TUESDAY
May 26, 2026
CHENNAI
CITY EDITION
14 Pages ₹ 5.00

THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com
INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

Vol. 149 • No. 124
Regd. TN/ARD/110/2024-2026
RNI No. 1001/1957

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T.N. government announces crop loan waiver

CHENNAI
The Tamil Nadu government, headed by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, on Monday announced a waiver on loans up to ₹50,000, availed by small and marginal farmers from cooperative banks. » PAGE 2

Man gets death sentence in POCSO Act case

THOOTHUKUDI
The Special Court for POCSO Act cases in Thoothukudi, on Monday, sentenced a man to death on two counts after finding him guilty in the sexual assault and murder of a Class XII student in Thoothukudi district in March. » PAGE 2

SC blames NTA for repeated NEET question paper leaks

Two-judge Bench issues notice to the Union Ministry of Education, NTA, and others on pleas to 'replace or fundamentally restructure' the exam body and make it answerable to Parliament

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday squarely blamed the National Testing Agency (NTA) for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), 2026, paper leak, saying the exam body sadly had not learnt its lesson even two years after the previous security breach in 2024.

The hard work of 23 lakh students came to nothing with the cancellation of the examination after it was learnt that the question paper had been leaked.

A Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe is under way into the issue and a retest is scheduled on June 21.

"It is so sad, really, that the NTA has not learnt its lesson. We had with such difficulty heard the petitions in 2024 and passed orders... We had directed the constitution of a committee to give recommendations... Those recommendations, we believe, were accepted... a monitoring/high-powered committee was appointed," Justice P.S. Narasimha, heading a two-judge Bench, observed on Monday while hearing a petition filed by the Federation of All India Medical Association to "replace or fundamentally restructure" the NTA.

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>
> **JUSTICE P.S. NARASIMHA**
> Supreme Court judge

Affidavit sought

The Bench directed the NTA to file an affidavit in the next three days on measures taken by it implement the recommendations of the monitoring/high-powered committee and listed the case for hearing on an urgent basis later this week.

The top court also issued notices to the Union of India, the Union Ministry of Education, and other respondents arraigned by the petitioners.

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Pradhan seeks report on CBSE marking glitches

NEW DELHI
Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan has sought a detailed report on the glitches in the CBSE portal after multiple complaints about the new On Screen Marking system. » PAGE 10

Fuel prices increase ₹7.5 in 10 days after fourth hike

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

In the fourth hike in ten days, prices of petrol and diesel were increased by ₹2.7 to ₹2.8 per litre across the country and for all variants on Monday. With the latest increase, retail fuel prices in the country are up by about ₹7.5 per litre since May 15.

The price of petrol in Delhi breached the ₹100-mark – a level last scaled in May 2022 in the early days of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Petrol in Delhi became expensive by ₹2.61 a litre on Monday, being sold at ₹102.12, while Price of diesel increased ₹2.71 per litre to ₹95.20.

Briefing reporters about the situation in West Asia, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary at the Union Petroleum Ministry, said India's oil-marketing companies (OMCs) incurred losses of "slightly less than ₹600 crore per day" from the sale of LPG, petrol, and diesel combined following the latest hike.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had informed that the Centre is estimated to take a revenue hit of more than ₹1 lakh crore in 2026 having reduced the Central excise duty on fuels by ₹10 per litre late-March to control retail prices.

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Fuel on fire

After nearly three months of stable fuel prices following the Iran war, Monday's hike came after a ₹3-per-litre increase on May 15 and two subsequent hikes of 90 paise each

Chennai	Petrol	Diesel
May 15	₹103.67	₹95.25
May 19	₹104.49	₹96.11
May 23	₹105.31	₹96.98
May 25	**₹107.77**	**₹99.55**

Voicing out: DYFI members protest against the hike in Chennai. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

'Daily robbery': Opposition after fresh price hikes

NEW DELHI
As petrol and diesel prices were raised for the fourth time in ten days, the Opposition leaders stepped up their attack on the Union government, accusing it of burdening consumers. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge described the increase as "daily robbery". » PAGE 9

Gulf countries must have ties with Israel to end Iran war: Trump

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday said Saudi Arabia and other Muslim-majority nations from West Asia and beyond must normalise ties with Israel as part of efforts to reach a deal with Iran, adding fresh uncertainty into protracted peace negotiations.

Progress over a deal to end the conflict that broke out in late February has slowed with both sides talking down the prospect of an imminent agreement.

In another hurdle for any deal, the U.S. leader said it should be mandatory for Qatar, Pakistan, Egypt, Turkiye, and Jordan to sign up to the Abraham Accords, a set of agreements brokered in 2020 with nations historically hostile to Israel.

"After all the work done by the United States to try and pull this very complex puzzle together, it should be mandatory that all of these countries, at a minimum, simultaneously, sign onto the Abraham Accords," Mr. Trump wrote in a lengthy social media post, listing countries whose leaders he spoke with on Saturday about efforts to end the war with Iran.

DEAL NOT YET CLOSE: IRAN
» PAGE 12

Nation's honour

BJP MP Hema Malini receives the Padma Vibhushan, conferred posthumously on her late husband and legendary actor Dharmendra, on his behalf from President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Monday. PTI (PHOTOS, REPORTS: PAGES 2 & 9)

3 AIADMK MLAs quit, join TVK; Opposition calls it 'horse-trading'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Three AIADMK rebel legislators, who had voted in favour of the C. Joseph Vijay-led government in Tamil Nadu during the recent trust vote, resigned from the Assembly on Monday and joined the ruling TVK, barely 21 days after they were elected.

This not only came as a setback to the AIADMK – which faced a post-poll rebellion from a group of 25 owing allegiance to regional strongmen S. P. Velumani, C. Ve Shanmugam and C. Vijayabaskar – but also triggered allegations from the Opposition of "horse-trading" by the ruling party, which is short of a majority in the House.

The MLAs – Maragatham Kumaravel (Madurantakam), S. Jayakumar (Perundurai), and P. Sathyabama (Dharapuram) – were among 25 of the 47 legislators of the AIADMK who revolted against party general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami a fortnight ago. After submitting their resignation letters to Speaker J.C.D. Prabhakar at his chamber in the Secretariat in the afternoon, the three met Public Works Minister Aadhav Arjuna at his office and presented him with shawls. They joined the TVK in the evening and justified their decision saying they could not accept Mr. Palaniswami's alleged plan to form a government with the support of the rival DMK.

"Since the letters they submitted are in the prescribed format, their resignations have been accepted. All three came in person and presented handwritten letters. When members submit resignation letters, they do not need to state a reason. It is sufficient if they contain the statement that they are resigning from the post effective today. The Election Commission would be notified of the vacancy," the Speaker said.

On the plea submitted by the Palaniswami faction seeking disqualification of those who voted in favour of the government during the trust motion, the Speaker reiterated that it was under consideration. With the three resignations, the strength of the AIADMK (inclusive of the two factions) has come down to 44 from 47. Five rebel MLAs – S.M. Sukumar (Arcot), P. Hari Bhaskar (Anthiyur), K. Mohan (Panruti), Dileepan Jaishankar (Sankarankovil), and N.S.N. Nataraj (Kangeyam) – have decided to back Mr. Palaniswami.

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Quick exit

The three MLAs who resigned on Monday were among the 25 of the 47 AIADMK legislators who revolted against the party

S. Jayakumar
Perundurai

P. Sathyabhama
Dharapuram

Maragatham Kumaravel
Madurantakam

HC acquits first accused in Kerala lynching case, enhances punishment for 12 others

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Monday acquitted Hussain of Pakkulam, Palakkad – the first accused in the lynching of Madhu, a mentally challenged tribal youth, in 2018, finding evidence against him unreliable.

The court, however, rejected the appeals filed by 12 other accused and awarded them life imprisonment, apart from ₹2 lakh fine each. They had earlier been awarded seven years of imprisonment.

The court was hearing appeals filed by the accused seeking acquittal, and also by the State government and Madhu's mother, Malli, who sought enhanced punishment for the accused.

Defending the verdict, prosecution counsel Jeevesh said the acquittal was due to hostile witnesses and weak identification evidence against the prime accused. He added that electronic evidence played a decisive role.

Madhu, hailing from the tribal settlement in Attappady, was killed on February 22, 2018 after an allegation that he had stolen rice from a grocery shop.

A special court in Mannarkkad for trial of cases of atrocities against members of SC/ST communities had convicted 14 of the 16 accused in the case in April 2023.

The High Court on Monday observed that this was the first case of mob lynching to come before the courts of Kerala.

Importantly, it said, this was also a case in which the prosecution had been doomed to fail, not because the truth was unavailable, but because a large section of the community that had witnessed the incident collectively had chosen to look the other way.

A file photo of Madhu's mother Malli, left, and sister Sarasu on the premises of a special court in Palakkad in 2023. K.K. MUSTAFAH

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Opposition criticises CM Vijay over a spate of crimes across T.N.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Leader of the Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin, AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami, and other Opposition leaders criticised Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay over a spate of crimes across Tamil Nadu in the past 15 days.

In a social media post, Mr. Udhayanidhi demanded that Mr. Vijay explain the steps taken to prevent crimes against women and children. "Is this Tamil Nadu or Uttar Pradesh? Where is your *Singapen Athiradi Padai* [a task force for protection of women]? Why is the Chief Minister, who delivered valour-tinged dialogues before the election, refusing to open his mouth?" he asked.

He said the State had witnessed 25 murders, four cases of double murder, and 19 incidents of sexual assault in the past 15 days.

"After the murder of a girl in Sulur, there has been a sexual assault of a girl in Villupuram. A boy was murdered near a temple in Madurai and a petrol bomb was hurled at the house of a woman in Coimbatore," he alleged.

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Top honours

Eminent personalities from Tamil Nadu who received the Padma awards for their outstanding contributions in various fields at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday

▶ **Padma Shri awardees** (from left): Former Health Minister H.V. Hande (Medicine), N. Swaminathan (Art), R. Sreedher (Others-Radio Broadcasting), Tamil author Sivasankari (Literature and Education), former CRPF Director-General K. Vijay Kumar (Civil Service); and a family member of R. Krishnan Kitna (Art-posthumous) receiving the award. PTI

▶ **Gastroenterologist K.R. Palaniswamy receiving the Padma Bhushan (Medicine) from President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi on Monday.** ANI

From Page One

Opposition criticises CM Vijay over a spate of crimes across T.N.

A. Gubendran, 17, was stabbed to death in the early hours of Monday at the Madurai Corporation's shopping complex in the Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple parking lot. A scuffle with M. Muthumani, 28, over buying bananas at his shop on Dhalavai Street on April 26 is said to have led to the murder. The Vilakkuthoon police have picked up five suspects: Muthumani; his brother Rajkumar, 26; Satheesh Kumar, 28; Harikrishnan, 18; and Muthukumar, 19.

Molotov cocktail attack

In Coimbatore district, four motorcycle-borne men hurled Molotov cocktails at the house of a girl near Thondamuthur on Sunday. Thondamuthur inspector T. Shanmugavel said one of the persons involved in the attack hailed from Chennai and was a serial offender. He and three of his friends carried out the attack, allegedly after the girl distanced herself from him. The police were trying to arrest them, the inspector added.

Three men were arrested on Sunday after a 25-year-old woman filed a complaint at the Thoothukudi All Women Police Station, alleging sexual assault.

The police said the accused – A. Mohith, 25; J. Ritheesh, 19; and J. Thiloth Berlin, 21 – hailed from Fathima Nagar in Thoothukudi. Mohith, who was known to the woman, had taken her to the crime spot, near the fishing harbour, late on Saturday. There, he and his two friends allegedly sexually assaulted her.

Act of vandalism

Mr. Udhayanidhi also referred to an incident in Perambur, the constituency represented by the Chief Minister, where a gang of drug-peddlers allegedly vandalised cars.

Mr. Palaniswami expressed shock over the incidents and urged Mr. Vijay to uphold law and order. Among the incidents he referred to are the sexual harassment of a girl in Madurai allegedly involving a ruling TVK functionary, the alleged harassment of a college student by a TVK functionary in Chennai, and the alleged harassment of an electricity engineer by TVK functionaries at Tiruvottiyur.

The AIADMK leader also referred to reports on the death of a couple who tried to pass through a railway subway inundated by heavy rain at Omalur in Salem district.

'Vijay a mute spectator'

AMMK founder T.T.V. Dhinakaran criticised the government over the sexual assault on minors. Recalling Mr. Vijay's statement when the sexual assault of a student at Anna University was reported during DMK rule, Mr. Dhinakaran asked, "Why is Mr. Vijay remaining indifferent and acting as a mute spectator to offences against women after becoming the Chief Minister?"

BJP State president Nainar Nagenthran said, "Only the government has changed, but the woes continue."

He also criticised Mr. Vijay for having "instigated" children to press their parents to vote for him and for having assured them that he was their "uncle", but remaining a mere "spectator" while children were being sexually assaulted.

It's horse-trading at speed of a horse, says Stalin on AIADMK MLAs joining TVK

Those who proclaimed themselves to be a clean force have become a 'tragic force', he says, and accuses the TVK of engineering the resignation of three AIADMK MLAs from S.P. Velumani group

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

DMK president and former Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday described the resignation of three AIADMK MLAs and their immediate meeting with Minister Aadhav Arjuna at the Secretariat to join the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) as "horse-trading at horse speed."

"Those who proclaimed themselves to be a clean force (the TVK) have now been thoroughly exposed. They have become a tragic force," Mr. Stalin said in a social media message.

He said the TVK, "in the first scene, sought the support of leaders of the DMK's alliance partners and, in the second scene, bargained with a section of AIADMK MLAs and a lone MLA of the AMMK during the trust vote." "In the third scene, it has engineered the resignation of AIADMK MLAs and made them join the party in the

M.K. Stalin

Secretariat itself. Did people vote for you just to witness these unsavoury scenes?" he asked.

Mr. Stalin said the drama unfolding now had exposed the "fake anti-BJP stand" of the Congress, which had joined the TVK government after saying it would extend support only if the TVK refrained from seeking the support of the NDA.

'Vulgar politics'

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami condemned what he termed as "vulgar politics" and "horse-trading" introduced by the ruling TVK. Any attempt to defeat and replace the AIADMK would remain a dream, he said.

A cinema celebrity, who claimed to bring about purity in politics, has resorted to "underhand dealings" to save his government, which was a matter of "shame", Mr. Palaniswami said without mentioning anyone.

The act of resignation of three MLAs on the ground floor of the Secretariat-cum-Assembly complex, and within a few minutes, receiving party membership from a TVK Minister on the first floor, only exposed a pre-meditated drama and the attempts of "horse-trading".

"The underhanded dealings of the TVK government is a new approach in Tamil Nadu politics. The AIADMK has been a great movement serving the people, tolerating acts of betrayal and back-stabbing. The MLAs who support the government or those who have resigned now should not forget that they contested against the symbol of the cinema celebrity," Mr. Palaniswami said.

Mr. Palaniswami also removed party functionary Thaiyur S. Kumaravel from all positions, including the party's primary membership. He said the actions of Mr. Kumaravel were not in line with the party's discipline and further brought disrepute to the party.

Meanwhile, AMMK founder T.T.V. Dhinakaran referred to the charges of "horse-trading" he made earlier, and contended that his charges were turning out to be true.

'Unethical act'

PMK president Anbumani Ramadoss said the MLAs had resigned only to join the ruling party and enjoy the benefits of power.

Former VCK MLA from Thiruporur S.S. Balaji said the act of the three MLAs was unethical and that "entertaining them would be dangerous".

When legislators from AIADMK, MDMK had resigned and won bypolls on DMK ticket

D. Suresh Kumar
CHENNAI

The resignation of three AIADMK MLAs, and their joining the ruling TVK on Monday, is not the first such instance in Tamil Nadu. Nonetheless, it stands out because they were elected just over a fortnight ago and the TVK is short of a majority in the House.

In March 2009, N. Ramakrishnan, who was elected from Cumbum on an MDMK ticket as part of an AIADMK front candidate in 2006, had resigned his Assembly membership. Incidentally, at that time, the DMK too was short of a majority in the House.

He had accused the MDMK leadership of suspecting him. "I, as a loyalist, cannot tolerate it," he told journalists.

2009 Cumbum bypoll

He was then fielded by the DMK from the same Cumbum constituency in the byelection held in August 2009 and emerged victorious. Thus the DMK won the seat after a gap of two decades.

Anita Radhakrishnan

Anita Radhakrishnan of AIADMK and N. Ramakrishnan of MDMK resigned in 2009 as MLAs and contested bypolls on a DMK ticket

The same month, former Minister Anita Radhakrishnan, who was elected from Tiruchendur on an AIADMK ticket, submitted his resignation to the Speaker, R. Avudaiappan.

He too joined the DMK and was fielded from the same seat in the bypolls held in December that year. Mr. Radhakrishnan won the byelection by a margin of 46,861 votes.

Ex-VCK MLA threatens to leave party over its support for TVK

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Despite joining Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay's Cabinet, the Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) has been facing sustained criticism for not being true to its "ideological roots" from its own comrades.

On Sunday, former VCK MLA "Panaiyur" Babu wrote to the party leader expressing his desire to leave the party, as the leader operated "without ideological clarity and is stumbling along".

'Panaiyur' Babu said VCK leader Thol. Thirumavalavan operated without ideological clarity

In a statement, Mr. Babu said VCK leader Thol. Thirumavalavan took different stands on the same issue. "[He] took one stand yesterday, another one in a television interview, another at the press conference and contradicted the same on a Facebook live. Yesterday, you [Thirumavalavan] called the actor [Vijay] the child of "BJP and RSS". Today, you have adopted that child, proving that you have begun to waver in your ideological stance."

VCK general secretary Sinthanai Selvan urged Mr. Babu to reconsider his decision. "What you said regarding the party's decisions cannot be ignored, but our leader's decision is not out of self-interest. He has sacrificed his youth to achieve the dream of social equality... Please place your criticisms in front of our leader," he said.

Mekedatu dam issue: CM tells officials to pursue legal action

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay instructed officials to pursue continued legal action regarding the Mekedatu dam issue during a meeting with Cauvery river water experts and legal luminaries at the Secretariat on Monday.

Following the Karnataka government's proposal for a *bhoomi pooja* for the construction of the dam, the Chief Minister held a consultative meeting to uphold Tamil Nadu's

C. Joseph Vijay

rights, a release said.

The meeting was also attended by Ministers N. Anand, Aadhav Arjuna, and R. Nirmalkumar, and senior officials.

During the meeting, it was pointed out that on November 11, 2025, the Supreme Court, while ruling on the lawsuits filed by the Tamil Nadu government opposing the Mekedatu project, disposed of the matter by stating that only the Central Water Commission, comprising experts, could determine whether the project complied with previous judgments.

The release said Mr. Vijay, taking the judgments into consideration, directed that actions subsequent to the detailed legal consultation be expedited.

Police expedite probe into sexual assault and murder of girl

Wilson Thomas
COIMBATORE

The police have expedited the investigation into the sexual assault-cum-murder of a 10-year-old girl near Sulur in Coimbatore district, aiming to submit the charge sheet within a month.

Inspector-General of Police (West Zone) R.V. Ramya Bharathi convened a meeting with Deputy Inspector-General of Police (Coimbatore Range) P. Saminathan, Coimbatore District (Rural) Superintendent of Police Allatipalli Pavan Kumar Reddy, Additional SP M. Vivekanandan and members of the investigating team on Monday.

The investigating team comprises Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Karikal Pari Shankar, five Inspectors, and 10-15 Sub-Inspectors. Perur DSP S. Suresh will assist Mr. Shankar.

Officers were assigned different tasks to wrap up the investigation at the earliest. The progress will be reviewed on a daily basis, Ms. Bharathi said.

On the forensic side, the police are awaiting the postmortem and viscera analysis reports.

A potency test is likely to be conducted on the main accused in the case, K. Karthi, 33.

Man sentenced to death for sexual assault, murder of Class XII girl in Thoothukudi

The Hindu Bureau
THOOTHUKUDI

The Special Court for POCSO Act cases in Thoothukudi, on Monday, sentenced a man to death on two counts after finding him guilty in the sexual assault and murder of a Class XII girl in Thoothukudi district in March.

The girl had gone missing in a scrub forest area, around 250 metres from her residence, on the evening of March 10, and was found dead on March 11. The Kulathur police had recovered the body and sent it for a post-mortem examination to Thoothukudi Government Medical College and Hospital.

Following the incident,

Dharma Muneeswaran being brought from the court after the sentencing. N. RAJESH

the victim's parents and villagers staged a protest demanding the arrest of the accused and action against the Kulathur and Vilathikulam police for allegedly failing to take prompt action.

After a week-long hunt, the accused, Dharma Muneeswaran, 38, of Sayalkudi in Ramanathapuram district, was arrested on March 19.

Then Superintendent of Police, Thoothukudi district, C. Madhan had said evidence leading to the arrest of Muneeswaran was gathered through scientific investigation.

Following the arrest, Dharma Muneeswaran was remanded in judicial custody at the central prison in Palayamkottai, before being shifted to Madurai prison due to safety concerns.

The case was presided over by II Additional District Judge M. Breetha.

Special Prosecutor V. Ellammal said 71 witnesses were examined between May 5 and May 22.

The prosecution submitted 19 material objects and 117 documentary evidences before the court.

Holding the accused guilty, the court awarded him two death penalties and one year's imprisonment under Sections 104 and 127(2) of the BNS and Section 6 of the POCSO Act.

IG hails verdict

Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Vijayendra Bidari said the double death sentence awarded by the court reaffirmed faith in the criminal justice system.

Mr. Bidari said the trial proceedings in the case were completed in 54 days, resulting in the highest punishment for the accused.

T.N. govt. announces cooperative crop loan waiver up to ₹50,000

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government headed by Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay, on Monday, announced a waiver on loans up to ₹50,000, availed by small and marginal farmers from cooperative banks since May last year.

Loans up to ₹50,000 obtained by marginal farmers will be completely waived. For small farmers, 50% of the loan within this limit will be waived. Marginal farmers who borrowed ₹50,000-₹60,000, will receive a waiver of ₹40,000, and small farmers in the same bracket ₹20,000.

As the loan amount increases, the quantum of the amount waived will decrease. Small and marginal farmers who borrowed more than ₹1 lakh will be provided a flat waiver of ₹5,000. Besides, other large-scale farmers who obtained crop loans through cooperative banks will receive a uniform waiver of ₹5,000 each.

The government said 14,22,555 farmers who availed crop loans from cooperative banks between May 1, 2025, and February 28, 2026, will benefit from this scheme, imposing an additional expenditure of ₹2,044.46 crore on the government.

INBRIEF

Census 2027 training begins for Corporation officials

Training for Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) officials for Census 2027 began in the city on Monday. The training session was presided over by Sunderesh Babu, Director of Census Operations, Tamil Nadu, in the presence of GCC Commissioner and Principal Census Officer G. S. Sameeran. Training sessions are scheduled from May 25 to May 27. Master trainers appointed by the Directorate of Census Operations trained officials. Deputy Commissioner (Revenue and Finance) and City Census Officer M. Prithiviraj was present at the meeting.

Ensure release of water from Mettur dam on June 12: Vasan

Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) leader G.K. Vasan on Monday urged the State government to release water from the Mettur dam on the customary date of June 12. He referred to representations received from farmers in this regard.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (May 26, Tuesday), the following articles are available:

- Why is the Indian rupee falling? **newsth.live/g1opoh/rupee/falling**
- How physicists are finding new ways to make electrons act strangely **newsth.live/electrons**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

Major fire breaks out at oil godown in city

Officials say the blaze intensified as oil cans stored inside the warehouse kept exploding, making it difficult for firefighters to approach the site

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A major fire broke out at a private oil godown in Manali on Monday.

Thick smoke billowed from a private oil godown belonging to Sri Sathya Sai Oil Lubricants at Rajiv Gandhi Nagar in Vichoor near Manali and the fire destroyed several oil cans stored at the facility. Upon receipt of the information, personnel from Fire and Rescue Services rushed to the spot with water tankers and other materials to put out the fire.

Fire services personnel could not approach the spot as the fire was massive, and the flames had spread to other premises as well. One woman sustained burns in the incident.

Fire and Rescue Services personnel continued firefighting operations until evening as thick smoke engulfed the locality. According to sources, the blaze erupted at the warehouse, where waste oil and lubricant materials were stored. A few workers present on the premises noticed the fire and immediately evacuated before alerting the Fire and Rescue Services department.

Firefighters from Manali, Ennore, and Tiruvottiyur rushed to the spot and launched operations to contain the blaze.

Battling the blaze: Fire and Rescue Services personnel trying to put out the fire at a godown in Manali. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Two Fire and Rescue Services personnel collapsed after inhaling smoke and were hospitalised

Officials said the fire intensified as oil cans stored inside the warehouse exploded, making it difficult for the personnel to approach the site initially. Dense black smoke billowed from the site and was visible from several kilometres away.

Police sources said the company's main manufacturing unit functions in Coimbatore, while the Vichoor facility was primarily used as a storage and transport warehouse. Officials added that only a few workers and a watchman were usually present on the premises. Sources further said the facility had earlier been sealed following court directions and had resumed operations only recently. During the firefighting operation, two firefighters reportedly collapsed after inhaling dense smoke. They were rescued by fellow personnel, administered first aid and admitted to a nearby hospital.

Officials confirmed that the fire did not spread to neighbouring factories and no casualties were reported. Manali New Town police are monitoring the situation and an inquiry is under way to ascertain the cause of the fire.

Health Minister K.G. Arunraj said the current stock position in warehouses across the city and districts was already available online. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Minister inspects TNMSC warehouse

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Health Minister K.G. Arunraj on Monday inspected a warehouse of the Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation (TNMSC) in Anna Nagar.

Dr. Arunraj told reporters that the Anna Nagar warehouse was the largest facility in Chennai from where drugs and medical equipment required for all government hospitals functioning inside Greater Chennai Corporation limits are supplied. Noting that there was scope to further improve the system, he said the current stock position in warehouses across the city and districts was available online. The next step, he added, was to have real-time stock positions at the hospital level, including primary health centres, taluk hospitals, and government medical college hospitals.

"With the war situation in the Middle East, a review was held to discuss precautionary measures in case of shortages in drug supplies and to plan how to manage if shortages of essential raw materials used in drug manufacturing arises," he said.

The Minister said that power supply was crucial for functioning of equipment, such as ventilators, in hospitals.

In the future, uninterrupted power supply in both government and private hospitals will be ensured through inter-department coordination as per the Chief Minister's directions, he said, adding that they have already spoken to the Electricity Minister and Secretary.

Dr. Arunraj said that issuance of licenses for 8,000 private hospitals, including small-sized clinics, were pending since 2019 under the Tamil Nadu Clinical Establishments Act. He also pointed to an audit objection raised regarding delay in granting licenses. If these licenses were issued in 2019, an annual licensing fee of ₹5,000 would have been obtained.

Man arrested for sexually harassing minor girl in Ambattur

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Ambattur Industrial Estate police have arrested a 36-year-old man for allegedly sexually harassing a minor girl after entering her house by posing as an employee of the Electricity Department to attend to a fault.

According to a complaint lodged with the poice, the incident happened on May 20, when the nine-year-old girl was alone at her home. Police said the man, posing as an Electricity Department employee, barged into the house.

Silver anklets snatched

After sexually harassing the child, the man snatched her silver anklets and fled the spot. Her parents lodged a complaint with the Ambattur Industrial Estate police.

The police identified the man as Balaji of Tondiarpet after checking CCTV camera footage. They traced the man to Red Hills and apprehended him. The police also recovered the anklets and a bike that was used during the crime. Balaji was booked under the provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. He was remanded in judicial custody. The police said he was involved in a series of robberies.

THE HINDU
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THE HINDU
Air Surcharge as applicable:
New Delhi - Rs. 15/-;
Port Blair - Rs. 20/-

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/184/2026
Dated : 19-05-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.

Name of the Work	Approx. Value
Composite work (Civil, Electrical General & OHE works) for construction of Chamarajanagar (CMNR) station yard remodeling and provision of Additional loopline at Hosa Agrahara (HAH) Station at CH:48655. **(Tender Ref. No. CMNR-HAH-YARD-LOOPLINE)**	Rs. 57,03,74,165/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs on 11-06-2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer/Construction/ Works/Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/149/AAS/PRB/SWR/2026-27
Download the **RailOne** app for easy ticket booking, PNR status, and more railway services.
South Western Railway-SWR SWRRLY @SWRAILWAYHQ @sw_railways

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM
Corrigendum Notice No.W.584/E-Tendering/30-DHN-2026-27 Dhanbad, dt. 22.05.2026.
It is further to notify that, in the E-Tender No. 30-DHN-2026-27 dtd. 30.04.2026 is hereby **Cancelled** due to administrative reason.
Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.)/ ECR/Dhanbad
PR/0299/DHN/Engg./C/26-27/16

CINEMA ❖ ARTS ❖ EVENTS
MUSIC DANCE DRAMA

Koothu-p-Pattarai
Presents (26.05.2026 & 27.05.2026) PATALIPUTHRAM - a play by Thiru. Gnana Rajasekaran IAS (Retd). Directed by Dr.K.R.Rajaravivarma. Time 7pm. Venue: 58/16, 3rd Main Road, Sri Ayyappa Nagar, Virugambakkam, Chennai -92. Contact: Perumal 9003290306. All are welcome.

Naada Inbam, 24992672.
Today 6.15pm Dr Malavi Hari, H Pushpavalli -Vocal Support, C Charulatha-Veena, G N Bhuvan. Ragasudha Hall.

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PERSONAL
ANNOUNCEMENTS
I, S.SAISARAN S/o Mr. R.Sakthivel aged 15 years residing at No. 25, Ambedkar 14th Street, Ozhalur P.O., Chengalpattu Dist, Tamilnadu – 603111. my correct date of Birth is 30.09.2010 – S.SAISARAN

CHANGE OF NAME
I, ASHWIN.I, s/o Mr. Ilango, aged about 32 years, residing at No–23, 1st Street, Surya Nagar, K.Pudur, Madurai – 625007, have changed my name to Ashwin Ilango vide affidavit dated 19.05.2026 sworn before S. Praveen Kumar, Notary Public, at Chennai. I shall henceforth be known as Ashwin Ilango for all purposes.

