

## IAS GS Foundation Course

Offline & LIVE Online Batch

Centre	English Medium	हिंदी माध्यम
Karol Bagh (Delhi)	13 May   8:00 AM	17 मई   शाम 6:00 बजे
Noida (Delhi-NCR)	22 May   6:00 PM	19 मई   दोपहर 3:00 बजे
Indore	18 May   8:00 AM	20 मई   शाम 5:30 बजे
Jaipur	4 June   11:00 AM	26 मई   शाम 5:00 बजे

Download Drishti Learning App to [Explore Our Courses!](#)

## Drishti IAS

Book Your Free Counselling Now

### 87501 87501

Karol Bagh | Noida | Prayagraj | Jaipur | Lucknow | Indore | Ranchi | Patna

### IN BRIEF



#### MGNREGS scale, workdays fell in 2025-26: study

**NEW DELHI**  
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) saw a sharp contraction in its scale and reach in 2025-26, according to a report on the final operational year of the scheme introduced by the UPA regime. » [Page 12](#)

#### NITI Aayog flags high dropout rate in schools

**NEW DELHI**  
A decadal analysis of India's school education system by NITI Aayog reveals that while India has achieved a near-universal access to school at the primary level, it faces challenges in retaining students at the secondary level. » [Page 12](#)

## Uncertainty continues in T.N. over govt. formation

Left backs TVK, but VCK holds back decision by a day; Vijay meets Governor again and stakes claim showing support of 116 MLAs, two short of majority; AMMK leader alleges horse-trading bid

The Hindu Bureau  
CHENNAI

Uncertainty prevailed over government formation in Tamil Nadu on Friday night as the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) remained undecided on backing actor C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), though the Communist Party of India and the CPI(Marxist) offered "unconditional support" to the party. Indian Union Muslim League leader Khader Moideen said his party has not given any letter of support to the TVK.

Late evening, Mr. Vijay called on Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar for the third time, staking claim to form the government, after receiving the support of the Left parties. His post-poll front's tally stood at 116,



**Numbers game:** TVK chief Vijay meets Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Arlekar at the Lok Bhavan in Chennai on Friday to stake claim to form government. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

still short of the halfway mark in the 234-member House. Till the filing of this report well past midnight, the Lok Bhavan did not issue any communication on the Governor's decision.

In a development past midnight, Amma Makkal

Munnetra Kazhagam's T.T.V. Dhinakaran accused the TVK of submitting to the Governor the photocopy of a "forged letter" claiming it has the support of his party's lone MLA-elect S. Kamaraj. "The TVK, which claims to be a

'pure force' has indulged in forgery in the hope that later they could indulge in horse-trading and buy our lone MLA, as it would not attract anti-defection law.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» [PAGE 10](#)

## Cong. high command likely to name Kerala CM tomorrow

G. Anand  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The decision on Congress Chief Minister in Kerala seemed to assume the contours of a political cliff-hanger on Friday. The question of who among the three Chief Minister probabilities - Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan, All India Congress Committee general secretary K.C. Venugopal, and senior leader Ramesh Chennithala - would make the cut appeared set to go down to the wire, with party high command reportedly scheduled to make the pivotal announcement on Sunday.

Mr. Satheesan, Mr. Chennithala and KPCC chief Sunny Joseph were bound for Delhi, reportedly for a penultimate round of talks with the high command on Saturday.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» [PAGE 10](#)



Amit Shah felicitates West Bengal CM-designate Suwendu Adhikari after the BJP legislature party meeting in Kolkata on Friday. PTI

## Suwendu Adhikari to take oath as Bengal Chief Minister today

Shiv Sahay Singh  
KOLKATA

The MLAs-elect of the BJP in West Bengal unanimously elected Suwendu Adhikari as leader of their Legislature Party on Friday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who presided over the meeting, said all proposals were received in favour of Mr. Adhikari.

Accompanied by several

leaders of the BJP's State unit, including Dilip Ghosh, Locket Chatterjee, and Tapas Roy, the Chief Minister-designate reached Lok Bhavan and met Governor R.N. Ravi to stake claim to form the government. The BJP had won 207 seats while the TMC was reduced to 80 seats.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» [PAGE 10](#)

# NEXT IAS

BIG LEARNINGS MADE EASY

Launching  
**NEW CAMPUS**

## मुखर्जी नगर, दिल्ली

- ➔ खुले, वेंटिलेटेड एवं स्मार्ट क्लासरूम
- ➔ लाइब्रेरी व सेल्फ-स्टडी के लिए समर्पित क्षेत्र
- ➔ समर्पित मेंटॉरशिप व काउंसलिंग जोन
- ➔ अनुशासित, सुरक्षित एवं फोकस्ड अध्ययन वातावरण
- ➔ अग्नि सुरक्षा मानकों के पूर्ण अनुपालन के साथ
- ➔ अन्य सभी सरकारी मानकों का पूर्णतः पालन
- ➔ 24 x 7 CCTV निगरानी के साथ सुरक्षित कैंपस

### सामान्य अध्ययन फ़ाउंडेशन कोर्स

#### CSE 2027-28

हिन्दी माध्यम	14 मई	10 जून
	(11:30 AM - 2:30 PM)	
English Medium	14 MAY	26 MAY
	(5:00 PM - 8:00 PM)	

Special ONE TIME LAUNCHING OFFER

Available between 1 - 14 MAY 2026

### करेंट अफेयर्स मास्टरी प्रोग्राम

ऑफलाइन | लाइव-ऑनलाइन | हिन्दी माध्यम

- कॉन्सेप्ट की समझ को मजबूत बनाने पर फोकस
- 3 शिक्षकों के पैनल द्वारा 200+ घंटे का शिक्षण
- सप्ताह में 2 कक्षाएँ (2.5 घंटे/कक्षा)
- प्रीलिम्स एवं मेन्स दोनों की आवश्यकताओं का कवरेज
- करेंट अफेयर्स आधारित सब्जेक्ट-वाइज टेस्ट्स

प्रीलिम्स + मेन्स बैच 2027

अवधि : 10 से 11 महीने

- फेज 1 : जून से दिसंबर
- फेज 2 : जनवरी से अप्रैल

15 जून से आरंभ

मासिक फीस : Rs. 1,500/-  
वार्षिक फीस : Rs. 12,000/-

मेन्स एक्सक्लूसिव बैच 2026

अवधि : 2½ महीने

1 जून से आरंभ

कोर्स फीस : Rs. 4,000/-

### लाइब्रेरी एंड मेंटॉरशिप प्रोग्राम

हिन्दी माध्यम | English Medium

- 10 घंटे प्रतिदिन (सप्ताह में सातों दिन) प्रीमियम लाइब्रेरी की सुविधा
- साप्ताहिक एवं मासिक, व्यक्तिगत आवश्यकता अनुसार तैयार किए गए टेस्ट
- अध्ययन रणनीति व फीडबैक हेतु मेंटॉरशिप सहायता
- प्रदर्शन एवं अनुशासन की नियमित समीक्षा
- नियमित मूल्यांकन (AI इंटीग्रेटेड)
- गुणवत्तापूर्ण वैल्यू एडिशन सामग्री की सुविधा
- नियमित उपस्थिति एवं टेस्ट प्रदर्शन पर मासिक प्रोत्साहन

Starting from **1<sup>st</sup> June** Limited Seats

Monthly Fee : Rs. 4,000/-

Yearly Fee : Rs. 40,000/-

**TILAK HOUSE**

42-B, Radio Colony, Parmanand Marg, Mukherjee Nagar, New Delhi-110009

9311667076 | info@nextias.com

**Corporate Tower (Vivekananda House)** : 6-B, Pusa Road, Metro Pillar

No. 111, Near Karol Bagh Metro, New Delhi - 110060 | 8081300200

www.nextias.com



## MLA seeks review of user fee, charges at Jewar airport

**The Hindu Bureau**  
LUCKNOW

Jewar MLA Dharendra Singh on Friday expressed concern over the proposed user development fee and other passenger charges at the upcoming Noida International Airport in Jewar. He submitted a detailed representation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, among others, seeking a reassessment of the charges.

### Timings DELHI

<b>SATURDAY, MAY 09</b>		
RISE	05:35	SET 19:01
RISE	00:40	SET 11:26
<b>SUNDAY, MAY 10</b>		
RISE	05:34	SET 19:02
RISE	01:15	SET 12:24
<b>MONDAY, MAY 11</b>		
RISE	05:33	SET 19:02
RISE	01:47	SET 13:22

<b>Delhi Weather</b>	max	min
Delhi City	34	21
Safdarjang	34	21
Palam	32	22

**Delhi Palam Today**  
37°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm and uneasy with moderate winds. Night will be pleasant.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
38°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight hot and uneasy. Night will be pleasant.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2026  
All rights reserved.

### 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. THE PUBLISHING PVT LTD, the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

# Delhi must move beyond being political capital, become global, future-ready city: L-G Sandhu

**Suruchi Kumari**  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Taranjit Singh Sandhu on Friday said Delhi must move beyond being only the country's political capital and become a future-ready global city built on five pillars: sustainability, inclusion, culture, innovation and economic growth, and compassion.

He was speaking at a felicitation ceremony organised for him by Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of International Studies, of which he is an alumnus. Mr. Sandhu said Delhi has continuously evolved over centuries and is now at another important stage in its development.

"Delhi is not merely a city. It is a living civilisational narrative," he said, tracing



L-G Taranjit Singh Sandhu being felicitated by JNU V-C Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit and Amitabh Mattoo, Dean and Professor, School of International Studies, on Friday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the city's journey from Indraprastha to Shahjahanabad and from the Lutyens' zone to the aspirations of a modern global capital.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for the Capital, the L-G said, "Reimagining Delhi is not about infrastructure but the very experience of urban living." He added that governance must re-

main "responsive, accessible and humane".

Mr. Sandhu said challenges such as urbanisation, environmental pressures, population growth, and mobility need coordinated action and long-term planning. "If we work collectively, Delhi can emerge as one of the most admired capitals in the world," he said.

## 3-year-old girl raped at pvt. school; accused caretaker, 65, granted bail

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

A three-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a caretaker at a private school in Delhi, the police said on Friday. The 65-year-old accused, who was arrested on May 1 and remanded in judicial custody, was granted bail by a district court on Thursday.

"The suspect was granted bail despite strong opposition from the prosecution," said DCP (West) Darade Sharad Bhaskar. The police are examining

the order and exploring legal remedies, said the officer. He said an FIR was registered on May 1 under BNS section on rape and under POCSO Act provisions after the victim's medical examination, following which the suspect was taken into custody.

Speaking to mediapersons on Friday, the victim's mother accused the police of harassment and the school of non-cooperation. She added, "There has been no action against the teacher who accompanied the child to the basement.

My daughter was questioned multiple times."

Regarding the alleged role of the teacher, Mr. Bhaskar said they are ascertaining the sequence of events, and the teacher has not been detained or questioned so far.

He added that the complainant and her daughter had been provided a comfortable, child-friendly environment during the inquiry proceedings and were called only for lawful inquiry and counselling purposes, considering the sensitivity of the matter.



**VIT**  
**CHENNAI**

Presents

THE HINDU  
**EDUCATIONPLUS**  
**CAREER COUNSELLING SERIES**

## VISUAL MEDIA CAREERS: WHERE TO START & HOW TO SUCCEED



**Dr. Padmanabhan T**  
Associate Professor,  
School of Media Arts and  
Technology (V-SMART),  
VIT Chennai



**Prof. C Pichandy**  
Eminent Professor – Media and  
Communication, Former Head, Department of  
Communication, PSG College of Arts  
and Science, Coimbatore



**Mr. Suresh Chandra Menon**  
Actor, Writer & Director



**Soma Basu**  
Journalist, Moderator

**Sunday, May 10, 2026 | 11:30 am onwards**



To register, visit:  
[newsth.live/THVITVP](http://newsth.live/THVITVP)  
or scan the QR code

**MARUTI SUZUKI**

**NEXA**

@ **VITARA**  
India goes @lectric

Introductory BaaS price  
**₹ 10.99 LAKH\*** + Battery EMI  
@ ₹3.99/km



**INDIA'S LARGEST\* FAST-CHARGING NETWORK**

**543km RANGE\***

**BHARAT NCAP**  
5 STAR SAFETY RATING BNCAP\*

**NEXA@edge**  
60% ASSURED BUYBACK AFTER 3 YEARS  
COMPLIMENTARY HOME CHARGER & INSTALLATION WORTH ₹ 50,000  
8 YEARS WARRANTY  
BATTERY: 8 YEARS  
VEHICLE: 3-5(PAID) YEARS  
COMPLIMENTARY CHARGING FOR 1 YEAR

SCAN TO CONNECT TO A SHOWROOM NEAR YOU

E-BOOK TODAY @ [WWW.NEXAEXPERIENCE.COM](http://WWW.NEXAEXPERIENCE.COM)

\*₹ 10.99 lakh for e VITARA Delta. Battery EMI: ₹ 3.99/km (subject to financier terms). Taxes and statutory charges are extra. Visit dealership for full T&Cs. | \*As certified by Kantar IMRB for an OEM platform for end-to-end usage as on November 28, 2025. | \*543 km range: Certified range; actual results may vary by driving conditions and usage. | \*ADAS features are for driver assistance only. Driver is responsible for safe and attentive driving. | \*Always wear your seatbelt. | \*Mentioned ownership plan is for e VITARA Delta variant. Calculation is done assuming vehicle is running 60 km per day, excluding charging cost. Valid on retail sales for the e VITARA till 31<sup>st</sup> May '26, capped at 1 000 units of electricity (kWh) per customer or 1 Year from the purchase of the vehicle, whichever is earlier. Assured buyback plan is available on payment basis with the option of 3 years/45 000 km or 4 years/60 000 km ownership plans (whichever is earlier). The program is offered through an Insurance company. e VITARA comes with standard warranty of 3 years/1 00 000 km with an option of extending the same on payment basis to 5 years/1 40 000 km and service activated coverage for 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> year for EV related components.





CLASSIFIEDS MART

TO ADVERTISE VISIT www.thehinduads.com CALL: 011-43579738

LEGAL NOTICE

BEFORE THE HONOURABLE PRINCIPAL SUB COURT AT PALAKKAD, KERALA RPIA 1946/2021 OS 123/2017

1. P. Ajayakumar, aged 58 years, S/o late Kandankutty, residing at B1, Crescent Orchid, PT Usha Road, Beach PO, Calicut, Kerala. Now at D13, Ellyuzium Court, A G Road, Calicut and 3 others

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE DISTRICT MUNSIF AT PONNERI

O.S.No.76 of 2016 E. Anbazhagan ... Plaintiff

1. Gurusharankar (died) 2. S.Rajinder Singh 3. Mrs. Parvinder Kaur 4. Mrs. Kiranjit Kaur 5. Preet Channa 6. Bismate Singh 7. Tijender Singh 8. Prabhajot Singh 9. Sonal Kaur 10. Bisleen Kaur (Minor) 11. Jasmine Kaur (Minor) 12. Minor 10 and 11

1. That the plaintiff E.Anbazhagan has filed this suit as against the Defendants for permanent injunction from forcible evicting the plaintiff / lessee / Tenant without following due process of law in the above suit property.

2. That the Plaintiff, E. Anbazhagan, S/o. Ellappan of No. 106/19, Golden Flat, Mugappair, Padi, Chennai-600 050, has filed steps for S.S.Petition as against 8<sup>th</sup> Defendant Prabhajot Singh to effect combined paper publication of English Daily Hindu paper circulated at New Delhi in I.A.No.18/2026 was allowed on 17.4.2026.

3. Therefore the 8<sup>th</sup> Defendant Prabhajot Singh in the above suit is posted for your appearance on 01.06.2026 at 10.00 A.M., if 8<sup>th</sup> Defendant Prabhajot Singh is failing to appear in the above suit before the District Munsif Court, Ponneri on 01.06.2026 at 10.00A.M., the above suit will be decided as set exparte in the above suit in O.S.No.76/2016.

C. NAGENDRA BABU, M.A., LL.B., Advocate for Plaintiff No. 112, Old Taluk Office Road, Old Ponneri, (Opp. to Taluk Office), Ponneri-601204. Cell: 98400 16735

EDUCATIONAL

GENERAL

SOCIOLOGY Foundation to Finale by Vikash Ranjan Batches Start: 10th May (OFFLINE/ONLINE/LIVE TABLET COURSE)

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH Andhra Pradesh Food Processing Society (APFPS) TENDER NOTICE (3rd Call) Short Tender Notification

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन, राजस्थान स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, स्वास्थ्य भवन, तिलक मार्ग, राजस्थान, जयपुर फोन नं. 0141-2225736, E-Mail ID: cemhraj@gmail.com

POLICE DEPARTMENT Office of the Director General and Inspector General of Police, No-2, Nrupathunga Road, Bengaluru 560 001.

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

The e-tender are invited in "Two Cover System" as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act, 1999 and Rules, 2000 through e-procurement portal of Government of Karnataka (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) for Supply of below Kit/Articles for all the Police Personnel of Karnataka State.

Table with 5 columns: Sl. No, Item Name, Tender No., Total Qty, Estimated Value (in Rs.).

Published Date : 06.05.2026 through e-portal 2.0, Last Date and Time for Bid Submission : 05.06.2026 @ 17:30 Hrs.

TAMIL NADU CONSUMERS' CO-OPERATIVE FEDERATION LTD. 29/2, Arcot Road, Saligramam, Chennai - 600093 Email ID: tanc93@yahoo.com

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder. Call our toll-free number 1800 102 1878

Rajasthan State Beverages Corporation Limited (A Government of Rajasthan Undertaking) Short-Term Notice Inviting e-Bid

UP Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd.

- 1. GEM/2026/B/7485401 Dated 29.04.2026 "Third Party Inspection of Quality and Quantity by Expert, during OH-4, PTPP, Parichha." Estimated Cost Rs. 6,47,027/-, EMD Rs 10,000/-, Bid Submission end dt. 26.05.2026 up to 04:00 PM.

BENGALURU SOUTH CITY CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer, Co-ordination & Planning, 4th Floor, Jayanagara Old Shopping Complex, Jayanagara 4th block, Bengaluru - 560011

No. EE(COP)/BSCC/Kppp/TN-01/2026-27 Date: 08.05.2026

INVITATION FOR TENDER (IFT) Two Cover System, Short Term Tender

(Through GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only) The Executive Engineer, Co-ordination & Planning, Zone-1, BSCC, invites tenders from eligible Tenderers for the services detailed in the table below.

Table with 2 columns: Sl. No., Name of the Work

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Co-ordination & Planning BSCC

OFFICE OF THE PROGRAM MANAGER PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION UNIT-PWD Uttarakhand Disaster Preparedness and Resilience Project (U-PREPARE)

NOTICE FOR INVITING BIDS

Table with 5 columns: S. NO., Package No., District, Name of Package, Method of Procurement for Bid

SHIRT upto 60% off TROUSER & JEANS SALE Spl. Range of Casual Shirts

भारत राजपत्र The Gazette of India सौ.जी.-डी.एल.-अ.-27042026-272102 CG-DL-E-27042026-272102

THE HUTTI GOLD MINES COMPANY LIMITED (A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

Hutti - 584 115, Raichur Dist., Karnataka State. Ph: (08537)276339/275463

TENDER NOTIFICATION NO.03/26-27 Dt: 09.05.2026 (Through KPP Portal only)

Tender is invited by "The I/c. Dy. General Manager (Materials)" for the following Tenders as detailed below.

Table with 3 columns: Sl. No., Description, EMD in Rs.

Calendar of events: (1) Pre-Bid Meetings (Zoom): 16.05.2026 for Sl.No.1 at 10.30 A.M., for Sl.No.2 at 11.00 A.M., for Sl.No.3 at 11.30 A.M. and for Sl.No.4 at 12.00 P.M.

For further details interested bidders are advised to log on to website https://www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact the office of undersigned during working hours. For participating in the above tender bidder needs to be registered in KPP portal.

Sd/- The I/c Deputy General Manager (Materials) LEADING GOLD PRODUCER IN INDIA

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DELHI WATER SUPPLY MAINTENANCE UNIT, U.P. JAL NIGAM (URBAN) ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, 245 M.L.D. GANGAJAL WTP CAMPUS SIDDHARTH VIHAR, GHAZIABAD-201009

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-1, DELHI 4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001.

YOGI VEMANA UNIVERSITY VEMANAPURAM, KADAPA - 516 005, A.P., INDIA

PUBLIC NOTICE WITHDRAWAL OF 2023 FACULTY RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATIONS Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Council of Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa and the orders issued by the Government vide G.O.No.149, HE (U) Department, dated 11.10.2023, the permission accorded earlier for the filling up of 118 vacant faculty positions in the University is hereby withdrawn as per G.O.No.59, HE (U) Department, dated 06.05.2026.

THE HINDU India's National Newspaper

# Delhi Says from the Heart: “Thank You, Modi Ji”

## From Unauthorized to Empowered: A New Chapter of Urban Transformation Begins in the Capital



Applications open on the SWAGAM portal from April 24, 2026—your rights, now in your hands. No long queues... No middlemen... Just one click—and your home becomes legally yours. Not Just Homes, It's a Vikas Ki Guarantee. With regularization, these colonies will now see structured development by government agencies. Earlier, unclear legal status limited development. Now, infrastructure investment will increase.

**What has changed?**

- MCD will issue Regularisation Certificates
- Revenue Department will provide Conveyance Deeds and Authorization Slips
- Infrastructure development will be ensured

Now, colonies will have:

- Better roads
- Safer streets
- Modern amenities

**A New Vision for Delhi: TOD Policy**  
While rights are being granted, the future is also being strengthened. Enter the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy.

This policy aims to integrate transport and housing by promoting high-density, planned development around metro and transit corridors. It enables people to live closer to transit, improving ease of living and encouraging walkability.

**What will change?**

- Affordable housing options
- Better connectivity
- Smart and planned urban growth

**A New Era of Affordable Housing**

**Under the new policy:**

- Development within 500 meters on both sides of Metro/RTS corridors
- Around 207 sq. km area opened for development
- Smaller plots (minimum 2000 sq. m) now eligible
- Maximum FAR increased up to 500
- 65% FAR mandatory for residential use
- Promotion of affordable housing units (≤ 99 sq. m)
- Remaining FAR allowed for commercial and flexible use

Regularization of unauthorized colonies and the TOD policy together will redefine housing, urban development, and ease of living in Delhi. This is not just about regularization—it is a step toward an inclusive, planned, and modern urban model that ensures better quality of life and infrastructure.

**Now Every Family's Dream of "Owning a Home" Will Come True**  
A Major Step Toward Inclusive Development  
Earlier, several areas were excluded from the TOD policy. Now, an additional 80 sq. km has been included.

