be a signal from a complex and often misunderstood condition: Pulmonary Hypertension (PH).

What is Pulmonary Hypertension?

In a healthy body, the right side of the heart pumps blood through the pulmonary arteries to the lungs, where it picks up oxygen. In patients with PH, these arteries become narrow, thick, or stiff. This creates resistance, forcing the heart to work significantly harder to push blood through. As the pressure builds, the heart's right ventricle eventually weakens from the strain. The result is a profound sense of breathlessness—known medically as dyspnea—because the body simply isn't receiving the oxygenated blood it needs to function efficiently.

More Than Just "Out of Breath"

Unlike the temporary huffing and puffing after a workout, PH-related breathlessness is persistent. Patients often describe it as "air hunger," a frightening sensation of being unable to take a full, satisfying breath. As the condition progresses, even simple tasks like dressing or talking can become exhausting. Because symptoms overlap with more

common ailments like asthma or COPD, PH is frequently misdiagnosed. This delay is critical; without treatment, the constant strain on the heart can lead to right-sided heart failure.

Hope Through Innovation

While PH is a serious, chronic condition, the landscape of care has shifted dramatically over the last decade. We now have a variety of "vasodilators"—medications that help open the narrowed blood vessels—along with advanced therapies that improve exercise capacity and quality of life.

The key is early detection. If you experience unexplained shortness of breath, chest pain, or fainting, it is vital to advocate for a thorough cardiovascular evaluation, often involving an echocardiogram. We must move past the idea that being "out of breath" is a normal part of life. By recognizing the signs early, we can take the pressure off the heart and help patients breathe easier again.

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

• ECONOMICS

Jobs to GDP to debt: State of poll state economies

A look at fiscal health of states is essential to understand voters' choices and recognise the challenges Chief Ministers will face



UDIT MISRA

ACROSS FOUR very different states — Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal — voters gave resounding mandates in the 2026 Assembly elections. The landslide victories underscored how decidedly voters wanted to either punish the incumbent and summarily change the way their states were being governed or, as was the case in Assam, to reward the incumbent without hesitation.

Here's a look at some of the key macro-economic data and the state government's fiscal health. This is not just to understand why voters might have chosen the way they did, but also to recognise the main challenges the incoming Chief Ministers face.

State of economic growth and people's incomes

Chart 1 captures a broader trend of how each of the four states grew and what happened to average incomes in each of the states over a decade between 2015 to 2024.

Over this decade, Assam's gross state domestic product (GSDP) — a measure of the overall size of the economy — not only grew at the fastest rate among the four states in question but also has been one of the fastest across India. Among the larger states, only Telangana registered a faster growth rate during this period.

As a result, Assam registered the fastest growth rate in per capita incomes, beating not just Telangana but also other prosperous states such as Gujarat and Karnataka. Even though Assam's per capita GSDP is still the lowest in this comparison, it has almost trebled to catch up with West Bengal. The two states that were bastions of Left parties, West Bengal and Kerala, continued to post modest gains for their people with per capita GSDP growing at a rate below 5%.

Tamil Nadu has fared better over the past decade, and an average resident of the state is now richer than their next-door neighbour in Kerala, thanks to substantially faster growth rates both of the overall economy and per capita incomes. Kerala had registered the slowest growth rate in overall economic size — a pace that has seen some other states (such as Telangana and Gujarat) jump ahead in per capita incomes.

State of (un)employment

India is undergoing a demographic transition with millions joining the working age population, and this has created a growing challenge for governments in the form of unemployment.

Chart 2 maps two key metrics in this regard. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) essentially tells the demand for jobs in a state. Higher the LFPR, more the percentage of people in the working age group who are actively looking for a job.

Compared with the national average of 55.1%, all the states that went to polls had a higher demand for jobs. None more so than West Bengal, which also had the highest unemployment rate among the four states. The unemployment rate is the percentage of people who were looking for a job but did not get it.

West Bengal's unemployment rate was

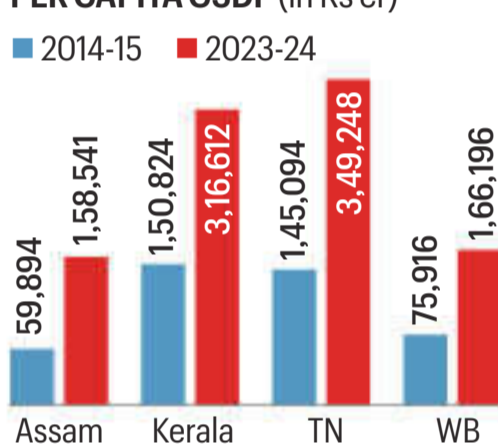


BJP supporters celebrate the party's victory in the West Bengal Assembly election in Salt Lake, Kolkata, on Monday. PARTHA PAL

• THE STORY SO FAR

1. The state of income growth

PER CAPITA GSDP (in Rs cr)



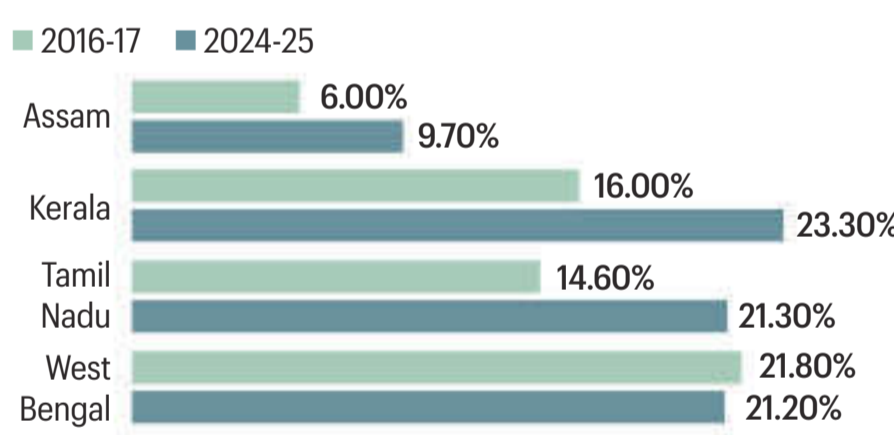
COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (CAGR, in %)

State	Per capita GSDP	GSDP
Assam	7.80%	11.40%
Kerala	4.90%	8.60%
TN	6.40%	10.30%
WB	4.90%	9.10%

NOTE: PER CAPITA INCOME, OWN REVENUE, AND EXPENDITURE HAVE BEEN CALCULATED USING STATE-WISE POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR THE RESPECTIVE YEARS USING POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY THE NATIONAL COMMISSION OF POPULATION. SOURCES: RBI; MOSPI; NATIONAL COMMISSION ON POPULATION; STATE BUDGET DOCUMENTS OF VARIOUS STATES FOR 2025-26; PRS

3. Rising interest burden for govts

INTEREST PAYMENTS AS A % OF REVENUE RECEIPTS



SOURCES: RBI; CAG; MOSPI; PRS

substantially higher than the national average, while Kerala's was the lowest and substantially lower than the country's average. Tamil Nadu's unemployment rate might be lower than West Bengal's, but one has to take into account the lower demand for jobs as well. For instance, even with lower LFPR than Assam, Tamil Nadu has been witnessing a higher unemployment rate, suggesting there was elevated stress among

2. State of unemployment

States	Labour Force Participation Rate in % (July-Sept 2025-26)	Unemployment Rate*
Assam	60.4	5.2
Kerala	59.4	3.7
Tamil Nadu	58.6	5.7
West Bengal	61	6.1
India	55.1	5.2

*ACCORDING TO CURRENT WEEKLY STATUS FOR PERSONS 15 YEARS AND ABOVE, SOURCE: ECONOMIC SURVEY 2026

4. State of govts finances

State	Fiscal Deficit as a % of Gross State Domestic Product	Revenue Deficit as a % of GSDP	Unconditional Cash Transfers as a % of revenue receipts
Assam	2.5	0	4.30%
Kerala	3	-1.9	NA
TN	2.8	-1.2	4.20%
WB	3.2	-1.7	10%

SOURCE: PRS; ALL DATA IS 2025-26 BE

voters when it came to jobs.

State of government finances

However, before any Chief Minister can address these macroeconomic parameters, they will have to first set in order the health of government finances. A government that has already borrowed more than its capacity, one that is saddled with the burden of paying back past loans, or one that is

spending too much on freebies instead of creating new productive assets, cannot reignite a state's growth story.

Charts 3 and 4 lay down some of the key metrics that the incoming Chief Ministers will have to contend with.

The first metric is fiscal deficit as a percentage of the state's economy. Fiscal deficit essentially refers to the amount of money a state government can borrow from the market to meet the gap between its revenues and expenses. Prudential norms peg it to be 3% or lower. As things stand, West Bengal was the one state that exceeded this prudential norm.

But another key metric — revenue deficit or gap between a state's revenue expenditure and revenue receipts — shows that while the overall borrowing levels may not be as high, the borrowed money is being used by many just to meet day-to-day gaps in expenditure and revenues.

Ideally, the 3% fiscal deficit should be used to invest in capital expenditure — the kind that creates productive capacity in the economy like making roads, railways and ports, etc. But if a state has a revenue deficit, it implies that the government is borrowing to meet its everyday expenses such as salaries and pensions. Barring Assam, the other three slip up on this metric.

A growing worry in this regard is the growth of unconditional cash transfers by state governments in aid to alleviate economic distress among voters and to purchase allegiance. West Bengal, for example, has been spending 10% of all its revenue receipts on such doles. Read in the context of a revenue deficit, this essentially means the state government is borrowing to dole out cash.

Lastly, when governments borrow recklessly for years, the interest on past loans starts to pile up. Chart 3 shows how all the states have racked up high interest payment bills. West Bengal's number does not show as much growth but it was high to begin with, whereas Kerala and Tamil Nadu's liability in this regard has shot up.

• POLITICS

Results cement national parties' rise, state leaders lose more ground

Vikas Pathak
New Delhi, May 4

WITH THE defeat of the All-India Trinamool Congress (TMC) after 15 years in power in West Bengal and the surprise defeat of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu, the standing of regional parties has hit a new low.

Although the Tamilara Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) is a new regional player that has done very well in Tamil Nadu, the regional framing of polls in the southern state has nevertheless suffered a loss, as the DMK was the strongest proponent of Tamil identity and politics. Anti-incumbency defeated the DMK's dogged framing of the elections as one to be fought around Tamil pride, with Chief Minister M K Stalin — who was championing the Tamil cause — losing his own seat.

This is just the latest jolt to regional politics. While the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is technically a national party, it was powerful only in certain regions like Punjab and Delhi. Its footprint, however, has been shrinking.

Recently, the AAP lost seven Rajya Sabha MPs to the BJP, a year after losing the Delhi Assembly to the saffron party.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI(M), which is also technically a national party, had in effect shrunk to one state, Kerala, thus becoming strictly a regional player. The victory of the Congress, another national party, over the CPI(M) in Kerala means that another force in a single state has suffered a setback. Similarly, the BJP defeated Naveen Patnaik's Biju Janata Dal in Odisha in 2024, ending Patnaik's 24-year stint as CM.

One regional party that has bucked the trend after 2024 is Hemant Soren's Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, which succeeded in beating the BJP in the last Assembly polls. Besides that, Omar Abdullah's National Conference is holding its own in Jammu and Kashmir.

The shift

The electoral turn of the past two years, thus, shows a shift towards national parties. This comes at a time when the Opposition has been flagging federal concerns and accusing the Centre of withholding funds, misusing agencies against its leaders, and also trying to change

India's "electoral map" through delimitation on the latest census figures, which would diminish the relative share of the southern states in the Lok Sabha.

The period from the decline of the Congress post-1989 marked the high point of regional parties, leading to 25 years of coalition politics.

The rise of Modi in 2014 unsettled this equilibrium. The BJP began to dominate western, central, and northern India.

The period from the decline of the Congress post-1989 marked the high point of regional parties, leading to 25 years of coalition politics. At the national level, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), carved out by the BJP with multiple regional parties, and the United Progressive Alliance, having the Congress and "secular" regional parties, ran coalition governments that had to be sensitive towards regional concerns to survive.

The rise of Narendra Modi in 2014 unsettled this equilibrium. The BJP began to dominate western, central, and northern India, leading to a decline in the standing of the SP, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the Bahujan Samaj Party, the Shiv Sena, and the Nationalist Congress Party. Of these, the last two split during Modi's second term: the factions that got the original party symbol then joined hands with the NDA. The Janata Dal (United), or JD(U), survived in Bihar, with Nitish Kumar nimbly moving from the NDA to the Opposition and back. However, even in Bihar, the pattern of a move towards national politics picked up, finally installing a BJP CM in the state.

Challenge for the Opposition

The Opposition's challenge is that while it is flagging federal concerns, voters seem to be moving towards national parties, particularly the BJP, with each passing year. With the Congress, despite its improved showing in 2024 when it secured 99 seats in the Lok Sabha, not being able to emerge as an alternative to the BJP in the last 12 years, the need for Opposition unity has made multiple parties articulate the language of federal concerns. The cases filed against many Opposition leaders have added to the framing of politics in federal terms. This however, is not impacting voter behaviour, with recent cycles of state polls showing the BJP emerging as more powerful.

It is largely in south India that regional parties are still influential. But they are under pressure here, too. Even in Telangana in December 2023, the Congress was able to defeat the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, a regional party that had years ago taken credit for the state's formation.

The perception that its fall from 303 to 240 seats in the Lok Sabha in 2024 would dent the BJP has not proved correct so far. Its allies, the JD(U) and the Telugu Desam Party, have backed it, even on the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which the Opposition had framed as a use to bring in delimitation to the detriment of southern states.

• IN NUMBERS

With BJP winning Bengal, how India's political map changes

Anjishnu Das
New Delhi, May 4

WITH THE BJP on track to notch a remarkable first-ever win in West Bengal by unseating the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the saffron party and its NDA allies are now in power in 22 state Assemblies, up from 21 at the end of 2025.

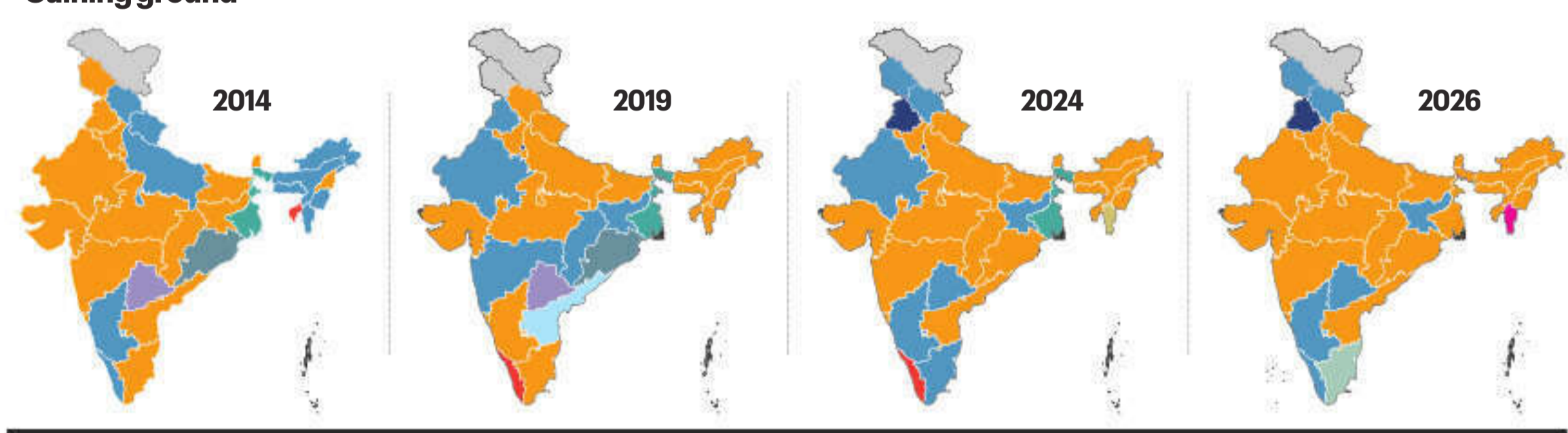
The BJP is en route to retaining power in Assam, while ally All India NR Congress (AINRC) is holding on to Puducherry. The NDA has struggled to make inroads in Kerala, and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) stands in third place in Tamil Nadu. Poll debutant Tamilara Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor-turned-politician Vijay, is on course to displace INDIA bloc member Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) from power in Tamil Nadu.

On the Opposition front, the INDIA bloc parties are set to hold power in six states — Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Telangana, Karnataka and now Kerala.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) looks set to return to power in Kerala after a decade of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left Democratic Front (LDF)'s rule. Kerala was the last remaining Left stronghold across the country.

The loss will mark the first time since 1977 that no state in India has a communist government. Three states — Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal — have had communist governments in their history, but all have seen the ideology's influence wane

• Gaining ground



in recent years.

Among the other non-NDA parties, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will look to defend its Punjab bastion in 2027 and the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM) holds Mizoram.

The DMK had been a major INDIA bloc ally, including in Parliament, and had been raising national issues to take on the BJP, ranging from language imposition to delimitation. Though its defeat in Tamil Nadu has brought the INDIA bloc down by two states, the Congress's expected win in Kerala will compensate for the loss.

While the TMC has also been in the INDIA bloc, because it has diverged from the alliance on some key issues, this article does not include it in the INDIA numbers. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the TMC decided to contest alone in West Bengal,

Shrinking Opposition

In all, an Opposition party is now set to be in power in nine states and Union Territories.

after differences with the INDIA bloc.

In all, an Opposition party is now set to be in power in nine states and Union Territories (UT).

Since 2014, when the Narendra Modi-led BJP first came to power at the Centre, the BJP and its allies have made significant gains across the country, including winning several states for the first time and striking key alliances in others. In doing so, it has shed the image of a primarily north Indian party.

In 2014, the NDA was in power in 16 states, the current constituents of the INDIA bloc in 10 states, and other regional outfits in another five.

By 2019, the NDA had expanded to 18 states while the present INDIA bloc fell to six (Punjab, Rajasthan, Maharashtra,

Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Puducherry), though regional parties managed to hold on to another six (West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Delhi, and Kerala). At the end of 2024, the NDA grew to 18 states and the INDIA bloc remained at six, with regional parties at five.

Now, only three states are ruled by non-BJP, non-INDIA bloc parties (Punjab, Tripura and Tamil Nadu). In 2014, the BJP on its own had held power in just seven states, requiring the strength of allies, including major regional parties, in another nine states where the NDA was in power.

In 2019, there were 10 states where the BJP was in power on its own. This figure grew to 12 states by 2024, and currently stands at 14 states.

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Centre	हिंदी माध्यम	English Medium
Karol Bagh	17 मई सुबह 11:30 बजे	13 May 8:00 AM
Noida	30 अप्रैल सुबह 11:30 बजे	28 April 11:30 AM
Indore	20 मई शाम 5:30 बजे	18 May 8:00 AM
Lucknow	29 मई सुबह 8:00 बजे	24 May 8:00 AM
Prayagraj	14 मई सुबह 11:15 बजे	5 May 11:30 AM
Ranchi	23 अप्रैल सुबह 8:00 बजे	29 April 8:00 AM
Patna	एकदिवसीय ऑनर्स	30 April 8:00 AM
Jaipur	27 अप्रैल सुबह 11:00 बजे	29 April 5:00 PM

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Ro-Ry roar: Mumbai Indians' six machines blow away LSG

Rohit Sharma's 84, Ryan Rickleton's 83 lays the foundation as host's make short work of 229-run target

SYNOPSIS: A 143-run stand for the opening wicket between Ryan Rickleton and Rohit Sharma helps MI chase down 229 runs against LSG at the Wankhede.

