



Breaches and bastions

In a historic day, the debutant TVK emerged as the single-largest party in Tamil Nadu, the UDF rebounded in Kerala with a near 3/4th majority while the BJP managed to capture West Bengal by decisively defeating the Trinamool and came back to power for a third time in Assam.

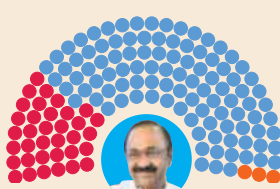
Data as per EC trends at 1 a.m. on Tuesday



TAMIL NADU 234

Party	Seats won/led	Vote share (%)
TVK	107	34.90
DMK+	74	31.39
AIADMK+	53	27.24

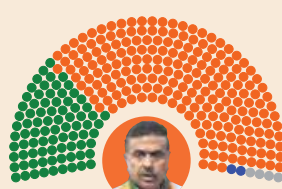
C. Joseph Vijay
Perambur: Won | Vote% **58.89**



KERALA 140

Party	Seats won/led	Vote share (%)
UDF	102	46.55
LDF	35	37.34
NDA	3	14.2

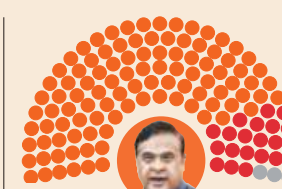
V. D. Satheesan
Paravur: Won | Vote% **49.3**



WEST BENGAL 293*

Party	Seats won/led	Vote share (%)
BJP	206	45.83
AITC+	81	40.81
INC	2	2.97
Others	4	10.39

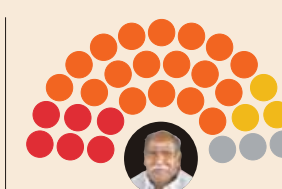
Suvendu Adhikari
Bhabanipur: Won | Vote% **53.02**



ASSAM 126

Party	Seats won/led	Vote share (%)
NEDA	102	48.27
ASM	21	35.41
Others	3	15.08

Himanta Biswa Sarma
Jalukbari: Won | Vote% **74.42**



PUDUCHERRY 30

Party	Seats won/led	Vote share (%)
NDA	18	38.67
DMK+	6	31.85
TVK	3	18.33
NTK	0	1.37
Others	3	9.03

N. Rangasamy
Mangalam: Won | Vote% **50.61**

Change and churn in Bengal, T.N., Kerala

Trinamool ousted as BJP sweeps Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Riding high on an anti-incumbency wave against the 15-year-long Trinamool Congress rule, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept the West Bengal Assembly election by more than two-thirds majority on Monday and is set to form the government in the State for the first time. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost the Bhabanipur seat to BJP's Suvendu Adhikari by 15,105 votes as the saffron party secured a significant ideological triumph in the State.

Data late on Monday showed that the BJP had won 206 seats in the 294-member Assembly, while the Trinamool bagged only 80 seats and was leading in



West Bengal BJP supporters celebrate the party's victory in Kolkata on Monday. ANI

another one. The BJP, which registered an all-time high vote percentage of over 45.85%, saw its vote share increase by more than 7% from 38.4% in the 2021 polls. The Trinamool's vote share dropped by almost 8% from 48.5% in 2021 to 40.8% in this election.

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Vijay rocks, disrupts T.N.'s bipolar politics

D. Suresh Kumar
CHENNAI

Tamil cinema's top actor C. Joseph Vijay's fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) on Monday made a stunning electoral debut, emerging as the single largest party with 107 seats in the 17th Tamil Nadu Assembly election. In doing so, it disrupted a nearly half-century-old bipolar landscape dominated by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam.

Taking on multi-party fronts led by the two Dravidian majors, the TVK, powered almost entirely by Mr. Vijay's charisma, fell just 11 seats short of the halfway mark in the 234-member House. While Mr. Vijay won from both Pe-



TVK chief Vijay receives victory certificate for the Perambur seat on Monday. R. RAGU

rambur and Tiruchi East, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, 14 of his Cabinet colleagues, Speaker M. Appavu and Deputy Speaker Pitchandy were defeated and the DMK was reduced to the principal Opposition with 59 seats in what became a three-cornered contest.

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Cong.-led UDF makes a comeback in Kerala

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Voters in Kerala delivered a decisive victory to the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 2026 Assembly election, ending 10 years of Left Democratic Front (LDF) rule.

Riding an anti-incumbent wave, the UDF won 102 seats after counting of votes on Monday, relegating the LDF to 35 seats and rebounding from its electoral wipeout in the Assembly elections in 2016 and 2021.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) bagged three seats - Nemom and Kazhakkottam in Thiruvananthapuram and Chathanoor in Kollam - fundamentally realigning the State's LDF-UDF "revolving door" politics. The



Congress's K.C. Venugopal and V. D. Satheesan share a cake after the win. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

BJP's political impact seemed to far outweigh its electoral impact, with the party becoming a third bloc in the Assembly, and an emerging player in provincial politics. The BJP also significantly increased its vote share across the State, emerging as a close second in six seats.

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NDA led by AINRC retains Puducherry

Rajesh B. Nair
PUDUCHERRY

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the All India N. R. Congress (AINRC) headed by Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, is set to retain power in Puducherry, winning 18 out of the total 30 seats in the Assembly.

Mr. Rangasamy's AINRC leads the tally with 12 seats, improving its numbers by two seats. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won four seats, its numbers came down by two from the previous Assembly. One seat each were won by the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam and Latchiya Jananayaga Katchi, the latter headed by businessman Jose Charles Martin, son of lottery baron Santiago Martin. The



Puducherry CM N. Rangasamy, receives certificate from officials on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which contested as a junior partner of the Congress in the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc, won five seats, with the Congress's tally coming down to one from the two seats it had won in the 2021 Assembly election.

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NDA secures record third term in Assam

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance on Monday scripted a record victory in Assam, bagging 102 of the 126 Assembly seats to retain power for a third straight term.

The BJP won 82 seats, which is 18 more than the majority mark of 64, while its regional allies, Asom Gana Parishad and Bodo Land People's Front, won 10 seats each. The Congress, which counted on its alliance with five other parties, managed 19 seats, the least since the BJP ended its 15-year rule in 2016. Only one of its allies, Rajgor Dal, tasted victory, securing two seats.

"Barring one, we won all the seats where Hindus are in a position to elect



BJP supporters in Guwahati celebrating the resounding win on Monday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

their candidates. I thank the people of Assam on behalf of the BJP and our allies, and assure them that we will fulfil the promises we made during the election," incumbent Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who won his Jalukbari constituency for the sixth straight time, said.

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IN BRIEF



SC asks Centre to examine plea on Aadhaar norms

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to examine a plea that new Aadhaar cards should be issued only to children, and that the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) frame "stringent guidelines" for the grant of the identity document to adults and adolescents. A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant was hearing a PIL. » Page 14

BJP, Cong., and NCP hold on to seats in Assembly bypolls

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Monday retained their seven sitting seats in five States after counting of votes for Assembly bypolls.

While the BJP won four seats in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tripura, and Nagaland, the Congress won two in Karnataka and the NCP emerged victorious in Maharashtra.

In Maharashtra's Baramati constituency, which fell vacant after the death of former Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, his wife and current Deputy Chief



Congress members celebrate bypoll victory in Bengaluru on Monday. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

Minister Sunetra Pawar won by 2,18,034 votes. Also in Maharashtra, the BJP's Akshay S. Kardile won the Rahuri seat, by a margin of 1.12 lakh votes against NCP(SP)'s Mokate G Khandu. In Gujarat's Umreth, the BJP's Harshadhai G. Parmar won defeating the Congress's

Bhugurajsinh Chouhan by 30,743 votes. The third win by the BJP was of Jahar Chakraborti, who defeated his nearest rival, the CPI (M)'s Amitabha Dutta, by 18,920 votes in Tripura's Dharmanagar.

In Nagaland, the BJP's Daochier I. Imchen won Koridong by 3,123 votes. In Karnataka, the ruling Congress's Umesh Hullappa Meti won the Bagalkot bypoll by a margin of 22,332 votes, while Samarth Shamanur Mallikarjuna, also from the Congress, won the Davanagere South seat by 5,708 votes.

'HISTORIC MANDATE'
» PAGE 14

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TAMIL NADU

TVK's spectacular surge upends Dravidian duopoly

Actor C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam has, in its electoral debut, decimated the DMK's seat base in the urban heartlands where the ruling party had been strongest. The AIADMK held its ground in the west and north through coalition cohesion, and the DMK clung on best in its delta heartland.

Srinivasan Ramani, Pon Vasanth B.A. and Sambavi Parthasarathy decode the results

In a tectonic shift in Tamil Nadu politics, the fledgling Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by actor C. Joseph Vijay, has emerged as the single-largest party in the 2026 Assembly elections, winning or leading in 107 of the 234 constituencies as of 1 a.m. on Tuesday – 11 seats short of a majority.

A granular analysis shows that while the two Dravidian majors have retained a slice of their core vote, the debutant party has swept up the anti-incumbency vote and those seeking an alternative to the established Dravidian order.

The Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA), led by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), has been pushed to second place with leads in 74 seats – a steep fall from 159 seats in 2021, while the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)-led coalition, which includes the BJP and the PMK, has come third with leads in 53 seats (Table 1).

In terms of vote share, however, the three formations are remarkably close – TVK: 35.09%, SPA: 31.4%, and the AIADMK-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA): 27.2%. The disproportion between vote share and seats – starkest for the SPA, which lost 86 seats on a roughly 14-point vote-share decline – reflects a three-cornered contest in which the new entrant has eaten into both established alliances' bases in concentrated geographies.

The Greater Chennai and urban story

The TVK's leads are concentrated in the north, especially the Greater Chennai region covering Chennai city, its suburbs, and the Greater Chennai Corporation. Here, the TVK leads in 32 of the 37 seats with a commanding 45.3% vote share, as against the SPA's 29.7% and the NDA's 20%.

More striking is the seat collapse: the SPA, which won 36 of these in 2021, has been reduced to two; the NDA's three seats give it a nominal second place. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin also lost in Kolathur, symbolising the TVK wave.

A classification of constituencies by urbanity (using satellite night-light intensity) reveals the geography of the TVK's rise clearly. The party scored 46.5% in highly urban seats and 38.7% in moderately urban seats, while polling 31.4% and 30.5% in moderately rural and highly rural seats, respectively. The NDA's pattern is the inverse: strongest in rural areas (29%-30%) and weakest in highly urban seats (17.3%). The SPA polled a flat 31%-32.5% across all four categories (Table 4).

The TVK has displaced the DMK's urban base. The SPA's leads are concentrated in the moderately rural and highly rural segments (50 and 12 seats, totalling 62), where the three-cornered contest has cut less decisively for the TVK and the NDA has held on best, leading in 48 of those rural seats against the TVK's 46.

Region-wise patterns

The NDA coalition has held together best in the west and the north, where the TVK's surge has been less pronounced. Its vote shares of 31.9% in the west and 31.7% in the north, both well down when compared to 2021, translated into 21 and 16 seats, respectively. This likely reflects superior vote-transfer efficiency between the AIADMK, the BJP, and the PMK in seats with a significant Vanniyar or Kongu Vellalar concentration (Table 3).

The DMK's delta (or central) stronghold offers a contrast. The SPA polled 33.9%, its highest regional vote share, as against the TVK's 32.2% and the NDA's 27.7%, converting that into 19 of the region's 41 seats, as against the TVK's 13 and the NDA's 9. The central/delta region is the one region where the DMK's core vote polled well and translated into seats.

A breakdown by contest type also reveals a clear-cut trend. In the 135 seats featuring a direct DMK vs. AIADMK contest, the seat distribution is – TVK: 52, SPA: 45, and NDA: 38. In its first electoral outing, the TVK has finished first in traditional Dravidian vs. Dravidian battlegrounds, with the DMK nosing ahead of the AIADMK into second place (Table 2).

Strikingly, in the 25 constituencies where the BJP was the lead NDA face against the DMK, the TVK leads in 15, the DMK in 10, and the BJP in zero. Wherever the BJP rather than the AIADMK was the principal Opposition, the TVK has comprehensively displaced it.

Reserved constituencies

Of the SC- and ST-reserved constituencies, the TVK led or won 24, the SPA 13, and the NDA 9. The TVK's vote share in reserved seats (34.5%) is roughly in line with its statewide performance, suggesting support across community lines (Table 5).

In sum, the TVK's surge has decimated the DMK's seat base in the geographies where it was strongest. The AIADMK has held its ground in the west and the north through coalition cohesion, while the DMK has clung on best in its delta heartland.

The TVK's tally is 11 short of a majority, but this could be the election that decisively changes the political architecture of a State dominated by the Dravidian parties since 1967.

(With inputs from Areena Arora, Devyanshi Bihani and Nitika Francis)



The TVK president won comfortably in both the Perambur and Tiruchirappalli (East) constituencies he contested although his party fell short of a majority by 11 seats. The TVK's performance was pronounced in the Greater Chennai region, where the party secured 32 of 37 seats



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin suffered a stunning defeat in Kolathur, where he has been winning since 2011. While the DMK was decimated in its urban pocket boroughs, its coalition managed to finish in second place, thanks to the DMK's creditable performance in the delta region

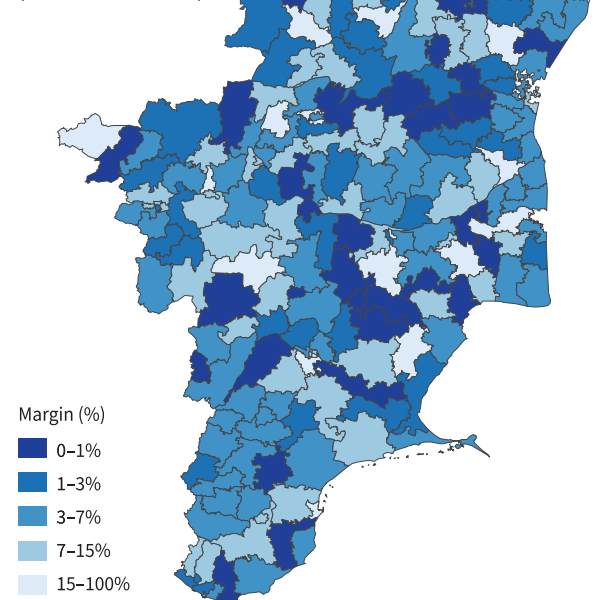


AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami managed a facile win in Edappadi, where the TVK candidate's nomination was rejected. The AIADMK-led coalition's strongest performance was in the north and the west, yielding it more than two-thirds of its overall tally



2026

VICTORY MARGIN BY CONSTITUENCY (closer race = darker)



ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES IN CHENNAI

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has swept all but two of the 16 Assembly constituencies in the State's capital, Chennai. The DMK's downfall in Chennai is drastic when compared to the previous election in 2021, in which the alliance it led not only won all the 16 constituencies in the district, but also secured over 50% of the vote share in 11 of them.

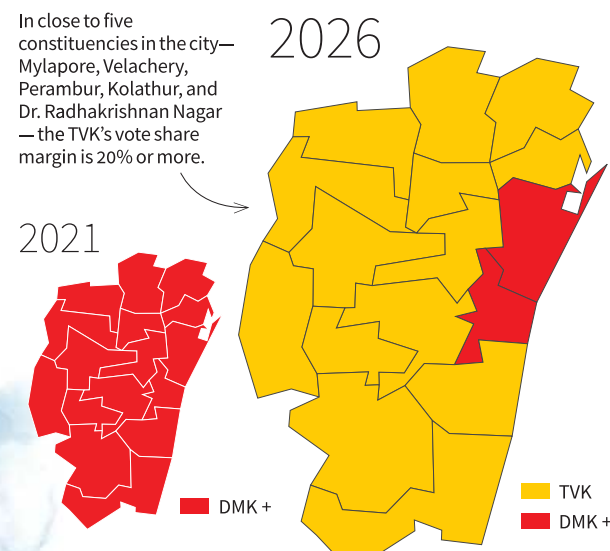


Table 1: Party-wise contested seats and vote share. The vote share refers to the share of votes secured by a party in the constituencies it contested

Alliance	Party	Seats		Vote share (%)
		Contested (±)	Won (±)	
DMK +	DMK	176 (-12)	60 (-73)	32.17 (-14.28)
	INC	28 (+3)	5 (-13)	28.28 (-13.08)
	DMDK	10 (-50)	1 (+1)	25.93 (+24.24)
	VCK	8 (+2)	2 (-2)	32.00 (-10.44)
	CPI(M)	5 (-1)	2 (+0)	32.09 (-3.08)
	CPI	5 (-1)	2 (+0)	30.56 (-12.72)
	IUML	2 (-1)	2 (+2)	33.90 (-4.51)
TOTAL		234 (+0)	74 (-85)	31.39 (-13.99)
AIADMK +	AIADMK	172 (-19)	47 (-19)	28.70 (-11.78)
	BJP	33 (+13)	1 (-3)	22.22 (-12.04)
	PMK	18 (-5)	4 (-1)	27.11 (-10.50)
	AMMK	11 (+10)	1 (+1)	18.34 (+18.22)
TOTAL		234 (+0)	53 (-22)	27.22 (-12.50)
	TVK	233 (+233)	107 (+107)	35.11 (+35.11)
	NTK	234 (+0)	0 (+0)	4.00 (-2.58)

Table 2: In a majority of seats in which the DMK and AIADMK contested against each other, the DMK won. In 52 of such seats, the TVK won. The debutant party also clinched a majority of seats in which the Congress and AIADMK contested against each other

	Seats	DMK + win/led	AIADMK + win/led	TVK win/led
DMK vs AIADMK	135	46	38	51
DMK vs BJP	25	10	0	15
DMK vs other NDA allies	16	4	4	8
INC vs AIADMK	18	1	3	14
INC vs BJP	5	3	1	1
Other SPA allies vs AIADMK	19	4	6	9
Other SPA allies vs other NDA allies	16	6	1	9

Table 3: The seats won/led and the vote share in seats contested by major alliances across various regions

Region	DMK +		AIADMK +		TVK		NTK	
	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)
Central	21 (-16)	33.90 (-14.43)	8 (+4)	27.79 (-9.56)	12 (+12)	32.15 (+32.15)	0 (+0)	4.27 (-2.72)
Greater Chennai	2 (-34)	29.68 (-19.17)	3 (+2)	20.06 (-13.21)	32 (+32)	45.21 (+45.21)	0 (+0)	3.44 (-4.73)
North	14 (-16)	32.01 (-15.71)	16 (+5)	31.54 (-10.49)	11 (+11)	31.74 (+31.74)	0 (+0)	2.66 (-2.48)
South	28 (-12)	33.21 (-10.56)	5 (-13)	23.71 (-13.03)	25 (+25)	33.52 (+33.52)	0 (+0)	6.01 (-1.80)
West	9 (-7)	28.70 (-12.34)	21 (-20)	31.88 (-14.89)	27 (+27)	33.54 (+33.54)	0 (+0)	3.21 (-1.87)

Table 4: The seats won/led and the vote share in the seats contested by major alliances in rural and urban areas

Region	DMK +		AIADMK +		TVK		NTK	
	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)
Highly urban	3 (-29)	30.91 (-16.78)	0 (-3)	17.28 (-14.44)	32 (+32)	46.50 (+46.50)	0 (+0)	3.69 (-4.54)
Moderately urban	8 (-19)	30.92 (-14.11)	6 (-10)	24.79 (-15.63)	29 (+29)	38.73 (+38.73)	0 (+0)	3.66 (-3.05)
Moderately rural	52 (-30)	31.46 (-13.35)	39 (-8)	30.33 (-11.18)	38 (+38)	31.40 (+31.40)	0 (+0)	4.12 (-2.13)
Highly rural	11 (-7)	32.55 (-13.27)	8 (-1)	29.15 (-10.80)	8 (+8)	30.41 (+30.41)	0 (+0)	4.46 (-1.42)

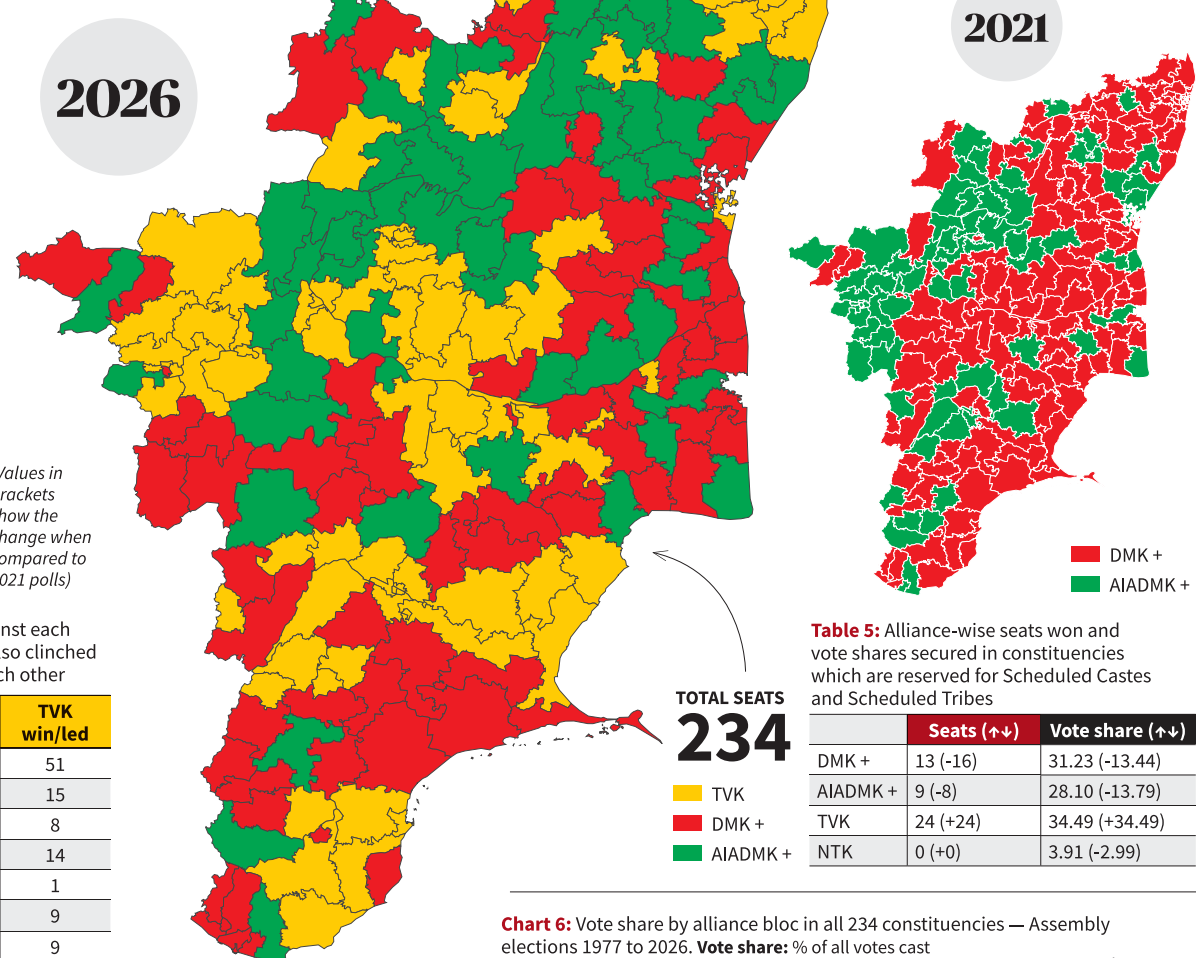
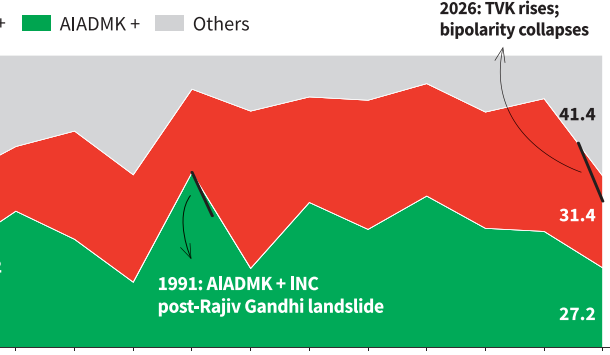


Table 5: Alliance-wise seats won and vote shares secured in constituencies which are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)
DMK +	13 (-16)	31.23 (-13.44)
AIADMK +	9 (-8)	28.10 (-13.79)
TVK	24 (+24)	34.49 (+34.49)
NTK	0 (+0)	3.91 (-2.99)

Chart 6: Vote share by alliance bloc in all 234 constituencies — Assembly elections 1977 to 2026. Vote share: % of all votes cast



Source: Election Commission of India
Vote share computed over total votes cast across all 234 Assembly constituencies

Data team: Srinivasan Ramani, Pon Vasanth B.A., Areena Arora, Sambavi Parthasarathy, Nitika Francis, Devyanshi Bihani

Design team: Kannan Sundar, J.V.S.N. Rajasekar, T. Sankar Ganesh, A. Ganeshan, S.T. Karthick, L. Balamurugan. Illustrations: Soumyadip Sinha, Satheesh Vellinezhi, Saai

PUDUCHERRY

AINRC returns to power with lower vote shares

The data for the tables were sourced from Election Commission of India

TABLE 1: Party-wise contested seats and vote share. The vote share refers to the share of votes secured by a party in the constituencies it contested

Alliance	Party	Seats		
		Contested (+/-)	Won (+/-)	Vote share (%) (+/-)
INC+	DMK	13 (+0)	5 (-1)	32.89 (-10.89)
	INC	22 (+8)	1 (-1)	23.91 (-9.64)
	VCK	2 (+1)	0 (+0)	1.84 (-15.38)
	Total (SPA)	30 (+2)	6 (-2)	31.85 (-3.04)
AINRC+	AIADMK	2 (-3)	1 (+1)	22.05 (-6.47)
	BJP	10 (+1)	4 (-2)	37.91 (-7.06)
	LJK	2 (+2)	1 (+1)	35.54 (+35.54)
	AINRC	16 (+0)	12 (+2)	40.99 (-5.91)
Total (NDA)	30 (+0)	18 (+2)	38.67 (-4.98)	
TVK	TVK	28 (+28)	2 (+2)	17.38 (+17.38)
	NMKZ	2 (+2)	1 (+1)	36.00 (+36.00)
	Total (TVK)	30 (+30)	3 (+3)	18.33 (+18.33)
NTK	NTK	28 (+0)	0 (+0)	1.47 (-2.15)

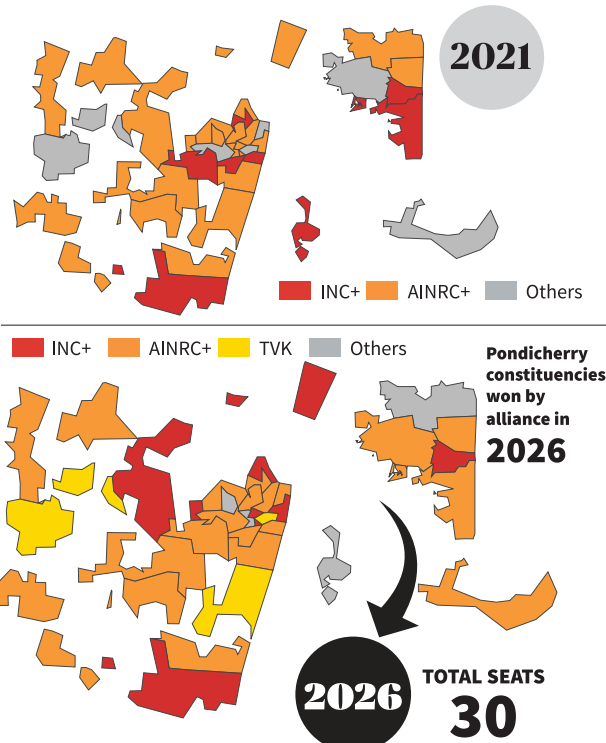
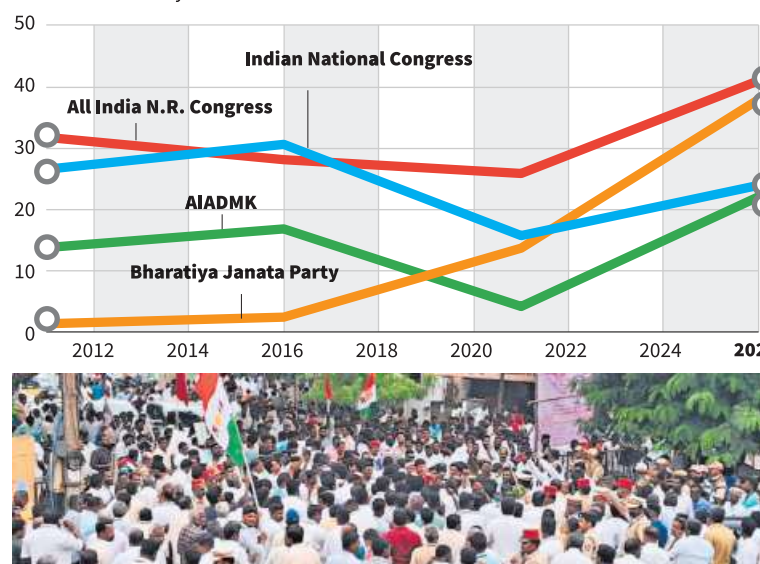


TABLE 2: The contested vote share secured by major alliances across various regions of Puducherry

Region	INC+		AINRC+		TVK		NTK	
	Seats (+/-)	Vote share (+/-)	Seats (+/-)	Vote share (+/-)	Seats (+/-)	Vote share (+/-)	Seats (+/-)	Vote share (+/-)
PONDICHERRY (n=25)	5 (-1)	31.44 (-1.39)	15 (+1)	38.90 (-6.39)	3 (+3)	19.44 (+19.44)	0 (+0)	1.36 (-2.14)
KARAIKAL (n=5)	1 (-1)	33.96 (-11.90)	3 (+1)	37.48 (+2.57)	0 (+0)	12.58 (+12.58)	0 (+0)	1.37 (-1.29)

CHART 1: The chart shows the BJP's contested vote share in Puducherry's Assembly elections over the years



- All 30 assembly seats see a three-way contest in 2026: the AINRC-led NDA backed by the BJP, a Congress-DMK INDIA alliance with internal seat-sharing friction, and Vijay's TVK contesting solo
- Voter turnout reached a record 89.85% — the highest ever in any Puducherry Assembly election — with Oussudu topping the chart at 94.39% and the Mahe constituency trailing well behind at 77.41%
- Five decades of verdicts show Puducherry alternating between Congress-led and DMK- or AIADMK-led alliances; AINRC emerged as a force in 2011, and the BJP entered the ruling fold in 2021

AINRC-led NDA retains power as Congress alliance falters due to internal feud

An analysis of vote shares secured by the major alliances shows that disruption caused by the TVK and the abysmal performance of Congress helped the AINRC led by N. Rangasamy

**Sambavi Parthasarathy
Pon Vasanth B.A.**

The National Democratic Alliance led by Chief Minister N. Rangasamy's All India N. R. Congress (AINRC) managed to retain power in Puducherry as the actor C. Joseph Vijay led Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), which managed to win 107 seats in Tamil Nadu, could only be a spoiler in the Union Territory.

Though the NDA lost nearly 5 percentage points in vote share compared with that of 2021, it managed to win 18 of the 30 seats by securing a vote share of 38.7%. The Secular Progressive Alliance led by the Congress, which faced intense fraternal fights within the alliance ahead of the elections, could secure only 31.9%, which was 3 percentage points lower than that in the 2021 elections. The alliance won in six seats.

The TVK, which secured about 35% of vote share in Tamil Nadu, could manage only 18.3% vote share in Puducherry. Despite securing a low vote share, the party and its ally Neyam Makkal Kazhagam won in two and one seats respectively.



AINRC cadres gathered to celebrating their candidates' victory in front of a counting centre in Puducherry on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Congress, whose candidates contested even in constituencies allotted to the allies, which led to the DMK, the VCK and CPI (M) openly expressing their discontent, performed poorly in the 22 constituencies where they were in the fray. It managed to win just one seat and secured 23.9% votes in the contested seats, which was nearly ten percentage points lower than 2021 elections. In comparison, the DMK secured 32.9% votes in the seats it contested and won in five seats.

The Naam Tamilar Katchi, which saw its vote share coming down sharply in Tamil Nadu due to the entry of the TVK, witnessed the same in Puducherry as well. It secured a meagre 1.37%, which was about two percentage points lower than 2021.

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While the Congress-led and AINRC-led alliances performed similarly in the Puducherry and Karaikal districts, the TVK performed notably better in the 25 constituencies in the Puducherry district, where it recorded all its three victories and secured 19.5% vote share. In contrast, in the five constituencies in Karaikal district, it secured only 12.3% of polled votes.

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KERALA

Congress-led UDF registers historic victory with near three-fourths majority

Haemorrhaging vote shares across regions, the CPI(M)-led LDF registers its lowest vote share tally since 1982; Congress and IUML led the UDF surge with the former winning 63 seats, and the latter securing 22; **Srinivasan Ramani, Nitika Francis and Pon Vasanth B.A.** look into the front's clean sweep

In a clear-cut mandate, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) has won the 2026 Assembly election in Kerala with a vote share that is the coalition's highest since the 2001 election. After a decade in Opposition, the UDF has been rewarded with a 46.55% vote share, surpassed only by its 2001 performance of 49.05%. It's a gain of 7.67 percentage points over its 2021 vote share (Table 1). The jump has translated into a seat gain of 62, taking the UDF to 102 seats in 2026, nearly three-fourths of the 140 seats in the Assembly.

Conversely, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) has experienced a drop of 7.1 percentage points from its 2021 performance, polling 37.34% of the vote and falling 64 seats from its 2021 tally of 99, to just 35 seats in 2026. This is the LDF's worst Assembly performance in over four decades. In every Assembly election since 1982, the coalition had polled at least 43.5% of the vote (Chart 2 and 3). Its previous low was 43.48% in 2016 and 43.7% in 2001. The 2026 figure of 37.34% is more than six percentage points below that previous floor, and over 11 points below the LDF's 2006 high of 48.63%. In a State whose politics has alternated between the two fronts with only one exception — the 2021 Assembly elections — since 1982, the scale of the LDF's collapse is without precedent.

In 2021, the Pinarayi Vijayan-led coalition had broken the cycle of incumbent removal and secured a rare second consecutive term, a phenomenon previously limited to the 1970s. The byelections and local body polls preceding this Assembly election had pointed to a change in the benches, but the LDF's reversals in 2026 have gone well beyond what those signals indicated.

The LDF includes the communist parties, the Kerala Congress (Mani) or KC(M), and others, with the alliance also backing several Independent candidates across the State. Both the CPI(M) and the CPI registered similar vote shares, close to 39%, in the seats they contested, but the KC(M), smaller LDF allies and the LDF-backed Independents underperformed relative to the front's overall vote share. The CPI(M), which contested 77 seats, has been reduced to 26, a loss of 36 seats from 2021, while the CPI dropped from 17 to eight of the 24 it contested.

The UDF includes the Congress, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), the Kerala Congress (KC), and others. The Congress contested 92 seats and won 63, an improvement of 42 seats over 2021, on a 7.14-point gain in contested vote share to 45.03%. The IUML, which contested 26 seats, polled 52.54% of the vote in those constituencies — the highest contested-seat vote share for any party across the alliances — and won 22 of them, against 15 in 2021. The IUML had outperformed the Congress in vote share within its contested seats in the previous Assembly polls; doing so again has helped the UDF as a whole gain a substantial number of seats. The Kerala Congress, contesting eight seats, won seven.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which drew a blank in 2021, has increased its tally to its highest ever in the State, even if a marginal three seats. The NDA's vote share rose 1.79 percentage points to 14.2%, while the BJP itself polled 16.04% in the seats it contested, having shared seats with its allies, the BJS and the Twenty20 party.