**This means:**

- Unauthorized colonies enter the mainstream of development
- Land pooling areas are now included

Now, Delhi's landscape will change—and so will its mindset. Because this is no longer just about homes—it's about the future of the entire city. This initiative will:

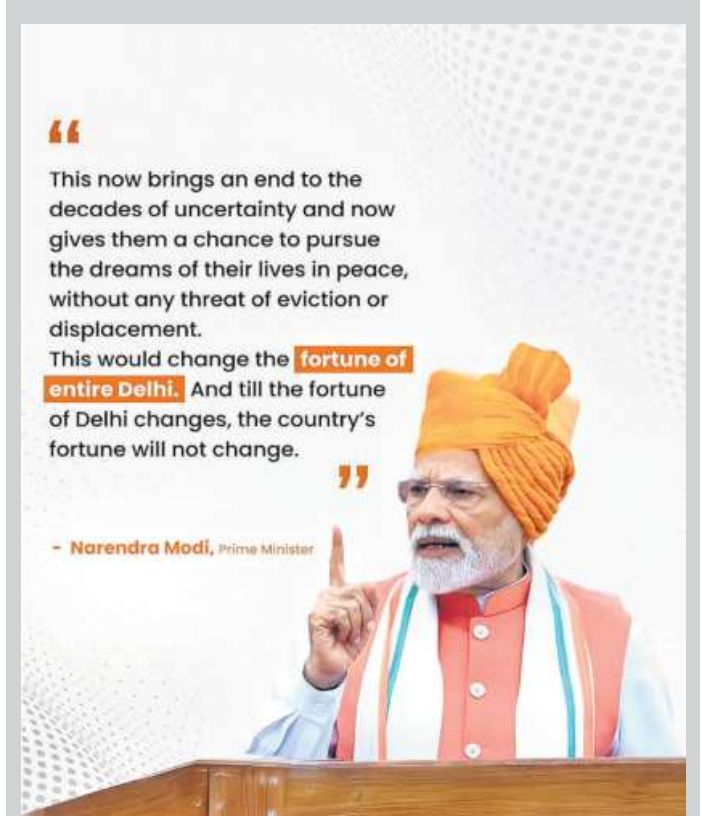
- Transform unplanned growth into organized development
- Empower citizens
- Elevate Delhi to a world-class city

**Delhi's New Urban Vision: A Step Toward Transformation**  
Regularization of unauthorized colonies and the TOD policy are not just about legal recognition—they lay the foundation of a modern urban model where every citizen has access to better infrastructure, connectivity, and quality of life.

**From Reality to Resolution**  
Over the past two decades, Delhi's population has nearly doubled. Rapid urban expansion led to unplanned development in many areas—resulting in thousands of unauthorized colonies, hundreds of slums, and numerous villages with inadequate infrastructure. For years, this reality was ignored. Now, the policy focus has shifted—from avoidance to acceptance, and from problem to practical solution.

**The Delhi of Tomorrow: Planned, Inclusive, Capable**  
With support from the central government, this initiative marks a strong beginning toward transforming Delhi into a systematic and **planned city**. Its impact will go beyond infrastructure—it will redefine lifestyle, connectivity, and the overall urban experience.

**This is not just development—it is the beginning of a new identity for Delhi.**



**Now Delhi Says—Thank You, Modi Ji**

When a family smiles holding the legal papers of their home...

When a young person begins planning their future...

When the first ray of development reaches a colony...

One voice echoes from every heart: “Thank you, Modi Ji!”

“This is not just a scheme—it is trust.”

**A trust that:**

Every citizen will receive their rights

Development will be inclusive

Delhi will transform—for the better

“Your city, your responsibility.”

The government is doing its part—now it's our turn:

Keep the city clean

Follow the rules

Participate in development

Because now, Delhi offers both rights and development—

**With Modi Ji: Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas**



For over 4.5 million people living in unauthorized colonies, a new era has begun. These residents have long lived in uncertainty and insecurity. With legal recognition now in place, not only are their property rights strengthened, but they are also gaining social and economic stability. A dream that remained incomplete for years is finally turning into reality. This is not merely regularization—it is the restoration of dignity, security, and rights. — CM Rekha Gupta

**PM-UDAY: A Dream Realized**  
Launched in 2019, the Pradhan Mantri Unauthorized Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana (PM-UDAY) has granted ownership rights to lakhs of families for the first time. So far, around 40,000 conveyance deeds have been issued. However, due to technical and procedural complexities, progress had been relatively slow. Now, by removing these bottlenecks, the government has accel-

erated the scheme with renewed momentum. “As-is Where-is” – The Guarantee of the Biggest Change  
Out of Delhi's 1,731 unauthorized colonies, 1,511 will now be regularized on an “as-is where-is” basis. What does this mean?

- No requirement for layout plans
- Existing homes will be considered legally valid
- All plots approved for residential use
- Relief extended to small shops

This is not just a reform—it is a guarantee of real change in people's lives. **Faster, Transparent, and Simpler Processes**  
Where files once took months, work will now be completed in days:

- GIS survey report in 7 days
- Deficiency Resolution Memo in 15 days
- Conveyance deed issued within 45 days
- Mandatory maintenance of PM-

**UDAY register**  
Additionally:

- ADM appointed as the single nodal officer
- Surveys conducted at the local level
- Online applications through the SWAGAM portal

With digital tracking and application systems, transparency has increased, and citizens no longer need to run from office to office. This is the new system of a double-engine government—simple, fast, and reliable.



For years, millions of families living in unauthorized colonies in Delhi were caught in a strange paradox—they had homes, yet no legal ownership. There was no clear property title, no full access to government services, and no sense of security about the future. Today, under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Delhi is witnessing a historic transformation where dreams are finally being recognized by law, and homes are being honored with rightful ownership. This is not just a policy decision; it is an effort to restore identity, dignity, and security to millions who have waited for decades. Because now, their homes are no longer just places to live—they are legally theirs. And across the streets of Delhi, a new voice echoes: “Thank you, Modi Ji!”

Key Transformations: Before vs Now		
Aspect	Earlier System	New System
Beneficiaries	Limited progress, slow process	~4.5 million citizens benefitted
Conveyance Deeds	~40,000 issued	Faster process, continuous growth
Approval Process	Multi-level approvals (DDA officials)	ADM as single nodal officer
Nodal Agency	Complex multi-agency system	Revenue Department leads
Survey Process	Conducted by DDA officials	Joint survey by Patwari & Naib Tehsildar
Timeline	No fixed timeline	45 days for deed issuance
Record Management	Limited, scattered	PM-UDAY register maintained
Basis of Regularisation	Layout plan mandatory	As-is where-is basis
Coverage	Limited, complex	1,511 out of 1,731 colonies included
Restricted Areas	Lack of clarity	Clearly excludes ridge, floodplains, protected zones
Certification	Multi-agency	MCD issues certificate
Deed Issuance	Complex, time-consuming	Direct by Revenue Department
Application Process	Offline	Online via SWAGAM portal

**This is more than a policy—it is a promise fulfilled.**



## Take east

The BJP's priority must be to end the violence in West Bengal

The Bharatiya Janata Party's victory in West Bengal has long been in the making. In power for three consecutive five-year terms, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) had been degenerating by the day while the BJP built itself up, vote by vote, aided by all the levers of power that it could exercise as the ruling party at the Centre. The party won 207 of the 294 Assembly seats; in 2021 it had 77. Suvendu Adhikari, Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing Assembly, will be the new Chief Minister. He defeated Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in her own constituency, Bhabanipur – marking the second time that he has prevailed over her, after Nandigram in 2021. Popular dissatisfaction over jobs, corruption, governance and law and order undermined the TMC, which increasingly relied on violence and coercion to keep the State under its thumb. The West Bengal teacher recruitment scam eroded public trust in the TMC, and the R.G. Kar rape and murder case was a major inflection point. Ms. Banerjee first lost control of governance – which was never complete even at the beginning – and then lost control of the narrative. In 2021, her claim to be the protector of Bengali identity against a BJP perceived as the promoter of a Hindi heartland project had worked in her favour. That regional identity politics weakened as its principal champion sank into chaos and degeneration.

The BJP's strategy has been evolving over the years under the direct supervision of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who spent several weeks in the State through the campaign. The party expanded its capacity at the booth level across rural Bengal through a decade of sustained work, building on its strong performance in the 2019 general election and its 2021 Assembly showing. The party had its own identity politics capable of countering the TMC's Bengali identity politics. BJP politics in the State was constructed on intense, contentious debates around citizenship, migration and Hindu consolidation – all tied to controversial administrative measures such as the tailored Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and changes to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The CAA was deployed as a mobilisation tool, particularly among Matua and other refugee communities. The BJP's gains flowed from a consolidation of Hindu votes alongside a decisive split in the TMC's Muslim support base. Now that the party has created history in West Bengal, the governance challenges before it cannot be overstated. The targeted assassination of a key aide of Mr. Adhikari and violence that has gripped many parts of the State, are instructive. The State needs a new vision for development and progress, but the restoration of law and order is the most urgent priority of all.

## More from less

The AINRC won comfortably with a reduced vote share

The people of the Union Territory of Puducherry, no strangers to fractured electoral verdicts, have decisively handed another term to the All India N.R. Congress-led National Democratic Alliance, favouring continuity and the status quo. Despite an unremarkable governance record, the NDA retained power largely due to the first-past-the-post system, which disproportionately rewards parties with the highest vote share. This is what has been reflected in the results of the 2026 Assembly poll. On the face of it, the NDA's victory appears convincing, but a closer look at the vote-share data tells a different story. By winning 18 of the 30 Assembly seats, the ruling alliance gained two more seats than in 2021, even as its vote share fell to about 38% – nearly five percentage points lower than five years ago. On the other hand, the Congress-led INDIA bloc, with about 32% of votes, lost two seats and its tally stood at six. It also suffered erosion of its vote base by around 3%. The presence of the TVK has caused vote share loss to the two formations, though the NDA ultimately emerged victorious. The TVK, along with its ally, won three seats with a vote share of around 18%. Apart from the charismatic appeal of the TVK's founder, C. Joseph Vijay, the prolonged wrangling over seat-sharing within the INDIA bloc hurt the alliance's prospects, despite its emphatic Puducherry Lok Sabha victory two years ago by over 1.3 lakh votes. Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, set to begin his fifth term, deserves credit for shielding his alliance from the TVK's challenge, despite speculation before the polls that the All India N.R. Congress might leave the NDA to join the fledgling party.

Instead of taking steps for the implementation of his electoral promise of securing Statehood for Puducherry, Mr. Rangasamy should focus on delivering better governance. The functioning of the outgoing regime came in for sharp criticism from the office of the C&G which, in its report for 2023-24, had rapped the AINRC-headed regime for spending beyond its means. Apart from ensuring administrative continuity and closer alignment with the Centre, the Chief Minister should focus on balanced urban and rural development, and improving infrastructure and public services. Also, with changing demographics, renewed focus should be on youth employment, sustainable housing, and environmental conservation to maintain a high quality of life. His administration should make lasting efforts to reduce the damage that frequent cyclones and floods cause to the people and their livelihoods. Such an approach would be the perfect way of expression of gratitude on his part to those who have voted for him and the NDA.

# A watershed moment in India's defence posture

Operation Sindoor commenced at 1:05 a.m. on May 7, 2025, with a surgical, high-intensity destruction of selected terrorist infrastructure. This strike was a direct and decisive response to the cowardly Pahalgam carnage orchestrated by cross-border terrorists on April 22, 2025. This operation represents a paradigm shift in India's politico-military mindset and doctrine, marking a watershed moment in its approach to national security.

### New era Indian doctrine

India's historical posture of "reactive restraint" provided a strong rationale for a "dossier approach", in which military inaction was often portrayed as extraordinary restraint and was frequently encouraged and lauded by the West. "What if" loops about attacking terror targets in a nuclear-armed adversary provided the final blow to India's decision-makers. Post-Operation Sindoor, the "zero tolerance" policy declared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was pivoted further and reinforced, whereby any act of cross-border terrorism would be considered an "act of war".

This reflects a leadership that possesses both the strategic resolve to act and the absolute confidence in the armed forces to deliver retribution. Despite the political risks, this extraordinary resolve to tackle terror head on – and the refusal to submit to nuclear blackmail and external pressure drew new red lines.

Operation Sindoor defined a new chapter in India's defence evolution too. While on transition to integration and restructuring, this Operation tested the ground realities of the three services – the Indian Air Force (IAF), the Indian Navy and the Indian Army. Post Pahalgam, the forces were tuned to expect a clear-cut political directive for action, which came in an unambiguous form and was perhaps stronger than what the services had anticipated. The services were given a free hand.

The resultant Indian strikes on nine terrorist targets were exceptionally well-integrated across the three services, achieving total success despite a fully alert Pakistan. The choice of Bahawalpur, and Muridke in Pakistan as targets was unthinkable. Pakistan and the world woke up to realities of the "new normal". Pictures and videos of the massive destruction at these terror hubs, and the sheer scale and success of the strikes, were stunning.

The highly calibrated and intelligent Indian response over the next two days was executed well, calmly but firmly. Pakistan clearly misread



R.K.S. Bhadauria

Former Air Chief Marshal and served as Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force

India's resolve. On May 9 and 10, when the Pakistan Air Force attempted to strike some of India's critical high-value assets, the Indian Air Force countered it in near real time with waves of airstrikes hitting 11 bases across Pakistan, including Nur Khan, Sargodha, Murid and Bholari. The level of precise targeting and extent of damage achieved could not have been imagined by Pakistan. The global defence analytical community acknowledges this as one of the most defining and concise actions against a nuclear-armed nation.

### Military audaciousness at its best

This total, integrated and calibrated response, characterised by masterful control of the escalation ladder, reflects the seamless synergy between India's civil and military institutions. In my opinion, India's achievements could not have been better. After 88 hours of Operation Sindoor, by noon on May 10, Pakistan was reeling from massive destruction at 11 bases by the IAF. Karachi was nervously monitoring Indian naval deployments poised for action, while aggressive Indian Army operations along the Line of Control and the International Border had rendered drone attacks unviable. A robust, networked air-defence system, including the S-400 missile system had completely denied airspace not only over Indian territory but also deep inside Pakistan. Pakistan had no choice but to rush and request a ceasefire.

Given the dynamics and complications of escalation control under a nuclear overhang, India's Chief of Defence Staff and the Service Chiefs deserve high praise for the ferocious targeting on May 10 and the brilliant seizing of the escalation opportunity to coerce a termination. This was military audaciousness at its very best.

The Indian armed forces responded in full measure to the political mandate, leaving no doubt regarding the nation's capacity for rapid, high-impact operation. The sheer scale and speed of India's action on May 10 was watched with awe across the country.

The announcement of the ceasefire was too sudden for the public at large. You cannot blame the people asking for more. One cannot view these developments with emotion. Having achieved all objectives and the scope of action on May 10, the termination decision was perfectly timed.

Operation Sindoor's ongoing status carries a powerful strategic signal. Undoubtedly, the

primary signal is for terrorists to remain in hiding and for their backers to desist. The message also extends to the Pakistani citizenry – a stark and constant reminder of the reckless involvement of part of their military leadership. In the age of global digital transparency and expert strategic analysis, the truth of these events cannot be shielded from their people for long. They must now confront the realities of a military regime camouflaged by a political facade and "regime" change should be on their minds.

### Accelerate indigenous defence growth

Ongoing operations have implications for India as well. The defence forces would need to maintain a high state of readiness to act. After the opening round of Operation Sindoor, the expectations are high. I am sure the services are working proactively to deliver. An equally important implication is for the defence industry to ramp up in real terms to achieve Atmanirbhara. The focus must be to "Innovate, Design, and Manufacture" at scale.



The government has focused hugely on reforms to energise the public and private industry in defence, aerospace, space, cyber and Artificial Intelligence domains. The stellar performance of indigenous systems during Operation Sindoor has invigorated India's innovation and startup ecosystem. I

have always maintained that the real responsibility for being the "agent of change" rests with the Defence Research and Development Organisation laboratories, Defence Public Sector Undertakings, and, to some extent, even on large industry players already in the system. They no longer have the option to delay and must immediately focus on truly integrating the entire private sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and startups, into an indigenous ecosystem through a "whole-of-nation" approach. There is an urgent need to capitalise on this golden period of governance and reforms, and the unpredictable geopolitical environment only reinforces the need to double down on true Atmanirbhara.

Ultimately, the "Modi redlines" regarding cross-border terrorism are permanent. This new normal is irreversible and will define India's strategic mindset for the foreseeable future. The nation demands nothing less, and the populace would stand firmly behind the architects and executors of India's national security. My salute to everyone involved in the success of Operation Sindoor.

# The elephant in India's data room

As another session of Parliament has ended, a familiar pattern was visible on the floor of the House. Members of Parliament who rose to ask questions, performing one of Parliament's most important accountability functions. Yet, a large share of these questions have followed/follow a predictable format, such as asking how many schools have functional toilets, how many pensions were disbursed in a given year, or how many beneficiaries received a particular scheme.

While these questions address important public concerns, the information they seek should ideally and already exist in the public domain in a clear, standardised, and easily accessible format.

An analysis of the parliamentary questions asked during the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-24) on youth employment found that a large share sought such basic facts. This reflects a far deeper reality that India's data system is fragmented and lacks interoperability. The elephant in the room, rarely acknowledged in such debates, is data standardisation, without which even the most ambitious policy visions risk being built on shifting sands.

### Anatomy of the problem

In the National Data and Analytics Platform vision document released by NITI Aayog, it was observed that India's data ecosystem remains incoherent, with Ministries and government departments failing to use shared standards for common indicators and even defining basic attributes such as time period and region inconsistently. India today generates more data than ever before, yet abundance does not equate to usability. Data collected by individual Ministries for their own programmes often cannot be integrated seamlessly, making consolidation a laborious and error-prone task.

According to a NITI Aayog report released in June 2025, welfare programme databases often list the same beneficiary multiple times, leading



Abhishek Sharma

Senior policy and political researcher

to fiscal leakages that inflate spending by 4%-7% annually. Recent government data clean-ups highlight the potential savings from addressing such inefficiencies. Notably, deleting 17.1 million ineligible names from the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme was expected to save ₹90 billion in FY2024, while removing 35 million bogus LPG connections could save ₹210 billion over two years, and eliminating 16 million fake ration cards may save around ₹100 billion annually.

These inefficiencies have significant policy implications. In the health sector, for instance, studies show that childhood tuberculosis cases are recorded separately in the Health Management Information System, the disease surveillance network, and immunisation registries, often resulting in the same patient being counted multiple times. Such duplication creates conflicting estimates, often leaving decision-makers uncertain and leading some to disregard data altogether in favour of anecdote or political expediency.

Beyond policy implications, these weaknesses also carry perception and economic costs. In the Global Innovation Index 2024, India had missing data for two indicators and outdated data for eight, with several relying on figures more than a year old.

Without coordinated methodologies, such indices both mask real performance and expose gaps in inter-agency coordination. In economic terms, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimates that improving public-sector data availability and sharing could add up to 1.5% of GDP, rising to 2.5% if private-sector data is included. In other words, the cost of poor data governance lies not only in misinformed decisions but also in squandered economic potential.

### Common standard for data

The solution to the inefficiencies can be seen under the National Data Governance Framework

India must ensure data standardisation for better governance outcomes

Policy (NDGFP), where the proposed India Data Management Office (IDMO) has the potential to be the keystone of reform by developing and enforcing common rules, standards, guidelines and protocols for data across all Ministries and States. However, the IDMO needs to be empowered with real authority to set binding standards, audit compliance, and resolve disputes over definitions and methodologies across Ministries. Otherwise, the inefficiencies will persist.

In addition, alignment with global statistical frameworks such as the UN's System of National Accounts for economic indicators, and harmonising them within a National Statistical Standards Manual could unify definitions and practices nationwide.

Most of all, India's open data platform, "data.gov.in", should be scaled up into a centralised, schema-consistent repository that serves both public availability of information and internal needs. Ministries must upload datasets in standardised formats regularly, enabling parliamentarians to access real-time, district-level figures.

### As a benchmark

Finally, institutionalising accountability will be key to sustaining progress. NITI Aayog's Data Governance Quality Index should be an annual benchmark, tied to performance reviews and incentives for Ministries and States, as healthy competition on data quality can drive change as powerfully as economic competition.

Data standardisation is often minimised as a technical exercise, but it is in fact the grammar of governance that a nation aspiring to become a \$5 trillion economy needs to get right. Addressing the elephant in the data room means committing to the standards, systems and stewardship that will make India's data fit for purpose, and fit for the future.

The views expressed are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A wise man's advice

The timely epistle by Gopalkrishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal, in the form of an open letter to the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam leader C. Joseph Vijay ("An open letter to Joseph Vijay", May 6), can be read as a wise man's advice and, at the same time, a welcome caution and alert to the actor-politician who is a novice in political governance and administration. Every syllable of the open

letter deserves careful reading and assimilation by Mr. Vijay if he has to blossom into a successful Chief Minister. Mr. Gandhi's advocacy for Mr. Vijay to keep protection of India's federal and secular fabric and the tenets of the Constitution as his priority, is laudable. His insistence that he should follow the lofty ideals of self respect and equality preached by Periyar EVR and ardently followed in letter and spirit by his illustrious predecessor M.K.

Stalin, needs careful adherence by Mr. Vijay. All the above are possible only and only when Mr. Vijay realises that the cine glare that has blinded his fans and has made them to vote his party to power could fade away anytime. **Tharcus S. Fernando,** Chennai

### Candid camera

The picture of the DMK President, M.K. Stalin, waving at his supporters in the Kolathur constituency following his defeat in the

Tamil Nadu Assembly elections evokes a sense of despondency (Opinion page, "Picture of the week", May 8). For a leader who has done so much for his Kolathur constituency in Chennai over the years, especially in terms of infrastructural development, this is

certainly not the verdict he deserves. The strong support for Mr. Stalin from the people of Kolathur, who turned emotional when he visited to thank them, reflects the deep bond he has built with the residents. One cannot and should not forget that Mr. Stalin made Tamil Nadu

economically prosperous, with GDP growth of 11.19% in FY 2024-25 – the first time in 14 years that it exceeded 10% – and 10.83% in 2025-26. In addition, he implemented welfare schemes, particularly for women, which gained wide popularity across the State.

**R. Sivakumar,** Chennai

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Corrections & Clarifications

India is the world's second-largest coal producer, not third as mentioned in the report "RE meets global electricity demand for the first time" (Opinion page, "Data Point", May 6, 2026).

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28576347/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

# GROUND ZERO

## Nightmare on the Narmada

Of the 41 passengers and crew members onboard a cruise vessel on the Narmada River, 13 died when it capsized during a violent storm in the Bargi Dam reservoir on April 30. The tourism department-operated cruise had been carrying families seeking respite from the summer heat. **Mehul Malpani** reports on the tragedy in Jabalpur and the questions it has raised over safety protocols and preparedness for inland vessel operations



The wreckage of the cruise boat that capsized in the Bargi dam reservoir in Jabalpur on April 30. A.M. FARUQUI

**A**pril 30 was a sweltering summer day in Madhya Pradesh, with the temperature crossing 40 degrees Celsius. So, when clouds gathered over the Jabalpur sky and a light breeze swept through the city that afternoon, people planned outings to nearby parks and lakes.

Several families decided to head to the Bargi dam reservoir on the Narmada river, about 40 kilometres from Jabalpur. For nearly three decades, this has been a popular destination for locals and tourists alike. Boat and cruise rides are operated by the Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation (MPSTDC) at the Bargi Boat Club.