MY SON, Koduru Kushal, Son of Thiru. Koduru Sarath, born on 16th October 2022, (District of Birth Chennai) residing at Old No.8/1, New No.10, 6th Cross, Kamaraj Street, West, Gandhi Nagar, Avadi Post, Chennai–600 054, shall henceforth be known as Koduru Kushyanth – Gonna Bathula Balasree (Mother)

I, K.S. KISHORE KUMAAR, S/o Thiru C. KUMARALAGU & Thirumathi K.SIVAGAMI, R/o S1, Nakshatra Apt., Thirupathi Kodai St, Kalaivanar Nagar, Athipet, Ambattur, Chennai-600058, converted from Hinduism to Christianity on 02.01.2022 at Perinba Prayer Assembly, Mugappair, Chennai-600037, and Changed Name to K.S.JADEN JESU. Henceforth known as K.S.JADEN JESU. Vide Affidavit sworn before Notary Public at Chennai on 18.05.2026

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PUBLIC NOTICE
PUBLIC NOTICE
Under instructions from our client **RADHA SOAMI SATSANG BEAS** (RSSB) represented herein by its Secretary - Chennai Centre, **Mr.ANIL KUMAR CHUHARMAL** having Registered office at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas, Tehsil Baba Bakala Sahib, Dist. Amritsar, Punjab -143 204 & Local Office at No. 47, Mc Nichols Road, Opp to Our Lady School, Chetpet, Chennai - 600 031, we issue this public Notice as follows:

Our client is the owner of the land measuring a total extent of 1 Acre and 21.50 Cents comprised in S.No.116/2A (measuring 0.18 Acre), S.No.116/2B and as per Patta S.No.116/2B2 (measuring 0.32 Acre), S.No.116/2C (measuring 0.23 Acre), S.No.116/3 and as per Patta S.No.116/3A (measuring 0.085 Acre), S.No.116/4 (measuring 0.20 Acre) and S.No.116/5B (measuring 0.20 Acre) situated at Vengaivasal Village, Tambaram Taluk, Chengalpattu District, relating to which status of 3 parent documents is : (i) Original Sale Deed dated 20.07.1965 registered as Document No.2588 of 1965 and (ii) Original Sale Deed dated 14.08.1995 registered as Document No.2962 of 1995, both on the file of the Sub-Registrar Office, Tambaram, being an old parent documents, are presently not available; however, their certified copies are available; and (iii) Duplicate copy of Sale Deed dated 27.05.1996 registered as Document No.4463 of 1996 on the file of the Sub-Registrar Office, Tambaram, is not available; however, the original registered document is available.

Attention is invited to public if anyone possesses these documents, the same may kindly be brought to the notice of our client within 10 days from this day.

MAHIMA MAKHIJA
Advocate for RSSB
A15, 3rd Floor, Santhosh Apartments, 33 Halls Road, Tamil Salai, Egmore, Chennai - 600008
Call: +91 96771 78493

Place: Chennai
Date: 25.05.2026

Ministry Of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
MSME - TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CENTRE - (CDGI)
An Autonomous body under Ministry of MSME, Govt of India
A1/1 Industrial Area, Firozabad 283203, www.cdgiindia.net
2 Days Government Certificate Course on
GENERATIVE AI FOR EDUCATION, RESEARCH & PRODUCTIVITY
Course Duration 2 Days (ONLINE) Date: 30 & 31 May 2026 Time : 5:00 PM to 8:30 PM
Course Content: Introduction to Generative AI, Microsoft Copilot, Perplexity AI for Research, Google NotebookLM, Mentimeter Interactive Polls, Differentiated Content with diffit, Interactive lessons with Curipod, Visual Imagery with Napkin AI, AI-Generated Presentations with Gamma, Creating lesson plans with AI, AI for Productivity & Research, Responsible & Ethical use of AI, introduction to AI Agents & local AI Tools,Practical Hands-on Training.. More
Training is useful for Jobs, Professionals & Education
Fees : Rs.3,540/- (Study material in soft copy shall be provided)
FEE PAYMENT ONLY IN MSME TDC CDGI ACCOUNT
Coordinator: 8603769900, 9953920498, 8168984069
Government of India certificate will be awarded

MSME TECHNOLOGY CENTRE
Ministry of MSME Govt. Of India
MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL & MEDIUM ENTERPRISES, GOVT. OF INDIA
KIADB Industrial Estate, Devanahalli, Bengaluru
GOVT. CERTIFICATE COURSE ON POSH LAW
(The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace) Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal ACT 2013
Course Duration 2 Days (ONLINE) Date: 30 & 31 May 2026 Time : 05:00 PM to 8:30 PM
Course Content: POSH Act 2013, History and Current state, Acts with supports SH, Includes Vishakha guidelines, Sexual harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013), Qualifiers of Sexual Harassment, Terminologies- Aggrieved Women, Extended Workplace, Employer, Internal & Local Committee, Employers Obligation, Dealing with False Malicious Complaint, Penalties, IPC Provisions, Case Studies, Do and don'ts of Women at Work Many Topics.
Mastering POSH Compliance
Fees : Rs.3,540/- (Study material in soft copy shall be provided)
Coordinator: 9818676612, 9818528498, 9686564246
Government of India certificate will be awarded

KALYANA KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Stores & Purchase Department, Central Offices, Sarige Sadana, Main Road, Kalaburagi-585 102. Mobile No. 77606 86172 (COSP), 77609 92029 (S.O).
No. KKRTC/CO/COSP/02 /2026-27. Dated:25.05.2026
TENDER INVITING NOTICE (THROUGH KPP PORTAL MODE ONLY)
Tenders through KPP portal (pre-qualification & commercial) are invited for supply of following items.

Sl. No	Tender No.	Tender Nomenclature	Estimate Value(Rs.)	Last date for submission of tender
1.	KKRTC/2025-26/ IND0189/CALL-2	Supply of Plywood Sheets	0.58 Core	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
2.	KKRTC/2024-25/ IND0125/CALL-7	Procurement of Oil Seals.	0.90 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
3.	KKRTC/2025-26/ IND0192/CALL-2	Procurement of Thin walled Bearings.	0.70 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
4.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0208	Procurement of Fasteners	0.94 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
5.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0209	Supply of Curing Envelops and Curing Bags	0.58 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
6.	KKRTC/2024-25/ IND0119/CALL-7	Procurement of Fuel Injection pipes & Leak off pipes	0.41 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
7.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0207	Procurement of Head Lamp Assemblies and Accessories	4.02 Crore	22.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
8.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0206	Supply of Desktop Computers, Laptops, Printers & Tabs	3.14 Crore	22.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
9.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0212	Supply of First Aid Box with Medicine	0.35 Crore	22.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
10.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0211	Supply of Fire detection & Suppression System(FDSS)	0.40 Crore	22.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
11.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0203	Supply of Automotive Grease	3.49 Crore.	27.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
12.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0205	Supply of PCTR & Allied Materials	11.02 Crore	27.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
13.	KKRTC/2026-27/ SE8553	Engaging an agency for providing technical assistants to the divisions of KKRTC	9.52 Crore	27.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
14.	KKRTC/2026-27/ SE8258-CALL-2	Identifying agency for providing IT Staff (Software & System Engineer on contract basis to KKRTC.	0.39 Crore	27.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
15.	KKRTC/2025-26/ IND0176/CALL-3	Supply of Fan Belts	0.38 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
16.	KKRTC/2024-25/ IND0101/CALL-5	Supply of Piston Assembly and Ring Sets	0.89 Crore	10.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs
17.	KKRTC/2026-27/ IND0213	Supply of King pin Components & Stub Axles	2.13 Crore	27.06.2026 at 15.00 hrs

All the details of Tender, Registration, Tender form documents etc. are available at **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in/.Mail** to **cospnekrtc@gmail.com or support@eprochelpdesk.** com for further information if required. Further, any addendum /corrigendum related to changes in terms and conditions of tender, specification and calendar of events etc. will be uploaded only through KPP portal.
Sd/- Controller of Stores and Purchases
(Tender Inviting Authority)
DIPR/Kalaburagi/158/Deshpande Publicity/2026-27

Odisha Police
Office of the D.G & I.G. of Police, Odisha, Cuttack
Tel. :0671-2304001, Website : www.odishapolice.gov.in,
Email: Email : sphqrs.orpol@nic.in & aig-prov.dopol@od.gov.in
RFP No. 01-RFP-OPSCIC-2026-27 Date :22.05.2026
Online Bids through e-Tender Portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in are invited from the eligible bidders for hiring of Setting up of Odisha Police Strategic Communication and Information Cell for Odisha, Cuttack, during the current financial year **2026-27** as per the schedule mentioned below.

Sl.No.	Name of Item	Ref No
1.	Odisha Police Strategic Communication and Information Cell for Odisha Police	01-RFP-OPSCIC-2026-27

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date	Time
1	Date & Time of release of bid	22.05.2026	05:00 PM
2	Deadline for Submission of Pre-Proposal/ Pre-Bid Queries.	28.05.2026	05:00 PM
3	Issue of Pre-bid Clarification	01.06.2026	05:00 PM
4	Last Date & Time of online bid submission	02.06.2026	05:00 PM
5	Date & Time for online Technical bid opening	08/06/2026, 11.30 AM	
6	Date of presentation of solution of e-tender / Technical Bid evaluation	To be informed to the participated bidders	
7	Date of Price bid opening	To be informed to the qualified bidders	
8	Venue	State Police Hdqrs., Cuttack, Buxi Bazar, Odisha	
9	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (Refundable)	8,64,000/- (Rupees Eight lakh Sixty Four Thousand) only	

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites : https://tendersodisha.gov.in. The Authority reserves the right to accept/ reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.
A.I.G. of Police (Provisioning,) Odisha, Cuttack.
(Tender Calling Authority)
12001/26/2627 OIPR-12001/12029/1/26-27/0006

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT.LTD. and Printed by Ra Babu Vijay at THG PUBLISHING PVT.LTD. Plot B-6 & B-7, CMDA Industrial Complex, Maraimalai Nagar, Chengalpattu Taluk, Chengalpattu Dist., Pin 603209. Editor: Suresh Nambath Chandrasekar (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

INBRIEF

National workshop on imaging innovations held

SRM Global Hospitals in association with SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre recently organised a one-day national workshop on the latest imaging innovations for the diagnosis and treatment of complex gastrointestinal disorders. Over 100 gastroenterology consultants, postgraduate trainees, academicians, and faculty members from across the country participated. The workshop focussed on developments in gastroenterology and minimally invasive therapeutic procedures, with special emphasis on advanced endoscopic ultrasound applications in gastrointestinal diagnostics and treatment. R. Jayanthi, dean, SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre and Vinay Dhir, chairman of the India EUS Club inaugurated the workshop. V. P. Chandrasekaran, chief operating officer and Swaminathan, medical superintendent, SRM Global Hospitals were also present.

A maze of utility lines shifted for constructing underground metro station at Purasawalkam

Officials said moving utility lines at Purasawalkam has been the most difficult task in Phase II network as road width was limited compared to other locations; all utility lines such as power cables, sewer and metro water pipelines were clustered in the station box area, making the process arduous

TRACK TALES

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

At Purasawalkam, under the bustling shopping hub of the city, when Chennai Metro Rail commenced work to build an underground station for the phase II project a few years ago, it ran into a maze of utility lines, the kind it had not encountered elsewhere.

In the 118.9-km Phase II network, shifting of utility lines such as power cables, sewer and metro water pipelines have been a routine process despite some setbacks.

According to officials of Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), the upcoming Purasawalkam High Road Metro Station is being constructed under the busy Purasawalkam Junction.

"Moving the utility lines at Purasawalkam has been the most difficult task so far in the Phase II network. This is because of multiple reasons. In this busy high-density commercial hub, the road width was far more limited compared to the other locations and all the lines were clustered in the station box area. The lines and cables were not running parallel to the station box alone; they were criss-crossing the box and shaft. We had to seek multiple traffic diversions to carry out the work and gradually relocate the lines and cables which took nearly three years," an official said.

Tough task: CMRL had to seek multiple traffic diversions to carry out the work, which took nearly three years. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

These issues aside, what made shifting the utilities here tougher was, unlike most of the stations whose length ranges from 135 metres to 150 metres, at Purasawalkam, it exceeded 300 metres.

Along with the station box, they had to build crossover boxes too, a critical technical feature that allows trains to switch tracks.

"In most of the other stations, the utilities were not as bunched up and we had to relocate them for a maximum of 150 metres. Nearly 100 power cables, two water pipelines with 1,000-mm diameter, a 1,000-mm, 900-mm, 600-mm, and 300-mm diameter sewer lines were among the lines we moved. Though we received the map of these utilities in advance before beginning the work, we were surprised to discover the alignment of the lines sometimes didn't match with the map that the respective agency had shared with us. These unchartered utility lines made the job much more complex. We successfully finished moving these lines nearly nine months back," a source said.

While the station is built at a depth of 21 metres, these utility lines were located at a depth of 2-3 metres at Purasawalkam. "It required manual excavation until the utilities were moved which doesn't happen in other locations. Heavy duty equipment called trench cutters will usually be used for station excavation work. After the three metre depth, trench cutters were deployed," he added. While some of the lines have been permanently moved, the ones which were shifted temporarily will restored to the original position when the station work is completed in two years.

Timings
CHENNAI

TUESDAY, MAY. 26			
RISE	05:42	SET	18:30
RISE	14:30	SET	01:59
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 27			
RISE	05:42	SET	18:31
RISE	15:18	SET	02:35
THURSDAY, MAY. 28			
RISE	05:42	SET	18:31
RISE	16:07	SET	03:13

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	41	26
Chennai Airport	41	30
Chennai City	39	29

Chennai Airport Today
35°C Day will be warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will be uneasy. Chances of light rain and thundershower.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
36°C The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm and uneasy with moderate winds. Night will remain uneasy.

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T.S. Anbu appointed ADGP Law and Order; Arun to head DVAC

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government, on Monday, posted Additional Director-General of Police T.S. Anbu as the ADGP, Law and Order, replacing Maheshwar Dayal, who has been transferred to the Administration Wing of the police headquarters as its head.

Mr. Anbu, a 2001-batch IPS officer, currently on compulsory wait, was heading the Crime Branch-CID of the State police until recently. He will take charge of the sensitive post amid incidents of murder, sexual offences, and other serious crimes reported across the State.

T.S. Anbu

A. Arun

Mr. Anbu is the recipient of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Police Medal for Excellence in Public Service. He has served in the Greater Chennai Police in various capacities such as the Deputy Commissioner of Police, the Joint Commissioner of Police, and the Additional Commissioner of Police.

Mr. Anbu was part of "Operation Puttur", in which the Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh Police arrested Panna Ismail, Bilal Malik, and others owing allegiance to Al Ummah, a banned communal outfit.

The State government also posted the former Chennai Police Commissioner, A. Arun, as Director, Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC), Chennai.

He was on compulsory wait after the Election Commission shifted him during the Model Code of Conduct ahead of the Assembly election.

Mr. Arun earlier served in different capacities such as the ADGP, Law and Order, and Commissioner of Police, Avadi.

Five screenings a day of Tamil films for one week from release

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Theatres can also run five daily shows on local festival days, public holidays, and weekends

The Government of Tamil Nadu has issued an order permitting all movie theatres across the state to screen five shows daily for the first seven days from the release date of a new Tamil film.

Additionally, theatres are allowed to run five daily shows on local festival days, public holidays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay has directed that no separate permission from the government or licensing authorities is required for this purpose.

Representatives from the film industry recently met with Mr. Vijay and placed several demands before him. Chief among them was the request to allow five shows per day for all movies in theatres across the State. Currently, theatres in Tamil Nadu operate four shows everyday. Under existing rules, to screen an additional special show (making it five shows a day) on local festival days or public holidays, separate special permission had to be obtained.

In response to the film industry's requests, an amendment has been made to the Tamil Nadu Cinemas (Regulation) Rules.

Accordingly, it has been announced that all theatres in Tamil Nadu are permitted to screen five shows daily for seven days from the release date of newly released Tamil films, as well as on local festival days, public holidays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

Police seize 170 kg of ganja

CHENNAI: The Tambaram City Police seized 170 kg of ganja and arrested four persons during a vehicle check on Sunday. The arrested were Palla Varahala Babu, 35, Galla Sathya Narayana, 29, Senapathi Durga Prasad, 24, and Vankala Durga Prasad, 23, all from Andhra Pradesh.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice
Dy.CEE(W), NWR, Ajmer on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tender for the following work up to **15.00 Hrs.** on the mention date. **Tender No.: EL/50/25/2025-26RT. Name of work:** Repair, Servicing and overhauling of Cummins make Diesel Alternator Set 500kVA, 750V in Power Cars during POH at carriage workshop Ajmer. **Approximate cost:** Rs. 270476613.19/-. **Earnest money:** Rs. 5409500/-. **Date & Time of closing of E-Tender:** 05.06.2026 at 15.00 Hrs. एवं **Date & Time of opening of E-Tender:** 05.06.2026 at 15.30 Hrs. The details of above E-Tender is available on website **www.ireps.gov.in.**
772-MG/26
Follow us on : /NWRailways NWRailways_

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

Shri K R Kunchithapatham
(The Commonwealth Sales Corporation
Labella Instrumentina
Arul Sakthi & Co.
Kaliswari Fireworks)
(13.06.1934 - 25.05.2026)
(H/O Sundari K)
Breathed his last very peacefully and attained Sivaloka Prapthi
Last Rites: May 26, 2026 from residence (New No.32, Ramanathan St, T.Nagar, Chennai-17).
Cremation at Guindy.
Deeply mourned by
Ramesh K | Subashini R | Neela S
Jaishankar K | Reshma J | Vasanthy R
Srivatsan S | Aiyeswariya R
Sushita J | Samith J | Avnita S
& the entire family
PH: 9840446759/8754472774

DEATH

OBITUARY

Dr. Aruna Sivakami Ananthakrishnan
24.05.1947 to 24.05.2026
Former Vice Chancellor
Mother Teresa Women's University, Kodaikanal
Former Head,
Department of Politics and Public Administration ,
University of Madras, Chennai-5
Deeply Mourned by
Son Ramakrishna
Daughter Prasanna Sriya
Grandson Vikas Madhav

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

14th ANNIVERSARY

VEENA SRINIVASAN

Date of Birth
21.04.1962
Date of Demise
26.05.2012
Oh, Veena,
We Miss You
- Family Members

OBITUARY

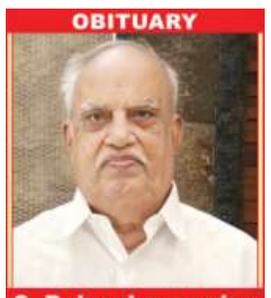
Kizhakkekalam Jayalakshmi (86),
wife of late Gopi Nair
passed away on 25.05.2026 at her son's residence in Anna Nagar, Chennai.
Fondly remembered by:
K Madhavan, Beena Pradeep, and G Ramdas.

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

Twelfth Anniversary

P.B.SRINIVASAN
Madras Telephones (Retd.)
D.O.D: 26.5.2014
Remembered by
Wife, Daughters, Son, Daughter-in-law, & Grandchildren
96772 64455
94452 22442

OBITUARY



S. Balasubramanian
Retd. Provident Fund Commissioner
Passed away on 25/05/2026
Deeply mourned
by Family & Friends
Ct: 97031 78612

REMEMBRANCE

K ALAMMAL
W/o V. Jayaraman (late)
(Retd) Sub. Post Master,
Ripon Buildings S.O,
India Post, Chennai.
10 February 1948 - 26 May 2025

FIRST YEAR REMEMBRANCE

Amma, on your first remembrance day, we cherish the memory of a kind and compassionate soul who treated everyone with love and equality.

Your countless contributions, selfless deeds, and unwavering support touched and uplifted the lives of many, while your gentle presence continues to remain a beacon of hope and inspiration to all who knew you. We miss you!

Siva, Anitha, Alankhrithi, Kumaran Niranjan, Family and Friends.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
No. DNR/S&T/Sig/2026/6 Danapur, dtd. 21.05.2026
Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom), East Central Railway, Danapur Division, for and on behalf of President of india invites tenders on web portal **www.ireps.gov.in** for the following work:-
1. Name of work with its location: Provision of RDSO approved make aspiration type fire alarm system for replacing Non-RDSO Fire alarm system at 30 station under Danapur Division., **2. Approximate cost of work :** Rs.30437104.00, **3. Earnest Money:** Rs. 608800.00, **4. Last Date & Time of Submission:** Up to 15.00 hrs. on 15.06.2026, **5. Opening of tender:** 15.00 hrs. on 15.06.2026, **6. Website Particulars where detail of the work and criteria can be seen: www.ireps.gov.in, 7. Address of the office from where detail information can be obtained:** Sr. Divnl. Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, East Central Railway, Danapur
Note: Any Corrigendum if required will be uploaded on above website before 14 days.
Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer
East Central Railway, Danapur
PR/0286/DNR/S&T/T/26-27/36

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
ADVERTISEMENT OF TENDER
Batch No- 07/26 Dated-22.05.2026
For and on behalf of the President of India, the Principal Chief Materials Manager, East Central Railway invites e-tenders for supply of the following items:
Sl. No : 1, Tender No. : 04264838, **Brief Description:** Axle Box Pivot Bush, **Quantity:** 8999 Nos, **Due Date :** 18.06.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00
Sl. No : 2, Tender No. : 14250331A, **Brief Description:** Disconnecting and Earthing Device 8 Pole 2 Way without OFF, ON Load 125A, **Quantity:** 183 Nos, **Due Date :** 15.06.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00
Sl. No : 3, Tender No. : 11254865A, **Brief Description:** Inhibited Mineral Insulation Oil shall, **Quantity:** 63528.667 Ltr., **Due Date :** 15.06.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00
Sl. No : 4, Tender No. : 14265013, **Brief Description:** 10 KVA 25 KV/240V, 1-Phase, Oil Type Auxiliary Transformer complectc, **Quantity:** 234 Nos, **Due Date :** 15.06.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00
Sl. No : 5, Tender No. : 14255052, **Brief Description:** 21.6/30.24 MVA, 132/27 KV. Traction Power Transformer, **Quantity:** 3 Set, **Due Date :** 22.06.2026, **Due Time :** 14:00
Note: All the above-mentioned tenders are e-tenders and all tenderers are requested to submit their bids on-line through the IREPS website at www.ireps.gov.in.
All corrigendum to above-mentioned tenders shall also be published online in IREPS website only. For more details regarding the above-mentioned tenders and other supply tenders please visit IREPS website.
AMM-cum Secy to PCMM
E.C. Railway, Hajipur
PR/0287/HQ/STORE/T/26-27/52

S. E. RAILWAY E– TENDER
Tender Notice No. PCMM/GENL/TP/2026/20 Dated: 22/05/2026
The Principal Chief Materials Manager, South Eastern Railway, Hd. Qrs. Office (5th Floor), New administrative Building, 11, Garden Reach Road, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India invites open E-tenders which have been uploaded on website **www.ireps.gov.in** as follows. All the tenders will be Closed at 14.00 hrs.

SL. No.	Tender No.	Closing Date	Brief Description	Qty.	EMD (in Rs.)
1	77261755	11/06/26	Set of Fluoropolymer Paints consisting of 02 items etc.	900 Set.	1,01,960/-
2	SERKGPW-TDAK-26-27	15/06/26	Fixed Remuneration per month for Attendant including GST.	288 Man Month.	2,03,600/-
			Statutory EPF including GST.	288 Man Month.	
			Service Charges.	288 Man Month.	
3	GEM/2026/B/7561685	19/06/26	Aerial Bunched Cable For Working Voltage etc.	65000 Mtr.	1,81,020/-
4	46253097B	24/06/26	Motor Protection Circuit Breaker (MPCB) etc.	3031 Nos.	1,17,170/-
5	45261632	30/06/26	SUPPLY OF 90 AH LOW MAINTENANCE LEAD ACID BATTERY etc.	47 Set.	1,16,760/-
6	75261790A	23/06/26	FLEXIBLE POLY VINYL CHLORIDE (PVC) FLOORING SHEET etc.	3356 Nos.	11,72,080/-
7	38263129	12/06/26	Kit for Dirt Collector consisting of 3 items in a set.	130718 Set.	84,740/-
8	38261563	17/06/26	Distributor valve (C.I. Version for freight application).	1229 Nos.	6,36,280/-
9	38261535	19/06/26	POH Kit 'B' for High Tensile CBC Draft Gear type RF-361.	850 Set.	5,21,560/-
10	38264079	24/06/26	Constant Contact side Bearer Assembly (Spring loaded type) Variant 'C'.	4755 Nos.	6,94,180/-
11	38263898	24/06/26	Slack adjuster Type IRSA-600 complete.	1850 Nos.	3,28,280/-
12	38263959	24/06/26	New Doorway Stiffening Cross Bar for BOXN Wagon.	14460 Nos.	5,63,080/-
13	38261575B	02/07/26	Flap Door Assembly (Modified) for BOXN Wagon.	20000 Nos.	14,98,790/-
14	38263884	01/07/26	Hand Brake Cable for KNORR BREMSE Design BMBS.	3540 Nos.	3,92,660/-
15	38264042A	01/07/26	Set of Nested Snubber spring Outer & Inner for LWLH 25T Bogie.	1153 Set.	1,18,370/-
16	38264045	06/07/26	Low torque grease seal for upgraded class "E" (6"x11") CTRB.	120000 Nos.	12,99,890/-
17	38263903	06/07/26	Adapter (Narrow Jaw), Class 'E',(6" x 11").	102815 Nos.	20,00,000/-
18	38261517	10/07/26	Side frame Key for cartridge roller bearing (for Narrow Jaw & Wide Jaw).	307662 Nos.	8,09,590/-
19	38261524	10/07/26	Constant Contact Polyurethane Side Bearer Assembly (Design-B.	3030 Nos.	6,46,720/-
20	38261564	10/07/26	Modified Elastomeric Pad, Design-A for CASNUB Bogie.	156900 Nos.	20,00,000/-
21	GEM/2026/B/7518934	01/06/26	Supply and Installation of different types of Furniture etc.	01 Set.	2,57,000/-
22	33263239	10/08/26	Emergency Lighting System for EOG type etc.	1870 Nos.	214040/-
23	33263254	07/07/26	High Capacity Inter Vehicle Coupler etc.	350 Nos.	1672230/-
24	33261513A	22/06/26	Bogie Frame Assembly for Coil Spring etc.	27 Nos.	188620/-
25	31261481	22/06/26	NON-ASBESTOS BASED "K" TYPE HIGH FRICTION etc.	94885 Nos.	716580/-
26	30261428	20/07/26	Water Tank Assembly (455 litres) etc.	390 Nos.	361720/-
27	30261434	13/07/26	Kit for Brake gear Bushes for BMBC coach etc.	770 Set.	155370/-
28	33263222	29/05/26	Set of Bite type Fittings for LHB coaches etc.	260 Set.	242070/-

Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full Details/Description/ Specification of the tenders and submit their Bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. **N.B:** Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all other tenders & any Corrigendum published thereafter. **(PR- 220)**

GOVT. OF JHARKHAND
CABINET SECRETARIAT AND VIGILANCE DEPARTMENT (CIVIL AVIATION DIVISION)
STATE HANGAR, BIRSA MUNDA AIRPORT ROAD, HINOO, RANCHI-834002
Email: dir_ops@jharkhandaviation.in; govtflyops@gmail.com
Telefax: 0651-2250319, 2251090
e-Tender Ref N o.: XI/Special Tools/01/2026-ना०वि० / 370, / Ranchi /Dated:21.05.2026
e-TENDER NOTICE
Offers under **TWO BID SYSTEM** are hereby invited by Civil Aviation Division (CAD), Govt. of Jharkhand from OEM/OEM Authorized Representative/OEM Authorized Vendor / Agency involved in the aircraft spare parts supply business for procurement and supply of Aircraft Special Tools/Equipment, spares etc. on requirement basis for the type of Aircraft in use according to selected quoted price (No consortium bid will be entertained).
1. Bidder has to deposit Rs. 1,00,000/- (One Lakh Rupees) EMD through online mode. Other terms and conditions and technical parameters are specified in the Detailed Tender Document.
2. Tender Document can be downloaded from the website www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in.The bidders have to submit their bids online through e-tendering mode only at www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in.
3. Last date and time of submission of bid online at www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in will be as per the Schedule of Events mentioned in the Tender Document.
a) e-Tenders will be opened in the office chamber of The Director (Ops), CAD, State Hangar, B M Airport, Hinoo, Ranchi by a committee duly constituted by CAD. If intervened by a holiday, bids will be received /opened at the same time on next working day.
b) The Technical Bids shall be opened first for scrutiny of the bid documents and technical data etc. The schedule of events for different activities is given below:

Scheduled of Events		
	Detail of Events	Date
1.	Publish of Tender on website & Start of Downloading Tender Documents	21/05/2026, 06:00 P.M.
2.	Pre Bid Meeting	25/05/2026, 04:00 P.M.
3.	Start of Submission of e-bids	26/05/2026, 04:00 P.M.
4.	Last date for submission of e-bids.	06/06/2026, 04:00 P.M.
5.	Opening of Technical Bids.	08/06/2026, 04:00 P.M.
6.	Opening of Financial Bids.	After scrutiny of the Technical Bid
7.	Award of agreement	Shall be notified later.

NOTE: If Technical Bid of any bidder is found incomplete, not supported by requisite EMD and /or required documents or deficient of any technical parameters as specified in the Detailed Tender Document, their Financial Bid shall not be opened.
4. Bidders are requested to check www.jharkhandtenders.gov.inon a regular basis for updates.
5. CAD, Govt. of Jharkhand reserves the right to cancel or modify any of the above conditions or cancel any or all tender terms without assigning any reason.
Sd/-
Capt. S. P. Sinha
Director (Ops) Civil Aviation Division
PR 380664 Civil Aviation(26-27)D

INBRIEF

Fire at hill near Naidu's camp office brought under control

A forest fire that broke out in the hilly terrain of Undavalli in Amaravati in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday night was brought completely under control, with officials urging local residents not to panic as precautionary measures remain in place. This area is close to the camp office of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The fire and emergency personnel rushed to the spot with fire engines immediately after receiving information about the incident.

Leopard cub rescued at veterinary varsity in Tirupati

A nearly one-year-old female leopard was rescued from a toilet at S.V. Veterinary University (SVVU) Clinical Complex on Monday morning. It was then shifted to the Animal Rescue Centre at S.V. Zoological Park in Tirupati for observation and further care. "All protocols have been followed to ensure the safety of the animal and the personnel involved. The animal is being closely monitored by the veterinary team," S.V. Zoological Park Curator Anurag Meena said.

Doctor does surgery from Wuhan on Hyderabad patient

Dr. Syed Mohammed Ghouse, robotic surgeon at the Asian Institute of Nephrology and Urology (AINU) in Hyderabad, remotely performed a robotic ureteric reimplant procedure on May 18, on a Hyderabad patient diagnosed with lower ureteric stricture while he was physically present at Tongji Hospital in Wuhan, China. The patient was prepared for the surgery by the team in Hyderabad, then Dr. Ghouse took over and controlled the robotic system in real time.

Waqf Board complicating Munambam issue: Kerala CM

Waqf Board chairman says board complied with Centre's directive; V.D. Satheesan promises protection for the affected families of Munambam and says not a single resident would be evicted

The Hindu Bureau
KOTTAYAM

Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan on Monday accused the Kerala State Waqf Board, constituted during the previous government's tenure, of "deliberately trying to complicate and derail attempts" by the United Democratic Front (UDF) administration to resolve the Munambam land issue swiftly in Ernakulam district of Kerala.

His response follows the Waqf Board's action of completing the registration of the controversial land on the Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development (UMEED) portal.