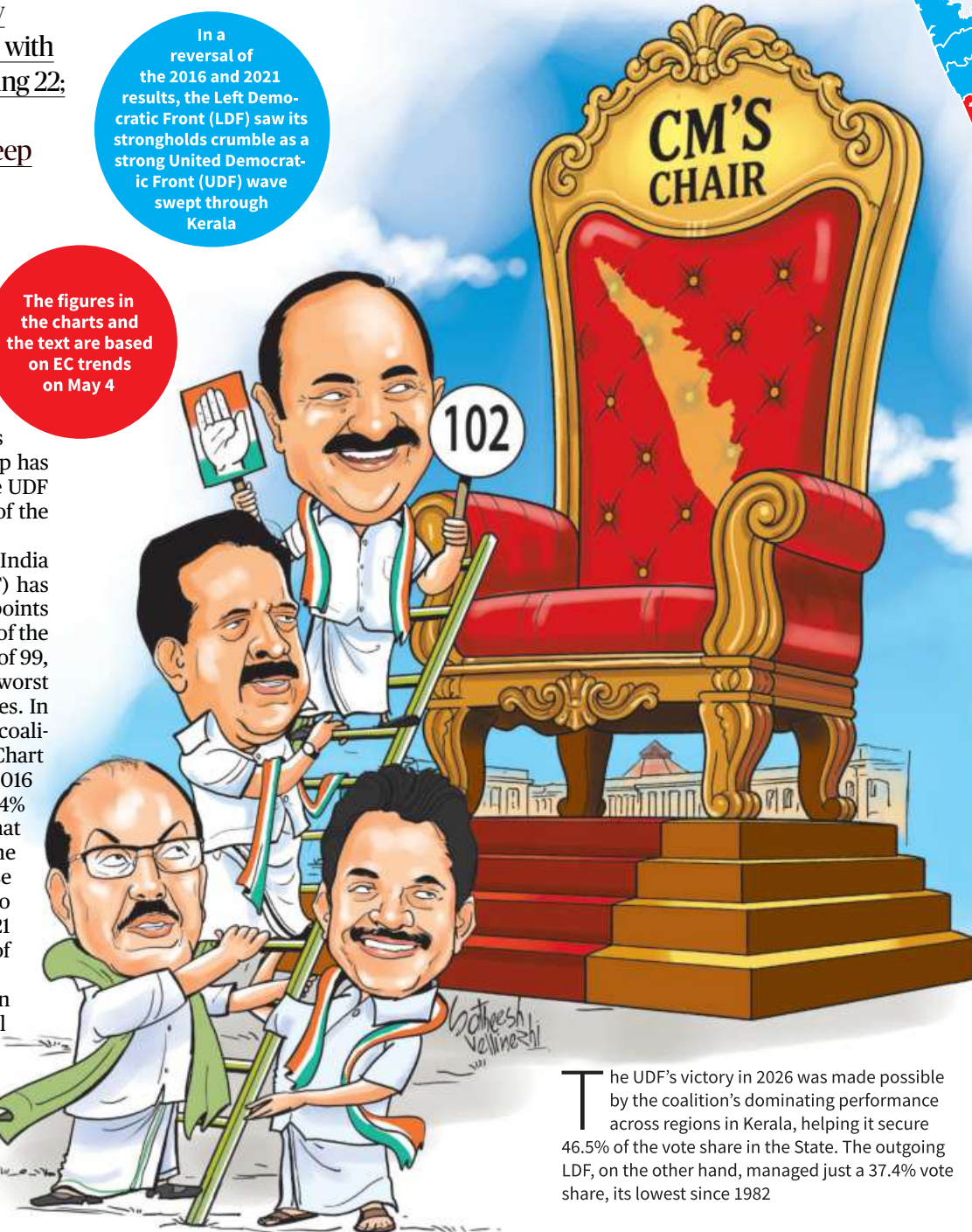
Regional break-up

The Malabar region, which has a higher proportion of Muslims and Christians than the rest of the State, lent the UDF its sharpest edge: the LDF lost or trailed in 20 seats it had previously held in the region, while the UDF secured 50.29% of the votes there with more than half of all votes cast in Malabar. The UDF's performance was strong across all three regions, with vote shares of 45.27% in Cochin, 43.21% in Travancore, and 50.29% in Malabar (Table 4).

Conversely, the LDF's vote share declined consistently across all three regions, settling within a narrow 36.6-38% band, and helping it retain a high of just 16 seats in the Cochin region on a 37.96% vote share. The Travancore region, where the LDF held 40 seats in 2021, now returns just 11, which is a 29-seat collapse in the southern region that historically swings the most.

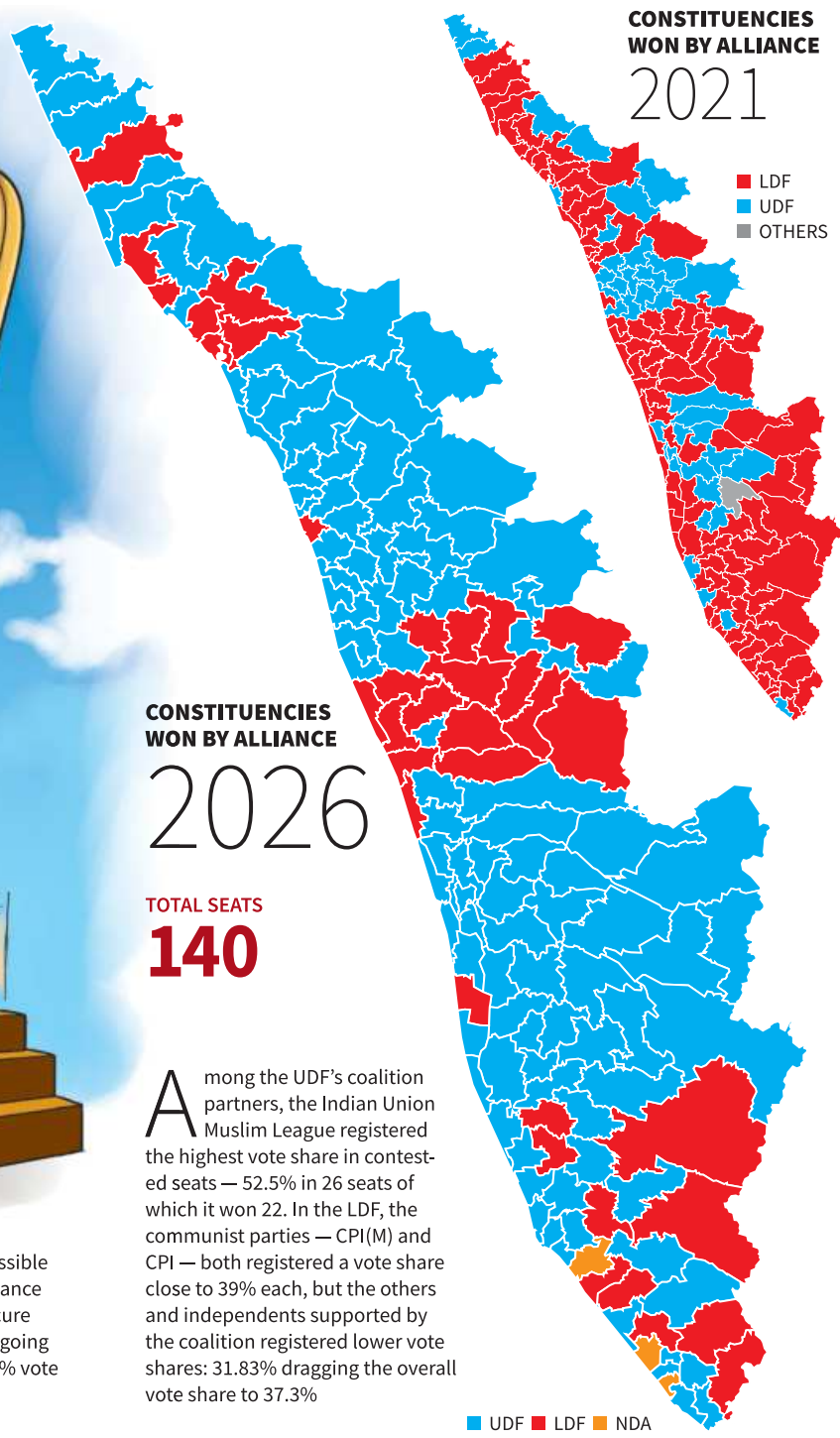
The NDA won all its three seats in Travancore, where its vote share rose 3 percentage points to 17.78% and this was the alliance's largest regional swing. The BJP's vote share in contested seats has risen across all regions, continuing a steady climb in its Assembly vote share since 2001. Its 16.03% in contested seats this time is roughly thrice its 2001 figure, and a high, despite the party contesting fewer seats than in 2021 (Chart 5).

(With inputs from Areena Arora, Sambavi Parthasarathy and Devyanshi Bihani)



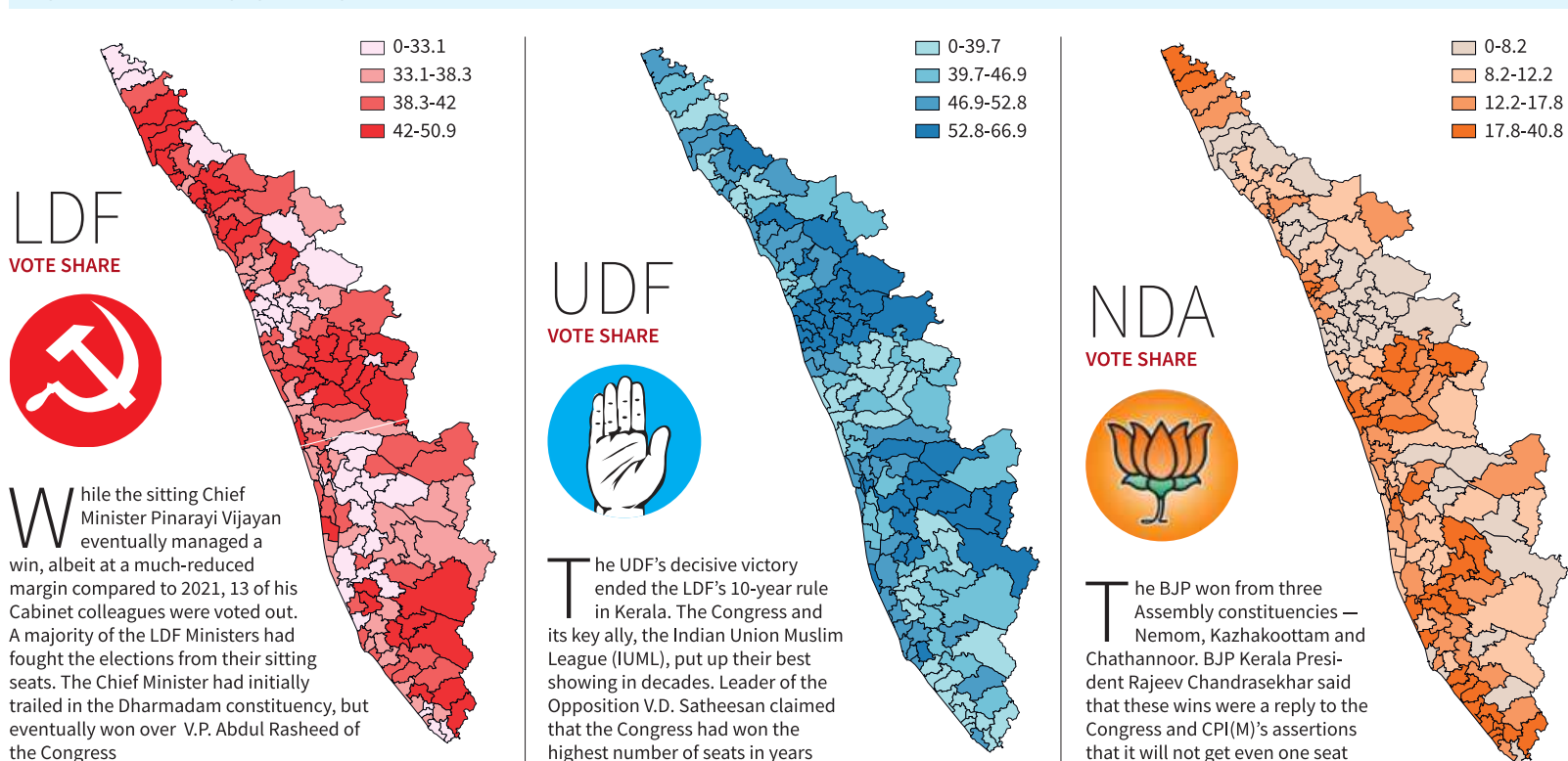
In a reversal of the 2016 and 2021 results, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) saw its strongholds crumble as a strong United Democratic Front (UDF) wave swept through Kerala

The figures in the charts and the text are based on EC trends on May 4



The Bharatiya Janata Party, which drew a blank in 2021, has raised its tally to a record high in the State, albeit just three seats

HOW THE ALLIANCES PERFORMED



While the sitting Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan eventually managed a win, albeit at a much-reduced margin compared to 2021, 13 of his Cabinet colleagues were voted out. A majority of the LDF Ministers had followed the elections from their sitting seats. The Chief Minister had initially trailed in the Dharmadam constituency, but eventually won over V.P. Abdul Rasheed of the Congress

The UDF's decisive victory ended the LDF's 10-year rule in Kerala. The Congress and its key ally, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), put up their best showing in decades. Leader of the Opposition V.D. Saheesan claimed that the Congress had won the highest number of seats in years

The BJP won from three Assembly constituencies — Nemon, Kazhakootam and Chathannoor. BJP Kerala President Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that these wins were a reply to the Congress and CPI(M)'s assertions that it will not get even one seat

TABLE 1: Party-wise contested seats and vote share. The vote share refers to the share of votes secured by a party in the constituencies it contested

Alliance	Party	Seats		Vote share (%) in contested seats
		Contested (±)	Won (±)	
LDF	Communist Party of India (Marxist)	77 (+2)	26 (-36)	39.37 (-7.62)
	Communist Party of India	24 (+1)	8 (-9)	38.70 (-6.79)
	Kerala Congress (M)	12 (+0)	0 (-5)	34.00 (-7.06)
	Others	27 (-2)	1 (-14)	31.83 (-8.17)
TOTAL		140 (+3)	35 (-64)	37.34 (-7.10)
UDF	Indian National Congress	92 (-1)	63 (+42)	45.03 (+7.14)
	Indian Union Muslim League	26 (+1)	22 (+7)	52.54 (+7.35)
	Kerala Congress	8 (-2)	7 (+5)	47.22 (+6.74)
	Others	14 (+3)	10 (+8)	43.32 (+8.53)
TOTAL		140 (+3)	102 (+62)	46.55 (+7.67)
NDA	Bharatiya Janata Party	98 (-17)	3 (+3)	16.04 (+2.40)
	Bharath Dharma Jana Sena	22 (+1)	0 (+0)	8.83 (+1.23)
	Twenty20 Party	19 (+19)	0 (+0)	11.12 (+11.12)
	Independent	1 (+1)	0 (+0)	2.96 (+2.96)
TOTAL		140 (+4)	3 (+3)	14.20 (+1.79)

OTHER CONTESTING PARTIES
LDF: Rashtriya Janata Dal: 3, Nationalist Congress Party (Sharadchandra Pawar): 3, Indian Socialist Janata Dal: 1, Indian National League: 1, Congress (Secular): 1, Kerala Congress (B): 1, Revolutionary Socialist Party (Leninist): 1, Independents: 16 **UDF:** Revolutionary Socialist Party: 4, Kerala Congress (Jacob): 1, Revolutionary Marxist Party of India: 1, Communist Marxist Party: 1, Independents: 7 **NDA:** Independent: 1

TABLE 4: The contested vote share secured by major alliances across various regions of Kerala

REGIONS	LDF		UDF		NDA	
	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)
COCHIN	16 (-15)	37.96 (-6.08)	28 (+15)	45.27 (+8.38)	0 (+0)	15.03 (+1.98)
TRAVANCORE	11 (-29)	37.63 (-7.49)	34 (+27)	43.21 (+6.52)	3 (+3)	17.78 (+3.00)
MALABAR	8 (-20)	36.62 (-7.54)	40 (+20)	50.29 (+7.70)	0 (+0)	10.61 (+0.94)

CHART 2&3: Historic alliance vote shares (in %)

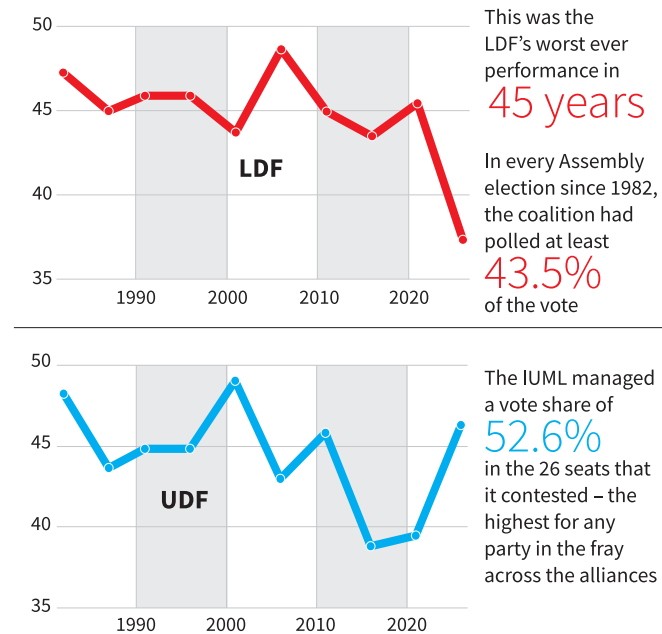
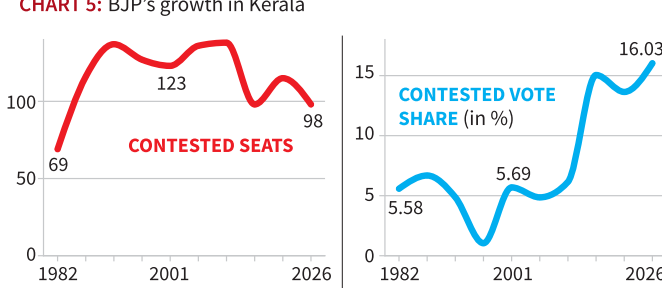


CHART 5: BJP's growth in Kerala



ASSAM

Spectacular show

The BJP-led NEDA has strengthened its hold on Assam politics with a massive victory, securing a consecutive third term

TABLE 1: Party-wise contested seats and vote share. Contested vote share refers to the share of votes secured by a party in the constituencies it contested

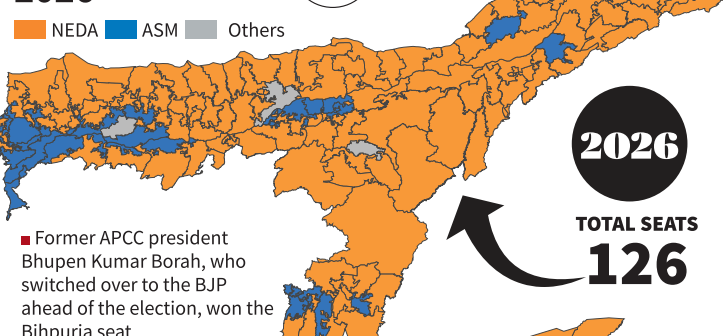
Alliance	Party	Seats		
		Contested (+)	Won (+)	Vote share (+)
NEDA	BJP	90 (-3)	82 (+22)	54.95 (+9.24)
	AGP	26 (-3)	10 (+1)	26.65 (-6.26)
	BPF	11 (-1)	10 (+6)	50.77 (+13.04)
	RHJM	0 (+0)	0 (+0)	0.00 (+0.00)
Total (NEDA)		126 (+0)	102 (+27)	48.27 (+3.76)
ASM	INC	99 (+4)	19 (-10)	37.22 (-2.23)
	Rajgor Dal	13 (+13)	2 (+2)	25.04 (+25.04)
	AJP	10 (-72)	0 (+0)	32.33 (+26.70)
	CPI(M)	2 (+0)	0 (-1)	27.96 (-17.41)
	CPI(ML)L	3 (-1)	0 (+0)	7.33 (+1.83)
Total (ASM)		123 (+0)	21 (-29)	35.41 (-8.10)



TABLE 2: Region and alliance-wise seats and vote shares secured

Region	NEDA		ASM	
	Seats	Vote share %	Seats	Vote share %
Upper Assam (n=56)	50	57.85	6	33.79
Lower Assam (n=50)	40	44.34	7	34.84
Barak Valley (n=20)	12	36.36	8	40.6

Assam constituencies won by alliance in 2026



Assam constituencies won by alliance in 2021

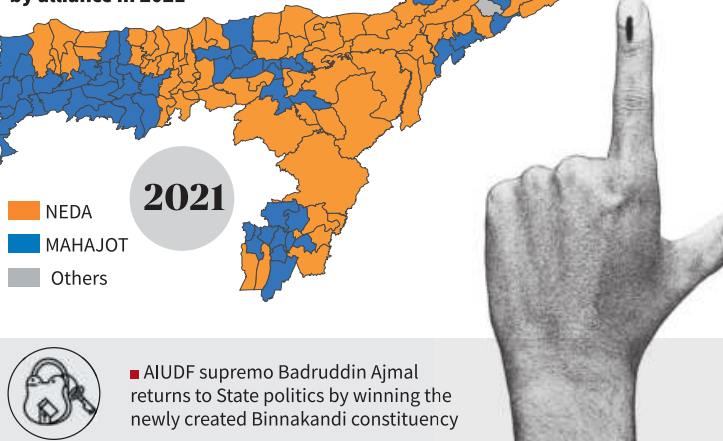


TABLE 3: Seats won and vote shares secured across 45 tea belt constituencies

Alliance	Seats	Vote share
NEDA	43	58.83
ASM	2	31.17
Others	0	9.99

TABLE 4: Alliance-wise performance in reserved constituencies

Alliance	Seats (+)	Vote share (+)
NEDA	21 (+3)	51.71 (+1.53)
ASM	2 (-4)	31.42 (-8.10)
Others	1 (+1)	16.87 (+6.57)

Dominance across two regions helps BJP-led bloc secure landslide victory

The BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance has won in 102 seats, while the Congress-led Asom Sonmilito Morcha is down to 21; AIUDF secures two seats and Trinamool Congress one

Srinivasan Ramani
Sambavi Parthasarathy
Pon Vasanth B.A.

The incumbent BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA) has won in 102 of the 126 seats, more than four-fifths of the Assembly, putting Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's coalition on track for a third consecutive term with an improved tally over 2021 (Table 1). The Congress-led multi-party alliance, the Asom Sonmilito Morcha (ASM), has been reduced to 21 seats, while the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) and Trinamool Congress won two and one seats respectively.

The NEDA secured 48.27% of the vote, a 3.76-point gain over 2021, while the ASM dropped 8.1 points to 35.41%. The BJP itself won 82 of the 90 seats it contested, with a contested-seat vote share of 54.95%, a sharp 9.24-point increase. The Bodoland Peoples Front won 10 of 11 contested seats with a 50.77% vote share, up 13 points. But the Asom Gana Parishad lost 6.26 points of contested-seat vote share, falling to 26.65%, even as it added one seat to finish at 10.

Within the ASM, the



Electoral triumph: Incumbent Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma celebrates in Guwahati after the BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance's win in the Assam polls on Monday. AFP

Congress won 19 of 99 contested seats, ten fewer than in 2021, on a contested-seat vote share down 2.23 points to 37.22%. The Rajgor Dal, fighting as part of the Opposition alliance for the first time, won 2 of 13. The Asom Jatiya Parishad, which had contested 82 seats in 2021 as a separate platform, was reduced to 10 contested seats and drew a blank.

Regional break-up

Assam can be classified into three broad regions: Upper Assam, Lower Assam, and the Barak Valley. The 2023 delimitation - that limited Muslim voters in the State to fewer constituen-

cies - has redrawn boundaries such that direct seat-level comparison with 2021 is not possible for these regional groupings.

The NEDA has dominated Upper Assam and Lower Assam, but the Barak Valley is a partial exception. In the Barak Valley, which has a higher share of Bengali-Muslim and Bengali-Hindu voters, the ASM outpolled the NEDA on vote share (40.60% to 36.36%), even as the seat count went 12-8 in the NEDA's favour (Table 2).

Mandate from tea-belt

The State's tea-belt - 45 seats across the Brahmaputra Valley featuring "tea

tribe" voters of Adivasi-origin labour communities, who form roughly a fifth of the State's electorate - went almost entirely to the NEDA, which won 43 of 45 (Table 3). The 24 SC- and ST-reserved constituencies followed a similar pattern, with the NEDA winning 21 on a 51.7% vote share against the ASM's two and 31.4% (Table 4).

In sum, the NEDA's sweep has been built on dominance across the two largest regions, a capture of the tea-belt seats, and a decisive margin in the reserved constituencies.

(With inputs from Arena Arora, Devyanshi Bihani, Nitika Francis)

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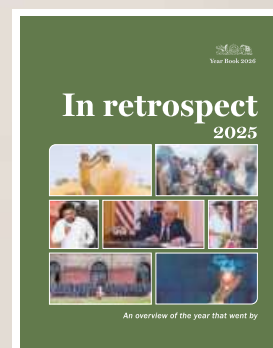
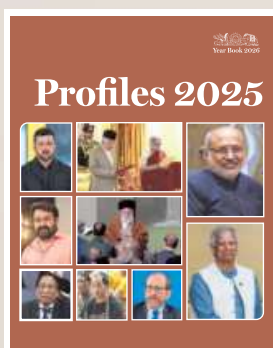
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WEST BENGAL

Rural sweep, urban gains hand BJP a decisive win over Trinamool

The BJP's breach of West Bengal has been built on a sweep of the agrarian South West, marked improvement in Greater Kolkata, the fracture of the AITC's minority base alongside Hindutva support, besides strong performance in reserved seats. **Srinivasan Ramani, Devyanshi Bihani, and Pon Vasanth B.A.** decode the party's stellar performance

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has finally breached West Bengal after years of threatening to defeat the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC). As of 8 p.m. on Monday, the ruling party at the Centre had won 102 of the 293 Assembly seats for which votes were counted and was leading in another 104, a tally of 206, more than two-thirds of the Assembly, relegating AITC to a distant second with 44 wins and leads in 37 more, a combined 81.

The BJP has improved its vote share by roughly 7.5 percentage points over 2021, garnering 45.75%, more than 4 points ahead of the AITC's 41.1% (with the Bharatiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha, or BGPM). The Left Front-led alliance has one win and one lead, the Congress two wins, and the Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP), outside the major alliances, two wins (Table 1).

Region-wise: the South West collapse

The BJP has gained vote shares across the State (Table 2), with substantial increases – more than 8 percentage points each – in Greater Kolkata, the northern region (Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, and the Dinajpurs), and the southwest (the agrarian belt of Bardhaman, Midnapore, Birhum, and parts of Purulia). The southwest has been the site of the most dramatic seat swing: the BJP led in 99 seats here against just 18 for the AITC, a virtual reversal of the 2021 verdict.

In the north, the BJP led in 40 seats to the AITC's 14, with a 49% vote share, more than 9 points ahead. The southeast, encompassing the agrarian areas of North and South 24 Parganas plus portions of Murshidabad and Nadia, was where the AITC was expected to put up its best resistance, but the BJP has edged ahead with 39 seats to the AITC's 35 even as the latter retains a 40.6% vote share to the BJP's 38.1%. The Left and Congress have two seats each here, both having gained at the AITC's expense without blocking the BJP's seat advance.

The BJP's most telling capture, however, is in Greater Kolkata. The party led in 28 seats to the AITC's 14, and has marginally outpolled it on vote share too (44.7% to 44%), having gained 12.5 points compared to 2021, when the BJP held no Greater Kolkata seats and trailed the AITC by 20 percentage points.

A classification by urbanity (Table 3) (using satellite-derived night-light intensity) shows the BJP leading across all four bands, most pronouncedly in the Moderately Rural and Highly Rural categories (81 and 72 seats). In Highly Urban seats, the BJP led in 21 against the AITC's 12, and the AITC's vote share advantage has all but vanished (44.2% to 43.8%). The BJP gained 13.1 percentage points in Highly Urban seats, the largest urbanity-band swing in the State, while the AITC dropped 9.3 points there.

Muslim-electorate seats

In the 166 constituencies where Muslims constitute (Table 4) over 25% of the electorate (per 2011 Census-derived district estimates), the BJP led in 91 seats against the AITC's 68, a 23-seat gap. The BJP's vote share here has risen 6.7 percentage points to 41.6%, while the AITC's has fallen 8.3 points to 41.7%. The two are now within a tenth of a percentage point on vote share, and the BJP has converted that into a clear seat advantage. The Left has two seats here, primarily through the Indian Secular Front (ISF) – the outfit led by Abbas Siddiqui – and the Congress two more.

Some of the Muslim vote that consolidated towards the AITC in 2021 appears to have moved to the ISF and the Congress, while a counter-consolidation of Hindu votes has allowed the BJP to convert a smaller absolute swing into a substantial seat advantage.

SC/ST reserved seats

The most pronounced gap remains in SC- and ST-reserved seats (Table 5), where the BJP led in 68 of the 84 reserved constituencies with a 50.2% vote share, nearly 10 percentage points ahead of the AITC's 40.6% and its 16 seats. The party's sustained outreach to the Matua and Rajbanshi communities, through the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and organisational work in the North Bengal districts and the Matua belt, appears to have delivered electorally.

The SIR of electoral rolls dominated the pre-election narrative (Table 6). Contrary to expectations that the deletions would suppress the AITC vote in its strongholds, the AITC has actually held up better in higher-deletion constituencies, winning 15 of the 27 seats with deletions above 20%, while the BJP swept 42 of 45 seats with deletions under 5%. The pattern suggests the SIR may have galvanised support where it was pronounced, but a more granular exercise would be required to establish its actual impact.

In sum, the BJP conquered West Bengal by sweeping the agrarian South West, doubling its lead in Greater Kolkata, Hindutva consolidation, a fracture in AITC's Muslim base, and Dalit support. (With inputs from Areena Arora, Sambavi Parthasarathy, and Nitika Francis)



Table 1: Party-wise contested seats and vote share. The vote share refers to the share of votes secured by a party in the constituencies it contested

Alliance	Party	Seats		Vote share (%)
		Contested (±)	Won (±)	
AITC+	AITC	291 (+1)	81 (-134)	41.18 (-7.41)
	BGPM	3 (+3)	0 (+0)	33.65 (+33.65)
	TOTAL	293 (+4)	81 (-134)	41.12 (-6.91)
BJP		293 (+0)	206 (+129)	45.75 (+7.78)
Left Front+	CPI(M)	197 (+58)	1 (+1)	6.60 (-3.24)
	MFB	0 (+0)	0 (+0)	0.00 (+0.00)
	ISF	38 (+6)	1 (+0)	11.39 (-0.67)
	SDPI	1 (-4)	0 (+0)	20.46 (+19.87)
	AIFB	24 (+3)	0 (+0)	3.30 (-4.07)
	CPI	17 (+7)	0 (+0)	2.60 (-2.93)
	RSP	18 (+7)	0 (+0)	1.65 (-4.51)
	CPI(ML)L	10 (-2)	0 (+0)	2.29 (+1.56)
	WBSP	1 (-1)	0 (+0)	0.31 (-0.26)
TOTAL	293 (+76)	2 (+1)	6.57 (-0.48)	
INC		293 (+201)	2 (+2)	3.04 (+0.01)

Map 1: West Bengal constituencies won by alliances in 2021, showing overwhelming AITC dominance across most regions, with scattered BJP pockets, and negligible Left Front and Congress presence statewide

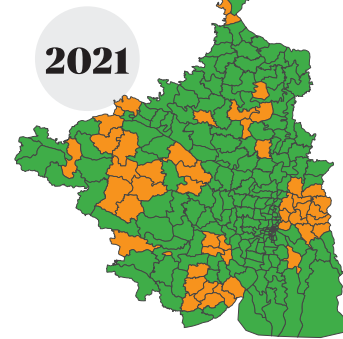


Table 2: The seats and contested vote share secured by major alliances across various regions of West Bengal

Regions	AITC+		BJP		Left Front+		INC	
	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)
Greater Kolkata	14 (-27)	43.98 (-8.63)	28 (+27)	44.67 (+12.49)	0 (+0)	8.40 (-1.72)	0 (+0)	1.05 (-1.14)
North	14 (-9)	39.62 (-4.90)	40 (+10)	49.04 (+6.77)	0 (+0)	3.08 (-0.31)	0 (+0)	4.26 (+0.70)
South East	35 (-30)	40.60 (-9.08)	39 (+24)	38.09 (+5.31)	2 (+1)	10.54 (+1.42)	2 (+2)	5.59 (+0.75)
South West	18 (-68)	41.33 (-5.73)	99 (+68)	49.52 (+8.14)	0 (+0)	5.07 (-1.27)	0 (+0)	1.40 (-0.40)

Table 3: The seats won/led and contested vote shares secured by major alliances in rural and urban areas of West Bengal

Urban/Rural	AITC+		BJP		Left Front+		INC	
	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)
Highly Urban	12 (-21)	44.24 (-9.29)	21 (+21)	43.83 (+13.09)	0 (+0)	9.05 (-1.55)	0 (+0)	1.05 (-1.29)
Moderately Urban	9 (-22)	41.00 (-5.81)	32 (+22)	47.92 (+9.31)	0 (+0)	6.87 (-2.73)	0 (+0)	1.81 (+0.12)
Moderately Rural	37 (-52)	40.42 (-7.54)	81 (+48)	45.09 (+6.64)	2 (+1)	7.42 (+0.35)	1 (+1)	3.46 (-0.03)
Highly Rural	23 (-39)	41.23 (-5.85)	72 (+38)	46.16 (+7.06)	0 (+0)	4.84 (-0.18)	1 (+1)	3.51 (+0.33)

Table 4: Alliance wise seats won/led and vote shares secured in seats with a high majority of Muslims (>25%) (n=166)

Alliance	Seats (±)	Vote share (%) (±)
AITC+	68 (-64)	41.72 (-8.29)
BJP	91 (+58)	41.59 (+6.68)
Left Front+	2 (+1)	8.19 (+0.28)
INC	2 (+2)	4.60 (+0.75)

Table 6: Alliance-wise seat distribution across constituencies grouped by extent of SIR deletions

SIR deletions	AITC+	BJP	Left Front+	INC
0-5% (n=45)	1 (-30)	42 (+28)	1 (+1)	0 (+0)
5-10% (n=92)	25 (-41)	63 (+39)	1 (+0)	1 (+1)
15-20% (n=86)	29 (-30)	57 (+30)	0 (+0)	0 (+0)
>20% (n=27)	15 (-10)	11 (+9)	0 (+0)	1 (+1)

BJP's growth: BJP's vote share in West Bengal shows a long stagnation through the Left Front era, followed by a sharp post-2011 surge. After marginal presence until 2016, it rose dramatically in 2021 and further in 2026, overtaking both AITC and Left, reflecting consolidation of opposition votes and organisational expansion across regions

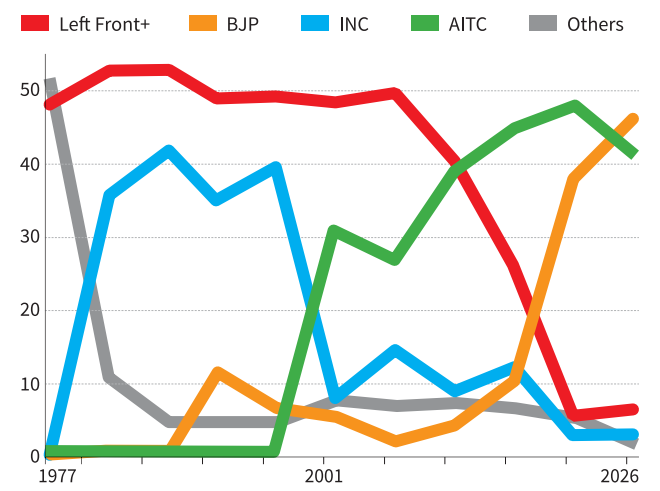
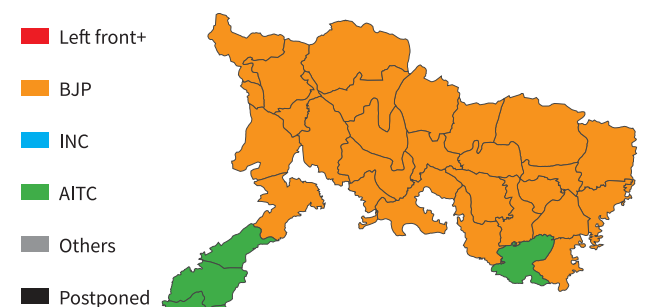


Table 5: Alliance-wise seats won and vote shares secured in constituencies which are reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs)

Alliance	Seats (±)	Vote share (±)
AITC+	16 (-29)	40.63 (-5.42)
BJP	68 (+29)	50.23 (+7.21)
Left Front+	0 (+0)	4.99 (-1.38)
INC	0 (+0)	1.45 (+0.27)

Map 2: West Bengal constituencies won by alliances in 2026, showing BJP dominance across large swathes, with clustered AITC strongholds, limited Congress pockets, and minimal Left Front presence statewide



206 seats (won/leading) take the BJP past the two-thirds mark, reducing the AITC+ to 81 in a dramatic reversal of the 2021 mandate

99 seats in the South West now favour the BJP, compared to just 18 for the AITC+, signalling a near-complete regional turnaround

28 seats in Greater Kolkata are led by the BJP against the AITC's 14, a sharp urban breakthrough from its zero-seat position in 2021

Map 3: Map of Greater Kolkata in 2026 highlighting a decisive BJP sweep across most urban constituencies, with only a few scattered AITC, showing a major shift in voter preference within the metropolitan region.

