MONDAY
April 27, 2026
CHENNAI
CITY EDITION
20 Pages ₹ 5.00

THE HINDU

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

Vol. 149 • No. 99
Regd. TN/ARD/110/2024-2026
RNI No. 1001/1957

To subscribe, give a missed call at 9828331787 or scan QR code

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

LAST LEG IN BENGAL

PM focuses on Matuas, Mamata slams SIR deletions

NEWS » PAGE 13

TIMELESS FRAMES

Photographer Raghu Rai passes away

NEWS » PAGE 14

CONTRASTING WINS

GT crushes CSK, KKR pips LSG in Super Over

SPORT » PAGE 17

Union govt. to resume talks on Ladakh on May 22

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Ladakh Lieutenant-Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena said here on Sunday that discussions between the Union Home Ministry and civil society bodies would resume on May 22 on the demand for Statehood and inclusion of the Union Territory in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The announcement, ending an impasse, came days ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Ladakh on April 30 and May 1. The meeting of the sub-committee on political dialogue will carry forward the "constructive democratic dialogue with key stakeholders of Ladakh and pave the way for an enduring solution to meet the aspirations of the people of Ladakh", Mr. Saxena said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

Trump safe after shooting in Washington; man held

An armed person stormed the lobby outside the White House Correspondents' Dinner; the U.S. President says he was the target of the attack; Modi expresses relief over Trump's safety

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

A man armed with guns and knives stormed the lobby outside the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner attended by U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday night, charging toward the ballroom in a chaotic encounter with Secret Service agents as guests dived under tables at the sound of shots being fired.

The President was uninjured and was rushed off the stage. U.S. law enforcement said the sole suspect has been detained and will face charges on Monday in federal court.

Video posted by Mr. Trump showed the suspect running past security barricades as Secret Service agents ran toward him. One officer was shot in a bullet-resistant vest but was recovering, officials said. The gunman was tackled to the ground and was not injured, the police said. Mr. Trump later said he believed he was the target of the attack.

The police believe the assailant, Cole Tomas Allen (31) from California, opened fire and acted alone but did not say who was his intended target or describe a motive.

World leaders expressed shock over the incident with Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying he was "relieved to learn that President Trump, the First Lady and Vice-President are safe and unharmed".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12
IRAN MINISTER IN PAKISTAN
» PAGE 16

Security breach

While several grievous situations have arisen during the two-time U.S. President's poll campaigns, Saturday's incident is the first during Donald Trump's time in office

REUTERS

Taking cover: U.S. President Donald Trump being escorted out after shots were fired during the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner on Saturday night.

SERIES OF INCIDENTS

June 18, 2016: A teenager was arrested after attempting to **wrestle a gun** from a police officer 'wanting to kill' Mr. Trump at a campaign rally in Las Vegas

November 5, 2016: Days before the presidential election where Mr. Trump won his first term, he was briefly **rushed offstage** during a rally in Reno, Nevada, after someone in the crowd shouted 'gun'

July 13, 2024: Mr. Trump was **shot at** during a presidential campaign in Butler, Pennsylvania, with a **bullet grazing his ear**

Sept. 15, 2024: Mr. Trump was allegedly the target of an **'assassination attempt'** by an intruder at his Florida golf club

NEARBY

Microplastics found in fish from Pichavaram

CHENNAI
A study has revealed that the Pichavaram mangrove ecosystem is experiencing "high contamination" of microplastics in fish and shellfish, raising ecological risks in the region. » PAGE 8

DSP, forest staff assaulted after jumbo kills man

UDHAGAMANDALAM
A DSP and six Forest Department staff were assaulted by a mob when they were trying to retrieve the body of a man killed by a wild elephant in Gudalur. » PAGE 8

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGE 6,7,19

Disqualify all seven defecting MPs, AAP says in petition to RS Chairman

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

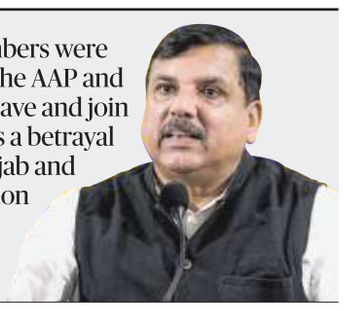
The Aam Aadmi Party on Sunday submitted a petition to Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan seeking the disqualification of seven MPs who have quit the party and merged with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Addressing a press conference, Sanjay Singh, leader of the AAP in the Rajya Sabha, said the move by the Raghav Chadha-led group was against the provisions of the anti-defection law.

The party urged the Chairman to terminate their membership, underlining that they were elected to the Upper House on AAP ticket but decided to leave the party and join the BJP. On Friday, Mr. Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Sandeep Pathak, Harbhajan Singh, Rajendra Gupta, Vikram Sahni, and Swati Maliwal quit and merged with the BJP.

The AAP has 10 members in the Upper House. The defecting group argues it has the required two-thirds strength to avoid disqualification. The AAP, meanwhile, has argued in its petition that the law requires the "original party" to merge and, in this case, the AAP has not taken such a call, which makes a case for their disqualification.

> These members were elected by the AAP and they later chose to leave and join another party. This is a betrayal of the people of Punjab and also of the Constitution of India
>
> **SANJAY SINGH**
> AAP leader



Consulted experts

"After consulting constitutional experts and seeking legal opinion from Kapil Sibal [Rajya Sabha member and senior Supreme Court lawyer], I have sent a petition to the Chairman requesting that the membership of these members be terminated as per the 10th Schedule of the Constitution," Mr. Singh said.

He termed the move by Mr. Chadha and the other MPs a "betrayal" of the people's mandate, and said he expected the Chairman to take an "unbiased" decision at the earliest.

Six of the seven MPs who quit the party were from Punjab.

"These members were elected by the AAP and later they chose to leave and join another party. This is a betrayal of the people of Punjab and also of the Constitution of India," Mr. Singh said.

New Zealand, India to sign FTA today; tariffs to go on all exports

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

India and New Zealand will on Monday sign a Free Trade Agreement that will remove tariffs on 100% of India's exports to New Zealand, and either sharply reduce or remove tariffs on 95% of current imports from that country.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday took to social media to welcome Todd McClay, New Zealand's Minister for Trade & Investment, to New Delhi, ahead of the signing of the pact. "As we approach the #IndiaNZFTA signing on April 27th, his visit marks a defining moment in our bilateral journey, reflecting the trust, shared values, and common vision that underpin our partnership for sustainable economic growth, driving prosperity for both our nations," he said.

India's exports to New Zealand grew 32.1% in 2024-25 to $711.1 million, the latest full financial year for which there is data. Imports from New Zealand grew 75.2% to $587.1 million over the same period.

Duty-free access

The deal will provide India with immediate duty-free access on 100% of tariff lines. This is down from the 10% tariff New Zealand currently levies on about 450 tariff lines that India exports, including textiles and apparel products, leather and headgear, ceramics, carpets, and automobiles and auto components.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

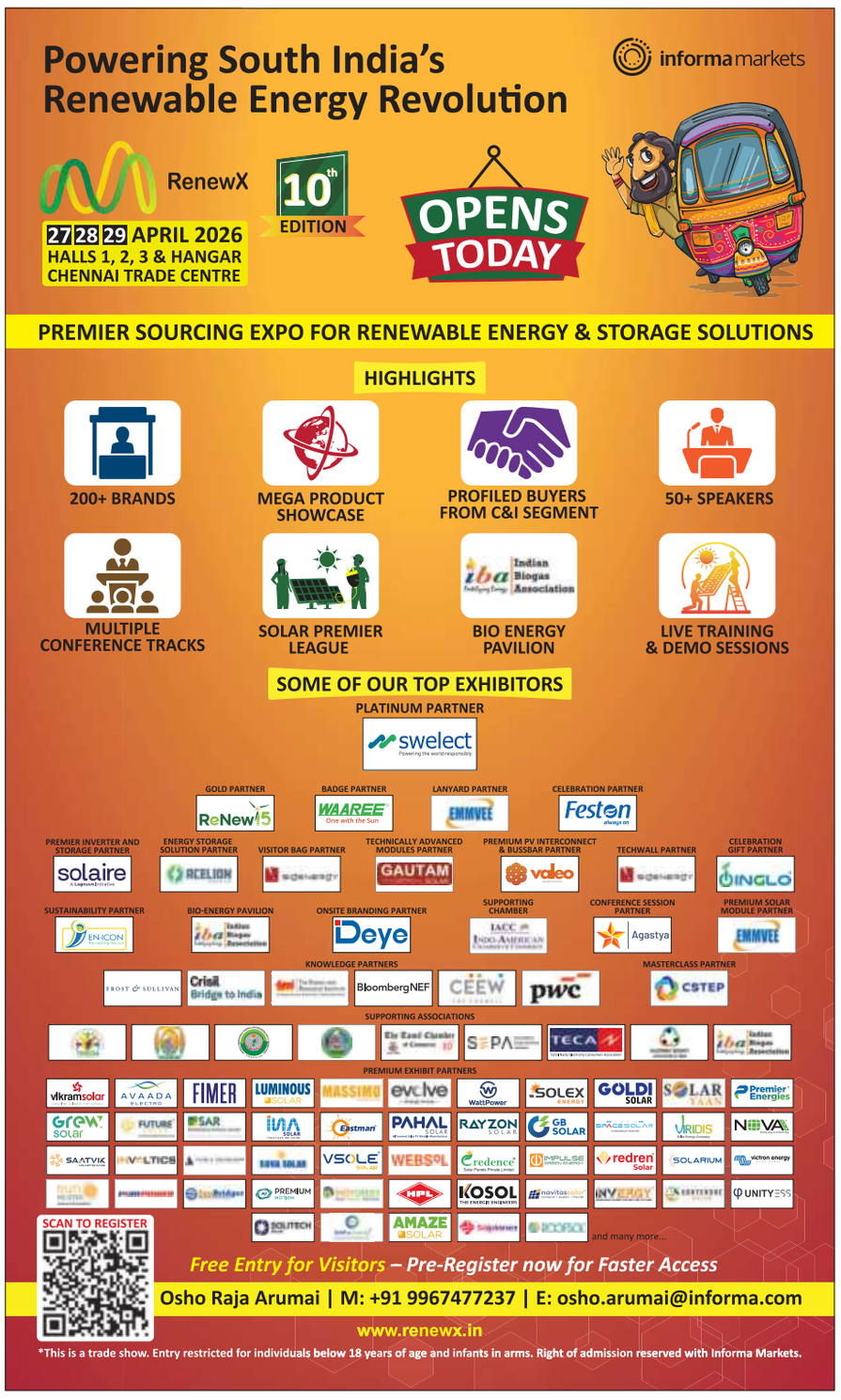
Railways orders signalling system audit

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Railways has ordered an audit of the signalling systems across its network to rectify deficiencies and improve the reliability of critical assets for ensuring safe train operations.

The Railway Board has directed the general managers of all zonal railways to depute senior officers to conduct the audit. The advisory comes against the backdrop of many fatal accidents or derailments in the past three years, suspected to have been caused by signal failure.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 8



Officials call in helicopters as forest fires spread rapidly across the Nilgiris

The Hindu Bureau
UDHAGAMANDALAM

The Forest Department is fighting multiple fires that have destroyed hundreds of acres of forest in the Nilgiris Forest Division and the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR).

Helicopters were deployed from the Sulur Air Force base in Coimbatore for the second consecutive day on Sunday to help fight the fires.

Extensive operation

According to a press release, a forest fire was reported in the Wenlock Downs Reserve Forest of Parson's Valley Range of the Nilgiris Forest Division on April 15.

A team of local foresters was deployed to fight the fire. More than 400 Forest Department personnel were roped in from across Tamil Nadu to put out the flames.

Aerial assistance: The strength of the ascending fires prompted the authorities to seek aerial assistance. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Seven forest fire response vehicles were deployed at crucial locations. Two teams of the State Disaster Response Force and five teams of the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services Department were drafted for the operations, the release said.

Members of eco-development committees were also engaged in fighting the fires, which spread rapidly on Saturday, driven by heavy winds, high temperatures, and low humidity.

The strength of the ascending fires prompted the authorities to seek aerial assistance.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

INBRIEF

Female Asiatic wild donkey brought to Vandalur Zoo

Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur has received a female Asiatic wild donkey as part of an animal exchange programme with Sakkarbaug Zoological Garden, Junagadh, Gujarat, according to an official press note issued on April 22. In return, the zoo sent one male and two female white peafowl, two male and two female mouse deer, and two unsexed yellow anacondas to Sakkarbaug Zoo. Officials said the exchange was carried out to improve animal pairing and welfare. With the arrival of the female, the lone male Asiatic wild ass at the Vandalur zoo now has a compatible mate. The move is expected to support better management and potential breeding of the species at the zoo, authorities added.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 27, Monday), the following articles are available:

- SIR pause on way to a billion electorate **newsth.live/sirandelections**
- How AI helped promote community-led development in Rajasthan **newsth.live/rajasthanAI**

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.

State-run women's libraries see steady rise in patronage

Pengal Noolagam in Chepauk and Pudupet helps women read after dropping their children at school or after completing their household chores; PWD seeks to relocate the facility in Pudupet

Meghna M.
CHENNAI

In a small corner on the busy Babu Jagjivan Ram Road, formerly known as Bells Road, a quiet library dedicated to women readers exists. Speeding through the lane, it's easy to miss the library. Sporting a new look, the library continues to steadily increase its readership.

"My college is over at 1 p.m. and I come here to study and finish any work. My mother works nearby at a canteen. We travel to Chengalpattu once her work is over by 5 p.m. I used to spend my time on the beach, but when I discovered the library, it was a relief not only to focus on my studies, but also for my safety," said Preetha. M, a first-year student at Queen Mary's College.

Chennai has two libraries run by the State government dedicated to women called *Pengal Noolagam*. It was set up in an effort to encourage women to read after dropping their children at school or after completing household chores. Unlike regular libraries, which close in the afternoon, they are open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Knowledge hub: The over 100-year-old Chepauk Women Public Library has a dedicated reading circle and conducts various events and reading challenges for the community. M. SRINATH

The library in Chepauk, first opened in 1925, is now over 100 years old. With over 11,000 books and 686 members, the librarian-in-charge has been raising awareness among the public and the nearby Chennai Middle School to encourage reading among women and children. It now has a dedicated reading circle too, taking up events and reading challenges for the community.

The other *Pengal Noolagam*, tucked away among the bike shops in Pudupet, sees only three readers coming in on a good day. With two opposite rooms functioning as the library, the library sports a weary look. There are over 24,000 books in the library and 56 registered members.

'Much-needed space'

"I come to the library in the afternoons to focus on my studies. Since I live nearby it gives me the much-needed space to prepare for my upcoming competitive exams," said Vimala G., a resident of Pudupet.

An official with the Department of Public Libraries noted that a request has been put in to move the Pudupet *Pengal Noolagam* noting the dilapidated condition. "It will also encourage more women to visit and enjoy reading," said the official.

Over the next two days, light to moderate rain is likely at isolated places in Coimbatore, the Nilgiris, Tiruppur, and Theni. R. VENGADESH

Ghat districts, south coastal T.N. may get isolated rain from April 27 to May 1

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Regional Meteorological Centre has forecast the likelihood of light to moderate rain at isolated places over Western Ghat districts and south coastal districts of the State on Sunday. The rest of the State, Puducherry and Karaikal are likely to experience mainly dry weather.

On Monday, isolated places over the Western Ghat districts, delta districts and south coastal districts of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal area are likely to get light to moderate rain.

Over the next two days, light to moderate rain is likely at isolated places with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds at speeds of 30-40 kmph over Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Tiruppur and Theni districts.

On Thursday and Friday, isolated places over Coimbatore, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Tirupattur and Vellore are likely to experience moderate to heavy rain with thunderstorm and lightning.

One or two places are likely to experience gusty winds speeds reaching 30-40 kmph. Light to moderate rain at isolated places is likely to occur over rest Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal area.

Credai Chennai gets new team of leaders for '26-28

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (Credai), Chennai, has announced its new leadership for the 2026-2028 term, with Mehul H. Doshi assuming office as the 10th President, along with the newly elected office bearers and executive committee members.

Suman Voora, Managing Director of Voora Property Developers, has taken charge as secretary, Credai, Chennai, and S.S. Prasad Babu, Director of Harmony Residences Pvt. Ltd., will be the treasurer.

T.S.S. Krishnan, CEO of Sreshta Premium Developers and Viswajith Kumar, Managing Director of Navin Housing and Properties Pvt. Ltd., have taken charge as vice-president.

Mehul H. Doshi, president, CREDAI, Chennai, said that the roadmap for 2026-2028 will be guided by the theme, 'Let's Build a Better Chennai', with focus on the four pillars - government, developers, society, and customers.

S. Krishnan, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, said Chennai could lead by example in inclusive, sustainable urban development

Mr. Doshi added that every initiative will be driven by a shared commitment to build a better Chennai that is progressive, inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready.

S. Krishnan, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Government of India, said that Chennai stands at a pivotal moment where real estate can power the next phase of growth.

Future-ready city

Mr. Krishnan further said: "From enabling the rapid expansion of Global Capability Centres to creating high-quality, environmentally-compliant office spaces, developers have a crucial role to play in shaping a future-ready city."

"At the same time, we must go deeper into the housing market beyond the top-end to unlock real demand through rental and truly affordable housing that serves the common citizen. With progressive reforms, expanding metro connectivity, and a clear push for transparency, Chennai could lead by example in inclusive, sustainable urban development," he added.

Trial run commences on 92-km stretch of Chittoor-Thatchur NH

Deepa H. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

If you are a resident of the Western suburbs and are headed out to Bengaluru and beyond, a 92-km-long stretch of the Chittoor-Thatchur National Highway (NH) has now been opened to vehicular traffic on a trial basis.

The six-lane wide, access controlled road can be joined on the SH-50 that connects Uthukottai and Tiruvallur. The other end of the road joins the Chennai - Bengaluru NH at Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh. By August, the corridor will connect to the new Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway.

Since the trial began, around 5,000 vehicles have been using the road on a daily basis, explained sources in the National Highways Authority of India. Of the entire 112 km length, the remaining 20 km that will connect with the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (CPRR) is likely to be ready by December this year. The section of NH-716B, developed at a cost of ₹5,486.32 crore, has multiple access points at Anupalle, Arthala, Narasimhapuram, Pallipattu, Nagari, Uthukottai, Kumararajapet, S.R. Puram, Veerakaverirajapuram, and Pondavakkam.

Green initiative: Over 80,000 saplings have been planted along the corridor. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A total of 24 major bridges, 17 minor bridges, 195 box culverts, 16 vehicular underpasses and 39 light vehicular underpasses, seven interchanges, four road overbridges and 112 utility crossings are part of the greenfield project that is being constructed to improve port connectivity.

The corridor is equipped with an advanced traffic management system, which uses surveillance and real-time analytics to ensure safe, efficient traffic flow and quick incident response. The system has 115 cameras that can pan, tilt and zoom, 120 surveillance cameras, and 86 emergency roadside telephones.

It also features 58 video incident detection and enforcement systems (VIDES), 18 vehicle actuated speed displays (VASD), 14 variable message signs (VMS), and six portal VMS units to enhance safety and traffic management.

Over 80,000 trees have been planted along the corridor as part of a green highway initiative, which is complemented by eco-friendly bamboo crash barriers at select locations promoting sustainable, low-cost solutions. Drip irrigation systems have been installed for the plants on the median.

Man held for breaking into neighbour's home in city

CHENNAI: A 44-year-old man was arrested for allegedly breaking into his neighbour's house in Seven Wells and stealing gold jewellery worth 4.5 sovereigns.

Police said the intruder had allegedly taken the locker key from its usual place and decamped with the valuables.

Seven Wells Police arrested Venkatesan, 44, living in the same locality, on April 25.

The stolen jewellery was recovered from his possession.

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

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	38	26
Chennai Airport	37	28
Chennai City	35	28

Chennai Airport Today
38°C Morning will be comfortable. Day will be slightly hot and uneasy. Night will also be comfortable. Dry weather to prevail.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
38°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slightly hot and uneasy. Night will be comfortable.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2026
All rights reserved.

Timings
CHENNAI

MONDAY, APR. 27			
RISE	05:51	SET	18:23
RISE	14:57	SET	02:45
TUESDAY, APR. 28			
RISE	05:50	SET	18:24
RISE	15:45	SET	03:22
WEDNESDAY, APR. 29			
RISE	05:50	SET	18:24
RISE	16:33	SET	03:58

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Construction Organization, Ernakulam Jn
1.Tender Notice No. 5-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated 24.04.2026
Name of work: Doubling of track between Thiruvananthapuram & Kanniyakumari - **Proposed reconstruction of Br.No. 108 (ROB) @ CH 245719.71m (CN CH: 245702.34m) with 1 x 24 m effective span Composite Girder** between Neyyattinkara & Parassala stations. **Tender Value: Rs 1225.99 Lakhs, Bid Security: Rs.24,52,000/- Completion Period : 12 Months**
Date and time of tender closing: 18/05/2026. 15.00 Hrs
Complete details and tender document will be available at **https://www.ireps.gov.in**
Chief Engineer/Construction
Ernakulam Jn

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder
Call our toll-free number
1800 102 1878
Or write to us at
customercare@thehindu.co.in
Scan the QR code to register your feedback
THE HINDU · thehindu businessline. · FRONTLINE · SPORTSTAR · The Hindu Young World · THE HINDU

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
Department of Mines and Geology
Email:dmg-eauction-mines@telangana.gov.in
Ref:3526719/MI/MMB/Phase-VI/2026 Date:April 27,2026
Notice Inviting Tender
'Invitation of bids for grant of Quarry Lease for Minor Mineral blocks'
The Department of Mines and GeMology, Government of Telangana, invites bids for the grant of quarry leases for 22 Minor Mineral Blocks (without embedded clearances) through electronic auction under Rule 12 and 13 of the Telangana Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 1966, as notified pursuant to Section 15 of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. The minerals proposed for grant include **Colour Granite, Building Stone, Rough Stone, Road Metal and Gravel.**
Interested bidders may obtain the Tender Document containing eligibility criteria, auction schedule, reserve price, bidding parameters, terms and conditions, and other details from the e-auction portal of MSTC Limited at: **https://www.mstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/mmb/tgmmb/index.jsp).**
Mineral Block Summaries and the Model Tender Document are available free of cost in the portal. Block-specific Tender Documents are available for purchase from the portal. Interested bidders may register themselves on the MSTC website to obtain login credentials required for submission of bids and participation in the e-auction process.
The date for commencement of Sale of Tender Document is **Wednesday, 29 April, 2026.** The last date for puchase of the Tender Document is **Wednesday, 13 May, 2026, on or before 17:00 hours (IST)** and the last date for submission of bids **(both on-line and physical)** is **Tuesday, 19 May, 2026, on or before 17:00 hours (IST).**
Sd/-
Director of Mines & Geology (FAC).
DIPR R.O.No. 66-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/2026-27 Dt: 26-04-2026

NEYVELI BOOK FAIR – 2026
(Under the aegis of NLC India Limited)
Silver Jubilee Edition
ATTENTION – PUBLISHERS & BOOK SELLERS!!!
It is hereby informed that the **25th Neyveli Book Fair** will be conducted **from 19.06.2026 to 29.06.2026.**
The online portal registration for booking of stalls in the **Neyveli Book Fair – 2026** will be opened from **10.00 am of 29.04.2026 to 5.00 pm of 08.05.2026** in the NLCIL website **www.nlcindia.in** .
For detailed information on Registration process, Rules & Regulations and General Information please refer **"Neyveli Book Fair – 2026"** page of NLCIL website **www.nlcindia.in** available from **29.04.2026, 10.00 am** onwards.

CLASSIFIEDS MART
TO ADVERTISE VISIT
www.thehinduads.com
CALL: 044-28576300 ▪ TOLL FREE: 1800 102 4161
or Contact your nearest Authorised space sellers

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME
I,ANTONY PREM Thevaraj, son of Antony Ananda Thevaraj, holder of Indian Passport No. T1478038, issued at Chennai on 20/02/2019, permanent resident of Plot 1333, Flat 1 b, Mayur apartments, 20th main road, Annanagar west, Chennai 600040 and presently residing at 401–20686 Eastleigh Cres, Langley, BC, V3A 0M4 do hereby change my name from Antony Prem Thevaraj to Tony Matthews, with immediate effect.

OLD AGE HOME
PALLIATIVE CARE at your home Trained Nurses, 24/7, Dr., Physio visits, Lab tests 1800–313–1883 tikotra.com/seniors

EDUCATIONAL

VACANCIES
PART TIME science teachers wanted. contact@bestieteacher.com

HEALTH
HAPPY FOOT SPA Reflexology Come as 2 & Pay 1 – @ Alwarpet. 72004 05144

PEST CONTROL
NETLON SAINTGOBAIN SS Doortype SV Trading Authorised Dealer:9940386715

BUSINESS OFFERS
Pedder Johnson®
Quality Independence
Toilet Safety Rail · Raised Toilet Seat · Patient Lifter · Hip Abduction Pillow · Turnover Pillow
Scan QR code for Brochure
Call:73044 25545
For Dealers Enquiry
Call: 88791 79696
www.pedderjohnson.com

CINEMA ❖ ARTS ❖ EVENTS
MUSIC DANCE DRAMA
KARTIK FINE ARTS [REGD]
Ph: 24997788, 9840928049
In association with Title sponsor
Dr.SHREEVARMA'S
present
Kartik Rajagopal
35th Kodai Nataka Vizha 2026.
Today 7pm at
Narada Gana Sabha Main Hall
PMG Mayurapriya
inaugurates
"Kallabiramam"
by P. Muthukumaran,
Production : Vaishali Prashanth
ALL ARE WELCOME
Please visit
Dr.Shreevarma's Stall
at Main Entrance

Kedaram (9884066767)
Lec Dem By Sangitha Kalanidhi R. K. Shriramkumar on Sangeetham and Sahityam of Shyamasastry kritis at Raghasudha Hall by 6.15 p.m. Mylapore. All are welcome.