Shankar Narayan
Mumbai, May 4

SUNDAY MAY have been optional nets, but Rohit Sharma spent an hour honing his batting skills under the evening sun. It was perhaps an indication that he was fit and raring to go, and on Monday, with Mumbai Indians (MI) needing to win to halt their losing streak, he delivered with the bat, much to the delight of the capacity crowd at the venue.

Rohit-Rickleton show

The Wankhede Stadium roared in delight as Rohit Sharma made his way down the stairs and into the middle to bat for the first time in three weeks. Playing as an impact sub, he would have hoped for an easy chase to mark his return, but his bowlers were not as grateful, conceding 228 runs in 20 overs.

If there was pressure, it did not show early. It was Ryan Rickleton who took charge. Fresh from a century in the previous home game against SRH, the left-hander started briskly, scoring 15 off his first five balls and immediately putting the bowlers on the back foot.

That early burst helped Rohit ease in. LSG needed powerplay wickets to take early control of proceedings, but Rickleton ensured they never settled. He attacked both Mohammed Shami and Mohsin Khan, taking MI to 50 in five overs and setting the tone for the chase.

While Rickleton's early fireworks had ensured that MI were not behind the eight-ball,

the anticipation from the capacity crowd about Rohit finding his groove was only rising with each passing over.

He finally found his rhythm in the sixth over, taking Avesh Khan for 21 runs, which included two fours and two sixes. It was the kickstart he needed, and it eased the pressure on the South African at the other end.

LSG's bowling approach made things easier. They relied largely on pace, using four seamers and just one spinner. Once Rickleton and Rohit got used to the pace of the surface, strokeplay became simpler. There was little variation to disrupt their rhythm.

Rickleton brought up his half-century off 21 balls in the eighth over as MI edged towards the 100-mark. An over later, it was Rohit's turn to reach his fifty with a six over long-on off left-arm spinner M Siddharth. The pair put MI in the ascendancy at the halfway mark and at 127/0, laid the ideal foundation to chase the score down. The onus was now on Pant to make things happen, but none of his bowlers looked capable of answering their captain's call.

The stand was finally broken by Mohsin Khan in the 11th over as Rickleton fell for 83 in 32 balls, after putting on 143 runs, for the first wicket with Rohit. In the last few matches, only one of MI's two opening batsmen had come good. On Monday, when both fired to help, MI ran away with the game. Rickleton's dismissal had little effect on Rohit, who remained on the attack against a bowling unit that had lost its bite. He was most severe on Avesh, who was at the receiving end of some sumptuous strokes from his bat, a six over cover-point in the 13th over being the best of the lot.

The right-hander took 35 runs off the pacer, which included three fours and three sixes. He looked good for more, but the strategic time-out led to



Rohit Sharma (84 off 44 balls, 6x4, 7x6) helped MI chase a steep target of 229 against LSG. DEEPAK JOSHI

IPL table

Teams	M	W	L	PTS
PBKS	9	6	2	13
RCB	9	6	3	12
SRH	10	6	4	12
RR	10	6	4	12
GT	10	6	4	12
CSK	9	4	5	8
DC	9	4	5	8
KKR	9	3	5	7
MI	10	3	7	6
LSG	9	2	7	4

M: MATCH; W: WIN; L: LOSS; PTS: POINTS

Number Plate

1 Mumbai Indians conceded just one boundary in the last three overs — on the fifth ball of the 19th over — to put the brakes on LSG's scoring rate. It stopped them from getting close to 250, and restricted the visitors to 228.

against MI, Nicholas Pooran had managed just 82 runs in eight matches in IPL 2026. For a batter of his ability, it had been a quiet and frustrating phase in a season where a lot was expected from his bat.

On a smaller ground and against a pedigreed yet out-of-form attack, he finally found his moment. Walking into bat in the third over, the left-hander did not take long to make an impact. He launched Will Jacks for a six off the fifth

ball he faced, a shot that seemed to free him up.

What followed was a clean, confident display of hitting. He focused almost entirely on the leg side, repeatedly targeting the area from long-on to fine leg. The result was an innings with eight sixes, each maximum a blend of crisp timing and raw power.

He brought up his first fifty of IPL 2026 in just 16 balls, putting the pressure firmly back on the opposition.

Pooran's knock ended in the ninth over, but not before he had blasted his way to 63 off 21 balls and added 94 runs in 34 deliveries for the second wicket with Mitchell Marsh. For LSG, the hope would be that it was the start of bigger things from his bat for the rest of the season.

BRIEF SCORES: LSG 228/5 in 20 overs (Nicholas Pooran 64, Mitchell Marsh 44) lost to MI 229/4 in 18.4 overs (Rohit Sharma 84, Ryan Rickleton 83) by six wickets.

Washington addressed key question around GT: Ashwin

Express News Service
Mumbai, May 4

FORMER INDIA player Ravichandran Ashwin lauded Washington Sundar's important cameo vs Punjab Kings on Sunday, saying that that innings has addressed some of the concerns that Gujarat Titans had about its middle order. The Titans have always relied heavily on their top 3 in Shubman Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler to score the bulk of their runs in the IPL but their middle order has more often

than not failed to fire.

On Sunday, Washington addressed some of these concerns after scoring 40 not out off 23 balls with help of five fours and a six to help GT chase down 164 with a ball to spare.

"Washington Sundar's innings was extremely important because it addressed a key question around Gujarat Titans' middle order. While a lot of their runs come from the top three, contributions like this show the depth they have. Washington has often been used as a flexible option, but he

“While a lot of their runs come from the top three, contributions like this show the depth they have.”

RASHWIN
ON GT'S MIDDLE-ORDER PROBLEM

stepped up, handled the pressure well, and ensured the chase was completed. It might not have looked flashy, but it was a

very composed and clinical effort to get the team over the line," Ashwin told *JioStar* after GT beat PBKS by five wickets. Chasing targets like 164 can be tricky and what sets GT apart from other sides, is their methodical approach, based on conditions.

"Gujarat Titans were once again incredibly composed in the way they approached the chase. Their batting may not always look explosive, but it's highly methodical and built around understanding conditions," Ashwin said.

Salt returns to Eng

Royal Challengers Bengaluru were dealt with a blow after opener Phil Salt returned to England for scans on his finger after he sustained an injury on. The finger injury has prevented the batter from playing in RCB's three previous games. This has allowed his England teammate Jacob Bethell to step in at the top of the order.

Salt damaged a finger on his left hand while diving to save a boundary during RCB's defeat to Delhi Capitals on April 18.

PREVIEW: DELHI CAPITALS VS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

No sight of Dhoni as familiar questions confront CSK

Tushar Bhaduri
New Delhi, May 4

"UPDATE ON MS Dhoni is way above my pay grade." This one line by a member of the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) coaching staff shows where the franchise is at present.

The team is placed sixth in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and still has an outside chance to make it to the playoffs. But bowling coach Eric Simons had a rather unique take on the now expected regular query about the availability of the face of the franchise for Tuesday's game against Delhi Capitals at the Arun Jaitley Stadium. For the record, Dhoni has not travelled with the rest of the squad for the fixture that's crucial for CSK's playoff hopes.

"He's not with us but he's improving. He will be ready when he's ready. He knows when he's ready to play," Simons said at the press conference on Monday.

But the manner in which the South African, a senior figure in the coaching team, washed his hands off the one

question which has dominated team composition through the whole season told its own story, despite Dhoni not taking the field in any game as his return keeps getting pushed back.

It tells something about the narrative following the franchise that the prospects of the team are forever linked to a 44-year-old, who doesn't play any cricket outside the IPL. Dhoni's absence was initially expected to be two-weeks long, but as the matches went on, it was prolonged, first due to the delay in his recovery and then about the problem in accommodating him in the team. It even prompted batting coach Mike Hussey to observe that Dhoni's presence would be a distraction for the team.

"He's such a team-oriented guy, MS Dhoni. He always wants what's best for the team and he was worried that if he came, there'd be a bit too much of a distraction," the Australian had said before the previous match against Mumbai Indians. "Obviously, the cameras would be on him a lot. The crowd would be cheering for



CSK players during a training session in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

him and things like that. And he really wanted the team to just be able to go about their job, do our thing."

Ruturaj Gaikwad is the designated captain of the team, but even he has acknowledged that Dhoni is the 'big man.' That he himself was short of runs for the first few games of the campaign didn't help his cause. His last two outings resulted in unbeaten half-centuries, the last one guiding his team to victory. But the undue focus on a player who may not even take the field this season can only undermine his position.

Simons felt compelled to

mention that Gaikwad was "a quality cricketer" and "very much the leader of the team."

"He's been very clear about his leadership role in the team. I don't think one must link his runs to his captaincy. It's just the case of when he gets into runs. He's had some tough innings, in the sense that we have been in trouble, wickets have tumbled and he's battled through. That's the hallmark of a really quality batsman."

Giving Gaikwad his vote of confidence, Simons described him as a "surgeon in this whole of chaos batting. He's the kind of guy who gets 50 runs in 22

balls and you haven't noticed him. The leadership has always been there, he's always been the captain. It's good that he's now scoring runs."

CSK haven't had continuity in their team selection. Players have been benched despite match-winning performances in games. Akeal Hosen bowled them to victory with a spell of 4/17 against MI, but was left out of the reverse fixture just a few days later. Similarly, Sarfaraz Khan has not always found his name in the team sheet despite playing some short but impactful knocks, and was seen practising some of his innovative shots during Monday's practice session.

Simons put the constant chopping and changing to the Impact Player rule. "The additional player can be used in different ways. It's about getting the balance right at the time, and it's about horses for courses in different situations to cover all bases. A lot of conversation goes behind these decisions. It's added a complexity to team management that's unique to this tournament," he said.

RIYAN PARAG VAPE ROW

It's not the smoking, it's the culture at Raj Royals

Sandeep Dwivedi
New Delhi, May 4

SMOKING IS injurious to health. Disclaimer out of the way, now about the Riyan Parag vape video, BCCI's rap on his knuckle for what the press release called "conduct that brings the game into disrepute" and how with time perceptions change. What was once a casual act that mostly went unnoticed or made heads turn is now an eye-raising scandalous taboo.

This IPL week, there was outrage, and also virtue-signaling, when the camera caught Parag smoking in the dressing room. This wasn't how it used to be. Back in the day, cigarette companies poured money into cricket, Wills and Benson & Hedges billboards dotted stadiums and a player seen smoking in public inadvertently multiplied his machismo and mystique. Those were the days when the Marlboro man and Clint Eastwood — with their cowboy hats, half-shut squint eyes and a cigarette dangling from their pursed lips — defined coolness.

In India, superstar Dev Anand would spread the unscientific virtues of smoking. Drawing circles in the air with his hands, like only he could, and that trademark carefree gait in place, he would sing about blowing every worry up in smoke. The world believed whatever he said and sang — even if it was "har fikr ko dhuen mein udata chala gaya". When he exhaled a plume of smoke, there was no tobacco warning on the silver screen.

Back then, cigarettes were seen as a way to ease stress, and that almost made it acceptable for top players, already under huge pressure to perform, to take a deep drag after a game. So when Krishnamachari Srikanth smoked like a chimney, while standing not too far from Kapil Dev with the 1983 World Cup in hand on the Lord's balcony, TV didn't draw red circles around him. No one was bringing disrepute to the game.

Later in the mid-90s, it was the tobacco companies that powered the growth of the game in the sub-continent and laid the foundation of India's present day rise as cricketing superpower. For the 1996 World Cup in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, Indian Tobacco Company signed a record-breaking title sponsorship deal. The cherry on the cake was the £5 million promotional campaign. Cricket popularity would go through the roof and the age of commercialisation was well and truly upon India.

In his seminal book *War Minus The Shooting*, the late Mike Margulies records for posterity the sport's complex dilemma. ITC's Wills World Cup manager Hemant Malik told him: "We are not converting anyone to smoking. Our market is expanding all the time — be-



Riyan Parag vapes in the dressing room. (R) Shane Warne wrote in his book how the Australian dressing room 'stank of cigarettes'. FILE

What should be more worrying for BCCI is Rajasthan Royals team culture. This is their second dressing room transgression this season, after the manager was penalised for using a mobile phone during a game.

cause people are being converted from bidis to cigarettes." The anti-smoking lobby had been reminding people that two thousand two hundred Indians die each day from smoking-related illnesses. Indian cricket's coffers were never empty after that while rural India had switched to cigarettes in hordes. But wasn't sport, a proven healthy pursuit, promoting an unhealthy habit?

Socrates, Warne, Raju

Not just cricket, sport in general had no qualms. Cigarette brand Winston sponsored the 1982 FIFA World Cup and four years later in Mexico it was Camel. Before FIFA signed up for WHO's Tobacco Free Sports campaign, footballer locker rooms smelled like bars. Such was tobacco's acceptability that cigarettes defined the personalities of players. There was a ring of romance around smokers with magical ball skills.

Probably the most celebrated was Brazilian Socrates — spiritual, philosophical, found in the company of intellectuals between games. Socrates idolised Che Guevara and Castro — men who, like him, rarely put down a cigarette. Cruyff, who redefined football, smoked at half-time, showered, and lit another before the second half.

His addiction complimented his image of a moody artist, a creative genius, a product of the liberal Dutch culture and a rebel who defied conventions. A coach once objected to his routine. Soon he was looking for a new job.

Cricket's equivalent was



Shane Warne. In his biography *My Spin*, Warne recalled the days when Benson & Hedges sponsored the Aussie team. "By the way, half the side smoked regularly ... Boony, Geoff Marsh, Bruce Reid, Greg Matthews, AB when he was having a drink, me and the physio Errol Alcott were smokers. It was partly the culture at the time and partly the sponsors making the fags so available — the dressing-rooms stank of cigarettes. Everyone just lit up — in restaurants, trains, cars and planes."

Yes, planes too. Indian spinner Venkatapathy Raju would join the smokers towards the tail of the aircraft on India's tour to England. Warne's account is funny. "He chain-smoked and got completely pissed on two cans of Swan Light. I think he was more terrified of his captain, Mohammad Azharuddin... so we gave him a bunch of mints and told him to crush out for an hour. I'm not sure it worked, to be honest. He was sheepish for days."

In days to come, the RR skipper Parag too might be sheepish. But he isn't the first young man caught smoking. What should be more worrying for the BCCI is Rajasthan Royals team culture. This is their second dressing room transgression this season, after the manager was penalised for using a mobile phone during a game. Transgressions multiply where culture is loose.

Rajasthan Royals know this better than most — their co-owner and three players once faced spot-fixing charges, a scandal that nearly finished the franchise. That crisis was also, at its core, a failure of culture, of oversight, of someone in authority looking the other way.

When a captain vapes in the dressing room, in full view of the entire squad, as casually as players sip tea in each other's company, it is not just about one man's habit. It speaks to what is considered acceptable, what goes unchecked, and who sets the tone.

For a franchise with that history, these are not small questions. This is a red flag, if not a smoking gun.

Starc revitalises DC bowling attack: 'His presence gives others confidence'

Tushar Bhaduri
New Delhi, May 4

DELHI CAPITALS (DC) returned to winning ways after three successive losses when theyaced a big chase against Rajasthan Royals in their previous game, and the inclusion of a genuine legend of the game may have something to do with it. Mitchell Starc played for the first time this season in Jaipur, and his three wickets — one in the first over and two towards the end of the innings — kept the total to something which DC could chase down.

Bowling coach Munaf Patel was relieved to have Starc at his disposal, especially after his team failed to defend 264 against the Punjab Kings. "It's vital to have a wicket-taker inside the Powerplay, as that's key to prevent a team from getting a really big score. Early wickets change the scenario completely," the former India seamer said on the eve of the game against CSK.

Not only does Starc get

With Lungi Ngidi available after banging his head on the ground, DC again have their full complement of bowling resources

wickets himself, but he also helps those around him get better. "Bowling partnerships are key, and that's what was missing for us in the previous matches. He's the captain of our bowling unit, and his presence gives confidence to the other players," Munaf said.

In this season's IPL, which has turned into a prolonged run-fest, bowlers can quickly get demoralised, especially if results don't go their way. In such a case, the role of the bowling coach becomes important, but Munaf admits there's only so much he can do.

"I try to motivate them, but once they go on the ground, they are on their own. I can't do

anything if they don't bowl to their strengths and don't target a batter's weakness," he said.

The adverse results in the middle of the campaign have ensured that DC has little wriggle room now, as Munaf admits that the "relax mode" is over. But if the wickets in the latter half of the campaign slow down as the sun beats down and start to aid spin more, he believes that could be to his team's advantage.

"We have two of the best spinners going around (Aarav Patel and Kuldeep Yadav). So, if the wickets get tired, it would be better for us," he said, though he felt there won't be much change.

With South African pacer Lungi Ngidi available after banging his head on the ground a week ago, DC again have their full complement of bowling resources. Kyle Jamieson shared the new ball with Starc in the last game, but the four-foreigner rule imposes its own limitations on team composition.

FIFA rejects \$20 million bid for World Cup broadcast rights



FIFA are yet to find an Indian broadcaster for the quadrennial showpiece, which kicks off on June 11. REUTERS

Reuters
New Delhi, May 4

MILLIONS OF soccer fans in the world's two most populous nations may not be able to watch the World Cup that starts next month, due to a deadlock over broadcast rights in India and no official decision in China.

In India, a Reliance-Disney joint venture has offered \$20 million for 2026 World Cup broadcast rights, a fraction of FIFA's ask, which was not acceptable to soccer's global governing body, two sources told Reuters on Monday.

Sony held talks but also decided not to make an offer for FIFA rights for India, a third source with direct knowledge said. There has also been no deal announcement for China, which FIFA says accounted for 49.8% of all hours of viewing on digital and social platforms globally during the 2022 World Cup.

FIFA did not respond to a Reuters request for comment. Reliance-Disney, a joint venture led by billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance, did not respond to requests for comment, and neither did Sony. The lack of a confirmed broadcast agreement with India or China is unusual at this stage.

In past World Cups, including 2018 and 2022, Chinese state broadcaster CCTV secured the rights well in advance and began airing promotional content and sponsor-driven advertisements weeks before the tournament. CCTV, which has extensive reach across television and digital platforms, did not immediately return a request for comment.

China accounted for 17.7% and India 2.9% of the global linear TV reach of the 2022 tournament. The two countries together accounted for 22.6% of total global digital streaming reach for that World Cup.

The 2026 tournament kicks off on June 11, leaving barely five weeks for a deal to be finalised, broadcast infrastructure to be set up and advertising inventory to be sold.

For India, FIFA initially sought \$100 million for broadcast rights for the 2026 and 2030 World Cups, the sources said, declining to be named because the talks are private.

When the World Cup last aired in India in 2022, Reliance's then-standalone media arm secured the rights for about \$60 million, which was announced around 14 months before the event in Qatar. The tournament drew over 110 million digital viewers across its platforms.

THE MAN ARSENAL MUST STOP

Simeone: Pragmatist & fighter with an unrealised dream

On eve of semifinal 2nd leg, revelatory documentary reminds why Argentine remains the most fascinating manager

Sandip G
New Delhi, May 4

THE FIRM, fiery eyes of Diego Simeone welled up towards the end of the first episode of a documentary on him, Living Match by Match. He was recounting a chat with his four-year-old daughter. "I told her football was my life, and she corrected, 'No, we are your life'." The eyes welling up again, he nodded and said: "But she was right."

