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## Supreme Court extends TET deadline for in-service teachers

Hyderabad: The Supreme Court on Friday extended the deadline for in-service teachers to qualify in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) from two years to three years. With this extension, in-service teachers have to qualify in the TET by August 31, 2028. However, the court rejected the plea seeking TET exemption for teachers appointed before August 23, 2010. City & Local GuidesThe Supreme Court's order came in response to review petitions filed by the School Teachers' Federation of India (STFI) and several other teachers' associations, along with multiple State governments, including Telangana, challenging the court's earlier judgment dated September 1, 2024.

## Congress govt conspiring to end KCR's welfare schemes: Jagadish Reddy

Hyderabad: Suryapet MLA and former Minister G Jagadish Reddy accused the Congress government of attempting to dismantle welfare schemes initiated by former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao during the BRS regime. He said the Congress government, which shelved the fee reimbursement scheme for students, was conspiring to abolish free electricity and free drinking water schemes in Telangana. City & Local Guides

## SIR poses threat to votes of migrant workers, Telangana CM cautions

Hyderabad: May 29

Suspecting that the votes of migrants may get deleted in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise being done in Telangana by the Election Commission of India (ECI), Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy said that it could become a major problem for Adivasis, Lambadas, and Dalits.

He said the votes of minorities and women could also be under threat due to SIR.

He, along with the All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge of Telangana Meenakshi Natarajan addressed the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee's (TPCC) Political Affairs Committee and the State Advisory Committee at Gandhi Bhavan on Friday, May 29.

At the meeting, he devised the strategies to be adopted to save the votes of these crucial sections from being deleted due to SIR.

As part of the mitigation strategy, he announced that in-charges to all 119 assembly constituencies and 17 Lok Sabha segments in the state will be appointed, to ensure that these crucial votes remain in the electoral rolls during the SIR exercise.

Recalling the role played by the booth enrollers in the party's digital membership drive held for 90 days during which 45 lakh members were enrolled in the state, he said those enrollers will play a key role during the SIR process at the booth-level.

He directed the in-charge ministers of all the districts to ensure that they spent at least once in ten days



with the party workers at the grass-root level, so that the workers will also be motivated to work at the booth-level.

The chief minister said that he himself would follow the same rule and spend three days with party workers in a month.

Observing that the appointment of chairpersons for various corporations has been completed, and with the sarpanches, municipal corporators and chairpersons from Congress holding their positions, everybody needed to ensure that the SIR exercise doesn't affect the votes in their respective jurisdictions.

He said all the Rajya Sabha MPs and MLCs needed to focus their energies in 15 assembly constituencies in Hyderabad, where SIR becomes crucial. He said that meetings needed to be held in all these 15 constituencies to prepare the party workers on SIR.

## Hooch Tragedy in Pune, 14 Killed, Eight Held

Mumbai, May 29

At least 14 persons died after allegedly consuming spurious liquor in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad, with several others in critical condition, triggering concern across the region. According to police, the victims had consumed liquor sourced from an illegal den operating in the Dapodi and Fugewadi areas. Soon after consumption, many complained of severe stomach pain, nausea and vomiting. A senior police officer said 10 deaths were reported in Pimpri-Chinchwad and four in Pune district. The case came to light on May 28 under the Dapodi police station limits after reports of multiple deaths in Fugewadi, prompting an investigation.

Preliminary findings indicated that illicit liquor was manufactured in Uruli Kanchan and supplied to Fugewadi and other areas. Police alleged that methanol was added to dilute the alcohol, leading to the deaths.

The Pimpri-Chinchwad police have arrested nine persons, including those allegedly involved in manufacturing, distribution and sale of the liquor. Four of the accused were produced before a court and remanded to police custody till June 8, 2026, while others are to be produced subsequently.

The state excise department has suspended 13 officials, including inspectors, sub-inspectors and constables, for alleged dereliction of duty in failing to curb bootlegging activities.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said eight persons had been arrested so far and more arrests were likely as the investigation progressed. "We have



identified the entire ecosystem and are also tracing its wider network. The police and the Excise Department are working together on this case. We will get to its roots and dismantle it," he said.

"We will trace all the networks and break this chain, as this amounts to murder. Strict sections have been invoked against the accused," he added, describing the incident as serious and stating that medical assistance was being provided to those undergoing treatment.

Police said viscera samples of the deceased have been sent for chemical analysis and reports are awaited. An FIR has been registered under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Maharashtra Prohibition Act.

Several persons who consumed the liquor are undergoing treatment at hospitals in the area.

## 'Traumatic', accountability must in NEET paper leak case: SC as govt says PM keeping eye

NEW DELHI, MAY 29

Terming it "very traumatic" for students and their families, the Supreme Court on Friday called for fixing accountability in the NEET paper leak case even as the Centre said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was personally monitoring the situation.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) told the SC that it was all set to conduct the NEET (UG) in the computer-based test (CBT) mode from next year instead of the pen-and-paper mode after consulting the Centre.

In an affidavit filed in the top court, the NTA said a high-level committee of experts had recommended transition of the NEET (UG) to the CBT mode.

"The real problem won't stop till actual accountability arises. Not in terms of so and so will be liable, it will be effective when we know which individual shoulders the responsibility. Unless you identify the specific duty bearers, it will be difficult," a Bench of Justice PS Narasimha and Justice Alok Aradhe said.

"The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has never been in such a situation... You need to learn," Justice Narasimha said, adding that the NTA should learn from other bodies such as the UPSC, which had been conducting the prestigious Civil Services examinations without any paper leak for decades.

Asking the Centre to file an affidavit in the matter, the Bench posted petitions seeking a direction to replace the NTA with a robust and autonomous body to conduct the medical entrance examination for further hearing in the second week of July after the summer vacation.

On May 12, the Centre and the NTA cancelled the NEET (UG)-2026 held on May 3 and the NEET paper leak case has since been handed over to the CBI, which has arrested at least 11 accused from Delhi, Gurugram, Jaipur, Nasik, Pune and some other places. The NEET has been rescheduled for June 21.

"The problem is that most institutions are ad hoc. It's a phenomenon that is everywhere in the country. It's not the individual who has the capability but the institution," noted the Bench, which had on May 25 pulled up the NTA for not having learnt lessons from earlier NEET paper leaks.

"It is sad that they have not learnt their lessons. The matter travelled to this court earlier also. We passed an order, a committee was formed... a monitoring committee, which made some recommendations and they were accepted but..." the Bench had said, while hearing petitions filed by the Federation of All India Medical Association and the United Doctors' Front.

However, the government on Friday asserted that it was seriously concerned about the issue and PM Modi was personally monitoring it to ensure that there were no lacunae.

"The PM is personally monitoring it," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told the Bench. He said some new mechanisms had been put in place for the NEET-UG re-test on June 21.

The Bench, however, said, "It's actually very traumatic if something like this happens — not just for the



students but also their families and everybody... It's not beyond us... We should not disappoint our youngsters."

Agreeing with the Bench, Mehta said, "They (students and their families) invest so much emotions."

The Bench also interacted with K Radhakrishnan, who heads the monitoring committee constituted by the top court in 2024 to suggest measures to make NEET fool-proof.

It wondered how the paper leak happened despite the committee's recommendations and subsequent reforms. "How much monitoring of implementation has happened? How has this failure occurred? Despite a high-powered committee, if this incident happened, there is something wrong with the original recommendation or there is no proper implementation," the Bench noted.

Radhakrishnan said the committee had submitted 35 long-term recommendations and around 60 short-term recommendations, most of which had already been implemented and that the reforms largely yielded positive results in the NEET (PG)-2025, which was conducted "mostly satisfactorily", except for some power outage issues.

Regarding the NEET (UG)-2026, the former ISRO Chairman said the committee had made recommendations covering both the pre-examination and post-examination stages.

Alleging a "systemic failure", the petitioners have sought replacement of the testing agency with a robust and autonomous body to conduct the medical entrance exam.

Seeking a complete overhaul of the national testing framework, they requested the top court to direct the government to replace the NTA with a "technologically advanced and autonomous body" to restore the integrity of medical entrance examinations.

The petitioners have demanded structural and technological reforms, including mandatory "digital locking" of question papers and a transition to the CBT mode to eliminate risks associated with the physical handling and transportation of examination material.

The association urged the top court to constitute a high-powered monitoring committee headed by a retired Supreme Court judge and including cybersecurity and forensic experts to oversee the re-conduct of the 2026 exam.



## Mujahid, Mahboob Alam Khan paid Rs 15 lakh to kill Hyderabad advocate: Police

Hyderabad May 29

Police Commissioner, VC Sajjanar, said that the motive behind the murder stemmed from prolonged disputes over Waqf properties and management issues in Malakpet and Lakdikapul areas. Several civil, criminal and Waqf Tribunal cases were pending between both groups for many years.

"The accused Mujahid Alam Khan and his father Mahboob Alam Khan allegedly conspired with their associates to eliminate the advocate for a contract amount of Rs 15 lakh. The conspiracy was executed through intermediaries Hassan Ali alias Chaous, Muneer and Kishan alias Pappu. The accused Kishan later engaged Vinay, who brought in Abhijeeth alias Nani, Vikram alias Chintu and Manideep alias Pogo Nani to carry out the murder. The accused allegedly conducted reconnaissance of the victim's movements for several months before executing the attack on May 23," Sajjanar said.

Based on technical evidence, police traced Kishan alias Pappu to Panipat in Haryana, where he was arrested on May 27 by a special police team. During interrogation, he allegedly confessed to the conspiracy and disclosed

the involvement of the other accused.

Acting on his confession and technical leads, police arrested accused Mujahid Alam Khan from his Jubilee Hills residence, while other accused were apprehended at different locations in Hyderabad on Friday.

Police identified Mujahid Alam Khan as the main conspirator who allegedly arranged the contract killing, while Mahboob Alam Khan allegedly assisted the accused in evading arrest after the offence.

Abhijeeth alias Nani was driving the offending Scorpio vehicle at the time

of the murder while Vinay arranged the execution team, procured the vehicle and participated in planning and surveillance.

Vikram, alias Chintu, connected the key accused, while Manideep, alias Pogo Nani, accompanied Kishan during the offence.

The Scorpio vehicle used in the crime, cash amounting to Rs. 10.10 lakh and several mobile phones were seized from the accused. Further investigation is underway to trace the absconding accused and collect additional evidence related to the conspiracy.

"Mahboob Alam Khan

and Mujahid Alam Khan's involvement in other cases, including the previous murder attempt cases, is being probed. The source of money paid to the hired assassins is being verified," Sajjanar added.

He added that the police will take custody of all the accused for further investigation in the case. Regarding the threat to the Khaja Moizuddin's family, he said assured that the police will provide them security.

The Commissioner clarified that there was no political interference or political pressure in the case, and a thorough scientific investigation was done.

## Preparations underway for Karnataka CM oath ceremony

Bengaluru, May 29

Preparations are in full swing at the Grand Steps of Vidhana Soudha for the swearing-in ceremony of Karnataka's new Chief Minister even before the official selection of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader.

Amid strong indications that Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president D.K. Shivakumar is set to become the next Chief Minister, arrangements for the oath-taking ceremony have already begun in Bengaluru. Sources said the formal announcement is expected after the CLP meeting scheduled for Friday.

Meanwhile, astrologer and Raja guru Dwarakanath Guruji has reportedly suggested June 5, 6 and 7 as auspicious dates for D.K. Shivakumar's swearing-in ceremony.

Speaking to reporters Dwarakanath Guruji said, "The auspicious time has already been fixed. Earlier, I had also suggested the muhurta for the CLP meeting on May 30. Now I have advised June 5, 6 and 7 as favourable dates for the oath-taking ceremony. With divine blessings and grace, D.K. Shivakumar is getting the Chief Minister's post."

# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## 15-year-old Vaibhav rewrites IPL history

AT 15, most teenagers are still learning to cope with school exams and adolescent uncertainty. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, meanwhile, is dismantling world-class bowlers under the brightest lights of the IPL. His astonishing 97 off just 29 balls for Rajasthan Royals against Sunrisers Hyderabad in New Chandigarh on Wednesday was an explosive innings. The knock, studded with 12 sixes and played at a staggering strike rate, helped him surpass Chris Gayle's long-standing record for most sixes in a single IPL season. That a teenager has overtaken a benchmark set by one of T20 cricket's greatest power-hitters underlines the extraordinary scale of the achievement. Interestingly, Gayle called Vaibhav the "new six machine" soon after.

What stands out even more is that Sooryavanshi appeared untouched by pressure, reputation or media glare. Falling short of a century by three runs would have devastated most players. His response — "Mere 100s lagte rahenge" — reflected an athlete already possessing rare self-belief and emotional composure. His rise also highlights how India's cricketing ecosystem has evolved. Vaibhav was inducted into the RR squad at just 13 years and 243 days old, becoming the youngest player ever to earn an IPL contract. The IPL, elite coaching networks and exposure to high-pressure competition at a young age are producing players with remarkable confidence and technical maturity. However, there is a need to guard against the dangers that accompany sudden fame. Prodigies such as Vinod Kambli, Prithvi Shaw and Unmukt Chand have struggled under the burden of premature stardom. Administrators must keep in mind that talent requires patient nurturing.

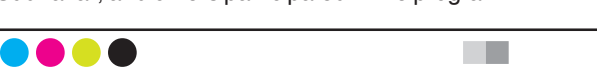
## MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy and KUDA Chairman Inagala Venkatram Reddy Inaugurate New Anganwadi Building



"Atmakur/Parakala, May 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) : A grand inauguration ceremony of the newly constructed Anganwadi Centre building was held on Friday at Agrampadu village in Atmakur mandal under the Parakala Assembly constituency of Hanamakonda district. As part of the State Government's prestigious "Mahila Shakti Varotsavulu" (Women's Empowerment Week Celebrations), Parakala MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy and Hanamakonda DCC President and KUDA Chairman Inagala Venkatram Reddy jointly inaugurated the new building by ceremonially cutting the ribbon. Addressing the gathering, the leaders stated that Anganwadi centres play a crucial role in ensuring healthcare, nutrition, and foundational education for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children in rural areas. They emphasized that the Congress government remains committed to women's empowerment and the bright future of children. As part of this commitment, modern Anganwadi buildings equipped with improved facilities are being made available across rural regions, they said. Leaders Share Warm Moments with Children After entering the newly inaugurated building, MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy and DCC President Inagala Venkatram Reddy affectionately interacted with the children, seated them on their laps, and encouraged them to write their first letters on slates using chalk pieces. The leaders personally guided the children through their early learning activities and blessed them warmly. They later reviewed the facilities available at the Anganwadi centre and enquired with the staff regarding nutritional support and other welfare services being provided to the beneficiaries. The programme was attended by Mandal Congress leaders, village Sarpanch, MPTC members, ward members, ICDS officials, supervisors, Anganwadi teachers, women representatives, and village elders in large numbers.

## Invitation Extended to MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy for PDC 4th Anniversary Celebrations

"UPPAL , MAY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) : On the occasion of the 4th anniversary celebrations of Praveen Dance Company (PDC), choreographer Praveen courteously met Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy at his residence and invited him to attend the anniversary event scheduled to be held on June 4 at Road No. 12, North Kamala Nagar, Kapra Circle. BRS leaders Nemuri Mahesh, Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Colony Secretary, reporter J. Sudhakar, and others participated in the program.



# Harahara Kshetram Committee Felicitates JALLI MOHAN



—MANJULA Couple with Vedic Blessings Couple Announces Donation of ₹21 Lakhs for Temple Reconstruction \*\*\*\*\*UPPAL , MAY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): As part of the reconstruction works of Sri Chilukeshwara Anjaneya Swamy Temple (Harihara Kshetram), Chikanagar residents, village elders, and senior BRS leaders Jalli Mohan and Jalli Manjula announced a generous donation of ₹21 lakhs towards the temple renovation in the presence of Bandari Lakshma Reddy. On this auspicious occasion, the temple committee honored the couple with Vedic blessings and felicitated them with shawls under the leadership of the Shiva Temple

Committee. Speaking on the occasion, several speakers recalled the services rendered by Jalli Mohan to the people of Chikanagar and wished divine blessings upon him and his family. Later, Jalli Mohan stated that he would continue to take responsibility and actively participate in every aspect of the temple reconstruction work. The event was attended by Temple Committee President Dasari Krishna, General Secretary Gone Srikanth Mudiraj, committee members Devasani Balachander, Gone Anjiah, Patangi Amruth Rao, Palvancha Vittal, Kompalli Ravinder Mudiraj, Gudi Madhusudan Reddy, Sanghi Swamy Yadav, Balaram, Guda Srisailam, Boda Vidyasagar, Veera Reddy, and others.

## Snake Menace to Be Addressed.. Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Responds to Krishna Reddy Nagar Issue



"KAPRA , MAY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Residents of Krishna Reddy Nagar Colony under Charlapally Division have been facing severe inconvenience due to the increasing menace of snakes caused by overgrown trees adjacent to the compound wall near the NFC Ground. The issue was brought to the attention of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. Responding promptly, the MLA met officials of the NFC department and explained the concerns faced by the colony residents. The officials responded positively and assured that the overgrown trees along the compound wall would be removed and necessary measures would be taken to ensure that residents do not face further problems. BRS party leaders Mahesh Goud, Colony President Venkatesh Naik, Vice President Shekhar Naik, Treasurer Shankar Naik, Akhil Naik and others participated in the program.

## Groundbreaking Ceremony for Desilting Works at Gopalpur Tank

— Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavaya, MLA K.R. Nagaraju \*\*\*\*\*Hanamakonda, May 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) : Warangal Member of Parliament, Dr. Kadiyam Kavaya, stated that public participation is crucial for the successful implementation of development programs. She emphasized that the protection and conservation of water resources constitute a collective responsibility of every citizen. On Friday, Dr. Kavaya, accompanied by local MLA K.R. Nagaraju, laid the foundation stone for the desilting works at the Gopalpur village tank, located in the 56th Division under the jurisdiction of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation. This project is being undertaken at an estimated cost of approximately ₹1 crore. Speaking on the occasion, the MP noted that the restoration of tanks would not only significantly boost groundwater levels but also enhance the water storage capacity of these specific water bodies. She stated that such developmental initiatives offer a long-term solution to the frequent flooding issues experienced in the surrounding areas. Dr. Kavaya highlighted that these desilting works would play a pivotal role in mitigating the flood-related problems frequently encountered in Gopalpur



and its neighboring localities during the monsoon season. She reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening civic infrastructure to ensure that the public faces no inconvenience. District Collector Chahat Bajpai, public representatives, officials, local leaders, and residents of the colony participated in the event.

## Flag Platforms to Symbolise Party Expansion: Tadigoppula Mallesh



constituency in-charge Tadigoppula Mallesh said on Friday. Following the directions of party president Kalvakuntla Kavitha, TRS leaders met Narsampet Municipal Commissioner Katam Bhaskar and submitted a representation seeking official permission for the proposed construction works. Speaking on the occasion, Mallesh stated that the party plans to complete the construction of flag platforms in all 30 wards under the Narsampet municipality in a phased manner. He further revealed that the initiative would subsequently be expanded to mandal headquarters and later to gram panchayat limits across the constituency. He remarked that the flag platforms are not merely symbolic structures, but represent the party's self-respect, unity among cadre, and enduring connection with the people. According to him, these centres would emerge as focal points for organising party activities more effectively at the grassroots level. Mallesh further stated that the party is actively preparing for the upcoming MPTC and ZPTC elections by strengthening its organisational network at the field level. He asserted that TRS intends to field strong candidates in all possible constituencies and is formulating a comprehensive political strategy ahead of the elections. He also announced that the TRS "Flag Festival" would be celebrated in a grand and spirited manner this year with the objective of energising party cadre and taking the party's ideology and programmes closer to the people. He called upon party workers to work collectively for the expansion and strengthening of the organisation across all levels.

— TRS leaders submit representation to Municipal Commissioner seeking permissions \*\*\*\*\*Narsampet, May 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) : Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) is set to undertake the construction of party flag platforms on a large scale as part of its strategy to strengthen the organisation from the grassroots level, party Narsampet

## “Here is the English news translation formatted for a clean, professional layout:

Peddapalli District, "Manthani" ( Indian chronicle ), "Kumar Assumes Charge as Manthani Assistant Public Prosecutor" Manthani: "Artha Kumar assumed charge as the Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) of the Manthani Additional Court on Friday. Kumar, who hails from Rayadandi village in Anthergaon Mandal, was previously serving as the APP at the Parkal Additional Magistrate Court. He has been transferred from Parkal to the Manthani Court as part of routine general transfers. Upon taking charge, Kumar was warmly welcomed by the court staff, who presented him with floral bouquets.



# Booth Level Agents Hold Crucial Responsibility in Electoral Roll Purification: Inagala Venkatram Reddy



"Parakala/Hanamkonda, May 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE) : Congress leaders have emphasised that Booth Level Agents (BLAs) must work with utmost vigilance and responsibility to ensure that electoral rolls — the very foundation of the democratic system — remain transparent, accurate, and free from discrepancies. A large-scale training programme for Congress Party Booth Level Agents was organised on Friday at NSR Convention Hall located at Gudepaad Cross Roads under the Parakala Assembly constituency. The programme was presided over by Parakala MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy and attended by Warangal MP Dr. Kadiyam Kavaya, Hanamakonda DCC President Inagala Venkatram Reddy, Warangal District Congress Committee President MD Ayub, and TPCC Parakala constituency observer Dr. Puli Anil Kumar as chief guests. Detailed Guidance on Special Intensive Revision Addressing the gathering, DCC President Inagala Venkatram Reddy stated that Booth Level Agents would play a decisive role in the "Special Intensive Revision" (SIR) process to be undertaken by the Election Commission of India. He stressed that BLAs must act responsibly in ensuring voting rights for every eligible citizen while facilitating the preparation of an error-free electoral roll. He informed that Booth Level Officers (BLOs) would visit every household at least three times between June 25 and July 24, 2026, as part of the revision exercise. During this period, BLAs were advised to remain available within their respective localities and actively supervise the distribution and collection of enumeration forms. Venkatram Reddy further stated that the draft electoral roll would be published on July 31, 2026, and instructed BLAs to thoroughly verify whether the names of all eligible voters had been properly included. He also urged party cadres to assist the public in filing Form-6 applications for new voter registrations and Form-8 applications for corrections, address changes, and other modifications between July 31 and August 30. He added that the final electoral roll would be officially published on October 1, 2026. Special Focus on Youth Voter Enrolment The DCC President highlighted the importance of identifying every young citizen who would attain 18 years of age by October 1, 2026, and ensuring their enrolment as voters through Form-6 applications. He also directed BLAs to cooperate with Booth Level Officers in preventing duplicate voter registrations and facilitating the deletion of names belonging to deceased persons or individuals who had permanently migrated from their constituencies. Further, he encouraged party workers to widely promote the online facility available through the official Election Commission website — voters.eci.gov.in — enabling citizens to independently complete their enumeration forms digitally. Several key leaders from the Parakala constituency, district committee members, Mandal Congress presidents, leaders of affiliated wings, and a large number of Booth Level Agents participated in the training programme.

## Corporate Entities Must Step Forward in Social Service: MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy



"Philanthropy by Business Leaders to Provide Free Funeral Facilities for Families Living in Rented Homes \*\*\*\*\*Hanamakonda, May 29 (Indian Chronicle) : Warangal West MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy has called upon corporate entities, business leaders, and socially conscious individuals to actively participate in welfare initiatives undertaken under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Emphasizing the collective responsibility toward regional development, he urged citizens to contribute their fair share in fostering a socially responsible and compassionate society. On Friday, Dr. Anita Reddy, a member of the Kakatiya University Governing Council, met with MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy to discuss a critical humanitarian issue concerning families residing in rented accommodations. She explained that when a death occurs in a rented residence, landlords often hesitate—or, in many instances, outright refuse—to allow the deceased's body to remain on the premises; this situation causes immense mental anguish and inconvenience to the bereaved families. In response to this issue, P.N. proposed the construction of a free public facility near the crematorium adjacent to the Padmakshamma Temple. However, this project is contingent upon the government allocating suitable land for the purpose. Several prominent businesspeople have come forward with a proposal. Murthy, Mahender Kapoor, Dr. Anita Reddy, and several other donors spearheaded this initiative. The donors also expressed their willingness to undertake the long-term maintenance of this facility under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. Appreciating their social commitment and humanitarian outlook,

MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy immediately took the initiative to personally meet with District Collector Chahat Bajpai, accompanied by the representatives, to discuss this proposal in detail. Responding positively to this initiative, the District Collector characterized the issue as a genuine and urgent social concern affecting numerous economically disadvantaged families. He stated that the proposed facility would significantly alleviate the hardships faced by grieving families during difficult times and commended the donors for undertaking this philanthropic endeavor.