Margin map: Constituency-level map showing victory margins across West Bengal, darker shades indicate closer contests, highlighting pockets of intense competition statewide overall

MARGIN (%)

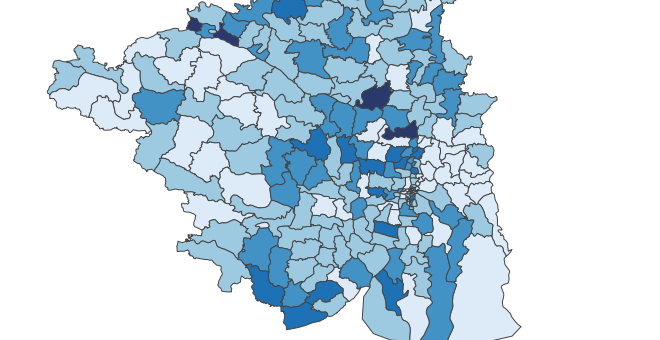
0-1%

1-3%

3-7%

7-15%

15-100%



Pinarayi holds, but 13 Ministers fail to win

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Perhaps the most telling impact of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) rout in the 2026 Assembly polls in Kerala was felt on the Pinarayi Vijayan Cabinet. While Mr. Vijayan eventually managed a win, albeit at a much-reduced margin compared with that of 2021, 13 of his Cabinet colleagues fell by the wayside.

Of the 21-strong Left Democratic Front (LDF) Council of Ministers, other than Electricity Minister K. Krishnankutty, all others had contested. Eight CPI (M) Ministers were among the defeated LDF candidates when the results of the April 9 Kerala polls were out on Monday.

General Education Minister V. Sivankutty lost to the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Rajeev Chandrasekhar in Nedom by a margin of 4,978 votes. In Kalamassery, Industries Minister P. Rajeev lost to V.E. Abdul Gafoor of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) by a margin of 16,312 votes.

Local Self-Governments Minister M.B. Rajesh lost the high-profile battle with the Congress's V.T. Balram in Thrithala by a margin of 8,385 votes. In Ettumanur, Cooperation Minister V.N. Vasavan lost to the Congress's Nattakom Suresh by a margin of 17,752 votes.

Higher Education Minister R. Bindu lost to the Kerala Congress's Thomas Unniyadan by a margin of 10,212 votes in Irinjalkuda. Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Other

Backward Classes O.R. Kellu lost in Mananthavady to Usha Vijayan of the Congress by 10,543 votes.

Health Minister Veena George, whose tenure was marked by controversies, lost in Aranamula to the Congress's Abin Varkey by a margin of 18,985 votes. In Tirur, Sports Minister V. Abdurahiman was defeated by the IUML's Kurukkoli Moideen by a margin of 24,137 votes.

The only Communist Party of India (CPI) Minister to lose, J. Chinchurani, who had handled the Animal Husbandry portfolio, was defeated in Chadayamangalam by M.M. Naseer of the Congress by a margin of 7,486 votes.

In Kannur, Museums and Archaeology Minister Ramachandran Kadannappally of the Congress (S) was defeated by T.O. Mohanan of the Congress by a margin of 18,551 votes. Forest Minister A.K. Saseendran of Nationalist Congress Party-Sharad Pawar lost in Elathur to Vidya Balakrishnan of the Congress (margin 12,162).

Mr. Augustine, who was the Water Resources Minister, lost to Roy K. Paulose of the Congress by a margin of 23,822 votes.

Transport Minister K.B. Ganesh Kumar of the Kerala Congress (B) lost to the Congress's Jyothikumar Chamakkala by a margin of 8,310 votes. In the defeated list was Ahammad Devarakovil, who had stepped down as Minister in 2023. He lost to the IUML's Fyzal Babu in Kozhikode South. The majority of the LDF Ministers had fought from their sitting seats.

LDF rout in Kerala holds lessons for the winners

The LDF's campaign, like its government, was strikingly at odds with Left tradition and revolved around Pinarayi's personality; the UDF must now resist the temptation to imitate this model

NEWS ANALYSIS

Varghese K. George
NEW DELHI

The victory of the Congress-led United Democratic Front is matched in intensity and depth by the defeat of the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front in Kerala. The winners have an immediate lesson to draw from the loser; that Kerala is characteristically disapproving of an über-leader who outshines his own party and keeps the spotlight firmly on himself.

The outgoing Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, had made this election all about himself. The tagline of the LDF campaign was "Who else, but LDF", with Mr. Vijayan as its sole face, looming in imposingly large hoardings across the State. The UDF campaign, by contrast, was a teamwork of unprecedented synergy among its leaders — a fact that all of them underscored after the victory. The UDF and its supporters must now resist the temptation to imitate the Pinarayi model of leadership.

Strikingly at odds with Left tradition, its campaign — much like its government over the last 10 years — revolved around Mr. Vijayan's personality, leaving little room for the CPI(M)'s own long-held internal



The IUML took extra care to avoid the risk of communal polarisation that could have ruined the pitch for the UDF. THULASI KAKKAT

processes of collective decision-making. No further evidence is required than the fact that at least six senior party leaders left the CPI(M) and contested with the UDF's support in this election; three of them won.

It is also evident that CPI (M) workers switched sides and voted for the UDF in large numbers, as the outcomes in party strongholds — including some in Kannur district — make it clear. Mr. Vijayan himself trailed in the early rounds of counting in his own constituency, a party bastion. The degeneration setting into the LDF so unsettled its own sympathisers that Malayalam writer K. Satchidanandan — a lifelong fellow-traveller of the Left — said publicly that he wished the LDF to lose power this time.

In the end, the claim of

inevitability around Mr. Vijayan is the single most important factor that did the LDF in. A defining feature of LDF rule historically has been the party's control over the government. The centralisation of power in the Chief Minister over the past 10 years weakened the party's mediatory role in politics and governance.

Absence of mediation

Leaders across many democracies seek to bypass the party and stir up the masses through direct communication made possible by social media. The absence of mediation reduces accountability, creates a personality cult, mutes the party and its workers, and corrupts feedback loops. All this has happened to the CPI(M) in Kerala, and the Congress and the UDF must resolve to avoid the same mistakes

SC asks Karnataka for report on Darshan's prison amenities plea

Aaratrika Bhaumik
NEW DELHI



Actor Darshan T. is accused of abducting and torturing Renukaswamy in 2024.

The Supreme Court on Monday sought a report from the Karnataka government on a plea by Kannada actor Darshan Thoogudeepa, in custody in the 2024 Renukaswamy murder case, alleging denial of basic amenities available to undertrial prisoners.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan directed the State to submit its report within a week. "We would also like to know from the State whether the basic amenities which the undertrial prisoner is entitled to are being provided to the petitioner or not. Registry shall ensure that appropriate reports are received within one week," the Bench said.

In his plea, Mr. Darshan alleged discriminatory treatment, stating that he had not been permitted to receive or purchase food, clothing and bedding from private sources, as allowed under prison rules, and that this violated Article 21.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Mr. Darshan, submitted that the alleged denial followed an earlier observation of the court that the actor should not receive "five-star treatment" in prison. He contended that, as a result, the actor had been placed in a quarantine cell without proper lighting and denied access to adequate food.

Mr. Darshan, along with actor Pavithra Gowda and

others, is accused of abducting and torturing Renukaswamy in June 2024. His body was later recovered in Bengaluru.

Referring to the submission, the Bench sought a report from the trial court in Bengaluru on the progress of the case, including the number of witnesses examined and the time likely to be taken to conclude the trial.

The court had earlier cancelled the actor's bail, holding that celebrity status does not exempt an accused from the rigours of law, and noting that relevant considerations had not been adequately addressed. Mr. Darshan had contended that continued incarceration, coupled with the likelihood of a prolonged trial, would adversely affect his livelihood and right to carry on his profession.

Counsel submitted that the accused had spent nearly a year in custody and that fewer than ten witnesses had been examined out of about 260 cited by the prosecution.

BJP secures record three seats in Kerala Assembly

S.R. Praveen
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Back in 2016, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made its historic entry into the Kerala Assembly with a win in Nedom, it was expected to propel the party's expansion in the State.

However, five years later, the party found itself reduced again to zero seats in the 140-member House. In the intervening years, it secured its first Lok Sabha seat and a historic win in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation. The momentum that the party built over the past two years appears to have

kept the BJP in good stead as it secured three seats, for the first time in the State.

At Nedom, BJP State president Rajeev Chandrasekhar reclaimed the seat by defeating CPI(M) candidate and General Education Minister V. Sivankutty. Mr. Chandrasekhar who got 57,192 votes was expected to put up a strong performance here as he had led in the Nedom segment in the 2024 Lok Sabha election. However, the key to his victory was perhaps the reduced margin of Congress's K.S. Sabarinadhan who could secure only 29,730 votes.

IUML anchors UDF's comeback in Malabar in Assembly polls

Abdul Latheef Naha
MALAPPURAM

The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) played a decisive role in the United Democratic Front (UDF)'s victory in

the Kerala Assembly elections. Acting as a key bulwark, the party secured a record 22 seats and strengthened the confidence of its allies, particularly the Congress in the Malabar re-

gion, through clear leadership and its organisational coordination.

The IUML has emerged as the third-largest party in the Assembly, after the Con-

gress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)), and is set to play a crucial role in the upcoming UDF government.

While State president Syed Sadikali Shihab

Thangal has ruled out any demand for the Deputy Chief Minister's post, there is a quiet sense within the leadership that the party deserves a larger share in governance.

That forecast has been fully realised, with the UDF winning all 16 seats in the district for the first time. IUML candidates registered large winning margins across constituencies.

THE ODISHA STATE POLICE HOUSING & WELFARE CORPORATION LTD.
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
JANAPATH, BHOINAGAR, BHUBANESWAR-22.
Ph: 0674-2541545, 2542921, E-mail: ophwc.od@od.gov.in, Website: www.ophwc.com
e-procurement notice No.- 02/OPHWC/2026-27

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC), Odisha, Bhubaneswar invites Percentage rate bid in Double Cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the works as detailed below:

1 Nature of work	Building works
2 No. of Works	07 Nos.
3 Value of Tender	Rs.3.67 Cr. to Rs.116.00 Cr. (Approx.)
4 Class of Contractor	'A' Class to 'Super' Class
5 Cost of Bid document (To be paid online)	₹ 11,800.00
6 Availability of Bid Documents in the website	Dt. 06/05/2026 to Dt. 26/05/2026 up to 5.00 P.M
7 Last date /time of Receipt of Bids in the Portal	Dt. 26/05/2026 up to 5.00 P.M
8 Date of Opening Bid	Dt. 28/05/2026 at 10.30 A.M.
9 Date of Technical Presentation (among qualified bidders only)	Date & Time will be notified after opening of the Technical Bid.
10	*The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can also be seen from the website: https://tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender shall not be published in Newspaper and can only be seen in the said website. *The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids and terminate the tender process without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Chief Engineer (OSPH&WC)
N.B.-The quoted rate should be all inclusive but excluding G.S.T. as applicable Under works contract.
12001/16/2627 OIPR-12001/12025/126-27/0002

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail : ceroads.bbsr@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CE-Roads-I-03/2026-27

- The Engineer-in-Chief (Civil), Roads-I, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bids in double cover system through ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road work as mentioned below:
- Nature of work : Road Works
- No. of work : 03 Nos.
- Tender Paper Cost : Rs.10,000.00
- Class of Contractor : Special Class / Super Class
- Available of bid document in the website : From 10.00 A.M. of 08.05.2026 to 5.30 PM of 28.05.2026
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt.29.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Engineer-in-Chief (Civil), Roads-I, Odisha
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA, NIRMAN SOUDHA, BHUBANESWAR
34001/154/2627 OIPR-34001/34181/126-27/0004

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SUNABEDA.
Letter No.:1961 email : serwsbd2003@yahoo.com Date:30/04/2026

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement Notice

- Name of the Work : Construction of Road Works - 02 Nos.
- Class of Contractor : "A" Class of (Odisha PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authority.
- Estimated Cost : Various from Rs.392.00 Lakhs to Rs.553.36 Lakhs (Approximately)
- Details of projects : As per Annexure attached.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bids
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda	CCERWCSBD - Online - 01/2026-27	06.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	20.05.2026 up to 05.00 P.M.	19.05.2026 up to 2.00 P.M.	21.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	To be intimated separately

5. The details of works can be seen from the web site : <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>
6. Any Corrigendum / Addendum will be displayed in the above tender web site.
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sunabeda.
25001/80/2627 OIPR-25001/25182/126-27/0001

UTKAL UNIVERSITY
VANI VIHAR, BHUBANESWAR-751004, ODISHA
Email: registrar@utkaluniversity.ac.in

Indicative Advertisement for Recruitment of Faculty Positions

No.: Estt./1041(Vol-IV)/5130/2026 Dated: 02.05.2026

Established in 1943, Utkal University occupies a foundational place in the higher education landscape of Odisha, emerging from an early generation of public universities that helped shape the intellectual architecture of modern India. Headquartered at its Vani Vihar campus in Bhubaneswar—spread across a sprawling ecosystem of 460 acres enriched by nature's bounty and complemented by the Utkal University Rural Campus at Chandikhole, spread over 66 acres, the University anchors an extensive academic network of nearly 430 affiliated colleges across the state. Embedded within the dynamic intellectual geography of South Asia, it aspires to evolve as a global destination for higher learning. Offering 47 academic programmes across diverse disciplines—including the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Management—and extending from undergraduate to doctoral levels, the University reflects a wide spectrum of academic engagement. Rooted in a distinguished legacy yet responsive to a transforming knowledge order, it advances cutting-edge curricula, fosters innovation and incubation, and promotes transdisciplinary engagements within contemporary knowledge ecologies. Through its commitment to research excellence and evolving pedagogic practices, it sustains a dynamic interface between heritage, convention, and futurity.

Utkal University invites online applications from eligible Indian citizens for appointment to the posts of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor against sanctioned positions across various Post-Graduate Departments, in accordance with Letter No. 5322/HE dated 31.01.2026 issued by the Department of Higher Education, Government of Odisha..

Disciplines / Departments:
Analytical & Applied Economics; Anthropology; Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology (AIHCA); Biotechnology; Botany; Business Administration; Chemistry; Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE); Commerce; Computer Science; English; Geography; Geology; History; Library & Information Science; Law; Personnel Management & Industrial Relations (PM&IR); Mathematics; Odia; Philosophy; Physics; Psychology; Political Science; Public Administration; Sanskrit; Sociology; Statistics; Zoology.

Eligibility & Qualifications:
Minimum qualifications, eligibility criteria, and service conditions shall be governed by the UGC Regulations/Notifications, 2018, as amended from time to time.

Application Process:
The application process shall be conducted entirely in online mode through the HIMS portal: <https://hims.odisha.gov.in/home>
Detailed advertisement, including department-wise vacancies and reservation positions, will be available on the University website: www.utkaluniversity.ac.in from 15.05.2026 onwards.

Important Dates:

- Opening of Online Application: 15.05.2026
- Closing of Online Application: 16.06.2026
- Last Date for Receipt of Hard Copy (Registered/Speed Post): 29.06.2026

In addition, a hard copy of the downloaded application form along with all relevant documents must be sent to the Registrar, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar-751004, Khordha, Odisha within the stipulated timeline.

General Instructions:
Applicants are advised to carefully review all eligibility conditions, qualifications, and procedural requirements before submission.
The University reserves the right to modify, amend, or cancel this advertisement, either in part or in full, without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/- Registrar

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA-DEPARTMENT OF SPACE CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE GROUP, SDSC -SHAR SRIHARIKOTA-524124
Brief E-TENDER NOTICE
No: SHAR: CMG CIVIL-MAINT-E-PT-01/26-27 Dt: 30.04.2026
On behalf of President of India, Item Rate tenders are invited through e-tendering for following works:

Name of Work	Tender No	Estimate Cost
AMC for Civil and PH works at Zero point & FLP for Two years (2026 & 2027), SDSC SHAR.	T/C-26-001	₹ 75.08 Lakhs
Closing ventilators and repairs in L110, SPB & L40 buildings at FLP, SDSC SHAR.	T/C-26-002	₹ 26.70 Lakhs
Term Contract for Civil works @ SLP areas, SDSC SHAR	T/C-26-003	₹ 100.00 Lakhs

Tender documents can be downloaded up to 15.05.2026, 14:30 hrs. For eligibility criteria and other details, interested tenders may please refer to the detailed bilingual (Hindi-English) Notice Inviting Tenders (NIT) on the website <https://www.isro.gov.in/Tenders.html> and tender free view at <https://www.tenderwizard.com/isro>
Sd/- GROUP HEAD, CMG/ SDSC SHAR

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER PWD ZONE KOTA
No.356 Date 30.04.2026

NIT No. 02/2026-27
Notice Inviting Bid
NIB No. PWD2627A0267

Bids for PWD Zone Kota are invited Road & Bridge Work from interested bidders upto 6.00 pm, 24.05.2026 other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://spgpr.zaj.nic.in>) of the Rajasthan and <http://pwd.rajasthan.gov.in> website. The approximate value of the procurement is Rs. 2477.18 lacs. (2 Works)
UBN No. PWD2627WLOB01202
UBN No. PWD2627WLOB01203

Add. Chief Engineer
PWD Zone Kota
DIPR/7766/2026



Lost and found

The NDA's success in Bengal and Assam is partly offset by its failure in Tamil Nadu and Kerala

The results of the 2026 Assembly elections in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry highlight several factors that have a bearing on India's direction as a secular, democratic, federal republic. In Assam and Puducherry, the BJP and its partners retained power, while in the other three States, incumbents were swept away in a strong current of changed popular opinion. In Assam, for the first time, the BJP crossed the halfway mark of 64 seats on its own and, with its partners, won 101 seats in the 126-member Assembly. For the Congress, this is its worst performance – even lower than its 1985 tally in the aftermath of the Assam Agitation. The regional outfits that were part of the Congress-led alliance, including the Rajgor Dal and Assam Jatiya Parishad, were routed, while those within the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) – chiefly the Asom Gana Parishad and the Bodoland People's Front – managed to win a few seats, though they now have little clout given the BJP's outright majority. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has reinforced his position in the State through a mix of polarising communal rhetoric and redistribution schemes. Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi lost his own seat.

In West Bengal, the BJP has achieved a decisive victory through long-term planning, aided by the State's political history, a tainted election process, and the exhaustion of the Trinamool Congress (TMC)'s politics that had run its course. Bengal has been home to India's national movement and to Hindutva ideas long before they spread elsewhere, and has carried a strong sense of regional identity. The BJP, through years of meticulous organisation, converted a threshold population of the State to its totalising nationalist narrative. Having subsumed the regional politics of Maharashtra, Assam and Odisha, it had set its sights on West Bengal with obsessive determination, and has won. The TMC faces existential danger, with its founder-leader Mamata Banerjee at 71 and its cadre and voters now susceptible to pressure from the BJP. This election was also the most tainted in India's elections: around 27 lakh people were arbitrarily removed from the electoral rolls, and the Supreme Court of India took an unhelpful view of that grave assault on the fundamentals of democracy. If that is the sign of things to come, it is cause for serious concern.

In Tamil Nadu, the political start-up, the TVK, led by actor C. Joseph Vijay has made a stunning debut. Mr. Vijay is set to become the first Chief Minister not from either of the two principal Dravidian parties since the DMK first captured power in the State – a historic rupture in Tamil politics. While his popularity is now established, his acumen in navigating the complexities of governance and managing the relationship with the BJP and the Centre will be tested from day one. Though the differences in vote share among the formations – the DMK-led alliance, the AIADMK-led alliance, and TVK contesting alone – were not large, a three-cornered contest and the first past the post mechanism delivered an outsized advantage to the TVK. The DMK's votes were more evenly spread across the State, while the TVK and AIADMK had theirs concentrated in pockets of influence, yielding far better vote-to-seat conversion. Mr. Vijay had the advantage of novelty, and the electorate proved open to a new experiment.

In Kerala, the Congress-led UDF's overwhelming victory is as notable as the pitiable performance of the CPI(M)-led LDF. The LDF's defeat belongs principally to outgoing Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who – uncharacteristically for the State and more so for the Left – had built a personality cult. The BJP has won a historic high of three seats, but the UDF's return, while restoring Kerala's traditional alternation in power, could act as a speedbreaker to the BJP's ambitions. The Congress faces the immediate task of amicably settling the question of Chief Minister from among three potential candidates – K.C. Venugopal, V.D. Satheesan and Ramesh Chennithala. The election results strengthen Home Minister Amit Shah's hand within the BJP's internal dynamics, as the party has grown into a behemoth harbouring multiple interest groups and ambitious leaders. Mr. Shah was the key strategist in West Bengal, and Mr. Sarma in Assam is firmly aligned with him. A reconstitution of all party organisations and a possible reshuffle of the Union Council of Ministers will likely reflect his preeminence in the days ahead. The BJP, by its capacity and willingness to expand its footprint across regions and social groups – oftentimes bending norms – is placing immense pressure on India's federal democracy. The DMK and the TMC have been bulwarks of Opposition politics within and outside Parliament, as demonstrated in the recent parliamentary vote on the Delimitation Bill. With both beaten at the hustings, and buoyed by its victories in Assam and West Bengal, the BJP will feel tempted and emboldened to continue its course of unilateralism. It would be in the interest of the country and of democracy for the BJP to be accommodative and sensitive towards diverse aspirations; while platforms of regional political mobilisation such as the TMC and the DMK will have to adapt to new challenges. The regional parties in Assam and Kerala too faced a setback, suggesting popular fatigue and an inclination towards larger frames of reference mediated by social media. As for the Congress, these results represent victory in Kerala, defeat in Assam, and a lost opportunity in Tamil Nadu. The defeat of the DMK and TMC sets the stage for a potential realignment of the Opposition, opening the possibility for the Congress to aggregate and galvanise social and other interest groups – and to position itself as a weightier axis of anti-BJP politics.

A round of elections that signals structural dominance

The phase of Indian politics since 2014 has been widely termed the fourth party system, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) constituting a dominant pole that increasingly structures the field of competition at both the national and State levels. Some observers have periodically asked whether this BJP-dominant system represents a durable structural dominance or a more fleeting electoral dominance, largely built on and sustained by the charismatic leadership of Narendra Modi.

What drives the juggernaut

These rounds of State elections (in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry) should settle that question in favour of structural dominance. The setback received by the National Democratic Alliance in the 2024 general election suggested that Mr. Modi's charismatic appeal had begun to recede from the dizzying heights it had scaled over the previous decade. Yet, the BJP has performed much better in the phase of elections between 2024-26 than it did either in 2014-16, when Mr. Modi still carried the transformative aura of the *vikas purush*, or in 2019-21, when he became the pro-poor messiah embodying an unmatched reservoir of popular trust. It is only in the present cycle that the BJP has managed to storm to power in Odisha, Delhi, and West Bengal, which is the biggest prize of them all.

Of course, Mr. Modi's leadership remains important in terms of his ability to direct and manage the machinery of the system of power. But it is the sprawling machinery itself, involving the close nexus of party organisation, wider Sangh networks, big industrial houses, and key state institutions, which drives the juggernaut of the BJP-dominant system.

In Haryana and Maharashtra, the mobilisation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh helped the BJP blunt the spectre of anti-incumbency (especially among Dalits) that was stalking the ruling alliance after a decade in power. Similarly, in West Bengal, the Sangh Parivar laid the groundwork for the BJP campaign to mobilise scattered caste and community grievances (such as of Matuas and Rajbanshis) into a coherent, State-wide narrative of Hindu exclusion.

In addition, the BJP has, in the course of this period, also built up an architecture of power that has made it the 'natural party of governance' (in the mould of the Congress period of dominance). The instruments of this power include the above-mentioned informal alliances and control over public institutions, through which the BJP is able to structure the party system to its advantage, breaking factions of opponent parties and co-opting its leaders. But it also involves



Asim Ali

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manipulating the administrative machinery to deepen the ideological hold of Hindutva.

In Assam and West Bengal

In Assam, the Himanta Biswa Sarma government has made the category of the "Bangladeshi Muslim immigrant" (read: Bengali speaking Muslim) the master signifier coursing through everyday functioning of bureaucratic institutions and the public regulation of land and resources. The category of the 'Bangladeshi immigrant' has been embedded at the core of the policies and practices of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), the 'D-voter' category (Doubtful Voter), detention centres, delimitation, eviction drives, policing, and surveillance. The interpellative capacity of the government procedures has turned the distinction between indigenous (Hindu) and outsider (Muslim) into the organising idea for Assamese society in terms of imagining collective life and approaching the political world. The communalism of the Himanta Biswa government thus goes much beyond the regular hate speeches; it is indeed baked into the very architecture of governance and how people relate to it.

In West Bengal, the BJP campaign was characterised by the underhanded tactics and partisan use of state institutions such as the Enforcement Directorate, the Central Bureau of Investigation and paramilitary forces, which were heavily deployed in an unprecedented manner in a State election (outside of Kashmir and the Northeast). Meanwhile, the shambolic and discriminatory rollout of the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls by the Election Commission of India ensured that a substantial chunk of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) support base (primarily Muslims) were struck off from the electoral list.

To withstand the juggernaut of the BJP-dominant system requires a politics of counter-hegemony. The Congress in Assam has failed to imagine such a politics over the last decade, let alone execute it. Instead, it turned to the scion of the Gogoi dynasty, who was dispatched from Delhi and given charge of the State a year before the election. The party relied on a dominant caste (Ahom)-led consolidation in upper Assam and Muslim-led consolidation in lower Assam. Meanwhile, the TMC banked on its narrative of Bengali pride, along with cash transfers to women and Muslim consolidation, to secure a fourth consecutive term. Both these strategies failed spectacularly.

The declining fortunes of both the established regional parties as well as the Congress can be traced back to the form of their organisation,

The Assembly election results strengthen the argument for the BJP's structural political dominance

Capitalising on changing Tamil voter mood

C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has established its popularity and stands to emerge as the single largest party in the 2026 Tamil Nadu State Assembly elections. Clearly, voters decided to give up on the two Dravidian parties, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), and chose to go with this newcomer. His bravado in not seeking an alliance with other parties and going it alone has won the day. Equally, Mr. Vijay was ready to be "Tamil" in his own way, but he also spoke and did politics in a manner that would appeal to untutored and ingénu voters – evident in his road shows, and his one-liners. Spectacle and banality have prevailed against old-style political tendentiousness and rhetoric.

Persona as capital

The lead-up to the elections was predictable. The campaigns had to deal with issues that have been the staple of political exchange in the State since the DMK came to power in 2021: the Dravidian model of growth and social justice versus the Hindutva model of authoritarian unity and erosion of rights; corruption and misgovernance of an incumbent party versus rosy promises of honest, accountable and equally welfarist governance, presided over by the AIADMK, under the aegis of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Mr. Vijay promised a 'third' path, without quite telling his voters what that means – except that he stuck to the time-tested welfarist and anti-Hindutva idiom. His poll managers ensured that he did not say anything contentious, and proclaimed his persona as his capital – in this neo-liberal era of self-creation and self-help, it helps to have a personality that is as much a hologram as a person. Which is also why nothing sticks to him – whether it is outrage over the more than 40 deaths in Karur (September 2025) or criticism of his cynical use of children to garner votes. For a generation growing up with precarity and uncertainty, while being drawn into the promises and perfidies of the gig economy, the Dravidian model cannot be expected to mean



V. Geetha

Feminist historian, translator and publisher

much. For older voters, Tamil Nadu's economic growth holds no surprises, and for those who have not been part of this growth process, such as rural Dalits and other working-class people, especially women, there is nothing to be celebrated. Cash transfers and subsidies do not address the deep indebtedness that many women are trapped in. As for corruption, it is viewed as a given, and nobody balks at its ubiquity, and there has been no concerted attempt to challenge it. The fear of the BJP and its disregard for rights cannot mean much to voters in a State that has returned the authoritarian J. Jayalalitha to power several times.

On reservation and social justice

Social justice, especially the reservation policy, is not an existential issue in that it is yet another detail to be attended to, while filling forms. Or it becomes a matter of contention, when used to discredit reservation for Dalits. In short, reservation is neither valued, nor understood, and Dravidian parties have been lax in meaningful political communication on the subject. For older voters, reservation, or for that matter, social justice, holds no special interest – after all, it is a default setting. It has been important only when it helped to build dominant caste constituencies. As Tamil scholar Stalin Rajangam pointed out nearly 15 years ago, reservation has been a focal point for numerically powerful backward castes to mobilise their caste brethren into a political force, which is then used to torment Dalits who are assertive, and on that basis, to proclaim a caste's claim to power within the larger body politic.

Claims to social justice cannot but appear ironic, to Dalits, in this context. The two Dravidian parties have been indifferent to the persistence of brutal violence against them – especially the spate of killings of young Dalit men who dared to love caste Hindu women. For all their veneration of Periyar, the DMK's leaders have not sustained a public dialogue or educational outreach on intercaste love and marriage.

The leader of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam now occupies a space hollowed out by a politics whose rhetorical power has lost its resonance

which is the electoral-professional party. As theorised by political scientist Angelo Panebianco, this is a party organised around the professional apparatus of campaign managers, consultants and pollsters (as opposed to ideologically motivated cadres), whose primary focus revolves around electoral competition.

The rise of the electoral-professional party is an institutional adaptation to the prevailing developmental paradigm. For State governments to attract big capital and deliver on economic growth (and amass the funds for social welfare), they are constrained to follow a similar bouquet of 'good governance' policies: pro business reforms and big infrastructure projects. This led first to the shift of the prevailing party form from the (ideological/identity-based) mass party to the (centrist) catchall party. The rise of technology-enabled direct cash transfers seeded the next transmutation from the catchall party to the electoral-professional party. The parallel professional framework becomes indispensable to connect these "techno-patrimonial" leaders (Yamini Aiyar) with their broad welfare constituency.

The southern States

As Neelanjana Sircar has noted from his fieldwork in Bengal, TMC cadres have been repurposed from overseeing delivery of benefits (outsourced to professionals) to the mobilising of voters for elections. In Tamil Nadu, even the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam has been transformed by M.K. Stalin's 'CEO' style leadership, from a decentralised organisation of strong district secretaries into a centralised, disciplined and welfare-driven machine. A similar story could be told in Kerala of Pinarayi Vijayan's transformation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPI(M), as a disciplined party under his personalistic management.

While M.K. Stalin, Pinarayi Vijayan and Mamata Banerjee achieved some success after turning their parties from cadre-based to electoral-professional outfits, it masked the electoral fragility of such politics. The downside of a managerial, ideologically feeble politics is that it depoliticises the electorate, and makes them turn to either the populist outsider solution (as in C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu) or the Hindu nationalist solution (as in the BJP in Assam).

While Kerala has gone for the conventional alternative in the Congress, it is not yet clear whether the deformed CPI(M), now in opposition, would be able to protect its space from the rising BJP any better than it has managed in Tripura and West Bengal.

Meanwhile, Hindutva's machinations have helped shore up dominant caste identities in the State, and in some contexts served the interests of subaltern caste persons who are disgruntled with the political truisms of the Dravidian parties. It is not so much the BJP's known antipathy to Muslims and Christians that marks its existence here – though that is not absent; rather, the party is viewed as 'their' own by segments of caste Hindus.

The DMK's model of rule too has contributed to the party being edged out. For some time now, the government has relied on policymaking, undertaken by able bureaucrats, with the support of non-governmental organisations, or private research institutes, rather than heed voices from the ground. It is ironic that sanitary workers complaining about unfair wages are ignored until it is impossible to do so, even as local bodies commission studies on municipal waste.

The other parties

The real and tragic losers in this election are the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi and the Left parties. The AIADMK is not burdened by ideology and has been let down by an uneven caste arithmetic. But the Left and Dalit parties have stayed within an uneasy alliance, and not benefited from it – in spite of individual victors, their vision of social change has been forced into a framework that is not theirs, and they would now need to retrieve it.