The Amazon Prime documentary deconstructs the raging man in pitch-black coat prancing up and down the Atletico Madrid touchline and separates the man from the manager, stitching together his more humane, likeable side, his fears and fragilities. He smiles more often than most during games; he cries often too, especially when paying tribute to his idol Diego Maradona. He wears turtle-necks and round-necks of more coloured textures.

There are warm nuggets into his managing style. When his team was wobbling in the title race in the 2020-21 season, he hung childhood photos of every player next to their shelf in the locker room. The players were surprised. He told them: "Do you remember your childhood dream?" He made another morning ritual — his players would not say "good morning" to each other, but greet one another with "We're going to be champions." They got the point, toughened up and delivered him the title in a suspenseful climax.

One of Simeone's favourite players, Fernando Torres, explains how he motivates his charges. "Cholo knows how to motivate people," the forward said. "There are team talks before games when he has to stop as he is overcome with emotion. It's not a pose, it's real. He feels it. And if you see your coach feels it, you follow him."

Every Simeone team bears certain common traits — grit, fight and heart. Sometimes it boils to extremes that his tactics could be misconstrued as cynical and provocative, as any Arsenal supporter who watched the first leg would readily vouch. The Atletico codes are shaped as much by circumstance as by the characteristics of their manager.

Shedding the cynicism

Atletico were never as rich or powerful as the *El Clasico* rivals, frequently forced to rebuild after losing their finest players to direct rivals — so much so that only two players, captain Koke and Antoine Griezmann, remain from the team that lost to Real Madrid on penalties in the 2016 Champions League final. Simeone did not complain. He just kept building teams that fought and challenged the duopoly of Real Madrid and Barcelona in La Liga, even when crowns didn't follow. The latest iteration is perhaps his most dynamic, finally shedding the stereotype of cynicism.

Few teams are defined by their manager as much as Atletico is. It was always Lionel Messi's Barcelona, it is already



Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone, animated as usual, passes on instructions to his players. AP

Lamine Yamal's now; it was always Cristiano Ronaldo's Real Madrid, it could soon be Kylian Mbappe's. But Atletico was always Simeone's. A tough-tackling defensive midfielder, he belonged to the pragmatic school of Carlos Bilardo and not his antithesis, César Luis Menotti, the romantic. He snarled, sniggered, exaggerated fouls — rewatch the David Beckham sending-off in the 1998 World Cup — and stretched the laws to their limits without ever breaking them. The Brazil striker Ronaldo says in the documentary: "Cholo was a master at kicking you, but not getting caught and sent off." He once left a stud-shaped hole in the thigh of Atletico Bilbao's star midfielder Julen Guerrero.

Several times in the documentary he insists he was creative too, pointing to a century of goals scored for his country and seven clubs. The one that

best embodies his spirit came against Colombia in the 1993 Copa America. The goalkeeper and defender are converging towards the ball, but a galloping Simeone intervenes.

The goalkeeper trips him, but he bounces back onto his feet and fizzes an angled shot into the empty net from an awkward angle. In a group of artists and mavericks, he was the artisan that let their artistry shine. So chaotically creative were some of the sides that teammates would drift from pre-game tactics and assume wanton positions on the field. Simeone filled in the spaces they vacated, fiercely guarding against quick counters.

"If there is one thing I am, it is very hard-headed. If I want something, I go after it," he wrote in Coach's Voice.

But the pragmatic man in dark suits has a bright, vivid dream — to win the Cham-

ions League. It eluded him in his playing days, once crushingly in the 119th minute of a quarterfinal against Ajax. Twice he has endured the pain as manager, both times to bitter rivals Real Madrid — once through a stoppage-time equaliser, the second in a shootout.

"I don't feel it as an obsession, that would be the wrong path," he said. "I see it as a dream, which is something positive. And we all share that dream."

Between him and that dream is Arsenal at the Emirates, managed by a man who wears black himself. Emotions will tumble, tempers will rage. But whether Atletico loses or wins, Simeone will come back — because "football is life."

● **Arsenal vs Atletico Madrid, Champions League semifinal, 2nd leg, 12.30am (Wednesday): Live on Sony Sports Network and SonyLIV.**

Simple idea behind France's badminton resurgence

British Raj
New Delhi, May 4

UNTIL MARCH 2025, France had never had a male shuttler in the top 10. One year later, Christo Popov, Alex Lanier and Toma Popov Junior had taken down some of the best in the world to reach the Thomas Cup final.

The transformation didn't happen overnight. It happened over 20 players. "The biggest difference right now is that our best players are working with a lot of coaches," Toma Popov Senior, father and coach of the Popov brothers, told *The Indian Express* at the India Open. "Earlier, there used to be one coach for 20 players. Now we have every player working with an individual coach."

One coach. One player. That is the whole French system in six words. Everything else — the sports science, the AI, the family training centres, the INSEP programmes — is an expression of the same idea. Not a collective. A collection of individuals, each

given exactly what they need, built to play as one. It was the foundation of a breakout 2025 — the year French badminton announced itself to the world. Lanier became the first French shuttler to enter the top 10 and win a Super 750 tournament, taking the Japan Open. Christo won the World Tour Finals. Three French men now sit in the top 20. On Saturday in Horsens, France reached the Thomas Cup final.

Science behind surge

The individual coaching model was the structure. Sports science was the engine.

"We have expanded our horizon on sports science. It is a great tool," says Popov Senior. "The analysis of every player has to be minute — as microscopic as it can get. We analyse how our players move, we have a team that keeps assessing their muscles and tendons with every move. Sometimes it is also important to evaluate how much progress you are putting in during training."



Toma Popov Junior celebrating the semi-final win over India. BADMINTON PHOTO

France went further than standard sports science. The coaches at INSEP — the Institut National du Sport, de l'Expertise et de la Performance, where Lanier trains under former Lithuanian international Kestutis Navickas — were early adopters of artificial intelligence, using AI tools to personalise training programmes for individual players. "The plans at INSEP and the

way we are training has resulted in our players having better neuromuscular gains — better counter movement jumps and sprints," Navickas said on *The Average Not Average* podcast.

While the Popov brothers train at their family-run centre in Fos-sur-Mer in southern France, the INSEP pathway produced a different but complementary model. Two systems. One principle.

Toma Popov Senior played international badminton in a different era. His son believes the gap between those eras is precisely what makes him effective. "While he was coaching me and from his playing days, my father has learnt a lot. That has definitely helped Christo in becoming a top ten player. I think that's the natural way forward — where we learn from our past mistakes and improve in future," says Popov Junior.

The father-son arrangement at Fos-sur-Mer is one of the more unusual in world badminton. It has produced one of the more

unusual results — a player in the world's top five whose entire development has been managed within the family. Individual attention taken to its logical extreme.

France's rise in men's singles has grabbed the headlines, but the system was already proving itself elsewhere. Thom Gicquel and Delphine Delrue became the first French shuttlers to enter the world top 10 in any category — proof, before the singles breakthrough, that individual attention at scale could work across the board. "The reason behind that is the system — so many coaches, a dedicated sports science facility," Delrue told *The Indian Express* at the India Open. "The performances have improved over the years."

From one coach for 20 players to one coach per player. From no top-10 men's singles presence to three in the top 20. From Thomas Cup also-rans to finalists. The system, it turns out, was the answer. France just had to build it first.

Top names slam French Open prize money

Associated Press
Paris, May 4

A GROUP of leading players including Jannik Sinner, Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff have expressed "their deep disappointment" at the level on prize money at Roland Garros amid a lingering dispute with Grand Slam tournament organisers.

The clay-court Grand Slam event starts later this month in western Paris. The players said they have other demands that have not been addressed by officials, including better representation, health and pensions.

The players' call came after French Open organizers announced last month the Roland Garros prize money has increased by about 10% for an overall pot of 61.7 million euros (\$72.1 million), with the total amount up 5.3 million euros from last year.

"Players' share of Roland Garros tournament revenue has declined from 15.5% in

2024 to 14.9% projected in 2026," the group of players responded in a statement on Monday.

Play begins on May 24 at Roland Garros. Men's and women's singles champions each receive 2.8 million euros and the runners-up 1.4 million euros. Semifinalists earn 750,000 euros and first round losers get 87,000 euros. Men's and women's doubles winners pocket 600,000 euros and the mixed doubles champions get 122,000 euros.

But the statement said "the underlying figures tell a very different story," claiming that players receive a declining share of the value they contribute to generate.

The same group of players had already signed a letter sent to the heads of the four Grand Slam tournaments last year, seeking more prize money and a greater say in what they called "decisions that directly impact us."

● CHESS GENIUS VS IIT-IANS

Pragg's mind tricks find new opponents — engineering prodigies

Amit Kamath
Mumbai, May 4

SHOAN RAJ has shown the image to at least 30 people.

It is a screenshot from a chess game, taken at move 11. It shows that Shoan — a third year Electrical Engineering student at IIT Delhi and captain of its chess team — had a +3 advantage over Pragganandhaa, one of the strongest grandmasters in the country.

A +3 advantage in chess is the equivalent of having an extra bishop or knight over your opponent — or three additional pawns on the board. A position most players would convert without thinking twice. Shoan did not convert it.

"If it were any other opponent in front of me, I wouldn't even think twice before playing the correct move," he says. "But simply because I was facing Pragg, I felt like he'd played some trick. So I didn't capitalise. There is a mental factor at-

tached to playing one of the best players in India."

He fumbled. Pragg won. The screenshot remains — a document of the moment a grandmaster's reputation did the work his pieces couldn't.

Last week, 19 players from IIT Delhi got to experience that mental factor firsthand when Pragganandhaa visited the campus for two events organised by his sponsors IMC Trading.

In the first, seven members of the chess team faced him in a handicap match — one minute on his clock, five on theirs. All seven were FIDE-rated players, some close to 2000. A video posted on YouTube by ChessBase India shows Pragg's hand a blur across the boards, his mind computing faster than a computer. Even when things looked hairy on the board, the 20-year-old super GM politely replied to commentator Sagar Shah's queries standing beside him, and occa-



R Pragganandhaa visited the IIT Delhi campus last week for two events organised by his sponsors. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

sionally hand wisecracks about his opponents.

He defeated all seven. He said he had "barely made it" in many of them. The biggest compliment he offered: the seven games had been a "challenge."

One of those challenges

came from Soham Palkar, a fourth year Mathematics and Computing student who had watched Pragg terrorise opponents as a 10-year-old in age-group nationals. Soham played an opening Pragg admitted he had no idea about. Pragg defused it anyway — with one

● BRIEFLY



Kimi Antonelli, 19, won his third consecutive race on Sunday. AP

Antonelli wins Miami GP, stretches c'ship lead to 20 points

ITALIAN TEENAGER Kimi Antonelli won the Miami Grand Prix for Mercedes on Sunday and stretched his Formula One championship lead to 20 points with an impressive third victory in a row. The youngest driver ever to lead the standings, at 19 years old, Antonelli made more history as the first to take his first three career F1 wins in successive races and all from pole position. He was also the first in five editions of the race to win in Miami from the front row. "This is just the beginning, the road is still long," he said after beating McLaren's world champion Lando Norris by 3.2 seconds at the Hard Rock Stadium. REUTERS

Inter seal Serie A title with three rounds to spare

INTER MILAN sealed the Italian league soccer title with a 2-0 victory over visiting Parma. Inter, which needed only a draw to secure the trophy, moved an unassailable 12 points clear of 2025 champion Napoli with three rounds remaining. It's their 21st Serie A title, trailing only the record 36 held by Juventus. For Cristian Chivu, Inter's first-year coach, the trophy was secured against the club he coached last season, having helped Parma avoid relegation. AP

India continue poor run at shotgun WC

INDIA'S GANEMAT Sekhon shot 70 out of 75 to end day one just a point outside the top eight, while veteran Mairaj Ahmad Khan endured another disappointing outing in the skeet competition at the ISSF World Cup Shotgun on Monday. The Chandigarh-based Sekhon, a silver medalist at this range three years ago, was the best-placed Indian sitting ninth and in contention for a finals berth with 50 qualification targets. PTI

Indian archers face stern test in WC Stage 2

INDIAN ARCHERY heads into another major event clouded by poor planning, lack of direction and the absence of a full-time foreign coach, an alarming situation in an Asian Games year, as a strong field assembles for World Cup Stage 2 beginning on Tuesday. With the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan scheduled from September 19-October 4 approaching fast, India's build-up looks far from convincing. PTI

Premier League: Forest beat Chelsea 3-1

CHELSEA SUFFERED a 3-1 home defeat by a second-string Nottingham Forest side on Monday, extinguishing any lingering hope of a top-5 finish that would guarantee Champions League football next season. It was the listless and error-ridden London side's sixth league defeat in a row. Chelsea talisman Cole Palmer had a penalty saved just before halftime after 18-year-old winger Jesse Shaun Derry was taken to hospital following a clash of heads. REUTERS

Anjali clinches gold in women's 10m air pistol

RAJASTHAN'S ANJALI Shekhawat claimed the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol event at the 24th Kumar Surendra Singh Memorial Shooting Championship on Monday. Shekhawat, who had earlier qualified fourth with a score of 576-23x, stepped up impressively in the final to shoot 240.5 and finish on top of the podium. Haryana's Kanak Budhwar clinched the silver medal with a score of 238.7. PTI

Boxers register strong results at Asian U-15, U-17

INDIA'S YOUNG boxers continued to dominate at the Asian Boxing U15 & U17 Championships with a series of strong performances. In the U-17 boys' competition, Yadav Yash (50kg) secured a commanding 5:0 victory over Turkmenistan's Suleyman Ahmedov, while Karuna Albertson Kom (60kg) impressed with a 4:1 win against Tajikistan's Ali Nazarov. Gopal Rameshwar Ganeshe (52kg) went down narrowly 2:3 against Tajikistan's Nazarov Damir. PTI

KOREAN SHIP ON FIRE IN HORMUZ; TEHRAN TELLS SHIP & TANKERS TO COORDINATE MOVEMENTS WITH ITS MILITARY

UAE accuses Iran of attacking empty ADNOC oil tanker in Strait

Iran hits UAE oil port; Trump says US Navy will help ships cross Strait

Showdown with Tehran begins, Gulf tense again

Reuters
Dubai, Washington, May 4

THE UNITED Arab Emirates on Monday accused Iran of attacking an empty crude oil tanker belonging to the Abu Dhabi state oil firm ADNOC with drones as it attempted to pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

ADNOC's maritime energy logistics unit said the Barakah was empty when it was attacked by two drones, and no injuries were reported.

"The UAE further stressed the need for Iran to halt these unprovoked attacks, ensure its full commitment to an immediate cessation of all hostilities, and the complete and unconditional reopening of the Strait of Hormuz," the foreign ministry added.

Iran has blocked entry and exit from the Gulf to most non-Iranian ships since the US and Israel began attacking it on February 28.

It has threatened to attack unauthorised vessels as they transit the Strait, conduit for around a fifth of the world's oil and gas shipments.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency said earlier that a tanker had reported being hit by unknown projectiles.

IRAN HIT several ships in the Strait of Hormuz on Monday and set a UAE oil port ablaze, as President Donald Trump's attempt to use the US Navy to free up shipping provoked the war's biggest escalation since a ceasefire was declared four weeks ago.

Trump's new mission "Project Freedom", which he announced on social media overnight to release ships stuck in the strait, was the first apparent attempt to make use of naval power to unblock the world's most important energy shipping route.

But at least in the initial hours on Monday, the gamble appeared to have backfired, bringing no surge of merchant shipping through the strait while provoking a show of force from Iran, which had long threatened to respond to any escalation with new attacks on its neighbours.

The US military said two US merchant ships had made it



Cargo vessels in the Strait of Hormuz near Bandar Abbas, Iran, on Monday. REUTERS

through the strait, without saying when. Iran denied any such crossings had taken place. The commander of US forces in the region said his fleet had destroyed six small Iranian boats, which Iran also denied.

Admiral Brad Cooper said he "strongly advised" Iranian forces to keep clear of U.S. military assets carrying out the mission. Iranian authorities, for

their part, released a map of what they said was an expanded sea area now under their control, which went far beyond the strait to include swathes of international waters, including long stretches of the United Arab Emirates' coastline on either side of the strait.

South Korea reported one of its merchant ships had been hit by an explosion and fire inside

the strait.

The British maritime security agency UKMTO reported two ships had been hit off the coast of the UAE, and the Emirati oil company ADNOC said one of its empty oil tankers was hit by Iranian drones while trying to cross.

"Iran has taken some shots at unrelated Nations with respect to the Ship Movement,

3 Indians injured in UAE port fire

Dubai: Three Indian nationals were injured on Monday after a fire broke out on the Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone (FOIZ) in the UAE following a drone strike originating from Iran, according to local media reports. Fujairah Civil Defence teams immediately responded to the incident and are continuing efforts to bring the fire under control, it added. Three Indian nationals sustained injuries after the fire broke out on the FOIZ, the *Khaleej Times* reported, quoting authorities in Fujairah. PFI

PROJECT FREEDOM, including a South Korean Cargo Ship. Perhaps it's time for South Korea to come and join the mission!" Trump posted on social media on Monday.

After reported drone and missile attacks inside the UAE throughout the day, including one that caused a fire at an important oil port, the UAE said Iranian attacks marked a serious escalation and it reserved the right to respond.

Nepal Cabinet resends constitutional council ordinance to President

Yubaraj Ghimire
Kathmandu, May 4



President Ramchandra Paudel

NEPAL'S CABINET on Monday decided to resend a Constitutional Council-related ordinance to President Ramchandra Paudel without making any changes, after he returned it for reconsideration, government officials said.

The ordinance seeks to amend the law governing the composition and powers of the six-member Constitutional Council, which recommends appointments for the chief justice and judges of the Supreme Court, ambassadors, commissioners and heads of all 13 constitutional commissions.

The cabinet, led by Prime Minister Balendra Shah, had forwarded the ordinance to Paudel on April 27. On Sunday, the president returned it to the government, saying it required further review and reconsideration.

The decision to resend the ordinance was taken at a cabinet meeting, government spokesperson Sasmit Pokhrel said.

If endorsed, the ordinance

would give the government greater authority in the process of selecting candidates for the judiciary, diplomatic missions and constitutional bodies.

The six-member council is headed by the prime minister and includes the chairman of the upper house, the speaker, the deputy speaker, the leader of the opposition in House of Representatives and the chief justice.

At present, the prime minister and the speaker belong to the ruling party, while the acting chief justice is considered neutral. The deputy speaker and the leader of the opposition belong to the RSP and the Nepali Congress, respectively.

• BRIEFLY

UNITED STATES

Rubio to travel to Italy on May 6 to mend ties with the Vatican



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the State Department in Washington. FILE

US SECRETARY OF State Marco Rubio will travel to Rome from Wednesday to Friday to advance relations with Italy and the Vatican, a State Department spokesperson said on Monday, after recent criticism of the pope by President Donald Trump. Rubio will meet with Holy See leadership to discuss the situation in the Middle East and mutual interests in the Western Hemisphere, while his meetings with Italian counterparts will be focused on shared security interests and strategic alignment. REUTERS

UNITED STATES

13 injured after shooting near lake in Oklahoma

A SHOOTING at a party at a lake near Oklahoma City sent at least 13 people to hospitals, according to police and hospital officials. Edmond police spokesperson Emily Ward said authorities received reports of shots being fired at about 9 pm Sunday at a gathering of young people near Arcadia Lake. She said that no arrests had been made yet. AP

MEXICO

Earthquake hits southern Mexico, no casualties

AN EARTHQUAKE of magnitude 5.6 hit southern Mexico on Monday morning, Mexico's National Seismological Institute said, while authorities reported no initial fatalities or damages. There were no immediate reports of victims or damages, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said in a post on social media. REUTERS

• NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka and Maldives sign seven MoUs

MALDIVES AND Sri Lanka on Monday exchanged 7 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) during the ongoing visit of President Mohamed Muizzu to the island nation. The MoUs were exchanged after talks between Sri Lanka President Anura Kumara Dissanayake and President Muizzu. PTI

PAKISTAN

Court rejects Imran, his wife's suspension pleas

A PAKISTAN high court on Monday rejected the petitions of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi seeking the suspension of their sentences in the 190 million pound Al Qadir Trust case. Khan and Bushra, who were sentenced to 14 and 7 years in jail respectively. PTI

'The death zone': How Russia is luring Africans to Ukraine

Matthew Mpoke, Bigg John Eligon & Zimasa Matiwane
Nairobi, May 4

JAMES KAMAU Ndungu told friends that he was heading to Russia for day labor. He was unemployed and eager for work back home too.