## “To woo Andhra voters in GHMC, Congress has started taking name of NTR. Congress has no right to speak about NTR Garu. NTR Garu was among the first to give the call for Congress-mukt Bharat.”

“Rahul Gandhi talks about OBC politics, but Congress removed the only OBC Chief Minister it had.” “Congress is Commission Party” “Suryapet: Telangana BJP State President Shri N. Ramchander Rao Garu addressed the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Prashikshan Abhiyan held in Suryapet and congratulated BJP karyakartas for attending the training programme with great commitment despite the scorching summer heat.” “Speaking on the occasion, Shri N. Ramchander Rao Garu said that the Prashikshan programme is aimed at strengthening ideological, discipline, Sangathan, and Seva approach of BJP karyakartas. He said the BJP is not merely a political party, but a movement built on the principles of ‘Nation First’ and ‘Seva.’ “Recalling the early days of the BJP, he said that when the party had only two seats, karyakartas like him used to travel on cycles from village to village for membership drives. “People used to ask us, ‘What is BJP?’ Some called it Vajpayee ji’s party, and many even mocked us. But the karyakartas worked with dedication across mandals and villages. Today, because of their hard work and sacrifice, the BJP is ruling across the country,” he said. “He further stated that Telangana too has witnessed the rise of the BJP, with 8 Members of Parliament and 8 MLAs representing the people. He said this growth was possible only because of the sacrifice and dedication of countless karyakartas who worked without expecting anything in return.” “Referring to the exhibition showcasing BJP karyakartas who sacrificed their lives for the party, Shri Ramchander Rao Garu said their lives should inspire every worker. “Wins and losses are part of politics, but seva must remain eternal. Sangathan hi Seva — with this spirit, every karyakarta must work for society and the nation,” he said. “He expressed confidence that the BJP will sweep Telangana in the coming elections and form the government. “Earlier, people used to say that BJP was limited only to North Telangana and had no presence in South Telangana. But today, people across the state want the BJP. After giving opportunities to both BRS and Congress, the people of Telangana are now looking towards a double engine BJP Sarkaar under PM Shri Narendra Modi ji,” he stated. “Launching a sharp attack on the BRS and Congress, he said that the BRS failed Telangana during its 9-year rule and has lost the confidence of the people which is why they got 0 in Lok Sabha Elections. He added that many leaders and karyakartas of BRS want to join the BJP because they see the BJP as the only credible alternative to the Congress. “He also criticised the Congress government, calling it a “corrupt and commission-driven party, which works with a single aim of Commission at every step.” He also said that Congress has once again exposed its

anti-farmer mindset through its failure in paddy procurement. “In Suryapet and neighbouring districts, despite having ministers, farmers are facing severe problems. Paddy procurement has become a major issue. Only after the BJP started the RythuGosaBJPBharosa Yatra did the Congress government wake up,” he said. “Shri Ramchander Rao Garu demanded that the state government immediately purchase every grain from farmers. He reminded the people that the Central Government reimburses for procurement and said the Congress government has no excuse for delaying the process. He also alleged that farmers are being forced to sell below MSP due to the negligence of the state government.” “Highlighting the contribution of the Modi Government to Telangana, he said development in the state has been possible only because of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji’s commitment. He listed several major initiatives, including national highways, 5 kg free rice distribution, Warangal airport development, revival of Ramagundam Fertilizer Factory, Central Tribal University, Warangal Textile Park, Coach Factory, and Zaheerabad industrial development. He said nearly 13 lakh crore has been given to Telangana by the Modi Government.” “He accused both BRS and Congress of spreading false propaganda against the BJP by claiming that the Centre has done nothing for Telangana. “Instead of questioning the BJP, BRS and Congress must answer what they have done for Telangana,” he said. “Referring to the new political drama of Congress, he said the party changes its narrative only for vote-bank politics. “In Jubilee Hills, Congress said Congress is Muslim and Muslim is Congress for Muslim votes. Now, for GHMC elections and to woo Andhra voters, Congress has started speaking about NTR Garu. Congress has no moral right to speak about NTR Garu. NTR Garu entered politics because Congress insulted Telugu pride. He was the first to speak of a Congress-mukt Bharat,” he said. “He said that the BJP has always stood for Telugu people and national unity. He further stated that the BJP has given major representation to OBCs, while Congress only plays OBC politics. “Rahul Gandhi talks about OBC politics, but Congress removed the only OBC Chief Minister it had. Today, all Congress Chief Ministers come from upper-caste backgrounds,” he said. “Concluding his address, Shri N. Ramchander Rao Garu appealed to the people of Telangana to give the BJP one opportunity. He said that under 12 years of Prime Minister Modi’s leadership, the country has witnessed public welfare, development, and good governance, without a single scam.” “Telangana must develop, and that is possible only with a BJP government. Every karyakarta must take this message to the people and work with the spirit of seva, discipline, and Nation First,” he said.

## Paths May Diverge, But Memories Endure Forever

Grand Farewell for Police Personnel — CID Visweshwar — Transferred Personnel Honored with Shawls and Garlands Amidst an Emotional Atmosphere — Geesugonda, May 29 (Indian Chronicle) : In the noble profession of safeguarding public peace and maintaining law and order, transfers are a routine administrative process. However, farewell ceremonies for colleagues who have worked together at the same station are often deeply emotional and heartfelt occasions. Such a touching atmosphere was witnessed on Friday at the Geesugonda Police Station. “A grand farewell ceremony was organized within the premises of the Geesugonda Police Station, under the supervision of CID Visweshwar, for the personnel recently transferred from the station: Sub-Inspector Srinivas, Assistant Sub-Inspector Sudarshan, Head Constable Prabhakar, and Police Constables Mahender and Hari Krishna. “On this occasion, fellow officers and staff members recalled the invaluable services and cooperation rendered by the departing personnel, extended their heartfelt appreciation, and formally felicitated them. Their discipline, courteous demeanor toward the public, proactive approach in resolving issues, and the courage they displayed in handling challenging situations were widely praised as exemplary. Officials stated that police person-

nel play a pivotal role in maintaining law and order—particularly in rural areas—by remaining accessible to the public and being responsive to their needs. Their unwavering commitment to duty and professional integrity have earned them respect not only among their colleagues but also within the community at large. “The transferred personnel shared their experiences and emotional memories regarding their tenure at the Geesugonda Police Station. They expressed their gratitude for the cooperation extended by the public and the support received from their fellow officers. They noted that it was precisely this spirit of coordination that enabled them to discharge their duties effectively. They remarked that the time spent in Geesugonda would remain a cherished and unforgettable chapter in their professional careers. “The event concluded with heartfelt best wishes for their future assignments, expressing the hope that they would achieve even greater success and attain higher positions in their careers ahead. Reflecting the deep camaraderie, unity, and mutual affection prevailing among the staff, the transferred personnel were felicitated with shawls and garlands as a token of respect and affection. “CID Officer Visweshwar and the police staff of the Geesugonda Station participated in the event and conveyed their best wishes to the transferred personnel.

## Congress Government Gives Top Priority to Women's Empowerment and Child Welfare



— MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy — Anganwadi Building Inaugurated in Agrampahad Village — Hanamkonda, May 29 (Indian Chronicle): MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy stated that the Congress-led government has accorded top priority to women’s empowerment and child welfare, thereby reaffirming its commitment to inclusive rural development. “As part of the Women’s Week celebrations, Parkal MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy—accompanied by Hanamkonda District Congress President and KUDA Chairman Inugala Venkatrami Reddy—inaugurated a newly constructed Anganwadi building in Agrampahad village, Atmakur Mandal, on Friday. “During the event, traditional ceremonies such as ‘Aksharabyasam’ (initiation into education) and ‘Annaprasana’ (the ceremony of feeding solid food for the first time) were conducted for the children. This reflected the priority the government places on early childhood development and cultural traditions. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA Revuri Prakash Reddy remarked that Anganwadi centers serve as the foundation for a child’s educational journey and play a pivotal role in shaping their future. He emphasized that the Congress government places the utmost priority on the welfare of women and children in rural areas. He explained that Anganwadi centers are indispensable in providing early childhood education, as well as in extending nutritional support and healthcare services to pregnant women and lactating mothers. He stated that the government is working in a coordinated manner to strengthen



these services and to enhance their scope and efficiency. “With the objective of improving the quality of education in the state, the MLA also announced several innovative initiatives, such as the establishment of pre-primary schools, an increase in food allowances, and the introduction of modern educational standards through ‘Young India Integrated Schools.’ “Reiterating the government’s commitment to education and healthcare, he affirmed that women’s empowerment is the primary objective of the Congress government. He noted that efforts are underway to achieve holistic development by providing improved nutrition, primary education, and superior medical services. “Local leaders, officials, and villagers participated in this event in large numbers. They welcomed this government initiative and commended the special focus the administration is placing on grassroots-level development.

## S C extends TET deadline for in-service teachers

Hyderabad: The Supreme Court on Friday extended the deadline for in-service teachers to qualify in the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) from two years to three years.

## Government Prioritizes Infrastructure Development: MLA K.R. Nagaraju



— MLA Inaugurates Internal CC Road Constructed at a Cost of ₹10 Lakh — Hanamkonda/Hasanparthy, May 29 (Indian Chronicle) : Emphasizing rural development as a key focus, Vardhannapet MLA and retired IPS officer K.R. Nagaraju stated that the government is giving top priority to the creation of essential infrastructure in rural areas. “He inaugurated an internal cement concrete (CC) road constructed at a cost of ₹10 lakh under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in Sitanagaram village of Hasanparthy Mandal, along with KUDA Chairman Inugala Venkatramireddy. “Speaking on the occasion, MLA

Nagaraju said that the development of rural road networks plays a crucial role in improving the living standards of people. He noted that well-constructed roads not only facilitate smooth transportation but also enhance access to agriculture, education, and healthcare services. “He further stated that the government is actively prioritizing the development of basic infrastructure such as drainage systems, drinking water facilities, and road connectivity in villages. He added that the Congress-led public government is progressing steadily in fulfilling its promises and remains committed to the holistic development of rural regions. “

The MLA highlighted that the newly constructed road will significantly benefit local residents by improving connectivity and mobility, marking another step forward in the village’s development. He reiterated that people’s welfare and development remain his primary objective and assured that all necessary development works would be completed expeditiously. “On the occasion of the inauguration, villagers expressed their gratitude to the MLA and conveyed their satisfaction over the development initiative. “The programme was attended by Sarpanch Kookatla Sunitha-Ramesh, Atmakur AMC Vice Chairman Tangedpalli Tirupati, Mandal Party President Poreddy Mahender Reddy, public representatives, Congress leaders, village elders, officials, women, youth, and villagers.

## V-Guard Expands CSR Initiatives for Social Empowerment in Telangana

— Hyderabad, May 29 (Indian Chronicle) : V-Guard Industries has expanded its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the fields of education, skill development, and healthcare across Telangana, according to a statement issued on Friday by V-Guard Foundation Director Reena Mithun Chittilappilly. She stated that under the ‘Navadarshan’ project, services are being provided to 958 children with special needs across 10 special schools in five districts. The company also constructed new classrooms at a school in Suraram, Hyderabad, benefiting 55 students. Additionally, V-Guard has supported the construction of an ESI dispensary in the Cherlapally industrial area, which is expected to provide healthcare services to more than 10,000 people. Reena Mithun Chittilappilly further said that V-Guard has implemented 56 CSR projects across 11 states nationwide,



benefiting around 78,000 people with an investment of Rs.7.13 crore.

## Women’s Safety is the Priority: CP Sumathi at Sanskar Mega Counselling Program

Police Record Can Seriously Impact Future Prospects, Warns CP Sumathi — UPPAL, MAY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): “As part of the initiatives being undertaken by the Malkajgiri Commissionerate She Teams to curb crimes such as harassment against women and children, cyber abuse, eve-teasing, and stalking, the ‘Sanskar Mega Counselling Program’ was conducted on Friday at PMR Convention Hall in Nagole. “Malkajgiri Commissioner of Police Sumathi, who attended the program as the chief guest, stated that the main objective of the initiative is to instill respect towards women, bring behavioural change among offenders, and prevent the recurrence of crimes. She said special focus is being placed on creating psychological awareness, emotional control, and legal understanding among youth and first-time offenders. “The CP emphasized that ensuring dignity and safety for women is the responsibility of every individual in society. She clarified that the objective of She Teams is not limited to law enforcement alone, but also to provide an opportunity for offenders to reform themselves and become responsible citizens. “CP Sumathi warned that once a person’s name is entered into police records, it could have a serious impact on their future, and advised individuals to change their behaviour before strict legal action becomes necessary. She made it clear that harassment of women, domestic violence, and attacks on children will not be tolerated under any circumstances. “The Commissioner revealed that from January 1 to May 18 this year, She Teams in the Malkajgiri, Uppal, and LB Nagar zones registered 61 FIRs and 236 petty cases, taking a total of 760 persons into custody. Among them, 137 were minors and 384 were youth below the age of 24, which she described as a matter of concern. “She further stated that awareness programs on



women’s safety, cyber safety, the POCSSO Act, and responsible social media usage were conducted in 406 educational institutions and public places, reaching more than 53,000 people. Follow-up counselling sessions will also be conducted in the future, and Change Mentors may be appointed wherever necessary, she added. “During the program, psychologist Geetha Challa from Manojagruthi organization and her team conducted special sessions on behavioural transformation, emotional regulation, and social responsibility. Legal experts also educated participants on punishments related to offences under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), POCSSO Act, and IT Act. “The event was attended by LB Nagar DCP Dr. B. Anuradha, Women Safety DCP T. Usharani, Additional DCP Koteswara Rao, She Teams ACP Venkateshwarlu, legal advisors, public prosecutors, police personnel, and parents of those attending the counselling program.

## Ensure Books and Uniforms Reach Students Before School Reopening:

BJP Leaders Submit Representation to Uppal MEO

— UPPAL, MAY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): With schools set to reopen soon, BJP senior leaders met the Uppal MEO and requested that all necessary facilities be provided to students at the Uppal Zilla Parishad High School. They urged officials to ensure that uniforms and textbooks are distributed to students on time before the commencement of the academic year. “The leaders also brought to the attention of MEO Ramarao Naik that private school managements should collect only reasonable fees and extend full cooperation to parents, keeping the future of students in mind. “BJP leaders Mahankali Laxman Mudiraj, Ravula Balakrishna Goud, Reddygari Devender Reddy, Singaram Karthik, Borampet Murali Krishna, Mamilla Hari Shankar and others participated in the programme.



## Jaggareddy appoints TPCC General Secretary Topaji Ananth Kishan as Sadashivapeta Congress Party Affairs In-charge

“Indian chronicle correspondent Sangareddy” Jaggareddy appointed Topaji Ananth Kishan as Sadashivapeta Congress Full-time In-charge and Municipal Affairs In-charge and said that he will take charge of the appointment and affairs of the Urban Committee. Jaggareddy suggested that they work together with Kambalappally Sri Gadil Ram Reddy CDC Chairman, Block Congress Party President Siddanna Constituency Convener Anjaneyulu as the coordinators.



## SIR exercise must be carried out with transparency, says CEO

Officials asked to ensure thorough field verification of voter details before publication of draft rolls.



manently shifted voters and eliminate duplicate entries from the rolls. He said all persons attaining the age of 18 years by October 1, 2026, would be eligible to enrol as voters. The Chief Electoral Officer instructed Booth Level Officers (BLOs) to conduct door-to-door verification of voter details between June 25 and July 24 and ensure inclusion of all eligible voters in the rolls. He asked officials to scrutinise every entry carefully before finalising the draft electoral roll. Officials were instructed to ensure that all members of a family are mapped under the same polling station jurisdiction. He also directed them to prepare proposals for establishing new polling stations wherever the voter population exceeds 1,200.

Mr. Reddy said adequate enumerator forms should be made available to all BLOs and clarified that voters would not be required to produce documentary proof during the enumeration process. He also emphasised the need for comprehensive training programmes to familiarise BLOs with SIR guidelines, field verification procedures and form handling methods. He said notices would be issued in cases where discrepancies are identified after publication of the draft rolls. Explaining the documentation requirements, he said those born before July 1, 1987, need only submit self-identification or birth-related documents. Individuals born between July 1, 1987 and December 2, 2004, must furnish their own documents along with documents of either parent, while those born after December 2, 2004, would have to submit documents of both parents. The draft electoral rolls would be published on July 31. Objections and claims would be received from July 31 to August 30 and disposed of by September 28, he said, adding that the final electoral rolls would be published on October 1. Mr. Reddy instructed officials to conduct field-level inquiries into all objections and claims and ensure that no complaint is ignored. He also stressed the need for continuous coordination with political parties while maintaining complete neutrality in the electoral process. The role of political party representatives in the mapping exercise should be confined to identification of houses and individuals, he said, adding that officials must ensure that the public does not perceive the SIR process as being carried out by private persons.

KARIMNAGAR May 29 (Correspondent): Telangana Chief Electoral Officer C. Sudarshan Reddy on Friday directed election officials to undertake a meticulous verification of voter details as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise and ensure that the process is conducted in a transparent and impartial manner. Reviewing the progress of mapping and training activities through a video conference with District Collectors, District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers and other officials from Hyderabad, Mr. Reddy stressed the importance of maintaining accuracy in electoral rolls. Additional Collector Srinivas Reddy and RDO Ramesh Babu participated in the meeting from the Karimnagar Collectorate.

Mr. Sudarshan Reddy said the Election Commission had conducted several special revision exercises since 1950 and noted that a similar SIR programme had earlier been implemented in the Telangana region in 2002. He said the exercise would help remove names of deceased and per-

## Grand launch of 'Sahasra Productions' logo and '6am Love' web series title

"The logo launch of the new production house Sahasra Productions and the title launch of their upcoming web series '6am Love' were held grandly in Hyderabad in the presence of several film personalities. The web series is produced by Lakshmikanth K.B and directed by Sudhakar Akkinapally, who is also handling the cinematography. At the launch event, actor and writer gave the clap for the muhurat shot, while cinematographer switched on the camera. Actors handed over the script to the director. Speaking at the event, Posani Krishna Murali said he was happy to see Lakshmikanth entering film production through Sahasra Productions. He also praised the catchy and fresh title '6am Love' and wished the team great success. Kaushal said the title sounded very fresh and noted that web series are currently trending. He appreciated the vision of director Sudhakar and the passion of producer Lakshmikanth, expressing confidence that the project would become a hit. Josh Ravi said audiences are encouraging unique web series with different concepts these days. He added that the story chosen by Sudhakar is very interesting and that '6am Love' will connect well with youth audiences. Producer Lakshmikanth K.B thanked all the guests who attended the launch and said Sahasra Productions aims to deliver good content-driven stories. He mentioned that he loved the cute and trendy story narrated by Sudhakar and promised high production values for the



series. Director and cinematographer Sudhakar Akkinapally thanked producer Lakshmikanth for trusting his story and giving him the opportunity. He said '6am Love' is a beautiful story that matches today's trends and promised to do full justice to it through his direction and camera work. He also mentioned that details about the cast and technical team will be announced soon. Technical Team: Production House: Sahasra Productions Web Series: 6am Love Producer: Lakshmikanth K.B Director & Cinematographer: Sudhakar Akkinapally Pro: Naresh

## District Judge Calls for Joint Efforts to Ensure Success of National Lok Adalat



the Chairman, a meeting with Bar Association President, Bar Association members, and representatives of insurance companies' standing counsels will be held at 11:00 a.m. On the same day, a separate meeting with officials from the Police, Excise, and Forest Departments will be conducted at 4:00 p.m. The District Judge stated that all stakeholders should work in coordination to facilitate the amicable settlement of cases through the National Lok Adalat. Various categories of cases, including criminal and civil matters, pre-litigation disputes, banking cases, electricity-related disputes, land issues, matrimonial and family disputes, motor accident claims, cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, chit fund disputes, cheque bounce cases, and other compoundable matters, will be taken up for settlement through mutual agreement. He appealed to all concerned departments and stakeholders to extend their cooperation to ensure the successful conduct of the National Lok Adalat and promote speedy, cost-effective dispute resolution through conciliation. Issued by the District Public Relations Office, Komaram Bheem Asifabad District.

"Indian Chronicle, K.B. Asifabad, May 29: District Principal Judge and Chairman of the District Legal Services Authority, Veeriah, has announced that coordination meetings in connection with the National Lok Adalat scheduled to be held on June 20 will take place on June 3 at the District Court Complex. According to a statement issued by

## An Endeavor to Fill Little Hearts with Great Hope — '1000 Steps Towards a Golden Childhood'

Narsampet/Warangal, May 29 (Indian Chronicle): As part of the 'Praja Palana Pragathi Nivedika' (Public Administration Progress Report) program, a high-level awareness meeting was organized on Friday at the Narsampet Mandal Parishad office under the aegis of the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services). Held as part of the 'Women's Safety Week' celebrations, and presided over by the Narsampet Project CDPO (Child Development Project Officer), Smt. Madhurima, the meeting focused on the theme: '1000 Steps Towards a Golden Childhood.' Addressing the gathering as the Chief Guest, the Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO), Mr. Srinivas, stated that the ICDS and Health Departments serve as crucial bridges between the government and the public at the grassroots level. He remarked that these two departments function like the 'two eyes' of the public health system, laying a strong foundation for the welfare of the people—specifically mothers and children. He further emphasized the necessity of continuing and expanding these coordinated services in the future. Addressing the participants, Dr. Shrawan urged parents to consult medical professionals without hesitation regarding any concerns related

to their children's growth and development. He stressed the importance of Anganwadi teachers and ASHA workers working in close coordination to ensure that every child receives timely immunization vaccinations. Speaking on this occasion, CDPO Smt. Madhurima stated that awareness regarding maternal health and child development is being fostered right from the stage of pregnancy registration. She emphasized that parents should closely observe every aspect of their children's growth from the very early stages of life. Advising families to avoid distractions such as mobile phones and television during mealtimes, she noted with concern that the culture of mindful eating is gradually declining. She also expressed apprehension that children are becoming increasingly distanced from the emotional warmth and affection traditionally received from their grandparents. Smt. Nalla Bharathi, State President of the Anganwadi Union, highlighted the active participation of Anganwadi teachers and assistants in public administration and welfare initiatives. She described Anganwadi centers as service institutions akin to a mother's lap, urging the public to fully utilize the facilities and welfare services provided therein. She further noted that the ICDS and Health

## Players Urge MMC Commissioner to Withdraw Hike in Membership Fee at Uppal Indoor Stadium Shuttle Badminton Court



"UPPAL, MAY 29 (INDIAN CHRONICLE): Players using the shuttle badminton court at the Uppal Indoor Stadium, located in the Uppal Circle office premises, have appealed to the MMC Commissioner to immediately withdraw the recent hike in membership fee. The players stated that they have been paying a monthly membership fee of Rs. 1,000 to play at the indoor stadium. However, without any prior notice from the authorities, the monthly fee was abruptly increased from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500 just two days ago, leaving them shocked and disappointed. They expressed concern that the 50 percent increase, reflected on the sports.gmmc.gov.in website, is highly unfair and discouraging for sports enthusiasts. According to the players, the sudden decision goes against the spirit of promoting sports and physical fitness encouraged by Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy. They said such a move would severely affect the morale and enthusiasm of players. The players

recalled that when the membership fee was Rs. 500, a large number of sportspersons regularly used the court. However, after the fee was increased to Rs. 1,000 citing maintenance costs, the number of players declined significantly. They warned that the latest hike to Rs. 1,500 may further reduce participation. Highlighting the poor condition of the stadium, the players said the badminton court is currently in a dilapidated state. The wooden flooring mat is torn, service lines are missing, and the floor is patched with temporary coverings that are peeling off, posing a risk of injuries to players. They also pointed out that water leaks from holes in the roof and ventilators directly onto the court floor, causing inconvenience and forcing the suspension of games for several days. Basic facilities such as drinking water and separate toilets for men and women are unavailable. Players are also facing breathing difficulties due to non-functional exhaust fans. The players further stated that the court remains closed every Monday as a weekly holiday and is also shut during festivals and national holidays, affecting regular practice schedules. They emphasized that daily physical activity is essential for maintaining physical and mental health and should not face unnecessary interruptions. They informed the Commissioner that nearby private badminton academies are offering better facilities with membership fees starting from Rs. 1,700 per month. Despite charging lower fees, the Uppal Indoor Stadium lacks proper infrastructure and amenities. The players appealed to the MMC Commissioner to intervene immediately and revoke the decision to increase the membership fee from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,500. They requested the authorities to continue the existing fee structure in the interest of encouraging sports participation and supporting the player community.

## Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla Accorded Police Guard of Honour

"Indian Chronicle, K.B. Asifabad, May 29: Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla received a grand welcome from district officials during his visit to Komaram Bheem Asifabad district on Friday. The Governor arrived in the district by helicopter and was received by District Collector K. Haritha, Superintendent of Police Neethika Pant, Asifabad MLA Kova Lakshmi, Sirpur MLA Palvai Harish Babu, MLC Dande Vittal, and other senior officials. Following his arrival, the Governor was accorded a ceremonial Guard of Honour by the police. He later interacted briefly with district officials and reviewed the schedule and details of his district tour. The visit was marked by official receptions and administrative engagements aimed at reviewing developmental and welfare initiatives in the district.



## Governor Calls for Special Focus on Public Health and Tuberculosis Eradication

"Indian Chronicle, K.B. Asifabad, May 29: Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla emphasized the need for special focus on public health and the effective implementation of welfare programmes during his visit to Komaram Bheem Asifabad district on Friday. The Governor inaugurated a review meeting at the Integrated District Collectorate Conference Hall by lighting the ceremonial lamp and joining officials in rendering the national song, Vande Mataram. He was accompanied by Special Chief Secretary Dana Kishore, District Collector K. Haritha, and Superintendent of Police Neethika Pant. Addressing the officials, the Governor stressed the importance of strengthening healthcare infrastructure and ensuring quality medical services for patients across the district. Referring to the district's 464 tuberculosis (TB) patients, he urged officials to adopt each patient individually and ensure the timely supply of medicines and nutritious food every month. He noted that many people suffering from prolonged cough, weight loss, and declining health often hesitate to seek medical assistance due to social stigma. The Governor called upon officials to identify such individuals, create awareness about TB, and ensure that they receive proper medical treatment. He emphasized that tuberculosis is curable with timely treatment and urged authorities to intensify public awareness campaigns. Expressing concern over the growing menace of drug abuse among youth, the Governor said that addiction is destroying promising futures and appealed for collective efforts towards building a drug-free society under the 'Nasha Mukta Bharat' initiative. He highlighted that both the Central and State Governments are implementing various measures to combat substance abuse and suggested involving Self-Help Groups in awareness and prevention programmes. The Governor also directed engineering officials to strictly monitor the quality of development works undertaken in the district. He urged citizens not to remain silent against social injustices and anti-social activities, assuring that the administration would continue to support efforts aimed at maintaining law and order and protecting public interests. Calling for greater coordination among departments, he urged officials to work collectively to accelerate



the district's progress and achieve the goals envisioned for the Aspirational District programme. Earlier, District Collector K. Haritha made a PowerPoint presentation outlining departmental services, welfare initiatives, and development programmes being implemented in the district. Superintendent of Police Neethika Pant briefed the Governor on law and order, anti-drug measures, and public safety initiatives. The Governor arrived in the district by helicopter and was welcomed by the District Collector, Superintendent of Police, and other senior officials. He later received a ceremonial Guard of Honour from the police. During the programme, the Governor presented a membership certificate of the Red Cross Society to the District Collector. District officials also presented mementoes to the Governor and the Special Chief Secretary. Among those present were ITDA Utnoor Project Officer Manda Makarand, Additional Collectors Yuvaraj Marmat and M. David, Additional SP (Admin) Chittaranjan, Kagaznagar Sub-Collector Shradha Shukla, District Revenue Officer Dasari Venu, Asifabad Revenue Divisional Officer Lokeshwar Rao, district officials, members of the Red Cross Society, and others. Issued by the District Public Relations Office, Komaram Bheem Asifabad District.

## Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla Visits Komaram Bheem District, Reviews Welfare Schemes

"Indian Chronicle, K.B. Asifabad, May 29: Telangana Governor Shiv Pratap Shukla arrived at the Komaram Bheem District Collectorate by helicopter on Friday. The Governor was welcomed with a bouquet by District Collector Haritha, Superintendent of Police Neethika Pant, MLC Danda Vittal of the erstwhile united district, Sirpur MLA Harish Babu, and Asifabad MLA Kova Lakshmi. After receiving a ceremonial Guard of Honour from the police, the Governor participated in a review meeting with officials to assess the implementation and progress of various Central and State Government welfare schemes in the district.



Departments are working in tandem to ensure that nutrition and healthcare services reach the public effectively. ACDPO Smt. Jyothi expressed her gratitude to Smt. Madhurima, MPDO Sri Srinivas, and others for attending the event. Appreciating the dedicated efforts of Dr. Shrawan in ensuring the success of welfare programs, she called upon all departments to work in coordination toward achieving the goals of maternal and child welfare. MPDO Srinivas, CDPO Madhurima, ACDPO Jyothi, Dr. Shrawan, ICDS Supervisors Aruna, Parijatham, and Jhansi Rani, and other staff members participated in this program.



## Haryana Chief Minister Saini announces new Master's, PhD courses in horticulture sector

GNS News Agency, May 29

The newly introduced courses would help develop skilled professionals and scientific solutions to address modern challenges in horticulture. (File Photo)The newly introduced courses would help develop skilled professionals and scientific solutions to address modern challenges in horticulture, says Saini.Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, on Thursday, announced the introduction of Master's and PhD programmes in the horticulture sector, in a major push to promote innovation and scientific advancement, at Maharana Pratap Horticulture University, Karnal.Saini was addressing the inaugural session of a four-day National Conference organised by the university in collaboration with the Lieutenant Amit Memorial Foundation. The conference is based on the theme — "Strategic Paradigm of Quality Seeds and Planting Material for Horticultural Crops in Amritkaal".Saini said, "The newly introduced courses would help develop skilled professionals and scientific solutions to address modern challenges in horticulture, including crop diseases, post-harvest losses and quality management".He also dedicated 14 Horticulture Science Centres to the university and said, "These centres would play an important role in providing farmers with modern technologies, scientific guidance and quality planting material."

The Chief Minister addressed the gathering and said, "India is the world's second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables, with annual horticultural production exceeding 360 million tonnes."However, he highlighted that the country still suffers major economic losses due to poor post-harvest management, lack of disease-free planting material and quality-related deficiencies.Therefore, "the future of agriculture lies in diversification and horticulture-based farming models. In changing times, traditional farming alone cannot substantially increase farmers' income".He added, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047

includes self-reliant agriculture, scientific innovation and prosperity for farmers. Quality seeds and planting material can increase agricultural productivity by 15 to 25 per cent... Haryana aims to double the horticulture sector and triple production by 2030. Thirteen Centres of Excellence have already been established in the state for horticulture development. About 1,000 acres across Haryana would be brought under smart horticulture technologies such as protected cultivation, hydroponics, aeroponics, greenhouses, vertical farming and e-pest management... Rural Haat Mandis linked with Farmer-Producer Organisation (FPO) pack houses will also be established. The first Rural Haat Mandi will be inaugurated on December 23, 2026, on the occasion of Kisan Diwas."The CM also announced that the "Meri Fasal Mera Byora" portal — meant for registration of horticultural crops — would remain operational throughout the year from 2026-27.In addition, a Cold Chain Policy has been proposed to improve storage, stabilise prices and boost horticulture exports, he said.The government is also planning to introduce a Haryana Potato Seed Act for certification of tissue culture-based potato seed production to ensure annual production of around 7.5 lakh quintals of high-quality seed potatoes.Recognising Haryana's growing mushroom industry, particularly in Sonipat, Panipat, Ambala, Karnal and Kurukshetra, Saini said "special programmes would be launched to promote mushroom cultivation and value addition".The CM also announced the establishment of a Regional Research Centre affiliated with Maharana Pratap Horticulture University in Ambala's Chansoli to further promote horticulture education and research. Calling upon the scientists to develop climate-resilient, disease-resistant and water-efficient crop varieties, Saini said emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, biotechnology and sensor-based systems would also bring revolutionary changes to the sector.

## Chingrighata cleared, VIP Road next: When will Orange Line reach Kolkata airport?

GNS News Agency, May 29

For residents living along VIP Road in Kolkata, a direct Metro ride has long been a distant dream. While the northern and southern suburbs of Kolkata gradually wove themselves into the city's rapid transit network, this bustling corridor has remained isolated.For decades, commuters in the locality had to rely on the Blue Line, making grueling journeys to the nearest stations — either Shovabazar (8 km) or Dum Dum (3 km) — with no direct public transport to bridge the gap.While the announcement of the 30-km Orange Line (Kavi Subhash to Airport via New Town) in 2010 sparked immense excitement, the project languished for years with a major bottleneck at the crucial Chingrighata crossing.

Now, that bottleneck is history. Metro sources confirmed that work on VIP Road is set to begin at full speed, paving the way for a seamless transit future.Officials said the delay at Chingrighata was largely because of administrative gridlock. To build a 34-metre-long viaduct between metro pillars 318 and 319, engineers needed to launch 12 massive concrete segments. As this required a significant traffic block on the heavily congested EM Bypass, permission from local authorities was repeatedly denied. The project sat completely stalled from February 2, 2025.Following changes in the administrative landscape, Metro authorities and Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) said they have secured the long-awaited clearances from the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate.Once the decks were cleared, RVNL engineers set a new benchmark. Allocated 120 hours of traffic blocks over two consecutive weeks, the team completed both phases of the Chingrighata work in just 115 hours, finishing ahead of schedule. Officials noted that had the local administration extended the same level of

cooperation earlier, the project could have progressed much sooner.With Chingrighata cleared, the spotlight now shifts to Chinar Park and VIP Road, where a 120-metre-long viaduct must be constructed between pillar numbers 826 and 832 near the Kaikhali Haj House.Preparations are already underway to transport a massive, 500-tonne launcher machine from Chingrighata to VIP Road, a moving operation that will take nearly a month on its own. According to project engineers, the entire phase will take about four months to complete. The launcher will initially be stationed between pillars 833 and 835 to begin mounting the concrete segments, which weigh between 22 and 34 tonnes each.To keep the city moving, the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate has promised full cooperation. The current blueprint involves implementing nightly traffic restrictions on various stretches of VIP Road from 11 pm to 5 am, minimising disruption to daytime commuters."The entire Orange Line from Kavi Subhash to the Airport, including the VIP Road section, is expected to be fully completed by December 2027," the senior Kolkata Metro official said.By December 2026: While services are currently operational up to Belegata on the Orange Line, the Metro has set an optimistic target to operationalise the stretch from Belegata to the IT Centre (Sector V) by the end of this year. Crucially, this will allow commuters to interchange at Sector V and travel to Howrah Maidan, effectively linking the Green Line and the Orange Line.By December 2027: Beyond Sector V, the line will extend to a station just before Chinar Park, enter an underground tunnel section that is currently progressing at a good pace, and terminate at the Airport.After structural civil engineering wraps up, teams will immediately move to track-laying, electrical formatting, and signalling, bringing a decades-old dream to reality for thousands of daily commuters.

## Proposal for adopting Punjab Right to Business Act: UT writes to MHA

GNS News Agency, May 29

The Chandigarh Administration has written to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) seeking an extension of the Punjab Right to Business Act in the UT, to further promote ease of doing business operations.Chandigarh Deputy Commissioner Nishant Yadav told The Indian Express, "We have sent a proposal to MHA (Ministry of Home Affairs) for adopting Punjab Right to Business Act. The act aims to promote ease of doing business by providing a time-bound and simplified system for setting up enterprises and Industries. The key features include a single window digital clearance mechanism, deemed approvals if departments fail to respond within the prescribed timeline, online submission and tracking of applications, reduction in unnecessary inspections and compliances and better coordination among government departments."

He also said, "The Act especially supports MSMEs and new industries by ensuring transparency, accountability and faster approvals for permissions related to land, labour, power, pollution control and other regulatory requirements. This will encourage investment and employment generation in Chandigarh."Under the proposal, sent to the MHA on Wednesday, the UT administration will establish a "Chandigarh Bureau of Enterprise and Investment" as the nodal agency for facilitating investments, processing declarations of intent, issuing in-principle approvals and resolving grievances of enterprises. The bureau will be headed by the UT Secretary Industries as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Director Industries as Additional CEO.The pro-

posed framework also broadens the definition of "Approved Industrial Park" to include industrial estates, SEZs, biotech parks, IT parks, food processing parks and other projects approved by the UT Administration or the Centre.

The entire approval process for eligible enterprises — including filing declarations, obtaining in-principle approvals, inspections and grievance redressal — will be shifted to a fully digitised single-window portal. It provides for automatic deemed approvals through the portal without manual intervention, aimed at reducing delays and increasing transparency in clearances.The proposed changes also empower the bureau to coordinate with the UT and Central departments, ensure expeditious clearances and implement policies promoting investment in Chandigarh. The bureau may reject applications only if the proposed enterprise falls under prohibited categories or if applications are materially deficient — with reasons required to be communicated in writing.It also lists multiple departments and services that will come under the ambit of the Act, including sanction of building plans, fire NOCs, labour registrations, pollution clearances, electricity and water connections. The departments covered include the Municipal Corporation, Estate Office, Labour Department, Chandigarh Pollution Control Committee and Chandigarh Power Distribution Limited.The officials said the move is aimed at improving ease of doing business in Chandigarh by introducing a time-bound, technology-driven approval mechanism and aligning investment facilitation systems with reforms already implemented in Punjab.

## Microsoft cuts Claude Code access as AI coding costs surge

New Delhi: US-based technology firm Microsoft has begun scaling back access to Anthropic's Claude Code among its employees and is redirecting engineers towards GitHub Copilot CLI as surging AI usage drives up enterprise computing costs, according to multiple reports.Reports said the technology company had earlier expanded access to Claude Code across thousands of employees, including developers, project managers and designers, to encourage experimentation with AI-assisted coding tools.However, the rapid adoption of the platform is now said to have significantly increased operational expenses. Despite the rollback, Microsoft's broader partnership with Anthropic remains intact.

The company continues to maintain its multibillion-

dollar Foundry agreement, which includes cloud infrastructure support and access to Claude models through Azure services.The development comes as several technology companies grapple with the rising costs associated with large-scale deployment of generative AI tools.In addition, Uber Chief Technology Officer Praveen Neppalli Naga had reportedly said that the company exhausted its entire 2026 budget for AI coding tools within the first four months of the year due to heavy employee usage.Machine Learning & Artificial IntelligenceThe growing cost burden stems from the token-based pricing structure used by large language models, where companies are charged based on the volume of text processed and generated by AI systems.Goldman Sachs has estimated that agentic .

## Delhi Gymkhana controversy rekindles questions over Mumbai's elite clubs

GNS News Agency, May 29

The controversy surrounding Delhi Gymkhana Club has cast fresh attention on Mumbai's own network of colonial-era gymkhanas, many of which occupy prime public land in one of the world's most space-starved cities.With the Maharashtra government now considering a comprehensive gymkhana policy, questions are being raised about how these elite institutions acquired vast land parcels, how they evolved over the decades, and whether they continue to serve a public purpose.

A fresh controversy over the century-old Delhi Gymkhana Club has once again put the spotlight on elite sporting institutions that occupy prime public land. According to Collectorate records, 11 of Mumbai's 20 gymkhanas, including the iconic Bombay Gymkhana, stand on land leased from the district collector. The debate is especially significant in a city starved of open spaces. According to a report by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), gymkhanas and elite clubs occupy nearly 664 acres, or about one-fifth of Mumbai's 3,780 acres of open space. The report notes that Mumbaiers have access to just 1.28 square metres of open space per person.Origins in colonial MumbaiThe term "Gymkhana" is believed to have originated from the Persian "jamat-khana", meaning "place of assembly". During British rule, gymkhanas functioned as social and sporting clubs catering exclusively to colonial elites.Membership largely comprised senior government officials, administrators, businessmen and philanthropists. Indians were barred from entering many of these establishments."Till 1860, Kolkata had more importance than Mumbai. Later, the advent of railways and the breakout of the American Civil war led to a boom in the cotton industry. These phenomena led to the opening of Suez Canal, as a result of which Mumbai became the main port for incoming European Ships, leading up to establishments of Gymkhanas in the city as a means of recreation," Bharat Gothoskar, founder of Khaki Heritage Tours, told The Indian Express.Apart from sporting facilities, these clubs also provided accommodation and dining facilities for travelling government officials and businessmen. Since hotels were scarce at the time, many gymkhanas became important social hubs for European visitors. Most were established on government land leased for this purpose.The roots of Mumbai's gymkhana culture go back to the 19th century. While official records identify the Bombay Gymkhana in Fort, established in 1875, as the city's oldest, historians point to an even earlier institution in Byculla.

"The Byculla Club existed during the early 1800, with its border stretching from the present day Maratha Mandir theatre at Mumbai Central to Jacob Circle. While it was named Bombay Turf Club, the place was also locally known to be Byculla Club because of its location," researcher and author Nitin Salunkhe told Express.According to Salunkhe, the rapid industrialisation of central Mumbai in the mid-19th century gradually made the area less attractive to European members.In 1864, the club was shifted to present-day Mahalaxmi and renamed the Western India Turf Club. In 1935, King George V permitted it to use the prefix "Royal", leading to its present-day name, the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC)."Till date, the RBI colony road in Byculla

## Bishnoi gang boasts of 1,000 foot soldiers in chilling letter to Canadian police

GNS News Agency, May 29

The Lawrence Bishnoi gang has sent a provocative letter to authorities in Canada claiming it commands up to 1,000 operatives willing to carry out shootings as part of its extortion operations targeting the South Asian diaspora.Testifying before the Immigration and Refugee Board on Thursday, an Edmonton police officer revealed the contents of the letter sent last August to a police station in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

In a bold challenge to law enforcement, the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, operating from its leader's prison cell in India, dispatched the letter dated August 13, 2025. Edmonton Police Service Constable Kevin St. Louis, part of Project AI-Extortion, described it while testifying. "Police actually received a letter addressed from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang that was sent to a police station," he said. The missive outlined the group's structure, boasted of its manpower for violent operations, and asserted that every business needs to pay their tax, a reference to protection rackets.The Abbotsford Police Department confirmed receipt of the communication. Sgt. Paul Walker told media that details were shared with federal and provincial partners tackling the extortion wave, with the department's Operation Community Shield task force probing its origins.gang, headed by Lawrence Bishnoi, a gangster from Rajasthan with deep ties to Punjab and Haryana criminal networks, has been active in India for years. Bishnoi has been lodged in Indian

is called 'Club Road' because of the erstwhile Byculla Club and the lane opposite Agripada Police station is called 'Ghaas (Grass) Gulli' since it used to house stables for horses in the erstwhile club before it was relocated to Mahalaxmi," Salunkhe said.As Mumbai emerged as India's principal port and commercial centre in the late 19th century, more gymkhanas came up across the city.Around the same time, Indians increasingly embraced sports such as cricket and football, both introduced by the British. Matches played by Indians at the Esplanade Maidan, then a continuous stretch encompassing today's Azad Maidan and Cross Maidan, often clashed with British polo games, leading to frequent disputes.Sports during that era were organised largely along communal lines. To ease tensions, Governor Lord Harris allotted playgrounds to different communities along the reclaimed seafront near present-day Marine Drive.This led to the establishment of the Islam Gymkhana in 1892 and the Hindu Gymkhana in 1894. The Parsee Gymkhana had already been established in 1885, reflecting the community's economic prominence in the city.Historical records of Islam Gymkhana show that the land was initially leased by the government at an annual rent of just Rs 12.Despite rising to prominent positions in government and administration, Indians continued to face restrictions at many European-only clubs.That changed in 1917 when Governor Lord Willingdon established the Willingdon Sports Club to entertain Indian guests who were otherwise excluded from elite colonial institutions.Following Independence, ownership and management of many gymkhanas passed into Indian hands. Several also lost portions of their land to urban infrastructure projects.During the 1960s, for instance, the Hindu, Parsee and Islam gymkhanas lost significant land for railway expansion. Today, the railway tracks between Charni Road and Marine Lines run along the outer edges of these clubs.Government directives later required gymkhanas to end community-based membership restrictions."Today, we have members from different communities. From cricketers Sunil Gavaskar to Sameer Dighe, all are members in our clubs," said Mohsin Shaikh, secretary of cricket at Islam Gymkhana.An office-bearer of Parsee Gymkhana said around 12 per cent of the club's membership is reserved for people from other communities.Today, each of the three community gymkhanas has more than 2,000 members.

Yet membership remains beyond the reach of most Mumbaiers. Entry into Bombay Gymkhana reportedly costs around Rs 1 crore, excluding taxes, while annual membership at Islam Gymkhana exceeds Rs 4 lakh.Members include industrialists, celebrities, businessmen, senior IAS officers and IPS officers. In some clubs, senior bureaucrats are granted honorary service memberships.Even where membership is available, opportunities are limited. Bombay Gymkhana last opened applications in 2023; before that, the window had opened only in 2003. Islam Gymkhana, meanwhile, admits around 200 new members annually before closing applications for the year.As Maharashtra considers a comprehensive policy for gymkhanas, questions surrounding public land, accessibility and the future of these colonial-era institutions are likely to come under greater scrutiny.

prisons since 2015 but is accused of directing operations through smuggled communication devices. Canadian authorities formally designated the Bishnoi Gang as a terrorist entity in September 2025, citing its involvement in murders, shootings, arson, and systematic extortion. The syndicate has been linked to a surge in incidents targeting affluent Indian-origin businessmen and professionals, particularly in British Columbia's Lower Mainland (Surrey and Abbotsford), Alberta, Ontario, and Manitoba. Tactics typically involve threatening WhatsApp calls or messages demanding large sums, followed by drive-by shootings or property damage if payments are not made. Many low-level operatives are reportedly Indian nationals on temporary visas or student permits, enticed by modest payments and a sense of affiliation. Proceedings of an alleged member tied to an Edmonton-based extortion ring. Project AI-Extortion, a collaborative effort involving Edmonton Police, RCMP, and other agencies, has prioritised removals. By early 2026, the Canada Border Services Agency had launched hundreds of investigations, resulting in removal orders and deportations.In Canada, the group has claimed responsibility for targeted attacks on businessmen, amplifying fear in communities that have built thriving enterprises in sectors from trucking and real estate to agriculture.Community responses have included calls for enhanced protection, with some families reportedly contemplating relocation. Police task forces in affected cities have issued alerts, and rewards for information have been announced in places like Surrey.

## As Congress high command meets today to decide Punjab 2027 roadmap, Warring camp bats for continuity

Amidst renewed reports of a change being effected in Punjab leadership ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has called a meeting of senior party leaders in New Delhi on Friday where Rahul Gandhi is also expected to attend.Congress General Secretary KC Venugopal, AICC general secretary in charge of Punjab, Bhupesh Baghel, MPs Charanjit Singh Channi, Amar Singh, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, former minister Vijay Inder Singla and state general secretary are among those who will attend the meeting.Sources in the Congress disclosed that a change in state leadership was on the cards including that of the state unit chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring and Bajwa. Among those whose names are doing the rounds for the state president are Randhawa, Singla and Channi. Jalandhar MLA Pargat Singh has also reportedly expressed his keenness for either being appointed state president or as LoP. Another name which did the rounds for some time was that of former Vidhan Sabha Speaker Rana KP Singh. Many leaders within Congress are said to have favoured Rana KP as the Hindu face of the party over Singla."The meeting has been called to hear suggestions from every senior leader for the way forward in the 2027 polls. Every one of them will be given time to speak. Thereafter, in a few days time another meeting will be held where the high command led by Rahul Gandhi will decide on the changes, if any," said a senior party leader.A senior leader, who did not want to be identified, said that with the BJP opting for a Jat Sikh face in Kewal Dhillon as the state president, the Congress high command would have to do a re-

think on its consideration of appointing a Hindu as the state unit chief. "AAP has a Jat Sikh CM, SAD has a Jat Sikh president and now BJP too has a Jat Sikh at the helm. Under these conditions it seems unlikely that a non-Jat Sikh would be appointed," he said.The Warring camp meanwhile firmly believes that he will not be unseated and that Congress will opt for continuity. "Despite recurring speculation and internal murmurs about a possible reshuffle in the Congress, the party's high command has repeatedly ruled out any immediate leadership changes," said a leader close to Warring.Recent statements from senior leaders, including Baghel and Venugopal, have emphasized organizational stability and grassroots strengthening as the party prepares for the 2027 Assembly elections. In April 2026, Baghel explicitly stated there would be "no change in Punjab Congress leadership," praising the functioning of Warring and Bajwa following strategy meetings in Delhi.He highlighted constructive discussions on a monthly activity calendar, district president training programs, and winnability-based candidate selection through surveys.Speculation about a leadership overhaul gained traction in early 2025 and persisted into early 2026, fueled by factional tensions involving figures like Channi who raised concerns over SC representation. In January 2026, after meetings with Kharge and Gandhi, Venugopal issued a strong directive against public statements on internal issues and groupism, while categorically stating, "There is no question of any leadership change in Punjab."The high command has focused on unity, directing leaders to avoid airing differences publicly and to prioritize regaining power in the state.