"I have been going there for more than 20 years and my family loves boating and going on cruise rides," says 72-year-old Riyaz Hussain Sayyed. "Whenever I have family or friends visiting, I take them there."

Sayyed's latest cruise ride, however, has left him with trauma that he says will stay with him forever. That windy afternoon, as passengers were enjoying the change in weather, a storm suddenly intensified and huge waves lashed against the boat, which capsized within minutes.

Sayyed watched helplessly as his 66-year-old wife, Reshma, disappeared into the water. His daughter's mother-in-law, Shamim Zaidi, 68, also died. "I just waited for death quietly. I heard a man's voice on the other side of the boat. He was also trying to get out, but he soon became silent," he recalls.

Clinging to a small grill, Sayyed managed to breathe through a narrow gap for more than four hours, surrounded by violent water and an eerie darkness.

He began shouting when he saw lights towards the shore and was rescued more than an hour later by construction workers and officials, who had to break part of the vessel to reach him.

Of the 39 passengers and two crew members who embarked on the last cruise ride that day around 5.20 p.m., 13 people, including eight women and four children, drowned. The rest were rescued by workers of a nearby private construction company, along with rescue teams that arrived shortly after. The incident occurred about 100 metres from the shore.

### Trapped beneath the river

Over the past week, several videos of the incident have emerged online, providing glimpses of the tragedy. One clip captures the moments just before the boat overturned, with two men tearing open life jacket packets while others remain inside an already flooding cabin. Another shows survivors floating in the water, trying to reach the shore amid high waves.

Survivors and officials say that those who managed to jump out of the cruise from the deck or through windows survived the tragedy, while most of the passengers trapped beneath the vessel died, as the life jackets were unable to bring them to the surface.

Marina Messi, 39, along with her husband Pradeep, two children – Siya and Trishaan – and her parents had come to Jabalpur from the Delhi cantonment area to attend a family function on April 29. Before their return, they decided to take the cruise. Three members of the family are dead: Marina's mother Madhu Messi, 62; Marina, who was found trapped beneath the vessel in a life jacket, and her four-year-old son Trishaan, whom she was embracing.

Julius Messi, Marina's 65-year-old father, says, "Everything transpired within minutes so nobody had time to react."

Most families have expressed anger over the

**Q** We managed to get life jackets but that was not enough. There were no instructions. The authorities cannot just throw jackets at us at the last minute.

**A** RAKHI SONI  
Sister of Neetu Soni who died in the tragedy

lack of preparedness on the cruise in the event of an emergency, while also alleging negligence on the part of the crew. Cruise operator Mahesh Patel and boatman Chhotalal Gond are facing the most ire as survivors allege that they were of "no help" during the tragedy.

They also allege that the passengers were not given any instructions before the ride on how to respond in case of an emergency, and that there were no jackets for children.

Julius explains what happened when the situation turned bad: "Pradeep and I started distributing life jackets to the passengers. There was no help from the crew. Some people could not get jackets, while some could not wear them properly. Since we could not find a kids-sized jacket, my daughter covered Trishaan in her jacket. I got out to look for a way to escape, but before I could return, the boat overturned and Marina and my wife got stuck in the lower portion of it."

Rakhi Soni, 41, lost her sister, Neetu Soni, 43, and her four-year-old nephew, Viraj. Seven members of the family, all residents of Jabalpur's Kotwali area, had gone for an outing to experience the breezy weather. Viraj's body was found on the last day of the search operation on May 3.

"We kept hoping and praying that he might have somehow reached the shore and been rescued by locals, but that hope was eventually shattered," says Rakhi. "My sister had separated from her husband and was working at a private bank to support her child. She wanted him to become an Air Force pilot and had enrolled him in an Army school."

Rakhi also says that there was no immediate help from the Boat Club or any authorities, and that she along with many others swam about 100-150 m to reach the shore. "Some locals and construction workers kept guiding us by yelling. They told us how to move our arms and legs to help us swim. We managed to get life jackets but that was not enough. There were no instructions. The authorities cannot just throw jackets at us at the last minute," she says.

Ramzan Sheikh, 22, a migrant labourer from West Bengal's Murshidabad, was among the first to spot the sinking vessel from a construction site near the shore. "A colleague was shooting a video of the dam when he spotted the ship. We immediately reached the shoreline (marked by a cliff about 25 feet high) but we had no clue what to do. The weather was really bad," he says.

Ramzan and his colleagues initially guided

the passengers by shouting instructions and helped them navigate their way towards the shore by throwing ropes. About half an hour later, as the first responders from the Boat Club arrived, he along with a few others jumped into the cold water wearing life jackets, along with the rescuers.

"When we spotted a man [Riyaz] stuck under the ship, two locals and I entered the water with the rescuers. We used some of our construction tools to break that part of the ship and got him out," he says.

### A challenging operation

While rescuing the survivors was challenging enough due to persisting winds, high waves, and the overturned cruise that had trapped some, recovering the bodies proved to be a tougher task. It forced the authorities to carry out searches in large areas of the reservoir for nearly three days until the last body was found on May 3 morning.

The rescue operation involved special divers of the Indian Army, called in from Uttar Pradesh's Agra and Telangana's Hyderabad; personnel of the National Disaster Response Force and State Disaster Emergency Response Force; local police and home guard; as well as local fishermen. Heavy machinery and equipment such as cranes and excavators were used to pull the vessel out of the water and look for people trapped under it.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav deployed ministers and senior officials to oversee search and rescue efforts. He visited the spot on May 1 and ordered a high-level investigation into the incident. He formed a four-member committee, headed by the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), and directed it to submit its report within 15 days. The State and Union governments also announced financial assistance for the victims' families, while Yadav said that workers and locals who assisted in the rescue would be rewarded.

The services of cruise operator Assistant Skipper Patel and boatman Gond, who were onboard, as well as ticket counter in-charge Brijendra, were terminated for negligence during and after the tragedy. Sunil Maravi, manager of Hotel Maikal Resort and Bargi Boat Club, was also suspended for negligence, while MPSTDC regional manager Sanjay Malhotra was attached to the headquarters and a departmental inquiry was initiated against him. The operations at the boat club remain suspended.

A local court in Jabalpur took suo-motu cognizance of the tragedy. Taking note of media reports that alleged that Patel "abandoned" the passengers and escaped, the court directed the local police to lodge a case against him and other concerned persons.

Officials also say that a lack of communication from the crew and the ticket counter in-charge after the tragedy led to confusion during the rescue efforts. "After getting out of water, they did not inform the authorities about the number of passengers onboard," says a senior government official. "A total of 29 tickets were sold for the ride, and 10 others were allowed as complimentary entries. While this is the standard practice for children, the lack of communication led to confusion during the rescue operation. We only calculated the actual numbers by looking at CCTV footage."

On May 7, officials of the district administration recorded the statements of the survivors, eyewitnesses and the crew, as part of the Chief Minister-ordered investigation.

Patel denies all the charges and claims that he was the last one to jump out of the cruise. "There were no winds when we started the jour-



We have never been responsible for giving instructions before passengers come on board, and nobody ever told us it was required. We have been operating the cruise for years.

**MAHESH PATEL**  
Cruise operator

ney and it got stormy all of a sudden. As the winds grew stronger, I started turning back the vessel but two back-to-back strong waves hit the vessel and it started overturning mid-turn. Before that I had asked the boatman to distribute the jackets kept in a storeroom," says Patel, a resident of Ghullapaat village near the dam.

Patel joined the Boat Club as a boatman in 2009 and has been operating the cruise since 2014 after becoming an Assistant Skipper. "We have never been responsible for giving instructions before passengers come on board, and nobody ever told us it was required. We have been operating the cruise for years, and this has been the standard practice," he says.

The boatman, Gond, says everyone was in a panic. He says he was trying to calm the passengers and distribute life jackets. "There was very little time so we did whatever we could," he says.

A group of boatmen and operators from the Bargi Boat Club also submitted a complaint to Jabalpur Collector Raghvendra Singh saying that the confusion in the number of passengers is often caused by VIPs and their guests who come without tickets, and that there were some onboard that day as well.

### Dismantling the vessel

Several questions have also been raised about the vessel's condition and whether it was fit to sail in adverse weather. Survivors have criticised the authorities' decision to dismantle it just days after the tragedy and before the investigation was completed, raising suspicions about the possible loss of crucial evidence.

A twin-hull catamaran cruise boat, the vessel was purchased in 2006 from a Hyderabad-based firm which has also been responsible for its maintenance and repair. It had a capacity of 90 passengers, according to officials. Its dismantled wreckage now lies on the shore.

Authorities, however, have denied both allegations, stating that the mechanical parts of the cruise remain at the site and that the investigation team will carry out a thorough inspection.

Singh says, "It is a 17-18 tonne vessel. It had become heavier due to water. It was broken so that it could be moved from there."

Rajendra Nigam, a retired Indian Navy Commander, working with MPSTDC as an advisor for water and adventure tourism, says some thought there would still be a few bodies trapped in the vessel's bays or some of its parts. "That is why they checked it completely to be sure," he says.

Nigam also says that the vessel was undergoing maintenance regularly with the last one taking place in 2024. "Its life had increased by 10 years after the last repair. There was no technical or mechanical fault with the vessel. The cruise model had been designed by the certified naval architects at the National Ship Design and Research Centre, Visakhapatnam," he explains.

Nigam adds that the assistant skippers and the boatmen working on the vessel received training at the National Institute of Water Sports in Goa every two years. "But this was an unprecedented situation. Nobody could do much," he says.

### Lack of protocols and enforcement

Adventure tourism activities in the State are governed by the tourism department, based on the Indian Adventure Tourism Guidelines, 2018, of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India, approved by the Union Ministry of Tourism.

Under the subhead for river cruising, section 26.9 mandates that a "comprehensive safety briefing must be given on boarding the vessel where all emergency drills are explained/demonstrated. Pictorial demonstrations, usage of life vests, muster stations for boarding lifeboats etc must be explained in detail".

Madhya Pradesh is yet to form and notify its own rules for inland vessels operations despite the Inland Vessels Act, to promote economical and safe transportation and trade through inland waters, being passed in Parliament in 2021. Kerala, Gujarat, and Goa, among others, have their own rules.

Officials say that before forming its own rules, Madhya Pradesh needs to establish a maritime board. "There have been discussions on the matter but a consensus is yet to be reached about whether it will be governed by the tourism or transport department. The matter has been mainly stuck due to this," says an official. Nigam says the process is now expected to accelerate in the wake of the tragedy and that the rules "should be framed within six months."

Experts blame lack of enforcement of rules and guidelines for slow responses and lack of preparedness during such incidents.

N. Unni, former director of the Inland Waterways Authority of India, says that in several countries, a detailed and mandatory instruction session is conducted before they let you onboard. "This is missing in our country," he says.

He also questions the formation of probe committees or judicial commissions in the aftermath of such tragedies. "How will a judicial commission or an official committee probe a technical subject? Sometimes, such bodies fail to finish their probe for years and the issue is forgotten unless another tragedy occurs. We need experts investigating the causes of such tragedies and we need governments, both Central and State, to act seriously on their recommendations to prevent such incidents in future," he says.



Riyaz Hussain Sayyed, 72, a survivor of the Jabalpur cruise tragedy, shows a photo he took with his family members on the deck of the vessel just a few minutes before the tragedy. A.M. FARUQUI

## From Page One

## Uncertainty continues over T.N. govt. formation

They submitted a photocopy of a WhatsApp letter to the Governor. When he asked for the original, they left saying it will be brought," he told journalists outside the Lok Bhavan, accompanied by Mr. Kamaraj. He said a police complaint will be lodged.

Earlier on Friday night, Mr. Dhinakaran submitted another letter to the Governor extending support to AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, urging that he be invited to form the government. The letter carried his signature as well as that of Mr. Kamaraj's (obtained earlier).

Sources said VCK leader Thol. Thirumavalavan, who met outgoing Chief Minister and DMK leader M.K. Stalin, indicated he had not issued any letter of support to the TVK yet.

Earlier, at a virtual consultation conducted by Mr. Thirumavalavan, the party leaders were learnt to have contemplated seeking the post of Deputy Chief Minister for him and another Cabinet berth should it join a coalition led by the TVK.

## Cong. likely to name Kerala CM tomorrow

Meanwhile, the accidental disclosure of a part of a document purportedly showing a list of new MLAs who back Mr. Venugopal – published in a newspaper on Friday – caused political embarrassment. AICC observers Mukul Wasnik and Ajay Maken, however, questioned the "legitimacy" of the document. Notably, Mr. Joseph, who, as per the "questionable" document surreptitiously captured by a lensman, appeared to back Mr. Venugopal, told reporters that "numbers meant everything in parliamentary politics". His statement assumed some significance against the backdrop of reports that a majority of Congress MLA-designates had backed Mr. Venugopal for the "top post". The "list" shows the shows the allegedly raging power struggles in Congress over the Chief Minister's post.

## Allies express apprehension

Notably, UDF allies have repeatedly expressed apprehensions that the "vexatious" selection process would carve up the Congress and, by extension, the alliance.

## Suvendu Adhikari to take oath as Bengal CM

Mr. Adhikari, 57, will take oath as the first BJP Chief Minister of West Bengal at Kolkata's Brigade Parade Grounds on Saturday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several Chief Ministers of the BJP and National Democratic Alliance-ruled States will participate in the swearing-in.

Amidst cheers from the MLAs-elect, Mr. Adhikari said: "Bhoi [fear] is out, and as Narendra Modi has said, bhorsa [faith] is in. We will not be satisfied with 46% votes and in the next election, we will have to bring 60% of the people with us," he added.

"We will ensure the security of women, instil nationalism and make West Bengal the country's cultural capital again," Mr. Adhikari added.

Mr. Adhikari contested and won from both Nandigram and Bhabanipur in the recently concluded Assembly election. He defeated former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur by a margin of 15,115 votes.

Hailing from Purba Medinipur district, Mr. Adhikari had served as a Cabinet Minister in Ms. Banerjee's government from 2016 to 2020. Mr. Adhikari defected to the BJP from the Trinamool in December 2020.

## U.S. court rules against 10% tariff, but no relief for traders

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) has ruled that the 10% temporary tariff President Donald Trump imposed on all U.S. trade partners, including India, was "unauthorised by law", striking a further blow to his attempts at using tariffs as tools to advance his policy priorities.

However, while the ruling sets a precedent, it does not translate into immediate relief for exporters around the world. The court on Thursday provided relief to only the plaintiffs – two small companies in the U.S. and Washington State – with the tariff remaining on all other importers.

The U.S. government is expected to appeal the judgment at the federal level, which could extend the process by several months. Mr. Trump, on February 24, 2026, used Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974 to impose a 10% tariff on imports from around the world for 150 days. This was in response to the U.S. Supreme Court striking down his country-wise reciprocal tariffs. The CIT, in a 2-1 decision, ruled that, although the U.S. Congress had originally passed Section 122 to give the President the authority to address balance of payments deficits, this did not include the trade deficit and current account deficits cited by Mr. Trump when he levied the 10% tariff.

## Bangladesh failed to give 'actionable response': India

In diplomatic note, New Delhi says it sent over 1,000 messages to Dhaka on repatriation of illegal immigrants since 2020, but the neighbouring country has not extended necessary cooperation

Kallol Bhattacharjee  
NEW DELHI

India has sent over a 1,000 diplomatic notes (notes verbale) and 456 "consolidated reminders" to Dhaka since September 2020 regarding the repatriation of suspected illegal Bangladeshi immigrants but has not received "an actionable response", a diplomatic document has stated.

The numbers were mentioned in the note verbale that the External Affairs Ministry sent to Dhaka on April 30, hours after the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh summoned the Indian envoy to protest against remarks made by Assam's then Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. Mr. Sarma had claimed in a media interview that under his government, Indian border guards were "pushing in" suspected Bangladeshi individuals through unguarded parts of the land border.



BSF personnel patrol along the fence on the India-Bangladesh border in Golakganj in Assam. FILE PHOTO

"It is of note that over 1,137 Notes Verbale seeking nationality verification and 456 consolidated reminders have been sent in this period," the Ministry said in the diplomatic note of April 30, which *The Hindu* has reviewed.

## 2,862 cases

"A majority of these communications have not received an actionable response," it said, adding that "Since September 2020

Bangladesh has not extended the necessary cooperation to India for nationality verification of over 2,862 cases of illegal Bangladeshis in India..."

It said "all measures undertaken by the Government of India for the repatriation of illegal Bangladeshi nationals are in adherence to Indian laws and procedures, in tandem with established bilateral arrangements".

The Indian allegation of

illegal Bangladeshi immigration was spotlighted on Thursday when Randhir Jaiswal, the spokesperson of the External Affairs Ministry, referred to the matter as the "core issue" in bilateral ties.

"These comments must be seen in the context of the core issue of repatriation of illegal Bangladeshis from India. This requires cooperation from Bangladesh, some for over five years," Mr. Jaiswal said during a weekly press briefing.

He was responding to remarks by Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman and Home Minister Salahuddin Ahmed who had said that Dhaka would take "adequate measures" if attempts at "push in" from the Indian side were to take place, especially against the backdrop of the victory of the BJP in the elections in West Bengal and Assam.

## Census enumerator ID can be verified through QR code

Vijaita Singh  
NEW DELHI

Census enumerators have been given identity cards with QR codes to enable residents to verify authenticity, says Lalit Jain, Director of Census Operations (DCO), Haryana, amid resistance from several high-end gated societies to grant access to enumerators.

In an interview with *The Hindu* on Friday, Mr. Jain said, "We understand that there may be some apprehension in their [residents] minds that maybe people [enumerators] are not genuine. Now, we have introduced the scan code enabled identity cards. Any person who has any doubt about the authenticity of our enumerator can scan the code on the ID card for verification."

On December 2, 2025, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed Parliament that according to Section 8(2) of the Census Act, 1948, every resident is "legally bound" to answer Census-related questions to the best of

her/his knowledge or belief.

"We have requested the presidents of the RWA (residents welfare associations) to allow us to enter, because Census ultimately is a nation building exercise, and it is to the benefit of everybody that we enumerate and we get to know the basic data about our population," Mr. Jain said.

## Allaying concerns

He added that "stranger anxiety" and apprehension about sharing personal data could be the reasons behind the resistance.

"Data we are asking for is not something which is very, very personal. We are just asking people whether they have drinking water supply in their homes, whether they have toilets. And secondly, they need not worry because whatever data they give is secure with us. We will not share this data with anybody. Moreover, this data will not lead to any documentation, and it cannot be used against you," he said.

## SC says it's 'shy' to direct arrest in Anil Ambani's ADAG case

Krishnadas Rajagopal  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said it has always been "extremely shy" to direct arrest even as petitioners asked why agencies have so far not arrested "king-pin" Anil Ambani in an alleged financial fraud case. The court said arrest must be the last resort, and not the first option.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Mr. Ambani, said "he may have been cheated too", even as a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report pegged losses to public sector banks and LIC in seven cases at ₹27,337 crore.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for CBI, said a total of nine regular cases were lodged against Reliance ADAG entities, led by Anil

## Nine regular cases have been lodged against Reliance ADAG entities, led by Anil Ambani

Ambani, of which seven were under investigation while chargesheets were filed in the remaining two.

Mr. Mehta informed the court that 31 look-out circulars were issued and over 224 witnesses were examined. He said searches were conducted at the premises of the ADAG promoters and directors. Two arrests were made, and "few more arrests were expected... as evidence surfaces".

Advocate Prashant Bhushan questioned why Mr. Ambani had not been arrested yet. Justice Bagchi said the need for custodial interrogation was the prerogative of the investigating agency.

## Operation Sindoor is a symbol of India's new military ethos: Minister

Saurabh Trivedi  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday described Operation Sindoor as a defining example of India's swift, precise, and joint military response capability, asserting that the operation had demonstrated the country's ability to compel its adversary to surrender.

Addressing the second edition of the Joint Commanders' Conference in Jaipur, the Defence Minister termed Operation Sindoor a "short-duration, deep-penetration, high-intensity, and high-impact operation" that reflected India's growing military capabilities and national resolve.

## Future warfare

Calling on the Commanders of the three Services to remain future-ready, Mr. Singh said the armed forces must continuously adapt to evolving global se-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with CDS General Anil Chauhan, and heads of services at the joint commanders' conference in Jaipur. PTI

curity challenges and learn from recent operational experiences.

The conference, on the theme of 'Military Capability in New Domains', focused extensively on future warfare, multidomain operations, cyber resilience, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies shaping modern battlefields.

Highlighting the changing nature of warfare, the

and secure communication networks to maintain operational superiority.

"Future wars will not be won solely through weaponry, but through innovative thinking and enhanced synergy," he said.

Mr. Singh also emphasised the greater integration among the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The Defence Minister also urged military commanders to cultivate the "element of surprise" to remain unpredictable to adversaries while ensuring preparedness against enemy actions.

During the conference, Mr. Singh released a documentary film on Operation Sindoor, the Hindi version of Vision 2047.

The Defence Minister also released the Joint Doctrine for Integrated Communication Architecture aimed at enhancing interoperability and integrated communications across the armed forces.

## Integration is key

He underlined the importance of strengthening capabilities in artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, data analytics,

## Calcutta HC rejects Centre's objections to pleas against Great Nicobar project

Abhinav Lakshman  
NEW DELHI

The Calcutta High Court has overruled the Union government's preliminary objections to a batch of petitions alleging that it violated the Forest Rights Act while obtaining consent for its ₹92,000-crore Great Nicobar Island project.

In an order made public on Friday, a Bench of Chief Justice Sujoy Paul and Justice Partha Sarathi Sen dismissed the Centre's argument that Meena Gupta, the petitioner in the case, did not have the *locus standi* to approach the court in this matter. It directed the case to be listed for final hearing on June 23.

Ms. Gupta is a retired IAS officer who has served as Secretary to both the Tribal Affairs and Environment Ministries.

Over the last two years, she has filed a series of petitions challenging the Gram Sabha resolutions



The Centre plans to build a transshipment port, an airport, and a township on the Great Nicobar island. GETTY IMAGES

consenting to the diversion of forest land for the mega-infrastructure project under the 2006 Forest Rights Act (FRA); the constitution of a sub-divisional level committee under the same law; and the notifications reducing the buffer zones for both the Campbell Bay and Galathea Bay National Parks. The petitions also question the validity of a certificate issued by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration

claiming that all rights under the FRA have been identified and settled.

On Wednesday, Additional Solicitor General of India Ashok Kumar Chakraborty argued that Ms. Gupta did not have authorisation from the tribal population of Great Nicobar Island to file the petition, adding that the petition was not maintainable because her place of residence was in Hyderabad. The court ruled that in this case, it was "clear that the petitioner has sufficient interest in the matter", and that "she is espousing the cause of the vulnerable tribal community".

## 'National importance'

The Centre argued that the project was of "great national importance" and that "such project of national importance cannot be called in question in a [public interest litigation] PIL petition". The Bench responded by saying, "So

far, argument regarding the cost and importance of project is concerned, at this stage we are not inclined to enter into the merits of the case. A project involving huge expenditure must proceed in accordance with governing laws holding the field and it is not beyond the scope of judicial review on permissible parameters."