In June, he sent a photo from Istanbul Airport, saying he was in transit, a close friend said. Weeks later, he sent another image, wearing fatigues and holding a gun. By August, he wrote from a trench in Ukraine, saying conditions were bad and asking for prayers. Kenya has not heard

from him since.

Kamau's case is part of a pattern in which Africans end up on front lines of Russia's war against Ukraine. Some go willingly as mercenaries, but many others say they were lured by false promises of jobs, only to be pushed into military service.

Recruitment networks have spread across the continent through travel agencies and job-placement firms that advertise on WhatsApp and Telegram. Interviews with victims and recruiters suggest the men are not hired directly by Russia's Defense Ministry.

Contracts reviewed by *The*

New York Times were in Russian, leaving many recruits unable to understand what they signed.

The promises have found fertile ground in Africa, where formal jobs are scarce and the youth population is growing fast. In several countries, authorities have reported cases of men being deceived into joining Russian forces.

Kenya's intelligence service has said about 1,000 Kenyans have gone to Russia and ended up in Ukraine, with only 30 returning. The government has

since increased checks on young men traveling abroad.

At a memorial for Kamau outside Nairobi in March, his mother wailed, "Why has Russia taken my son?" Kenyan senator Okioti Andrew Omtatah compared the desperation behind such recruitment to a slavish ship arriving in Mombasa with jobs on offer.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in March that foreigners were taking part in Moscow's war but insisted no one is recruited against their will. Kremlin spokesman

Dmitry Peskov told the Times it was unaware of Africans being promised civilian work and then forced into military service.

Ukraine's ambassador to South Africa, Olexander Scherba, accused Russia of exploiting young Africans who need money. Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Botswana and Mali have all reported similar cases. In Kenya, prosecutors charged a man in February with recruiting 22 Kenyans for Russia. South African authorities are also investigating alleged recruitment schemes. NYT

Suspected hantavirus outbreak traps 150 on ship off Cape Verde

Reuters
Cape Town, May 4

MEDICS WERE working on Monday to evacuate two people with symptoms of the deadly hantavirus after a suspected outbreak on a cruise ship held off West Africa carrying mostly British, American and Spanish passengers, officials said.

Around 150 people were still stuck on the vessel after three people - a Dutch couple and a German national - died, and others fell ill, including a Briton who left the vessel earlier and was being treated in South Africa, authorities added.

"We're not just headlines: we're people with families, with lives, with people waiting for us at home," Jake Rosmarin, a US travel blogger, said in a tearful Instagram video post from the ship on Monday. "There is a lot of uncertainty and that is the hardest part," he added.

• WHAT IS HANTAVIRUS?

SPREAD BY RODENTS

Hantavirus is primarily spread by rodents but can be transmitted between people in rare cases.

People most typically become infected when virus in rodent droppings, saliva and urine becomes airborne.

The name comes from the Hantan River area of South Korea where the virus was identified in the 1970s.

CAN BE FATAL

Hantavirus is a family of viruses that cause two illnesses, one that affects the lungs and the other that attacks the kidneys.

Concert pianist Betsy Arakawa, wife of actor Gene Hackman, died from hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in New Mexico in 2025.

SYMPTOMS

Hantavirus usually begins with flu-like symptoms, such as fatigue and fever.

Four to 10 days later, coughing, shortness of breath and fluid in the lungs appear.

TREATMENT

There is no specific therapy for hantavirus infection, so treatment focuses on supportive care including rest and fluids. REUTERS

The World Health Organization said the risk to the wider public was low from the disease that is typically carried by rodents and does not transfer easily between humans.

But authorities in the island nation of Cape Verde said they had not allowed Dutch-flagged MV Hondius to dock as a precaution, with the "aim of protecting national public health".



Members of the 501st Legion Korean Garrison dressed as Star Wars characters parade to mark Star Wars Day in Seoul on Monday. REUTERS

Two dead after car runs into crowd in Leipzig, driver held

Reuters
Leipzig, May 3

A DRIVER was arrested after a car struck several people in the eastern German city of Leipzig on Monday, local police said.

The police said that they were conducting an operation in the area and would be providing further updates.

Local broadcaster MDR reported two people were killed and two severely injured when a car ran into a crowd.

Leipzig police confirmed to Reuters that there were injuries from a driving car but could not give more details.

A damaged Volkswagen SUV with a person on top of the vehicle was seen speeding through a pedestrian zone, local broadcaster Radio Leipzig reported.

The broadcaster cited eyewitnesses as saying there were several bodies covered with sheets as well as a stabbing.

Empire Strikes Seoul

Members of the 501st Legion Korean Garrison dressed as Star Wars characters parade to mark Star Wars Day in Seoul on Monday. REUTERS

• PRODUCTION COMPANIES HAVE BEEN TESTING WHAT AI MODELS CAN DO, CREATING EXPERIMENTAL CLIPS OF CHINESE WARRIORS IN COMBAT, AN APOCALYPSE OR AN IDYLIC COUNTRYSIDE RIVER

China's AI microdrama surge is redefining short-form entertainment and work

Vivian Wang & Jiawei Wang
Beijing, May 4

UNTIL RECENTLY, making a hit microdrama, the soapy, short-form, made-for-mobile shows that have become wildly popular in China, meant hiring actors, renting sets and spending weeks filming and editing.

Now, some Chinese companies are churning them out for \$30 a minute, with no cameras, no crew and no human performers. That's thanks to artificial intelligence.

Dramas generated by the technology have suddenly become ubiquitous in China: In March alone, nearly 50,000 new AI-generated microdramas

were uploaded to Douyin, China's version of TikTok, according to DataEye, a Chinese consulting firm. That single month's uploads nearly matched the platform's total uploads for all of 2025.

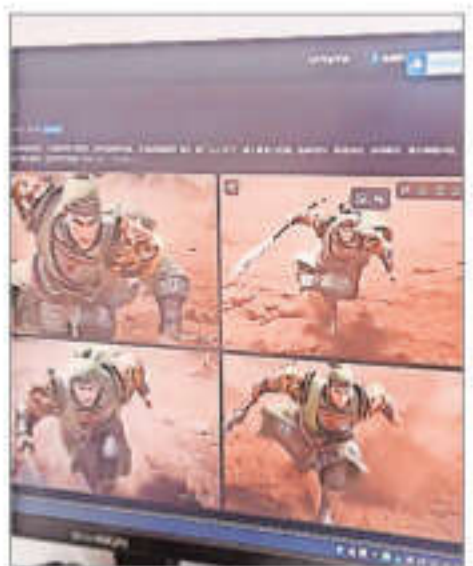
The boom is being fueled by the widespread availability and increasing prowess of AI video tools, including Seedance 2.0, which was released in February by the Chinese parent company of TikTok. Production companies have been testing what these models can do, creating experimental clips of Chinese warriors in combat, an apocalypse or an idyllic countryside river.

Most AI-generated microdramas, which under Chinese

law are required to be labeled as such, attract little attention. But some clips have racked up hundreds of millions of views, in a country where people are generally more optimistic about AI than in the West.

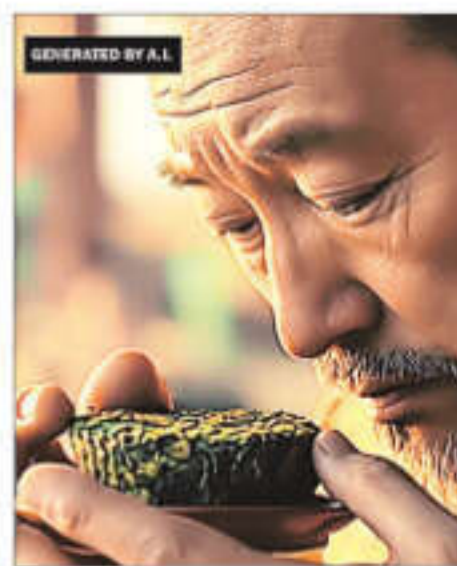
The Chinese market for AI microdramas is expected to be worth more than \$3 billion this year, according to Chinese state media, out of a more than \$14 billion market for microdramas in general.

But recently, the surge has also set off an outcry in China. Actors say their work opportunities have dried up. Celebrities and ordinary people alike have threatened legal action after discovering their likenesses in AI-



Chinese AI microdrama market is expected to exceed \$3 billion. NYT

generated microdramas. (ByteDance has since introduced restrictions on using real people's faces in Seedance.)



We spoke to several people in China's entertainment industry to hear how AI has changed their lives.

When Li Jiao'e moved to Hengdian, a major filming hub in eastern China, in 2024, he had only bit parts in microdramas. Still, he was thrilled. After years of bouncing between unrelated jobs, he was finally chasing his dream of being an actor.

As time passed, he started getting a few speaking lines, often in comedic roles. Sometimes, people recognized him in public.

But in recent months, roles evaporated, he said. Group chats where people shared opportunities went silent.

"There's nothing," he said. "It's like it was raining, and then suddenly the rain stopped."

He said the drop was partly

because a major streaming platform raised its standards for what it was buying.

But he thought the hype around AI was another reason.

Fears of actors being replaced by AI gathered steam recently after a major streaming site announced that it had created a database of more than 100 actors whose likenesses could be available for future AI productions. A different microdrama platform also announced that it had removed a popular show after two social media users discovered that their likenesses had been used, without their permission, to create villains in the show.

The platform, which is

owned by ByteDance, said it would strengthen its review mechanisms to prevent similar cases in the future.

Chinese regulators last month introduced rules requiring people's consent before they can be used as digital avatars. Li said he did not oppose the use of AI in entertainment but thought the industry was applying it in the wrong way.

"They're still just imitating humans or trying to make things more humanlike," he said. "They should be trying to unleash more imagination, taking a more unconventional route."

He continued: "After all, our fundamental value as humans is in our ability to imagine." NYT

NORTHERN RAILWAY CORRIGENDUM

Ref : Tender Notice No. 01/2026-2027 dated 08.04.2026 S. No. 03 Tender No. 77269028RGC Opening date 29.04.2026.

In reference to above, tender opening date has been extended from 29.04.2026 to 14.05.2026. All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

The corrigendum has been published on website www.ireps.gov.in.

Note : This is the First Corrigendum in above referred tender.

Date: 04.05.2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1481/26

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER

78-SRDEE-G-DLI-2026-27

Electrical work in connection with (i) Improvement to damaged flooring, walls, rooms, halls, staircase of Accounts Building Annex-II at Baroda House New Delhi. (ii) Improvement of General Admin Section of G branch, GM's Conference hall at main building at Ground Floor & first floor at Annex-I at Baroda House. (iii) Improvement of halls, rooms of store department in Annex-I at Baroda House.

Approx. cost of the works in Rs. 8997820.00/-

Address of the office Sr. Div. Elect. Engineer/General, DRM Office, Delhi Division, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi, 110055

Earnest Money Rs. 180000.00/-

Last Date & time of submission of tender 26.05.2026, 16.00 Hrs.

Opening of tender 26.05.2026, 16.00 Hrs.

Website & notice board www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Div. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1490/2026

STATE FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, POLIPATHAR, JABALPUR (M.P.) WALK IN INTERVIEW

A Walk-in-interview will be held on 19.05.2026 for the purely temporary post of Junior Research Fellow (06 Post), Project Assistant (02) from 10:30 am onwards in the office of the undersigned for assisting in the research project. Suitable candidate may attend the interview with relevant certificate and mark sheets in original as well as one set of self attested photocopies. Proof of identity and one recent photograph. (Registration time 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM)

More details can be obtained from the notice board of the office of the undersigned or log on to institute's website www.mpsfri.org

Director

INTERNATIONAL FLOWER AUCTION BANGALORE LIMITED

#24, BELLARY ROAD, HEBBAL, Bengaluru-560024

Phone:- 8431235867/ 9980303339

E-Mail:- ifalimited@gmail.com, Website :- www.ifabindia.org

IFAB/2025-26/PM/WORK_INDENT/SCALL-4 Date: 30/04/2026

TENDER For Supply and Installation of Technological Equipments Including Double Deep Racking System, Pallets, Conveyor Belt System, Etc., and Construction of Flower Storage Cold Rooms for Strengthening of International Flower Auction Bangalore Limited Under RIDF Project.

Two bid system online tenders are invited through Karnataka e-procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>, by IFAB Ltd., on 30.04.2026 for Supply and Installation of Technological Equipments Including Double Deep Racking System, Pallets, Conveyor Belt System, Etc., and Construction of Flower Storage Cold Rooms (IFAB/2025-26/PM/WORK_INDENT/3 /CALL-4) Under RIDF at International Flower Auction Bangalore Limited from the interested parties. The documents are available in the Karnataka Procurement Portal only from 30.04.2026 and last date for bid submission is on 11.05.2026 till 4.00 PM.

Please note the date variation in the tender document uploaded in the portal i.e., the last date is mentioned as 23-04-2026 by typing mistake. It is requested to read it as 11.05.2026

Sd/- Managing Director

DIPR/CP/480/SHIRDI SAI/2026-27

SMART CITY AHMEDABAD DEVELOPMENT LTD

E Tender - Request for Proposal (RFP) For SITC of Dashcam along with AI based solution for surveillance of Municipal Infrastructure

Pre-Bid Meeting 12/05/2026 at 15:00 Hrs at Smart City Ahmedabad Development Limited, Command and Control Centre, Opp. Divan Ballubhai School, Nr. Sanskar Kendra, Paldi, Ahmedabad-380007

Last Date Online Price Bid Submission 08/06/2026 at 16:00 Hrs.

Last Date of Receipt of Physical Bid 08/06/2026 at 17:00 Hrs.

Detail & Tender available on <https://ahmedabadcity.gov.in> & <https://smartcityahmedabad.com>

Smart City Ahmedabad Development Ltd. (SCADL) Office Address Command and Control Centre, Opp. Divan Ballubhai School, Nr. Sanskar Kendra, Paldi, Ahmedabad-380007

Email smartcity@ahmedabadcity.gov.in, scadl.amc@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HARYANA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LIMITED, PANCHKULA (HMSCL)	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF LAMINAR AIR FLOW BENCHTOP ON 2 YEARS RATE CONTRACT AS MENTIONED AGAINST ITEM IN SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENT	04.05.2026 18.05.2026	Rs. 2,50,00,000/-	www.hmscl.org.in	892299829 equipmentmgt@hmscl@gmail.com
2	HARYANA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LIMITED, PANCHKULA (HMSCL)	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF PORTABLE HAND HELD TUBE SEALERS WITH GUN ON 2 YEARS RATE CONTRACT AS MENTIONED AGAINST ITEM IN SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENT	04.05.2026 18.05.2026	Rs. 15,00,000/-	www.hmscl.org.in	892299829 equipmentmgt@hmscl@gmail.com
3	HARYANA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LIMITED, PANCHKULA (HMSCL)	TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF DIGITAL ANALYTICAL BALANCE ON 2 YEARS RATE CONTRACT AS MENTIONED AGAINST ITEM IN SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENT	04.05.2026 18.05.2026	Rs. 22,50,000/-	www.hmscl.org.in	892299829 equipmentmgt@hmscl@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in No. 44917/HRY

कार्यालय उज्जैन नगर पालिक निगम, उज्जैन

विज्ञापन क्र./2026/671 (Online) निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना उज्जैन, दिनांक - 04/05/2026

निम्नांकित कार्य के लिए प्रपत्र 'अ' (फार्म ए) में प्रतिशत कम या अधिक के आधार पर प्रमुख अभियंता लोक निर्माण विभाग म.प्र. शासन भोपाल के कार्यालय में पंजीकृत ठेकेदारों से उक्त विभाग में पंजीयन प्रमाण पत्र की प्रमाणित प्रति प्रस्तुत करने पर ऑनलाइन (Online) निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना एवं अन्य जानकारी वेबसाइट www.mptenders.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है। यदि उपरोक्त निविदा में किसी प्रकार का संशोधन होता है तो इसकी सूचना ऑन लाईन दी जावेगी। पृथक से समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित नहीं की जावेगी।

क्र.	टेण्डर क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	अनुमानित लागत	नगरीय प्रशासन एवं विकास विभाग म.प्र. भोपाल	अंदाजित मनी रु.	समय अवधि	आनलाईन क्रय करने की एवं ई. एम. डी. राशि एवं समस्त दस्तावेज Submission करने की अंतिम दिनांक
1	2026_UAD_487838_2	गोमट मार्ग से तिलकेश्वर मार्ग (महावीर मार्ग) चौड़ीकरण कार्य एवं सीमेंट कांक्रिट सड़क निर्माण कार्य।	3,29,97,625/-	02-08-2021 UADD ISSR SOR And 08-011-2025 UADD ISSR Road SOR	1,64,988/-	365 दिवस	16.05.2026 समय 17:00 टेण्डर फार्म मूल्य 15,000/- रहेंगा।
2	2026_UAD_186897_2	जयसिंहपुर प्रस्तावित अप्परपास के पास से नूतन स्कूल चारधाम पार्किंग के पास तक सी.सी. रोड निर्माण कार्य	7,46,95,615/-	02-08-2021 UADD ISSR SOR And 08-011-2025 UADD ISSR Road SOR	3,73,478/-	365 दिवस	16.05.2026 समय 17:00 टेण्डर फार्म मूल्य 20,000/- रहेंगा।
3	2026_UAD_483033_2	रामानुज कोट से दानी गेट तक सड़क चौड़ीकरण कार्य।	10,02,00,533/-	02-08-2021 UADD ISSR SOR And 08-011-2025 UADD ISSR Road SOR	5,01,003/-	365 दिवस	16.05.2026 समय 17:00 टेण्डर फार्म मूल्य 30,000/- रहेंगा।

कार्यालय सचिव- नगर पालिक निगम उज्जैन

UP Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd. MALAWAN -ETAH - 207001

PUBLICATION OF GEM-TENDER NOTICE (IN/OUT OF STATE)

1-GEM Bid Number: GEM/2026/B/7494668

Supply : "Procurement of H2SO4 (Sulphuric Acid) for Water Treatment Plant at 2X660, MW JTTP Malawan, Etah"

Estimated cost: Rs. 41,51,847.70 (Including GST)

EMD: Rs.40,000.00

Last Date of uploading Bid : 11.05.2026 17:00hrs.

2-GEM Bid Number: GEM/2026/B/7494590

Supply : "Procurement of HVAC equipments & its spares at 2X660MW JTTP, Malawan, Etah"

Estimated cost : 6,02,316.84 (Including GST)

EMD: Rs 6,000.00

Last Date of uploading Bid : 16.05.2026 17:00 hrs.