## Accused held in Surat bank robbery case shot in leg by police after 'he opens fire'



GNS News Agency, May 29

One of the accused in the Surat bank robbery case was allegedly shot in the leg by police on Friday when he tried to escape by firing in the air in a bid to escape, officers said. The alleged incident took place on the outskirts of Kanyasi village where the Surat City Crime Branch took one of the accused Shubham Thakur to locate the weapons used in the April 27 heist at the State Bank of India (SBI) branch on Varachha road in Surat. Surat City Commissioner of Police Anupamsinh Gahlaut told The Indian Express that the police officials had fired in retaliation after Thakur allegedly fired a round from the weapon used in the crime, during the process of panchnama of recovery. "The accused was taken for the recovery of his weapon, which was buried in a field... During the exercise of the panchnama of recovery of his particular weapon used in the dacoity,

the accused fired one round in the air and attempted to escape. A police officer fired in retaliation..." Gahlaut told

A joint team from the Crime Branch and Varachha Police station escorted Thakur to a secluded spot to locate alleged weapons used in the heist and Thakur opened fire with the concealed weapon, police said. According to sources, Assistant Commissioner of Police K I Modi allegedly fired a single round which hit Thakur in the leg. Two accused Thakur, 24, and Vikram Singh Rajput, 30, residents of Gonda, Bihar, who were arrested from Uttar Pradesh, are in police remand till May 14. According to police, a gang of armed robbers had looted Rs 52 lakh cash from the SBI branch in a daylight heist by threatening the bank employees and customers at gunpoint. CCTV footage showed the presence of five accused persons. The perpetrators had snatched the mobile phones of the bank customers and employees to prevent them from alerting the police in a timely manner, and they also allegedly disabled the alarm system. Police have claimed that a gangster in Bihar's Beur jail identified as Kundan Bhagat plotted the heist in the hope of stealing gold, but got unlucky as the keys to the vault were with the manager, who was away on duty for the Gujarat local body polls. According to police, the SBI branch in Varachha ranks second in the city in approving gold loans, which the robbers seemed to be aware of. The police said the robbers had bought a second-hand motorbike from Telangana with a fake licence plate and rode to Surat and stayed there for two months, taking houses on rent using fake Aadhaar cards which they made in Madhya Pradesh.

## Right-wing preacher Sangram Bhandare, aides fling ink at NCP(SP) leader Vikas Lawande over Warkari remarks



GNS News Agency, May 29

Vikas Lawande black ink A screenshot of the purported video of the incident shows NCP (SP) spokesperson Vikas Lawande with black ink over him, and Sangram Bhandare (right). Nationalist Congress Party (SP) spokesperson Vikas Lawande was allegedly attacked on Saturday by a group led by right-wing preacher Sangram Bhandare, who flung black ink on him at Mhatobachi Alandi in Pune district. The protest was reportedly in response to Lawande's remarks related to the Warkari movement. A purported video of the incident has gone viral. In the clip, Bhandare is purportedly heard asking Lawande why he targeted his gurus. "You could have called me an infiltrator. Why did you target my gurus? Say whatever you want about us, it doesn't matter, but do not criticise our gurus," he can be heard asking.

Following the incident, Lawande arrived at the Loni Kalbhori police station, demanding action against the alleged attackers. "I am not going to leave till they are arrested," he said. Last month, NCP (SP) chief Sharad Pawar had written an article on the alleged entry of regressive elements

into the peace-loving Warkari fold, saying he would reveal the names of 40 such "infiltrators". During a recent TV debate, Lawande escalated the row by accusing certain Kirtankars of being "infiltrators". Subsequently, the NCP (SP) released a list naming several prominent spiritual figures, claiming they had disrupted the traditional social equality of the Warkari sect. In a Facebook post, Lawande appealed to his supporters to turn up at Loni Kalbhori police station. He said that as he was returning after finishing his discourse at Alandi Mhatobachi, Bhandare and 10-15 others arrived in three- and four-wheelers. "They blocked my car, poured ink over me, manhandled me, and pointed a pistol at me. They then fled the scene," he alleged. State NCP (SP) president Shashikant Shinde said Lawande's stance reflected the ground realities. "Democracy no longer exists in the country or the state. It is unfortunate that even the constitutional right to freedom of speech is being suppressed. Some people have infiltrated the sacred Warkari tradition—a legacy passed down from Sant Tukaram Maharaj and Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj—with political motives. There is a deliberate attempt by certain individuals to tarnish this tradition," he said. Warning of staging a protest, Shinde said, "I strongly condemn such tendencies that malign the name of the Warkari sect and erode the culture of democracy." NCP (SP) Maharashtra Youth president Mehbub Shaikh also condemned the incident, saying it was "highly reprehensible and a stain on democratic values". "Giving a violent form to ideological differences does not suit the culture of Maharashtra; it is essential to curb such tendencies in a timely manner. I demand that the police administration take immediate notice of this matter, file strict charges against those involved, and arrest the culprits at once," he said. "The entire state of Maharashtra is now watching whether the state home minister takes impartial action by booking these goons or provides political protection and a free hand to such elements. No one is above the law. If immediate action is not taken against those who openly issue threats and commit acts of violence, it will raise serious questions about the role of the government and the home department," Shaikh added.

## 'Badmashi' remarks against Bhajan Lal, Chander Mohan | Panchkula court restrains Haryana MP from making 'defamatory' statements

GNS News Agency, May 29

A Panchkula civil court has restrained BJP MP Rekha Sharma from making remarks, which "to a prudent man seems to be defamatory in nature", against former Haryana chief minister late Bhajan Lal and former deputy chief minister Chander Mohan. On May 7, Civil Judge (Junior Division) Arunima Chauhan, while hearing a civil suit filed by Mohan, passed the order on an application seeking ad-interim stay before filing of written statement and reply by the defendant, BJP MP Rekha Sharma. Appearing for the plaintiff, Chander Mohan, Advocate Deepanshu Bansal submitted that during the campaign for the ongoing Panchkula Municipal Corporation elections, the defendant made "grave and reckless allegations". On April 24, the defendant allegedly called Chander Mohan and his late father Bhajan Lal "badmash" and attributed their political success to "badmashi", the advocate said. Mohan's counsel also submitted that several dignitaries were present at the venue and media covered the event, due to which the remarks were widely shared. The remarks allegedly defamed the image of the plaintiff and his father before the public. The advocate said the plaintiff sought directions restraining the defendant from making any further remarks against him and his family. While the defendant opposed the plea and argued that the statement in question was a mere remark on the opposition party's working style. It was neither intended to be defamatory nor spread by the defendant. It was also argued that whether the comments and video were defamatory would be examined during trial. After hearing arguments, the court observed, "Now whether the said state-



ment and remarks made by the defendant are defamatory or not shall be contemplated over during the trial of the case and at this stage, the only fact to be cogitated over is as to whether defendant is liable to be restrained or not. The court also observed, "Sentiments of the plaintiff (Chander Mohan) have been deeply hurt by the remarks... if any such act is repeated, the same shall only create more complexities and lead to multiplicity of litigation." In its order, the court said, "Considering the same, in order to ensure peaceful and smooth Panchkula Municipal Corporation Elections, 2026, defendant is hereby restrained from making any such remark against the plaintiff and his father which to a prudent man seems to be defamatory in nature. The court, however, clarified that, "This order shall not be construed as curbing the right of fair political criticism of the defendant in any manner."

## Punjab CM Mann calls BJP 'Bharat Jalao Party', alleges politicisation of ED



GNS News Agency, May 29

Launching a blistering attack on the BJP while reacting to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raid at the Chandigarh residence of Punjab minister Sanjeev Arora on Saturday morning, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann alleged that the BJP was "playing a very dangerous game" in Punjab and warned that Punjabis would never bow before pressure.

Addressing media persons at the Sangrur circuit house on the last day of 'Shukrana Yatra', Mann said, "Bharat Jalao Party should be the name of BJP... eh agg lagan wali party hai (this is a party that spreads fire and unrest)." Referring to the raid on Sanjeev Arora, he said it was the second ED raid within a month and the third this year targeting AAP leaders and linked it to "politicisation of ED". "I am warning the BJP... we are Punjabis... don't keep an evil eye on us... asi oh akh kadh laine aan par dabaa agge jhukde nahi (we gouge out such evil eyes but never bow before pressure)," Mann said.

He added, "The BJP is playing a very dangerous game in Punjab, and they will have to pay for it." Mann's remarks came days after Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha, who recently switched from the AAP to the BJP, had made a similar statement alleging political vendetta. Chadha had claimed that "the AAP is playing a very dangerous game in Punjab by doing political vendetta on the Rajya Sabha MPs who switched from the AAP to the BJP in the form of PPCB raids, withdrawal of security, and even FIRs on Sandeep Pathak... they are bound to do anything against me as well." However, the Punjab Police has so far not shared details of any FIRs against Sandeep Pathak. Escalating his attack further, Mann said, "The BJP can go to an extent that they can remove the word Punjab from our national anthem as well and can replace it with UP... I warn the BJP, don't play this dirty game... Punjabis will reply back in a befitting manner." The chief minister alleged that the BJP was upset over the Punjab government bringing a stricter sacrilege law. "We have made a stricter sacrilege law which gives strict punishments to those involved in this heinous act. Hence, they (BJP) are bewildered... that they will not be able to get any such acts done from their agents in Punjab, which can further create communal tensions in the state and... polarise voters. Hence, they are now using other tools... ED as per their political needs. But I want to tell PM Narendra Modi that this is Punjab and it will not bow before you at any cost," he said. Claiming that the BJP thrives on communal polarisation, Mann alleged, "Wherever they go... they create communal tensions... they did it in Maharashtra, Odisha, Bihar, Karnataka, Bengal and now Punjab is their next target... their motive is not to bring out any black money or such documents through ED raids but only to force that person to join the BJP." Referring to the ED raid on Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal before he joined the BJP, Mann said, "Now they must be issuing threats to Sanjeev Arora to join the BJP or face action in his business houses. Look at the case of Rajya Sabha MP Ashok Mittal... they conducted a raid at his Jalandhar-based university and other premises... and afterwards he joined the BJP, and they provided him security... so everything went ok afterwards?"

In a sharp attack on the prime minister, Mann said, "Main BJP di dhanki ton nahi darda (I am not scared of the BJP's threats)... want to tell the PM that he had to bow only once during his entire tenure which was to withdraw the three farm laws and Punjabis had forced him to do that... so perhaps he has kept that itch in his mind and is continuously doing acts to harm Punjab." Listing several contentious issues between the Centre and Punjab, Mann alleged, "Sometimes they start planning constitutional amendments

in Chandigarh UT, sometimes in Panjab University and at times they want full control of BBMB (Bhakra Beas Management Board), sometimes they say no to Punjab's tab-leau in Republic Day function, say no to purchase of paddy, block our RDF (Rural Development Fund) money which is around Rs 9,000 crore... after doing all this how can you come to Punjab to seek votes?"

Referring to a recent ED raid on a Mohali-based businessman in which Punjab minister Aman Arora was allegedly named, Mann said, "They claimed to have pictures of the businessman with us... that way even Modi has pictures with Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya, who fled the country after grabbing crores of money." A visibly angry Mann further said, "Swearing in ceremony in Bengal has not yet taken place and see... how people's houses are burning, but this hatred formula will not work in Punjab... our land is very fertile... You can sow anything but not seeds of hatred in this land."

Linking recent developments to his ongoing 'Shukrana Yatra', Mann alleged, "Ever since I started Shukrana Yatra... they started these ED raids and blast incidents happened a day before... they want people's attention to be diverted to incidents other than this Shukrana Yatra in which thousands of people are coming to express their gratitude over the stricter sacrilege law." He asserted that he was not afraid of legal notices. "The BJP can send me as many legal notices as they want, and I will stand by my statement on BJP-style election preparation in Punjab," he said. "Look, I said it again today... The BJP prepares for elections through ED raids, bomb blasts in any state... now send me another notice. The BJP believes in polarisation and doing murder of democracy, which we will not let happen in Punjab... unhan da Vijay Rath 2027 vich Punjab aa ke rukega te asi us rath de pahiyeh tor devange taa jo oh agge kitte vi na ja sake (their victory chariot will come to a halt in Punjab in 2027 and we will shatter its wheels into pieces so it can never move ahead anywhere again)," Mann added. The chief minister also demanded that the Centre release pending funds to Punjab. "If you really want to do anything... give a special package to Punjab, give our blocked Rs 9,000 crore RDF money, our blocked VAT (Value-Added Tax) money, and take credit for the same," he said. On the recent warning issued by Akal Takht Jathedar regarding certain provisions in the amended sacrilege law allegedly hurting Sikh sentiments, Mann remained firm and declared, "Law will not be revoked... let meetings be convened." He further said, "This law is approved by the sangat... was made on their demand... only one family (Badals) doesn't like it and they let others speak against it... as per the 2008 Jaagat Jyot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar Act, government has been authorised to make a law and that has been done on the demand of public... what wrong have I done? This law will not be withdrawn... I want to say this clearly yet again."

## Retired bank employee duped of Rs 3.75 crore in insurance scam

Hyderabad: A retired bank employee from Old Alwal has lodged a complaint with the Hyderabad Central Crime Station police alleging that she was cheated to the tune of Rs 3.75 crore in the name of an insurance business. According to the complaint, the victim came into contact with Pranikar Sridhar alias Sridhar, a resident of Rajendranagar, in August 2021. Introducing himself as an employee of a private insurance firm in Himayatnagar, the suspect allegedly persuaded her to join as an insurance agent by promising high commissions, incentives and huge returns. Police said he initially collected money claiming it was required for obtaining an agent code and later convinced her to purchase insurance policies in the names of new customers and family members, assuring massive profits. Believing his claims, the victim reportedly invested huge amounts through cash payments, online transfers and proceeds from the sale of a house.

## New suburban railway station between Thane and Mulund? Railways' big move may finally ease the Central line rush

GNS News Agency, May 29

The Union Railway Ministry has granted in-principle approval for the construction of a new suburban railway station between Thane and Mulund. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw conveyed the approval in a letter to Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The CM took to social media, claiming that the proposed station would make transportation in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region more efficient and dynamic. The new station is expected to cater to commuters from Ghodbunder, Pokhran Road and the Wagale Estate area. As per official estimates, it could reduce footfall at Thane and Mulund stations by 31% and 24%, respectively. With Thane station currently handling over six lakh passengers daily, the project is aimed at easing congestion at one of the region's busiest transit hubs.

Conceptualized in 2019, the project will be spearheaded by Central Railway (CR) and financed by Thane Smart City Limited. While the Railways will develop the core infrastructure, including tracks and platforms, the Smart City body will execute work on the circulating area. The station is also set to include facilities such as vehicular parking, a deck and a bus terminal. Initially pegged at Rs 120 crore, the cost of the project is now expected to exceed Rs 245 crore. The station will come up on a 14.83-acre plot origi-



nally earmarked for the Thane Mental Hospital, which was transferred to the Railways in 2023 after permission from the Bombay High Court. The project had faced delays due to funding constraints with the Smart City body. Subsequently, Thane MP Naresh Mhaske sought financial support from the Union Railway Ministry, which the authority obliged. In March 2026, the Thane Municipal Corporation passed a unanimous resolution to name the station after late Shiv Sena leader Anand Dighe. Following the approval, the CR will prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR), including revised cost estimates, before seeking final sanctions to commence work.

## Fatal swing ride was never in bid; report flags 'sheer negligence'

GNS News Agency, May 29

The 'Tsunami Jhula' amusement ride that collapsed at the Surajkund International Crafts Mela in February, killing a police inspector and injuring multiple visitors, was not included in the original list of rides submitted by the contractor during the bidding process. The fatal installation also operated without due approval amidst hazardous site conditions and "poor workmanship", the state human rights commission was told last month. Hearing a suo motu case along with multiple complaints on April 7—the order was released Saturday afternoon—the Haryana Human Rights Commission (HHRC) took on record a state Tourism Department report that pinpointed "sheer negligence" by three Haryana Tourism Corporation (HTC) officials: Activity Head Nitin Kataria, Executive Engineer Satish Deswal, and Junior Engineer Nishant. The coram of Justice Lalit Batra, judicial member Kuldip Jain and member Deep Bhatia noted, quoting from compliance reports submitted to it, the three

HTC officials have been charge-sheeted for major penalty under the Haryana Civil Services Rules for dereliction of duty. The HHRC order noted that the "ride in question namely 'Tsunami Jhula', which led to unfortunate fatal and non-fatal accident, was not even included in the list of rides submitted by the contractor at the time of bidding". The Commission observed that installing the swing amounted to a "grave violation of tender condition and demonstrates unauthorized installation" without due approval.

A separate report from the state chief electrical inspector exposed a severe lack of safety norms across the fairground. The inspector's findings, accompanied by site photographs, depicted "hazardous conditions such as open electrical distribution boxes, exposed and loosely hanging wires, improper jointing and unprotected cables laid in areas accessible to the public". The report cautioned that these conditions "could have resulted in serious accidents including electric shock, short-circuit or fire incidents".

## Every country has stupid people: Rubio on racist comments against Indians



New Delhi: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday described the United States as a "welcoming country" and termed the racist comments made against Indians as the actions of "stupid" people. Addressing a joint press conference with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Rubio stated that he takes such comments very seriously.

On being asked about racist remarks against Indians in the US, he responded: "I don't know how to address that, but I'll take that very seriously about the comments. Look, I'm sure that there are people who have made comments online and other places because every country in the world has stupid people. I'm sure there are stupid people here. There are stupid people in the United States who make dumb comments all the time. I don't know what else to tell you other than the United States is a very welcoming country. Our nation has been enriched by people who come to our country, have come from our country from all over the world, have become Americans, have assimilated into our way of life and have contributed greatly. So, that's all I can comment on that in regard to your point."

Highlighting the contribution of the Indian community in the US economy, Rubio said: "Over 20 billion dollars have been invested in the US economy by Indian companies. We want that number to continue to increase, and obviously, the expertise as well that they've provided to our economy has been very, very valuable." Rubio also stated that the US is modernising its migration system and changes in immigration policy were applied across the world and "not India-specific." He noted that over 20 million people had illegally entered the US over the past few years and stressed the importance of addressing that challenge. On concerns about the recent changes in J1 visa, F1, H1B visa and his message to Indians in this regard, Rubio said: "The changes that are happening now, or the modernisation of our migration system into the United States, is not focused, is not India-specific. It is global; it's being applied across the world. We are in a period of modernisation, and I'll be frank and honest with you because it's important to talk about this. We've had a migratory crisis in the United States. This is not because of India, but broadly, we had

over 20 million people illegally enter the United States over the last few years, and we've had to address that challenge. In addition to that challenge, and I think this is true for India, this is true for every country in the world... Everything that you do as a country needs to be in your national interest, and that includes your immigration policy."

He noted that immigration has enriched the country, but stressed that the system must be adjusted with changing times. "The United States, I believe, is the most welcoming country in the world for immigration. Every single year, a million people roughly become permanent residents of the United States and contribute greatly. My parents entered the United States as permanent residents in 1956 from Cuba and so it's a process that's enriched us, but it has to be a process that's adjusted in every era to the realities of the modern times in which you live, and we are, and it's long overdue," he added. Rubio said that the US is currently undergoing a process of reforming the system and acknowledged that the transition could create some difficulties and friction points. However, he stated that the system that will be implemented after the process will be more efficient and better than the previous system. "The United States is currently undergoing a process of reforming the system by which we choose how many people come into our country, who comes in, when they come in, etc. Anytime you undertake a reform, anytime you undertake a change in the system by which you admit people, or frankly anytime you undertake a reform in any system, not just on immigration, there are going to be, there's going to be a period of transition that's going to create, you know, some friction points and some difficulties and so forth. Ultimately, we think that when this process is in place, once this process has been modernised, and that's really what it is. We are modernising the US immigration system for the 21st century so that it is an immigration system that's not just good for America, but it's also good for the people that are coming." "Once we are complete and once we've done the work of modernising that system, I think we're going to... going to wind up with a system that's more efficient and even better than the previous system, and in some ways may prove to be even more beneficial than the previous system was to people from India who seek to enter the United States to work and innovate. But, obviously, there's going to be a period of adjustment along the way. So I just don't... what I want to clear is that the changes, while they may be having a disproportionate impact on a place like India that provides so many high-skilled workers to the US economy, it is not a system that is targeted at India. It is one that's being applied globally. But we're in a period of transition, and like any period of transition, there's going to be some bumps on that road. But we think ultimately our destination is going to be a better system, a more efficient system, one that works better than the one that we had embraced previously and more sustainably by the way," he added.

## India, US strategically united on critical minerals and technology: Rubio



New Delhi: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Sunday that India and the US are strategically aligned on several key global issues, including critical minerals, supply chains and terrorism. He called India "one of the most important strategic partners" for the US in the world. While addressing a joint press briefing with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday, Rubio said that India and the US have suffered due to global terrorism networks. He noted that India and the US as democracies understand the importance of public scrutiny, accountability.

Rubio said, "I have to go back and justify to the American people every decision we make and the president has to do the same on why it's good for our country and our counterparts here in India have to do the exact same thing. You have to respond to the people of India about why your partnership with the United States or your stance on any issue for that matter is to the benefit of your country. I imagine this is true in every country in the world to some degree, but it is particularly true for democracies." "Democracies respond directly to the people and you have to respond constantly and democracies, you have opposition parties, have a free and open media. By the way you have a lot of media. We have media in our government, you guys have a lot of media, that means a lot of scrutiny and lot of attention. But that begins to align our interests immediately because we both recognize and have mutual respect and understanding that every decision we make, every announcement we make, everything we work together on, we ultimately have to go back and justify it to our voters, to our people, the people who put us in these positions to begin with," he added. Marco Rubio stated that the strategic partnership between India and the US goes beyond regional cooperation. He stressed that both nations are strategic allies on the idea that access to critical minerals and supply chains are essential issue in the 21st century.

He said, "The second point I would make is that our partnership from a strategic standpoint is not limited to a regional one. Now, clearly there are regional issues in the

Indo-Pacific that are important to both of our countries. But, the ability increasingly as we have conversations, we are talking about strategic interests that align beyond simply the region. Whether it's your visit last weekend to the Western Hemisphere, we have a lot of alignment. Whether it's our mutual interests of what's happening currently now in the Strait of Hormuz and beyond and then on the topics as well. "If you talk about the topics that we have a mutual interest on, both countries are strategic allies on the idea that access to critical minerals and supply chains are an essential issue in the 21st century. The over-concentration of reliance on a single source for anything, particularly things that are vital for our economies, is one of the great challenges of the 21st century and we are strategically aligned on that topic," he added.