Residents of Munambam in Kerala's Ernakulam forming a human chain demanding revenue rights for their land holdings. H. VIBHU

"Ordinarily, it is the Muthavalli who is required to register the Waqf property on the UMEED portal. But in this case, the Waqf Board itself has taken the initiative. What we can understand from this is it is a deliberate attempt to pit two communities against each other," the Chief Minister said. He promised that "not a single resident" would be evicted from Munambam and promised complete protection for the affected families, while also facilitating the payment of land tax by them.

Waqf Board chairman K.S. Hamsa hit back sharply, insisting that the board had merely complied with the directions issued by the Centre. "The board holds the authorities of Farook College responsible for misleading them and illegally selling the property. It is the duty of the Waqf Board to ensure that every property is registered. Since the Muthavalli of Farook College was not expected to register the land, we took the initiative ourselves," he explained.

'Needless fuss': Satheesan defends posting former Kerala poll officer as his Secretary

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister V.D. Satheesan has said that "a needless fuss" is being made over the decision to appoint Indian Administrative Service officer Rathan U. Kelkar, till recently Chief Electoral Officer of the State, as his Secretary.

Briefing presspersons in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday on the decisions taken by the Cabinet, Mr. Satheesan said neither the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which was in power then, nor the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had found fault with Mr. Kelkar's service as CEO. The only complaints were made from his own office as the then Leader of the Opposition. And even those were not targeted at Mr. Kelkar at a personal level, he said.

Moreover, the appointment cannot be equated with the appointments in West Bengal where the Trinamool Congress, the Congress and the CPI(M) had levelled serious charges against the CEO after the large-scale elimination of names from the electoral rolls during the Special Intensive Revision, Mr. Satheesan said.

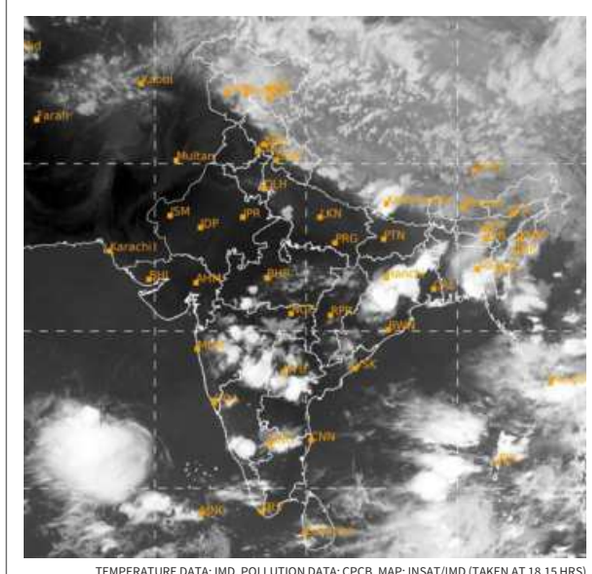
In Kerala, no such complaints were levelled against the CEO by the Opposition, which at the time, was the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF).

"What exactly is the basis of this controversy? He (Mr. Kelkar) is an All India Service officer posted in Kerala. The Election Commission of India selects an officer from the panel submitted by the State government to be appointed CEO for conducting the election. After the election, does the official life of the officer come to an end?" Mr. Satheesan asked.

Mr. Kelkar is "an efficient officer with a good track record" in departments, including Information Technology, Environment, Planning and Economic Affairs and Taxes, the Chief Minister said.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.15 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe. Heat wave to severe heat wave conditions likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	36	31.6	23.0	Kozhikode	0.3	34.8	26.2
Ahmedabad	—	43.0	28.4	Kurnool	27	39.4	23.3
Aizawl	7.4	32.4	21.2	Lucknow	—	42.3	28.6
Allahabad	—	45.4	29.0	Madurai	—	37.8	26.7
Bengaluru	—	34.0	20.8	Mangaluru	—	32.1	24.1
Bhopal	—	43.4	29.6	Mumbai	—	35.1	29.4
Bhubaneswar	—	38.3	29.1	Mysuru	—	32.8	21.0
Chandigarh	—	42.4	26.6	New Delhi	—	43.5	32.4
Chennai	—	41.3	30.3	Patna	—	38.2	28.2
Coimbatore	11	34.0	20.8	Port Blair	12	31.5	26.0
Dehradun	—	40.4	24.6	Puducherry	—	37.3	22.4
Gangtok	39	22.2	15.1	Pune	—	37.0	24.2
Goa	7	33.6	25.8	Raipur	—	45.1	30.0
Guwahati	7	29.0	22.6	Ranchi	—	39.8	26.0
Hubballi	—	33.0	24.0	Shillong	3	23.0	16.5
Hyderabad	—	42.2	29.7	Shimla	—	33.0	22.0
Imphal	2	30.5	20.5	Srinagar	1	23.3	13.0
Jaipur	—	43.6	30.4	Thiruvananthapuram	2	31.9	25.0
Kochi	64	29.6	25.0	Tiruchi	1	37.3	24.6
Kohima	—	25.0	17.0	Vijayawada	—	45.0	31.5
Kolkata	—	36.5	30.1	Visakhapatnam	—	36.0	30.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	5	10	.38	43	103	
Bengaluru	5	.24	.52	58	114	
Chennai	6	.14	.30	46	62	
Delhi	.21	.77	.27	214	366	
Hyderabad	.16	.15	.34	61	92	
Kolkata	8	.23	.22	66	102	
Lucknow	9	.46	.49	147	117	
Mumbai	.53	.43	.15	41	50	
Pune	—	.32	100	17	44	
Visakhapatnam	.10	.25	.13	40	118	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 392 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 17

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

THE HINDU GROUP

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Omar Abdullah
Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir; Vice President, Jammu & Kashmir National Conference

A. Revanth Reddy
Chief Minister of Telangana

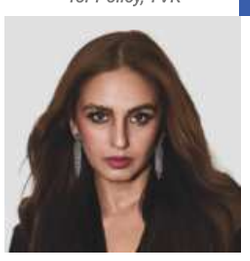
Dr. Thamizhachi Thangapandian
Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha

Dr. K. G. Arunraj
Health Minister, Tamil Nadu, and General Secretary for Policy, TVK

Nirupama Rao
Former Foreign Secretary of India; Former Ambassador to the U.S. & China

Philip Green
High Commissioner of Australia to India

Prabha S. Chandra
Director, NIMHANS



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Award-winning actor

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June 5 & 6, 2026
Bengaluru
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TV Partner: NDTV 24x7

A CH-CHE

From black to grey

India needs to prepare for a future with an ageing population

If India wanted proof of its shifting demographic status, then the latest SRS bulletin, 2024 has provided just that. The figures from the Sample Registration System - Statistical Report, 2024, offer incontrovertible proof – falling fertility rate, low crude birth rate – to show that India's pace of population growth is considerably slowing down. While the pundits predict at least three decades of population growth for the country, the plunging fertility rate certainly commands pause for contemplation and forward planning, for India to crest a crisis that several nations are struggling to manage. India's Total Fertility Rate has dropped to 1.9, lower than the replacement level of 2.1, aided, in large, by a falling birth rate. As per the latest SRS data, India's birth rate fell from 21 in 2014 to 18.3 in 2024; while death rate marginally went down from 6.7 to 6.4. The country is well on its way from population 'explosion' to one of ageing population and shrinking workforce expansion. India might still reap its demographic dividend – the median age in India is 29.2 years, in stark contrast to China (median age of 40.2), and several other European nations. In 2026, India has approximately 370 to 380 million youth, aged 15-29 years, representing roughly 27 % of the country's population. Estimates also put India's below 35 years population at over 65% of the total, making it one of the world's youngest cohorts.

In demographic terms, falling birth rate reflects a decline in fertility, linked to factors such as urbanisation, better education, access to contraception, and the desire for smaller families. India's high life expectancy at birth (72 years) and dipping death rate offer the other side of the transition paradigm, implying better access to health care. India needs to reassess the path ahead and pivot to prepare for the needs of a future greying nation, when the demographic dividend disappears. The SRS data, however, flags a more immediate concern too – one of vast regional and rural/urban disparities. Overall, performance in rural areas is not on a par with the urban centres, and the southern States continue to stay ahead of the northern States. Overall, child survival improvements are real (the Infant Mortality Rate has fallen to 24) but high-burden States in the north are still at a much higher IMR. States and areas that lag will need targeted interventions, whether it is access to health care, awareness or education facilities to effect a national convergence.

Baby bait

Incentives for having more children will keep poorer women out of workforce

Departing from decades of family-planning policies in India, the Andhra Pradesh government has proposed new incentives for families in the State to have three or more children. The State's total fertility rate has dropped from around 3 in the 1990s to 1.5 today, well below the replacement rate of 2.1 as well as the national average. According to some projections, nearly a quarter of the State population will be elderly by the mid-century, resulting in a smaller workforce relative to the old-age dependency burden. But while South India is ageing faster than the North, the evidence for cash incentives leading to larger families and doing so without significant socio-economic trade-offs is weak. At present, Andhra Pradesh has proposed ₹30,000 for a third child and ₹40,000 for a fourth; ₹1,000 monthly for five years; free education until the age of 18; provisions for mothers to work from home; enhanced funding for the 'Thalliki Vandanam' scheme, which currently pays ₹15,000 per child for school attendance; longer maternity leave; and other Anganwadi and childcare support. While one-time payments may encourage some families to have children earlier than planned, evidence from India and around the world indicates that they rarely produce large or sustained increases in fertility.

People in the State are having fewer children likely because housing and private education have become more expensive, stable employment is accessible later rather than sooner, and aspirations around children's quality of life have expanded. The proposed incentives are unlikely to offset the 18-year cost of raising one additional child even under optimistic assumptions about public provisions. The State government has also said that it wants to double women's labour force participation, which is antithetical to having more children with the existing social infrastructure. Indeed, France and the Nordic states were able to maintain this two-pronged success only by investing heavily in universal childcare, flexible working arrangements, paid parental leave, high-quality public schooling, and legal protections against career penalties that mothers are at risk of. Otherwise, as is already prevalent in India, mothers end up absorbing more unpaid care work and cannot enter the workforce. Crucially, the economics of the proposed incentives are more likely to influence poorer households seeking immediate cash, leading to an uncomfortable possibility: the State modestly increasing the size of economically vulnerable families without guaranteeing adequate long-term support for child development. Finally, ecological concerns such as water scarcity, urban congestion, waste management, and recycling will also be tested in the long term. While the southern States are anxious about population-based delimitation, asking families to alter personal decisions about having children to address a problem of constitutional design would be a profound mismatch between instrument and objective.

Finance Commission transfers and equity issue

K.R. Shanmugam

Former Director, Madras School of Economics, and Consultant to the Government of Tamil Nadu

The Finance Commission (FC), constituted under the Constitution, determines the distribution of the Union's gross tax revenues between Centre and States and among the States themselves to address vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalances. Following earlier commissions, the 16th FC has retained the vertical devolution share of 41% for the States and continued to emphasise equity as the guiding principle in determining horizontal transfers.

During consultations with the FC, States raised several concerns regarding the structure of fiscal transfers. Since cesses and surcharges exceeded 15% of gross tax revenues, they should either be included in the divisible pool or capped at around 8%-10%. In addition, the Centre receives substantial non-tax revenues from natural resource extraction, asset monetisation and surplus transfers from the Reserve Bank of India.

States and pressures

States also face mounting fiscal pressures. The COVID-19 pandemic, structural changes introduced by the Goods and Services Tax (and recent rate rationalisation from four rates to two principal rates), and mounting public debt further constrained their fiscal space. Moreover, the growing dominance of Centrally Sponsored Schemes has narrowed their fiscal autonomy (the restructuring of the National Rural Employment Guarantee programme requires States to bear 40% of programme costs), while buoyancy of central taxes has slowed. These factors could reduce the actual transfers to States, leading several States to demand a 50% vertical share.

Another concern is frequent changes in devolution criteria and their assigned weights across successive FCs in order to transfer more resources to fiscally weaker States, making it difficult for States to predict their future shares. Many States called for a reduced weight for the income-distance criterion and suggested adjusting it for purchasing-power differences to better reflect variations in the cost of living.

Over time, the shares of better-performing States have steadily declined compared with those of major beneficiary States. The combined shares of four major beneficiary States – Bihar (including Jharkhand), Madhya Pradesh (including Chhattisgarh), Uttar Pradesh (including Uttarakhand) and West Bengal – increased from 42.5% during the Sixth FC period to 51% under the 15th FC. In contrast, the combined share of the four southern States – Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu – declined from 24.8% to 15.8%, widening the gap to 35.2%. Continued reliance on unconditional equalisation transfers may weaken incentives for revenue mobilisation and fiscal discipline in weaker States. Moreover, rising transfers to poorer States have not eliminated disparities in public expenditure even on basic services. In 2022-23, Bihar spent ₹937 per person on health, against Arunachal Pradesh's ₹10,148 (10.8 times lower), while Bihar's per-student spending on elementary education in 2023-24 was ₹20,282 compared with Sikkim's ₹1,30,498. These gaps show that fiscal transfers alone have not ensured convergence in public service delivery.

> Under the 16th Finance Commission, arbitrary weights affect better-performing States

Recommendations of Finance Commission

The 16th FC accepted the Centre's argument that cesses and surcharges cannot be shared because they often finance welfare and infrastructure programmes that indirectly benefit States and retained 41% vertical share. It also abolished revenue-deficit grants as well as sector-specific and State-specific grants and recommended that States discontinue off-budget borrowings, bring all liabilities onto their budgets and maintain fiscal deficits below 3%. These measures could increase short-term fiscal stress for States.

The FC made only modest adjustments to the criteria used by the 15th FC. Income distance received a weight of 42.5%; population 17.5%; area 10%; forest cover 10%; and the demographic criterion – modified by replacing the inverse fertility rate with population growth – 10%. It also introduced States' contribution to national GDP, replacing tax effort, with a 10% weight. However, instead of using actual GSDP shares, the FC applied a square-root transformation to State GSDP shares, with a weight of just 10%, far below the expected 25%. This significantly reduced the advantage of economically stronger States and altered the rankings. Maharashtra's actual GSDP share of 14.23% fell to 8.31% after the transformation, while Tamil Nadu's declined from 9.09% to 6.67% and Karnataka's from 8.95% to 6.59%. At the same time, the shares of many smaller States increased.

Consequently, overall devolution shares of 14 States rose marginally compared with the 15th FC. Karnataka gained the most (0.484 percentage point increase), followed by Kerala (0.457) and Gujarat (0.277). Tamil Nadu saw only a negligible rise, from 4.079% to 4.097%. Meanwhile, the shares of 14 States declined, with Madhya Pradesh experiencing the largest reduction (0.503 percentage points), followed by Arunachal Pradesh (0.403) and Uttar Pradesh (0.32).

From a longer-term perspective, however, disparities remain substantial. Under the 16th FC, the southern States' share has risen slightly to about 17%, while the share of the largest beneficiary States has fallen to just under 50% – a shift of only about 1.2% in favour of the southern States. The balance between equity and efficiency has changed only marginally. Under the 15th FC, efficiency-related criteria accounted for 25% of the weight and equity criteria for 75%; under the 16th FC, this has shifted to 30% and 70%, respectively – an adjustment too small to significantly alter outcomes. Poorer States such as Uttar Pradesh (17.62%), Bihar (9.95%), Madhya Pradesh (7.35%) and West Bengal (7.22%) continue to receive larger shares than fiscally stronger and better-performing States.

Devolutions with alternative schemes

Alternative weighting schemes suggest that the outcomes could have been different. If the FC had assigned a 25% weight to the square root of GDP contribution while reducing the weight of income distance to 27.5%, Karnataka's share would have increased from 4.131% to 4.928%, Maharashtra's from 6.441% to 7.218%, and Tamil Nadu's from 4.097% to 4.867%. Under an equal-weight scheme across the six criteria, their shares would have risen further to 5.544%, 7.845%, and 5.246%, respectively.

Had the FC used actual GSDP share (instead of square root formula) with 10% weight, the devolution shares of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu would have increased to 7.033%, 4.367% and 4.342% respectively. With 25% weight (and 27.5% weight to income distance), they would have increased to 8.698%, 5.517% and 5.478%. With equal weighting scheme, their respective shares might have increased to 8.833%, 5.937% and 5.653%. That is, their respective shares increased by 2.392%, 1.806% and 1.556%.

Given that the 16th FC estimates total vertical transfers of ₹104 lakh crore over the award period, these differences are significant. A 2.392% increase in Maharashtra's share would translate into an additional ₹2.49 lakh crore, or about ₹49,744 crore annually. Karnataka's additional 1.806% share would yield about ₹1.88 lakh crore, or roughly ₹37,565 crore annually. Tamil Nadu's 1.556% increase would amount to approximately ₹1.62 lakh crore, or ₹32,365 crore annually.

In India, unlike other large federations such as Australia and China, States with greater political influence in terms of parliamentary representation are not necessarily the economically stronger ones. Consequently, these States tend to receive higher fiscal transfers. The issue is likely to intensify after delimitation, as governments may have stronger incentives to favour politically influential States. Since the FC's primary objective is to address both vertical and horizontal fiscal imbalances, future FCs should place greater emphasis on fiscal capacity and fiscal outcome indicators rather than relying predominantly on non-fiscal indicators. Additionally, they should adopt more data-driven approaches for assigning weights, such as the principal component analysis method.

The views expressed are personal

India and Australia – bridging the trade and trust barrier

Vaibhav Jain

Incoming delegate of the Australia-India Youth Dialogue

Raja Karthikeya

Former delegate of the Australia-India Youth Dialogue

Is a comprehensive India-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in the offing? With the Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong in India for the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting, there is anticipation that a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) may be inked. This would expand the 2022 Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) that had opened 100% of the Australian market to India while India reciprocated with roughly 70% market access covering nearly 91% of trade value. Canberra has since been pushing for parity, both privately and publicly. Meanwhile the West Asia crisis has forced upon India – in the words of the Chief Economic Adviser – a "balance of payments crisis stress test", making trade expansion and courting investments an urgent necessity for the country.

India has been in a hurry over the past year to conclude trade agreements; geopolitical fragility and the unpredictability of tariff politics have pushed India to sign agreements with the EU, the U.S., New Zealand and the U.K. CECA fits neatly into this larger recalibration.

The problems with Australia

But with Australia, the trade situation is complicated. Since ECTA, bilateral merchandise trade doubled from $12.2 billion in FY 2020-21 to $24.1 billion in FY 2024-25. These gains, however, have not been evenly shared. Australian exports to India account for nearly two-thirds of the bilateral trade.

Even in services, where bilateral trade has crossed $10 billion, Australia's higher education sector alone accounts for close to 60%. In contrast, investment tells the opposite story: as of 2024, Indian investment in Australia had touched nearly $32 billion against Australia's cumulative FDI into India of about $18 billion.

The bilateral relationship is thus beset by interconnected problems. Australia wants parity in market access. But the question for India is not whether India should simply concede more market access; it is whether India can trade some market access for a more balanced overall relationship. Australia's 2025 Economic Engagement Roadmap for India identified four bilateral 'superhighways': clean energy, education, tourism, and agribusiness. On the first three, there appears to be broad alignment but not on the fourth. Agriculture is where this bargain becomes most difficult. India has restricted access to its agricultural market in nearly all its major trade agreements. Despite being compelled to keep India's most vulnerable sectors (dairy, wheat, rice, sugar and chickpeas) outside ECTA, Australian farm exports to India have risen by nearly 90%, while Indian agricultural exports to Australia have grown more modestly by 35%.

> An India-Australia trade deal must prioritise balance over parity

This asymmetry reflects two very different agricultural realities. The average Indian farm is about 0.73 hectares; the average Australian farm exceeds 1,400 hectares. Agriculture contributes around 16% to India's GDP and 2.5% to Australia's. For Australia, agriculture is an export industry. For India, it is a livelihood that supports more than half of its population and remains the bedrock of its food security.

The notion of a "level playing field" between these two systems is hence a misframing of the problem. Indian farmers, even with subsidised inputs, remain structurally exposed to monsoon variability, fragmented landholdings and thin margins. Protecting the Indian market from cheap Australian imports, particularly wheat, is not a negotiating position; it is a political necessity. Yet, given the industrial scale of Australia's farming, Canberra will understandably push India to open up its market fully.

Using agriculture as an opportunity

Nonetheless, agricultural trade talks between the two countries need not become a zero-sum game. Agriculture can become the sector through which India converts Australia's demand for market access into a broader opportunity for institutional cooperation and investment. Two low-hanging fruits stand out.

First, the future of India-Australia agricultural trade must depend less on tariff concessions and more on mutual recognition of biosecurity and phytosanitary standards. Building on the 2025 organic products arrangement, both countries can expand cooperation in digital certification, quarantine protocols and regulatory alignment. This would give Indian farmers a fairer shot at the Australian market even as India considers reciprocal access for Australian farmers.

Second, Australia's strategic opportunity in India may lie beyond agricultural commodities and in exporting the systems that make modern agriculture possible: precision farming technologies, cold-chain infrastructure, water management expertise and climate adaptation practices. India loses anywhere from 15% to 35% of its agricultural output to pests, disease and post-harvest inefficiencies every year. Australia's extensive experience in dealing with drought cycles, heat extremes and water scarcity is knowledge that would interest India.

However, this experience sharing must go hand-in-hand with real investments. Australian capital, technology and know-how must register a deeper presence inside India's agricultural sector – in storage facilities, logistics networks, farm-level tools and agri-technology partnerships between firms, universities and local governments. The recently launched India-Australia Smart Farm Network Initiative points in the right direction.

Need for complementarity

Agriculture is too politically important in India to be treated as just another line item in a trade schedule; equally, it is too economically important to be left outside the bilateral partnership altogether. Rather than making the new FTA one of absolute symmetry in market access alone, India and Australia should make it an agreement based on complementarity across trade and investment.

Should the diplomats succeed, the day when Chyawanprash and Vegemite sit on the same breakfast table in the two countries is not far.

The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ties bound by respect

India and the United States share strong diplomatic and economic ties, but recent incidents expose double standards and disrespect towards India. While Indian professionals contribute immensely to the U.S. economy, cases of racial remarks, humiliating visa procedures and unfair treatment of Indian students continue to surface. At the same time, America expects India to support its strategic interests and trade priorities.

True friendship between nations must be based on mutual respect, not superiority. The U.S. should understand that today's India is a rising global power with talent, technology and economic strength.

T. Kailash Ditya,
Hyderabad

Missing children

May 25 was "International Missing Children's Day", yet there was not a word about it on most platforms. Greater awareness is needed about this grave and sensitive issue, especially when thousands of children go missing around the world.

Sreelekha P.S.,
Secunderabad

Corrections & Clarifications

The Data Point, "Now, only two young States haven't had a coalition govt." (Opinion Page, May 25, 2026), incorrectly marked Kerala, in Chart 1 for 2004, as having a "single-party" government.

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

Water governance in peri-urban areas

Parameswaran Iyer
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Richard Damania
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India's water story has made real progress. The Jal Jeevan Mission has brought tap water to nearly eight out of every 10 rural households. While urban water supply is not without its challenges, at least there is intermittent supply in most towns and cities. However, the images of India's water challenges are shifting. One is the village that still waits for a reliable connection, and the second is the city which floods every now and then due to erratic and heavy rain. In between the two, there is a missing middle – a vast, overlooked landscape which has both challenges and opportunities.

This is India's peri-urban expanse: a zone where farmland and scattered habitations give way to factory sheds, and densely cluttered settlements. Over the last two decades, the number of Census towns has jumped from 1,362 to 3,784, a 178% increase. These are not villages anymore, but neither are they recognised as cities. Nowhere does this institutional limbo exact a higher price than in water and sanitation.

A middle ground

Take, for example, the Rawta village on the edge of Delhi. Residents here receive water through a pipeline at a common collection point, but only on alternate days, and that too between 7 p.m. and midnight. Families sacrifice sleep to fetch water. Private vendors selling water exploit this gap. Or consider Gurugram, where rural governance was abolished and peri-urban areas were placed under the municipal corporation which struggles with administrative inefficiencies. Residents are left with the worst of both worlds: urban prices without urban services.

Moreover, such consequences ripple beyond convenience. In peri-urban Hyderabad, toxic leachate from waste dumps has contaminated groundwater. And when cities grow thirsty, they reach outward. The Bisalpur dam, originally built to irrigate Tonk and Sawai Madhopur, now prioritises Jaipur's growing water demand, leaving downstream farmers to bear the cost. When water moves from rural to urban areas without accountable governance, the peri-urban becomes a zone of sacrifice.

Sanitation tells a similar story. Nearly 40 million urban households rely on on-site systems such as septic tanks. However, desludging is irregular – often only when tanks overflow – and illegal dumping of septage into rivers and open fields is routine. A single 5,000-litre tanker discharging its load into the open undoes the work of thousands of toilets constructed under the Swachh Bharat Mission.

By 2047, the country will need 230 million new housing units and 500 new cities. Today's peri-urban fringe is tomorrow's city centre. Whether we plan for it deliberately or inherit a legacy of chronic challenges is a choice one has to make right now.

> India's peri-urban expanse: a zone where farmland and scattered habitations give way to factory sheds, and densely cluttered settlements

A plan of action

That choice requires five clear actions. First, the governance vacuum has to be resolved. State governments must constitute Nagar Panchayats for all Census towns, as the 74th Constitutional Amendment envisioned. Where the transition has already occurred, functional capacity must follow legal reclassification. Small-scale experiments such as the multi-stakeholder platform in Sultanpur village, which brought together engineers, panchayat members and residents, show that accountability can be built when institutions are forced to coordinate. Second, drinking water sources must be secured at their origin itself. The Jal Jeevan Mission succeeded in expanding tap connections, but source sustainability needs relentless focus. This means protecting catchments from encroachment, preventing solid waste dumping, and adopting community-driven sanitary inspections of local water sources, an approach that has already worked in Maharashtra.

Third, there should be a Swachh Bharat Mission 3.0 with an explicit focus on peri-urban sanitation. This mission, ideally housed under the Ministry of Jal Shakti and leveraging rural employment guarantee schemes, should prioritise faecal sludge and septage management. Its priorities should be to build faecal sludge treatment plants where sewage treatment plants are beyond 15-20 km; deploy GPS-equipped desludging trucks to prevent illegal dumping; and introduce mini-cesspool vehicles for narrow lanes, as Berhampur in Odisha has done. Desludging costs, which can range from ₹1,500-₹6,000 per trip, should be folded into monthly water bills through a small sanitation levy.

Fourth, decentralised wastewater treatment technologies should be scaled up. Startups such as Indra Water and Tigreen have built modular, plug-and-play systems that treat used water close to its source, recovering over 95% of water with minimal land and energy use. But these remain at the incubation level. They need clear policy signals, single-window clearances for green industries, public procurement mandates, and government-backed guarantees that create a market for treated used water. Fifth, peri-urban water should be financed as strategic infrastructure. The Uttarakhand model – a blended finance structure combining State risk-bearing with World Bank concessional loans linked to disbursement indicators – offers a template. Similar mechanisms can extend to septage and decentralised treatment.

India's water future will be decided in these zones. Peri-urban India has the numbers, the economic dynamism, and the demographic weight to demand better. If we act now, the missing middle can become the core: dense, thriving, and water-secure.

Views expressed are personal.

A definite end to the Silverline

The new government wants to develop maritime transport as well as a rail line

STATE OF PLAY

S. Anandan

In one of its first decisions, the United Democratic Front (UDF) government in Kerala denotified the controversial Silverline project, which envisaged a standalone semi high-speed standard gauge railway line along the length of Kerala. The project had been on the back burner for some time after the Union government had refused to give it the green signal, prompting the last Left Democratic Front (LDF) government to propose a Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) in the run-up to the Assembly elections. Its scrapping, as promised by the UDF in its manifesto, was, therefore, a foregone conclusion.

The Silverline project had been on the wrong track from the very beginning, as there were concerns over the irreversible damage that the line could do to the local ecology. The line was meant to be built largely on the embankments across wetlands, biodiversity hotspots and flood-prone areas. Experts also stated that the estimated cost of the project was grossly underplayed. Calls for broad-based consultations to identify viable alternatives went unheeded, with the State government brazenly pushing ahead with the project, which led to widespread protests, as officials, escorted by the police, began planting yellow stones demarcating the areas to be acquired.

Such apprehensions led the Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP) to carry out a comprehensive study of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the Silverline initiative. The study concluded that there would be significant adverse environmental impact, mostly irreversible, which would be detrimental to connected ecosystems. It called for a less capital-intensive project, which would not worsen the State's debt burden, preferably within the existing railway system. "Modernising the signal system and straightening existing and new lines could significantly increase train speeds and reduce travel time. This would reduce the project's cost and ensure interoperability with the Indian Railway system. The Indian Railway has already initiated the process of modernising signals and straightening rail lines with the recent introduction of the Vande Bharat Express, an Indian made semi-high-speed train. It has also begun laying a third line designed for semi-high-speed trains. The DPR should have considered these alternative options, including the possibility of an additional fourth line," the study added.

Alternative projects

Interestingly, the UDF election manifesto moots a high-speed railway corridor, but in collaboration with the Indian Railways. It gets a passing mention in the document, which promises a few other big-ticket projects such as Mission Samudra, which seeks to integrate Kerala's intricate and vast network of canals and waterbodies into a maritime transport network.

It appears to be a feasible proposition provided there is political will. Much water has flowed since the government led by V.S. Achuthanandan laid the groundwork for operationalising the National Waterway-III, with the ambitious dream of first transporting hazardous cargo and then the public at large. However, only smaller sections have been made navigable so far because of a lock gate at Thrikkunnapuzha that is yet to be widened. The reconstruction work is set to be completed soon, and the bottleneck at Chavara would be resolved as well, which will open up the entire west coast canal for goods traffic sometime next year. Besides cargo movers, cruise vessel operators are also keen to ply along the fairway, which will definitely give a fillip to tourism and help decongest the highways.

While the water transport network takes shape, a high-speed rail corridor seamlessly linked to the existing railway lines could serve an entirely different purpose. The enthusiastic patronage for Vande Bharat indicates a need for faster travel along the State's 530-km length. It would not only ease the pressure on the highways, but also deliver economic benefits. Such a rail corridor would make commutes in the State swift, pleasant and efficient, indirectly unburdening cities such as Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.

However, the new government would do well not to go down the same road as its predecessor. Broad public and expert consultations should be a precursor to these mobility projects, without which the government risks triggering backlash that could stop them in their tracks.

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Deaths caused by lightning have been consistently rising

State-wise trends show that the majority of deaths caused by lightning happened in non-peninsular States

DATA POINT

Serish Nanisetti

Lightning has emerged as the most lethal natural hazard in India, with the number of fatalities rising consistently over the years. A review of reports published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) showed that the country reported a total of 1,02,263 deaths due to lightning in the 50-year-period between 1975 and 2024 **(Chart 1)**. Over half of these deaths happened between 2005 and 2024.