3-Gem Bid No: GEM/2026/B/7500766

Work-Hiring of 54 Seatar Delux Bus at 2X660MW JTTP, Malawan, Etah"

Estimated cost: 1731960.00 (Including GST)

EMD: Rs.34,000.00

Last Date of uploading Bid : 16-05-2026 18:00hrs.

For information regarding Addendum/Corrigendum/Rejection of Bids kindly regularly visit Website www.gem.gov.in

पत्रांक : 44/अडीएन(यु)/2X660 सेवा/उत्पादन/ दिनांक: 04.05.2026

"Save Electricity for Nation"

UPSIDA कार्यालय सचिव प्रमुख (सिस्टिम), निगम सचिव, दिल्ली उज्जैन राज्य अधीनस्थ विकास प्राधिकरण सुन्दरपुर, गीतापुरदरवार। ई-निविदा सूचना

सुन्दरपुर स्थित निगम जल के लिए प्राधिकरण के निगम कार्य हेतु सरकारी निगम/सहकारी/उपक्रम/निगम/प्राधिकरण/उपक्रम/नगर/निकासी में अर्थ शक्ति में सहायक कार्य/उपक्रमों से ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा के माध्यम से आमंत्रित की जाने वाली निविदा सन्दर्भ निम्नलिखित है:-

क्र.	कार्य का नाम	सर्वेक्षण/दिनांक
01	Structural and Landscaping work on road side path with two way Maintenance near CD-2 Office, UPSIDA EPP Kansa Dist. G.E. Nagar	22.03

निविदा दिनांक 05.05.2026 को सुबह 11:00 बजे से दिनांक 25.05.2026 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक उपरोक्त की जा सकती है, जहाँ ई-निविदा को दिनांक 25.05.2026 को सुबह 11:00 बजे या इसके पश्चात खोल जायेंगे। निविदादाताओं द्वारा उपरोक्त बिना मूल्य समतल पत्रों की नूतन प्रतियों को पंजीकृत करके अर्थात् प्राधिकरण को दिनांक 25.05.2026 को सुबह 5:00 बजे तक कार्यालय में प्राप्त करना अनिवार्य है अन्यथा निविदा को Consider नहीं किया जायेगा। ई-निविदा प्रणाली में निविदाओं में समतल पत्र साहित्य रखे जायेंगे। निविदादाताओं को निविदा सूचना के विवरण प्राप्त करने के लिए निगम की वेबसाइट www.upsida.com पर विधि ई-निविदा एवं निविदा की वेबसाइट www.etender.up.nic.in पर देखी जा सकती है। (कृपया निविदा सूचना के अन्तर्गत उपरोक्त निगम सचिव-2, सचिव, गीतापुरदरवार, मो. नं०-9871909088)

UJVN LIMITED

H.O. : "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006

Telephone: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508

CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866 Website: www.ujvn.com

Letter No: 382 Date extension Notice-1 Date: 04/05/2026

Due to unavoidable reasons the date of submission & opening of bid e- NIT No. 01/EE(Civil)/MB-W/TN/2026-27is being extended as below:-

Last date & Time for submission of bid onportal- upto 17:00hrs. of 11.05.2026.

Last date & Time for submission of hard copies- upto 17:00hrs of 12.05.2026

Date & Time Opening of bid on the portal :- At 11:00hrs. of 13.05.2026.

Other terms, conditions of bid shall remain same.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit "e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

Executive Engineer (Civil) MB-I, Maneri

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)

Name of work with its location Provision of fencing for location boxes under ADSTE/FDB section of Delhi division.

App. Cost of the work (₹) Rs. 38,46,210.00/-

Bid Security (₹) Rs. 76,900.00/-

Address of the office Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055.

Date & Time for uploading the tender/closing of the tender Tender uploading 04.05.2026 / closing date & time- 29.05.2026 up to 15.00 hrs.

Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc. See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at the S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.

Tender No. 558-Sig-16-M-TENDER-1478 Dated: 04.05.2026 1483/2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

पूर्वोत्तर आयुर्वेद एवं होम्योपैथी संस्थान NORTH EASTERN INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA & HOMOEOPATHY (An Autonomous institute under the Ministry of Ayush, Govt. of India) Mawdiangiang, Shillong, Meghalaya - 793018

Adv.No. EST-130131/2024-Administrative Division/H-73 Dated: 07/04/2026

रिक्त सूचना/VACANCY NOTICE

पूर्वोत्तर आयुर्वेद एवं होम्योपैथी संस्थान, (भारत सरकार, आयुष मंत्रालय के अधीन एक स्वायत्त संस्थान), माव्दिआंगियाँ, शिल्लोंग, मेघालय - 793018 में अनुबंध के आधार पर बायोस्टैटिस्टिशन एवं सहायक (फामेसी) पदों में भर्ती हेतु आवेदन पत्र आमंत्रित करता है।

North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda & Homoeopathy (NEIAH), Shillong is inviting applications for the post of Biostatistician and Consultant (Pharmacy) on Contract Basis.

विषय के लिए इच्छुक उम्मीदवार संस्थान की वेबसाइट www.neiah.nic.in पर जा सकते हैं। For details, interested candidates may visit the Institute website namely www.neiah.nic.in

Sd/- Dy. Director (Admn), NEIAH, Shillong

CBC 17217/12/0001/2627

ازعدالت جوڈیشل مجسٹریٹ قسٹ کلاس (منصف) کا مدنیل

ماہلاس:-

شمیر احمد صوفی ولد محمد سلطان صوفی ساکن ہدرکنڈ گاندربل

بنام:- صدیق حسین ولد غلام قادر بجران ساکن میر گاندربل

Vellege Kingus Tesil Nowshera District Rajori

بجرانم - وارنٹ گشتی عام بخلاف

Sadam Hussian S/o Gh.Qadir Bajran

R/o A/P Vellege Kingus Tesil Nowshera District Rajori

حکم بنام : ایکٹران پولیس یو۔ ٹی جموں و کشمیر

معاملہ مندرجہ عنوان الصدر میں ملزم کی گرفتاری بطریق معمول ناممکن ہے اس طور ملزم کے خلاف کارروائی 512 ض ف بجل لائی جا چکی ہے۔ لہذا ایکٹران پولیس یو۔ ٹی جموں و کشمیر کو بذریعہ وارنٹ حکم دیا جاتا ہے کہ جب کبھی اور جہاں کہیں ملزم صدر حدود یو ٹی جموں و کشمیر دستیاب ہو وہ اسے گرفتار کر کے عدالت مجاز میں حراست و ضبط پیش کریں۔ وارنٹ ہذا دستیاب ملازم زیر کار ہے۔

07.04.2026

وارنٹ ہذا امر و اجراء ہوئی حکم سنایا گیا۔ محمد حمزہ احمد

برسر دستخط اترقہ دہر عدالت کے جاری کی جاتی ہے۔

جوڈیشل مجسٹریٹ درجہ اول (منصف)

DIPK- DIPK-1010/26 - DATE 04 MAY 2026

RajCOMP Info Services Limited (RISL)

C-Block, 1st Floor, Yojana Bhawan, Tilak Marg, C-Scheme, Jaipur

RISL invites e-bids from the eligible bidders for the following:

NIB No./ Date/ Unique bid no.	Particulars	Estimated Cost	Start of sale / Last date
F4.15(24)/RISL/Tech/2026-02927-9573420/498 Dated 01.05.2026	RFP for Hiring of Technical Experts Services for SAS Analytics Stack.	Rs. 2.25 Cr/ Rs. 4.50 Lacs	01.05.2026/ 25.05.2026

Details can be seen on the websites <http://risl.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://doitc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Bids are to be submitted through <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>

RajSamwad/C/26/2014 ACP (Dy. Dir.)

UTTARAKHAND SAHAKARI CHINI MILLS SANGH LTD.

NEAR RAILWAY CROSSING, BADIPUR ROAD, JOGIWALA, DEHRADUN-248001 (UTTARAKHAND)

Telephone No. :- 0135-2974413, E-mail:- uksugars@gmail.com

Website :- www.uttarakhand sugars.com GST No. 05AABU71713K221

Letter No. 201/PUR/01/E-Tender/2026-27, Date: 04 May, 2026

E-Tender Notice for Rate Contract Items

Online E-Tenders are invited from Manufacturers / Authorized distributors (as per details given in the tender documents) for PUMPS & ITS SPARES, PACKING & JOINTING, BEARING, MS & GI PIPES, GENERAL PURPOSE ELECTRODES, SPECIAL ELECTRODES, SWITCH GEAR & ITS SPARES AND ZINCALUME/GALVALUME COLOR PROFILE SHEETS & RIDGE CAPS (PLAIN) to our Co-operative and Corporation sugar mills season 2026-27.

The details for submission of the E-Bids is available on the E-tender portals as per Table No. 01 www.uktenders.gov.in & www.uttarakhand sugars.com. The bidders will have to deposit Per Tender fees (Non Refundable) of Rs. 2,360/- (GST Inclusive) & earnest money in the form of Demand Draft/ RTGS / NEFT in favor of Uttarakhand Co-operative Sugar Factories Federation Limited, Payable at Dehradun. Tenders without Tender Fees & Earnest money will not be accepted. The bank details are available inside the tender document.

The Federation reserves the right to cancel any or all bids/annual e-bidding process, without assigning and reason to & decision of Federation will be final & binding.

TABLE No. 01

Sl. No.	Name of Item	Starting Date of leading of E-Tender Portal at 06:00 PM	Last Date & Time for Submission of e-bids	Technical bid opening at 10:30 AM	E.M.D. (In Rs.)
1	Pumps & Its Spares	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,80,000.00
2	Packing & Jointing	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	40,000.00
3	MS & GI Pipes	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,40,000.00
4	Bearing	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,50,000.00
5	General Purpose Electrodes	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	40,000.00
6	Special Electrodes	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,00,000.00
7	Switchgear & Its Spares	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	2,00,000.00
8	Zincalume / Galvalume color coated profile sheets and ridge caps (plain)	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,20,000.00

RATE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF DIFFERENT ITEMS TO OUR SUGAR FACTORIES IN UTTARAKHAND STATE

Sl. No.	Name of Item	Starting Date of leading of E-Tender Portal at 06:00 PM	Last Date & Time for Submission of e-bids	Technical bid opening at 10:30 AM	E.M.D. (In Rs.)
1-	Pumps & Its Spares	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,80,000.00
2-	Packing & Jointing	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	40,000.00
3-	MS & GI Pipes	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,40,000.00
4-	Bearing	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,50,000.00
5-	General Purpose Electrodes	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	40,000.00
6-	Special Electrodes	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,00,000.00
7-	Switchgear & Its Spares	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	2,00,000.00
8-	Zincalume / Galvalume color coated profile sheets and ridge caps (plain)	04-05-2026	24-05-2026	25-05-2026	1,20,000.00

इस निविदा के सम्बन्ध में सभी संशोधन, स्पष्टीकरण, शुद्धि, परिशिष्ट, समय वृद्धि आदि को वेबसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in & www.uttarakhand sugars.com पर ही दिया जायेगा। निविदादाता अर्थात् निकासी के लिए नियमित रूप से इन वेबसाइटों को पढ़ते रहें।

GENERAL MANAGER

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

Tender Notice No.: e-Tender/2026/15, Date: 30.04.2026. For and on behalf of President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 invites e-tender for the following works before 15.00 hrs. on the date mentioned against items and will be opened at 15.30 hrs. SI.No.-1. Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-23-2026. Description of work: Renewal of H-Beam Sleeper of Br. No. 84 (MID) and 87 (MID) between Kharagpur-Howrah section under Sr. DEN/East/Kharagpur. Tender Value: ₹ 53,62,340.10. Earnest Money: ₹ 1,07,300. Date of Opening: 15.05.2026. Completion Period of the work: 08 months. SI.No.-2. Tender No.: E-KGP-EAST-24-2026. Description of work: Construction of (03 nos.) new 6.00 mtr. wide FOB at Narayan Pakuria Murail, Bhogpur & Nandajajan stations under the jurisdiction of Sr. DEN (East)/Kharagpur. Tender Value: ₹ 13,43,74,996.98. Earnest Money: ₹ 26,87,500. Date of Opening: 20.05.2026. Completion Period of the work: 12 months. SI.No.-3. Tender No.: E-KGP-WEST-11-2026. Description of work: Chakulia-Rakhamines: Improvement of slope stability of embankment by construction of R.C.C. Drain in between 3rd line & DN line under the jurisdiction of ADEN/Jhargram. Tender Value: ₹ 2,43,42,392.70. Earnest Money: ₹ 4,86,900. Date of Opening: 09.06.2026. Completion Period of the work: 12 months. Tender Document Cost: ₹ 0 (for SI.No. 1 to 3 each). Bidding start date: From 01.05.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 15.05.2026 (for SI.No. 1), from 06.05.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 20.05.2026 (for SI.No. 2) and from 26.05.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 09.06.2026 (for SI.No. 3). Interested tenderers may visit website www.ireps.gov.in for full details/descriptions/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tender for these works will be accepted. N.B.: Prospective bidders may regularly visit www.ireps.gov.in to participate in all tenders. (PR-117)

"IMPORTANT"

Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any notices or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

BORDER SECURITY FORCE

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Constable Vishnu Singh Shekhawat on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he sustained fatal bullet injuries while fighting militants in Kashmir valley, J&K. He fought bravely and made supreme sacrifice in the line of duty. His sacrifice and gallant action have been aptly recognized by GOI by awarding him with Shaurya Chakra (Posthumously).

CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Lance Naik Rukmangal Singh of 26 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while countering an ambush by around 800 Maoists on his team on 5 May 1998 in Palamu District, Jharkhand. In the exchange of fire 4 Maoists were also neutralized. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Lance Naik Mohd. Fazal of 53 Bn, who was critically injured in an encounter with insurgents and succumbed to his injuries on 5 May 1998 in Assam. In the exchange of fire one insurgent was neutralized. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to two valiant troopers of 140 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice after being grievously injured while countering an ambush by Maoists in Kanker district, Chhattisgarh on 5 May 2007. #CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable Prasant Kumar Biswal of 43 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice after being seriously injured while countering an attack by Maoists in Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh on 5 May 2007. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.

खशासी राज्य चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय पीलीभीत, उत्तर प्रदेश

संख्याएएसएमसी / पीलीभीत / मे.का./2026-27/480 दिनांक-04.05.2026

सुवायोजन विज्ञापित

खशासी राज्य चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय पीलीभीत में आचार्य, सह-आचार्य एवं सहायक आचार्य के रिक्तपदों को सीधी भर्ती से भरे जाने हेतु जारी विज्ञापित संख्या-एएसएमसी / पीलीभीत / मे.का./ 60 दिनांक 04.04.2026 को तिथि दिनांक 19.05.2026 तक विस्तारित की जाती है। इस सम्बन्ध में विस्तृत विवरण महाविद्यालय की वेबसाइट <http://asmcpilbhit.com> पर प्रदर्शित है।

प्रधानाचार्य

Rajasthan State Mines & Minerals Limited

4, Meera Marg, Udaipur - 313001, Phone: (0294)227177 / 2429733/67

Fax: (0294)242768/2428779, Email: contracto.rsmm@rajasthan.gov.in

Date: 30/04/2026

e-TENDER DOCUMENT FORM

NIT No. & Date	Description of Work
E-Tender No. RSM/CO/GGM(Cont) 02/2026-27 Dated 29.04.2026	Supply of ROM Gypsum from Got Manglod Gypsum Mines for Consumers/Traders Contract value Rs. 717.00 lakh, EMD Rs. 14.34 lac, Tender UBN No. MML2627WLO800025 Fees Rs. 4720/-

Other terms & conditions have been given in detailed tender for which please visit us at our website www.rsmm.com or www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in or eproc.rajasthan.gov.in or contact SM

LESSONS LEARNT FROM CURRENT CRISIS SHOULD LEAD TO MORE STORAGE: PETRONET LNG CEO

India may expand LNG storage to manage future supply crises

Sukalp Sharma
New Delhi, May 4

THE LIQUEFIED natural gas (LNG) supply disruption due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the West Asia war has underscored the need for having more LNG storage capacity in India to cushion geopolitical and supply shocks, and all stakeholders in the sector are now serious about increasing the capacity by adding more storage tanks, according to the chief executive of India's largest LNG importer Petronet LNG.

"Definitely, taking cue from this present crisis, all stakeholders are seriously thinking about increasing the storage capacity... I'm quite sure that very soon you will see activity in this regard," Petronet LNG CEO AK Singh told reporters on Monday, adding that the company already has firm plans to increase its cryogenic LNG tanks by about 70%.

Singh added that there is "serious movement" in this regard even at the government level, and hopefully, the "lessons learnt" from the current crisis will lead to creation of additional LNG stockpiles in the country.

How much should be the optimum reserve storage capacity is a question that is being actively deliberated upon. India has strategic and commercial stockpiles of crude oil as reserves, but hardly any of LNG.

Petronet LNG itself is looking at adding storage tanks at its LNG terminals. It has eight LNG tanks at its flagship Dahej terminal and two at its terminal at Kochi. Singh said the under-execution Gopalpur terminal project will add two tanks, and



Additional LNG storage buffers may have helped blunt the impact of the Strait of Hormuz blockade. PETRONET LNG/WEBSITE

the firm is looking to add another tank at Kochi terminal. As for Dahej, Petronet LNG is looking to add four tanks, and is looking at land availability for it.

India depends on LNG imports to meet about half of its natural gas requirement, and about 60% of those imports came through the critical maritime chokepoint of the Strait of Hormuz, primarily from India's largest supplier Qatar, and also the UAE. Vessel movements through the strait have halted due to the conflict. Not one LNG cargo has reached India from the Persian Gulf for over two months now, hitting supplies even as India has been trying to augment supplies by sourcing LNG from alternative sources.

With LNG imports under pressure, the Centre was forced to prioritise natural gas supplies to certain critical segments like transportation and household kitchens, while rationing the flow to some industries.

As per industry analysts, having additional LNG storage buffers could have helped blunt the impact of the unprecedented

blockade of the strait, something that was considered extremely improbable, but still happened. Currently, India has 23 LNG tanks spread across its various LNG terminals, and Petronet LNG alone accounts for 10 of those.

While these tanks provide short-term buffer, they are mostly geared for continuous operations of the regasification terminals, and aren't seen as emergency stockpile capacity. One tank usually accommodates one LNG shipload, and India's LNG consumption is about 1.25 tanks a day, Singh explained. Since LNG tanks have to be cryogenic in order to keep LNG in the liquid state, building them is an expensive proposition and a longer-term project as compared to building a tank to hold other liquid fuels. As per Singh, it will take at least three years for a new tank to be constructed, which can only start once all the pre-project activities are complete and the requisite approvals are in place. He said the initiative is still at the planning stage, and did not comment on the likely execution timeline.

No plans to extend financial support to oil companies: Govt

ENS Economic Bureau
New Delhi, May 4

THE GOVERNMENT has no plan at present to compensate public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) for their losses on sale of petrol, diesel, and jet fuel below market prices, a senior Petroleum Ministry official said on Monday. The comments come at a time when there are discussions within the government on the possibility of hiking fuel prices, particularly petrol and diesel.

Despite the surge in international oil and fuel prices amid the West Asia crisis, retail prices of regular petrol and diesel have not been hiked.

In the case of ATF, or jet fuel, just about 25% of the price increase was passed on for domestic flights on April 1, although a full passthrough was done for international flights.

Consequently, public sector OMCs — Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation — are incurring heavy losses on the sale of these fuels, and have been pushing for price hikes, it is learnt. Petrol and diesel prices have not been hiked for over four years in India.