Mr. Vijay has thus gained from the sins of omission and commission of extant parties. And it is to his advantage that his young followers are not part of that slow world of thought and dialogue which continues to attract young persons, inspired by Periyar, Ambedkar and Marx. Rather, the adoring crowds that have voted Mr. Vijay to power move to a different rhythm. Thanks to social media, they respond to the instant rather than anything else. The proliferation of images and words on our screens has collapsed the gap between intent and action. And Mr. Vijay occupies this collapsed space – his presence is already action.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The much awaited results

The election results have been astounding. Tamil Nadu has delivered a stunning verdict, defying most exit poll predictions. Actor-politician C. Joseph Vijay, has led his newly formed party, the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam, to a remarkable victory, marking a significant shift in the State's political landscape. This electoral outcome

reflects the electorate's desire for change, where there is a willingness to embrace new leadership. While the mandate is decisive, it also brings high expectations. With the elections behind him, expectations now shift to Mr. Vijay's ability to turn campaign promises into tangible results. **Y.R.M. Rao,** Chennai

For decades, West Bengal has stood as a stark reminder of how political violence can become institutionalised. From the long years of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) to the rule of the All India Trinamool Congress, governance often operated under a shadow of intimidation, cadre dominance, and systemic coercion. What has

unfolded was not merely an electoral loss; it was public repudiation of a political culture that many Bengalis had grown weary of. The people are expecting a transformation in governance – one that ensures safety, dismantles entrenched corruption and restores faith in public institutions. **Arvind Dinkar Tapkire,** Mumbai

There is no denying that the BJP's victory was facilitated by the 'SIR effect' which disenfranchised lakhs of their constitutional right. When such a significant section of the electorate is silenced, the foundation of the mandate is hit. **Adrian David,** Chennai

The results of the five elections show that once

free and fair conditions are created for voting, voters are incentivised to express their opinion fearlessly. One must congratulate the Election Commission of India for conducting the polls well notwithstanding the SIR controversies. **Rajib Sarma,** Guwahati, Assam

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

Governance is the ultimate currency in Kerala

The LDF's unprecedented decade long-run has come to an end with the UDF winning the mandate by offering change and speaking to concrete grievances



K. M. Seethi

Director, Inter University Centre for Social Science Research, Mahatma Gandhi University

Kerala has long kept its own counsel at the ballot box. In the Assembly elections of 2026, the electorate of this politically alert State delivered what many observers had anticipated – a decisive verdict, where the United Democratic Front (UDF), led by the Indian National Congress, is returning to power with a thumping majority, ending the Left Democratic Front's (LDF) unprecedented decade-long run in office. Equally notable is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance's (NDA) entry, with two former Union Ministers crossing the threshold into the Kerala Assembly. The results show a UDF majority with an estimated 102 seats (out of 140), against the LDF's 35 and the NDA's 3.

The pattern across the recent electoral cycles tells its own story. The 2024 Lok Sabha result, in which the UDF swept 18 of the 20 parliamentary seats, was the first clear signal. The 2025 local body elections confirmed the trend. And now, in 2026, the pendulum has completed its arc.

The LDF lost its base due to the retrospective voting penalty, whe-

rein voters act as rational auditors, rewarding or punishing incumbents based on promised versus delivered outcomes. In 2016 and 2021, performance against explicit benchmarks (crisis response, welfare delivery, administrative credibility) earned positive scores, producing a historically unprecedented back-to-back majority. But success raises benchmarks. By 2026, voters were no longer comparing LDF to its predecessor; they were comparing it to itself, and to an aspirational future it had not fully delivered. The slogan "We have governed well; trust us again" was ill-suited to counter this dynamic.

Communal consolidation?

However, no issue generated more heat than the voting behaviour of religious minorities. By 2026, poll surveys suggested that the UDF garnered over 70% of Christian support, compared to roughly 25% for the LDF, a dramatic reversal from the LDF's approximately 45% share among Christian voters in 2016. The swing was most pronounced in Kottayam, Idukki, Pathanamthitta, and Ernakulam. The LDF government's 2025 push



Clean sweep: Congress leaders Shashi Tharoor, Ramesh Chennithala, K. C. Venugopal, and V. D. Satheesan celebrate in Thiruvananthapuram. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

to reform the education sector was perceived by Christian denominations as a challenge to the educational autonomy of minorities.

Among Muslim voters (approximately 26% of the electorate) the LDF lost heavily, with losses concentrated in Malappuram, Kozhikode, and Ernakulam. The provocative public statements of some leaders on Muslim issues, combined with senior CPI(M) (Communist Party of India (Marxist)) leaders' consistent failure to pu-

blicly rebuke them, were read as implicit endorsement of such statements. The UDF hammered this connection relentlessly.

Additionally, the Sabarimala gold theft issue, along with high-profile cases implicating CPI(M)-linked individuals, delivered a credible narrative of institutional rot that the UDF deployed with surgical precision in Hindu-majority constituencies.

The NDA's role is best understood through the polarisation

trap – a process in which a third party draws enough votes to alter seat outcomes without winning decisively. The NDA's vote share, rising from approximately 12% in 2016 to approximately 19% in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, transformed two-way fights into triangular contests in constituencies such as Nemom, Chathannoor, Kazhakoottam and Palakkad. The UDF alleged that the LDF engaged in 'adjustment politics' by fielding weak candidates to help the BJP indirectly. However, the verdict did not validate a systematic collusion pattern; the BJP's consolidation appeared organic.

The economic undercurrent

The LDF governed a decade without a corruption conviction, yet perception proved as damaging as fact. Fiscal stress, 25%+ youth unemployment, stalled infrastructure, and the abandoned Silver-Line project gave the UDF's allegations tangible grounding among urban and middle-class voters. Moreover, the war in West Asia created deep anxiety across Kerala's Gulf-dependent families as there were many job losses and forced returns. Kerala's new mid-

dle class voted prospectively and the UDF's aspirational messaging went over well. Its manifesto spoke directly to issues that had drifted from the LDF, which included employment generation, Gulf returnee rehabilitation, rubber price stabilisation etc.

Kerala's 2026 election verdict is a democratic correction with specific reminders. The LDF collapsed under unmet benchmarks and institutional controversies while the UDF won by offering change, and speaking to concrete grievances. The new middle class and Gulf-dependent families are forces that no party can manage through welfare alone.

Kerala's electorate – diverse in faith and alert to the uses and abuses of identity – has once again demonstrated that governance is the ultimate currency of its politics. Communities shifted, coalitions realigned, and incumbents fell, but the democratic credo held firm. In a national setting increasingly shadowed by polarisation, Kerala's verdict is a clear reminder: its democratic dividends continue to act as a bulwark against the coarser impulses of electoral mobilisation.

The significant erasure of democracy in Bengal

The Trinamool government, through its anti-democratic practices and failure to focus on economic development, has lost its connect with the people



Subhanil Chowdhury

Professor of Economics at Presidency University, Kolkata

The results of the 2026 Assembly elections in West Bengal marks a tectonic shift in the political landscape of the State. As of writing this article, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), for the first time in history, has emerged as a clear winner with more than 200 seats and a vote share of 45.6%, up from around 38% in 2021. The Trinamool Congress on the other hand is winning around 80 seats with 40.8% of the vote share, down from 48% in 2021. Most of the Cabinet Ministers of the Trinamool government have also lost. Clearly, there has been a significant anti-incumbency vote against the ruling party.

The Trinamool government had a massive beneficiary network through its multiple schemes targeting women, workers as well as the youth. Moreover, the BJP was portrayed as an 'outsider', incompatible to the ethos of Bengali culture. Also, the question of disenfranchisement through the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls was also a major electoral talking-point. In spite of all these issues, supposedly favouring the ruling party, the BJP has won a thumping majority in the State.

What explains these results?

Trinamool's track-record

The last 15 years of Trinamool rule have been mired with innumerable controversies. A large number of Ministers have been in jail under corruption charges. The cash for jobs scam in the School Service Commission resulted in about 26,000 school teachers losing their jobs. The government, while providing various direct transfer schemes, could not provide a dearness allowance on a par with the Central government to State government employees. Moreover, the Trinamool's record with respect to industrialisation and employment generation has also not been good. All of this resulted in a situation where the younger generation and a significant section of the urban educated middle-class voting against the ruling party. Even in rural areas, despite the massive fund transfer programme of the government, the Trinamool has been unable to retain its base. The extortion rackets run by the ruling party across the State resulted in a situation where ordinary people were robbed of their hard-earned money.

In addition to such economic is-



Historic shift: BJP supporters burn fire crackers to celebrate their party's win in the Assembly elections, outside a counting centre in Kolkata, on May 4. REUTERS

suues, there are political reasons because of which the Trinamool lost. First, is the significant erosion of democracy in the State.

In the 2018 and 2023 panchayat elections, ruling party cadres indulged in massive violence denying voting rights to the rural population. In many cities, the municipal elections have not been held for many years now. Even the elections to various students' un-

ions in the State have been suspended. Since these elections were either not held or were rigged, the Trinamool lost its connect with the people. They could not sense the deep anger which the people had accumulated against the regime.

Additionally, the RG Kar rape and murder case witnessed an outpouring of opposition against the government on the streets of

Kolkata and other urban areas. Since then, there has been yet another case where a young woman was raped in a college campus in Kolkata. This not only eroded the Trinamool's woman voter base, it also galvanised the people against the government.

The SIR issue

However, it must be said that the SIR process in West Bengal has resulted in a situation where lakhs of genuine voters have been disenfranchised. If the total vote difference between the two camps is close to the numbers under adjudication, then this will raise serious questions about the electoral outcome. While the Trinamool tried to make it an issue, the anti-minority campaign of the BJP which targeted the so-called infiltrators, consolidated a significant section of the Hindu community in favour of the BJP. If we assume that it is mostly Hindus who vote for the BJP, then around two-thirds of them have voted for the party. Such a huge Hindu consolidation of votes for the BJP is only second to that in Assam. The fact that the BJP, without fielding a single Muslim candidate, won 45% of the votes, where the Muslim popu-

lation in the State is close to 30%, shows the extent of Hindu consolidation in the State. In addition to the anti-incumbency sentiment, the BJP's ideological consolidation cannot be denied.

It is also a fact that the BJP's rise happened because neither the Congress nor the Left could emerge as a force which could challenge both the larger parties. The Congress is leading in two seats, the Left in 1, the Indian Secular Front also in 1, along with two seats won by the newly formed party by former Trinamool MLA Humayun Kabir. What is interesting to note is that all these seats are from minority-dominated areas. This shows that a section of minorities also voted against the Trinamool where credible non-BJP candidates were in the fray.

In other words, the anti-incumbency sentiment against the government existed even among minorities.

The State is now entering a new political phase. The apparent political consensus of secular politics dipped in Bengali cultural ethos has now been breached by the BJP. The results today will have far-reaching consequences for the State of West Bengal.

Assam's mandate of assertion and polarisation

The BJP's strategy of conflating Hindu and Assamese identities, along with promoting welfare and development schemes, has led to its decisive victory in the State



Kaustubh Dekha

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The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is set to form the government in Assam for a third consecutive term. In an Assembly of 126 seats, the seat as well as vote share of the incumbent alliance has significantly gone up.

Politics in Assam is marked by great linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity. This has created ample ground for political polarisation in many directions. Historically, the State has undergone various political shifts ranging from Congress dominance till the mid-1970s to the rise of regionalism in the mid-1980s, before returning to Congress dominance in the first decades of the 21st century. The State, once considered a stronghold of the Indian National Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA), has now become a stronghold of the BJP. The present electoral mandate therefore needs to be read as a renewed validation of an already existing political domination, with augmented ideological moorings.

The once formidable 'Congress system' began developing cracks in Assam soon after Tarun Gogoi's return to power in 2011. The party

managed to retain power despite a pervasive image of corruption, largely due to its image of creating 'peace and development' as the party initiated negotiations with major rebel groups in Assam. However, an important development in that election was the emergence of the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) that emerged as a major political player by winning 18 seats, cutting into 'Muslim votes' seen as a traditional bastion of the Congress.

However, at that point, the alienation of 'Muslim votes' helped the Congress as there was a surge of sympathetic Hindu votes for the party, which otherwise could have gone to the BJP that was already making a slow but steady mark over Assam's politics. This complex negotiation with the AIUDF and the question of 'Muslim votes' would later set up the Congress's 'Muslim dilemma' in Assam for years to come. This needs to be read with the fact that in the current verdict, the Congress has faced near complete eradication in the Hindu majority areas of Assam, as the party has managed to elect just one Hindu candidate, out of its total tally of 20 seats, as per the latest reports. A meticu-



Saffron wave: BJP party workers celebrate the party's win at the BJP Assam State head office, in Guwahati on May 4. ANI

lously crafted digital campaign by the BJP managed to create a powerful narrative labelling the Congress as a "Miya party" (Miya is a pejorative term for Bengali-speaking Muslims), which the opposition was not able to counter.

The other trend with strong implications for the years to come is the declining hold of the Congress in the tea trade unions due to unfulfilled promises such as raised wages, the grant of land pattas, and Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to tea tribes. Interestingly, the first

two demands have been met by the BJP government in the run-up to the last election.

The waning of regionalist forces in the State was already marked in the previous Assembly elections. It has now become further established; the Congress's alliance with the Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and the Rajiour Dal seems to have come too late in the day to have had any significant impact.

The road to victory

The BJP's victory in Assam can be

understood through various verticals. One, the BJP's developmental model has worked out in different ways. At a broader level, a section of people feel that the party has delivered in terms of building the necessary infrastructure. At a more minute level, people feel that the various schemes introduced by the ruling incumbent are vital, and that they can't afford to let them go. Voters are now habitual 'hitadhikaris' (beneficiaries).

Two, the self-projection of the BJP as a protector of Hindus and the conflation of the Hindu and Assamese identity has helped the party consolidate votes. The hardline Hindutva approach riding on religious polarisation has met with demographic dividends given the historical legacy of suspicion and mistrust across sections on linguistic and religious lines.

Third, the exercise of delimitation seems to have helped the alliance bring up the tally from previous numbers, by reducing the effectiveness of 'Muslim votes' constituency-wise. The exercise has not only redrawn the boundaries of the constituencies but also of political fault lines in the State.

And finally, the Centre and State governments working in tan-

dem has been a historic reality for the Northeast, a resource-starved 'peripheral' region. Therefore, rallying the campaign around a 'double-engine sarkar' and invoking the 'Modi-Shah leadership' steered by Himanta Biswa Sarma regionally, have been strategies that have played out well.

The historic fragility of a region with a militarised past, the resonance of which is not yet over, tends to weigh down on one's sense of electoral sensibilities.

Add to this the uncertainties of price rise, the general situation of joblessness, polarisation and a crafty political party with ample resources to stitch together an electoral coalition consisting of sub-groups of voters with divergent socio-economic needs but brought together by a triadic reality – aspirations, insecurity and polarisation.

This verdict needs to be read as a solemn reminder of the importance of having a robust organisational machinery on the ground. At this point, as the sun sets over the Brahmaputra, triumphant rays of saffron sweep over most of Assam. And a long night sets in for those who wanted the Lotus replaced.

Text & Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Percentage drop in Dubai airport passenger traffic

66 in per cent. Dubai airport's passenger traffic plunged by two-thirds in March following Iran's attacks on the UAE during the West Asia war, the emirate's media office said on Monday. Traveller numbers at Dubai International sank to 2.5 million, down 66% year on year. AFF

Persons injured in Oklahoma City shooting on Sunday

12 A shooting on Sunday night at a party at a lake near Oklahoma City sent at least 12 people to hospitals, according to police and hospital officials. Edmond police spokesperson said authorities received reports of shots being fired at about 9 p.m. No arrests had been made yet. AP

Percentage decline in Russia's pipeline gas exports to Europe

1.70 in per cent. Russian energy giant Gazprom's average daily natural gas supplies to Europe via the TurkStream undersea pipeline declined by 1.7% in April from a year earlier to 41 million cubic metres, Reuters preliminary calculations showed on Monday. REUTERS

Decline in India's liquefied petroleum gas consumption

16 in per cent. India's cooking gas LPG consumption fell by a steep 16% in April as supply disruptions linked to the West Asia conflict hit availability for both household kitchens and commercial users, according to latest official data. LPG consumption stood at 2.2 million tonnes in April. PTI

Percentage decline in India's palm oil imports in April

27 in per cent. India's palm oil imports fell 27% to a one-year low in April, as sluggish demand from institutional buyers and a recent price rally that eroded its discount to rival oils prompted refiners to curb purchases, five dealers said. REUTERS
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Did the PM's broadcast violate MCC?

What does Part VII say about using public resources? How does election law treat such appeals? Can public broadcasters be used for campaign messaging? Why has the Election Commission not acted so far?

EXPLAINER

V. Venkatesan

The story so far:

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC), which guides political parties and candidates during elections, was first drafted by the Kerala government in 1960. The Election Commission (EC) formalised it in 1968, revised it in 1974, and added Part VII on the "party in power" in 1979. Former Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Seshan enforced it with unprecedented rigour from 1991. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's April 18 address has raised questions about whether the address violated the Code.

How did the Model Code of Conduct evolve?

The Supreme Court, in *Mohinder Singh Gill v. Chief Election Commissioner* (1978), described Article 324 as "a reservoir of power" that allows the EC to act where Parliament has not legislated. The Punjab and Haryana High Court, in *Harbans Singh Jalal v. Union of India* (1997), held that the Code comes into effect from the announcement of the election schedule. Sanctions range from censure to the suspension of party recognition under paragraph 16A of the Election Symbols Order, 1968.

Mr. Modi's address was carried live on Doordarshan, Sansad TV, and All India Radio. He named four Opposition parties and urged women voters in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal to punish them at the polls on April 23 for defeating the 131st Constitution Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha.

Does the Prime Minister's broadcast violate the Code?

Clauses 1(a), 1(b), and 4 of Part VII of the MCC prohibit the party in power from



Prime Minister's address was carried live on Doordarshan, Sansad TV, and All India Radio. PTI

combining official visits with electioneering, using government machinery for campaign work, and misusing publicly funded mass media for partisan coverage during the election period. The broadcast raises distinct questions under both the Code and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

The Code asks what the incumbent did with public resources. It does not provide a closed list of impermissible appeals; that open texture is deliberate. On its face, the April 18 address appears to be a textbook Part VII matter. At the time of writing, the Commission has taken no action on the complaints it has received.

The statute is less flexible than the Code. Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, as amended in 1961, makes it a corrupt practice for a candidate or his agent to appeal to voters on the ground of "his" religion, race, caste, community, or language. The provision turns on a pronoun, "his", and five enumerated nouns. In *Abhiram Singh v. C.D. Commachen* (2017), a seven-judge

Bench of the Supreme Court settled, by a 4:3 majority, that "his" extends to the voter as well as the candidate.

What do the law and the courts say about such appeals?

However, Abhiram Singh grappled with the pronoun, not with the nouns. The 1961 Parliament was legislating against the sectarian appeals of its moment, when religion, race, caste, community, and language were the dominant axes of Indian politics. Section 123(3) was not drafted to police every form of partisan appeal.

The April 18 broadcast ran on different axes: gender as a mobilising category, party affiliation as a target, and the Prime Minister's national broadcast on Doordarshan as the medium. The objection here is not to the identity of the audience, but to the partisan use of publicly funded media. The statute's five nouns were never meant to catch that.

A writ petition pending before the Supreme Court (Diary No. 24600 of

2026), filed by former Congress MP T.N. Prathapan, and a candidate in the just-concluded Assembly elections in Kerala, opens a different statutory route. It invokes Section 123(7), not Section 123(3). Section 123(7) makes it a corrupt practice to obtain or procure the assistance of government servants, including gazetted officers, for the furtherance of a candidate's electoral prospects. The sub-section was drafted to deter candidates from pressuring police and revenue officials into electioneering; the petition asks whether its reach extends to public broadcasters and the PMO.

The petition argues that the use of Doordarshan and Sansad TV, along with Prime Minister's Office personnel, to prepare and disseminate a partisan broadcast falls within this prohibition. Where Section 123(3) focuses on the grounds of an appeal, Section 123(7) turns on who was pressed into service to deliver it.

On that reading, the statute reaches April 18 not through its five nouns but through its workforce clause.

This returns the conversation to the Code. The MCC, unlike the statute, was written to be open-textured. Part VII asks what the party in power did with public resources; the statute asks which of five categories the appeal invoked, or whose assistance it procured. The statute sets a floor on corrupt practice, not a ceiling on what the Code can reach.

The Commission's silence on Mr. Modi's broadcast is not a doctrinal difficulty. It is a choice not to use the one instrument in Indian electoral regulation that was kept open precisely for settings where the statute may reach only belatedly, if at all. If the court admits the petition and the Commission is compelled to answer, the architecture of MCC enforcement may face its hardest test yet. (V. Venkatesan is a journalist and legal researcher)

THE GIST

The April 18 broadcast appears to be a textbook Part VII issue, raising questions about the partisan use of State-funded mass media and the use of public resources during the election period, but the Commission has taken no action so far.

While Section 123(3) does not cover such appeals, the petition invokes Section 123(7) on the assistance of government servants, bringing the issue back to the open-textured MCC, which the Commission has chosen not to use.

What does the latest ruling mean for Forest Rights Act?

Why did the court intervene in the DLC's decision? What does the law say about eviction and grazing rights?

C.R. Bijoy

The story so far:

On April 20, the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court reminded the District Level Committee (DLC) under the Forest Rights Act 2006 in Lakhimpur, Uttar Pradesh, that any previous court orders inconsistent with a later law are null and void.

Why is the order important?

The High Court struck down the DLC's decision in March 2021, rejecting the forest rights claims of the Tharus of Palia Kalan Tehsil, a tribal community, citing a Supreme Court interim order in 2000 that barred "de-reservation of forests/sanctuaries/national parks" until further orders.

The DLC is headed by the District Collector and includes the Divisional Forest Officer, the District Tribal Welfare Officer, and three district panchayat members.

The core legal principle in lawmaking is that all provisions in earlier laws and

court orders that are inconsistent with the provisions of a later law are null and void. The Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006 itself also states that forest rights are recognised and vested in forest dwellers "notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force and subject to the provisions of this Act". The DLC violated this provision, which is a punishable offence.

Has the DLC been punished?

While the order has thus brought relief across the country, the High Court did not invoke the mechanism the FRA provides to sanction offenders. The Gram Sabha is a statutory authority under the FRA. It has to issue 60 days' notice to the State-Level Monitoring Committee to proceed against the authority violating the law.

However, the High Court ignored this provision and instead asked the DLC itself to reconsider its offence and make its decision anew in line with existing law and court orders.

The FRA does not provide for such allowances.

How has the FRA been superseded?

FRA disallows the eviction or removal of forest dwellers "from forest land under their occupation till the recognition and verification procedure is complete". For example, in January 2026, the Uttarakhand High Court ordered the forest department that "till final adjudication of the claims, the respondents shall refrain from initiating any coercive action, including eviction of the petitioners or interference with their peaceful possession and agricultural activities on the lands under their occupation".

However, there has been repeated disregard for and violations of the FRA. For instance, in September 2014, the Madras High Court had dismissed the plea of petitioners from Asaripallam, in Theni district, challenging eviction notices they had been issued and to consider their claims under the FRA. This was based on the forest officer's submission that they were encroachers and weren't eligible for rights under the FRA.

The Madras High Court stated that the claim process under the FRA would only

waste the authorities' time and dismissed the case.

The same High Court has dismissed similar petitions under the FRA by petitioners from Perambalur in 2017, Tuticorin in 2020, Sivagangai in 2021, and Theni in 2022. Authorities also continue to issue eviction orders under the Tamil Nadu Forest Act (TNFA) 1882, despite such orders having been overridden by the FRA.

Does the FRA allow grazing?

On March 13 this year, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court dismissed a review petition of the March 2022 order, noting that "the provisions prohibiting cattle trespass into forests under Section 57 of the Tamil Nadu Forest Act", to protect wildlife and the spread of disease, were the valid legal basis for the ban.

The High Court had initially banned grazing in all forest areas of Tamil Nadu; later the same month, it restricted the ban order to tiger reserves, national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries. However, it made no reference to the FRA, which recognises grazing rights in all forests, including those overlapping with tiger reserves, national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries. FRA is also a central law and thus overrides a State law with regard to both prohibition and permission for grazing.

This is why the Allahabad High Court reaffirming that provisions in the later law override inconsistent provisions in previous ones, as well as in court orders, comes as a breath of fresh air.

(C.R. Bijoy examines natural resource conflicts and governance issues)

THE GIST

The High Court reaffirmed that provisions in a later law override inconsistent earlier court orders, striking down the DLC's rejection of the Tharus' forest rights claims.

The ruling highlights repeated disregard of the Forest Rights Act, including eviction orders and denial of grazing rights, despite the law recognising and protecting these rights.

KEYWORD



GETTY IMAGES

Das Adam Smith Problem: rethinking Smith's moral and economic worlds

The Das Adam Smith Problem shows an apparent dichotomy between sympathy and self-interest in Adam Smith's works, but most scholars now view it as a misunderstanding, arguing that his philosophy forms a coherent whole uniting ethics and economics

Atanu Biswas

Adam Smith's magnum opus, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, considered the foundation stone of modern economics, marked its 250th anniversary on March 9. While celebrating the epic work, it is also worth pondering the long-standing conflict between two of Smith's books – *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) and *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759).

A 'problem' or a misreading?

The "problem," known as "Das Adam Smith Problem," was first formulated by German economists of the Historical School, such as Wilhelm Hasbach and August Oncken, in the late 19th century. They perceived a huge contrast between the sympathetic moral philosophy of Smith's first book and the selfishness depicted in the latter. Did Smith's perspective really evolve over those 17 years?

In the 1920s, however, Jacob Viner, a mentor of the early Chicago school of economics, showed that Smith's two books share an identical philosophical base. Furthermore, David D. Raphael and Alec A. Macfie, editors of the 1976 Glasgow Edition of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, categorically rejected the Das Adam Smith Problem, calling it "a pseudo-problem based on ignorance and misunderstanding."

Smith extended his earlier moral philosophy into economics rather than discarding it. The 'invisible hand' was a metaphor for how individual motivations, when properly directed, could benefit society. It was never intended to be a celebration of avarice. Drawing on Rousseau's *Second Discourse*, as discussed in Charles L. Griswold's 2010 paper, "Smith and Rousseau in Dialogue: Sympathy, Pitié, Spectatorship and Narrative," Smith suggested that human beings are not naturally sociable, and that markets are extensions of morality rather than moral voids.

The Das Adam Smith Problem has come to symbolise the dual nature of modernity itself, especially in the wake of industrial capitalism. The majority of contemporary scholars see this as a misunderstanding or a partial grasp of Smith's philosophy and view it as forming a coherent whole that unites ethics and economics. As Amartya Sen wrote in a 2010 paper in the *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, "In economics, for example, Smith was concerned not only with the sufficiency of self-interest at the moment of exchange but also with the wider moral motivations and institutions required to support economic activity in general."

Reconciling morality and markets

On closer inspection, Smith's two perspectives are not only compatible but also complement each other, as they are,

in fact, part of a unified system. While the *Wealth of Nations* is more outward-focused, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* is inward-focused; both, however, view the world and the self through the lens of empathy. The *Wealth of Nations* deals with applied empathy, whereas *Theory of Moral Sentiments* is about empathy per se.

What is the root cause of the Das Adam Smith Problem? As Leonidas Montes argued in a 2003 paper in the *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, "Scholars have long been interested in the apparent dichotomy between sympathy and self-interest in Smith." This dilemma arises because, by nature, human beings are binary thinkers. The real world, however, exists along a spectrum of grey areas. There is a constant interplay, advancement, regression, etc., of self-interest and empathy. Smith's two books engage with different points along this same spectrum.

In his 2010 work, Amartya Sen argued that "Adam Smith has had much smallness thrust upon him." Smith became the welfare theorist of today because of the innovative interpretations of the welfare economists.

Leon Walras, the famous economist, set the goal for mathematical economics in the 1880s, but it was not until Kenneth Arrow's work in the 1950s that it was realised. To comprehend what markets can accomplish collectively, Arrow developed economic theory beyond tired

dichotomies of whether they are good or bad.

A debate that endures

There is no denying that the "Das Adam Smith Problem" has long puzzled academics, and it shows not just the dualities in Smith's work but also our own uneasy relationship with morality and markets. But it is also necessary to mention the fact that though the two different Smiths are now well connected, there is no single thread that fully links the two works. As David Wilson and William Dixon noted in a 2006 paper in the *Journal of Critical Realism*, "There is still no widely agreed version of what it is that links these two texts, aside from their common author." That is the beauty and mystery of it.

Today, the Das Adam Smith Problem has taken on a broader scope. "How do we integrate the fact that much economic analysis is based on self-regard (via the price mechanism) with renewed interest in and evidence of the importance of pro-social motivations?" Natalie Gold, of the University of Oxford, in her 2020 paper in *Social Philosophy & Policy*, writes that it's the renewed Das Adam Smith Problem for the 21st century. Thus, the cornerstone of the Scottish Enlightenment in the 18th century continues to shed light on the world in a renewed spectrum.

(Atanu Biswas is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata)

THE DAILY QUIZ

A two-year-old party has secured a thumping win in its first electoral outing in Tamil Nadu. A quiz recalling other such first-time triumphs around the world

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna party was formed as a vehicle for the _____ family after it lost control of its previous party. In the 2018 local government elections, the SLPP won 231 of the 340 local authorities. The momentum from this win carried the party to a landslide victory in the 2019 presidential and 2020 parliamentary elections. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 2

Name the firebrand South African politician who, after being expelled from the African National Congress, formed a communist, black nationalist party that in its first electoral outing won 25 seats.

QUESTION 3

Barely a year old and led by billionaire Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit, the X

party contested the 2019 elections in Thailand while banking on a progressive platform. It won 81 seats, becoming the third-largest party in Parliament, prompting the military-backed government to perceive it as a major threat. This is why the party was forced to dissolve in a year. Name X.

QUESTION 4

What was the name of the movement that comedian Beppe Grillo launched that made its national debut in the 2013 general election in Italy?

QUESTION 5

The _____ was formed in 1977 after several opposition parties merged together specifically to defeat then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The party contested the 1977 general election and, in a monumental shift in fortunes, won 295 out of 542 seats, ending 30 years of uninterrupted rule by the Indian National Congress. Fill in the blanks.



Visual Question:

Name this man. He founded the Israeli party Kadima after splitting from Likud in 2005. He suffered a stroke before the 2006 election and couldn't participate, but Kadima went on to become the largest party in the Knesset that year. He was called the 'Butcher of Beirut'. GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE OF ISRAEL (CC BY-SA)

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1.

- According to George Lucas, the stories were taken from an ancient journal chronicling the history of the galaxy and written by immortal beings. What were the beings called? **Ans: Whills**
 - 2. Fans use BBY and ABY as a primary timeline marker in the Star Wars lore for Before and After BY. What is BY? **Ans: Battle of Yavin, the decisive conflict where the Rebel Alliance destroyed the Empire's first Death Star**
 - 3. What are the surnames of Mace, Princess Leia, Lando, and Ahsoka? **Ans: Windu, Organa, Calrissian and Tano**
 - 4. To which planets do Chewbacca, Admiral Ackbar, Wicket and Jar Jar Binks belong? **Ans: Kashyyyk, Mon Cala, Endor, Naboo**
 - 5. Which craft measures 34.37m by 25.61 meters, is powered by Giodyne SRB42 sublight engines and can attain a speed of 75 Megalights in the vacuum of space? **Ans: Millennium Falcon**
 - 6. What is the actual name of the 'Cantina band'? **Ans: 'Figrin D'an and the Modal Nodes'**
 - 7. Name the trio of actors who provided the physical presence, voice, and face of Darth Vader in the original trilogy. **Ans: Dave Prowse, James Earl Jones and Sebastian Shaw**
- Visual: Identify these loveable characters and name the actor who played the taller droid. **Ans: R2-D2 and C3PO and the actor is Anthony Daniels**
- Early Birds:** Suchit Narottam | Tito Shiladitya | Sudhir Thapa | Prashant Nain | Astha Kumari



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

An animal that is active during the nighttime is called "nocturnal". Is there a word to describe an animal that is active during the daytime? (P. Anand, Chennai)

The word that you are looking for is "diurnal". It is a formal word and cannot be used in all contexts. The "i" in first syllable is like the "ie" in "pie", "die" and "tie". The "ur" is pronounced like the "ir" in words like "shirt", "first", and "thirst". The final "a" is like the "a" in "China". The main stress is on the second syllable. Here are a few examples.

Some species of bats, I am told, are diurnal.

A leopard is a nocturnal animal, not diurnal.

What is the meaning and origin of the expression "to bark up the wrong tree"? (K. Moidu, Kerala)

The expression comes from the sport of raccoon hunting. A raccoon (also spelt coon) is a small furry animal, which is found mostly in America. These animals, being nocturnal, are hunted at night. In order to catch them, hunters make use of dogs. The dogs' job is to chase these animals and drive them up a tree. Once a raccoon is driven up a tree, the dogs stand under it and keep barking. This is their way of telling their masters that there is an animal hiding in the tree. Sometimes, of course, the dogs pick the wrong tree to bark at – one in which there is no raccoon. So when you say that someone is "barking up the wrong tree", it means he has made the wrong choice. He will not succeed in doing what he wants to because he is following the wrong course of action. Here are a few examples.

If you think you are going to get Sonia's job by being nice to the Chairman, you are barking up the wrong tree.

When Azhar said that he was being discriminated against because he belonged to a minority community, he was barking up the wrong tree.

The idiom is used in informal contexts.

Do you "peel" or "unpeel" an orange? (G. Neelakantan, Bangalore)

You "peel", not "unpeel" an orange. When you say that you have "peeled" something, it means that you have removed its skin.

For example:
Bala spent two hours in the kitchen peeling potatoes.

Yogesh refused to peel the apple.

The word rhymes with "feel", "heel", and "meal".

What is the meaning of "circa"? (N. S. Gundur, Dharwad)

First, let's deal with the pronunciation. The "ir" is pronounced like the "ir" in "bird", "birth", and "shirt". The final "a" is like the "a" in "China". The stress, as you have probably guessed, is on the first syllable.

"Circa" is a formal word that is used before a year to indicate that something happened around that time, but not exactly in that particular year. In other words, it informs you of the approximate year when something happened. Published in *The Hindu* on July 04, 2000

Word of the day

Operose:

characterised by effort to the point of exhaustion, especially physical effort

Synonyms: wearisome, tedious, hard

Usage: *He avoided operose work whenever possible.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/operose

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ɒpəroʊs/

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

From Page One

Vijay rocks, disrupts T.N.'s bipolar politics

The AIADMK finished third with around 45 seats, with its leader Edappadi K. Palaniswami retaining his home constituency. The Naam Tamilar Katchi, led by Seeman, which contested all 234 seats, once again failed to open its account.

This marks the first time since 1952 Tamil Nadu voters, known for delivering decisive mandates for a single party or front, have produced a hung Assembly. The TVK secured an impressive 35% vote share, polling over 1.7 crore votes. The verdict reflects both fatigue with established Dravidian parties and faith in a 51-year-old who walked away from a ₹200-crore-per-film career at its peak after building a fan base over three decades. The voters favoured a "change" and rejected Mr. Stalin's positioning of the election as a fight between "Tamil Nadu and New Delhi" and Prime Minister's promise of a "double-engine sarkar".

Cong.-led UDF makes a comeback in Kerala

The magnitude of the LDF's collapse seemed reflected in the defeat of 13 Cabinet Ministers. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's margin fell sharply in Dharmadam in Kannur, a CPI(M) stronghold for decades. The UDF appeared to have built its victory on anti-incumbency anger against the LDF and the "need for change" campaign rhetoric.

Congress and its key ally, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), put up their best showing in decades. Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan claimed that the Congress had won the highest number of seats in years.

Voter fatigue, the Sabarimala gold scandal, successful corralling of anti-BJP votes, erosion of the LDF's traditional base, the CPI(M)'s failure to dissociate itself from SINDP Yogam leader Vellappally Natesan's anti-minority rhetoric, dissensions in the CPI(M), and the impression that 10 years in power had rendered the political executive impetuous appeared to have propelled the UDF victory.

Trinamool ousted as BJP sweeps Bengal

Not only has the BJP been able to retain its strongholds in north Bengal and southwest Bengal, but it made significant inroads in erstwhile Trinamool bastions of Kolkata and adjoining districts. In several districts of the State, such as Cooch Behar, Alipurdwar, Jalpaiguri, Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Purulia, Paschim Bardhaman, Jhargram, Bankura and Purba Medinipur, the trends indicate that the Trinamool is likely to draw a blank.