The decennial averages of deaths caused by lightning in the last three decades jumped from 1,683 (1995-2004) to 2,476 (2005-2014) and 2,809 (2015-2024). This is despite India's broader progress in reducing deaths from natural causes, thanks to better forecasting, modelling and disaster preparedness. From 2016, lightning accounted for at least 50% of all deaths due to natural causes while cyclones and floods accounted for fewer **(Chart 2)**. There were 3,315 deaths caused by lightning in 2016, which was the highest ever since 1974, as per the NCRB. In terms of proportion, lightning accounted for the highest share of all deaths due to natural causes in 2021. There were 2,880 deaths due to lightning, which was 70.4% of the 4,091 deaths due to natural causes.

The number of deaths reported due to lightning has never fallen below the 2,000 mark since 2005. The figure crossed the 2,800 mark in six of the eight years between 2017 and 2024. While there were 2,825 deaths in 2024, the latest year for which the data is available, early indications are that the number could go up in 2026. The unseasonal thunderstorm and lightning on May 13, 2026, in eastern and western Uttar Pradesh resulted in at least 111 deaths, many of which were caused by lightning.

State-wise trends show that the majority of deaths caused by lightning happened in non-peninsular States **(Map 1)**. For instance, of the 3,315 deaths reported in 2016, nearly 60% happened in just four States – Madhya Pradesh (639), Jharkhand (542), Uttar Pradesh (384), and Odisha (376). The pattern was similar in 2024 as well. The five States of Madhya Pradesh (577), Bihar (360), Uttar Pradesh (275), Odisha (249) and Chhattisgarh (241) accounted for 60% of the 2,825 deaths reported that year **(Chart 3)**.

A study by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), using the dataset from the Tropical Rainfall Measurement Mission's Lightning Imaging Sensor, showed a clear increasing trend in lightning activity in India over the last two decades. The findings of the study indicated that seasonal variations showed more lightning activity over northwest India during the monsoon season, and northeast India during the pre-monsoon season. "The increase in lightning activity is due to the rise in Convective Available Potential Energy (CAPE), low-level moisture content and temperature. The increase in temperature and moisture is attributed to changes in India's land use and land cover (LULC)," the study said. Kumar Margasahayam, an early warning systems expert, said, "This is a direct result of a warming planet where warmer air and sudden cooling is leading to more convective thunderstorms. This has led to more and frequent thunderstorms and more lightning phenomena."

The India Meteorological Department currently provides thunderstorm forecasts, while the IITM provides real-time alerts on lightning through its mobile application Damini. The app also shares precautionary guidelines during thunderstorms in 23 regional languages, making safety information more accessible. The increasing fatalities emphasise the need for creating more awareness among the public on precautions to be taken during lightning attacks.

Fatal strikes

The data for the charts were sourced from the National Crime Records Bureau's Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India (ADSI) reports

CHART 1: The deaths caused by lightning strikes reported over the years

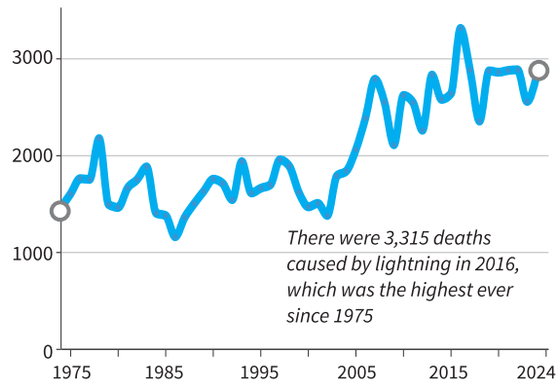


CHART 3: States that accounted for the highest number of deaths due to lightning between 2019 and 2024

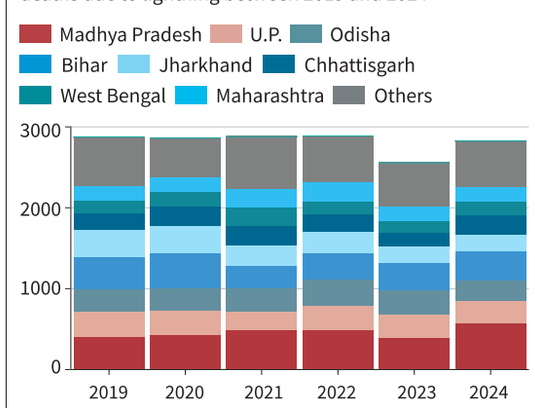
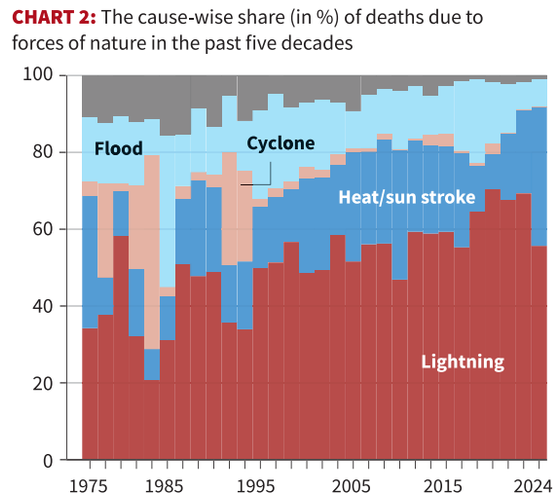
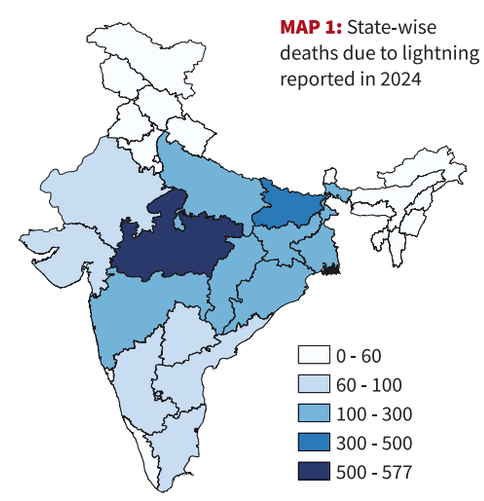


CHART 2: The cause-wise share (in %) of deaths due to forces of nature in the past five decades



MAP 1: State-wise deaths due to lightning reported in 2024



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 26, 1976

Centre to manage sick tea gardens

New Delhi, May 25: Parliament to-day authorised the Union government to take over the management of sick and un-economic tea gardens with the Rajya Sabha passing the Tea (amendment) Bill, 1975.

The Bill, earlier passed by the Lok Sabha, empowered the Centre to order an investigation into the working of a sick tea undertaking and to take decision for liquidation or reconstruction of the taken-over undertaking.

Winding up a brief discussion on the Bill, the Commerce Minister, Mr. D. P. Chattopadhyaya said public sector organisations would be given priority in managing the taken-over-tea undetakings.

Such public sector bodies had adequate expertise in running tea gardens.

Assuring that people responsible for mismanaging the existing tea units would not get any sympathy from the Government, the Minister did not rule our the possibility of allowing some private owners to run the taken-over tea gardens.

The Minister said the multi-national companies handling Indian tea had been requested to export more processed tea in packages.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 26, 1926

Volcano eruption in Japan

Tokio, May 25: Mount Tokachi erupted suddenly with a tremendous roar, which was heard twenty miles away. The inhabitants of Miye town, at the foot of the volcano, fled in panic. The town is seriously endangered and train service to it has been suspended. It is reported that sixty houses have been buried under lava.

One hundred and twenty persons, mostly miners are missing inside the local sulphur mine. A message from Hokkaido says that two thousand farmers are missing as the result of the eruption.

It is reported that 1,000 persons are missing and 200 have been drowned due to water gushing from the ground, as a result of eruption of Mount Tokachi, a dormant volcano at Hokkaido. A message from Hokkaido states that the reports of casualties from the volcano vary considerably, but it is officially learned that 100 bodies have been recovered.

From Page One

SC blames NTA for repeated NEET leaks

A second petition by the United Doctors Front was also heard, which sought the transition of the NTA from a registered society to a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament to ensure constitutional and parliamentary accountability.

For the Supreme Court, the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak was a repetition from 2024 , when over 20 lakh students were affected by a paper leak. The court had, at the time, taken cognisance of the fiasco and heard petitioners over many days. It had finally not cancelled the 2024 exam, reasoning that the leak had been localised.

However, the apex court had acknowledged the need to reform the exam process. It had directed the constitution of a committee headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman K. Radhakrishnan to recommend changes in the way the NTA conducted the crucial annual exam for medical admissions across the country.

The recommendations of the monitoring/high-powered committee included the shift to a computer-based test (CBT) mechanism. Mr. Radhakrishnan has also been asked to file a separate affidavit within the same time period as the NTA on what steps were taken to ensure that the committee's recommendations had been followed.

Fuel prices increase ₹7.5 in 10 days after 4th hike

Price of petrol rose the highest in Kolkata and that of diesel in Mumbai. In Kolkata, petrol was dearer by ₹2.87 per litre, available for ₹113.51 at the pump. The price of diesel in Kolkata jumped by ₹2.80 per litre to ₹99.82.

The price of petrol in Mumbai rose ₹2.72 a litre to ₹111.21 while that of diesel increased by ₹2.81 to ₹97.83.

In Chennai, petrol price was up by ₹2.46 per litre to ₹107.77, while that of diesel jumped ₹2.57 per litre to ₹99.55.

India's OMCs withheld the pressure of high crude oil prices in the backdrop of the conflict in West Asia for about three months before passing it on from May 15 onwards.

Three AIADMK MLAs quit, join ruling TVK

With the resignation of three members and shifting of loyalties of five members, the strength of the rebel faction has now reduced to 17.

Later in the day, the five MLAs called on Mr. Palaniswami at his residence in Chennai.

A party release said the five AIADMK MLAs assured that they would "accept the instructions and advice of Mr. Palaniswami" and discharge their duties both as legislators and party functionaries.

The three AIADMK MLAs who resigned from the Assembly said they took the decision in the "interest of the people in our constituencies" and it was not motivated by any "selfish agenda".

Addressing the media, Ms. Kumaravel said she and the others were unable to do much for their constituencies over the past five years because of the DMK government. "We raised several demands in the Assembly, but were unable to fulfil even 10% of the promises made to the people. Even in this election, people voted for me reposing faith in me. They expected us to fulfil their demands," she said. Asked whether they would contest the bypolls, Ms. Kumaravel said it was for the TVK party leadership to take a decision.

HC acquits first accused in Kerala lynching case

The High Court also noted that this was the first case in Kerala where a tribal man was hunted down, publicly humiliated, and assaulted by a group of persons who believed they were entitled to enforce their own version of community justice on a man. They did not feel that Madhu was worthy of ordinary human dignity

"His death stands as a painful reminder of the continuing distance between constitutional ideals and the lived reality of many among the most marginalised sections of society. The near-total collapse of eyewitness testimony in the present case is one of the most disturbing features of the entire trial, and we record our deep concern regarding the same," said a Division Bench of Justices Raja Vijayaraghavan V. and K.V. Jayakumar.

Approximately 75 persons were present at Mukkali junction when Madhu sat tied against the temple treasury box on that afternoon (February 22, 2018). Forest officials, shop employees, roadside traders, and local residents appeared before the court, watched the CCTV footage in open court, and pleaded ignorance when their images and videos came up on the screen and claimed inability to identify the persons involved. The evidence on record established that several accused persons had contacted witnesses during the pendency of the trial, in clear violation of their bail conditions. It was only after the bail of most of the accused was cancelled that a witness, found the courage to depose before the court, the High Court said, adding that witness protection in the country remained deeply inadequate in practice.

(With PTI inputs)

Assam UCC Bill tabled; seeks ban on polygamy

Opposition parties oppose the Bill and demand consultation with all stakeholders; draft legislation excludes Scheduled Tribes from its purview; makes registration of live-in relationships mandatory

The Hindu Bureau
GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Monday tabled 'The Uniform Civil Code, Assam, 2026 Bill' in the State Assembly, proposing a common law for all residents on matters related to marriage, divorce, succession, and live-in relationships.

Uttarakhand and Gujarat are the two other States that have passed such a law earlier.

Assam Parliamentary Affairs Minister Atul Bora tabled the Bill on behalf of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The MLAs of three Opposition parties opposed the Bill.

"The introduction of the UCC Bill paves the way for an on-record discussion on why it is the need of the hour and how it will help realise the path our founding fathers laid down," the Chief Minister said.

> The introduction of the UCC Bill paves the way for an on-record discussion on why it is the need of the hour and how it will help realise the path our founding fathers laid down
>
> **HIMANTA BISWA SARMA**
> Assam Chief Minister

Under the proposed law, bigamy and polygamy shall invite imprisonment up to seven years under Section 82 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

The Assam UCC Bill, replacing various religion-based personal laws to ensure "absolute equality and gender justice", excludes Scheduled Tribes from its purview.

The Bill mandates monogamy and sets a standardised legal age of 21 years for grooms and 18 years for brides. The government said the Bill, if passed, would make registration of all marriages and divorces compulsory to prevent fraud. The Bill codifies uniform grounds for divorce, such as cruelty, desertion, or mutual consent, and ensures the custody of children under five years with the mother.

The Bill creates a uniform, gender-equal order of preference for intestate inheritance among Class-1 heirs, which includes the spouse, children, and parents of the deceased.

The Bill makes the registration of live-in relationships mandatory within a month. "This protects vulnerable individuals by declaring that any child born out of a live-in relationship is fully legitimate, and by granting a deserted live-in partner the explicit legal standing to claim financial maintenance through the courts," the statement said. Failure to register a live-in relationship within a month shall attract imprisonment for up to three months or a fine of up to ₹10,000.

The Bill repeals the Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Act, 2024, to streamline the State's statutory architecture.

Congress leader Zakir Hussain Sikdar said the "political agenda" of the BJP made the government "bulldoze" the Bill. "The government should have held consultations with political parties and non-political organisations before introducing the Bill in the House," he said. The Bill has been scheduled for discussion on May 27.

The Hindu wins top honours at ABBY, Kyoorius awards

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Hindu Group's campaign, 'Written by Journalists', has won the prestigious Black Elephant at the Kyoorius Marketing Awards, recognising it as the finest work of the year.

This is the highest honour awarded to the single Best of Show entry across all categories.

Crafted by Talented, the campaign celebrates the power, credibility, and craft of journalism, and highlights why stories written by journalists continue to matter in an evolving media landscape. The campaign also secured a Grey Elephant for Best in Discipline and a Concrete Elephant for excellence in strategy, effectiveness and execution.

At the ABBY Awards, The Hindu Group emerged as the runner-up for Publisher of the Year and secured four medals – one Gold, two Silver and one Merit. Here too, *The Hindu*'s 'Written By Journalists' campaign won Gold for reinforcing the enduring value of journalism.

The Group also secured silver awards for Stub The Habit, created by Ogilvy, a campaign recognised for its impactful communication on tobacco awareness, and Kerala for All, a Brand Solutions project done along with Kerala Tourism to promote accessible and inclusive tourism. *The Hindu* Made of Chennai, a city celebration campaign, earned a Merit recognition.

Speaking on the achievements, L.V. Navaneeth, Chief Executive Officer of The Hindu Group, said, "These honours reflect the strong collaboration between our editorial and business teams, along with our agency partners, in creating impactful storytelling and meaningful brand experiences that truly connect with audiences. The recognition reaffirms our commitment to building ideas that are both creatively compelling and strategically effective."

Delhi court convicts Cong. leader in protest case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday convicted Congress leader Alka Lamba in a case involving assault on police personnel during a protest at Jantar Mantar in 2024.

Ms. Lamba and several others had staged a protest ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election, demanding the implementation of women's reservation in Parliament.

Ms. Lamba was booked on charges of assaulting public servants, obstructing government officials in the discharge of their duties, and disobeying a lawful order. The prosecution said the protest had been organised despite prohibitory orders being in force in the area.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Ashwani Panwar of the Rouse Avenue Courts said arguments on sentencing would be heard on June 5.

Supreme Court supports CBI probe into death of model Twisha Sharma

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday backed the Madhya Pradesh government's call to handover the model-turned-actor Twisha Sharma death case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), saying it had stepped in with awareness of a "narrative" created that the judiciary was involved in denying her family a fair probe.

The court had registered the *suo motu* case on Saturday, posting the case for urgent hearing on Monday.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant of the State's decision to handover the investigation to the CBI. "The CBI must make an endeavour to complete the probe promptly," Chief Justice Kant said.

The CBI on Monday met the Bhopal police officials and collected the necessary documents and evidence. They re-registered the State police FIR as their own case.

Twisha Sharma's brother performs rituals a day after the cremation on Monday. PTI

Mr. Mehta briefed the court that a second autopsy had been conducted by a team of doctors from AIIMS flown from New Delhi. The results of the second autopsy were still awaited.

The 33-year-old woman was found dead at her matrimonial home in Bhopal on May 12. Her family has levelled allegations of mental harassment and financial demands against her husband Samarth Singh and his mother Giribala Singh, a retired judge.

The apex court's intervention came amid publicised interviews by the retired district judge, and Ms. Sharma's family, who have alleged procedural lapses, institutional bias and tampering with evidence.

The court urged family members on both sides to make their statements before the probe authorities rather than to the media.

(With PTI inputs)

HC grants mother-in-law two days to file her reply

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh High Court on Monday granted two days to retired judge Giribala Singh to file her reply on two pleas challenging the anticipatory bail granted to her in the Twisha Sharma death case, with the State government telling the court that she was not cooperating with the probe.

The development comes on a day when the Special Investigating Team (SIT) of the Bhopal Police interrogated Ms. Singh for the first time.

Bhopal Police Commissioner Sanjay Kumar ruled out allegations of tampering with the CCTV footage from Ms. Singh's house, where Twisha was found dead on May 12.

BJD MP exits party, steps down from Rajya Sabha

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Debashish Samantaray, a Biju Janata Dal Rajya Sabha MP, on Monday resigned from the regional party and also stepped down from the Upper House of Parliament, alleging that he was "systematically belittled" within the BJD.

In a letter addressed to BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik, Mr. Samantaray said, "I have always dedicated myself to the interest of the party... I have taken this hard decision in public interest."

Resigning from the BJD, he said, "I shall always be indebted to you for nominating me to the Rajya Sabha." He indicated at the possibility of him joining the BJP.

The senior leader said, "I have been trying to meet the BJD supremo, but vested interest groups blocked my access to the [party] president."

India-U.S. ties, Iran crisis in focus as Quad Foreign Ministers meet today

NEWS ANALYSIS

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Foreign Ministers of the Quad will meet for the first time in nearly a year, as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar hosts U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi in Delhi on Tuesday at Delhi's Hyderabad House. The Foreign Ministers will also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an External Affairs Ministry advisory said.

The Ministers last met on July 1, 2025, when they updated the goals for the quadrilateral grouping, simplifying them to four areas: maritime and transnational security, economic prosperity and security, humanitarian assistance and emergency responses, and the launch of the Quad Critical Minerals Initiative.

However, rapid developments, including the U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran and other actions by the Donald Trump administration, have posed questions over the viability of the grouping, and the Ministers will have their task cut out as they seek to renew their mandate.

In addition, they will discuss whether it is possible to hold the Quad Summit in India later this year, or take a decision to downgrade the grouping by meeting regularly only at the Foreign Minister level, as was the case prior to 2021, given India's difficulties in scheduling the summit in 2024 and 2025.

Trade tensions

In particular, tensions between India and the U.S. in the past year have led to a slowdown in ties, amid differences over the India-Pakistan conflict, strained trade talks after the U.S. imposed a whopping 50% tariff on Indian goods, Mr. Trump's comments on India being a "dead economy", and immigration restrictions by the U.S. During his four-day visit to India, Mr. Rubio has faced some embarrassment and persistent questions from journalists over the U.S. President reposting an anti-immigrant rant describing India as a "hellhole".

"The President is a big fan of India, a big fan of Prime Minister Modi. I wouldn't be here if the President didn't want me to be here. He wouldn't have sent someone like Sergio [Gor] to be our Ambassador, someone who's very close to the President," Mr. Rubio told journalists on Monday.

"I mean, people say stupid stuff all the time on social media and in every country in the world, unfortunately," he added, indicating "general" comments online.

Invitation to PM

Although Mr. Rubio conveyed an invitation to Mr. Modi to visit Washington in the next few months, it is Mr. Trump's turn to visit India, and Mr. Modi is in any case expected to travel to the U.S. for the G-20 Summit in December. Prior to that, his travel schedule has already filled up.

Prioritising the Quad may be more difficult given other engagements. In September, Chinese President Xi Jinping is expected to be in the U.S. to return Mr. Trump's visit to China, which will take precedence. Indications that Washington is seeking a more accommodating position with Beijing could cause concerns for the long-term future of the Indo-Pacific grouping that was set up to counter Chinese actions in the region.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio with wife Jeanette Rubio at Amber Fort in Jaipur on Monday. ANI

Marco Rubio visits Taj Mahal, Amber Fort

Press Trust of India
AGRA/JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Monday visited the Taj Mahal in Agra and the Amber Fort in Jaipur along with his wife Jeanette Rubio and U.S. Ambassador to India Sergio Gor ahead of the crucial Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting on Tuesday.

Mr. Rubio, who is on a four-day visit to India, arrived in Agra in a special aircraft and travelled by car to the Taj Mahal, officials said.

This was followed by a trip to the Amber Fort, where Mr. Rubio and his wife were given a traditional Rajasthani welcome and attended cultural performances featuring folk dances, including Kacchi Ghodi and Ghoomar.

BJP hits out at Congress over fuel price hike comments

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday criticised Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, for his remarks on fuel price hikes.

BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India had been confronting the challenges arising from the West Asia crisis with strength. Referring to the remarks of Mr. Gandhi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on the latest increase in prices of petrol and diesel, Mr. Bhatia asked: "In a global challenge, whether one belongs to the ruling party or Opposition, can they not stand with the country?"

He said for nearly 65 to 70 days of the West Asia war, fuel prices in India remained unchanged as the intention was to ensure that common citizen did not suffer. "Oil companies absorbed losses because they did not want the public to suffer. While there is a gas crisis globally, domestic gas remains available in India because it is our priority," said Mr. Bhatia.

He alleged that after the war began, instead of supporting the Prime Minister's appeal to citizens, the Congress "spread panic" through misinformation. He said every decision taken related to fuel prices would be in public interest.

'Daily robbery': Opposition slams fresh fuel price hike

Kharge says every hike is a blow to household budgets; Rahul terms Modi 'inflation man', says fuel prices were being increased in 'instalments', Kejriwal asks why cheaper oil was not being sourced

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

As petrol and diesel prices were raised by ₹2.61-₹2.71 a litre on Monday, marking the fourth increase in less than two weeks, the Opposition leaders stepped up their attack on the Narendra Modi government, accusing it of burdening consumers and failing to shield them from rising costs.

While Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge described the increase as "daily robbery", Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi called Prime Minister Narendra Modi "*mehangai manav*" (inflation man). Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convener Arvind Kejriwal questioned why India was not sourcing cheaper crude oil from Russia and Iran.

In a post on social media platform X, Mr. Kharge said the "daily assault of fuel loot" was continuing, noting that this was the fourth hike in 10 days. "The Modi government has sprinkled petrol to burn the savings of common people," the Congress chief said.

Mr. Kharge alleged that despite international crude oil prices not witnessing an increase comparable to that seen during the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) years, retail fuel prices had risen sharply under the BJP government. He claimed that petrol prices had increased from ₹71.41 a litre in 2014 to ₹102.12 in 2026, while diesel prices had risen from ₹56.71 to ₹95.20 during the same period.

Running on fumes: Motorists at a petrol pump in New Delhi on Monday. Petrol and diesel prices were raised for the fourth time in less than two weeks. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Congress president also linked Monday's hike to gains in shares of public sector oil companies and alleged that the government prioritised "profit over people".

'Who is benefitting'

"Every fuel price hike is another blow to household budgets," he said, adding that farmers and micro, small, and medium enterprises were among those most affected. "We repeat. Who is benefitting from this daily robbery?" he asked.

Mr. Gandhi also attacked the Prime Minister, alleging that fuel prices were being increased in "instalments". "'*Mehangai manav*' Modi strikes again. He raises petrol and diesel prices in instalments – ensuring that your pockets are quietly picked, bit by bit," he said in a post on X.

Mr. Gandhi claimed that he had warned of an impending economic storm, but the government had delayed the increases because of elections. "'*Mehangai manav*' Modi has just one job: promises during elections, and attacking people's pockets at other times," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal said rising inflation was imposing hardship on "140 crore people" and asked what compulsion prevented the government from purchasing cheaper fuel. "Russia and Iran are offering us cheaper and sufficient oil and gas. Why is Prime Minister Narendra Modi not buying cheap oil from them?" he asked in a video message on X.

Congress spokesperson Ragini Nayak raised concerns over oil supply disruptions and the economy. She asked what the government had done to bring back ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz.

India-China ties, global diplomacy in spotlight at The Hindu Huddle, 2026

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Geopolitical issues, particularly the unpredictable behaviour of global superpowers, will be at the core of discussions at The Hindu Huddle, as diplomats and thinkers discuss possible solutions to recent disruptions and conflicts in West Asia and Europe. The theme of the The Hindu Huddle, to be held in Bengaluru on June 5 and 6, is "A World in Transition".

Among the key speakers will be the Chinese Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, who will discuss developments in India-China ties and the role the two countries can play on the multilateral stage. This will be a special session that looks at 75 years of the bilateral relationship, and particularly the last few years, with New Delhi and Beijing resuming normal diplomatic, business, and travel ties after years of freeze and military stand-off following the Galwan incident in 2020.

This year, both sides are expected to engage more closely as India chairs the BRICS Summit in September, and high-level engagements are expected to continue between them.

Another important panel on global diplomacy will focus on "The Middle Power Way". It will look at whether the international order can be rebuilt by other powers, when global leaders flout the rules. The discussion derives from the speech at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos made by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney earlier this year, where he pointed out that while great powers can afford to "go it alone" given their market size and military capacity, middle powers cannot. "Middle powers must act together, because if we are not at the table, we're on the menu," Mr. Carney said.

The panel will have some of the most senior diplomats serving in India: Australian High Commissioner Philip Green, European Union Ambassador Herve Delphin, and Brazilian Ambassador Kenneth Felix Hascynzki da Nobrega. Joining them in the discussion will be the author of *The Fractured Himalaya*, Nirupama Menon Rao, who is a former Foreign Secretary and former Ambassador to the U.S. and China.

Both discussions will be moderated by *The Hindu*'s Diplomatic Affairs Editor, Suhasini Haidar.

Event partners

The event is presented by Sami-Sabinsa Group as the Presenting Partner. The event is co-powered by the Government of Telangana and held In Association with Khaja Bandanawaz University. The event is further supported by: Larsen & Toubro, Apollo Hospitals, IIM Sirmaur, ICFAI Group, TAFE, Wizzmoni, Associate Partners; Casagrand, Realty Partner; Amity University Bengaluru, University Partner; Harrow International School Bengaluru, Education Partner; Meghalaya Tourism, State Partner; and NDTV 24x7, TV Partner.

President confers Padma awards; Dharmendra, N. Rajam honoured

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday presented Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri awards for 2026 at the Civil Investiture Ceremony-I held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

For this year, the President has approved 131 Padma awards, including five Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan, and 113 Padma Shri.

They are announced every year on Republic Day. On Monday, the President presented two Padma Vibhushan, six Padma Bhushan, and 58 Padma Shri awards.

She conferred the Padma Vibhushan on legendary Bollywood actor Dharmendra posthumously, received by his wife and MP Hema Malini; and violin virtuoso N. Rajam, for exceptional contribution to their respective fields.

'Singing violin'

Ms. Rajam pioneered a revolutionary approach to classical music by introducing "Gayaki Ang" – a technique that enables violin to emulate human vocals – earning her global renown as the "Singing Violin". The Padma Bhushan was presented to former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Bhagat Singh Koshyari; Shatavadhani R. Ganesh, who revived the classical art form of "Avadhana"; Uday Suresh Kumar Kotak, founder of Kotak Mahindra Bank; and eminent gastroenterologist Kallipatti Ramasamy Palaniswamy.

High honour: President Droupadi Murmu conferring the Padma Vibhushan on violinist N. Rajam, the Padma Bhushan on Kotak Mahindra Bank founder Uday Suresh Kumar Kotak, and the Padma Shri on cricket player Harmanpreet Kaur Bhullar in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

The award was conferred posthumously on former MP Vijay Kumar Malhotra and "ad guru" Piyush Pandey.

The remaining Padma awardees will be felicitated in the second round of the ceremony to be held later.

Among the Padma Shri recipients were Prosenjit Chatterjee, one of the most influential figures of Indian cinema; Harmanpreet Kaur Bhullar, an inspirational figure in Indian women's cricket; para athlete Praveen Kumar; former Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Director-General K. Vijay Kumar; folk musician Mir Haji Kasam; Tamil devotional music artist N. Swaminathan; and traditional folk music artist Taga Ram Bheel.

Other awardees

While Silambam master K. Pajanivel was awarded for promoting the ancient art originating from Tamil Nadu, hockey coach Baldev Singh was felicitated for distinguished service to Indian hockey for over four decades.

"Kantha" embroidery artist Tripti Mukherjee, social worker Janardan Bapurao Bothe, and husband-wife duo of Dr. Ramchandra Godbole and Suneeta Godbole, who provided healthcare and social support to tribal communities, also received the Padma Shri. Environmentalists Devaki Amma G. and Hally War; bibliophile Ankegowda M.; Sanskrit scholar Vempaty Kutumba Shastry; and botanist Gambir Singh Yonzone were the others who received the Padma Shri.

Cockroach Janta Party has not dimmed PM's popularity among youth: Haryana CM

Nistula Hebbar
NEW DELHI

Dismissing the suggestion that the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) reflected anger among the youth, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday said the youth would still back Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who would be the face of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Punjab Assembly election, slated for early next year.

Speaking during an interaction organised by the Women Journalist Welfare Trust here, Mr. Saini said the CJP did not reflect the views of the majority of the youth in the country.

"In my frequent interactions with young people, I have not seen any support for this CJP. What is the longevity of a cockroach? The Opposition, including the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party, have a history of concocting fake narratives, just like the Congress did during the 2024 [Lok Sabha] election, stating that the Constitution was in danger. It was the Congress that put the Constitution in danger by imposing Emergency, [and] by undertaking self-serving amendments to the Constitution," Mr. Saini said.

Modi will be the face of the BJP in the Punjab Assembly election, says Nayab Singh Saini

Visits to Punjab

Mr. Saini's reference to the AAP was noteworthy as he has been undertaking several trips to neighbouring Punjab for campaign events across the State. When asked about his campaign interventions, Mr. Saini said that the people of Punjab showed great enthusiasm for the BJP, because of the welfare programmes implemented by BJP governments, when compared with the ruling AAP government which had failed to do so.

Mr. Modi would be the party's face in the Punjab election, he said. "The BJP has just won a historic victory in West Bengal. During the campaign, there was no local face projected, the people saw Prime Minister Modi and his governance record, and voted for the BJP. Similarly, in Punjab too, Mr. Modi will be the face," he said.

He has been visiting Punjab frequently since 2025, with observers saying that he was being deployed to stitch together a non-Jat Sikh coalition in the State.