Moreover, the timing of the current global surge in prices, which clashed with assembly elections in some states, made it politically fraught for prices to be hiked. In the absence of

price increases, the OMCs are facing significant financial burden. But the Centre has no proposal to extend any financial support to the companies.

"Currently there is no proposal before the government of India to support the OMCs (for their losses on fuel sales)," Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma said in response to a question at the inter-ministerial press briefing on the West Asia crisis.

She also noted that by not hiking the prices of regular petrol and diesel, the OMCs have been contributing in keeping inflation in check.

The OMCs are also incurring heavy under-recoveries on sale of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to households, even as they have hiked prices of commercial and industrial LPG in line with international prices movements.

But unlike petrol, diesel, and jet fuel, the Centre has over the past few years provided subsidy support to the OMCs for losses on domestic LPG sales, and that cannot be ruled out even this time around, industry officials said. With the recently-held state elections having now concluded, a hike in prices of fuels like petrol, diesel, and the domestic LPG could be in the offing in the coming days or weeks, according to highly placed sources in the government.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

'Centre not insulated from how states react to Strait of Hormuz crisis'

Siddharth Upasani
New Delhi, May 4

THE INDIAN government is "not insulated" from how states react to the West Asia crisis, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran said, adding that demand for more funds due from fiscally stretched states at a time of external shock adds to the Centre's own challenges.

Speaking at a seminar on state finances organised by the Institute of Economic Growth on Monday, Nageswaran said any honest assessment of state finances must be against the challenging global backdrop. And while the shocks don't originate at the state level, that's where they are absorbed, with stress landing on areas such as food and fuel subsidies, fertiliser allocation, agricultural support, and employment programmes.

"In other words, states are not insulated from what happens in the Strait of Hormuz. And I can also tell you that the sovereign is not insulated by how states respond to the Strait of Hormuz as well, because ultimately the combined fiscal deficit is what feeds into the current account deficit," the government's top economist said.

While the Centre's fiscal deficit target of 4.3% of GDP for 2026-27 has come under pressure due to the rising costs from the impact of the war in West Asia, international investors and global ratings agencies look at the combined deficit at the national and state level.

Referring to a recent finance ministry analysis of 18 states' budgets for 2026-27 that found



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V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN,
CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

half of them were set to post a revenue deficit, Nageswaran said that when external shocks hit, it is fiscally-constrained states that "press the hardest on the Centre and they do so at the very moment when the Centre itself is going to be facing significant challenges in the current financial year in meeting its fiscal deficit goals."

"The resulting dynamic therefore places stress on the general government fiscal position which is now assessed by global investors as an integrated whole, not merely as a Union government number... Fiscal indiscipline at the subnational level is no longer a closed, domestic accounting matter. It is visible and it is priced," he said.

While the Centre has largely shielded households from the energy shock caused by the war in West Asia, the fiscal arithmetic has become "more complicated and will likely remain so" for much of FY27, Nageswaran said Monday, with fertiliser costs set to be substantially higher, leading to a higher subsidy bill. Saying that India's public finances is in "very large measure a story of its states", the CEA said that as the country moves towards a higher income status, the effi-

ciency and quality of resource allocation at the state level will increasingly determine not just the pace of growth but how inclusive and sustainable it is.

In its Monthly Economic Review report for April, released last week, the finance ministry had said of the 18 states whose FY27 budgets had been analysed, eight — Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Telangana, and Bihar — were expected to post a revenue surplus, with an average fiscal deficit of 2.94%, interest payments amounting to 8.61% of revenue receipts, and outstanding liabilities and capital outlay at 24.24% and 4.08% of their state GDP, respectively.

In contrast, nine states — Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh — with a budgeted revenue deficit in 2026-27 had worse average numbers across the board: a fiscal deficit of 3.44%, interest payments at 16.1% of revenue receipts, and outstanding liabilities and capital outlay at 31.6% and 2.04% of state GDPs, respectively.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

'Central bank explores steps to mobilise dollar inflows as rupee slides'

Reuters
Mumbai, May 4

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) is studying ways to mobilise dollar inflows to bolster its foreign exchange buffers and cushion rising pressure on the rupee from a spike in oil prices driven by the Iran war, three sources familiar with the discussions told Reuters.

The rupee has slumped 5.5% this year, sliding to an all-time low of 95.33 per dollar last Thursday, while foreign exchange reserves have fallen from a peak of \$728.5 billion and equity outflows have hit \$19 billion over March and April alone.

The RBI has maintained it is comfortable with its reserves — enough to cover 11 months of imports — but the latest policy discussions underscore fresh urgency to bolster defences amid capital outflows. The discussions at the RBI have not been previously reported, though analysts have speculated about how authorities might resurrect elements of their crisis-era playbook.

Among the steps being considered is reviving a mechanism last used in 2013 to draw in dollar deposits from non-resident In-

dians, two of these sources said. A second option being discussed is eliminating withholding tax on overseas government bond investors to encourage flows, they said.

No final decision has been taken, and any move would be made in consultation with the government, the third source said. Reuters could not establish when a decision would be taken.

"Both are under serious consideration," the source added, noting that the final decision on taxation rests with the finance ministry.

The sources declined to be identified since they are not authorised to speak to the media.

An email to the RBI and the federal finance ministry seeking comment was not immediately answered.

The war between the US, Israel and Iran has weakened the Indian currency, adding to a near 5% fall in 2025. The two measures under consideration could help draw in dollars from overseas.

The deposit scheme was used to stabilise the rupee in 2013 and brought in about \$26 billion at a time when US interest rates were close to zero.

NCLAT UPHOLDS ADANI BID FOR JAIPRAKASH ASSOCIATES

Vedanta plea against Adani dismissed: 'No merit in appeal'

George Mathew
Mumbai, May 4

THE NATIONAL Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Monday dismissed the petitions filed by Vedanta Ltd, owned by Anil Agarwal, which challenged the selection of Adani Enterprises' bid for the debt-ridden Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL).

A two-member bench comprising Chairperson Ashok Bhushan and Member (Technical) Barun Mitra said, "No grounds have been made out by the appellant (Vedanta) to interfere with the decision of the adjudicating authority (NCLT). We do not find any merit in the appeal. The appeal is accordingly dismissed. There shall be no order as to costs."

"We also find that no material irregularity was committed by the Resolution Professional in conducting the process. No grounds have been made out by the appellant to interfere with the impugned order dated November 11, 2025," it said.

NCLAT dismissed Vedanta's plea, where it had questioned the evaluation metrics adopted

17, 2026 approving the resolution plan dated October 14, 2025 submitted by Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL). AEL raced ahead and outbid Vedanta for JAL.

Adani Enterprises had earlier secured the CoC approval — dominated by National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd — for its Rs 14,535 crore bid to acquire Jaiprakash Associates in November 2025. It emerged as the winning bidder for Jaiprakash Associates despite being outbid by Vedanta by nearly Rs 2,000 crore.

The auction attracted interest from five major players — Adani, Vedanta, Dalmia Cement, Jindal Power and PNC Infratech. While the floor price was Rs 12,000 crore, only Adani and Vedanta remained in the final round. Vedanta submitted the higher overall bid of around Rs 16,000 crore, which included an upfront payment and the balance to be paid over five years. In contrast, Adani's bid totalled Rs 14,535 crore, featuring a higher upfront component of over Rs 6,000 crore, with the remaining scheduled for payment within two years.

Vedanta approached the NCLAT in March, challenging the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) approval to Adani Group's resolution plan for acquiring debt-laden Jaiprakash Associates under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

NCLT, Allahabad branch, pronounced an order on March

17, 2026 approving the resolution plan dated October 14, 2025 submitted by Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL). AEL raced ahead and outbid Vedanta for JAL.

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FULL REPORT ON
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Direct taxes log 5-yr low growth of 5.1% in FY26, fall short of target

Kuldeep Singh
New Delhi, May 4

INDIA'S DIRECT tax collections after refunds grew at a five-year low of just 5.12% year-on-year in FY26 (provisional figures) and fell short of the revised estimates of Rs 24.21 lakh crore by Rs 80,594 crore, according to data released by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on Monday. Personal income tax (PIT) collections grew by a mere 0.03% y-o-y.

In absolute terms, direct tax collections after refunds stood at Rs 23.40 lakh crore, lower than the revised estimate of Rs 24.21 lakh crore. Corporate tax collections were Rs 10.99 lakh crore against the revised estimate of

Rs 11.09 lakh crore, while non-corporate tax collections stood at Rs 11.83 lakh crore against the revised estimate of Rs 13.12 lakh crore. Non-corporate taxes include those paid by individuals, HUFs, firms, local authorities, artificial juridical persons, etc.

Corporate tax receipts (after refunds) rose 11.39% against the projected growth of 12.4% in the revised estimates, while PIT collections grew only 0.03% against the estimated 6.2% growth for FY26. Direct tax collections before refunds grew 4.03% to Rs 28.11 lakh crore. Refunds declined 1.09% to Rs 4.71 lakh crore.

Jayesh Sanghvi, tax partner, EY India, said non-corporate tax collections were expected to be impacted by the rate reduc-

tions in the new personal income tax regime announced in the Budget. "Healthy corporate tax growth and effective refund management have helped the overall growth reach 5.12%. The healthy corporate tax collections augur well despite disruptions from global conflicts and supply chain issues. Hopefully, this resilience will reflect positively in the coming times," he said.

As per experts, the tepid performance is primarily due to substantial tax relief measures under the new tax regime, including enhanced rebates that have effectively made annual incomes up to Rs 12 lakh (or up to Rs 12.75 lakh for salaried individuals with standard deduction) completely tax-free. FE

'SEBI to issue advisory on Mythos risks'

Mumbai: Amid concerns around Anthropic's AI model Mythos, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chair Tuhin Kanta Pandey Monday said it will soon issue an advisory to market participants outlining how they should stay alert to vulnerabilities and play a proactive role in mitigation.

He said the regulator was engaging with all stakeholders cautioning them of the risks posed by Mythos. SEBI, he said, is in constant touch with market participants and relevant stakeholders as the challenge after Mythos and similar AI models will "test our resilience." He was speaking at the IMC capital markets conference.

"As you know, Mythos is only available to a very few entities, it's not widely available, but nevertheless, it presents grave risks," he observed. He added that it's important for market players to use whatever tools they have to proactively find vulnerabilities themselves and patch them.

"Technology may be misused. Algorithms may move faster than human controls. Digital platforms may become channels for fraud," he said, adding that while AI tools can identify weaknesses faster, they can also exploit vulnerabilities at speed and scale. FE

• BRIEFLY

Manufacturing PMI sees mild recovery in Apr

New Delhi: The country's manufacturing sector activity witnessed mild recoveries in growth of new business intakes and production, but rates of increase were the second-weakest in nearly four years. The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 53.9 in March to 54.7 in April. The two largest sub-components of the Purchasing Managers' Index, new orders and output, rose since March but trailed readings seen in at least three-and-a-half years. PTI

UBS cuts India FY27 growth forecast to 6.2%

New Delhi: Swiss investment bank UBS on Monday cut its gross domestic product growth forecast for India by 50 basis points to 6.2% for FY27. The investment bank warned that the growth could fall to 5-5.5% in case of an "extended energy shock scenario" which sees the price of the country's crude oil basket rising to around \$150 per barrel. A quick de-escalation in West Asia with the Indian basket averaging \$85/bbl and flows resuming via the Strait of Hormuz over the June quarter could mean a growth rate of 6.5%. ENS

• MARKETS

Sensex 77,269.40 355.90 0.46%	NIFTY 24,119.30 121.75 0.51%	Gold ▼ ₹1,52,800	US Dollar ▲ ₹95.08
Silver ▲ ₹2,49,000	Oil ▲ \$118.70		

NOTE: GOLD, SILVER RATES AS PER ALL INDIA SARAFI ASSOCIATION DATA GOLD PER 100G, SILVER PER 1KG; CRUDE OIL (INDIAN BASKET) AS OF APRIL 30, 2026

• 'BLUE-CHIP COMPANIES ARE USING FORMULA ONE AS A LAUNCHPAD AND SPOTLIGHT FOR THEIR OWN AI PRODUCTS, RE-BRANDINGS'

As Formula One evolves, AI becomes part of race

Reuters
London, May 4

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE'S (AI) integration into Liberty Media-owned Formula One and its 11 teams has been noticeable on- and off-track in the already highly tech-powered sport.

Eight new AI partnerships were signed in the past six months alone, according to research firm Ampere Analysis.

Among them, nine-time constructors' champion Aston Williams F1 team are partnering with AI company Anthropic for its Claude model to support team operations and race strategy. "It's much more than a sticker on a car or a sticker in a billboard," Williams' Board Advisor Peter Kenyon told Reuters. "We see it as one of our differentiating points: how

can this partner help us in that journey back to the top?"

Whereas F1 cars in yesterday had a plethora of brands with tobacco companies at the centre, now partnerships often centre on AI and tech companies helping the teams understand datasets, while benefiting from great exposure.

"What Anthropic and our tech team are doing are understanding the opportunities and then integrating those into our business to be able to demonstrate for ourselves and them, and showcase their technology in the pursuit of getting Williams back to the top," Kenyon added. AI can be a key tool enabling teams to navigate new regulations and new cost cap rules, now set at \$215 million.

"Efficiency is one of the ubiquitous benefits of AI products,



Last season, technology led the top 10 spending categories for F1 teams. REUTERS

meaning a natural synergy between teams and AI brands," said Adam Lewis, a senior analyst from Ampere Analysis.

Technology led the top 10 spending categories for F1

teams, reaching an estimated \$769 million last season, up 41% from the previous year, according to intelligence platform SponsorUnited.

AI and machine learning brands account for four of the top 15 new sponsorship investors, a SponsorUnited report also showed, including \$65 billion-valued cloud infrastructure company CoreWeave, which has a partnership with the Aston Martin F1 team.

AI has been innovative in sifting through administrative tasks and interpreting key rules within sporting and technical regulations, helping engineers take swifter decisions during on-track situations which were impossible decades ago. "So it's gone from a sort of basic AI to more of an agentic approach where rather than just search-

ing for something, it's actually providing decisions for us," Jack Harrington, the group partnership lead for Oracle Red Bull Racing, told Reuters. The Red Bull outfit, which four-time champion Max Verstappen races for, has a partnership worth \$494 billion-valued software company Oracle, and has embedded its technological nous across the team.

Technology firms like Alphabet-owned Google are also seeing positives from entering the F1 arena.

"These blue-chip companies are using Formula One as a launchpad and spotlight for their own AI products or re-brandings," Lewis said, noting Google's partnership with F1's McLaren shifted to Google Gemini, a generative AI tool, from Google Pixel.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The vehicles/articles as per list attached have been seized by Police Stations of Rohini District, Delhi under section 66 D.P. Act-1978. Now, in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by the Commissioner of Police, Delhi and as envisaged vide section 67(i) of Delhi Police Act, 1978, the enclosed list of 135 vehicles (Police station wise list is attached) are notified for the information to the general public through this proclamation. Any person, who may have to claim thereof may appear before the concerned Assistant Commissioner of Police along with the proof of ownership to establish his or her respective claim within six months from the issue of this proclamation. This proclamation should be given wide publicity among the general public and be displayed on the notice board of the court and also in the Police stations.