The ASG further argued that the petitions should not be maintainable because multiple petitions were filed for prayers that could have been made in the same petition, further posting that the National Green Tribunal had already heard and ruled on this issue, and hence the principle of *res judicata* would apply. The court dismissed both arguments, ruling that the petitions and issues before the High Court were distinct not only from each other but also from the issue decided by the NGT earlier this year.

## No Lakhimpur Kheri witnesses examined in past 3 months: SC

The Hindu Bureau  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday recorded disappointment at the non-production of witnesses in the trial of Ashish Mishra, son of former Union minister Ajay Mishra, and others in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, after perusing a status report filed by the State of Uttar Pradesh, said no witnesses had been examined in the trial in the past two to three months.

The court noted that the State had identified 208 witnesses, pruning their number to 131. The State counsel said 44 witnesses were examined, 15 were discharged and 72 witnesses were yet to be produced. The Bench said no reason was given in the status report as to why the

## The Bench said no reason was given as to why the witnesses were not being produced in court

witnesses were not being produced in court for trial.

The case deals with an incident on October 3, 2021 when an SUV, which was part of Mishra's convoy, allegedly mowed down protestors, including four farmers, protesting the controversial agriculture laws in the Lakhimpur Kheri district.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the victims' families, said the local police were hand-in-glove with the accused persons. Mr. Bhushan said efforts have been allegedly made on behalf of the accused, through threats and inducements, to not cooperate in the proceedings.

# BJP's win in Bengal plugs a big hole in national security: Shah

The party now has a government in every State from 'Gangotri to Gangasagar'; infiltration and cow-smuggling will become 'impossible' in West Bengal after the party's victory, says Union Home Minister while addressing legislators in Kolkata

**Shiv Sahay Singh**  
**Shrabana Chatterjee**  
KOLKATA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the West Bengal Assembly election was not only significant from electoral and ideological points of view, but from the aspect of national security as well. The victory plugs "one of the biggest holes" in national security, he said.

"We now have governments in Assam, Tripura and Bengal. Infiltration and cattle-smuggling will become impossible. The Central and State governments will work together to turn the border into an 'impenetrable fortress' for national security," Mr. Shah said, while addressing newly elected legislators of the BJP in Kolkata.

The BJP leadership had highlighted illegal infiltration from Bangladesh as a major issue in the Assembly election. India shares a 4,096-km border with Ban-



**Spirited reception:** Union Minister Amit Shah receives a warm welcome upon his arrival at the airport in Kolkata on Friday. ANI

gladesh, of which more than half – 2,216 km – lies in West Bengal.

During his address, the Home Minister, who presided over the BJP Legislature Party meeting, emphasised that the victory was not only about the BJP's expansion and about the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance forming a government in its 21st State. "The BJP promises

the people of Bengal and the country that we will identify and remove every infiltrator from India. And let me say from this stage – people who call this polarisation are mistaken. This is not about polarisation. This is about national security," Mr. Shah said.

"The biggest importance of this victory is that it plugs one of the biggest holes in India's national se-

curity. Now, infiltration and cow-smuggling will become impossible in West Bengal," Mr. Shah said.

## Ideological significance

The Home Minister, who led the party's election campaign in West Bengal along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also spoke about the ideological significance of the victory.

"The victory in West Bengal is significant because after 100 years of ideological continuity, we have a government from every State from Gangotri to Gangasagar. I feel that Syama Prasad Mookerjee would bless the Narendra Modi government from where he is now," he said.

Mookerjee, founder of the Jana Sangh, the ideological precursor of the BJP, hailed from West Bengal. The Home Minister also referred to the 150th year of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Vande Mataram*, saying the BJP forming the government in the novelist's State was "a huge sign".

Reflecting on the party's

journey in West Bengal, Mr. Shah said while it was a three-MLA party in 2016, it won 77 seats in 2021 and 207 in 2026. "I cannot forget that 321 BJP party workers had to lay down their lives for this journey. I have travelled all across the country, but have never seen such violence, except in Kerala and West Bengal," he added.

The Home Minister said that the average margin of victory of BJP legislators was 28,000 votes and in nine of the 23 districts, former Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress drew a blank.

"I have never seen such a mandate, particularly when the party is in Opposition. West Bengal has witnessed 93% voting and no allegation of booth capturing was made even by the Trinamool. I want to thank the voters of Bhabanipur, where Suwendu Adhikari defeated Mamata Banerjee," he added. Mr. Adhikari was appointed as the leader of the BJP Legislature Party on Friday in the presence of Mr. Shah.

# Killers of Suwendu's aide at large; post-poll violence continues in West Bengal

**Shrabana Chatterjee**  
KOLKATA

The assassins of Chandranath Rath, the personal assistant to BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, are still at large two days after the murder, even as more incidents of post-poll violence have been reported from across West Bengal.

## Probe under way

The police have recovered a second motorcycle used by the killers to escape. Another motorcycle and a car, both with fake registration plates, have already been seized. The police suspect that local criminals may have provided information to the killers, who shot Rath dead from a point-blank range at Madhyamgram in North 24 Parganas, while he was in a car. Rath was shot three times and was declared dead in a hospital.

While forensic experts collected samples from the crime scene, they did not find any fingerprints in the car used by the assassins, sources said.

However, the police have recovered CCTV foot-



**Gathering evidence:** CID officials inspecting the spot where Chandranath Rath was shot dead in North 24 Parganas district. PTI

age from the place. Sources said one unit of the Special Investigation Team has gone to Uttar Pradesh to trace connections of the killers. The Additional Director-General, CID, and the Director-General of BSF inspected the scene of the crime in the Doharia locality of Madhyamgram.

## Violence continues

Crude bomb blasts were reported from the Panihati constituency, the police said on Thursday. At least five BJP workers were injured and are undergoing treatment.

Ratna Debnath, the mother of R.G. Kar victim,

won from the Panihati constituency on BJP ticket. "A blast happened here, but it was a little far away from my home. Two people were severely injured, and total seven were admitted to hospital," Ms. Debnath said.

Blasts have been reported from the Sibpur area in Howrah, and visuals went viral on social media.

Both the Trinamool Congress and the BJP said they have each lost three party workers in the violence. Arson, vandalism, and clashes have been reported from multiple parts of the State since May 4, the day results were out.

## DMK seeks change in Lok Sabha seating arrangement

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

DMK Parliamentary Party leader Kanimozhi has written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking suitable changes in the seating arrangement of DMK members in the House in view of the changed political circumstances.

"As our alliance with the Indian National Congress has come to an end, it may not be appropriate for our members to continue occupying the present seating arrangement alongside them in the House," she said in the letter.

Ms. Kanimozhi requested separate seating arrangements for the DMK members to enable them to effectively discharge their parliamentary responsibilities.

## BJP spokesperson from Manipur quits over ethnic conflict

**The Hindu Bureau**  
GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Manipur unit spokesperson, Elangbam Johnson, resigned from the party on Friday due to the party leadership's alleged failure to resolve the ongoing ethnic crisis in the State.

Mr. Johnson, who unsuccessfully contested the 2022 Assembly election from the Keishamthong constituency, said in Imphal that he had consulted his supporters before deciding to quit the party. He said the BJP was unable to convince people since May 2023 that it could usher in peace.

The conflict between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities broke out on May 3, 2023, claiming

more than 260 lives and displacing some 62,000 others over the past three years.

Mr. Johnson criticised the BJP's Manipur unit for its "inability to take decisions independently on matters concerning the State" and act decisively on them. He alleged that the State unit lacked the power to make decisions even on disciplinary matters. He was associated with the United Committee Manipur, a civil society organisation, before joining politics.

Several parties in Manipur and social organisations have condemned the May 7 attacks on Tangkhul Naga villages along the India-Myanmar border, allegedly by members of the militant group Kuki National Army-Burma.

## SC criticises Punjab govt. over drug menace

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday criticised the Punjab government and authorities for their inability to bring the drug problem in the State to heel.

Chief Justice Surya Kant, heading a Bench comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, said drug abuse and trafficking continue unabated as only small peddlers were caught while none dared to lay a hand on the big fish.

The Chief Justice narrated a recent incident involving a mother who lost all her five sons to drug addiction. "She lost her fifth son to drugs. The police need to be sensitised," the CJ said. "The bigger sharks or influential ones should be arrested," he said.

## Minister intended to 'praise' Col. Sofiya but he could not articulate it: M.P. govt. to SC

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The State of Madhya Pradesh on Friday told the Supreme Court that State Minister Kunwar Vijay Shah had intended to "praise" Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, but could not articulate himself properly.

Mr. Shah is accused of making disparaging remarks against the Army officer, who had briefed the media during Operation Sindoor.

Appearing before a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the State of Madhya Pradesh, submitted, "I am not justifying anything... But he possibly wanted to praise the lady... He had tendered an apology.



Kunwar Vijay Shah

He could not articulate and he wanted to praise... It is unfortunate."

Chief Justice Kant responded that it was "most unfortunate". "We know that when a political personality wants to praise, how well they can do it. If he wanted to apologise, he should have done it immediately," the Chief Justice told Mr. Mehta.

Senior advocate Manin-

der Singh, appearing for Mr. Shah, said a public apology had been issued the next day. Chief Justice Kant observed that the apology came only after the court took cognisance of the matter. He said the apology appeared to be part of a "fake defence".

Mr. Singh submitted that Mr. Shah had apologised on television.

Justice Joymalya Bagchi said a January 19, 2026 order had referred to "some earlier instances" involving Mr. Shah. These instances, however, were not investigated by the Special Investigation Team.

The Bench said the State must comply with its directions in the January 19 order, including taking a decision on the grant of prior sanction for prosecution.

## EC publishes Index Cards for Assembly elections

**Sreeparna Chakrabarty**  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Friday published Index Cards and Statistical Reports for the recently concluded Assembly elections in four States and one Union Territory.

According to data made available in the public domain through the EC website and the ECINET app, total votes polled in West Bengal were 6,38,42,843, of which 6,32,58,138 were valid. In Assam, the corresponding figures were 2,16,84,656 and 2,13,97,936.

The turnout of women voters in West Bengal was 93.8%, slightly higher than the 92.06% for men. In Assam, women's turnout was recorded at 86.53%, marginally exceeding the 84.95% of men.

Tamil Nadu polled 4,93,89,958 votes and 4,91,24,329 were valid, while in Kerala, 2,16,30,208 votes were polled and 2,14,71,988 were valid. Women voters recorded a turnout of 86.2% in Tamil Nadu, higher than the 83.77% among men.

In Kerala, women voter participation stood at 81.17% as against 74.9% among men.

The Union Territory of Puducherry saw 8,66,932 votes being cast, of which 8,59,506 were valid.

## NOTA option

The percentage of voters opting for 'None of the Above' (NOTA) was the highest in Assam at 1.23% and lowest in Tamil Nadu at 0.4%.

This round of Assembly elections also saw extensive mobilisation of electoral infrastructure. West Bengal had the highest number of polling stations at 85,092, followed by Tamil Nadu with 75,064 and Assam with 31,490.

The Index Cards contain data across multiple dimensions, such as candidates, electors, votes polled, votes counted, party-wise and candidate-wise votes polled, etc.

## SC seeks Centre's response on plea against blocking of AAP Gujarat unit's Meta accounts

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought a response from the Union government on a petition filed by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) challenging an "illegal, arbitrary and unconstitutional" order to geo-block and suspend the Meta handles of the national party's Gujarat unit without giving any prior reasons, hearing or notice.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant issued notice to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and the State of Gujarat on the petition filed by the party, which said the move was intended to "silence an Opposition party and is opposed to multi-party democracy".

The AAP, represented by senior advocate Shadan Farasat, said the Gujarat



unit's Meta accounts @aapgujarat (on Instagram and Facebook) have functioned as official handles for political commentaries, dissemination of party policies and welfare-related information.

"They were used as legitimate platforms for political speech and democratic engagement, which fall squarely within the protection of Article 19 of the Constitution. Any action that has the effect of silencing or disproportionately restricting the voices of Opposition parties strikes

at the heart of constitutional democracy and is liable to be scrutinised as a violation of the basic structure doctrine," the AAP said.

Mr. Farasat said a direction to block an entire account/page/group would amount to a prior restraint on free speech. He said the burden was on the Union government and the State to justify the prior restraint. The AAP said it was not informed of any specific content alleged to be objectionable or the statutory provision which was relied upon for blocking the accounts, or the factual factors.

The blocking of the entire Meta accounts without any specific content-based identification, is disproportionate and manifestly beyond the scope of Article 19(2) and the powers under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act...," the petition submitted.

## Congress slams Modi govt. over women's safety citing NCRB data

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday sharpened its attack on the Narendra Modi government over women's safety and rising crime against vulnerable sections, with party president Mallikarjun Kharge alleging that 12 years of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rule had exposed the "hollowness" of the Centre's claims on law and order, and women's safety.

In a post on X, Mr. Kharge said the government's narrative on women's safety stood contradicted by official data. Citing the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2024 report, the Congress chief said crimes against women had risen by 42.6% since 2013. Referring to the same data set, he said crimes against children had gone up by 204.6%, atrocities against Dalits by 41.3%, and crimes against



**Mounting criticism:** AIMC President Alka Lamba addresses a press conference at the AICC headquarters, in New Delhi on Friday. ANI

Adivasis by 46.7%.

He said the NCRB data pointed that cybercrime had surged by 1,689% and 10,546 farmers, 52,931 daily wage labourers and 14,488 students died by suicide in 2024.

"Twelve years of the Modi government have exposed the hollowness of its claims on law and order and women's safety," Mr. Kharge said, adding that the "truth" was now before the country.

The remarks came as the NCRB's 2024 report re-

corded an increase in cases involving juveniles in conflict with the law and crimes against senior citizens. A total of 34,878 cases were registered against juveniles in 2024, an increase of 11.2% over the previous year, while crimes against senior citizens rose by 16.9% to 32,602 cases.

Separately, All India Mahila Congress president Alka Lamba accused the BJP of using 'Beti Bachao' and 'Nari Vandan' merely as political slogans while fail-

ing to ensure justice for women.

Addressing a press conference, Ms. Lamba cited NCRB figures and said that 42,85,888 cases of crimes against women were registered between 2014 and 2024 during the Modi government's tenure.

"These are not just statistics, but more than 42 lakh women and girls struggling for justice," she said, alleging that annual crimes against women rose from 3.4 lakh in 2014 to nearly 4.42 lakh in 2024.

Ms. Lamba said that BJP governments were shielding the accused instead of punishing them, and referred to cases in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Bihar to accuse the ruling party of protecting influential leaders.

She demanded that NCRB data on crimes against women be discussed during the Monsoon Session of Parliament.

**IN BRIEF**



**DRDO, IAF conduct maiden trial of TARA glide weapon**

The Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Indian Air Force have conducted the maiden flight-trial of the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) weapon system off the coast of Odisha on Thursday. TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system capable of converting conventional unguided warheads into precision-guided weapons for accurately engaging ground-based targets. According to the Ministry of Defence, the modular range extension kit has been designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat along with other DRDO laboratories. It is aimed at improving the range and lethality of low-cost aerial weapons.

**SC takes cognisance of judge sending advocate to custody**

The Supreme Court on Friday took cognisance of a representation made by the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) about a video footage showing an Andhra Pradesh High Court judge sending a young advocate to a day's judicial custody for a procedural lapse. The court's official website showed the case tentatively listed for hearing on May 15. The SCBA had urged Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, in a resolution passed on May 6, to look into the incident while expressing shock at the judge's reported conduct. The Bar Council of India had also sought an urgent intervention of the Chief Justice in the same matter.

**HC to pass order protecting Tharoor's personality rights**

The Delhi High Court on Friday said it will pass an interim order to protect personality rights of Shashi Tharoor, after the Congress MP moved court seeking removal of deepfake videos of him circulating online falsely attributing statements to him that he never made. The court also issued notices to defendants in suit including social media platforms such as X and Meta. Senior advocate Amit Sibal, appearing for Mr. Tharoor, submitted that there were three specific deepfake videos in circulation and that recourse had already been taken by notifying the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Delhi.

**TCS case: AIMIM corporator booked for hiding Nida Khan**

Nida Khan, one of the accused in alleged sexual exploitation and forcible conversion at the Tata Consultancy Services office in Nashik, was sent to police custody till May 11 by a Nashik court on Friday. Ms. Khan was earlier arrested by the Nashik police in a joint operation with the Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar Police. The police have also booked an All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) corporator from Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar on the charge of harbouring Ms. Khan while she absconded from the law. The Nashik court allowed Ms. Khan to meet her mother twice a day while in police custody, on the grounds of her early pregnancy.

**MGNREGS scale, workdays fell in 2025-26, finds study**

Despite rise in registered households, employment generation has dropped, leading to an average income loss of ₹1,221 for each household; 40% fewer households completed 100 days of work

**Sobhana K. Nair**  
NEW DELHI

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) saw a sharp contraction in its scale and reach in 2025-26, according to a report on the final operational year of the scheme introduced by the Congress-led UPA regime. The report points to a paradoxical trend in which the number of registered households rose marginally, but fewer households and workers found employment, total workdays declined significantly, and fewer families completed the guaranteed 100 days of work.



The new rural employment scheme, Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission Act, is set to replace MGNREGS. PTI

The report points to a paradoxical trend in which the number of registered households rose marginally, but fewer households and workers found employment, total workdays declined significantly, and fewer families completed the guaranteed 100 days of work. The report was released by the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, a coalition of non-profit bodies working with MGNREGS workers, and was prepared by LibTech India, a consortium of academics and activists.

LibTech estimates that the contraction resulted in an average income loss of ₹1,221 for each MGNREGS household during the financial year. The report was released by the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha, a coalition of non-profit bodies working with MGNREGS workers, and was prepared by LibTech India, a consortium of academics and activists.

₹1,221 for each MGNREGS household during the financial year.

**Uncertain transition**

The Viksit Bharat - Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, which was passed in Parliament last December, is expected to come into force soon, replacing MGNREGS. The Union government has allocated only ₹30,000 crore for MGNREGS for the transitional period. This decline is deeply worrying, the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha said, especially since the new employment scheme was brought in with no pu-

blic consultation. "The employment guarantee programmes play a critical role in rural livelihood security and any major restructuring of such programmes must involve meaningful consultation," it said in a statement.

**Fewer working days**

The number of registered households under the scheme increased by 3.2%, from 14.98 crore in 2024-25 to 15.46 crore in 2025-26. However, this did not translate into greater employment. The report notes that 44 lakh fewer households and 67 lakh fewer workers were em-

ployed compared to the previous year, representing declines of 8.2% and 9.1% respectively.

The number of person-days of work generated under the programme fell sharply by 21.5%, from 268.44 crore in 2024-25 to 210.73 crore in 2025-26. Average person-days per household dropped by 14.5%, from 50.18 to 42.92. The impact of this decline is evident in the sharp fall in the number of households completing the full 100 days of guaranteed employment, which declined by 40.5%, from 0.37 crore to 0.22 crore.

The contraction was geographically widespread. Fifteen out of 20 States recorded a fall in person-days during the year. West Bengal generated no person-days in either 2024-25 or 2025-26 and was excluded from the comparative analysis. Tamil Nadu recorded the steepest decline at 42.8%, followed by Haryana at 41.7%. Only four States registered an increase in person-days.

**'Two Indians on ship hit by hantavirus asymptomatic'**

**Bindu Shajan Perappadan**  
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has confirmed that the two Indian nationals aboard the cruise ship *MV Hondius*, which has reported cases of hantavirus infection, are at present asymptomatic and under observation in accordance with international health protocols.

The Ministry added that it is maintaining close coordination with the World Health Organization and other international partners. "Necessary public health measures are also being undertaken proactively to safeguard the health and wellbeing of Indian citizens," it said in a release on Friday.

A senior Health Ministry official said eight probable cases of hantavirus infection have been reported aboard the vessel, of which five cases have been confirmed. Three deaths have been reported.

**Prosecution has failed to establish conspiracy to kill Sohrabuddin Sheikh: HC**

**Chinmay Gaiikwad**  
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court, which on Thursday upheld the acquittal of 22 accused persons in the 2005 case of alleged fake encounter of Gujarat gangster Sohrabuddin Sheikh, has stated that the prosecution had failed to establish a case. A copy of the court order was made public on Friday.

A Division Bench of the Bombay High Court, comprising Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Gautam Ankhad, dismissed appeals filed by Sohrabuddin Sheikh's brothers, Rubabuddin Sheikh and Nayamuddin Sheikh. The appeals challenged a December 21, 2018 trial court order that acquitted 22 police personnel from Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The case pertains to the alleged extrajudicial killing



of Sohrabuddin Sheikh in November 2005, the disappearance of his wife, Kausar Bi, and the subsequent death of Tulsiram Prajapati in December 2006. According to the prosecution, the three were abducted from a luxury bus near Zahirabad and later killed in staged encounters as part of a criminal conspiracy allegedly involving police officers and politicians.

The Bench noted that the prosecution examined 210 witnesses, of whom 92 turned hostile. "There is no ground to draw an inference that the trial was not

conducted properly because 92 prosecution witnesses turned hostile," the court said. It added that these witnesses, when cross-examined by the prosecution, denied having made any statement to the police in support of the prosecution case.

The court said that not a single witness identified the accused in the dock as the persons who had abducted Sohrabuddin Sheikh, Kausar Bi and Tulsiram Prajapati.

The Bench held that the prosecution failed to establish the offence of criminal conspiracy. "The essence of the offence of conspiracy is the fact of combination by agreement. There must be some evidence regarding physical manifestation of the agreement. Mere transmission of thought or sharing of a desire to commit an unlawful act is not sufficient," the court said.



A NITI Aayog report reveals that India faces challenges in retaining students at the secondary level. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

**NITI Aayog flags low student retention, learning outcomes**

**Maitri Porecha**  
NEW DELHI

A decadal analysis of India's school education system by NITI Aayog reveals that while India has achieved a near-universal access to school at the primary level, it faces challenges in retaining students at the secondary level. There is also a persistent crisis in achieving learning outcomes.

The report, titled "School education system in India - temporal analysis and policy roadmap for quality Enhancement", highlights the "pyramid" problem. The education system currently resembles a sharp pyramid, housing 14.71 lakh schools and 24.69 crore students.

While the country boasts 7.3 lakh primary schools, that number plummets to 1.64 lakh at the higher secondary level. Four out of every 10 children who enter the system drop out before completing higher secondary education.

"This structural fragmentation means only 5.4% of schools offer a continuous journey from Grade 1 to 12. For the vast majority of students, moving up through the grades requires changing institutions multiple times - a hurdle that contributes to a steep attrition rate," the report said. "This fragmentation without any established linkage between schools for transitioning requires students to shift schools at key stages, depending on local availability, which further contributes to declining retention rates and limits the likelihood of progression to higher stages of education."

To add to this, close to 7,993 schools across the country reported zero student enrolment, with the highest numbers seen in West Bengal (3,812) and Te-

langana (2,245). "While these schools appear operational in administrative records, they no longer serve any student population. These schools, despite zero enrolment, continue to receive financial and human resources due to the lack of updating of records, showing the difference between on-ground reality and planning," the report said.

**Composite schools**

The report recommends "cylindrical" schooling to fix the "leaky pipeline" of student dropouts, which involves creating composite schools that cover Grades 1-12 under one roof. The report points to the fact that the Right to Education Act ends at age 14, leaving families to bear the costs of tuition, books, and transport for older children.

The report highlights that according to UDISE+ 2024-25, 1.19 lakh schools lack access to functional electricity.

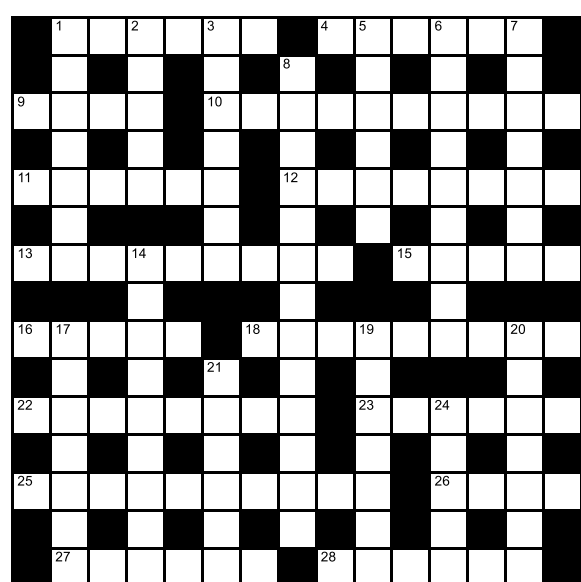
Access to water and hygiene facilities is also inconsistent. The share of schools with drinking water facilities has increased from 96.5% in 2014 to 99% in 2025, but 14,505 schools still lack functional water sources, and nearly 59,829 lack hand-washing facilities, compromising student health and hygiene.

The report pointed out that in October 2025, the Education Ministry announced that AI and Computational Thinking will be introduced from Grade 3. However, the report warns that without ethical frameworks and better teacher training, an over-reliance on AI could "diminish independent thinking" in younger learners.

Despite high enrolment, reading proficiency in Grade 8 has dropped. In 2014, 74.7% of Grade 8 students could read a Grade 2 text; by 2024, that figure fell to 71.1%. In mathematics, only 45.8% of Grade 8 students can solve a basic division problem.

**THE CROSSWORD+ 14789**  
(set by Afterdark)

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



- 13 Dynamic work unit led by English nationalist; foreigner in charge (9)
  - 15 Members of NSE provide logic (5)
  - 16 Auditor's representative joins school groups (5)
  - 18 A top mole (English) infiltrates UK party by pretext ultimately to gain understanding (9)
  - 22 Penny or Romeo's free altogether, essentially to make food (8)
  - 23 Savages get direction to stay inside vacant bases (6)
  - 25 Arrival at old city begins with exciting exploits (10)
  - 26 Information on female's operation (4)
  - 27 Want to become father after decent earnings initially (6)
  - 28 Rode for a period of time (day) (6)
- Down**
- 1 Say, she could be poor nun (7)
  - 2 Party line at house is for puppets, perhaps (5)
  - 3 In speech, misrepresent meaning to get permit (7)
  - 5 An inside information on vacating city office (6)
  - 6 Favourite job! Essentially dump fuel (9)
  - 7 Dutch champions not beginning meals (7)
  - 8 Liberal or hater? (8,5)
  - 14 Journalists having endless red wine, refresh regularly (9)
  - 17 Shunned the Dove ad I shot (7)
  - 19 English doctor meets idiot at entrance of Yemen consulate (7)
  - 20 Seen as warm (7)
  - 21 Somewhat aggrieved, I tormented boss of 14 (6)
  - 24 Legal to decapitate, but horrific (5)

- Across**
- 1 Bells designed primarily, saved for another bicycle part (6)
  - 4 Recorded without Prince hit (6)
  - 9 Virtuoso illegally confined in country (4)
  - 10 Fetching club's client log for analysis (10)
  - 11 Relative was in American-Indian company first (6)
  - 12 In conclusion, square was covered (8)

**SUDOKU**

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

**Solution to previous puzzle**

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

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

**FAITH**

**Hanuman's eloquence**

Kamban conferred the title of *sollin selvan* (Master of words) upon Hanuman in his Ramayanam. Hanuman's eloquence is like a rare jewel. Valmiki's work also pays tribute to Hanuman's way with words.

There are two occasions when Hanuman lives up to his title, said Damal S. Ramakrishnan. When Sugriva despatches Hanuman as his emissary to Rama and Lakshmana who have arrived near the Rushyamukha mountain in their search for Sita, Hanuman takes the form of a mendicant and addresses them. "How is it that you, with your brilliant complexion like that of royal sages or gods, are appearing like ascetics? How did you, who deserve to rule a kingdom, come to this place?" Impressed with Hanuman's speech and astuteness in sizing them up, Rama tells Lakshmana that only a man who has undergone the discipline needed to learn the Rig Veda, the memory power to master the Yajur Veda, and proficiency in proper recitation of the Sama Veda could speak that eloquently.

The other occasion when Hanuman's eloquence came to the fore is when Sita was being held captive in Ashok Vanam by Ravana. He gently introduces himself by reciting events from Ayodhya in a manner that convinces her that he is there to help. Hanuman offers to rescue her by carrying her on his shoulders, saying he had already carried Rama, who is like a father figure to him, on his shoulders. He says he was offering the same service to Sita, who is like a mother to him. However, Sita turns down the offer reasoning that if she were to do so, everyone would hail Sita as a great fighter, diminishing Rama's valour. As a talented speaker himself, Hanuman is impressed by her words.

**IN BRIEF**



**Hyundai Motor India Q4 PAT falls 22%, to pay ₹21 dividend**

Hyundai Motore India Ltd. (HMIL) reported fourth quarter consolidated profit after tax slid 22% to ₹1,256 crore. Revenue rose 5.4% to ₹18,916 crore. For FY26, PAT fell 4% to ₹5,432 crore. Revenue for FY26 grew 2.3% to ₹70,763 crore. The board recommended a dividend of ₹21 per share. To support growth, HMIL announced the expansion of Pune facility by another 70,000 units post Phase-II expansion, taking the overall capacity to 1.14 million units by 2030.

**Titan Company Q4 net profit rises 35% to ₹1,179 crore in Q4**

Titan Company posted a Q4 net profit of ₹1,179 crore, a 35% rise over ₹871 crore a year earlier. Consolidated revenue climbed 46% to ₹20,300 crore. Total income for FY26 stood ₹76,078 crore, a 33% growth. Ajay Chawla, MD, said, FY26 had been a landmark year for Titan; it took 40 years for the company to cross the ₹50,000 crore annual revenue milestone in FY25, while the next almost ₹25,000 crore had been 'remarkably' achieved in a single year of FY26.

**Bank of Baroda Q4 PAT up 11%, set to pay ₹8.5 dividend**

Bank of Baroda, the second largest public sector bank, reported a 11% year-on-year growth in profit after tax (PAT) to ₹5,616 crore. PAT for FY26 at ₹20,021 crore grew 2.2%. The board has recommended a dividend of ₹8.5/equity share for FY26. Q4 net interest income expanded by 8.7% to ₹12,494 crore. Gross NPA Ratio improved to 1.89% in Q4 from 2.26% a year ago. The Net NPA Ratio reduced by 13 bps to 0.45% in Q4FY26.

**Strait of Hormuz: why U.S. Project Freedom couldn't secure free navigation**

**M. Kalyanaraman**  
CHENNAI



Some experts say drones have changed the equation as they could damage ships.

The U.S. announced Project Freedom on May 4 to end the Iranian blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. It was suspended the next day even as merchant ships and U.S. Navy craft came under attack.

Though U.S. President Donald Trump cited progress in talks with Iran as the reason for calling off the initiative, Iran showed it could escalate the situation if the U.S. persisted in its attempt to deny Iran stake in the Strait of Hormuz and establish dominance in the Persian Gulf. This was a far cry from 40 years ago when the U.S. was able to intervene in the Tanker Wars and ensure a relatively smoother flow of ships in the region.

Listing a range of advanced systems, including underwater drones and warships, the U.S. said multiple advanced military capabilities were being 'harnessed' in Project Freedom to reopen safe navigation via the strait.

As the initiative got underway, the U.S. claimed two U.S.-flagged merchant ships crossed the strait freely, apparently not via the routes Iran indicated, as a demonstration meant to encourage confidence.

Iran had earlier indicated only the area close to its coast was free of mines and marked a danger zone running almost the entire breadth of the strait towards Oman.

**Temporarily suspended**  
In a day, however, Mr. Trump declared Project Freedom was temporarily suspended. There were in-

dications shipowners were not convinced to make the transit. The same day the project was announced, Hapag-Lloyd, one of the biggest container shipping firms in the world, said its risk assessment was unchanged and the strait was closed for transits until further notice.

**Industry cautious**  
The industry sought more details since the U.S. indicated it was not going to escort ships individually, unlike 40 years ago when it largely succeeded in beating back Iranian initiatives to take control of the strait. Operation Earnest Will involved minesweepers, patrol boats and U.S. warships escorting merchant ship convoys with anti-missile batteries to counter Iranian attacks.

At the time, Iran had recently acquired Silkworm missiles that could be mounted on trucks and fired from land at merchant ships. It also had speedboats with machine guns and mines. Iran sought to attack Kuwaiti and Saudi ships as the two countries were supporting Iraq, its adversary.

During Operation Earnest Will, the U.S. Navy es-

**OMCs losing ₹30,000 crore a month on petrol, diesel, LPG**

Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary, Union Petroleum Ministry, added that Oil Marketing Companies were making these losses despite the government reducing the export duty on petrol and diesel

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

India's oil-marketing companies (OMCs) are losing about ₹30,000 crore a month on the sale of petrol, diesel and LPG as they hold steady retail fuel prices amid rising prices of crude oil, said Sujata Sharma, Joint-Secretary at the Union Petroleum Ministry.

Ms. Sharma told reporters the OMCs were incurring the losses despite the government having reduced excise duties on petrol and diesel earlier.

"Our OMCs are buying crude oil at higher rates but are not selling at corresponding rates to protect our consumers, this impacts their finances," she stated, "To alleviate this pressure [on OMCs], the government reduced the excise duties on retail fuel and forewent revenue of



Sujata Sharma

₹14,000 crore in a month. Notwithstanding the same, OMCs are incurring under-recoveries on petrol, diesel and LPG."

**West Asia tensions**  
Escalating tensions in West Asia, which have now extended for more than 60 days, have marred shipping across the Strait of Hormuz, which accounts for a fifth of the global

energy trade. This has resulted in prices of crude oil prices spiralling upwards.

At the time of writing, benchmark Brent Crude futures (for July 2026) were trading 0.7% higher over their previous close at \$100.75 for every barrel.

As per provisional data from the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), consumption of petrol rose about 6.36% in April year-on-year whilst that of diesel rose 0.25%.

Since the onset of the tensions, LPG use slid 15.7% in March from February and 7% in April.

This was due to the government seeking to regulate allocation of commercial LPG to commercial establishments.

On March 27, the government increased the allocation of the bottled LPG to commercial and industrial establishment to up to

70% of pre-crisis levels.

Indicative of rising price pressures, the price of commercial LPG cylinder was hiked by ₹993 per cylinder and that of 5-kg free trade LPG by ₹261 per cylinder on May 2, the latter being imperative for migrant populations in urban and semi-urban areas. This was the second such hike. The first of these hikes was effected on April 1.

**13 vessels in Hormuz**

Speaking to reporters at the same briefing, Opesh Kumar Sharma, Director at the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, informed there were 13 India-flagged vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

This included one LPG tanker, five crude oil tankers, one chemical products tanker, three container ships, two bulk carriers and one dredger.

**Rubber firms raise prices on war | Call for long-term cotton policies**

**M. Soundariya Preetha**  
COIMBATORE

Rubber industries raised product prices by 7% as costs spiralled on U.S.-Israel-Iran war.

All India Rubber Industries Association president Anay Gupta said with production cost rising by 15% in the last three months,

the industries raised prices from May 1. If input prices do not stabilise in two months, they would mull a hike in second quarter.

Prices of natural rubber had climbed 40% and that of synthetic rubber 70%. Firms making products for various sectors, including auto and tyres use a blend of synthetic and natural

rubber. The industry is facing an almost 15% shortage of synthetic rubber availability due to the war and MSME output has slid 15%.

The Association appealed to the government to permit duty free import of natural rubber for six months as the import duty was now 25% or ₹30 a kg, whichever was higher.

**The Hindu Bureau**  
COIMBATORE

The long-term policies of the government should address the fundamental constraints faced by the cotton sector to improve productivity. It should ensure economic viability of the crop for the growers and also take into account

**SBI FY26 net rises 13% to ₹80,032 cr.**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's biggest lender, reported Q4 standalone profit after tax rose 6% year-on-year to ₹19,684 crore. For FY26, the lender reported 13% YoY growth in PAT to ₹80,032 crore.

The board declared a dividend of ₹17.35/equity share. Soon after the announcement of the results, SBI shares came under selling pressure and closed with a loss of 6.62% at ₹1,019.55 on the BSE.

For Q4, Net Interest Income (NII) grew 4.13% to ₹44,380 crore and for FY26 4.08% to ₹173,120 crore.

Net Interest Margin (NIM) for the quarter fell 21 basis points to 2.93%. For FY26 NIM slid 18 basis points to 3.03%. For the quarter, SBI reported a 2.4% drop in total income to ₹140,412 crore. For FY26 total income grew 5% to ₹551,648 crore.

The bank made lower provisions of ₹3,140 crore



Chairman C. Sreenivasulu Setty

towards Non Performing Assets (NPA) for the quarter versus ₹3,964 crore a year earlier. For FY26, provisions grew to ₹15,422 crore from ₹14,418 crore in the previous year.

For the year ended March 31, gross NPA was lower at ₹73,452 crore from ₹76,880 crore a year ago.

Net NPA stood at ₹8,830 crore versus with ₹19,667 crore a year ago.

The bank saw a deposit growth of 11.03%. Consolidated net profit for the fourth quarter grew by a marginal 1% to ₹20,161 crore. For FY26, it grew 8% to ₹85,168 crore.

**M. Kalyanaraman**  
CHENNAI

Some experts say drones have changed the equation as they could damage ships.

corted almost 130 fleets consisting of more than 250 ships in a 14-month period ending in September 1988. Though the Tanker Wars drove up insurance costs and reduced traffic, transits continued amid a few attacks and the strait remained open.

After the U.S. launched a major operation against Iran's Naval capabilities, Iran backed off and the Tanker Wars ceased.

Now, however, some experts say drones have changed the equation. A few low-cost weapons could inflict visible damage on merchant ships and even one hit from a swarm of drones could have a disproportionate impact, including on insurance costs that influence global ship movements.

**'Ahead of the game'**  
"The U.S. is ahead of the game as far as countering Iranian surprises is concerned, especially if it is able to deploy capabilities continuously," said Commodore (retd.) R. Seshadri Vasana, a defence expert.

But that commitment was not visible to the shipping industry since key operational details were missing. Meanwhile, at least two merchant ships, including a UAE tanker, were attacked and damaged. Two U.S. Navy destroyers were hit too, in a sign of Iranian firepower. "While a few ships made it out safely while Project Freedom was in place, it was clear transits without coordination with Iran entailed significant risk," said Jakob Larsen, chief safety and security officer, Bimco, a global industry body representing shipowners.

**'Internal mismatch a reason behind GST notices'**

**Ashokamithran T.**  
MUMBAI

Most of the notices served by tax authorities to enterprises in our study received at least one notice in FY 2025 that was caused by a mismatch between their own GSTR-1 and 3B filing. Not by any external factor," Clear Tax said in a report. GSTR-1 is the sales report and GSTR 3B are the tax payment documents. The two are based on different databases but are not connecting with each other creating a mismatch and triggering a notice, it said.

"[As much as] 80% of enterprises in our study received at least one notice in FY 2025 that was caused by a mismatch between their own GSTR-1 and 3B filing. Not by any external factor," Clear Tax said in a report. GSTR-1 is the sales report and GSTR 3B are the tax payment documents. The two are based on different databases but are not connecting with each other creating a mismatch and triggering a notice, it said.

**Bank of India Q4 PAT rises 15%, dividend at ₹4.65/share**

**The Hindu Bureau**  
MUMBAI

Bank of India for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026 reported 15% growth in Profit After Tax (PAT) at ₹3,016 crore. For FY26 the bank reported 14% growth in PAT at ₹10,527 crore.

The board declared a dividend of ₹4.65 per share. Global deposits rose 13.56% crossing ₹9.27 lakh crore. Global advances grew 15.82% and crossed ₹7.71 lakh crore. Gross NPA ratio at 1.98% grew 129 bps. Net NPA ratio at 0.56% increased by 26 bps YoY.

**KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED - TENDER NOTICE**  
Office of the Chief Engineer (Commercial & Tariff), Vydyuthi Bhavanam, Thiruvananthapuram  
Inviting Short term tender for the procurement of power during peak hours of 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2026 through e-bidding portal (DEEP) only DEEP portal reference no - KSEBL/Short/26-27/ET/19 dtd 07.05.2026. Last Date for submission of queries - 12.05.2026. Submission of RFP (online digitally signed non financial technical Bid and IPOs) - 19.05.2026, 02.00 pm For more details visit [www.kseb.in](http://www.kseb.in) Ref: PR/MC/1/F385/2026

**क्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग, ग्रामीण वृत्त, जोधपुर**  
क्रमांक: 264-280 दिनांक: 05.05.2026  
निविदा सूचना संख्या : 01 वर्ष 2026-27  
NIB No.: PWD2627A0323  
राजस्थान के राज्यपाल महोदय की ओर से सार्वजनिक निर्माण कार्य हेतु उपर्युक्त श्रेणी में सार्वजनिक निर्माण विभाग राजस्थान में पंजीकृत संवेदकों एवं राज्य सरकार/केन्द्र सरकार के अधिकृत संवेदकों/केन्द्रीय लोक निर्माण विभाग/राज्य एवं दूर संचार विभाग/रेलवे इत्यादि में पंजीकृत संवेदकों, जो कि राजस्थान सरकार के उपर्युक्त श्रेणी के संवेदकों के समकक्ष हों, से निर्मित प्रपत्र में 8 सड़के कार्य विनियम लागू रहित रूप 1400.00 लाख है के लिए ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया हेतु ऑनलाइन निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं।  
ऑनलाइन निविदा आवेदन साइट: 11 मई 2026, 9:30 बजे से एवं अगले 01 जून 2026, सायं 03:00 बजे तक  
निविदा से सम्बन्धित विवरण वेबसाइट <http://dipr.rajasthan.gov.in> व <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> व <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है। सम्पूर्ण निविदा प्रक्रिया <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर ऑनलाइन सम्पादित की जायेगी। इच्छुक संवेदकों को अपने डिजिटल हस्ताक्षर के माध्यम से वेबसाइट पर <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर रजिस्टर्ड करवाना आवश्यक है। कार्यभार यु.बी.एन. संख्या निम्नानुसार है।  
1- PWD2627WLOB01446, 2- PWD2627WLOB01447  
3- PWD2627WLOB01448, 4- PWD2627WLOB01449  
(विनीत गुप्ता) अधीक्षण अभियन्ता सा.नि.वि. ग्रामीण वृत्त जोधपुर  
DIPR/C/80/11/2026

**V.O. CHIDAMBARANAR PORT AUTHORITY**  
CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT  
TUTICORIN - 628 004.  
**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

#	Name of the work	Estimated cost Put to tender value (Amount in INR)	Cost of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Amount in INR)	Online Tender opening date
1	Supplying of Mechanical Excavator (JCB) Front End Loader, Mini Excavator on Hire Basis for Cleaning Juliflora Trees, Other Bushes, Leveling Undulated area in the Harbour Estate for the Period of one year in VOCPA	31,82,272/-	63,645/-	21.05.2026
2	Modification of an existing shed into BTTS union office with toilet and septic tank at Zone-B in VOC Port	9,98,020/-	19,960/-	22.05.2026
3	Annual maintenance work for Residential and Non-Residential buildings at Zone-B (Unit rate basis) for a period of Two years	65,00,000/-	1,30,000/-	29.05.2026
4	Strengthening of World Trade Avenue Roads with rigid pavement including side drain and Parking Yard in VOC Port	5,75,36,905/-	11,51,000/-	01.06.2026
5	Resurfacing of Internal Roads around CSF Quarters including Port Hospital at VOC Port Authority	1,92,74,636/-	3,86,000/-	01.06.2026

**Note:**  
For eligible tenderers, downloading of bid documents from the NIC e-tendering website:  
i) <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>  
ii) <https://www.vocport.gov.in>  
Sd/-  
CHIEF ENGINEER  
VOCPA

**BANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED**  
(Wholly Owned by Government of Karnataka Undertaking)  
CIN - U04010KA2002SGC030438  
**BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Through KPP Portal)  
No: BESCOM/CGM/Proj/DGM-1/AGM-1/BC-14/26-27/CYS-44  
BESCOM Invites a tender for the work of "Replacement of existing LT Overhead lines into LT AB cable in various hazardous locations, schools & temple premises, theft prone area, in the aspect of safety and improving quality of power supply in City Sub-division 1 & 2 of Davanagere Division, Davanagere circle" on Total Turnkey basis under Percentage Quoting basis.  
(1) Tender Enquiry No : BESCOM/2026-27/EL/WORK\_INDENT1082 (2) Availability of Bid documents : 11.05.2026 onwards. (3) Last date for submission of bid queries : 20.05.2026 before 17:00 Hrs. (4) Pre-Bid meeting : 21.05.2026 @ 11:00 Hrs. (5) Venue of Pre-Bid meeting : O/o Chief General Manager (Ele), 4th Floor, Project Section, B Block, Corporate office, BESCOM, K. R Circle, Bangalore-560 001. (6) Last date & Time for bid submission : 11.06.2026 @ 15:00 Hrs. (7) Opening of Technical Bids : 12.06.2026 @ 15:30 Hrs.  
The bid documents can be downloaded and necessary assistance can be obtained through the e-procurement portal from the website <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>  
E-procurement Help Desk: Phone No: +91-8046010000 +91-8068948777 E-mail: [support@eprocelpdesk.com](mailto:support@eprocelpdesk.com)  
Aspiring bidders needs to be registered on e-procurement portal. Bidders can take the assistance from the e-procurement during office working hours.  
Sd/-  
For electricity related complaints call : 1912 Chief General Manager (Ele), Projects, BESCOM.