No 'grave urgency' to entertain plea against Cockroach Party: CJI

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Monday asked a lawyer to not take the continued online frenzy over his reported use of the word "cockroach" in a court hearing so "sentimentally".

The Chief Justice was reacting to a lawyer, advocate N.K. Goswami, who expressed anxiety at the manner in which a courtroom observation from the Bench was being "distorted" online despite a clarification from the judge. The CJI's reported remark on "cockroaches" with reference to fake law degree holders during the hearing of a writ petition on May 15, spawned a public furore, and a viral online platform, the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP).

The Chief Justice had later clarified that he had been misquoted, and had the greatest concern and respect for the youth.

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court seeking a probe into the 'activities' of the party.

On Monday, the Chief Justice said there was "no grave urgency" to entertain a writ petition filed by an SC lawyer seeking a probe into the "activities" of a "digital-political formation", the CJP, and the commercial exploitation, trademark appropriation, and monetised circulation of oral remarks made in court proceedings.

Arrests, mass resignations, 'bulldozer action' deepen Trinamool's crisis in Bengal

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Demolition notices for illegal construction of buildings continued to be issued in West Bengal. A police team visited Trinamool Congress general secretary Abhishek Banerjee's residence on Monday to collect security equipment. Kolkata Police officials described the visit as a routine exercise.

Arrests of local Trinamool leaders have also continued in the three weeks since the new government came to power.

A Trinamool party office in Konnagar area of Hooghly district was razed on Monday. The Trinamool office had been illegally constructed on government land, allegedly by local party councillor Khokon Pal, and was thus taken down by a bulldozer, official sources said.

Abhishek Banerjee

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation had previously sent notices to several properties linked to Mr. Banerjee, seeking clarification about deviations from originally sanctioned plans.

Demolitions continue

Bulldozers were also deployed in Beleghata, Bosepukur, Tiljala, and Kasba areas of Kolkata on Sunday to demolish illegal multi-storeyed buildings allegedly connected to former or current Trinamool leaders, and local strongmen associated with the party.

Many Trinamool councillors have resigned, and some councillors and panchayat pradhans have been arrested in the past few weeks, with the Trinamool further affected by the loss of local body members.

On Monday, at least 30 councillors in the Bhatpara municipality, including the chairman, handed in their resignation. A similar situation was reported from the Diamond Harbour municipality, where eight of the 16 Trinamool councillors resigned. In the Halisahar, Kanthi, North Barrackpore, and Garulia municipalities, over half the Trinamool councillors have resigned en masse in some areas. At least a dozen councillors across the State have been arrested

INBRIEF

SC considers bigger public participation in Aravalli case

The Supreme Court on Monday said the expert committee to be constituted to define the Aravalli hills and ranges must ensure larger public participation through consultations with domain experts and stakeholders. A Bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant was responding to submissions by Additional Solicitor-General Aishwarya Bhati that the Central Empowered Committee and the *amicus curiae*, senior advocate K. Parameshwar, had given common names to be included in the panel. The court intends to have the panel not only define the Aravalli but also draw a road map for permissible activities, including the question of regulated mining in one of the oldest and ecologically-sensitive mountain systems in the world.

8 killed as car falls into deep gorge in Maharashtra's Raigad

Eight persons were killed after the car they were travelling in fell into an 800-foot-deep gorge in Raigad district of Maharashtra, a police official said on Monday. The accident occurred in the Ambenali Ghat section on Poladpur-Mahabaleshwar road early on Sunday morning. The sports utility vehicle was located in the gorge on Monday morning, after relatives of the victims alerted the police when the group failed to reach their destination in Satara district. The victims had left from Harne Bandar beach in Dapoli. The police tracked the victims' last location through a mobile tower near Poladpur. Following this, a search and rescue operation was launched.

Amit Shah to visit border areas over next three weeks

Starting with Rajasthan on Tuesday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit the country's border areas over the next three weeks, a government official said. During his visits to outposts along Pakistan and Bangladesh borders, Mr. Shah is expected to take stock of the security situation with State government and Border Security Force (BSF) officials. Mr. Shah arrived in Rajasthan's Bikaner on Monday night. He will visit the BSF border outpost at Sanchu on Tuesday, where he will attend the "*Prahari Sammelan*" and virtually inaugurate barracks for women personnel. Later in the day, he will review the border security with senior BSF officers in Bikaner.

One held after 'rape, murder' of minor girl in Kashmir

The J&K Police arrested a young man on Monday amid a public outcry over the alleged rape and murder of a minor girl, who went missing on Saturday in Budgam, central Kashmir. "Over the last 36 hours, we questioned multiple suspects. After a while, one of the suspects admitted his involvement in the crime," Senior Superintendent of Police, Budgam, K.K. Hari Prasad, said. The accused is a resident of Galwanpora. The 12-year-old victim's body was recovered in Budgam on Sunday. A copy of the Koran and the girl's shoes were found near the body.

Minister calls for report from CBSE as Class 12 exam results trigger concerns

Dharmendra Pradhan deputes IIT Madras and IIT Kanpur experts to assist the board; the expert team will examine the overall IT infrastructure robustness; complaints have been raised over the new On-Screen Marking system, or OSM, while the re-verification process has run into delays

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

After multiple students complained about the new On-Screen Marking (OSM) system, which was introduced by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for evaluating Class 12 answer papers this year, Union Minister for Education Dharmendra Pradhan stated that he had asked the CBSE for a detailed report on the glitches.

The CBSE has been in the eye of the storm recently with Class 12 students and parents complaining about the OSM system and the struggles they have faced in the re-evaluation process after the completion of the board examination. "The IIT [Indian Institute of Technology] Madras and IIT Kanpur will look into the technical glitch faced by the CBSE portal. Those who applied for revaluation will get a scanned copy. I've taken it seriously. The government is looking into it in detail," Mr. Pradhan stated.

"The expert team will examine the overall IT infrastructure robustness and assist in taking corrective measures to ensure that login authentication, user access systems and payment gateways are accurate and in order," an official from the Ministry of Education explained.

On Monday, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh criticised the government for introducing the OSM system for Class 12 board examinations, which he said had thrown into chaos the academic futures of lakhs of children.

"He's portraying himself as some saviour by bringing in IIT-Kanpur to help address these technical issues. The question really is why these issues were not anticipated? Why did it take the minister so long to respond?" Mr. Ramesh said. "The Mantri Pradhan owes the country his resignation, and the Pradhan Mantri owes us answers to why this Minister – who is openly disrupting the future of India's students with his ineptitude – has been allowed to continue for so long."

The CBSE had rolled out the On-Screen Marking system for Class 12 evaluation this year. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

OSM system

In the OSM system, instead of traditionally checking physical copies, the evaluators checked the scanned answer sheets on-screen. Officials in the Education Ministry confirmed that 98 lakh answer books were scanned and evaluated digitally. Experts said that each answer book had an average of 20 sheets, which means that nearly 1.96 crore pages were scanned in a compressed timeline, at centres with varying infrastructure and partially trained staff.

Several students who had applied for re-evaluation for their marks said they received wrong answer sheets. On Monday, a Delhi student was brutally trolled for taking to X to complain about the unexpectedly low marks he received in Physics. He alleged it may not merely be a "rechecking" issue but a serious answer-sheet mismatch. "We applied for photocopies of my answer sheets. And I am shattered because the Physics answer sheet uploaded by the CBSE is not mine," a student said. CBSE officials told *The Hindu* that there was indeed a mix-up with regard to the student's Physics answer sheet and his original answer book was handed over to him.

Teachers' warning

The CBSE had been warned by teachers as early as February 2026 that evaluators had not received structured training in the OSM system. While the CBSE had promised that the OSM method of evaluation would lead to greater transparency, speed, and accuracy, according to its own data, over 68,000 answer books had to be rescanned due to poor image quality, and over 13,500 were pulled for manual rechecking.

In the results announced earlier this month, Class 12 pass percentage dropped by three percentage points from last year to 85.20%. Having received lower than expected marks, students began applying in large numbers for re-evaluation on the portal, which opened on May 19 and almost immediately crashed due to the heavy traffic.

After encountering the glitch, students were stranded mid-process as the CBSE pulled out the application link from its website entirely. The portal then reopened on May 20.

Students who had paid fees on May 20 reported that payment was deducted but no confirmation was received. "Students were in dark even after 24 hours. Some were able to apply later, others still complained of the process not working. Login failures, application submission errors, download failures continued to be reported," a parent told *The Hindu*. On May 21, the portal again slipped into maintenance mode. The CBSE extended the deadline for application twice to remedy the situation.

Students who managed to access their scanned answer sheets shared screenshots on social media of copies that appeared blurred, unreadable or having rotated pages. "Some scans showed overlapping elements – browser bars, timestamps – obscuring the actual written content. Students posed an obvious question – if we cannot read these copies, how did examiners evaluate them? Students identified answers that match official marking scheme, yet marks were deducted. Evaluators have complained of screen fatigue, poor scan resolution and missed answers during the OSM process," pointed out educationist and RTI activist Keshav Agarwal.

Many students received main answer booklets but supplementary sheets were absent. The CBSE has not commented on how evaluation quality was maintained when OSM system was allegedly defective.

320 tourists stranded in Gulmarg cable car rescued; probe ordered

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

More than 300 tourists aboard Asia's highest cable car, the Gulmarg Gondola, were rescued after a dramatic, hours-long operation in north Kashmir's Gulmarg on Monday.

Rescue operations were launched in the afternoon after the cable car developed a technical snag, leaving 65 cabins suspended mid-air. Panic gripped the stranded tourists as the weather turned inclement, with strong winds and rain lashing Gulmarg.

The rescue operation lasted over six hours and ensured the safety of all tourists, officials said. Technical teams were assessing the nature and extent of the malfunction, they added.

Teams from the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Response Force, the Jammu and Kashmir Police, and the Army worked jointly to bring the tourists down safely.

A tourist climbs down from the cable car at Gulmarg Gondola after the service was halted due to a technical snag on Monday. ANI

Around 320 stranded tourists were rescued in the operation. "The incident occurred around 1.20 p.m. when a technical fault forced several gondola cabins carrying tourists to remain suspended mid-air. Fourteen SDRF teams were initially pressed into service, while an additional team was later deployed," Director-General of Police Nalin Prabhat.

Personnel were rushed to the Gondola cable car after a technical fault caused a sudden suspension of services between the Base Station and Phase-1, an Army spokesperson said. "Following a distress call received from the J&K Police and the Gondola Management Authority regarding the safety and evacuation of stranded tourists, the Indian Army swiftly swung into action and mobilised rescue teams towards the affected area," the Army said.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said an inquiry would be conducted into the incident. "Responsibility for any lapses will be fixed and appropriate action taken," he said.

Closely monitoring Ebola situation in Africa: Health Ministry

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda on Monday reviewed preparedness and surveillance measures to counter the Ebola virus, amid concern that the outbreak in Africa may spread to other parts of the world.

India has not reported any case of the Bundibugyo Ebola disease to date.

The Health Ministry said it was monitoring the situation in Africa. "We are working closely with the National Centre for Disease Control and other agencies concerned, and have strengthened surveillance and public health preparedness across the country," said a senior official.

Meetings have also been held with States, Union Territories to review preparedness and response measures.

DGCA directive

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has directed airlines to ensure that passengers travelling from or transiting through Uganda or the Democratic Republic of the Congo mandatorily fill out a form providing personal and contact details, travel origin, exposure history, and any medical symptoms.

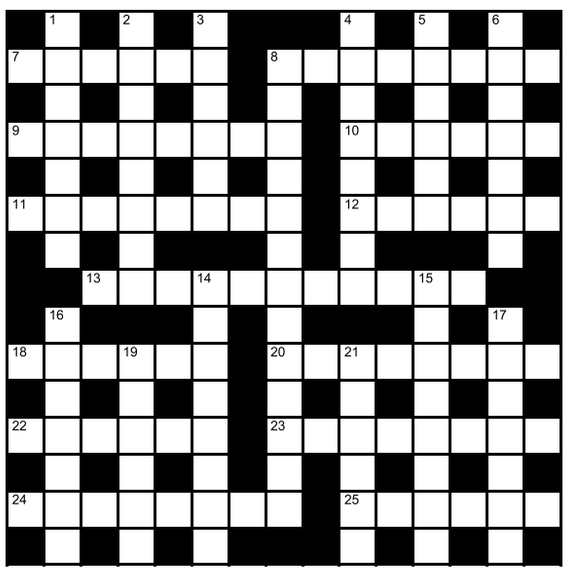
As per the standard operating procedure, airlines must designate segregated seating with at least three vacant rows around the suspected passenger. Suspected cases must be provided masks and personal protective equipment, while masks must also be distributed to passengers seated nearby.

TH CROSSWORD + 14803

(set by Pixie Dust)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

7 Spooner exclaims:"I fall flat for lady!" (6)
8 Legendary skill? (8)
9 What's behind sacrifice? Fatherhood - laying aside past forever! (8)
10 Honey producers controlling half a dozen groups (6)
11 Saurashtra's captain, fast bowler's an astronaut (8)
12 Factor in Archetypal Lord's ashen hue (6)
13 A net is used several times in murder? (11)
18 Snake swallowed sandwiches, bit of liver and pieces of ears and arms (6)
20 Global organisation to drawback? Unfortunate! (8)
22 That is Sue's wrapping paper (6)
23 Angelic Emma pays Riemann from time to time (8)
24 Off guard, Doctor Anu swears, endlessly (8)
25 William for one, cycling around trendy framework (6)

Down

1 So, Pat's egocentricity to some extent kept back secret police (7)
2 Disallow stands in camps (8)
3 Close to retirement, mean master escaped monotony (6)
4 Cop and Private Investigator with new fix for locks (5,3)
5 Desperate wives beginning to love swinging around (6)
6 Can this impunity hurt Modern Cafe? (7)
8 UFOs scare us? (6,7)
14 Dilettantes Raman, Stew & Bursa scratching heads and bottoms (8)
15 Tall model unpaid without embarrassment and remorse at first (8)
16 Invalid is not complaining (7)
17 Tumbler acknowledging king's wave (7)
19 Insult criminal now and repudiate (6)
21 Take in drink for starters - throw-up in party, perhaps losing equilibrium (6)

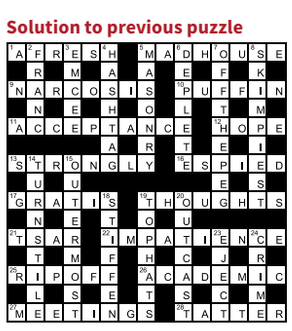
SUDOKU

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

No.SS6892 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Definition of a Vaishnava

Who is a Vaishnava? Obviously, a Vaishnava is a devotee of Vishnu. He acknowledges the supremacy of Vishnu. But beyond this, there are specific qualities which a person should have, to be called a Vaishnava, said M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse.

Vishnu is not the first name of the Supreme One. As Parasara Bhattar pointed out, Vishnu is the first avatara of the Supreme One. He gave the tasks of creation and destruction to Brahma and Siva, respectively. He placed Himself in the middle as Vishnu the protector. His first name is Narayana. Then comes the name Vasudeva. The third name is Vishnu. That being the case, why do we use the word Vaishnavam, to refer to the faith that recognises His overlordship over everyone and everything? Why don't we say Narayanam or Vasudevam, considering that these are based on His earlier names? Itihasas tell us about the characteristics of a Vaishnava, and the foundation of all that is the very name Vishnu.

Vishnu means the all pervasive One. In the Vishnu Sahasranama, it is the second name. He is present in everyone as *antaryami*, regardless of whether we are His devotees or not. He is even present in the asuras who hate Him. When Hiranyakasipu asks Prahlada where Hari can be found, the child replies that He is present in Prahlada and even in Hiranyakasipu. He is present in cetana (sentient) and acetana (non-sentient) entities. The entire universe is His body. This is the *sareera sareeri* concept.

Kindness to all, and anger towards none should be the motto of a person, if he or she can be considered a Vaishnava.

INBRIEF

Panel to study quantum tech's potential in financial sector

The Reserve Bank on Monday announced the setting up of an eight-member expert committee to study the potential of quantum technology in the financial sector. Quantum technology represents a paradigm shift compared with traditional systems as it leverages the principles of quantum mechanics. This enables quantum systems to address complex financial problems such as portfolio optimisation, risk assessment, and macroeconomic modelling, the RBI said. PTI

Ashok Leyland bags order from VRL Logistics

Ashok Leyland Ltd. said it has bagged an order of 715 vehicles from VRL Logistics for an unspecified amount. The order includes AVTR 3120 haulage trucks, BOSS 1615 trucks and Oyster staff buses. While 300 trucks have already been delivered, the remaining 415 orders are scheduled for execution in the current year. "The order marks a strategic deepening of our partnership to drive higher logistics efficiency," said Anand Sankeshwar, MD, VRL Logistics.

Dhoot Transmission to raise ₹1,400 crore via IPO

Auto components manufacturer Dhoot Transmission Ltd. is set to hit the capital market for raising a fresh issue of ₹1,400 crore, according to the prospectus. The proposed offer is a mix of fresh issue and an offer for sale. The fresh issue will consist of equity shares aggregating up to a value of ₹1,400 crore. The offer for sale will comprise up to 1.6 crore equity shares. The company proposes to use the IPO proceeds for repayment/prepayment of borrowings of ₹493.9 crore, and for investment in subsidiaries.

'Prolonged war may shave 200 bps off corporate profitability'

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

Having undertaken a stress test of 34 sectors, Crisil Ratings said that prolonged supply-chain disruptions due to the West Asia conflict could shave off corporate operating profitability by 200 basis points (bps) this fiscal from the pre-conflict expectation of 12%, with some sectors seeing a more pronounced impact.

This is assuming supply-chain disruptions lasting for 9 months this fiscal compared with 6 months in Crisil's base case), with crude prices averaging $110 per barrel for this fiscal versus a base case assumption of $95.

"For companies, managing costs and profitability will be a bigger challenge than achieving topline growth," said Subodh Rai, MD, Crisil Ratings. "Of the 34 sectors stress-tested, 22 would see operating profitability being culled more than 10% due to higher inventory costs and inability to fully pass on the burden to consumers immediately," he said.

"On the other hand, even a partial pass-through can drive up realisations, resulting in a lower impact on revenue growth for most sectors. Further, credit profiles will be cushioned by controlled gearing levels and sustained domestic demand. We foresee the credit quality of only 8 sectors, accounting for 10% of our rated corporate debt, being materially impacted," he added.

Indian mobile market hit as global semicon industry faces 'severe memflation'

India sees shortage of sub ₹10,000-₹15,000 phones as leading chips manufacturers divert capacities to meet humongous demand for high-bandwidth memory required to support AI infra

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The semiconductor industry globally is experiencing a severe structural 'memflation' (inflation caused by memory chips shortage), with skyrocketing prices leading to huge disruptions in price sensitive consumer electronics and mobile phone markets in India, said industry experts.

The key reason is that global wafer and advanced packaging capacities are increasingly being allocated toward high bandwidth memory (HBM) and AI infrastructure due to significantly higher demand and margins. A typical HBM takes 2-3x wafer capacity compared with a conventional DRAM.

This is making availability of conventional DRAM and NAND used in mainstream electronics tighter, according to India Electronics & Semiconductor Association (IESA).

Dynamic Random-Access Memory, or DRAM, is a type of computer memory used in PCs, laptops, and smartphones to temporarily store data that the processor needs to actively use. While NAND is a type of memory storage used in smartphones that retains data even without power.

Industry experts also confirmed that there is a shortage of sub ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 phones across the country as leading semiconductor (memory chips) manufacturers are diverting all their energies and production capacities away from standard consumer chips to meet the humongous demand for high-bandwidth memory required to support AI infrastructure.

Off reach: The entry-level smartphone segment is under severe pressure due to rising memory chip costs. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

India very vulnerable

B.V. Naidu, a foundational architect in India's semiconductor and Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) ecosystem and a former president of IESA, India is extremely vulnerable to memory chip shortage due to its heavy reliance on electronic component imports and a consumer base driven by price elasticity.

"It seems global chip makers are prioritising premium brands such as Apple and Samsung for standard memory allocation, leaving budget brands in India and in other geographies to starve of chip/component supply. This has resulted in a short supply of economy smartphones in India. Also, I was told prices of several brands of cellphones have gone up by at least 15-20%," Mr. Naidu said.

As per IESA, higher DRAM and NAND prices, combined with the shift to AI-enabled applications and larger storage needs, are making the sub ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 category increasingly difficult to sustain profitably.

"The market is witnessing a structural recalibration toward higher-value devices. That means, phone makers are prioritising premium phone production over entry level phones," explained Ashok Chandak, president, IESA.

Confirming the trend, Rajeev Rajput, Senior Principal Analyst at Gartner, in a recent report said, "Memflation will destroy, or at least delay, non-AI demand into 2028, to varying degrees depending on the application. Technology suppliers should prepare for higher prices during the first half of 2026, followed by persistent but moderating price increases throughout the rest of the year." CIOs and IT leaders should be cautious about signing supply agreements with unfavourable pricing terms that extend beyond 2027, he warned.

Echoing a similar sentiment, Mr. Chandak said while capacity expansion announcements were underway globally, meaningful and substantial relief may take up to another two years because semiconductor capacity creation was highly capital-intensive and time-consuming.

"We expect the market to remain tight through 2026-2027, with gradual normalisation thereafter," he added.

On bill of materials (BOM) pressure and smartphone profitability, Mr. Chandak observed, memory pricing has become one of the biggest cost pressures in smartphone and entry level laptop manufacturing.

Investors upbeat as oil prices slip on renewed peace talks

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Investors returned to buying, pushing the benchmark Sensex and Nifty upwards, as oil prices dipped and rupee appreciated.

Sensex and Nifty rose 1.4% and 1.3% to 76,488.96 and 24,031.70 points respectively after trading and gradually improving over the day's session.

All but the Nifty FMCG index among the sectoral indices registered a close of more than 2.5%. Of the 3,419 stocks that traded, 2,270 advanced and 1,450 declined. Markets were spooked by the uncertainty of the escalating war between Iran and the U.S. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz had choked oil supplies, spiking prices. Brent Crude Futures were consistently trading at over $104-105 a barrel for the better part of the past three months. The indicator had gone as high as $112 a barrel on some days.

Cheaper oil reduced pressure on the Indian rupee which appreciated to 95.26 against the U.S. dollar on Monday.

"Global sentiment improved on reports of progress towards reopening the Strait of Hormuz, although credibility remains uncertain given frequent shifts in developments. The rally was led by large caps, supported by relatively attractive valuations vs long-term averages," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd.

BP subsidiary, ONGC sign TSP agreement

TSP indicated a raise in crude output by 10.8% and gas output by 31.5% over 10-year contract period

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Building on enhanced output from Mumbai High from a similar pact, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) inked another technical services-provider (TSP) pact with BP Plc's subsidiary, BP Exploration Services India, for its Western Offshore fields.

"The TSP will review field performance and identify improvements in reservoir, facilities and wells to boost production from Western Offshore fields (excluding Mumbai High)," ONGC said.

It added the TSP indicated potential to raise crude output by 10.8% and gas output by 31.5% over the 10-year contract period.

"In terms of oil plus oil-equivalent gas, the increase works to about 24.1% (from 128.93 MMTOE to 159.96 MMTOE).

The increase is expected to be visible from fiscal year 2027 with full-scale visibility expected from fiscal year 2030," ONGC said.

BP Exploration Services India would be receiving a fixed fee for the initial two years and thereafter, a service fee premised on the revenue from the incremental production scaled after recovering incremental costs.

In January last year, ONGC inked a TSP contract with BP Exploration Alpha Ltd., another BP subsidiary, for Mumbai High - the largest oil field of the Mumbai Offshore basin.

According to ONGC, preliminary production from the initial months of the contract implementation indicated "moderation of the earlier decline trajectory and stabilisation of production."

Cyient Semicon raises $30 million

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

IT firm Cyient's subsidiary Cyient Semiconductors raised $30 million via equity and debt from funds managed by EAAA India Alternatives (Edelweiss) and affiliated co-investors.

The transaction includes equity investment of about $10 million at a post-money valuation of about $500 million (₹4,600 crore) alongside about $20 million in structured debt to support long-duration growth, it said.

The funds would be deployed to advance product research and development roadmap across custom power semiconductors and custom ASSP's; building in-house semiconductor validation and testing infrastructure in India to boost development and qualification capabilities and supporting working capital needs, it said.

FM asks lenders to design repayment of loans around business cycles

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman urged banks to go beyond standard loan products and design such offerings where repayments are structured around the unique needs of a particular business.

Speaking at the 37th foundation event of the SIDBI here, Ms. Sitharaman said the government's focused institution is for helping small industries take the lead on this.

"My message to SIDBI and every banker here is that standard products cannot serve non-standard businesses," the FM said, citing examples of how the income generation of businesses vary across multiple activities.

It can be noted that at present, loans are typically given with a monthly repayment, which may be weekly as well in the case of microfinance.

"A farmer-linked enterprise does not earn every month. A resort does not earn evenly through the year. A garment exporter waits for payment after shipment. A small auto-comp supplier waits for invoice clearance. A woman entrepreneur may have regular transactions yet no property in her name," Ms. Sitharaman said.

"Why should all of them be given the same repayment structure?" the FM questioned, asking SIDBI to take the lead to ensure credit is designed around business cycle of an enterprise.

The FM gave examples of the plan that she has in mind, pointing out to how credit terms can be different for various industries in Maharashtra.

An agri-processing enterprise in Nashik, Satara or Sangli can have repayments linked to harvest cycles, while a grape processor, turmeric unit or a pulses unit which earns with the arrival of a crop must be allowed a seasonal repayment and off-season flexibility. Similarly, in the hospitality or the tourism-related businesses in Mahabaleshwar, Matheran or Lonavala, where earnings come in four strong months, repayments should be linked to that cycle, she said. Even in the case of textile and garment units in Ichalkaranji or Solapur, credit must understand export cycles, the FM said.

सी.एस.आई.आर. मद्रास कॉम्प्लेक्स
CSIR MADRAS COMPLEX
सीएसआईआर रोड, सीएसआईआर परिसर, तरमणि, चेन्नै
CSIR Road, CSIR Campus, Taramani, Chennai-600113.
शुद्धिपत्र / CORRIGENDUM
सभी संबंधित उम्मीदवारों को सूचित किया जाता है कि प्रशासनिक कारणों से निम्नलिखित पदों के लिए भर्ती रद्द कर दी गई है:-
1. कनिष्ठ सचिवालय सहायक (सा.) – हिन्दी (अन्य पिछडा वर्ग) का 01 पद, जो सीएमसी विज्ञापन संख्या एमसी–01/2025 दिनांक 16.04.2025 के माध्यम से विज्ञापित किया गया था और
2. सुरक्षा सहायक का 01 पद, जो सीएमसी विज्ञापन संख्या 01/2024 दिनांक 28-01-2025 के माध्यम से विज्ञापित किया गया था।
It is hereby notified to all concerned candidates that the recruitment for the following posts have been cancelled due to administrative reasons.
1) 01 post of Junior Secretariat Assistant (Gen) – Hindi (OBC), advertised vide CMC Advertisement No.MC-01/2025 dated 16.04.2025 and
2) 01 post of Security Assistant, advertised vide CMC Advertisement No.01/2024 dated 28.01.2025.
अधिक जानकारी के लिए कृपया सीएसआईआर मद्रास कॉम्प्लेक्स (सीएमसी) वेबसाइट **http://www.csircmc.res.in** पर जाएँ तथा होम पेज पर "CAREERS" विकल्प पर क्लिक करें।
For more details please visit CSIR Madras Complex (CMC) website **http://www.csircmc.res.in** and click on "CAREERS" from the Home Page.
प्रशासनिक अधिकारी / Administrative Officer

GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN
DISTRICT SUPPLY OFFICE, ALWAR
Email- dsofood-ALW-rj@nic.in Phone No.-0144-2344553
क्रमांक-307 दिनांक-20/05/2026
Notice Inviting Bid
e-Bids for selection of Handling and Transportation of Food grains Under PDS from FCI Depots in District ALWAR are invited from interested bidders up to **Date 10/06/2026 Time 12:00 pm** Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in or http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in) of the state, The approximate value of the procurement is **5.00 crore** for One year.
NIB No- FCC2627A0037
UBN No-FCC2627SLOB00036
DIPR/C/9038/2026
District Supply Officer
ALWAR

The Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation Limited
Door No. 294/1D, 100 feet Road (Tadigadapa to Enikepadu Road), Kanuru, Vijayawada-521137. Andhra Pradesh. India
Tel: +91-866-2429999 Fax: +91-866-2429977 Email: contracts-ho@apmdc.in
Tender Notice
Ref: APMDC/P&C/CAMC IT Hardware/SCM/2026-27/1, Date: 26.05.2026.
APMDC invites E-tender from reputed Agencies for "Selection of Provision of Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) for the Existing IT Hardware Infrastructure & Devices at APMDC Suliyari Coal Project, Madhya Pradesh". For more information on the eligibility criteria, tender fees, timelines and other details, please visit APMDC website **(www.apmdc.ap.gov.in)**. The Tender document is available for downloading from APMDC website **from 26.05.2026 and the last date for submission of bid is 15.06.2026**.
Place: Vijayawada
Date : 26.05.2026
DIPR 5108PP/CL ,DT.25-05-2026
Sd./- Managing Director
The A. P. Mineral Development Corporation Limited

Office of the Additional Chief Engineer (Project) PHED Ajmer
Qtr. No. II/2, PHED Colony, Vaishali Nagar, near RIICO Watch Factory,
Ph. No. 0145-2640265, *email: acepajmer@gmail.com acepajm.phed@rajasthan.gov.in*
S.No. F()ACE/Proj/Aj/AR-JJM /2026-27/1057 Date: 20.05.2026
CORRIGENDUM NO.5
NIB Code:- PHE2526A6441 & UBN No. PHE2526WLOB13856)
In continuation to this office NIT No.03/2025-26 issued vide letter no. 2436-2491 dated 11.02.2026. The following amendment are hereby notified:-

S.N.	Description	As per original NIT & Corrigendum 4	As per this corrigendum
1	Date & time for downloading of tender document	13.02.2026 at 10:00 AM to 21.05.2026 up to 06:00 PM	13.02.2026 at 10:00 AM to 11.06.2026 up to 6:00 PM
2	Date & time for online submission of tender	From 24.02.2026 at 10:00 AM to up to 21.05.2026 at 6:00 PM	Up to 11.06.2026 at 06:00 PM
3	Date & time of physical submission of tender fee, RISL charges and EMD	22.05.2026 at 01:00 PM	Up to 12.06.2026 at 01:00 PM
4	Date & time of opening of technical bid	22.05.2026 at 03:00 PM	Up to 12.06.2026 at 03:00 PM

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as mentioned in tender document.
(Krishan Kumar Agarwal)
Additional Chief Engineer
(Project) PHED, Ajmer
DIPR/C/9057/2026

Government of Kerala
Published Tenders from 21-05-2026 to 24-05-2026
Ground Water Department
Tender ID: 2026_GWD_851963_1 * District Officer * Supply and commissioning of rig units for Wayanad District u * Closing Date: 19-Jun-2026 * PAC: Rs22500000
Visit https://etenders.kerala.gov.in for more details.
Ro.No:21-24/May/2026/PRD/(N)6

idco Your power to grow ISO 9001 & 14001 Corporation | ODISHA NEW OPPORTUNITIES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (P&C) IDCO, IDCO TOWER, BHUBANESWAR
Tender Call Notice No. File No.: IDCO/HO-P&C/A-100869/04/2026/V-1 14331, Dated : 20.05.2026
NOTICE INVITING TENDER THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT
Name of the Work : SITC of 33 kV UG Cable (1C x 630 Sqmm XLPE) for Connectivity of 33/11 kV, 2 x 8 MVA Primary Substation (PSS) from 33 kV Source and SITC of 11 kV UG Cable (3Cx 400 Sqmm XLPE) for Distribution of Load at Ramdaspur Industrial Estate under Electrical Section, Godisahi, Cuttack.
Estimated Cost put to tender : Rs.1,28,25,992.00
Period of completion : 4(Four) Calendar Months

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-Line for Bidding	
		From	To
1	2	3	4
Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, IDCO Tower, Bhubaneswar	Bid Identification No. P&C/EST/E-06/2026-27	17.00 hours of dt. 26.05.2026	17.00 hours of dt.10.06.2026

Further details can be seen from the e- Procurement Portal **www.Tendersodisha.gov.in** and Corrigendum if any will be published in newspapers and can only be seen in the e-procurement portal as well as in **IDCO website.**
Sd/- Chief General Manager (P&C), IDCO, Bhubaneswar
4001/109/2627
OIPR-4001/4075/1/26-27/0034

JAC DELHI-2026
Admission Notice for B.Tech. & B.Arch. Programmes 2026-2027
ONLINE applications are invited for admission to B.Tech. and B.Arch. programmes offered by the following Universities/Institutes established by the Government of NCT of Delhi:
- **Netaji Subhas University of Technology (NSUT), www.nsut.ac.in**
- **Delhi Technological University (DTU), www.dtu.ac.in**
- **Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW), www.igdtuw.ac.in**
- **Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi (IIIT-D), www.iiitd.ac.in**
- **Delhi Skill and Entrepreneurship University (DSEU), www.dseu.ac.in**

For detailed information regarding eligibility criteria, reservation policy, admission procedure, counselling schedule, application process. seat matrix, and other admission-related guidelines, candidates are advised to visit: **jacdelhi.admissions.nic.in**
ONLINE Application Process
- Candidates must register ONLINE through the JAC Delhi Admission Portal as per the instructions given in the Admission Brochure available on the portal.
- A non-refundable registration fee of Rs. 1500/- is to be paid ONLINE only through Credit Card / Debit Card / Net Banking / UPI / or any other online payment mode available on the portal.
- Candidates are advised to regularly visit the JAC Delhi website for updates and important announcements regarding the admission process.