Sri Thiagaraja Sangeetha Vidwath Samajam, Mylapore
Today 6.30 PM. Gayathri Girish - Vocal, M. Vijay - Violin, Neyveli S. Skandasubramanian - Violin, Adambakkam K. Shankar - Ghatam. All are welcome. www.srithiagarajasamajam.org

To advertise visit
www.thehinduads.com
☎ 044-28576300
☎ Toll Free: 1800 102 4161

SHRI NARENDRA MODI

Honourable Prime Minister of India

JSW JFE Steel Limited

(Formerly Known as JSW Sambalpur Steel Limited)

FORGING AHEAD

STRONGER TOGETHER

LEFT TO RIGHT: Shri Jayanarayan Mishra, Hon'ble MLA - Sambalpur, Shri Tankadhar Tripathy, Hon'ble MLA - Jharsuguda, Shri. Rabi Narayan Naik, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Drinking Water of Odisha. Shri. Suresh Pujari, Hon'ble Minister of Revenue and Disaster Management of Odisha, H.E. Mr. Keiichi Ono, Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of Japan to India, Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan, Hon'ble Union Minister of Education, GOI, Shri. Mohan Charan Majhi, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Mr. Sajjan Jindal, Chairman, JSW Group, Mr. Yoshihisa Kitano, President & CEO, JFE Holdings, Inc., Smt. Anu Garg, Chief Secretary of Odisha, Mr. Parth Jindal, MD, JSW Cement & JSW Paints and Chairman, JSW Dulux, Mr. Jayant Acharya, JMD & CEO, JSW Steel, Mr. Hiroyuki Ogawa, Board Director, JFE Steel Corporation.

JSW Steel and JFE Steel Join Forces to Power India's Steel Future — a 10 MTPA vision in Odisha.

A Landmark 50:50 joint venture between JSW Steel and JFE Steel, two of the world's leading steelmakers.

Located in Sambalpur - Odisha, the facility will scale from **4.5 MTPA to 10 MTPA** and beyond, creating thousands of jobs and reinforcing Odisha's position as a thriving industrial ecosystem.

A STEP FORWARD IN BUILDING A STRONGER, AATMANIRBHAR BHARAT.

Traffic congestion on GST Road as residents return to city after voting

The police deployed personnel on key stretches for return-route management, and at multiple strategic points to manage vehicular movement; the road witnessed jams at various locations including Singaperumal Koil and Chengalpattu bypass

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

At a crawl: Heavy traffic congestion near Kalaignar Centenary Bus Terminus in Kilambakkam on Sunday. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Traffic on the GST Road slowed down considerably on Sunday as residents started to come back from their hometowns after voting in the Assembly elections last week.

The road witnessed jams at various locations including Singaperumal Koil, Chengalpattu bypass, and near Paranur toll plaza. The snarl lasted for a length of over 2 km at Singaperumal Koil.

Sources in the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said that the worst snarls happen when multi-axle vehicles, heavy vehicles, buses, and cars come at the same time. "If personal vehicles alone pass, the lines at the toll plazas get cleared faster. One tractor would end up blocking the lane," said an official. Another official said that they expect more vehicles to take the road from Sunday night.

"People travelling from the southern districts come by buses, and those vehicles start in the evening to reach the capital by Monday morning. We expect the stretch between Paranur and Kilambakkam to witness heavy traffic from late Sunday night till about 10 a.m. on Monday," the official said.

Srivathsan, who runs the Only Coffee outlet at Madurantakam, said that it took his staff over 20 minutes to cross the road in the morning. The road was jam packed as usual and running to capacity, he said.

Wayside amenities

Motorists taking the road have been demanding wayside amenities at Ulundurpet, Thirumandurai, Vikravandi, and Paranur as they would like to take a break in between their journey.

Expecting many more would travel back to the city till Monday morning, Traffic police of Tambaram City Police deployed personnel along key stretches for return-route management and at multiple strategic points to manage vehicular movement within the Tambaram City Police limits.

Commissioner Sanjay Kumar set up a special monitoring cell and personnel have been stationed at Paranur Toll Plaza to monitor the inflow of vehicles, while arrangements have been made at Singaperumal Koil to divert heavy vehicles towards Oragadam if required.

Special attention has also been given to pedestrian movement, with personnel posted opposite the Kilambakkam bus terminus to facilitate passengers crossing the road to board MTC buses.

Traffic regulations

Traffic regulation measures were also in place at Vandalur junction.

In addition, all signal points and bus stops along the stretch from Paranur Toll Plaza to Chennai Airport were monitored as part of the traffic management plan, the police said.

Gridlock at Hasthinapuram bus stand junction due to shopfront encroachments

T. Arvind
CHENNAI

Choked stretch: A mini bus makes its way through a narrow stretch of Thiruporur Road leading to the Hasthinapuram bus stand in Chromepet.

Commuters navigating the Hasthinapuram bus stand junction in Chromepet face traffic congestion everyday, as encroachments and narrowing road width on either side severely restrict vehicular movement, particularly during peak hours.

On the northern stretch of Thiruporur Road, from the Government High School to the Hasthinapuram bus stand, office-goers and parents dropping children at school, are caught in traffic congestion due to roadside encroachments.

A similar situation prevails on the southern stretch from Vinobhaji Nagar 7th Main Road, where narrow road width compounds the problem. The two stretches converge at the junction, forcing vehicles to take turns onto Rajendra Prasad Road, a key link to MIT junction and GST Road.

Illegal parking

Encroachments on the southern side include illegal parking on a vacant plot, loading and unloading of construction materials at a shop, and haphazard parking in front of gyms and commercial establishments.

Roadside tea stalls and eateries further narrow the carriageway, leaving little room for vehicles to pass. Two-wheeler riders, especially women, are often seen struggling to navigate the congestion during peak hours.

Congestion spills over

The impact extends beyond the junction. "The congestion on Thiruporur Road often spills over up to the middle of Rajendra Prasad Road," said John, an autorickshaw driver, adding that minibuses such as S2 and S4 face difficulty operating along the stretch.

Drivers of Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) buses operating from the Hasthinapuram bus stand, established about a year ago, say manoeuvring their vehicles at the junction is a challenge. "Encroachments and erratic parking along Rajendra Prasad Road up to the MIT flyover is another headache for us," an MTC driver said.

The police said that while patrols and warnings are issued, violations tend to recur.

Residents have called for stronger enforcement. Social activist Meenakshisundaram suggested deploying a dedicated traffic personnel at the junction.

'Expanding population'

"With areas such as Nemilicherry and Sembakkam expanding rapidly, authorities could consider engaging NCC or NSS volunteers if there is a staff shortage," he said.

Residents and commuters said the situation could worsen as the population grows.

They urged better coordination between the Tambaram Corporation, police, and elected representatives to implement traffic management measures, and regulate encroachments before congestion becomes unmanageable.

Despite high prices, residents flock to Kasimedu to buy fish

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The fishing harbour at Kasimedu in the city witnessed large crowds on Sunday, after the fishing ban began on the Eastern coast. With the ban in place, mechanised boats remain on shore, leading to the quantity of fish landing coming down from 120 tonnes - 150 tonnes to 35 tonnes - 40 tonnes a day.

"Due to the heat, people don't prefer to consume mutton or chicken, and instead prefer fish. With catamarans and smaller FRPs (fiber reinforced plastic) that fish close to the coast bringing back fresh fish everyday, buyers prefer Kasimedu to any of the other fish markets, where fish from Kerala is sold," said community leader Nanjil Ravi.

Varieties including *madava, vaalai, aila, manja paarai*, were sold at Kasimedu. Due to the huge demand, fish prices have more than doubled, said traders.

Vanjaram, that was selling at ₹800 a kg before the ban, was sold at ₹1,200 a kg. *Paarai* that was available at ₹530/kg was sold at ₹950/kg, and *nethili* which was sold at ₹370/kg was sold at ₹600/kg, said a trader. Subramani, a resident of Karapakkam, said, "I usually come to Kasimedu, since the fish is fresh. I do not mind the exorbitant price," he said.

Man misappropriates ₹14 lakh by claiming police had seized it

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A 25-year-old worker was arrested for allegedly staging a fake robbery claim, stating that traffic police had seized ₹14 lakh from him in Koyambedu.

According to police, the complainant, Tanveer Ahmed, 37, runs an aluminium scrap business in Periamedu. He had employed Mohammed Tanjir, 25, as a driver-cum-assistant.

On April 24, Tanveer Ahmed sent Tanjir to a mobile phone shop in Koyambedu to collect ₹14 lakh. After collecting the cash, Tanjir later claimed that a traffic policeman intercepted his autorickshaw, seized the money, took him on a two-wheeler, and dropped him near the Maduravoyal bypass, asking him to collect the amount from a police station. He also alleged that his mobile phone was taken. Based on the complaint, Koyambedu Police registered a case and launched an inquiry.

During investigation, the police found that Tanjir had fabricated the story. He had allegedly misappropriated the money and hidden it in a house in Ponneri, falsely claiming that it was seized by traffic police.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OM SHANTI

Mr. R. Suryanarayanan
Born : 30.05.1948
Died : 25.04.2026
Retd. Chief Manager,
Central Bank of India
Deeply mourned by family and friends
Last rites: 27th April
@ Perambur Residence at 3 p.m.
Ph: 9444621562

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

17th ANNIVERSARY
Attained glory on 27th April, 2009

Mrs. Kanaka Thomas
Fondly remembered by
T. Joseph and
Dr. Hemalatha Joseph,
Rohit and Devina,
Rohan and Nivetha,
Harvey Joseph and
Ryan Joseph

17th Anniversary

S. Jaspal Singh Aneja
28.07.1946 • 27.04.2009
Always
in our Memories
Fondly remembered by
FAMILY MEMBERS and
Sintron Electronics P. Ltd
Singh Trading Company
Anejas@OMR
CHENNAI

DEATH

OBITUARY

T N Subramanian (Age 93)
Passed away peacefully on 26th April 2026.
Mourned by near and dear.
Daughters
Revathi Lakshminarayan
Padma Balasubramani
Phone: 9551261161

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

TENTH YEAR ANNIVERSARY

ANNALETCHUMY DHARMALINGAM
W/o (Late) Mr. P.M.Dharmalingam
Our Angel in Heaven; Guiding us safe "You will always be in our hearts"
Bose Dharmalingam (Son) & Selvarani (Daughter-in-law)
Indira Kogulan (Daughter) & Kogulan (Son-in-law)
Grandchildren: Winston- Natasha, Andrew,
Andrea- Prem Anand, Caitlin, Carrine,
Nivethan, Meena, Meera
Great Grand children: Sofia & Aiden
The Ideal Beach Resort Family
Mb: 98840-88808

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

At

GALGOTIAS

It's About the Company We Keep and The Students We Empower Through Placements

Driven by Students, Backed by Top Recruiters

Batch 2026 Highlights

526 Students Placed in Infosys

228 Students Placed in Capgemini

205 Students Placed in cognizant

119 Students Placed in LTM

188 Students Placed in CUB City Union Bank Ltd

91 Students Placed in accenture

61 Students Placed in EY

{ 4700+ PLACEMENT OFFERS SECURED FOR BATCH 2026 AS ON DATE }

Centre for Drone Intelligence & Simulation

Next Gen Structure and Smart Hydraulics Lab

Centre of Excellence - Tableau AI Data Lab

HP-Intel AI for Future Workforce Lab

Semiconductor Research Lab

INDUSTRY INTEGRATED ACADEMIC CENTRES

Centre for Supercomputing & Advanced AI Research anchored by Nvidia DGX H200 GPUs

Advanced Geotechnical and Earth Science Centre

Centre for Design Thinking & Augmented Reality

TATA Technologies Learning Centre

Cisco Centre of Excellence

GALGOTIAS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

For Admissions Scan to Apply

Email: admissions@galgotiacollege.edu

Web: www.galgotiacollege.edu

Following Programs are accredited by NBA
BTech - ECE, EE, EEE, CSE, IT & CE

Galgotias College of Engineering and Technology
Admissions Helpline No.:
0120-4513800, +91-7303382061
+91-7303382063

GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY

For Admissions Scan to Apply

Email: admission@galgotiasuniversity.edu.in

Web: www.galgotiasuniversity.edu.in

B.Pharma Program accredited by NBA

Galgotias University
Admissions Helpline No.:
9810162221, 9717300418, 9582847072
9971026125 **0120-4370000**

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS 2026 RANKED 1201-1400

RANKED 15th **amongst Top** Private Universities in India

RANKED 43rd **amongst Top** Private & Government Universities in India

For Computer Science and Information Systems

RANKED 2nd in Uttar Pradesh amongst Private Universities

RANKED 11th in India amongst Private Universities

G-SCALE
GALGOTIAS STUDENT CENTERED ACTIVE LEARNING ECOSYSTEM
• Critical Thinking • Collaboration • Engagement • Experiential Learning

G-SCALE moves education beyond passive lectures to an environment where students actively engage in real-world problem-solving, collaboration, and experiential learning.

NAAC GRADE A+ Accredited University | THE Times Higher Education | nirf National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

Apply Today for Career-Focused 2026–27 UG/PG/Diploma/Ph.D. Programmes at Galgotias University

Computer Science and Engineering | Electronics and Communication Engineering | Electrical Engineering | Mechanical Engineering | Civil Engineering | Computer Applications and Technology | Defence Technology | Artificial Intelligence | Business | Aviation | Logistics and Supply Chain Management | Tourism Management | Liberal Education | Languages | Finance & Commerce | Basic Sciences | Biosciences and Technology | Forensic Sciences | Agriculture | Law | Pharmacy | Allied Health Sciences | Nursing | Media and Communication Studies | Hospitality | Design | Education | Polytechnic | Vocational Education | Skilling and Entrepreneurship

#GetYourSelfPlaced

International delegates get to witness polling in T.N.

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Under the International Election Visitors' Programme, delegates from various countries witnessed the polling process during the recently concluded Assembly election in the State.

"India is giving the whole world the experience, procedures and knowledge, how to do it [conduct the election]. This is what democracy is...bring the vote to the voter," High Commissioner of Mauritius to India Sheilabai Bappoo was quoted as saying in an official press note issued by the Election Commission of India.

She witnessed the polling process at a polling station in Chennai on April 23. The delegates visited Tamil Nadu on April 22 and 23, and observed the systematic movement of polling parties along with election materials through well-planned logistics and established standard operating procedures.

The delegates also interacted with Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik. They were apprised of the overall conduct of elections and the security arrangements in place to ensure a peaceful and smooth process.

"The most important thing I have learned is the minimum assured facilities the ECI and District Election Officer are providing the voters, specifically the help desk and colour coding," Tshering Samdrup, a delegate from Bhutan, said.

Vijay's assets: another case in HC questions loan extended to estranged wife Sangeetha

The actor-turned-politician had not properly explained large amounts of loan extended by him to various individuals and entities, says the litigant, a voter from Perambur Assembly constituency

Mohamed Imranullah S.
CHENNAI

One more writ petition has been filed in the Madras High Court, seeking an inquiry into the assets declared by Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president C. Joseph Vijay while filing his nomination for contesting from the Perambur Assembly constituency in the election held this year.

The new writ petition has been listed for hearing before Chief Justice Sushrut Arvind Dharmadhikari and Justice G. Arul Murugan on Monday (April 27). The Bench had already ordered notice, returnable by June 3, to the Income Tax Department in a similar case filed last week.

The latest case had been filed by M.P. Venkatesh, 32, of Kodungaiyur in Chennai. In his affidavit, the petitioner said that as a voter in the Perambur Assembly constituency, he was entitled to be informed about the financial status of every candidate, and that they were obliged to make truthful disclosures.

He said the disclosures expected to be made by the candidates in Form 26 were not an empty ritual or formality, but a substantive constitutional obligation. Any suppression, concealment, misstatement or manipulation of material particulars would amount to a fraud on the electoral process, he added.

A bare reading of Vijay's election affidavit discloses a "disturbing and consistent pattern of suppression, misrepresentation and financial obfuscation", the petitioner alleged. FILE PHOTO

Pointing out that Mr. Vijay had projected himself as a proponent of clean and transparent politics, the petitioner said: "However, his own disclosures in the 2026 nomination affidavit reveal substantial financial dealings, including high value loans extended to family members and closely connected entities, which have triggered serious public concern and scrutiny."

He went on to state: "The disclosure of a ₹12.6 crore loan to his spouse, Sangeetha, has assumed greater significance in the light of widely reported developments concerning matrimonial disputes, thereby raising legitimate questions about the genuineness, purpose and characterization of such transactions."

Further, referring to affidavit disclosures regarding loans extended to various other individuals and entities, the petitioner said: "The fifth respondent (Mr. Vijay) has simultaneously declared zero liabilities and no outstanding dues, thereby projecting an artificially sanitized and misleading financial profile. Such contradictory disclosures, including large transfers such as ₹20 crore to the Kokilambal Educational Trust, are neither properly explained nor truthfully presented."

Alleging that a bare reading of the election affidavit discloses a "disturbing and consistent pattern of suppression, misrepresentation and financial obfuscation", the petitioner sought an inquiry into the issue by the Election Commission of India as well as the Director General of Income Tax (Investigation).

Two other cases

The Chief Justice's Bench would hear on Monday two more cases of a similar nature, regarding the assets disclosed in the election affidavits of the AIADMK's former Ministers, D. Jayakumar and C. Ve. Shanmugam, who contested the election from the Royapuram and Mailam constituencies, respectively.

The first case against Mr. Vijay had been filed by V. Vignesh, another voter from the Perambur Assembly constituency, who alleged that there was a difference of over ₹100 crore in the assets declared by the TVK leader in the affidavits he had submitted before the Returning Officers in the Perambur and Tiruchi East Assembly constituencies, since he was contesting from two constituencies.

However, that petitioner had not submitted in the court the amended affidavits that had been accepted by the Returning Officer of the Perambur constituency, and had instead relied only on a rejected affidavit.

Two gaurs die, two calves rescued after falling into well in Manapparai forest range

Fatal fall: The carcass of a gaur being lifted from a well at Karuppur village in the Manapparai forest range on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

R. Rajaram
TIRUCHI

Four gaurs, including two calves, fell into a farmwell at Karuppur village in Manapparai forest range in Tiruchi district on Saturday night. Two of them were found dead, while the other two – both calves – were rescued by a team of field-level personnel from the Forest Department and the Fire and Rescue Services on Sunday.

The four animals fell into the well around 8.15 p.m. on Saturday. Forest Department officials inspected the well on being alerted by the residents. The nearly 80-foot-deep well had about 10 feet of water. Initially, three gaurs were spotted on Saturday night. The fourth animal was noticed on Sunday, a Forest Department official said, and added that one gaur was dead, and its carcass was floating in the water.

The operation was launched in the early hours of Sunday by the joint team, after mobilising necessary material. A team of veterinarians was present. R. Kanchana, Conservator of Forests, Tiruchi Circle, monitored the rescue operation.

First, the water was drained from the well using a motor. A crane was brought to the spot. The two dead animals were found to be male, with one aged four and the other three. They had apparently died in the impact of the fall. The carcasses were lifted with a crane.

The team managed to rescue two calves – both around one-and-a-half years old – from the well. The operation lasted six hours, the officials said. The condition of the two rescued calves was assessed by the veterinarians. The calves were given medications before being released.

An autopsy was performed on the two dead animals at the nearby Karuppureddipatti reserve forest, and they were buried thereafter.

The officials suspect that the four animals may have strayed into the area before falling into the open well at night.

The Manapparai and adjoining Thuvarankurichi forest ranges in Tiruchi district have a sizeable number of gaurs, which are constantly on the move, especially at night. There have also been earlier instances of gaurs and other animals having fallen into open wells in the vicinity of the reserve forests in the Manapparai and Thuvarankurichi forest ranges.

THE HINDU

EDUCATIONPLUS

GET THE EDGE Follow us facebook.com/thehindu twitter.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

Beyond the thesis

If doctoral research stops at writing and never reaches real-world application, can it truly claim to create impact?

Harilal Bhaskar

For a long time, doctoral research was guided by a simple expectation: think harder than anyone else about a narrowly defined problem and prove it through writing. The thesis became the ultimate marker of intellectual maturity; a document that signalled depth, discipline, and originality.

That expectation was not misguided. It was appropriate for its time. But the conditions under which it evolved have changed faster than the system that upholds it. The challenge confronting societies today is not a shortage of ideas. It is the slow and uncertain journey from ideas to functioning solutions. Knowledge circulates freely; usable capability does not. The distance increasingly determines whether nations lead or follow.

Conversion problem

This gap is where doctoral education now finds itself exposed. Across key sectors – energy systems, advanced manufacturing, artificial intelligence, health technologies, climate adaptation – the limiting factor is no longer theoretical understanding but the ability to convert insight into something that works reliably outside controlled environments. Doctoral training sits at the centre of this conversion problem.

Over time, the Ph.D. has become exceptionally good at producing publications and measurable academic novelty. What it produces far less consistently are systems that can be deployed, tested under real conditions, and sustained at scale. This is not an indictment of researchers. It is the predictable outcome of evaluation structures that prioritise articulation over application.

The real issue, therefore, is not talent. It is alignment. A thesis demonstrates that a scholar understands a problem in depth. It does not demonstrate that the problem can be solved under constraints, adapted to context, or carried forward by others. In a slower era, that distinction was tolerable. Today, it is decisive.

Technological advantage is now measured in compressed timelines. Countries that shorten the path from research to deployment gain leverage. Those that do not, irrespective of academic output, become dependent on external systems to operationalise their own ideas. This reality demands a rethink of what doctoral achievement represents.

New parameters

Writing cannot remain the sole endpoint. The future of doctoral work must be judged by responsibility for outcomes; by whether research survives interaction with real users, real environments, and real failure modes. This does not mean sidelining theory or abandoning fundamental inquiry. Foundational science remains essential. But treating a written document as the only legitimate proof of doctoral merit no longer reflects how knowledge creates value in the world.

What is needed is an additional doctoral pathway: one that evaluates construction alongside comprehension. Where candidates are assessed on how systems perform, how results can be reproduced, and how solutions behave beyond the laboratory. In such a model, writing still matters but as documentation of something that exists and functions, not as a substitute for it. This raises standards rather than lowering them.

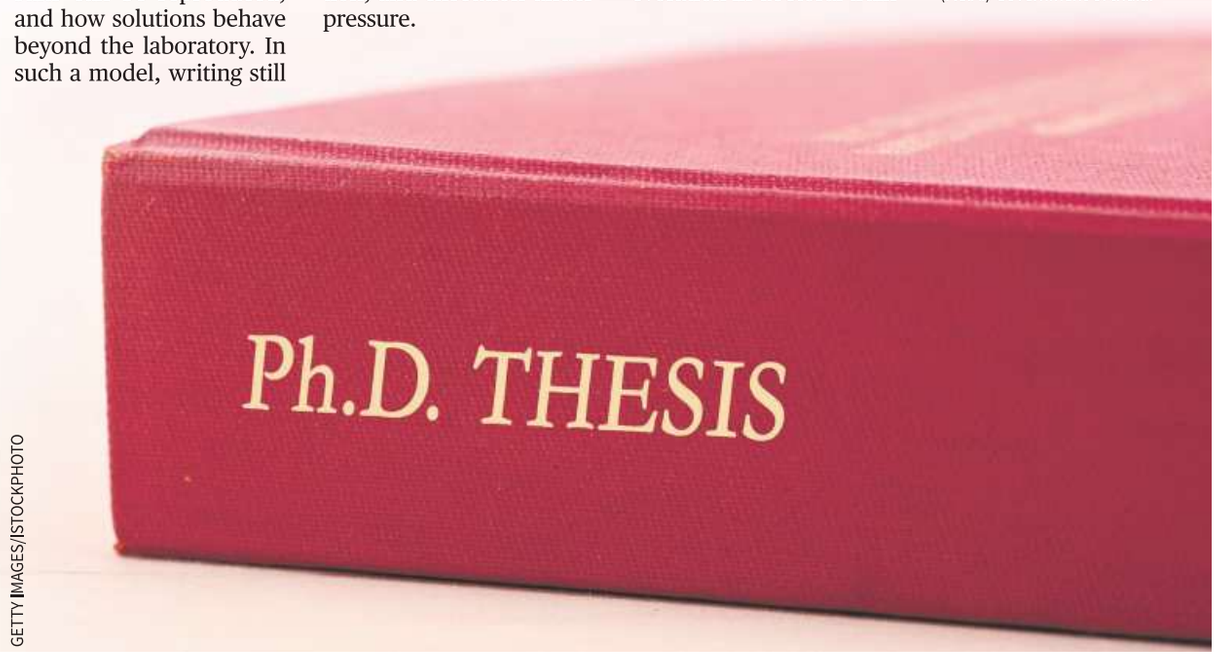
Explaining an idea is demanding. Making it work, repeatedly and reliably, is harder. For researchers, such a shift is not a threat. It broadens what counts as excellence. It allows doctoral work to escape the narrow life-cycle of journals and enter longer, more consequential trajectories. It acknowledges forms of intelligence that academia has often undervalued: systems thinking, integration, and execution under pressure.

For institutions, however, it is unsettling. It requires new evaluation norms, collaboration beyond disciplinary boundaries, and closer engagement with industry, public systems, and mission-oriented programmes. It forces a reconsideration of what advanced education is ultimately meant to serve.

Is the purpose of a Ph.D. to certify intellectual capability alone or to strengthen collective capacity? These goals are not contradictory. But in the current context, treating them as separate has become untenable. India, especially, faces this choice at a critical moment. Investments in shared research facilities, national technology platforms, and strategic sectors are expanding. Without corresponding evolution in doctoral training, the country risks producing sophisticated knowledge that remains detached from deployment pathways. Doctoral education should amplify national capability, not delay it.

The researcher of the future will still value rigour, question assumptions, and pursue depth. But they will also build, test, iterate, and deliver under real conditions. The decisive question will not be how impressive a thesis reads. It will be whether the research altered what could be done. If doctoral systems cannot answer that question with confidence, reform is not a matter of preference. It is unavoidable.

The writer is COO and National Coordinator at I-STEM under the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser (P.S.A.) Government of India.



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

SCHOLARSHIPS

INMAS DRDO Internship
Offered by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a specialised laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, (DRDO), Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
Eligibility: Indian nationals below 28 years currently in the seventh or eighth semester of a full-time BE or B.Tech. or third or fourth semester of an M.Sc or M.Tech. with minimum 75%, or more than 7.5 CGPA on a scale of 10.
Rewards: ₹5,000 a month.
Application: Email research-academic@gov.in
Deadline: April 30
www.b4s.in/edge/IMDR1

Catalyst Scholarship Programme
Offered by Elgi Equipment and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham University.
Eligibility: Students born between July 1, 2004, and June 30, 2010 with a minimum aggregate of 80-85% in Maths, Physics, and Chemistry in Class 12. and who have appeared for the Amrita Entrance Examination - Engineering 2026 (AEEE).
Rewards: Fully funded scholarship.
Application: Online
Deadline: April 30
www.b4s.in/edge/CSPP1

Norwich University of the Arts GREAT Scholarship
A joint initiative of the Norwich University of the Arts, the U.K. and the British Council under the GREAT Britain Campaign.
Eligibility: Indian citizens who hold a valid passport and a valid offer to pursue a full-time postgraduate course at the university and are classified as overseas or international fee-payers, and fulfil conditions outlined in the offer
Rewards: £10,000 reduction in tuition fee
Application: Online
Deadline: May 3
www.b4s.in/edge/NUAG2

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

SBI Youth for India Fellowship

SBI invites applications for the 14th edition of the SBI Youth for India Fellowship, a 13-month immersive rural development programme designed for youth to work closely with rural communities across India.