Highlighting strong counter-terrorism alignment between India and the US, he said, "On the issue of terrorism, both of our countries have suffered, both directly and indirectly, because of global terrorist networks. There is a strong counter-terrorism alignment as a result of that. On innovation and ensuring that all of the promises of new technologies and new advances in the 21st century, all of them come with risks and rewards. Every technological advancement that's made individuals and societies more productive have always come with risks associated with them. Managing those risks and maximizing those benefits is one of the great challenges of the 21st century and there's a tremendous strategic alliance between our countries in agreement on that point." He described his visit to India "phenomenal" and termed India an "important strategic partner" of the US. He said, "It's been a phenomenal visit already and it's only been a day and we have so much more work to do and it's an honour to be here with all of you in this important visit to one of our most important strategic partners in the world and I want to highlight that point for a minute. We obviously have relations and we work with countries all over the world and we need to just as India does and we have all kinds of alliances and partnerships with countries that we work on sometimes on discrete and individualized issues, other times on broader issues that involve one region of the world or another." "A strategic partnership is something very different. It's something much broader than that. A strategic partnership is when your interests as two nations are aligned and you work together strategically to solve those problems and the list of issues that we work together with India on, the breadth and scope of them, is what highlights the fact that India is an important strategic partner of the United States, one of our most important strategic partners in the world. It begins with the fact of our shared values. We are the two largest democracies in the world. And so obviously that in and of itself begins to align our interests simply because our leaders respond directly to voters and people on a regular basis," he added.

## Oreshnik missile used again as Russia intensifies Ukraine war

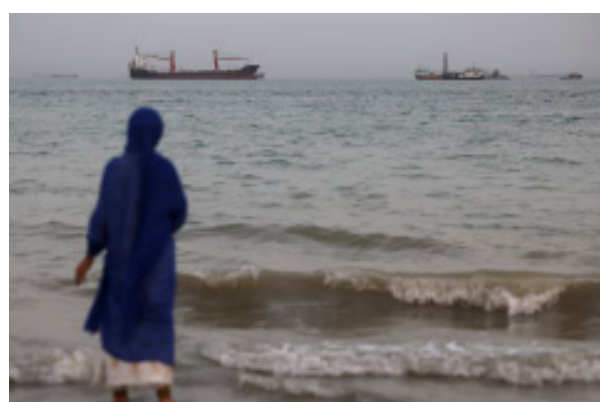


Kyiv: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Sunday Russia used the powerful hypersonic Oreshnik ballistic missile during a mass drone and missile attack on Kyiv on Sunday which killed at least two people, marking the third time the weapon has been used in the four-year war. The intense aerial assault damaged buildings across the Ukrainian capital, including near government offices, residential buildings and schools. The Oreshnik, which is capable of carrying nuclear or conventional warheads, struck the city of Bila Tserkva in the Kyiv region, Zelenskyy said in a post on Telegram. The target was not immediately clear.

Russia first used the multiple-warhead Oreshnik on the Ukrainian city of Dnipro in November 2024. It was used a second time in January in the western Lviv region. The combined attack included 600 strike drones and 90 air, sea and ground-launched missiles, according to Ukraine's Air Force. Ukrainian air defences destroyed and jammed 549 drones and 55 missiles. Around 19 missiles failed to reach targets, the Air Force said. Earlier, Zelenskyy warned that Russia was planning to use the Oreshnik, citing intelligence from the US and Western partners.

President Vladimir Putin said the Oreshnik, which means "hazelnut tree" in Russian, streaks at 10 times the speed of sound, or Mach 10, and is capable of destroying underground bunkers "three, four or more floors down". The weapon travels "like a meteorite" and is immune to any missile defence system, Putin said, adding that several such missiles, even fitted with conventional warheads, could be as devastating as a nuclear strike. Air raid sirens blared through the night as smoke billowed across the city from strikes. Associated Press reporters heard powerful explosions near the city centre and close to government buildings. The attack was ongoing at sunrise Sunday, with more missiles and drones expected to reach Kyiv. Damage was recorded in 40 locations across several districts of the capital, including residential buildings, Kyiv military administration head Tymur Tkachenko said in a Telegram post. "It was a terrible night, and there had never been anything like it in the entire war," said Kyiv resident Svitlana Onofrychuk, 55, who has worked in the market that was damaged for 22 years. "I am very sorry that I have to say goodbye to Kyiv now, I am not staying there anymore, there is no possibility," she added. "My job is gone, everything is gone, everything has burned down." Yevhen Zosin, 74, a Kyiv resident who witnessed the attack, said the moment he heard the explosion he rushed to grab his dog. "Then there was another explosion and she and I were thrown back like a pin by the shock wave. We both survived, she and I. My apartment was blown to pieces," he said in Kyiv's Shevchenko district, a five-story residential building was hit, which caused a fire, and one person was killed, Ukraine's state emergency service reported. A school building was damaged by an attack while people sheltered inside, Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said. Local authorities reported supermarkets and warehouses across the city also were damaged. Multiple communities recorded damage throughout the Kyiv region, according to Mykola Kalashnyk, the regional governor.

## Trump says no rush for Iran deal, US blockade stays



WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD, - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Sunday he had told his representatives not to rush into any deal with Iran, appearing to dampen hopes of an imminent breakthrough in the three-month-old war that had been raised by both sides a day earlier. The U.S. blockade on Iranian ships on the Strait of Hormuz would "remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed", Trump wrote on Truth Social. The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here.

Negotiations were progressing and the U.S. relationship with Iran had become more professional and productive, he said. But he added: "Both sides must take their time and get it right. There can be no mistakes!" A day earlier, Trump said Washington and Iran had "largely negotiated" a memorandum of understanding on a peace deal that would reopen the Strait of Hormuz, which before the conflict carried one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments. Trump has repeatedly played up the prospect of an agreement to end the war that the U.S. and Israel started on February 28, so far without success.

It was not clear whether the agreement he was referring to on Sunday was the initial memorandum of understanding that has been under discussion, or a much more challenging broad peace settlement, likely to take much longer. The two sides remain at odds over numerous difficult issues, such as Iran's nuclear ambitions and Tehran's demands for the lifting of sanctions and the release of tens of billions of dollars of Iranian oil revenues frozen in foreign banks. Various media in the U.S. and Iran had said the memorandum setting out a framework for ending months of fighting would, if concluded, lift a U.S. blockade on Iranian shipping and reopen the waterway, which Iran has shut with threats to attack shipping.

HOPE FOR RELIEF IN GLOBAL ENERGY CRISIS senior Iranian source earlier told Reuters that if Iran's Supreme National Security Council approved the memorandum, it would be sent to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei for final approval. But Iran's Tasnim news agency said differences remained over one or two clauses. Tasnim cited a source as saying there would be no final understanding if the U.S. continued to create obstacles. In another potential stumbling block, a military adviser to Khamenei said Tehran had the legal right to manage the Strait of Hormuz, though it was not clear if that meant continuing to decide which ships can go through. Any deal cementing the current fragile ceasefire would bring relief to markets but not immediately quell a global energy crisis, which has driven up costs of fuel, fertilizer and food. Even if the war ends now, full flows through the strait will not return before the first or second quarter of 2027, the head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company said last week. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said 33 vessels had passed through the strait over the past 24 hours after getting permission from Tehran, still far short of the 140 on a typical day before the war. Trump, while offering various war aims during the conflict, has repeatedly said the U.S. struck Iran to prevent it from obtain-

ing nuclear weapons. Iran "must understand, however, that they cannot develop or procure a Nuclear Weapon or Bomb", he reiterated in his post on Sunday. Iran has long denied it is pursuing such weapons and says it has a right to enrich uranium for civilian purposes, although the purity it has achieved far exceeds that needed for power generation. Sources have told Reuters the proposed framework, when it emerges, will unfold in three stages: formally ending the war, resolving the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz and launching a 30-day window for negotiations on a broader agreement, which can be extended.

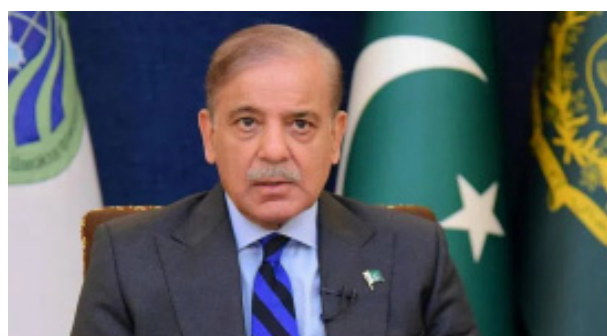
Trump, whose approval ratings have been hit by the war's impact on U.S. energy prices, said on Friday he would not attend his son's wedding this weekend, citing Iran among the reasons for staying in Washington. He spoke on Saturday with leaders from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan, who encouraged Trump to agree to the emerging framework, Axios reported. Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on Saturday that "the trend this week has been towards a reduction in disputes, but there are still issues that need to be discussed through mediators". Baghaei said the issue of the U.S. blockade on Iran's shipping was important, but that its priority was ending the threat of new U.S. attacks and the parallel conflict in Lebanon. The U.S.-Israeli bombing of Iran killed thousands of people in Iran before it was suspended in a ceasefire in early April. Israel has also killed thousands more and driven hundreds of thousands from their homes in Lebanon, which it invaded in pursuit of the Iran-backed Hezbollah militia. Iranian strikes on Israel and neighbouring Gulf states have killed dozens of people. Additional reporting by Doina Chiaciu, Ariba Shahid, Hatem Mater, Andrew Mills, Elwely Elwely and Parisa Hafezi; Writing by Kim Coghill, Kevin Liffey and Andrew Heavens; Our Standards: The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles., opens new tab Jasper Ward is a breaking news reporter in Washington. She primarily covers national affairs and U.S. politics. Jasper was previously based in The Bahamas where she covered the collapse of FTX and the subsequent arrest of its founder Sam Bankman-Fried. She was a part of the Reuters team that won the Gerald Loeb Award for breaking news for its FTX coverage. Shahzad is an accomplished media professional, with over two decades of experience. He primarily reports out of Pakistan, Afghanistan regions, with a great interest and an extensive knowledge of Asia. He also reports on politics, economy, finance, business, commodities, Islamist militancy, human rights

## Ebola clinic torched in Congo, 18 patients flee

Bunia (Congo): Angry residents of a town at the epicentre of the Ebola outbreak in eastern Congo attacked and burned a tent that was part of a health centre where people are being treated for the virus, the staff there said Saturday. It was the second such attack in the region in a week. No one was hurt in the attack, according to initial reports but as patients ran out to escape the fire, 18 people with suspected Ebola infections left the facility and are now unaccounted for, a local hospital director said. The angry residents had arrived at the clinic in the town of Mongbwalu on Friday night and set fire to a tent set up for suspected and confirmed Ebola cases by the Doctors Without Borders humanitarian group, Dr. Richard Lokudi, director of the Mongbwalu hospital, told The Associated Press. "We strongly condemn this act, as it caused panic among the staff and also resulted in the escape of 18 suspected cases into the community," he said. On Thursday, another treatment centre, in the town of Rwampara, was burned down after family members were banned from retrieving the body of a local man suspected to have died of Ebola.

## Pakistan hopes to host next round of Iran-US peace talks very soon: PM Sharif

Islamabad: Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said that Islamabad hopes to host the next round of peace talks between Tehran and Washington very soon. He praised US President Donald Trump for "his extraordinary efforts to pursue peace" in West Asia, while he committed that Pakistan will continue efforts for peace in the region. Trump, on Saturday, held a phone call with the leaders of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Türkiye, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain and Pakistan. For Pakistan, it was Army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir who was on the call, said Sharif. Sharif, who is currently on a visit to China, also praised the field marshal, saying: "I greatly appreciate his tireless efforts during the entire process. The Pakistan PM said in a statement on X: "The discussions provided a useful opportunity to exchange views on the current regional situation and how to move the ongoing peace efforts forward to bring lasting peace in the region. Pakistan will continue its peace efforts with utmost sincerity and we hope to host the next round of talks very soon." Munir was in Tehran till late Saturday evening, holding talks with top Iranian leaders on accelerating efforts to achieve a "conclusive agreement" between the US and Iran to bring peace in West Asia. As Munir wrapped up his trip, Trump said in a statement on Truth Social: "An agreement has been largely negotiated, subject to finalisation between the United States of America, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the various other countries." Trump also said that he had a separate phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu



"which, likewise, went very well". He added that the "final aspects and details of the deal are currently being discussed, and will be announced shortly". Pakistan has emerged as a mediator in the ongoing conflict, which has triggered severe energy shortages and affected economies worldwide. Several analysts say that Islamabad enjoys the confidence of both Tehran and Washington. Islamabad hosted senior leaders of both sides last month for talks, the first of its kind since 1979, but the parties failed to clinch a peace deal. The key sticking points in the US-Iran peace talks are Iran's nuclear programme and control over the Strait of Hormuz, which hosts roughly one-fifth of the world's energy supplies in normal times. Shipments through the strait have been severely disrupted since February 28, when the US and Israel launched joint attacks on Iran, triggering retaliatory strikes.

## What is the current political situation in South Korea? | Explained



The story so far: South Korea's constitutional court upheld the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol. The Court unanimously (8-0) agreed in favour of the impeachment. Mr. Yoon is the second president to be removed from office in the last eight years. According to the constitution, South Korea will have to elect a new President within 60 days.

On December 3, 2024, President Yoon announced an emergency and declared martial law to protect South Korea from "anti-state forces" and to eliminate "despicable pro-North Koreans." This was the 17th martial law in the history of independent South Korea. Six hours later, the National Assembly convened and 190 members voted in favour of lifting the martial law under Article 77. On December 14, 2024, in its second motion, the Assembly succeeded in voting President Yoon out of office with 204 votes in favour. Of the 300 seats in the National Assembly, the Democratic Party of Korea (DPK) holds 170, while the People's Power Party (PPP), to which Mr. Yoon belongs, has 108 seats.

What happened after impeachment?

The declaration of martial law and the impeachment motion ignited public protests across South Korea. It polarised society; thousands protested against the impeachment, supporting Mr. Yoon, while 2,00,000 people gathered outside the parliament, supporting his removal. On January 17, the Corruption Investigation Office requested an arrest warrant against Mr. Yoon, which was approved, lead-

ing to Yoon supporters attacking the courthouse. The 11th and final hearing on the martial decree took place on February 25. In his last hearing, he stated that his intention was only to warn the public of anti-state forces.

What does the verdict say?

The constitutional court upheld the impeachment of Mr. Yoon and expressed disillusionment with his reasoning. It held that Mr. Yoon did not follow the constitutional mandate, rules, and procedure. While Mr. Yoon argued that he imposed martial law due to the presence of anti-state forces, the verdict contradicted the same and stated that he declared martial law to overcome the National Assembly, which composed mostly of the opposition. The verdict ruled that his actions threatened the military's political neutrality and placed the soldiers serving the nation in direct confrontation with its people. Furthermore, the verdict argued that the political and economic cost of impeachment is more acceptable than the negative repercussions of a violated constitutional and democratic process. Mr. Yoon's claims of alleged election fraud were also dismissed. Based on all the above, the court upheld the removal of Mr. Yoon and said he "abandoned his duty to uphold the Constitution and gravely betrayed the trust of the sovereign citizens of Korea." Mr. Yoon will now face a series of criminal charges that he was shielded from during his tenure.

What is next for South Korea?

The Presidential elections will be held on June 3. As crowds of supporters and protestors clear off the streets, the interim heads and security forces are on high alert to maintain peace and order. The PPP is now in disarray, with Mr. Yoon being seen as a wronged leader by many of his supporters. Lee Jae-Myung of the DPK is the most favoured contender for the elections. He had led his party to victory in last year's parliamentary elections. South Korea also faces an external challenge with the U.S. imposing 25% "reciprocal tariffs". Thus, the next President will have to address both political and economic challenges. Femy Francis is a researcher at Global Politics Area Studies on China, East Asia and the Pacific at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru

## Kashmir's lesser-known spring blooms



Kashmir's agroclimatic conditions are distinct from the rest of the country. The valley's long, harsh winters leave the vegetation in dormancy. When spring arrives, it breathes new life into the landscape. The mountainous region is a home to a variety of endemic plants, including indigenous bulbs, herbs, shrubs, and trees. These floral species play a crucial role in maintaining the valley's biodiversity. Some of the most prominent spring flowers are: Colchicum luteum (veer kaum): A delicate yet vibrant bloom, often seen carpeting hillocks and grooves; Sternbergia vernalis (goul tour): A golden-yellow flower that marks the arrival of spring; Salix (braed mushuk), a plant with significant cultural and ecological value; Viburnum grandiflorum (kulmansh), a shrub with large pink flowers; and daffodils, whose bright yellow and white hues symbolise renewal and have deep roots in Kashmiri folklore.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these plants also provide essential ecosystem services. They serve as vital food sources for pollinators, ensuring the pollination of horticultural fruit trees that also bloom during spring. "The Valley's vast altitudinal variations — from 1,600 metres in the basin to over 4,500 metres at mountain peaks — create diverse habitats suitable for these plants," Anzar Khuroo, professor at Department of Botany, University of Kashmir, said. "The gradual blooming from the valley plains in early spring to the alpine meadows in late summer showcases their remarkable diversity and adaptability." For centuries, ethnic communities have used these endemic blooms for medicinal and cultural purposes. Many traditional uses have been

preserved through oral traditions, passed down from generation to generation. These flowers don't symbolise Kashmiri heritage: they also hold potential therapeutic benefits. Threats and conservation But for their significance, these species face numerous threats. Unsustainable development activities, deforestation, and increasing human encroachment pose significant risks. Climate change has also started to alter their blooming patterns. Research has found that relatively milder winters and early warming in February have led to premature flowering in the Valley, disrupting the natural seasonal cycle.

For example, a recent study conducted by the Khuroo's group at University of Kashmir reported a shift in the spring flowering phenology (the study of flowering patterns and cycles influenced by seasonal changes) of the model plant species Sternbergia vernalis, in response to the changing climate in Kashmir region of the Himalaya. At present, there are no dedicated conservation programmes targeting the plants that bloom in spring. National parks and wildlife sanctuaries currently serve as safe havens, preserving their populations. On the flip side, unregulated tourism and a growing trend of trekking without environmental consideration pose new challenges. "As Kashmir's ecology and environment faces increasing pressures, it is imperative to strike a balance between development and conservation," Khuroo said. "Protecting these endemic blooms is not just about preserving biodiversity: it is about safeguarding the cultural and ecological essence of the Valley for generations to come."

## Unvaccinated U.S. man dies after contracting measles

GNS News Agency, May 29 An adult who was infected with measles has died in New Mexico, state health officials announced on Thursday (March 6, 2025), though the virus has not been confirmed as the cause. The person who died was unvaccinated and did not seek medical care, a state health department spokesperson said in a statement. The person's exact age and other details were not immediately released. The person was from Lea County, just across the state line from the West Texas region where 159 measles cases have been identified and a school-age child died last week. New Mexico health officials have not linked the outbreak there to the Texas cases.

The person is the 10th in Lea County to have a confirmed measles infection. Seven were unvaccinated. The vaccination status of the other three is unknown. Six of the cases are in adults and the rest are in children younger than 17. On Tuesday, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that they were sending a team to Texas to help local public health officials respond to the outbreak, which began in late January. Measles is a respiratory virus that can survive in the air for up to two hours. Up to 9 out of 10 people who are susceptible will get the



virus if exposed, according to the CDC. The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is safe and highly effective at preventing infection and severe cases. The first shot is recommended for children ages 12 to 15 months, and the second for ages 4 to 6 years. "We don't want to see New Mexicans getting sick or dying from measles," said Dr. Chad Smelser, the deputy state epidemiologist. "The measles-mumps-rubella vaccine is the best protection against this serious disease."

## Are Sustainability development rankings relevant to universities in India?



In the last few years, sustainability has emerged as a critical priority for mankind, all over the world. Global ranking agencies like the Times Higher Education (THE) and the QS have been ranking World Universities for Sustainability. In the last two years, the number of Indian Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), participating in these rankings, has more than doubled, reflecting the popularity of these Rankings. The Ministry of Education, Government of India introduced Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), as a sub-parameter for overall rankings for the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. In NIRF-2025, SDG, as a new category, was introduced for ranking of institutions.

Concerns are, however, expressed by several people, on the relevance of these rankings for the HEIs in India. Only one of the 17 SDGs, Quality of Education (SDG-4), is directly concerned with education. Besides, HEIs do not have any active role in either causing or controlling the rest of the sustainability issues. In such a situation, the questions that arise are: how does participation in SDG rankings help the major stakeholders like students, teachers, the HEIs, or for that matter, the society, at large? Is it yet another case of commercialisation of rankings? In this context, this article examines the origin of these rankings, potential benefits, participation, and performance of Indian universities in major global sustainability rankings over the last three years, challenges faced by the institutions, and suggests the way forward. The origin of sustainable development rankings can be traced to the increasing focus on global climate action and the adoption by the United Nations, in 2015, of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be achieved by 2030. It is a global call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They address the major global economic, environmental, and societal challenges, related to poverty, education, health, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

Although all the SDGs are not focused directly on higher education, HEIs, as the knowledge creation and dissemination hubs, were identified as the critical players, in advancing these goals through education, research, and community outreach. The universities are expected to prepare students for a sustainable future, by incorporating the principles of Sustainability and Green Skills in the curricula of all the programmes. A number of career opportunities are emerging in Sustainable Sectors like Renewable Energy, Sustainable Agriculture, Urban Planning and Infrastructure, Waste Management, and Circular Economy. In addition, the universities are expected to take up interdisciplinary research so as to address the real-life sustainability problems and publish the findings in journals. They should also build awareness in the society on the SDGs, by demonstrating their practice of sustainability in their campuses. Global sustainability development rankings

In order to encourage and reward the HEIs to integrate the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into education and research, the United Nations launched the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI), which was supported by global ranking agencies like QS and Times Higher Education. Recognising this, ranking agencies have started to evaluate institutions based on their contributions to the SDGs, alongside traditional metrics like academic reputation, research output, and teaching quality. HESI also has been facilitating academic publishers in promoting the SDGs among editors and authors. UI GreenMetric World University Ranking UI GreenMetric World University Rankings, initiated by Universitas Indonesia in 2010, even before SDGs were established, evaluates universities based on their environmental sustainability efforts, including energy use, waste management, and green infrastructure

The UI GreenMetric evaluates university's policy and on environmental sustainability performance, on the basis of six criteria: setting and infrastructure, energy and climate change, waste management, water use, transportation, and education. It is focused primarily on environmental sustainability, with less emphasis on social and economic aspects. Times Higher Education Impact Rankings Launched in 2019, the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings evaluate universities, based on their contributions to the individual SDGs, across four broad areas: research, stewardship, outreach, and teaching, by way of response to 15-20 different questions for each SDG. Participation in the overall ranking requires universities to submit data, along with evidence, for at least four SDGs, one of which must be the SDG 1, partnerships for the goals. Universities receive a score and a rank for their activities in each of the SDGs for which they submit data, besides an overall rank. The Rankings are open to any university that teaches at

either undergraduate or postgraduate level. They were designed to encourage, as many universities as possible, to participate, by limiting the amount of data required for participation. In the last 2 years, there has been a 60% growth in the number of global participants to reach 2,540. QS world university rankings for Sustainability Introduced in 2023, QS rankings for Sustainability evaluate universities based on 53 sub-parameters, categorized under environmental impact (of environmental education, research and sustainability), social impact (education, health, employability, equality and knowledge sharing) and governance (good governance practices). In order to be eligible for the Sustainability Rankings, an institution must be eligible for at least one of the QS rankings (global, by region, or by subject). Business Schools are not currently eligible to participate. It captures data on energy consumption, water consumption, and carbon emissions in the campus. It uses technology tools to assess the knowledge of staff and students on sustainability. Though it is the most recent one to get into SD rankings, the number of participating universities grew by 149% in the last two years to reach 1,743 in 2025. During the Group of 20 countries (G20) meet in India in 2023, an action plan was drawn up to accelerate Progress on the SDGs in G20 countries. In line with the G20 Mission of LIFE (Lifestyle for Environment), criteria related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were introduced, for the first time, to rank institutions under the Overall category for NIRF-2024. For NIRF-2025 rankings, SDG, as a new category, was introduced. NIRF SDG rankings-2025 seeks to capture quantitative data on the environment, for the last 3 years, covering aspects like green area in the campus, consumption of water, energy, air quality, waste generation, food waste, and more. Besides, it captures qualitative data on sustainable living practices, covering initiatives and programmes of the university in areas like elimination of plastics, reduction of carbon footprint, renewable energies, tree plantation, addressal of social issues, minimization of food waste, sustainable transportation, and more. Participation of Indian HEIs in global sustainability rankings Over the last two years, the number of Indian HEIs participating in global sustainability rankings has grown significantly. Participation in THE impact ranking has more than doubled to 148 institutions, whereas in the case of QS Sustainability rankings, it grew five fold to 77 universities. Though it is the earliest to start SD ranking, number of participating universities UI GreenMetric Rankings from India has grown only by 11% in the last 3 years. Are sustainability rankings evaluating the real contribution of universities to SD Goals? The impact rankings focus on contribution of a university on each of the SDGs, covering policies, practices and outputs, along with evidence. QS rankings evaluate the environmental and the social impact of the initiatives of the university and the governance practices but does not map with each SDG.