S NO.	POLICE STATION	REGI. NO.	ENG NO.	CH NO.	MAKE	MODEL
1	Prem Nagar	DL-4SCD-5946	BURNT	-	M/CY	BURNT
2	Prem Nagar	NIL	36029	36613	SCOOTY	MEJITO
3	Prem Nagar	HR26CA 7881	8489	7808	M/CY	SPLENDER
4	Prem Nagar	DL4SBG 2853	5655	16172	M/CY	DELUX
5	Prem Nagar	DL4SDF 1143	-	5746	M/CY	SPLENDER
6	Prem Nagar	DL4SBU 8367	6957	85199	M/CY	CBZ
7	Prem Nagar	DL5SBJ 5993	-	7673	M/CY	PASSION
8	Prem Nagar	DL11SU 5721	-	78433	M/CY	TVS
9	Prem Nagar	DL4SCH 1073	-	4319	M/CY	PASSION
10	Prem Nagar	DL4SBM 5634	32377	96141	M/CY	SPLENDER
11	Prem Nagar	DL4SCH 3371	17876	12892	M/CY	PASSION
12	Prem Nagar	HR-26BB-4271	63535	41792	M/CY	HONDA
13	Prem Nagar	DL-6SAH-9321	99616	88645	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
14	Prem Nagar	DL-4SBT-1640	37906	87628	M/CY	BAJAJ DISCOVER
15	Prem Nagar	DL-8SBW-7328	-	-	M/CY	-
16	Prem Nagar	DL-4SCJ-6053	-	-	M/CY	-
17	Prem Nagar	DL-8SBD-3788	-	-	M/CY	-
18	Prem Nagar	DL-10SB-1193	-	-	M/CY	-
19	Prem Nagar	DL4SDQ-1249	18778	16788	M/CY	SPLENDOR
20	Prem Nagar	DL-8SCG-6284	-	-	M/CY	-
21	Prem Nagar	DL-4SCJ-3480	-	-	SCOOTY	-
22	Prem Nagar	DL-11SB-9988	-	-	M/CY	HF DELUX
23	Prem Nagar	DL-4SCF-2189	-	-	SCOOTY	-
24	Prem Nagar	DL4SCR-8974	-	-	M/CY	-
25	Prem Nagar	NIL	-	14603	SCOOTY	NTORQ
26	Begumpur	DL8SCH 6306	20522	86296	M/CYCLE	YAHAMHA
27	Begumpur	DL10SC6005	8489	51759	M/CYCLE	HONDA
28	Begumpur	DL8SAF3795	-	01096	M/CYCLE	BAJAJ
29	Begumpur	DL7SBF7377	-	-	SCOOTY	HONDA
30	Begumpur	DL10SB1608	-	27420	SCOOTY	HONDA
31	Begumpur	DL4SBW9851	7893	07382	M/CYCLE	HERO
32	Begumpur	DL4SCF9949	52349	123235	M/CYCLE	HONDA
33	Begumpur	DL119268	17137	39470	SCOOTY	SUZUKI
34	Begumpur	DL8SCE9598	78453	51503	SCOOTY	TVS
35	Begumpur	DL8SBJ0071	-	-	SUZUKI	ACEES
36	Begumpur	DL11SH-2999	16094	17294	SCOOTY	HONDA
37	Begumpur	DL11N5785	-	-	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
38	Begumpur	DL11SK1491	03845	00988	M/CYCLE	HERO
39	Kanjhawala	HR-60A-5084	1326	3838	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR PLUS
40	Kanjhawala	DL-4SBG-2718	11417	11450	M/CY	SUPER SPLENDOR
41	Kanjhawala	DL-1SAE-6373	-	-	SCOOTY	SCOOTY
42	Kanjhawala	HR-14H-4351	27367	23143	M/CY	BAJAJ PLATINA
43	Kanjhawala	HR-79B-6685	21507	20479	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR
44	Kanjhawala	HR-95A-6030	36229	-	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR
45	Kanjhawala	DL-1ST-2748	15784	1173	M/CY	HERO HONDA GLAMOUR
46	Kanjhawala	DL-11SW-4424	5803	4053	M/CY	PASSION PRO
47	Kanjhawala	DL-8SAG-7668	3168	12002	M/CY	HERO CD DELUXE
48	Kanjhawala	DL-9ST-3784	18738	26114	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR
49	Kanjhawala	DL-4SDH-4260	36107	40642	SCOOTY	TVS JUPITER
50	Kanjhawala	DL-4SBR-3804	87305	84810	SCOOTY	SCOOTY ACTIVA
51	Kanjhawala	DL-8SCM-9234	94039	61550	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR
52	Kanjhawala	DL-5SAP-6389	41452	36690	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR
53	Kanjhawala	DL-4SCM-7179	3084	2511	SCOOTY	SCOOTY MAESTRO
54	Kanjhawala	DL-1SAG-9360	6166	3837	M/CY	BULLET 350
55	Kanjhawala	DL-6SAL-6611	7059	36937	M/CY	HERO HF DELUXE
56	Kanjhawala	DL-5SAQ-4643	45553	32979	M/CY	HERO SPLENDOR PRO
57	Kanjhawala	HR-13L-3581	22054	247	M/CY	HERO CD DELUXE
58	Kanjhawala	HR-13D-2474	33956	15985	M/CY	HERO CD DELUXE
59	Kanjhawala	DL-11SJ-5478	4893	944	SCOOTY	SCOOTY PLEASURE
60	Kanjhawala	DL-8SAH-5153	56209	20021	M/CY	TVS STAR CITY
61	Kanjhawala	DL-8SAR-3576	89269	49	M/CY	HONDA UNICORN
62	Kanjhawala	DL-10S-5373	36904	36198	M/CY	YAMAHA FZ
63	Kanjhawala	HR-13L-5556	21259	7437	M/CY	HERO HF DELUXE
64	Kanjhawala	HR-10H-8234	0	78485	M/CY	BAJAJ DISCOVER
65	Kanjhawala	DL-11SK-8762	23761	16853	SCOOTY	TVS JUPITER
66	Kanjhawala	DL-4SAD-1279	17392	44135	SCOOTY	CHETAK BAJAJ
67	Parshant Vihar	DL 6SAT 5581	1541	1539	M/CY	YZF R-15
68	Parshant Vihar	DL 5SAH 5164	46695	15773	M/CY	TVS STAR CITY
69	Parshant Vihar	DL 4SAU 5964	84240	65118	M/CY	SPLENDOR BLACK
70	Parshant Vihar	DL 6SAT 8582	52425	17137	HONDA ACTIVA WHITE	HONDA ACTIVA WHITE
71	Parshant Vihar	DL 5SAQ 0377	115	218	SPLENDOR BLACK	SPLENDOR BLACK
72	Parshant Vihar	DL 4SAS 4495	47046	47603	TVS GLX	TVS GLX
73	Parshant Vihar	DL 6SAR 1384	44598	42197	BAJAJ DISCOVER 100	BAJAJ DISCOVER 100
74	Parshant Vihar	DL 10SA 9646	3464	3310	M/CYCLE	M/CYCLE
75	Parshant Vihar	DL 3SB 8267	NA	NA	SCOOTY	SCOOTY
76	Parshant Vihar	DL 4SNR 7494	45051	45819	HONDA ACTIVA	HONDA ACTIVA
77	Parshant Vihar	DL 3SCF 0536	8196	30116	HERO HONDA TWISTER	HERO HONDA TWISTER
78	Parshant Vihar	DL 11D 6877	33328	50382	BAJAJ CT 100 RED	BAJAJ CT 100 RED
79	Parshant Vihar	DL 1SAD 5331	11843	22292	HF DELUX	HF DELUX
80	Parshant Vihar	DL 8ST 5291	22357	34111	HERO HONDA PASSION	HERO HONDA PASSION
81	Parshant Vihar	UP14GV 4043	159	1252	M/CYL	M/CYL
82	Parshant Vihar	DL 8SBT 6200	16551	164603	HONDA ACTIVA 3G	HONDA ACTIVA 3G
83	Parshant Vihar	DL 13SU 0481	48050	43846	SPLENDOR BLACK	SPLENDOR BLACK
84	Budh Vihar	DL-11SJ-7735	BLACK	BLACK	M/CYCLE	M/CYCLE
85	Budh Vihar	DL-11SF-8284	SPORT	SPORT	M/CYCLE	M/CYCLE
86	Budh Vihar	DL-8SBQ-7329	BLACK	BLACK	M/CYCLE	M/CYCLE
87	Budh Vihar	DL-6SAW-2264	-	-	SCOOTY	SCOOTY
88	Budh Vihar	DL-8SNB-3281	BLACK	BLACK	M/CYCLE	M/CYCLE
89	Budh Vihar	DL-4SBQ-8632	-	73447	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
90	Budh Vihar	DL-12SB-8906	86344	96030	SCOOTY	-
91	Budh Vihar	DL-6SAE-0467	7461	8553	M/CYCLE	PASSION
92	Budh Vihar	DL-4SAS-8143	-	-	M/CYCLE	TVS VICTOR
93	Budh Vihar	DL-6SAT-4174	61027	60945	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
94	Budh Vihar	DL-4SDH-6109	-	3068	M/CYCLE	PASSION
95	Budh Vihar	DL-8SCJ-7310	49339	59672	M/CYCLE	SPLENDER
96	Budh Vihar	DL-8SNB-7638	-	-	M/CYCLE	-
97	Budh Vihar	DL-8SCH-2881	11060	10720	M/CYCLE	-
98	Budh Vihar	DL-8SAH-1388	-	-	M/CYCLE	TVS VICTOR
99	Budh Vihar	DL-5SZ-0956	24139	53368	M/CYCLE	XCD
100	Budh Vihar	DL-11SC-5188	29272	29118	M/CYCLE	-
101	Budh Vihar	DL-8SAU-5396	48904	45361	M/CYCLE	PULSAR
102	Budh Vihar	DL-7SAG-4581	24686	53123	M/CYCLE	STAR CITY
103	Budh Vihar	DL-11G-5574	4900	12419	SCOOTY	ACCESS
104	Budh Vihar	DL-8SAH-7525	43188	44514	SCOOTY	TVS
105	Budh Vihar	UP-24AQ-5579	86734	57141	M/CYCLE	SPLENDER
106	Budh Vihar	DL-11SE-2719	19135	26277	M/CYCLE	PLATINA
107	Budh Vihar	DL-11SN-8420	1807	5846	M/CYCLE	PASSION PRO
108	Budh Vihar	DL-4SBT-9602	87119	54560	M/CYCLE	PLATINA
109	Budh Vihar	DL-4SBF-7259	28936	40691	SCOOTY	AVIATOR
110	Budh Vihar	DL-8SAN-4095	19572	42093	M/CYCLE	PASSION PRO
111	Budh Vihar	DL-11SA-9463	500	3718	M/CYCLE	SPLENDER
112	Budh Vihar	DL-11SQ-3748	27044	68057	SCOOTY	AGITOR
113	Budh Vihar	DL-6SY-8008	63195	63305	SCOOTY	HONDA
114	Budh Vihar	DL-8SAH-7706	41317	41926	M/CYCLE	APPACHE
115	Budh Vihar	DL-14SC-4159	21589	21678	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
116	Budh Vihar	DL-11SA-7981	42286	17436	M/CYCLE	PASSION PRO
117	Budh Vihar	DL-11SH-9441	74396	74396	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
118	Budh Vihar	DL-10SV-2754	82854	8328	SCOOTY	ACTIVA
119	Budh Vihar	DL-11SK-1766	6993	7463	M/CYCLE	PASSION PRO
120	South Rohini	DL13SR3760	-	SCOOTY	HONDA	Honda Maestro Red
121	South Rohini	DL8SBM3122	-	M/CYCLE	ROYAL ENFIELD	Bullet Black
122	South Rohini	RJ14HC0322	-	SCOOTY	HONDA	Honda Activa White
123	South Rohini	DL9SAJ1348	-	M/CYCLE	TVS	TVS Sport Red-Black
124	South Rohini	DL4SCZ7304	-	M/CYCLE	YAMAHA	Yamaha R-15
125	South Rohini	DL3CK7647	-	M/CYCLE	TVS	TVS Apache White-Red
126	South Rohini	DL8SBM0658	-	SCOOTY	HONDA	Aviator Black
127	South Rohini	UP14BD9054	-	SCOOTY	YAMAHA	Vespa Fascino Yellow
128	South Rohini	DL1SU1580	-	SCOOTY	TVS	TVS Jupiter Dark-Gray
129	South Rohini	DL4SDC7316	-	M/CYCLE	YAMAHA	Yamaha FZ Green-Black
130	South Rohini	DL2SF4071	-	SCOOTY	HONDA	Honda Activa Black
131	South Rohini	DL7SBK9979	-	M/CYCLE	HERO	Hero Splendor Black
132	South Rohini	DL11EA4357	-	SCOOTY	SUZUKI	Suzuki Swish
133	South Rohini	DL3CK0751	-	SCOOTY	YAMAHA	Ray ZR
134	South Rohini	UP16AS3385	-	SCOOTY	HONDA	Aviator Black
135	South Rohini	DL4SCU1177	-	SCOOTY	HONDA	Honda Maestro Black

DP/9875/RD/2026
Sd/-
Addl. Dy. Commissioner of Police-II,
Rohini District, Delhi

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
CONSTRUCTION CIRCLE,
U.P. JAL NIGAM (URBAN)
A-2/33, Ashiyana Phase-II,
Moradabad-244001
Email:upjnmbd@gmail.com

Letter No.: 558/Fin/61
Date: 04.05.2026

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

NI No. 392/NVIDA/28 Date 30.03.2026
TENDER ID: 2026_UPJNM_1132330_1

SCHEME NAME: INTERCEPTION & DIVERSION (I&D) & STP FOR EXISTING DRAIN IN NAJIBABAD TOWN/NPP, DISTT BUNOR

With reference to the Tender for work of "INTERCEPTION & DIVERSION (I&D) & STP FOR EXISTING DRAIN IN NAJIBABAD TOWN/NPP, DISTT BUNOR under SBM 2.0 Programme" invited vide NI No. 392/NVIDA/28 dated 30.03.2026, it is to notify that due to unavoidable reasons pre-qualification bids will now be opened at 14:00 hours on dated 13.05.2026 at the same venue as notified earlier and the tender can now be submitted by the eligible bidders upto 12.05.2026 by 17:00 hours. Other terms & conditions shall remain the same.

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI

Q.No. 518/2025
CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA Applicant
VS
SULEKHA TOMAR Defendant

To, 1. NARENDRA KUMAR SINGH
S/O MR. RAM KUMAR SINGH
House No. B-373, 1st Floor Block-B
Brij Vihar Ghaziabad U.P.-201001.

Whereas the above-named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs.31,30,077.46 (Rupees Thirty One Lakh Thirty Thousand Seventy Seven and Forty Six Paise Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before DRT, Registrar on 13.07.2026 (for further details kindly visit DRT website: www.drt.gov.in Phone Number 011-23748473). Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above-mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

(i) All concerned may attend their cases by hybrid mode (by physical appearance in the Court or through CISCO WEBEX VC Link).

(ii) For online appearance through VC all the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/software.

(iii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing case to be taken by Hon'ble Presiding Officer/ Registrar/ Recovery Officer-I/ and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.

(iv) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph.No.011-23748473. Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 23rd March 2026.

By Order of this Tribunal

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Dated: 04/05/2026
E-Tender Notice

E-tender is invited, from reputed and experienced contractor by the undersigned, for and on behalf of the president of India, for the following:-

Tender No.: ELECT-GEN-BPL-T-11-2026 Name of Work: BPL Division-Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of passenger lift installed at DRM Bhopals office for the period of Three years. Completion Period: 36 Months. Estimated Cost: Rs. 5,19,401.16/- Earnest Money in Rs. 10,400/- Date and Time for closing of tender: 20/05/2026, 11:00 hrs. Tender No.: ELECT-GEN-BPL-T-12-2026 Name of Work: BPL Division-Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract of Stretcher lift (Ground+1 floor) provided at Railway Hospital, Nishatpura, Bhopal (M/s Shivalik Elevators make) for the period Three years. Completion Period: 36 Months. Estimated Cost: Rs. 7.73,280/- Earnest Money in Rs. 15,500/- Date and Time for closing of tender: 20/05/2026, 11:00 hrs. The details of complete tender documents and its related information may be seen at https://www.reps.gov.in and notice board of this office. Manual offer, for above said tender is not acceptable and if any manual offer submitted, will not be considered. Corrigendum/ Updating, if required, will be uploaded on website, it may be seen at above said URL and notice board of this office, till the date of closing of tender. The Contractor must read the all tender documents as uploaded on IREPS along with all conditions carefully to know the eligibility for participation in tender and documents etc. to be submitted along with offer. Only documents uploaded on IREPS along with offer by the contractor will be considered for finalization of tender.

For Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (General) DRM's Office, West Central Railway, Bhopal Near Rani Kamalapati Railway Station

Any Food Related Complaint, Please Call Toll Free Helpline 1800111321



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indianexpress.com

CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.
NSIC New NSDP Building, 2nd Floor, Okhla Ind. Estate, Okhla, New Delhi-110022

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

CONCOR invites E-Tender in Single Packet System of tendering for the following work:-
Name of Work: CONCEP/Ans-I/PL/Road work-I/02941T/12026-27
Tender No. Construction of POC road (CC Road), drain and other allied works at MMLPAnemadgarh

Estimated Cost ₹ 589.59 Lakhs (including GST)
Completion Period 09 Months
Earnest Money Deposit ₹ 4.44,800/- (Rs. Four Lakh Forty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Only)
Cost of

Classifieds

PERSONAL
I, SAMIKSHA YADAV, D/O SUNIL YADAV, R/O- H.No. 69, SECTOR-122, PARTHALA, KHANJARPUR, NOIDA, G. B. NAGAR, U.P. have changed my name to SAMIKSHA YADAV.

I, Anita Sengar W/o Tara Singh R/o K-15 Delta 2 Greater Noida have changed my name to Anita Tomar for all purposes.
I, ASMA D/O-Kamaljit R/O 247,DDA-Janta-Flat, Group-2, Pocket-C, Hasthal,Uttam-Nagar, New Delhi-110059, have changed my name ANURADHA

I, Saadiya Maryam, W/o Farhan Alam, R/o-B-1176, Green Fields-Colony, Faridabad, have changed my name Saadiya (as a given name) and Maryam (as surname).
I, SUREET SINGH ARORA, S/O MANJIT SINGH, R/O-323, RAM NAGAR, OPP,LAXMI NARAYAN MANDIR, KRISHNA NAGAR, DELHI-110051, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUREET SINGH, PERMANENTLY.

I, MADHU GIRDHAR, W/O RAKESH KUMAR GIRDHAR, RESIDENT, 8-L, MODEL TOWN, ROHTAK, HARYANA HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MADHU BALA.
I, Dig Pal Singh Solanki, S/o-Man Singh, R/o-9, Maruti-Vatika Ext.Awadhpuri, Shahganj, Agra, U.P-282010, have changed my name, from Dig Pal Singh Solanki to Dig Pal Singh, for all future purposes.

I, Yasmin Baig D/o Mohd Khushhal Khan, R/O B-11, 8089, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, hereby declare that I have changed my name to Yasmin Khan for all future purposes.
I, Vijay Kumar S/o Kishori Lal Dheer, R/O B-198, Surya Nagar, NCR Ghaziabad-201011, U.P, have changed my name from Vijay Kumar to Vijay Kumar Dheer for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE
The general public is hereby notified that my client, Mrs. Raj Bala (67 years old) wife of Late Sh. Raj Kumar, resident of H. No. A-297, Near Shadi Pur Depot, Pandav Nagar, Patel Nagar, S.O. Central Delhi-110008, has severed all relations with her son, Mr. Gaurav Kumar.
I, Sweta Agrawal W/O Jalaj Agrawal R/O Q-1701, Homes 121, Sector-121, Noida, G.B Nagar U.P.-201301 Have Change My Name Sweta Agrawal To Sweta Agrawal For All Future Purposes

PUBLIC NOTICE
Under instructions of my client Mr. Jasmeet Singh Sawhney, notice is hereby given that the original copy of title documents of Property No-B-104, First Floor (without roof rights), Fateh Nagar, New Delhi - 110014, standing in the names of Mr. Ujjagar Singh and Mr. Karanpreet Singh, have been lost/misplaced. FIR No. 272767/2020 dated 02/05/2020 has been lodged at P.S. Hari Nagar, West District, Delhi. Lost Document: Sale Deed dated 28/05/2024, Regn. No. 2024/25/1/4336, Book 1, Vol. 11086, PP 85-102. Sub-Registrar Office West Jarakpur, New Delhi. It is declared that no mortgage/charge/encumbrance or third-party interest has been created on the basis of the said documents. Public is cautioned not to deal with the said documents if found. Any person having any claim must inform the undersigned within 15 days with proof failing which no claim shall be entertained and duplicate/verified copies shall be obtained.

PUBLIC NOTICE
My Client, Sunil Anthony Kalia through SPA Holder Sudhir Kumar Bhat, is the owner of Flat No. A-8, Mandakini Apartment, Gurgaon, CGHS Limited, Pitampura, New Delhi, by virtue of Certificate of Possession dated 15.05.1987 and Share Certificate dated 10.12.2018, both issued by Gwalior Co-operative Group Housing Society in favour of Devi Prasad Kalia (Share Certificate dated 10.12.2018, and Certificate of Possession dated 15.05.1987) and the said Certificate dated 10.12.2018, is endorsed in favour of Sunil Kalia and Praven Kalia on 13.01.2019. The original Certificate of Possession (LR No. 741555/2/23 dated 06.08.2023) and Share Certificate (LR No. 2737979/2018 dated 08.12.2018) have been misplaced/lost. Anyone finding or holding the same is requested to return them to the undersigned. Any person having any claim/objection regarding the above property must notify in writing within 15 days of publication of this notice, failing which no claim shall be entertained.
Vipranth Law and Associates
Nisha Sharma
Advocate
Ch. No. A-15, Western Wing,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

CROSSWORD

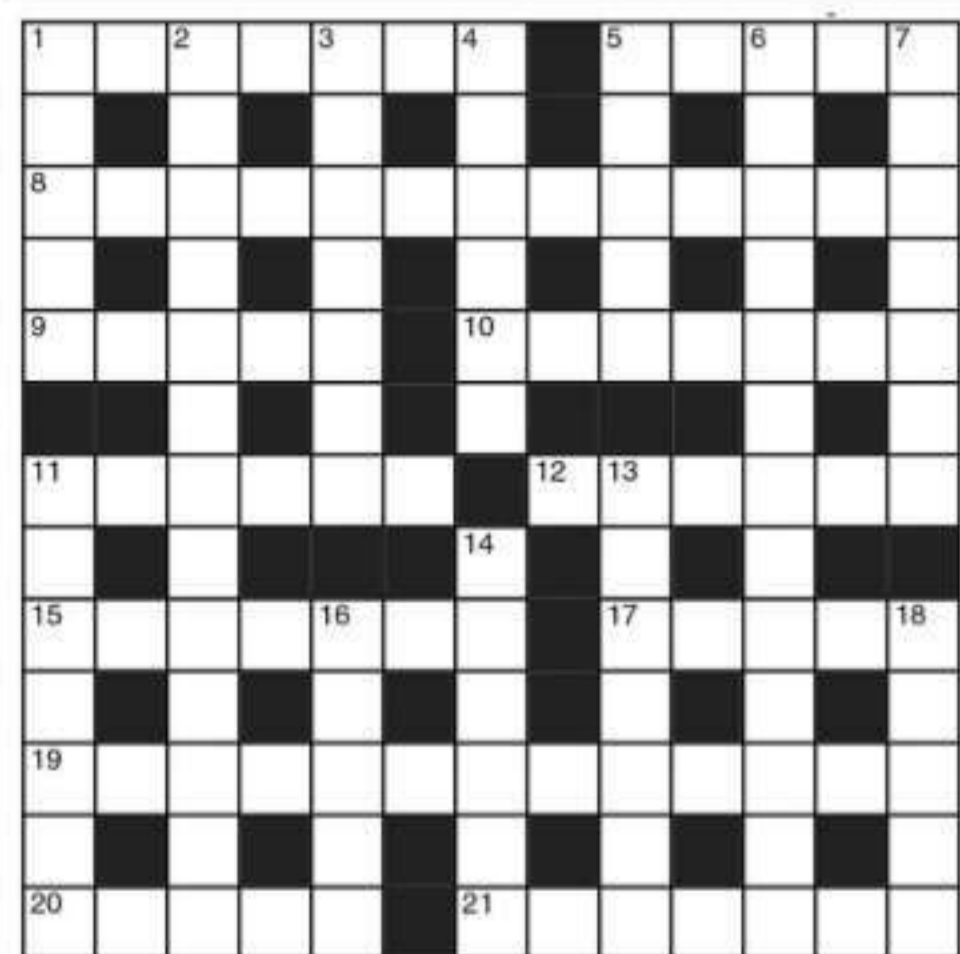
5980

OVER THE HEDGE

BY MICHAEL FRY & T LEWIS

ROYAL STARS

BY GEORGIA NICOLS



ACROSS
 1 Opposes publicity put in front of buildings (7)
 5 He has a trying job (5)
 8 Deigning to be gracious (13)
 9 What one is not well out of? (5)
 10 Scoring in many games but not tennis (7)
 11 They go downhill fast in cold weather (6)
 12 Teased — on account of scruffy appearance? (6)
 15 We do turn out after all — it's not forbidden (7)
 17 Axes and rifles (5)
 19 The last job one aims for on a racecourse (9,4)
 20 She has no right to leave scene of Hamlet (5)
 21 Expert put to death by direction (7)