Eligibility: Indian citizens, OCI-card holders or NRIs between 21 and 32 years who hold a Bachelor's degree.

Deadline: April 30
youthforindia.org

Plan A or B?

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

I completed Engineering in 2020. For the past five years, I have been preparing for the Civil Services and other competitive exams but I didn't clear them. Now I want to pursue an MBA. Is this the right path? Umesh

Dear Umesh,

An MBA is the right path only if you are doing it for the right reasons. It is a professional, demanding and outcome-oriented course. It can be an incredible launchpad, but you need to enter it with clarity, not desperation. Your Quantitative Aptitude skills are transferable, and you will need to take the CAT, XAT, or GMAT for admissions.

But the question is why do you want to do an MBA now? Own your gap years with a clear narrative beyond exam prep. Show how you have chosen to create impact through this time. Build your profile by gaining practical experience through internships, micro-consulting, or projects for NGOs to strengthen your story.

Complete online certifications in Finance, Marketing, or Data Analytics to build business skills. Start a blog or LinkedIn newsletter analysing business or economic issues weekly to build your profile.

I finished M.Sc. Maths and am preparing for banking exams. I want to become financially independent soon. What is a suitable career for my profile? What can I have as Plan B? Shilpa

Dear Shilpa,

An M.Sc. Maths is an elite degree. The banking exams are incredibly competitive but the jobs actually under-utilise your potential.

Consider pivoting toward careers where your degree is an asset and gives you a genuine advantage over other candidates. Not 'Plan B' but a 'better Plan A'.

Have you considered roles like data analyst or data scientist? Learning Python (Pandas, NumPy, Scikit-learn), SQL, and tools like Power BI or Tableau in the next six to nine months can prepare you for entry-level roles companies.

Actuarial Science is a gold-standard career for maths graduates but requires clearing exams conducted by the Institute of Actuaries of India. It has multiple levels but you can begin working in an actuarial firm after the initial exams.

You could also explore roles like risk analyst or quantitative analyst in investment banks, consulting firms, or corporate treasury. Build skills in finance, advanced Excel, and Python or R.

If academia interests you, clearing the NET exam can lead to roles as a lecturer or assistant professor, which offer stability, good pay, and work-life balance.

Exams like the Indian Statistical Service (ISS) and Statistician roles in NSSO are designed for Maths/Statistics postgraduates. These have less competition due to limited eligibility.

As a Plan B, choose something that supports you financially while you build your main career. Options include online tutoring, working with ed-tech firms, or entry-level analytics roles like data entry operator or MIS Executive to gain experience and start earning.

My 13-year-old son is in Class 8 in Vizianagaram. He is interested in space studies. How can we help him achieve his dream? Srikar

Dear Srikar,

Focus on sparking his curiosity and introducing him to real space science.

ISRO offers a free, self-paced course called *Space Science, Technology and Applications* for students from Class 8 onwards. It comes with a certificate on completion.

In Class 9, he can target the ISRO YUva VIgyani KAryakram (YUVIKA), a two-week residential programme conducted at various ISRO centres for students who have passed Class 9. It offers them stay at an ISRO centre, expert lectures, visit labs, and hands-on experience.

ISRO covers the cost of study material, accommodation, and food, and even reimburses travel fare. The selection is merit-based.

In Classes 11–12, he should take Physics and Maths to build a strong foundation. If he enjoys building rockets and satellites, he can pursue B.Tech. Aerospace, Avionics, or Space Technology. If he is curious about concepts like galaxies and stars, he can choose a B.Sc. in Physics/Mathematics and later specialise in Astronomy or Astrophysics.

The Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) in Thiruvananthapuram is India's first institution dedicated to space education and is directly supported by ISRO. It offers B.Tech. Aerospace Engineering and Avionics, and a unique five-year Dual Degree (B.Tech. + M.Sc.) in Engineering Physics with specialisations like Astronomy and Astrophysics.

The IITs, NITs, and Manipal Institute of Technology are also well known for their B.Tech. programmes in Aerospace, Mechanical, Electronics, and Computer Science Engineering .

I completed my B.Tech. CSE-AI in 2025. Despite a good CGPA, I have not got a job. I am confused about whether to prepare for Gate 2027, pursue M. Tech., continue hunting for jobs in the IT sector, or write the UPSC for a government job. Shaik

Dear Shaik,

This is not your fault. This is a structural shift with entry-level roles vanishing.

If you take the GATE in 2027 for a M.Tech, you will need to spend two years specialising. The UPSC is total switching of gears! The age limit is 21-32 for the general category and the success rate is under 1%. Preparation typically takes one or two years of intense study. Choose this only if you genuinely want to serve in administration.

My recommendation is to upskill while hunting! Employers are looking for AI literacy, automation fluency, and specialised capabilities across foundation model adaptation, multi-agent systems, AI security and jailbreak defence, and responsible AI implementation. This is the most direct path to employment. Build projects. Create a portfolio. Contribute to open-source. Make yourself visible and demonstrably skilled.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

Digital museum

The Advanced Study Institute of Asia (ASIA) and Faculty of Law, SGT University, Gurugram, conducted a virtual launch of The Living Constitution: The Draft of Democracy, a digital museum dedicated to the Constitution of India. The platform brings together the Constituent Assembly debates, archival records, biographies of the framers, historical timelines, and the visual and artistic life of the original illustrated manuscript. Visit https://www.livingconstitution.in/

From Page One

Helicopters deployed as forest fire spreads across the Nilgiris

Battling the blaze: More than 400 Forest Department personnel were roped in from across Tamil Nadu to put out the fire. M. SATHYAMOORTHY

The Collector made the request to the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority.

An Air Force team from Sulur conducted aerial reconnaissance, and was helping in dousing the fire using a helicopter, the release added.

Forest Department officials said the department was fighting multiple fires in the Singara and Masinagudi Forest Ranges in the MTR as well as those in Parson's Valley.

'Retaliation against inaction'

They believe the fires were started by people, possibly in retaliation for the perceived inaction on the part of the Forest Department after the killing of three persons by tigers in The Nilgiris last year.

The Forest Department has warned communities residing near the reserve forests against starting fires.

In Mudumalai, the fires might have been started by herders clearing dry grass for regeneration of cattle fodder, according to officials.

Palacode, Veerapandi and Kulithalai frontrunners in voter turnout since 2011

They saw high turnout in every Assembly poll held in the State since the 2008 delimitation. This is due to several factors, including political mobilisation on communal lines and local-level loyalties

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

Three Assembly segments – Palacode in Dharmapuri district, Veerapandi in Salem district, and Kulithalai in Karur district – have remained perennial toppers, featuring in the top five in terms of voter turnout in every Assembly election held since the delimitation of Tamil Nadu's constituencies in 2008.

The State's overall voter turnout has fluctuated over the years, from 78.29% in 2011 to 74.84% in 2016 and 73.51% in 2021 (held amid the COVID-19 pandemic), before surging to 85.15% in 2026 after the Special Intensive Revision of the electoral roll.

While several Assembly segments witnessed drastic changes in voter turnout in these elections, Palacode, Veerapandi, and Kulithalai retained their positions at the top, irrespective of the Statewide trend.

Ranking high: Kulithalai, which falls in the central region, stood second in the State in terms of voter turnout in 2011. FILE PHOTO

Several factors have contributed to the consistently high voter turnout in these segments. They include political mobilisation on communal lines as well as local-level loyalties.

In the 2026 election, Veerapandi recorded the second highest voter turnout in Tamil Nadu at 93.36%, following Karur (94.41%). It topped the State in 2011 with 89.16% and ranked fourth in both the 2016 (86.74%) and the 2021 elections (86.43%).

Veerapandi was once a stronghold of late DMK leader Veerapandi S. Arumugam, though the AIADMK dominated the constituency in the 1980s and the recent elections. Since 2011, the AIADMK has been winning this seat consecutively.

Another Assembly segment from western Tamil Nadu that has been topping the State's voter turnout list is Palacode, a predominantly rural segment. It topped the State in both 2016 (88.63%) and 2021 (88.13%), and ranked fourth in 2011.

In 2026, it recorded 90.57% and ranked fifth.

The constituency remains a stronghold of former AIADMK Minister K.P. Anbalagan, who has been winning the seat since 2001. He is among the few MLAs in Tamil Nadu to have been elected consecutively from the same constituency. In an attempt to challenge his dominance, the DMK has fielded D.N.V. Senthilkumar, former Dharmapuri Lok Sabha member, against him.

Unlike the other two Assembly segments in western Tamil Nadu, Kulithalai, which falls in the central region, ranked second in the State in terms of voter turnout in 2011 (88.83%), 2016 (88.16%), and 2021 (87.21%), before slipping to the third place in 2026, despite recording 92.8%.

Former Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi was first elected to the Assembly from Kulithalai in 1957. Over the decades, the seat has alternated between the DMK and the AIADMK.

Six Forest Dept. staff, DSP assaulted after man dies in elephant attack in Gudalur

The Hindu Bureau
UDHAGAMANDALAM

Six Forest Department staff sustained injuries after being assaulted by an angry mob, when they were attempting to retrieve the body of a man who died in an elephant attack at O'Valley in Gudalur late on Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as T. Kalaiselvan, 45. He was part of a team tasked with preparing meals for a temple festival being held in the area. He was attacked by the elephant when he went to fetch water from a well near a wooded area.

Hearing his cries, residents rushed to his aid, but were unable to rescue him. They staged a protest and prevented the Forest Department staff from retrieving his body and sending it for a post-mortem.

As tensions rose, some of the protesters allegedly attacked the department staff and their vehicles, saying they failed to protect the lives of the local residents.

In the attack, six temporary staff members of the Forest Department sustained injuries. Among them, Rajesh, 50, suffered a broken hand.

Protesters allegedly attacked the Forest Department staff and their vehicles, saying they failed to protect the lives of local residents

A Deputy Superintendent of Police was also assaulted, officials said.

Two arrested

The New Hope police registered a case following the incident. They have since arrested two people, identified as K. Arumugam, 40, and C. Manikandan, 29, and are on the lookout for four others.

After extensive negotiations, the protesters dispersed at around 3 a.m. on Sunday.

The department has released an interim compensation of ₹50,000 for the next of kin of the deceased.

Special teams have been formed to prevent human-elephant conflicts in the region.

Railways orders audit of signalling systems to ensure safe operations

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Indian Railways has ordered an audit of the signalling systems across its network to rectify deficiencies and improve the overall reliability of the critical assets for ensuring safe train operations.

Directing the general managers of all zonal railways to depute senior officers to conduct the audit, the Railway Board said in a safety advisory that it was essential to ensure the quality of newly commissioned installations and periodically review the existing/old systems to assess their reliability.

The instruction comes in the backdrop of many fatal accidents or derailments in the last three years, in which the failure of signals, especially in the automatic signalling territory, was suspected to be the reason.

In at least two incidents, including the accident involving the Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express in South Eastern Railway on June 2, 2023, which left about 290 passengers dead and 900 others injured, signals were in the green for speeding trains to run on the main line, but the points were set to the loop line.

The instruction comes in the backdrop of many fatal accidents or derailments in the last three years, in which the failure of signals was suspected to be the reason. FILE PHOTO

The advisory said the audit must cover the quality of installation and adherence to approved drawings and specifications, compliance with the Technical Advisory Note issued by the Research Design and Standards Organisation, the condition of equipment, wiring, earthing, and bonding, which were imperative for the effective functioning of the signalling systems.

"The objective of the audit is to identify faulty systems, ensure compliance with the prescribed standards, and improve the reliability of the signalling installations," a senior railway officer said, adding that the records of audit reports would be maintained by the zonal railways for review.

The Railways has also directed the general managers to conduct root-cause analysis of asset failures at the divisional level. "It is important that asset failures are investigated to arrive at the root cause. The divisional railway managers shall make sure that a detailed root-cause analysis of asset failures in their jurisdictions is done on a regular basis," the Railway Board said in an order issued last week.

The Railway Board Chairman and Chief Executive Officer would review the reports of asset failures by interacting with the divisional railway managers and their teams through video-conference and discuss the root-cause of such failures.

Research finds high microplastic contamination in mangrove fish

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A study reveals that the mangrove ecosystem of Pichavaram is experiencing "high contamination" of microplastics in fish and shellfish, raising ecological risks in the region.

The research, conducted by Bharathidasan University and published in *Chemosphere*, examines seasonal patterns of microplastic ingestion in aquatic species.

It noted that these particles, originating from degraded plastic waste and synthetic materials, are "pervasive pollutants in aquatic ecosystems", and are being consumed by a wide range of organisms.

According to the study, microplastic levels vary significantly across seasons, with the highest (around 45%) recorded during the monsoon. This spike is attributed to increased runoff and plastic inflow during heavy rains, which transport debris into the mangrove environment.

Toxic threat: According to the study, microplastic levels vary significantly across seasons, with the highest (around 45%) recorded during the monsoon. FILE PHOTO

The study highlights the need for targeted strategies to reduce pollution and its impact on marine life

The findings show that fish such as Rock Mullet (*Liza tade*) and Pearl Spot (*Etroplus suratensis*), along with shellfish such as *Portunus sanguinolentus* and *Scylla serrata*, exhibit notable ingestion levels.

In *Liza tade*, for instance, microplastic counts varied across seasons, reflecting how exposure changes with environmental conditions.

A significant share of detected particles – about 32% – measured less than one millimetre, indicating high bio-availability. Fibres dominated the samples, with blue (around 40%) and red among the most common colours. Polymer analysis identified polyethylene, polypropylene, and polyethylene terephthalate as the primary materials.

The study explained that mangrove ecosystems act as "natural bio-filters", trapping microplastics through their dense root systems and sedimentation processes. This high retention capacity allows plastics to accumulate and persist for long periods, increasing the likelihood of ingestion by aquatic organisms and their movement through the food web.

The research highlighted the "pervasive nature" and complex seasonal behaviour of microplastics in Pichavaram, and called attention to their ecological implications.

It also highlighted the need for targeted strategies to reduce pollution and its impact on marine life.

Panaiyur fossil assemblage dates back to Holocene period: study

Shankari Nivethitha B.
THOOTHUKUDI

A paleontological assessment of fossil assemblage at Panaiyur in Thoothukudi district reveals that it belongs to the middle to late Holocene period, approximately 8,000 to 12,000 years ago.

The technical report of the assessment by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) was authored by its scientific team comprising Dola Roy, Debashree Dam, R. Chandran, C. Raghunathan, and Dhriti Banerjee.

The team visited the site last January and conducted a detailed study of these fossils.

The study stemmed from a letter sent by former Thoothukudi Collector K. Elambahavath to the ZSI, after a local archaeology enthusiast, Rajesh Selvarathi, discovered the site located around 25 km from Thoothukudi.

Age estimate

According to the report, the tentative age was determined based on the stratigraphic position, sedimentological context, degree of fossilisation, and comparison with dated quaternary deposits from the region.

Several lines of evidence support this age estimate. One of the key factors is species composition, which consists entirely of extant taxa with modern distributions in the Gulf of Mannar, suggesting relatively recent depositions rather than ancient assemblages.

Another factor is the nature of sedimentary facies (sandy to silty sediments with shell concentrations), which are typical Holocene coastal and estuarine deposits formed during sea-level highstands.

The report states that the finding adds to the limited inventory of Quaternary fossil sites in Tamil Nadu and provides new data for understanding coastal evolution in the Gulf of Mannar region.

Additionally, the recovery of 104 specimens representing four taxonomic groups, which includes three bivalve taxa and one gastropod family, demonstrates a moderately diverse molluscan community.

According to the report, the identified fossil taxa are extant species or genera found in the Gulf of Mannar and adjacent waters. The morphological similarity between the fossil and modern specimens, combined with the absence of extinct species, indicates remarkable environmental continuity over the past several thousand years.

"This suggests that the fundamental oceanographic, climatic, and ecological conditions of the Gulf of Mannar have remained relatively stable throughout the Holocene period, despite fluctuations in sea level and coastal configuration," the report said.

The assemblage also indicates shallow marine to estuarine setting with mixed sandy-muddy substrates, moderate water circulation, marine to brackish salinity, and warm tropical temperatures.

Referring to this fossil assemblage, Sudhakar Sivasubramaniam, Head (in-charge), Department of Archaeology, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, said the structures were exposed due to soil erosion during the floods that hit Thoothukudi in 2023.

He said similar assemblages could be found from Panaiyur to Manappad, though intentional excavation would require significant financial investment.

He added that around three to four acres of land in Panaiyur exposed the fossil assemblage and that nearby areas could be excavated and developed for public exhibition.

Mr. Chandran from ZSI said the preliminary study was limited to already exposed areas. He said if further excavations were undertaken at the request of the Tamil Nadu government, more significant findings could emerge.

He further said the position of the fossil locality in Panaiyur, which is situated around 5 km from the coastline, suggests changes in the coastal configuration during the Holocene period.

Rocky remains: A view of the fossil assemblage from approximately 8,000 to 12,000 years ago, at the site in Panaiyur in Thoothukudi district. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Long wait for consumers: Petrol sales rose to 10,345 kl and diesel to 14,156 kl in the State on Saturday. G.N. RAO

Restore normal fuel supply by today, Naidu asks officials

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday directed officials and oil company representatives to immediately step up petrol and diesel supplies across the State, with a target to restore normalcy by Monday.

Reviewing the situation through a teleconference from his camp office, the Chief Minister was informed that a sudden surge in demand, partly due to bulk purchases by commercial consumers at retail outlets, had strained supplies. Petrol sales, which usually average 6,330 kilolitres per day, rose by 34% to 8,489 kilolitres on Saturday and remained 22% higher than normal on Sunday.

Diesel sales also increased, climbing from a daily average of 9,048 kilolitres to 10,556 kilolitres on Saturday, adding to pressure on supply systems.

Officials said the State has 4,510 fuel outlets, of which about 10%, or 421 petrol bunks, had shut down due to lack of stock. Fuel supply, they said, was already 10% higher than normal levels, but panic buying by consumers triggered an unexpected surge in demand, resulting in long queues and rapid depletion of stocks at many outlets.

Mr. Naidu said panic buying was aggravating the situation and causing inconvenience to the public, and directed officials to ensure that people did not face hardship from a fuel shortage. Officials also flagged supply constraints in the aquaculture sector, where diesel is often procured in bulk in drums, adding to logistical pressure. The Chief Minister directed the District Collectors and Fisheries Department officials to prepare a coordinated plan to ensure that routine economic activity is not disrupted. Mr. Naidu asked officials to submit a detailed report on measures taken, and progress, in easing the situation.

Will abide by directions of high command: Shivakumar

Amid leadership speculation, Karnataka Deputy CM says Siddaramaiah and he 'have faith' in the Congress top brass and that an appropriate decision will be taken at the right time

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A day after returning from Delhi, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Sunday said that he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would abide by the Congress high command's decision on leadership in the government.

Speaking to press persons, Mr. Shivakumar said he had full faith in the party leadership and that an appropriate decision would be taken at the right time. "Both the Chief Minister and I have said that we will follow the high command's instructions and act accordingly," he said. During his three-day stay in the national capital, Mr. Shivakumar met All India Congress Committee president Mallikarjun Kharge and AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal and reportedly sought clarity from them on the matter of leadership change.

There has been speculation about a possible leadership change and Cabinet reshuffle in Karnataka in May. FILE PHOTO

There has been speculation about a possible leadership change and Cabinet reshuffle next month.

The results of the Assembly elections in four States and one Union Territory will be declared on May 4, along with byelections to two Assembly constituencies in Karnataka. After May 4, the party high command is expected to summon both Mr. Siddaramaiah and Mr. Shivakumar for discussions on issues related to leadership, the Cabinet, and the KPCC president's post.

Responding to a query on Minister Satish Jarkiholi's remarks about confusion in the party, he said, "Our party will take the necessary decisions at the right time, we have faith in our leadership; they know what needs to be done."

Ten workers seriously injured as rail overbridge collapses in Visakhapatnam

The collapsed portion of an under-construction overbridge at Auto Nagar in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

Ten workers were seriously injured when a portion of an under-construction rail overbridge collapsed at Vadlapudi in Visakhapatnam city, Andhra Pradesh, on Sunday. They were rushed to nearby hospitals. Doctors said their condition was stable.

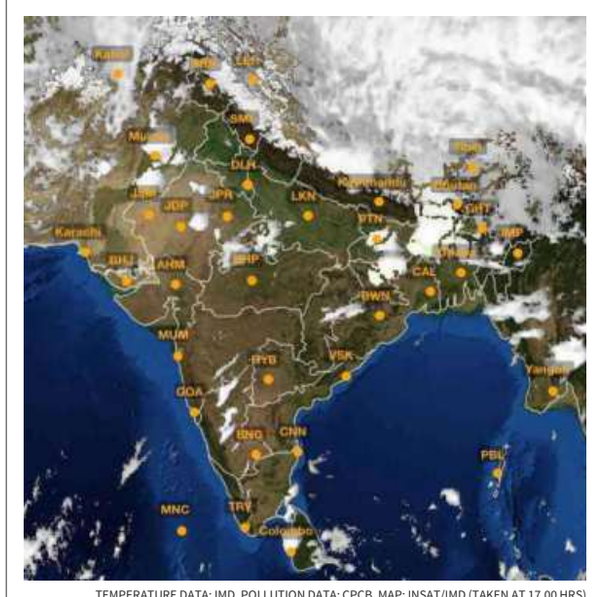
The bridge, under the control of the State government, is aimed at connecting Auto Nagar and Duvvada. Work on it has picked up pace of late as it is a long-pending demand of the residents of Auto Nagar, Vadlapudi, Duvvada and Kurmannapalem.

The Gajuwaka police registered a case.

Roads & Buildings Minister B.C. Janardhan Reddy, who is currently on an official visit to Singapore, said strict action would be taken against the contractor concerned if negligence was found to be the reason behind the accident.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh and Assam and Meghalaya. Heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal and Sikkim.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	33.5	21.6	Kozhikode	—	37.2	29.3
Ahmedabad	—	44.8	28.2	Kurnool	—	43.2	29.7
Aizawl	5.0	30.2	18.3	Lucknow	—	43.0	43.0
Allahabad	—	45.7	26.3	Madurai	—	40.0	26.1
Bengaluru	—	36.0	24.8	Mangaluru	—	34.7	27.1
Bhopal	—	43.0	25.2	Mumbai	—	34.4	26.5
Bhubaneswar	—	35.5	26.5	Mysuru	—	36.2	21.4
Chandigarh	—	40.8	22.4	New Delhi	—	43.1	27.1
Chennai	—	38.6	27.6	Patna	—	34.4	27.6
Coimbatore	—	38.4	25.4	Port Blair	—	32.8	27.0
Dehradun	—	39.2	22.5	Puducherry	—	34.5	25.0
Gangtok	1.0	16.0	13.6	Pune	—	42.9	25.9
Goa	—	—	—	Raipur	—	44.2	28.3
Guwahati	3.0	28.0	22.4	Ranchi	—	40.2	25.0
Hubballi	—	38.0	23.0	Shillong	—	16.3	12.1
Hyderabad	—	40.6	28.4	Shimla	—	31.5	20.0
Imphal	6.5	26.3	17.4	Srinagar	1.0	26.4	10.5
Jaipur	—	—	—	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.2	27.6
Kochi	—	33.2	28.6	Tiruchi	—	39.1	26.6
Kohima	—	—	—	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	—	33.6	27.4	Visakhapatnam	—	32.6	27.3

(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	.36	377	.12	81	150	Poor
Bengaluru	.14	.55	.20	66	95	Good
Chennai	4	3	.30	57	45	Good
Delhi	.49	129	.40	232	329	Poor
Hyderabad	.16	.15	.35	66	92	Good
Kolkata	.13	.27	.20	31	51	Good
Lucknow	.13	.30	.19	220	160	Poor
Mumbai	5	.24	.28	77	149	Moderate
Pune	.—	.23	100	50	70	Moderate
Visakhapatnam	.34	.52	.26	34	109	Moderate

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 349 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 24.

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

Heat, grief make way for customary grandeur as Kerala holds scaled-down Thrissur Pooram

Mini Muringatheri
THRISSUR

The scorching sun was harsher than ever, the humidity was unbearable, and there was a sense of gloom in the air. Yet, Thrissur Pooram unfolded in all its splendour on Sunday.

Deeply rooted in tradition yet vibrant in festive energy, the annual festival in Kerala is a unique blend of rituals, percussion, and grand elephant processions. It signifies the symbolic meeting of deities of 10 famous temples in the region with the main participants being the deities of Paramekkavu and Thiruvambady temples.

Following the fireworks tragedy at Mundathikode that claimed 15 lives, authorities had decided to hold this year's event without fireworks. While all other major rituals were retained, the *Kudamattam* was curtailed to just 15 minutes, with just 10 sets of parasols to be displayed.

Majestic tradition: Crowds gathered to witness the traditional *Kudamattam* as part of the Thrissur Pooram in front of Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple at the Thekkinkadu Maidan on Sunday. K.K. NAJEEB

The scaled-down format did not deter people, determined to make the most of what remained and keep the spirit of the festival vibrant, from thronging Thekkinkadu Maidan. As the trumpets roared, and richly adorned elephants strode in royal procession, people plunged headlong into the festival mood.

Emotional bond

Deities were brought on caparisoned elephants to Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple, with their convergence offering a breathtaking sight, while the percussion ensembles by some of finest in the State woke up the rhythm in the people's heart. The deep emotional bond the festival has with people of Thrissur and beyond explains the crowd that gathered under a cloud of grief that hung over the proceedings.

As artiste Nanda Kishore put it, "We stand here with pain in our hearts. But we cannot turn away from festivals. Poorams and celebrations bridge distances between people... lighten our hearts. That is why these festivals must go on."

Visually challenged trainee judge gets an inclusive campus

Thanya Nathan C., Kerala's first visually challenged trainee judge, at the Kerala Judicial Academy on Sunday. THULASI KAKKAT

K.S. Sudhi
KOCHI

Hostel room number 110 on the ground floor of the Kerala Judicial Academy at Athani in Ernakulam has been spruced up for a new occupant.

Two stainless steel grab bars have been fixed along the wall of the room to guide Thanya Nathan C., the first visually challenged trainee judge in the district judiciary of Kerala, who checked into the hostel on Sunday, from the door to the bed. The bathroom has been modified to cater to the needs of its occupant. Ms. Nathan will be accompanied by her mother, C.H. Babitha, with permission from the academy which will be covering the expenses.

The academy premises have been modified to ensure unobstructed movement for Ms. Nathan with newly built ramps and tactile paving to guide her along the path. A walkway encircling the courtyard with a fully grown flowering tree has been secured with chains to prevent any accidental fall.

"I need a companion to move outside the room, though I quickly get accustomed to the interiors of the rooms where I am staying. It is for the first time that I am staying in a hostel room," Ms. Nathan said.

While service of a woman attendant will be made available for Ms. Nathan, her fellow trainees will be put on a weekly rotation to help her complete her academic work. It will be a learning opportunity for other trainees, said K.N. Sujith, Director of the academy.

Ms. Nathan may miss the "walk the talk" programme where the trainees take a stroll along the campus with senior judges. However, plans are afoot to set up the required facilities for the programme.

Some of the proposals to make the campus fully inclusive, which had to be put on hold during the Assembly election, will be revived once the Model Code of Conduct is lifted. Purchasing of software for trainees with special needs is in the pipeline, Mr. Sujith added.

The year-long training programme for Ms. Nathan and her fellow trainees will commence on Monday with an induction ceremony at 11 a.m.

Telangana CM seeks refresh of grievance redress app

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Directing officials to strengthen Prajavani, the platform enabling people in Telangana to register their grievances for timely solutions, Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy has asked them to decentralise the system so that people at the grassroots levels are able to register their complaints.

Mr. Reddy gave the instructions during a meeting with senior officials headed by Chief Secretary K. Ramakrishna Rao on Sunday. He wanted Prajavani to be extended to the revenue division level with immediate effect and to mandal level in the coming days.

Prajavani, launched a few days after the Congress took over the reins of the State in December 2023, has ensured speedy redress of grievances. Senior officials receive complaints every Friday and take steps for their expeditious redress. A similar mechanism has been functioning at the district level, where Collectors conduct Prajavani weekly.

The Chief Secretary was asked to give adequate powers to officials at different levels to resolve the complaints lodged during Prajavani.

All the complaints should be registered and sent to the departments, and the applicants should be informed about the status of their representation from time to time.

Grievances should be resolved in a time-bound manner and there should not be any delays in addressing the issues raised by the people.

'Karnataka Minister on life support, may need lung transplant'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Doctors attending to D. Sudhakar, Minister for Planning and Statistics of Karnataka, say that if his lungs do not show significant improvement, he may be considered for lung transplantation.

Mr. Sudhakar, who had developed a lung infection, is receiving intensive medical care at KIMS Hospitals (Krishna Institute of Medical Science), Electronic City, Bengaluru.

In a health bulletin issued on Sunday, doctors said at present he was stable on life support.

Continuous observation

"Currently he is on full life support to assist his vital organ functions. A specialised multidisciplinary team of expert doctors, is monitoring his condition round the clock... if his lungs does not show significant improvement he may be considered for lung transplantation," said Dr. Pavan Yadav M.V., Clinical Director, Interventional Pulmonology at KIMS.

Upgraded SARPA platform to boost snakebite care in Kerala

Sarath Babu George
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Amid a rise in snakebite cases in Kerala during the ongoing heat wave, the State Forest Department is set to roll out an upgraded version of its snake-response platform, SARPA, aimed at strengthening emergency response and reducing fatalities.

The Snake Awareness, Rescue and Protection App (SARPA) has played a crucial role in recent years by coordinating snake rescues, enabling users to report sightings, and providing details of trained responders and nearby healthcare facilities. The platform has been credited with improving response times.

The proposed upgrade comes against the backdrop of a spike in snakebite cases, which officials and experts link to the present spell of extreme heat. Kerala has reported four fatalities from snakebites last week.

According to official sources, SARPA is being redesigned to address deficiencies in emergency care by integrating a network of medical professionals and snake experts into the platform. This will allow first responders to access verified and real-time guidance during the crucial minutes following a snakebite.

One of the persistent challenges in snakebite management is the difficulty in identifying the species involved, which often leads to hesitation in administering anti-snake venom or uncertainty about the correct dosage.

The upgraded application will include dedicated login access for doctors, which will enable them to guide first-response measures remotely until specialised care is reached.

Turning point

The U.S. is slicing away at India's ability to pursue an independent foreign policy

The U.S. has allowed its waiver of sanctions on Iran's Chabahar port to lapse on Sunday (April 26), indicating that India is now at a crossroads on how to proceed with the port as a key connectivity initiative. Barring a belated waiver renewal, New Delhi must choose between accepting sanctions and abandoning its $620 million investment, or proceeding with the project and risk strict U.S. sanctions. India's "start-stop" engagement with Iran on developing a facility at the Shahid Beheshti terminal at Chabahar goes back decades, and Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee signed an MoU for the project in 2003. However, U.S. pressure on India to postpone plans aimed at stopping Iran's nuclear programme led to construction delays. The Manmohan Singh government was unable to make much progress either, but continued work on the Zaranj-Delaram highway to connect the Iran-Afghanistan border crossing to Kabul. After the 2015 JCPOA, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government signed a trilateral agreement with Iran and Afghanistan to advance trade and aid via Chabahar port and a highway into Afghanistan. Chabahar's importance grew as ties with Pakistan deteriorated and it restricted India's transit access to Afghanistan. However, fate intervened again as U.S. President Donald Trump walked out of the JCPOA, and began a "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran by re-implementing all sanctions. While India was forced by the U.S. to give up Iranian oil imports, and plans for the rail line, the U.S. built a "carve-out" for Chabahar, allowing India to send wheat and medical supplies to Afghanistan. That carve-out is now at an end, with the Trump administration giving Delhi until this month to "wind-down" its operations. Since November 2025, India has withdrawn personnel from Chabahar, prepaid its $120 million investment commitment, and is considering transferring its stake in the Shahid Beheshti Terminal to an Iranian company, with the option of returning later.

The West Asia war has complicated the situation, and it is unclear when, if ever, India will be able to re-engage with Iran or rebuild Chabahar after the conflict. Temporarily dropping the project may seem pragmatic. However, Chabahar is just one of several India's independent decisions that the U.S. has thwarted; there have been diktats to stop buying oil from Iran, Venezuela, and Russia. Mr. Trump has threatened sanctions on all trade with Iran, and on BRICS grouping members; the U.S.'s seemingly insatiable demands may also extend to India's engagement with other countries. Giving in on Chabahar will not just end India's connectivity plans with Iran, Central Asia and Afghanistan. It will damage its claims of sovereign autonomy, and slice away its ability to pursue an independent foreign policy.

Tough call

India needs to develop rapid venom detection diagnostics

A combination of snakes being ectothermic, a hotter summer than usual, difficult decision-making, and gaps in clinical infrastructure has led to a situation in Kerala where the availability of anti-snake venom (ASV) has not been able to prevent all deaths from snakebites. Snakes are driven by the heat to seek refuge in cool, damp spaces, which means homes and storerooms with firewood and coconut husks. The State is also densely vegetated with substantial human-wildlife range overlap. April-May is also the pre-monsoon breeding season for many venomous snakes, which means that they move around more and tend to be defensive. However, about 70% of snakebite presentations involve non-venomous species, and roughly half of the rest are dry bites with no venom injected. A substantial number of patients thus do not warrant ASV. Caution against administering ASV willy-nilly is merited because these compounds can also induce anaphylactic reactions, which can be fatal. At the same time, there is no commercially available diagnostic kit in India to detect venom in a patient's blood, and the diagnosis is entirely symptomatic. The ICMR has called this syndromic approach a systemic flaw, since by the time symptoms appear, the venom may already have damaged tissue irreversibly. Together with scarce ICU beds, a lack of ventilator backups, inadequate training in managing anaphylaxis, and limited lab support for monitoring, this approach has offset the benefits of the availability of ASV.

India accounts for nearly half of all snakebites in the world, with agricultural workers and children being the worst affected. Kerala is home to over 100 snake species, including the Big Four venomous snakes: the common krait, Russell's viper, saw-scaled viper, and spectacled cobra. The State government has made snakebite a notifiable disease. It launched the 'SARPA' programme to professionalise snake rescue. The SARPA Padam and the upcoming SARPA Suraksha programmes also focus on assessing risk and conducting ward-level and school awareness campaigns. Progressive as the notification and 'SARPA' are relative to similar measures in the rest of India, the deaths are a sign that Kerala may be prevention-heavy and that it needs to reinforce the 'cure' as well. ASV is already widely available; the uncertainty that prevails over doctors' decision-making at the first point of contact needs to be mitigated. Many experts have also called for the development and use of rapid venom detection diagnostics to eliminate the risks of the syndromic approach. This must be followed by increasing hospital capacity and the availability of skilled medical workers to manage the consequences of that decision.

Trump's hubris and the cost to the world order

M.K. Narayanan

Former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

The *Chambers Dictionary* describes hubris as insolence, arrogance, and overconfidence that can lead to disaster or ruin. The moot question is whether this description fits the actions and personality of United States President Donald Trump. To many, if not most people, it would seem an apt description of the 47th President of the U.S. who, in his second term, seems intent on completing the unfinished tasks of his first, and in a manner that leaves no one in any doubt about his narcissistic attributes. To some, this may appear too harsh a judgment, but considering reactions from across the globe, the majority would agree.

Mr. Trump's actions at the beginning of this year in Venezuela, followed by his shenanigans in West Asia,suggest that he fully comprehends what he is doing. His supporters even cite historical precedents to justify his actions. They refuse to accept that all this only confirms the rise of the 'illiberal international', which is reshaping the global order today.

A false reading of victory

Wars usually tend to be fought in the belief that one side will come out victorious. In West Asia today, the situation conforms to the adage that not all wars need to have a winner. A 'no win fragile peace' in West Asia should ordinarily be a humbling experience for anyone, but Mr. Trump is intent on brandishing the claim that he has virtually eclipsed Iran. Higher levels of bombast cannot, however, obscure the reality that while Iran has suffered, it still stands tall though bruised. The Pakistan moderated truce talks in Islamabad have, meanwhile, provided a fig leaf for a truce of sorts and an opportunity to continue negotiations without either side having to prove its claims of victory.

Mr. Trump's folly of launching a war on a Friday/Saturday, hoping to force a result in his favour by Monday morning, has since been proven wrong. Spurred, perhaps, by his success in Venezuela, and driven by a delusion to win a Nobel Peace Prize by preventing another world war, Mr. Trump appears to see victory in every twist and turn of events in West Asia today. His occasional claims to peace having returned to the region appear increasingly hallucinating rather than real.

From Israel's point of view, a ceasefire on terms that have not achieved its objective of destroying Iran's war machine carries little meaning. That this should be so, even after the U.S. had joined the war on its side, would be even more hurtful, but it has little option but to go along. A major worry is that if the impression were to gain ground that, having launched a war to end all wars, it has now been reduced to being a nursemaid to a faltering peace, it would be highly damaging to its image and future.

> The West Asia conflict has exposed the disruptive leadership style of the United States President

As of now, there appear to be no victors or losers in a conflict 'manufactured' by Israel, and sustained by the U.S. If anything, suspicions have grown about Israel's role overall, as also about its manipulative skills, leading to a 'credibility gap' across the region. The role of the U.S. as a guarantor and guardian of many Arab States, including provision of a nuclear umbrella, also stands diminished. It is too early to assess how this would fundamentally alter power equations across the region.

Military leaders often declare deadlines to finish campaigns. Mr. Trump is, perhaps, the first civilian overlord to announce deadlines and determine victories, often randomly and without justification. This war has witnessed a series of announcements by Mr. Trump about the end of the war in West Asia as also several announcements of victory, leading to an 'Alice in Wonderland' scenario. Meanwhile, hundreds have lost their lives on account of an unnecessary conflict, and several thousand have been rendered homeless.

Modern war realities

One lesson to learn from the conflict – something that is less known and often overlooked – is how smaller armies can 'best' major powers by employing low cost effective weapons and tactics. Further, overestimating the strength of powerful allies – by Israel in respect of the U.S. – could prove a costly mistake. Iran might have been battered, but any belief that this would result in the dismantling of Iran's network of proxy militia, has clearly been belied. What has accompanied this is the deep suspicion – across the region, and also in the West and elsewhere – about Israel's Machiavellian tactics and policies of misinformation.

The failure of the Pakistan-mediated ceasefire talks held from early April in Islamabad raised the spectre of a fresh round of unbridled violence, with the U.S. President at one stage even threatening to erase Iran from the face of the earth. Yet, even as all bets were off on what to expect at the end of the two-week-long ceasefire, Mr. Trump pulled another rabbit out of his hat. As the world waited with concern at the grim prospect of a further escalation of a needless war, Mr. Trump announced that he was acceding to Pakistan's request and announced an indefinite extension of the ceasefire.

Mr. Trump's logic in acquiescing to Pakistan's request and endorsing the need to give Tehran's leadership more time to prepare a proper end to the war would have been praiseworthy, had it not emanated from anyone other than the present incumbent of the White House, who is known for his mood swings. Notwithstanding the rickety ceasefire prospects, hopes have arisen that an all-out war has been avoided for now. Iran, however, is acting as a 'spoiler', seizing some ships in the Strait of Hormuz. There is also no clarity on the date or even the likelihood of the next round of U.S.-Iran talks.

The ceasefire does provide some breathing space for now. What is significant is the fact that a war initiated by Israel has since changed colour, with Israel's role becoming peripheral. The focus has shifted to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and on determining who has the authority to impose a blockade of international waters. In 1507, a Portuguese admiral took control over the Strait of Hormuz, turning it into a customs-controlled port that levied duties on passing trade. Mr. Trump is now exploiting this anachronism to turn it into a global chokepoint, imposing a naval blockade, and threatening the free flow of oil across the Strait. Given the unpredictability of his thought processes, nothing can be said as to how long the latest ceasefire would last, but his assertion that Tehran must never have a nuclear weapon, nor make or obtain one, would seem to suggest that the current ceasefire is likely at best to be a temporary one.

Pakistan's role

What is possibly most galling for India is the emergence of Pakistan as a conciliator – or to use Mr. Trump's phrase "an indispensable broker" as far as the conflict is concerned. Even as Mr. Trump seeks to garner all the glory, proclaiming that he has been able to stave-off the 10th major war of his times, Pakistan's role and its influence is witnessing an upswing. The turn of the wheel whereby Pakistan rather than India helped negotiate peace, is likely to make India unhappy, but this is the reality as of today. The special relationship between Field Marshal Asim Munir of Pakistan and the U.S. President is different from the usual cozying up of Pakistani generals with U.S. Presidents in the past, and this has helped shape Pakistan's emergence as a peacemaker that cannot be wished away. What should also not be lost sight of is that, of late, Pakistan has successfully managed to project itself as a net 'security guarantor' for the Islamic world. In the circumstances, India must tread lightly. It may be something that India had not bargained for, but any attempt at this time to denigrate Pakistan and Asim Munir's role could prove counterproductive. Patience has been India's sublime virtue, and this is the time for India to exercise it in full measure.

Summer as a source of income shock for gig workers

Krishna Malakar

Assistant Professor in Climate Policy, IIT Madras

As India moves into another summer, early forecasts indicate intense heat ahead. Heatwaves are no longer rare; they are a recurring feature of Indian summers. The question is no longer whether extreme heat will return, but whether the country is prepared for its economic consequences.

Official data show that India did experience significant heat-related mortality in 2022. Meteorological trends indicate that heatwaves across large parts of the country have become more frequent and prolonged over the past decade. As policymakers review preparedness measures before peak summer arrives, there is one group which remains largely absent from the adaptation conversation – gig and delivery workers, whose livelihoods increasingly power India's urban economy.

From food delivery riders and e-commerce couriers to app-based drivers and logistics workers, millions now earn income through digital platforms. NITI Aayog estimates India had about 7.7 million gig workers in 2020-21, projected to reach over 23 million by 2029-30. As heatwaves intensify, this growing workforce will be among the most climate-exposed and least protected.

Heat cuts earnings

For gig and delivery workers, extreme heat is not just a matter of discomfort; it directly affects earnings. Income depends on the number of trips completed, orders delivered, or hours logged on an app. When temperatures surge, movement slows, fatigue increases, and health risks rise; yet, incentive structures remain unchanged.

Unlike salaried employees, gig workers cannot "work from home" or take paid leave during extreme heat. Logging off for a few hours means immediate income loss. Continuing to work through peak heat hours increases the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and longer-term health stress. If the coming summer follows recent patterns, heat will be not just a public health concern but an income shock, forcing workers to choose between protecting their health and their earnings.

> Resilience for gig workers means safe work and stable earnings during extreme heat

Preparedness remains incomplete

India has made progress in recognising heat as a public health risk. Heat Action Plans, early warning systems and emergency measures have improved preparedness in several cities. But most policies still treat heat as a medical emergency rather than an economic risk, assuming that people can adjust their behaviour. Advisories typically recommend staying indoors, reducing physical activity, and taking frequent breaks. But for gig and delivery workers, whose income depends on mobility, these options are not realistic.

Even where cities set up temporary drinking water kiosks, shaded rest areas, or cooling centres, these measures are rarely designed with highly mobile platform workers in mind. As a result, preparedness efforts may reduce mortality, but they do little to prevent income loss.

The weeks before peak summer offer a narrow but important policy window. Heat stress sits at the intersection of climate policy, labour regulation, urban planning and platform governance. Yet, responsibility remains fragmented.

Health departments focus on illness and mortality. Disaster management agencies focus on emergency response. Labour departments grapple with the ambiguous employment status of gig workers. Digital platforms optimise delivery times and incentives, with limited explicit integration of climate risk considerations. When accountability is distributed across institutions without coordination, heat risk for gig workers remains inadequately addressed. These vulnerabilities are further compounded for women gig workers, who often face additional health, safety and unpaid care burdens during extreme heat, making income disruption even harder to absorb.

If adaptation is to move beyond reactive measures, this is the moment to expand its scope.

First, heat must be treated as a labour and productivity issue, not only a health one. Rest norms during peak heat hours, shaded congregation points, and access to drinking water at common waiting locations should be seen as basic safeguards.

Second, policymakers must acknowledge that extreme heat creates income volatility. Without mechanisms – whether through labour protections or better integration with existing welfare systems – to cushion these losses, adaptation will remain incomplete.

Third, digital labour platforms need to be part of the preparedness conversation. Heat-responsive design such as moderating delivery pressure during peak heat hours or introducing more flexible performance metrics –can lower exposure without halting services.

Finally, stronger institutional coordination is needed before summer intensifies. Collaboration among labour departments, urban local bodies, disaster management authorities, and platform regulators would signal that heat risk is being treated as an economic issue, not just a seasonal emergency.

Rethinking resilience

India's cities increasingly depend on gig and delivery workers to function. Food, medicines and essential goods move through urban systems because this workforce absorbs daily risks. As temperatures rise, those risks will intensify.

Climate resilience cannot be measured only by advisories issued or cooling centres opened. For gig workers navigating city streets on two-wheelers and bicycles, resilience means the ability to work safely – and to earn without enduring silent income losses during extreme heat.

If heat preparedness continues to overlook gig and delivery workers, the country will enter another season of rising temperatures without protecting one of its most visible and essential workforces.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AAP defections

The exodus of high-profile leaders from the primary membership of the Aam Aadmi Party is the party's worst existential crisis to date, leaving it at a political crossroads. For a party that set out to overhaul the political system, the steady loss of leaders is a clear sign of inadequate engagement by its central leadership with the rank and file. AAP needs to strengthen its grassroots, purge power brokers and sycophants, and quell internal dissent and factionalism by grooming second-rung leaders through a spirit of consensus.

B. Suresh Kumar,
Coimbatore

The ease with which the MPs crossed over from a party avowedly founded on lofty ideals to a party espousing the Hindutva ideology was astonishing. Are we to deduce that little ideology divides politicians in India? The mask of idealism has fallen off the faces of the defectors. There seems to be some substance in the allegation that the MPs joined the BJP to get "dry-cleaned".

G. David Milton,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu results

Most pre/post poll predictions have indicated that the ruling DMK will come back to power in Tamil Nadu, if not with a massive mandate but with a comfortable majority. However, the fair, impartial and flawless declaration of the results depends on how the Election Commission of India which has proved beyond doubt that it is blatantly partisan in favour of the BJP government and its allies, is going to conduct itself during the counting and declaration of the final results.

It is unfortunate that the Election Commission has become the most controversial conductor of fair and free elections in India.

Tharcius S. Fernando,
Chennai

Stunning show

What a thrilling afternoon at Chepauk. Despite CSK's fighting 158/7, Gujarat Titans were simply unstoppable. It was a clinical, dominant performance worthy of champions.

S.M. Jeeva,
Chennai

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

Information asymmetry in higher education

Jnyanranjan Sahoo

is associated with the National Council for Teacher Education. Views are personal

Every admission season in India feels like a marketplace of promises. Brochures look impressive and websites highlight success stories. Yet, even then, students are making some of the most important decisions of their life with limited and uneven information.

India's higher education system has expanded rapidly; enrolment increased from 3.42 crore in 2014-15 to 4.33 crore in 2021-22. The Gross Enrolment Ratio has also improved. The higher education landscape has enlarged from standalone degrees to multidisciplinary ones, and that too of various management categories. However, expansion has made choices more complex.

Making the right choice

Students and families often face trade-offs between cost, quality, and location when choosing an institution. The core problem is that institutions know far more about their quality than students do. They have detailed knowledge about their faculty, teaching-learning processes, infrastructure, student support systems and placement outcomes. In contrast, students depend on brochures, advertisements, informal advice, and selective placement data. Much of this available information is incomplete or unverifiable. In economics, this situation is called information asymmetry. When one party has more information than the other, decision-making becomes distorted. George Akerlof's idea of the "market for lemons" explains how, in such situations, lower-quality providers can imitate the signals of higher-quality ones. In higher education, this means that institutions offering weaker academic quality can still appear attractive through marketing, branding, or selective disclosure. As a result, students may end up choosing institutions that do not meet their expectations. Simultaneously, good institutions may not be able to distinguish themselves clearly. This creates a situation of adverse selection, where the market does not reward quality effectively.

The problem is not just about individual choices. It has wider implications. It affects graduate outcomes, employability, and trust in the education system. It also has implications for achieving national goals such as the SDG-4 (ensuring inclusive and quality education) by 2030 and Viksit Bharat by 2047 with a skilled and employable workforce.

Overload of information

One may argue that there is now more information available than ever before. However, institutional websites, rankings, data portals, and social media may offer vast information, but not necessarily better information.

A large part of the data available is self-reported and often promotional. Definitions of indicators such as faculty strength, research output, and placement outcomes vary across institutions. Some rankings use methods that are not fully transparent. For students and families, this creates confusion. In such situations, students tend to rely on visible signals such as brand name, campus infrastructure, or fees. These signals are easy to observe but they do not always reflect academic quality. When these signals dominate decision-making, institutions may focus more on visibility than on improving provisions related to teaching-learning processes. This is where public ranking frameworks and verified data portals become important.

India's National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), introduced in 2016, is one such effort to standardise information. It uses a common set of indicators such as teaching and learning resources, research output, graduation outcomes, outreach, and perception. It also requires institutions to disclose data in a structured format, the value of which lies in comparability. When institutions report data using common definitions and formats, it becomes easier for students to make informed choices. Similarly, centralised data portals that provide verified information on enrolment, accreditation, and faculty strength can reduce dependence on informal and unreliable sources.

> Institutional websites, rankings, data portals, and social media may offer vast information, but not necessarily better information

Room for improvement

These tools also have limitations. Rankings depend on how indicators are selected and weighted. If too much importance is given to easily measurable factors, institutions may try to improve scores rather than actual quality. Many important aspects of education, such as classroom experience, mentoring, and work-integrated learning, are difficult to measure. There is also a risk of over-interpreting ranks. Differences between institutions may be small, but ranks can create the perception of large gaps. This is why rank bands and methodological transparency are important. Despite these limitations, the absence of credible public information would be far worse. Without verified data, students would continue to rely on biased information. Information asymmetry would remain high, and poor-quality signalling would persist.

If India aims to build a strong and inclusive higher education system, information systems must be a priority. This includes better data verification, clearer definitions, transparent methodologies, accessible platforms and appropriate visualisation. For students, this is about making informed choices. For institutions, it is about credibility and accountability. The key question is simple: can students choose well if they cannot clearly see what they are choosing? Until that gap is reduced, the higher education market will continue to reward not only quality, but also the ability to present quality convincingly.

Kerala's heat-ridden woes

Summer is being defined by rising power consumption and political rows

STATE OF PLAY

Tiki Rajwi
tiki.rajwi@thehindu.co.in

If there's one thing in Kerala that would make a sizeable dent in household budgets this summer, it would be the electricity bill. The sweltering summer heat in conjunction with the State's cloyingly humid weather have pushed up electricity consumption to the extent that records were being reset on a daily basis in mid-April.

On April 25, the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) pleaded with consumers to avoid charging electric vehicles or using electricity-guzzling equipment after 6 p.m. The spike in consumption is largely attributed to the over-dependence on air-conditioners to beat the heat. For the first time in the history of the State's power sector, electricity demand during peak hours in the evening , 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., crossed the 6,000 megawatt (MW)-mark this summer. Kerala also saw daily consumption skyrocketing to 117.18 million units (mu) on April 18. Daily consumption in April has so far averaged 107.23 mu. To put it in perspective, it was 95 mu in April 2025. Moreover, as of April 25, the State has reported a 43% shortfall in summer rainfall, according to the India Meteorological Department. All this assumes significance when read with the fact that Kerala 'imports' over 70% of its electricity from outside the State. Of the remaining roughly 30% generated within the State, hydropower is the mainstay, but it is generally kept at a minimum in the summer months as a reserve for contingencies.

Curiously, there is also the 'power paradox'. The State's solar power capacity, household-level generation included, has grown in recent years. So much so that the day-time injection of surplus solar power into the grid has become too much to handle for the KSEB. Here, the problem lies in the fact that Kerala lacks large-scale energy storage systems, although several Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and Pumped Storage Projects are in the pipeline. Last week, the KSEB was pulled up by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission for sloppy planning for the summer and for not fast-tracking BESS projects. The criticism came after the panel was told that the utility was forced to surrender contracted Round-The-Clock power during the daytime to make space for the excess solar power getting uploaded into the grid.

The power price

Additionally, the cost factor of Kerala's power dilemma cannot be ignored. The KSEB's annual expenditure on power purchases is huge; the utility's annual administration report shows that it spent ₹12,982.59 crore in 2023-24 and ₹12,749.65 crore in 2024-25. It is pertinent to remember that any additional spending on power procurement gets passed on to the consumers through thermal fuel surcharges in electricity bills.

The heat is also being felt on another front. A political row has erupted over a now-dead clutch of long-term power supply contracts. As Kerala awaits the results of its State Assembly elections, the Congress-led Opposition, the United Democratic Front, has blamed the summertime power crisis on the cancellation of a clutch of long-term power supply contracts on the Design, Build, Finance, Own and Operate mode totalling 465 MW. While the decision to scrap the deals was taken by the State Electricity Regulatory Commission in 2023 citing irregularities, the Leader of Opposition, V.D. Satheesan has accused higher-ups in the Left Democratic Front government and the KSEB of conspiring to scuttle the contracts. The contracts, according to him, would have guaranteed Kerala cheap power till 2040. Mr. Satheesan has announced that the UDF, if it comes to power, would order an investigation into the "corruption" involved in the cancellations.

The predicaments faced by Kerala's power sector are not recent developments. Rather, they have built up over the decades alongside the rapid pace of urbanisation experienced by the State. If anything, the West Asia crisis and, in Kerala's case, the unrelenting 2026 summer, have served to underscore the importance of energy security, both at the national and regional levels. In recent years, it has become evident that Kerala would need to tap multiple sources – renewables and sustainable storage systems included – to reduce its dependence on outside agencies. From the government's side, this would require fast-tracking existing projects and carefully planning future ones. This would be a challenge for whoever forms the new government in Kerala after May 4.

West Bengal reports the most violence during poll season

Members and supporters of the ruling Trinamool Congress were involved in or instigated most of the violent incidents

DATA POINT

Suchitra Karthikeyan
Gautam Nirmal Doshi

Trinamool Congress workers clashing violently with Aam Janata Unnayan Party founder Humayun Kabir in Murshidabad, during the first phase of the Assembly polls in West Bengal for 152 constituencies on April 23, is the latest of at least 74 violent incidents reported so far during the ongoing poll season.

Five people have been killed in poll-related violence since the Model Code of Conduct came into force from March 15, 2026, of whom three were Trinamool supporters, one a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) supporter and the other not affiliated to any party. With the rest of the 142 constituencies in West Bengal going to polls on April 29, one has to wait to see how violent this poll season has been.

However, as per Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), West Bengal remained the most violent during polls in India. It accounted for nearly 60% of the 775 violent incidents reported during Assembly polls (in States with over 200 seats) since 2016 **(Chart 1)**. The 2021 Assembly polls, which saw a pitched battle between the Trinamool and the BJP, was the bloodiest with 278 violent incidents, as per ACLED.

Bloody trail

A look at four elections in West Bengal – the Assembly polls in 2016 and 2021, and the local body polls in 2018 and 2023 – shows that panchayat polls witnessed more violent incidents and fatalities. Such incidents jumped by 61.2%, from 172 in 2016 to 278 in the 2021 Assembly polls. Meanwhile, incidents of violence during the panchayat polls jumped sharply by 110%, from 155 in 2018 to 327 in 2023 **(Chart 2)**.

A closer look at ACLED's data showed that members of the ruling Trinamool were involved in or instigated most of the violent incidents **(Chart 3)**. Keeping in line with the diminished significance the CPI(M) (Communist Party of India (Marxist)) has in the State, violent incidents in which it was involved came down from 40 in 2016 to five in 2021. Meanwhile, the BJP, which is aggressively pursuing growth in the State, was involved in 125 incidents in 2021, compared to just eight in 2016. The BJP not only took the CPI(M)'s place in their involvement in violence, but was also at the receiving end of violence reportedly instigated by the Trinamool.

For instance, in 2016, Trinamool was involved in 118 of 172 violent incidents. Of the 39 cases in which Trinamool members were involved in violent clashes with members or supporters of other parties, 33 involved the CPI(M) and six were with the BJP.

In 2021, Trinamool was involved in 178 (64%) of the 278 violent incidents. In 108 cases, reportedly instigated by the ruling party, BJP was on the other side in 87 instances, followed by the CPI(M) in nine. Sixteen Trinamool supporters and 17 BJP supporters were killed in the incidents involving fatalities.

In 2018, of the 155 violent incidents, 102 involved mob violence. In 63 of those incidents (64.7%), members affiliated to the Trinamool were reportedly the instigators while BJP was at the receiving end in 20 instances, followed by civilians in 17 incidents, and rivals from within the Trinamool in 10.

2023 was the bloodiest year with Trinamool facing more fatalities. According to ACLED data, Trinamool was the perpetrator in 66 (33%) of the 198 violent incidents it was party to. Fatalities were reported in 60 incidents, with Trinamool suffering 30 fatalities, followed by the BJP (10), Congress (7) and four not affiliated to any party. The CPI(M) and the Indian Secular Front suffered three fatalities each.

Tainted by violence

The data for the charts were sourced from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED)

Strained tensions: Security personnel at the site after clashes broke out between supporters of the Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) and the ruling Trinamool (TMC) during the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections, at Naoda, in Murshidabad, April 23. PTI

Chart 1: State-wise share of instances of violence reported during elections in the last decade. All figures are in %

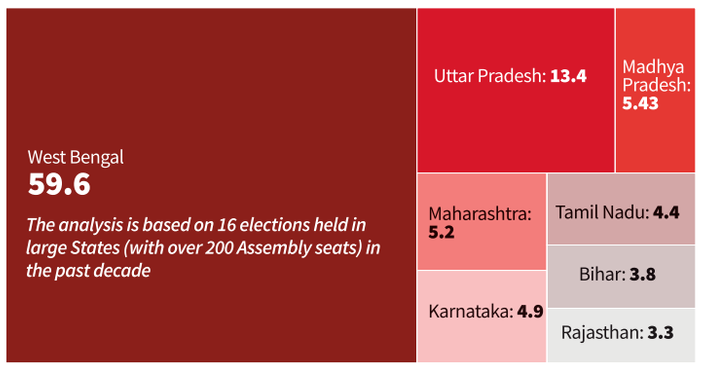
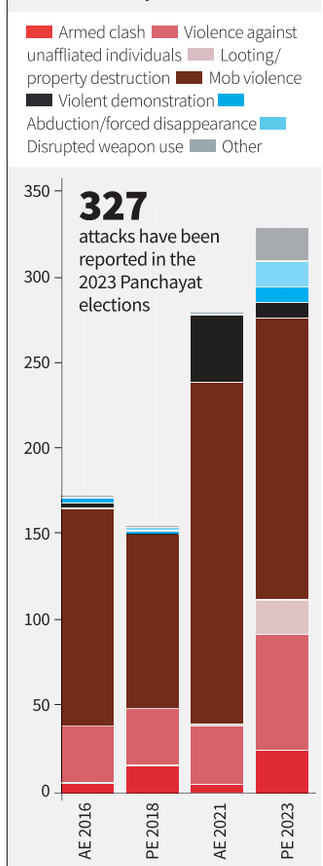
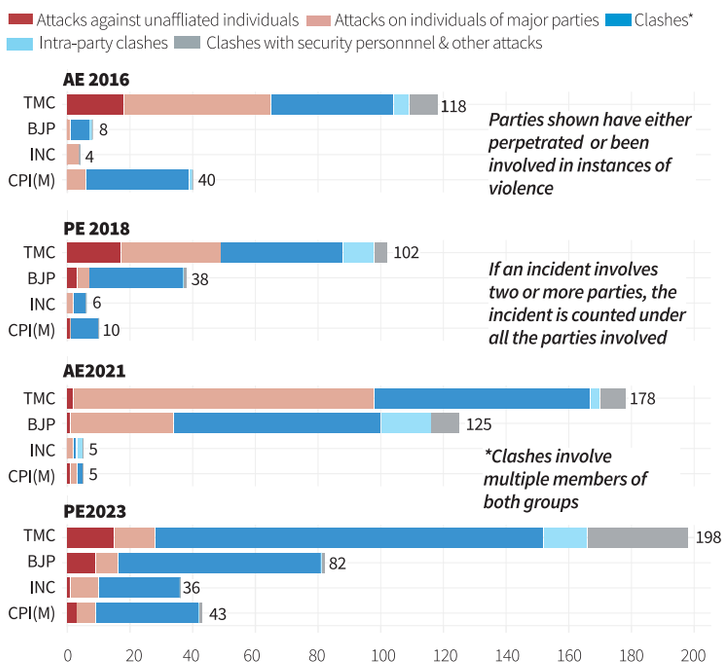


Chart 2: Events of violence recorded during West Bengal elections in the last decade. AE refers to Assembly Elections and PE refer to Panchayat Elections



Armed clashes include usage of bombs, grenades, and other explosives. Violence against unaffiliated individuals also includes political violence against individual members, workers, and leaders

Chart 3: The reported involvement of parties in instances of violence across Assembly and Panchayat elections in West Bengal held between 2016 and 2023



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 27, 1976

Anti-smuggling drive: Arab dhow to be used

Madras, April 25: The Madras Customs will shortly release into service a confiscated Arab dhow to intensify its anti-smuggling operations in the region, Mr. G. Sankaran, Collector of Customs, said on Saturday.

The dhow had been recently confiscated by the Bombay Customs, while it was engaged in smuggling operations between India and the Gulf countries.

Mr. Sankaran told Samachar that with the ocean-going dhow, the Customs staff would be able to intercept any catamaran or fishing vessel engaged in transporting contraband from ships for shore.

Already, the Madras Customs authorities were rummaging the ships even before they could enter the port. This practice had considerably reduced the chances of smuggling, he added.

Mr. Sankaran said the incidence of smuggling in the Madras region has come down considerably after September, 1974. With the Declaration of Emergency, the anti-smuggling operations had received a "further push" he added. The goods seized every month were worth about Rs. 10,000 and the availability of foreign fancy goods had now become "pretty low" in the city, he said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 27, 1926

Photos by phone

Recent developments in transmitting photographs long distances over the telephone have resulted in the establishment of a regular commercial service between New York, Chicago and San Francisco, says a press report. On an average the time taken to transmit a photograph seven by five inches is seven and a half minutes.

An X-ray photograph taken, say, in Chicago may be "telephoded" to New York for medical diagnosis by a specialist on payment of a small sum. The value of the new service for the rapid circulation of finger-prints of "wanted" criminals has already been satisfactorily tested by the New York Police.

When, recently, an important industrial company planned a new issue of stock, the final draft of the prospectus was so delayed that it was only by using the photo transmitting system that a simultaneous issue on both sides of the American continent was made possible.

From Page One

Trump safe after shooting; man held

"I extend my best wishes for their continued safety and well-being. Violence has no place in a democracy and must be unequivocally condemned," Mr. Modi said on X.

Authorities said Vice-President J.D. Vance was removed from the room first, while agents initially covered Mr. Trump in place before escorting him and First Lady Melania Trump from the room.

The shooting suspect was identified as Cole Tomas Allen of Torrance, California, according to two law enforcement officials.

The President said the gunman had left a manifesto, which he described as "strongly anti-Christian," without providing details.

The suspect sent writings to family members minutes before the shooting. The New York Post said the suspect had written in the note that his targets would be "prioritised from highest-ranking to lowest."

On Sunday, U.S. Acting Attorney-General Todd Blanche said that Mr. Trump and officials in his administration were the likely targets in the shooting incident.

Mr. Trump told presspersons at a late-night White House briefing that he believed he was the target of the attack. He said the Secret Service officer was saved by his bulletproof vest and was in "good shape". Later in an interview with Fox News, the President said the suspect's family had raised concerns about him to Connecticut Police ahead of the targeting of the gala. Mr. Trump described the suspect a "sick guy."

NATO leader Mark Rutte called it an attack "on our free and open societies" and leaders stressed violence had no place in a democracy.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he was "shocked by the scenes" that had occurred in Washington. "Any attack on democratic institutions or on the freedom of the press must be condemned in the strongest possible terms," Mr. Starmer wrote on X.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the incident was "unacceptable". "Violence has no place in a democracy," he said on X.

(With inputs from Reuters)

Centre to resume talks on Ladakh on May 22

A BJP spokesperson said Mr. Shah would arrive in Leh on April 30. On May 1, he would pay respects to the holy relics of Lord Buddha on the occasion of Buddha Purnima and "share his thoughts on the spiritual significance of the sacred exposition" being held in Ladakh from May 1 to 14.

The talks hit a stalemate after violence erupted in Leh last September, leaving four people dead and over 80 injured. Following the riots, climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who was leading a street agitation, had been detained under the National Security Act for six months.

The Centre formed a judicial commission last October to inquire into the circumstances that resulted in the violence. The Centre's outreach earlier this month failed to fructify into any major achievements on the core demands of the civil society groups.

New Zealand and India to sign FTA today

On average, New Zealand levied a tariff of 2.2% in 2025, which will come down to zero under the agreement.

The pact between the countries is one of the fastest-negotiated trade agreements that India has entered into, with negotiations being announced in March 2025 and concluding in December.

India has also managed to keep several items out of the FTA, including all dairy products such as milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, and cheese, animal products other than sheep meat, vegetable products such as onions, chana, peas, corn, and almonds, sugar, artificial honey, animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils, arms and ammunition, gems and jewellery, and copper and aluminium and their products. The FTA includes a provision wherein New Zealand will invest $20 billion in India over 15 years.

New Zealand has inked an annex on student mobility and post-study work visas for the first time. Under this, Indians can work up to 20 hours per week while studying in New Zealand, with extended post-study work visas.

The deal includes a quota of 5,000 visas for skilled Indians for stay up to three years in the sectors of interest to India, which include AYUSH practitioners, yoga instructors, chefs, and music teachers, as well as other key sectors such as IT, engineering, healthcare, education, and construction. Under the Working Holiday Visa programme included, 1,000 young Indians annually can get multiple entry in New Zealand for a period of 12 months.

According to the Centre, India has offered New Zealand exporters market access in 70.03% of the tariff lines with 30% of these lines seeing tariffs being immediately removed while the rest will see a phased removals or reductions.

According to New Zealand, 95% of the country's current exports will see tariffs either reduced to zero or sharply reduced. The agreement also includes a provision that says that in the event that India in the future offers another country better terms on services and wine, these new terms will automatically apply for New Zealand as well.

Modi hails India's strides in nuclear, wind energy

Prime Minister says civil nuclear programme has greatly helped different sectors; highlights that the country now ranks fourth in world in wind energy capacity; calls for Census participation

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the achievement of criticality in the fast breeder nuclear reactor at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu as a "historic milestone in India's nuclear energy journey".

During his monthly *Mann ki Baat* address, the Prime Minister focused on India's nuclear and renewable energy efforts, as well as on various nature conservation initiatives being undertaken across the country.

He also urged citizens to take part in the Census 2027 enumeration process, saying the data collected were "completely secure, kept confidential, and protected with digital security".

> The national Census is not just a government job. It is the responsibility of all of us. Your participation is crucial. The information you provide is completely secure, kept confidential, and protected with digital security. Let us all participate in this process. Make Census 2027 a success
> **NARENDRA MODI**
> Prime Minister

Nuclear pride

"India's civil nuclear programme has greatly helped everyone from agriculture to modern innovators," Mr. Modi said. "Friends, just a few days ago, our nuclear scientists enhanced India's pride with another major achievement. The fast breeder reactor in Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu, has achieved criticality."

He further explained that 'criticality' is the stage in which a reactor successfully executes a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction for the first time.

"This stage signifies the reactor entering the operational phase," Mr. Modi said.

"This is a historic milestone in India's nuclear energy journey. And importantly, this nuclear reactor is built entirely with indigenous technology."

Strides in wind energy

The Prime Minister also spoke about India's wind energy sector, saying that the country had recently achieved a major milestone with wind energy generation capacity exceeding 56 gigawatts (GW). He said that, in the past one year, about 6 GW of new capacity had been added.

"India is progressing rapidly in wind energy and the world is also looking towards us," he asserted. "Today India ranks fourth in the world in wind energy capacity. This is the hard work of our engineers, this is the diligence of our youth, this is a symbol of the collective willpower of the nation."

Mr. Modi noted that several States in India such as Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, were leading the charge in this sector.

"In areas like Kutch, Patan, and Banaskantha in Gujarat, where previously only deserts were visible, large renewable energy parks are now being built," he said. "Youth are benefiting from this, creating new opportunities, developing new skills, and opening up new avenues for employment."

Crucial Census

Mr. Modi also spoke about the Census 2027 data collection process under way in the country, calling it the world's largest Census.

"Friends, the national Census is not just a government job," he said. "It is the responsibility of all of us. Your participation is crucial. The information you provide is completely secure, kept confidential, and protected with digital security. Let us all participate in this process. Make Census 2027 a success."

He further explained that Census 2027 had been made digital, with all information recorded directly in digital form by workers going door-to-door using a mobile app.

"This time your participation in the Census has also been made easier; you can enter your information yourself," Mr. Modi explained. "This facility will open for you 15 days before the worker's arrival. You can enter the information as per your convenience. When you complete the process, you receive a special ID . This ID will be sent to your mobile or email. Later, when the worker visits your home, you can verify the information by showing this ID."

This process, he added, eliminated the need to enter information again, thereby saving time and simplifying the process.

"In States where self-enumeration has been completed, Census staff have also begun the work of listing households," Mr. Modi said.

"So far, the house listing of approximately 12 million families has been completed," he added.

At *Chintan Shivir*, DNT enumeration in Census discussed

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

The Ministry brought together Centre and State officials to discuss the future of its schemes for marginalised sections

The Social Justice Ministry on Sunday concluded a three-day "*Chintan Shivir*" (brainstorming session), during which the inclusion of denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic tribes (DNTs) in the ongoing Census 2027 exercise was one of the key focus areas.

The DNT communities have been demanding a separate column or question in the Census forms, specifically to account for their populations across the country. Community leaders are also mobilising support for a separate Schedule for DNTs on a par with the lists of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. The Supreme Court dismissed a petition last month seeking a Census question for DNTs and a separate classification for them, leaving them the liberty to approach the government on the matter.

During the *Chintan Shivir*, the Social Justice Ministry brought together Centre and State government officials to discuss the future of its schemes for marginalised sections through panel discussions, breakout sessions and thematic meal sessions.

Social Justice Minister Virendra Kumar said on Sunday that the sessions were "a serious and result-oriented platform for the Centre, States and Union Territories to reflect collectively on how social justice delivery can be made more accessible, responsive and implementation-driven".

The brainstorming session also discussed scholarship and hostel schemes for SC and OBC students, comprehensive support for transgender people and how to align schemes for them with the new amendments enacted by Parliament in 2026. While a central focus of the sessions on DNT welfare was the principal bottleneck issue of State and Union Territory governments not providing DNT community certificates, hindering their access to schemes, across different sessions, the issue of obtaining an accurate count of DNT populations across the country also kept coming up, officials said.

This comes even as members of Centre's Development Welfare Board for DNTs raise concerns over the lack of clarity on their enumeration in the ongoing Census. "As of now, we don't know if there will be a column for OBCs. So we don't know if there will be a DNT column as well or how this is going to be done," one Board official said.

Experts seek data-led approach to tackle public health risks

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The webinar "Public Health in India: From Reactive Care to Preventive Ecosystems" held on Saturday highlighted the urgent need to strengthen preventive healthcare, build data-driven systems, and develop a skilled public health workforce to address the country's evolving health challenges.

Organised by the SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) in association with *The Hindu* as part of the Future Career Conversations series, the session focused on India's ongoing shift from a curative model of care to prevention-led public health systems.

Setting the context, Hari Singh, Dean, School of Public Health, SRMIST, outlined the wide range of public health challenges facing India, from infectious diseases to the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), also noting persistent gaps such as the urban-rural divide and the need for more inclusive systems.

Soumya Swaminathan, Chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and Principal Adviser, National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme, spoke about pandemic preparedness and broader health risks. "The lessons from the pandemic clearly show that preparedness, strong public systems, and global cooperation are critical," she said.

She also emphasised the need for stronger, evidence-based approaches and more robust data-driven surveillance systems, noting that "public health responses must increasingly rely on data to anticipate and manage risks effectively".

J. Amalorpavanathan, Member, State Planning Commission, Tamil Nadu, provided insights into Tamil Nadu's public health model. Explaining the State's structured systems and preparedness strategies, he noted that consistent policy focus, better investment in health and system readiness are key to improving health outcomes.

Prakash M., Associate Professor, School of Public Health, SRMIST, discussed the role of artificial intelligence and digital tools in public health. He said that "AI in public health is most effective when it builds on existing systems and strengthens decision-making," stressing the need for better integration of digital health architecture.

Participants raised questions on career opportunities and academic pathways in public health. The panellists highlighted the need for interdisciplinary skill sets, including epidemiology, data analysis, and policy understanding.

Discussions also touched upon emerging areas such as digital health systems and the growing relevance of technology in shaping future public health careers.

The session was moderated by Athira Elssa Johnson, Senior Reporter, *The Hindu*.

The webinar can be viewed at https://newsth.live/THSRMPY

On the draw

Rahul plans Great Nicobar visit, clearance awaited

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday began his three-day visit to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for the Congress convention in Port Blair, after which he is scheduled to visit the Great Nicobar Island as well. The party in-charge of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Manickam Tagore, said Mr. Gandhi was "awaiting permission from the administration" for the trip.

West Asia war, language on Israel derail joint statement at BRICS meet

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Extended late-night parleys and heated debates marked the meeting of the 11-nation BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys in New Delhi that ended without a joint statement on Friday, *The Hindu* has learnt, indicating more trouble for India's BRICS Presidency this year.

While delegates from the United Arab Emirates and Iran sparred over the war in West Asia, a number of diplomatic and official sources present or briefed about the discussions said that the meetings on April 23-24 also saw an unexpected attempt by India to "tone down" language on Israel and Palestine, which was opposed by almost all other members.

The issues have set the stage for more difficult negotiations in the weeks ahead as BRICS Foreign Ministers are due to meet on May 14-15, with the summit scheduled for September 10-11. Many BRICS Foreign Ministers have confirmed they will attend the meeting next month, including Russia, China, Egypt, and Brazil.

Attendees at the BRICS Deputy Foreign Ministers and Special Envoys meeting in New Delhi. PTI

In particular, sources present in the meetings said that officials from the Ministry negotiating the joint statement sought to amend paragraphs from BRICS summits in Brasilia in 2025 and Kazan in 2024.

These included softening language that criticised Israel for its bombardment of Gaza and Lebanon, as well as dropping a reference to "East Jerusalem" to be established as the capital of the Palestinian state as a part of the two-state solution. Ministry officials even sought to replace references of "Israel" while criticising its operations in the West Bank and Lebanon with the less direct term "occupying power".

"We were very surprised as India has agreed to such language at many multilateral fora," said a diplomat who asked not to be named. However, another diplomat pointed out that India had incorporated such changes during the India-Arab League Summit held in Delhi in January 2026. In bilateral statements, India stopped using the term "East Jerusalem" in 2017.

The MEA declined several requests for a response on whether India's position on Palestine was isolated at the meeting. "There was no change in India's position on the Palestine issue" a government source told PTI news agency on Sunday, attributing the lack of consensus to "sharp difference of positions among members who are party to the conflict".

NCSC seeks report on Mamata's 'derogatory' remark

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) on Sunday took *suo motu* cognisance of a video clip showing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee allegedly using "derogatory" language against the SC community during an election rally.

The NCSC has written to the Chief Secretary of West Bengal and the Director-General of Police, directing them to submit a detailed report within three days.

The Commission referred to a video that appeared on "Kolkata TV" on April 26, regarding Ms. Banerjee's alleged remarks made during a rally in Kolkata's Chowringhee area recently while campaigning for a Trinamool candidate during the ongoing Assembly polls in the State.

"Suo-motu cognisance has been taken by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes on a video that appeared in 'Kolkata TV' wherein derogatory language has been used by Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal, against SC community," the notice stated.

"The Commission has decided to investigate/inquire into the matter in pursuance of the powers conferred upon it under Article 338 of the Constitution. You are hereby requested to submit an action taken report to the undersigned within 3 days," it said. NCSC Chairman Kishor Makwana said the Commission is committed to safeguarding the constitutional rights of Scheduled Castes.

For two women, a fight for justice in poll contest

BJP's Ratna Debnath, and Left Front's Sabina Yasmin, whose daughter died in post-poll violence in Nadia, have turned personal loss into questions of safety, governance, and State accountability

Shrabana Chatterjee
KOLKATA

Campaign trail: BJP's Ratna Debnath during an election rally at Panihati in North 24 Parganas of West Bengal; (right) CPI(M) candidate Sabina Yasmin interacts with people during a campaign in Nadia. PTI

Two mothers from different corners of West Bengal and from contrasting social backgrounds are contesting the Assembly elections with one aim: to bring justice to their daughters, who were killed in separate, gruesome incidents in the State.

Ratna Debnath, from the Panihati Assembly constituency in North 24 Parganas, has emerged as a key face of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s campaign. For Ms. Debnath, whose daughter – a doctor – was raped and murdered at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Hospital and Medical College in August 2024, the election is a personal quest for justice for her daughter.

PM's assurance

A few days ago, when she shared the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Panihati, she spoke about her daughter. "I want to make her name public," she said, prompting Mr. Modi to assure her that files relating to the case would be reopened after the polls.

Away from the media gaze, another mother is on a similar quest. Sabina Yasmin, whose nine-year-old daughter Tamanna Khatun died when crude bombs were hurled following the bypoll results in Nadia district's Kaliganj in July 2025, is the Left Front candidate from the seat.

She is fighting the election to ensure that her daughter's death due to political violence is accounted for.

'Our fight is the same'

"Our fight is the same. She is fighting for her daughter's justice, and so am I. The parties may be different, the politics may be different, but our fight is the same," Ms. Yasmin said of Ms. Debnath's candidature.

Though the two women are from opposing ends of the political spectrum, both aggrieved mothers have blamed the ruling Trinamool Congress and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for their daughters' deaths.

The deaths under different circumstances have raised questions about the role of the ruling establishment.

Tamanna Khatun was killed inside her home when bombs were allegedly hurled during victory processions organised by the Trinamool Congress workers in Kaliganj, raising concerns about the culture of political violence in the State.

The rape and murder of the young doctor at R.G. Kar Hospital by a former civic police volunteer in August 2024 became a watershed moment in West Bengal politics.

Widespread outrage, mourning and protest were witnessed for months.

The incident was the biggest challenge that the Mamata Banerjee-led government had to deal with in its third term.

Pursuit of justice

"My first priority will be to ensure justice for my daughter and not let any other 'Abhaya' happen in this State," Ms. Debnath has repeatedly said in her campaigns.

Ms. Debnath is contesting against the CPI(M)'s Kalatan Dasgupta, a key face of protests in the R.G. Kar incident, and Trinamool's Tirthankar Ghosh, son of Nirmal Ghosh, MLA, who was questioned by the Central Bureau of Investigation for allegedly tampering with evidence of the crime.

On the other hand, Ms. Yasmin is contesting against the BJP's Bapan Ghosh and Trinamool Congress candidate Alifa Ahmed, whose by-election victory in June 2025 and the subsequent celebratory processions were linked to the death of her minor daughter.

For both women, the electoral battle is deeply personal, shaped by grief and a search for justice. Their stepping into the political arena has transformed their individual tragedies into broader questions of safety, governance, and State accountability.

Mamata seeks Bhabanipur support, PM reaches out to Matuas in campaign last leg

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi being felicitated during a 'Vijay Sankalp' rally in Arambagh, West Bengal. PTI

With hours left for campaigning in the last phase of election in West Bengal, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday focused on issues concerning the Matua population, and said the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would ensure citizenship to the community of Hindu refugees that has migrated from Bangladesh.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee focused on her constituency in Bhabanipur, where she held a roadshow. She raised several issues, including the deletions of under-adjudication voters from the electoral roll, and targeted the administration that has been appointed by the Election Commission. "Those who are arresting now must think about getting arrested in future. Sin spares no one," she said.

Mr. Modi held a public meeting at Thakurnagar in North 24 Parganas, and said the Trinamool Congress openly opposed the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. "Don't fall for the TMC's lies on CAA. All refugees will receive permanent address in this country... If someone votes for Trinamool, they will be making their ancestors sad," he said.

The Prime Minister, who offered prayers at the Matua temple in Thakurnagar, recalled his visit to Orakandi in Bangladesh ahead of the 2021 Assembly polls in West Bengal. The Matua sect of Namasudra Hindus originated from Orakandi in the 19th century and its followers have been migrating to Bengal.

"I pledge before the brothers and sisters of the Matua Namasudra community members that they will receive citizenship through the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. They will be provided the same documents which other citizens of this country have," he said.

The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls has resulted in a significant number of voter deletions in the Matua community, resulting in uncertainty among them. The community has largely voted for the BJP in the past. Dozens of Assembly seats in North 24 Parganas and Nadia are dominated by the community, and its support will be crucial in determining the electoral fortune of the party.

Mr. Modi, who held another rally at Haripal in Hooghly, and a roadshow in north Kolkata, also touched on the issue of women's safety. Accusing the Trinamool of "sheltering goons who torture women", he said the BJP has given ticket to Sandeshkhali's Rekha Patra and the mother of the R.G. Kar victim, Ratna Debnath, and this proves the party's commitment to ensuring women's security.

In Bhabanipur, Ms. Banerjee began her campaign with a roadshow in Chakraberia and addressed four public meetings. The Trinamool chairperson, who is up against the BJP's Suvendu Adhikari, walked for over 80 minutes from Chakraberia intersection to Hazra Fire Brigade and her procession went through several lanes and by-lanes.

Ms. Banerjee tried to assure the electorate that it has not faced any issues over the past 15 years that she has been in power. "I scored a century in the first round, I will do it again in the second round. BJP is scared. That's why they brought in the central forces. All the OCs (officers in-charge of police stations) have been changed. They (BJP) are indulging in hooliganism. Cast your own vote. Keep a copy of the voter slip so that NRC cannot be implemented," she said.

Drug menace emerges as key plank in Amit Shah's campaign for Punjab polls

Nistula Hebbar
Vikas Vasudeva
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Poll bugle: Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a rally at Moga in Punjab on March 14. ANI

Scarcely would the campaign trail for the West Bengal election grow cold when Union Home Minister Amit Shah directs his attention to Punjab, with a visit scheduled for next month, targeting the drug menace in the State, which shares an International Border with Pakistan.

The Assembly election in Punjab is due next year and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), by bringing seven Rajya Sabha members from the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the State over to its side, has signalled that the battle has commenced.

Top sources in the BJP have told *The Hindu* that Mr. Shah will be visiting the State as often as once a month, throughout the year, covering each district.

A crackdown on the drug trade in the State will be a part of this. After the near disappearance of violent Left Wing Extremism in the country, the war against drugs is not just a political but a policy imperative for the Centre, said a source.

'No alliance with SAD'

BJP president Nitin Nabin, in a recent TV interview, has already announced that the party would be going alone in the Punjab polls, with no revival of its oldest alliance, with the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on the anvil.

Over the years, the drug menace has remained a politically and socially significant issue in Punjab. In March, Mr. Shah, who sounded the party's poll-bugle at the "*Badlav* rally" in Moga, sought a chance to form the next government, promising that "the BJP will free Punjab from the scourge of drugs within two years".

Plans to contest solo

Pointing out that the BJP used to contest elections as a "younger brother" earlier, therefore its government could not be formed, Mr. Shah stated that in the 2027 Assembly election, the party will fight to form its own government in Punjab. The BJP and the SAD had been alliance partners since 1996 and had long contested Assembly elections together under a seat-sharing arrangement, with the SAD fielding candidates for 94 seats and the BJP for 23.

The BJP contested these electoral battles as a "junior partner" in the alliance, which many in the party's State unit believed restricted the BJP's growth beyond urban centres for years.

However, after the SAD chose to sever ties with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the contentious Central farm laws in 2020, the BJP has been pushing for its expansion across the State to achieve its solo ambitions.

While Punjab presents a distinct political landscape where religion, region and caste-based coalitions remain central to the State's electoral arithmetic, it appears that the BJP is placing the drug menace at the centre of its campaign strategy. "Unlike caste or religious identity, the drug crisis cuts across communal and regional lines and a sustained focus on its eradication could help the BJP build broader electoral appeal among sections of society," said a senior party leader.

BJP attacking Bengali culture, pride: Kejriwal; Modi won't have his way in Bengal: Tejashwi

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA

Arvind Kejriwal during a public meeting in support of Trinamool candidate Kunal Ghosh at Beleghata in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

Former Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party convener Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday joined the Trinamool Congress campaign in West Bengal, addressing three election rallies – two in Kolkata and one in Howrah.

His visit comes during the last leg of poll campaign in the State. Campaigning for the second phase of the Assembly elections will conclude at 6 p.m. on Monday. A few days ago, the AAP suffered a major setback when seven of its 10 MPs crossed over to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Speaking at a public meeting in Beleghata in support of Trinamool candidate Kunal Ghosh, Mr. Kejriwal accused the BJP of deploying "all the Army and central forces" in the State as if "the people here are all terrorists". "This is an attack on Bengal, on Bengali culture and pride. You will have to reply to this," he said.

Mr. Kejriwal described the West Bengal Assembly election as a fight to save "the democracy" in the country and praised Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, while urging people to vote for the Trinamool. He alleged that the BJP had "captured" Delhi by framing him in false corruption cases, though courts had found him innocent.

"Today, they [BJP] have destroyed all the good work we did in Delhi. We built good schools, but they shut them. We built *mohalla* clinics and made bus travel free for women, but they stopped that. We made electricity free, and they are going to stop that, too. They will stop all the work *Didi* has done here if you accidentally vote for them," he said.

Tejashwi lauds Mamata

Along with Mr. Kejriwal, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Tejashwi Yadav also campaigned for the Trinamool. Speaking at a public rally at Jorasanko in Kolkata, Mr. Yadav said Ms. Banerjee was "fighting like a tigress".

"The Prime Minister, the Home Minister, all BJP Chief Ministers, the ED, the CBI and also *'godi* media' (partisan media) are all against Mamata *Didi*, but she is fighting like a tigress, and Modi*ji* will not have his way in West Bengal," the RJD leader said.

While Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Yadav are campaigning in the State in support of the Trinamool Congress, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has launched scathing attacks on the State government and Ms. Banerjee.

Mr. Gandhi, who has held multiple public rallies, accused the Trinamool Congress leadership of paving the way for the BJP in West Bengal. On Saturday, Mr. Gandhi accused both the BJP and the Trinamool of corruption and misrule.

Trinamool running a reign of terror in West Bengal, says Rahul Gandhi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi

Ahead of the final phase of polling for the West Bengal Assembly election, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday accused the ruling Trinamool Congress of running a reign of terror in the State.

"In West Bengal today, it is not democracy but TMC's reign of terror that prevails. Intimidating, attacking, and eliminating opposing voices after votes are cast – this has become the defining character of TMC," Mr. Gandhi wrote in a social media post flagging the murder of a Congress worker. Debdeep Chatterjee, a share trader, was beaten to death allegedly by a mob in Asansol on Saturday after an argument broke out when his car brushed against a parked motorbike near his home.

The Congress's West Bengal unit, in a post on X, said that Mr. Chatterjee worked closely with Asansol North Congress candidate Prasenjit Puitandi. It further said that the "victim was attacked and beaten by miscreants" linked to the ruling Trinamool and died of his injuries shortly thereafter.

Quoting this post Mr. Gandhi, extended his deepest condolences to the grieving family and called the murder by "TMC-affiliated goons" as "utterly reprehensible".

He said the Congress's politics has never been based on violence, nor will it ever be.

Trinamool files case over 'misuse of National Flag'

Press Trust of India
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Sunday lodged a complaint against BJP candidate Papia Adhikari, alleging misuse of the National Flag during election campaign in the Tollygunge Assembly constituency in south Kolkata.

The complaint was filed by Trinamool leader Kohinoor Mazumdar.

INBRIEF

Pawan Khera moves SC against rejection of bail plea

Congress leader Pawan Khera moved the Supreme Court on Sunday, challenging the Gauhati High Court's rejection of his anticipatory bail plea in a first information report (FIR) registered on his alleged remarks that Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife held multiple passports and assets abroad. The High Court had rejected the pre-arrest bail petition on the ground that custodial interrogation was necessary to unearth the source of his accusations. The High Court, in its decision on April 24, declined to accept Mr. Khera's contention that his comments were merely political rhetoric.

PM to launch development projects in Uttar Pradesh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to make a two-day visit to Uttar Pradesh from April 28 to 29. On April 28, in his Lok Sabha constituency of Varanasi, Mr. Modi will participate in a Mahila Sammelan, where he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of development projects worth about ₹6,350 crore. He will visit the Kashi Vishwanath temple on the following day and is scheduled to dedicate the Ganga Expressway to the nation in Hardoi. He will also lay the foundation stone of the Varanasi Junction-Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction third and fourth railway line project, including the rail-cum-road bridge over the Ganga.

Images that eloquently told the story of India in light and shade

The story of Raghu Rai, who passed away on Sunday, is intricately linked with that of the country; from capturing the stately presence of Indira Gandhi to documenting the Bhopal gas tragedy, his photographs have frozen moments of history

Ziya Us Salam

Language may be used to obfuscate the truth. An image never lies. Raghu Rai's countless images often with their quiet optimism and occasionally brooding pessimism, never did. A testimony to a country as much at ease with the gentle religiosity of the eternal refugee, the Dalai Lama, and the endlessly healing Mother Teresa as with the silent eloquence of a frame of a Satyajit Ray film or the stately presence of Indira Gandhi captured in a frame sitting in her office, signing some papers even as her Ministers, all men, stand around her.

Then there were timeless frames of a blind Muslim beggar finding his way leaning on the shoulder of a Hindu girl with mental disabilities and another one of a *chaiwala* precariously perched at the gate of a moving train with his tray, cups and saucers.

For the record, Rai, who passed away at the age of 83 on Sunday, after battling cancer for two years, was a print photographer whose association with the *Statesman*, beginning 1966, has been recounted almost as often as his images have been debated before being embraced. He worked for *Sunday* and *India Today* too, but, essentially, he was his own man, doing his own thing. In his own fashion, documenting the times he lived in.

Rai's story is intricately linked with that of India. Without either, the story would be incomplete. In the lap of the Himalayas, Rai found peace at the feet of the Dalai Lama. On one occasion, he had gone to capture the face of serenity. Two monks flanked a little maroon sheet, as Rai prepared for the shoot. Then came the Dalai Lama and in the humility which was always his companion, he asked Rai, "Where do you want me to stand?" A little later, Rai's photo spoke as precisely, the interplay of light and shadow, the intensity of the purpose being balanced with the gentleness of nature.

Rai followed the Ganga trail; capturing its beauty, its religiosity with such depth as to make infinity intelligible. Much the same

RAGHU RAI (1942-2026)

he did with the Yamuna, and Delhi, the city which draws its lifeline from the Yamuna. He lent a magical touch to Khushwant Singh's *Delhi: A Portrait* and quietly reiterated that a good picture is better than a thousand words, even if the words were of the irrepressible Singh. With his lens, Delhi's trees spoke, its monuments communicated.

He found peace by the ghats of the Ganga in Banaras. A Hindu saint with long, knotted hair evoked as much awe as spirituality for him. The way his lens captured the pacific waters one didn't need a story. He was to immortalise it for posterity with the book, *Varanasi: Portrait of a Civilisation*, one of the nearly 20 books he penned and photographed for. Further down the Ganga trail, he followed Mother Teresa to Kolkata. His image of the Mother, bent over a stick, her eyes aglow with hope lent grace and spirituality to the moment.

'Meeting god'

He was born in 1942, the year of Quit India; his parents quit the newly created Pakistan soon after Partition. The Padma Shri awardee's photographs were many things to a million people. For Rai, they were life. As he once told this correspondent, "Without my camera, I am nothing. Indeed, without a memory a human being is like a ripple in the river, when and where it starts, where it ends, nobody knows. For me, photography started as a bid to freeze memories."

He was a protégé of Henri Cartier-Bresson, who nominated Rai, then an upcoming photojournalist, to join Magnum Photos in 1977. He was to go on to raise photo journalism to an art, holding retrospectives in New Delhi and London besides exhibitions in the U.S., Finland, Australia, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands. Wherever people could read and see, Rai's work was admired. Most notably Bhopal after the gas tragedy in 1984. He was generous to the talented, appreciative of the skilful, and impatient of delays and dilettantes. Understandable for someone so blessed, so devoted that his art itself became a form of worship.

"I meet my god through my camera," he once said.

He chronicled the soul of India for six decades: Rahul

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president Naveen Patnaik on Sunday condoled the death of photographer Raghu Rai, and said his lens chronicled the soul of India and preserved the nation's memory.

"Raghu Rai *ji*'s lens chronicled the soul of India for over six decades – its people, its struggles, its joys, and its defining moments," Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X. "He didn't just take photographs, he preserved our nation's memory," he said.

"My heartfelt condolences to his family, his colleagues, and the countless admirers his work touched across generations," Mr. Gandhi said.

"Deeply saddened to learn about the passing away of legendary photojournalist #RaghuRai. Through his lens, he chronicled the spirit of India, its people and everyday life, which will remain etched in our collective memory," Mr. Patnaik said in a post on X.

"His frames were not mere pictures, but living histories. May his legacy inspire generations of storytellers," he added.

Raghu Rai didn't just photograph India, he invented a way of seeing it

TRIBUTE

Rohit Chawla

I came to Raghu Rai before I came to photography.

As a young, 18-year-old inconsequential boy shooting for a city magazine, more to fund a relationship than any artistic calling, photography was a means to an end, until his images began to intrude – in passing at first, then completely. They didn't just influence what I shot, they altered what I thought a photograph could hold.

His series on Indian musicians for *India Today* remains, for me, among the finest editorial work produced in this country. But it wasn't just the subject, it was the construction. The audacity of his wide-angle lens, the tension he seemed to choreograph at the edges of the frame, even the recurring crows, improbably present, as if domesticated into his compositions, added a cinematic aside long before cinema caught up with that language.

"I am partial to the wide angle," he once told me, "because even when I photograph a person, I want the atmosphere, the surrounding, the simultaneity of moments."

That instinct to hold not just the subject, but the world around it was perhaps his greatest signature.

And then the prints. The darkroom, in his hands, was less a process and more a mythos. Stories circulated, half technical and half mystical, of his dodging, his burning, even of his breath playing a role in tonal gradation before the image met the fixer. Whether apocryphal or not, it hardly mattered. The prints had a density, a depth, that felt authored beyond the negative. This was long before software flattened both image and imagination.

He also belonged to a time when access to power, to its proximity was not negotiated but more instinctive. His images of Indira Gandhi are as much a part of history as she is. In fact, modern history is nothing without people like Raghu Rai. Mrs. Gandhi's images by him were not just portraits, but studies in authority and theatre, often with an almost subversive choreography of those around her. Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama, his other recurring presences, were rendered not as icons, but as centres of gravity. Access in those simpler times could almost be gained by owning a camera alone and not by lying supine at the feet of our political masters as is the case now.

What set him apart, though, was not just access, but intent.

"Photography, for me, is *darshan*," he said. "You have to make yourself available mentally, physically, spiritually to the moment." It sounds lofty until you see the work. Then it feels like a simple fact.

Rich legacy: What set Raghu Rai apart was not just access, but intent. ROHIT CHAWLA

His range was equally telling. Nearly 20 books, moving effortlessly from the humble tree to the human body, from the public moment to the private study.

There was no hierarchy in what deserved attention, only in how deeply it was seen.

Our interactions were occasional, but never forgettable. Raghu had little patience for the banal or the derivative, and even less inclination to disguise that impatience. I remember a call after an issue of *Architectural Digest* had devoted itself to photography. He was unimpressed vocally of some of the other imagery and insisted I write to the editor and register what he clearly felt was a collective lapse in judgment. It wasn't a suggestion.

His views on the contemporary photographic landscape were, unsurprisingly, unsparing. He saw much of it as noise: too many images, too little intent. A "fast-food attitude", as he once put it, where the ease of digital had eroded both discipline and depth.

There were, of course, contradictions. Raghu, in his earlier years, was famously dismissive of advertising photography. The idea that manufactured images could command such fees seemed, to him, faintly absurd. He viewed those of us navigating that world with a mix of curiosity and suspicion.

He was often miserly with his praise for his peers. I once tried, on stage, to nudge him into acknowledging many of the derivative pitfalls of contemporary photography practices. He declined with a silence as he didn't want to share his own huge disquiet on this aspect in public.

I also remember the great uproar around staged imagery in photography in the case of Steve McCurry. To some of us, the outrage felt misplaced because photography has always negotiated and often reconstructed the real. For him, the problem was never construction, it was emptiness. As he once remarked, without years of *tapasya*, most experimentation was merely surface – "form and texture" without energy.

Of the thousands of his photographs that shaped my visual memory, the one that stayed strangely was not a sweeping wide-angle, but a tight close-up of Muhammad Ali, headgear on, likely shot at the National Stadium in the early 80s at a public exhibition bout. That image shifted something fundamental in me. Away from spectacle, toward stillness. Away from the expansive frame, toward the quiet portrait.

And then, the last time I saw him was in February 2026. Frail, masked, being wheeled in for a lifetime achievement award. Still unmistakably Raghu Rai, present and observing. There was a brief acknowledgment across the room, a small wave. It felt less like farewell and more like a final edit – precise, unsentimental.

"Wherever I go, my *darshan* is through my camera," he had said. "I meet my god through it."

Raghu Rai didn't just photograph India. He invented a way of seeing it.

He has taken his last breath, which, once upon a time, according to rumour, we all want to believe, could alter the texture of an image in the dark room.

Goodbye Maestro, you were always the first among equals.

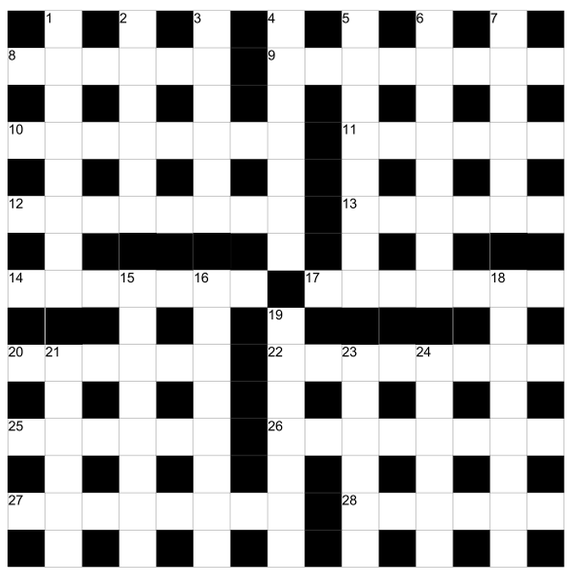
(Rohit Chawla is an artist whose lens has captured the pulse of contemporary India. His imagery blends artistic intuition, political activism, and portraiture into a fine-art aesthetic.)

TH CROSSWORD + 14778

(set by Mythical)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



ACROSS

8. Daughter & son expelled from Budapest oddly cheerful (6)
9. Spooner's female animal sickens, sends away to destination by plane (8)
10. Access transport (8)
11. Roman God's mercurial nature's devoid of malice ultimately (6)
12. Reprimand student leader of institute at first and release (8)
13. A lawyer limits information to items on the list (6)
14. This worry duly affected young ladies (7)
17. Study this site regularly for one working with canines (7)
20. Spice container overturned by little woman (6)
22. Impressive old queen enthralled by drawing (8)
25. Appallingly, a scar seen around one part of the lung (3,3)
26. Firm about basically selling off musical instrument (8)
27. Major celebrity playing games with sailor (8)
28. Summon judge after rabbi's knocked out by a follower (6)

DOWN

1. Son awaiting disbursement of money (8)
2. Primarily, director establishes clear rules, ensuring equity and order (6)
3. Mostly tolerate unknown amateur's lines (6)
4. Food supplier made a mess of terrace (7)
5. Serbian boy beaten up somewhere in Australia (8)
6. Try drinking Italian wine, it's most flavoursome (8)
7. Red-faced female aristocrat seen outside inn initially (6)
15. Soldier from the south to demand a royal salutation (8)
16. Story supported by urban wisdom (8)
18. Reportedly failed to elude authority (8)
19. No time? First try cooking Chinese style dish (4-3)
21. After being written up, some cadet in Utah co-operated (6)
23. On reflection, one graduate identified Japanese condiment (6)
24. Remains briefly in cast, frequently ignored (6)

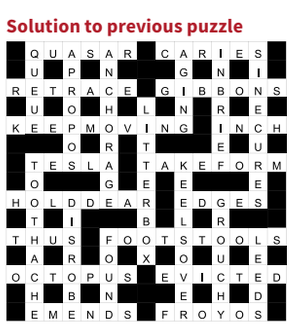
SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

No.SS6863 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Nine paths of devotion

Sri Desika Srinivasa Tathachariar explained in a discourse that there are nine types of devotion, shaped by the temperament and inclination of each individual. King Parikshit exemplified *Sravanam* – immersing himself in listening to the divine glories of God. Sage Suka Brahmam embodied *Kirtanam*, constantly narrating and glorifying the Lord through sacred discourse. Child devotee Prahlada lived in *Smaranam*, maintaining uninterrupted remembrance of God at all times. Goddess Mahalakshmi represents *Paadasevanam*, offering service at the Lord's feet.

In the same way, King Prithu exemplified *Archanam* – the path of devoted worship through rituals and offerings performed with sincerity and discipline. Akrura embodied *Vandanam*, expressing deep devotion through prostration, reverence, and heartfelt salutations to the Lord.

Garuda, the king of birds, and Hanuman exemplified *Dasyam* – the path of selfless service, dedicating every act to the Lord. Arjuna embraced *Sakhyam*, relating to the Divine as a close friend, sharing trust and intimacy with Krishna. Finally, King Mahabali represents *Aatmanivedanam*, offering himself completely in total surrender to the Lord. Together, these examples complete the spectrum of devotion, showing that whether through service, friendship or total surrender, every sincere path leads one closer to the Divine. Thus, the nine forms of Bhakti are like different rivers, all ultimately merging into the same vast ocean of divine grace and eternal bliss. The ultimate fruit, "*Moksham*" (liberation), is assured for all these nine forms of devotion, though the approaches may differ (*Mukthi: Navaanaam Phalam*).

MONEYWISE

ASKUS

Vaishali R Venkat

Q I have invested in a small-cap fund (Direct plan-growth) through SIP for quite some time, but it's highly volatile. Now, I want to invest in a more stable fund, such as a multi-cap or a flexi-cap fund. I want to switch to another fund and also minimise my tax liabilities. Is it possible to switch from one fund to another?

NARINDER GAUTAM

A First of all, thank you for showing interest in *The Hindu Moneywise*. The word 'stable' in markets can be tricky.

Even flexi-cap and multi-cap funds are not always stable and can witness volatility and declines at times.

If stability is your priority, stocks and mutual funds may not be suitable, as they are inherently volatile and are better suited for long-term investing, say five to seven years at least. For short-term, you can park your funds in instruments such as FDs, RDs, or certain debt funds.

With regard to switching funds, even within the same fund house, it is treated as a redemption (selling of units). If you exit with a profit, capital gains tax will apply, depending on the holding period of your units.

If you exit at a loss, it erodes your capital, though such losses can be set off against gains for tax purposes. In both cases, you also need the discipline to reinvest the lump sum into another fund, without spending it upfront.

A simpler approach could be to pause or cancel your future SIP instalments, while retaining the accumulated units/amount without redeeming.

Further, you can redirect the future SIP contributions into a new fund of your choice.

This approach offers several advantages. It works by separating your past SIP accumulations from your future investment decisions.

Since you are not redeeming your existing units, there is no sale taking place, and therefore no immediate capital gains tax arises.

Likewise, if the fund is currently at a loss, you also avoid booking a loss by staying invested.

In effect, your existing corpus stays invested and it gets an opportunity to regain value over time. Additionally, since there is no redemption, you also bypass the exit load (if applicable) that is typically charged when units are redeemed within a short holding period, especially under one year. Above all, as per your wish, you also get an opportunity to redirect your future monthly contributions into a fund of your choice.

Another behavioural advantage: since you are not redeeming and receiving a lump sum in your bank account, you reduce the risk of spending the money impulsively. This approach creates a balanced strategy where you minimise taxes and costs, avoid premature loss realisation, and gradually improve the quality of your portfolio through future investments.

Q Sir, I am a senior citizen with total taxable income below the taxable threshold. Currently, banks and other financial institutions deduct TDS on the interest from my deposits. So, can I submit Form 15H to banks and institutions from April 2026 to avoid TDS and claim a refund later?

M. VIJAYARAGHAVAN

A Sir, from April 1, 2026, both the Forms 15G & 15H were replaced by a new unified Form No. 121. From this financial year onwards, all eligible taxpayers, both below and above 60 years of age, will only have to submit Form No. 121, and the earlier Forms are no longer valid.

Form 121 applies to income such as PF withdrawals, pension, rental income, interest on deposits, insurance commission, income from mutual funds, dividends, and proceeds from life insurance policies.

HUFs are eligible to use this form, whereas companies, firms, and non-residents are not. Please note that Form 121 must be submitted separately to each bank or financial institution from which you earn interest income.

(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified Wealth Manager and certified in NISM's Research Analyst module)

Send queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

ILLUSTRATION: SAAI

Rupee depreciation and its impact on investments

The correction we are witnessing in the equity market is due to multiple reasons and rupee depreciation is just one of them; this is not something under your control and to worry about

CURRENCY CAULDRON

Joydeep Sen

In the recent past, there has been lot of apprehensions on the weakening of our currency, and rightly so. For a perspective on the extent of weakening of INR, over the past few decades, it depreciates on an average 2.5% to 3% per year against the U.S. Dollar.

We as a growing economy import a lot, higher than our exports, and to manage this, our currency depreciates. The issue in the recent past has been that in 2025-26, INR moved from 85.53 to the greenback on March 31, 2025 to 92.76 on March 30, 2026 i.e. a depreciation of 8.45%. If we look at the intermediate low point of 94.71 on March 23, 2026, till that point of time, our currency had depreciated 10.73%. How does this impact you?

Equity investments

The exchange rate does not have much of a direct impact on the equity market, as long as you are investing in India.

Currency depreciation does have a negative impact on sentiments in the market, but the market is the confluence of 'n' number of factors, and we see the movement as the cumulative effect.

The correction we are witnessing in the equity market is due to multiple reasons e.g. selling by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), crude oil price flaring up, etc., and rupee depreciation is just one of those reasons. This is not something under your control and you need not worry much about this.

> High inflation is a negative for both equity and bond markets, but more so for the bond market as inflation is a bigger variable for interest rates

> Allocation to gold should be say 10% of your portfolio, or maximum 15 %. The rationale is, gold is not a mainstream investment like equity or bonds

Debt investments

Weaker currency leads to something called imported inflation. As an example, when we import crude oil, there is a certain price in U.S. dollars. That gets converted to our currency at the prevailing exchange rate. Weaker the currency, higher is the landed price.

This adds to our inflation. High inflation is a negative for both equity and bond markets, but more so for the bond market as inflation is a bigger variable for interest rates. A weak INR would contribute to imported inflation going forward.

The RBI, in the policy review on April 8, 2026, projected consumer price inflation at 4.6% in 2026-27. For this projection, the RBI assumed normal monsoon (which is a question mark now), crude oil price at $85/ barrel (lower than current prevailing price) and INR at 94 (weaker than current level). That is to say, currency weakness has already been factored in, for projecting inflation at 4.6%. Going forward, if currency does not depreciate significantly from current level, it should not be a major concern for your investments.

We discussed so far, the adverse impact of rupee depreciation on your portfolio. There are two investment avenues that benefit from this. One is gold. There is an international price of gold denominated in U.S. dollars.

This gets converted to rupees at the prevailing exchange rate. Weaker the rupee, higher is the INR price of gold. History shows that the returns gold has given us, over the decades, while the major part is gold price movement per se (in USD), a substantial chunk is due to weakening of our currency. The learning is, you should have some allocation to gold in your portfolio.

Having said that, allocation to gold should be say 10% of your portfolio, or maximum 15 %. The rationale is, gold is not a mainstream investment like equity or bonds.

The other investment that benefits from currency weakness is global investments. When you invest in stocks or bonds or funds in USA (or any other country), it gets converted from INR to USD (or any other currency). When you redeem your investments, it gets converted back to INR. During the investment period, if rupee depreciates (which it usually does), you get that benefit as well. You can invest abroad though relevant Mutual Fund products available in India. You can invest directly in stocks or bonds or other avenues abroad, which would be part of the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) limit. Outbound products available at GIFT City are part of the LRS limit.

Expenses

Your expenses in India are impacted due to inflation i.e. purchasing power of rupee comes down progressively. Even if part of this inflation is due to currency weakening, it is not under your control, and you cannot do much about it. Rather, if it is about your expenses abroad, in USA or any other country, then there is something you can do. Apart from expenses, you can look at investing abroad as part of portfolio allocation and get the benefit of diversification. If and when expenses crop up, which you are envisaging now, you can redeem to the extent required, otherwise let it continue.

(Joydeep Sen is a corporate trainer (financial markets) and author)

Arriving at terminal wealth

THINKINVESTOR

Terminal wealth, which is the amount you need at the end of the time horizon for a goal, should be enough to fund the goal after paying taxes. But accounting for taxes is easier said than done

Venkatesh Bangaruswamy

The amount you need at the end of the time horizon for a goal is referred to as terminal wealth. In this article, we discuss how to determine the terminal wealth for a goal. We also look at how to adjust for taxes on goal-based investments, as taxes can impact a goal's terminal wealth.

Tax drag

Suppose you want to provide for your child's college education ten years hence. As the first step, you must find out the current cost of college education for a branch of study you believe your child will pursue. For other goals such as buying a house, you must consider the current cost of buying your desired house. Next, you must consider the inflation related to the goal. A search on the Internet suggests that education inflation is 10%. Suppose the education you want your child to have costs ₹25 lakh today. You must determine how much it would cost 10 years hence at 10% inflation. That would be the terminal wealth required for the life goal.

The above calculation is simple but ignores the effect of taxes on the terminal wealth.

The terminal wealth should be enough to fund the goal after paying taxes. But accounting for taxes is easier said than done. This is because of two reasons. One, it is typical for individuals to invest in bank deposits for their bond allocation. The interest income on deposits is taxed annually on an accrual basis.

And two, you must rebalance your portfolio starting five years from the end of the time horizon for the goal. This means you could incur long term capital gains tax on your equity investments in the years you rebalance. The impact of taxes on your portfolio returns is referred to as the tax drag.

Conclusion

You can adjust for the tax drag by projecting the proportion of equity and bonds in the portfolio through the time horizon for a goal considering your rebalancing process. Then, you must adjust the portfolio value each year for taxes. But all this defeats the objective of keeping your investment process simple. An easier approach is to add, say, 10-15% to the pre-tax terminal wealth as buffer for taxes. Alternatively, you could decide that any shortfall in terminal wealth because of tax drag can be made good with surplus cash or from additional borrowings taken at the end of the time horizon for a life goal.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Personal Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 1 year — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 1 year — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
HDFC Bank	10.50-21.00	10,747-13,527	2,149-2,705	Upto 2.5% (Maximum Rs 25,000)
Citi Bank	9.99-16.49	10,621-12,290	2,124-2,458	Upto 3%
Tata Capital	10.99 onwards	10,869 onwards	2,174 onwards	Upto 2.75%
ICICI Bank	10.50-19.00	10,747-12,970	2,149-2,594	Upto 2.50%
Bank of Baroda	10.00-15.60	10,624-12,053	2,125-2,411	Rs 1,000-10,000
State Bank of India	9.60-13.85	10,525-11,595	2,105-2,319	Upto 1.5% (Maximum Rs 15,000)
Axis Bank	12.00-21.00	11,122-13,527	2,224-2,705	1.5%-2%
Kotak Mahindra Bank	10.75-24.00*	10,809-14,384	2,162-2,877	Upto 2.5%
Bank of India	9.35-12.35	10,464-11,211	2,093-2,242	Upto 2% (Maximum Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	10.20-13.90	10,673-11,608	2,135-2,322	Upto 0.5%
Punjab National Bank^	8.95-14.50	10,367-11,764	2,073-2,353	Upto 1%
HSBC Bank	9.75-15.00	10,562-11,895	2,112-2,379	Upto 1%
Federal Bank	10.49-17.99	10,744-12,694	2,149-2,539	Upto 3%
Union Bank of India	8.90-13.00	10,355-11,377	2,071-2,275	Upto 0.5% (Maximum Rs 7,500)
Bajaj Finserv	13.00 onwards	11,377 onwards	2,275 onwards	Upto 4%
Punjab & Sind Bank	9.50-11.50	10,501-10,996	2,100-2,199	Upto 1%
South Indian Bank	10.15-14.45	10,660-11,751	2,132-2,350	2%
IDBI Bank	9.50-14.00	10,501-11,634	2,100-2,327	1% (Minimum Rs 2,500)
UCO Bank	10.05-10.45	10,636-10,735	2,127-2,147	Upto 1%
IDFC First Bank	10.49 onwards	10,809 onwards	2,162 onwards	Upto 3.50%
Bank of Maharashtra	9.55-12.90^^	10,513-11,351	2,103-2,270	Upto 1%
Indian Overseas Bank	12.05	11,135	2,227	Upto 0.75%
Indian Bank	9.05-13.65	10.391-11,544	2,078-2,309	1%**
Dhanlaxmi Bank	11.90-15.70	11,097-12,079	2,219-2,416	Upto 2.5% (Minimum Rs 1,250)
IndusInd Bank	11.00 onwards	10,871 onwards	2,174 onwards	2.5% onwards

*For pensioners, NIL processing fees for loan upto Rs 25,000, and fees of Rs 250 for loan above Rs 25,000.

Car Loans

Rates and Charges — Loan amount 5 lakh, Tenure 1 year — (% of loan amount)

Name of Lender	Interest Rate (%)	EMI (Rs)	Processing fee
Union Bank of India	8.20-9.40	10,186-10,477	Up to Rs. 1,000
Punjab National Bank	8.05-8.90	10,150-10,355	NIL upto 30th September 2022
Bank of Baroda	7.95-11.25	10,126-10,934	0.50% (Rs 2,500-Rs 10,000)
Canara Bank	8.30-11.00	10,210-10,871	0.25% (Rs 1,000-5,000)
Bank of India	8.25-9.95	10,198-10,611	NIL
UCO Bank	8.05	10,150	1% (Upto Rs 1,500)
State Bank of India	7.80-8.65	10,090-10,294	NIL
IDBI Bank	8.60 - 9.90	10,282-10,599	Rs 2,500
Bank of Maharashtra*	8.20-11.70	10,186-11,047	NIL
Indian Overseas Bank	8.95	10,367	0.5% - 0.6% (Rs 500-Rs 10,000)
ICICI Bank	8.10 onwards	10,162 onwards	Rs 5,500-Rs 8,500
HDFC Bank	8.35 onwards	10,222 onwards	0.5% (Rs 3,500-Rs 8,000)
Karnataka Bank	8.61-10.66	10,283-10,787	0.5% (Rs 2,500-Rs 10,000)
Federal Bank	9.90	10,599	Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500
Axis Bank	8.20-11.40	10,186-10,971	Rs 3,500-Rs 5,500
South Indian Bank	10.55-12.00	10,759-11,122	1% (Max: Rs. 10,000)
City Union Bank	13.00-13.50	11,377-11,505	1% (Min: Rs 250)

**0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holder. 0.05% concession on interest rate to women & armed forces personnel subject to minimum floor ceiling of RLLR.

Rates and charges as on February 15 — **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

BELFAST

N. Ireland police suspect dissident republicans in latest car bombing

AP

Northern Ireland police said on Sunday they suspect dissident republicans could be behind an overnight car bomb attack outside a police station near Belfast. Politicians denounced the incident, with First Minister Michelle O'Neill from the pro-Irish Sinn Fein party saying those behind the attack "speak for absolutely no one". AFP

JOHANNESBURG

Taiwan Minister hits out at China, says island will not bow to pressure

AP

Taiwan's Foreign Minister Lin Chia-lung on a visit to Eswatini slammed China's move to pressure African nations into revoking travel permits, saying it will not "bow its head." Taiwan's President postponed a trip to Eswatini last week after "Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar revoked the charter's overflight permits". AFP

DAMASCUS

Syrian court begins first public trial of ousted leader Assad and allies

AP

A Syrian court conducted the first hearing on Sunday in the trial of ousted ruler Bashar al-Assad and senior figures from his government. Mr. Assad and his brother Maher have fled Syria and will be tried in absentia, but one of their relatives, former security official Atef Najib, was present in the courtroom. AFP

BOGOTA

Explosive device kills 20 on bus in Colombia amid rising violence

REUTERS

An explosive device killed 20 people travelling on a bus in southwestern Colombia on Saturday, an attack the country's Army chief described as a "terrorist act" that also left at least 30 injured as violence linked to drug trafficking escalates. At least 26 incidents have taken place in the past two days in the southwest region. AP

Israel and Hezbollah call out Lebanon truce breach

Agence France-Presse
JERUSALEM

Israel and Hezbollah traded blame over violations of the fragile ceasefire in Lebanon on Sunday, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying the military was "vigorously" targeting the Iran-backed group as both sides claimed new attacks.

The accusations came as the foes said they carried out fresh attacks in southern Lebanon.

"Hezbollah's violations are, in practice, dismantling the ceasefire," Mr. Netanyahu said. Under the terms of the truce, which was recently extended, Israel says it has the right to respond to planned, imminent or ongoing attacks

Hezbollah said its fighters targeted Israeli troops in response to their ceasefire violations. "The enemy's continued ceasefire violations... and above all its continued occupation of Lebanese territory will be met with a response and a resistance," it said in a statement.

Araghchi heads to Russia after diplomatic push in Pakistan

Iran's top diplomat made a second visit to Islamabad as it works to save negotiations with the U.S.; departs for Moscow to meet Putin; Trump says Tehran can contact the U.S. if it wants to negotiate

Agence France-Presse
ISLAMABAD

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi returned to Islamabad on Sunday, ping-ponging from capital to capital as mediators hoped to keep peace talks between Tehran and the United States alive.

Mr. Araghchi visited Oman's Muscat on Saturday after leaving Pakistan, and left Moscow after his second visit to the Pakistani capital to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin, but there remained no indication that direct U.S.-Iranian talks would resume.

On Saturday, U.S. President Donald Trump scotched a planned trip to Islamabad by his negotiators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

But in a sign that indirect efforts were ongoing, the Fars news agency reported that Iran had transmitted "written messages" to the Americans via Pakistan that were "about some of the red lines of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including nuclear issues and the Strait of Hormuz".

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (left) meets Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi during the latter's first visit on April 25. AFP

Those messages were not, however, part of any negotiations, Fars said.

There had been hopes for a new round of talks on Saturday, with Mr. Witkoff and Mr. Kushner due to visit Islamabad, but Mr. Trump later told Fox News he had scrapped the trip, saying there was no point "sitting around talking about nothing".

On Sunday, Mr. Trump told the channel: "I said, we're not doing this anymore. We have all the cards. If they want to talk, they can come to us, or they can call us, you know there is a telephone, we have nice secure lines."

Domestic pressure

The President is under growing domestic pressure, with petrol prices in the United States pushed up by Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz and midterm elections scheduled for November.

Mr. Araghchi described his initial Pakistan trip as "very fruitful" but signalled scepticism over Washington's intentions, saying he had "yet to see if the U.S. is truly serious about diplomacy".

With the Minister bound for Russia, Iran's ISNA news agency quoted Tehran's Ambassador Kazem Jalali as saying: "The Foreign Minister will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday", adding that Mr. Araghchi would "consult Russian officials regarding the latest status of the negotiations, ceasefire, and surrounding developments".

Russia's Foreign Ministry confirmed on Sunday that Mr. Araghchi would travel to Moscow "with the aim of holding talks", the RIA Novosti news agency reported, without specifying with whom.

Sri Lanka seeks investors for loss-making Mattala airport built with loans from China

Meera Srinivasan
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has called for Expressions of Interest to run its loss-making international airport in Mattala, in the southern Hambantota district, with a Cabinet-appointed committee tasked with negotiating the deal with prospective domestic and foreign investors.

The Ministry of Ports and Civil Aviation, on behalf of Airport and Aviation Services, "invites proposals from prospective investors *i.e.* Companies, Corporations, Firms, and Joint Ventures" for investments to "utilise resources" of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport (MRIA), according to an official statement.

The EOI, which includes airside, aerodrome and landside operations, is open to both domestic and international entities, the statement said.

Indo-Russian deal

India has in the past expressed interest to operate the airport in Mattala, which has made headlines as the 'world's emptiest airport', including through a joint venture with a Russian company. However, the proposals did not take off.

A view of the Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport. The facility is yet to prove commercially viable since its launch in 2013. AFP

The airport has accumulated a net loss of nearly $130 million, according to the Auditor General

The Mattala airport was developed with a nearly $200-million Chinese loan by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, who sought to develop his stronghold, along with other big ticket infrastructure projects such as the Hambantota port, also backed by the Chinese. However, the airport facility is yet to prove commercially viable since its launch in 2013.

It has recorded a cumulative loss amounting to nearly LKR 40 billion (roughly $130 million), the Auditor General's report said in 2024.

The airport currently has no scheduled flights but handles charter planes, officials said.

Ukraine marks Chernobyl anniversary amid Russia war

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy accused Russia of "nuclear terrorism" on Sunday, as Ukraine marked the 40th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster amid deadly new drone attacks.

Five people were killed across Ukraine after Moscow launched more than 100 drones overnight, the latest in an almost nightly barrage the country has faced since the beginning of the war in 2022.

In a social media post marking the Chernobyl anniversary, Mr. Zelenskyy said Russia's invasion was "again bringing the world to the brink of a man-made disaster". He highlighted how Russian drones regularly pass over Chernobyl and that one had hit its protective shell last year.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy

Any repairs to the massive metal outer structure are virtually impossible due to Russia's invasion, according to the environment group Greenpeace.

"The world must not allow this nuclear terrorism to continue, and the best way is to force Russia to stop its reckless attacks," he added.

Russia's nuclear agency Rosatom took over the plant in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia, Europe's biggest civilian nuclear power complex, after it was occupied by Russia. The plant is now in shutdown mode.

Including Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine has four nuclear power plants, which are vital for the country's power supplies.

The 1986 explosion at Chernobyl was the worst civilian nuclear disaster in history and changed global perceptions of atomic energy.

Mali Minister killed; coordinated rebel, jihadist attacks rock junta

Agence France-Presse
BAMAKO

Mali's Defence Minister died after an attack on his house, his family said on Sunday, as the Army fought a second day of battles with jihadist fighters and separatist rebels near the capital Bamako and other cities, putting the Sahel nation's ruling junta under severe pressure.

Defence Minister Sadio Camara, his second wife and two of his grandchildren died after a car bomb attack on his home in the junta stronghold of Kita, his family said.

Saturday's shock attacks, synchronised by Tuareg rebels of the Azawad Liberation Front (FLA) coalition and the jihadist Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), targeted several areas in the vast arid country.

Tuareg rebels said it allowed Russian forces backing Mali's Army to withdraw from the city of Kidal, which they claimed was under their control.

Mali has been ravaged for more than a decade by internal conflict but Saturday's attacks were the worst since 2020, when the junta seized power.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres condemned the "acts of violence" and called for international support to meet humanitarian needs.

Maharashtra University Of Health Sciences, Nashik
Dindori Road, Mhasrul, Nashik-422004
Phone No. 0253-2539236
Email: registrar@muhs.ac.in, civil@muhs.ac.in, Website: http://www.muhs.ac.in

E-tender Notice No-Civil/ 02/2026

Maharashtra University of Health Sciences invites e-tenders for providing temporary services of skilled and unskilled manpower by the contractor on contractual basis for Housekeeping Services in MUHS Campus, Nashik for a period of two years.

The e-tender form, form fee, earnest money, terms and conditions are published on the website **http://mahatenders.gov.in** The actual work should be inspected before submitting the e-tender.

Date: 27.04.2026

Sd/-
Registrar

MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
(LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

SRM e-Tender No. T-2626/MSETCL/CO/Projects/Pre-Tender (RFx No. 6000001497)

MSETCL invites offers by SRM e-tendering in TWO bid system (Techno-Commercial Bid and Price Bid) from the eligible registered bidders for the following work as detailed below.

"Establishment of 220/132/33kV PM Mitra Textile Park sub-station, Tal. & Dist.- Amravati along with construction of 220 KV DCDC line from proposed 400/220 kV Nandgaon Peth s/s with HPC conductor – 5.68 km under Amravati zone, MSETCL, Maharashtra."

Interested bidders may obtain further information available on the website. **https://srmetender.mahatransco.in**

The date of downloading of Bid documents available on the website is from **23.04.2026**.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (Projects), MSETCL

JAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Indra Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur - 302004

No. f.6( )JDA/DC-STORE/Cleaning Work/2026-27/D-129 Dated: 23.04.2026

NOTICE INVITING BID

NIB No.: No. f.6( )JDA/DC-STORE/Cleaning Work/2026-28/D-

Online Bids are invited for "Cleaning Work" up-to 13.05.2026 till 6:00 PM. The estimated cost of work is Rs. 3,00,00,000/- (Three Hundred Lakhs only). The last date for applying for Bid and making Online Payment on JDA Portal is 13.05.2026 by 6:00 PM. details may be seen in the Bidding Document available on www.jda.rajasthan.gov.in, www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in and www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in.

UBN No. JDA2627WSOB00029

To participate in the bid, bidder has to be:

1. Registered on JDA website www.jda.rajasthan.gov.in, For participating in the Bid, the Bidder has to apply for the Bid and pay the Bidding Document Fee, RISL Processing Fee and Bid Security Deposit, online only.
2. Registered on e-Procurement Portal of Government of Rajasthan www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in for online e-Bid submission.

Dy. Commissioner (Store)

Raj.Samwad/C/26/1531

THE HINDU GROUP

ALREADY AHEAD OF HIS TIME

The numbers tell one story. The manner tells another. In just six IPL games, Sooryavanshi has shown a fearlessness that makes his rise feel less surprising, more inevitable.

ON STANDS NOW!

Also inside:
Rachin Ravindra on patience during IPL, and Vaishali and Sindarov seize defining moments at the Candidates to step firmly into world championship contention.

Pick up your copy of
SPORTSTAR
#ALLINFORSPORTS

Scan or visit newsth.live/SSSUB to subscribe and read the latest edition: 'HERE COMES THE SUN'

A LANDMARK

Samson scores 5,000 runs in the IPL, enters an elite club

FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Chennai Super Kings wicketkeeper-batter Sanju Samson breached the 5,000-run mark in IPL in the match against Gujarat Titans in Chennai on Sunday. He is the 10th batter to achieve the feat and his tally includes five hundreds and 26 half-centuries. Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma lead the run-scorers list.

SLOW BURN

Ruturaj ties with Dwayne Bravo for second-most dot balls played

R. RAGU

The 30 dot balls played out by Ruturaj Gaikwad on Sunday is the joint second-most by a batter in an innings in the IPL. Dwayne Bravo also failed to score off 30 deliveries during his unbeaten 70 off 59 for MI against KXIP in 2009. Shikhar Dhawan (PBKS) holds the record for the most dot balls (31 vs. Sunrisers Hyderabad, 2023).

BIZARRE

Raghuvanshi is the fourth to be dismissed Obstructing The Field

R.V. MOORTHY

Angkrish Raghuvanshi became the fourth player to be dismissed Obstructing The Field in the IPL. Yusuf Pathan was the first (Kolkata Knight Riders vs. Pune Warriors India, 2013), followed by Amit Mishra (Delhi Capitals vs. Sunrisers Hyderabad, 2019) and Ravindra Jadeja (Chennai Super Kings vs. Rajasthan Royals, 2024).

REAPING THE FRUITS

Mohsin says he worked a lot on fitness in the off-season

R.V. MOORTHY

I worked a lot (on my fitness) in the off-season. Body feels good and everything feels nice. Felt the slower one could be useful. I am working on my body and want to stay fit and healthy, and keep playing matches — LSG's left-arm pacer Mohsin Khan after his five-wicket haul against KKR on Sunday.

Rabada and Sai Sudharsan hog the limelight as Titans tame Super Kings

The pacer, along with new-ball partner Siraj, restricts the home team to 158 for seven; the left-handed opener makes it a cakewalk for the visitor with a 46-ball 87; skipper Ruturaj wages a lone battle for the Chennai outfit on an uneven wicket; the Men in Yellow play out a staggering 66 dot balls

IPL-19

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

A day after 986 runs were scored in the two IPL matches played in Delhi (Delhi Capitals vs. Punjab Kings) and Jaipur (Rajasthan Royals vs. Sunrisers Hyderabad), Sunday's fixture between Chennai Super Kings and Gujarat Titans felt like a palate cleanser for fans who were recovering from the gluttony of fours and sixes they were served.

In a game that seemed like an aberration in the world of T20 cricket, the Titans bowlers, especially the pacers, had the Super Kings batters hopping on a challenging surface and set up a comfortable eight-wicket win for their side here at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

Opting to field, Kagiso Rabada (4-0-25-3) and Mohammed Siraj (4-0-23-1) produced a superb display of accurate fast bowling in the PowerPlay to restrict the Super Kings to a modest total of 158 for seven. For CSK, Ruturaj Gaikwad waged a lone battle, scoring an unbeaten 74 (60b, 6x4, 4x6) on a two-paced pitch.

Titan's pursuit was guided by local boy B. Sai Sudharsan, who backed up his century from the previous game with a fine 87 (46b, 4x4, 7x6). The left-hander drove well, pulled the half-trackers over the ropes and chipped away at the target meticulously.

Once he crossed 50, Sai Sudharsan floored the pedal, smacking five out of his seven sixes as Shubman Gill's men cantered home in 16.4 overs. The fate of the contest, though, was sealed in the afternoon when Rabada broke the back of the host's batting in the PowerPlay (3-0-16-2).

The South African had the in-form Sanju Samson caught behind, and three balls later, dismissed Urvil Patel.

Siraj then inflicted further damage when he bounced out Impact Player Sarfaraz Khan for a golden duck. From there, the runs just dried up for CSK, who crawled to 28 for three at the end of six overs.

For a period of 31 balls, there were no boundaries, and the Men in Yellow played out a staggering 66 dot balls, including 38 in the first half.

Ruturaj accelerated towards the end, scoring his last 54 runs off just 23 balls. But by then, the damage had been done for the five-time champion, which slumped to its fifth defeat in eight matches.

Showing the way: Sai Sudharsan took control of the chase after Rabada pushed Super Kings on the back foot. R. RAGU & PTI

SCOREBOARD

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS
Sanju Samson c Buttler b Rabada 11 *(15b, 2x4)*, Ruturaj Gaikwad (not out) 74 *(60b, 6x4, 4x6)*, Urvil Patel c Holder b Rabada 4 *(3b, 1x4)*, Sarfaraz Khan **(Impact Player for Urvil)** c Buttler b Siraj 0 *(1b)*, Dewald Brevis c Gill b Suthar 2 *(9b)*, Shivam Dube b Arshad 22 *(17b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Kartik Sharma c Holder b Rabada 15 *(9b, 3x4)*, Jamie Overton c Shahrukh b Arshad 18 *(6b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Akeal Hosein (not out) 0 *(0b)*; Extras (lb-2, w-10): 12; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 158.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-21 (Samson, 3.3 overs), 2-25 (Urvil, 3.6), 3-26 (Sarfaraz, 4.4), 4-37 (Brevis, 8.2), 5-96 (Dube, 15.3), 6-122 (Kartik, 17.5), 7-143 (Overton, 18.6).

TITANS BOWLING
Siraj 4-0-23-1, Rabada 4-0-25-3, Suthar 3-0-22-1, Holder 4-0-22-0, Arshad 4-0-43-2, Rashid 1-0-21-0.

GUJARAT TITANS
B. Sai Sudharsan c Brevis b Akeal 87 *(46b, 4x4, 7x6)*, Shubman Gill st. Samson b Noor 33 *(23b, 1x4, 3x6)*, Jos Buttler (not out) 39 *(30b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Washington Sundar (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (w-2): 2; Total (for two wkts. in 16.4 overs): 162.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-58 (Gill, 6.2), 2-155 (Sai Sudharsan, 16.2).