Important Dates

1.	Commencement of Online Registration and Choice Filling.	**May 28, 2026 (Thursday)** from 10:00 AM
2.	Last Date and time for Online Registration (Registration Form Filling, Registration Fee Payment and Choice filling).	**June 09, 2026 (Tuesday)** Till 11:30 PM

HELP DESK : helpdesk.jacdelhi2026@nsut.ac.in
Note :- Application received without prescribed fee shall not be considered / summarily rejected.
DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0069/26-27
Chairperson, JAC Delhi-2026

VATICAN CITY

Pope makes historic apology for Vatican's role in justifying slavery

REUTERS

Pope Leo XIV on Monday issued an unprecedented apology for the Vatican's role in justifying slavery and said the delay in condemning it was "a wound in Christian memory". Past Popes have apologised for Christians' involvement in the slave trade. But Leo's words went further by mentioning the Church's role in legitimising slavery. AFP

ISTANBUL

Jailed Kurdish leader says 'no time to lose' for Turkiye peace process

AFP

Jailed PKK founder Abdullah Ocalan warned against any delay in taking legal steps to flesh out the peace process with Ankara, in a message on Monday. Mr. Ocalan said prolonging the peace process would only "generate risk". Last year, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) formally renounced its armed struggle after four decades. AFP

CAIRO

Israeli attack kills two, including six-year-old girl, in Gaza: medics

AP

An Israeli airstrike on a tent encampment of displaced families in the southern Gaza Strip on Monday killed two people including a six-year-old girl and wounded 17 people, Palestinian health officials said. The attack was carried out by two helicopters. The Israeli Army said it had struck militants but provided no information. REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

Death toll climbs to more than 30 in Pakistan train bombing: officials

REUTERS

The death toll in the suicide bombing of a train carrying security personnel in the Pakistani province of Balochistan the day before rose to more than 30, officials said on Monday. The separatist group Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) claimed the car bomb attack in the provincial capital Quetta. REUTERS

Iran says progress on several issues, but agreement with U.S. not yet close

Tehran talks down hopes of imminent peace deal with U.S.; Iran official says 'conclusion reached on a large portion of the issues under discussion'; Iranian state media reports officials on a visit to Qatar as part of 'diplomatic process' to end war

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran warned on Monday that, while some progress had been made, it was not yet close to striking a deal with the United States to end the war in West Asia, after a weekend of mixed messages from Washington and Tehran.

World oil prices tumbled on renewed optimism about an agreement, after top U.S. diplomat Marco Rubio suggested a deal could be reached within the day but a top Iranian official responded: "No one can make such a claim."

Beneath the calm: Vessels sailing through the Strait of Hormuz, as seen from Musandam, Oman, on Monday. REUTERS

"We thought we might have some news last night, maybe today," U.S. Secretary of State Rubio told reporters during a visit to New Delhi, referring to hopes for a deal.

But in Tehran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei poured cold water on hopes for a quick final settlement.

"It is correct to say that we have reached a conclusion on a large portion of the issues under discussion," he told a weekly news briefing. "But to say that this means the signing of an agreement is imminent – no one can make such a claim."

Service fees in Hormuz

Mr. Baqaei stressed that Iran would continue to manage maritime traffic through the Strait of Hormuz by charging service fees. "The services that are provided – navigational services in addition to the measures necessary to protect the environment of the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman – require the collection of certain fees," he said.

Earlier, U.S. President Donald Trump had said that he had told his negotiators "not to rush into a deal, in that time is on our side", and warned that the U.S. naval blockade would remain in place until a deal was reached.

Meanwhile, Iran's top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf arrived in Qatar on Monday, state media reported. A delegation headed by "Mr. Ghalibaf, travelled to Doha today. This trip comes as part of the diplomatic process", said the official IRNA news agency, adding that talks will be held to end the war.

Xi praises peace efforts, hails 'unbreakable' China-Pak. ties

Reuters
BEIJING

President Xi Jinping hailed China's "unbreakable" friendship with Pakistan on Monday as he met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Beijing, seeking to deepen their "all-weather" partnership. Mr. Xi welcomed the Pakistani leader as an "old friend" and said the two countries had "understood, trusted and supported each other" over decades.

Pakistan is among an exclusive group of countries which China regards as an "all-weather strategic partner", spanning close economic, trade and security cooperation. But Islamist militant attacks on Chinese nationals and projects in southwest Pakistan where China has big infrastructure investments have irked Beijing.

Bilateral push: Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Monday. REUTERS

"No matter how the international situation changes, China always prioritises the development of its ties with Pakistan in its neighbourhood diplomacy," Mr. Xi said.

Mr. Sharif, in turn, called China and Pakistan two "iron brother" countries with a relationship that is "next to none". Mr. Sharif was accompanied by Pakistan's Army chief, Asim Munir, who was recently in Tehran for meetings with Iran's leadership.

"I know that you have just returned from Iran and made positive efforts for the current peace. We appreciate the constructive role played by Pakistan," Mr. Xi said.

Netanyahu orders military to intensify offensive in Lebanon

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday he had ordered the military to intensify its offensive in Lebanon in an effort to "crush" Hezbollah, accusing the group of targeting Israeli forces with drone attacks.

"I have ordered an even greater acceleration of our operations," Mr. Netanyahu said on Telegram.

"It is true that they are attacking us with drones, but we have teams working on countermeasures and we will solve this issue... We will intensify our blows, increase our firepower, and we will crush them."

These comments were made despite a U.S.-brokered ceasefire and follow calls by far-right Ministers Itamar Ben Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich to escalate military operations, with Mr. Smotrich advocating "strikes on capital Beirut".

A total of 24 Israelis have been killed since hostilities began on March 2. Lebanon's Health Ministry has put the overall death toll in the war at 3,123.

Eight killed after Russia and Ukraine exchange missile and drone attacks

Reuters
MOSCOW/KYIV

At least eight people have been killed in missile and drone attacks on Russian and Ukrainian territory in the past 24 hours, local authorities on both sides said on Monday, with damage reported to energy infrastructure in Russia's Belgorod region.

The barrage came days after Russia accused Kyiv of striking a vocational school in the Russian-occupied Lugansk region, killing 21 people. Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his military to retaliate for that attack. Ukraine's military denied the accusations and said it had struck an elite drone command unit in the area.

In the aftermath: A worker takes part in repair work on a damaged residential building following Russian strikes in Kyiv on Monday. AFP

Since then, four people, including two teenagers, have been killed in the Russian-controlled Ukrainian town of Horlivka, its Mayor Ivan Prikhodko said on Monday, blaming Ukrainian armed aggression.

In Russia's Belgorod region, one man was killed and another injured in a missile and drone attack that also cut power and water supplies, local authorities said on Telegram.

In Ukraine, two people were killed and 16 wounded in Russian shelling, missile and drone attacks in Kherson over the past 24 hours, regional Governor Oleksandr Prokudin said.

In another attack near Kharkiv, Ukraine's second biggest city, one person was killed and two were injured. The regional Governor said that according to preliminary information, Russia carried out a missile attack on the town of Derhachi, just outside the city.

Iran says Supreme Leader suffered only 'superficial' wounds

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

The injuries suffered by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei in U.S.-Israeli strikes in late February were only "superficial", an Iranian Health Ministry official said on Monday. The 56-year-old has not appeared publicly since he was named as Iran's new leader on March 8, issuing only written statements, fuelling speculation about his health.

In March, U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said Mr. Mojtaba was "believed to be alive, wounded and disfigured".

On Monday, Health Ministry spokesman Hossein Kermanpour described the day Mr. Mojtaba was wounded. He said Mr. Mojtaba arrived at a hospital on February 28 and "entered the operating room along with several other wounded individuals."

"Apart from superficial injuries to the face, head and legs, which caused neither amputation nor any particular medical problem, nothing major had happened," Mr. Kermanpour said.

Sport

It would be 'supercool' to have the World title decider in India, reckons Gukesh

CHESS

C. Shyam Sundar
OSLO

He is the World champion alright, but has copped a lot of criticism in the recent past over his performances after ascending the throne. Yet, D. Gukesh is calm personified as he handles the flak he faces over his patchy form.

Here in the Norwegian capital to play the Norway Chess tournament, the Indian, who will turn 20 on May 29, handled questions about the dip in his form over the past 18 months or so with quiet assurance.

"I have not been performing well in the last one-and-a-half years and I think I would say that my performances have been way below expectations. They (critics) have the right to say what they feel and I have the right to do my best," Gukesh said ahead of the prestigious event.

No worries: Gukesh is not overtly concerned about the chatter surrounding his patchy form in the recent past. FLICKR/NORWAY CHESS

He said he would be happy to play the World Championship match anywhere, but admitted that it would be special if it was to be held in India, even though the pressure of defending the title at home would be immense.

"Anywhere would be nice... In India there's always a lot of pressure. The World Championships will attract a lot of attention. If it's in India it will be supercool and I will be very happy," he added.

Asked if he would like to see a repeat of the incident where Magnus Carlsen banged the table after a loss to him in the tournament last year, Gukesh said chess players generally don't show a lot of emotions but when it did happen, a lot of people got attracted to chess."

(The writer is in Oslo at the invitation of Norway Chess).

Magnus Carlsen — understanding the aura of a Norwegian sporting superstar

C. Shyam Sundar
OSLO

There's something about Magnus Carlsen. Like him or hate him, the Norwegian chess superstar is hard to ignore.

He's probably the greatest sports icon in a nation where football rules the popularity charts and is most spoken about with the FIFA World Cup on the horizon.

The 35-year-old is the player to beat every time he sits at the board – irrespective of the format.

It's no different at Norway Chess with people – right from the tournament director Kjell Madland to the denizens – rooting for Carlsen in his home event.

"Of course, it's a huge thing that Norway has a player like Magnus," said Madland, adding "It's not easy to understand his impact. And of course, replacing him is not going to be easy."

Carlsen.
FLICKR/NORWAY CHESS

> It's not easy to understand his impact. And of course, replacing him is not going to be easy
>
> – **KJELL MADLAND,** tournament director

Meanwhile, a young man, who was helping his little son move giant chess pieces on an oversized board at Deichman Bjørvika where the prestigious event is being held, said Carlsen's exploits over the years have been phenomenal and felt his fame had probably reduced because he made winning a habit.

"But years ago, when he started winning world titles for the first time, Carlsen was probably even more popular because it was all new," he said.

Staff at the Scandic hotel here said it was hard to think the local hero could be beaten.

"You cannot beat him here. That's unthinkable," said Gustav Nerland, receptionist at the hotel and a huge fan of the World No. 1.

His colleague Eiler Kongsrud nodded in agreement and said "Magnus is a great champion."

There is something about Carlsen which continues to befuddle his opponents and ensures his long-running supremacy.

CHALLENGING

Pacers are forced to work hard, don't get extra cushion: Patidar

SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

RCB skipper Rajat Patidar stayed clear of commenting on the flat pitches on offer in the IPL, but provided a leaning shoulder to the bowlers. "It's very challenging for the bowlers. The faster bowlers are forced to work very hard, don't get much extra cushion. Even if there is a little mistake, it goes straight for six," he said.

GAME-CHANGER

'It's not easy for a spinner in this format... Rashid has been top class'

SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

GT assistant coach Vijay Dahiya credited Rashid Khan's improvement to his hunger to contribute to the team. "It's not easy for a spinner in this format. He has gone through a couple of surgeries. He's been top class in the nets and is chatting with batters trying to understand how his game works and what he is lacking."

RESILIENT

Skipper Rahane proud of the way KKR never stopped fighting

R.V. MOORTHY

I'm proud of the way we came back. The first six games were tough, and although we played good cricket in phases, we failed to capitalise on key moments. Those fine margins made the difference. What stood out was the character and resilience in the group — Ajinkya Rahane, KKR captain.

FINE MARGINS

Capitals undone by inconsistency and missed moments: Badani

R.V. MOORTHY

There were many games where the match could've gone either way, but we failed to seize those moments. The GT game that we lost by one run is an example. Even defending 264 against PBKS, you'd back yourself to win. The difference between qualifying and missing out comes down to small margins — Hemang Badani, DC coach.

A spot in the final up for grabs, RCB runs into well-drilled GT

Patidar & Co have the edge in Qualifier 1 courtesy an all-round side, while Gill's team boasts of an in-form bowling pack

IPL-19

Anish Pathiyil
DHARAMSHALA

There was practically nothing to separate Royal Challengers Bengaluru and Gujarat Titans at the end of the IPL 2026 league stage.

Both sides accumulated nine wins each and were separated by a narrow Net Run Rate margin of 0.088. They even had a 1-1 head-to-head record. But, when they meet at the HPCA Stadium here for their Qualifier 1 contest on Tuesday, the winner will take a large stride towards securing a second IPL title.

Defending champion RCB appears to be the favourite for the crown despite bumps along the road. The side's success is in large part due to the performances of its two most senior cricketers.

Virat Kohli (557) continues to churn out runs at the top of the order, this time with a personal-best strike rate of 163.82. Medium-pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has turned the clock back. He has already bagged 24 wickets at a praiseworthy economy rate of 8.07. With short boundaries and barely any help on offer for the spinners, RCB might be tempted to play Jacob Duffy considering Phil Salt is doubtful for the match.

GT has been a top-heavy side and this season is no different. Openers Shubman Gill (616) and Sai Sudharsan (638) are the bedrock on which the batting block has been built, with both of them scoring over 600 runs. The real difference-maker in the Titans ranks has been South African pacer Kagiso Rabada, whose fiery spells have given him 24 wickets.

The conditions at the scenic venue often render contests as a direct confrontation of batting might but with two quality bowling line-ups on display, it could well be the execution with the ball that eventually decides the winner.

Gill. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Today's match

QUALIFIER 1

RCB vs GUJARAT TITANS

Dharamshala, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 8

RCB 4 | GT 4

PREVIOUS MEETING

GT won by four wickets, 2026

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Moving up a gear: Kohli has operated at a personal-best strike rate of 163.82. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

Influencers

The players who have powered their teams' campaigns:

	Batters	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	100s/50s	Orange Cap Rank
ROYAL CHALLENGERS	Kohli	14	557	105	163.82	1/4	9
	Padikkal	13	433	61	171.82	0/3	17
	Bowlers	**Inns**	**Wkts**	**BB**	**Econ**	**4W**	**Purple Cap Rank**
	Bhuvneshwar	14	24	4/23	8.07	1	1
	Rasikh	10	14	4/24	9.87	1	14
GUJARAT TITANS	**Batters**	**Inns**	**Runs**	**HS**	**SR**	**100s/50s**	**Orange Cap Rank**
	Sai Sudharsan	14	638	100	157.92	1/7	1
	Gill	13	616	86	161.67	0/6	2
	Bowlers	**Inns**	**Wkts**	**BB**	**Econ**	**4W**	**Purple Cap Rank**
	Rabada	14	24	3/25	9.18	0	2
	Rashid	14	19	4/33	8.71	1	5
SUNRISERS HYDERABAD	**Batters**	**Inns**	**Runs**	**HS**	**SR**	**100s/50s**	**Orange Cap Rank**
	Klaasen	14	606	69	159.47	0/6	3
	Kishan	14	569	91	178.36	0/6	6
	Bowlers	**Inns**	**Wkts**	**BB**	**Econ**	**4W**	**Purple Cap Rank**
	Malinga	14	19	4/32	9.27	1	6
	Sakib	10	15	4/24	9.07	1	11
RAJASTHAN ROYALS	**Batters**	**Inns**	**Runs**	**HS**	**SR**	**100s/50s**	**Orange Cap Rank**
	Sooryavanshi	14	583	103	232.27	1/3	5
	Jurel	14	458	81*	149.67	0/5	15
	Bowlers	**Inns**	**Wkts**	**BB**	**Econ**	**4W**	**Purple Cap Rank**
	Archer	14	21	3/17	8.76	0	3
	Brijesh	11	13	2/18	9.65	0	20

Source: IPLT20.com

COMPILED BY SRINIVAS SRIRAM

'The game is going to be a battle'

Anish Pathiyil
DHARAMSHALA

Gujarat Titans assistant coach Vijay Dahiya said Qualifier 1 will see a battle between two equal teams and dismissed the notion that Royal Challengers Bengaluru will have an advantage, having played a league-stage contest at the HPCA Stadium here.

"There are many players across both teams who have played at this venue before and they will be aware of the conditions here. Both teams play as a unit, that is what stands out. The game is going to be a battle. Since there is a lot at stake, there is going to be pressure on both," Dahiya said.

The coach added that the two sides have found themselves at the top end of the IPL 2026 table due to the consistency in their bowling. "You see teams putting runs on the board. But in the end, you need a solid bowling unit. You hardly see any changes in both the teams, and that is due to the bowlers' self-belief and the faith put in by the captain and the management," he said.

GT has picked the most PowerPlay wickets in the competition this year (38), thanks to some accurate bowling from Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj. Dahiya said the two have formed a solid partnership on and off the pitch.

"They understand the game very well and what they need to do for the partner at the other end. They are different characters who come from different international environments and a lot of credit needs to be given to Ashish Nehra, the way he handles both of them," the coach opined.

Swiatek, Rybakina advance; Wawrinka bids farewell

FRENCH OPEN

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Four-time French Open champion Iga Swiatek and second seed Elena Rybakina eased into the second round with comfortable wins at a sweltering Roland Garros on Monday, as Stan Wawrinka bade an emotional farewell.

Swiatek, playing at a Grand Slam event for the first time since linking up with Rafael Nadal's former coach Francisco Roig, made short work of seeing off Australian teenager Emerson Jones 6-1, 6-2 in just 60 minutes.

The Pole is looking to regain the trophy she won at Roland Garros in three successive years from 2022-24 before losing to Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals 12 months ago.

Australian Open champion Rybakina also wasted little time in swatting aside Slovenian Veronika Erjavec 6-2, 6-2 on Court Philippe Chatrier. Former champion Wawrinka's final Roland Garros ended in disappointment as the 41-year-old was beaten 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 by Dutch lucky loser Jesper de Jong. Wawrinka, who beat Novak Djokovic in the 2015 final, is retiring at the end of the season.

After the match, Wawrinka was presented with a glass case containing a section of a clay court and two video tributes to his career were displayed on big screens around the stadium – the latter featuring messages from former champions Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Djokovic.

Djokovic through

Meanwhile on Sunday, Novak Djokovic came from a set down to get the better of Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard 5-7, 7-5, 6-1, 6-4 and book his spot in the second round.

The 24-time Major champion is seeking to win a fourth Roland Garros crown, which would send him beyond Margaret Court as the player with the most Grand Slam titles in the history of the sport.

Tuesday's Picks

MEN
1-Sinner vs. Tabur
4-Auger-Aliassime vs. Altmaier
6-Medvedev vs. Walton
9-Bublik vs. Struff
14-Darderi vs. Ofner
16-Vacherot vs. Faurel
WOMEN
1-Sabalenka vs. Maneiro
4-Gauff vs. Townsend
5-Pegula vs. Birrell
9-Mboko vs. Bartunkova
12-Noskova vs. Sakkari
18-Osaka vs. Siegemund

THE RESULTS

First round: Men: 22-Rinderknech (Fra) bt Rodionov (Aut) 7-6(5), 6-2, 6-3; 19-Tiafoe (USA) bt Spizzirri (USA) 6-3, 6-7(5), 6-4, 6-3; 31-Nakashima (USA) bt Agut (Esp) 6-2, 7-5, 6-2; 8-de Minaur (Aus) bt Samuel (GBr) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; 27-Jodar (Esp) bt Kovacevic (USA) 6-1, 6-0, 6-4; Carreno Busta (Esp) bt 12-Lehecka (Cze) 6-3, 7-6(3), 6-3; de Jong (Ned) bt Wawrinka (Sui) 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4; 32-Humbert (Fra) bt Mannarino (Fra) 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.
Borges (Por) bt 23-Etcheverry (Arg) 6-3, 6-4, 6-2; 28-Fonseca (Bra) bt Pavlovic (Fra) 7-6(6), 6-4, 6-2; 3-Djokovic (Srb) bt Perricard (Fra) 5-7, 7-5, 6-1, 6-4; Basavareddy (USA) bt 7-Fritz (USA) 7-6(5), 7-6(5), 6-7(9), 6-1.

Women: Bandecchi (Sui) bt 31-Bucsa (Esp) 6-4, 2-6, 6-4; 28-Potapova (Aut) bt Joint (Aus) 6-1, 6-2; 23-Mertens (Bel) bt Maria (Ger) 7-5, 6-0; 7-Svitolina (Ukr) bt Bondar (Hun) 3-6, 6-1, 7-6(3); 3-Swiatek (Pol) bt Jones (Aus) 6-1, 6-2; Teichmann (Sui) bt 20-Samsonova (Rus) 6-4, 6-4; 13-Paolini (Ita) bt Yastremska (Ukr) 7-5, 6-3; 2-Rybakina (Kaz) bt Erjavec (Slo) 6-2, 6-2; 6-Anisimova (USA) bt Rajaonah (Fra) 6-3, 6-1.
Snigur (Ukr) bt 21-Tauson (Den) 3-6, 7-5, 6-2; 18-Cirstea (Rou) bt Efremova (Fra) 6-3, 6-1.

Fallen seeds:

Men: 7-Fritz, 12-Lehecka, 23-Etcheverry.

Women: 20-Samsonova, 21-Tauson, 31-Bucsa.

Heart and soul: Former champion Wawrinka was overcome with emotion after receiving a warm farewell on Monday. REUTERS

Salt is fit, but we are yet to decide our combination: Patidar

Anish Pathiyil
DHARAMSHALA

Royal Challengers Bengaluru skipper Rajat Patidar said that opening batter Phil Salt was close to returning to action but added that the call on whether he will play IPL 2026 Qualifier 1 against Gujarat Titans was yet to be taken.

The Englishman had left for the UK after suffering a finger injury in the game against Delhi Capitals on April 18. Salt was set to rejoin the squad ahead of the playoffs but he was not present during practice on the eve of the game. "Salt is fit. He is under observation. He has been participating in a few drills but we haven't decided on our playing XI yet. We will look at the pitch and decide," Patidar said on Monday. Jacob Bethell deputised for his compatriot before he was ruled out due to a left ring-finger injury. Venkatesh Iyer opened the batting in Bethell's absence and contributed a rapid 44 against Sunrisers Hyderabad. He had also filled in for Patidar in the middle-order during the contest against Punjab Kings. Patidar hailed Venkatesh's versatility with the bat, which has allowed the team to slot him in at any spot.

"I've known Venky since childhood. He has a great attitude and is ready to bat anywhere. He was a main player at Kolkata Knight Riders but when he came here, he didn't get a lot of chances in the beginning. He accepted that and ensured he was prepared when the chance came to cash in," the captain said.

Decoding the strengths and shortcomings of the Final Four

S. Shrivathsan

Royal Challengers Bengaluru

Strengths: The defending champion has an all-round squad packed with match-winners. Virat Kohli's returns, especially in the absence of Phil Salt, reflect that he is as hungry as ever to taste success. The presence of Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Josh Hazlewood and Krunal Pandya – all top-quality bowlers who have been there and done that – is a boon.

Weaknesses: Four of RCB's five defeats came away from home, a stark contrast to the spotless run it had in IPL 2025. The Rajat Patidar-led outfit has work to do in a phase where it might end up playing at three venues in six days. Despite scoring a half-century on his comeback – against Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday – the captain has not reached his maximum potential yet.

Gujarat Titans

Strengths: In a format where runs are the dominant currency, the 2022 title-winner boasts of a bankable top three (skipper Shubman Gill, Sai Sudharsan and Jos Buttler) that is well-equipped to shine across conditions. The pace battery, led by Mohammed Siraj and Kagiso Rabada, is equally potent and rich in depth.

Weaknesses: The middle-order batters, barring Washington Sundar, have not been up to the mark – none except the India all-rounder have even crossed the 100-run hurdle for the season. The Gujarat side is yet to successfully chase down 200 or more this campaign, so how prepared it is for a possible scenario remains to be seen.

Sunrisers Hyderabad

Strengths: SRH has the wherewithal to keep the scoreboard ticking despite setbacks, with Heinrich Klaasen and Ishan Kishan being the conductors of the orchestra. Having infused young blood into the bowling attack – Sakib Hussain, Praful Hinge and Shivang Kumar among others – the Hyderabad outfit has the variety to stifle rival batters.

Weaknesses: While the newcomers have delivered the goods thus far, the bowling unit is short on experience. Apart from skipper Pat Cummins, no bowler in the probable playing XII has consistently experienced the rigours of knockout cricket.

Rajasthan Royals

Strengths: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi! The 15-year-old pocket dynamite has shown maturity beyond his age at a time when his opening partner Yashasvi Jaiswal has not been at his best.

Speedster Jofra Archer, the team's strike bowler, is back in his element after a breathtaking spell in the do-or-die fixture against Mumbai Indians.

Weaknesses: The middle-order batters have rarely fired in unison, and it could partly be down to the shuffling of personnel during the first round. With lead tweaker Ravindra Jadeja only recently returning to the field and the other pedigreed slow bowler, Ravi Bishnoi, out of action since the beginning of the month, the spin department is still a concern.

INBRIEF

Como seals its maiden CL spot; Milan, Juve miss out

Como qualified for the Champions League for the first time in its history on Sunday, the club being joined by Roma in the top four as AC Milan and Juventus missed out on the final day.

Important results: Serie A: Cremonese 1 (Bonazzoli 55-pen) lost to Como 4 (Rodriguez 36, Douvikas 51, Da Cunha 74-pen, 81); AC Milan 1 (Saelemaekers 2) lost to Cagliari 2 (Borrelli 20, Rodriguez 57); Napoli 1 (Hojlund 24) bt Udinese 0; Torino 2 (Casadei 59, Adams 84) drew with Juventus 2 (Vlahovic 24, 54); Verona 0 lost to Roma 2 (Malen 57, El Shaarawy 90+4). **LaLiga:** Villarreal 5 (Parejo 30-pen, Perez 34, 54, Mikautadze 40, Gueye 45) bt Atletico Madrid 1 (Pubill 43).

Injured Yamal and Williams in Spain's World Cup squad

Lamine Yamal is the star name in Spain's squad for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, named by coach Luis de la Fuente on Monday. Athletic Bilbao's Nico Williams is in the squad despite a season badly disrupted by fitness issues.

The squad: Goalkeepers: Unai Simon, David Raya, Joan Garcia; **Defenders:** Marcos Llorente, Marc Pubill, Pedro Porro, Aymeric Laporte, Eric Garcia, Pau Cubarsi, Marc Cucurella, Alejandro Grimaldo; **Midfielders:** Rodri, Martin Zubimendi, Mikel Merino, Pedri, Gavi, Fabian Ruiz, Alex Baena; **Forwards:** Yeremy Pino, Victor Munoz, Mikel Oyarzabal, Ferran Torres, Lamine Yamal, Dani Olmo, Nico Williams and Borja Iglesias.

Coach Conte says goodbye to Napoli after two years

Antonio Conte bid goodbye to Napoli after two years at the helm as he ended his stint with a 1-0 Serie A win over Udinese on Sunday. "It's been really special to coach Napoli... it's been two great seasons, an exceptional experience."

Tamil Nadu leg-spinner Ashwin hangs up his boots

Tamil Nadu leg-spinner M. Ashwin announced his retirement from domestic and IPL cricket through Instagram on Monday. The 35-year-old featured in 117 T20 matches, claiming 115 wickets at an economy rate of 7.27. Ashwin, who turned out for five IPL franchises since making his debut in 2016, claimed 35 wickets from 44 matches at an economy of 8.01.

LIVE TELECAST

Roland Garros: Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 2.30 p.m.; **Evening session**, Sony Sports Ten 1, 2, 5 & LIV, 12 a.m. (Wednesday)

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

Antonelli laps up Canadian GP for his fourth straight victory of the season

The 19-year-old Mercedes driver extends his lead to 43 points over teammate Russell, who retires early with a power failure; Ferrari's Hamilton, who has won the event seven times, secures his 10th podium in Montreal and 204th overall after holding off Red Bull's Verstappen

FORMULA ONE

Agence France-Presse
MONTREAL

Italian teenager Kimi Antonelli continued his spectacular early-season romp on Sunday when he claimed his fourth straight win for Mercedes to extend his lead in the World Championship to 43 points in a thrilling Canadian Grand Prix.

His win made him the first driver in F1 history to secure his first four wins in succession thanks, in part, to the retirement of teammate George Russell with a power failure after the pair had battled through the first half of the race.

The 19-year-old Italian came home 10.768 seconds clear of Ferrari's seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

"It was a really fun battle with George," said Antonelli.

"We were pretty much on the limit. It was not easy today (Sunday).

"It was a shame for George to have the failure because it would have been a very cool battle, but I'll take it."

Hamilton secured his 10th Canadian podium and the 204th of his career after resisting four-time champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull, who claimed his first podium of the season.

Hamilton, who took his maiden victory in Montreal in 2007 and shares the record of seven wins here with Michael Schumacher, was delighted and hugged Antonelli who succeeded him at Mercedes.

"Finally, we found our sweet spot and had a good weekend. It's amazing to be back up here and I got to have a battle with Max, which was great. I am so happy, I love this track," said Hamilton.

Charles Leclerc came home fourth for Ferrari ahead of Isack Hadjar in the second Red Bull, Franco Colapinto of Alpine and Racing Bulls' Liam Lawson.

Pierre Gasly was eighth for Alpine ahead of Williams' Carlos Sainz and Oliver Bearman of Haas.

The results:
1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes) 1:28:15.758s; 2. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari) +10.768s; 3. Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing) +11.276; 4. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) +44.151.
+1 lap: 5. Isack Hadjar (Red Bull Racing), 6. Franco Colapinto (Alpine), 7. Liam Lawson (Racing Bulls), 8. Pierre Gasly (Alpine), 9. Carlos Sainz Jr. (Williams), 10. Oliver Bearman (Haas).
+2 laps: 11. Oscar Piastri (McLaren), 12. Nico Hulkenberg (Audi), 13. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi), 14. Esteban Ocon (Haas).
+4 laps: 15. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin), 16. Valtteri Bottas (Cadillac).
DNF: 17. Sergio Perez (Cadillac), 18. Lando Norris (McLaren), 19. George Russell (Mercedes), 20. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin), 21. Alexander Albon (Williams).
DNS: Arvid Linblad (Racing Bulls).
Standings (top five): Drivers: 1. Antonelli 131 points, 2. Russell 88, 3. Leclerc 75, 4. Hamilton 72, 5. Norris 58.
Constructors: 1. Mercedes 219, 2. Ferrari 147, 3. McLaren 106, 4. Red Bull Racing 57, 5. Alpine 35.

THE JOURNEY IN NUMBERS AFTER THE 68-LAP RACE AT MONTREAL

Lights to flag

1 Antonelli is the first driver to register his first four career wins in successive races

1 The Italian (4) has more victories than Russell (3) since they became teammates at Mercedes in 2025

2 Hamilton records his first top two with Ferrari, his first second-place finish after the 2024 Las Vegas GP

4 Antonelli joins Alonso, Hamilton and Verstappen as the only active drivers to win at least four races

5 Ferrari's Leclerc has always finished in the top five in Canada

6 Colapinto produces his best-ever result for the second race weekend in a row

8 Antonelli has equalled Verstappen's record for most podium finishes by a teenager

12 Mercedes goes past Ferrari for most wins at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve

16 The number of drivers who have secured four successive wins in F1 after Antonelli's latest triumph. 15 of them have gone on to win the drivers' championship

43 Antonelli's lead over Russell at the top. Only twice has a driver overturned a bigger deficit to clinch the title (46 - Verstappen vs. Leclerc, 2022; 44 - Vettel vs. Alonso, 2012)

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

Samardeep shocks Toor, earns CWG qualification; Praveen, Yashas and Santhosh, too, make it

ATHLETICS

Y.B. Sarangi
RANCHI

Shot putter Samardeep Singh Gill, triple jumper Praveen Chithravel and hurdlers P. Yashas and T. Santhosh Kumar earned Commonwealth Games qualification on the concluding day of the Federation athletics meet at the Birsa Munda Stadium (Morabadi) here on Monday.

At his lucky venue where he had landed gold at the National Open and South Asian meets last year, Samardeep crossed 20m for the first time as he upset his idol Tajinderpal Toor with a throw of 20.46m in his third attempt to win gold. Samardeep went past 20m in his last three attempts while Toor managed 20m-plus throws in his first (20.07m) and last (20.06m) efforts.

"It's all about the mindset. Once I crossed 20m, I felt a lot better," said Samardeep.

Samardeep upset his idol Toor. RITU RAJ KONWAR

National record-holder Praveen overcame a foul in his first attempt to record 17.08m in his third effort and ensure victory over Commonwealth Games medallist Abdulla Aboobacker (16.63m).

"I want to go step by step and achieve good results abroad," said Praveen.

Yashas (49.00) and Santhosh (49.06) clinched the top two spots respectively in a keenly-contested 400m hurdles final.

Close win: Yashas, left, pipped Santhosh in a keenly-contested 400m hurdles final. RITU RAJ KONWAR

Another National mark owner, Animesh Kujur (20.64) gave a good account of himself but missed the CWG qualifying mark (20.61) by a whisker.

A consistent Shivam Lohakare unleashed the winning throw of 81.71m in his sixth attempt in javelin. Asian Championships silver medallist Sachin Yadav finished fifth (79.07m).

Shivaji Parashuram, who was disqualified for a lane infringement after finishing second in 10,000m, bounced back to take the men's 5,000m title in 14:14.43.

The results (finals): Men: 200m (CWG Q mark 20.61): 1. Animesh Kujur (Odi) 20.64, 2. P.K. Jishnu Prasad (Ker) 20.98, 3. Abhay Singh (Rel) 21.01; **800m (CWG Q mark 1:45.00):** 1. Krishan Kumar (Har) 1:47.68, 2. Prathamesh Deore (Mah) 1:47.97, 3. Satyajeet Pujari (Mah) 1:48.40; **5,000m (CWG Q mark 13:19.64):** 1. Shivaji Parashuram (Kar) 14:14.43, 2. Vinod Singh (MP) 14:15.50, 3. Deepak Bhatt (Utk) 14:17.18; **400m hurdles (CWG Q mark 50.27):** 1. P. Yashas (Kar) 49.00, 2. T. Santhosh Kumar (NCOE Thiruvananthapuram) 49.06, 3. Murad Sirman (Guj) 50.90; **Triple jump (CWG Q mark 16.89m):** 1. Praveen Chithravel (JSW) 17.08m, 2. Abdulla Aboobacker (Air Force) 16.63m, 3. Gailey Venister (TN) 16.37m; **Shot put (CWG Q mark 20.36m):** 1. Samardeep Singh Gill (MP) 20.46m, 2. Tajinderpal Toor (Pun) 20.07m, 3. Karanveer Singh (Pun) 19.38m; **Javelin (CWG Q mark 82.61m):** 1. Shivam Lohakare (Mah) 81.71m, 2. Yashvir Singh (Raj) 80.80m, 3. Rohit Yadav (Rly) 80.40m.
Women: 200m (CWG Q mark 23.06): 1. Kusum Thakur (HP) 23.94, 2. Tamanna (Har) 24.06, 3. Sudeshna Shivankar (Mah) 24.07; **800m (CWG Q mark 1:57.88):** 1. Pooja (JSW) 2:02.42, 2. Huidrom Bhumeshwori Devi (IOCL) 2:05.56, 3. Thota Sankeertana (IOCL) 2:05.74; **5,000m (CWG Q mark 14:56.60):** 1. Seema (Rel) 16:04.83, 2. Ravina Gayakwad (Mah) 16:46.21, 3. Sonam Parmar (IOCL) 16:48.11; **400m hurdles (CWG Q mark 54.67):** 1. R. Vithya Ramraj (TN) 56.61, 2. Sinchal Kaveramma (NCOE Bengaluru) 57.77, 3. Shravani Sangle (Mah) 59.73; **High jump (CWG Q mark 1.92m):** 1. Khyati Mathur (UP) 1.82m, 2. Manshi (Rly) 1.80m, 3. Abhinaya Shetty (JSW) 1.73m; **Heptathlon (CWG Q mark 6095):** 1. K.A. Anamika (Ker) 5685, 2. Pooja (JSW) 5632, 3. Khushi (Har) 5435.

Dominant: Praveen recorded 17.08m to ensure victory over Aboobacker (16.63). RITU RAJ KONWAR

Indian freestyle grapplers on a gold rush

Press Trust of India
DA NANG (VIETNAM)

India continued its impressive run at the U23 Wrestling Asian Championships with its freestyle grapplers claiming a bunch of gold medals here on Monday.

Akshay edged past Kazakhstan's Yelaman Amangeldi 4-2 victory to claim the men's 57kg title, while Vicky pulled off a thrilling 7-5 win against Uzbekistan's Sherzod Poyonov in the 97kg division.

In the women's 53kg final, Muskan controlled the bout against Vietnam's Thi My Linh Nguyen for a comfortable 6-2 win.

Tapsya was even more dominant in the 57kg category, securing her gold with a victory by fall over Kazakhstan's Altyn Shagayeva while leading 4-0.

Bhagyashree H. Fand added another gold in the 62kg division, blanking Kyrgyzstan's Tynys Dubek 4-0, while Pulkit (65kg) continued the gold rush with a 4-1 win over Mongolia's Narkhajid Nyamsuren.

Amruta Shashikant Pujari took home silver in the 72kg division after a narrow 2-4 defeat to Mongolia's Odgerel Edene Ochir.

The results (finals):
Men: 57kg: Akshay T. Dhere bt Yelaman Amangeldi (Kaz) 4-2; **97kg:** Vicky bt Sherzod Poyonov (Uzb) 7-5.
Women: 53kg: Muskan bt Thi My Linh Nguyen (Vie); **57kg:** Tapsya bt Altyn Shagayeva (Kaz) by fall; **62kg:** Bhagyashree H. Fand bt Tynys Dubek (Kgz) 4-0.
65kg: Pulkit bt Narkhajid Nyamsuren (Mon) 4-1; **72kg:** Odgerel Edene Ochir (Mon) bt Amruta Shashikant Pujari 4-2.

AROUND THE CITY

Wheels India claims fourth straight title

N. Karthik took four for 27 and R. Gowtham top-scored with 51 as Wheels India Ltd. defeated Ashok Leyland VVC by seven wickets in the final to clinch the Lucas TVS Thiruvallur DCA Trophy for the fourth consecutive time.

The scores:
Final: Ashok Leyland VVC 125 in 26.3 overs (Abhishek Kumar 32, N. Karthik 4/27) lost to Wheels India Ltd. 129/3 in 19.4 overs (V. Rajasekaran 37, R. Gowtham 51).
Special awards:
Top run-getter: B.M. Balu Rajkumar (Ashok Leyland, 155).
Top wicket-taker: N. Karthik (Wheels India Ltd., 12).

On a roll: Wheels India Ltd. won the Lucas TVS Thiruvallur DCA Trophy yet again. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vijay is champion

Vijay Sreeram (TN), with eight points from nine rounds, emerged the champion of the second International FIDE-rated chess tournament, conducted by Annai Arul Public School. He received a cash prize of ₹50,000. Krithin Durai (TN), Pavan Karthikeya Varma (Telangana), and IM R. Balasubramaniam (ICF) scored 7.5 points each and finished second to fourth respectively on tie-break. A total cash prize of ₹5 lakh was distributed during the valedictory function, where Grandmaster A.R. Ilamparthi gave away the prizes.

Trophy time: Champion Vijay, left, with chief guest Ilamparthi, second from right, and the other dignitaries. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Double for Krish; Shiv and Ayansh excel

Championship leaders: Shiv, Ayansh, Rivaan and Krish are ahead in their respective categories.

KARTING

Sports Bureau

Mumbai's Krish Gupta (Leapfrog Racing) notched up a double, winning the Sprint and Feature races in the Senior Max class, to move to the top of the leaderboard at the conclusion of the second round of the Meco Meritus Cup karting championship in Bengaluru, on Sunday.

Aided by two podium finishes, including a victory, Hyderabad's Shiv Tummala (Peregrine Racing) and MSPORT's Ayansh Patil of Kolhapur grabbed the top spots in Mini Max and Micro Max classes.

In the premier OKJ Junior class, Chennai's Rivaan Dev Preetham (MSPORT) yet again dominated the point-scoring sessions, the Super Heat and Final Race, winning both comfortably.

Sensational slide, rampaging comeback and nail-biting finish

The good news – for everyone else except the bowling fraternity – is that more of Sooryavanshi is in store. He showed that he wasn't an otherworldly being thrust upon us with a six-ball four against MI on Sunday, but that means he will be even more charged up against Sunrisers in New Chandigarh on Wednesday

Hit and miss: Sooryavanshi has lit up the tournament with his swashbuckling strokeplay while Miller and Delhi were left to rue the South African's 'brain-fade' moment against Gujarat. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

R.V. MOORTHY

In the race to the IPL 2026 playoffs, Punjab were duly punished after suffering six successive losses while Kolkata kept themselves alive until the last day; those who did not make the top-four cut will look back at missed opportunities

R. Kaushik

And then there were four. It wasn't until the 69th, and penultimate, match of the 10-team league phase that the final qualifier for the IPL 2026 playoffs was identified. Sunrisers Hyderabad's 55-run defeat of defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Friday had cemented the top three; the holders and table-toppers would take on Gujarat Titans, the 2022 champions, in Qualifier 1. Hyderabad, who like the top two also ended up with 18 points, had earned their place in the Eliminator, waiting to see who their opponents were.

When Shreyas Iyer blasted his maiden century against Lucknow Super Giants on Saturday to arrest an alarming slide of six straight losses and keep Punjab Kings in the hunt, the wait for the fourth qualifier spilled over to the final day of league action, in keeping with the IPL's reputation and history. In the end, after a start-stop-start season, Rajasthan Royals, champions in the inaugural edition in 2008, earned that right following a 30-run conquest of Mumbai Indians under a blazing afternoon sun at the Wankhede Stadium.

As is inevitably the case, those that missed out on qualification narrowly - Punjab finished on 15 points, Delhi Capitals on 14 while 16 was the magic figure on which Rajasthan rode into the last four - will rue missed opportunities, a game that slid by here, a point that was dropped there. Kings will potentially point to the only no-result of the tournament, against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens, as a decisive moment.

Struggling at the time to get on the points table, Ajinkya Rahane's men, strangely opting to bat despite the threat of rain, were gasping at 25 for two when the skies opened up, gifting them a much-needed first point. Who's to say how the match would have panned out had PBKS, riding the crest of an early wave, had the opportunity to play out a full game?

Kings will look back and understandably wonder how it came to this pass. For the first half, and more, of the league phase, they looked unstoppable and unbeatable. The no-result in Kolkata was the only point they dropped in their first seven outings; with 13 points and seven games remaining, it wasn't a question of whether they would make the playoffs, but what their final points tally would be and who they might run into in Qualifier 1.

Inexorable tailspin

Then, remarkably, without warning, Punjab embarked on an inexorable tailspin, the celebrated leadership group of Shreyas and head coach Ricky Ponting powerless to arrest the slide.

The same personnel that fuelled their first-half charge started to repeatedly fluff their lines, their death bowling went to pieces and their catching and ground fielding was abysmal. The last development would have particularly incensed Ponting, for two reasons - one, he was among the best fielders of his generation and two, misfields and dropped catches are unforgivable unforced errors.

PBKS have plenty of time - nearly 10 months - to rue their self-inflicted misfortune and reflect on how they managed to embrace elimination when advancing to the next stage was infinitely the simpler and more inviting proposition. Shreyas had a great run with the bat and was tactically astute for the most part - at one point, there were calls for his elevation to T20I captaincy at the expense of the misfiring Suryakumar Yadav, though those calls have disappeared now - but the end result is something he will struggle to reconcile with.

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians were the biggest disappointment, reiterating that big names and celebrity superstars don't guarantee success. Lucknow Super Giants weren't much better

Delhi fell tantalisingly short numerous times in closing out games, not least against Gujarat when they needed two runs off as many deliveries with David Miller and Kuldeep Yadav in the middle. For reasons best known to him, the South African turned down the scores-tying single off the penultimate ball from Prasidh Krishna, backing himself to get the job done.

It was a massive error in judgement and DC paid a heavy immediate and eventual price. Kuldeep was run out off the last ball looking for the bye that would have sent the game into a Super Over as Gujarat pulled off a one-run heist. From then on, one of only two from the original eight – apart from Punjab – to have not won the title even once blew hot and cold, struggling for consistency and crashing out despite bringing the curtain down on the league phase with a comprehensive victory over Kolkata on Sunday.

So much for the two that narrowly missed out. KKR and Chennai Super Kings recovered from early setbacks to stay in touch with the qualification race, though they were always chasing their tails and playing catch-up. The same couldn't be said of the two cellar teams, Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants, both of whom managed a frugal four wins each from 14 outings. Five-time champions Mumbai were the biggest disappointment, reiterating that big names and celebrity superstars don't guarantee success.

Lucknow are now licking their wounds and already contemplating changes, including to their leadership after ₹27 crore-signing Rishabh Pant had another modest season with the bat and has now led the side to just 10 wins from 28 outings across two campaigns.

Left-handed batters (mainly openers) and fast bowlers stole the individual honours, none more so than the youngest player in the history of the competition. Vaibhav Sooryavanshi rang in his 15th birthday just a day before IPL 2026 got underway on March 28. He celebrated that milestone in extraordinary fashion, sending chills down the spine of some of the most illustrious bowlers of the modern era. He instilled fear and uncertainty, he mesmerised and entertained with an array of strokes that screamed out intrepidness and great class. He spared no one - not Josh Hazlewood or Jasprit Bumrah, not Kagiso Rabada or Mitchell Starc. When was the last time you watched a match just for one player? And that too for a 15-year-old?

The good news – for everyone else except the bowling fraternity – is that more of Sooryavanshi is in store. He showed that he wasn't an otherworldly being thrust upon us with a six-ball four against MI on Sunday, but that means he will be even more charged up against Sunrisers in New Chandigarh on Wednesday.

Already this season, he has had two interesting run-ins with the 2016 winners. In Hyderabad a month and a half ago, he perished first ball, caught on the pull off debutant pacer Praful Hinge. Retribution was swift, and just 12 days in coming. In the return fixture in Jaipur, he brought up the third fastest IPL century, off 36 deliveries (he holds the record for the second fastest too, let's not forget), treating Praful with disdain and battering Sakib Hussain, who had also taken four wickets on his debut alongside his pace partner.

Hyderabad won both those games, by 57 runs and five wickets, but captain Pat Cummins and head coach Daniel Vettori will read nothing into those results as they head into the first actual knockout game of the competition. They know there's more to RR than Sooryavanshi - yes, though it's easy to lose track of that sometimes - but much of their focus will be concentrated on halting the boy wonder because, well, he is the boy wonder.

Topping the charts

Sooryavanshi finished the league stage as the fifth highest scorer, with 583 runs, behind only Sai Sudharsan, Shubman Gill, Heinrich Klaasen and K.L. Rahul. Among those with more than 400 runs, he is one of only two batters with a strike rate of more than 200; his 232.27 is comfortably better than Abhishek Sharma's 206.22 and these two left-handers also have the most sixes where, again, Sooryavanshi is clearly streets ahead, with 53 'maximums' to the Hyderabad opener's 43. Wednesday will therefore witness a battle within a battle, with the winner living to fight another night and vanquished taking an early flight home.

The two leading scorers of the competition are Gujarat's Sai Sudharsan and Gill, with 638 and 616 runs respectively. But interestingly, as if to reinforce the belief that batters win matches while bowlers win tournaments, the GT bowing unit has accounted for more than 100 wickets, making them the only franchise to top that milestone this edition. Their charge has been led by the excellent Kagiso Rabada and the terrific Afghan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who has purged a lean last couple of years with 19 wickets to go with an economy of 8.71. Rabada's 24 wickets are the joint highest alongside Bhuvneshwar Kumar, the ageless wonder from RCB who holds the Purple Cap owing to a superior economy rate of 8.07 compared to his South African counterpart's 9.18.

Rabada and Mohammed Siraj, who has picked up 17 wickets, are in a personal battle for the most dot balls bowled in the competition. Between them, the Rabada-Rashid-Siraj trio has 60 wickets which, allied with Prasidh's 14 and Jason Holder's 13, paint the picture of a wicket-hungry group that has backed up the heroics of their openers and the explosive No. 3, Jos Buttler.

Maximising their depth

RCB have just one bowler in the top 12 wicket-takers and one batter - Virat Kohli, at ninth, with 557 runs – in the top 15 run-makers, but clearly, they have maximised their depth in both departments, which explains their status as the table-toppers.

They were forced to split the opening combine of Kohli and Phil Salt after the latter picked up a finger injury, and Salt's replacement, Jacob Bethell, has flown back home, also with a finger injury. In their absence, Venkatesh Iyer has stepped up nicely, while at No. 3, Devdutt Padikkal has been wonderful to watch with his rangy ball-striking and a rejigged mindset that's allowed him to score at 171.82.

Rajat Patidar, who ended a long wait by leading the team to their first trophy last season, has scored 393 runs at a strike-rate of 183.64 while Tim David is a dangerously fierce middle-order presence. This is the fulcrum around which the batting has revolved, while the bowling has been shored up, in Bhuvneshwar's wake, by Rasikh Salam and the crafty Krunal Pandya, though Hazlewood has blown hot and cold.

All to play for as we head to the final week then. Bengaluru and Gujarat will have two bites at the cherry by finishing 1-2, while Hyderabad and Rajasthan are at the point of no return. It's taken nearly two months to reach this stage; now, it's all about the next six nights.

THE GIST

- Punjab will wonder how they were eliminated. For the first half, and more, of the league phase, they looked unstoppable and unbeatable
- Kolkata and Chennai recovered from early setbacks to stay in touch with the qualification race, though they were always playing catch-up. The same couldn't be said about Mumbai and Lucknow
- In the playoffs, Bengaluru and Gujarat will have two bites at the cherry after finishing 1-2, while Hyderabad and Rajasthan are at the point of no return

Physicists are finding new ways to make electrons act strangely

Science advances when scientists recreate what they find in nature in new conditions; that is how we got air travel, lasers, nuclear power, antibiotics, and semiconductors; something similar maybe happening with quantum materials — materials whose properties arise from quantum physics effects

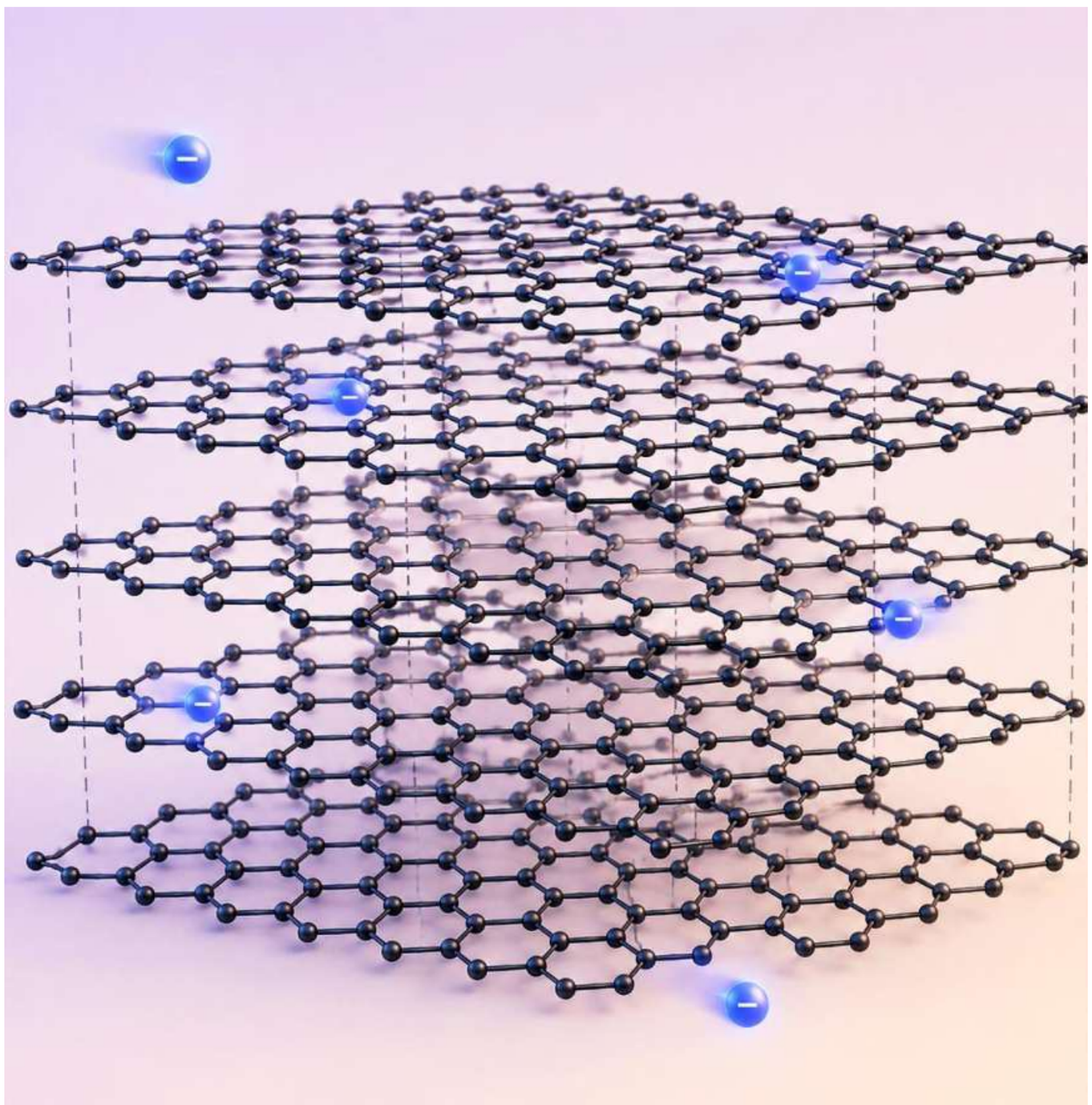
Vasudevan Mukunth

For most of the last two centuries, we have not had to think much about electricity. At the start of this period, we were just beginning to understand what it was. And towards the end, climate change and renewable energy have rendered it a constant thought in our minds. But for many decades in between, we could take it for granted.

Electricity, most of the time, was just something behind a switch. If you flipped the switch, electrons would move through a wire. If you raised the voltage, more current would flow.

But today, there is another way in which some people are thinking about electrons – a way that could, someday, change the future.

Scientists have found that inside some materials, in extreme conditions, electricity behaves in highly unusual ways. The electrons stop being independent particles and begin moving together. They flow around edges with uncanny precision. Most of all, the particles seem split up into pieces, each apparently carrying a fraction of an electron's charge.



Usually, electrons in a material can zip past each other without also pushing each other apart. But in pentalayer graphene (depicted here), the electrons have such low kinetic energy that the particles' mutual repulsion becomes the dominant interaction between them. IMAGE CREATED WITH CHATGPT 5.2

From ramp to staircase

Physics has made many weird discoveries – but a real contender for its weirdest find is the fractional quantum Hall effect (FQHE), which is where electrons behave in those strange ways.

Recently, physicists were able to make it even stranger by recreating it without one of the conditions they believed to be indispensable for it.

In 1879, the U.S. physicist Edwin Hall found something odd. If electricity flows through a metal plate when a magnetic field is pointing perpendicular to the plate, the current experiences a sideways push. (One reason this was odd was that J.J. Thompson would not discover the electron 18 years later.) Scientists later explained why: the magnetic field pushes moving charges sideways, causing electric charge to pile up on the plate's edges, creating a voltage across the metal. This came to be called the Hall effect. The compass in your smartphone uses it to point north.

As usual, the rise of quantum mechanics complicated the picture. In the early 1980s, physicists were studying very clean materials at temperatures just a fraction above absolute zero, using magnetic fields.

When they increased the strength of the field beyond a point, the resistance the current was experiencing – called the Hall resistance – stopped changing smoothly.

Instead, it took discrete values. For example, when before it could change from 1 to 1.1 to 1.2 to 1.3 and so on, now it could change only to 1 or 2 or 3 or so on, like climbing stairs rather than being able to use the ramp. In other words, physicists found the resistance became quantised. And they called it the integer quantum Hall effect.

Once again, they soon found an explanation. Normally, the electrons in a material can have a range of energies. But when there is a strong magnetic field acting on them, the range becomes a set of levels, called Landau levels. And the electrons can occupy only these levels. This is like when before a bunch of people in a room could lie down where they wanted – on one of the four beds or on the floor in between – now they could only occupy the beds. In this condition, the material becomes an insulator on the inside and a very good conductor on its boundaries.

Ocean of electrons

Then, in 1982, physicists found the strangest thing of them all. Sometimes, the Hall resistance occurred only in whole-number steps (1, 2, 3, ...) but sometimes it could occur as fractions: 1/3, 2/5, 3/7, etc. This was FQHE.

(The fraction here refers to the multiple of the material's natural Hall resistance. For example, if the natural resistance is 50 Ω, a fractional Hall resistance of 2/5 implies a measured resistance of 20 Ω.)

At first glance, this should be impossible: electrons are indivisible particles – you cannot break them up into smaller pieces – and each electron carries a fixed amount of electric charge. Yet the Hall resistance seemed to be changing in fractions, as though the current were being carried by objects with only a fraction of an electron's charge. What then was 1/3?

The answer came from quantum mechanics. When many electrons come together to interact strongly, they form a collective quantum state – a sort of liquid state in which it is impossible to distinguish individual electrons. This is like an ocean: you cannot isolate the single water droplet you dropped in it. And much like waves in the ocean – where no single droplet travels to the shore but the water as a whole has a moving pattern – a part of the collective quantum state can behave as if it possesses only a fraction of an electron's charge.

Physicists generally call these parts quasiparticles.

In this particular case, the quasiparticles were very unusual. They were of a type called anyons. Which meant they would also have a very unusual property: they would be much more robust than other particles (or quasiparticles) at storing information.

'Faking' a field

However, there is a big practical problem. The FQHE gives rise to anyonic quasiparticles.

But to create the effect, physicists need to apply a very strong magnetic field to the material – sometimes even stronger than the one in a hospital MRI scanner. And the material had to be very clean (i.e. almost entirely free of impurities) and held at close to absolute zero.

Try as they might for no less than four decades, physicists found that this was the only way to create the FQHE. Obviously this is not practical.

FQHE – but especially the anyons it gives rise to – could help quantum computers of the future protect information from noise, which is one of the enterprise's hardest unsolved problems today.

In 2025, Microsoft said it had built a quantum computing chip that created anyons using a different technique, and used them to store and manipulate information.

(However, many scientists doubt the company's claims: among other concerns, questions linger about whether the chip really contains anyons and the means by which that can be verified.)

A sandwich for electrons

One breakthrough came in 2024. It was based on doing something really clever, if also very sophisticated: if a strong magnetic field organises a material's electrons in unusual patterns, could the field's role be 'faked' from within the material itself?