DOWN
 1 Concentrate on the film (5)
 2 Danny's car ails badly — he must go there by boat (6,7)
 3 She puts on other people's clothes (7)
 4 There's very little time to get support (6)
 5 Girl making article in stone (5)
 6 Where to find motorists on course? (7,6)
 7 Committed to being betrothed (7)
 11 Dishonest way to acquire a piece of riding gear (7)
 13 A ship has, for example, first-rate missile (7)
 14 Concedes there are about a thousand approaches (6)
 16 A stew badly cooked has to be thrown away (5)
 18 Located or spotted by ear (5)

SOLUTIONS CROSSWORD 5979 ACROSS: 1 Droop, 8 Operator, 9 Aster, 10 Educates, 11 Train, 12 Era, 16 Pigeon, 17 Starve, 18 Dip, 23 Adore, 24 Proposal, 25 Comet, 26 Eulogies, 27 Zebra **DOWN:** 2 Zebra, 3 One-sided, 4 Spider, 5 Erect, 6 State, 7 Crisp, 12 End, 13 Asp, 14 Handsome, 15 Overhear, 19 Images, 20 Spies, 21 Fools, 22 Doggo



CALVIN & HOBBS

BY BILL WATTERSON



MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG



JUMBLD WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Spare me through your ____, do not punish me through your ____ - Anselm of Canterbury (5,.,.,7)

GMEIR ○●●●●○

CUTIS ○●●●●○

COMICS ●●●●●○

EINTJY ●●●●●○

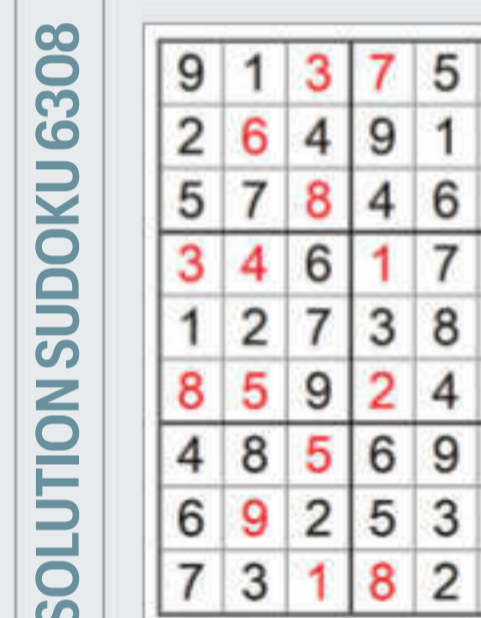
SOLUTIONS: Gmeir: Game, Cutis: Cosmetic, Jmeir: Spare me through your mercy, do not punish me through your justice. - Anselm of Canterbury

DIFFICULTY LEVEL 1s INSTRUCTIONS

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



"IMPORTANT"

Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

INVITATION OF TENDERS THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for the supply of the following items:-

S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
1.	06261139	M.S. FLAT SIZE 50X6MM X STANDARD LENGTH	500000 KGS	22.05.2026
2.	06251002	PIG IRON FOR FOUNDRY PURPLE	283738 KGS	25.05.2026
3.	09263050	GENTIAN BLUE ENAMEL FINISHING PAINT	154717 NOS.	28.05.2026
4.	77269020	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR METAL LINERS	1021000 NOS.	20.05.2026
5.	77269061	RUNNING CONTRACT FOR HVN LINERS (T-8992)	622530 NOS.	29.05.2026
6.	02260081	HIGH VOLTAGE FUSE RATING 125A WITH FUSE	4905 NOS.	01.06.2026
7.	12260029A	EARTHING CABLE COMPLETE	17350 NOS.	08.06.2026

Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No manual offer will be entertained.

Tender Notice No.: 09/2026-2027 Dated: 04.05.2026 1482/2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

झारखण्ड सरकार

स्वास्थ्य, विकित्सा शिक्षा एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग

सूचना

झारखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग के विज्ञापन सं-01/2016 एवं विज्ञापन सं-01/2023 द्वारा खाद्य सुरक्षा पदाधिकारी के पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु अनुशसित निम्नांकित अर्हियों के सभी मूल प्रमाण-पत्रों की जांच दिनांक -06.05.2026 एवं 07.05.2026 को खाद्य सुरक्षा आयुक्त कार्यालय, आर-सी-एच-कैम्पस, नामकुम, राँची में की जाएगी :-

BHOLA SHANKAR (11602864), CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH (11602954), UMESH KUMAR (11605605), VIJAYA PARMAR (23183398), ANIRUDDHA ROY (23180324), PRAGATI SINGH (23181997), AMBRISH PANDEY (23180236), RITESH KUMAR (23182472), ARPITA CHOUDHARY (23180513), VIKASH KUMAR (23183412), SAURAV SINGH (23182735), ABHIMANYU KUMAR (23180031), SHWETA TRIPATHI (23182953), MASUM ANSARI (23181520), MD AHSAN ALAM (23180117), RAJHANS KUMAR (23182322), CHANDAN KUMAR SHAW (23180760), NAMRATA MAHATO (23181649), ASHUTOSH CHANDRA GAHLAUT (23180580), RIJWAL PANDEY (23182450), VIVEK SHARMA (23183505), AMAN GUPTA (23180207), NAWED ANJUM (23181682), DEEPAK KUMAR SINGH (23180839), PAVAN CHOUDHARY (23181911), SHAILESH KUMAR YADAV (23182766), ANIKET DIWEDI (23180310), LALITA KUMARI (23181395), KIRAN HEMBROM (23181270), ASHISH KUMAR VERMA (23180566), NAINA NAYAK (23181642), ASHA RAJ (23180543), DAISY NELEMA TIGGA (23180798), VISHAL KUMAR SINGH (23183475), PUJA KUMARI (23182183), SUPRIYA MUNDU (23183187), ABHA SHANKAR THAKUR (23180021), ANJALI VIVA MINJ (23180348), SANJEEV KUMAR UPADHYAY (23182652), ROHIT KUMAR (23182499), NAURANGDEV KUMAR (23181666), MANISHA (23181472), ANUP KUMAR (23180443), VAISHALI KUMARI (23183361), KUMAR PRABHAKAR (23181326), SARITA JERAI (23182685), CHANDRADEO GANJU (23180770), AVINASH KISKU (23180617), DERRICK TIGGA (23180865), RAVI KUMAR HANSDA (23182412), MUNNA KUMAR (23181632), PUJA BHAGAT (23182179), ANUPA PRITY BARA (23180449), JASMINE KER KETTA (23181127), PUJA KUMARI (23182186), BISHWANATH GAGRAI (23180731), RADHIKA KUMARI (23182234).

सभी अनुशसित अर्हियों से अनुरोध है कि निर्धारित तिथि को विभाग में निश्चित रूप से उपस्थित होकर अपने मूल प्रमाण-पत्रों एवं अन्य वांछित अभिलेखों की जांच करा लें।

(युव प्रसाद) सरकार के उय सचिव

PR.NO.378909 Health Med Edu and Family Welfare(26-27):D

NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

The Deputy Chief Engineer Const-II, Shivaji bridge, Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-Tender for the following work. Tender closing date-25.05.2026 at 15.00 hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Bidder should visit the www.ireps.gov.in website for all details including corrigendum etc.

Mode of Tender : E-Tender (Single Packet) (Open Tender)
 Tender Notice No.: 148-W-Dy. CE-C-II-CSB Date: 04.05.2026
 Full name of work : Maintenance and renovation of the office complex of DYCE/ C-II/CSB at Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi.
 Approx. cost : Rs. 61,95,491/- (Rs. Sixty one lacs ninety five thousand four hundred ninety one only.)
 Bid security (Cash/BG) amount : Rs. 1,23,900/- (Rs. One lakh twenty three thousand nine hundred only.)
 Completion period : 12 (twelve) Months
 Availability of tender document on Rly. website : Available on IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in. Tender detail and other instructions are as per NIT available on above mentioned IREPS site.
 Tender availability on website : 04.05.2026
 Tender closing date : 25.05.2026 upto 15.00 hours.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 1486/2026

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 84 Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Pushkar @ Kaku, S/o Sh. Sompal Singh R/o H.No.40/7, Gulik No.07, Swaroop Nagar, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No.233/20 u/s 380/411/34 IPC, P.S. Wazirabad, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Pushkar @ Kaku cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Pushkar @ Kaku has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Pushkar @ Kaku of FIR No.233/20 u/s 380/411/34 IPC, P.S. Wazirabad, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 09.06.2026.

By Order,
 Ms. Sayesha Chadha
 Judicial Magistrate First Class-08 (Central)
 Room No.272, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
 DP/5770/N/2026

JHARIA REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, DHANBAD

e-Procurement Notice

Tender Reference No: JRDA/CIVIL/26-27/02/34 Date: 29.04.2026

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Construction of 2 Nos. of Community Hall at Belgaria Dhanbad
1.	Estimated Cost	Rs. 3,56,98,227.00
2.	EMD	Rs. 3,57,000.00
3.	Tender Document Cost	Rs. 10,000.00
4.	Time of Completion	08 months
5.	Date/Time from which bid is available for online bidding	05.05.2026 at 03:00 PM
6.	Last Date/Time for on-line submission of bids	26.05.2026 at 05:00 PM
7.	Date and Time of Bid Opening	28.05.2026 at 11:30 AM
8.	Name and Address of Officer inviting tender	Head of Department (Civil), JRDA, Dhanbad Hatia More, Golf Ground Road, Hirapur, Dhanbad - 826001 Jharkhand, India Email: infojrda.dhn@gmail.com

Note : 1. Only e-tenders will be accepted.
 2. Further details can be seen on website - https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Head of Department (Civil), JRDA, Dhanbad
 PR 378973 Rural Development (26-27)_D JRDA, Dhanbad

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय

ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, राँची

ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ई-निविदा संख्या-03/2026-27/RWD/EE/RANCHI दिनांक-

क्र० सं०	आई-डेंटिफिकेशन संख्या/पैकेज संख्या	प्रखण्ड	कार्य का नाम	प्राकल्पित राशि (रुपये में) अंक में	कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि / अवधि	टेंडर कॉल नं०
1	RWD/RA NCHI/01/2026-27	नगड़ी	लालमुटवा पंचायत एनएच-33 गुटवाडिपु से महुआटोली भाया पीठडकुडी पथ का सुदृढीकरण कार्य। (ल०-2.550 कि०मी०)	2,05,30,700.00	दो करोड़ पाँच लाख तीस हजार सात सौ रुपये मात्र।	12 माह

1. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि-07.05.2026
 2. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय-23.05.2026 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे तक।
 3. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय-25.05.2026 अपराह्न 3.30 बजे।
 4. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता- कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, राँची।
 5. ई-निविदा प्रकोष्ठ का दूरभाष सं-0651-2360137
 विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट jharkhandtenders.gov.in में देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
 ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग
 कार्य प्रमण्डल, राँची

PR 379004 REO(26-27)#D

MUTHOOT FINCORP LTD. | GOLD AUCTION NOTICE

Regd. Office: Muthoot Centre, TC No 27/3022, Punnen Road, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India - 695001. CIN : U69929KL1997PLC011518, Ph: +91 471 4911400, 6231427.

Notice is hereby given for the information of all concerned that gold ornaments pledged with under mentioned branches of the company for the period up to 30.06.2025 & All other 6 months tenure gold loans up to 30.09.2025 and EMI gold loans due up to 31.03.2026. Also those gold loans where interest is due and not paid up to 31.03.2026 are also included in this auction. Which were overdue for redemption and which have not been redeemed so far in spite of repeated notices will be auctioned on 06.06.2026 from 10 am onwards. Auction Date: 06.06.2026 - MUZAFFARNAGAR DISTRICT - CIVIL LINES MUZAFFARNAGAR: 4276000681, 4276000684, 4276000685, 4276000705, 4276000707, 4276000731, 4276000732, 4276000738, 4276000750, 4276000756, 4276000761, 4276000768, 4276000773, 4276000797, 4276000869, 4276000933, 4276001199, 4276001216, 4276001221, 4276001252, 4276001265, 4276001342, KHATAULI-MUZAFFARNAGAR: 430000391, 430000394, 430000586. Auction Date: 06.06.2026 - SAHARANPUR DISTRICT - DELHI ROAD SAHARANPUR: 449500283, 449500332, 449500372, 449500373, 449500389, 449500400, 449500418, DEOBAND: 4204000672, 4204000718, 4204000719, 4204000725, 4204000744, 4204000746, 4204000818, 4204000823, 4204000825, 4204000834, 4204000863, 4204000874, 4204000875, 4204000879, 4204000883, 4204000887, 4204000903, 4204000920, 4204000944, 4204000955, 4204000997, 4204001017, 4204001022, 4204001023, 4204001030, 4204001036, 4204001067, 4204001103, 4204001128, 4204001144, 4204001151, 4204001167, 4204001174, 4204001175, 4204001206, 4204001217, 4204001253, 4204001513, 4204001550, 4204001592, 4204001609, 4204001617, 4204001659, 4204001666, 4204001712, 4204001693, 4204001718, 4204001724, 4204001737, 4204001823, 4204001960, 4204002064, 4204002069, GANGLICH: 4391001997, 4391002008, 4391002018, 4391002023, 4391002043, 4391002053, 4391002084, 4391002084, 4391002086, 4391002087, 4391002088, 4391002102, 4391002136, 4391002153, 4391002154, 4391002159, 4391002185, 4391002210, 4391002235, 4391002242, 4391002250, 4391002308, 4391002339, 4391002343, 4391002374, 4391002407, 4391002422, 4391002430, 4391002443, 4391002436, 4391002444, 4391002447, 4391002448, 4391002490, 4391002495, 4391002516, 4391002522, 4391002523, 4391002537, 4391002538, 4391002545, 4391002580, 4391003335, SAHARANPUR-DEHRADUN ROAD: 2764000819, 2764000962, 2764000970, 2764000986, 2764001009, 2764001018, 2764001041, 2764001044, 2764001051, 2764001085, 2764001096, 2764001114, 2764001115, 2764001136, 2764001159, 2764001166, 2764001187, 2764001190, 2764001212, 2764001213, 2764001222, 2764001226, 2764001246, 2764001251, 2764001259, 2764001291, 2764001330, 2764001340, 2764001394, 2764001409, 2764001439, 2764001441, 2764001455, 2764001459, 2764001482, 2764001493, 2764001537, 2764001538, 2764001547, 2764001583, 2764001585, 2764001607, 2764001645, 2764001661, 2764001680, 2764001682, 2764001703, 2764001715, 2764001721, 2764001743, 2764001757, 2764001864, 2764001920, 2764002001, 2764002054, 2764002025, 2764002213, 2764002295, 2764002296, 2764002377, 2764002412, 2764002419, 2764002444, 2764002487, 2764002491, 2764002550, 2764002716, 2764002759, 2764002776, 2764002838.

Auction will be conducted at respective branches. please note if the auction does not get completed on the same day due to any reasons, the same will be conducted on 17.06.2026 at 10.00 am onwards at SAHARANPUR DISTRICT - SAHARANPUR-DEHRADUN ROAD- GROUND FLOOR , DOOR NO-2A/2327, DEHRADUN ROAD, SAM INTER COLLEGE, SAHARANPUR, UTTAR PRADESH-247001. The bidders are requested to produce photo id card ,Pan card .The successful bidder should transfer the money through RTGS.

MUTHOOT FINCORP LTD

NORTH BIHAR POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED

(Registered Office: ViduytBhawan, Bailey Road, Patna -800021)
 A Govt. Of Bihar Undertaking
 (Department of Planning & Engineering)
 CIN:U40109BR2012SGC018920
 [Corrigendum/Addendum Notice]
 (Through e-procurement mode only -www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

Expression of Interest with EO/NIT No. 26/PR/NBPDC/2026 and 27/PR/NBPDC/2026 was invited by Chief Engineer (Planning & Engineering), North Bihar Power Distribution Limited (NBPDC) with PR No. 001533 (B&C) 2026-27 for Empanelment of Manufacturers for Supply of Power and Distribution Transformers in North Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited (NBPDC) and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited (SBPDC) for all central/state Govt. funded schemes and internal procurement for period of 5 Years is being amended/modified as follows:-

EO/NIT No	Particulars
26/PR/NBPDC/2026	Empanelment of Manufacturers for Supply of 3 -Ph 10 MVA, 16 MVA and 20 MVA 33/11 KV Power Transformers in North Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited (NBPDC) and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited (SBPDC) for all central/state gov. funded schemes and internal procurement for a period of 5 years
27/PR/NBPDC/2026	Empanelment of Manufacturers for Supply of 3Ph 25 KVA, 63 KVA, 100 KVA, 200 KVA 315 KVA 500 KVA, 630 KVA and 11/0.433 KV Distribution Transformers in North Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited (NBPDC) and South Bihar Power Distribution Company Limited (SBPDC) for all central/state gov. funded schemes and internal procurement for a period of 5 years

The Time line for the above EO/Id is modified as follows:

Submission Start Date:-	25.05.2026, 11:30 Hrs onwards
Submission Due Date:-	15.06.2026, up to 17:00 Hrs
Eoi opening Date	16.06.2026, up to 17:30Hrs

Pre-Bid Discussion

Pre-bid Query Submission Type and Date:- Through email to: ceplanningnbpdc@gmail.com upto 29.05.2026

Pre-bid Discussion Date:- 02.06.2026, 12:30 Hrs

Venue Details:- Conference hall 4th floor, Viduyt Bhawan-3, Bailey Road, Patna - 800021

The RFP documents can be downloaded from website www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in .

All other terms & conditions will remain unchanged.

PR- 002271 (B & C) 2026-27

Chief Engineer (P&E)

For further details please visit : www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar

नये से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार