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Khammam BRS leaders demand arrest of Bandi Sanjay's son

Khammam: BRS leaders in erstwhile Khammam have demanded the immediate arrest of Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Bandi Bhageerath, who was booked in a POCSO case.

Speaking to the media at Yellandu in Kothagudem, senior party leader Dindigala Rajender alleged that Bandi Sanjay, despite being in a responsible position as a Union Minister, was shielding his son.

Malakpet man arrested for tampering scooter number plate to avoid challans

Hyderabad: The Malakpet police arrested a man for using a tampered registration number plate on his vehicle to evade traffic challans.Geographic Reference

The man Mohammed Amer (24), a resident of Shanker Nagar, Malakpet, owns a scooter and was allotted a registration number – TG11C2019 by the transport department. However, Amer tampered with the registration number of the vehicle and changed it to TG112019 and TG11209 on two different number plates. He changed those number plates to evade traffic penalties.

Misguided Missiles: CM Revanth Reddy Slams PM Modi Over Gold Ban

Hyderabad, May 10

Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Monday came down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for announcing austerity measures including asking for a self-imposed ban on buying gold for one year to overcome the impact of the US-Iran war, stating that it only reflected complete administrative failure at the Centre and chinks in the NDA's foreign policy.

In an informal chat with mediapersons, the Chief Minister also took strong exception to Modi isolating Muslims and Maoists, which he said was unbecoming of a Prime Minister who was constitutionally obligated to work for welfare of all sections of society. Reacting to the Prime Minister taking a jab at Congress, describing it as MMC (Maoist Muslim League Congress) at his public meeting on Sunday, the Chief Minister wondered if Muslims and Maoists were not part of the diversified Indian society.

"If the BJP believes in annihilation of people differing with its ideology, the Congress, which knows the value of life, having lost its great leaders, has persuaded Maoists and brought them into the mainstream," Revanth Reddy pointed out. "It is unfortunate that we have a PM who shows discrimination against a section of citizens of the country," he added.

On Modi's charge that the Congress was denying a free hand to the security forces to deal with Maoists, Reddy said he would never agree if a free hand would mean killing Maoists in encounters. Successive Congress governments had formulated policies like land reforms, free housing for the poor, minimum support price, employment guarantee, as part of addressing the concerns raised by Naxalites in pursuit of their ideology which was the uplift of the poor.

Revanth Reddy said because of persuasion of the Telangana government, 818 Maoists, including 22 top leaders, had surrendered along with sophisticated weapons including 58 AK47s rifles, SLRs and rocket launchers. The Prime Minister ought to have appreciated Telangana for achieving something no other state could, he said and reiterated his appeal to former Maoist former general secretary Ganapathi to surrender.

Referring to the impending crisis the country would face in the days to come, the Chief Minister reminded that Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi had cautioned the Modi administration against the adverse impact months ago. The arrogance of the present dispensation did not allow broad consultation and availing of expertise of Congress leaders who had earlier dealt with international crisis, Revanth Reddy said. "They (Modi and ministers) are misguided missiles," Reddy said.

Asked how the BJP could win elections if the allegations of mishandling of crises were true, Revanth Reddy said misuse of poll machinery was reflected in the recent deletion of lakhs of voters in West Bengal, a lethal weapon that the BJP puts to use. "We could win in the South because the Congress resists such coercive steps," Revanth Reddy said.

The Chief Minister said he still believed that the Telangana elections would be put off by six months and held along with 2029 Lok Sabha polls as the BJP would go ahead with the one nation-one election plan. He said if Modi was sincere about women's reservations, he could as well implement them within existing the 543 seats in the Lok Sabha and take up delimitation as well without increasing the number of constituencies.

Gadwal Vijay Laxmi Appointed Chairperson of Telangana Women's Commission

Hyderrabad, May 11

: The Telangana government has appointed former GHMC Mayor Gadwal Vijay Laxmi as the Chairperson of the Telangana Women's Commission, in a key step aimed at strengthening the institutional framework for the protection of women's rights in the state.

The appointment was announced through an official order issued on May 11, 2026, by Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao. Gadwal Vijay Laxmi, who previously served as the Mayor of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), will now head the Commission for a five-year term from the date of assuming office.

Along with the Chairperson, the government has also nominated six members to the Commission under the provisions of the Telangana Women's Commission Act, 1998. The newly appointed members are Kasoju Sankaramma, Chityala Swetha, Shashikala Yadava Reddy, Sada Laxmi, N. Radha Bai, and Ujma Ashai Shakira.

The appointments were made under Section 5 of the Telangana Women's Commission Act, 1998. The Commission is entrusted with addressing issues related to women's welfare and rights, including investigating unfair practices against women, examining complaints involving deprivation of rights, and recommending legislative or policy measures to the state government.

The appointment of Gadwal Vijay Laxmi is being viewed as a significant administrative move by the state government. With experience in public administration, law, and journalism, she is expected to bring both political and governance expertise to the role. The move also fills a long-pending leadership vacancy in the Commission, a demand repeatedly raised by women's rights activists amid growing concerns over women's safety and gender equality.

The Department for Women, Children, Disabled and Senior Citizens is expected to release detailed terms and conditions related to the appointments in the coming days.

Vijay Calls On Political Leaders In The State

CHENNAI, May 11

Ushering in a refreshingly healthy political culture in the State, newly appointed Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay called on a wide rage of senior political leaders, including former Chief Minister M K Stalin, by driving down to their homes where his gesture was reciprocated with a warm welcome and bonhomie by the political rivals and their families.

The Chief Minister's motorcade started traversing the roads of Chennai after the completion of the swearing in of all the 234 elected MLAs of new Assembly, which Vijay witnessed by sitting through the entire proceedings in the House, before going from one house to another.

Among the top leaders Vijay visited and sought their blessings were Stalin, where he was welcomed by former Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, MDMK founder Vaiko, Naam Tamilar Katchi chief coordinator Seeman and PMK leader Anbumani Ramadoss.

The 'courtesy calls' made by the new Chief Minister to his political rivals actually began in the Assembly in the morning as he exchanged pleasantries with former chief ministers Edappadi K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam.

Stalin said that he gave his wishes and some advice to Vijay who had called on him out of political decency. Shawls were exchanged during the meeting at Stalin's Alwarpet residence, where Udhayanidhi Stalin presented him with a book on DMK's history titled, 'Kalathin Niram Karuppu Sivappu – DMK 75.'

Vijay went to the Akkarai residence of Anbumani Ramadoss and also to the house of Vaiko, where he was welcomed by Durai Vaiko. The Chief Minister meeting opposition leaders reminded him of a similar gesture by DMK founder C N Annadurai, Vaiko said, adding that he had advised him to follow the path of secularism. The gesture also sent out a positive message on the need for encouraging healthy politics in Tamil Nadu, he said.

As news of the meeting of Vijay with Stalin went viral on social media with people expressing their admiration for the new culture that has been ushered into the State. Some television channels even announced debates on the development.

Petrol, Diesel Price Hike Soon? PM's Fuel Warning Sparks Speculation

New Delhi, May 11

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for careful use of fuels like petrol, diesel and gas in the country, speculations are rife that petrol and diesel prices may go up further anytime now. As the inter-ministerial discussions are going on in this matter, the government is weighing all options to take a call at the right time, according to the sources.

The buzz of price hike erupted as Modi's on Sunday appealed to citizens to reduce energy consumption, urging people to use fuels "with great restraint" and suggested measures such as using public transport, carpooling and reviving work-from-home practices to reduce fuel consumption amid the ongoing West Asia conflict. However, the prices of petrol and diesel in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and other cities remained unchanged on Monday.

The sources, however, said that state-run fuel retailers may raise petrol and diesel prices in the coming days to offset mounting losses. "The discussions between the finance and petroleum ministries and oil marketing companies (OMCs) are going on a daily basis and weighing all options about the fuel price hike. The timing and extent of the hike will depend on global crude trends and the government's approach to balancing fiscal pressures and energy pricing," the sources said.

As per the sources, fuel prices are expected to witness a hike soon across India as state-owned OMCs have incurred losses of more than Rs 1 lakh crore over the past 10 weeks for shielding consumers from soaring global fuel prices due to the Iran war. "Besides, there is a fear of a surge in the import bill as the global crude prices breached the $104-per-barrel mark after US President Donald Trump's response to Iran's latest proposal, which may trigger the hike of fuel prices in India as well," the sources said.

"State-owned oil retailers have already informed the government about their loss due to supply disruption following the ongoing Gulf war and anticipate a small rise in fuel prices soon from the central government to offset significant daily losses. So the hike in fuel prices remains inevitable now as the government does not want to soar the import bill cost," the sources said without giving how much hike in fuel prices.

India imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil requirements, exceeding 5 million barrels per day. As per the latest government data, India's crude oil import bill for the financial year 2025-26 (FY26) reached $134.7 billion, accounting for 17.4 per cent of the country's total import bill, driven by high global prices and demand.

According to the sources, major OMCs like Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) are together incurring under-recoveries of Rs 1,600-1,700 crore every day by selling petrol, diesel and cooking gas LPG below cost. "The cumulative under-recovery over the past 10 weeks of conflict in West Asia is estimated to be over Rs 1 lakh crore," the sources said.

Despite a nearly 50 per cent rise in crude oil prices during the period (Gulf war), petrol and diesel prices have remained unchanged at two-year-old levels of about on average of Rs 94-95 per litre and Rs 87.67 per litre, respectively. But LPG prices, however, were raised by Rs 60 per cylinder in March, but are still below actual cost.

Harish Rao seeks CVC probe into demolition of Kakatiya-era temple

Warangal: BRS deputy floor leader T Harish Rao accused the Congress government of demolishing the historic Shiva temple in Ashok Nagar village of Warangal district in search of hidden treasure under the pretext of school construction. He demanded immediate registration of an FIR, restoration of the temple, and an in-depth investigation by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Harish Rao visited the ruins of the 800-year-old Kakatiya-era Shiva temple in Ashok Nagar village on Monday and performed special prayers at the demolished site along with local residents. Former Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao, former MLAs Peddi Sudarshan Reddy, Shankar Naik, Vinay Bhaskar, Aroori Ramesh, and former Corporation Chairman Errolla Srinivas accompanied him.

Speaking to the media, Harish Rao alleged that the temple's sanctum sanctorum, which was built by Kakatiya ruler Ganapati

Deva, was razed between midnight and 1 am. A pit measuring 24 feet deep was dug beneath it under the cover of darkness. "If this were for school construction, why was it done in the dead of night?" he asked, holding Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy responsible for the entire episode.

He said the district Archaeology Department officer filed a written complaint with the Collector on May 7, stating that the excavation was carried out in search of hidden treasure. Despite the complaint, no FIR was registered, no machinery was seized, and no action was taken. "This points to the involvement of top functionaries in the State government," he added.

The former Minister questioned how land recorded as endowment land in the Dharani portal during the BRS regime was secretly reclassified as government land in the Bhu Bharati portal after the Congress came to power. He also questioned why a school originally sanctioned at another location in the same constituency as per the GO was shifted to a site with a standing temple when sufficient alternative land was available nearby.

"A school can be built near a temple. But why demolish the temple itself?" he asked.

Harish Rao demanded immediate registration of an FIR, arrest of those responsible, seizure of machinery, and handover of the site to the Archaeology Department under the 1958 Act, which covers structures over 100 years old. He announced that the BRS would file complaints with the Central Vigilance Commission and State Vigilance Department for an in-depth probe.

The BRSLP deputy leader also targeted alleged large-scale financial irregularities in tenders for 76 Integrated Schools across the State. He alleged that all contracts were awarded at excess rates ranging between 4.86 per cent and 4.99 per cent above the estimated cost, and not a single tender went into the negative. He further alleged that Rs 494 crore of public money was siphoned off through inflated tenders. A retired official was appointed as Chief Engineer to facilitate the process, he claimed.

Responding to Revanth Reddy's claim that the winning contractors were linked to the BRS, Harish Rao challenged the Chief Minister to cancel the tenders immediately. "I am the one demanding cancel-

Indian Chronicle
English Daily

Gubernatorial actions under scanner

While the curtains have finally come down on the uncertainty over government formation in Tamil Nadu, providing much relief to the people of the State, the suspenseful drama has brought into focus the questionable role of Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arleka in the entire episode. There was an unreasonable delay on his part in inviting the leader of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), Joseph Vijay—a popular film star who created history by dismantling the five-decade-long duopoly of the Dravidian parties—to form the government. The TVK emerged as the single largest party in the elections, bagging 108 seats in the 234-member Assembly, but fell ten short of the magic figure required to form the government. The Governor should have, without any hesitation, invited Vijay to form the government and prove the majority on the floor of the House at a later date. The constitutional position in the event of a hung verdict is very clear. Whether the government enjoys the support of the legislature should be decided on the floor of the Assembly, not in the Lok Bhavan. However, the Governor chose to insist on the numbers required to provide a stable government, triggering avoidable delay and unnecessary speculation. The fact that Vijay and his party leaders were made to run to the Lok Bhavan four times in the last few days to meet the Governor to stake claim to form the government shows an appalling lack of respect for constitutional propriety and procedures.

In the end, it turned out that the test of majority was virtually taken in the precincts of Lok Bhavan as Vijay was accompanied by representatives of the supporting parties during his fourth meeting with the Governor, where he handed over their letters of support. :

Telangana Jana Samithi Plenary on May 12: M. Narsaiah

TELANGANA JANA SAMITHI, PRESIDENT GREATER HYDERABAD "Hyderabad, May 11: Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) Greater Hyderabad President and Plenary Organising Committee Convener M. Narsaiah stated that the Telangana movement was a historic struggle for self-respect and identity, fought against the exploitation and domination of Seemandhra ruling forces. He said the movement united all sections of society to protect Telangana's resources and uphold the dignity and aspirations of its people."In a statement issued on Sunday, Narsaiah said that although Telangana was formed in 2014 following the sacrifices of martyrs and the united struggle of the people, the aspirations of the movement were gradually sidelined. He alleged that the previous government failed to protect democratic values and instead promoted family rule and authoritarian governance."He said that in order to safeguard Telangana's identity, realise the aspirations of the movement, and build a democratic Telangana, the formation of a dedicated political platform became inevitable. It was under these circumstances that Telangana ideologues, democratic forces, and activists believed that Prof. Kodandaram, who had served as Chairman of the Telangana Political JAC during the statehood movement, could provide leadership for this cause. As a result, Telangana Jana Samithi was formally launched on April 29, 2018."Narsaiah said that while parties such as TRS, later renamed BRS, along with national parties like Congress and BJP, have dominated Telangana politics, TJS emerged as the only political party dedicated exclusively to Telangana's identity and movement aspirations."He highlighted that since its inception, TJS has actively participated in several public struggles and consistently worked among the people for the resolution of public issues. The party, he said, brought alternative politics to the forefront by advocating transparent and democratic political practices, free from money power and corruption. He added that TJS has been striving to create political space for ordinary citizens."Listing the party's activities, Narsaiah said TJS spearheaded movements on unemployment issues through its "Koluvulakai Kotlata" campaign, supported Adivasi struggles for podu lands in the Godavari basin, and extended solidarity to RTC workers during their strike. He also noted that the party fought against the ban on Dharna Chowk and legally pursued the matter to restore democratic rights at Indira Park Dharna Chowk."He further stated that the party has fought for remunerative prices for farmers, equal wages for equal work for labourers, and protection of Krishna river waters. TJS also played a key role in uniting democratic forces, intellectuals, and activists against what he termed the authoritarian rule of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao."Narsaiah said TJS was instrumental in bringing the promises made to Telangana activists during the movement back into public discourse and contributed towards including several such assurances in the Congress manifesto. He added that the party supported Congress in the previous Assembly elections to end authoritarian rule and became a partner in people-centric governance."He said Prof. Kodandaram has been actively working to ensure the Congress government under Chief Minister Revanth Reddy fulfils the promises made to the people and addresses the concerns of employees, teachers, unemployed youth, farmers, labourers, and other sections."Stating that TJS remains the only party advancing with the slogans of Telangana identity, movement aspirations, and democratic values, Narsaiah announced that the party's fourth plenary meeting will be held grandly on May 12 at Jalavihar, Necklace Road, Hyderabad."He said Telangana activists, intellectuals, leaders of people's organisations, and party cadres from across the state will participate in the plenary and deliberate on various issues. Elaborate arrangements are being made to accord a grand welcome to TJS State President and MLC Prof. Kodandaram before the meeting commences at 10 a.m., he added."Narsaiah appealed to party workers, activists, and the public to attend the plenary meeting in large numbers and make it a success.

Grand Celebrations of Abhayanjaneya Swamy Birth Anniversary Conducted Under the Leadership of Temple Trustee Gudi Swarna Madhusudhan Reddy

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Attends as Chief Guest""""UPPAL , MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):"The birth anniversary celebrations of Lord Abhayanjaneya Swamy were celebrated with great devotion and grandeur at the Abhayanjaneya Swamy Temple situated on Chilakeshwara Gutta. The festivities, organized under the leadership of temple trustee Gudi Swarna Madhusudhan Reddy, created a spiritually vibrant atmosphere that deeply impressed

devotees."Special pujas, abhishekams, and floral decorations were performed for the deity, while the temple premises were beautifully illuminated with decorative lights. The celebrations featured devotional bhajans, traditional musical performances, and Vedic chanting, providing spiritual bliss to the devotees."Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy and Malkajgiri Parliament In-charge Ragidi Lakshma Reddy attended the event as chief guests and sought the blessings of the deity."Residents of Chilk Nagar, colony members, women, youth, local leaders, a large number of devotees, and members of the Abhayanjaneya Seva Samithi enthusiastically participated and made the event a grand success.Distribution of prasadam and annadanam (free meal service) became special attractions of the celebrations. The temple premises echoed with chants of "Jai Shri Ram" and "Jai Hanuman," filling the atmosphere with devotion and spiritual fervor.

Government is Ours.. Responsibility for Development is Ours: Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy

----Rs. 37.10 Crore Sanctioned for Development of Uppal and Kushaiguda Government Schools"----Milk Abhishekam Performed to CM Revanth Reddy's Portraits at Uppal Cross Roads""""UPPAL, MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal Congress Party in-charge Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy stated that a people's government is functioning in the state under the leadership of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. He said that the government is bringing crores of rupees in funds to the Uppal constituency and undertaking several development works."He announced that Rs. 37.10 crore has been sanctioned for the upgradation of the Uppal and Kushaiguda Zilla Parishad Government Schools in the Uppal constituency. He said that this was possible only because of the special initiative taken by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. As a mark of gratitude, Congress leaders performed a milk abhishekam to the Chief Minister's portraits."Congress leaders conducted the milk abhishekam programme at Uppal on Monday. Speaking at the event as the chief guest, Parameshwar Reddy said that regardless of opposition propaganda or misleading statements, people continue to trust the Congress Party and Chief Minister Revanth Reddy."He further stated that residents of the constituency can approach him directly or meet the Congress Party division presidents for solutions to local issues and development-related concerns."Former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy, Kandi Aagi Reddy, Taufiq, division presidents of Uppal, Ramanthapur, Chilakanagar, Habsiguda and Nacharam including Bakaram Laxman, Rafiq, Vijay, Rajesh Mudiraj and Srikanth Goud, senior Congress leaders Bopanapalli Sudhakar Reddy, Chen Reddy Raghupathi Reddy, Bazaru Jagannath Goud, Kompalli Balaraj Mudiraj, Eega Anjaneyulu, Shravan Reddy, Youth Congress leader Akarapu Arun, Block Cell President Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Block President Amareshwari, Prakash Reddy and party workers participated in the programme.

BJP Leaders' True Colours Exposed: Deepak John

"Bandi should resign for a fair and impartial probe in the POCSO case""District Congress President Deepak John demands action""Indian Chronicle, Secunderabad, May 11:"Deepak John, President of the Secunderabad District Congress Committee, alleged that the "true colours" of BJP leaders, who frequently speak about nationalism and dharma have now been exposed. He strongly criticised the silence of the BJP leadership over the allegations against Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Bandi Bhageerath."Referring to reports surrounding the alleged POCSO case, Deepak John questioned why BJP leaders were not responding to allegations that a minor girl was allegedly lured to a farmhouse multiple times in the name of friendship and sexually assaulted after being allegedly intoxicated through soft drinks. He alleged that despite the victim being a Hindu girl, the BJP was maintaining "strategic silence" because the accused is the son of one of its own leaders."Deepak John said it was shameful that the son of a Union Minister holding a responsible constitutional position was allegedly involved in such acts. He demanded that Bandi Sanjay Kumar take moral responsibility for the incident and that the BJP should immediately remove him from the ministerial post if the party has any commitment towards society."He further stated that if Bandi Sanjay truly believes in ethics and integrity, he should resign from both his MP and ministerial positions until the investigation is completed. Only then, he said, can the probe proceed in a transparent and impartial manner, thereby proving the BJP's sincerity and commitment to justice.

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Felicitates Tenth Class Toppers

""UPPAL , MAY 10(INDIAN CHRONICAL): As part of the "Education Week" programs being organized by the Telangana Education Department, Uppal MLA

Bandari Lakshma Reddy attended a special event held at Uppal ZPHS."On this occasion, the MLA felicitated and congratulated students who achieved top marks in the 10th class examinations for their outstanding performance. Speaking at the event, he advised students to work hard in their studies and strive to achieve higher goals in life."He stated that the government is giving special priority to the development of the education sector and is implementing several programs for the future of students by providing improved facilities in government schools. He also mentioned that ?18 crore has been allocated for the development of the school."MEO Rama Rao, the Headmaster, BRS party leaders, party workers, and others participated in the program.

Samala Sadasiva Birth Anniversary Celebrated Grandly

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, May 10: Samala Sadasiva birth anniversary was celebrated grandly under the aegis of the Telugu Sahiti Sadassu in Kagaznagar on Monday."As part of the celebrations, members paid floral tributes to the statue of the Central Sahitya Akademi award recipient and noted multilingual scholar near the Kagaznagar bus stand."Speaking on the occasion, the participants praised Dr. Samala Sadasiva's remarkable contributions to Telugu literature as well as the field of painting, stating that his services would remain unforgettable."The programme was attended by Telugu Sahiti Sadassu president Pendyala Kishan Sharma, working president Katakam Madhukar, Mandal Education Officer Vasala Prabhakar and several others.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Naresh Kumar. Ch S/o. Gangaiah Aged 42 years. R/o. H.No. 4-91, Rampur, Narsapur(G) Mandal, Dist. Nirmal, Telangana 504306, Have Changed My Name From Naresh kumar ch S /o. Gangaiah (Old Name) To **CHINOLLA NARESH** S/o. Gangaiah (New Name).

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

FORM-VI

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

(See Sub-rule (1) of rule-19) and Section - 11(1) of the Act-30/2013)

Gazette No. 128/2026 **Date: 02-05-2026**
Dist.Collector Lr.No.Rev/G1/LAG/0022/2026-G-Section **Date: 20-04-2026**
Spl.Dy.Collector, LA R&R, Unit-II, Lr.No: C/11/2025 **Date: 31-03-2026**

Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana / District Collector that a total of **Ac.9.09Gts.,** of land is required in the **Appampally Village of Koukuntla Mandal,** Mahabubnagar District for public purpose, namely for the purpose of **Extention of Left Canal to Create Additional Avacut of D-80 under Koilsagar Lift Irrigation Scheme.** The Government vide G.O.Ms.No.50, Irrigation & CAD (LA R&R/A2) Department dt.25.02.2017 exempted the **Koilsagar Lift Irrigation Scheme from the application of the provisions of Chapter - II & III of the Right** to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013. Therefore Social Impact Assessment study has not been carried out as required U/s 4 (1) of the said Act. No families are likely to be displaced due to the Land Acquisition. The Additional Collector (Revenue) is appointed as Project Administrator for the purpose of Rehabilitation and Resettlement of the affected families.

Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the **Appampally** Village of **Koukuntla** Mandal of Mahabubnagar District a piece of land measuring, more or less **Ac.9.09gts** of standard measurement, whose detailed description is as following, is under acquisition:

Village: Appampally **Mandal: Koukunta** **District: Mahabubnagar**

S. No.	Sy. No.	Dry/ I.D/ Wet	Type of Land	Area Proposed Under Acquisition (in acre) Ac. Gts	Name & Address of Person Interested	Boundaries N	S	E	W	Trees	Structures
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	203	Dry	Patta	0.16	Balanna S/o Savaranna	201	206	-	204		
2	206	Dry	Patta	0.06	Kale Naganna S/o Sayanna	203	207	205	-		
3	206	Dry	Patta	0.13	Kale Thirupathaiah S/o Sayanna	203	207	205	-		
4	206	Dry	Patta	0.14	Kale Ramulu S/o Sayanna	203	207	205	-	Bore	
5	206	Dry	Patta	0.12	Male Srinu S/o Shanthanna	203	207	205	-	Bore	
6	205	Dry	Patta	0.10	Golla Kondanna S/o Savaranna	-	207	206	208		
7	205	Dry	Patta	0.15	Golla Ashanna S/o Savaranna	-	207	206	208		
8	205	Dry	Patta	0.14	Male Kathalamma W/o Balanna	-	207	206	208		
9	207	Dry	Patta	0.18	Golla Galla Gattana S/o Yellappa	205	-	206	208		
10	208	Dry	Patta	0.10	Golla Galla Gattana S/o Yellappa	193	-	207	209		
11	208	Dry	Patta	0.35	Golla Ananthamma W/o Golla Kurumanna	193	-	207	209		
12	208	Dry	Patta	0.01	Manemma W/o Buchanna	193	-	207	209		
13	210	Dry	Patta	0.21	Mallesh S/o Gatanna	192	-	208	232		
14	210	Dry	Patta	0.01	Srinu S/o Hanumanthu	192	-	208	232		
15	210	Dry	Patta	0.13	K.Vishnuvardhan Reddy S/o Laxma Reddy	192	-	208	232		
16	210	Dry	Patta	0.15	Kothakapu Manjula W/o K.Narsimha Reddy	192	-	208	232		
17	210	Dry	Patta	0.10	K.Venkat Reddy S/o Kistappa	192	-	208	232		
18	232	Dry	Patta	0.22	Male Sheshmamma W/o Kondanna	211	233	210	234		
19	232	Dry	Patta	0.09 1/2	K.Vishnuvardhan Reddy S/o Laxma Reddy	211	233	210	234		
20	232	Dry	Patta	0.02 1/2	Mallesh S/o Shantappa	211	233	210	234		
21	232	Dry	Patta	0.16	Golla Ashanna S/o Savaranna	211	233	210	234		
22	232	Dry	Patta	0.11	Golla Kondanna S/o Savaranna	211	233	210	234		
23	233	Dry	Patta	0.05	Golla Ashanna S/o Savaranna	232	-	210	234		
24	233	Dry	Patta	0.02	Babu Reddy S/o Narsimha Reddy	232	-	210	234		
25	233	Dry	Patta	0.13	Male Ramulu S/o Balanna	232	-	210	234		
26	233	Dry	Patta	0.13	Male Srikanth S/o Balanna	232	-	210	234		
27	234	Dry	Patta	1.06	1.Gudur Anjaneyu Reddy S/o Venkata Reddy 2. Gudur Damodar Reddy S/o G. Venkata Reddy 3. Boya Yadamma W/o Narayana 4. Tungani Srinivasulu Yadav S/o Hanmanthu 5. Male Karre Chinnayya S/o Chinna Sayanna 6. Chakali Balappa S/o Erra Seetanna 7. L.Buchamma W/o Bhagavan Reddy 8. Boya Saroj W/o Boya Thirupatanna 9. Chakali Balaswamy S/o Pedda Ganganna 10. Golla Dasanna S/o Kistanna 11. Manemma W/o Seenu Jala 12. Sakali Ramalingam S/o Sakali Savaranna 13. Sakali Anjaneyulu S/o Chakali Pedda Savaranna 14. Mushti Chandrakala W/o Venkatesh 15. Mushti Lakshmi W/o Chinna Masanna 16. Golla Venkateswaramma W/o Shivanna 17. Boya Sujatha W/o Chinna Venkatanna	230	-	233	236		
28				0.05	Road						
	Total :			**9.09**							

This notification is made under the provisions of Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act of 2013 (Act No.30 of 2013) to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Mahabubnagar & Special Deputy Collector LA R&R, Unit II, Irrigation Project, Mahabubnagar on any working day during the working hours. The District Collector, Mahabubnagar / Collector cum appropriate Government is pleased to authorize the Special Deputy Collector LA R&R, Unit II, Irrigation Project, Mahabubnagar and his staff to enter upon and survey land, take levels of any land, dig or bore into the subsoil & do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in section (12) of the said Act.

Under section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transactions or cause any transactions of land i.e. sale/purchase, etc., or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector.

Objections to the acquisition, if any, may be filed by the person interested within 60 (sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section (15) of the Act before District Collector, Mahabubnagar.

Sd/- Spl. Dy. Collector L.A R&R Unit-II, Mahabubnagar **Sd/-District Collector, Mahabubnagar**

DIPR RO.NO:181/LA/PP/Advt/Pub/2026-27

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Lays Foundation Stone for Development Works Worth 1.48 Crore in Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda Divisions

"""UPPAL, MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy, along with former corporator Banala Geetha Praveen, laid the foundation stone for several development works worth ?1.48 crore in the Chilkanagar and Beerappa Gadda divisions."The development works include construction of CC roads, storm water drain (SWD) pipelines, and sewerage lines in various colonies and bastis of the two divisions."Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that development works worth ?1.48 crore have been initiated for the progress of Chilkanagar Division. He stated that new underground drainage pipelines, storm water drain trunk lines, and CC roads are being taken up and completed in a phased manner. He appreciated former corporator Banala Geetha Praveen for working tirelessly and systematically towards the development of the division."Former corporator Banala Geetha Praveen said that storm water drain pipeline works are being undertaken from the Auto Stand to Phani Medical Shop in Bank Colony, while CC road works are being carried out from the Auto Stand to the Ward Office. She added that drainage pipeline works have begun in Sai Ram Nagar Colony and that drainage works in Kalyan Puri were launched with the initiative and support of MLA Lakshma Reddy."She expressed special thanks to the MLA for supporting the development activities and said that every promise made during the elections is being fulfilled through these development works. She also thanked the presidents, secretaries, and committee members of various colony welfare associations for their cooperation and suggestions in carrying forward the development agenda."Senior BRS leaders including Banala Praveen Mudiraj, Eddula Kondal Reddy, Kokkonda Jagan, V.B. Narasimha, Jalli Mohan, Balakrishna Goud, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Masa Shekhar, Ramanjaneyulu, Shyam Banti, and Obed, along with members of Sai Ram Nagar, Bank Colony, and Kalyan Puri Welfare Associations, local residents, and women participated in the programme in large numbers.

Foundation Day celebrations mark start of educational week festivities.

KARIMNAGAR May 11 (Correspondent): Educational week celebrations under the Prajapalana Pragathi Pranalika commenced on Monday with Foundation Day programmes organised across schools in Gangadhara mandal to mark Telangana Formation Day.Bhavitha Activity Room at Gangadhara High School, the summer camp at TGMS Gangadhara, and a kitchen shed at Garshakurthi school were inaugurated by local public representatives and ward members.

MRO Ambati Rajitha, MPDO Dammani Ramu, SI Vamsi Krishna, and MEO Enugu Prabhakar Rao participated in the programmes and interacted with students.Addressing the students at the summer camp, Mr. Ramu said the camp should be utilised effectively to learn arts, crafts, music, sports, writing skills, and other creative activities that would help students excel in the future.Ms. Rajitha encouraged students to showcase their talent during the valedictory programme scheduled on May 25.Principal Padma, teachers, parents, and staff members were present.

Collector calls for swift redressal of public grievances

185 petitions received during Prajavani programme across district.

KARIMNAGAR May 11 (Correspondent): Karimnagar Collector Chitra Mishra on Monday directed officials to accord top priority to grievances received during the Prajavani programme and ensure their prompt resolution after field-level verification.Receiving petitions from the public at the Prajavani programme held at the Collectorate auditorium, the Collector reviewed the nature of complaints and instructed officials to clear pending applications without delay.

A total of 129 petitions were received at the district-level programme. While some grievances were resolved on the spot, others were forwarded to the concerned departments for necessary action.As part of the State government's directions, Prajavani programmes were also conducted simultaneously in the revenue divisions under the supervision of Revenue Divisional Officers. Officials said that 40 applications were received in the Karimnagar Revenue Division and 16 in the Huzurabad Revenue Division.In all, 185 petitions were received across the district during the grievance redressal programme.Additional Collector Srinivas Reddy, RDO Maheshwar, ZP CEO Srinivas, DRDO Sridhar, AO Sudhakar and other district officials were present.

PM's Remarks Contrary to Federal Spirit - MLA K.R.Nagaraju

"Vardhannapet / Warangal, May 11 (Indian Chronicle) : Vardhannapet MLA K. R. Nagaraju stated that central funds do not belong to any political party and must be distributed fairly in accordance with constitutional norms. He said that holding public office is a supreme constitutional responsibility that requires treating all citizens equally, and that every word spoken by a person in such a position must reflect national unity, federal principles, and democratic values."Referring to the recent visit of Narendra Modi to Hyderabad, Nagaraju said the public was left wondering whether the visit was official or political in nature. He expressed surprise at the Prime Minister's participation in the inauguration of a private hospital, his city tour, and the tone of his subsequent public address. He criticized the speech as lacking the dignity, balance, and responsibility expected of a Prime Minister."Nagaraju further remarked that the comments made in the public meeting, directed at the Telangana Chief Minister, were against the spirit of federalism. He said suggestions that Telangana should align with the Centre and seek cooperation for funds "to develop like Gujarat" were inappropriate."He emphasized that every state in India is a constitutionally empowered entity with equal rights, and that central funds are not the property of any political party. He said allocations must be made fairly based on objective criteria such as population, revenue sources, backwardness, and tax contribution. Favoring one state while discriminating against others, he noted, goes against the essence of democracy. He added that the Prime Minister, as the leader of the nation, must rise above political bias and act in a manner that safeguards national integrity."He also clarified that funds allocated to states are derived from taxpayers' money and do not belong to any organization or individual group."Citing history, Nagaraju concluded that leaders who acted with arrogance have faded into obscurity, and that in a democracy, the people's verdict is ultimate.

Fire breaks out at residential flat in Jeedimetla

Hyderabad: Fire broke out at a flat in a building at Gajularamaram in Jeedimetla on Monday evening. No casualties were reported in the incident.

The fire started in a flat situated on the second floor of a residential building. It is suspected that an occupant of the flat had switched on the geyser and it exploded, leading to the fire in the premises. An LPG cylinder also exploded due to the fire. Household articles were gutted in the incident.

"No casualties were reported in the incident. On receiving information about the fire, our team rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control," said V Shekar Reddy, Station Fire Officer, Jeedimetla fire station.

Assistive devices distributed to 120 children with disabilities in Karimnagar.

KARIMNAGAR May 11 (Correspondent): Assistive devices worth nearly ?20 lakh were distributed to 120 children with disabilities at a programme organised jointly by Samagra Shiksha and ALIMCO at the Bhavita Centre in Karimnagar on Monday.The beneficiaries had been identified during a survey conducted in November last year. The equipment distributed included tricycles, wheelchairs, rollators, hearing aids and teaching-learning material kits.Karimnagar Mayor Kolagani Srinivas, who attended the programme as chief guest, said ensuring support and welfare measures for persons with disabilities was a collective responsibility. He directed officials to ensure timely delivery of allowances and other benefits.SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy said the distribution of assistive devices would help improve mobility and access to education for the beneficiaries.Additional Collector and District Education Officer Ashwini Tanaji Vakade instructed officials to ensure that no eligible student was deprived of the required facilities and educational support.District Welfare Officer Saraswathi, District Education Department Assistant Director Ram Mondaiah, Mandal Education Officer Bhadraiah, coordinator D. Srinivas, corporator Padala Srija, parents and children participated in the programme.

MMC Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy Inspects Census Operations in Habsiguda

"UPPAL, MAY 10 (INDIAN CHRONICAL):"Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation Commissioner Vinay Krishna Reddy inspected the ongoing census operations in the Habsiguda area on Monday morning."On this occasion, he interacted directly with enumerators and supervisors and reviewed various aspects including the field-level mapping process, usage of the House Listing Operation (HLO) app, and the methods being followed for data collection."The Commissioner inquired whether the staff were facing any technical or practical difficulties during the execution of the work and offered appropriate suggestions for resolving the issues. He directed officials to ensure that the census process is carried out efficiently and accurately."Emphasizing the importance of correctly recording information from every household, the Commissioner advised the field staff to work in coordination and create awareness among the public while discharging their duties.

Congress seeks measures to streamline paddy procurement

Medipalli Sathyam raises farmers' grievances with Collector.

KARIMNAGAR May 11 (Correspondent): Choppadandi MLA and Karimnagar District Congress Committee president Dr. Medipalli Sathyam on Monday warned that farmers would not accept the practice of 43-kg weighment during paddy procurement and alleged that some rice millers were harassing farmers.Addressing the media after meeting the District Collector during the Prajavani programme at the Collectorate, Mr. Sathyam said the Congress government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, had prioritised farmers' welfare since assuming office.

He alleged that during the previous BRS regime, farmers were subjected to irregular weighment practices and deductions during procurement. In contrast, he said, the present government had ensured procurement without deductions or exploitation over the last two years.

Mr. Sathyam attributed the delay in lifting paddy from procurement centres to a shortage of lorries caused by the GPS-based transport policy introduced by the Centre. He urged the district administration to increase the number of vehicles and speed up the procurement process.The MLA demanded the appointment of special officers at every procurement centre and rice mill to monitor operations and address farmers' grievances. He also sought the creation of a dedicated dashboard and daily review mechanism for procurement activities.Stating that the State government had spent ?1.6 lakh crore on farmers' welfare schemes, including farm loan waiver, Rythu Bharosa, bonus payments and input subsidies, Mr. Sathyam said the government would not tolerate injustice towards farmers.Alleging that certain rice millers were creating hurdles despite officials working efficiently, he warned that he was prepared to join farmers in staging dharnas at procurement centres if harassment continued.He said the Collector had assured that a meeting with rice millers would be convened shortly and expressed hope that procurement operations would improve from Tuesday onwards.

Mahila Samaikhya building inaugurated in Bahadurkhanpet.

KARIMNAGAR May 11 (Correspondent): SUDA Chairman Komatireddy Narendra Reddy on Monday inaugurated a Mahila Samaikhya building constructed at a cost of ?10 lakh in Bahadurkhanpet village of Karimnagar Rural mandal under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Narendra Reddy said the State government was implementing several welfare schemes aimed at strengthening women economically and socially. He urged women to make effective use of the facility for community activities.He appreciated sarpanch Gurram Sandhya Tirupathi Reddy for ensuring the speedy completion of the building.

Uppal MLA Lakshma Reddy Congratulates Class 10 Toppers at Chiluka Nagar Government School

"UPPAL , MAY 11(INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy congratulated the students of Chiluka Nagar Government School who secured top marks in the Class 10 examinations. Along with former Chiluka Nagar Division Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj and BRS party leaders, he visited the school and felicitated the meritorious students with shawls and sweets."Speaking on the occasion, the MLA also appreciated the efforts of the school Principal and teachers for guiding the students towards achieving excellent results. He stated that he would never compromise when it comes to providing basic infrastructure facilities to government schools and assured that all necessary development works in the school would be taken up. He further promised to ensure the sanction and completion of the new school building at the earliest.Former Corporator Geetha Praveen praised Principal Anji Reddy and the school management for taking special care and showing dedication towards the students, which helped the school achieve better results this year compared to last year. She congratulated the students once again and wished them success in securing good ranks in their Intermediate studies as well."A large number of BRS party leaders participated in the programme.

Public Grievances Must Be Resolved Promptly: District Collector TS Divakara

District Collector receives public petitions during Prajavani programme""Khammam, May 11 (Indian Chronicle):""District Collector TS Divakara directed district officials to resolve public grievances submitted by citizens without delay."During the Prajavani programme held on Monday at the Collectorate meeting hall, District Collector TS Divakara, along with Additional Collectors Dr. P. Srija and P. Srinivas Reddy, received petitions from the public."Manubolu Rama Rao of Kalakodim village in Tallada mandal submitted a complaint stating that a public road leading to his house had been obstructed with thorn fencing, blocking access to the panchayat road. The Collector instructed the District Panchayat Officer to take immediate necessary action."Several farmers from Venkatapuram, Vangaveedu, and Siripuram villages of Madhira mandal submitted a petition regarding damaged floodwater drainage pipes laid beside the R&B road near the Bhagavanulapuram village stage after Palavagu. They explained that only one side of the damaged pipes had been replaced while the other side was filled up, preventing rainwater from flowing properly toward the stream and causing potential losses to their agricultural lands. The Collector directed the Sathupalli R&B Executive Engineer to take appropriate action."Pagilla Ramu of Khammam town requested sanction of a MeeSeva center under the quota for persons with disabilities. The Collector referred the matter to the EDM for consideration based on feasibility."D. Nagaraju, President of the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled, Khammam district, submitted a petition requesting sanction of Indiramma houses for ten poor differently-abled persons belonging to economically weaker families in Khammam city. The Collector instructed the PD Housing department to examine their eligibility and consider their inclusion in the second list."ZP CEO Deeksha Raina, district officials, Collectorate AO Srinivas, and others participated in the Prajavani programme."— Issued by the District Public Relations Officer's Office, Khammam.

Degree College Abuzz with Educational Week Celebrations

--Chief Guest Palakurthi Sarangapani (Municipal Chairman)""" "Vardhannapet, May 11 (Indian Chronicle) : Educational Week celebrations began on a grand note on Monday at the Government Degree College, Vardhannapet, as part of the Telangana government's prestigious 'Praja Palana–Pragathi Pranalika' programme. The inaugural event was conducted under the chairmanship of Principal Prof. G. Poshayya."Vardhannapet Municipal Chairman Palakurthi Sarangapani attended as the chief guest. Shubharani Rajender, M. Devender, Paparao, and Vani Kumaraswamy graced the occasion as special guests."The programme commenced with Saraswati Puja and the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Prof. G. Poshayya elaborated on the academic, cultural, and research activities being carried out by the college. He highlighted the challenges faced by the institution and appealed to public representatives for support toward its development. He also noted that several facilities had been established with the support of local donors and affirmed that all necessary arrangements were being made to provide quality education to students."Educational Week Coordinator Dr. G. Rajitha explained the schedule of various activities planned during the celebrations."Addressing the gathering, chief guest Palakurthi Sarangapani appreciated the college for organizing national and international seminars despite limited resources. He assured support from the government for the college's development, improvement of infrastructure, and the establishment of a permanent building. He further stated that gravel chips would be laid in the campus to resolve muddy conditions during the rainy season. He also mentioned that public representatives would encourage admissions for the 2026–27 academic year by motivating at least five students from each ward to enroll in the college."Inaugural Coordinator Dr. B. Vishnu Kumar expressed gratitude to all those who contributed to the success of the programme. The Principal and staff felicitated the chief and special guests as well as media representatives. The vote of thanks was delivered by Educational Week Coordinator and IQAC Coordinator Dr. G. Rajitha."Vice Principal Dr. CH. Raju, Dr. A. Madhusudhan Reddy, Dr. N. Srinivas, Dr. CH. Snehalatha Reddy, Dr. V. Sampath Reddy, Dr. B. Swetha, Dr. K. Joshna, along with teaching and non-teaching staff, Raithu Vedika members Ram Reddy and Rajitha, public representatives, and media personnel were present.

All Departments Must Achieve Indian Red Cross Society Membership Targets: District Collector TS Divakara

Departments instructed to appoint nodal officers and encourage employees to enroll""Khammam, May 11(Indian Chronicle):" ""District Collector TS Divakara instructed all government departments to achieve the membership enrollment targets of the Indian Red Cross Society."After the grievance redressal programme on Monday, the Collector held a review meeting on Red Cross Society membership enrollment with Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Srija, Additional Collector P. Srinivas Reddy, and district officials at the Collectorate meeting hall."Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said officials should extend full cooperation for the membership drive and encourage employees in every department to enroll as members of the Red Cross Society. He directed departments to appoint special nodal officers to monitor the enrollment process and ensure that the assigned targets are achieved. The Collector also advised every officer to personally enroll as a member."He stated that the services of the Red Cross Society are highly valuable during emergencies and disasters. The Collector said the district administration should aim to enroll at least around 1,000 government employees from Khammam district as members of the society."He particularly instructed departments such as Revenue, Education, Medical and Health, Prohibition and Excise, and Roads & Buildings (R&B) to take special initiative in increasing membership registrations. Departments having more than 200 employees were asked to take focused measures to improve enrollment in the Red Cross Society."ZP CEO Deeksha Raina, district officials, Collectorate AO Srinivas, and officers from various departments participated in the meeting."— Issued by the District Public Relations Officer's Office, Khammam.

Collector Haritha Assures Better Facilities for Girl Students

""Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, May 10: K. Haritha on Monday said the district administration is taking steps to provide improved infrastructure facilities in government schools to secure a better future for students."As part of the 99-day Praja Palana Pragathi programme and Education Week celebrations, the Collector, along with Asifabad MLA Kova Lakshmi, performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of additional classrooms and separate toilet facilities for girl students at Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya in Gangapur village of Rebbena mandal."Addressing the gathering, Haritha said the government's primary objective is to strengthen infrastructure in government schools and ensure quality education for all. She stated that steps are being taken to construct additional classrooms based on student strength in schools across the district."The Collector said the Central Government, under the guidance of NITI Aayog, is focusing on the construction of separate toilets for girls in every school. She added that infrastructure facilities are being developed in schools across the district using CSR funds, MGNREGS funds and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan resources."She further stated that prefabricated toilet units are being installed in schools where sufficient space is not available. Summer camps are also being organised for students of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya to help them develop skills in sports, drawing and painting."Haritha said coaching facilities have been arranged for students appearing for SSC and Intermediate Advanced Supplementary examinations and advised them to make proper use of the opportunity."Speaking on the occasion, MLA Kova Lakshmi said she would extend full support for improving infrastructure facilities in government schools for students."Later, the Collector inaugurated a prefabricated toilet block at the Zilla Parishad Secondary School in Tungeda village. She also interacted with the village sarpanch regarding developmental works taken up after the elections and assured support for the village's development."Sarpanches, PACS president Karnatham Sanjeev, Tahsildar Suryaprakash, MPDO Shankaramma, public representatives, students and others participated in the programme."Issued by District Public Relations Officer

BRS Leader Seeks Immediate Arrest of Bandi Sanjay's Son Sai Bhageerath

"Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, May 10: R. S. Praveen Kumar on Monday demanded that authorities issue lookout notices against the son of Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar and ensure his immediate arrest in connection with the ongoing case."Speaking at a press conference held in Kagaznagar, Praveen Kumar said notices should be circulated to all airports and seaports if necessary, and accused Sai Bhageerath of evading arrest despite a case being registered against him three days ago."He further urged Cyberabad Police to announce a reward for information leading to Sai Bhageerath's whereabouts and questioned why no action had been taken so far."The BRS leader alleged that police were deliberately delaying the arrest to help intimidate the victim's family into withdrawing the case. He expressed concern that law enforcement authorities were allegedly supporting the accused instead of protecting the victims."Praveen Kumar also demanded the immediate suspension of the Inspector, ACP and other police officials responsible for alleged negligence in the matter."He further accused Union Minister Bandi Sanjay of threatening the victim's family and claimed that his position in the Union Home Ministry could influence the investigation. Praveen Kumar urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove Bandi Sanjay from the ministerial post to ensure a fair investigation.

SIR Mapping Process Must Be Accelerated: State Chief Electoral Officer Sudarshan Reddy"90% Mapping to Be Completed Within the Next 15 Days

Measures Should Ensure No Genuine Voter Loses Voting Rights"Weekly Review Meetings With Political Parties Every Wednesday""Khammam, May 11 (Indian Chronicle):""Telangana State Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy has directed officials to speed up the process of mapping the latest electoral rolls with the 2002 Special Intensive Revision (SIR) voter list as part of the ongoing SIR exercise."On Monday, the CEO conducted a video conference from Hyderabad with district collectors and concerned officials across the state to review the progress of SIR mapping. Khammam District Collector Divakar T.S. and Additional Collector (Local Bodies) Dr. P. Srija participated in the meeting from the district collectorate."Speaking on the occasion, Sudarshan Reddy instructed officials to ensure that at least 90 percent of the mapping process is completed in all Assembly constituencies across the state within the next 15 days."He directed District Election Officers to motivate their teams and accelerate the mapping process. He clarified that the role of political party representatives in the mapping exercise should be limited only to identifying houses and individuals."The CEO also instructed officials to identify and appoint the required number of data entry operators from all available resources for the SIR process. He stated that once the SIR process begins, daily reviews will be conducted on the distribution and collection of forms."Officials were asked to take steps to ensure that people are aware of their respective Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and to make sure that no genuine voter loses their voting rights during the process."To improve the pace of mapping, he suggested conducting review meetings with political parties every Wednesday."During the video conference, District Collector Divakar T.S. informed the CEO about the progress of the SIR mapping process in Khammam district. He said that the district's mapping percentage, which stood at 36 percent during the previous review meeting, has now increased to 42 percent."He added that Abhishek Agastya, Commissioner of the Khammam Municipal Corporation, is personally monitoring the process on a daily basis."The Collector stated that field-level activities are being carried out extensively during morning and evening hours and expressed confidence that at least 50 percent mapping would be completed in the next 15 days."Khammam Corporation Commissioner Abhishek Agastya, Kallur Sub-Collector Ajay Yadav, Election Deputy Tahsildar Ansari, election department officials, and other concerned officers also participated in the video conference."— Issued by the District Public Relations Officer's Office, Khammam.

Collector Haritha Orders Swift Disposal of Prajavani Petitions""""Indian Chronicle, Kagaznagar, May 10: K. Haritha on Monday directed officials to examine every application received during the Prajavani programme at the field level and ensure their speedy resolution."The Collector participated in the Prajavani grievance redressal programme held at the Integrated Collectorate meeting hall along with Additional Collectors Yuvraj Marmat and M. David, and District Revenue Officer Dasari Venu."Addressing officials on the occasion, Haritha stressed that all petitions received through Prajavani should be resolved promptly and instructed departments to ensure that no applications from previous programmes remain pending."Later, the Collector received petitions from applicants belonging to different parts of the district. Routhu Manisha of Muthyampet village in Koutala mandal submitted a request for sanction of a disability pension. Jummidi Shankaramma of Borlakunta village in Dahegaon mandal sought sanction of an Indiramma house."Vemula Manjula of Bazaarwada in the district headquarters also submitted a petition seeking allotment of an Indiramma house. Jugnaka Badirao of Velgi village in Wankidi mandal requested financial assistance for livelihood support."Lohat Paras of Saleguda village in Asifabad mandal appealed for issuance of a caste certificate to pursue higher education, while Kar Sorpe Anji of Vempalli village in Sirpur (T) mandal sought issuance of a caste certificate."Residents of Paikaji Nagar Colony in the district headquarters also submitted a memorandum seeking resolution of civic issues in their locality."District officials and petitioners participated in the Prajavani programme."Issued by District Public Relations Officer

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BRS protest demanding arrest of Bandi Sanjay's son

Karimnagar: BRS women activists staged a dharna at Telangana Chowk here on Monday, demanding the immediate arrest of Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son Sai Bageerath in the POCSO case. They raised slogans against the Union Minister. They displayed placards printed with closed-eye pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and shut-up gesture photos of AICC leader Rahul Gandhi and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy.The agitating workers pasted posters on saffron cloth arranged by BJP cadre on the eve of the Hindu Ektha Yatra to be held in the town on Tuesday.

Pune's oldest perfumers who once served the Nawab of Hyd

Pune has many hidden stories, but some of its oldest ones do not live in books or monuments. They live in family businesses, in workshop walls, in the smell of spices and natural oils, and in the hands of people who have kept a tradition alive for generations. Damodardas Sugandhi, a perfume and incense business that began long before modern Pune took shape and still carries the memory of an older India.Damodardas and Bhagwandas was officially established on April 10, 1872, although its roots extend much deeper. Damodardas and Bhagwandas were uncle and nephew, and long before the partnership was registered, the family had already been in business. In fact, the original business was started around 1820 to 1822 by Damodardas himself. Since Damodardas had no children, he did not adopt anyone. Instead, he brought his nephew Bhagwandas into the business and gave the enterprise a future.The family did not begin in Pune. They were originally from Vadnagar in Gujarat, a community of Nagar Brahmins who had once been bankers. Their history is linked to an older period when Shahaji Maharaj is said to have given them land in Satara. Several Nagar families were settled there for banking work. During Shivaji Maharaj's time, they were involved in money exchange, almost like an early form of forex business.

This work continued until the time of Sambhaji Maharaj, after which the region became unstable and looting increased. The family then moved through Wai and Pandharpur, and finally came to Pune when the Peshwa era brought stability at the end of the 1 th century.At first, life in Pune was difficult. The family did not have many means of earning. Since they already understood banking and accounts, they took up accounting work and small jobs in different firms. But success was limited. Then came a turning point through a woman connected to Damodardas's wife, known in the Peshwa records as Lachhu Sugandhi's Pedhi. Through this connection, the family learned the art of making incense sticks. Around 1820 to 1822, they entered the incense business, and this became the foundation of the brand that would last for generations.Their first workshop was in the area that is now known as Ravivar Peth, where a weekly market used to be held on Sundays. Because the market is open every Sunday, the incense made during the week sold easily. Demand grew steadily. By the 1860s, the business had grown large enough to employ around 40 women, all hand-rolling incense sticks.As the business expanded, the family realised they needed a formal structure. Damodardas was ageing, and there was still no direct heir. So Bhagwandas was called from Mumbai and brought into the trade. That is how the partnership firm truly took shape in 1872. A document from that period mentions April 10 as the founding date.

The company then grew beyond Pune. During the colonial period, its incense reached Hyderabad, and even the Nawab of Hyderabad was among its customers. The business also became known for making incense sticks of unusual lengths, including one foot, one and a quarter feet, and even two and a half feet.These long incense sticks were considered special at the time. Thick sticks, as wide as a little finger, became popular because they had no competition and were often used for new temple openings and important religious occasions. Over time, the trade spread further, reaching Kabul and even Persia (now Iran), showing that export had been part of the business from an early stage.

Later, the next generations carried the business forward with care. By 1926, the family had records showing exports to London. Their incense reached stores there, and the family even began experimenting with new ideas. In London, Yardley and Bush companies invited them to understand fragrance tours and modern scent trends.Since the British market was interested in fancy perfumes and raw fragrance materials, the family was encouraged to adapt traditional incense for new tastes. That led to innovation in products like lavender incense and other fancy incense types, which could be called the early cousins of today's premium incense.Today, this is the sixth generation of the family business. Devendra Tribhuvan Das Sugandhi leads the story now, and his nephew, Harsh Purushottam Sugandhi, is slowly entering the trade after the family faced a loss when Devendra's elder brother passed away during the Covid period. The next generation is already preparing to take over.Owner Devendra Sugandhi said, "What makes the brand different is its USP. It has kept its old formulas but updated the fragrance to suit modern tastes. The old scent style was rooted in musk and amber, which was traditional and familiar to older users. Today's younger buyers often prefer foreign-style perfumes and spray fragrances. Instead of copying those products, our family has created a twist within the traditional framework. This keeps the soul of the old product alive while making it attractive to a new audience."The future of fragrance

The business today focuses mainly on incense sticks, but it also makes dhoop sticks, attar, and ashtagandh. In attar, the family blends its own fragrances. Some raw materials come from Kannauj, especially henna and rose attar, but the final blending is done in-house in Pune. That gives the products a distinct identity. The attars are mostly natural, with very little or no synthetic content. The family has remained faithful to traditional fragrance-making while giving each product its own character.Among the incense varieties, Paanadi is the fastest-selling and most iconic product. Old favourites like Kasturi Amber and Rajdarbari still remain important. Amber is stronger than musk, while in the six-number version, amber and musk are balanced with a slight amber edge.Owner Devendra Sugandhi told The Indian Express, "The market has changed a great deal, especially after Covid. Young buyers now want better packaging, cleaner design, and products they can gift. Fragrance is no longer only for Pooja. It is also used for personal gifting and corporate gifting. To respond to this shift, our company has hired a packaging agency and redesigned its look.""Sales now come largely through the website, and online business makes up about 30 per cent of total sales. There are also international clients in Europe, around 16 of them, while the USA, Canada, and Australia receive regular shipments, though in smaller volumes. Pune once had only six incense makers. Now the number is around 70."He added, "The season begins when the Palkhi leaves Pune, and Diwali brings a strong rise in gift box sales. The prices start at about 1600 rupees per kilogram for masala incense. Raw material costs have risen sharply by 20 per cent to 40 per cent, and essential oils have become more expensive due to the Russia-Ukraine war and rising gas prices. Still, the business remains stable. It uses only natural and sustainable materials, follows BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) 6 standards, and avoids wasteful ingredients that can cause breathing problems."

Sunil Jakhar warns Kejriwal as AAP, BJP workers clash over minister Sanjeev Arora's arrest

Tension prevailed in several parts of Punjab on Sunday as clashes and heated confrontations broke out between workers of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) during the AAP's protests against the Enforcement Directorate (ED) arrest of minister Sanjeev Arora.The protests, organised a day after Arora's arrest in a money-laundering case, saw confrontations in Balachaur, Ludhiana, and Bathinda, while demonstrations were also held in several other districts.

At Balachaur, located in Nawanshahr district, a heated argument erupted outside the BJP office when AAP workers arrived to protest. The situation escalated after Banga MLA Sukhwinder Kumar Sukhi, who had joined the AAP from the Shiromani Akali Dal in March last year, along with AAP supporters, entered the BJP office where BJP district president Rajwinder Singh Lucky was present.According to video footage of the incident, Lucky was recording the protest and speaking about the issue from inside the office when Sukhi and AAP workers allegedly attempted to snatch his mobile phone. The confrontation soon turned tense before police intervened and escorted most of the AAP workers out of the premises.

During the altercation, Lucky was heard telling police officials, "Take your MLA out of our office or later you will complain that the MLA has been beaten up by BJP workers. Everyone has the right to protest, but no one has the right to enter someone's office and indulge in hooliganism."Punjab BJP working state president Ashwani Sharma later reached Nawanshahr, where he met party workers and also approached the SSP seeking action against the MLA in the incident.

In Bathinda, tension flared outside the BJP office near Mittal Mall after AAP workers, accompanied by MLAs Jagroop Singh Gill, Sukhveer Singh Maiserkhana and Balkar Sidhu, reached the spot to protest. BJP workers, led by district president Sarup Chand Singla, also gathered outside the office.While BJP workers raised slogans against the government, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Sanjeev Arora, demanding the minister's resignation, AAP workers countered with slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and accused the BJP of misusing the ED as a political tool against opposition parties.

As sloganeering intensified from both sides, police formed a human chain to prevent any physical clash between the rival groups. Sources said the protest continued for several minutes before the situation was brought under control.A similar confrontation took place in Ludhiana outside the BJP office near Arora Palace grain market, where the BJP alleged that one of its workers sustained minor injuries during a scuffle with AAP supporters.Rajneesh Dhiman, BJP Ludhiana district president, alleged that BJP leaders and workers had gathered outside the office after receiving information that AAP workers were heading there to protest.

"As we got to know that AAP workers were coming outside our office, around 30-40 of our office-bearers, including me, came outside so as to prevent them from entering our office. However, they started clashing with us, and one of our workers got bruises," he alleged.Dhiman claimed that AAP MLAs Ashok Prashar Pappi, Kulwant Sidhu, Hardeep Singh Mundian, and Daljeet Singh Bhola, along with the Ludhiana mayor and other AAP leaders, were present during the incident.Dhiman further alleged that similar attempts had occurred earlier. "AAP workers had tried to enter our office two or three times, and the police failed to control them. On Sunday as well, the police were protecting them. We do not plan to complain to the police and instead will protest outside the office of the police commissioner on Monday," he said.In Abohar, AAP workers, along with MLAs Jagdeep Singh Goldy Kamboj and Narinder Sawna, protested outside the residence of state BJP president Sunil Jakhar. However, no untoward incident was reported there.Reacting strongly to the incidents, Jakhar warned AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal against "turning Punjab into Mamata Banerjee's Bengal".

In a statement shared on social media, Jakhar alleged that Sukhwinder Sukhi entered the BJP office in Balachaur in the presence of police personnel and assaulted BJP leaders while vandalising the premises."Punjab will not be allowed to become Mamata Banerjee's Bengal," Jakhar said, adding that action against "corrupt people looting Punjab" would continue.Jakhar maintained that while the BJP respected everyone's democratic right to protest, nobody would be allowed to take the law into their own hands. He also alleged that a party born out of an anti-corruption movement was now protesting in support of "corrupt individuals".

Jakhar demanded immediate and strict action against those involved in the alleged incidents of violence and said video footage clearly showed AAP MLAs entering the BJP office in Balachaur.Ashwani Sharma also criticised the AAP over the protests and said the incidents exposed the "mask of honesty" worn by the ruling party."We are assessing the situation and reviewing what happened. In Ludhiana too, there was a clash in which one of our workers sustained minor injuries. However, we will respond politically and appropriately," Sharma said.Meanwhile, AAP workers demonstrated in several districts carrying placards with slogans such as "ED+BJP alliance murdabad" and "Punjab naal dhakka band karo" (stop the discrimination against Punjab), accusing the BJP-led Centre of targeting Punjab and Opposition leaders through central agencies.

Reacting to the allegations, Banga MLA Sukhi said that AAP workers were protesting outside the BJP office peacefully when the tension escalated."On Sunday, AAP workers were protesting outside the BJP office as per our call, and we were protesting without any mic. However, a journalist informed us that Luckyji had said his questions should also be answered. I told them that after our protest, we would respond to their questions," Sukhi said.Sukhi alleged that BJP district president Lucky later came outside the office with a mic and started making provocative remarks against AAP leaders and workers.

"He used derogatory remarks against the AAP, calling them 'trolley chor' and 'speaker chor', which agitated the workers. Despite that, I went inside his office at the insistence of some BJP leaders to sort out the matter peacefully," he claimed.The MLA further alleged that Lucky was already conducting a Facebook Live session when he entered the office and again used objectionable remarks against him on his live session.

"I only asked him to keep his mobile phone away and pushed it aside. Nothing else happened. He is trying to present a false picture to the public. I am an MLA because of the people, and if they think I am wrong, they can punish me the way they want. I believe in genuine public service," he added.Meanwhile, AAP Ludhiana district president Jatinder Singh Khangura blamed BJP workers for the clashes and alleged that they resorted to hooliganism during the protests and attempted to manhandle AAP workers."The Aam Aadmi Party strongly condemns the incident," Khangura said.AAP leadership stated that such "authoritarian behaviour" by the BJP would not be tolerated and asserted that the party would continue its fight through legal and democratic means.Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu, however, accused AAP leaders and workers of promoting violence in Punjab."Naked hooliganism under the patronage of the AAP has started in Punjab. Whether it is Ludhiana or any other corner of Punjab, their hooliganism is increasing everywhere. We demand that police immediately register cases against those involved in such acts across Punjab," Bittu said.Bittu warned that if action was not taken, BJP workers would intensify their protest. "We will go to any extent to protect the honour of our workers, and the accused will not be spared at any cost. Soon, there will be accountability for every act of hooliganism committed by them," he said.Bittu alleged that if police and the DGP failed to act against the accused AAP leaders, he would raise the matter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah and submit video evidence related to the incidents.

Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari seeks free power, water for urban poor

GNS News Agency, May 11

Former Union Minister and Chandigarh MP Manish Tewari has urged Punjab Governor and UT Administrator Gulab Chand Kataria to introduce targeted welfare measures for the city's urban poor and lower middle-class households, including 300 units of free electricity and 20,000 litres of free water a month for families earning below Rs 20,000.In a four-page communication, Tewari highlighted the economic distress faced by vulnerable sections and called for policy intervention to ensure affordability and dignity in basic living. He said many families were struggling with rising food inflation, the escalating cost of living, and mounting financial pressures.

Referring to his visits across Chandigarh over the past 23 months, including urban villages and rehabilitation colonies, Tewari said he had witnessed first-hand the hardship faced by residents. "Many families are unable to pay lease rentals or licence fees for their small flats in relief and rehabilitation colonies, leading to cancellation notices and heavy interest demands from the Administration," he said.Arguing that Chandigarh has the fiscal space for such relief, Tewari cited budget figures from Demand No. 53 of the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Union Budget 2026-27. He noted that Chandigarh's actual spend in 2024-25 was Rs 6,598.19 crores, with net expenditure of Rs 5,858.93 crores, including Rs 1,027.87 crores on Power and Renewable Energy.For 2025-26, Rs 917.87 crores had been earmarked for Power and Renewable Energy, but revised estimates brought that figure down sharply to Rs 279.82 crores after power distribution in Chandigarh was privatised on February 1, 2025, with Chandigarh Power Distribution Limited (CPDL), a subsidiary of Eminent Electricity Distribution Limited (EEDL), taking over operations from the Engineering Department's Electricity Wing.For 2026-27, only Rs 171.86 crores has been estimated for Power and Renewable Energy. Tewari said this represented a reduction of Rs 856.01 crores compared to the actual spend in 2024-25. "That is the fiscal space the Chandigarh Administration must leverage to provide 300 units of free electricity to families with a monthly income below Rs 20,000," he said.He suggested the Administration seek Rs 856-1,000 crores through Supplementary Demands for Grants in September-October 2026 to reimburse CPDL for free power supplied from July 1, 2026. "This is the model already being followed in Delhi and Punjab, where governments reimburse distribution companies for free or subsidised power supplied to consumers," he said.Tewari also argued that Chandigarh, as a Union Territory funded directly by the Centre, was better placed than Punjab to provide such relief. He noted that Punjab, despite a projected debt liability of Rs 4.47 lakh crores by March 31, 2027, and a debt-to-GDP ratio of 46.65 per cent, continues to provide free power.He further pointed to the Centre's large welfare spending, citing schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, which provides free food grains to 81.5 crore people at an annual cost of Rs 2.27 lakh crores; PM-KISAN, under which Rs 6,000 is given annually to 9.32 crore farmers at a cost of Rs 63,500 crores; and MGNREGA, with an annual budget of Rs 86,000 crores that provided employment to 7.88 crore people in 2024-25.On free water, Tewari recalled that on March 11, 2024, Congress and AAP councillors passed a resolution in the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation's General House to provide free water to residents. Though the resolution was initially rejected by then Administrator Banwari Lal Purohit, the General House reaffirmed it on July 10, 2024. Tewari said the resolution remains valid but has not been implemented.He said estimates placed the cost of supplying free water to all Chandigarh residents at Rs 39.65 crores as of March 30, 2024. Restricting the benefit to households earning below Rs 20,000 a month would cost only about a quarter of that amount, which, he said, the Municipal Corporation could easily bear.Tewari contrasted this with what he described as wasteful expenditure, citing Rs 166 crores spent on the failed 24×7 Mani Majra water supply project, now under CAG performance audit, and a further liability of around Rs 510 crores through a loan commitment to Agence Française de Développement for the pan-city 24×7 water project."Finding Rs 15-20 odd crores to provide free water to the poor and vulnerable sections is loose change and can be easily managed, provided the Administration refrains from exercising its misconceived veto," he said."I do hope I will receive a direct response from you, as the matter concerns the invisible population of Chandigarh that keeps the wheels of the city turning by their sweat, toil and tears," Tewari wrote.

Six Sikh couples marry free of cost at Samuhik Vivah in Hyd

Hyderabad: Six Sikh couples got married at a 'Samuhik Vivah Samagam' without spending a penny, that too in the presence of hundreds of Sikhs who came from different parts of the State to bless the newlywed at Gurudwara Baram Bala, Sikh Chawniat, Kishanbagh, on Sunday.What made the occasion emotional was the happiness of economically struggling parents, many of whom never imagined they would witness their sons and daughters getting married in such a dignified and traditional manner without spending a single rupee, said a press release.

India advances hypersonic missile tech with DRDO scramjet breakthrough

Marking a further breakthrough in hypersonic missile technology for India, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) achieved a 1,200-second runtime of its actively cooled scramjet full-scale combustor on Saturday. The test was conducted at the Scramjet Connect Pipe Test (SCPT) facility in Hyderabad, building on the successful 700-plus second test carried out in January.The hypersonic cruise missile is capable of exceeding five times the speed of sound, or over 6,100 km per hour, for extended periods. The speed is achieved through a cutting-edge air-breathing engine, which utilises supersonic combustion to sustain long-duration flight.

The test was conducted at the SCPT facility at the Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad-based premier facility of the DRDO, which is responsible for the design and development of state-of-the-art Missile Systems and technologies."This successful test positions India at the forefront of advanced aerospace capabilities and continuously emerging war technologies. The remarkable feat is achieved through a cutting-edge supersonic air-breathing engine, which utilises indigenously developed liquid hydrocarbon endothermic fuel, high-temperature thermal barrier coating and advanced manufacturing processes. The ground tests conducted at the SCPT facility have successfully validated the design of an advanced active cooled scramjet combustor as well as the capabilities of a state-of-the-art test facility," the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said in a statement.

Scramjet combustor incorporates an innovative flame stabilisation technique that holds a continuous flame inside the combustor with an air speed of more than 1.5 km per second. DRDO scientists studied many novel and promising ignition and flame-holding techniques over multiple ground tests before arriving at the scramjet engine configuration.With regard to the specialised fuel for the system, the MoD said an indigenous endothermic scramjet fuel jointly developed for the first time by the DRDL and industry partners is central to the breakthrough. The fuel offers dual benefits of significant cooling improvement and ease of ignition.

Another key achievement amid the development of hypersonic technologies is the development of Thermal Barrier Coating (TBC), designed to withstand extreme temperatures encountered during hypersonic flight. A new advanced ceramic TBC having high thermal resistance and capable of operating beyond the melting point of steel has been jointly developed by DRDL and Department of Science and Technology (DST) facilities.Hypersonic weapons have the potential to beat existing air defence systems available with major military powers across the world and deliver rapid and high-impact strikes. Several nations, including the US, Russia, India, and China, are actively pursuing hypersonic technology and have demonstrated various levels of development.

India's private capex jumps 67 per cent to Rs 7.7 lakh crore: CII

New Delhi: India's private capital expenditure recorded a sharp 67 per cent jump to Rs 7.7 lakh crore in September 2025, signalling the strongest revival in the country's investment cycle in more than a decade, according to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) .The industry body said private capex had risen significantly from Rs 4.6 lakh crore in September 2024.CII's analysis of nearly 1,200 companies from the CMIE Prowess database showed that manufacturing accounted for Rs 3.8 lakh crore, or nearly half of the total private investment, led by sectors such as metals, automobiles and chemicals. The services sector contributed Rs 3.1 lakh crore, driven by trading, communications and IT/ITeS industries.Complementary economic indicators also pointed towards strengthening investment activity. Capacity utilisation among manufacturing firms rose to 75.6 per cent in the third quarter of FY26 from 74.3 per cent in the previous quarter, while new order books expanded 10.3 per cent year-on-year.

Withdraw mandatory digital birth certificates: Teachers' front to PSEB

GNS News Agency, May 11

The Punjab School Education Board's (PSEB) decision to make digital birth certificates mandatory for student registration from the academic session 2026-27, has drawn sharp criticism from the Democratic Teachers' Front (DTF), which termed the move "unreasonable" and demanded the withdrawal of the same.The education board has launched an online admission portal for Classes VIII, IX, X, XI and XII, requiring schools to complete registration through a digital admission-cum-withdrawal register. Student details including admission number and date must be entered online based on handwritten records. The digitally prepared register must be e-signed and submitted before the prescribed deadline. Entries will not be accepted after the closing date.

The teachers' body state president Vikramdev Singh, general secretary Mahinder Kauriyanwali and finance secretary Ashwani Awasthi said as per the Board's instructions, students born in Punjab must provide a "digitalised form" of their birth certificates issued through service centres, with automatic online verification.However, for the students born outside Punjab, certificates will be verified by school heads at their own level before entry into the portal.Calling the provision discriminatory, the leaders of teachers' front said, "Imposing the condition of a digital birth certificate only on Punjab residents is unjustified. It will render previously issued manual birth certificates ineffective and force parents to run from pillar to post at service centres for digitisation."

They also said under the Right to Education (RTE) framework, schools are allowed to admit students on the basis of alternative documents if birth proof is unavailable."Making digital birth certificates mandatory contradicts this flexibility and will create avoidable difficulties for school heads and parents,"they said.The teachers' body also questioned the need to seek digital birth certificates from students already registered with the Board in Class VIII when they move to higher classes. "This requirement is completely unwarranted."The Democratic Teachers' Front demanded that the PSEB continue with the existing system, allowing school heads to verify documents and record date of birth accordingly. They demanded the board to withdraw what it called the "unjustified condition" of mandatory digital birth certificates.

'Aiming to return with trophy': After stellar WPL, Chandigarh's Nandni sets sight on T20 World Cup

As Chandigarh pacer Nandni Sharma reflected on her journey to the selection for the T20 Women's World Cup team, she showered praises on Union Territory Cricket Association's (UTCA) for ensuring her development as a pacer and backing her potential.The 24-year-old has also been selected for the one-off Test against England at Lord's after the World Cup."I got chances in UTCA and the full backing from the UTCA management including former president Sanjay Tandon as well the coaches and staff. All these performances for Chandigarh helped me to be picked up by Delhi Capitals in the Women's Premier League (WPL) auction and now selected for the T20 World Cup team as well as for the solitary Test against England. It still feels like a dream," Sharma said after a UTCA?felicitation ceremony held at the Sector 16 Stadium on Monday morning.

"I will aim to give my best for the Indian team in the T20 World Cup and hopefully we will return with the trophy."The Delhi Capitals pacer had become the second Indian player to take a WPL hat-trick and the first uncapped Indian player to take a five-four in a match against Gujarat Titans in the WPL this year. She finished the tournament with a total of 17 wickets and was the joint highest wicket-taker of the tournament along with Titans' Sophie Devine.

On Monday, the young pacer was accompanied by her parents Shyam Sundar Sharma and Seema Sharma and siblings Akash Vats and Prerna Sharma.With her father being a spare parts shop owner in the Industrial Area, young Nandni started her cricketing journey at the age of 10 with then Sacred Heart Convent School student before joining the LIC Academy in Sector 26. She initially played for Punjab junior team and made the switch to UTCA after it got affiliation with BCCI."Her father and brothers have also played cricket. She was pretty adamant at a very young age that she will play cricket and we all supported her dream. She dreamt of playing for Indian one day and this dream will soon be reality for her. It's all due to her hard work and passion," her proud mother Seema shared.

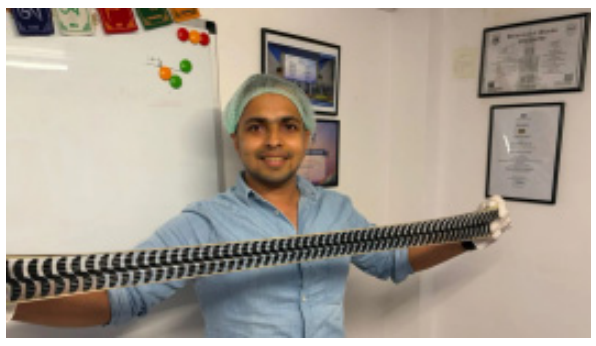
UTCA's Founder-President and Governing Council Member of the WPL, Sanjay Tandon also lauded her achievements."When Nandni was picked up by Delhi Capitals, it was a proud moment for UTCA. She also became the highest wicket-taker in WPL and was the emerging player of the season. It was a huge motivation for young women cricketers of Chandigarh too," Tandon said."As she is set to play for India in the T20 Women's World Cup, we wish her all the best. UTCA will also start a Chandigarh Women's Premier League soon and the process of it has already started," Tandon concluded.

From mountain chill to made-in-India innovation: Startup 'prints' warmth into lightweight jackets

GNS News Agency, May 11

Yash Goliya enjoyed travelling but felt weighed down by the thick jackets he had to carry to some of Europe's scenic and coldest mountains. Regular winter jackets could not be used in any other season."That's what made me think that we should have some clothing that we can wear in all seasons. We began to apply our printed technology methods (in which electronics are not assembled from components but deposited like ink on any substrate) to make heated jackets," says Goliya.There were heated jackets that used stitched conductive thread or bulky carbon fibre, but Goliya discovered that printing conductive ink onto thermoplastic polyurethane produced lighter, minimally stiff jackets that allowed for complex circuitry.

Mumbai-based Goliya, whose startup journey has been honed at Venture Center in Pune, is the founder of Suryudey Plastic Electronics Pvt Ltd, which "treats electronics the way a printer treats ink, depositing it directly onto any surface and in any shape".One of the company's technologies is printed heaters, or "ultra-thin resistive heaters that are screen-printed using silver-carbon conductive inks".The jackets, which will be launched before winter, are a part of the heated wearables segment.Suryudey has made vests, T-shirts and gloves. In its medical devices section, the company has built continuous health monitoring devices featuring printed electrodes and heating and sensing elements on biocompatible substrates."The printed sensors are practically embedded in the fabric surface, making them comfortable for extended wear," says Goliya.An attractive section is connected textiles, in which "printed antennas on fabric-compatible substrates enable NFC, Bluetooth, and RFID connectivity directly from the garment". The tech can be used in industrial heating, defence, automotive and aerospace."Think of an electronic item, and you picture a hard device in which different parts are firmly soldered or screwed on. We asked ourselves, 'What if electronics were not rigid?' The conventional method of fixing electronic parts onto stiff boards is great when building laptops. It would not work for a jacket, a curved medical sensor, or an antenna



that needs to be transparent and conformal," says Goliya.

After studying electronics and telecommunication at Sardar Patel Institute of Technology in Mumbai, Goliya went to the Technical University of Munich, Germany, to study communication engineering and learnt about printed electronics."It was like a regular inkjet printer, but one could replace the ink with functional inks and actually print electronics. I thought that was quite revolutionary," he says.India has a number of large companies making membrane switches for control panels but very few startups and companies working on innovative printed electronic solutions.Suryudey buys the inks, but the entire manufacturing process is in-house. It has applied for a utility patent. A challenge for the company has come in the form of skyrocketing silver prices. Silver is an essential raw material, so Suryudey has responded by redesigning its heated jackets and other products to use as little silver as possible and alternatives, such as copper."Earlier, we used to get our controller PCBs (printed circuit boards) from China. Now, we are making it and the entire product in-house to have more control and get around issues of freight being disrupted," he says.Once the jackets are launched and the company gains more traction, Goliya plans to raise funds for expansion and to create more products. After that, maybe he will take a holiday back to the cool slopes without a heavy winter jacket.

Hours after BJP's win, TMC alleges arson and attacks across Bengal: 'Has exposed its true face'

Tensions flared in parts of West Bengal Tuesday as the Trinamool Congress alleged widespread attacks on its offices and workers following the BJP's win in the Assembly elections, even as the saffron party appealed for calm and denied involvement.According to TMC sources, party offices in areas including Tollygunge, Kasba, Baruipur, Kamarhati and Baranagar, as well as districts such as Howrah and Berhampore, were vandalised.

In Beleghata, a local party office was attacked and block president Pabitra Biswas was allegedly assaulted, while the office of councillor Sushanta Ghosh was also damaged. In the Bijoygarh–Netajinagar area, the election office of former minister Aroop Biswas was ransacked, with visuals showing people kicking broken hoardings.In Jamuria and Siliguri, TMC offices were reportedly set on fire. The party further claimed that its Udaynarayanpur candidate, Samir Panja, was assaulted, and that candidates, including Raj Chakraborty and Trinankur Bhattacharya, were manhandled while leaving counting centres, requiring CAPF escort. Maniktala candidate Shreya Pande also alleged that her election agent was attacked.The TMC, in a post on social media, accused the BJP of orchestrating the violence. "The BJP has exposed its true face the moment it came to power. In Jalpaiguri Ward 14, BJP-backed miscreants have unleashed vandalism at our Trinamool Congress party office. This destruction and deliberate attempt to create unrest is the real face of the BJP," it added.The BJP, however, rejected the allegations, with leader Rahul Sinha suggesting the incidents could be the result of internal rivalries within the TMC. He added that the situation was not comparable to the violence during the 2021 West Bengal Assembly elections and that the police and central forces are now taking prompt action.Amid the volatile situation, the BJP directed its workers to avoid provocation, refrain from celebrations near TMC offices, and maintain peace.

On its official X handle, the BJP said, "Yesterday

marked a moment of freedom for West Bengal—freedom from corruption, scams, political violence, appeasement politics, and injustice. The voice of the people is clear. This decisive mandate stands for development, dignity, and justice. As citizens of West Bengal, it is now our collective responsibility to ensure the state moves forward on a path of progress, leading once again in industry, literature, cinema, and employment, and becoming truly free from political violence.""We appeal to all political stakeholders across parties to refrain from any form of violence or retaliation. Let us use our energies to build and strengthen our state. Let us work together to shape the West Bengal our forefathers envisioned: a land of freedom, peace, and opportunity for all," it said.The Election Commission of India (ECI) sought reports from local authorities and warned of strict action against those involved in violence. While no major injuries have been reported, ECI also urged citizens and political workers to use helplines if they feel threatened.In a related development, TMC leader Safiuzzaman Sheikh, alias Habib, was arrested in Murshidabad's Nowda area on charges of inciting violence. Habib, the nephew of MP Abu Taher Khan, will be produced in court later Tuesday.

'If Bengal wanted BJP ...': After TMC's poll debacle, Mahua Moitra says party respects people's mandate

GNS News Agency, May 11

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Mahua Moitra acknowledged the party's defeat in the recently concluded Assembly elections in West Bengal, and said the TMC respects people's mandate."The will of the people is supreme. If Bengal wanted BJP then Bengal has got BJP. We respect that," she wrote in a post on X, adding that the party put up a good fight against "unimaginable odds" on an "uneven pitch". The will of the people is supreme. If Bengal wanted BJP then Bengal has got BJP. We respect that. We fought the good fight against unimaginable odds on an uneven pitch and for that I am proud of my leader & my party. We will continue to stand & fight for a secular country where…for that I am proud of my leader & my party. We will continue to stand & fight for a secular country where the constitution, not brute majoritarianism, is the last word," she said.

As the ruling party lost to the BJP on Monday, TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee termed it an "immoral" victory, accusing the saffron brigade of "looting" over 100 seats.Out of the 293 Assembly seats, for which the counting was held on Monday, the BJP won 207 seats, while the TMC could secure only 80.As the Trinamool Congress (TMC) trailed behind the BJP throughout the day in West Bengal, the final nail came as the day ended — party chief and outgoing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee lost to the BJP's Suvendu Adhikari by over 15,000 votes in Bhabanipur.Speaking to reporters outside the counting centre, Banerjee said: "BJP looted more than 100 seats. The Election Commission is the BJP's commission," she said, adding that she had complained to the chief electoral officer, but no action was taken.

Mumbai police form SIT to probe racket supplying fake birth certificates to illegal foreigners

The Mumbai police on Tuesday formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to investigate offences of providing fake birth registration certificates to illegal foreign nationals. An officer said that it has come to light that a large number of such birth certificates have been obtained through fraudulent means.The SIT will be headed by the Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) and will comprise the Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime), the Additional Commissioner of Police (Special Branch), the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Detection), Crime Branch, and other officers.In a post on X, BJP leader Kirit Somaiya thanked Police Commissioner Deven Bharti for constituting an SIT.

An internal probe report by the BMC recently uncovered violations in the birth and death registration system, and found that nearly 87,000 corrections from 2024 to 2026 were made not in the mandatory registration system but in the old manner. The BMC report recommended suspending a civic official.The Mumbai police registered an FIR in February against two former BMC medical health department officials who allegedly approved birth certificates without verifying the required documentation. No arrests have been made in the case as yet.The Mahayuti government in the state has been promising to take action against illegal Bangladeshi nationals. Last year, the Mumbai police deported over 1,000 of these individuals back to Bangladesh. Earlier this year, a detention centre was established to hold illegal foreign nationals before their deportation.

From earning Rs 4,000 as a house help to the Bengal Assembly: Meet BJP MLA Kalita Majhi

GNS News Agency, May 11

Kalita Majhi's victory stands out as one of the highlights of the BJP's sweeping win in West Bengal. A domestic help, Kalita, got a second chance when the BJP named her as its candidate in Ausgram in the state's Purba Bardhaman district. The gamble paid off on Monday when the 37-year-old defeated Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidate Shyama Prasanna Lohar by 12,535 votes."I am very happy, and I am grateful that Prime Minister Narendra Modi kept faith in me. Today, I can gift him this win," Kalita said, speaking to The Indian Express over the phone. "My main focus will be to work for the development of the backward classes, and to ensure that proper roads and drinking water reach everyone's homes. I will also work for the development of the youth and the safety and security of women," she added.Kalita, who used to work as a domestic help in two houses and earn Rs 4,000 a month, is a resident of Majhpukur Par in Ward No 3 of Guskara Municipality. She stays with her husband, Subrata Majhi, a plumber, and her son, who has appeared for his Class 12 exams.In active politics for more than 10 years now, Kalita's life changed when the BJP gave her a ticket to contest the 2021 Assembly elections from Ausgram, which is a part of the Bolpur Lok Sabha constituency and a Scheduled Caste reserved seat.In 2021, TMC candidate Abhedananda Thander won the Ausgram seat with 1,00,392 votes. Kalita came second with 88,577 votes. This time around, Kalita secured 1,07,692 votes.Kalita said that after her name was announced in the first list of BJP candidates, she took a month off from work to focus on campaigning. "The families in the homes where I have worked for so many years are very happy. They blessed me. They always stood by me whenever I needed them; now, they are very happy for me," she said.Being a domestic help has helped her understand the basic issues of the common man and the sufferings of the poor in her constituency, she said, adding that her focus is to build a hospital to help people in her village, who have to travel to the main Burdwan town to get medical facilities. From encouraging the use of solar panels to generate electricity and infrastructure development to generating employment opportunities, Kalita listed a slew of priorities.

Kerala Congress win sparks intense CM race

Thiruvananthapuram: After a big win in the Assembly elections and trouncing the Left Front, the Congress party finds itself in the midst of an open contest for the top post, turning a predictable transition into a high-stakes race. In earlier decades, the question of leadership rarely invited prolonged uncertainty.

When stalwarts like K. Karunakaran, A.K. Antony and Oommen Chandy rose to the Chief Minister's office, the path was largely clear. Karunakaran went on to hold the post four times, Antony thrice, and Chandy twice; each transition was marked more by consensus than contest. That template now appears to have shifted.The Congress party's emphatic return to power after a decade in the opposition has triggered an intense internal churn, with multiple power centres asserting their claim.What would ordinarily have been a moment of unalloyed celebration has, instead, opened up a complex negotiation over leadership, reflecting both the depth of the party's bench strength and the competing ambitions within.At the heart of the current flux is the unexpected entry of K.C. Venugopal into the fray. A trusted national-level organiser and a key figure in the party's central leadership, his name gaining traction has raised eyebrows within the state unit.His candidature introduces a new dynamic, one that goes beyond the traditional state leadership contest and brings the weight of the high command more directly into play. The coming days will be

crucial.A meeting in New Delhi, led by the central leadership on Tuesday, is expected to chart the next steps, including the appointment of observers who will travel to Kerala. Their task will be to gauge the mood among the 63 Congress legislators and to hold consultations with allies, whose support remains vital in shaping a stable government.Unlike in the past, when leadership choices were often settled through quiet consultations, this time the process is unfolding in full public view. Camps are forming, signals are being sent, and the balancing act between seniority, acceptability and political arithmetic is becoming increasingly intricate.

India–Jamaica boost trade, skilled mobility in Kingston talks

GNS News Agency, May 11

Kingston: India and Jamaica agreed to further strengthen trade linkages and explore cooperation for recruitment and mobility of skilled professionals, including healthcare workers and teachers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.Addressing a joint press conference here after talks with his Jamaican counterpart Kamina J Smith on Monday, Jaishankar said the discussions were comprehensive, and they reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral ties, identifying new avenues to deepen the partnership.

"We signed several important agreements and discussed effective implementations of MOUs which have been recently concluded in the fields of digital transformation, cultural exchange, sports and digital payments to ensure tangible outcomes on the ground," he said. India recognised Jamaica's growing role as a logistics hub and gateway to the Caribbean for trade and investment, Jaishankar said."We agreed to further strengthen trade, business and investment linkages, explore cooperation for recruitment and mobility of skilled professionals, including nurses, healthcare workers and teachers," he said. The two sides also discussed expanding cooperation in defence and security, healthcare, digitisation, agriculture, education and infrastructure, the minister said.Highlighting development cooperation as a key pillar of ties, Jaishankar noted the successful completion of the Improving Rural Livelihoods Project in Kitson Town in March 2026, implemented with Indian assistance of USD 1 million under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, benefiting over 200 individuals and impacting thousands more.He said India is also discussing the feasibility of establishing an artisan empowerment hub in Jamaica and reiterated support for the country's recovery following Hurricane Melissa.

As part of humanitarian assistance, India has supplied relief material, deployed a medical team and is in the process of providing 30 dialysis units. It is also sending 40 fishing boats and 200 GPS units to aid recovery efforts.The ministers reaffirmed close cooperation in multilateral fora and discussed issues such as reformed multilateralism, climate justice and priorities of the Global South.

India appreciated Jamaica's support for its candidature for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for 2028-29. Both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and called for early finalisation of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.Jaishankar also highlighted growing people-to-people ties, noting the popularity of yoga and Ayurveda in Jamaica and the contribution of the Indian diaspora to the country's development. He announced a contribution of two million Jamaican dollars towards celebrations marking 181 years of the arrival of Indians in Jamaica on India Heritage Day.

According to the website of the High Commission of India in Kingston, Jamaica has an Indian diaspora of around 70,000 people whose forefathers came mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as indentured labour between 1845 and 1917. Some also came from South India.The diaspora constitutes around 3 per cent of Jamaica's population and continues to nurture an abiding interest in Indian culture, music, dance and history, serving as a cultural bridge between the two countries. May 10 is observed as India Heritage Day in Jamaica.Jaishankar arrived in Kingston on Saturday, marking the first leg of his nine-day tour of Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, aimed at further strengthening India's strategic and cultural ties with the Caribbean nations.Later in the day, Jaishankar interacted with Jamaica's industry and business leaders, underlining the need to deepen economic engagement as countries diversify partnerships globally."Emphasised that as we all diversify and seek reliable partners, the imperative to deepen India-Jamaica business ties is that much stronger," he said in a social media post, noting that the potential for bilateral and regional economic cooperation should be "explored more vigorously". Jaishankar also appreciated Industry Minister Aubyn Hill for convening the interaction with business leaders.

US intelligence indicates limited new damage to Iran's nuclear program, sources say

WASHINGTON,GNS News Agency, May 11 U.S. intelligence assessments indicate that the time Iran would ?need to build a nuclear weapon has not changed since last summer, when analysts estimated that a U.S.-Israeli attack had pushed back the timeline to up to a year, according to three sources familiar ?with the matter.The assessments of Tehran's nuclear program remain broadly unchanged even after two months of a war that U.S. President Donald Trump launched in part to stop the Islamic Republic from developing a nuclear bomb.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.The latest U.S. and Israeli attacks that began on February 28 have focused on conventional military targets, but Israel has hit a number of significant nuclear facilities.

The unchanged timeline suggests that significantly impeding Tehran's nuclear program may require destroying or removing Iran's remaining stockpile of highly enriched uranium, or HEU.The war has stalled since the U.S. and Iran agreed an April 7 ?truce to pursue peace. Tensions remain high as both sides appear deeply divided, and as Iran has choked traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, blocking some 20% of world oil supplies and igniting a global energy crisis.

Secretary ?of Defense Pete Hegseth has said publicly that the U.S. aims to ensure Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon via ongoing negotiations with Tehran.U.S. intelligence agencies had concluded prior ?to June's 12-day war that Iran likely could produce enough bomb-grade uranium for a weapon and build a bomb in around three to six months, said two of the sources, all of whom requested anonymity to discuss U.S. intelligence.Following the June ?strikes by the U.S. that hit the Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan nuclear complexes, U.S. intelligence estimates pushed that timeline back to about nine months to a year, said the two sources and a person familiar with the assessments.

The attacks destroyed or badly ?damaged the three enrichment plants known to have been operating at the time. But the U.N. nuclear watchdog has been unable to verify the whereabouts of some 440 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60%. It believes that about half was stored in an underground tunnel complex at the Isfahan Nuclear Research Center, but it has been unable to confirm that since inspections were suspended.The International Atomic Energy Agency assesses the total HEU stockpile would be enough for 10 bombs if further enriched.

"While Operation Midnight Hammer obliterated Iran's nuclear facilities, Operation Epic Fury built on this ?success by decimating Iran's defense industrial base that they once leveraged as a protective shield around their pursuit of a nuclear weapon," said White House spokeswoman Olivia Wales, referring to the June operation and the latest war that began in February."President ?Trump has long been clear that Iran can never have a nuclear weapon – and he does not bluff."The Office of the Director of National Intelligence did not respond to a request for comment.U.S. officials, including Trump, repeatedly cite ?the need to ?eliminate Iran's nuclear program as a key objective of the war."Iran can never be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon. That is the goal of this operation,?" Vice President JD Vance wrote on X on March 2.The unchanging estimate of how long it would take Iran to build such a weapon reflects in part the focus of the latest U.S. and Israeli military campaign, the sources said.

While Israel has struck nuclear-related targets, including a uranium-processing facility in late March, U.S. attacks have concentrated on conventional military capabilities, Iran's leadership and its military-industrial base.The unchanged estimates may also stem from a lack of major nuclear targets that can be readily and safely destroyed following June's military action, according to some analysts.Eric Brewer, a former senior U.S. intelligence ?analyst who led assessments of Iran's nuclear program, said it ?was not surprising that the assessments have not changed ?because recent U.S. strikes have not prioritized nuclear-related targets.

"Iran still possesses all of its nuclear material, as far as we know," said Brewer, vice president of the nuclear materials study program at the Nuclear Threat Initiative arms control think tank. "That material is probably located in deeply buried underground sites where U.S. munitions can't penetrate."In recent weeks, U.S. officials have contemplated dangerous operations which ?would significantly impede Iran's nuclear efforts. Those options include ground raids to retrieve the HEU believed to be stored in the tunnel complex at the Isfahan site.

Iran has repeatedly ?denied seeking nuclear weapons. U.S. intelligence ?agencies and the IAEA say Tehran halted a warhead development effort in 2003, though some experts and Israel contend that it secretly preserved key parts of the program.Precisely evaluating Iran's nuclear capacity is difficult, even for the world's leading intelligence services, say experts.Several U.S. intelligence agencies have independently studied Iran's nuclear program, and while the sources described a broad consensus regarding Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon, outlying assessments do occur.

It is possible Iran's nuclear ambitions have been set back further than ?the intelligence estimates ?suggest.Some officials, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, have argued that U.S. strikes on Iranian air defenses have reduced the nuclear threat by diminishing ?Iran's ability to defend its nuclear sites should it decide to rush toward weaponization in the future.There also is the impact of Israel's assassinations of Iran's leading nuclear scientists.David Albright, a former U.N. nuclear inspector who runs the Institute for Science and International Security, said the killings have added significant uncertainty ?to Tehran's ability to build a bomb that would function as intended."I think everyone agrees knowledge can't be bombed, but know-how certainly can be destroyed," he said.Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tabGram Slattery is a White House correspondent in Washington, focusing on national security, intelligence and foreign affairs. His work covers how key U.S. foreign policy decisions are debated, shaped and executed. He was previously a national political correspondent, covering the 2024 presidential campaign. From 2015 to 2022, he held postings in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Santiago, Chile, and he has reported extensively throughout Latin America.

Middle East truce in doubt as US and Iran fight for control of Strait of Hormuz

DUBAI/WASHINGTON,GNS News Agency, May 11 A fragile truce in the Middle East was under strain on Tuesday after the U.S. and Iran exchanged fire ?in the Gulf as they wrestled for control of the Strait of Hormuz.Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, said in a social media post on Tuesday breaches of the four-week-old ceasefire by ?the United States and its allies had endangered shipping and energy transit through the vital waterway.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here."We know well that the continuation of the current situation is unbearable for the United States, while we have not even begun yet," he said.The U.S. military said on Monday it destroyed six Iranian small boats, as well as cruise missiles and drones, after President Donald Trump sent the navy to escort stranded tankers through the strait in a campaign he called "Project Freedom".

The narrow waterway, which carries a large share of global supplies of oil, ?fertiliser and other commodities, has been virtually closed since the U.S. and Israel began attacks on Iran on February 28, causing price rises around the world.Several merchant ships in the Gulf reported explosions or fires ?on Monday, and an oil port in the United Arab Emirates, which hosts a large U.S. military base, was set ablaze by Iranian missiles.Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has ?effectively closed the strait with threats of mines, drones, missiles and fast attack craft, while the United States has responded by blockading Iranian ports.Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said Monday's events showed there was no military solution to the ?crisis. He said peace talks were progressing with Pakistan's mediation, and warned the U.S. and the UAE against being drawn into a "quagmire."The U.S. military said two U.S. merchant ships made it through the strait, without saying when, with the support ?of Navy guided-missile destroyers.Iran denied any crossings had taken place, though shipping company Maersk

The commander of U.S. forces in the region said his fleet had destroyed six small Iranian boats, which Iran also denied. Iranian media quoted a military commander as saying U.S. forces targeted two small commercial boats, killing five civilians.Iran also said on Monday it had fired on a U.S. warship approaching the strait, forcing it to turn around. Iranian officials later described the ?fire as warning shots.Reuters could not independently verify events in the strait as the two sides issued contradictory statements.South Korea said one of its merchant ships, HMM Namu, suffered an explosion and fire in its engine room while in the ?strait, though no one aboard was hurt. A government spokesperson said it was unclear if the fire was caused by an attack.

Also on Monday, the British maritime security agency UKMTO reported two ships had been hit off the coast of the UAE, and the Emirati ?oil company ADNOC said one of its

empty oil tankers was hit by Iranian drones.UAE OIL PORT ABLAZEIranian authorities released a map of what they said was an expanded maritime area now under Iranian control, stretching beyond the strait to include lengthy sections of the UAE coastline.After a day of reported drone and missile attacks inside the UAE, including one that caused a fire at Fujairah, an important oil port, the UAE said Iranian attacks marked a serious escalation and it reserved the right to respond.The Iranian map included Fujairah and another Emirati port, Khorfakkan, both of which lie on the Gulf of Oman and which the UAE has relied on since the start of the conflict to bypass the blocked strait.If ?Iran were able to enforce control over access to ?those ports it would amount to a near-total maritime ?siege of the Gulf Arab state.Iran's state television said military officials had confirmed they attacked the UAE in response to the "U.S. military's adventurism".UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash said on Tuesday Abu Dhabi had received messages of solidarity from regional and other allies, which he said "affirm that Iran is the aggressor, responsible for the escalation of the crisis" in the ?Gulf.

PEACE EFFORTS STALLEDThe war in the Middle East has cost thousands of lives and roiled the global economy. U.S. and Iranian officials have held one round of face-to-face peace ?talks, but attempts to set ?up further meetings have failed.Trump has said the U.S.-Israeli attacks aimed to eliminate what he called imminent threats from Iran, citing its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, its support for Hamas and Hezbollah and its "menacing activities".Iranian state media said on Sunday that the U.S. had conveyed its response to a 14-point Iranian proposal via Pakistan, and Iran was reviewing it. Neither side gave details.The proposal would defer talks on Iran's nuclear energy and research programmes until after agreements to end the war and on ?shipping security. Trump ?said over the weekend he was still studying it, but would probably reject it.The latest U.S. intelligence shows limited damage to Iran's nuclear programme since ?the war began, officials told Reuters.Trump wants to remove Iran's stockpiles of enriched uranium to prevent it from processing it to the point where it could make a nuclear weapon. Iran denies seeking to build a nuclear bomb.

Trump's Germany troop cuts show limits of NATO efforts to keep US on board

BRUSSELS, -GNS News Agency, May 11 European officials have been working on ways to convince Donald Trump to keep the United States in NATO despite severe tensions over the Iran war. But ?his abrupt move to cut U.S. forces in Germany is the latest sign that such efforts have their limits and are far from certain to succeed.

The substance of the ?decision announced on Friday to remove 5,000 troops from Germany did not come as a surprise to NATO officials. European leaders have agreed with the U.S. president that Europeans will take over more responsibility for their own security from U.S. forces.The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

Dropping a plan to deploy long-range U.S. Tomahawk missiles to Germany was more concerning for Berlin. But even that was not a huge shock, as that deal was made by Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, and U.S. Tomahawk stocks have been depleted by the U.S.-Israeli war against ?Iran.More alarming for European governments was how the move was made – with little prior notification or consultation and with U.S. officials linking it to Trump's displeasure at German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's criticism of ?U.S. conduct of the Iran war.

"What is worrying is not the figure of 5,000 troops, but the political signal from Washington that longstanding, absolutely reliable partnerships no ?longer seem to count for anything and appear to be subject to arbitrary decisions," said Siemtje Moeller, a senior lawmaker from Germany's Social Democrats, who are part of Merz's governing coalition.The move followed accusations by ?Trump that U.S. alllies have not been doing enough to support the U.S. in the Iran war and suggestions by him that this meant Washington no longer needs to honour the alliance's Article 5 mutual defence ?clause.Trump also pushed the alliance to the brink by threateneing to take Greenland from Denmark, a fellow NATO member. NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte helped to defuse that crisis but the underlying dispute has not been resolved.European diplomats say they fear Trump may make further moves that could test the alliance before a summit of its 32 national leaders in Ankara in July, especially if the Iran war is not over by then and he is still venting anger at allies."The longer game ?for NATO and European allies is getting through Ankara," said a European diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We need to do things with the Americans if we can, and without them if we must."

Defence experts say Europeans have little choice but to try to keep the U.S. on board, given their heavy reliance on the United States to deter any possible attack by Russia.As part of their efforts to ?convince Trump of ?the value of European allies, officials have said many European countries are honouring agreements to allow U.S. forces to use bases on their soil and fly in their airspace during the Iran campaign - even if they are not keen to advertise the fact, given Trump and the war are deeply unpopular in much of Europe.While Spain has banned the use of bases on its territory, Rutte said countries including Britain, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Montenegro, Portugal and Romania were delivering on their commitments.European officials are also working to make a broader case to Trump, other U.S. officials, lawmakers and Republican-friendly think tanks that it is in their interests to stick ?with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.Their efforts include ?highlighting support for a post-war mission in the ?Strait of Hormuz, underlining the military and economic value of European allies and demonstrating that Europe is taking on a greater role within NATO, diplomats say.DIFFERENCES AMONG NATO LEADERS ON IRAN WARWhile there is broad support for these efforts across the alliance, the crisis has also exposed stark differences among European NATO leaders over ?how to respond to the war on Iran.Leaders of Western European countries such as Spain, France and Germany have voiced blunt criticism, reflecting domestic public ?opinion but risking Trump's ire.Rutte, ?by contrast, has made clear he sees anti-war rhetoric as unhelpful. Some eastern European countries, fearing any weakening of NATO will embolden Russia, have taken a similar view, diplomats say."When European countries are saying 'this is not our war', it irritated the hell out of me," Rutte told "What the Hell is Going on", a podcast hosted by the American Enterprise Institute think tank, after meeting Trump in Washington last month.On Monday, Rutte also said several countries were "pre-positioning ?essential logistical and ?other support" such as minehunters and minesweepers near the Gulf to be ready for a possible Strait of Hormuz mission after ?the war ends.The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany have said they are sending ships that could be part of such a mission. France, which is leading planning of a potential mission with Britain, also has ships in the Middle East that could take part."European leaders ?have gotten the message, they've heard the message from the U.S. loud and clear," Rutte told reporters at a summit of European leaders in Armenia.

EU proposes removing leather from deforestation rules

Brussels: The European Commission on Monday proposed to remove leather from the scope of the revised European Union (EU) Deforestation Regulation, in a move to avoid penalising EU producers of goods such as handbags and shoes.The draft delegated act, open for public feedback until June 1, proposes targeted amendments to the product scope, including adding soluble coffee and certain palm oil derivatives while excluding leather and retreaded tyres and so on, said the Commission in a statement, Xinhua News Agency reported.The Commission also unveiled a package of supporting measures to ensure the smooth and effective implementation of the revised law, following the adoption of the revised text by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU in December 2025.The measures include a simplification review report, updated guidance and frequently asked questions. The supporting measures are expected to reduce annual compliance costs for companies subject to the EU Deforestation Regulation obligations by about 75 per cent compared to the original regulation.The Commission said the package is designed to provide additional clarity to economic operators, members and third countries while guaranteeing legal stability and predictability.The EU Deforestation Regulation aims to ensure that key goods placed on the EU market do not contribute to deforestation and forest degradation, which are major drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss. It covers seven commodities — cattle, wood, cocoa, soy, palm oil, coffee, rubber, and some of their derived products.Under the regulation, any operator or trader placing these goods on the EU market or exporting them must prove the products do not originate from recently deforested land or have contributed to forest degradation.The regulation is set to apply from December 30, 2026.

Why West Bengal's voter turnout shattered records

Under normal circumstances, an increase in voter turnout is considered an indication of democracy's vibrancy. Over the past four decades, as electoral data became increasingly available in the public domain, turnout was seen as a ready indicator of the likely verdict; the drawback being that the same figure could be, and was, used to justify contrasting forecasts or assessments.Higher turnout has often been seen alternatingly as a mandate against the incumbent government or an endorsement of the ruling party. There was also at least one instance when a rise in turnout was interpreted as voters choosing political continuity in the face of a threat to "national" security, coupled with a "sympathy" vote for the ruling party. This was in 1984, after Indira Gandhi's assassination, when 63.56 per cent of voters lined up, as against 56.32 per cent in 1980 and thereafter declining to 61.95 per cent in 1989.

Higher turnout, however, never came under the public glare as it has in the just-concluded polls in four states and one Union Territory. The decision of the Election Commission of India to conduct the Special Intensive Revision posthaste, with the politically driven objective of "purifying" the electoral rolls for all five assemblies, was the singular reason for this. But of these, the SIR in West Bengal was most politically contentious, not just for its comparatively extended timeline, but also for a past associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party.By mid-2025, as the state entered the politically charged pre-poll period, it had already been three-and-a-half decades since the BJP launched its political campaign against "foreigners" or "infiltrators" from Bangladesh, allegedly entering India illegally and altering the demography of places they settled in. This campaign was neatly timed with the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation in the late 1980s, and enabled the widening of the nascent Hindutva plank.By that time, the Assam agitation had run its full course, during which then-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief M D Deoras made a politically indicative assertion: Hindus from Bangladesh must be treated as refugees, while Muslims should be treated as infiltrators. In 1993, during Delhi's first assembly election after being granted partial statehood, the BJP made the repatriation of Bangladeshi "foreigners" a central plank of its successful campaign.

The BJP continued to espouse this issue, although it petered out somewhat after 2004. It was majorly revived during the Lok Sabha elections in 2014 with slogans and assertions that are now part of India's political lexicon. Over the past 12 years, this campaign not only turned ceaseless but became more virulent. As events in the National Capital Region and several other states in north and west India in recent years show, survival has become hazardous for even genuine Bengali Muslim citizens of India if they live outside the state. Despite accounting for almost 27 per cent of the state's population, they were collectively cast, along with "actual" illegal immigrants, as Bangladeshis. This campaign against them is neatly coupled with the campaign to "invisibilise" all Muslims: For example, by preventing them — forcefully, and through administrative orders — from offering Friday namaz on public grounds.

The opacity, hurriedness and insensitivity with which the SIR was conducted in West Bengal was one of the biggest reasons for the unprecedented turnout in the two phases. The figures spoke for themselves, but ironically, they were of use to both the Trinamool Congress and the BJP. The entire SIR process, the extraordinary number of deletions, the Supreme Court contributing with its injudicious order not permitting 2.7 million people to vote, was of use primarily to the TMC. The BJP, on the other hand, sought votes on the basis of its "success" in "cleaning" the rolls by eliminating dead or phantom/ghost voters, those who had multiple votes across different locations in their names, and of course, those who simply had no right to vote due to being illegal immigrants or "ghuspaithiyas".

The TMC's campaign against the SIR enhanced the fears of previously uninterested voters who concluded that being on the electoral rolls was essential for them to be considered legitimate residents. Migrant workers and other professionals outside the state also rushed back at enormous cost; they thought voting this time was essential to remain on the voters' list and that this in turn was necessary to remain citizens on paper. For them, the vote and their name in the voters' list became a synonym, maybe even more than the Aadhaar card or passport. Neither is now considered by its holders as being sufficient for seeking what is rightfully theirs. It is too early for a detailed postmortem on the SIR in West Bengal. Undeniably, the process remains questionable, especially because it was politically driven, thus raising worries over the ECI's impartiality and whether people can continue having faith in the electoral process.The BJP stoked the fears of those who had faced harassment from the TMC's cadre over the past 15 years. Central police forces in large numbers and polling staff from outside the state made these people confident of voting without risking safety. The other major issue that propelled turnout was that of identity, as framed differently by the two parties. The BJP fanned the communal and exclusivist Hindu identity by claiming it was under threat from Muslims and those appeasing them, while the TMC framed the inclusivist Bengali identity as facing a threat from the BJP, driven by "outsiders". These two conceptualisations of the Indian nation and nationhood remain as they have been since the late 19th century, but more pronouncedly from 1925, when the RSS was established. Though surviving as different streams within the national discourse, this is the first time that the "secular-versus-cultural nationalism" divergence has manifested itself so starkly in an election and boosted electoral turnout in an unprecedented manner.

Despite objections, open school body spent Rs 247 crore on new office — didn't move in

Despite a senior official's caution against "extravagant expenditure on fancy offices," the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) — mandated to educate underprivileged children — spent Rs 247 crore in 2021 to acquire two floors in NBCC's World Trade Centre in Delhi. It received possession in March 2024 but has never moved in and is now scouting for a tenant, The sum is striking in context. NIOS receives no budgetary support from the Centre. It funds itself entirely through admission and examination fees. According to its last publicly available annual report, for 2022-23, NIOS generated a total income of Rs 288.65 crore that year, of which Rs 183 crore came from admission and exam fees, against total expenditure of Rs 157.89 crore.

Official records show the proposal to buy 61,000 square feet of commercial space, and relocate NIOS headquarters from its current office in Noida to the capital, was discussed and approved at a Finance Committee meeting of the NIOS Society on October 8, 2021, under then Chairperson Prof Saroj Sharma.

The Ministry's own Joint Secretary and Financial Adviser then had cautioned against the move before that meeting. The Joint Secretary had reportedly highlighted the mandate of NIOS to help educate "un(der)privileged, poor children of the society who could not pursue formal education in schools." And that the revenue earned by NIOS comes mainly from these sections of the society. "It is therefore necessary that NIOS must refrain from making any extravagant expenditure on fancy offices at very costly places," the JS is learnt to have said.The committee set those objections aside. Sharma reportedly told the committee that NIOS was empowered to locate its office anywhere in the Union Territory of Delhi and "learners of NIOS face difficulties in reaching NIOS office, as no Regional Centre is located in Delhi."

Those in favour of the purchase also cited the National Education Policy's emphasis on digital infrastructure, arguing that the "newly constructed building in the said premises will have all modern facilities for the learners for making them at par to other boards."The committee further noted that other government bodies and public sector undertakings had established offices in NBCC-designed buildings at Kidwai Nagar and Nauroji Nagar, and that the space would be "allotted as per fixed rate in a transparent manner." On those grounds, the Finance Committee approved the acquisition, recording that "other members of the Finance Committee have given their consent on the agenda." An official later said the decision was "not a single person's decision but unanimously taken by the academic council."

The cost, however, did not stop at Rs 247 crore. At a meeting on January 13, 2025, held under then Chairperson Pankaj Arora — who held additional charge of NIOS from October 2024 to July 2025 while also serving as chairperson of the National Council for Teacher Education — the Society approved further expenditure: Rs 18.82 lakh as stamp duty and e-registration fee, and Rs 70 lakh as GST on maintenance services. Asked about the spending and the need for the space, Arora said there was "no progress on that front" during his tenure.By July last year, NIOS had estimated that actually moving in would require a one-time interior development cost of Rs 37 crore, followed by annual recurring expenses of roughly Rs 2.13 crore for maintenance, and Rs 7 lakh in property tax. Faced with that arithmetic, the institution formed a committee to assess the WTC premises and recommend "optimal utilization."The committee has since suggested leasing out one floor to reduce the financial burden. When contacted, current NIOS chief

Akhilesh Mishra declined to comment. A senior NIOS official, however, said that according to a proposal in the works, one floor will be rented out and the other will be used "as a space for digital schooling, where we will broadcast our classes live, and another part for the 'Learn One More Bharatiya Bhasha' initiative."

India to get AI-powered orbital data centre satellite by Pixxel, Sarvam

New Delhi: India is set to get an AI-powered orbital data centre satellite, with space-tech firm Pixxel partnering with AI startup Sarvam to develop the country's first such system, it was announced on Monday.

After the partnership, Pixxel will design, build, launch and operate the Pathfinder satellite, while Sarvam will provide the artificial intelligence backbone, enabling both training and inference directly in orbit through full-stack language models running onboard, the company said.

The Pathfinder, a 200-kg class satellite expected to reach orbit as early as the fourth quarter of 2026, underscores the companies' push to rapidly advance space-based computing capabilities.Unlike conventional satellite systems that rely on low-power processors, the Pathfinder will host datacenter-grade GPUs similar to those used in terrestrial AI infrastructure, allowing high-performance computing directly in space.

The satellite will also carry Pixxel's flagship hyperspectral imaging camera, making it among the first in the world capable of capturing high-resolution hyperspectral data and analysing it in orbit using advanced AI models. This would eliminate the need to transmit large volumes of raw data back to Earth, enabling real-time insights, faster decision-making, and applications across environmental monitoring, resource management and infrastructure tracking.Pixxel CEO Awais Ahmed said orbital data centres represent a new frontier as ground-based infrastructure faces constraints related to energy, land and scalability. He added that space-based computing, powered by solar energy and located closer to data sources, can overcome many of these limitations.Sarvam CEO Pratyush Kumar said the partnership extends the company's sovereign AI platform beyond terrestrial systems into space, enabling India-built AI models to operate independently of foreign cloud infrastructure.

From worst-affected by Maoism to highest class 10 pass percentage: The Bijapur turnaround

Bijapur, the Chhattisgarh district that was the worst-affected by Maoism, has jumped to first place among the state's 33 districts for pass percentage in class 10 board exams and second place in class 12 exams.Last year, the district stood ninth in class 10 pass percentage and 23rd in class 12 pass percentage. The pass percentage for class 10 boards has increased from 85.40% last year to 96.06% this year, and for class 12 boards, it increased from 80.35% to 95.63%.The district was once infamous for school students dropping out and allegedly joining Maoist ranks, officials said.

In the last two years, security forces stepped up operations against Maoists in the Bastar region, which includes Bijapur. Since 2024, as many as 234 Maoists have been killed in encounters, while 1,191 have been arrested and another 1,003 have surrendered, severely weakening the rebel movement.How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 Results How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 ResultsLast year, District Collector Sambit Mishra conducted a survey to find out how many school children were dropping out and why. The survey revealed that nearly 10,000 children had dropped out of school.Mishra then set out to ensure that of those that remain, the maximum number of students clear the 10th and 12th board exams. "Soon after the results last year (in May), we took a meeting with all school teachers and principals, where we found out the issues. We learnt that faculty members were not present in many instances. We also took a basic test of all children and identified those who were weak in their studies. We learnt that there were learning gaps, due to which personal attention was needed for students. We then took four major steps," he said.First was finding out which subjects needed more teachers, and we recruited 68 new teachers, called "Shiksha Mitans", using District Monetary Foundation (DMF) funds.

The other three steps taken were conducting pre-board exams every two months with regular performance reviews. The teachers were asked to identify weaker students and take remedial classes and extra teaching sessions. A district-level exam cell prepared blueprint-based question papers for students so they are well-prepared. Another initiative was teaching students Artificial Intelligence prompts, which helped some of them clear their doubts, though several others could not use it due to a lack of mobile network.How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 Results How Bijapur Moved from Maoist Violence to Top Class 10 ResultsThe authorities also worked on ensuring that attendance at schools was over 90%.

District Zilla Panchayat CEO Namrata Choubey's active involvement in monitoring was critical. She used to hold monthly meetings with all subject teachers where students were performing poorly in pre-boards and our centralised test. This helped us address the gaps and ensure better results," said Mishra.The education department's assistant programme coordinator, Zakir Khan, said, "We had eight months to prepare students for the exams, and the results were very pleasing. Last year, 3,940 students appeared for SSC (10th) and HSC (12th), of which 3,279 passed. This year, 4,111 students appeared for SSC and HSC, of which 3,942 passed."

It was not only pass percentage, but the number of students securing first-class marks also doubled this year. "This year, 2,805 students got first-class in SSC and HSC, while last year the number was 1,441. Girls were ahead of boys in both exams," said District Education Officer Lakhanlal Dhanelia.The results also brought a cheer to the face of Satyanarayan Tokal, 57, who has been teaching in a government school in Pamed, once a Naxal stronghold over 100 km away from Bijapur district headquarters."Till last year, there was no proper road to our school, and to go to Bijapur town, we used to travel via Telangana. Until 2008, it was a middle school and then it became a high school. The initiative has made a big impact. In 2012, it became a higher secondary school, and since then, it is the first time that two girls have scored above 80% marks. Archana Gundi scored 82% in HSC science and Sandhya Sabka scored 80% in SSC," said Tokal proudly.Khan said, "In Tarlaguda porta cabin school near the Telangana border, all 28 children passed. One of them, Divya Micha, got 87.84%. She is from a remote village named Metlacheru, about 16 km from Bhopalpatnam, where there is no electricity or network."

After the Hormuz disruption, Asia should build an energy security alliance

After Hormuz disruption, Asia should build an energy security allianceThe closure has alerted countries to their vulnerability to other nautical chokepoints. Aside from the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have to cross the Strait of Malacca, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), said last month that "we are facing the biggest energy security threat in history", worse than the aggregate impact of the crises sparked by the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2022. He should know, as the organisation he heads was established as a result of the Yom Kippur War. The latter triggered the quadrupling of crude oil prices ($2.90/bbl in October 1973 to $11.90 in January 1974) and a global recession. In its aftermath in January 1974, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger invited the leaders of the Western world to a conference in Washington, DC. Kissinger's objective was to create a mechanism by which Western countries could counter the cartel of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and manage and mitigate future supply disruptions. The IEA was the outcome of this conference.

Fifty-two years on, in the wake of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, India should lead a call for the petroleum-importing countries of Asia to create a similar institution, but with a broader threefold purpose. One, to safeguard the rights of individual member countries to free and unencumbered navigation passage through the maritime straits in Asia; two, to counter the pricing power of Middle East exporters through the lever of their aggregate purchasing strength; and three, to harness the complementary technical, financial and human assets of members to accelerate the pace of the green energy transition. Such an institution could be called the Asian Energy Collaborative Compact (AECC).

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has had a dual impact on Asian oil-import-dependent countries. It has led to an energy shortage and highlighted the risks of exposure to maritime chokepoints. The closure has trapped 13 million barrels of petroleum (and its derivatives) in the straits. The bulk of this quantity (approximately 85 per cent) is destined for the Asian markets. As a result, a number of Asian countries are currently facing an energy-supply crisis. The Philippines has declared a national energy emergency; Japan has cut back on ferry and bus services, and India has rationed the supply of LPG to commercial establishments. China has also put the brakes on domestic consumption, although the impact has been buffered by substitute supplies from Russia and a drawdown of stocks from its strategic reserves.

Beyond this physical constraint, the closure has alerted countries to their vulnerability to other nautical chokepoints. Aside from the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have to cross the Strait of Malacca and, further east, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. These maritime passages are in the high seas and under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, also referred to as the "constitution of the oceans", all ships are assured the right of "innocent passage". The Iranian action has breached this right and created a precedent that compels reflection on the counterfactual. What if the Strait of Malacca (through which 60 per cent of all seaborne trade to and from East Asia passes) were choked? What if the flow of merchandise traffic through the Taiwan Strait and/or the South China Sea were impeded by regulatory restrictions and/or tolls? What pipeline configurations, over land and under water, might enable countries to create supply lines that avoid exposure to such blocks?These concerns are common to most Asian countries irrespective of their political system, ideology or stage of economic development. They can and should therefore be discussed conjointly. The AECC could provide a forum for such discussions.

The "Asian Premium" (the price differential between the price paid for crude oil by Asian countries to Middle Eastern exporters and the North Sea benchmark price) ranged between $3 and $6 per barrel before the start of the conflict. It widened to $60 per barrel after the start of the bombing. It has come down since, but the initial increase

warrants the question: Was the steepness of the hike in prices, freight rates and insurance premiums due entirely to tightening supply and inelastic demand? Or was it also because of asymmetric bargaining, that is, the fact that Asian importers failed to leverage their aggregate purchasing power?Kissinger convened the leadership of the Western world in January 1974 to counter OAPEC. My suggestion is that AECC should be set up to secure a similar objective. It should develop mechanisms that, whilst not impeding a country's ability to trade independently, enable the members to negotiate collectively to secure better supply terms and reduced freight and insurance costs. In addition, AECC should provide real-time market intelligence on supply disruptions, infrastructure incidents and geopolitics. This information is currently provided by the IEA, but Asia should have its own bespoke agency. IEA has a Western skew as it works under the OECD's umbrella.The exit of the UAE from OPEC is further evidence of the fractured relationships amongst the Gulf oil exporters and the terminal volatility of the international petroleum market. It deepens the urgency for Asia to shift away from fossils towards renewables. Most, if not all, Asian countries have a green energy strategy in place, and some have made impressive progress. But no country has successfully scaled up renewables to dominance in its energy consumption basket. The question arises: How can this shift be accelerated? One proposition that prima facie seems fanciful would be for Asian countries to leverage their green assets (technology, finance, mineral and metal resources, human talent) to identify and tackle areas of overlapping interests regarding the green transition. The proposition is fanciful because, unlike the IEA, Asian countries do not share a common political ideology or system. But the region does have a common purpose in decarbonisation and energy security. So, in its third role as an energy think tank, AECC should research how best the complementary assets of its members can be combined to generate a positive-sum green outcome.

Range Rover SV price reduced by Rs 75 lakh after India-UK FTA push

New Delhi: Jaguar Land Rover India on Tuesday announced a sharp reduction in prices of its flagship Range Rover models by up to Rs 75 lakh, as it moves to pass on anticipated benefits from the proposed India-UK free trade agreement to customers.The company said that the price cuts apply to completely built unit (CBU) models imported from the UK, with the biggest revisions seen in the high-end SV portfolio.The Range Rover SV has been repriced from Rs 4.25 crore to Rs 3.5 crore (ex-showroom), while the Range Rover Sport SV now starts at Rs 2.35 crore, down from Rs 2.75 crore.According to the company, the revised pricing reflects changes expected under the new duty structure once the India-UK FTA comes into effect.The new prices are effective immediately, signalling the company's confidence in the agreement's rollout.Commenting on the move, Managing Director Rajan Amba said the company is extending the anticipated benefits of the trade deal to its customers in advance.

The Thalapathy who turned legacy into political authority

At the DMK rally at Sirkazhi in Mayiladuthurai district , the crowd does not receive M K Stalin as Chief Minister or party president, but as a figure entering a private space — his wife's native town. Stalin seems to understand that. He does not rush onto the stage; instead, arrives with a certain studied calm.Stalin's stagecraft lies in the small things: the slight pause before he waves, the way he scans the crowd before he starts his speech, the half-smile that acknowledges affection without surrendering to it. Around him, the stage is all noise and motion — party men leaning in, hands rising, slogans swelling — but Stalin is almost restrained. In a Dravidian rally, where charisma is often performed through excess, his theatrics come from withholding.

"If I stand here and ask for your vote by telling you what we have done for you, and what we will do for you, that is the Dravidian model. But if one seeks votes through lies, slander and defamation, that is the model of 'slave' Palaniswami. So the choice before you is simple: do you want a Stalin government that works for you, or a 'slave' Palaniswami doing servitude for Delhi?" As the crowd roars back — "Stalin government" — he widens the frame beyond the constituency. "We are fighting here," he said, "for the victory of all Tamil Nadu, against the Delhi brigade."As Tamil Nadu heads to the polls on April 23, has more than one reason to believe it can return to power — a fragmented Opposition, the advantages of incumbency, a welfare record it is eager to showcase, and a leader who has slowly, steadily turned inheritance into authority.

While doing so, he has found a voice that extends beyond the state, one that has placed him at the centre of the federalism debate. He has repeatedly framed Delhi's moves – from the language policy to GST dues, education and delimitation – not as isolated disagreements, but as part of a larger centralising pattern.Close aides say Stalin's method, before he articulates the federal position, is rarely impulsive. He is known to summon a compact circle of political advisers, legal hands and senior bureaucrats to his office in Fort St. George, often on short notice, to brainstorm. "What does the Constitution permit? How will Delhi frame the issue? And where does Tamil Nadu's public mood already stand? Only then comes politics," says one of them.On the National Education Policy, on the role of governors, on NEET, on the sharing of tax revenues, Stalin has tried to convert what might appear as state-level grievances into a larger argument about the balance of the Union. His associates say he seeks a documented brief, comparative data from other states, legal pathways and a clear slogan that can travel beyond Tamil Nadu.MK Stalin (2nd R) with his father M Karunanidhi, mother D Karunanidhi and other family members before filing the nomination papers from Kollathur assembly seat, in Chennai in 2011 MK Stalin (2nd R) with his father M Karunanidhi, mother D Karunanidhi and other family members before filing the nomination papers from Kollathur assembly seat, in Chennai in 2011The heir, not so apparent

Stalin inherited not only a name, but a movement — with memory, rivalries, rituals and wounds. He was M Karunanidhi's son, born into a household into which public life entered with the force of fate.In her memoir, Stalin's wife Durga captures that world in intimate terms. She writes of entering Gopalapuram, the family home, in 1975 as a young bride, not yet realising how completely politics governed its rhythms. In that household, Karunanidhi was not simply father or patriarch, but the central presence around whom both family and party moved.That shadow would define Stalin for decades. A senior party figure recalls that Stalin would not even sit before Karunanidhi during conversations.Karunanidhi gave his younger son his legacy, preferring him over the older, mercurial Alagiri. For Stalin, the harder task was turning this inheritance into authority.

Long before he was seen as chief ministerial material, he was travelling across Tamil Nadu as a cadre-builder for the party.Tiruchi Siva MP, one of Stalin's closest colleagues, recalls Stalin's relentless routine in the DMK youth wing in the early 1980s. The team would be constantly on the move across districts — mornings with party workers, afternoons hoisting flags, nights reserved for public meetings that often ran well past midnight. "We did not rest even after that," Siva tells .Stalin often drove the car himself — an Ambassador on those tours, Siva says, and a Fiat in Chennai. "He never took a break to sleep while driving," says Siva.The party meetings that Stalin attended in those early years were not grand political stages but orientation camps organised in coconut groves near riverbanks, sessions held under thatched roofs, with meals and sleep shared at the venueIt was at one such youth wing meeting in Vellore in 1982 that Siva first called him "Thalapathy" or Commander. "I told party workers that every notice for future meetings should display his name as Thalapathy Mu Ka Stalin," he says.An old colleague of Stalin, who is no longer in his good books, says that even in those years, Stalin had an unusual memory for faces, recalling district-level workers and local grievances years later. It was a trait that helped Stalin build a quieter but durable network within the party. "A minister told me that even now, highways can stir old party memories in him — a house where an old party worker lived, where he had a meal," he says.For decades, Stalin's position in the party was a question that remained unresolved. If step sister Kanimozhi got a Rajya Sabha MP post in her early years in the party, and elder brother Alagiri became a Union minister, under him, Stalin gave son Udhayanidhi a quick elevation to Deputy CM post. But his own ascent was not dramatic. It was gradual, disciplined, and often shadowed by doubt.M Karunanidhi along with his son MK Stalin at the party's executive meeting held at Anna Arivalayam in Chennai on Friday in 2021 (PTI) M Karunanidhi along with his son MK Stalin at the party's executive meeting held at Anna Arivalayam in Chennai on Friday in 2021 But by the mid-2010s, Stalin was already the "obvious heir apparent," with a more modern campaign machinery, professional outreach and increasing public presence. Yet, he did not move against the old order, or rush to claim what seemed politically inevitable.A senior Congress leader says that Stalin remained an "heir in waiting" for many years "even as his role within the party expanded". That patience was read in different ways — as discipline by loyalists, as caution by critics. Either way, it became the grammar of his rise.After Jayalalithaa diedAfter J Jayalalithaa's death in 2016, Tamil Nadu entered an unsettled phase. The AIADMK fractured but did not disappear. The BJP, sensing an opening in a state where it had long struggled for depth, began pushing more aggressively. Actor-politicians Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan hovered at the edge of the stage. And Stalin, though no longer merely a son-in-waiting, was still being tested. The defeat in the R K Nagar bypoll, when the DMK was pushed to third place behind AIADMK and eventual winner TTV Dhinakaran, was a personal embarrassment for Stalin.Yet, by 2017, Stalin became more combative against the BJP-led Centre, sharper in his warnings on Hindi and Sanskrit imposition, and more willing to speak in the language of Dravidian grievance and state pride.The terrain around him was fluid. Central agencies were intensifying their scrutiny of DMK figures. The AIADMK's internal disarray did not automatically translate into DMK dominance.A BJP leader who witnessed the AIADMK crisis from close circles says Stalin refused to grab his chance to topple the AIADMK government. "There were days when we thought Stalin would topple the government by evening, all the stars were in his favour. But he chose to wait till the 2021 polls to capture power just like he waited for the baton from his father," he says.Before Fort St GeorgeLong before he entered Fort St George as Chief Minister, Stalin had already spent years learning governance at close range — first as Mayor of Chennai from 1996 to 2001, then as Local Administration Minister, and later as Deputy Chief Minister, a post to which he was elevated in 2009, at age 56.Those who worked with him during that period describe a politician who believed in systems — roads, drains, civic routines, municipal order."I saw him learning how the state works – through files, engineering notes, budget constraints and bureaucratic delay," says a retired officer who headed the Chennai Corporation administration when Stalin was the mayor. "He was cautious, process-driven, and more inclined to review. He did not arrive as a natural administrator. But he learned," he says.During his tenure as Mayor, Chennai's road infrastructure expanded and corporation schools were upgraded — initiatives often cited by officials as early examples of his focus on civic delivery.

After he took over as Deputy Chief Minister in 2009, he was involved in overseeing urban development and local administration projects, reinforcing his administrative exposure to large-scale governance. Residents in parts of Chennai recall that the late-1990s focus on roads and sanitation, while uneven, marked a shift towards more organised and consistent civic services in certain neighbourhoods. In retrospect, these offices were rehearsals for his bigger role.DMK founder Karunanidhi's son Azhagiri (left) with other family members at Tamil Nadu House DMK founder Karunanidhi's son Azhagiri (left) with other family members at Tamil Nadu House Since taking office as Chief Minister, Stalin has sought to give the DMK's "Dravidian Model" a sharper administrative shape, pairing welfare expansion with industrial growth and social justice. Tamil Nadu's nominal GSDP rose 16% in 2024-25 to Rs 31.19 lakh crore, with real growth of 11.19%, the state's highest in 14 years. By 2023, the government said it had attracted over Rs 9.74 lakh crore in investments, including major electric-vehicle commitments such as VinFast's Rs 16,000-crore project and Tata-JLR's Rs 9,000-crore plan. State data says 46 new factories since 2021 have generated 1,39,725 jobs.

The welfare side of that model has been equally ambitious. Free bus travel for women has recorded 68 crore rides, with the government estimating average monthly savings of Rs 888 per beneficiary. The Kalaignar Magalir Urimai Thittam provides Rs 1,000 a month to 1.15 crore women, while school breakfast now reaches about 20 lakh children. Schemes such as Pudhumai Penn and Tamil Pudhalvan extend Rs 1,000 monthly support for higher education to lakhs of students from government schools. Alongside this, programmes such as Naan Mudhalvan and Illam Thedi Kalvi have aimed to address skills and post-pandemic learning loss.Yet Stalin's tenure has also carried harder questions. Opposition parties point to law-and-order lapses, custodial deaths, drug proliferation and administrative slack.

The hooch tragedies in Villupuram (2023) and Kallakurichi (2024), which together killed around 70 people, exposed not just local corruption but a deeper failure on the state's part to disrupt the illicit trade. The murder of BSP leader Armstrong in July 2024 raised questions about police efficiency. In the Anna University sexual assault case later that year, the language of the FIR and its leak turned a crime into a larger crisis of policing, sensitivity and credibility.More than any other institution, the police have brought the greatest embarrassment to Stalin's government. Critics and even some insiders say that reflected his inability to impose a clear command over a force tugged by multiple power centres — from pressures emanating from Delhi to those in his own close circle.Talking about the CM's limitations in controlling the force, a senior DMK leader told The Indian Express, "It works like caste. The police force is like a clan. A CM, in any state for that matter, is bound to protect the force. If he does not keep the police force in good humour, they will not cooperate with you when you or your party men make mistakes. It is a give and take policy. That is why a CM who stands for social justice can go easy on officers accused of the Thoothukudi firing."

Privately, StalinThose who work closely with Stalin say he rarely loses his temper. But punctuality is non-negotiable. When reports reached him that Udhayanidhi, in his early months in the Cabinet, was arriving late for events, Stalin is said to have summoned him and told him that he can't make people wait. "Hundred people waiting for you is not just a crowd. It is 100 hours of human time," an insider recalls him telling Udhayanidhi.Associates describe him as a family man, with his grandchildren his weakness. He watches films regularly, keeps up with television, and, officials say, also watches reels. A senior officer said Stalin recently noticed a reel featuring two boys from Panruti in Cuddalore district speaking about the importance of education and asked that they be traced and brought to the Secretariat.Within the family and party, associates say, he has increasingly played the role of stabiliser, maintaining periodic contact with his elder brother Alagiri to resolve all conflicts he faced at one point.Those close to him say his ambitions remain rooted in Tamil Nadu, not Delhi. At the centre of his operational world stands his son-in-law, V Sabareesan, widely seen as a key strategist managing the logistics and networks of the party's modern political apparatus. There is quiet speculation within DMK circles that Sabareesan could be considered for the Rajya Sabha sooner rather than later.More delicate, party insiders say, is the question of Kanimozhi's place in Tamil Nadu politics. According to senior party sources, she recently explored the possibility of a return to state politics and was keen on contesting the Assembly elections, an idea Stalin is said to have politely turned down. Even those who describe her as privately dissatisfied do not see her as a serious counterweight to either Stalin or Udhayanidhi. "It may be a challenge, but not a threat," a senior DMK leader says, arguing that unlike Udhayanidhi, she lacks an independent organisational base in the state. Stalin continues to keep her accommodated and respected,

'Hard reset': A year since Pahalgam, J&K's security landscape looks vastly different

In the year since the Pahalgam terror attack, the security apparatus in Kashmir and Jammu has witnessed what many call a "hard reset" – from the Army scouring the dense forests more aggressively to the J&K police setting up 'Snow Leopards' and 'Markhor', two elite counterinsurgency units trained in high altitude and jungle warfare, officials in the security establishment The Indian Express spoke to say.The strategy, which has changed from defence to preemption and offence, has meant that while many gunfights continue to take place in the dense forests, Pahalgam was the last big militant attack in Jammu and Kashmir.

"For almost three decades, we were largely used to urban warfare. It was relatively easy – target a house where terrorists are trapped, and the game is over," explained a senior police officer. "But the jungle warfare was new to us. It took us some time to adapt, but we are there now."After the Pahalgam attack, J&K Police established two new elite units within its Special Operations Group (SOG) to strengthen operations in challenging terrain. The twin units have drawn their names from high-altitude wild animals found in the Valley known for their strength, resilience, precision and speed. While the Snow Leopards unit is trained for high-altitude warfare in rough terrain, Markhors are trained for gunfights in dense forests. The twin units have undergone specialised training with different elite forces in the country.While these units are always in a ready-to-deploy position, the Army, too, has strengthened its security apparatus, especially in mountainous areas, with its elite paratrooper units deployed at high altitudes. It was one such unit that killed Pahalgam attackers Suleiman alias Faisal Jatt, Afghan and Jibran on July 28 last year, in the Dachigam forest area on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Then, in December last year, the Army launched a major anti-militancy operation on both sides of the Pir Panjal mountains that connect the Kashmir valley to Poonch and Rajouri on one side and Kishtwar and Doda on the other. The Army managed to eliminate the Saifullah group of Jaish-e-Mohammad after a year-long pursuit, and also disrupted the larger terror network emanating from Pakistan, destroying their hideouts and forcing them to shift their bases."There was a total shift of strategy. Earlier, they (terrorists) were hunting for us, and now we were hunting for them," said a senior officer. "The results are obvious. They have been on the run and have not been able to plan an attack since Pahalgam."The security agencies in Jammu and Kashmir have also adopted better coordination between different forces operating on the ground and the intelligence agencies. The security grid, under the banner of the Joint Control Centre, meets every week to get "instant operation and intelligence feedback" and for better coordination between the security apparatus deployed in the Kashmir and Jammu regions."Over the last few years, the contour of insurgency has changed. Insurgents shifted their bases from urban areas of the valley to the mountains bordering the Kashmir and Jammu regions. These border regions have jurisdictional overlap and are often overlooked. It is these areas that they (the terrorists) used as their sanctuary," said another police officer. "To effectively deal with this new threat, coordination between the regions on both sides of the Pir Panjal mountains was essential. It is now showing results."

According to the National Investigation Agency, two months ago, a Letter Rogatory was sent to the competent judicial authority in China seeking exact details of the supply chain and end-user details of an electronic device linked to the attack. According to officials, the NIA has yet to hear back and is likely to send a fresh reminder in the coming days.

Last month, the NIA Deputy Inspector General Sandeep Choudhary, in an application before a Special NIA Court in Jammu, said that various material and electronic devices connected with the conspiracy and execution of the terrorist attack had been seized. "One such crucial electronic device was a GoPro camera, which was relevant for establishing pre-attack reconnaissance, movement and operational preparation of the terrorist module involved in the Pahalgam attack," it said.The NIA has also found that three terrorists were using two phones of Chinese origin. "The NIA has got confirmation from the Chinese company that the phones concerned were sold in Pakistan," an official said.The NIA has found in its probe that the attack was planned by Sajid Jatt and the terrorist outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)/The Resistance Front (TRF). "All movements of the attackers, drone drops of arms and targeting tourists were coordinated by Pak-based handle Sajid. During the investigation, the NIA examined 1,113 persons, including 543 dhok inhabitants, 117 ponywallahs, 67 animal owners, 52 local food vendors, 19 shopkeepers, 42 photographers, 36 persons working in ticket counters and ziplines, 31 shawl hawkers, 25 taxi drivers and 23 other suspects."

Gradual depreciation preferable to burning reserves to defend a level, says former RBI Governor Duvvuri Subbarao

Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Duvvuri Subbarao says that while the RBI has adequate reserves to address excessive volatility, there is a strong case for minimal intervention in the forex market. "A 5% depreciation in the rupee could add roughly 40 basis points (bps) to inflation and shave off 25 bps from growth. With uncertainty around both input costs and demand, firms are likely to defer investment decisions, even if they do not cancel them outright," he told The Indian Express in an interview. "Going forward, RBI is likely to remain on hold over the next few policy cycles," he says.

What's the impact of West Asia conflict on various sectors, investment and margins?

The shock is largely cost-driven and uneven across sectors. Input-intensive industries — fertilisers, textiles, chemicals and MSMEs — are facing margin compression due to higher freight and raw material costs.This comes at a time when private capex was beginning to gain traction. With uncertainty around both input costs and demand, firms are likely to defer investment decisions, even if they do not cancel them outright. Stronger corporates may be able to absorb the shock and even consolidate market share, but smaller firms are more exposed to working-capital stress. Overall, the investment cycle remains intact, but momentum could soften in the near term due to profitability pressures.

Given the current uncertainties, what policy options does the government have?

The government has already reduced excise duties on petrol and diesel to cushion the impact on consumers. Going forward, it faces a difficult trade-off. One option is to continue absorbing higher oil prices, thereby protecting consumers. However, this would worsen the fiscal position, tighten financial conditions, and eventually weigh on consumption and investment thereby hurting growth.The alternative is to allow prices to pass through to consumers. This would raise inflation but impose a relatively smaller drag on growth. Neither option is benign. However, from a balance-of-payments perspective, there is a stronger case for allowing greater pass-through. Higher prices would dampen demand and help contain pressures on the current account deficit. Some price pass-through may actually be the more sustainable option.

Do you foresee interest rate action by the RBI to tackle an expected rise in inflation?

At its April meeting, the Monetary Policy Committee kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25% and maintained a neutral stance. The policy signals suggest that the RBI is balancing growth risks against emerging inflation pressures. India entered this episode with relatively strong macro fundamentals — robust growth, moderate inflation, a manageable external account, and healthy bank and corporate balance sheets. This provides some policy space. Going forward, the RBI is likely to remain on hold over the next few policy cycles. The case for rate cuts is limited due to upside risks to inflation from oil prices and potential weather-related food shocks.At the same time, the case for rate hikes is also weak, as inflation remains within the target band. Additionally, premature easing could widen interest rate differentials with the US and add pressure on the rupee.Overall, policy is likely to remain data-dependent with a cautious bias towards checking inflation. The bar for both rate cuts and hikes is high: expect an extended pause.

Will external sector, rupee stay under pressure as capital outflows continue, and markets remain battered?

The rupee briefly crossed 95 to the dollar before recovering, aided in part by RBI measures to curb arbitrage opportunities in the offshore NDF market.Beyond oil prices, several other factors are exerting pressure on the currency — tightened fiscal conditions, RBI's liquidity operations, and relatively low domestic interest rates.Importantly, the rupee had been weakening even before the Iran conflict, driven by capital outflows. Going forward, additional pressure may come from a widening current account deficit due to higher crude prices, lower remittances and weaker exports. The current account deficit, which was around 1% of GDP in FY26, could plausibly widen to around 2% this year.While the RBI has adequate reserves to address excessive volatility, there is a strong case for minimalist intervention.Allowing a gradual real depreciation would improve export competitiveness and apportion the burden of adjustment across sectors, giving greater flexibility to both fiscal and monetary policy. A gradual, managed depreciation is preferable to burning reserves to defend a level. There has been some discussion around issuing NRI bonds to bolster reserves. This appears premature. Such a move could send adverse signals about external stability. Besides, it may not be effective given low interest differentials, unless offered at a significant cost.

What's your overall assessment on the economy and growth outlook?

The impact of the Iran conflict on India will transmit through slower growth, higher inflation and a weaker rupee.India imports about 80-85% of its crude requirement, making it highly vulnerable to oil shocks. RBI estimates suggest that every 10% increase in oil prices could raise inflation by about 50 basis points and reduce growth by 25 bps. Similarly, a 5% depreciation in the rupee could add roughly 40 bps to inflation and shave off 25 bps from growth. This is essentially a supply shock that simultaneously affects growth and inflation. As higher oil prices percolate through supply chains, stress will spread across a wide range of sectors. On baseline assumptions of crude at $85 per barrel and an exchange rate of ?94 per dollar, RBI projects GDP growth for this fiscal year at 6.9%. Outcomes could worsen if the conflict is prolonged or intensifies. Importantly, if disruptions force business closures, restarting activity could entail disproportionate costs, amplifying the growth impact.

With the conflict in West Asia continuing, what do you think is the outlook for energy prices and crude oil?

Crude oil is likely to remain elevated and volatile, even with a temporary ceasefire. The geopolitical risk premium — particularly around the Strait of Hormuz — is unlikely to dissipate quickly. For India, this is a critical vulnerability. Sustained high crude prices would widen the current account deficit and feed directly into inflation.Even without an actual supply disruption, uncertainty alone can keep prices elevated. The more realistic scenario is one of moderately high and volatile oil prices, rather than a return to earlier benign levels.

What are the risks to the banking system as several sectors are facing headwinds?

The banking system is in a stronger position than in previous cycles, with improved asset quality and capital buffers. The risks now are more sector-specific than systemic.

Stress could emerge in MSMEs due to cost pressures, while rising yields may lead to mark-to-market losses on bond portfolios. If growth slows, asset quality risks could re-emerge at the margin. The appropriate response is continued vigilance through stress testing, close supervision and ensuring adequate liquidity, rather than broad-based intervention.What macroeconomic strategies and policy measures are necessary for India to effectively manage external shocks while sustaining investor confidence and long-term economic stability?Managing shocks of this nature requires strong macro buffers — stable growth, contained inflation and adequate foreign exchange reserves. India's current position reflects some of this preparedness. Going forward, reducing dependence on imported energy, diversifying supply chains and maintaining policy flexibility will be critical.A coordinated fiscal and monetary response, along with clear communication, will be essential to anchor expectations and sustain investor confidence.

Centre 'not insulated' from how states react to Strait of Hormuz crisis: Chief Economic Advisor V Anantha Nageswaran

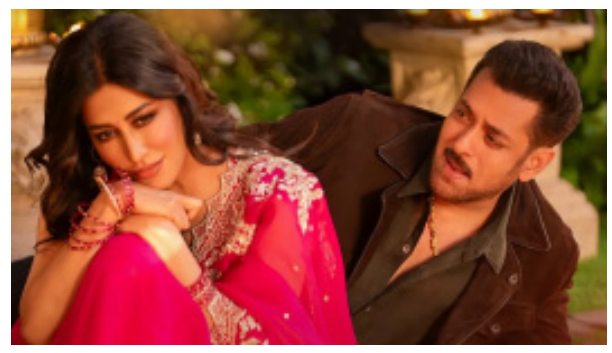
The Indian government is "not insulated" from how states react to the West Asia crisis, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran said, adding that demand for more funds due from fiscally-stretched states at a time of external shock adds to the Centre's own challenges.Speaking at a seminar on state finances organised by the Institute of Economic Growth on Monday, Nageswaran said any honest assessment of state finances must be against the challenging global backdrop. And while the shocks don't originate at the state level, that's where they are absorbed, with stress landing on areas such as food and fuel subsidies, fertiliser allocation, agricultural support, and employment programmes.

"In other words, states are not insulated from what happens in the Strait of Hormuz. And I can also tell you that the sovereign is not insulated by how states respond to the Strait of Hormuz as well, because ultimately the combined fiscal deficit is what feeds into the current account deficit," the government's top economist said.While the Centre's fiscal deficit target of 4.3% of GDP for 2026-27 has come under pressure due to the rising costs from the impact of the war in West Asia, international investors and global ratings agencies look at the combined deficit at the national and state level.Referring to a recent finance ministry analysis of 18 states' budgets for 2026-27 that found half of them were set to post a revenue deficit, Nageswaran said that when external shocks hit, it is fiscally-constrained states that "press the hardest on the Centre and they do so at the very moment when the Centre itself is going to be facing significant challenges in the current financial year in meeting its fiscal deficit goals".."The resulting dynamic therefore places stress on the general government fiscal position which is now assessed by global investors as an integrated whole, not merely as a Union government number… Fiscal indiscipline at the subnational level is no longer a closed, domestic accounting matter. It is visible and it is priced," the CEA said.

While the government has largely shielded households from the energy shock caused by the war in West Asia, the fiscal arithmetic has become "more complicated and will likely remain so" for much of 2026-27, Nageswaran said on Monday, with fertiliser costs set to be substantially higher, leading to a higher subsidy bill. Saying that India's public finances is in "very large measure a story of its states", the CEA said that as the country moves towards a higher income status, the efficiency and quality of resource allocation at the state level will increasingly determine not just the pace of growth but how inclusive and sustainable it is.

In its Monthly Economic Review report for April, released last week, the finance ministry had said of the 18 states whose 2026-27 budgets had been analysed, eight – Odisha, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Telangana, and Bihar – were expected to post a revenue surplus, with an average fiscal deficit of 2.94%, interest payments amounting to 8.61% of revenue receipts, and outstanding liabilities and capital outlay at 24.24% and 4.08% of their state GDP, respectively. In contrast, nine states – Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh – with a budgeted revenue deficit in 2026-27 had worse average numbers across the board: a fiscal deficit of 3.44%, interest payments at 16.1% of revenue receipts, and outstanding liabilities and capital outlay at 31.6% and 2.04% of state GDPs, respectively."But this is where economic analysis ends and political economy begins. The fruits of capital expenditure are probably felt with a time lag. So, there is a time inconsistency problem between who gets to spend and who gets to reap the benefits of it," Nageswaran said, adding that this problem doesn't occur with cash transfers that have expanded significantly in recent years. And while targeted cash transfers support consumption, smoothen incomes at times of uncertainty, and empower women and marginalised groups, Nageswaran said it is a problem when these recurring and committee expenditures are in lieu of investments and pushes up revenue deficits, which are then financed through borrowings. Over time, this trade-off becomes visible in the form of infrastructure gaps and quality of public services, the CEA said.

'I have to be ready when he is not on time': Chitrangada Singh reveals the truth about Salman Khan's professionalism; expert on fostering a more inclusive and respectful environment



Actor Chitrangada Singh recently spoke about her experience working on the film Maatrubhumi alongside Salman Khan, offering a perspective that challenges long-standing industry perceptions. Speaking at an event, she reflected on how preconceived notions can shape expectations before actually working with someone. "Film bohot mehnat se banai hain, dil se banai hain (The film is made with a lot of hard work and heart). People talk about Salman as if he is like this and he is like that, and I also received a lot of tips on that topic. That I have to be ready when he is not on time and the schedule might be stretched (sic)."

However, her lived experience turned out to be very different from what she had heard. "In reality, nothing like that happened. I was prepared after so many people heard this rumour that is unprofessional… but there is no truth in it. He is so approachable and easy (sic)." What stood out to her most was not just punctuality or work ethic, but a certain attentiveness on set that extended beyond immediate collaborators.Highlighting this, she said, "He has that amazing quality where he looks out for the least seen person on set, might be the lightman, or the fourth AD. He will ask whether they had a break and had their food on time. How are they being treated? Things like that, and after years of working in the industry, to still have that concern, is amazing."

So how does a leader or senior professional's behaviour impact overall workplace morale and productivity?

Sonal Khangarot, licensed rehabilitation counsellor and psychotherapist, The Answer Room, tells indianexpress.com, "A leader's behaviour sets the emotional tone of a workplace. From a psychological and change management lens, when senior professionals demonstrate genuine concern for all team members — including those in less visible or lower-status roles — it signals psychological safety, fairness, and inclusion. This aligns with principles of social exchange theory, where employees reciprocate respect and care with higher engagement and commitment."Such behaviour reduces perceived hierarchy gaps, Khangarot states, fostering trust and belonging—key drivers of intrinsic motivation. In change management, especially, employees are more receptive and adaptable when they feel seen and valued, not just functionally but humanely. It also minimises disengagement and quiet resistance, which often stem from a sense of being overlooked.Moreover, she says that inclusive leadership strengthens collective identity within teams, improving collaboration and reducing interpersonal friction. Over time, this translates into higher morale, lower attrition, and more consistent productivity—because people don't just work for outcomes, they work for environments where they feel they matter.Practical ways individuals in any workplace can foster a more inclusive and respectful environmentInclusivity at the workplace is not limited to leadership—it is shaped daily through small, consistent behaviours. "From a psychological lens, individuals contribute to a culture of respect by reinforcing dignity and belonging in everyday interactions," explains Khangarot.One practical way is acknowledging people across roles—greeting colleagues, using their names, and recognising contributions, especially of those in less visible positions. The expert mentions, "This supports the basic human need for belonging, which directly influences motivation and engagement. Practising empathetic listening, where one listens without interrupting or dismissing, helps build psychological safety within teams."It is also important to be aware of subtle biases. This can involve using inclusive language, being mindful not to exclude others in conversations, and gently addressing behaviours that may be dismissive. Encouraging quieter members to share their views fosters balanced participation. "When respect is shown consistently across hierarchies, it normalises fairness and strengthens trust, gradually creating a more inclusive and collaborative work environment," concludes Khangarot.

Govt not planning any financial support to oil companies for their losses on petrol, diesel, jet fuel

The government has no plan at present to compensate public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) for their losses on sale of petrol, diesel, and jet fuel below market prices, a senior Petroleum Ministry official said on Monday. The comments come at a time when there is growing speculation over the possibility of an increase in fuel prices, particularly petrol and diesel.Despite the surge in international oil and fuel prices amid the West Asia crisis, retail prices of regular petrol and diesel haven't been hiked. In the case of ATF, or jet fuel, just about 25% of the price increase was passed on for domestic flights on April 1, although a full passthrough was done for international flights.

Consequently, public sector OMCs—Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation, and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation—are incurring heavy losses on the sale of these fuels, and have been pushing for price hikes, it is learnt.Petrol and diesel prices have not been hiked for over four years now in India. Moreover, the timing of the current global surge in prices, which clashed with assembly elections in some states, made it politically fraught for the prices to be hiked. In the absence of price increases, the OMCs are facing significant financial burden. But the government has no proposal to extend any financial support to the companies."Currently there is no proposal before the Government of India to support the OMCs (for their losses on fuel sales)," Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma said in response to a question at the inter-ministerial press briefing on the West Asia crisis. She also noted that by not hiking the prices of regular petrol and diesel, the OMCs have been contributing in keeping inflation in check.The OMCs are also incurring heavy under-recoveries on sale of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) to households, even as they have hiked prices of commercial and industrial LPG in line with international prices movements. But unlike petrol, diesel, and jet fuel, the government has over the past few years provided subsidy support to the OMCs for losses on domestic LPG sales, and that cannot be ruled out even this time around, industry officials said.With the recently-held state elections having now concluded, a hike in prices of fuels like petrol, diesel, and the domestic LPG could be in the offing in the coming days or weeks, according to highly placed sources in the government. Throughout March and April, the Petroleum Ministry assured consumers that there was no proposal to hike fuel prices.

On the repeated assurances from the MoPNG that prices won't be hiked, the official had said that these were political announcements that came in the middle of the state elections, and are definitely a constraint in raising the prices. The effort has been to hold on to the prices for as long as possible, but with no end in sight to the Strait of Hormuz closure, the status quo on prices can't continue for long. The official didn't elaborate on the timeline for price revisions.Petrol is currently priced at Rs 94.77 per litre in Delhi, and diesel at Rs 87.67 per litre. Domestic LPG is priced at Rs 913 per 14.2-kg cylinder in the capital. Fuel

prices vary across states due to differences in state levies.On April 23, the Petroleum Ministry had said that the OMCs were incurring losses of around Rs 20 per litre on petrol sales and Rs 100 per litre on diesel sales. On April 1, it had said that the OMCs were incurring an under-recovery of about Rs 380 per 14.2-kg cylinder on LPG sales to households. While having acknowledged that the OMCs are also incurring losses on jet fuel sales for domestic flights, the ministry has so far not shared the extent of their under-recoveries on this fuel.

Last month, a few reports, quoting a note by brokerage Kotak Institutional Equities, had talked about the potential hike of Rs 25-28 per litre in petrol and diesel prices once the assembly elections concluded. The final phase of voting was held on April 29. The brokerage had said that the case for a petrol and diesel price hike was strong, but the timing was driven by political considerations. The MoPNG had dismissed such reports.Oil prices have been extremely volatile since the West Asia war began, but the petrol and diesel prices have not been hiked to protect the domestic consumer from this volatility. The Indian crude oil basket, which averaged $70 per barrel last year, averaged over $113 in April.While the retail prices of petrol and diesel are deregulated, in practice, the government-owned OMCs—with 90% market share in fuel retail—have kept prices stable in consultation with the government. They incur heavy losses when international oil prices surge, and earn hefty profits when the prices slump. Petrol and diesel prices have been more or less frozen since April 2022.With the effective halt in vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz—from where one-fifth of global oil and natural gas flows usually transited—global energy supplies have been hit and prices have skyrocketed. India depends heavily on oil and gas imports to meet its energy needs, and fuel prices in the country are linked to global oil and fuel price benchmarks.While India has been in a comfortable position with regard to crude oil, petrol, and diesel availability, it still has to bear the brunt of high prices. In the case of LPG, apart from high prices, supplies to India have been notably hit, forcing the government to ration commercial and industrial LPG sales in order to prioritise supplies to crores of households that depend on LPG.

The 7 greenest countries in the world leading the way in sustainability

As climate change becomes one of the defining challenges of our time, some countries are showing the world how sustainability can move from policy to everyday life. From running on hydropower to protecting forests and investing in clean transport, these nations are setting examples in environmental responsibility.Here are seven of the greenest countries in the world and what makes them stand out.

1. Denmark

Denmark is often seen as a global leader in sustainability. The country has invested heavily in wind energy and aims to become carbon neutral in the coming decades. Copenhagen is widely recognised for its cycling culture, with bicycles often preferred over cars for daily commuting.Denmark also focuses on energy-efficient buildings, waste-to-energy systems, and strong environmental laws. It consistently ranks high in climate action and green urban planning.

2. Sweden

Sweden combines industrial development with environmental responsibility remarkably well. More than half of its energy comes from renewable sources such as hydropower, wind, and bioenergy.The country is known for recycling systems so efficient that very little waste ends up in landfills. Sweden also has strict emissions policies and a strong public transport network that supports low-carbon living.

3. Norway

Despite being a major oil producer, Norway is one of the greenest nations globally because of its domestic sustainability efforts. Nearly all of its electricity comes from hydropower, and electric vehicles dominate its roads thanks to strong government incentives.Its forests, fjords, and strict conservation laws also reflect a deep national focus on protecting nature.

4. Finland

Finland stands out for its forest management and clean air. Around three-fourths of the country is covered by forests, and sustainable forestry practices are a key part of its environmental model.The country also invests in circular economy solutions, renewable energy, and eco-friendly architecture. Finland regularly ranks among the happiest

countries too, showing how environmental quality often supports quality of life.

5. Switzerland

Switzerland is known for pristine lakes, strict waste segregation, and highly efficient public transportation. Environmental protection is deeply built into both policy and public behavior.Hydropower plays a major role in its electricity supply, while strong regulations help preserve biodiversity and reduce pollution. The country's emphasis on clean urban spaces and responsible tourism adds to its green reputation.

6. Costa Rica

Costa Rica is often called a sustainability success story. Nearly all of its electricity comes from renewable sources including hydropower, geothermal, wind, and solar energy.The country has also reversed deforestation through aggressive forest protection policies. Around a quarter of its land is protected through national parks and reserves, making biodiversity conservation a national priority.

7. Iceland

Iceland uses its unique geography to stay green. Thanks to volcanic activity, it relies heavily on geothermal energy and hydropower, which provide most of its electricity and heating.

Its low population and strong environmental awareness also help maintain clean air and protected natural landscapes. Iceland is a strong example of how natural resources can be used sustainably.

Indian auto retail industry clocks 13 pc growth in best-ever April

New Delhi: The Indian auto retail industry opened FY27 on an exceptionally strong note, retailing a record 26,11,317 units in April — a 12.94 per cent growth, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) data showed on Tuesday.Two-wheeler retails continued their robust momentum, reaching 19,16,258 units last month, the best-ever April for this category. The demand engine remained broad-based with urban markets growing 14.07 per cent (on-year) and rural markets growing 12.30 per cent."With two-wheelers at +13.01 per cent, three-wheelers at +7.19 per cent, passenger vehicles at +12.21 per cent, commercial vehicles at +15.02 per cent, tractors at +23.22 per cent, and construction equipment at -2.25 per cent, five of the six vehicle categories — along with the total industry — registered all-time April records," said FADA Vice President Sai Giridhar.This clearly underlines that the structural demand momentum which defined the second half of FY26 has carried into the new financial year, he mentioned.Commercial vehicle retails in April stood at 99,339 units. From a market mix standpoint, rural markets grew a striking 20.25 per cent YoY growth compared to urban at 10.22 per cent. The MCV sub-segment continued its standout run at +27.07 per cent YoY, while LCVs grew 17.76 per cent and HCVs 8.25 per cent — reflecting participatory growth across sub-segments.Looking at the May-June-July period, dealer confidence remains broadly steady, with 50.90 per cent of dealers now expecting growth — marginally firmer than the 49.81 per cent growth expectation recorded in the previous survey for the April-June window.This suggests that the dealer community continues to view the underlying demand pulse as intact even as it factors in the customary seasonal lull that typically sets in between the conclusion of the marriage season and the onset of the festive build-up, said the FADA report.

Archana Puran Singh returns to gym after 1.5 years, tells son Aaryamann Sethi 'it's my day 7'

Actor Archana Puran Singh, 63, recently mentioned on her son Aaryamann Sethi's YouTube vlog that she has rejoined her home gym after a long gap. "After 1-1.5 years, I am coming back to the gym. It's my day 7," she told Aaryamann, as he added, "It's my day 3".Taking a cue from the duo's exchange, we asked an expert on the significance of starting again.From a clinical perspective, returning to exercise after a long gap is not just about fitness, it is about reconditioning the body, said consultant dietitian and fitness expert Garima Goyal. "After months or years of inactivity, muscle strength declines, joint mobility reduces, and stamina drops. Jumping back too aggressively can increase the risk of injury, which is why a gradual, structured comeback like this becomes crucial," she said.What makes "day 7" significant is the focus on consistency over intensity. "The first few days of restarting are not about pushing limits but about rebuilding the habit. During this phase, the body is adapting again, neuromuscular coordination improves, and basic endurance begins to return. This is the foundation on which long-term strength and fitness are built," shared Goyal.

Another key factor here is muscle memory. "Even after a long break, the body retains a certain level of adaptation from past training. This means that strength and endurance can return faster than expected, provided the routine is consistent and supported with proper nutrition," described Goyal.Nutrition, in this phase, plays a supportive role. "Ad-

equate protein intake helps in muscle repair, while balanced meals ensure enough energy for workouts without excessive fatigue. Hydration and micronutrients like magnesium and vitamin D also contribute to recovery and muscle function."

What also stands out is the emotional aspect of her journey. "Restarting after a gap often comes with hesitation, self-doubt, or comparison with past fitness levels. But acknowledging "day 7" shows acceptance of the process rather than chasing perfection. This is a reminder that fitness is not about where you left off. It is about where you choose to begin again," said Goyal.

Ro-Ry, MI's 6-hitting machines get roaring, as their talisman Rohit Sharma returns

GNS News Agency, May 11

Sunday may have been optional nets, but Rohit Sharma spent an hour honing his batting skills under the evening sun. It was perhaps an indication that he was fit and raring to go, and on Monday, with Mumbai Indians (MI) needing to win to halt their losing streak, he delivered with the bat, much to the delight of the capacity crowd at the venue.

The Wankhede Stadium roared in delight as Rohit Sharma made his way down the stairs and into the middle to bat for the first time in three weeks. Playing as an impact sub, he would have hoped for an easy chase to mark his return, but his bowlers were not as grateful, conceding 228 runs in 20 overs.If there was pressure, it did not show early. It was Ryan Rickelton who took charge. Fresh from a century in the previous home game against SRH, the left-hander started briskly, scoring 15 off his first five balls and immediately putting the bowlers on the back foot.That early burst helped Rohit ease in. LSG needed powerplay wickets to take early control of proceedings, but Rickelton ensured they never settled. He attacked both Mohammed Shami and Mohsin Khan, taking MI to 50 in five overs and setting the tone for the chase.

While Rickelton's early fireworks had ensured that MI were not behind the eight-ball, the anticipation from the capacity crowd about Rohit finding his groove was only rising with each passing over.He finally found his rhythm in the sixth over, taking Avesh Khan for 21 runs, which included two fours and two sixes. It was the kickstart he needed, and it eased the pressure on the South African at the other end.LSG's bowling approach made things easier. They relied largely on pace, using four seamers and just one spinner. Once Rickelton and Rohit got used to the pace of the surface, strokeplay became simpler. There was little variation to disrupt their rhythm.Rickelton brought up his half-century off 21 balls in the eighth over as MI edged towards the 100-mark. An over later, it was Rohit's turn to reach his fifty with a six over long-on off left-arm spinner M Siddharth.

The pair put MI in the ascendancy at the halfway mark and at 127/0, laid the ideal foundation to chase the score down. The onus was now on Pant to make things happen, but none of his bowlers looked capable of answering their captain's call.The stand was finally broken by Mohsin Khan in the 11th over as Rickelton fell for 83 in 32 balls, after putting on 143 runs, for the first wicket with Rohit. In the last few matches, only one of MI's two opening batsmen had come good. On Monday, when both fired together, MI ran away with the game.Rickelton's dismissal had little effect on Rohit, who remained on the attack against a bowling unit that had lost its bite. He was most severe on Avesh, who was at the receiving end of some sumptuous strokes from his bat, a six over cover-point in the 13th over being the best of the lot.The right-hander took 35 runs off the pacer, which included three fours and three sixes. He looked good for more, but the strategic time-out led to his undoing as Siddharth induced a top edge after the break. His 84 off 44 balls had six fours and seven sixes. The Wankhede crowd that had lost its voice in the previous four home games finally had something to cheer for.

Before Monday's game against MI, Nicholas Pooran had managed just 82 runs in eight matches in IPL 2026. For a batter of his ability, it had been a quiet and frustrating phase in a season where a lot was expected from his bat.On a smaller ground and against a pedigreed yet out-of-form attack, he finally found his moment. Walking into bat in the third over, the left-hander did not take long to make an impact. He launched Will Jacks for a six off the fifth ball he faced, a shot that seemed to free him up.What followed was a clean, confident display of hitting. He focused almost entirely on the leg side, repeatedly targeting the area from long-on to fine leg. The result was an innings with eight sixes, each maximum a blend of crisp timing and raw power. He brought up his first fifty of IPL 2026 in just 16 balls, putting the pressure firmly back on the opposition.Pooran's knock ended in the ninth over, but not before he had blasted his way to 63 off 21 balls and added 94 runs in 34 deliveries for the second wicket with Mitchell Marsh. For LSG, the hope would be that it was the start of bigger things from his bat for the rest of the season.Brief Scores: LSG 228/5 in 20 overs (Nicholas Pooran 64, Mitchell Marsh 44) lost to MI 229/4 in 18.4 overs (Rohit Sharma 84, Ryan Rickelton 83) by six wickets.

Dinesh Karthik on why he ranks RCB's IPL win 'right up there' with 2007 T20 World Cup triumph

Just under a year after lifting the IPL title with Royal Challengers Bengaluru, Dinesh Karthik has admitted the win sits right at the top of his career achievements along with winning the 2007 T20 World Cup with India. The 40-year-old also said that he ranks this IPL victory slightly above the won that he had won with the Mumbai Indians in 2013.Speaking about the emotional weight of the triumph, the 40-year-old said the RCB title "just pips" the 2013 win because of the long wait and the connection with the fans.

"A few days ago, somebody asked me what my highlight in a cricketing career was," Karthik said on the RCB Podcast. "Obviously, the World Cup I was part of is right up there, but the RCB win was also right up there.""An MI win as a player was a great one too, but the RCB win just pips it because of the fact that we waited 18 years for it. It's a long wait. We all know how passionate the fans are. You almost feel a sense of yearning and giving back when you finally win," he added.For Karthik, the victory was not just about lifting a trophy, but about delivering for a fanbase that had stayed loyal through nearly two decades of disappointment."The first one was for the fans. They've been with us through thick and thin, constantly supporting us. It was said in the dressing room as well – if we cross the line, it's for the fans. That was a very special feeling."

He also spoke about the broader journey of the team through the season, which included disruptions and challenges before they eventually found their rhythm."We went through a lot last year. The country itself went through a bit towards the back end of the tournament, and we had to reassess, regroup and start again in many ways.""It's one thing having momentum on your side, and then there's a sudden break, and you come back. The way we managed to get past a couple of games and play solid cricket – all teams played good cricket – the standard of the IPL is unparalleled right now," Karthik said."To win a tournament like that is never easy. It felt ecstatic, ethereal. I'm very proud to have been part of that moment."Karthik said one of the most powerful images from the night was seeing Virat Kohli overcome with emotion after finally winning the title with RCB – a franchise he has represented for more than a decade."It was great to see Virat Kohli in tears, the greatness of AB de Villiers and Chris Gayle being there with us, and the likes of Andy Flower and Mo Bobat putting a team together and doing something very special."Looking back at the journey of the coaching group, Karthik also praised head coach Andy Flower and him for choosing the role of becoming RCB's head coach."I asked Andy where this ranks among his wins. He said the Ashes win for England was special, the 2010 World Cup was phenomenal, but the RCB win is right up there.""He had multiple offers, but he chose RCB because he felt this was a challenge. And yes, it was a challenge. For us to come together as a group, do what we did in the auction, and play a certain brand of cricket – and make fans feel proud that they supported RCB – that it was worth the wait. That feeling is what is most satisfying," the former wicketkeeper-batsman said.

KL Rahul reveals message from DC management which has fuelled his IPL 2026 success

GNS News Agency, May 11

KL Rahul seems to have turned a corner with regards to his approach to batting in T20 cricket in the ongoing season of the Indian Premier League (IPL). The Delhi Capitals star has scored 433 runs in nine matches but it is his strike rate of 185.84 that stands out. The highest strike rate that he has finished with in his previous seasons in the IPL is 158.41 in 2018 and Rahul has often been heavily criticised for seemingly failing to keep up with the big-hitting standards of the day in T20 cricket.Rahul, who opens the batting for the Delhi Capitals, said that his changed approach this season is reflective of the way T20 cricket itself has transformed in recent years. "T20 cricket has evolved over the last two or three years, especially in the IPL. You can see patterns in how teams are winning, and recently, teams that win the Powerplay often go on to win the game. A few years ago, games were usually decided between the 14th and 20th overs. The Powerplay was always important, but now it carries even more weight," KL Rahul said in JioStar.

Rahul said that the DC team management told him clearly that they want to maximise the runs they can get in the powerplay, for which he will be given the freedom to go on the attack all the way through. "For me, personally, it's

something I've had to adapt to for the team. This season, the messaging from the team management was very clear. They spoke to me before the IPL and wanted me to bat at the top of the order and play with freedom. Teams are aiming for upwards of 60 in that phase. Having that clarity gave me time to think about how to achieve it within my skill set. I've tried to go out each game with that intent. You won't always succeed, but the idea is right. My focus is on maximising the Powerplay, because that's the demand of the team and of T20 cricket right now," he said.

Dinesh Karthik reveals how Virat Kohli pushed him into RCB coaching role: 'You would probably fit in quite nicely'

Former India wicketkeeper batsman Dinesh Karthik has opened up about how he became the batting coach and mentor at Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), a year after announcing his retirement from all forms of the game. The 40-year-old spoke about how RCB Director of Cricket Mo Bobat sowed a seed in his mind during IPL 2024 about being involved in the support staff and how encouragement from Virat Kohli sealed the deal.

Karthik was part of RCB's coaching group, which helped win their maiden IPL last season, where they defeated Punjab Kings in the final in Ahmedabad."It manifested when, as I was finishing in 2024, Mo asked me if I would be keen or interested. I was in the middle of the tournament, and it was a very different IPL season – we had lost six out of seven or seven out of eight games, I don't remember exactly – and we had a mountain to climb. To be fair, nobody gave us a chance.""But I was so invested in that. We were having discussions while I was playing, and I was also speaking to my wife and Mo. Malolan Rangarajan was also giving me a picture of what it could be if I played. He never told me 'do this or do that'. He just showed me how it would look."

"Mo was very confident I would be useful to the team. I trust Mo a lot – I've grown very fond of him and have a very good equation with him. He didn't convince me, but he showed me exactly what it would look like and told me it's a good place to be, considering where I was in my career. I completely trusted him, and I dropped the hat," Karthik said

on the RCB Podcast.He further said that Kohli urged him to think about the offer, suggesting that it would be good for him. He also revealed that head coach Andy Flower was also glad to have him on board."In between all of this, towards the back end of the season, I spoke to Virat for a while, and he was very encouraging. He said, 'Think about it, I think it's good.""When the offer really came at the end of the season, after I hung my boots, Mo called me and said they were keen. He also said Andy was very happy and they were in a place where they felt a couple of Indian coaching staff would help as well"."I remember speaking to Virat again, and he said, 'You should do it. You would probably fit in quite nicely'. That's all I needed. Someone like Virat has respect for you, and it is a challenge," he added.

'BCCI control the ICC': Simon Harmer on SA's WTC final win and global cricket balance

GNS News Agency, May 11

South African off-spinner Simon Harmer said that India's dominance in world cricket was underpinned by its commercial and administrative power, arguing that South Africa's World Test Championship (WTC) triumph had not significantly altered the global balance.South Africa defeated Australia by five wickets to win the WTC final at Lord's last year, their first major red-ball crown since readmission in 1991-92."Because of their commercial power, they have all of the power," Harmer told The Guardian. "The BCCI control the ICC. But what can we do? As a player, you just control the controllables. The only thing that changes the narrative is winning trophies."

Harmer was part of the South African side that defeated India 2-0 at home last year to inflict a second consecutive series loss at home on the Shubman Gill-led side. He expressed admiration for the current South African setup under head coach Shukri Conrad and captain Temba Bavuma, describing it as a side built on collective strength rather than star power."That team is more than the sum of its parts with only a couple of superstars," he says. Conrad, in particular, has earned Harmer's respect for his blunt, no-nonsense approach. "If he thinks you're shit, he'll tell you straight. I rate that. I've not always had that."On English spinners, Harmer was more sympathetic, suggesting that conditions and the structure of county cricket often limited their impact and pushed them into supporting roles rather than leading ones. "In England, generally your spinners are a bit of an afterthought," he says.While he acknowledged the quality of individuals like Liam Dawson and Jack Leach, he believed their effectiveness was often shaped by the system around them. "It's not a lack of resources, you've got 18 counties," Harmer says. "But how many have a spin-bowling coach? Probably two or three."For Harmer, the issue extended beyond resources to mentality and competitive edge under pressure. "Somebody can have all the skills in the world, but when it hits, if they run for the hills, it doesn't matter how good they are," he says. "I think English cricketers don't always have that fight in them."He also criticised the county system for allowing stagnation to exist. "With 18 teams, there's definitely a place for mediocrity," Harmer says. "There are loads of guys just plodding along, doing enough to keep their average contracts."