The result broke several myths, including secularism being deeply embedded in Bengal's society and that the electorate cannot be polarised on religious lines. While the elections saw polarisation of Hindu voters, the Muslim votes, which largely went with the Trinamool in the past, was split between candidates of the Left-ISF alliance, Congress, and Humayun Kabir's Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP), spoiling the Trinamool's chances.

NDA led by AINRC retains Puducherry

The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) has won two seats in the Union Territory, while its ally, the Neyyamakkal Kazhagam (NMK), managed to secure one seat.

Three Independents – Azhagan alias Azhaganathan (Kadrigamam constituency), T. Ashok Kumar (Mahe), and V. Vigneswaran (reserved Nedungadu in Karaikal region) – have won.

Mr. Rangasamy won in both the constituencies he contested by convincing margins. While he retained the Thattanchavady seat by a margin of 4,441 votes, he won the Mangalam constituency by a margin of 7,050 votes. The electoral battle in Thattanchavady was keenly watched after the president of the Puducherry Pradesh Congress Committee and incumbent MP V. Vaithilingam jumped into the fray by deciding to contest against him.

NDA secures record third term in Assam

The thumping win established Mr. Sarma as one of the BJP's most bankable leaders in Assam and beyond. He played a major role in the BJP's landslide victory in West Bengal and has been the key player for the party in other Northeastern States.





On the other hand, State Congress president Gaurav Gogoi, who led the Asom Sonmilito Mancha (Opposition alliance) campaign, lost Jorhat seat to the BJP's Hitendra Nath Goswami by 23,182 votes. Lurinjyoti Gogoi, the president of Congress ally Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), also bit the dust.





Rajgor Dal president Akhil Gogoi was the saving grace as he comfortably retained his Sibsagar seat.

"Although the BJP secured an absolute majority, we will continue to rule with our allies," State BJP president and MP Dilip Saikia said, attributing the NDA victory to the BJP's focus on development and the insulation of the indigenous peoples from the onslaught of "illegal immigrants".

NDA hat-trick

It is the first time a non-Congress government has secured three consecutive terms in Assam

WINNERS			
Himanta Biswa Sarma	Akhil Gogoi	Pradyut Bordoloi	Ajanta Neog
			
BJP	RAJGOR DAL	BJP	BJP
Jalukbari	Sibsagar	Dispur	Golaghat
+89,434 votes	+17,272 votes	+49,667 votes	+43,759 votes

LOSERS			
Gaurav Gogoi	Debabrata Saikia	Lurinjyoti Gogoi	Ripun Bora
			
INC	INC	AJP	INC
Jorhat	Nazira	Khowang	Barchalla
-23,182 votes	-46,701 votes	-9,984 votes	-24,562 votes

Trinamool Cong.'s fumbles and BJP's promises drive change in West Bengal

The Trinamool's overemphasis on the SIR cost it the election, while the BJP was successful in capturing the imagination of the electorate with promises of industries and jobs; BJP also leveraged the rising anger over crimes against women and successfully kept a united front in the State

NEWS ANALYSIS

Shiv Sahay Singh
Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Around 3 p.m. on Monday, as counting trends indicated that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was heading towards a massive victory in West Bengal, a flustered Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was seen rushing towards a girls high school in south Kolkata, a counting centre for the Bhabanipur Assembly seat. Walking in, she raised suspicions of malpractice, claiming that the counting had abruptly stopped and that the vote numbers had remained stagnant for a long time.

Hours later, when her rival Svendud Adhikari secured a marginal lead over her, the Trinamool Congress chairperson walked out of the counting venue. "It is an immoral victory,"



One-issue campaign: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and party leader Abhishek Banerjee are seen during a protest against the SIR in Kolkata in this file photo. PTI

she said, accusing the Election Commission of doing everything wrong.

Ms. Banerjee and her party are staring at a massive defeat at the hands of BJP in the 2026 Assembly election, with the BJP winning or leading in 208 seats

and the Trinamool being reduced to 80 seats. Not only the Chief Minister, but many of her Cabinet colleagues contesting seats in and around Kolkata have either lost or are trailing.

There are several reasons for these electoral set-

backs, the most crucial being that the Trinamool focussed its entire poll campaign on a protest against the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, and the widespread deletion of voters' names. Though the SIR

shrank the State's electorate by 12%, with the highest rate of deletions in Muslim-dominated districts, it is not clear whether or how its impact helped the BJP.

The issue of Bengali sub-nationalism worked for the Trinamool Congress in 2021, when the State's ruling party was successful in dubbing the BJP as an "outsider party". Five years later, however, the same game plan of challenging BJP leaders to eat fish, proved to be counterproductive for the Trinamool.

The ruling party failed to address questions about the flight of industries and unemployment, and teachers' recruitment scam. Its welfare schemes lost their shine as the BJP promised to double the State's cash incentives for women and unemployed youth.

While the Trinamool's election manifesto was a repetition of old schemes, the BJP was able to capture

the imagination of the electorate by promising to provide jobs and bring industry into the State.

Crimes against women
Another factor the Trinamool missed was the growing anger about attacks against women in the State, particularly after the gruesome rape and murder at R.G. Kar Hospital in August 2024.

Not only did the BJP field the victim's mother, Ratna Debnath, as a candidate, but party leaders also repeatedly assured voters during their campaign that such crimes would not occur if the BJP came to power.

The BJP was successful in keeping a united front, by engaging both old loyalists and new entrants. While the party's campaign was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah spent over two weeks in the State at the height of the campaign.

Modi urges all parties in Bengal to focus on positive change and not revenge

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday described the outcomes of the elections in four States and a Union Territory as a triumph of democracy and the Constitution, suggesting that voters chose stability and development amid the crisis in West Asia and broader global turmoil. He was addressing BJP karyakartas at the party's headquarters.

Mr. Modi credited voters and grassroots party workers for the BJP's success and paid tribute to colleagues and their families who sacrificed their lives for the party, particularly in West Bengal and Kerala.

Analysing the results, he said people in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala rejected the governments which practised "divisive politics" and chose mutual development and unity.

The Prime Minister highlighted women as a crucial pillar in building a developed India, stating that they were increasingly supporting development-focused politics and playing a decisive role in election outcomes. He accused the Congress and Samajwadi Party (SP) of blocking women's reservation in the Lok Sabha, and said that women voters would hold the SP accountable in the 2027 Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh.

Pointing out that there was no longer any State with a communist government in power, Mr. Modi said the results not only showed an electoral shift but a change in the people's mindset.

On the BJP's unprecedented victory in Bengal,



Narendra Modi at BJP headquarters in Delhi to celebrate the party's victory in Bengal, Assam and Puducherry. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

the Prime Minister said a new dawn had risen in the State. "The number of seats the BJP has won is a reflection of how the people have uprooted the politics of fear, appeasement, and violence," he said.

"Banglaye porivorton hoye geche (change has truly come to Bengal)," said Mr. Modi, paying tributes to Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder and BJP's ideological ancestor Syama Prasad Mookerjee. He assured the people of Bengal of efforts to fulfil their aspirations. "In the very first Cabinet meeting, the Ayushman Bharat scheme will be cleared for implementation... the strictest possible action will be taken against infiltrators," he said.

Mr. Modi urged the workers of all political parties in West Bengal to end "the cycle of political violence" and focus on a positive transformation rather than "revenge".

The Prime Minister thanked the people of Assam for the third consecutive victory of the BJP-led alliance, and the people of Puducherry for renewal of the mandate. He said they were now set for accelerated development.

Noting that the party performed fabulously under the guidance of the newly elected BJP president Nitin Nabin, he said the results of bypolls in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Nagaland, and Tripura, were also encouraging.

He congratulated the people of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. "The people of these five States/U.T. have demonstrated to the entire world why this country is truly the mother of Democracy. For us, democracy is not merely a system of governance; it is a cherished value that flows through our veins. It is not just India's democracy that has triumphed, but also the Constitution," he said.

Kolkata streets turn saffron, Mamata's home deserted as BJP secures historic win

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

As counting of votes in the West Bengal Assembly poll progressed on Monday, indicating a saffron surge in the State, BJP workers took over the streets of Kolkata to celebrate.

The party is set to secure power in West Bengal for the first time.

However, the residence of incumbent Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee wore a deserted look as early results pointed to a loss for her party, the Trinamool Congress, after 15 years in power.

BJP supporters draped in saffron raised slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" atop motorcycles as they rode through the city's streets, which were devoid of commuters and where most



Mamata Banerjee's residence looked deserted in the wake of her party's ouster from power.

shops remained closed.

"The people of the State have voted against the Trinamool Congress because of atrocities against women, massive corruption, and syndicate culture. This is a personal win for us," said Santa Ghosh, a BJP supporter celebrating with gulaal (orange colour) outside the State party head-

quarters in central Kolkata's Murlidhar Sen Lane.

The BJP's victory song, "Sada saari rong hoye gache gerua abir-e. Nil akashe gerua rong legeche. Bangla jure padya phutche (The white sari has been coloured saffron. The blue sky now bears the hue of saffron. The lotus has bloomed across Bengal)," blared from loudspeakers outside the party office as supporters broke into song and dance.

BJP workers were also seen enjoying chicken biryani, countering the Trinamool's campaign claim that the party would ban non-vegetarian food.

At several BJP offices, workers celebrated with jhalmuri, the puffed-rice snack that became one of the most talked about elements of this election.

Split in Muslim votes spells doom for Trinamool Congress

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

It was the shifting away of the Muslim vote from the Left front to the Trinamool Congress that brought Mamata Banerjee to power in 2011.

About 15 years later, a split in the minority vote became one of the key reasons why the Trinamool lost power in 2026.

The Muslim vote bank which remained steady with the Trinamool over the past several elections saw a split this time, with the Left-ISF alliance, Congress and Humayun Kabir's Aam Janata Unnayan

Party (AJUP) spoiling the Trinamool party.

The split of Muslim votes came to the advantage of the BJP. The party's candidates were seen either winning or leading in six of the 12 seats in Malda, where the electorate is 50% Muslims.

A similar situation unveiled in the adjoining district where BJP nominees were seen winning or leading in eight out of 22 seats in Murshidabad, a district with 70% Muslim population.

Brewing discontent
In the Muslim-dominated areas, which also saw mas-

sive deletions during the special intensive revision (SIR) process, there was anger among people as many felt that the Trinamool did not do enough for them to restore their names in the final voter list.

Discontent among a section of Muslim electors had been brewing over a host of issues, including construction of temples from the State exchequer and lack of development in areas dominated by the minority.

Many voters chose alternative options, including the Left Front, Congress and AJUP candidates.

WINNERS					LOSERS					
Saffron sunrise BJP ends 15-year Trinamool rule as Mamata Banerjee's fortress crumbles under a pro-change mandate 	Winnings Suwendu Adhikari BJP Nandigram +9,665 votes	Ratna Debnath BJP Panihati +28,836 votes	Rekha Patra BJP Hingalgaon +5,421 votes	Humayun Kabir AJUP Nowda +27,943 votes	Agnimitra Paul BJP Asansol Dakshin +40,839 votes	Losses Mamata Banerjee AITC Bhabanipur -15,105 votes	Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury INC Baharampur -17,548 votes	Shashi Panja AITC Shyampur -14,633 votes	Chandrima Bhattacharya AITC Dum Dum Uttar -26,404 votes	Bratyabrata Basu AITC Dum Dum -25,273 votes



Changing tide: A UDF victory rally in Kannur on Monday. Kannur is considered a stronghold of the CPI(M) in Kerala. S.K. MOHAN

With defeat in Kerala, Left out of power for first time since 1977

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

With its defeat in the Kerala Assembly election, the Left parties are not in power in any State for the first time since 1977. The setback has sharpened questions over the political strategy of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). During its campaign, the Congress had accused the ruling party of colluding with the BJP, with the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, branding the CPI(M) as the "Communist Janata Party".

CPI(M) general secretary M.A. Baby rejected the charge, calling it a "deliberate" and "distorted" narrative aimed at tarnishing the party's image. "CPI(M) stands by all sections of people, we have always supported the socially excluded both in terms of religion and caste," he said.

The political resolution adopted at the CPI(M)'s 21st Party Congress, held under the leadership of then general secretary Sitaram Yechury, underlined that the fight against the BJP and the Narendra Modi government's policies was the "main task at hand".

Critics within the party, however, argue that there was a deviation from this position. They point to the October 2025 decision of the Pinarayi Vijayan government to sign up for the Prime Minister Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme, which dovetails with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 to upgrade and brand 14,500 schools nationwide as model institutions.

Kerala, one of the three States that opposed the NEP, along with Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, had argued that it encroached upon school education, a subject on the Concurrent List. The Kerala government then changed its stand to secure Central funds. The scheme, however, was not implemented in the State in the face of strong opposition, particularly from the Communist Party of India (CPI).

The critics argue that the CPI(M) did not push back hard enough against "communally divisive" statements made by Ezhava leader Vellappally Natesan, who was perceived as backing the Pinarayi Vijayan government.

Mr. Baby rejected both charges. He pointed out that unlike the Congress government in Rajasthan, the CPI(M) never implemented PM SHRI. Responding to questions on Mr. Natesan's statements, he said, "CPI(M) has never endorsed his statements. In fact, I have criticised his comments as unbecoming of the position he has held." Mr. Baby also noted that the Congress shares power with the BJP in a panchayat in Thrissur, and held the Congress responsible for the BJP's victory from Thrissur in the 2024 Lok Sabha election.

'Forensic review'

On the electoral outcome, Mr. Baby said the party would conduct a forensic review to identify and correct "aberrations", both "real or imagined". "The LDF [Left Democratic Front] was defeated in Kerala after 10 years of continuous rule, during which it had done its best for the welfare of the people and to meet their aspirations, despite the financial constraints imposed by the BJP-led Union government," he said.

CPI general secretary D. Raja said the LDF government delivered on its promise of development in Kerala, pointing to above average life expectancy, low infant mortality, and infrastructure projects such as roads and metro rail projects. He also said there was no communal or caste conflict in the State during the LDF rule. "Despite all this we lost. We will need to introspect on the reasons for our defeat. The Left needs to re-emerge as a force to reshape the country's political course," he said.

BJP's victory in West Bengal marks a paradigm shift in its political journey

Border State of West Bengal has been important for the party ideologically, and portrays its idea of cultural nationalism; the victory will help the party establish a different sort of political order in the State; victory is a signal that it is preparing to break new ground for Lok Sabha election

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

The storming of the hustings in West Bengal and Assam by the Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday, with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) winning in Puducherry and securing three Assembly seats in the bipolar polity of Kerala, heralded a big day for the BJP politically.

The implications of these results for the BJP are manifold and significant, in particular the win in West Bengal. First, the party is now uninterruptedly in power from Gangotri in Uttarakhand, the origin of the Ganga, to Gangasagar in West Bengal, where the river meets the Bay of Bengal. The birthplace of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder of the BJP's earlier avatar, the Jan Sangh, in the border State of West Bengal has always been ideologically very impor-



Celebratory mood: BJP supporters celebrating the party's sweep in the West Bengal Assembly election, in Kolkata on Monday. PTI

tant for the party.

West Bengal heavily informs the BJP's own idea of cultural nationalism, via the national song *Vande Mataram*, the Independence movement, and the Partition of India and the politics it engendered.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, during a press conference in the midst of his campaign in the State, had said that May 4 would bring a BJP government in Anga (Assam), Banga (West Bengal), and Kalinga (Odisha), referring to these

States by their ancient names, pointing to a past that predates their current electoral history.

Different political order

This drawing of a long arc of history is purely ideological in its nature, and

Its recent victories imply that the BJP can get sub-regional nationalism right by tone, tenor, narrative

makes the victory in West Bengal significant in helping the party establish a different sort of political order in the State, beyond the previously held political pieties.

Second, it was commonly held that the BJP as an electoral entity did well when it came up against national parties, including the Congress, but faltered at the gate with regional parties, missing the tone of sub-regional nationalism.

That presupposition has been finished with victories against the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha in 2024; the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Delhi in 2025; and against the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal now. This clearly implies that the BJP can get sub-regional nationalism right by tone, tenor and narrative,

and move beyond the perception that it is a party of north Indian Hindi speakers.

Third, the BJP gained Odisha in 2024, winning the Assembly election and the Lok Sabha seats from the State, a new ground that helped it shore up its third term at the Centre, and an important space as far as the array of States under its rule is concerned.

Big preparations

The victory in West Bengal is a signal that the BJP is already preparing to break new ground for the Lok Sabha election of 2029 by its dominance on the ground across States from Haryana to West Bengal and Assam, since in many States, Lok Sabha rewards follow State verdicts.

For the BJP, both in terms of ideology and electoral power, May 4 is a red letter day. Amid the surfeit of electoral victories the party has enjoyed since 2014, the win in West Bengal in 2026 induces a paradigm shift.

Long-term planning, unity in State unit helped the BJP swing Bengal its way

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party's first solo victory in West Bengal was not the smooth progression of one win after another, but it has been decades in the making. From tapping Mamata Banerjee's newly launched party Trinamool Congress as a National Democratic Alliance ally at the Centre during the Vajpayee era to being the only party with the firepower to halt Ms. Banerjee's bid for a fourth term in the State, it has been a long slog.

The peaks of the BJP's tally of 18 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha election were followed by the troughs of a loss in the 2021 Assembly polls and a depleted tally of Lok Sabha seats in 2024. Therefore, for the 2026 Assembly polls, the organisational planning and messaging had to be just right.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held 19 big rallies across the State, and two well-attended roadshows in Howrah and Kolkata, in the crucial Greater Kolkata zone that traditionally did not vote for the BJP.

Shah's campaign

Union Home Minister Amit Shah led the intricate organisational work of the BJP, camping in the State for 15 days, with overnight stays in five different zones during this time, sorting out organisational hiccups through meetings with workers at the ground level. He addressed over 30 public meetings, undertook 12 roadshows, and umpteen meetings to bring the message home.

The post-poll violence



Triumphant win: BJP supporters in Delhi celebrate party's victory in Assembly elections on Monday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

against BJP supporters following the 2021 Assembly election had left a big hole in terms of trust in the BJP's campaign.

However, Mr. Shah's ubiquitous presence made a difference when it came to reassuring BJP voters that this time they would not be left to their own devices. BJP leaders felt that the abandonment of the party's campaign midway through the 2021 polls because of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic had cost it dear, reinforcing Mr. Shah's decision, in 2026, to see the campaign through to the end.

Union Ministers Bhupendra Yadav and Dharmendra Pradhan, Lok Sabha member Biplab Deb, and Sunil Bansal, the national general secretary in charge of West Bengal, pitched in significantly.

While Mr. Yadav and Mr. Bansal dealt with the BJP's organisational issues, deployment of workers, and sorting out problems on the ground, Mr. Pradhan, who had handled Nandigram in the 2021 election,

met with leaders of different communities for a comprehensive outreach.

Mr. Deb, the former Chief Minister of Tripura, who had supplanted the Communist government in that State in 2018, did micro outreach in previous Left bastions within Kolkata.

Unity pays off

The party's State president, Samik Bhattacharya, a lifelong BJP member, managed to broker peace in a party that had, before the polls, appeared fractured. He was one of the few people who managed to bring Suwendu Adhikari and Dilip Ghosh to work together.

Efficient organisation ensured an emphasis on getting most BJP voters to cast their ballots before 11 a.m. In the 2006 Assembly election in the State, the BJP had struggled to find candidates for the 15 seats that it wrangled from its then ally, the Trinamool, and even surrendered a few of those seats. Two decades later, matters have come full circle.

Despite severe setbacks in Assam and Tamil Nadu, not all is lost for Congress

Sandeep Phukan
Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

Two contradictory things have happened for the Congress in the latest Assembly elections. While it is a warning sign for the party, reflecting its failure to read the tea leaves in Assam or smell the coffee in Tamil Nadu, nationally it helps the party cement itself as the sole node of any challenge to the BJP.

In a post on X, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge described the results as a "mixed bag" and asserted an ideological battle demanded "patience, perseverance and unwavering resolve".

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, reached out to Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief C. Joseph Vijay to congratulate him on his "spectacular" victory. "This mandate reflects the rising voice of youth which cannot, and will not, be ignored," he said on X.

He alleged that the verdict in Assam and Bengal has been "stolen" and claimed that it was a repeat of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana.

Mr. Gandhi spoke to Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee and DMK president M.K. Stalin about the election results. The Congress leader had sharply attacked the Trinamool administration in his election rallies and later in a video message circulated by the party in West Bengal, inadvertently aiding the BJP's campaign.

Mr. Gandhi did not address any joint public meeting with Mr. Stalin in



Disappointing outcome: The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee office wears a deserted look on Monday. PTI

Tamil Nadu. This did not help the DMK-Congress alliance, which was already working at odds with each other on the ground.

The Congress rout in Assam has been exacerbated by its State unit chief Gaurav Gogoi's defeat by a margin of over 22,000 votes. While its alliance with regional players - Asom Jatiya Parishad (AJP) and Rajior Dal (RD) - failed to pay dividends, its campaign focusing on three Gogois (including Assam Jatiya Parishad leader Lurinjyoti Gogoi and Rajior Dal leader Akhil Gogoi) in the hope of consolidating Ahom votes actually helped the BJP consolidate all other communities besides the Ahoms.

Assam situation

Over the past 10 years, the party's organisational structure, once considered formidable, has eroded with a steady attrition of leadership. In this period, the organisation has failed to lead pro-people agitations in any visible way. Despite back-to-back defeats in the Assembly and

Lok Sabha elections in Assam since 2021, the Congress did not fix any accountability on the party general secretary in charge of the State, Jitendra Singh. However, Mr. Singh stepped down late on Monday after taking responsibility for the debacle.

In Tamil Nadu, the reverse happened when the All India Congress Committee ignored party in-charge Girish Chodankar's suggestion that Mr. Vijay could be a possible ally. The party also publicly distanced itself from other leaders, such as Congress MP Manickam Tagore and Professional Congress chief Praveen Chakravarti, who had advocated an alliance with the TVK. Mr. Gandhi, according to sources, agreed with their views.

An alliance between the Congress and TVK cannot be ruled out in the future.

The defeat of INDIA bloc constituents, Trinamool and DMK, may give the Congress an unintended advantage of removing any challengers within the alliance.

IN BRIEF



Rajnath Singh pushes for edge in high-tech warfare

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday underscored the urgent need for India to accelerate innovation in cutting-edge defence technologies, urging industry and academia to step up efforts in emerging domains such as directed energy weapons, hypersonic systems, artificial intelligence, and quantum technologies. Addressing the inaugural session of North Tech Symposium in Prayagraj, Mr. Singh stressed that future warfare will be shaped by rapid technological transformation and the element of surprise. He highlighted the use of advanced platforms such as the Akash missile system and BrahMos as proof of India's growing self-reliance in defence manufacturing.

SC seeks Centre's response on Christian Michel James' plea

The Supreme Court on Monday sought the Centre's response on a petition filed by Christian Michel James, the alleged middleman in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper case, seeking release from custody on the ground that he has already undergone the maximum sentence for the offences for which he was extradited. A Bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the Centre, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and the Enforcement Directorate (ED), directing them to file their responses within four weeks. Mr. James had earlier approached the Delhi High Court. The High Court dismissed his plea on April 8, observing that there was "no merit in the plea".

SC raps courts in Odisha for 'odious' bail conditions

When the Odisha judiciary set "odious" bail conditions, such as cleaning police stations for two months, for members of Adivasi and Dalit communities, it suggested that judges had a "regressive mindset" and caste-based biases, the Supreme Court said on Monday. The subjects of these bail conditions are a group of indigenous people facing criminal charges after their protest against the acquisition of their land for a mining project in Rayagada and Kalahandi districts allegedly turned violent. The court directed that all State judiciaries should refrain from imposing conditions that carry caste implications.

SC weighs risk of misuse of benefits for trans people

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday flagged the "danger" of those masquerading as transgender persons to get welfare benefits, while hearing multiple petitions challenging a law that removes the right to self-identification.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 requires a government-appointed medical Board's favourable recommendation for a District Magistrate to certify an individual as a transgender person. The petitioners said the Act disregards transgender identity as an "authentic human identity, freely chosen" and violates their rights.

"Does it not pose a danger that there are people who would masquerade this qualification for grabbing reservation or privileges?" Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, asked.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, appearing for the petitioners, said the "danger" of people faking transgender identity to secure benefits was hardly .001%.

The court issued notice to the Centre and the States on the pleas, noting that the question of staying the Act did not arise as the law had not yet been notified.

Political executive will decide on Bengal law and order, says SC

SC was replying to an urgent oral plea seeking to continue deployment of Central security forces to prevent post-election violence in West Bengal

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the elected political executive in West Bengal would take decisions on law and order, while hearing an urgent oral plea seeking continuation of Central forces' deployment in the State to prevent post-poll violence after the 2026 Assembly election.

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the "State of West Bengal will be run by the Political Executive".

The oral mentioning by senior advocate V. Giri, appearing for an organisation, Sanatani Sangsad, and others, was made even as counting was under way in West Bengal.

The Election Commission (EC), represented by senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, said the poll body's role in the State would come to an end by evening once the election process concluded. "Everything will be over by evening," Chief Justice Kant told Mr. Giri.



On guard: Security personnel stand guard outside a counting centre in Malda on Monday. ANI

Mr. Giri said the Central forces deployed in the State may continue to remain in place to ward off any possibility of violence, considering West Bengal's history of post-poll violence.

He suggested that the deployment could be monitored by a retired top court judge.

"The Political Executive of the State will decide," Justice Bagchi said, making it clear that the Supreme Court would refrain from taking a decision on the issue of law and order, which is a State subject.

The court had, on April 2, directed the EC to requisition Central forces to protect the life, liberty and fa-

milies of judicial officers involved in the West Bengal special intensive revision (SIR) exercise after seven judicial officers deployed for SIR work were ghe-raoed by people in Malda district.

"This was not a routine incident. It was *ex facie* a calculated, well-planned and deliberate move to demoralise the judicial officers and impact the ongoing process of adjudication of objections," Chief Justice Kant had observed then.

The top court had ordered an independent probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation or the National Investigation Agency into the incident.

SC brings survivors of forcible ingestion of acid in RPwD Act

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday included persons who were forcibly administered acid within the definition of "acid attack victims" under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

The 2016 law recognised only victims of acid-throwing, and not forcible acid ingestion. It accepted both the act of acid-throwing and the administration of acid as offences punishable with imprisonment from 10 years to a life sentence under Section 124 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt).

A Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the reading into of survivors of forcible administration of acid in the category of "acid attack victims" would be deemed to be operative retrospectively from the inception of the Act in 2016.

Benefits apply
The deemed recognition would aid victims of forcible acid ingestion to claim disability benefits due under the 2016 Act.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, said the nodal Ministry had

The court has suggested framing a comprehensive policy framework to protect the survivors

already forwarded the proposed amendment in the Schedule of the 2016 Act to the Ministry of Legislative Affairs.

Though Mr. Mehta urged the court to wait for the Ministry to initiate the amendment, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for petitioners, successfully pleaded the court to flex its plenary powers under Article 142.

"The victims mostly, if not all, are women. Till the Schedule of the 2016 Act is changed, the Supreme Court must pass an order under Article 142 to include not only persons on whom acid was thrown but also those who suffered the extreme agony of having to forcibly ingest acid in the category of 'acid attack victim'. There is some monetary support given to them under the Act and they are issued an identity card..." Mr. Rohatgi submitted.

The court had suggested framing a comprehensive policy framework to protect the survivors, who require extensive and continuous medical treatment.

SC asks Centre to examine plea on revising Aadhaar issuance norms

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Union government to examine a plea seeking issuance of new Aadhaar cards only to children, and that the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) frame "stringent guidelines" for the grant of the identity document to adults and adolescents.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant asked the Centre to consider a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, which said easy accessibility to Aadhaar cards should be restricted to prevent infiltrators from disguising themselves as Indian citizens.

Mr. Upadhyay said a signed rental agreement and a 182-day stay in one



The plea said accessibility to Aadhaar must be restricted to prevent infiltrators from disguising themselves as Indian citizens. FILE PHOTO

location would make a person statutorily eligible to apply for an Aadhaar card.

He said Aadhaar was being used as an entry document to "infiltrate" and obtain other Indian records, from ration cards to passports.

Mr. Upadhyay said that as per UIDAI records, there were already 144 crore

Aadhaar holders. The authority had stated that 99% of citizens had Aadhaar, including 55 crore Jan Dhan account holders and 85 crore recipients of free ration.

The court pointed out that not only Aadhaar, but other government documents were also being forged, with many of the

criminal hubs behind such acts located abroad.

Mr. Upadhyay said a cache of 87,000 fake documents had been found in Mumbai, terming it "infiltration through the Aadhaar framework".

"Infiltration is an economic offence in so far as it is done to take unlawful benefits of the resources of a country. It is done in an organised manner... The sole intent of infiltration is to settle in a country such as India and live off its resources. Almost 80 crore people are being given free ration, in which a large number of infiltrators are also present," the plea said.

The petition also sought the installation of display boards at common service centres stating that Aadhaar is only proof of identity and not of citizenship.

Historic mandate, says NCP after Sunetra's Baramati win

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The victory of Sunetra Pawar, wife of former Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, on Monday created history with her Nationalist Congress Party claiming a new national record of the highest victory margin in Assembly elections, surpassing the previous record attributed to the BJP's Sunil Kumar Sharma, who had won the Sahibabad constituency in Uttar Pradesh by 2.14 lakh votes in 2022. While 2,18,969 votes were in favour of Ms. Pawar, her nearest rival - Independent candidate R.Y. Ghutkade Sir - got only 935 votes. While mainstream parties did not field a candidate for the bypolls, there were 22 Independents in the fray, who together secured 4,837 votes. While Ms. Pawar ap-



Sunetra Pawar

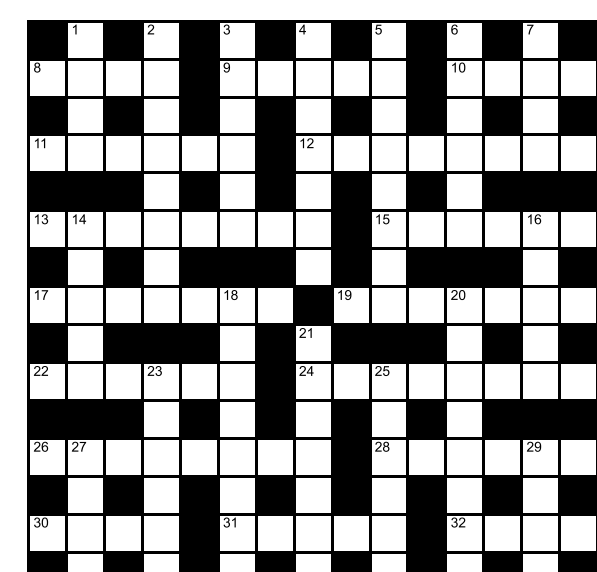
pealed to party workers not to take out victory processions once the result was declared, she thanked the people of Baramati for the overwhelming mandate.

In a post on X, she stated that Ajit Pawar's guidance and presence were deeply missed. "For me, this victory is not merely a political success but a true tribute to his work and his memory. His contribution to Maharashtra and Baramati, his strong connection with the people, and his vision for

development continue to live in everyone's hearts," she stated.

In Karnataka, where the ruling Congress retained Bagalkot and Davanagere South Assembly seats, left vacant after the deaths of sitting MLAs H.Y. Meti and Shamanur Shivashankarappa respectively, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah termed the victory a mandate reflecting both the achievements of his government and the enduring strength of the party's ideology. Congress candidate Samartha Shamanur Mallikarjuna defeated Srinivas T. Dasakariyappa of the BJP in the Davanagere South constituency by 5,708 votes, while Umesh Hullappa Meti defeated the saffron party's Charantimath Veerabhadrayya in the Bagalkot seat by a margin of 22,332 votes. (With inputs from PTI)

THE CROSSWORD+ 14785 Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at <https://thehindu.com/crosswords>



- Across**
- 8 Cost of travel in Cardiff area (4)
 - 9 Mercury obtained from Arizona hotel construction after the Spanish left (5)
 - 10 Extraordinary risk irritates (4)
 - 11 Literary king with book came to know (6)
 - 12 Rival's pop nonet composition (8)

- 13 Deserter from Army Post Office, say (8)
 - 15 Horrible diatribe on losing inspection bungalow, in short, is a verbal attack (6)
 - 17 Traverses tomb markers (7)
 - 19 Arranged pack with xenon containing one tool (7)
 - 22 Ma cuts hybrid grape (6)
 - 24 Finished after Army Service Corps climbed (8)
 - 26 Perhaps, heel's swamper? (8)
 - 28 Where a group of swimmers may study? (6)
 - 30 Ship from Karwar goes (4)
 - 31 Rub off Times emblem in the beginning (5)
 - 32 Type of house built without using aluminium in Salem, India (4)
- Down**
- 1 Uncommon in Almora region (4)
 - 2 Thaws forests being chopped up after beginning of December (8)
 - 3 Rule: "No pets in apartments under renovation" (6)
 - 4 One behind Line of Control rejected final call for military officer (7)
 - 5 Indian bread got from guy at the inn initially (8)
 - 6 Meal given by doctor around nine decomposed (6)
 - 7 Hide runner at end of garden (4)
 - 14 Hidden and concealed in sniper duty (5)
 - 16 Pass away, having taken 9 in custody, in Southern US (5)
 - 18 Extraordinary Lent diet is allowed (8)
 - 20 Relative has toured South African city (8)
 - 21 Ass walks around a vessel to get fruits (7)
 - 23 Visit part of Calcutta before part of London (4,2)
 - 25 We returned with money for nut (6)
 - 27 Conservative's attempt to consume egg (4)
 - 29 Units of Resistance from Head Office rejected manuscript (4)

SUDOKU

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

Solution to previous puzzle

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

BJP's Assam, Bengal show will impact Manipur: CM

Press Trust of India
IMPHAL

Chief Minister Y. Khe-mchand Singh on Monday said the BJP's strong performance in Assam and West Bengal will have a positive impact in Manipur, which goes to the polls in 2026. "BJP's outstanding performance in Assam and West Bengal elections will have a positive impact on the Manipur election next year. I want to extend my wishes to the people of Bengal and Assam," the CM told reporters.

On the demand for the implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Manipur, Mr. Khe-mchand Singh said the government has been trying to constitute a panel for the purpose. "While the Assembly had previously adopted a resolution for its implementation, no steps had been taken so far," he said. Meitei-based civil bodies led by the Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity have demanded the implementation of the NRC to identify illegal immigrants. The Manipur Legislative Assembly had in August 2022, during the tenure of former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, unanimously resolved "to establish the Population Commission of the State and also to introduce and enforce the NRC, said Mr. Khe-mchand Singh.

'Baramati win a tribute to Ajit Dada': Sunetra thanks Oppn., voters for support

NCP chief marks her Assembly debut with record margin of 2.18 lakh votes; Dy. CM Shinde, nephew Rohit Pawar congratulate her; BJP's Akshay Kardile wins Rahuri, the other seat that went to bypolls

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

The ruling Mahayuti won both the constituencies of Maharashtra where bypolls were held on April 23.

While Deputy Chief Minister and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sunetra Pawar secured a landslide victory in Baramati, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Akshay Kardile won from Rahuri.

Speaking to mediapersons after her first Assembly election, the Deputy CM said, "It is a tribute to Ajit Dada's work, his contributions to Maharashtra and Baramati, his deep bond with the people, and his vision for development that remain etched in everyone's hearts. This victory entails the responsibility of carrying forward his dreams and legacy."