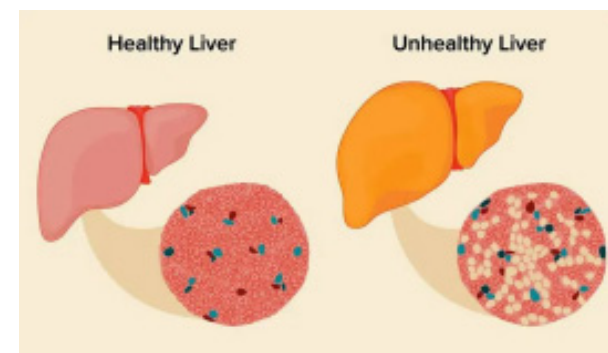
A cursory study of data captured by the first edition of the NIRF SDG Rankings 2025, however, covers infrastructural inputs quantitatively and initiatives to address SDGs qualitatively. The collection of relevant data on the academic and research contribution of the university and their impact on achieving the SDGs seems to receive less priority when compared with infrastructural inputs. It is not yet known how the data will be analysed to arrive at the ranks, as the methodology is not yet communicated in the public domain. NIRF methodology for SDG rankings seems to be contextually relevant but lacks the depth and rigor of global ranking frameworks, in terms of collection of relevant data, evidence for validation, evaluation of impact and analysis of the data to arrive at the rankings. In the absence of such a comprehensive framework and transparent communication, there could be possibilities of green washing, during submission of the data, particularly on the infrastructural inputs, thereby defeating the purpose of the rankings. Challenges faced by Indian HEIs while participating in sustainability rankings

Currently, most of the institutions lack robust systems to collect the infrastructural / utilities data like green area in the campus, consumption of water, energy, air quality, waste generation, food waste etc, as they are not part of the academic processes of the university. While the HEIs have been investing on academic infrastructure, most of them, particularly the state government funded universities, lack financial resources to spend on SDG initiatives like renewable energy, waste water recycling, sustainable transportation etc. In this process, these rankings do not offer a level playing field, for all the participating institutions. How to make the sustainability rankings more viable and relevant to the universities? The sustainability rankings need to focus more on what HEIs can contribute to SDGs, as a part of their day-to-day operations, like sustainability education, interdisciplinary research to address SD issues and dissemination of the same by way of publications and societal outreach to build awareness on SDGs. HEIs may be allowed to focus on specific SDGs, identify problem areas, therein and find solutions, implement them on a pilot basis and provide details of the same, as a real life case study, as a part of the data capture. The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) offer a wealth of traditional knowledge to address the contemporary global challenges and achieve the SDGs cost effectively. The universities must be encouraged to integrate the IKS, as a part of their interdisciplinary research, to address the specific sustainability issues. The evaluation framework may be designed to capture not only inputs but also outcomes and impact of the same for furtherance of the SDGs, supported by verifiable evidence.

## Non alcoholic fatty liver disease on the rise, Apollo Health of Nation report

Hyderabad: Cases of non-alcoholic fatty liver (NAFLD) disease, which is connected to obesity, overweight, and diabetes, are on the rise not only in Telangana State but even in other parts of the Country, the fifth edition of Health of Nation 2025 report released by Apollo Hospitals on Monday indicated.

The Health of Nation report, based on the health screenings of 2.5 million individuals at Apollo Hospitals in the Country, has indicated that NAFLD has emerged as an important health issue linked to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. "Of the 2,57,199 individuals screened across all the units of Apollo Hospitals in the country, about 65 per cent had fatty liver, and 85 per cent of those were non-alcoholic," the report said. In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, nearly 1 in 2 individuals (47 per cent) showed signs of Grade 1 fatty liver, an early-stage condition tied to obesity and metabolic imbalances. About 24 per cent of the individuals in TG and AP had hypertension while a combined 82 per cent of the screened were obese and overweight. About 81 per cent of patients screened in TG and AP are Vitamin D deficient and 27 per cent screened were found to be anaemic.



- 24 per cent of individuals have hypertension
- A combined 82 per cent of the screened population is overweight/obese
- 81 per cent were Vitamin D deficient
- Nearly 1 in 2 individuals (47%) showed signs of Grade 1 fatty liver
- 27 per cent were anaemic, pointing to nutritional gaps, especially in iron-rich foods
- 83 per cent of people have reduced flexibility, an indication of no physical activity

# The old city changeth, yielding place to new



wooden columns. This kind of setting made it easy for those serving tea or hookah during a mehfil or religious musical nights. "Now, the religious gatherings once held at least twice or thrice in both wealthy and middle-class households in the city are dwindling. "Even the attendance of local devotees on Urs (specials days dedicated to local saints) is thinning," Anjum Rashid, a shopkeeper from the city's Kalashpora mohalla, says.

The built-up area in Srinagar has seen a significant change in the Land Use Land Cover (LULC), an indicator of fast urbanisation. A survey conducted by the Sher-i-Kashmir University for Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) between 2000 and 2020 concluded that these two decades saw "the high rate of urbanization, population growth, migration, and tourism". The LULC changes have been experienced at the urban hotspots of Srinagar city, like Lal Chowk, Natipora, Hyderpora, Rajbagh, Nowgam, Dargarpora, the Dargah area, Chhatabal, Batamalo, and Bemina. "These places have experienced the highest level of urbanization in Srinagar city," it records. According to the SKUAST data, Srinagar increased from 34.53 square kilometres in 2000 to 60.63 sq km by 2020. Population too has grown from 0.1 million in 1901 to 1.2 million in 2011, when the last census was carried out. It was projected to be 1.7 million in 2024. Water bodies in Srinagar city reduced from 19.36 sq km in 2000 to 14.44 sq km. It suggested that the extent of vegetation in Srinagar city was 43.87 sq km in 2000 and came down to 26.23 sq km by 2020. The vegetation area has decreased mainly in the northern and eastern parts of Srinagar, at places like Khajia Bagh Colony, Pahal, Mazgam, and Mughal Gardens, due to a population increase and developmental area build-up.

Similarly, the dense forest area in Srinagar city was 1.02 sq km in 2000 and reduced to 0.38 sq km by 2020. Sparse forest area was 0.76 sq km in 2000 and came down to 0.7 sq km by 2020. The extent of open areas in Srinagar city was 131.95 sq km in 2000 and stood at 124.39 sq km by 2020. The reduction, according to the survey, was attributed to construction of hotels, buildings, and amusement parks at places like Lal Chowk, Batamalo, and Boulevard Road. "The urbanization process causes chaotic expansion, deteriorates living conditions, and degrades environmental scenarios, all of which have negative consequences for human health," the study concludes. Sameer Hamdani, author of the book *The Syncretic Traditions of Islamic Religious Architecture of Kashmir (Early 14th to 18th century)*, says Srinagar was put on the list of Endangered sites of the New York-based World Monuments Fund watchlist in 2008. "The city was described as one of the world's last surviving intact examples of pre-engineered wooden architecture. Many people have been impressed by the medieval charm of the historic city with its narrow gullies and kuchhas, wood and masonry houses, and tall wooden shrines," Hamdani says, drawing attention to the quintessential Kashmiri spire on several religious structures. Tracing architectural influences to Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Timurid, Mughal, and Tibetan, Hamdani says change was inevitable but "the apathy of its residents to the historical architectural traditions is unfortunate". He speaks of aspiration, more than functionality. "A vast majority of people find that by using costly, non-native materials and designs and motifs, they are fulfilling an aspirational goal," Hamdani feels. There is architectural and human chaos at Lal Chowk, Srinagar's commercial hub, where several buildings retain elements of the Dogra and British colonial period. Located just 3.5 km away from historic Zaina Kadal, Regal Cinema has been turned into a massive shopping mall with more than eight floors. It's one among dozens. Srinagar Municipal Corporation (Building) Bye Laws, 2011, limited houses and commercial structures to three floors and an attic. This was because the Kashmir valley falls under Seismic Zone V (very high damage risk zone), according to the Jammu and Kashmir State Disaster Management Authority. The J&K Lieutenant Governor's administration, however, introduced Urban Building By-Laws (UBBL), 2020, only to be withdrawn, and fresh by-laws introduced in 2021. Officials say these by-laws had no local inputs and were aimed at deregulation and densification of Srinagar to accommodate its growing population. Iftikhar Ahmad Hakim, who retired as Srinagar's chief town planner (CTP) in 2023, says the proposed by-laws deregulate Floor Area Ratio (FAR), ground coverage, and height in building. For the first time in Kashmir there is no bar on the number of floors that can be constructed, no leeway for fire gaps. Srinagar's European style of living in bungalows comes from previous by-laws that ruled in favour of a 15- to 30-foot distance between two houses as a fire gap. Here, people would lay lawns, adding to the green cover around the houses. The latest by-laws have also done away with zoning to delineate the city into compartments of commercial and residential pockets. "Earlier regulations existed to balance development with the need for liveable, resilient, and equitable cities. Removing them without careful planning and alternative safeguards can have long-term disastrous consequences for both current and future generations," Hakim says. He adds this will lead to "spatial anarchy" leading to "social anarchy" because communities will be displaced and cultural networks broken. He warns that water will soon become scarce and sanitation will become "inefficient or overwhelmed" if these by-laws are implemented. Author Hamdani too warns against densification of Srinagar, "which is already a congested city". "We need to de-densify and not increase the building footprints viz-a-viz open green spaces. The city could go vertical in certain corridors that do not affect the horizontal character of the historic city," Hakim suggests. He adds that the whole idea of going vertical is to save open spaces and demarcate more green areas.

## Heat waves forecast for 17 mandals across Andhra Pradesh

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority forecasted heat wave conditions in 17 mandals across the State on Thursday.

"Out of the 17 mandals, six in Krishna district, four in NTR, two each in Parvathipuram Manyam, Guntur, and Palnadu, and one in Eluru are expected to suffer heat waves," APSDMA Managing Director, Kurmanadh said in a press release. Scattered rains with thundershowers are also expected in 13 districts on Thursday including Parvathipuram Manyam, Alluri Sitaramaraju, Anakapalle, and East Godavari, he added. Other districts that may receive thundershowers due to surface circulation over central India: Konaseema, Kakinada, Eluru, NTR, Guntur, Prakasam, Nandyal, Anantapur, and Sri Sathya Sai, said the press release. The maximum temperature was recorded at 40.8 degrees Celsius in Ulindakonda of Kurnool district, 40.3 degrees Celsius in Darimaduga of Prakasam district, and 40.1 degrees Celsius in Thavanampalle of Chittoor district, Kurmanadh added.

# Tanks battle polluted groundwater in Haryana



Ikbal Khan, 60, speaks in Hindi accented with a strong, rough Mewati accent. He recalls a time, over 25 years ago, when women from his village of Ghaghas would fetch drinking water from a well on the outskirts of the village. As the groundwater diminished, borewells were sunk. "But over the past four to five years, the groundwater has turned salty," he says. People in Nuh district in Haryana began constructing kundas, underground water tanks, some with government support. Ikbal, like most of his fellow villagers, constructed one a month ago. He spent ₹60,000, with financial aid from the Block Samiti, a rural government body. Ikbal lives below the poverty line, with an annual income of less than ₹1.8 lakh. His tank, like most others, has a capacity of around 20,000 litres. The farming family uses the water only to drink, relying on the rain to feed the crop. This cuts the produce per acre to less than half that well-irrigated land brings in.

Before his family of six got their own tank, Ikbal used to share one with other families. This is common in this village of about 5,000 people, which now has close to 200 tanks. Together, three or four families bear the cost of water, supplied by privately owned water tankers. This way, they share the financial burden. Ghaghas is situated in the foothills of the Aravali mountain range, 10 km off National Highway 248A, connecting Gurugram in Haryana to Alwar in Rajasthan. Nuh figures among the government think-tank NITI Aayog's list of 100 'Aspirational Districts', for faring poorly on various development parameters. But it's not just Nuh. More than two-thirds of Haryana's districts face a groundwater crisis. Harmful chemicals have entered underground streams, making the water unfit for drinking and irrigation.

The Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2024 released by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in December 2024, stated that fluoride concentrations exceeded the permissible limit in Haryana, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Haryana was second on the list, with 208 out of 879 samples containing excessive fluoride. In addition, several samples had arsenic beyond permissible limits. Long-term exposure to both these contaminants can have severe health consequences, including fluorosis that degrades the skeletal system and causes cancer. Out of Haryana's 22 districts, anomalous values of uranium (over 30 parts per billion) were found in 16 districts. This makes it part of the "over-exploited, critical, and semi-critical groundwater stress zones", the report says. Chronic exposure to uranium can lead to kidney damage. The report was based on groundwater samples collected from 15,259 background monitoring network stations in May 2023 across India. In Haryana, 19 districts had a high electrical conductivity (EC) groundwater value. This is a measure of the ease with which water conducts electricity, indicative of the degree of salinity. Referring to the CGWB report, Indian National Lok Dal leader and Rania MLA Arjun Chautala raised the issue of deteriorating groundwater quality during the Budget Session in the Haryana Assembly this year. The first-time MLA said the report had made alarming revelations. He said groundwater contamination is a serious matter and that attention must be paid to ensure testing and reducing rising uranium levels in the Ghaghar and other rivers. Haryana Public Health Engineering Minister Ranbir Gangwa, in his reply, informed the House that a water testing laboratory had been established in every district of the State. Activist and convener of community-led Mewat RTI Manch Rajuddin Meo, who led a campaign, Jai Care Mission, for clean drinking water in Nuh in 2009, says, "The groundwater crisis is now serious. The water here has become so salty that even birds and animals do not drink it." He adds that Nagina block bore the brunt. Out of 68 villages, 26, including Ghaghas, were the worst hit. "A survey by the Haryana government in 2022 identified these 26 villages as having levels of total dissolved solids (TDS) beyond the permissible limit," he says. Nuh district water testing laboratory sources confirm this. "Of 860 borewells, 70 had a TDS over the permissible level of 2,000 mg/litre," says a source. Meo says a locality of around 100 families in Ghaghas continues to use the groundwater as they cannot afford water from the tankers. He claims that the government's free piped drinking water to Nuh villages is yet to cover the entire district. "Also, the ₹2,100 crore three-phase Mewat Canal project, announced by former CM Manohar Lal, is yet to take off." A pipeline of the Central government's Jai Jeevan Mission and the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation for Rural and Ur-

ban Areas was laid in Ghaghas last year. Villagers say it is being tested, so there is no regular drinking water supply. About half an hour's drive from Ghaghas, down the highway, across the road, is Madhi village. Mohammad Jubair, 58, sits under a thorn-ridden keekar tree, often the only foliage in this water-starved area. His white beard matches white turban and kurta. He claims that the village is divided into three localities for water supply through pipelines. "Each locality gets only 10 minutes of piped water supply every third day. We need at least 30 minutes a day to meet our household's water needs," he says.

Mohammad Sabir, 42, on a handicap tricycle, joins the conversation, adding that the water supply is only in name and the village is dependent on private water tankers. People in Jhajjar and Hisar had similar stories. Agroha, Barwala, and Adampur blocks of Hisar are the worst hit. Many village panchayats in Hisar have bought their own tankers. "Dushyant Chautala (former Deputy CM) had facilitated a donation of 50 tankers through a private firm four years ago," says Suresh Kumar, the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (Hisar) president. He lives in Durjanpur village. Raj Kumar, Jhajjar's Kheri Khumar village sarpanch, says, "The two wells in the village have been abandoned, as the water is not fit for drinking. We are dependent on a canal for irrigation and drinking water." Around a dozen villages in Jhajjar district, including Gudha, Dhor, and Palra, also face similar problems. Sushila, the sarpanch of the neighbouring Khatiwass village, wonders what will happen when the canal dries up. Sandeep Kumar, an executive engineer at the Public Health Engineering Department in Punhana block, Nuh, says the whole district has piped water. "About 100 villages face difficulties, including those pertaining to illegal connections, but Madhi does not have a problem." When Arjun Chautala raised the issue of groundwater in the Assembly, Chief Minister Nayab Saini had said that the government had, as part of its commitment to ensure the supply of clean drinking water, worked to provide tap water to every household in the last 10 years. Hazi Fateh Mohammad, who has been running a water supply business for the past decade, selling water to three or four villages in Nagina block, Nuh district, says the demand for tankers has decreased since the arrival of the pipeline. "We supplied 25-30 tankers during the month of Ramzan last year. Now it is down to 5-10 tankers." He has installed a common water point fed by his tanks in his village of Nagina, where he gives water free of cost. Maya, 65, a fellow resident of the village, says she fetches drinking water from her twice a day despite the piped water supply to her home. "Almost all households prefer groundwater from the filling point for drinking. It tastes better. The piped water is mostly used for washing, cleaning, and for animals," she says. Dilshad Khan, 32, is a marginal farmer in Madhi. He owns less than an acre of land and works as a truck driver to supplement his income. He shares a kunda with a neighbour, but they still find the water bill high. "A tanker costs ₹1,200 in winter, but it's hard to find one for even ₹2,000 in summer. There's often a five- to six-day waiting period. We need at least two tankers a month," he says. Like him, many others in Nuh own agricultural land, which is often too little to live off. People either rear cattle or work as drivers and helpers to make ends meet. "We are at the mercy of god! There is neither a canal nor any drain for irrigation," says Irfan Khan, 35, who holds a vocational diploma from an industrial training institute. "The groundwater here is so salty that we cannot even bathe with it. It causes a burning sensation. We put out clay pots filled with the tanker water even for the birds," he says.

In Haryana, 1.14% samples have high sodium levels and 0.34% have very high levels making the groundwater unfit for irrigation, as per the CGWB report. The CGWB has listed some of the reasons for deteriorating groundwater quality. These included an excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides in farming, improper waste disposal, sewage leakage, landfill contamination, and the over-extraction of groundwater, among others. Kumar from Hisar says the government's approach to the crisis seemed short-term, with the stress mainly on supplying water through a pipeline. "Instead of focusing on long-term sustainable solutions, such as recharging groundwater and promoting crop diversification to reduce the extraction of groundwater, the government is taking stop-gap measures," he says. Shiv Singh Rawat retired as a superintending engineer in the Haryana government's Irrigation and Water Resources department. He is now the convener of the Yamuna Bachao Abhiyan, a movement to clean up the river ghats and protect the river from pollution. He advocates for a comprehensive and sustainable water management strategy to move from water scarcity to water security. He suggests "holistic solutions adopted globally for water management, such as floodwater aquifer rechargers, large-scale rainwater harvesting, and the reuse of treated wastewater". He also wishes that States would cooperate to resolve interstate water disputes, like the ongoing Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal and Ravi-Basra water allocation issue between Haryana and Punjab. "Investment in climate-resilient infrastructure is needed to withstand the impact of erratic rainfall and rising temperatures," says Rawat. He also calls for improving public awareness and participation in water conservation efforts.

## Hyderabad-Amaravati greenfield expressway gets Centre's nod after 11 years wait

Decks are finally cleared for the much awaited Hyderabad-Amaravati greenfield expressway project, connecting the capital cities of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh respectively. It ends more than 11 year wait since the bifurcation of the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh. The Ministry of Home Affairs, the nodal agency to resolve the pending bifurcation issues, has directed the Ministry of Roads, Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) of the Hyderabad-Amaravati greenfield expressway on Tuesday (April 9, 2025). The development follows the meeting Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan had with heads of departments concerned after the Telangana government made a strong pitch for the implementation of the assurances given in the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act (APRA), 2014 during a meeting convened by the Ministry of Home Affairs on February 3, 2025. The Telangana government has been insisting on the implementation of the assurance given in Schedule XIII of the APRA for the greenfield expressway. "The Central Government shall take measures to establish rapid rail and road connectivity from the new capital of the successor State of Andhra Pradesh (Amaravati) to Hyderabad and other important cities of Telangana," Schedule XIII of the Act says.

The issue figured in the February 3 meeting yet again and the MoRTH secretary informed that this was a new proposal and therefore, alignment clearance is needed before proceeding further. Mr. Govind Mohan suggested that the Union Ministry could consider initiating the process for



detailed project report and also accord in principle approval for the project resulting in the approval by the Union Government. Telangana wanted expressway up to Machilipatnam. The approval however falls short of the Telangana government's expectations as Chief Minister A. Revanthy Reddy is in favour of a greenfield expressway up to Machilipatnam for faster movement of goods to and from Telangana. The Chief Minister discussed the matter with his Andhra Pradesh counterpart N. Chandrababu Naidu during their face-to-face meeting on July 8 last year and explained about Telangana's plans to set up a dry port in area abutting Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway. Mr. Naidu too concurred with Mr. Reddy's views claiming that the improved connectivity between the two capitals would act as a confidence building measure for further strengthening the relations between the two Telugu speaking States.

## IOC assures of ample fuel supply, 'shortage localised'



prices — which are still below market rates — and the market-linked bulk prices, according to the government. On top of that, certain private sector fuel retailers are retailing the fuels at higher prices than the OMCs, leading to additional pressure on the latter's retail network as consumers are preferring to buy from them. Higher fuel demand due to the crop harvesting season is also leading to additional demand pressure. "Indian Oil wishes to reassure customers and the general public that there is no overall shortage of petrol and diesel in the country. The current situation being witnessed at certain retail outlets is highly localised and temporary in nature, arising due to local demand-supply imbalances and redistribution of sales patterns in select areas," Indian Oil said Saturday. "The higher demand being witnessed at some locations is attributable to the following factors: seasonal increase in diesel demand during the ongoing harvesting period; temporary shift of customers from certain private retail outlets owing to relatively higher retail prices at some private pumps; increased migration of institutional and commercial demand to PSU retail outlets, as bulk and institutional supplies are currently priced significantly higher in line with prevailing international market prices," the company added.

These shifts are a major reason why the OMCs' retail outlets in some areas are running out of fuel stocks faster than usual, leading to dry-out-like situations, according to industry sources. They said that the problem gets amplified when a supply constraint at one retail outlet leads to rumours of shortage in the area, and consumers start panicking from other outlets as well. The visible migration of a large number of bulk consumers to OMCs' retail stations, combined with higher agricultural season fuel demand, has led to a demand growth of 20% to 30% in some localised areas, Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma had said on Thursday. "The price difference between diesel for bulk sales and that available at petrol pumps is Rs 40-42 per litre," she said. The three OMCs together have a share of 90% in the fuel retail market. "Indian Oil would also like to highlight that during the period from 1-22 May 2026, the company recorded substantial growth in fuel sales over the corresponding period last year, with petrol sales increasing by 14% and diesel sales by around 18%. Despite this sustained and exceptionally high growth in demand, Indian Oil continues to consistently meet customer requirements across the country," the refiner said, adding that instances of fuel supply disruption are limited to "a very small number" of its over 42,000 retail outlets.

IOC assures of ample fuel supply, fuel supply, Indian Oil Corporation assures of ample fuel supply, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, fuel shortage localised, US-Israel war on Iran, LPG supply disruptions, LPG shortage, oil supply, LPG supply, LPG supply crisis, LPG crisis, empty lpg cylinders, LPG distribution supply crisis, LPG distribution, LPG crisis, global energy costs, cooking gas price, west asia war, israel-US-iran war, Iran conflict, west asia conflict, iran and israel war, iran and israel, us israel war, war in iran, iran us, us israel iran, us israel, us iran war, iran us war, us war, israel news, israel iran war news, war news, israel iran news, israel war news, iran war news, war on iran, iran israel war today, war in iran and israel, iran attack israel, israel iran, israel us attack iran, attack on iran, iran attack on us, us and iran, us attack in iran, did iran attack us, us to attack iran, us and israel, us and israel attack iran, us attack iran today, us iran news, iran us news, us news, iran attack news, iran attack today, Khamenei newsSome private sector fuel retailers are selling the fuels at higher prices than the OMCs. (Reuters)

Amid reports of fuel retail outlets running out of petrol and diesel stocks in some pockets, the country's largest oil marketing company (OMC) Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) assured consumers that there is no "overall shortage" of the two automobile fuels and the issues being faced at certain retail outlets are "highly localised and temporary". Indian Oil also said that the three OMCs — Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum being the other two — are continuously monitoring the situation and taking necessary steps to address such "isolated situations". Fuel demand, particularly of diesel, is seeing a surge in certain pockets as a large number of bulk fuel consumers have shifted to public sector OMCs retail outlets due to a wide gap between retail

## Indians spent \$623 million on foreign holidays, card settlements in March

foreign holidays, card settlements, foreign holidays spending, card settlements spending, foreign holidays expenditure, card settlements expenditure, Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS), Indian express news, current affairsOverseas travel has declined since March this year as the US-Iran conflict disrupted air services and drove up air fares. Despite the ongoing war in West Asia, outward remittances under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) for travel-related expenses didn't show sign of big moderation at \$1.09 billion in March, a drop of 16% from \$1.31 billion recorded in February, data released by the Reserve Bank of India said. High air fares and disruption in travel services failed to dampen the travel spirit as over 60% of the travel-related expenses were for holiday expenses and international credit card bill settlements by Indians. In January, remittances under the travel category had touched \$1.66 billion. The "other travel" segment — covering holiday expenses and international credit card bill settlements — accounted for \$623 million (over Rs 5,900 crore) in the month of March 2026, highlighting the discretionary overseas spending. The numbers make it clear that affluent and aspirational Indians are increasingly prioritising foreign experiences, education and lifestyle-driven consumption at an unprecedented scale. The RBI has provided a break-up for remittances under the travel category after credit card transactions were brought under separate LRS category for the first time in March 2026.

The government has brought overseas spending through credit cards under the LRS to curb excessive foreign exchange outflows and close regulatory loopholes. The move follows concerns that some individuals were using international credit cards to spend beyond the annual remittance ceiling of \$250,000 permitted under the scheme. Until now, overseas transactions made through debit cards were already counted under the LRS framework, but credit card expenditures remained outside its ambit. Data gathered from leading money remittance agencies and financial institutions indicated that several international credit cards were being issued with spending limits significantly higher than the prescribed annual threshold, allowing users



to bypass the cap indirectly. By bringing credit card spending within the LRS net, the government aims to create uniformity across payment instruments, strengthen monitoring of foreign exchange outflows and prevent misuse of the existing regulations. Travel for education also remained one of the biggest drivers of outbound money flows, touching \$450.16 million in March alone. The amount covered tuition fees, accommodation and a wide range of student expenses overseas, reinforcing the growing migration of Indian students — and Indian money — into global education markets. Within the broader travel category, business travel remittances stood at \$16.05 million, while pilgrimage-related travel accounted for \$2.55 million. Overseas medical treatment travel bill touched \$2.79 million. Total travel remittances were \$16.4 billion in FY2026 as against \$16.9 billion in FY2025. Overseas travel has declined since March this year as the US-Iran conflict disrupted air services and drove up air fares. Under the LRS, all foreign remittances exceeding Rs 20 lakh — except those made for education or medical treatment — attract a 20% Tax Collected at Source (TCS). These remittances may include expenses related to overseas travel, gifts, and foreign investments. In contrast, remittances below Rs 10 lakh do not attract any TCS liability. For international payments such as air ticket purchases made through a bank account, TCS will apply based on the transaction amount. No tax will be charged on payments up to Rs 10 lakh, while transactions exceeding this threshold will attract a 20% TCS.

## Katrina Kaif's 'most important' skincare rule sparks debate: Dermatologist weighs in

Katrina Kaif has one skincare non-negotiable: she has to go to bed with a clean face. During a rapid-fire round with Femina India, when asked if she would sleep with her makeup on or skip sunscreen, the actor replied: "Sleeping with your makeup on, to me, is the worst thing. I can skip sunscreen on and off, but taking off your makeup before sleeping is the number one most important rule for skin health." Curious about her take, indianexpress.com reached out to a health expert to find out whether that is actually true.

Skip sunscreen vs not removing makeup: which is worse?

Dr Shareefa Chause, Dermatologist, Dr Shareefa Skin Care Clinic, Mumbai, clarified that not wearing sunscreen is generally more harmful for the skin in the long term than sleeping with makeup on occasionally. "Sunscreen protects the skin from harmful UV rays, which are the main cause of premature ageing, pigmentation, tanning, and even increase the risk of skin cancer over time," she told us, adding that daily sun exposure without protection gradually damages collagen, leading to fine lines, dark spots, and loss of skin elasticity.

"On the other hand, not removing makeup at night can also negatively affect the skin, but its impact is usually more immediate and short-term," said the expert. According to her, sleeping with makeup can clog pores, trap dirt and oil, and lead to breakouts, blackheads, dullness, and skin irritation. It also prevents the skin from repairing itself overnight, which is when natural healing and renewal happen, she added. According to Dr Chause, prolonged exposure to ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun is one of the leading



causes of skin cancer. Repeated sun exposure for long periods can lead to DNA damage, raising the risk of melanoma and other skin cancers. Sunscreen acts as a protective barrier, safeguarding the skin from harmful UVA and UVB rays.

"Using dermat-approved sunscreen daily helps to reduce the chances of skin cancer and improve skin health. So, don't neglect sunscreen and make it a part of your daily routine," said the expert. Dr Chause also mentioned that ideally, both habits should be avoided for healthy skin. However, if prioritising one, "sunscreen use during the day is more critical because UV damage is cumulative and long-lasting." At night, even a simple cleansing routine can help the skin recover better. "Sunscreen protects your skin's future, while removing makeup protects its present health," she said. So while both are important, but sunscreen is non-negotiable for long-term skin safety.

## Old iPods, off-grid holidays, Lego bricks: Switching off the phone is new and growing market



trending, DIGITAL DETOX, phone witched off, DIGITAL DETOX TREND, iPods, off-grid holidays, Lego bricks, Switching off the phone, digital rehab, checking WhatsApp, facebook, Instagram, social media, Indian express news, current affairs "Digital detox retreats work best in natural and remote locations, which is why those are the only kinds of destinations we usually propose," Aggarwal said. "At times we intentionally choose places with limited network reception." As screen time climbs and digital anxiety becomes an increasingly familiar complaint among parents, young professionals, and even policymakers, a quiet but fast-growing market is emerging around the proposition of helping people put their smartphones down.

Its offerings range from refurbished iPods flying off second-hand shelves to Lego's most complicated brick sets selling out among adults and curated wilderness retreats where checking WhatsApp is, by design, not an option. Together, they form an unlikely but booming market: a break from the dopamine-laced tyranny of smartphones. Much of this feeds into a rising demand for keeping off devices and weaning away from social media platforms. Bangalore-based Transforming Travels, for instance, is among the travel firms specifically offering "unplugged vacations" packages, "involving what the agency calls periods of abstinence from smartphones and social media platforms. The hard sell typically entails a sojourn in a remote location, high up in the hills or inside the confines of a reserve forest, to help reduce screen dependence and anxiety. These trips range from weekend getaways to week-long group retreats, including a number of women-only groups, Chandni Aggarwal, the founder of Transforming Travels, told

"Digital detox retreats work best in natural and remote locations, which is why those are the only kinds of destinations we usually propose," Aggarwal said. "At times we intentionally choose places with limited network reception." The approach, she explains, is more disciplined than it might sound. Participants frequently arrive hoping to negotiate partial access — the occasional email check, a quick scroll. That, she says, is precisely what the retreat is designed to resist. "Even briefly checking emails or messages can immediately pull your mind back into stress, work, or social pressures, interrupting the entire process of self-disconnection and reflection." Nearly 90% of her clients end up choosing remote or natural destinations, she adds — not because they are pushed to, but because once the logic is explained,

## How Neeta Lulla created Aishwarya Rai's lavender blue lehenga from 'Dil Ka Rishta'

Before Instagram aesthetics and Pinterest-inspired outfits, Bollywood influenced a large section of fashion enthusiasts, birthing myriad trends. From Madhubala's Anarkali moment to Kareena Kapoor's Poo outfits, the film fraternity continues to serve as the ultimate fashion guide for women. One of the most-discussed fashion moments was Aishwarya Rai Bachchan's stunning lavender lehenga from Dil Ka Rishta, with several fashion influencers recreating it on social media even today.

Noted fashion designer Neeta Lulla recently opened up about the iconic lehenga, highlighting the intricate craft and thought that went into its creation. In an Instagram video, Lulla shared that the lehenga was made from organza. To give it a sensuous look while keeping it modest, the blouse featured a kurti structure with a slit in the centre. Sharing the video on Instagram, the designer wrote, "The lavender blue lehenga that launched a 'Thousand Recreations'. When Aishwarya Rai wore this dreamy look in the late 90s in the movie 'Dil ka Rishta', it instantly turned into one of the most recreated lehenga inspirations of all time." "From soft lavender and blue pastel tones to the flowy silhouette and delicate detailing, women are still recreating this iconic aesthetic decades later. From the custom-dyed hues to the handcrafted silver embroidery, every detail was meticulously created by artisans in the workshop," she added.

Sharing details about the embroidery, the designer revealed that it was done with light water sequins in light

it makes sense. Few symbols of the detox moment are quite as striking as the iPod's unexpected revival. Apple retired the device in May 2022, having long since folded music listening into the iPhone. Yet demand for the original, single-purpose music player has quietly crept back, driven, analysts suggest, by precisely the thing that made the iPhone seem like an upgrade: its connectivity. For a generation that grew up with smartphones, the appeal of a device that plays music and does nothing else is not retro nostalgia so much as deliberate restraint. Google Trends data from the US showed a notable surge in searches for both the iPod and the iPod Nano in 2025. Back Market reported refurbished iPod sales rising 16% annually over the past two years, with demand also climbing in markets beyond the US. Tony Fadell, the former Apple engineer and product creator has taken note. "I think there are smarter ways of making an AirPods that has an iPod in it," he told tech industry veteran Eric Newcomer in an April podcast interview. "So I think they need to bring back the iPod." The same logic is driving the surprising adult appetite for Lego. A Lego insider acknowledged the company is expanding its India plans, with demand rising both from parents seeking screen-free play for children and from adults gravitating toward the brand's most complex sets. The complicated F1-themed range, which spans from "21-piece mystery bags" to "1,642-piece advanced builds," is seeing its strongest growth at the elaborate end. Lego declined to comment formally on the specifics. This is not just a consumer trend, it is increasingly a regulatory concern. The Economic Survey 2025-26 called on the government to introduce age-based limits for social media use among children and restrict digital advertising targeted at them — a move that would directly affect Meta and Google in one of their largest user markets. The Survey highlighted Australia's landmark legislation, which last year became the first in the world to enforce a minimum age for social media use, requiring platforms including Instagram, YouTube and Snap to block accounts of users below 16. The Australian law has drawn pushback from tech companies but broad support from parents, and is widely expected to set a template for tighter regulation elsewhere.

In India, at least two states Andhra Pradesh and Goa are understood to be considering similar restrictions for children. The country's data protection framework already prohibits behavioural tracking and targeted advertising to minors and requires parental consent for services offered to those under 18, though it is yet to come into effect. Research is building the case for urgency. A 2025 small-sample study in Tamil Nadu's Chengalpattu district found rising social media addiction among college students, with measurable impacts on academic performance, mental health and personal relationships — 13% of participants said social media use had damaged their personal relationships. This study, led by Gokul Gopakumar from the Chennai-based Sree Balaji Medical College & Hospital and Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, suggested "significant behavioural patterns, risk factors, and demographic characteristics" as responsible for excessive social media use.



blue and silver to create an impact. She also shared that the lavender shade became popular because the actor personally loved the colour and complemented her eyes. The jewellery, on the other hand, was handcrafted in her atelier to complement the overall look. "A unit of mine that handcrafted jewellery sat in my atelier and created the choker, the earrings, the maang tikka, the bracelets and some of the bangles. To this jewellery piece, we incorporated stones, Swarovski crystals and blue crystal beads to create an Indo-Western fusion of sorts," she said. "Because the look was not completely traditional, nor was it completely westernised. So, I would say it was a contemporary look and that look, kind of, you know the rest of it, it's history," Lulla added.

## 'My child's eyes seemed fixed downward': Lesser-known hydrocephalus symptom parents should know

When parents think of serious brain conditions in babies, unusual eye movements may not immediately ring alarm bells. But doctors say a baby whose eyes appear unusually fixed downward could be showing an important warning sign. This lesser-known symptom, often called "sunsetting eyes", can sometimes point to hydrocephalus — a condition caused by excess cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) building up inside the brain. According to Dr Anurag Saxena, Cluster Head for Delhi NCR — Neurosurgery, Manipal Hospital Dwarka, New Delhi, this is not a sign parents should ignore.

"What is hydrocephalus?" "Hydrocephalus is a condition where excess cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) builds up inside the brain's ventricles. In infants, this can increase pressure in the skull as their bones are still soft and expanding," says Dr Saxena. If left untreated, that pressure can interfere with brain development and lead to serious complications. "This pressure may lead to an enlarged head, affect brain development, and, if untreated, lead to developmental delays, vision problems, seizures, or long-term neurological conditions. Early detection is important to prevent permanent damage," says Dr Saxena.

Why do the eyes look fixed downward?

The downward gaze happens because rising pressure inside the skull begins affecting areas of the brain that control eye movement. "The pressure may push the eyes downward, making it difficult for the child to look upward," says Dr Saxena. This visible sign often indicates significant internal pressure. "This sign often indicates significant pressure and should never be ignored, especially if accompanied by irritability or head enlargement," says Dr

Saxena. Hydrocephalus does not always present dramatically in the early stages, which is why some signs may be overlooked. "Apart from head enlargement, symptoms of hydrocephalus may include poor feeding, frequent vomiting, excessive sleepiness, irritability, delayed milestones, weak muscle tone, seizures, and abnormal eye movements," says Dr Saxena. In older children, the warning signs may look different. "Symptoms can include headaches, blurred vision, difficulty concentrating, and balance problems," says Dr Saxena. Because some symptoms develop gradually, parents may dismiss them as temporary discomfort or routine developmental issues. "Downward-fixed eyes in a baby can indicate increased intracranial pressure from hydrocephalus and should be treated as urgent," says Dr Saxena. "Immediate medical evaluation is necessary as rising pressure can significantly affect brain function."

What causes it—and can it be treated?

Hydrocephalus in infants may develop due to congenital conditions, brain malformations, infections during pregnancy, bleeding in the brain (especially in premature babies), or tumours blocking the normal flow of fluid. The good news is that timely treatment can improve outcomes significantly. "It usually involves surgery to redirect excess fluid and relieve pressure," says Dr Saxena. The most common treatment involves placing a shunt system to drain excess fluid into another part of the body, or performing an endoscopic procedure to improve fluid flow. "When managed promptly, children can have good developmental outcomes," says Dr Saxena. So if your baby's eye movements seem unusual—especially if accompanied by vomiting, irritability, unusual sleepiness, or a rapidly enlarging head—seek medical attention promptly.

## Sachin Tendulkar heaps praise on son Arjun after Lucknow Super Giants debut



GNS News Agency, May 29

Arjun Tendulkar Sachin IPL LSGArjun Tendulkar of Lucknow Super Giants celebrates the wicket of Prabhshimran Singh of Punjab Kings during Match 68 of the TATA Indian Premier League 2026 between Lucknow Super Giants and Punjab Kings at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow, India. The legendary Sachin Tendulkar heaped praise on son Arjun who took the wicket of the in-form Prabhshimran Singh with a yorker that trapped the opener in front of the stumps in the 15th over in the Lucknow Super Giants vs Punjab Kings encounter on Saturday. Arjun finally made his debut for LSG after waiting almost the entirety of the season and returned with figures of 1/36 in his 4 overs. "Well done, Arjun. Proud of the way you've carried yourself through this season, always believing in your ability, staying patient, working hard

quietly, and remaining positive despite having to wait for your opportunity till the very last match. Cricket tests patience as much as skill, and you handled both beautifully today. Keep your feet on the ground, and continue being in love with the game like you always have. Love you always," Sachin posted on X.Ahead of the IPL 2026 mini-auction in December, Arjun was traded by Mumbai Indians for his first stint outside the five-time champions. Lucknow Super Giants acquired the services of Arjun at his base price of INR 30 lakh.

Having made his T20 debut in 2021, Arjun was first signed up in the IPL by the Mumbai Indians the same season. In 29 T20s, Arjun has snapped up 35 wickets at a strike rate of 16.0 besides aggregating 189 runs with the bat. Arjun has played only five IPL games in all, picking up three wickets. On Saturday, Punjab Kings rode on skipper Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten ton and opener Prabhshimran's fifty to beat Lucknow Super Giants by seven wickets in an Indian Premier League match. PBKS produced a good bowling display to restrict LSG to 196 for six, a target which they chased down with consummate ease with Iyer (101 not off 51 balls) and Prabhshimran (69 off 39) leading from the front as they stayed in the hunt for a playoffs berth. Earlier, opener Josh Inglis made 72 off 44 balls with the help of nine boundaries and two sixes, while Ayush Badoni scored 43 off 18 deliveries in the middle overs to guide LSG to 196 for 6. Towards the end, Abdul Samad made an unbeaten 37 off 20 balls. Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal (2/25) and Marco Jansen (2/33) were the most successful bowlers for PBKS on the day.

## Praggnanandhaa ends tied-fifth at Romania classical event; Vincent Keymer wins



GNS News Agency, May 29

German grandmaster Vincent Keymer clinched the Super Chess Classic Romania 2026 tournament with a final round victory over Jorden van Foreest on Saturday. Keymer's win was the only decisive game of the final round at Bucharest, but it ended up being a tournament deciding result on a day where five players had a chance to win the title. R Praggnanandhaa, India's only contender in the tournament, ended joint-fifth, along with four other players. Praggnanandhaa's only victory in the nine rounds he played in the tournament came against world championship contender Javokhir Sindarov while the Indian prodigy

had lost in the seventh round to Fabiano Caruana. Pragg will now fly to Oslo to compete in the Norway Chess tournament, where he will be pitted against world champion D Gukesh, world no 1 Magnus Carlsen, Keymer, Wesley So and Alireza Firouzja. The Norway Chess tournament starts from Monday.

On Saturday, Praggnanandhaa played out a 31-move draw against Dutch grandmaster Anish Giri. Both players were not in contention to claim the title at the end of the day, so the draw was understandable. Praggnanandhaa walked away with a prize money of \$18,000 (approximately Rs 17 lakh) for his fifth-place finish. This does not include the bonus he will get from his one win over Sindarov. The organisers had announced that there would be \$1,25,000 reserved as a bonus pool, which will be divided for the number of decisive games that are played out at the tournament and then distributed to players according to their wins at the event. Meanwhile, Sindarov, who was in rampaging form in the recently-concluded Candidates tournament, ended joint-third in the Super Chess Classic Romania 2026 tournament after shrugging off the loss to Pragg, which turned out to be the only time the Uzbek prodigy tasted defeat in Bucharest. Sindarov found form late in the tournament, taking down Keymer in round 7 and then Van Foreest in round 8.

## Why Coco Gauff and Iga Swiatek are favourites at this year's French Open

Going by the recent results on the women's tour, upheaval and a few surprises may be expected at the French Open, starting Sunday, with the top names either unfit or lacking form. Going by the recent history of women's tennis, though, the top names, with their surface expertise and track record of recovering their best games on the biggest stages, may be expected to re-establish some order.

No players are more likely to do so than the two best claycourters of this decade. Coco Gauff has reached two finals at Roland Garros in the past four years and won one of them. Iga Swiatek has won four titles in Paris since the turn of the decade. Both have gone through a considerable amount of churn in the past 12 months: technical shifts, coaching changes, exposure of their weaknesses. Neither have won a title this year. But those who pipped them to the summit of the sport in their lean patch have hit unexpected roadblocks. The year started with Elena Rybakina establishing herself as a top name with the Australian Open title. Then Aryna Sabalenka established her hold to the World No. 1 spot – now for the last 70 weeks – by winning in Indian Wells and Miami, but injuries stalled her progress. Rybakina, meanwhile, did win a title on clay in Stuttgart but that was in a weak field and in indoor conditions that don't mirror Paris at all.

It has allowed for Gauff and Swiatek – who reached the final and semifinal at last week's Italian Open respectively – to put themselves back in the mix and kick off an intriguing four-way fight to the finish among the top seeds, without a clear favourite. For both Gauff and Swiatek, the surface gives them the edge. Swiatek is an easy early pick for the title – even a slim consensus favourite among the bookmakers – thanks to her clay pedigree. But ever since she won Wimbledon last year, her form took a downturn, especially her forehand that lost its sting and aura of intimidation. But nowhere does it hurt opponents' more under the baking sun, on the Parisian clay. Having joined hands with Francisco Roig, a former member of Rafael Nadal's team, results are expected at this tournament for the erstwhile 'queen of clay.'

No other player on the women's tour has the appetite to fight and defend like defending champion Gauff, and no other surface rewards this more than clay. But since winning Roland Garros last year, her form took a nose-dive. There are obvious areas of improvement in her technique, from a lasso-like forehand that dithers too much and a serve, which, while dangerous when firing, leaks too many errors when the chips are down. Swiatek's recent struggles seem to be psychological, Gauff's technical. Which is probably why they thrive in physical, slow-burn contests on the



crushed red brick. If they were coming into any other Major, their stock would be considerably lower. It would be so too if there was an overwhelming form favourite for this tournament. Even if the likes of Sabalenka and Swiatek have established consistency at the Majors, women's tennis has not shed its reputation for unpredictability. The competitive curve, as well as the ruthlessness of the best-of-three-sets format, makes the running tough for the top seeds. It remains so going into the French Open, where a string of outsiders are capable of springing a surprise. The recent title-winners deserve the first mention. The Tour has revealed in the feel-good story of two Ukrainians winning on the big stage recently as war rages on back home. Marta Kostyuk was the big surprise, winning a topsy-turvy Madrid Open.

Elina Svitolina was the more capable of the compatriots, defeating Rybakina, Swiatek and Gauff back-to-back to win the Italian Open. Coupled with a run to the Australian Open semifinal, Svitolina is putting together a solid season. But she has not quite yet got the results on the big stage to give her the favourite tag. Ten years ago, Svitolina would have been a sleeper pick for the French Open. In that time, she has had a down turn in form, become a mother, and returned to the Top 10. But she still hasn't lifted into the category of mainstay of Grand Slam contender. Both Ukrainians are in Swiatek's section of the draw. Sabalenka, too, has a couple of tough assignments with Naomi Osaka lurking, as well as a potential quarterfinal against ninth seed Victoria Mboko or fifth seed Jessica Pegula. Clay may not be either player's strong suits but given the fact that they are on the rise, they seem capable of ruining a top name's path. The same can't be said for the Russian eighth seed Mirra Andreeva. Clay is her strong suit, and for long she has been touted to take the next step in her career. A favourable draw, in Rybakina's section, gives her every chance of doing so.

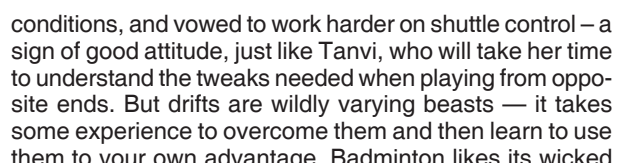
## Gurindervir Singh and his obsession to prove naysayers wrong drives him to 100m NR

Gurindervir Singh, 25, from Punjab, broke the men's 100m national athletics record at the Federation Cup in Ranchi Saturday, clocking 10.09 seconds to become the first Indian to run a sub-10.10-second time. In fact, Gurindervir broke the record twice in two days. In the first semifinal on Friday, he ran 10.17s to better Animesh Kujur's previous mark of 10.18s, though in the second semifinal, Kujur sprinted back with a faster 10.15s. The performances of India's fastest two men have raised the country's hopes for an athletics medal in the Commonwealth Games (in Scotland, from July 23) as well as the Asian Games (in Japan from September 19), where they could go even faster as they are expected to be in peak form. To be sure, Gurindervir's 10.09s in Ranchi would have been good enough to win him a silver in the last Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022. On Saturday, when Gurindervir snapped off his bib after crossing the finish line at the Birs Munda Stadium, coach James Hillier had his eyes fixed on the screen. As it displayed '10.09s', gasps and roars echoed around. Gurindervir then showed the cameras the back



of his bib and a message scribbled on it – "Task is not finished yet. 10.10. Wait. I am still standing." James Hillier Indian sprinters Gurindervir Singh with coach James Hillier.