Scientists have found that inside some materials, in extreme conditions, electricity behaves in highly unusual ways. The electrons stop being independent particles and begin moving together like a fluid

Turns out the answer is 'yes' if the material is graphene. Graphene is a sheet of carbon atoms arranged in a honeycomb pattern. Since the 2000s, physicists have found that if you stack one layer of graphene on another and turn it by a small angle – i.e. twisted bilayer graphene – the electrons in the stack behave oddly.

The grid of atoms in this structure forms what is called a moiré superlattice, which essentially significantly slows the electrons down. When the electrons slowed down, they formed a (strongly) collective quantum state – the kind of state that gave rise to the FQHE earlier. But this time there was no magnetic field; the moiré superlattice had recreated the field's requisite effects.

Twisted bilayer graphene has many odd electronic properties. However, it does not slow electrons down enough to create a sufficiently robust collective quantum state.

Usually, electrons in a material are zipping around with enough kinetic energy for them to ignore their mutual repulsion. This does not mean they clump together – more like they can zip past each other without also pushing each other apart.

On the other hand, the FQHE demands that the electrons' mutual repulsion must be the stronger force. For that, the electrons need to slow down beyond a specific point, and twisted bilayer graphene was not really creating the conditions for that.

Enter pentalayer graphene. After many experiments, physicists found that when they added more graphene layers to the stack, the electrons slowed down more.

With five layers – with each layer turned by a small angle relative to the one below – placed atop a substrate of hexagonal boron nitride, the electrons' kinetic energy dropped enough for electron-electron interactions to become dominant.

(Aside: If the electrons are repelling each other in this state, how come they form a collective quantum state instead of flying apart? When electrons are repelling each other but are also confined, they do not have the luxury of flying apart. Instead, they organise themselves better, leading to the collective quantum state – sort of like a negotiated settlement where they agree to not antagonise each other.)

Quantum materials

In 2024, a team lead by Long Ju at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology reported that it had detected FQHE in pentalayer graphene. They called it the FQAHE – the 'A' stood for anomalous, meaning it had been achieved without using a magnetic field.

The team reported observing Hall resistance like 2/3 and 3/5.

They concluded that the moiré superlattice created by five layers of graphene had produced the requisite structural features mimicking the effects of a magnetic field.

The experimental observation of FQAHE does not mean the underlying science is ready for real-world use.

With or without magnetic fields, physicists still need the material to be ultra-clean and work with it at very low temperature.

They also need to get the angles at which the graphene layers are turned relative to the substrate very close.

Even a small deviation can destroy the ideal moiré superlattice properties required to slow and confine the electrons.

Finally, the FQAHE also appears only when the material contains the 'right' number of electrons, which physicists can control by applying the right amount of voltage.

Since then, by fine-tuning these controls, physicists have found ways to create more robust FQAHE states.

Many of them keep going because of the value the anyonic quasiparticles hold for more advanced quantum computers – and indeed a whole world of physics that was previously locked behind powerful yet expensive magnets.

But more than that, science also advances when scientists recreate what they find in nature in new conditions. That is how we got air travel, lasers, nuclear power, antibiotics, and semiconductors.

Something similar may be happening now with quantum materials – materials whose properties arise from quantum physics effects.

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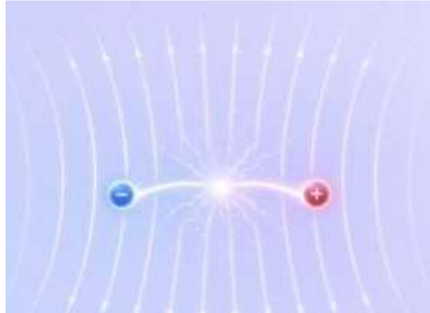

An electromagnetic field can stir up a pair of subatomic particles from the vacuum at very high energy. IMAGE CREATED WITH CHATGPT 5.2

Tech needed to create matter from light in place

Vasudevan Mukunth

Matter can become energy. You might have seen this in the film Oppenheimer or in videos of nuclear explosions. Just as the nuclei fuse, a blinding light fills the air and sky, so bright that simply closing your eyelids does not help.

Physics allows physicists to do the opposite as well: to create matter from light. The problem is the scale at which the required technologies need to work. Scientists need to pack a great quantity of light into a really small volume of space, and hold it there for long enough for the light to 'condense' into matter.

Specifically, scientists need to create extremely intense electromagnetic fields (photons are packets of electromagnetic energy).

Recently, researchers from Germany, Ireland, the U.K., and the U.S. reported clearing a key technical hurdle on the path to doing so. Their findings were published in *Nature*.

Scientists need to pack a great quantity of light into a really small volume of space, and hold it there for long enough for the light to 'condense' into matter

The theory that describes how light and matter interact is called quantum electrodynamics (QED). Normally, empty space appears empty. But at extremely high energy, QED predicts that a sufficiently powerful electromagnetic field can stir up a pair of subatomic particles from the vacuum. The problem? The strength of the electromagnetic field required far outpaces what current technologies can achieve.

In the new study, the researchers used a different technique. They fired an extremely intense laser pulse at a polished target, immediately parting the atoms in its surface of all their electrons. The electric field in the laser light set the electrons oscillating back and forth at nearly the speed of light. This caused the target's surface to reflect the laser pulse in multiple copies at higher frequencies, called harmonics. Physicists have hoped to further compress these harmonics and focus them into small spots. Such coherent harmonic focusing (CHF) would make the harmonics extremely intense, approaching the levels required to create matter.

But while the idea has been around for two decades, physicists have struggled to realise it efficiently. Previous experiments produced harmonics but with much less energy than in the original pulse.

A pulse's intensity increases from the leading point to its middle, roughly. The time taken for the pulse's peak intensity to enter the target is called its rise time. The authors of the new study reduced the rise time to well under one-trillionth of a second. At peak performance, then, the experiment generated enough energy within the 12th to 47th harmonics to show for the first time that the efficiency required by theory may be within reach.

The authors have stressed that they have not yet demonstrated the final focused state, only that the essential technical ingredients are now in place. At the next generation laser facilities that the U.K. and China, among others, are currently building, the technique is projected to reach an intensity of 10^{29} W per sq. cm – the threshold where QED effects become apparent.

"The reward would be access to a new regime of physics, where light becomes strong enough to tear down the vacuum and create particles from nothing," Alexander Pukhov, of the University of Dusseldorf and who helped lay the foundations of CHF, told *Physics*.

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Persons killed in landslide at illegal gold mining site in Angola

28 At least 28 people died when a landslide hit an illegal gold mining site in Angola's Bengo province, one of the country's deadliest of such accidents. Four were rescued and search operations have now been completed. A boom in unregulated artisanal gold mining, driven by Angola's push to diversify from diamonds, has made such tragedies increasingly likely. REUTERS

Year-on-year GDP growth for Singapore in Q1 of 2026

6 in per cent. Singapore's economy grew six per cent year-on-year in the first quarter, driven by a surge in demand for AI chips, memory components and server parts. As a major electronics hub, the country has benefited from robust AI-related manufacturing and wholesale trade, offsetting risks from the West Asia crisis and rising oil prices. AFP

Tourists stranded at Gulmarg Gondola after a technical fault

300 Around 300 tourists were stranded aboard the Gulmarg Gondola in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday after the cable car system developed technical problems. Operations of both phases were suspended. There were no casualties. Hundreds of tourists were rescued safely by the SDRF, NDRF, police, and army personnel. PTI

Persons killed in train bombing incident in southwest Pakistan

30 At least 30 people were killed when a suicide bomber rammed an explosive-laden vehicle into a shuttle train carrying security personnel and their families in the city of Quetta in southwest Pakistan. The blast derailed coaches and caused major damage. The Baloch Liberation Army claimed responsibility for the attack. REUTERS

NGT penalises DUSIB for lapse in submitting sewage discharge data

50,000 in ₹. A fine of ₹50,000 was imposed by the National Green Tribunal on the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) for repeatedly failing to submit details of sewage discharge from JJ clusters. An earlier penalty of ₹25,000 was also ignored. PTI

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Why is the Indian rupee falling?

How does a falling rupee affect India's economy? How does a currency's exchange rate shape its balance of payments? To what extent does Foreign Portfolio Investment influence demand for the rupee? What strategic role does the Reserve Bank of India play in preventing the rupee's depreciation?

EXPLAINER

Jayan Jose Thomas

The graph of the Indian rupee has been snaking sharply downward. The rupee-to-dollar exchange rate, or the rupees needed to purchase a U.S. dollar, crossed 96 in May this year. That rate was around 85 a year ago, indicating the rupee's decline in value since then.

Exchange rate is the price that a currency, such as the rupee, commands in the market, relative to the dollar or other currencies. Just as the market price of onions is determined by demand and supply, so is the price of a currency.

What is the impact of trade deficits on the rupee's value?

The demand for the rupee rises with India's exports and falls with imports. When firms in Ludhiana export garments, the dollars or euros they receive from foreign buyers are exchanged for rupees to pay workers and suppliers, thereby increasing demand for the rupee. On the other hand, Indian companies import oil by exchanging rupees for dollars, thereby reducing the demand for the rupee. Rupee demand also declines when we travel abroad and exchange rupees at the airport for the currency of our destination country.

Overall, if India's imports exceed exports, the foreign currency payments it must make to the rest of the world exceed the foreign currency payments it receives. That implies more rupees are exchanged for dollars than dollars are exchanged for rupees, leading to declines in the demand for, and the value of the rupee (requiring more rupees to purchase one dollar).

Thus, a currency's exchange rate is closely tied to the country's balance of (foreign currency) payments (to and from the rest of the world). India has consistently run a merchandise trade deficit, with imports of goods (especially oil) exceeding exports. The deficit in its merchandise trade account is partially offset by a surplus in India's invisibles. That is mainly thanks to foreign currency inflows from the export of services, particularly software, and to the large remittance inflows from migrant workers, especially in West Asian countries. Overall, India's current account, which is the sum of merchandise trade and the invisibles accounts, has been in deficit **(Table 1)**.

The gap in the current account, between the foreign currency payments India owes to the rest of the world and the foreign currency payments it receives, has been bridged by inflows through the capital account, mainly foreign investment and loans. If the current account deficit is more than offset by a surplus in the capital account, the excess foreign currency received is added to the country's foreign exchange (or forex) reserves (Table 1).

How do capital outflows weaken the rupee?

A country's forex reserves are as valuable as a family's treasure trove. The reserves are tapped to pay for critical imports during periods of insufficient foreign currency inflows, and to defend the currency's value when capital outflows are too large (discussed below).

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is mostly in new or existing factories and businesses and, as a result, has some ties binding it to the host country. In comparison, foreign portfolio investment (FPI), which involves purchases of stocks or bonds, is highly volatile and driven by speculation. Portfolio investors enter a country seeking quick financial returns and exit at the first sign of risk or when higher returns are offered elsewhere. When FPI surges in, the stock markets are on a roll; when it flows out, it leaves a trail of destruction. Capital outflows imply that investors withdraw their investments in rupee assets and exchange them for dollar assets, leading to a tumble in demand for the rupee and in its exchange rate.

The periods of rapid depreciation of the Indian rupee have each been characterised by worsening of the trade account, FPI outflows, or both. These include April to September 2013 (when the rupee-to-dollar rate fell from 54.4 to 63.8); January to October 2018 (from 63.6 to 73.6); February to April 2020 (from 71.5 to 76.2); January to October 2022 (from 74.4 to 82.3); September 2024 to February 2025 (from 83.3 to 87.1); and the latest phase that began in May 2025 (from 85.2 to 96) **(Chart 1)**. The recent losses in the rupee have mainly been due to foreign investors withdrawing from India as they retreat to the safety of their home bases amid growing geopolitical tensions and higher U.S. interest rates.

The depreciation of the rupee imposes a high cost on the Indian economy. To purchase a barrel of oil at $100, Indian companies now must pay ₹9,600, compared to ₹8,500 had the exchange rate remained at ₹85 per dollar. However, a depressed rupee can help boost exports: a shirt costing ₹1,200 can be sold in the U.S. market at $12.5 now; if the exchange rate were ₹80 per dollar, the price would have been $15. But rupee depreciation alone may not help much, given the range of supply and demand constraints weighing on Indian manufacturing.

What is the role of the RBI?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) intervenes to prevent the exchange rate from falling to very low levels. When foreign investors rush out by selling their rupee assets for dollars, the RBI props up the rupee by selling some of the dollars (or treasury bonds) from its reserves. This raises the demand for rupee and slows its decline (as it did during October 2024-January 2025 and August-December 2025) **(Chart 2)**. India's forex reserves remain sufficiently large: they stood at around USD 691.11 billion at the end of March 2026, enough to cover 10.8 months' worth of the country's imports (as of the end of December 2025). That is a mighty armoury the RBI can deploy to shield the rupee against impending speculative tides.

The ongoing geopolitical tensions and the threat of further oil price increases pose severe challenges. India could be at risk of paying more dollars per barrel of oil and more rupees per dollar. The country must take steps to regulate speculative capital outflows and reduce its dependence on oil imports.

(Jayan Jose Thomas is a Professor of Economics at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and a visiting researcher at the South Asia Institute of the University of Heidelberg.)

Mounting strain

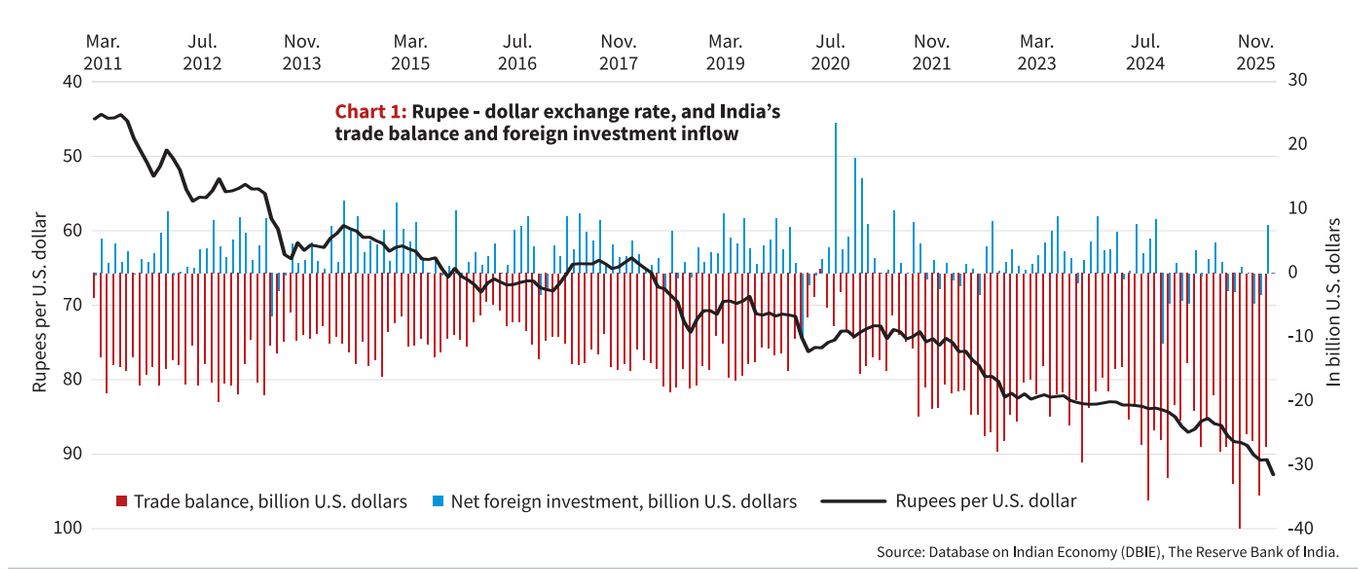
Amid ongoing geopolitical tensions, the rupee has weakened sharply against the dollar. Global uncertainty, volatile capital flows and rising import costs have intensified pressure on India's balance of payments and forex reserves

Table 1: India's balance of payments, in billion U.S. dollars

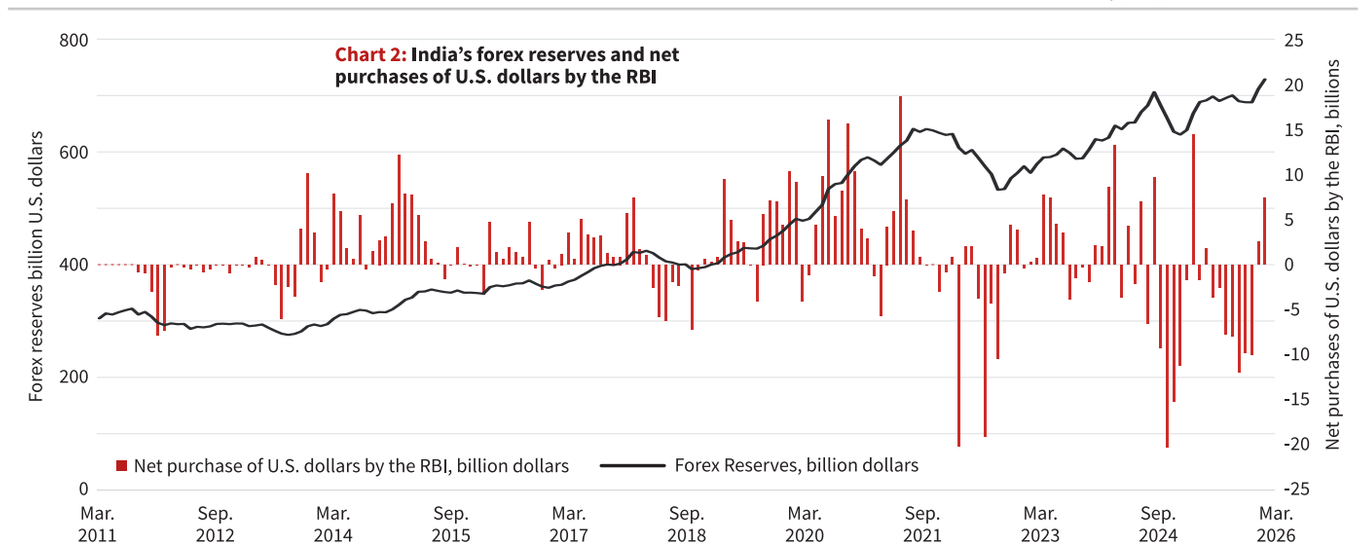
	2023-24	2024-25
A. Current account	-26.1	-23.1
A1. Merchandise trade	-244.9	-286.9
A2. Invisibles	218.8	263.9
B. Capital account	89.4	16.6
B1.Foreign investment	54.2	4.52
B2. Loans	6.5	29.3
B3.Others	28.7	-17.2
C. Forex reserves (increase -/decrease+)	-63.7	5

The Table shows the net values of the respective items. The merchandise trade balance is exports minus imports of goods; similarly, inflows minus outflows of foreign investment and other items.

Source: Database on Indian Economy (DBIE), The Reserve Bank of India.



Source: Database on Indian Economy (DBIE), The Reserve Bank of India.



Source: Database on Indian Economy (DBIE), The Reserve Bank of India.

THE GIST

- The rupee-to-dollar exchange rate crossed 96 in May this year. A currency's exchange rate reflects the price it commands in the market relative to the dollar and other currencies.
- Exchange rate is closely tied to a country's balance of payments. India has consistently run a merchandise trade deficit, with imports — especially oil — exceeding exports.
- The depreciation of the rupee imposes significant costs on the Indian economy. Therefore, the country must regulate speculative capital outflows and reduce its dependence on oil imports.

BUILDING BLOCKS

The physics of thermometers, temperatures and cold atoms

We use different devices to measure temperature. The science behind them, and concepts such as absolute zero and cold atoms, reveal the complex physics underlying the measurement of heat and temperature

Adhip Agarwala

People from Bengaluru should not be allowed to complain about their weather turning hot. The other day, as a *namma* friend called to express disappointment over their daytime temperatures reaching as high as 33 degrees, I wondered in what Awadhi words should I inform her about the pleasant 42 degrees here in Kanpur. The baked earth, the breezily burning air and the blindingly bright sunny afternoons are clearly things she would not be missing.

Even while you drink a glass of *nimbu paani* to cool yourself, have you ever wondered: what does a 'degree' really mean? By that I don't mean your qualifications, but just the temperature. Also have you ever thought how does one even measure it?

GETTY IMAGES

Units of temperature

The standard unit of temperature is called Celsius, named after Swedish physicist Anders Celsius who designed some of the early thermometers. But there is a fundamental catch with measuring temperature. While we can feel anxiously hot or depressingly cold depending on the weather or global news, one challenge in measuring temperature is defining the zero for it. After all, unlike the number of gas cylinders or valid ID cards – can you really count them on your fingers, and say when you have 'zero'?

To define this zero – we use one of our common day magical materials – water. So, how does water help decide this? To proceed, we need to understand what temperature really is.

Temperature is a way of estimating how hot something is. Now when we heat a material, what we are really doing is making the atoms and molecules of that material more and more restless. They shake more and more vigorously as we pump in energy. Similarly when we cool something we make the atoms more sluggish, that is, we take away their energy. Not very different from us. So can we really continue to heat or cool something as long as we want?

Turns out the answer is no. For a while, the material may decide to get heated or cooled, but at some point it may decide to completely change its character. This is called a phase transition. You see this everyday. When water is kept in a refrigerator, it would first start cooling and appear as - just colder water.

But at some point, it won't cool as a liquid - but will start turning into ice, which as we know is a solid. This "temperature" at which water turns to ice was named 'zero' degree Celsius. Similarly, when water is heated, it gets hotter and hotter until it starts boiling and turning into vapour. After this particular "temperature" after which the water cannot get hot anymore – was named '100' degrees Celsius.

Therefore the zero and 100 of temperature was marked and divided into a hundred divisions so that we can measure everything else in these units. It is on this scale that our body temperature is 37 degrees Celsius. There is another popular scale – Fahrenheit, where zero and 100 is marked using a different protocol. On that scale our body temperature is supposed to be 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. In 1948 physicists finally decided to use Celsius as a standard unit.

Now that we have defined zero and 100 of temperature, the next question is how do we measure it? Here comes another magical material –mercury, no – not the planet.

Mercury thermometers

Mercury is a metal, like iron or aluminium, i.e., which conducts current and shines, but unlike our metallic utensils or spoons, it is in a liquid state. Now most metals expand a bit when heated. This is because the atoms within the materials tend to get away from each other when they are hot. But one of the most amazing properties of mercury is that it expands only as much as it is heated. Think of it like a rod whose length changes depending on how hot it is. So we have found the measurement trick.

The idea is simple: put mercury in a glass bulb attached to a tube. Keep the bulb in a bucket of ice. See the level of mercury in the tube and mark it as zero. Now put the same bulb in boiling hot water. Mercury will expand and the level will rise in the tube. Mark that new level as 100. Use your favourite scale to equally divide the distance between the two marks into 100 divisions. And you have a thermometer. Now you can put this thermometer in your favourite soup, or soil, or your mouth to measure how much the mercury expands to tell you what the temperature is!

In fact, this is how regular thermometers used to look until a few years ago, when phones were still non-smart. Most of the school going students today may not have seen these thermometers. They could easily break for no good fault of ours and would lead to a huge hue and cry from the adults nearby.

But in any case, mercury thermometers, then, could be found in every household. But as the quantity of greenhouse gases, global temperatures, homes, gadgets, and governments changed - our thermometers changed too.

Digital thermometers

So to measure temperature, one basically needs a material which changes its behavior depending on how hot something is, and whose change of behavior can be measured accurately. After all, measuring something correctly is fundamental to all of science. This branch of physics which specialises in the principles behind measurements is called metrology.

With advances in condensed matter physics – the physics of materials – physicists created a new class of materials called semiconductors in the 1950s. Semiconductors are neither metals (i.e. conductors) like aluminum or copper, nor insulators (i.e. things which do not conduct current) like glass or wood. Hence the prefix "semi". They conduct a small amount of current, but the amount of current they carry can increase if the temperature rises.

This is because semiconductors have a rather interesting arrangement of atoms and electrons.

In metals, electrons move freely from atom to atom, like a soup - so they can easily conduct electricity whenever a battery is attached. In insulators, the electrons are tightly bound to the atoms. So even when a battery is put - they refuse to budge. In semiconductors, electrons are loosely bound to the atoms. They mostly stay close to atoms, but when the atoms become agitated due to heat, they shake off these electrons. These "free" electrons can now move and create an electrical current.

Now when a battery is attached to a semiconductor and if the temperature rises, the atoms shake more vigorously and more electrons are made free. So the hotter the surrounding is, more current will be generated and if we can measure that current we can find what the temperature is!

This is what happens in a digital thermometer which you find in your homes now – with 70 years of technological progress, humans have perfected the art of measuring changes in currents and voltages.

Absolute zero and cold atoms

Now, even while water turns to ice at zero degree celsius – the atoms in the ice are still shaking, though more slowly. Now if we continue to take away their energy even further, is there a point where it can essentially have "no" energy? What temperature would that mean?

That temperature is now defined as the Absolute zero - in another unit called Kelvin (K): the scientific unit of measuring temperatures. In terms of Celsius, this means -273 degrees Celsius.

When temperatures fall to just a few Kelvins, they become even harder to measure. We cannot use our mercury or semiconductors to measure them, since the properties of these thermometers themselves would change completely.

In fact, even atoms themselves become very funny at these temperatures and we need to use the whole power of quantum mechanics to understand them. Study of such atoms at ultra-low temperatures is cold-atomic physics.

Bose and his condensate

Atoms, in general, can be considered as one of the two types of personalities. One: 'fermions' type, where they do not like to stay together in one room. And another: 'bosons' where they like to all stay together whenever given a chance. 'Bosons' is named after Satyendra Nath Bose, an Indian physicist. In 1924, he first theoretically predicted the statistical behaviour of these 'bosons'.

Many cold atoms are bosonic in nature and when they reach temperatures very close to zero Kelvin they form an exotic phase of matter called the Bose-Einstein Condensate (BEC), named after Bose and Albert Einstein. In 2001, three U.S. scientists Eric A. Cornell, Wolfgang Ketterle and Carl E. Wieman were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for achieving the BEC in experiments at a temperature of 20 nanoKelvins (nK). 1 nK is 0.000000001 Kelvin, just slightly above Absolute zero.

So, the next time when the heat bothers you, whether in Bangalore or Kanpur, and you call a friend to complain about the rising temperatures - don't forget to express gratitude to the long, illustrious line of thermometers that have accurately measured temperatures for you.

(Adhip Agarwala is an Assistant Professor of Physics at IIT Kanpur)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"Hi! Come on in. Did your cousin get the job?"

"We are not really sure."

"Why not? He did well at the interview, didn't he?"

"He must have. But the man who interviewed him says that he'll give him the job provided my cousin pays him something in return."

"He wants a bribe, eh? Why doesn't he give him a piece of bread and get it over with?"

"A piece of bread! I wish it were that simple. The man wants...."

"....but that's what a bribe amounted to. Don't you know that?'

"You mean to say that when you bribed someone, you gave him a piece of bread?"

"Exactly! The word 'bribe', some people believe, originally meant a piece of bread. In the old days, when fairly well to do people went for a walk, they used to carry bread in their pockets. When beggars used to harass them for money, they used to dip into their pockets and give them a piece of bread instead."

"Since the rich man wanted to be left in peace, he gave the poor man a piece of bread."

"It was a bribe to stop pestering him."

"That's interesting."

"Tell me, are you planning on joining the new computer course?"

"No, I am not. It's very expensive. The fee ...."

"....how much is it going to cost you? Two cows or three cows?"

"Two or three cows! What are you talking about?"

"That's what the word 'fee' means. It comes from the Anglo Saxon 'feoh' meaning 'cattle'."

"But what is the connection between cattle and money?"

"In the old days, cattle represented a man's wealth. The more cattle an individual had, the more money he had."

"That's true. Anyway, what's the silly movie you are watching?"

"I have no idea what the movie is called. It's about this kid who gets rescued by a soldier. Later, they...."

".... speaking about soldiers. My cousin Ravi has joined the army. He told me that he is going to be in the infantry."

"Is your cousin an infant?"

"No, he isn't. He wouldn't be able to join the army if he were."

"That's true. Any way, this movie...."

"....wait a minute! Are you saying that there is a connection between 'infant' and 'infantry'?"

"Don't you see any connection?"

"Well, both words look alike, but that's about it. An 'infant' is a child. And 'infantry' is a term that is used in the army."

"Well, there is a connection. You see, the word 'infant' comes from the Latin 'infans which means 'unable to speak'. So, the original infant was a child who hadn't begun to speak as yet."

"....don't tell me the infantry consisted of little children who didn't know how to speak."

"No, I am not saying that. The original infantry consisted of young men. Youths, shall we say, and they..."

"....but surely these men could speak?"

"Of course, they could. But they were not expected to. Since they were all very junior people in the army, they were not expected to speak unless they were spoken to."

Published in The Hindu on September 26, 2000

Word of the day

Veracity: unwillingness to tell lies

Synonyms: truthfulness

Usage: *Concerns were raised about the veracity of the viral video.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/S1djW2/veracity

International Phonetic Alphabet: /vəˈɹæ.sɪ.ti/

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

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

From colonial censorship to post-Independence controversies, the history of books banned or withdrawn in India reflect the politics of offence and free expression

Prathmesh Kher

QUESTION 1
Which 1909 work by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar was proscribed by the British Raj?

QUESTION 2
Which 1954 satirical retelling of the Ramayana by Aubrey Menen became one of the earliest books banned in independent India?

QUESTION 3
Which 1988 novel by Salman Rushdie became the first book banned by the Rajiv Gandhi government for allegedly hurting Muslim sentiments?

QUESTION 4
Which book by Taslima Nasrin was banned in West Bengal in 2003 after it was accused by some Muslim groups of hurting religious sentiments?

QUESTION 5
Which biography by Joseph Lelyveld was banned by the Gujarat government in 2011 over claims concerning Mahatma Gandhi's personal life?

QUESTION 6
Which 2009 book by Wendy Doniger was withdrawn and pulped by Penguin India after a legal challenge from a Hindu activist group?

Visual question: Identify this individual, who introduced the Censorship of Press Act of 1799, imposing pre-censorship on newspapers, pamphlets and printed material. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Questions and answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1: In 1895, this famous English writer was convicted for gross indecency and for practicing homosexual acts sentenced to serve two years in prison. **Ans: Oscar Wilde**

2: Name the British politician and writer known for coining phrases like 'the pen is mightier than the sword' and 'It was a dark and stormy night' born on this date. **Ans: Edward Bulwer-Lytton**

3: May 25 is observed as 'Africa Day' to commemorate the foundation of the Organization of African Unity on that date in 1963. It was founded in this National capital. **Ans: Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)**

4: In 1977, the first of the 'Star Wars' films was released. It was retroactively titled as __ **Ans: 'Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope'**

5: A first achieved by British mountaineers Charles Evans, Joe Brown and George Band achieve on this date 71 years go. **Ans: Scale Kangchenjunga, the third-highest mountain in the world**

Visual: Name this Asian country celebrating its Independence Day today. **Ans: Jordan**

Early birds: Utsav Kaushal Ranjan | Sunil Madhavan | Prem Nath Tiwari | Soumendra Banerjee | Deepak Jiloha