The bypoll was necessitated by the death of then Deputy CM and NCP chief Ajit Pawar, who had won the seat seven times, in an air crash on January 28. In Ahilyanagar district's



Maharashtra Deputy CM Sunetra Pawar in Nagpur last week. PTI

Rahuri, Mr. Akshay defeated his nearest rival - NCP (SP)'s Mokate Govind Khandu - by 1,12,587 votes. He is the son of Shivaji Kardile, who was the sitting MLA when he died in October last year.

Ms. Sunetra won by a record margin of 2,18,930 votes. In 2019, Ajit Pawar set a record for the highest victory margin in the Assembly after defeating his nearest rival by 1.65 lakh votes. In a congratulatory post on X, Deputy CM and

Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde stated: "By electing Sunetratai with a record-breaking margin, the people of Baramati have paid a heartfelt tribute to Ajit Dada. There is no doubt that Sunetratai will fulfil the dream of development and progress for Baramati, envisioned by the late Ajit Pawar Dada."

NCP (SP) leader and Ms. Sunetra's nephew, Rohit Pawar, said, "This victory is, as expected, a demonstration of the love Baramati residents have shown for Ajit Dada and a tribute of gratitude paid to him."

Ms. Sunetra extended her gratitude to the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), particularly NCP (SP) president Sharad Pawar and his daughter Supriya Sule, for not fielding any candidate against her.

"Let us all work together with unity for Baramati's development, keeping the youth, farmers, women, entrepreneurs, and every section of society at the centre," she said, thanking the people of Baramati for their support. Her son Jay Pawar called for restraint in celebrations.

Hurdle out of way
Her victory also removes a possible hurdle that may have come in the way of her continuing as the Deputy CM, given that all Ministers are required to become State Legislature members within six months of appointment.

Ms. Sunetra was sworn in as Maharashtra's first woman Deputy CM on January 31.

BJP's Parmar wins Umreth bypoll by over 30,000 votes

Abhinay Deshpande
AHMEDABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Harshad Parmar won the bypoll to the Umreth Assembly seat in Gujarat on Monday, defeating Congress nominee Bhururajsinh Chauhan by a margin of over 30,000 votes. Mr. Harshad secured 85,500 votes while Mr. Chauhan polled 54,757 votes. The April 23 bypoll

was necessitated by the death of sitting BJP MLA Govind Parmar on March 6 due to a heart attack. The BJP fielded Govind's son, marking his first major electoral contest.

'EVMs changed result'
Reacting to the result, Mr. Chauhan alleged discrepancies in electronic voting machines (EVMs), claiming that despite enthusiastic support for the

Congress, the BJP emerged victorious due to "EVM-related issues".

"People enthusiastically voted in favour of the Congress, but due to EVMs, the BJP emerged victorious," said the Congress candidate, adding that a written complaint has been submitted to the election authorities.

The remaining four candidates failed to cross the 1,000-vote mark.

Cong. wins first seats in W.B. after 2021 wipeout

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

The Congress on Monday won the Farakka and Raninagar constituencies, paving the way for the party's return to the Assembly, where it had not won a single seat in the previous Assembly election.

Motab Shaikh, whose name was initially not in the electoral rolls and was included by a tribunal set up by the Supreme Court to look into the deletions, defeated his nearest rival, BJP's Sunil Chowdhuri, by 8,193 votes. The TMC candidate came third in the Murshidabad district constituency.

Mr. Shaikh secured

Motab Shaikh, whose name was initially not included in the rolls, defeated his nearest rival from the BJP by 8,193 votes

63,050 votes while the BJP nominee polled 54,857 votes. TMC's Amirul Islam stood third with 47,256 votes, according to the Election Commission website. From Raninagar, Congress candidate Julfikar Ali defeated by 2,701 votes TMC's Soumik Hossain. The two were neck and neck till the later rounds.

The CPI(M) came in third while the BJP secured the fourth spot.

Like Delhi, West Bengal will reap benefits of PM's policies, says CM

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

West Bengal will reap the benefits of the Centre's schemes, mirroring development in the Capital, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said on Monday, welcoming the Bharatiya Janata Party's success.

Ms. Gupta congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Mi-



Delhi CM Rekha Gupta offering sweets to Education Minister Ashish Sood on Monday. PTI

nister Amit Shah and BJP president Nitin Nabin, saying the results reflect peo-

ple's trust in development-focused governance.

"The people have rejected false slogans and chosen development, transparency and stability," she said, adding that the verdict signals a shift towards "result-oriented politics".

The Chief Minister said West Bengal is now poised to develop with greater momentum through PM's welfare policies.

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD

Walk-in-Interview

A walk-in-interview will be held in the office of Sr. Executive Engineer, O&M Division, BBMB, Punjabi Bagh, Delhi for the following post of Doctor for one year on Part-time basis for 02 hours daily on the date shown against the post. The duty place of the selected doctor will be the office of Dy. Secretary/Coordination, BBMB, Kaka Nagar, New Delhi.

Sr. No.	Name of Post	No. of Post	Date of interview	Time
1.	MO (General Cadre)	01	12.05.2026	11.00AM

Part Time remuneration is as under:-

A	MO (General Cadre)	Rs. 25,000/- per month for 2 hours per day
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The interested candidates may appear before the Selection Committee along with following original certificates and one photocopy of each

- Educational certificates
- MBBS Degree
- ID Proof (Aadhar, Pan or Voter Card)

Special Note:-

- No TA will be paid to the candidates for appearing in the interview.
- Terms & conditions of appointment will be applicable as approved by the Board Secretariate BBMB, Chandigarh.

258/PR/Bd Sect./4 FOR YOUR BETTER TOMORROW SAVE ENERGY TODAY

BEFORE THE HON'BLE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II
5th Floor, KSHB Office Complex, Panampilly Nagar, Cochin-682036
O.A. NO. 548 OF 2025

Canara Bank, Tripunithura : Applicant
Vs.
Surenran V V and Others : Respondent

PAPER PUBLICATION

Whereas, O.A. NO. 548/2025 was listed before Registrar on 23.03.2026 Whereas, this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/notice on the said application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against your for recovery of debts of Rs. 34,66,457.84*. In accordance with sub section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:

- To show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted;
- To disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application;
- You are restrained from dealing with or disposing or secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;
- You shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.
- You shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding Security interest over such assets.

You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before the Registrar of this Debt Recovery Tribunal on 08-05-2026 at 11:00 A.M., failing which the application shall be heard and declared in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this 29th day of April, 2026.

By order of the Tribunal
Sd/- Registrar Debts Recovery Ennakulam

DEFENDANTS

- Mr. Surenran V V, Quarter No. 163 PTS, Malaviya Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi-110017
- Smt. Sushama Surenran W/o Surenran V V, Quarter No. 163 PTS, Malaviya Nagar, South Delhi, Delhi-110017
- Mr. Subrahmanian VV, S/o Vallon, Vennamattathil, Irumpnam, Thiruvankulam Village, Ernakulam - 682309

TRAFFIC ADVISORY

IPL T20 CRICKET MATCH
on 05-05-2026

DELHI CAPITALS VS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
7:00 PM TO 11:30 PM

ARUN JAITLEY STADIUM, FEROSHAH KOTLA GROUND, NEW DELHI

DELHI POLICE
SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

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) Dayargani 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 R/A Kamla Market (Both Carriageways)
- Asaf Ali Road from Turkman Gate to Delhi Gate
- BSZ Marg from Delhi Gate to Ramcharan Aggarwal Chowk / ITO Chowk (Both Carriageways)

ENTRY TO THE STADIUM

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

FREE PARK & RIDE

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

PARKING
Labelled Vehicles

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

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

General Vehicles

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 Hours Traffic Helpline: 011-25844444 / 1095

States

DMK will function as an efficient Opposition

The Hindu Bureau CHENNAI

The outgoing Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday said the DMK, which had functioned efficiently as a ruling party, would now function as an effective Opposition.

In a social media message, the DMK president said he accepted the people's verdict and congratulated the victors on their win. He said the DMK had implemented a range of welfare schemes over the past five years and provided good governance.

"We developed the State in all sectors. We sought votes based on our achievements and for the continuation of welfare schemes," he said.

Mr. Stalin thanked the voters of Tamil Nadu who supported the Secular Progressive Alliance. "We ran a government even for those who did not vote for us. I remained true to all sections and acted according to my conscience. I worked beyond my capacity. I thank the party cadre and alliance partners who worked with me on the ground," he said.

Mr. Stalin added that he had witnessed both successes and failures. "What is important is purpose and ideology. I do not measure everything by victories and defeats. The journey of the DMK will continue without any slack."

A new-gen campaign and faith of youngsters that paid off for TVK

The party's campaign was conducted almost fully on social media, spearheaded by young people, who form one-fifth of the electorate, says author R. Kannan; it was almost as if Vijay got a free pass as the other parties were dismissive of him

M. Kalyanaraman CHENNAI

Many younger voters fervently believed Vijay would come first in the election even as many opinion polls and exit polls put him at third place. They were proved right.

"His was a campaign conducted almost fully on social media and spearheaded by young people who though form only one-fifth of the electorate. It wouldn't be a joke to say that Vijay won where 5G penetration was better," says R. Kannan, biographer of Annadurai and M.G. Ramachandran, former chief ministers of Tamil Nadu. Mr. Kannan added this was an anti-establishment vote that drew in older people too, who



Festive mood: TVK supporters from Singapore celebrating at the party's office in Panayur. R. RAVINDRAN

wanted to roll back the near dominance of the DMK and family rule in Tamil life.

It was almost as if Mr. Vijay got a free pass in the campaign. Other parties were dismissive of him. The DMK simply refused to

acknowledge Mr. Vijay.

Chief Minister M. K. Stalin rarely, if ever, spoke about him in public meetings. Perhaps the DMK thought Mr. Vijay was not important enough to merit much attention or that talking about him would only

elevate his stature.

The DMK focused on its old adversary, the AIADMK, and the ideological force supporting it, the BJP. This had paid rich dividends to the DMK in the past including in the Lok Sabha elections two years ago which it swept.

Perhaps the DMK erred in not criticising Mr. Vijay - for Karur stampede, his engagement level, and other apparent failings. Many of his candidates were fresh faces and that was touted to be a plus point although turncoats from other parties such as the candidate in Kolathur against Mr. Stalin were also given tickets. And the DMK didn't really go after the thin, sometimes dubious, resumes of TVK candidates.

Mr. Vijay, however, had a field day. He targeted the

DMK and went hammer and tongs at them. He used terms that younger people sometimes use to taunt older people. He called Stalin, "uncle", facing all-round criticism for that. Social media reels went several notches further by trolling the DMK.

Repeat of 1967

Most of the big leaders and ministers have lost. In a sense, this is a repeat of 1967 when the DMK came to power.

In that election almost the entire old guard was wiped out. Towering leader K. Kamaraj, who disdainfully declared he would win lying in bed - meaning he didn't have to bother campaigning - lost to a student leader from Chennai's Pachaiyappa's College.

BJP's Bengal sweep fires up Punjab unit; will repeat feat in 2027 poll: Jakhar

Vikas Vasudeva CHANDIGARH

Buoyed by the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) electoral performance in West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry, State unit president Sunil Jakhar on Monday said if the party can come to power in Bengal, it can do the same in Punjab as well. "Punjab will witness similar results in 2027," he said while talking to mediapersons at the party headquarters in Chandigarh.

Pointing out that West Bengal was a major challenge for the party, Mr. Jakhar said: "Under a strong leadership and with the support of the people, that challenge has now been overcome. With the same enthusiasm, the party has begun preparations for the upcoming election in Punjab."

He said the West Bengal results would energise party workers and instil hope. "Law and order in Bengal was poor, and politically motivated oppression was prevalent. Punjab is also facing similar concerns. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government has failed on all fronts," he said, asserting that AAP's exit from Punjab is certain.

Hitting back, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the BJP from Punjab had



BJP workers celebrating the poll results, in Amritsar on Monday. PTI

State in the country but it should never dream of winning from Punjab. Dismissing the party's prospects in the State, he said the BJP leadership should forget that it will ever assume power in Punjab as its "sins against the State and its people are unpardonable."

Injustice with Punjab

"The people of Punjab are well aware of the dubious character of the BJP, and they will definitely teach it a lesson as Punjabis can never forget how the food growers of the State were humiliated during the year-long protest against the farm laws," the Chief Minister said, adding that there is a long history of "injustice and stepmotherly treatment" meted out to Punjab and its people by the BJP.

JMM draws a blank, but finds footing in Assam

Press Trust of India RANCHI

The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) failed to open its account in Assam despite aggressively contesting 16 seats in the 126-member Assembly. The party, however, said the party secured a footprint in Assam, as two

of its candidates emerged the runners up and 14 secured the third position.

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren-led JMM secured 1.18% of the vote share till 7 p.m., which is more than the vote share of CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) Liberation combined, a party office-bearer said.

"We contested the Assembly polls in Assam for the first time. In a short phase of campaigning led by our leader Hemant Soren, we made our presence felt in the northeastern State. We have registered our footprint in Assam. We will continue our struggle for the tribals in the State,"

JMM general secretary and spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya told reporters.

The party's best performance came from Phedricson Hasdak, who secured the second spot from the Gossaigaon constituency with 21.14% of the vote share. Sabharam Basumata of the Bodoland Peo-

ple's Front (BPF) won the seat by a margin of 23,083 votes.

The second best performer from the party was Priti Rekha Barla, who contested from Mazbat seat and bagged the second position with 18.42% vote share. She lost to Charan Boro of BPF by a margin of 55,546 votes.

Delhi Weather max min Delhi City 37 25 Safdarjang 37 25 Palam 36 22

Delhi Palam Today 35°C The weather will be warm and windy. Night will be pleasant. Spell of duststorm and thundershower with strong winds to occur.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 36°C The weather will be very warm. Night will be pleasant. Spell of dust storm with strong winds and light rain and thundershower to occur.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice regarding the death of a person. The notice mentions the name of the deceased and the date of death.

THE HINDU DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division, Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru - 560052.

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal only)

Table with 2 columns: S.No., Name of the Work. Item 1: Annual Maintenance of Storm Water Drains in Shivaji Nagar Constituency.

Calendar of Events: 1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer, Traffic Engineering Cell Division, Room No.09, Ground Floor, Annex Building-3, Greater Bengaluru Authority Office Premises, N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560002.

INVITATION FOR TENDER - (IFT) (Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPP Portal Only)

Table with 2 columns: S.No., Name of the Service. Item 1: Providing Emergency Relief Task Force Team for Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) Control Room.

Calendar of Events: 1) The RFP Documents may be Downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in from 05-05-2026 onwards.

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder. Mr. N SELVA KUMAR PH: 9820350726 selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

Chhattisgarh State Industrial Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Chhattisgarh Undertaking) NOTICE INVITING TENDER (1*Call) (e-Procurement Portal)

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-30, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसिज, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय) (उपग्रह सरकार का उपक्रम), मणसं-02/43, आवास विकास निकट एलाओआइसीओ विलिज, शाहजहाँपुर पत्रांक: 746/E-Tender/136 दिनांक 30.04.2026 ई-निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-30, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसिज, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय) (उपग्रह सरकार का उपक्रम), मणसं-02/43, आवास विकास निकट एलाओआइसीओ विलिज, शाहजहाँपुर पत्रांक: 744/E-Tender/134 दिनांक 30.04.2026 ई-निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-30, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसिज, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय) (उपग्रह सरकार का उपक्रम), मणसं-02/43, आवास विकास निकट एलाओआइसीओ विलिज, शाहजहाँपुर पत्रांक: 747/E-Tender/137 दिनांक 30.04.2026 ई-निविदा सूचना

BENGALURU CENTRAL CITY CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer, Shivajinagara Division, Thimmaiah Road, Queens Road, Bengaluru - 560052. CORRIGENDUM

GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR TOMO RIBA INSTITUTE OF HEALTH & MEDICAL SCIENCE (TRIHMSS) NAHARLAGUN - 761110: ARUNACHAL PRADESH

ADDENDUM In continuation of TRIHMSS advertisement dated 30th April 2026; the 4 (four) posts of SR which were shown for Emergency Medicine & Trauma is now reduced to 3 (three) posts of SR and it is earmarked 1 (one) post of SR for department of General Medicine.

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-30, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसिज, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय) (उपग्रह सरकार का उपक्रम), मणसं-02/43, आवास विकास निकट एलाओआइसीओ विलिज, शाहजहाँपुर पत्रांक: 745/E-Tender/135 दिनांक 30.04.2026 ई-निविदा सूचना

कार्यालय परियोजना प्रबन्धक, यूनिट-30, कन्स्ट्रक्शन एण्ड डिजाइन सर्विसिज, उत्तर प्रदेश जल निगम (नगरीय) (उपग्रह सरकार का उपक्रम), मणसं-02/43, आवास विकास निकट एलाओआइसीओ विलिज, शाहजहाँपुर पत्रांक: 743/E-Tender/133 दिनांक 30.04.2026 ई-निविदा सूचना

IN BRIEF



'Divine appointment' behind MNF resilience: Zoramthanga

Mizo National Front (MNF) president Zoramthanga on Monday asserted that his party's resilience is rooted in divine appointment rather than political or material strength, days after they lost the Aizawl Municipal Corporation election to ruling Zoram People's Movement. Addressing a function at the MNF office in Aizawl, Zoramthanga said, "For over 60 years, god has guided us, and he often uses our weaknesses as a means for us to learn and reflect. To uplift the MNF, god has taught us lessons through our past experiences." PTI

Special court convicts 12 in '93 Gujarat arms landing case

A special TADA court in Gujarat's Jamnagar on Monday convicted 12 persons and acquitted 17 others in the 1993 arms landing conspiracy case. Special TADA Judge R.P. Mogera sentenced 10 accused to five years of rigorous imprisonment (RI), and two to seven years of RI, special public prosecutor Tushar Gokani said. The case pertains to a conspiracy allegedly hatched by fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim to avenge the December 6, 1992, demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya by smuggling a large cache of weapons and explosives, including RDX, into India by sea. PTI

Srinagar resumes its role as J&K's summer capital after hiatus of six years

Offices reopen at the Civil Secretariat as part of the annual shifting from winter capital Jammu; CM calls for effective implementation of on-the-ground directions and improved coordination

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Srinagar on Monday functioned as the full-fledged summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir after a hiatus of six years, with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah accorded a ceremonial guard of honour at Civil Secretariat.

All offices reopened at the Civil Secretariat as part of the annual shifting of the capital from Jammu, the winter capital, which is currently gripped by a heatwave. The annual shifting, locally known as the Darbar Move, was abolished by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in 2020 following a court order.

In 2025, Mr. Abdullah ordered the resumption of the traditional shifting of Jammu and Kashmir's capital. The 150-year-old practice was introduced by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1872. Around 151 government departments shift offices as part of the Darbar



Chief Minister Omar Abdullah inspecting the guard of honour at the Civil Secretariat complex in Srinagar on Monday. ANI

Move, with over 10,000 employees also relocating. "The Darbar Move, which was resumed last year in Jammu, marks a renewed continuity of governance in Jammu and Kashmir, with the full Secretariat now shifting to the summer capital after several years," Mr. Abdul-

lah said. Following the revival of the annual shifting, the Jammu and Kashmir government inaugurated 368 residential units for employees at Sempora in Pampore this year, constructed at a cost of ₹90.65 crore. "These residential quar-

ters will particularly benefit a large section of Darbar Move employees, many of whom have faced persistent challenges in securing suitable accommodation for their families over the years," a government spokesperson said.

On the reopening of offices at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar, Mr. Abdullah chaired a meeting with administrative secretaries. The Deputy Chief Minister, Cabinet Ministers and the Adviser to the Chief Minister were also present, officials said.

Mr. Abdullah emphasised the need for timely execution of works, effective implementation of on-the-ground directions and improved inter-departmental coordination.

Several National Conference (NC) legislators welcomed the revival of the Darbar Move. "We thanked the Chief Minister for the move, as it significantly benefits Srinagar city," said NC legislator Tanvir Sadiq.

Child rights panel seeks faster trial in Pune rape-murder

Chinmay Gaikwad
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights on Monday asked the State government to appoint a special public prosecutor in the rape and murder case of a four-year-old girl in Pune district's Bhor taluka and transfer the case to a fast-track court.

On May 1, which is observed as Maharashtra Day, 65-year-old Bhimrao Kamble allegedly took the girl from Nasrapur village to a location where he sexually assaulted her. The police said the accused then allegedly killed her by crushing her with a stone and buried the body under a pile of cow dung. The victim's family and villagers discovered the incident later that day.

The case triggered widespread protests, including a night-long blockade of the Pune-Bengaluru highway, a police baton charge and a bandh in parts of the region.

The Pune rural police have arrested the accused. A court in Shivajinagar remanded him in police custody until May 7. A case has

been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, along with provisions relating to murder and sexual assault.

'Unfortunate incident'
The chairperson of the child rights body, Sanjay Puranik, said the incident was unfortunate. He added that the commission would recommend that the accused be awarded the maximum punishment under the law and that the government extend full support to the victim's family. He also said a special public prosecutor should be appointed and the case tried in a fast-track court.

The Pune rural police have formed a six-member team, including two women officers, to expedite the investigation. Superintendent of Police Sandeep Singh Gill said the accused would undergo medical examination, chemical analysis and a potency test. "The police are also investigating whether any other person was involved in the crime," he added.

Police records show that the accused had faced two prior charges of sexual offences.

Approach HC over pending plea, SC tells Pappu Yadav

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday granted liberty to Lok Sabha MP Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, to approach the Patna High Court seeking listing of his pending petition for upgradation of his security cover from 'Y' to 'Z' category.

His counsel told a Bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi that the High Court had, on November 19, 2024, issued notice on Yadav's plea seeking security upgradation, but the order was neither uploaded nor was the matter listed for hearing thereafter.

The counsel said the sitting MP from Bihar's Purnia had received threats from the Bishnoi gang and that despite repeated requests before the High Court, his petition had not been listed for hearing after November 2024.

Immensely energised by people's response to 'Sadbhav Yatra': Nishant

Press Trust of India
VALMIKI NAGAR

Janata Dal (United) leader Nishant Kumar on Monday said he felt "immensely energised" by the public response to his maiden outreach programme, the 'Sadbhav Yatra', in Bihar, where his father Nitish Kumar served as Chief Minister for nearly two decades.

The 45-year-old, who entered politics a couple of months ago, launched the yatra in West Champaran district on Sunday, continuing his father's practice of beginning political yatras from the Champaran region.

In a post on X, the JD(U) supremo's heir apparent said: "I feel immensely energised by the affection and blessings received from the public. Heartfelt gratitude to all party workers."

Mr. Nishant reached Valmiki Nagar late on Sunday night after a several-hour



JD(U) leader Nishant Kumar paying tribute to the statue of Mahatma Valmiki during 'Sadbhav Yatra' in West Champaran on Monday. PTI

drive, during which his open vehicle - evocatively named "Sadbhav Yatra", or chariot of goodwill - was showered with flower petals by JD(U) workers, who, according to party insiders, see in him a ray of hope amid uncertainty over the party's political future following his father's exit from government.

Mr. Nishant, who entered politics around the time his father announced his decision to step down as Chief Minister and move to the Rajya Sabha, was initially expected to join the new government headed by Bharatiya Janata Party leader Samrat Choudhary. However, party insiders said he has made it clear

that he would like to engage with the public and party cadres before accepting a berth in the Cabinet or the State legislature.

JD(U) Legislature Party leader Shrawon Kumar, who is accompanying him on the yatra, told reporters: "This is what sets him apart from others. While it is common to see people hanker after power the moment they enter politics, our leader of the future wants to serve the people first."

While addressing the people in Bettiah on Sunday, Mr. Nishant said that just as his father started all his yatras from Champaran - the land of Mahatma Gandhi - he too had done the same thing.

JD(U) spokesperson and MLC Neeraj Kumar had said at a press conference in Bettiah, the West Champaran district headquarters, that "like his father, he is starting a yatra from the land of sage Valmiki".

Portion of bridge collapses in Bihar's Bhagalpur; probe on

Press Trust of India
PATNA

A portion of a key bridge over the Ganga river collapsed in Bihar's Bhagalpur district early on Monday, creating a wide gap in the middle of the structure and prompting authorities to order an investigation, officials said.

No casualties were reported in the incident, which halted traffic on the 4.7-km-long Vikramshila Setu connecting Bhagalpur and Naugachia. Authorities have arranged steamers and boats to ferry people from one side of the river to the other.

Bhagalpur District Magistrate Nawal Kishor Choudhary said, "At around 12.50 a.m., a gap formed near pillar number 133 of the Vikramshila Setu. Shortly thereafter, the slab fell into the river."

"As soon as officials received information about the gap between the slabs, they acted promptly to re-



A slab of the Vikramshila Setu bridge collapsing into the Ganga river in Bhagalpur on Monday. ANI

move all vehicles and people from the spot," Mr. Choudhary said.

Bihar State Bridge Construction Corporation (BSBCC) chairman Chandrashekar Singh said Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary has spoken to the Defence Minister and the Army Chief to ensure alternative arrangements with the help of the Border Roads Organisation and the Army.

Meanwhile, the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Assembly, Tejashwi Ya-

dv, said the collapse of the bridge was "proof of corruption" under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

"Does one need more direct proof of corruption than this? Last month, we warned that this bridge could collapse, but the government ignored it and defended its corrupt system," he said on X.

State Congress president Rajesh Ram said the government "utterly failed" in maintaining the bridge.

'Logistical nightmare': CUET aspirants complain of faraway centres

Shubhangi Kshitiza
Saurav Mahima Rao
NEW DELHI

Allotted exam centres hundreds of kilometres away from their home towns, and some even in different States, students appearing for the Common University Entrance Test (CUET-UG) are grappling with logistical issues apart from travelling expenses. For some, the uncertainty has led them to re-evaluate higher education plans.

CUET, conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for admission to undergraduate courses at Central, State, deemed, and private universities across India, has turned into a logistical nightmare for thousands of aspirants over the years. Over 11-13 lakh students appear for the exam annually, with registrations exceeding 14 lakh in 2026. The tests are



Over 11-13 lakh students take the CUET annually. FILE PHOTO

scheduled to be held between May 11 and May 31 this year. Since the release of the advanced city intimation slips on April 29 by NTA, several students are now reconsidering their decision to take the test.

Varsha Bhardwaj, 18, a student of Global Public School in Sector 67, Gurugram, has been allotted a centre in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, 190 km away. With no one available to

accompany her and the journey requiring an overnight stay on top of the ₹1,800 registration fee she has already paid, she said she will most likely not be able to appear for the examination at all.

"I'm not sure how I would manage going to another State on my own because my parents won't allow me to travel alone and unaccompanied by any male family member,"

the student said. She is not alone in her anxiety.

Satyam, an aspirant from Bihar, has been allotted a centre in West Bengal, nearly 300 km away from his home. With his examinations scheduled across three different dates, arranging accommodation, managing travel expenses, and coping with the physical toll has turned an entrance exam into an endurance test. He said, "I have mailed NTA multiple times. It will be very tough for me to go and come back for my exam on May 15, 18, 20 respectively."

In response to the growing unrest, the testing agency acknowledged the issue on social media saying, "We understand that some of you have been allotted exam centres far from your preferred cities and we have received a number of concerns re-

garding this. This situation is largely due to the high concentration of candidates in a few cities and limited CBT (computer-based test) centre availability."

While it said it is actively reviewing the concerns and exploring best possible solutions to "minimise inconveniences" for students, many are reconsidering their decision to appear for the test, which since 2022 has been made mandatory for admission to Central universities.

Mridul Mayank from Chhattisgarh's Jashpur has been assigned a centre in Raipur rather than his preferred location of Ambikapur. The allocation demands an additional seven hours of travel on two different days, May 14 and 19, in the scorching heat, a daunting prospect for any student but more concerning for Mayank, who has

diabetes. "I am not sure that I'll let him travel and opt for back-to-back exams given his health condition, I cannot overlook his diet and the risk," his mother Vibha said.

The distress reverberates across the country. Siva, a student from Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh, is facing a similar predicament after being assigned a centre in Atchutapuram, far from her home.

Back-to-back papers
Adding to the travelling burden is the scheduling concern. Lakshita Yadav, 18, from Tikli village in Gurugram, has been allotted a centre in Ghaziabad, two hours from home. On May 23, three of her papers - History, Hindi, and Physical Education - are scheduled in the same shift, leaving her with little time between exams on an already strenuous exam day.

Police launches ORS drive for personnel to tackle Rajasthan heat

Press Trust of India
JAIPUR

In view of the prevailing heatwave conditions in Rajasthan, the State police will distribute five lakh oral rehydration salts (ORS) packets among its personnel to protect them from dehydration during duty, an official spokesperson said on Monday.

The initiative was launched on Monday following directions from Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar Sharma, the spokesperson said, adding that Deputy Inspector General (Training) Sharad Chaudhary is overseeing the campaign. The relief material will be supplied to 12 police training centres in Rajasthan, as well as four

centres outside the State. Through range inspectors general, efforts are being made to ensure the packets reach every constable.

"Each personnel will receive 10 ORS packets, which will particularly benefit those deployed in traffic management, law and order, patrolling, and other public duties," the spokesperson said.

He added that the first consignment of 90,000 ORS packets reached the Rajasthan Police Academy on Monday and is being distributed to training centres. Another batch is expected to arrive on Tuesday. The spokesperson added that the campaign is being supported by Ashish Poddar, a native of Jhunjhunu.

IN BRIEF



India resumes wheat exports after a gap of four years

Indian traders have begun exporting wheat for the first time in four years, as ample stocks, higher global prices and firmer freight rates have opened a window for them to make small shipments to buyers in Asia and the Middle East, trade sources said. Consumer goods conglomerate ITC started loading 22,000 metric tons of wheat at the western port of Kandla for shipment to the United Arab Emirates, sources said, declining to be identified. **REUTERS**

National Stock Exchange unveils Electronic Gold Receipt

The National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) on Monday launched Electronic Gold Receipts (EGRs) as a new segment, in a bid to create a more transparent and efficient price discovery of the yellow metal. The move is expected to bridge the age-old gap between physical gold and the financial markets by offering a regulated, secure, and technologically-advanced platform for trading in the precious commodity, the exchange said in a statement. **REUTERS**

Rupee falls 39 paise to close at all-time low of 95.23/USD

Rupee fell 39 paise to close at an all-time low of 95.23 against the U.S. dollar on Monday, as the ongoing Middle East tensions are causing volatility in global markets, keeping oil prices high and raising fears of inflation and economic slowdown. Forex traders said Brent oil, hovering near \$110 per barrel, is putting pressure on oil-importing economies like India. On Thursday, rupee had settled at 94.84/against the USD. **PTI**

Corporate governance issues at Chowgule Steamships

Central to the complaint is the allegation CSL's subsidiary CSOL sold vessels during 2018-19 but sought shareholder approval only subsequently at the annual general meeting in July 2019

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

Allegations of corporate governance lapses, questionable financial transactions and inadequate disclosures at Chowgule Steamships Limited (CSL) have emerged, with promoter-shareholder Ms. Sheela Yeshwantrao Chowgule detailing what she describes as a pattern of irregularities and resistance from the company's management.

Ms. Chowgule, one of the legal heirs of the late industrialist Yeshwantrao Chowgule, has filed complaints before multiple regulatory bodies, including the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), the Registrar of Companies and the Income Tax Department, seeking a comprehensive investigation.

Central to the complaint is the allegation that CSL's subsidiary, Chowgule Steamships Overseas Limited (CSOL), sold vessels during 2018-19 but sought shareholder approval only subsequently at the company's annual general meeting in July 2019. The explanatory statement to shareholders, the complaint notes, did not disclose that the transactions had already been completed, raising concerns over transparency and com-



Many queries: Ms. Chowgule filed complaints before regulatory bodies, including Securities and Exchange Board of India. **REUTERS**

pliance with disclosure norms.

The complaint argues that such post-facto approvals effectively deprived shareholders of meaningful oversight.

Ms. Chowgule has also pointed to financial decisions that, according to her, weakened the company's balance sheet. These include the write-back of over \$99 million in loans owed by CSOL to group companies during 2018-19, which is said to have contributed to a substantial erosion of CSL's net worth. "The issues of ships being sold and money being brought in as loan that is later written off are indeed related," says Ms. Chowgule.

At the same time, several step-down subsidiaries of CSOL—entities incorporated in offshore jurisdictions such as the Marshall Islands that is a well-known flag of convenience—were "systemati-

cally wound up". The complaint notes that these entities had been reported as operational or profitable earlier, but were later dissolved without adequate public explanation.

The complaint highlights what it terms structural governance lapses, including the same individual holding the roles of Managing Director and Chief Financial Officer, a practice it claims is in violation of Section 203 of the Companies Act, 2013.

A Panama-based entity, HAVRE SA, features prominently in the complaint. It is alleged to have engaged in related-party transactions with CSOL, but these were not disclosed until after complaints were made to SEBI in 2023.

The most contentious issue raised relates to Quail Investments Limited, shown in company filings as a foreign promoter-group shareholder holding a 6.23% stake in CSL.

According to Ms. Chowgule, due diligence conducted with authorities in Guernsey revealed that the entity had been compulsorily wound up in July 1974 and had not filed any statutory returns since then. Despite this, Quail Investments is reflected in filings as having extended a loan to CSOL during 2020-21, raising questions about the authenticity of the transaction.

The complaint further points out that regulatory filings list the entity's domicile as the "United Kingdom", whereas Guernsey is not part of the U.K., suggesting the possibility of incorrect or misleading disclosures to authorities.

Chowgule Group went through a family settlement in 2021 and was split into two groups. Sheela Chowgule was arrayed as a member of the group under Vijay Chowgule. She says she is a shareholder in Chowgule Steamships Limited with a stake of 0.32%, comprising of 115,000 equity shares, making her a minority promoter.

Emails and WhatsApp messages to Vijay Chowgule seeking a response to the complaints elicited no response. When called on the phone later, a voice on the other side said, "You have got the wrong number. And you have got the wrong things. Don't call me. I am blocking you."

War impacts April manufacturing PMI

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Manufacturing activity in April 2026 slowed to its second-lowest level in nearly four years, showed a private sector survey of companies, with improvements seen compared to March, but new order levels still remaining historically low.

The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 54.7 in April 2026 from 53.9 in March. However, this level was still the second-lowest in 46 months. A reading above 50 denotes expansion in activity while one below 50 indicates a contraction.

'Mild recoveries'

"April data showed mild recoveries in growth of new business intakes and production among Indian manufacturers, but rates of increase were still the second-weakest since 2022," the report said. "Ex-

ports was a bright area, with firms welcoming the fastest upturn since last September."

Lower readings

The report noted that the two largest sub-components of the PMI — new orders and output — rose since March but readings were still lower than those seen in at least three-and-a-half years.

"Survey participants indicated that advertising and demand resilience supported sales and production, but that growth was hampered by competitive conditions, the war in the Middle East and a reluctance among clients to approve pending quotes," the report said.

It further noted the survey respondents continued to say the war exerted upward pressure on inflation, with input costs and output charges rising at the quickest rates in 44 and six months, respectively.

JAL: Vedanta plea dismissed by NCLAT

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

A company law appeals court rejected a challenge by mining billionaire Anil Agarwal's Vedanta Ltd. to the winning bid by Gautam Adani's group for bankrupt real estate firm Jaiprakash Associates Ltd. (JAL), whose assets include For-

mula One circuit.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) did not find merit in the issues raised by Vedanta and dismissed its two petitions. A Bench held the Committee of Creditors were right in preferring Adani Group's ₹14,535 crore bid over Vedanta's resolution plan.