EL-D-PA001/49/2023-PA  
**ERNET India**  
(An Autonomous Scientific Society under Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Govt. of India), Block-1, A -Wing, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, DMRC IT Park, Shastrri Park, Delhi-110 053  
ERNET India intends to fill up the following posts on Regular basis as per details given below:-  
S. No Name of post No of post (Reservation Status) Pay Matrix Level as per 7th CPC  
1 Senior Manager (Group A) 01(OBC) Level-13 (Rs.123100-215900)  
2 Junior Scientific Officer (Group A) 01( UR ) Level-10 (Rs.67700-208700)  
3 Technical Assistant (Group B) 01 (OBC) Level-6 (Rs.35,400-1,12,400)  
4 Assistant (Group B) 01 (OBC) Level-6 (Rs.35,400-1,12,400)  
5 Personal Assistant (Group B) 01 (UR) Level-6 (Rs.35,400-1,12,400)  
2. Application must reach the undersigned within 30 days from date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment news.  
3. Candidates desirous of applying for the above post may refer website "https://ernet.in" for complete details regarding eligibility criteria, application form and other details.  
4. Any modification /amendment etc. shall be uploaded on ERNET website.  
Registrar & Director (P&A)  
ERNET India

## KYIV

## Trump announces prisoner swap, Ukraine-Russia ceasefire for 3 days



REUTERS

U.S. President Donald Trump announced a three-day ceasefire between Ukraine and Russia starting on Saturday, saying he hoped it could lead to a long-term deal to end Moscow's war. The truce would also include a mutual swap of 1,000 prisoners each, said Mr. Trump, who has struggled to end the four-year conflict. AFP

## TAIPEI

## Taiwan's Parliament approves \$25-billion defence spending Bill



REUTERS

Taiwan's Parliament approved a \$25-billion defence spending Bill on Friday that Opposition lawmakers say will be used for U.S. weapons, after months of political wrangling. Taiwanese lawmakers have been at loggerheads over how much to spend on improving defence capabilities against a potential attack by China. AFP

## SEOUL

## North Korea to deploy new artillery guns targeting Seoul



AP

North Korea said on Friday it will deploy new long-range artillery systems this year that are capable of striking South Korea's capital region and will commission its first naval destroyer in coming weeks. KCNA cited Kim Jong-un as saying the striking range of this large-calibre rifled gun is over 60 km. AP

## PESHAWAR

## Six killed, 13 injured as mortar shell hits civilian area in northwest Pak.



AFP

At least six persons were killed and 13 others injured when a mortar shell exploded in a civilian area in Pakistan's northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said. The incident took place in the Durrani Banda area of Hangu district when police were engaged in an operation against the militants. PTI

## U.S., Iran trade fire, threatening truce; UAE reports 'attacks'



USS Rafael Peralta enforcing a maritime blockade against the Iran-flagged crude oil tanker vessel Stream. AFP

Agence France-Presse  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said the ceasefire with Iran was still in place despite an Iranian attack on three American destroyers in the Strait of Hormuz that fanned fears on Friday that the truce was faltering.

The U.S. military said it carried out strikes on Iranian military targets in response, although Tehran charged that it was Washington that had initiated the exchange of fire.

The latest violence threatens to unravel a fragile truce in effect since April 8 that brought an end to weeks of U.S.-Israeli attacks on the Islamic republic, which has retaliated with strikes across the West Asia and by blocking the strait, a vital route for oil and gas shipments.

The United Arab Emirates said that its air defences were "engaging missile and drone attacks originating from Iran".

Asked in Washington on Thursday if the Iran cease-

fire was still on, Mr. Trump said: "Yeah, it is. They trifled with us today. We blew them away. They trifled. I call that a trifle."

## 'Eliminated threats'

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a post on X that Iranian forces launched "multiple missiles, drones and small boats" at the three U.S. warships, but none were hit, and that it "eliminated inbound threats and targeted Iranian military facilities responsible".

"CENTCOM does not seek escalation but remains positioned and ready to protect American forces," it said.

For its part, Iran's central military command accused the United States of violating the ceasefire by attacking an oil tanker and another ship, saying Tehran's forces "immediately and in retaliation attacked American military vessels".

Mr. Trump this week fuelled hopes of a deal, saying an agreement could be near.

## The 'bridge of defiance' that was struck

The BI Bridge in Karaj, the tallest bridge in the Persian Gulf region, was hit during the American and Israeli military strikes on the night of April 2; in Iran, however, the bridge has quickly become something larger than a construction project; it is now being presented as a symbol of resistance

## DISPATCH FROM IRAN

Saurabh Shukla  
Saurabh Shahi  
KARAJ

Standing over the dry bed of the Karaj River, all that remains are twisted steel beams, shattered concrete slabs, dust, and silence. What lies here is not the aftermath of an accident. Iranian officials and witnesses describe it as a deliberate and calculated strike — one they say was designed not just to destroy infrastructure, but to break Iran's industrial and social backbone.

On the night of April 2, 2026, the BI Bridge in Karaj — the tallest bridge in the Persian Gulf region — was hit during American and Israeli military strikes, according to Iranian authorities. The attack destroyed a key section of the bridge and turned what was once considered a symbol of Iranian engineering into a field of rubble.

In Iran, however, the bridge has quickly become something larger than a construction project. It is now being presented as a symbol of national resistance and self-reliance.

The BI Bridge, also known as Bilqan 1, connected the Bilqan region of Karaj with Tehran and formed part of one of Iran's most important transport corridors. Karaj, located west of Tehran, functions as Iran's largest industrial suburb. Nearly

200,000 vehicles travel daily between Karaj and Tehran, and the bridge had been designed to divert almost one-third of the traffic from heavily congested older routes.

Its strategic importance extended far beyond urban traffic management.

The corridor links Tehran to Qazvin, Tabriz, the Caspian region, and onward trade routes connecting Iran with Russia and Central Asia.

Project Engineer of this bridge has also emphasised another aspect of the bridge — that it was built almost entirely with domestic technology and materials. The bridge had not yet been formally inaugurated, though traffic had already started moving across it.

## Broader strategy

According to local accounts, civilians had gathered near the Karaj riverbed on the evening of April 2 when the strikes began. The first missile hit the central span of the bridge, causing a section to collapse and vehicles to fall into the dry riverbed below.

Emergency responders rushed to the scene soon afterward.

Witnesses and Iranian officials state that additional strikes followed after rescue teams arrived. The sequence of attacks has been described by Iranian commentators as a "triple-tap strike", a military tactic in which an initial strike is followed by subsequent at-



Symbol of resistance: The BI bridge, after it was destroyed by a strike in Karaj, nearly 35 km southwest of Tehran, on April 3. Donald Trump had previously threatened to bomb Iran 'back to the Stone Ages'. AFP

tacks targeting rescuers and emergency personnel arriving at the scene.

Iranian authorities have described the attack as a violation of international humanitarian law, arguing that the bridge was civilian infrastructure rather than a military target.

Beyond the destruction itself, Iranian analysts believe the strikes reflected a broader geopolitical strategy aimed at destabilising Iran internally. The BI corridor connects Tehran with northern and northwestern regions that have large Azeri populations. Karaj itself has a substantial Azeri community, while cities further northwest such as Tabriz are overwhelmingly Azeri.

Iranian political commentators argue that the destruction of the bridge was intended to isolate Tehran from those regions

and create internal pressure or instability along ethnic lines — a strategy they claim resembles approaches previously seen in Syria and Lebanon.

However, Iranian officials insist that such assumptions misread the structure of Iranian society. Azeris are deeply integrated into Iran's political, military, and economic institutions and constitute one of the country's most influential communities.

The attacks also intensified debate within Iran over technological independence and industrial self-sufficiency. In recent years, Tehran has invested heavily in domestic engineering and manufacturing capabilities as sanctions limited access to foreign suppliers and international cooperation. Iranian officials point to projects such as the BI

Bridge as examples of the country's ability to sustain major infrastructure development independently.

Alongside the bridge strike, Iranian media reports indicate that steel plants, cement facilities, and scientific institutions were also targeted during the broader military campaign.

Particular attention has focused on Sharif University of Technology in Tehran, widely regarded as one of West Asia's leading engineering universities.

Despite sanctions, Iran continues to produce a large number of engineering graduates annually, and officials frequently portray technical education as central to the country's economic resilience.

Following the bridge strike, Iran carried out what officials described as a symbolic retaliatory op-

eration near the King Fahd Causeway connecting Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Iranian state-linked media framed the move as a warning that critical infrastructure throughout the Gulf region remains vulnerable.

## Political moment

Inside Iran, the public response to the attack became a major political and symbolic moment.

After statements attributed to U.S. President Donald Trump warning of further destruction of Iranian infrastructure, crowds gathered near bridges and public structures across several cities. In Karaj, thousands reportedly assembled near the damaged BI Bridge.

The gatherings were widely portrayed in Iranian media as demonstrations of civilian resolve and national unity.

Reconstruction efforts began almost immediately after the strikes. Engineering crews and heavy machinery reportedly arrived at the site within hours, and officials now say the bridge could be rebuilt within six weeks.

At the site today, cranes move continuously above shattered concrete while workers weld new steel structures into place. Iranian authorities say the rebuilt bridge will rely once again on domestic materials, local industry, and Iranian engineers. (Saurabh Shukla and Saurabh Shahi are senior editors with The Red Mike)

## Starmer says he won't step down after Labour's losses

Sriram Lakshman  
LONDON



Keir Starmer

Friday was not a good day for British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his Labour party, as results for 136 councils to elect 5,000 councillors in England and Assembly elections in Wales and Scotland started coming in. A defiant Mr. Starmer pushed back against calls from within his party, for him to step down.

"I'm not going to walk away and plunge the country into chaos," Mr. Starmer said in London on Friday morning, as he acknowledged the results were "really tough".

Labour had lost 536 councillors by 4 p.m. local time. The Conservatives had lost 312. It was a very different picture for nationalist Reform UK party, which had gained 726 councillors as of 4 p.m. local time. The Greens and Liberal Democrats also made gains of 112 and 41 councillors, respectively.

Reform won seats from Labour in the latter's bastions such as the Midlands. It also won its first London Borough of Havering.

While the results are far from complete, the picture was not looking good for Labour in the elections for the Welsh assembly or Senedd where Labour had won three (-11) in the newly expanded legislature with 96 seats. The nationalist left of centre Plaid Cymru had won 13 seats (+5) and Reform 11 (+11).

Labour had been projected to come in third in the Welsh and Scotland legislative elections, behind Reform UK. Plaid and the

Scottish National Party (SNP) were projected to win in Wales and Scotland, respectively.

In Scotland the SNP had won 36 of 129 seats as of this writing, with Labour and the Conservatives at 2 seats each.

If the final results are in line with the projections, it would spell particularly bad news for Labour, which has held the Senedd since it was constituted in 1999 and been winning a majority of U.K. parliamentary seats from Wales for more than a century.

Mr. Starmer had already been under the scanner for his handling of the appointment of former British envoy to Washington, Peter Mandelson, who had links with Jeffrey Epstein, the paedophile and financier.

Polling suggests that the party has lost more voters to the left than to the right, according to Tim Bale, a political scientist at Queen Mary University of London.

**TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF ANDHRA PRADESH LIMITED**  
(A Government of Andhra Pradesh Undertaking & An ISO 27001:2022 Certified Company)

**e-Procurement TENDER NOTICE**

The APTRANSCO invites bids online for Spec No.PMM31-e-28/2026. Nature of Work: Supply of 52 Nos 132kV PTR C&R Panels, 67 Nos 132kV Feeder C&R Panels (Distance Protection), 15 Nos 132kV Feeder C&R Panels (Line Differential Protection) and spare relays under RMI, System Improvement & O&M works of APTRANSCO. Date & Time of availability of Tenders: 08.05.2026 at 05:00 PM. Web: <https://tender.approcurement.gov.in>.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer/Transmission

R.O. No. - GMCC/APTRANSCO/30/26-27

**RAYALASEEMA UNIVERSITY : KURNOOL**  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Withdrawal of 2023 Faculty Recruitment Notifications**

Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Council of Rayalaseema University and the orders issued by the Government vide G.O.RT.No.63, the permission earlier accorded for filling up of 103 vacant faculty positions in the University is hereby withdrawn. Consequently, the faculty recruitment notifications (No. RU-01/T.Estt./Recrt-2023, No.RU-02/T.Estt./Recrt-2023 and No.RU-03/T.Estt./Recrt-2023) issued on 30-10-2023 for filling up the said posts stand withdrawn.

Candidates who have applied to the 2023 notifications may visit the university website <https://rukup.edu.in/> for information regarding refund of the application fee. The dates of fresh notifications and other particulars will be announced separately.

Sd/- Registrar, Rayalaseema University, Kurnool

**RAVENSHAW UNIVERSITY**  
**CUTTACK - 753003, ODISHA (NAAC-A++)**

**FACULTY RECRUITMENT NOTICE**

Applications are invited, in online mode, from eligible candidates to fill up regular posts of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor (including backlog vacancies), in the Departments of Bengali, Botany, Chemistry, Commerce, Computer Science, Economics, Education, English, Geography, Geology, Hindi, History, Mathematics, Odia, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Sanskrit, Sociology, Statistics and Zoology, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack.

Detailed advertisements will be available on the University website [www.ravenshawuniversity.ac.in](http://www.ravenshawuniversity.ac.in) as well as on HIMS Portal <https://himsrecruitment.odisha.gov.in/home>. The application process shall be conducted entirely in online mode through the HIMS Portal : <https://himsrecruitment.odisha.gov.in/home> from 12.05.2026 to 11.06.2026. After submitting the application online, a printout of the same, along with all supporting documents duly self-attested by the applicant, must be sent to the "Registrar, Ravenshaw University, College Square, Cuttack, Odisha-753003" by Speed Post / Registered Post only so as to reach him on or before 20.06.2026 by 05.30 PM. The University reserves the right to fill or not to fill any post(s) without assigning any reason therefor.

For details of vacant Posts, essential qualifications, other terms and conditions, please visit the University website [www.ravenshawuniversity.ac.in](http://www.ravenshawuniversity.ac.in) or HIMS Portal <https://himsrecruitment.odisha.gov.in/home>

No.1720 / Date. 06.05.2026

REGISTRAR  
11001/412627 OIPR-11001/11008/126-27/0006

E-mail: [cifnetHQ.trg@gmail.com](mailto:cifnetHQ.trg@gmail.com) Phone : 0484-2351610, 2351493  
Website : [cifnet.gov.in](http://cifnet.gov.in) भारत सरकार 2351790

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
मत्स्यपालन, पशुपालन और डेयरीमंत्रालय - मत्स्य पालन विभाग  
MINISTRY OF FISHERIES, ANIMAL HUSBANDRY & DAIRYING-DEPT OF FISHERIES  
केन्द्रीय मत्स्य नौचालन एवं इंजीनियरी प्रशिक्षण संस्थान  
CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF FISHERIES NAUTICAL AND ENGINEERING TRAINING  
फ़ाईन आर्ट्स बिल्डिंग, कोची (केरल) | FINE ARTS AVENUE, KOCHI (KERALA) - 682016

**CIFNET ADMISSION NOTICE - SESSION 2026-27**

Admission to courses under Craftsman Training Scheme (CTS) at Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical & Engineering Training, Kochi, Chennai & Visakhapatnam for the academic session 2026-27 will be made through Common Entrance Test (CET), scheduled to be held on 14.07.2026. Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admission to 'Vessel Navigator' and 'Marine Fitter' trades. The duration of both the courses is 24 months (2 Year) and fully residential. The selected candidates will be paid stipend of Rs.1500/- (One thousand and five hundred) per month by the Government of India. The details of admission are available on website [cifnet.gov.in](http://cifnet.gov.in). The last date to submit the application : 16.06.2026. DIRECTOR

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA - e-Procurement Notice**  
**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, CENTRAL MINOR IRRIGATION CIRCLE, BHUBANESWAR**  
Phone-0674-2540559 Mail ID: [cmic.bbs@gmail.com](mailto:cmic.bbs@gmail.com); No.684/C/MIC Date : 30.04.2026

The Additional Chief Engineer, Central Minor Irrigation Circle, Bhubaneswar on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids in Double cover only in ONLINE mode for the works detailed in the table from "B" & "A" class Contractors registered with the State Government and contractors of equivalent Grade/Class registered with Central Government/M.E.S./Railways for execution of civil works on production of definite proof from the appropriate authority. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the works.

**e-Procurement Notice-BID IDENTIFICATION NO- ACE -CMIC-1/2026-27**

Sl. No.	Name of the works	As per Annexure to this bid notice.
1	Total No. of works	2 (Two) nos
2	Estimated Cost	Rs 186.70 lakh & Rs.190.2 Lakh Approximately (Detail list of work Annexed)
3	Class of Contractor	Class "B" & "A"
4	Period of completion	As Mentioned against Work.
5	Date & time of Availability of Bid Document in the portal for online bidding.	5.05.2026 at 10.00 AM to 19.05.2026 up to 5.30 P.M.
6	Last date/Time for receipt of Bid only in ONLINE	19.05.2026 up to 5.30 P.M.
7	Date/Time of Opening of Technical Bid.	20.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M. at Office of the Addl. C.E Central M.I. Circle, Bhubaneswar through Web site
8	Date/Time of Opening of Financial Bid	To be intimated online after offline evaluation of Technical Bids.
9	Date of Transparent Lottery (If cases arises)	To be intimated through mail after offline evaluation of Financial Bids.
10	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting the Bid.	Additional Chief Engineer, Central M.I. Circle, Bhubaneswar, Plot No.-A-32, Po: Bhoinsagar, Bhubaneswar PIN: 751022, Dist: Khurda, Ph:0674-2540559
11	Mode of Payment of Bid Cost	Online
12	Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal : <a href="https://tendersodisha.gov.in">https://tendersodisha.gov.in</a>	

**Additional Chief Engineer, Central M.I. Circle, Bhubaneswar.**  
32001/161/2627 OIPR-32001/32047/126-27/0002



GETTY IMAGES



He had a clear vision. In his first year in U-15, he wanted to become the top player in India. He had the ambition to play at the international level. I would say, he is fearless

**KRISHNA KUMAR**  
Childhood coach

then No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn, No. 4 Jonatan Christie and No. 7 Li Shi Feng.

In the Thomas Cup quarters against Chinese Taipei, he felled reigning All England Open champion and World No. 8 Lin Chun-Yi in authoritative fashion – 21-16, 21-17 in 48 minutes.

“He has beaten at least six or seven players in the top-10 and that is a big plus for me,” said Vimal. “At BAC, I was most impressed by the way he defended. After blocking the shuttle, his approach to the net was really good. The flick and the tumble at the net were near-perfect. I would rate him as good as any top-10 player.”

Ayush’s ascent comes at a critical time for Indian badminton. Last year was frighteningly barren for the country, with Ayush’s Super 300 trophy and Lakshya Sen’s Australian Open Super 500 crown being the only top prizes.

But in the first four months of 2026 alone, Ayush and Lakshya – by reaching the All England final – have brought things back on track. The two are now ranked 18th and 11th in the world, and will be the prime drivers of the Indian challenge at the BWF World Championships this August in New Delhi.

However, it is also a fact that India has had a series of near misses in recent times. No Indian men’s singles player has won an elite BWF Super 1000-level title since K. Srikanth’s success at the 2017 Denmark Open. Can Lakshya, or Ayush, help end the drought?

“Ayush needs to bring in more variations,” opined Vimal. “Against Shi Yu Qi [then No. 2] in the BAC final, he thought he could just hit through. But Shi is one of the most complete players and did not allow Ayush to play to his strengths.

“Also, he cannot afford to be a slow starter. With games becoming 15-point affairs from next year, I don’t know if it’s going to make it like T20 [cricket]. He can’t play the way he did against Christo Popov [in the 11-21, 9-21 Thomas Cup semifinal loss to France]. If you don’t get going early, you are out.”

The path forward will be far from uncomplicated. There will be pitfalls galore, like the negative effects of early stardom, wavering focus, injuries, etc. A wrong step or two can derail a career.

Vimal doesn’t want Ayush to succumb to the perils of fame, and instead wants him to stay true to his reticent, introverted personality. The former National champion wasn’t too approving of the exuberant celebrations following India’s Thomas Cup quarterfinal triumph over Taipei.

“When your personality is a certain way, you should not go looking for something that is not there,” the former National champion stated bluntly. “You still had a semifinal to play. Lakshya is different, more flamboyant, but not Ayush.”

**Cultivating an aura**

Instead, Ayush could work on making better use of his physical stature, felt Vimal.

“The best players I’ve seen at close quarters, from Prakash Padukone to Morten Frost, all had an aura,” said Vimal. “Ayush is a big, tall guy, and when he comes onto the court, he should look threatening.

“When Viktor Axelsen walked in, the far-eastern players used to be worried. I could make out from their eyes. Ayush has to develop something similar.”

# The quiet rise of a reticent giant: Ayush Shetty’s slow-burn ascent

The 6’4” shuttler isn’t the quintessential prodigy. He did not win a National Championship in any age category. But he has beaten the world’s best in recent weeks, showing he belongs on the big stage. What does the 21-year-old need to contend for badminton’s most prestigious tournaments?

**N. Sudarshan**

**T**he journey from promise to performance is one of the most important markers of an elite sportsperson’s quality. How the boundless energy, youthful drive and seemingly infinite potential amalgamate and transform into sustained success often defines a player’s worthiness.

Ayush Shetty, the rising 21-year-old badminton player who has been the toast of the nation in recent weeks, is the latest Indian to try and crack this code. After first coming into the limelight in October 2023 by bagging a bronze medal at the World Junior Championships, Ayush, in his first full-fledged year on the senior circuit, secured the 2025 US Open Super 300 title.

**Inspired run**

Last month, he made an inspired run to the final of the Badminton Asia Championships (BAC) in China, beating three top-10 players en route and breaking into the world’s top-20 at



Ayush has beaten at least six or seven top-10 players and that is a big plus for me. I would rate him as good as any top-10 player... [but] he needs more variations. Also he cannot afford to be a slow starter

**U. VIMAL KUMAR**  
Chief coach, Centre for Badminton Excellence

the end of it. At the Thomas Cup that followed, he helped India finish with a creditable bronze medal, only its second podium finish at the prestigious team event, adding to the 2022 gold.

“In the last couple of years, we believed he was progressing well, and that he would show this performance,” said U. Vimal Kumar, Dronacharya awardee and chief coach at the Centre for Badminton Excellence in Bengaluru – erstwhile Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) – where Ayush trains.

“His height [6’4”] and the sharpness he has while playing the downward shots are tremendous advantages for him. In fact, this is the age for a player to show results. They might not win big tournaments, but at 18, 19 and 20, if you can show that you are capable of beating top international players, create upsets...”

“I always look for that trend. Players who have excelled at the world stage have all done that. Ayush is one of them.”

Interestingly, Ayush, unlike a quintessential prodigy, has had a quiet rise. When he was younger, he was indeed spoken about in badminton circles, but they were mostly in hushed tones and whispers. As Krishna Kumar, his childhood coach, pointed out, Ayush never won a National title.

“Nothing at any sub-junior or junior National Championship, and his father was very upset about it,” said Krishna Kumar. “I told him, ‘Don’t worry, the real results will come when he is somewhere around 19 or a senior.’ When

he was 19, he became junior No. 2 in the world.”

That belief was courtesy the impression Ayush left on Krishna Kumar nearly a decade ago at the U-13 Nationals in Vijayawada. So deep was it that the rendezvous resulted in the talented youngster coming under the coach’s tutelage at I-Sports badminton school in Bengaluru within a year of moving from Karkala in Udupi district.

**Early impression**

“I was the Karnataka coach and there was a training camp at the Karnataka Badminton Association (KBA),” Krishna Kumar recollected. “Back then, the PPBA was inside KBA and I requested Vimal Kumar for a player for Ayush to practise with. But that boy beat Ayush very easily, two days in a row.