It was perhaps directed at social media trolls who had taken potshots at him recently. "People say a lot of things on social media.



conditions, and vowed to work harder on shuttle control – a sign of good attitude, just like Tanvi, who will take her time to understand the tweaks needed when playing from opposite ends. But drifts are wildly varying beasts – it takes some experience to overcome them and then learn to use them to your own advantage. Badminton likes its wicked winds – sometimes an AC blast blows sideways and only at the net to add to the jeopardy with a whirring cackle. Before their loss in Thailand, Satwik-Chirag had spoken of how, at the Hyderabad academy, they train specifically to come to grips with this element, which is almost comparable to the intense debates on the nature of cricket pitches. The finicky, fluttery, flighty shuttle, however, can be as moody and whimsical as invisible air can be. And it can change mid-match, mid-rally, from one court to the next, from Saturday to Sunday. Coach Park Tae Sang praised Ashmita Chaliha on Thursday for her exemplary shuttle control in drifty conditions. On Friday, she perished to the same drafts as more experienced Line Kjaersfeldt showed superior mastery of conditions. Is it fair & same for both players? Not quite, because just like toss and dew in cricket, which side you wind up on, in the second half of the third game, matters plenty.

With experience, shuttlers learn to get a semblance of control. But court drifts can reward or punish randomly. While Indians have been aided at times, everything from Prannoy's slow starts (which he unfailingly recovers from) to Lakshya Sen's Olympic medal miss has a bit of drifty reasons that can't be pinpointed like poor shotmaking in video analysis. Srikanth could've won much more had he not played so much in the slow courts of Europe. The greatest players overcome that, and Srikanth did go right up to the finals at the 2021 Worlds. He's one of the better readers of winds and how to respond to them. But every time a lead is lost, it's not always the shifty weak nerves of shuttlers. It's the second-most crucial, non-negotiable skill that the young players need to ace, after fitness. But only an ignoramus will omit it as a factor to disparage player temperaments.

## Why court drift can put Anmol Kharb 11-2 up against Chen Yufei and then drag her down when sides change

GNS News Agency, May 29

Not a betraying of vulnerability or a prick to pride, but admitting that a loss happened in badminton because of the drift (AC draught) in the arena, wasn't considered cool a decade back. The likes of Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, when they were defeating all and sundry, never hinted at the windy conditions that gave the shuttle a mind and wings of its own, as the cause of their losses. But tournaments in Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, more than anyplace else, tend to ruffle feathers – quite literally.

It wasn't that the big names of Indian badminton were not bothered by drift, or were so proficient in shuttle control that they could ace any conditions, especially in the drifty summer-time halls of Asia. But someone like Sindhu or Satwik-Chirag could simply hit through with their power. Saina had a mix of strength to smother the shuttle when she got under it, and determination to tame it, by simply learning quickly enough. Srikanth, Prannoy and Sai Praneeeth learnt to use up the first few points to get a hang of how the tosses were landing or if smashes were overshooting from one side. And in 2021, Sindhu went on to rent out the whole Gachibowli stadium ahead of the Tokyo Olympics, realising she couldn't leave it to the last minute to acclimatise in the Covid Games. The blowing winds affect everyone; the good players simply adapt to it carefully and even use it as a strategy as the court sides change. This implies building up an early long lead in the decider third set if you know life's about to get stormy from the other end. Or fine-tuning smashes to the back court so they don't fly wild. Or altogether avoiding lines and playing to the centre or hitting a cross to cut down the straight-shooting trajectory. Adjusting shuttle lengths and hitting speeds and shuttle placements, depending on the windcock, is 90 per cent of the time, the 100 per cent skill needed in badminton, with all other things being equal. In the last six months, Tanvi Sharma couldn't tame the shuttle after practising for years at the NCE Guwahati in the World Juniors final. Vennala Kalagotla and Tanvi both missed out on the Asian Juniors finals, unable to adapt to conditions.

It's all very well to diss on Anmol Kharb, who had an 11-2 lead against former Olympic champion Chen Yufei and went on to lose the decider. But it's only the ignorant who do not factor in that the winds wreaked havoc with Yufei in the first half of the third set at Thailand (clearly she wasn't choking) to put her 2-11 down, and when the sides changed, the Chinese benefitted from a flurry of points and turned the tables, while Anmol got stuck on the unfavourable end.

She didn't offer it up as an excuse, merely stated the

## Iran football team shifts World Cup training base from USA to Mexico



GNS News Agency, May 29

On a day that US President Donald Trump said that they had "largely negotiated" a deal with Iran on the ongoing war, the Iranian football federation has said that they will move their training base for the upcoming FIFA World Cup to Mexico. The Iranian football team was initially supposed to have their training based in Tucson, Arizona, but will now be based out of Tijuana, Mexico, according to Mehdi Taj, the president of the Iran Football Federation. Taj made the announcement late on Saturday in a statement and also claimed that the global governing body of football, FIFA, had given its blessings for the move. FIFA, however, is yet to announce that it was okay with the move. "All team base camps for the countries participating in the World Cup must be approved by FIFA. Fortunately, following the requests we submitted and the meetings we held with FIFA and World Cup officials in Istanbul, as well as the webinar meeting we had yesterday in Tehran with the respected FIFA secretary general, our request to change the team's base from the United States to Mexico was approved," Taj was quoted as saying in a statement released by the Iranian federation. Iran's participation at the FIFA World Cup – which will be co-hosted by the USA, Mexico and Canada – had been under threat because of uncertainty surround-

ing the war in the Middle East and security concerns about the Iranian players in the US.

The FIFA World Cup will be held from June 11 to July 19. Iran are scheduled to play all their three Group G games in the US, with Inglewood, California hosting their games against New Zealand on June 15 and Belgium six days later, and Seattle playing host for the Iran vs Egypt clash on June 26. The federation said Tijuana's relatively close proximity to Inglewood, a suburb of Los Angeles, will benefit the team and the new location "includes all training facilities, gym, private restaurant and everything else the team needs." Iran's federation said moving the base camp will resolve potential visa issues since the team will enter the U.S. through Mexico.

## Barcelona tops La Liga class as season concludes

Madrid: The 2025-26 La Liga season ended Saturday night with Barcelona champion, Real Madrid second and Oviedo, Mallorca and Girona relegated to the second tier. Some clubs can look back with satisfaction, while others face an uncomfortable summer.

Here are the end-of-term marks in Spain's top flight FC Barcelona finished top of the class, with Hansi Flick's side recovering from a slow start, perhaps affected by the loss of defender Inigo Martinez to Saudi Arabia, to dominate the competition. Lamine Yamal, Pedri, Raphinha, Pau Cubarsi, Eric Garcia and Joan Garcia were all outstanding, but Flick also deserves special praise for showing faith in young players and rotating a thin squad so effectively that injuries to key players were hardly noticed, reported Xinhua. Villarreal, Real Betis, Celta, Getafe and Rayo Vallecano also deserve high marks. Villarreal played rapid counter-attacking football to book its place in the Champions League almost a month before the end of the season, with Gerard

Martin again showing he is arguably Spain's best specialist striker and Georges Mikautadze also impressing. The disappointment was Villarreal's Champions League campaign, and that may be one reason Marcelino Garcia Toral will not continue as coach next season. Betis also qualified for the Champions League under the steady guidance of Manuel Pellegrini, with Cucho Hernandez, Aitor Ruibal and Ezze Abde all impressing. Celta reached the Europa League quarterfinals and finished sixth to secure a return to the competition after playing entertaining football under Claudio Giraldez. Borja Iglesias led the line, while Carl Starfelt was a rock in defense. Getafe may not be the most attractive side to watch, but Jose Bordalas again forged his players into a unit greater than the sum of its parts. After a poor first half of the season, good January signings helped Getafe finish seventh and qualify for the Conference League. Rayo Vallecano also deserves high marks for finishing eighth with one of the lowest budgets in La Liga, while also reaching

Wednesday's Conference League final, which could still earn the team a place in Europe next season. The Madrid-based club will pay a price for that success, with young coach Inigo Perez expected to leave and Villarreal his probable destination. Real Sociedad also earns a pass mark after a notable improvement under Pellegrino Matarazzo, who took the club from relegation candidate to Copa del Rey winner. La Real would probably have finished higher in La Liga, but results dipped in the final month after the Cup triumph secured a place in Europe. Real Madrid has to view its season as a failure. It ends a second consecutive campaign without a major trophy, having finished well behind Barcelona in La Liga, lost to Bayern Munich in the Champions League quarterfinals and crashed out of the Copa del Rey against second-division Albacete. Xabi Alonso promised to bring order, but player power saw him sacked in January, leaving Alvaro Arbeloa with the almost impossible task of working with players who knew their voice carried more weight than the coach's.

## Vijay, Abhimanyu had 'narrow escape from death' during shoot atop moving train over 2,500-ft valley



Abhimanyu Singh is known not just in Bollywood circles but also among the South Indian cinema audience, having appeared in a handful of regional movies. He recently shared his experience working with actor-turned-politician C Joseph Vijay, who currently serves as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, recalling the time they both shot a stunt sequence atop a moving train without proper security measures in place. Revealing that his first Tamil film was with Vijay, Abhimanyu described him as a "simple and grounded" human being. For those who may not know, Abhimanyu played the villain opposite Vijay in Velayudham (2011) and Thalaivaa (2013). "We landed in Coimbatore (during the filming of Velayudham), travelled by car for six hours, and reached a place. We were all waiting at a small hotel. One and a half hours away from that spot, there was a small railway station where they had kept ready a train that they had hired," he shared during a conversation with Hindi Rush.

Abhimanyu continued, "A fight sequence was being shot in it for the past six days. On the seventh day, they had to shoot the portions on top of the train. That was the last day on which the train would be available. There was

an Australian fight master who said that if we focused too much on security, we couldn't complete the scene in the stipulated time. Then another fight master from Chennai stepped in. Initially, Vijay and I rehearsed while the train was stationary on the track. Then we were informed that as soon as the camera started rolling, the train would move."Mentioning that he was taken aback initially, Abhimanyu Singh said he immediately discussed this with Vijay, wondering how they would fight atop a moving train. He asked, "Are you sure we will be able to fight like this?" Vijay replied, "No, no, we will not fight; we will save each other." Abhimanyu further recalled, "Once the train reached a speed of 70-80 kmph, it was just Vijay and me, with no safety equipment, and the cameraman, who just had ropes tied around his waist. There was no one else with us. I immediately noticed a bridge, and that's when I realised that if my leg slipped, I would fall into a 2,500-ft-deep valley. Also, if one of us slipped, we would have instinctively held onto the other person's hand, and we both would have died."Luckily, nothing happened, and they completed the shoot successfully.

"I couldn't sleep for 6-7 days, thinking about what would have happened if my leg had slipped even a bit. But then I thought: if such a big star wasn't scared and was ready to do the stunts without safety, why should I be? He was instantly ready to do all that with so much courage and guts. Nonetheless, we really had a narrow escape from death," he added. Mentioning that the audience down South is very loyal to their stars, Abhimanyu Singh noted that the same isn't the case in Bollywood. "The fans there watch all the films of their stars. They respect and worship them. The stars are lucky to have such an audience." He further lauded the regional industries for remaining rooted even now and telling such tales through their films and shows. "The South Indian film industries continue to tell the stories of their land. Their stories have a soul that is both of India and of their native places. Bollywood, on the other hand, is confused about what to show the audience. Talented writers don't get a chance

## Pyasa for Rs 10L, Guide for Rs 5L: How much rare first release posters of iconic films would cost today

Film historian laments the loss of the original posters of Pyaasa and Guide. Film historian laments the loss of the original posters of Pyaasa and Guide. It's a tragedy that a lot of Hindi cinema's most prized archival treasures have been lost to time. These not only include film props, costumes, and prints, but also hand-painted posters, which served as the face of the film, the first glimpse of the grand, immersive experience in store. While the hunt for the original release posters of some cult classics are on, veteran film historian and memorabilia archivist SSM Ausaja laments that a lot of them has been permanently lost. "Nobody has the poster of PC Barua's Devdas (1935)," revealed Ausaja, referring to the first Hindi film adaptation of Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay's 1917 seminal Bengali romance novel, starring the director, Jamuna Barua, and Chandrabati Devi as Devdas, Paro, and Chandramukhi, respectively. He also regretted the loss of the original posters of Ardeshir Irani's 1931 period fantasy film Alam Ara, which is regarded as India's first talkie, as well as Nitin Bose's Dhoop Chhaon (1935), which was India's first film to use playback singing. The archival loss is not limited to the 1930s, but extends even to 1970s, with the loss of the first release poster of Gulzar's 1975 memorable musical romance Mausam, starring Sanjeev Kumar and Sharmila Tagore. "I've been searching for the poster for 30 years," Ausaja said on the podcast The Bollywood Minute.

"If you have a first release poster, it's a jackpot. The market of posters is very high today because of auctions," he added. The archivist claimed that the auction price of the first-release posters of Hindi cinema's classics can range from Rs 1 lakh to even Rs 10 lakh. For instance, the original posters of veteran screenwriter duo Salim-Javed's blockbusters, like Ramesh Sippy's Sholay (1975) and Yash Chopra's Deewaar (1975), could land very well between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 2 lakh. If one goes back to the 1960s, first release posters of Chetan Anand's 1965 romance Guide, starring Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman, and K Asif's 1960 period drama Mughal-E-Azam, starring Prithviraj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar, and Madhubala, could cost even over Rs 5 lakh. He added that the price of Guru Dutt's 1957 tragedy Pyaasa could even touch Rs 10 lakh today, almost 70 years later. "They're not available anywhere. If you go to



these places or search online, they're all selling re-release posters," said Ausaja. He also explained how to distinguish between an original poster and a re-release poster. "The first release posters will have the poorest paper quality. The paper would be dying, and you'd know. But the colours will be organic, and will mesmerize you. The feel of the organic colour and paintbrush is enough for any art lover to say, 'Wow!'," he added. "It's very important to locate and preserve the first-release poster. The re-release posters and the reprinted posters are generally of very poor aesthetic quality. I don't think they even possess any archival value," claimed the historian. In India, like the rest of the world, posters were handmade and printed on lithographic press till the 1970s. Transition to the offset process happened in the 1980s, followed by digital printing 1990s onwards. "Lithographic press is very, very rare now. It's not functional anymore globally. So, all the lithographic prints in organic colours are all considered to be antiques and have a very good archival value," revealed Ausaja.

## 'He thinks so differently': AR Rahman on 'epic' collaboration with Hans Zimmer for Ramayana

Ever since the teaser of Ramayana dropped, anticipation around Nitesh Tiwari's mythological epic has been steadily building online. Headlined by Ranbir Kapoor, the two-part film is being positioned as one of the most ambitious and expensive projects ever mounted in Indian cinema, with reports pegging its budget at nearly Rs 4,000 crore. Adding to the scale of the project, AR Rahman has teamed up with legendary German composer Hans Zimmer for the soundtrack. In a recent interview, Rahman described their collaboration as "epic" and called Ramayana the biggest film of his career.

During a chat with Faridoon Shahryar, Rahman was asked about his experience of working with composer Zimmer, who has won two Academy Awards and four Grammys in his career. "I think it's an epic collaboration. That too, to do a film which is our own, from our country and culture. Bringing him as almost like an ambassador to the world, to non-Indians. His name is going to make many people watch the movie definitely. At least a certain section is going to watch what has Hans Zimmer done in an Indian movie," he shared. The composer-singer further added, "He has also worn many hats. He is a true artiste who thinks so differently than other people. He set a standard while inspiring generations. To work with him is definitely a great honour. One of India's greatest movies."

Recalling the day he saw Ramayana's trailer in 3D, AR Rahman praised the upcoming film's technology and said, "It is one of the biggest films of my career. Not only the story, we all know the story, and how we respect it, but the technology. Just even watching the trailer on 3D is in-



credible. I've never seen anything of Indian or in the whole world as a piece of art. It's so incredible on 3D, the music and sound."Ramayana has been produced by Namit Malhotra and Yash under Prime Focus Studios and Monster Mind Creations. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the movie stars Ranbir Kapoor as Rama, Sai Pallavi as Sita and Yash as Ravana. It also features Sunny Deol, Lara Dutta, and Ravi Dubey, among others. The epic will be released in two parts - Part 1 set to release on Diwali 2026 and Part 2 scheduled to hit the theatres on Diwali, 2027.

## From 'jihadi' remark to police complaint: New row rocks AMMA as Ansiba Hassan, Tiny Tom lock horns



At a time when the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) was slowly heading back to normalcy after being rocked by the row sparked by the findings of the Justice Hema Committee report and the numerous sexual misconduct allegations that emerged against several male film industry insiders in the aftermath, the organisation has once again found itself embroiled in an ugly controversy.

Days after she stepped down as AMMA's joint secretary, Drishyam star Ansiba Hassan has alleged that she was forced to resign and that she faced months of trauma. Going one step further, she claimed that actor Tiny Tom was the reason behind her resignation. Accusing Tiny of spreading baseless rumours about her interactions with others, Ansiba also alleged that he used a communal derogatory term against her, referring to her as a "jihadi." Tiny, however, has refuted the allegations. Don't Miss | Drishyam 3 movie review: A close shave for Mohanlal, Jeethu Joseph as Georgekutty battles himself | Received no support from AMMA president,' alleges Ansiba Hassan

Maintaining that she submitted her resignation on February 21, Ansiba recently revealed that she agreed to continue in her post until the forthcoming general body meeting scheduled for June, at the request of the association's general secretary, Kukku Parameswaran. "I had clearly mentioned the mental harassment I faced over a complaint filed by another executive committee member, who alleged that I was responsible for her domestic issues. The president (Shwetha Menon) maintained that it was a personal matter between two individuals and that the association should not intervene. I received no support from her. However, Kukku contacted me, asked me to submit a report, which I did," Ansiba told Onmanorama. Ansiba Hassan says she 'felt forced to resign'

However, during a recent executive committee meeting, Shwetha suddenly accepted her resignation, even though Ansiba decided to continue solely because one of the organisation's key office bearers asked her to do so. "I felt forced to resign," she stated. The actor continued, "At present, I have very few film offers, and I still don't know why. I am the sole breadwinner in my family and had to protect myself. But I realised that by staying silent, I was only protecting those making accusations against me." Cinema Anatomy | Beyond Drishyam: Mohanlal delivered a whole year of Lalim with 5 performances, a Best Actor award | Pointing out that she has been facing such at-

## 'Played Chief Ministers of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra': Mammootty explains difficulties of being CM

Malayalam megastar Mammootty and noted actor Kunchacko Boban made a surprise appearance at a grand reception organised for newly-appointed Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan, as well as other ministers and MLAs from the Ernakulam district, at the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium in Kadavanthra on Sunday, May 24. While addressing the gathering, Mammootty pointed out how strenuous the job of a chief minister is, given that the person holding the position is the state's key decision-maker on all matters. The acting legend also extended his best wishes to Satheesan, sharing his hope that the latter would do an excellent job of addressing and resolving the masses' woes, irrespective of which side the demand originated from.

'Being a Chief Minister is not easy at all,' points out



Mammootty "I have played the role of a Chief Minister in several films. Interestingly, I have portrayed the Chief Ministers of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. Acting is only for a short time, and it becomes relatively easy with experience. However, in reality, being a Chief Minister is not easy at all. It is a very difficult and demanding job," Mammootty pointed out on the occasion.

He added, "Such a task of immense responsibility

tacks since her election as AMMA's joint secretary, Ansiba Hassan noted that some people weren't happy with her appointment. The actor also revealed that she was summoned to the Tripunithura police station once over a "false complaint" filed by a female member of AMMA. Ansiba claimed she had to file an RTI to find out why she was summoned. She also accused Tiny Tom of making false allegations against her of being involved in religious conversions. Mentioning that she has informed superstars Mammootty and Mohanlal about the incidents, she noted that they were saddened by the developments. In the meantime, Tiny Tom dismissed Ansiba Hassan's accusations as "baseless." Alleging that her statements were based on hearsay, he challenged her to present evidence to substantiate her claims. "I am a mimicry artiste. There is no caste or religion among us. I do not know how such an allegation came up. In any case, the issue will be discussed and resolved within the organisation," he said during a media interaction.

Asserting that he has never behaved inappropriately towards any woman, Tiny also denied making communal remarks against anyone, pointing out that Mammootty and Nadirshah, two people who have apparently supported him the most in his career, belong to the same community as Ansiba. "Ansiba is like my sister," he added.

Lakshmi Priya admits to filing police complaint against Ansiba Hassan in the meantime, actor Lakshmi Priya, the association's vice president, stepped forward, claiming she was the one who filed a police complaint against Ansiba Hassan. Maintaining that the issue was personal, Lakshmi Priya said it had nothing to do with the organisation and that she filed it after attempts to resolve it otherwise purportedly failed. "The complaint was filed in January. It was a very personal matter between Ansiba and me. I did not want to speak about it publicly because it had nothing to do with AMMA. I had asked her many times to come and sort out the issue privately before I went to the police. I kept trying to resolve it through conversation, but it did not happen," Lakshmi Priya told Onmanorama, adding that the issue was eventually resolved, as a result of which no case was registered. She also dismissed Ansiba's allegations as "baseless" and "fabricated," asserting that they lacked any truth. She maintained that no one in AMMA ever referred to Ansiba using communal slurs or targeted her over her religious identity.

Shwetha Menon reacts; Neena Kurup files fresh complaint against Tiny Tom | Breaking her silence on the matter, AMMA president Shwetha Menon recently maintained that the organisation received a complaint from Ansiba Hassan against Tiny Tom only after the matter went public. Stating that Ansiba has named both Tiny and Lakshmi Priya in her complaint, Shwetha noted that AMMA would thoroughly investigate the issue. Following Ansiba, renowned actor Neena Kurup also filed a complaint against Tiny, alleging that he used abusive language against her during a gathering of the organisation and even threatened her. Reacting to the ongoing controversies, veteran actor Mallika Sukumaran requested the quick intervention of superstars Mammootty and Mohanlal to resolve the matter. A renowned actor herself, Mallika is also the wife of the late legendary actor and former superstar Sukumaran, and the mother of actors Prithviraj and Indrajith Sukumaran. "There have always been disagreements within AMMA, but this is the first time we are seeing such open divisions. Everyone seems to have a different opinion, and there is no unity. Unless people stand together, it will be difficult to move forward," she reportedly said. Mallika added, "We heard about Ansiba's complaints against Tiny Tom and another executive member only through news reports. This never used to happen before. Every member has the right to know what is happening inside AMMA."

has been placed on the shoulders of our Satheesan. It is a job that must be performed with the utmost care. He must listen to everyone, speak with them, and resolve their problems. His role also involves leading and coordinating the ministers. The Chief Minister is responsible for every affair of the state. May he be able to discharge these duties with complete justice." The actor also honoured the chief minister by draping him with a ponnada (ceremonial shawl). Mammootty played Chief Minister in 3 movies in Yatra and Yatra 2, Mammootty essayed the role of YS Rajasekhara Reddy, who served as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. For the unversed, in director Santhosh Viswanath's One (2021), penned by Bobby-Sanjay, Mammootty played Kadakkal Chandran, the Chief Minister of Kerala. In RK Selvamani's Tamil film Makkal Aatchi (1995), the megastar portrayed Sethupathy, who becomes the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. In Mahi V Raghav's biographical dramas Yatra (2019) and Yatra 2 (2024), Mammootty essayed the role of YS Rajasekhara Reddy, a real-life politician who served as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh from 2004 to 2009.

Speaking at Sunday's event, actor Kunchacko Boban said, "I hope our new government serves the people beyond party beliefs, ideologies, caste, or religion. I wish that this government would provide new hope and energy to the state in every way." Actor-politician Ramesh Pisharody, who won from the Palakkad Assembly constituency with a Congress ticket in the recently held polls, was also present at the occasion. "We have received a popular Chief Minister chosen after much public discussion. We (the Congress party) hadn't announced a Chief Minister candidate before the election, during the campaign, or even after the results were declared. Then, following extensive democratic discussions, 3.5 crore Malayalees expressed their opinion and chose this Chief Minister.