Households face rising medical inflation

NEWS ANALYSIS

Nivedita S.

Medical inflation in India is rising at an exponential rate every year with many households, despite government support, at risk of piling up large debt if a family member falls chronically ill or has an accident.

The government's 2025-26 Economic Survey showed health inflation slowed to 3% in December 2025 from 6% in 2023. However, the Aon's Global Medical Trends Rate 2026 and other reports put medical inflation at 12-13%.

This is significant as most Indians lack health cover and depend on out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE). In 2025, the estimated average OOPE per hospitalisation case (excluding childbirth) was ₹34,064 (₹31,484 in rural and ₹38,688 in urban) as per the Survey on Health conducted as part of the 80th round of the National Sample Survey. In government hospitals, the average OOPE per hospitalisation was ₹6,631, ₹39,530 in charitable/NGO-run hospitals and ₹50,508 in private hospitals. This is a huge jump from the 75th round where the average medical expenditure was ₹20,135 in hospitalisation cases (excluding childbirth). For a large section of the population, this exceeds monthly household income.

Factors behind inflation

The reasons for the rise in healthcare costs are multifaceted. "Rising medical inflation can be attributed to rapid technological advancement resulting in costlier treatments, increased demand as non-communicable disease burden rises and population ages," Dr. Aashna Mehta, associate professor at



Turning pauper: Families resort to taking loans, selling jewels and property to meet medical expenses. **GETTY IMAGES /ISTOCK**

the Indian Institute of Public Health, said.

She added pharmaceutical inflation (rise in drug price) was also a factor.

The advancement in healthcare relies on technology leading to higher input costs in hospitals and increased imports of costly medical devices and drugs. The fluctuations caused by global supply chain disruptions also contribute.

"When new technology is introduced in healthcare, the initial costs will be high. However, with the streamlining of the technologies and boosting local production, the costs can be reduced," said Dr. M. Muniyandi, Head of Department of Health Economics at the ICMR-National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis.

Privatisation issue

Privatisation of healthcare in India is also a major factor in costs rising. In 2025, 61.25% of hospitalisation cases were at private hospitals as per the Survey on Health. Many patients often had to resort to private health institutions to take certain lab tests and undergo complex surgeries on account of quality issues and absence of these facilities in public hospitals.

Profit-driven model

As public hospitals are overburdened and lack infrastructure, large corpo-

hospitalisation; OOPE as well as expenditure on medicines is left out, which means people access these by paying out of pockets," Dr. Mehta said.

The government's Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) provides ₹5 lakh/ to 12 crore poor and vulnerable families in urban and rural areas for secondary and tertiary healthcare.

However, rejection of claims on account of incorrect documents, excessive lag in reimbursement, fraudulent activities by hospitals and reliance on digital services caused hindrances in its effectiveness.

Another problem is the "missing middle," says Dr. Mehta. "Those who are left out of coverage entirely because they are not poor enough to be eligible for government-funded schemes and not well-off enough to buy private insurance."

Solutions ahead

India's public health expenditure is below 2% of GDP. The Union Budget 2026 allocated ₹1,04,559 crore towards the healthcare sector, which is only 0.26% of GDP. "Most countries that succeeded in keeping healthcare affordable and accessible for all have done so on the back of robust public sector provisioning as well as public spending and subsidies," Dr. Mehta said. She added there was no other alternative to address the rising medical inflation.

The Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010, mandates private and public hospitals to charge the rates for each type of procedure and service within the range determined by the Centre in consultation with the State Government. However, its imple-

mentation lags. As healthcare is a State subject, State governments should step in to form guidelines to enforce this measure to prevent overcharging.

"Strengthening public healthcare network via integration of hospitals is necessary. Patients must be able to move easily from a primary health centre to tertiary care. There must be massive testing and diagnostic facilities in place run by the government," Dr. Muniyandi said. He added the interventions the government introduced for addressing polio, HIV and tuberculosis, which ensured free treatment for vulnerable populations, must now be expanded to other serious illnesses and non-communicable diseases.

To address pharmaceutical inflation, the National List of Essential Medicines 2022 must be expanded. Currently, there are 384 drugs in the list and prices capped by price ceilings via market-based formula.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) list of essential medicines, however, has 520 drugs. Several experts pointed out lack of frequent updation left out several life-saving drugs from the national list.

"Apart from focusing on prevention by adopting a healthy lifestyle and opting for periodic screening against common illnesses, those who can afford to must buy private insurance with ample coverage to protect against catastrophic health expenditure," Dr. Mehta said.

There is also a need to expand the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to include healthcare services apart from medicines to ensure life-saving treatments are readily available for the public irrespective of market conditions.

New India Assurance to focus on retail

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Over the past two years, The New India Assurance Co. Ltd. slowly shifted its focus toward becoming a stronger retail-driven entity. "We believe true insurance penetration lies in reaching the hinterlands and serving populations that have remained largely uninsured," Girija Subramanian, CMD said.

"And while we'll grow at the same pace that we are growing on the corporate accounts, we have an internal target to see we increase retail segment. Our aim is to achieve a balanced 50:50. Currently, the ratio stands at 70:30." The insurer intends to achieve this over the next 2-3 years and internal targets have been set keeping this in mind.

"We have established a dedicated MSME vertical



Girija Subramanian

to serve micro, small, and medium enterprises—a segment that remains largely under-insured or uninsured. There are approximately 6.3 crore MSMEs in India, of which only about 10-11% are insured. Even within this group, many lack adequate coverage. This highlights a significant protection gap and a substantial opportunity to expand insurance penetration in the sector."

Petronet LNG Q4 net up on pre-war prices

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

India's largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) Petronet LNG's consolidated net profit soared 25.3% on a year-over-year basis to ₹1,337.6 crore in the March-ended quarter notwithstanding an about 23% dip in revenue, a dynamic primarily fuelled by favourable gas price regime before the onset of the conflict.

Cost of materials consumed in quarter slid 28.5% on a year-over-year basis to ₹7,746 crore. Revenue declined 23% to ₹9,642.3 crore. The com-

pany also declared a dividend of ₹3 per share.

West Asia impact

Akshay Kumar Singh, MD and CEO, said since March 2, no vessel from Qatar's Ras Laffan has come to its Dahej terminal.

"[Earlier], every month, we used to get 9 to 10 cargoes from Qatar.

"In the months of March and April — the two months we did not get a single cargo, same thing is expected in May, and we are not sure what will happen in June," Mr. Akshay Kumar Singh stated while addressing a separate query.

'No to commodity derivative investments by institutions'

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

The insurance and banking watchdogs are not inclined to allow institutions to invest in commodity derivatives, said SEBI Chairperson Tuhin Kanta Pandey said at an event.

"They were engaged with them and they had a rationale that at this moment they don't feel it is the right time," said Mr. Pandey. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) said it will engage with the Centre to enable banks and pension funds to trade in commodities to promote the market.

Further speaking about the threats from Mythos, Anthropic's large language model being spoken of as a security threat, Mr. Pandey said: "innovation also brings risk. New products may be misunderstood. Technology may be misused. In an interconnected securities market, a single weak link can create wider risks. Regulated entities have to stay ahead of such risks through stronger cyber resilience, continuous monitoring and faster remediation. SEBI is in constant touch with market participants and relevant stakeholders as the latest challenge after Mythos and similar AI models test our resilience. SEBI will soon issue an initial advisory on risks emanating from such models and AI-led vulnerability detection tool. Algorithms may move faster than human controls."

Underlining the need for access and awareness at the same time, he said investor participation must come with responsibility.

LEIPZIG
Two killed after car ploughs into crowd in Germany, driver arrested



A car ploughed into crowd on Grimmaische street in Germany's eastern city of Leipzig on Monday, killing at least two people and injuring several others, authorities said. Mayor Burkhard Jung said authorities did not know of a motive. But he said that "there is no longer any danger. The police have caught the perpetrator." AFP

KATHMANDU
Nepal PM defends eviction of squatters amid mounting criticism



Nepal's newly elected Prime Minister Balendra Shah defended on Monday his push to clear informal settlements from stiff criticism by rights groups, in rare public comments since assuming office. Officials last month began demolishing squatter settlements home to thousands of people on government land in Kathmandu. AFP

LAGOS
Nigeria to evacuate 130 citizens from South Africa after attacks



Nigeria is planning a "voluntary repatriation" of 130 citizens living in South Africa amid fears that anti-immigration violence could spike, the Foreign Ministry said. South Africa has seen repeated waves of xenophobic and anti-migrant protests, including renewed attacks in recent weeks that has targeted mostly people of African origin. AFP

YEREVAN
Europeans have 'gotten message' from Trump on defence: NATO



Europeans have "heard" U.S. President Donald Trump's message of frustration over the Iran war and are "stepping up", NATO chief Mark Rutte said on Monday after Washington said it would withdraw 5,000 troops from Germany. Europe has ramped up its defence spending amid U.S.'s commitment to NATO and the Ukraine war. AFP

UAE says Iran has resumed attacks as the U.S. moves to reopen Hormuz

U.S. military says it intercepted Iranian missiles, sunk six of Tehran's boats as American-flagged ships pass through the strait; UAE says Iran targeted oil facility; Tehran denies both claims, says any safe passage through Hormuz must be coordinated

Associated Press
DUBAI

The U.S. military said it battled Iranian forces and sank six small boats as it moved to reopen the Strait of Hormuz on Monday. The UAE, a key American ally, said it had come under attack from Iran for the first time since a ceasefire took hold in early April.

The attacks appeared to be in response to U.S. President Donald Trump's latest efforts to reopen the strait, a critical waterway for global energy. The U.S. military said two American-flagged merchant ships had transited the strait on Monday. Iran's Revolutionary Guards denied that any commercial ships had crossed the strait. Iranian state media also denied reports that the U.S. had sunk Iranian vessels. The UAE Defence Minis-



A container ship sits at anchor as a small motorboat passes in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran on Monday. REUTERS

try said Iran had launched four cruise missiles, with three shot down and one falling into the sea.

Indian nationals hurt
Authorities in Fujairah said an Iranian drone sparked a fire at a key oil facility, wounding three Indian nationals. The British military reported two cargo vessels ablaze off the UAE. The UAE condemned

what it called "renewed treacherous Iranian aggression" and called for an immediate halt to the attacks.

In Oman, authorities said a residential building near the strait "was targeted," resulting in two foreign workers wounded.

Responding to the accusations, Iranian state media, quoting a senior military official, said it had "no

plans" to target the UAE. Breaking Iran's chokehold on the strait would ease global economic concerns and deny Tehran a major source of leverage.

But reports of new attacks raised doubts as to whether shipping companies would take risks to use the waterway. Iran has said the new U.S. effort is a violation of the fragile truce that has held for more than three weeks.

The U.S.-led Joint Maritime Information Center had advised ships on Monday to cross the strait in Oman's waters, saying it had set up an "enhanced security area."

Admiral Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Central Command, said American forces have successfully opened a passage through the strait that is free of Iranian mines.

He said Iran launched multiple cruise missiles,

drones and small boats at civilian ships, and that U.S. military helicopters sank six of the small boats.

Mr. Trump had warned on Sunday that Iranian efforts to halt passage through the strait "will, unfortunately, have to be dealt with forcefully." He described "Project Freedom" in humanitarian terms, designed to aid stranded seafarers on hundreds of ships that have been stuck in the Persian Gulf since the war began.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency called the effort part of Mr. Trump's "delirium."

Iran's military command has warned that ships passing through the strait must coordinate with them. "We warn that any foreign military force that intends to approach or enter the strait will be targeted," Major General Ali Abdollahi said.

Ukraine targets Moscow skyscraper in rare attack

Agence France-Presse
MOSCOW/KYIV

A Ukrainian drone hit a residential high-rise building in an upscale Moscow neighbourhood in a nighttime attack, the Russian capital's Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said on Monday. "A drone crashed into a building in the area of the Mosfilmovskaya. There are no casualties," Mr. Sobyenin said, referring to an expensive district next to the Moscow film studio and some 10 kilometres from the Kremlin.

He added that the two drones that targeted Moscow were repelled by air defences during the night. Another Ukrainian drone was hit over the Russian capital in the busy morning hours, Mr. Sobyenin said in a later post.

The rare strike on heavily protected Moscow came just days ahead of Russia's annual May 9 parade, which this year will be held without military hardware amid a heightened threat



High-rise tensions: The damaged facade of a high-rise building following a drone attack in Moscow on Monday. REUTERS

from Ukrainian strikes. The parade marking Soviet victory over Nazi Germany has become a central event during President Vladimir Putin's rule.

"They fear drones may buzz over Red Square," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. "This is telling, it shows they are not strong".

Nine killed in Ukraine
Meanwhile, a Russian missile attack killed seven people in an eastern Ukrainian town and a separate attack left two others dead in a southern village, Kyiv said.

A ballistic missile attack on the town of Merefa, outside Ukraine's second city of Kharkiv, killed seven civilians and wounded dozens, regional authorities said.

Separately, a Russian strike killed two people in the village of Vilnyansk.

Vilnyansk lies close to the regional capital of Zaporizhzhia - towards which Russian forces have been grinding.

In Russia, the governor of the Belgorod region said a Ukrainian drone killed a civilian resident in a border area.

Threshold of tension



Artillery units and military vehicles stand on the Israeli side of the border with Lebanon on Monday. Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem condemned Tel Aviv's operations in Lebanon amid a fragile truce, repeating the group's rejection of direct talks. Israeli attacks on Lebanon have killed more than 2,600 people and displaced more than a million since the war began. REUTERS

OPEC exit 'part of long-term plan, not directed against anyone': UAE oil chief

Agence France-Presse
ABU DHABI

The UAE's departure from OPEC, dominated by ally-turned-rival Saudi Arabia, was not targeted at anyone but is part of a broader plan to future-proof its economy, the country's oil chief said on Monday.

The move was part of the long-term project to diversify beyond fossil fuels, said Sultan Al Jaber, CEO of state oil giant ADNOC and the UAE's industry and advanced technology Minister.

The shock decision, which took effect on Friday, followed months of tensions with Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter and OPEC's *de facto* leader, over foreign policy, oil out-



Quota clash: The UAE has long chafed at OPEC production limits championed by Saudi Arabia. AFP

put and war in West Asia, which has strained Gulf economies.

Strained ties
The Gulf neighbours also had a public fall-out in December over Yemen, where they back rival militias.

The UAE had been frustrated with OPEC's quotas, which sought to cap Emirati production at 3.4 million barrels a day, while Abu Dhabi seeks to raise production capacity to five million barrels a day by 2027.

But Mr. Jaber said the

decision to withdraw had purely national considerations in mind.

"The UAE's sovereign decision to reposition itself within the global energy landscape, and to exit OPEC and OPEC+, is not a decision directed against anyone," he said.

The exit of the UAE, which was OPEC's fourth-largest producer, deals a blow to the cartel's ability to control oil prices.

Leaving OPEC "serves our national interests and long-term strategic objectives, aligns with our industrial, economic, and developmental ambitions", Mr. Jaber said.

UAE Energy Minister Suhail Al Mazrouei also said the country had left OPEC "on good terms".

Carney looks to Europe to build new world order

Agence France-Presse
YEREVAN

European leaders talked up independence on defence and closer ties with Canada on Monday, as they gathered in Armenia for a summit clouded by U.S. threats to cut military support.

U.S. President Donald Trump loomed large over the meeting of the European Political Community (EPC) in Yerevan, which was for the first time attended by a non-European leader: Canada's Mark Carney.

"We're destined to submit to a more transactional insular and brutal world and gatherings such as these point to a better way forward," the Canadian Prime Minister told fellow leaders.

Mr. Trump's go-it-alone policies on trade and defence have pushed Canada and Europe closer together, with both now confronting the economic fallout from the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran which has further strained transatlantic ties.

The gathering comes days after Washington announced it would pull



Mark Carney

5,000 U.S. troops from Germany, whose leader, Chancellor Friedrich Merz, has sparred with Mr. Trump over the conflict in West Asia.

"We have to step up our

military capabilities to be able to defend and protect ourselves," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said. The bloc needed "more independence" in security matters, she added.

Like Europe, Canada's economy has been hurt by Mr. Trump's tariffs but Mr. Carney has remained defiant.

Moving to diversify away from its southern neighbour, Ottawa has become the first non-European country to join the EU's defence financing scheme, while seeking to increase cooperation on trade.

"We're the most European of non-European countries, so there's many ways that we can work together," Mr. Carney said.

A biannual political forum, the EPC was established on the initiative of French President Emmanuel Macron in 2022 in response to the invasion of Ukraine.

It was "initially perceived as an anti-[Vladimir] Putin club" but Canada's participation has given it a new "anti-Trump slant", said Sebastien Mailard, a special adviser at the Jacques Delors Institute, a think tank.

Pakistan to return Iranian crew of U.S.-seized ship amid tensions

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan said on Monday it had facilitated the transfer of 22 Iranian crew members from a U.S.-seized vessel, describing the move as a "confidence-building measure" amid fragile diplomatic contacts between Washington and Tehran.

The sailors, who had been held aboard the container ship *Touska*, were flown into Islamabad late on Sunday and were due to be handed over to Iranian

authorities, according to a statement from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

The handover follows a tense maritime standoff in the Gulf of Oman, where U.S. forces intercepted the Iranian-flagged vessel.

President Donald Trump had said the ship carried "a gift from China", an allegation Beijing rejected. Iran has condemned the seizure as "piracy" and a violation of an April ceasefire, urging the UN to intervene.

Pakistan has positioned

itself as a mediator for the war in West Asia, hosting talks aimed at reducing friction between the United States and Iran.

'Rare instance'
The transfer of the crew was coordinated with both sides, Pakistan said, reflecting a rare instance of practical cooperation despite wider tensions over sanctions, shipping routes and regional security.

The vessel itself is expected to be returned after repairs.

IN CHARGE

Back spasm rules out Hardik, Suryakumar leads MI against LSG



EMMANUAL YOGINI

Suryakumar Yadav led Mumbai Indians against Lucknow Super Giants on Monday as regular skipper Hardik Pandya was unavailable for selection. "Hardik is not well, so stepping into his shoes," Suryakumar said at the toss. The franchise confirmed that Hardik missed the match due to a back spasm.

LATEST UPDATE

Dhoni hasn't travelled to Delhi, but he is steadily improving: Simons



FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

M.S. Dhoni hasn't travelled to the national capital for Chennai Super Kings' IPL clash against Delhi Capitals. CSK bowling coach Eric Simons said that Dhoni, who is yet to play this season, was steadily improving after a calf injury. "He's not with us, but steadily improving. He knows when he's ready to play," said Simons.

CONTINUED ABSENCE

Injured Salt returns to England for scans on finger injury



ANI

RCB opener Phil Salt has returned to England for scans on a finger injury. The injury kept Salt out of RCB's last three matches, with fellow Englishman Jacob Bethell stepping in at the top of the order. According to *ESPNCricinfo*, the 29-year-old "damaged a finger on his left hand" while fielding during RCB's defeat to DC.

STEPPING UP

Washington handled the pressure well against PBKS, says Ashwin



VIJAY SONEJI

Washington Sundar's innings was extremely important because it addressed a key question around Gujarat Titans' middle-order. Washington has often been used as a flexible option, but he stepped up to handle the pressure. It was a composed and clinical effort to get the team over the line — R. Ashwin.

Rickelton, Rohit combine to power MI past LSG

The left-right pair stitches together a 143-run opening stand as the five-time champion chases down 229 with ease; the Mumbai outfit keeps its playoff hopes alive; Pooran's blitz in vain

IPL-19

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

After three weeks on the sidelines nursing a hamstring injury, Rohit Sharma made a grand return to IPL 2026 at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday.

Rohit wasted little time reminding everyone of his class, producing 84 off 44 balls (6x4, 7x6) to breathe life back into Mumbai Indians' flickering playoff hopes and script a commanding six-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants.

Back with a bang

As a packed stadium chanted his name, a nonchalant Rohit eased into his innings before taking on Mohammed Shami with a couple of early sixes. Alongside Ryan Rickelton (83, 32b, 6x4, 8x6), he stitched together a 143-run opening stand as Mumbai chased down LSG's 228 for five with ease.

On a batting-friendly surface, Rohit arrived as an Impact Player and made it count. He collected 21 runs off Avesh Khan in the sixth over.

All-out attack

Rickelton attacked from the outset. He continued in the same vein before being dismissed by Mohsin Khan. The South African fell to the left-arm pacer af-



Lighting up Wankhede: Rickelton and Rohit tore into the LSG bowlers and made it a no-contest. EMMANUAL YOGINI

ter having struck him for a four and two maximums in the same over. Rohit perished when he

looked set for a hundred. He offered a straightforward catch to Shami off M. Siddharth's bowling. By

then, however, Mumbai had seized control. Despite losing Tilak Varma and stand-in captain

Suryakumar Yadav in quick succession, Naman Dhir stood firm and ensured there were no

hiccup. Earlier, Nicholas Pooran rediscovered form with a blistering 16-ball fifty.



SCOREBOARD

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Mitchell Marsh c Naman b Bosch 44 (25b, 4x4, 3x6), Josh Inglis c Suryakumar b Ghazanfar 13 (5b, 3x4), Nicholas Pooran c Rickelton b Bosch 63 (21b, 1x4, 8x6), Rishabh Pant c Rickelton b Jacks 15 (10b, 1x4, 1x6), Aiden Markram (not out) 31 (25b, 1x4, 1x6), Akshat Raghuvanshi c & b Raghu 11 (7b, 1x6), Himmat Singh (not out) 40 (31b, 2x4, 2x6); Extras (nb-4, w-7): 11; Total (for five wickets, in 20 overs): 228.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-29 (Inglis, 2.3 overs), 2-123 (Pooran, 8.1), 3-125 (Marsh, 8.5), 4-148 (Pant, 10.4), 5-160 (Raghuvanshi, 12.1).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Deepak Chahar 4-0-43-0, Bumrah 4-0-45-0, Ghazanfar 4-0-50-1, Jacks 2-0-34-1, Bosch 2-0-20-2, Raghu 4-0-36-1.

MUMBAI INDIANS

Ryan Rickelton c Inglis b Mohsin 83 (32b, 6x4, 8x6), Rohit Sharma (Impact Player for Raghu) c Shami b Siddharth 84 (44b, 6x4,

7x6), Tilak Varma c Markram b Siddharth 11 (13b), Suryakumar Yadav c Pooran b Shami 12 (7b, 2x4), Naman Dhir (not out) 23 (12b, 3x4, 1x6), Will Jacks (not out) 10 (4b, 1x6); Extras (lb-2, w-4): 6; Total (for four wickets, in 18.4 overs): 229.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-143 (Rickelton, 10.5), 2-177 (Rohit, 13.6), 3-189 (Tilak, 15.3), 4-213 (Suryakumar, 17.4).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING

Shami 4-0-53-1, Mohsin 4-0-47-1, Prince 3-0-24-0, Avesh 3-4-0-56-0, Siddharth (Impact Player for Marsh) 4-0-47-2.

Toss: Mumbai Indians.

Player-of-the-Match: Rickelton. MI won by six wickets with eight balls to spare.

Next assignment

LSG: May 7 vs. RCB
Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

MI: May 10 vs. RCB
Raipur, 7.30 p.m.

After Josh Inglis departed early, Pooran (63, 21b, 1x4, 8x6) launched a stunning counterattack, dismantling spinners Will Jacks and A.M. Ghazanfar. He shared a 94-run stand with Mitchell Marsh (44, 25b, 4x4, 3x6).

Six-hitting spree

Pooran's eight sixes left the Mumbai bowlers gasping, with even Jasprit Bumrah conceding 21 in an over as LSG surged to 90 for one in the PowerPlay.

Corbin Bosch eventually broke the stand by removing Pooran, with Rickelton

taking the catch behind the stumps. He also dismissed Marsh four deliveries later to trigger a min-collapse as Rishabh Pant and Akshat Raghuvanshi also got out quickly.

Recovery

An unbroken 68-run stand between Himmat Singh and Aiden Markram pushed LSG well past the 200-run mark, but it proved insufficient.

Mumbai returned to winning ways, keeping its campaign alive and reigniting belief within the dressing room.

Capitals, Super Kings aim to stay afloat in playoff race

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

A hair's breadth separates Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings right now. After nine matches each, both sides have eight points in their kitty, with CSK in sixth position on the basis of a superior net run rate of 0.005 in comparison to the seventh-placed Capitals' -0.895.

As the league phase of IPL-19 approaches the business end, infusing intrigue is the possibility of a mid-table muddle with an eye on the playoff spots. It is in this context that the joust between these two teams at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Tuesday occupies prime importance. The victor will close the gap on Sunrisers Hyderabad, Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Titans, each of whom has 12 points from 10 matches, while the vanquished outfit will drift further away from the pack.

For DC, a seven-wicket win against Rajasthan Royals in its most recent outing was a much-needed lift. After chastening losses



Net-effect: The big-hitting Brevis can take the game away from the opposition if he gets going. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

to Punjab Kings and Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Axar Patel's men exhibited character in Jaipur to chase down a target of 226. Pathum Nissanka's return to the line-up worked well, with the Sri Lankan opener notching up his first IPL half-century.

Concerns linger in the bowling department, which has allowed the opposition to rack up 220-plus totals in three of the previous four games. The host will need Mitchell Starc and Lungi Ngidi, who

has had the prescribed period of rest after suffering concussion against PBKS, to strike in tandem.

If DC stuttered after a solid start, CSK has found its footing in recent encounters. The five-time champion, which will be without M.S. Dhoni on Tuesday as well, has won four of its last six matches. With every game from hereon bearing serious implications on the race for the playoffs, neither team can afford to put a foot wrong. Who will blink first?

Two overseas quicks a result of Plan A failing, says Munaf

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

For its first seven games in IPL-19, Delhi Capitals chose to field one fast bowler and three specialist batters from the permitted quota of four foreigners in the starting line-up.

But having failed to defend 264 against Punjab Kings, Axar Patel and Co. have tweaked their combination by playing two overseas quicks in the last two matches. Dushmantha Chameera and Kyle Jamieson featured against Royal Challengers Bengaluru, and the latter teamed up with Mitchell Starc in Capitals' seven-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals.

According to DC bowling coach Munaf Patel, the change in strategy was dictated by the failure of Plan A, which entailed Mukesh Kumar and Aaqib Nabi taking the new ball. On Tuesday, Starc is likely to be accompanied by the fit-again Lungi Ngidi.

"The two Indian pacers, Aaqib and Mukesh, bowl with the new ball. If you



Nabi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

use domestic fast bowlers, you can add more overseas batters. That was the plan at the start of the tournament. But when something isn't successful, you have to move to another plan. Our Plan A fell short," Munaf conceded.

Miller may sit out again

As a consequence, David Miller had to warm the bench against Royals. With Pathum Nissanka making the most of his opportunity with a sparkling knock, the South African's situation is unlikely to change. "Since we had to play two overseas fast bowlers, only one between Nissanka and Miller could play".

Simons backs Brevis and Dube to return to form

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

It won't be long before Dewald Brevis and Shivam Dube come good for Chennai Super Kings in IPL 2026, bowling coach Eric Simons said on Monday.

While Brevis has underwhelmed with 64 runs in four innings after an impressive debut campaign for CSK in 2025, Dube hasn't quite made the match-winning impact that the burly big-hitter is capable of with his long levers.

Simons, however, threw his weight behind the duo.

When and not if

"Nothing's ailing them. Throughout this tournament, we've seen top players struggle for a period and then have a breakout innings. When you've got quality, it's just a case of when it happens rather than if it happens.

"So we are not overly concerned about it. They play in a tough period of the game. You can go out there and try to accelerate and get out, and before you know it, two or three

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Punjab Kings	9	6	2	1	13	0.855
Royal Challengers	9	6	3	0	12	1.420
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	6	4	0	12	0.644
Rajasthan Royals	10	6	4	0	12	0.510
Gujarat Titans	10	6	4	0	12	-0.147
Chennai Super Kings	9	4	5	0	8	0.005
Delhi Capitals	9	4	5	0	8	-0.895
Kolkata Knight Riders	9	3	5	1	7	-0.539
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	0	6	-0.649
Lucknow Super Giants	9	2	7	0	4	-1.076

Today's match

DELHI CAPITALS vs CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 32
DC 12 | CSK 20
PREVIOUS MEETING
CSK won by 23 runs, 2026
LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOJHOTSTAR

innings have gone by. It's just a case of when they come right," the 64-year-old South African reasoned on Monday.
After a sluggish start to

the tournament, CSK has picked up pace in recent weeks. If the five-time champion can sustain its run, the teams above it will be subjected to intense pressure.

"I think we've got some momentum. Teams need an identity and sometimes teams get an identity really quickly. Sometimes it comes down to one person scoring runs or taking wickets. We have a sense of our identity now. We always knew the way we wanted to play, but the parts have fallen together," Simons stated.

IN BRIEF



Real Madrid defender Mendy suffers injury

Defender Ferland Mendy was injured 10 minutes into Real Madrid's 2-0 win over Espanyol in the Spanish league on Sunday. The latest setback could end any hopes of him making France's squad for the World Cup. The 30-year-old Mendy, who has suffered a series of injuries this season, was a member of the French squad at the 2024 European Championship but hasn't been called up since then. Mendy has played only nine matches with Real Madrid this season.

Honours even between Odisha, Bengaluru in ISL

Odisha FC and Bengaluru FC played out a 1-1 draw in the ISL at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Goa on Monday. OFC's Rahim Ali broke the deadlock in the 34th minute before Braian Sanchez's 48th-minute penalty restored parity.



Villarreal coach Marcelino to leave at the end of the season

Villarreal will be looking for a new coach when it plays back-to-back Champions League seasons for the first time after confirming Marcelino will leave at the end of the season. Marcelino's second spell as coach at Villarreal began in 2023 and has now seen the team deliver one of its best-ever seasons, placing third in La Liga with four games remaining, on track for its best result in 18 years. That means Champions League qualification two years running, a club first.



Rising star Seixas to make his Tour de France debut in July

French teenage prodigy Paul Seixas announced on Monday that he will ride the Tour de France in July for the first time, raising hopes of a first home winner in more than four decades. No Frenchman has won the Tour since Bernard Hinault did so for a record-equalling fifth time in 1985. The 19-year-old Seixas has been in stunning form this season, winning seven races and pushing Tadej Pogacar close in Liege-Bastogne-Liege Monument one-day classic a week ago.

LIVE TELECAST

- IPL:** Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.
- IPL:** Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
- ISL:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
- Champions League:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & LIV, 12.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

India's poor run at Shotgun WC continues

Press Trust of India
ALMATY (KAZAKHSTAN)

India's Ganemat Sekhon shot 70 out of 75 to end day one just a point outside the top eight, while Mairaj Ahmad Khan endured another disappointing outing in the skeet competition at the ISSF World Cup Shotgun here on Monday. 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 and the finals scheduled for Tuesday.

In men's event, Mairaj began with a 25 before slipping to 23 and 23, ending the day on 71 in 26th place. Anantjeet Singh Naruka also opened with a perfect 25 but managed only 23 and 21 thereafter to total 69. Gurjoat Singh Khanguara shot 22, 24 and 24 for an aggregate of 70, placing him at 33rd. Among women, Raiza Dhillon shot 69 (22, 23, 24).

Three-peat hero Antonelli the toast of Mercedes in Miami

The 19-year-old is the youngest to lead the championship; Norris loses his advantage due to a failed pit-stop strategy; Piastri and Russell finish third and fourth after a race that was brought forward by three hours due to inclement weather

FORMULA ONE

Reuters
MIAMI

Italian teenage prodigy Kimi Antonelli won the Miami Grand Prix for Mercedes on Sunday and wrote his name in the Formula One record books with his third victory in a row from pole position. The youngest driver ever to lead the championship, at 19 years old, also became the first to take his first three career wins from the top slot on the grid and also the first in five editions of the race to win in Miami from the front row.



Exuberant lad: Italian prodigy Antonelli's performance has been top-notch. GETTY IMAGES & AFP



"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 to stretch his lead to 20 points after four rounds – all won by Mercedes. Norris, winner of the Saturday sprint, had a three-second lead at one point but lost out after the pit-stops when Antonelli came in first for a change of tyres and then got ahead of the Briton, who pitted one lap later. Australian Oscar Piastri, last year's winner, completed the podium for McLaren after a lively finish to the race with Antonelli's teammate and closest rival George Russell taking fourth.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished fifth after starting on the front row and spinning full circle on the opening lap without collecting anyone or being hit by other cars and dropping to 10th. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was sixth, passed by Russell and Verstappen in the final corners as he wrestled with a damaged car after leading at the start and then hitting the barrier at the end, while teammate Lewis Hamilton finished seventh.

The Italians' connection When Antonelli clinched his first career win at the Chinese GP, Jannik Sinner won the Indian Wells Masters. A few weeks later, Antonelli won in Japan and Sinner bagged the Miami Masters. This weekend, Sinner triumphed at the Madrid Masters and Antonelli took the top step of the podium in Miami. Leclerc faced a post-race investigation for multiple alleged breaches of track limits on the final lap while Verstappen also faced a stewards' enquiry for crossing the white line at the pitlane exit. The safety car was deployed on lap six after two accidents, Red Bull's Isack Hadjar skidding into the wall and then Alpine's Pierre Gasly sent cartwheeling off after contact with the Racing Bulls of Liam Lawson.

The race was brought forward by three hours after forecasts predicted lightning and thunderstorms and was completed without any weather interruption. **The results:** 1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) 1h 33m 19.273s; 2. Lando Norris (McLaren) +3.264s; 3. Oscar Piastri (McLaren) 27.092; 4. George Russell (Mercedes) 43.051; 5. Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing) 43.949; 6. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) 53.753; 7. Franco Colapinto (Alpine) 61.871; 8. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 64.245; 9. Carlos Sainz (Williams) 82.072; 10. Alexander Albon (Williams) 90.972. **+1 lap:** 11. Ollie Bearman (Haas); 12. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi); 13. Esteban Ocon (Haas); 14. Arvid Lindblad (RB Formula One Team); 15. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin); 16. Sergio Perez (Cadillac F1 Team); 17. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); **+2 laps:** 18. Valtteri Bottas (Cadillac). **DNF:** Nico Hulkenberg (Audi), Liam Lawson (RB), Pierre Gasly (Alpine), Isack Hadjar (Red Bull). **Standings: Drivers:** 1. Antonelli 100; 2. Russell 80; 3. Leclerc 59; 4. Norris 51; 5. Hamilton 51. **Constructors:** 1. Mercedes 180; 2. Ferrari 110; 3. McLaren 94; 4. Red Bull Racing 30; 5. Alpine 23.



Norris. AFP

Lights to flag at Miami GP

Anirudh Velamuri

The journey in numbers after the 57-lap race at Miami on Sunday. **1:** Antonelli is the first Mercedes driver to win three back-to-back races since Hamilton in 2021. **1:** Norris' first podium finish as reigning World champion. **1:** Williams' first double points finish since Monaco last year. **3:** The Italian is the third driver (Senna in 1985 and Schumacher in 1994) to take the first three career poles in consecutive races. **3:** Antonelli is the third driver (Damon Hill in 1993 and Mika Hakkinen in 1997-98) to clinch his first three career wins in consecutive Grands Prix. **3:** Norris has equalled Verstappen's record of most podium finishes in Miami. **100:** Verstappen is the first to score 100 points or more at the Miami International Autodrome. **200:** The Dutchman is the sixth driver to score points at 200 Grands Prix. **250:** Bottas is the 14th to start as many as 250 Grands Prix.