“Once in Vijayawada, Ayush won the first and second rounds but developed a fever after that. I asked him to take an injection and play. He met that same PPBA player, and to our surprise, won the match in two straight games. That was the first sign.

“After that, every time he used to be in the lower-age category, he used to trouble those higher. He had a clear vision. In his first year in U-15, he wanted to become the top player in India. He had the ambition to play at the international level. I would say, he is fearless.”

The ability to punch above his weight is a recurring feature. It was most recently seen at the BAC, where, as World No. 25, he beat the

## STACKING UP

**ATP Men’s Top 15**

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Jannik Sinner	24	14,350	20
2	Carlos Alcaraz	22	12,960	18
3	Alexander Zverev	29	5,805	22
4	Novak Djokovic	38	4,700	17
5	Felix Auger-Aliassime	25	4,050	24
6	Ben Shelton	23	4,030	22
7	Taylor Fritz	28	3,770	23
8	Alex de Minaur	27	3,755	22
9	Daniil Medvedev	30	3,460	24
10	Lorenzo Musetti	24	3,415	23
11	Alexander Bublik	28	3,355	26
12	Flavio Cobolli	23	2,750	28
13	Jiri Lehecka	24	2,715	22
14	Andrey Rublev	28	2,590	24
15	Karen Khachanov	29	2,220	24

**Top Indians**

Sumit Nagal Rank 276 ▲ 1 spot	Manas Dharmne Rank 384 ▲ 60 spots

**English Premier League Standings**

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	35	23	7	5	67	26	41	76
2	Man. City	34	21	8	5	69	32	37	71
3	Man. United	35	18	10	7	63	48	15	64
4	Liverpool	35	17	7	11	59	47	12	58
5	Aston Villa	35	17	7	11	48	44	4	58
6	Bournemouth	35	12	16	7	55	52	3	52
7	Brentford	35	14	9	12	52	46	6	51
8	Brighton	35	13	11	11	49	42	7	50
9	Chelsea	35	13	9	13	54	48	6	48
10	Everton	35	13	9	13	44	44	0	48
11	Fulham	35	14	6	15	44	49	-5	48
12	Sunderland	35	12	11	12	37	46	-9	47
13	Newcastle	35	13	6	16	49	51	-2	45
14	Leeds United	35	10	13	12	47	52	-5	43
15	Crystal Palace	34	11	10	13	36	42	-6	43
16	N. Forest	35	11	9	15	44	46	-2	42
17	Tottenham	35	9	10	16	45	54	-9	37
18	West Ham	35	9	9	17	42	61	-19	36
19	Burnley	35	4	8	23	35	71	-36	20
20	Wolves	35	3	9	23	25	63	-38	18

**Spanish LaLiga Standings**

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	34	29	1	4	89	31	58	88
2	Real Madrid	34	24	5	5	70	31	39	77
3	Villarreal	34	21	5	8	64	39	25	68
4	Atletico Madrid	34	19	6	9	58	37	21	63
5	Real Betis	34	13	14	7	52	41	11	53
6	Celta Vigo	34	12	11	11	48	44	4	47
7	Getafe	34	13	5	16	28	36	-8	44
8	Athletic Club	34	13	5	16	40	50	-10	44
9	Real Sociedad	34	11	10	13	52	53	-1	43
10	Osasuna	34	11	9	14	40	42	-2	42
11	Rayo Vallecano	34	10	12	12	35	41	-6	42
12	Valencia	34	10	9	15	37	50	-13	39
13	Espanyol	34	10	9	15	37	51	-14	39
14	Elche	34	9	11	14	45	53	-8	38
15	Real Mallorca	34	10	8	16	42	51	-9	38
16	Girona	34	9	11	14	36	51	-15	38
17	Sevilla	34	10	7	17	41	55	-14	37
18	Alaves	34	9	9	16	40	53	-13	36
19	Levante	34	8	9	17	38	55	-17	33
20	Real Oviedo	34	6	10	18	26	54	-28	28

**Test Batting**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Joe Root	880	932
2	Harry Brook	857	898
3	Travis Head	853	884
4	Steve Smith	831	947
5	Kane Williamson	822	919
6	Kamindu Mendis	781	784
7	Temba Bavuma	775	806
8	Yashasvi Jaiswal	750	858
9	Saud Shakeel	734	787
10	Shubman Gill	730	807

**Test Bowling**

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Jasprit Bumrah	879	908
2	Noman Ali	843	853
3	Mitchell Starc	838	852
4	Matt Henry	836	853
5	Pat Cummins	832	914
6	Marco Jansen	825	825
7	Scott Boland	820	820
8	Kagiso Rabada	807	902
9	Josh Hazlewood	775	864
10	Nathan Lyon	753	812

**WTA Women’s Top 15**

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Aryna Sabalenka	27	10,110	19
2	Elena Rybakina	26	8,555	23
3	Iga Swiatek	24	6,948	19
4	Coco Gauff	22	6,749	19
5	Jessica Pegula	32	6,136	21
6	Amanda Anisimova	24	5,985	20
7	Mirra Andreeva	19	4,181	21
8	Jasmine Paolini	30	3,722	20
9	Victoria Mboko	19	3,531	21
10	Elina Svitolina	31	3,530	15
11	Karolina Muchova	29	3,318	18
12	Belinda Bencic	29	3,090	19
13	Linda Noskova	21	2,999	23
14	Katerina Alexandrova	31	2,669	26
15	Marta Kostyuk	23	2,507	19

**Top Indians**

Sahaja Yamalapalli Rank 358 ▲ 28 spots	Vaishnavi Adkar Rank 397 ▼ 14 spots

**Italian Serie A Standings**

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Inter Milan	35	26	4	5	82	31	51	82
2	Napoli	35	21	7	7	52	33	19	70
3	AC Milan	35	19	10	6	48	29	19	67
4	Juventus	35	18	11	6	58	30	28	65
5	Roma	35	20	4	11	52	29	23	64
6	Como	35	17	11	7	59	28	31	62
7	Atalanta	35	14	13	8	47	32	15	55
8	Lazio	35	13	12	10	39	34	5	51
9	Bologna	35	14	7	14	42	41	1	49
10	Sassuolo	35	14	7	14	43	44	-1	49
11	Udinese	35	13	8	14	43	46	-3	47
12	Parma	35	10	12	13	25	42	-17	42
13	Torino	35	11	8	16	39	58	-19	41
14	Genoa	35	10	10	15	40	48	-8	40
15	Cagliari	35	9	10	16	36	49	-13	37
16	Fiorentina	35	8	13	14	38	49	-11	37
17	Lecce	35	8	8	19	24	47	-23	32
18	Cremonese	35	6	10	19	27	53	-26	28
19	Verona	35	3	11	21	24	57	-33	20
20	Pisa	35	2	12	21	25	63	-38	18

**German Bundesliga Standings**

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Bayern	32	26	5	1	116	35	81	83
2	Dortmund	32	20	7	5	65	32	33	67
3	RB Leipzig	32	19	5	8	63	42	21	62
4	Leverkusen	32	17	7	8	66	43	23	58
5	Stuttgart	32	17	7	8	66	46	20	58
6	Hoffenheim	32	17	7	8	64	46	18	58
7	SC Freiburg	32	12	8	12	45	53	-8	44
8	Eintracht	32	11	10	11	57	60	-3	43
9	FC Augsburg	32	11	7	14	42	56	-14	40
10	Mainz	32	9	10	13	41	50	-9	37
11	M'gladbach	32	8	11	13	37	50	-13	35
12	Hamburg	32	8	10	14	36	51	-15	34
13	Union Berlin	32	8	9	15	37	57	-20	33
14	Cologne	32	7	11	14	47	55	-8	32
15	Werder	32	8						

# Diamonde in the rough: why Europe's big clubs covet the Leipzig winger

GETTY IMAGES



The 19-year-old has turned heads in Germany with his catalogue of spectacular goals and dazzling dribbles. His game isn't fully formed yet, but his breakthrough season in the Bundesliga suggests that there are seemingly no limits to just how good he can get

## Sports Bureau

**T**wo years ago, Yan Diomande was a world away from top-level professional football.

He was training with a private academy in Florida, representing the academy's affiliate team in a developmental American league. In 2026, the Ivory Coast teenager is one of the breakout stars of the Bundesliga. The winger's 19 goal involvements have helped RB Leipzig to third in the German top flight, with a Champions League spot for next season in its grasp.

## On the radar

In addition to 12 goals and seven assists in 31 appearances, Diomande's gasp-inducing dribbling has caught the eye of recruitment departments at elite clubs.

The 19-year-old has completed 3.5 dribbles per game in 2025-26. The next best in the Bundesliga is 2.3. The only player with more prolific dribbling numbers than Diomande in Europe's top-five leagues is Barcelona's Lamine Yamal, with 4.8. In addition to his flair, he is willing to work off the ball when his side doesn't have possession.

Unsurprisingly, PSG, Liverpool and Bayern Munich have all been credited with interest in Diomande – astonishing for a player with fewer than 50 professional league appearances!

When you consider Diomande's back-story, his runaway success feels all the more incredible. Born in the Ivorian metropolis of Abidjan, his early life in football was one of struggle.

"We didn't have a good situation at home," he told RB Leipzig media. "We didn't have money and not much space, so I left to go to a village, follow my passion and play football. Everyone is playing on the street and it's really nice, but we don't play with this [football boots], just shoes. To play with boots you have to have money, so somebody bought them for me because I didn't have money nor did my family."

In 2022, his talent unlocked an opportunity to move to the USA. He made the courageous decision to fend for himself as a young teen. Far from home, alone in a foreign country, Diomande studied and trained, hoping to break into a Major League Soccer team. That didn't work out, nor did an audition with Rangers in the Scottish Premiership.

He was scouted by LaLiga side Leganes, with whom he signed a contract in 2024. His debut, at the Santiago Bernabeu in March 2025,

brought him face to face with Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Jr., superstars he had only seen on television. Playing at a historic stadium against an iconic team felt like a dream.

"When I was a kid, [my parents] bought me a Cristiano Ronaldo shirt, so actually he is my idol," Diomande told Bundesliga media. "And now I watch a lot of players – Mbappe, [Rafael] Leao, Vinicius – players that play in my position, to look and learn from them."

While Diomande was adapting to professional football, RB Leipzig – after a club-wide reckoning, led by new head of football Jurgen Klopp, following the worst top-flight season in its history – was scouring the globe for hidden gems.

Leipzig director Marcel Schafer admitted that unearthing the next diamond was becoming more challenging, but a player in LaLiga had shown up on the club's statistical model.

## First-mover advantage

"We saw the data and immediately knew that we had to take a detailed look, both on video and in live matches," said Schafer. "Our advantage was that we were there before he had even played 200 minutes in the league. We didn't need to have five conversations about signing him because the profile was clear. It was a 100% match from our side."

The profile Leipzig identified so early is now on glorious display in Germany. Diomande's game isn't fully formed yet, but it's already at a very high level. He can create separation from a standing start, bursting past his marker into space. He can also elude defenders on the run with dribbles at high pace. As his goal catalogue shows, he has the rare ability to hit the target with his 'weaker' left foot – as a result, he has access to a wide range of finishes from both wings.

"My style is explosive, fast, and physically strong," Diomande said. "Quick, agile, and also a finisher. I know I am not yet a perfect finisher, but I am only 19. With time, it will come – and I will become a killer in front of goal. I like to say: I left the streets, but the streets did not leave me."

This season in the Bundesliga, Diomande averages 22 sprints and 66 intensive runs per game. He has been recorded at a top speed of 36.3 kmph.

Leipzig manager Ole Werner told *Sky Germany* his player was "unstoppable". "He's spectacular, sharp, and basically unstoppable. What's really special is that he doesn't need fancy moves. He just relies on his timing, ball control, and speed," Werner said.

"But what's even more important to me is that he works for the team and is



My style is explosive, fast, and physically strong. Also a finisher. I know I am not yet a perfect finisher, but I am only 19. With time, it will come – and I will become a killer in front of goal

YAN DIOMANDE

very good at counter-pressing. It's a matter of attitude, and he demonstrates that. He can go far if he keeps working just as hard as he has been and doesn't get too big for his boots."

The evidence so far suggests Diomande won't stop pushing himself. "I believe I can keep improving and become even better than I am now," he said. Where in Spain he "only had to worry about spending time on the ball", Germany has taught him the value of going to the gym to get stronger "because it's much more physical here".

Diomande has also shown that he has a long-term perspective. In 2024, he chose Leganes over Chelsea, which was also interested in him, because "it's not always just about money. If you play well, it will come naturally. I'm young; I need to play".

It's why he isn't paying attention to any of the transfer rumours currently in circulation. While he did say during a TikTok live session that his father, a Liverpool fan, dreamt of seeing Yan play at Anfield, he later told German outlet *Sport Bild* that his "dream club right now is Leipzig".

## Will he, won't he?

Several top clubs will be shopping for wingers this summer, and Diomande is on every shortlist. But Leipzig has no need to sell; Diomande's contract runs until 2030. The strong likelihood of Leipzig playing in the Champions League next season not only offers the player what he wants but also further reduces the club's incentive to cash in on a valuable asset.

Reports suggest that Leipzig is unlikely to listen to any offer below 100 million euros, which promises a significant profit on the 20 million euros it paid Leganes. If Diomande closes out the season in similar style and then makes an impression at the World Cup, there will be no shortage of big clubs testing Leipzig's resolve to hold on to its young diamond.



He's basically unstoppable. What's really special is that he doesn't really need fancy moves. But what's even more important is that he works for the team and is very good at counter-pressing

OLE WERNER  
Leipzig manager

## GAME THEORY

### Bicycle chiefs: the most prolific Grand Tour champions

It's Grand Tour season. The first of cycling's three iconic multi-stage races, the Giro d'Italia, got underway on Friday. The Tour de France (July 4-26) and the Vuelta a Espana (August 22-September 13) complete the famed trinity. This week, we look at cycling's best multi-week male riders – the ones with the most Grand Tour titles:

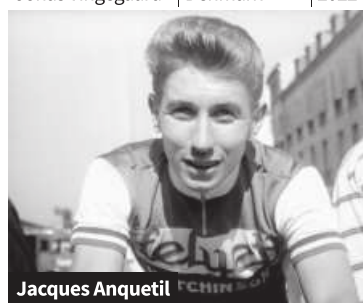
Cyclist	Country	Winning span	Giro d'Italia	Tour de France	Vuelta a Espana	Total
Eddy Merckx	Belgium	1968-1974	5	5	1	11
Bernard Hinault	France	1978-1985	3	5	2	10
Jacques Anquetil	France	1957-1964	2	5	1	8
Fausto Coppi	Italy	1940-1953	5	2	0	7
Miguel Indurain	Spain	1991-1995	2	5	0	7
Alberto Contador	Spain	2007-2015	2	2	3	7
Chris Froome	Great Britain	2011-2018	1	4	2	7
Alfredo Binda	Italy	1925-1933	5	0	0	5
Gino Bartali	Italy	1936-1948	3	2	0	5
Felice Gimondi	Italy	1965-1976	3	1	1	5
Primoz Roglic	Slovenia	2019-2024	1	0	4	5
Tadej Pogacar	Slovenia	2020-2025	1	4	0	5
Tony Rominger	Switzerland	1992-1995	1	0	3	4
Roberto Heras	Spain	2000-2005	0	0	4	4
Vincenzo Nibali	Italy	2010-2016	2	1	1	4
Carlo Galetti	Italy	1910-1912	3	0	0	3
Philippe Thys	Belgium	1913-1920	0	3	0	3
Giovanni Brunero	Italy	1921-1926	3	0	0	3
Fiorenzo Magni	Italy	1948-1955	3	0	0	3
Louison Bobet	France	1953-1955	0	3	0	3
Charly Gaul	Luxembourg	1956-1959	2	1	0	3
Laurent Fignon	France	1983-1989	1	2	0	3
Pedro Delgado	Spain	1985-1989	0	1	2	3
Greg LeMond	United States	1986-1990	0	3	0	3
Jonas Vingegaard	Denmark	2022-2025	0	2	1	3



Eddy Merckx



Bernard Hinault



Jacques Anquetil



Tadej Pogacar

SOURCE: UCI, CYCLING HALL OF FAME

## PICTURE THIS



GETTY IMAGES

### Derby delight

Golden Tempo, ridden by jockey Jose Ortiz, won a historic edition of the Kentucky Derby in 2 minutes 2.27 seconds last weekend. It was the first time in 152 races that the winner had been trained by a woman – Cherie

DeVaux. Billed as 'the most exciting two minutes in sports', the Derby is an annual horse race held at Churchill Downs in Louisville. It is, by a few years, the 'youngest' jewel in the American Triple Crown. But unlike the Preakness Stakes and the Belmont Stakes, which have had hiatuses, it has been staged ev-

ery year since 1875, even during both World Wars and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Held annually on the first Saturday in May, it is preceded by the two-week-long Kentucky Derby Festival.

Known as 'The Run for the Roses', because the winning horse is draped in a blanket of

roses, the event is the most-watched and most-attended horse race in the United States.

The fastest time ever run in the Derby was in 1973, when Secretariat, one of the most famous racehorses in history, clocked 1 minute 59.4 seconds, breaking Northern Dancer's 1964 record.

**TRIED AND TESTED**

**We are quite comfortable with the way we play: GT's Parthiv**



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

“If we get wickets at the start, we have the upper hand. Our plans are quite set, and we are quite comfortable with the way we are playing right now. With the kind of bowling attack we have, we would want to restrict it (Rajasthan Royals) to the minimum score possible — Gujarat Titans assistant coach Parthiv Patel.

**DEPENDABLE**

**'Fast bowlers Rabada and Siraj are high-performing players'**



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Both are high-performing players at the international level. You know the pedigree both of them bring, especially with the new ball. Rabada bowling 150 kph consistently and the way Siraj has been putting pressure... it is great to see — GT assistant coach Parthiv Patel on pacers Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj.

**ABSOLUTE PEACH**

**McClenaghan hails Prince's 'divine delivery' to get Kohli**



AP

Former New Zealand pacer Mitchell McClenaghan praised Prince Yadav for his “divine delivery” that dismissed Virat Kohli during the Lucknow Super Giants-Royal Challengers Bengaluru match in IPL 2026. “It was a divine delivery. He wasn't trying to swing the ball in. He just hit the seam. It swung in enough off the seam to beat Kohli!”

**GIANT-KILLER**

**Qualifier Prizmic knocks out Djokovic from Italian Open**



AFP

Novak Djokovic was eliminated from the Italian Open in the second round on Friday by Croatian qualifier Dino Prizmic, who won 2-6, 6-2, 6-4. The 24-time Grand Slam champion was making his comeback from a shoulder injury in the last big tournament before the French Open.

# Spinners, Allen make it four in a row for KKR

Anukul scalps two while Narine provides a breakthrough as the Kolkata outfit restricts DC to 142 for eight; the opener's sensational century seals the chase with plenty to spare

**IPL-19**

**Vivek Krishnan**  
NEW DELHI

When a modest target has to be pursued in modern-day T20 cricket, the benefits of having time and knowing the precise tempo to operate at are sizeable for the chasing team.

Finn Allen may have been out of sorts heading into Kolkata Knight Riders' clash against Delhi Capitals on Friday in IPL 2026, but this was an opportunity he wasn't going to fritter away.

The New Zealander steered KKR to a target of 143 with an unbeaten 100 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium, handing the three-time champion an eight-wicket win in 14.2 overs to keep its playoff hopes alive. It was Knight Riders' fourth victory on the trot.

**Match-winning stand**

With an unbroken partnership of 116 for the third wicket, Allen and Cameron Green helped alleviate any concerns in the KKR camp post the dismissals of Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi.

DC's future this season hangs by a thread, having stumbled to its seventh defeat in 11 matches. At the heart of a shambolic performance was Capitals' ineptitude with the bat, as reflected by a total of 142 for eight.



**Action aplenty:** Allen produced the big shots at will. Anukul castled Stubbs while Narine came up with a tidy spell. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

On a slow surface, KKR's spinners held sway. Anukul Roy struck twice while Sunil Narine chipped in

with a breakthrough. Pacer Kartik Tyagi also took two wickets.

For the host, Pathum Nissanka stood out with a knock of 50.

In an opening partnership of 49, Nissanka took



**SCOREBOARD**

**DELHI CAPITALS**

Pathum Nissanka st. Raghuvanshi b Anukul 50 (29b, 5x4, 3x6), K.L. Rahul c Green b Tyagi 23 (14b, 4x4), Nitish Rana c Narine b Green 8 (10b, 1x4), Sameer Rizvi c Powell b Narine 3 (7b), Tristan Stubbs b Anukul 2 (4b), Axar Patel c Anukul b Vaibhav 11 (22b), Ashutosh Sharma c Rahane b Tyagi 39 (28b, 3x4, 3x6), Vipraj Nigam (not out) 3 (3b), Mitchell Starc run out 0 (2b), Lungi Ngidi (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (w-2): 2; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 142.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-49 (Rahul, 4.6 overs), 2-74 (Nitish, 7.6), 3-80 (Rizvi, 9.5), 4-85 (Nissanka, 10.1), 5-89 (Stubbs, 10.5), 6-128 (Axar, 18.3), 7-140 (Ashutosh, 19.2), 8-140 (Starc, 19.4).

**KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING**

Anukul 4-0-31-2, Vaibhav 3-0-29-1, Narine 4-0-17-1, Tyagi 4-0-25-2, Varun 4-0-28-0, Green 1-0-12-1.

**KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS**

the initiative. Besides the pulls and flicks, he was also deftly personified, notably piercing the gap perfectly behind square on the off-side with a late steer against Varun Chakaravarty.

**Vital strike**

At the start of the 11th over, the diminutive opener reached his half-century with an inside-out drive off Anukul. Off the very next ball, however, the left-arm spinner saw the batter

Ajinkya Rahane run out 13 (9b, 1x4, 1x6), Finn Allen (**Impact Player for Varun**) (not out) 100 (47b, 5x4, 10x6), Angkrish Raghuvanshi b Axar 1 (3b), Cameron Green (not out) 33 (27b, 2x6); Total (for two wkts. in 14.2 overs): 147.

**FALL OF WICKETS**

1-29 (Rahane, 2.6), 2-31 (Raghuvanshi, 3.4).

**CAPITALS BOWLING**

Starc 3-0-31-0, Axar 4-0-27-1, Ngidi 2-0-7-0, Vipraj 2-0-34-0, Kuldeep (**Impact Player for Ashutosh**) 3-0-41-0, Mukesh 0-2-0-7-0.

**Toss: Knight Riders.**

**Player-of-the-Match:** Allen. KKR won by eight wickets with 34 balls to spare.

**Next assignment**

**DC:** May 11 vs. PBKS Dharamshala, 7.30 p.m.

**KKR:** May 13 vs. RCB Raipur, 7.30 p.m.

charge and dragged his line for Raghuvanshi to complete a stumping off a wide.

**Slow going**

Confronted with the need to rebuild after DC was reduced to 89 for five, Axar Patel and Ashutosh Sharma retreated into their shells — just 11 runs were added from overs 12 to 16.