India and Australia retain top spots in ICC T20I rankings

Hyderabad: India and Australia have retained their positions at the top of the ICC Men's T20I Team Rankings and the ICC Women's T20I Team Rankings, respectively, following the annual updates carried out .The latest rankings, which rate all matches played since May 2025 at 100 per cent and those of the previous two years at 50 per cent, see India's lead over England trimmed from 14 to 13 points in the men's table while Australia's lead over England in the women's rankings has reduced from 18 to 12 points.

India, who retained their title in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup played in India and Sri Lanka this year, are on 275 points, still enjoying a comfortable lead over England (262) and Australia a close third with 258 points in the updated rankings, which see the top seven positions unchanged. New Zealand (247), South Africa (244), Pakistan (240) and the West Indies (233) are the other teams in the top 10 to have retained their positions.

Sri Lanka have dropped six rating points and slipped below Bangladesh to ninth position and are now just one point ahead of Afghanistan while the USA have leapfrogged the Netherlands and Scotland to take 13th position. In other movements in the top 20, Nepal have overtaken the United Arab Emirates to 17th position while Oman have moved past Canada to 19th.

In other notable changes, Italy have gained 11 points and moved from 26th to 23rd, Spain's 12-point gain sees them advance from 30th to 26th, Cyprus have gained 10 points to progress from 64th to 53rd and Eswatini have gained 10 points to move from 74th to 65th.

'Don't think money has anything to do with it': Justin Langer throws weight behind 'selfless' Rishabh Pant

Rishabh Pant's returns with the bat continued to lag on Monday even as some of his big-ticket teammates at Lucknow Super Giants finally managed to find some form. The LSG captain fell after scoring 15 in 10 balls as LSG lost by six wickets to Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium, thus sinking to their sixth consecutive defeat.The innings took Pant's tally for the season to 204 runs at a strike rate of 128.30 and average of 25.50. While this is woefully below par by any standard, it is a continuation of a pattern that was set last season, in which Pant scored 269 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of 133.17 and average of 24.45. Nearly half of those runs came from his last innings of the season alone, in which he scored an unbeaten 118 in 61 balls.

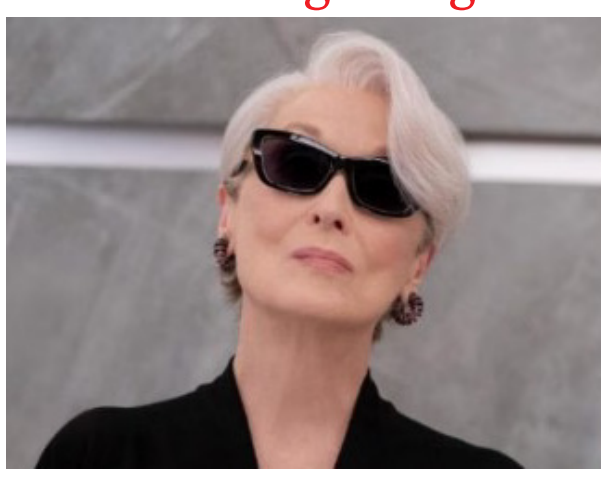
That innings remains an outlier, with Pant scoring just two half-centuries apart from that in the 23 innings he has played as captain of LSG, since he was bought by the side at the 2025 auction and became the most expensive player of all time. Langer was asked if Pant is still feeling the pressure of being the big ticket buy for LSG. "Honestly, I don't think the money has anything to do with it; I don't think that has anything to do with it at all. What I do think is that leadership is a tough position, you're carrying lots of pressure, and he knows that," Langer told the media after the loss to MI."He's carrying a lot of pressure for the team, and he does it, like all of us, with a smile on his face 98% of the time. The other 2% of the time, it's tough. But he's chipping away, he's working hard and, as I say, he's had a match-winning game earlier in the season. We love it when we see him smiling and playing that swashbuckling style of play, and he's not far off," Langer explained.Despite the loss, Langer backed captain Pant, insisting the wicketkeeper-batter was close to rediscovering his best form."Well, it's funny how we played a practice game here two days ago, and Rishabh, I think he got… I'm not sure the exact final score, maybe 95 off 40 balls or 30 balls or something."And you're just looking at it again, and you go, 'Oh my gosh, that's Rishabh Pant at his very best.' So, you know, he's a very good player; we know that. We've seen him in Test cricket destroy teams at number five."

Langer hailed Pant's decision to shift to No.5 on the batting order and sending out Nicholas Pooran in his usual No.3 spot. Pooran, who has been enduring an extraordinarily poor season, scored 63 in 21 balls. "And we felt today, with that and the way he played just two days ago after a seven-day break, that might be a good option for the team. He selflessly moved down the order to let Nicky P bat – that was unbelievable.""So yeah, I mean, Rishabh's not far off. As a captain in the IPL, as a coach, you've got to keep fronting up, don't you? That's all you can do. And he'll keep fronting up and hopefully help us get some wins over the next few games," the Australian said. LSG next take on Royal Challengers Bengaluru at home on Thursday.

This is the most beautiful phase of my life, says KL Rahul

Hyderabad : Delhi Capitals star opener KL Rahul said that T-20 cricket had evolved over the last two or three years, especially in the IPL, and one could see patterns in how teams are winning. Recently, teams that win the Powerplay often go on to win the game."A few years ago, games were usually decided between the 14th and 20th overs. The Powerplay was always important, but now it carries even more weight. For me, personally, it's something I've had to adapt to for the team," Rahul said, speaking on JioStar's 'Superstars' show"This season, the messaging from the team management was very clear. They spoke to me before the IPL and wanted me to bat at the top of the order and play with freedom. Teams are aiming for upwards of 60 in that phase," Rahul said."Having that clarity gave me time to think about how to achieve it within my skill set. I've tried to go out each game with that intent. You won't always succeed, but the idea is right. My focus is on maximising the Powerplay, because that's the demand of the team and of T20 cricket right now," he said.On opening the batting alongside Pathum Nissanka, Rahul said:

The Devil Wears Prada comes of age: 20 years later, burning bridges no longer lights the way



Of course, we've all rolled our eyes in Miranda Priestly fashion at the reports of why it's taking so long for David Frankel to come up with a sequel to his 2006 classic workplace dramedy, The Devil Wears Prada — "By all means, move at a glacial pace. You know how that thrills me." Or strut away in our imaginary blood-red Rockstud Pumps at the cast's excuse of the makers not being able to crack a script — "Details of your incompetence don't interest me." But after watching The Devil Wears Prada 2, I realized why there was wisdom in waiting.

The sequel lacks the relentless verve of the first part, but that's by design. Because like the memorable characters from the first film, the world of journalism has also come of age. The Devil Wears Prada 2's head isn't buried in the sand, but it has its ear kept to the ground. Had it released a decade earlier, it could've been another tone-deaf follow-up riding solely on nostalgia. Unlike part 1, it could've gotten the biggest of brands knocking on its doors like it did this year.With The Devil Wears Prada 2, neither the makers nor the characters dismiss the ground reality with a "That's all," but it questions what Meryl Streep's Runway editor-in-chief so boastfully declares at the end of the first part — "Everybody wants to be us." Well, do they? The landscape of journalism has changed drastically in the last 10 years, and more rapidly in the past five years. For them to treat Runway as a place wrapped in its candy-coated fur would've been possible — and more tempting — but certainly not true to the times.

Miranda Priestly's entry scene in the sequel has her strike a pose on the red carpet, only to be whisked away into isolation by her team, alarmed by the news of a scandal coming out. This isn't 2006, when iPhones are yet to be launched. Or the internet is still a luxury instead of the perennial, perilous alternate reality of today. A scandal isn't just harmless watercooler talk, but a viral PR disaster with tangible consequences. Miranda can neither just eyeroll her way out of situations nor dump her problems on her hapless subordinates like haute couture coats on messy desks.That's why for Miranda, her caustic sense of humour is no longer a weapon of choice, but an armour for self-defence. She doesn't fire shots like a machine gun on the loose, but picks her battles across advertisers, bosses, and subordinates. She goes from "that's all" to "that's all?" while negotiating with a luxury advertiser, has horror spelled over her face while travelling economy due to budget cuts enforced by a millennial boss, and contorts her body in unattainable ways to get her coat to the hook. Stomping her feet and dumping the coats on desk is a practice of the past, thanks to HR complaints of workplace harassment against her.

Clearly struggling to get upto speed with the woke police, she's constantly reprimanded (through cautionary side-eyes and semi-audible clearing of throat) by her first assistant Amari (Simone Ashely) to not endorse inappropriate language and risk cancellation. "What can I not say?," she asks, as confused as contemptuous. But all the persistent, polite niggles can't discourage her from reserving her snarkiest barb for Amari herself, when she doesn't show up on time — "Has she gotten human trafficked?" — even more brutal and undiplomatic than the casual "has she died?" remark she directed at Emily (Emily Blunt) in the first part.

It's in fleeting glimpses like these that we see Miranda in all her stinging glory. But her penchant for sarcasm and affinity for stone-cold steeliness are now buried under the burden of powerlessness in a market where even the most influential opinion makers are at the mercy of dwindling revenues and shorter attention spans. In the first part, when she confesses to Andy (Anne Hathaway) the pain of discounting her family for her work, she justifies it with aspiration ("everybody wants to be us"). But at the end of the sequel, seated next to her in the car again, Miranda offers a more evolved justification to Andy — "I love working" — with a glint in her eye.Journalism, for Miranda, is no longer about scaling the ladder of power, but it's come down to protecting her identity from extinction. Similarly, for Andrea, who demonstrated power of a different kind — in walking away from Miranda at the end of the first part — journalism is now about staying in the filth and fixing it. Two decades ago, she could exercise the choice of quitting a job and applying for another. But 2026 comes to her with a lay-off from an anti-establishment newspaper and the rude realization that it's no longer a singular workplace that's toxic. It's the entire ecosystem, infected by issues far larger than ego hassles and wardrobe shaming at work.When she's roped back into Runway as Features editor, she starts off on a wrong footing with Miranda, who claims she has "not earned" her position. But when Andy goes out of her way to get Miranda that elusive exclusive in the era of rehashes, Miranda rewards her both personally and professionally by securing a bigger budget for her section and inviting her to a high-end weekend getaway. After a change in hands of ownership, Miranda and Andy become unlikely bedfellows and join forces against an army of tech bros and a compromised future. Yes, they've to choose between the lesser of the devils, but they get there only through a sustained push for "more thought-out pieces with a POV" instead of glossy fashion dumps.

Miranda gives Andrea the benefit of doubt instead of treating her walkout two decades ago as a sucker punch to her ego. Similarly, Andrea never gives in to the lucrative offer of writing a definitive Miranda Priestly exposé despite their differences. She recognizes Miranda is as much, if not a bigger, victim as herself of the tectonic shift in the economics and consumption of journalism. She could've gone the Emily way, switched fields, scaled the corporate ladder, and dated a billionaire to (almost) buy the position she thought she always deserved. Or she could've turned on the system that made her what she's today and made a moolah or two out of the soul-selling book offer. But instead, she chooses not to be "Emily 2", but Andrea, a self-made journalist with abiding integrity.At its very core, The Devil Wears Prada's sauciness came from its origin. Lauren Weisberger, a former Vogue employee and assistant to editor-in-chief Anna Wintour, wrote a "definitive" expose on her ex-boss, whom Miranda was reportedly modelled on. What's more spicy than having two women go at it — whether it's for the same position or at different rungs of the corporate ladder? But The Devil Wears Prada 2 refuses to go down that familiar, potentially more profitable street. Because it recognizes the market for what it's become — a bait-feeding mechanism that pits one (woman) against another as part of the corporate power struggle. The sequel wants to dig deeper and demonstrate that there's power in collaboration. Sure, an Emily can still manifest "May the bridges I burn light my way," but guess where she ends up? Sharing carbs (and guilt) with the Emily who chose to build those bridges in the dark instead.

'When will this war end?': Ameesha Patel stranded at Dubai airport as UAE shuts airspace

Actor Ameesha Patel on Tuesday said her New York-Mumbai flight was diverted due to UAE airspace restrictions, leaving her stranded for hours at the airports in Muscat and Dubai. She attributed the closure to "fresh missile attacks" launched by Iran.Taking to her X handle, Ameesha wrote, "On my way back to MUMBAI from NEW YORK on Emirates! As we were about to land in DUBAI the airspace closed in UAE due to fresh missile Attacks! We have now been diverted to MUSCAT n are awaiting further updates !! When will this WAR end (folded hands emoticons) !! Praying."

The actor posted another update after a few hours, along with a photo from inside the Dubai airport. "Been hours n hours at DUBAI airport !! And the wait continues .... Can't wait to get home to MUMBAI," she wrote in the caption. While sharing another picture from the airport lounge, Ameesha wrote, "24 hours from the time we left NYC and still counting hours to reach Mumbai. Endless airport lounge time."The UAE said Iran launched four cruise missiles during the attack on Monday. According to the defence ministry, three were intercepted by air defence systems, while the fourth fell into the sea. At the same time, a drone strike sparked a fire at the oil facility in Fujairah, a key hub for energy exports.

Bobby Deol was hesitant to do Anurag Kashyap's Bandar till Dharmendra stepped in: 'Go take a chance'

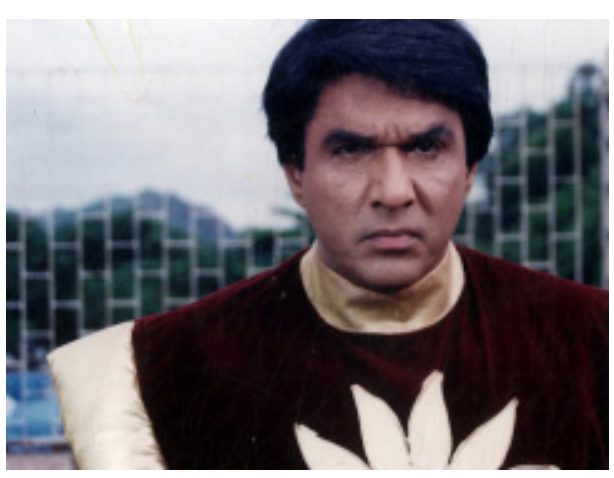
Actor Bobby Deol bounced back from his career's lowest phase in the late 2010s when he took a chance with Prakash Jha's 2020 MXPlayer crime show Aashram. Playing a corrupt spiritual guru wasn't even remotely on his mind in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when he ruled the roost as an A-list superstar. In his 2.0 era, Bobby has consolidated his position as the go-to villain in projects like Animal (2023), The Ba***ds of Bollywood (2025), and the upcoming films, Alpha and Jana Nayagan.But when Anurag Kashyap reached out to him with the crime thriller Bandar, Bobby thought the film could amount to taking his adventurous streak too far. He was initially hesitant to take up the protagonist's role of a has-been television star accused of rape by his ex-girlfriend. "Bobby was initially slightly hesitant about whether he would be able to pull off the Bandar role," a source close to the development tells SCREEN.

So, he went back to his family and took their advice. His family was also surprised, given it's quite a dark role for a star like Bobby Deol. But it was the biggest star of his family — his late, legendary father Dharmendra — who encouraged Bobby to give his nod. The veteran actor recalled how he also encountered raised eyebrows when he showed interest in offbeat films back in the 1960s, during his rise as a superstar.

"Dharam ji told him actors can't be shy. He said, 'Even I have done non-mainstream roles in Satyakam, Anupama, and Dillagi. Go take a chance,'" adds the source. That did it for Bobby, who immediately gave his nod to the role. He clearly had faith in his father, who did his own share of unconventional films like Hrishikesh Mukherjee's Anupama (1966) and Satyakam (1969), along with the lesser-known risk, Basu Chatterjee's 1978 romantic comedy Dillagi, in which he starred opposite his then-future wife Hema Malini.Bobby Deol has looked up to Dharmendra, as was witnessed when he received the Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of his late father at the Chetak Screen Awards last month. "He worked in this industry for so many years, he saw both good and bad times, but never gave up. Wherever I go and whoever I meet, I receive so much love because my father opened people's hearts for us — for me, my brother (Sunny Deol), and our family," said a visibly emotional Bobby.

Last year, the actor told SCREEN upon completing 30 years in the film industry that he's just getting started. "I'm going to be here for a very long time, probably as long as my dad (Dharmendra). If there's anyone I'm inspired by, it's only my father. He's something else," said Bobby.Bobby Deol also opened up on Bandar, calling it one of the most unconventional roles he's done so far. "That was a very different kind of character than what I've played in films and shows. Usually, you end up playing very larger-than-life characters. You become so conditioned playing those that it becomes more difficult to change the whole process of how you perform. But Anurag really helped me with that. He brought out the best in me," Bobby added.Bandar premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival last year, marking a first for Bobby. Co-produced by Zee Studios and Nikhil Dwivedi's Saffron Magicworks, the film also stars Sanya Malhotra, Saba Azad, Sapna Pabbi, Indrajith Sukumaran, and Joju George, among others. It is slated to release in Indian cinemas on June 5.

'He is very stubborn': Surendra Pal reacts to Mukesh Khanna's refusal to accept Ranveer Singh as Shaktimaan



Even today, Mukesh Khanna continues to remain in the news, largely due to his iconic portrayal of Shaktimaan. More recently, veteran actor Surendra Pal, who has worked with Mukesh Khanna in both Shaktimaan and Mahabharat, spoke about their dynamic and how he came to be cast in the television series.In a conversation with Sidharth Kannan, while speaking about Mukesh Khanna, Surendra said: "My friendship with Mukesh has been very strong, in fact it still is. We have always shared a cordial relationship. I respect him deeply and hold him in very high regard. The role of Bhishma Pitamah that he portrayed was so beautiful that I think nobody else could have done it the way he did. He is a very natural actor and works with great passion."The veteran actor further recalled that when he heard Mukesh was making Shaktimaan, he approached him and requested a role as the antagonist. He said: "I told him to give me the villain's role. He said no, only one specific person can do this role. I asked who, and he said Amrish Puri. I said fine, but I knew Amrish Puri would not do it because he was very busy with films. In television, you need a full-time commitment; you cannot work the way you do in films."

Surendra added that when he later learned the villain's role was still available, he went back to Mukesh's office. "When I found out that the villain's role in Shaktimaan was still vacant, I went to his office again and said, give me this role. He asked what I would do with it. I told him, first give it to me, then I will show you."Surendra Pal then described the effort he put into creating the iconic character of Tamraj Kilvish in Shaktimaan: "I started thinking deeply about the character. Mukesh ji suggested that I use a nose extension, and he also said that I had to break away from my image of Dronacharya. We decided to completely transform it. I wore a curly-haired wig, changed my eyebrows, changed my eyes, and even altered my teeth. It was difficult to paint them and apply gum there. While speaking, I could even taste the colour. I wore long artificial nails. It was all very difficult."While praising Mukesh Khanna's performance as Bhishma Pitamah in Mahabharat, Surendra said: "He played the elderly role of Bhishma Pitamah, but added so many variations. He performed it exceptionally well." He further added: "With Shaktimaan, he broke away from the image of Bhishma Pitamah and added humour to the character. He became a children's favourite. That only shows the range he has as an actor."Addressing the long-standing perception of differences or ego issues between them, the actor clarified: "He is a wonderful man and a wonderful actor. I left the role of Kilvish because I used to shoot inside caves where torches were burning, and there was always smoke everywhere. I also had to wear heavy padding to appear fat. It became very hectic because of the heat and I used to sweat a lot. After a point, it was not possible for me to continue. It wasn't about money; sometimes your health takes a toll. I wanted to look after my health." He further added: "There was never any ego problem between us. Both our characters were equally significant and still remembered in public memory. And we were both equally dedicated actors. In fact, during work, there were never any ego issues between us."Surendra Pal also responded to Mukesh Khanna's recent comments suggesting that Ranveer Singh may not be the ideal choice for the role of Shaktimaan: "He is the best judge; it is his creation. He will naturally want the best for his character, which he treats like his own child even today. That is why he will not compromise. He is very stubborn."However, he added a differing perspective: "Ranveer Singh is not a bad choice. I really like him, and after watching Dhurandhar, I have become an even bigger fan. I feel he could be ideal for the role. I think Mukesh ji should reconsider and broaden his thinking a little."Recently, Mukesh Khanna revealed that he is losing crores of rupees by not greenlighting the cast of Shaktimaan, as he does not want a star to portray the iconic superhero. In a chat with Zoom, he said: "It is my loss. I am losing crores of rupees, as Sony is ready to give me crores of rupees. I said, 'Wait, I don't want this cast.' They are adamant, and I am also adamant. They want a star, I don't want a star. If I am allowed, I would conduct auditions across the country to find who will become Shaktimaan. You will get publicity and also find a boy who is good-looking, simple, and kind. For me, no actor who already has an image can become Shaktimaan."

'Ladka bewakoof hai': Sunil Dutt begged police to save Sanjay Dutt in 1993 Mumbai blasts case

Sanjay Dutt, during his younger years, was often seen as the quintessential "spoilt brat." Born to film legends Nargis Dutt and Sunil Dutt, Sanjay often found himself in the news for the wrong reasons. Over time, his life became embroiled in multiple controversies, including substance abuse, alleged links with the underworld, and his association with the 1993 Bombay blasts. He was accused of illegal possession of arms and later convicted of possessing a 9mm pistol, an AK-56 rifle, hand grenades, and ammunition. Recently, former Mumbai Police Commissioner MN Singh, who led the investigation, revisited the case in an interview with Hussain Zaidi Files' YouTube channel, offering detailed insights into the probe.

'Sanjay Dutt spoke to Dawood Ibrahim, got those weapons delivered to his house'Singh said, "The underworld was involved in getting arms from Pakistan. Sanjay Dutt had spoken to Dawood Ibrahim, met him, and then got those weapons delivered to his house. Abu Salem had come to make the delivery on the instructions of Dawood Ibrahim's younger brother. So, when we learnt that Sanjay Dutt had accepted the weapons, we were all shocked."

Sanjay's father Sunil Dutt was an active politician at the time and had a stellar reputation. Singh said that Sanjay's involvement shocked them because they couldn't believe that Sunil's son would be involved in something nefarious. "We couldn't believe it—not because we thought Sanjay Dutt couldn't do something like this, but because of Sunil Dutt. He was a great, decent gentleman. However, when I had so much information about Sanjay Dutt receiving weapons during a period of riots, how could I not act upon it? Should I have simply let it go because he is a star? That wasn't possible."

Sanjay Dutt confessed, said he took arms for protectionHe further added: "Then we summoned him and questioned him. He confessed to his actions. He said, 'I have taken them, but it was a mistake.' When asked what prompted him to associate with gangsters, he said, 'Around the time of the riots, I was receiving threats, so I got them delivered to my home. It was my mistake.' I then told him, 'You already have multiple licensed weapons—wasn't that enough? There was also police security outside your house. Despite all this, you took AK-56 rifles, bullets, and grenades. These are not things one keeps for personal safety.' After this, he admitted his involvement, and we arrested him."

Singh also spoke about the pressure he faced during the investigation: "During this time, I was under pressure from several quarters, including Sunil Dutt, who would often meet me and request me to save his son, saying, 'Ladka bevakoof hai' (the boy is foolish). I told him it was extremely difficult for me, especially since Sanjay was a public figure and the entire world knew about the case. I could not dismiss the charges. He requested that I not invoke the TADA (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act), saying his son was not a terrorist. I agreed that he was not a conventional terrorist, but he had helped terrorists, which is also a serious crime. I also told him that Sanjay Dutt was not the only one against whom action had been taken—many others, including some police officers who helped gangsters, were also charged."He added: "As an officer, I had to fulfill my duty. In such a case, I cannot help anyone. Many people were unhappy with my actions, but the case against him was strong, and that is why convictions followed. I filed the case under the TADA Act and submitted the charge sheet."However, Singh raised one concern for public consideration: "Everyone involved—including Abu Salem, Baba Moosa Chauhan, and Haneef Kadawala, who were accused of delivering the weapons—were punished under the TADA Act. My grievance with the court is that those who delivered the weapons were convicted under TADA, but the person who received them was not treated under the same provisions. I have no personal enmity with Sanjay or Sunil Dutt, but one must analyse how this makes sense. I cannot say whether the court was pressured, but the outcome raises questions."In his autobiography Let Me Say It Now, former Deputy Commissioner of Police Rakesh Maria also described Sanjay Dutt's interrogation, noting that the actor initially denied involvement before eventually confessing.Maria wrote that during questioning, he told Dutt: "I am asking you like a gentleman; you should answer like one." He further recounted that several prominent figures

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