Viva Inter! Inter Milan sealed its 21st 'Scudetto' on Sunday. AFP

Inter regains Serie A crown; Real makes Barcelona wait

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MILAN

Inter Milan won its third Serie A title in six seasons, and 21st overall, on Sunday thanks to a comfortable 2-0 win over Parma at a jubilant San Siro. Marcus Thuram's side-footed finish just before half-time set Inter on its before Henrikh Mkhitaryan's second-half goal put the Scudetto beyond doubt. With three matches left, Inter has a 12-point lead over reigning champion Na-

poli and 15 more than third-placed AC Milan. Less than a year after losing the 2025 title race by a point and collapsing to a 5-0 humiliation by Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League final, Inter is back at the top. In LaLiga, Vinicius Junior struck twice for Real Madrid in a 2-0 win over Espanyol on Sunday to make leader Barcelona wait to be crowned champions. The Catalans would have completed the title defence if Real dropped points, but Alvaro Arbeloa's side trimmed the gap

on Barca to 11 points, with four matches remaining. **The results: Serie A:** Juventus 1 (Vlahovic 62) drew with Verona 1 (Bowie 34); Inter Milan 2 (Thuram 45+1, Mkhitaryan 80) bt Parma 0. **LaLiga:** Getafe 0 lost to Rayo Vallecano 2 (Camello 38, Nteka 73); Real Betis 3 (Hernandez 22, 58, Abde 45) bt Real Oviedo 0; Espanyol 0 lost to Real Madrid 2 (Vinicius 55, 66). **Premier League:** Aston Villa 1 (Buendia 90+6) lost to Tottenham 2 (Gallagher 12, Richarlison 25). **Bundesliga:** Freiburg 1 (Lienhart 75) drew with Wolfsburg 1 (Koulierakis 55); Borussia Moenchengladbach 1 (Tabakovic 88) bt Borussia Dortmund 0; St. Pauli 1 (Ceesay 87) lost to Mainz 2 (Tietz 6, Mwene 40).

Atletico, Arsenal have everything to play for

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Agencies
LONDON

For Atletico Madrid striker Julian Alvarez, the consequences of Tuesday's Champions League semifinal clash at Arsenal may go beyond booking a ticket to Budapest at the end of May.



Alvarez. REUTERS

The Argentine forward, linked with a move to Arsenal as well as to Barcelona, has seemed at times to be getting itchy feet in the Spanish capital. It is crucial for coach Diego Simeone and the club to convince Alvarez that he can achieve his dreams at Atletico by ousting Mikel Arteta's Premier League leader in London. Atletico showed it needs no inferiority complex when it heads to the Emirates Stadium, with both sides yet to win the trophy, arguably the biggest clubs never to do so. Simeone's side had the better of the encounter at its Metropolitan stadium last week. Arsenal left bemoaning a penalty award which was later cancelled by VAR.

Semifinal second leg Arsenal vs. Atletico Madrid (1-1 each; Wednesday at 12.30 a.m.) Bayern Munich vs. Paris Saint-Germain (PSG leads 5-4; Thursday at 12.30 a.m.)

Simeone rotated his whole line-up for the weekend's LaLiga win at Valencia, heading to London with a fresh and rested group of players, looking to seal a return to the Champions League final for the first time in a decade. The club is desperate to win the trophy for the first time, but beyond that, it can show Alvarez he does not need to look elsewhere to succeed.

Indians end campaign on disappointing note

ATHLETICS

Press Trust of India
GABORONE (BOTSWANA)

Amoj Jacob and Ragul Kumar suffered injuries during the men's 4x400m and 4x100m races respectively as India ended its World Athletics Relays campaign on a disappointing note on the second day of competitions, here on Sunday. The Indian camp had high hopes of making the 2027 World Championships in the men's 4x400m relay but the team did not finish the race as Jacob suffered cramps and pulled out after taking the baton from the first-leg runner Dharamveer Choudhary. Rajesh Ramesh and Vishal T.K. were to run in the third and fourth legs. In men's 4x100m, third-leg runner Ragul fell on the track after failing to hand over the baton inside the exchange zone to fourth-leg runner Gurinder Singh. Harsh Santosh Raut and Animesh Kujur ran the first two legs. The Indian quartet was disqualified.

Chinese supremacy continues in Thomas Cup

BADMINTON

Sports Bureau

World No. 1 Shi Yu Qi led from the front as China subdued France 3-1 to retain the Thomas Cup at Forum Horsens in Denmark on Sunday. Shi, who had recently recovered from a stomach ailment, held off World No. 4 Christo Popov 21-16, 16-21, 21-17 in an 85-minute encounter to help the Asian badminton powerhouse draw first blood.

France, making its debut in the summit clash, hit back in style as World No. 10 Alex Lanier stunned World No. 7 Li Shi Feng 21-13, 21-10 in 43 minutes to level the tie. **Marathon** The third singles was a fascinating affair before World No. 15 Weng Hong Yang edged World No. 17 Toma Junior Popov 22-20, 20-22, 21-19 in a 96-minute marathon to put China ahead. The duo of He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu, ranked

99, then stepped up to take out World No. 52 Eloi Adam and Leo Rossi, 21-13, 21-16 in 38 minutes to help the Asian claim its 12th crown. India, which won in 2022, added to its bronze finishes in 1952, 1955 and 1979. **The results (final):** China bt France 3-1 (Shi Yu Qi bt Christo Popov 21-16, 16-21, 21-17; Li Shi Feng lost to Alex Lanier 13-21, 10-21; Weng Hong Yang bt Toma Junior Popov 22-20, 20-22, 21-19; He Ji Ting & Ren Xiang Yu bt Eloi Adam & Leo Rossi, 21-13, 21-16).



Podium finish: India, the 2022 champion, with its fourth bronze medal after similar achievements in 1952, 1955 and 1979. GETTY IMAGES



Work in progress: Verstappen enjoyed driving a heavily upgraded car, but was set back by a spin on the opening lap. GETTY IMAGES

Red Bull still lacks a bit, feels Verstappen

The four-time World champion says that despite the car's improvements, he could not have realistically fought for the win in Sunday's Miami GP

FORMULA ONE

Agence France-Presse
MIAMI

Max Verstappen said Red Bull had improved a lot but still lacks the pace and performance to challenge for wins, after finishing fifth in Sunday's Miami Grand Prix.

The four-time World champion enjoyed driving a heavily upgraded car as he sought success for the first time this year, but was set back by a spin on the opening lap.

"I lost the rear and tried to minimise the time loss," he said of his chaotic first lap, which led to him making an early pit stop.

"Early on, the hard tyre

didn't work for us and it was tough," he added. "We dropped quite heavily down the pack.

"Maybe I could've been in the place Oscar (Piastrri) finished (third) if we did enough, but it's always easy to say that afterwards.

"Unfortunately, we are still lacking a bit, but we'll be better. I don't know how much more pace there is."

The Dutch racer, 28, said that despite the car's improvements, he did not think he could have realistically fought for the win in Miami.

Tough going

"It was tough," he said. "We've improved a lot this weekend, but still lack a bit and for sure there's more pace to unlock."

Verstappen's Red Bull teammate Isack Hadjar started from the back of the grid after being disqualified from qualifying and then crashed out of the race on lap six.

He hit the barriers in the chicane and the crash triggered a safety car interval that helped Verstappen by giving him a cheap pit stop.

"It was a tough one," said Hadjar. "It was easy points considering the car I had so I feel I just threw it all away.

"I can't really remember what happened because it went so very quickly. It felt like it was a big hit and I didn't see it coming. The car was broken and I couldn't stop it.

"It just shows how much you need to be focused and I wasn't".

We shouldn't feel sorry for ourselves: Liverpool's van Dijk

FOOTBALL

Agence France-Presse
LONDON

Virgil van Dijk admitted Liverpool's troubled season has been "unacceptable" after a 3-2 defeat at Manchester United dented its push to qualify for the Champions League.

The Reds' loss against their bitter rivals on Sunday left them in fourth place in the Premier League.

Dismal title defence

Arne Slot's side, crowned champion 12 months ago, has mounted a dismal title defence, forcing it to settle for fighting to reach next season's Champions League.

After its 18th defeat in all competitions this term, Liverpool still needs four points from its remaining three games to seal a place in Europe's elite club competition via a top five finish.

Slot was without star forwards Mohamed Salah, Hugo Ekitike and Alexander Isak, as well as two goalkeepers, through injury against United.

But Liverpool captain van Dijk conceded fitness issues could not be used as an excuse for such a turbulent campaign.

"I'm not here to make excuses. It's been a very disappointing season, an unacceptable season for us, and it's tough," he said.

"We shouldn't feel sorry for ourselves whatsoever. We have to work, we have to turn this around and make sure that next season



Taking accountability: van Dijk said fitness issues could not be used as an excuse for such a turbulent campaign. REUTERS

these things don't happen because it's not Liverpool."

van Dijk hit back at criticism of Liverpool players' use of their free time after several were pictured abroad before the United game.

"I'm not sure it's a holiday. It's a city trip," the Dutch defender said.

"But I think if you have one day off, and you don't have many days off, they decide what they want to do with their families. We are not kids. Everyone is an adult."

Put to him that some critics believe the team has too much time off, van Dijk said: "Really? I wish we had a couple more days off at times because I think it works both ways.

Finding balance

"You see Pep Guardiola giving (Manchester City) three days off, for example, the last weeks in a row and they are doing pretty well. It is finding the right balance."

Slot is under fire for failing to keep Liverpool in the title race in a season that will end without silverware.

No repeat

And van Dijk, who has won the Premier League and Champions League during his time at Anfield, is determined to ensure Liverpool don't endure a repeat of their frustrating form next season. "Like anyone else, obviously, personally I want this to be solved. I want us to be what I've experienced over my time here. I want to be successful," he said.

Achieving consistency

"Consistency is the most difficult thing in any job, in anything you do, but it is the best way to get results and also be successful. That's what we have to try and find.

"We have to realise that next season we can't repeat (this). It's unacceptable."

Bengal Janata Party!



Indian women gear up for a stern test against the Japanese

AFC U-17 ASIAN CUP

Press Trust of India
SUZHOU (CHINA)

India faces a stern test against powerhouse Japan as it looks to bounce back from the defeat in the opening game and revive its campaign in the AFC U-17 Women's Asian Cup 2026, here on Tuesday.

The Young Tiggers lost their opening Group B match to Australia 2-0 and find themselves in a situation where every goal will matter after Japan crushed Lebanon 13-0 to garner three points.

Japan, among the most technically refined sides in women's football, brings in a formidable pedigree into the clash, having reached the final in seven of the nine editions and lifting the

title four times.

The Asian giant also underlined its global dominance by clinching the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup crown in 2014.

Though Japan will start the overwhelming favourite, India remains undaunted, with head coach Pamela Conti asserting that her players will take the field with a clear and focused mindset.

Excited

"We've just finished training, and we are quite excited because we are going to play against one of the strongest teams in the world. I, as a coach, and the players as well, believe that we need to play a perfect match if we want to win. But beyond that, just being there, experiencing it, and enjoying the game is also important," said Conti.

Indian archers have their task cut out in World Cup Stage 2

Press Trust of India
SHANGHAI

The Indian archery team will head into another major tournament 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 here on Tuesday.

With the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya scheduled from September 19 to October 4, India's build-up looks far from convincing.

The season began on a disappointing outing at the World Cup Stage 1 in Mexico, where the only saving grace was a gold medal for the women's compound team. That result did little to hide deeper concerns.

Despite competing in a depleted field, with powerhouse South Korea skipping the event, India's recurve archers failed to step up. It turned into a reality check as none of the leading names, including Tarundeep Rai, Atanu Das, B. Dhiraj, Deepika Kumari and Ankita Bhakat could reach the medal rounds. Atanu and Dhiraj managed



Big challenge: An out-of-form Dhiraj needs to raise his game. FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

pre-quarterfinal finishes before bowing out.

The men's recurve team, seeded 10th, suffered an opening-round exit after losing to Spain in straight sets. The women's team cleared the first hurdle but went down to Turkey in the quarterfinals.

In the individual section, Deepika exited in the second round. Ankita, Simranjeet Kaur and Kumkum Mohod progressed one round further before losing in the third. The mixed team pairing of Dhiraj and Kumkum also endured a forgettable outing, crashing out in the opening round to Brazil.

Despite such an underwhelming performance, the national federation retained the same squad for the first two World Cup

stages, with trials for the Asian Games and the next World Cup legs slated in Sonapat from May 15.

As a result, India will once again rely on an ageing Tarundeep, an out-of-form Dhiraj, the inconsistent Atanu and veterans like Deepika and Ankita in Shanghai, this time against a much stronger field.

It will be a miracle of sorts if the Indian recurve side returns with a medal.

The squads: Recurve: Men: Tarundeep Rai, Atanu Das, B. Dhiraj, Yashdeep Bhoge.

Women: Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat, Simranjeet Kaur, Kumkum Mohod.

Compound: Men: Abhishek Verma, Kushal Dalal, Ojas Deotala, Sahil Jadhav.

Women: Jyothi Surekha, Aditi Swami, Pragati, Madhura Dhamangaonkar.

ROUND-UP

Rahul scalps five

NEW DELHI: Rahul Chaudhary's five for 65 helped Madras Cricket Club beat Bhivani Youth Cricket Academy by 39 runs in the 51st All-India Tyagmurthi Goswami Ganesh Dutt Memorial cricket tournament at S.G.T.B. Khalsa College ground on Monday.

The scores:

Madras Cricket Club 300/9 in 40 overs (Sujal Rajiv Singh 58, Deepak Punia 55, Abhay Chauhan 43) bt Bhivani Youth Cricket Academy 261 in 34.5 overs (Dhruv Kaushik 54, Dhruv Bhardwaj 50, Deepanshu Phore 39, Rahul Chaudhary 5/65).

Kritagya's all-round show to the fore

Kritagya Singh's all-round effort (50 n.o. and three for 48) helped Telefunken Cricket Club edge past TNM Cricket Academy by five runs in the 41st All-India Laxman Dass Chhabra Memorial cricket tournament at the St. Stephen's ground on Monday.

The scores: Telefunken Cricket Club 245/9 in 35 overs (Saurabh Deswal 59, Bharat Sindhvani 56, Parikshit Sehrawat 51, Kritagya Singh 3/48, Rishabh Bansal 3/42) bt TNM Cricket Academy 240/8 in 35 overs (Shantanu Singh 71, Amit 52, Kritagya Singh 50 n.o., Mayank Dagar 3/41).

Senior national women's hockey team goalkeepers attend special camp

Press Trust of India
BENGALURU

The Indian women's hockey team custodians Savita, Bichu Devi Kharibam, Bansari Solanki and Madhuri Kindo attended a special goalkeeping camp conducted by Ireland's David Williamson under the su-

pervision of chief coach Sjoerd Marijne, that concluded at the the SAI Centre here on Saturday.

Supported by Anandana, the Coca-Cola India Foundation, the 11-day camp started on April 22, enabling focused and high-performance training for the goalkeepers.

Williamson is an experienced field hockey coach and former player from Northern Ireland.

He is a renowned goalkeeping specialist who has worked extensively with the USA women's national team.

Senior goalkeepers Savita, Bichu Devi, Bansari,

and Madhuri attended the sessions, allowing them to focus extensively on technical basics, decision-making, defensive organisation, and tactical awareness in match situations as the team prepares for major tournaments in the upcoming international calendar.

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I want to be India's fielding coach... I feel I am almost there

Yagnik hopes to become the best in the world in his area of expertise; says he is relishing his role at Knight Riders after making the switch from Royals; the 42-year-old describes Jammu & Kashmir's historic Ranji triumph as special, hails the group as one of the most gifted

INTERVIEW

Dishant Yagnik

Tarun Shastry

Dishant Yagnik doesn't just coach fielders; he extracts the best out of them.

After a historic Ranji Trophy triumph with Jammu & Kashmir – a vision he famously prophesied nine months ago – Yagnik has brought his high-octane, unconventional coaching philosophy to his new franchise, Kolkata Knight Riders, in the ongoing edition of the Indian Premier League.

Whether it is by turning specialist batters into wicketkeepers or using complex math puzzles to sharpen reflexes under pressure, Yagnik is on a mission to redefine the fielding landscape. In this exclusive interaction with the *The Hindu*, he discusses the science behind fielding, the pain of leaving "home", and his ultimate ambition: to turn India into the world's most formidable fielding unit. Excerpts

Nine months ago, you said with total confidence that J & K would win the Ranji Trophy. It actually happened. How do you look back at that journey?

It felt absolutely great, and if I'm honest, it was an overwhelming experience. When I joined the J & K set-up, the first thing I noticed during the net sessions was the raw talent. I've seen a lot of cricketers, but this group was among the most gifted I've ever worked with.

When we started, we had significant challenges. But we had a great coaching unit – Ajay Sharma sir and Krishna Kumar sir – and our philosophy was simple: let the players express themselves. You can't come in and start changing everything on day one. We waited, observed, and then started making micro adjustments to their techniques.

In terms of fielding, I essentially overhauled the culture. Historically, fielding has been viewed as a 'third skill' – something you do after batting and bowling. I made them realise that fielding is the winning pillar of the team. Winning the Ranji Trophy as a coach is something I can't quite describe – it's special. I won it as a player in 2011-12, but seeing our vision come to life was even more special.

You spent a lot of time with Rajasthan Royals. This season, you are with KKR. How has the transition been?

I spent nearly 15 years with the Royals – five as a player and nine as a coach. I felt like I was part of the foundation of that franchise. So, when I found out I wouldn't be part of the team for this year, it was a shocker. It hits you personally when you've given that much time to one place. But the professional world is a mirror of the game itself – you have to accept and move on.

KKR welcomed me with open arms. The transition was made easier by the vision of Abhishek Nayar (head coach). In our very first conversation, he didn't just give me a job; he gave me a massive challenge. He asked, "Angkrish Raghuvanshi is a talented batter and fielder, but can you make him a wicketkeeper?" That was the hook. I've always believed that with the right drills and mindset, I can turn any athletic fielder into a 'keeper. We started that work in late June last year.

It was a fascinating project because Angkrish is 6 feet 2 inches tall. Usually, 'keepers are shorter for a lower center of gravity, but he had the quick reflexes and judgment. Fielding and keeping are almost different sports in terms of the micro skills involved. We did a lot of one-on-one sessions through July and August, tracking everything on WhatsApp – the drills, technical nuances and footwork. Seeing him now operate as a keeper-batter for KKR is the result of that relentless improvement.

Does the environment at KKR offer you more creative freedom compared to your previous stints?

To be very honest, I've found a lot more freedom here. There's a certain "freedom of speech" that Abhishek and the management have provided. In many set-ups, if you are the fielding coach,



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

you tend to stay in your lane and avoid giving inputs on batting or bowling. But here, I feel empowered to express my suggestions on anything – strategy, technical batting aspects, or preview-review meetings. My advice is heard. That level of trust makes a coach want to give 200%.

Your training sessions are interesting. I recently watched you conduct a drill where players wore helmets and tried to catch tennis balls that were getting deflected at high speeds. How do you keep such a traditionally 'dry' subject like fielding so engaging?

I draw a lot from my playing days. I remember how fielding practice could sometimes feel like a chore – casual, low pressure, and frankly, a bit boring. I promised myself that if I became a coach, every drill I design would have

consequence. There has to be the pressure of dropping a catch or missing a direct hit in front of the whole group.

I'm a big believer in 'dual task training'. The idea is to keep the mind occupied with one task while the body performs another. The helmet drill is the perfect example.

It's built on teamwork. I hit the tennis ball, it hits the leader's helmet, and because of the oval shape, it deviates in a random direction. I then tell players they have to catch it with their non-dominant hand. Why? Because using your dominant hand is easy; it's instinct. Forcing them to use the other hand changes the whole complexion of the drill and forces the brain to work harder.

These sessions create incredible energy in the camp. If you're struggling to win games, a high-intensity, fun but competitive drill like this can lighten the mood while keeping the competi-

tive edge. My colleague Siddhi and I spend hours visualizing these scenarios before we introduce them to the players.

What is the core philosophy you're trying to implement?

One of the biggest insights I've gained is why kids from small, tier-two city academies struggle when they reach professional grounds. In an academy spanning 5,000 square feet, you are never challenged by space. You train in the nets, you take catches in a 20-yard radius, and you feel comfortable.

It's similar to a swimmer, who has spent his whole life in a pool, suddenly being thrown into the sea. They panic because the range is different. Likewise, in the professional world, the challenge is different: how do you get a senior player and a junior player to share the same energy? Seniors often

prioritise batting and bowling, which is fair, but to create a fielding culture, everyone must be equally invested. That's why I design drills where there are tangible rewards and punishments. It levels the playing field.

You've worked with the biggest stars in the game, but what is the ultimate dream for Yagnik?

My dream, as a player, was to play for India. When that chapter closed, my dream shifted: I want to coach the Indian national team. But it's not just about the job title; I want to set a high standard and a specific fielding culture in India.

I want to reach a point where every player is in the same elite category. It's a commitment I've made to myself. I don't know whether I should say this or not, I feel I am almost there. I see it in my visualisations. I truly believe that with a couple more pushes, I will get the chance to serve Indian cricket in the fielding department. I want to build a team where nobody can be hidden on the field.

Speaking of "hiding" players, people see certain cricketers as less athletic. How do you work with someone like Varun Chakaravathy, who might not have the natural flexibility like Raghuvanshi?

I never compare two fielders, but I design drills specifically for the individual. With Varun, I make sure every session matches the match pace – the angles he actually covers, and the trajectory of the ball he is likely to face.

Varun has been incredible. You saw that catch he took at Eden Gardens (against Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 2) – that didn't happen by accident. What I look for is commitment and energy. If a player gives me 100 out of 100 in energy, I can work with him. Varun pushes himself every single session. If you rated him a 6/10 at the start of the season, his work over the last three weeks has pushed him to an 8/10.

In T20 cricket today, every spot is a hot spot. With innovative batting, the ball goes everywhere. You can't hide anyone. My job is to make them perfect fielders so the captain doesn't have to worry. We have fielding captains who take ownership of the hot spots during the game, but the accountability starts with me. I need to understand the conditions – whether it's the humidity of Chennai or the thin air in Dharamshala – and share that knowledge with the players before the game, not after.

How has it been working with the KKR management and co-owner Shah Rukh Khan so far?

The welcome I received was unbelievable. Venky Mysore is a gem; he's more like a big brother than a CEO. We chat in the lobbies, in restaurants – it's very casual and he's supportive.

As for Shah Rukh sir, I met him briefly during my RR days, but this time, we had an hour-and-a-half team get-together. If he wasn't an actor, he would have been the world's greatest motivational speaker. The way he mesmerises a room is magical. He speaks from the heart, and he means every word. I went into that meeting with a list of things I wanted to ask him, but by the time he finished speaking, I had all my answers. His presence alone is a massive boost for the coaches and players.

You have a habit of making bold predictions. In 2024, when you were at RR, you said, "We don't buy superstars, we create them." In 2025, you predicted the Ranji win. What is the message for 2026?

My manifestation is both on a personal and professional level. I want to become the No. 1 fielding coach in the world. I have a checklist of things I need to improve on – technical skills, hitting intensity, psychological drills – and I'm ticking those boxes every day.

But more importantly, I want to serve India. I want to make India the best fielding team in the world. Right now, when people talk about elite fielding, they think of South Africa, Australia, or New Zealand. But my dream for 2026 and beyond is that whenever the word 'fielding' is mentioned, the first thing anyone says should be 'India'. That is my commitment. That is the culture I want to build.

How to know if a medical technology actually adds value

Unlike with consumer goods, you cannot undo an implant that causes chronic pain, reverse an unnecessary diagnostic test or erase a false diagnosis from your medical record; expensive does not mean better in healthcare, it means higher stakes and this distinction is critical in a country like India

Narayana Subramaniam

Medicine treats the evaluation of emerging technologies as a technical problem, but it is not. It is fundamentally an economic problem.

When does a ₹30,000 genetic test represent excellent value and when does it represent wasted money? The answer depends on a question members of the medical profession almost never discuss: who's paying?

This distinction is critical in India, where millions of individuals make expensive healthcare decisions out of pocket while public health systems struggle with scarce resources and competing priorities. Yet this is precisely where thinking clearly matters most: your decisions directly affect your health and finances in ways that can't be reversed or recovered from.

Unique vulnerability

A patient might spend ₹2 lakh on a recommended screening test that a government health system would never fund at scale – not because the test is bad but because the math works differently when you are an individual versus a system.

Yet patients rarely understand that they are trying to optimise for these incompatible situations. They simply spend money and hope it is the right decision.

Consider a genetic screening test for hereditary cancer risk in a woman with a family history of breast cancer. A positive test entails preventive surgery, significantly improved survival, lifelong surveillance, and critical family planning decisions. Here, ₹30,000 represents excellent value.

But deploy the same test in a healthy population and it is positive roughly twice per 1,000 healthy individuals. So you spend ₹3 crore identifying two individuals who benefit. The remaining 998 experience anxiety, unnecessary follow-up check-ups, and potential harm from false positives.

The same test has opposite value depending on the context and who is paying, which is why these conversations are so fraught.

Return on investment

In India, patients and health systems evaluate the same technologies through fundamentally incompatible frameworks. An individual spending their own money asks "will this help me?" A government with scarce resources asks "What is the return per rupee across the population?"

These questions cannot have the same answer, yet patients need to understand both to make informed decisions.

Consider sophisticated cancer screening once again. A wealthy individual can afford ₹50,000 a year to catch one cancer earlier – which is an excellent personal return on investment. A government screening 1 lakh women would spend ₹500 crore and catch 20-30 cancers earlier. That quantum of money would be better used to treat patients already diagnosed rather than screen



A wealthy person can afford ₹50,000 a year to catch one cancer earlier, which is an excellent personal return on investment. But a government screening 1 lakh women would spend ₹500 crore and catch 20-30 cancers earlier. Representative photo. NAVYMEDICINE/UNSPASH

healthy people. The technology was identical but the value proposition was opposite.

As an individual, the technology is worth it if benefit exceeds cost. Your risk tolerance, values, and circumstances matter. You may rationally choose expensive screening that public health cannot justify at scale.

But is more expensive always better? Not quite.

Newer is not better

Healthcare differs from consumer goods because the stakes are permanent. You cannot undo an implant that causes chronic pain, reverse an unnecessary diagnostic test or erase a false diagnosis from your medical record. Expensive does not mean better in healthcare. It means higher stakes.

Rather than asking whether a treatment is worth the cost, let us ask more prudent questions. For example, does it produce meaningfully better outcomes than what already exists?

A robotic surgery might be more precise but does it actually improve function compared to traditional methods? Better precision sounds good until outcomes are identical at double the cost.

Consider minimally invasive diagnostic devices. A newer needle biopsy might require special equipment and training. But if both produce identical accuracy, and one takes 15 minutes while the other takes 45 minutes, the newer device effectively consumes resources without improving your diagnosis.

Newer isn't better. Better is only when outcomes actually change.

Recovery burden

For newer cancer drugs, survival may improve by a few months but the cost and side-effect burden may be immense – sometimes ₹5-10 lakh a month versus ₹1-2

Newer options appear attractive but established options are backed by decades of documented safety. A medication with 30 years of outcomes in millions of patients carries substantially less risk than one with three years of data in the hundreds

lakh for older drugs.

A drug extending one's lifespan by three months while causing severe nausea, cognitive impairment, hair loss, inability to work, and requiring weekly hospital visits isn't automatically superior to one extending life by two months with manageable side-effects that you can sustain at home.

An individual might gain 90 days of life but lose those days in hospital admissions and emergency department visits. Quality of life during treatment matters as much as survival statistics.

Long-term safety

Newer options appear attractive but established options are backed by decades of documented safety. A medication with 30 years of outcomes in millions of patients carries substantially less risk than one with three years of data in the hundreds. That history matters when you are considering putting something new into your body.

Another distinction that matters more radically is whether some technology has been approved for your specific condition or if it is being used off-label.

Off-label use is legal in India; to make matters worse, evidence supporting it is often dramatically weaker than for approved indications.

A technology might be brilliant within its approved use and problematic outside it. For example, expandable metal stents

approved for biliary ducts were used off-label in blood vessels, where different mechanical environments caused vessel rupture, cardiac complications, and at least 13 deaths before regulators intervened.

The device worked perfectly for its intended purpose. It failed catastrophically outside that context.

Being a good patient

Asking these questions doesn't make you a difficult patient. It makes you an informed one.

When your doctor recommends an expensive new technology, you don't need to be confrontational. Write down the questions beforehand and don't shy away from the hard ones.

Take notes on the answers. Good doctors welcome these questions because they have already asked themselves the same things.

If a doctor dismisses your questions or pressures you into deciding immediately, that is important information. You deserve time to think through expensive decisions.

Medicine is not unique in requiring difficult trade-offs – but it is unique in the stakes. A bad stock investment recovers. A bad medical technology decision becomes part of your body, your medical record, and your life forever.

The questions that matter are not intellectually complex but they may feel uncomfortable to ask. Your responsibility is to ask them anyway, demand evidence and insist on comparison. In a system designed to innovate faster than it validates, your scepticism is your only real leverage.

(Narayana Subramaniam is Lead Consultant, Head and Neck Surgery and Oncology, Aster Hospitals, and Adjunct Faculty, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. narayana.subramaniam@gmail.com)



A person walks past two uneven doors showing a sinking building in Mexico City in July 2016. AP

Mexico City is sinking so fast, it can be seen from space

Associated Press

Mexico City is sinking by nearly 25 cm a year, according to new satellite imagery released this week by NASA, making it one of the world's fastest-subsiding metropolises.

One of the world's most sprawling and populated urban areas, at 7,800 sq. km and some 22 million people, the Mexican capital and surrounding cities were built atop an ancient lake bed. Many downtown streets were once canals, a tradition that continues in the rural fringes. Extensive groundwater pumping and urban development have dramatically shrunk the aquifer, meaning that Mexico City has been sinking for more than a century, leaving many monuments and older buildings – like the Metropolitan Cathedral, where construction began in 1573 – visibly tilted to the side. The contracting aquifer has also contributed to a chronic water crisis.

"It damages part of the critical infrastructure of Mexico City, such as the subway, the drainage system, the water,

The NASA estimates are based on measurements taken by the NISAR satellite, which is a joint initiative between NASA and ISRO that can track real-time changes on the earth's surface

the potable water system, housing and streets," said Enrique Cabral, a researcher studying geophysics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. "It's a very big problem."

Mexico City is sinking so fast that the subsidence can be spotted from space.

In some parts it is happening at an average rate of 2 cm a month, according to NASA, such as at the main airport and the iconic monument commonly known as the Angel of Independence.

Overall that means a yearly subsidence rate of about 24 cm. Over the course of less than a century, the drop has been more than 12 m, according to Cabral.

The NASA estimates are based on measurements taken between October 2025 and January 2026 by the NISAR satellite, which can track real-time changes on the earth's surface and is a joint initiative between NASA and the Indian Space Research Organisation.

NISAR scientist Paul Rosen said that by capturing details of the earth from space, the project is also "telling us something about what's actually happening below the surface." "It's basically documentation of all of these changes within a city," Mr. Rosen said. He added: "You can see the full magnitude of the problem."

With time the team hopes to be able to zoom in even more on specific areas and get measurements on a building-by-building basis.

More broadly, researchers hope to apply the technology around the world to track things like natural disasters, changes in fault lines, the effects of climate change in regions like Antarctica and more.

Mr. Rosen said it could be used to bolster alert systems, letting scientists alert governments for evacuations in cases of volcano eruptions, for example.

For Mexico City the technology amounts to a big advance in studying the subsidence issue and mitigating its worst effects, according to Cabral.

For decades the government has largely ignored the problem other than stabilizing foundations under monuments like the cathedral. But following recent flare-ups of the water crisis, Cabral said, officials have begun to fund more research. Imagery from the NISAR satellite and the data that comes with it will be key for scientists and officials as they plan on how to address the problem.

"To do long-term mitigation of the situation," Cabral said, "the first step is to just understand."

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

How drugs are named and classified

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

_____ describes what this group of drugs does: block a process that's the final step in acid secretion. They're swallowed as inactive compounds and turn into their active form in the stomach's acidic environment. Fill in the blanks.

QUESTION 2

Drugs called X work by blocking two enzymes, COX-1 and COX-2, responsible for aiding inflammation and pain. Some work by blocking both while some just block COX-2. They're often prescribed together with the answer to Q1 because they may cause ulcers. What is X?

QUESTION 3

Name the international system run by the World Health Organization responsible for giving every drug a

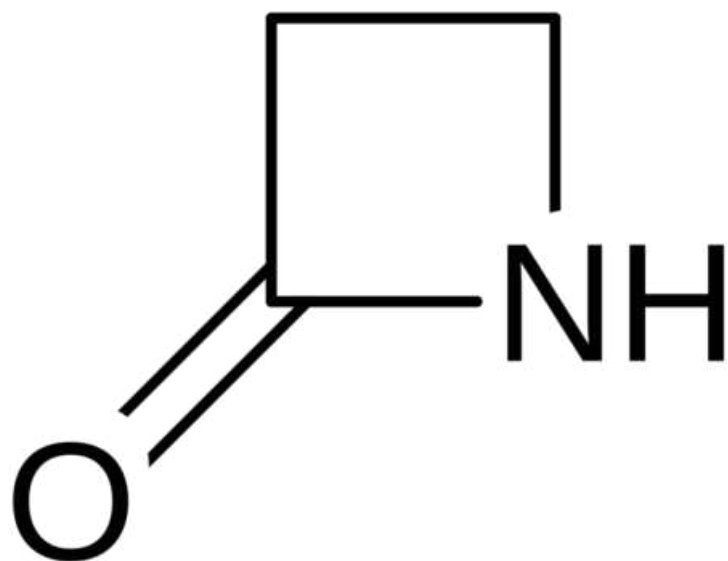
unique and non-branded name that can be used worldwide. The system's rules for naming give drugs their unusual names, like itolizumab or daraxonrasib.

QUESTION 4

Drugs called ACE inhibitors are used to lower the blood pressure. Researchers then invented ARBs, which also lower blood pressure, but don't cause the ACE inhibitors' typical side effect: a dry cough. What does 'ARB' stand for?

QUESTION 5

A biologic is a drug made by living cells, such as bacteria or yeast, rather than synthesised in a lab. A _____ is a copy of a biologic made by a different manufacturer. Since living systems are variable, the copy can never be molecularly identical to the original. Fill in the blank.



VISUAL: Even though penicillins and carbapenems look and work differently, they're sometimes classified together because both compounds contain this ring-shaped chemical structure, which damages bacteria's cell walls. Name the structure. PUBLIC DOMAIN

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

Answers to April 28 quiz:

1. First person to summit all 14 eight-thousanders – **Ans: Reinhold Messner**
 2. First Western woman to travel through Hadhramaut valley – **Ans: Freya Stark**
 3. Explorer trained by British Survey who walked through Tibet, etc. – **Ans: Nain Singh Rawat**
 4. Explorer from Abbasid Caliphate, wrote on Viking funerary rites – **Ans: Ahmad Ibn Fadlan**
 5. First Indian woman to summit Mt Everest, at 30 – **Ans: Bachendri Pal**
- Visual: Thor Heyerdahl**
First contact: Vivek Kumar Tiwari | K.N. Viswanathan | Tamal Biswas | Prem Nath Tiwari | Rahul Nair

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