Though Ashutosh managed a few boundaries towards the end, it did prove futile in the grand scheme.

## BCCI bans unauthorised visitors from players' rooms

**Press Trust of India**  
NEW DELHI

Warning of potential “honey traps, legal liability and security risks”, the BCCI has banned unauthorised visitors from the hotel rooms of players, support staff and team officials in the IPL.

This was after incidents of “misconduct and protocol violations” were flagged by the Board's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU). In an elaborate advisory for the 10 franchises, the BCCI said that written authorisation from team managers would be a must for guests to have access to players' and officials' rooms.

“The advisory is intended to reinforce the standards of professionalism, discipline, security awareness and protocol compliance expected from all stakeholders associated with IPL,” BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said in a communication to the CEOs of the franchises.

“These incidents, if left unaddressed, carry the potential to cause significant reputational harm to the tournament, the franchise concerned and the BCCI.”

The Board also banned players and support staff from leaving team hotels at “irregular hours” without informing their designated security liaison officer and team integrity officer.

## Can Titans pacers contain Royals openers Jaiswal and Sooryavanshi?

**S. Prasanna Venkatesan**  
JAIPUR

In 2023 and 2024, Gujarat Titans treated Jaipur like an away ATM: insert XI, withdraw points. Then came 2025, and the machine jammed.

There are grounds where 180 sits on the board like a mob boss at a nightclub — untouchable, respected, radiating consequences.

The Sawai Mansingh Stadium this season has not been one of them. Here, the scoreboard has behaved like a slot machine in a provincial casino. Targets aren't safe, and batters have swung as if the boundary cushions owe them money.

**Trusted formula**

That doesn't entirely align with the blueprint behind GT's three-match winning streak — the bowlers to contain, the target to remain modest, the chase to unfold without panic. It has won seven out of seven chases of 170 or below since 2025.

Kagiso Rabada has rediscovered rhythm with the new ball, claiming four



**Swashbuckler:** Jaiswal will have a big role to play at the top of the order along with Sooryavanshi. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

wickets at an economy of 6.89 in the PowerPlay across the last three matches.

Significantly, three of those dismissals have come through short and short-of-length deliveries. Mohammed Siraj has been equally incisive, taking four wickets at 6.44 in the same phase.

**Engrossing battle**

Their duel with RR's explosive openers — Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav So-

oryavanshi — could be the night's defining match-up. Jason Holder's return of seven wickets at 6.94 adds further control to GT's attack.

With captain Riyan Parag striking form and Donovan Ferreira shaping into a terrific finisher, RR's middle-order has contributed more consistently over the last two games.

GT's, meanwhile, remains vulnerable. Including its last match against Punjab Kings, GT's Nos. 4

**Today's match**



Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

**HEAD-TO-HEAD**

Played: 9

RR 3 | GT 6

**PREVIOUS MEETING**

RR won by six runs, 2026

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIHOTSTAR



I think it's just about trying to execute as well as possible and backing it up with some good fielding. We can be a little bit smarter, a little bit better in the field

**KUMAR SANGAKKARA**  
Royals' head coach

to 7 have averaged only 22 since the last IPL — the second-lowest among all teams in that period. RR has enough bowling variety to expose and target that weakness in search of its first win here this season.

## I can't take too much credit for Sunrisers being at the top of the table: Cummins

**Anirudh Velamuri**  
HYDERABAD

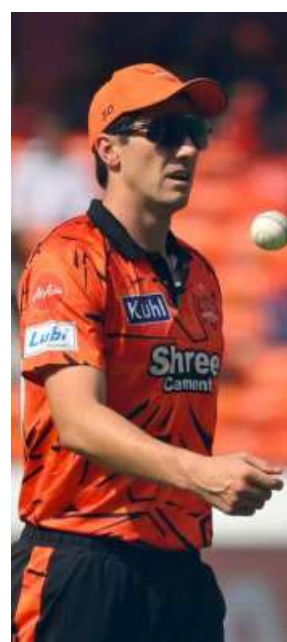
Three defeats in its first four IPL 2026 games had already set alarm bells ringing around Sunrisers Hyderabad's campaign.

The explosive batting line-up looked capable of brilliance one day and collapse the next, while concerns over an inexperienced bowling attack only grew louder with every setback.

Less than a month later, the narrative has flipped completely.

**Exceeding expectations**  
Sunrisers now sit atop the table, playing with the swagger and assurance of genuine title contenders, courtesy of batters finding their rhythm and a young pace attack that has exceeded expectations before skipper Pat Cummins' return.

“I can't take too much credit for Sunrisers Hyderabad being on top of the table. I have only played the last three or four games. These boys have been flying the whole season,” Cummins said of his pacers Praful Hinge, Sakib Hussain and, Eshan Malin-



Cummins. NAGARA GOPAL

ga on the sidelines of the launch of Apollo Hospitals' Centre of Excellence for Sports Injuries.

“Hyderabad has been great to me the last couple of years. It's a very easy bunch of players to look after.

“Everyone knows what they want to do out there, so it's easy for me to stay nice and calm and just let the guys shine because they are all superstars,” he said on Friday.

**Points table**

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	7	4	0	14	0.737
Punjab Kings	10	6	3	1	13	0.571
Royal Challengers	10	6	4	0	12	1.234
Rajasthan Royals	10	6	4	0	12	0.510
Gujarat Titans	10	6	4	0	12	-0.147
Chennai Super Kings	10	5	5	0	10	0.151
Kolkata Knight Riders	10	4	5	1	9	-0.169
Delhi Capitals	11	4	7	0	8	-1.154
Mumbai Indians	10	3	7	0	6	-0.649
Lucknow Super Giants	10	3	7	0	6	-0.934

The 33-year-old said adaptability and resilience remain crucial in an unforgiving league, especially for bowlers.

**Being practical**

“As quicks, the odds are stacked against you a lot in the IPL with its big scores. It also presents an opportunity to bounce back after a bad over; your next one could still win you the match... you are not going to win every game of the season, so it's about not stressing too much about it.”

Joining the outfit mid-season as he made his way back from injury, Cummins swears by prioritising

recovery regardless of the schedule.

“When you get into a tournament, playing is obviously the priority. I don't do a lot of bowling outside of games. It's mainly about recovery. Most of my focus outside of the game is actually on preparing my plans. The actual physical prep is mainly done in the gym or resting.”

He also underlined the importance of not obsessing over the game.

“I want to be as fresh as I can, so I switch off from cricket as much as I can. I feel like when I need to switch on in the game, I have enough bandwidth to give it my full focus”.

## IN BRIEF



## Shanto and Mominul help Bangladesh take control

Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's century put Bangladesh in a strong position on the opening day of the first Test against Pakistan in Dhaka on Friday. Shanto made 101 off 130 balls (12x4, 2x6), to steer Bangladesh to 301 for four at stumps. Mominul Haque missed out on his ton after being dismissed for 91 (200b, 10x4). Shanto and Mominul combined for a 170-run partnership for the third wicket to steady the innings after Bangladesh had slumped to 31 for two in 10.1 overs.

**The scores:** Bangladesh 301/4 in 85 overs (Mominul 91, Shanto 101, Mushfiqur 48 batting) vs. Pakistan.  
**Toss:** Pakistan.

## Simranjeet, Sahil enter semifinals at archery WC

Simranjeet Kaur and Sahil Jadhav reached the recurve women's and compound men's semifinals, respectively, to remain in the medal hunt at the archery World Cup Stage-2 in Shanghai on Friday. Simranjeet, who got a first-round bye, beat Spain's Paula Alarez Gonzalez 6-4, China's Yu Qi 6-4 and Turkiye's Gizem Ozkan 6-5 (shoot-off: 10\*-10, shot closer to centre). He will take on Olympic medalist Kang Chaeyoung of Korea in the semifinals. Sahil got byes in the first two rounds and defeated compatriot Abhishek Verma 149-147, German Ruven Fluss 149-146 and Austrian Nico Wiener 147-147 (shoot-off: 10-9). He will meet Frenchman Nicolas Girard for a place in the final.



## Ancelotti set for four-year Brazil contract extension

Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti is set to be handed a four-year contract extension taking him through to the 2030 World Cup, the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) said on Thursday. CBF president Samir Xaud said he is "certain" Ancelotti's extension will be officially confirmed "before the World Cup".

## Sabalenka hopes to compete under Belarusian flag

Aryna Sabalenka is hoping to play under the Belarusian flag after the International Olympic Committee lifted its ban on the country's athletes who could compete in the Olympics. Women's World No. 1 Sabalenka has had to compete under a neutral banner as a consequence of her country's support for Russia following its ally's invasion of Ukraine. Asked whether the WTA would drop the ban on the 28-year-old representing her country, Sabalenka said: "I really hope they are going to give us our flag back. I know how much of an inspiration I am for young kids. Representing such a small country, and the hard work that I had to do to get to the top, it is incredible. I would be super proud to represent Belarus."

## Aryan's ton highlight of Sonnet's win over Delhi CC

Aryan Dalal led the way with 108 as Sonnet Cricket Club eased past Delhi Cricket Club by 141 runs in the 51st all India Tyagmurthi Goswami Ganesh Dutt Memorial cricket tournament at S.G.T.B. Khalsa College ground in Delhi on Friday.

**The scores:** Sonnet CC 388/6 in 40 overs (Sanat Sangwan 40, Shivam Kumar 63, Shreyans Mahey 46, Ronit Berry 38, Aryan Dalal 108, Naman Tiwari 33) bt Delhi CC 247 in 35.3 overs (Vimanyu Kumar 84).

## LIVE TELECAST

**Archery World Cup:** Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 7.30 & 11.30 a.m.

**Bangladesh vs Pakistan:** 1st Test, day 2, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.

**ISL:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 5 & 7.30 p.m.

**Premier League:** SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 5, 7.30 & 10 p.m.

**LaLiga:** FanCode, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

**Serie A:** DAZN, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday)

**IFL:** Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 6.30 p.m.

**Bundesliga:** Sony Sports Ten 1, 2 & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.

**IPL:** Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

## Indian women beat Lebanon, punch quarterfinal ticket

A goalless draw between the Philippines and Taiwan ensures the Young Tigresses advance as one of the two best third-placed teams; the side enters the knockout round for the first time

## U-17 ASIAN CUP

Press Trust of India  
SUZHOU (CHINA)

India scripted history by qualifying for the quarterfinals of the AFC Under-17 Women's Asian Cup for the first time with a commanding 4-0 victory against Lebanon in the final Group-B fixture on Friday.

India's entry into the last-eight stage was confirmed after the Philippines and Taiwan failed to win their final head-to-head Group-C match by a margin of 12 goals or more.

Pritika Barman (7, 85), Alva Devi Senjam (36) and Joya (72) had earlier put India on the verge of qualification with their strikes at

the Suzhou Taihu Football Sports Centre.

In the end, the emphatic win helped India reach the quarterfinals as one of the tournament's two best third-placed teams.

Reaching the semifinals of this tournament would guarantee India a spot in the 2026 FIFA U-17 Women's WC. India, which made only one change from its last game, with Anushka Kumari replacing Pearl Fernandes, played with intent to win.

**The result:** India 4 (Pritika Barman 7, 85, Alva Devi Senjam 36, Joya 72) bt Lebanon 0.



**Making the grade:** India reaped the benefits of playing with intent. X@INDIANFOOTBALL

## AIFF condoles demise of former India midfielder Mohan Singh

ANI  
NEW DELHI

The All India Football Federation condoled the death of former India midfielder Mohan Singh, who passed away on Thursday.

A skilful midfielder of his generation, Mohan represented India at the international level in the early 1970s.

He made his senior national team debut against Burma on March 22, 1972, in Rangoon during the pre-Olympic tournament.

He went on to earn three caps for the national team, all during the 1972 pre-Olympic campaign, according to a press release from AIFF.

AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey said, "Mohan Singh was a gifted midfielder who served Indian football with distinction during his playing days."

At the domestic level, Mohan represented Bengal



**High point:** Mohan receives the Player-of-the-Match award from the then Chief of Army Staff General S.H.F.J. Manekshaw after the 1972 Durand Cup final. X@INDIANFOOTBALL

in the Santosh Trophy in 1972 and played a key role in the team's successful campaign.

At club level, Mohan enjoyed successful spells with East Bengal and Mohun Bagan. With East Bengal, whom he represented in 1972 and 1975, Mohan scored 11 goals across competitions.

During his time with the Red and Gold brigade, he

won the Calcutta Football League (1972, 1975), IFA Shield (1972, 1975), Durand Cup (1972), Rovers Cup (1972, 1975), and the Boro-doli Trophy (1972).

He later turned out for Bagan in 1973 and 1974, scoring three goals and winning the Durand Cup in 1974.

Mohan also represented Mohammedan Sporting Club in 1976.

## Gukesh beats Caruana in final round of rapid event

Press Trust of India  
WARSAW

World champion D. Gukesh defeated American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana in the ninth and final round to be tied fourth in the Super Rapid and Blitz Tournament's rapid competition here.

Eighteen more rounds are to come in the blitz section that follows the rapid event.

Gukesh started the final day of the rapid section with a loss to French Grandmaster Maxime Vachier-Lagrave before drawing with Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia.

Wild card American Hans Moke Niemann proved his detractors wrong by emerging as the surprise winner of this section with 13 points. Wesley So was second on 12 ahead of Fedoseev on 11.

"My rapid event was in-

## Sports Bureau

The Global Chess League (GCL) will stay home for another season. The fourth edition of the league, a joint venture of Tech Mahindra and world chess governing body FIDE, will be held later this year.

The third season was conducted in Mumbai last December, with The Royal Opera House being the venue. It was the first time the league, featuring most of the world's top players, was staged in India – the first two editions were held in Dubai and London. The event in Mumbai attracted a good crowd on all days.

Grandmaster Pravin Thipsay, who was the coach of last year's champion Alpine SG Pipers, backed the decision to hold the GCL in India again. "The league could go to another city this year," Thipsay told *The Hindu*. "I think it will be

nice to have it in Chennai, the capital of Indian chess."

The GCL commissioner Gaurav Rakshit said that India's passion for the game and the rapidly growing chess ecosystem had made it a natural destination for the league. "The GCL has played a pivotal role in transforming chess into a more dynamic and spectator-friendly sport," Rakshit said. "We look forward to another exciting season that brings together the world's best players and a global fanbase."

The FIDE president Arkady Dvorkovich said that the league had injected new energy into the sport by combining world-class competition with an engaging team format. "India continues to play a defining role in the global growth of chess, both through its exceptional talent and the passion of its fans," Dvorkovich said.



**Deep in thought:** Gukesh made the most of a 38th move error by Caruana to push for a win.

consistent. I was playing well, but I missed a few chances. There were also games where I was in trouble and managed to save. The tournament could have been better," Gukesh told 'Saint Louis Chess Club'.

Gukesh, Caruana and Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland tied for the fourth spot on nine points apiece and the main battle is likely to be between these six

players once the blitz competition begins.

"In blitz, all you have to do is play fast and pray. That's going to be my strategy," he said.

**The results (round 9):** D. Gukesh (9) bt Fabiano Caruana (9); Radoslaw Wojtaszek (5) drew with Hans Moke Niemann (13); Vladimir Fedoseev (11) bt Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (8); Javokhir Sindarov (8) drew with Firouza Alireza (6); Duda Jan-Krzysztof (9) drew with Wesley So (12).

## Villa thumps Forest, sets up Europa League final with Freiburg

Associated Press  
BIRMINGHAM

John McGinn scored a brace as Aston Villa routed Nottingham Forest 4-0 in the Europa League on Thursday to reach its first major European final in 44 years.

McGinn's second-half goals were almost identical left-footed shots from the edge of the 18-yard area and capped a dominant display in the second leg of the all-English semifinal at Villa Park. Villa won 4-1 on

aggregate and will next face German club Freiburg, which beat 10-man Braga 3-1 to advance with a 4-3 result.

It is Villa's first major European title decider since it defeated Bayern Munich in the European Cup way back in 1982.

On Thursday, Emiliano Buendia was involved in the opening two goals. The creative midfielder left behind several defenders on the left side of the area and sent a low cross for Ollie Watkins to tap in. The Ar-



**Perfect finish:** McGinn scores Villa's fourth goal. REUTERS

gentine added the second goal from the penalty spot before McGinn completed the rout.

In the other last-four clash, Freiburg overturned a 1-2 deficit from the first leg. Mario Dorgeles, who

scored the winner for Braga in Portugal last week, was shown a straight red card in the seventh minute after fouling Jan-Niklas Beste, who would have had only goalkeeper Lukas Hornicek to beat.

In the third-tier Conference League, Crystal Palace made its first European final by beating Shakhtar Donetsk 2-1 in the second leg and 5-2 on aggregate. Palace will play Rayo Vallecano after the LaLiga team got the better of Strasbourg 1-0 on Thurs-

day and 2-0 overall.

**The results: Semifinals:** Europa League: Aston Villa 4 (Watkins 36, Buendia 58-pen, McGinn 77, 80) bt Nottingham Forest 0 (Villa won 4-1 on aggregate). Freiburg 3 (Kubler 19, 72, Manzambi 41) bt Braga 1 (Victor 79) (Freiburg won 4-3 on aggregate). Conference League: Strasbourg 0 lost to Rayo Vallecano 1 (Alemao 42) (Rayo won 2-0 on aggregate). Crystal Palace 2 (Pedrinho 25-og, Sarr 52) bt Shakhtar Donetsk 1 (Eguinaldo 34) (Palace won 5-2 on aggregate).

## SNAPSHOTS

**Odisha downs SC Delhi**  
NEW DELHI: Odisha FC beat Sporting Club Delhi 2-1 in an ISL fixture at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Friday. After 11 games each, Delhi and Odisha are 10th and 11th on the table with 10 points each. The Delhi outfit has a better goal difference.

**Bharadwaj and Manisha best among Indians after day one**  
ALMATY: Shapath Bharadwaj hit two perfect series and followed it up with 21 shots in the third

series to end day one of the men's trap event with a total of 71 hits from 75 in the ISSF World Cup for Shotgun here on Friday. Manisha Keer, with a score of 69, was the best-placed Indian women in her trap event. Vivaan Kapoor also shot a perfect 25 in his second series, after starting with 22 and finishing with 23 shots in the third. Ahvar Rizvi, shot 23, 22 and 23 to finish day one on 68 at the Asanov Shooting Club. Udaivir Singh Jaijee and Ali Aman Elahi, competing for ranking points, scored 71 and 66 respectively.

Manisha began with two consecutive series of 24 before finishing with a total score of 69 after hitting 21 in the third. She is currently in 17th position. National champion Neeru Dhanda hit 23, 23 and 22 to finish the day in 21st place with a score of 68. Pragati Dubey shot 65 (18, 23, 24) to be placed 35th. Competing for ranking points, Varsha Varman (20, 20, 21) shot a score of 61 while Vidhi Singh (18, 21, 23) hit 62 targets. The last 50 targets and the finals of both men's and women's events will be held on Saturday.

## Excellent Lass expected to score

BENGALURU: Excellent Lass, who has been well prepared, is expected to score in the Kungilal Stud Trophy (1,200m), the main event of the races to be held here on Saturday (May 9).

False rails (width about 5.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

**1. CHANTILLE PLATE** (1,500m), rated 20 to 45, 3.00 p.m.: 1. Star Of India (8) Neeraj 61, 2. Alamgir (5) Pavan 60.5, 3. IL Volo (7) M. Rajesh K 57, 4. The Golden Dream (4) Kiran Rai 56.5, 5. Pledge (3) Akshay K 56, 6. Assurances (2) Suraj 55.5, 7. Turkoman (1) Rushal G. A 54 and 8. Fiery Lexi (6) G. Vivek 52.5.

**1. ANNABELLE, 2. RAZZMATAZZ, 3. HUSANARA**

**4. KUNIGAL STUD TROPHY** (1,200m), rated 80 & above, 4.30: 1. Ricardo (1) Aleemuddin 61.5, 2. Mandarino (5) Pavan 59, 3. Star Glory (4) M. Prabhakaran 55, 4. Kalamati (3) Trevor 54.5, 5. Excellent Lass (6) Yash 53 and 6. Never Give In (2) Antony 53.

**1. EXCELLENT LASS, 2. KALAMATSI**

**5. DEAN STEPHENS MEMORIAL TROPHY** (1,400m), maiden 3-

and 8. Waitara (8) Neeraj 51.5.

**1. CIRCLE OF DREAMS, 2. RODNEY, 3. WAITARA**

**3. DUPONT PLATE** (1,200m), rated 00 to 25, 4.00: 1. Husanara (4) Darshan 62.5, 2. Annabelle (6) Aleemuddin 61, 3. Lucero (7) Jagadeesh 61, 4. Razzmatazz (8) S. Sachin 61, 5. White Secret (12) A. Ramu 61, 6. Jalwa (1) Asrivatham 60, 7. Whitney (9) Rayan 60, 8. Meghann (11) Lakman S 59.5, 9. Femme Fatale (5) Kiran Rai 59, 10. Striking Arrow (3) Vaibhav 59, 11. Princess Jasmine (2) Suhass K 58 and 12. Lorven's Glory (10) M. Rajesh K 54.5.

**4. KUNIGAL STUD TROPHY** (1,200m), rated 80 & above, 4.30: 1. Ricardo (1) Aleemuddin 61.5, 2. Mandarino (5) Pavan 59, 3. Star Glory (4) M. Prabhakaran 55, 4. Kalamati (3) Trevor 54.5, 5. Excellent Lass (6) Yash 53 and 6. Never Give In (2) Antony 53.

**1. EXCELLENT LASS, 2. KALAMATSI**

**5. DEAN STEPHENS MEMORIAL TROPHY** (1,400m), maiden 3-

y-o only, (Terms), 5.00: 1. Atman (5) G. Vivek 56, 2. Bartolino (8) Pavan 56, 3. Conquistador (7) Darshan 56, 4. Duke Of Buckingham (6) Vaibhav 56, 5. Siege Storm (1) Akshay K 56, 6. The Archer (4) Trevor 56, 7. Ashwa New York (3) Yash 54.5 and 8. Royal Legacy (2) Neeraj 54.5.

**1. THE ARCHER, 2. SIEGE STORM, 3. BARTOLINO**

**6. AZHAR PLATE** (1,200m), rated 20 to 45, 5-y-o & over, 5.30: 1. Final Call (9) Trevor 60, 2. Ebotse (5) Aleemuddin 59, 3. Flash (1) Md. Ashraf Reza 59, 4. Super King (7) Neeraj 59, 5. Chisox (10) A. Hangal 56, 6. Sunlit Path (4) Darshan 55, 7. LG's Star (8) G. Vivek 54, 8. Roadrunner (2) Lakman S 54, 9. Superhero (3) Arshad 52.5 and 10. Michiko (6) M. Rajesh K 50.5.

**1. FINAL CALL, 2. LG'S STAR, 3. SUNLIT PATH**

**Double: CIRCLE OF DREAMS - EXCELLENT LASS**  
Jkt: 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6; Mini Jkt: 3, 4, 5 and 6; Tr (1): 1, 2 and 3; (ii): 4, 5 and 6.