SUPER KINGS BOWLING
Akeal 3.4-0-46-1, Kamboj 3-0-16-0, Overton 2-0-28-0, Gurjapneet 3-0-36-0, Noor 4-0-29-1, Dube 1-0-7-0.

Toss: Gujarat Titans.
Player-of-the-Match: Rabada.
Titans won by eight wickets with 20 balls remaining.

Next assignment

GT: April 30 vs. **RCB**
Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

CSK: May 2 vs. **MI**
Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

It's been one step forward, two steps back: Fleming

Tarun Shastry
CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings' season continues to swing frustratingly out of rhythm, with its campaign hitting another bump following a home defeat to Gujarat Titans in IPL 2026 on Sunday.

In a tournament where momentum is everything, CSK has found itself chasing it more often than having it.

Head coach Stephen Fleming acknowledged the side's inconsistency, while also pointing to the challenging surface and demanding early conditions that made stroke-making difficult.

"It's definitely a tough one. Batting was extremely challenging; it looked difficult even from the outside," Fleming said.

"I don't want to sound like I'm making excuses, but the first 10 overs were particularly tough.

"Their bowlers made the most of it, generating extra bounce and exploiting the moisture in the pitch, which created problems for us. We couldn't build any momentum until the final few overs."

Fleming also admitted that the team fell short in executing its plans. "Some of it was due to our own shortcomings," he added. Despite the stuttering campaign, Fleming struck a cautiously optimistic tone ahead of the upcoming games.

"We need to keep being positive. It's been one step forward, two steps back as of now. If that pattern continues, hopefully the next step is a win," he said with a smile.

"It's a very tight competition – the toughest in the world – but that won't stop us from staying positive and looking forward to the next game."

GT all-rounder Jason Holder, meanwhile, praised the impact of the new-ball pair, Mohammed Siraj and Kagiso Rabada.

"We felt there was a lot in the wicket. There was moisture and some steep bounce early on, which really helped us.

"Both Rabada and Siraj were outstanding and that created a lot of problems for them".

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Punjab Kings	7	**6**	0	1	**13**	1.333
Royal Challengers	7	**5**	2	0	**10**	1.101
Sunrisers Hyderabad	8	**5**	3	0	**10**	0.815
Rajasthan Royals	8	**5**	3	0	**10**	0.602
Gujarat Titans	8	**4**	4	0	**8**	-0.475
Chennai Super Kings	8	**3**	5	0	**6**	-0.121
Delhi Capitals	7	**3**	4	0	**6**	-0.184
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	**2**	5	1	**5**	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	7	**2**	5	0	**4**	-0.736
Lucknow Super Giants	8	**2**	6	0	**4**	-1.106

Rinku and Narine do the star turn as Knight Riders clinch Super Over thriller

Sahil Mathur
LUCKNOW

In an attempt to keep their campaigns alive, Lucknow Super Giants and Kolkata Knight Riders - two bottom-placed teams - played the first Super Over of the IPL 2026 with the visiting team ending on the right side of the result here on Sunday.

Sunil Narine removed Nicholas Pooran and Aiden Markram as Super Giants only managed one run before Rinku Singh completed the formality, finishing the game with a boundary off the first ball.

Last-ball six

The match got tied when both teams finished at 155 after Mohammed Shami hit a last-ball six off Kartik Tyagi, who was defending 16 in the final over.

None of the teams was in complete control of the game during the second innings as Super Giants lost wickets regularly, while a collective bowling effort kept Knight Riders in the hunt. Rishabh Pant top-scored with a 38-ball 42 but didn't find much support from the rest of the batters. Impact Substitute Himmat Singh scored 19 off 10, including two fours and a six, to bring LSG close, but KKR managed to keep itself alive when he was caught in the last over.

Field day: Rinku was in the thick of action, coming to KKR's rescue with a fighting knock and superb catching. R.V. MOORTHY

Impact Index

1 Gill and Sai Sudharsan, with their 19th 50-plus partnership in 40 innings, went past Rohit and Ishan (18 in 54) for the most by an Indian pair

1 Ruturaj scored the slowest half-century (49 deliveries) in the Impact Player (IP) era (since 2023)

2 Super Kings registered the second-lowest PowerPlay total (28/3) this season after Sunrisers (22/3 vs. LSG)

2 CSK used the IP option within the first four overs of a contest for the second time this season (Sarfaraz for Mhatre vs. RR)

4 Ruturaj (100) became the fourth after Dhoni (234), Raina (180) and Dube (105) to hit 100 or more sixes for CSK

8 Sai Sudharsan's 75-plus scores in his first 50 visits to the crease in the league. Only Gayle (14) has more

9 Rabada's wickets in the PowerPlay, the most this season

12 The dozen overs Super Kings took to reach 50, the slowest in this edition. It was also their second slowest to the mark (12.1 overs vs. RCB, 2011)

13 Sai Sudharsan's 50-plus scores since 2024. Kohli (17) leads the charts

3555 Sanju Samson is the third fastest (by deliveries) to 5000 runs. Only de Villiers (3288) and Warner (3554) have been quicker

Compiled by Anirudh Velamuri

Earlier, Mohsin Khan's deceptiveness outsmarted KKR batters before Rinku's solo effort took his team to a competitive total.

Rinku hit four consecutive sixes off Digvesh Rathi in the last over to take 26 runs, after hammering 17 off Mohammed Shami. The KKR vice-captain moved from 53 off 42 to finish unbeaten on 83 off 51 balls.

His innings came at the back of a poor start after being put into bat on a black-soil surface. Mohsin had Tim Seifert caught at short cover before he deceived Ajinkya Rahane with an off-cutter. In the following over, Angkrish Raghuvanshi was adjudged obstructing the field. Mohsin returned to remove Rovman Powell.

Just when Cameron Green and Rinku looked to revive the innings, Mohsin had the former caught before completing his five-wicket haul, removing Anukul Roy for a duck.

LSG bowlers did well until the 18th over to keep the scoring rate in check before Rinku gave KKR some breathing space, enough to get his side a second win.

The week ahead: April 27: DC vs. RCB (Delhi), 7.30 p.m.; **April 28:** PBKS vs. RR (New Chandigarh), 7.30 p.m.; **April 29:** MI vs. SRH (Mumbai), 7.30 p.m.; **April 30:** GT vs. RCB (Ahmedabad), 7.30 p.m.; **May 1:** RR vs. DC (Jaipur), 7.30 p.m.; **May 2:** CSK vs. MI (Chennai), 7.30 p.m.; **May 3:** SRH vs. KKR (Hyderabad), 3.30 p.m.; **May 3:** GT vs. PBKS (Ahmedabad), 7.30 p.m.

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Ajinkya Rahane c Markram b Mohsin 10 *(15b, 1x6)*, Tim Seifert c Mukul b Mohsin 0 *(3b)*, Angkrish Raghuvanshi Obstructing The Field 9 *(8b, 1x4)*, Cameron Green c Pant b Mohsin 34 *(21b, 3x6)*, Rovman Powell c Pant b Mohsin 1 *(4b)*, Rinku Singh (not out) 83 *(51b, 7x4, 5x6)*, Anukul Roy c Badoni b Mohsin 0 *(1b)*, Ramandeep Singh c Marsh b Linde 6 *(11b)*, Sunil Narine (not out) 4 *(6b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 155.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-3 (Seifert, 1.6 overs), 2-16 (Rahane, 3.4), 3-27 (Raghuvanshi, 4.6), 4-31 (Powell, 6.1), 5-73 (Green, 10.5), 6-73 (Anukul, 10.6), 7-93 (Ramandeep, 14.6).

SUPER GIANTS BOWLING
Shami 4-0-34-0, Mohsin 4-1-23-5, Prince 4-0-24-0, Digvesh 4-0-46-0, Linde 2-0-18-1, Markram 2-0-9-0.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS
Aiden Markram c Rinku b Green 31 *(27b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Mitchell Marsh c Powell b Vaibhav 2 *(3b)*, Rishabh Pant c Seifert b Narine 42 *(38b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Nicholas Pooran c Narine b Varun 9 *(12b, 1x6)*, Ayush Badoni c Anukul b Varun 24 *(19b, 2x6)*, Mukul Choudhary c Rinku b Anukul 1 *(2b)*, Himmat Singh **(Impact Player for Mohsin)** c Rinku b Tyagi 19 *(10b, 2x4, 1x6)*, George Linde c Rinku b Vaibhav 8 *(4b, 2x4)*, Mohammed Shami (not out) 11 *(6b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Prince Yadav (not out) 0 *(1b)*; Extras (b-2, lb-1, nb-2, w-3): 8; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 155.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-8 (Marsh, 1.1), 2-65 (Markram, 10.2), 3-78 (Pant, 12.2), 4-89 (Pooran, 13.6), 5-93 (Mukul, 15.2), 6-120 (Badoni, 17.3), 7-129 (Linde, 18.2), 8-148 (Himmat, 19.3).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Anukul 2-0-19-1, Vaibhav 4-0-24-2, Green 2-0-12-1, Narine 4-0-23-1, Varun **(Impact Player for Raghuvanshi)** 4-0-33-2, Tyagi 4-0-41-1.

Toss: Super Giants.
Match tied.
Super Over: Lucknow Super Giants 1/2 in 0.3 overs lost to Kolkata Knight Riders 4/0 in 0.1 over.
Player-of-the-Match: Rinku.

Next assignment

KKR: May 3 vs. **SRH**
Hyderabad, 3.30 p.m.

LSG: May 4 vs. **MI**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m

In Kohli's backyard, RCB holds all the aces against host DC

Bethell set to get another opportunity at the top for the defending champion; Axar & Co. in desperate need of a win to get the campaign back on track after failing to defend 264 against PBKS

Fine-tuning: Padikkal will look to weigh in with big runs for RCB. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

IPL-19

Vivek Krishnan
NEW DELHI

Delhi Capitals' performance against Punjab Kings on Saturday had the fluctuations of a volatile stock market. So wildly did it oscillate from the sublime to the ridiculous, as an exemplary batting effort to amass 264 for two – DC's highest total in IPL history– was followed by a horror show with the ball and in the field. While the bowling appeared rudderless on a pitch that played better than expected, the malaise of dropped catches spread like wildfire, allowing Shreyas Iyer and Prabhsimran Singh to make merry with half-centuries.

Dispiriting as that was, Axar Patel's men have little time to contemplate, given that they run into another formidable opponent in Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Monday.

Besides Royal Challengers oozing with confidence after five wins from seven matches, Capitals' task is compounded by the likelihood of the defending champion enjoying a lion's share of the support. Virat Kohli, the one constant in RCB's ever-evolving set-up, may no longer be living here, but residents of the national capital continue to exhibit fierce loyalty to a superstar whose formative years can be traced to the by-lanes of west Delhi.

More importantly, the 37-year-old is showing no sign of slowing down in white-ball cricket. Despite prolonged breaks from competitive cricket following his Test retirement last year, his impact for the southern franchise hasn't dimmed in the slightest – 328 runs in seven innings at 54.66 is proof.

The former skipper will be given company by Jacob Bethell at the top of the order. With Phil Salt yet to recover from injury, Bethell, who was drafted in for the last game, will get another chance to step up.

Other than that, RCB's combination looks well-settled. The same cannot be said of Capitals, who are in desperate need of a win to shrug off Saturday's erratic display.

Today's match

DELHI CAPITALS vs. RCB

Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **34**
DC 13 | RCB 20 | NR 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
DC won by six wickets, 2026

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

I think he's my new favourite player: Cummins all praise for Suryavanshi

Pranay Rajiv
JAIPUR

Despite scoring a stunning 36-ball hundred, Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Suryavanshi ended on the losing side on Saturday in an IPL 2026 game, after Ishan Kishan and Abhishek Sharma orchestrated a masterful Sunrisers Hyderabad chase.

Nevertheless, with his blazing ton at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium here in Jaipur, Suryavanshi earned himself a brand-new admirer – SRH skipper Pat Cummins. "Yeah, I think he's my new favourite player. He hits the ball so hard, and it's great to watch. It's good fun," said Cummins in the post-match press conference.

Earlier in the day, as the Aussie pacer ran into bowl to Suryavanshi in the second over – their first-ever meeting – the Royals opener was in scorching touch.

He had just torn into Praful Hinge in the first over, belting him for four consecutive sixes, to four parts of the ground – a pull, a whip of the pads and two sumptuous lofted drives past long on and long off.

The SRH skipper had parked two fielders in the leg-side outposts and dished out a shortish delivery, sliding it away from Suryavanshi.

The seemingly obvious trap had no impact on the Royals opener. Without even retreating fully to his back foot, he flat-batted the ball for a six in front of the leg-side square.

"You've got to be right on the money as a bowler, because if you're not, it's going a long way. He's impressive. He's had a great start to his career. I like the way he plays," admitted Cummins.

Up, up and away: Cummins is all praise for Suryavanshi, despite being at the receiving end of his electric batting. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

BWF votes for a new scoring system

Agence France-Presse
KUALA LUMPUR

The Badminton World Federation (BWF) said it has "strengthened the sport" for the future after the governing body voted to change the scoring system in a major move.

First to 15 points

Currently matches are the best-of-three games with the winner of each game being the first to 21 points.

From January 2027, it will be the first to 15 points.

BWF president Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul called it an important milestone.

"We are building a sport that speaks to the next generation, while continuing to invest in the long-term future of our players," Leeswadtrakul said.

Kenya's Sawe becomes first man to run a marathon under two hours

Reuters
LONDON

Kenya's Sabastian Sawe became the first man to run a marathon in under two hours when he won the London Marathon in one hour, 59m and 30seconds on Sunday.

The 31-year-old Sawe, who has never lost a marathon, shattered the world record previously held by the late Kelvin Kiptum who set a time of 2:00:35 at the Chicago Marathon in October 2023.

Yomif Kejelcha of Ethiopia stayed on Sawe's heels over much of the 42.195km course before fading down the final stretch to take was second in his debut with 1:59.41, while Jacob Kiplimo of Uganda took bronze in 2:02.28.

Tigst Assefa of Ethiopia broke her own women's only world record en route to victory.

The 29-year-old pulled away from Kenyans Hellen Obiri and Joyciline Jepkosgei down the home stretch to cross the finish line in 2:15.41 seconds, beating the record of 2:15.50 she set last year in London.

Obiri was second in 2:15.53, while Jepkosgei took the bronze in 2:15.55.

Blistering runs: Sawe and Assefa produced the best-ever times while winning the London Marathon. AFP

Fantastic finish: Ham completed a famous wire-to-wire victory on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ham keeps John at bay to take the honours

SINGAPORE OPEN

S. Shrivathsan
SINGAPORE

The final round of the Singapore Open on Sunday witnessed thrills and spills galore. But overnight topper Jeongwoo Ham of South Korea kept his composure in the crunch, warding off a spirited challenge from Australian Cameron John, to walk away with the title. By taking up the top two spots on the leaderboard, Ham and John also booked their tickets to The Open Championship at Royal Birkdale in Southport later this year.

Among Indians, Gaganjeet Bhullar and Pukhraj Singh Gill had contrasting outings at the par-71 Sentosa Golf Club Serapong course to finish tied-26th.

Ham, who entered the last leg of the International Series event with a four-stroke advantage, saw his lead cut down to a solitary shot at one point as John tried to give the Korean a run for his money. The trophy chasers and other challengers had to be locked in for longer than expected after rain threatened an anticlimactic end to a gripping finale.

Play was halted for more than three and a half hours and once action resumed, Ham did enough – three-under 68 for a total of 16-under 268 – to secure a wire-to-wire two-shot victory. The 31-year-old, who slipped up with a double bogey on the third hole, produced three birdies on the back nine.

John managed a 66 (overall 270) that included three successive birdies between holes 12 and 14 after the turn. Bhullar carded 73 (total of 280) after four bogeys on the front nine and a double bogey on hole 15.

Pukhraj, on the other hand, jumped from T45, thanks to a 67 effort that comprised five birdies and a bogey. Karandeep Kochhar, the other Indian who made the cut, came 70th with 76 (overall 295).

Top scores: 1. Jeongwoo Ham (Kor) (64-68-68-68) 268; 2. Cameron John (Aus) (70-67-67-66) 270; 3. Josele Ballester (Esp) (68-72-69-66) 275, Jazz Janewattananond (Tha) (68-66-73-68) 275, Tomohiro Ishizaka (Jpn) (67-68-70-70) 275.

(The writer is in Singapore at the invitation of The International Series)

Kwizera blazes to TCS World 10K Bengaluru record

That winning feeling: Kwizera claims the international men's category. Also taking top spot are Niyonkuru (international women), Harmanjot and Sanjivni (Indian men and women). SUDHAKARA JAIN

ATHLETICS

Ashwin Achal
BENGALURU

Rodrigue Kwizera blitzed through the field to set a new men's event record at the TCS World 10K Bengaluru 2026 here on Sunday.

Kwizera stepped on the pedal in the final stretch to finish with a timing of 27:31s, well under the previous mark of 27:38 set by Nicholas Kipkorir Kimeli in 2022.

Kwizera, who missed the top spot to Kenya's Sebastian Sawe in a photo finish here three years ago, won $34,000 (including the event record bonus of $8,000).

Acceleration

The Burundi runner accelerated at the 8km mark – after passing the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium – to pull away from his rivals.

Kwizera kept a high pace in the long straight finish on Cubbon Road to eclipse Kimeli's record.

"The challenge was the heat. I have been training in Spain, where it is much cooler this time of the year. Today, I told myself that I will push at the 5K mark, and again in the final kilometre.

"I wanted to go for the event record; I am glad I did it," Kwizera said.

Stiff challenge

Rwanda's Florence Niyonkuru overcame a stiff challenge from favourite Brenda Jepchirchir to claim the international women's title.

At the 7km stage, it was Florence, Brenda, Ethiopian Melal Biratu and Kenya's Judy Chepaskwony who formed the leader pack.

Florence took over in the last right turn, at the Cubbon Park metro station.

Now on her own, Florence eased off and missed the event record (30:35, Irene Cheptai, 2022) by ten seconds.

The Rwanda athlete took home $26,000.

Harmanjot Singh and Sanjivani Jadhav recorded the best timings among Indian men and women respectively.

Harmanjot clocked 29:13, falling short of the Indian record by just one second.

"I had the event record in mind. I tried to stay with the international elite pack as far as I could, which was till 5K. After that, I decided to rely on my own judgement," Harmanjot said.

Sanjivani, the 2017 Asian Championships 5,000m bronze medallist, took top Indian honours here for a third time in a row.

Harmanjot and Sanjivani won ₹3,00,000 and ₹2,75,000 respectively.

The results:

International: Men: 1. Rodrigue Kwizera (Burundi) 27:31; 2. Harbert Kibet (Uganda) 27:39; 3. Gilbert Kipkosgei Kiprotich (Kenya) 27:43s.

Women: 1. Florence Niyonkuru (Rwanda) 30:45; 2. Brenda Jepchirchir (Kenya) 30:59; 3. Chaltu Dida Diriba (Ethiopia) 31:03.

Indian (winners only):

Men: Harmanjot Singh 29:13.

Women: Sanjivani Jadhav 35:01.

SNAPSHOTS

Confidence-building win for Atletico

MADRID: Atletico Madrid built confidence for its Champions League semifinal against Arsenal, with a 3-2 win over Athletic Bilbao on Saturday in LaLiga.

However Diego Simeone's side was also left sweating on the fitness of midfielder Pablo Barrios, who walked off injured.

Inter Milan was held to a 2-2 draw at Torino on Sunday, with the Serie A leader letting slip a two-goal lead and leaving the title race ticking over.

Borussia Dortmund cruised to a 4-0 home win over Freiburg in the Bundesliga on Sunday to lock in Champions League qualification for next season.

The results: LaLiga: Rayo Vallecano 3 (Camello 30, Lejeune 84, Alemao 90+9) drew with Real Sociedad 3 (Oyarzabal 22, 76-pen, Oskarsson 63).

Serie A: Genoa 0 lost to Como 2 (Douvikas 10, Diao 68); Torino 2 (Simeone 70, Vlasic 79-pen) drew with Inter Milan 2 (Thuram 23, Bisseck 61).

Bundesliga: Stuttgart 1 (Demirovic 61) drew with Werder Bremen 1 (Stage 18); Borussia Dortmund 4 (Beier 8, Guirassy 14, Bensebaini 32, Silva 87) bt Freiburg 0.

On Saturday: LaLiga: Atletico Madrid 3 (Griezmann 49, Sorloth 54, 90+3) bt Athletic Bilbao 2 (Paredes 23, Guruzeta 90+7).

Calm finish: Sorloth beats Bilbao's Simon for Atletico's second. AFP

Abhay betters u-20 200m Natl. record

TUMAKURU: Reliance's Abhay Singh broke the under-20 men's 200m National record at the 24th u-20 Federation athletics competition on Sunday. Abhay came home in 20.82s, bettering Shanmuga Srinivasan's previous best of 21.02s set in 2021.

Abhay. X@AFIINDIA

The results (winners only): Men: 200m: Abhay Singh (Reliance), 20.82s (NR; OR: Shanmuga Srinivasan, 21.02, 2021); **800m:** Mogali Venkatram (AP), 1:49.02; **400m hurdles:** Jashanpreet Singh (Pun), 51.80; **3000m steeplechase:** Sumit Rathee (Har), 9:28.04; **High jump:** Basant (Navy), 2.21m; **Triple jump:** P. Royshan (TN), 15.75; **Javelin:** Rohan Yadav (NCOE, Patiala), 73.37; **Discus:** Nishchay (Har), 57.02.

Women: 200m: Bhoomika Nehate (Mah), 24.21s; **800m:** Nagini (Kar), 2:12.06; **400m hurdles:** Tanu Chaudhary (UP), 59.38; **3000m steeplechase:** Mansi Yadav (Mah), 11:10.59; **High jump:** Pooja (Har), 1.80m; **Triple jump:** Sadhana Ravi (TN), 12.97; **Javelin:** Poonam (JSW), 51.64; **Hammer throw:** Nandini (UP), 58.78.

U.P. clinches men's junior gymnastics title

BHUBANESWAR: Uttar Pradesh took the men's junior team title in the National gymnastics championships.

The results: Team: Men: Junior: 1. Uttar Pradesh (Agrim Rawat, Harschit Damodaran, Hrigu Srivastava, Mohd. Zaid Ansari, Soham Sagar Atre, Vikas Yadav) 282.464, 2. Maharashtra (Adhyan Desai, Ayush Dalvi, Mayuresh Vartak, Nishad Narvane, Prasun Amalnerkar, Shreeyash Patil) 270.268, 3. West Bengal (Ayush Debnath, Premanshu Bera, Reetesh Debnath, Sk. Nabhigh Ali, Sohan Haque, Suman Dutta) 267.265.

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs New Zealand: 1st T20I, FanCode, 1.30 p.m.

South Africa Women vs India Women: 5th T20I, Star Sports 3 & JioHotstar, 5.30 p.m.

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

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

ENGAGEMENTS

Cricket: TNCA league, I div. playoffs, Qualifier-1, MRC vs. Globe Trotters (Gojan-A); Eliminator, Jolly Rovers vs. Nelson SC (Gojan-B), day three, 9.15 a.m.; Friends Trophy u-12 inter-academy tournament, N.M. Greens, 8 a.m.

SHARDA UNIVERSITY
Beyond Boundaries

2026 ADMISSIONS OPEN

At India's Truly Global University that's Building Leaders who'll shape Viksit Bharat.

In a world where universities are expected to do more than just teaching, Sharda University stands apart as an institution that creates thinkers, innovators, leaders and global citizens. Since 2009, Sharda University has emerged as one of India's most respected multi disciplinary universities - combining academic depth, cutting-edge research, global exposure and strong career outcomes.

SHAPING AI EDUCATION IN ALIGNMENT WITH HON'BLE PM's M.A.N.A.V. VISION

RESEARCH & INNOVATION WITH NATIONAL IMPACT

At Sharda University, research is not confined to classrooms or journals. It is aligned with Viksit Bharat @2047, addressing real challenges in healthcare, technology, sustainability, defence and nation-building.

- Out of 912 patents published, 234 have been awarded - an impressive 26% success rate.
- Government-Funded Research Projects worth Rs. 35.21+ Crores
- Supported by ISRO, DRDO, DST, DBT, ICMR, iHUB & other national agencies
- 9315 Scopus-indexed publications
- 91,052 citations | H-Index: 110
- 13.6% papers among the world's top 10% most cited
- 12 Advanced Research Centres for Interdisciplinary work

From AI in Medicine and Quantum Technologies to Virology, Semiconductor Research and Renewable Energy, Sharda University is shaping solutions that matter - both nationally and globally.

GLOBAL EXPOSURE THAT GOES BEYOND BOUNDARIES

Sharda University offers one of India's most diverse and multicultural campus experiences.

- Students from 95+ countries, 28 states & 7 UTs over a period of time
- 330+ International collaborations and academic partnerships.
- 1047 Faculty with global exposure from institutions like Harvard, Stanford, Johns Hopkins & NASA.
- 55% Publications (2025) are in Q1 & Q2 journals

Here, students don't just study global subjects-they live a global education experience every day.

TOP RANKINGS & ACCREDITATIONS

Sharda University's academic excellence is reflected in its strong national and international rankings:

- Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026: ENGINEERING 401 - 500 Band
- Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2026: INTERDISCIPLINARY 351 - 400 Band
- Times Higher Education Asia Rankings 2026: 301-350 Band
- Times Higher Education World University Rankings 2025: 59th in India
- NIRF Rankings 2025: 87 in the University category
- North India's 3rd Ranked University for Engineering - Times Engineering Rankings 2025
- India's 3rd Ranked University for Management (Among 40 Universities) - Times B-School Rankings 2026
- NBA-Accredited Engineering, Pharmacy & MBA Programmes

These rankings reaffirm Sharda University's commitment to quality education, academic rigour and global standards.

AI-POWERED ECOSYSTEM FOR LEARNING & DISCOVERY

- Sharda University is proud to be part of the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of "AI for Aspiring India." The university has created a robust AI-ML, Big Data, and High-Performance Computing (HPC) landscape that supports both academic inquiry and industry-aligned innovation.
- From classrooms to research labs, AI is embedded in the university's academic DNA. Special emphasis is on AI for All.- Tech as well as Non-Tech Students.

OUTSTANDING PLACEMENTS & GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS

Sharda University's strong industry connections ensure that students graduate career-ready & future-ready.

Recent Placement Highlights

- 2236 students placed and many got multiple job offers
- Highest package: Rs.1.6 Crore per annum
- Premium offers in Rs.15-21 LPA range

Top Recruiters Include:

Infosys, Amazon, Samsung, Accenture, KPMG, Wipro, ABP Network, Sopra Steria, Ceat Tyres and more.

Students also progress to top global universities for higher studies across the USA, UK, Europe and Australia.

STARTUPs & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

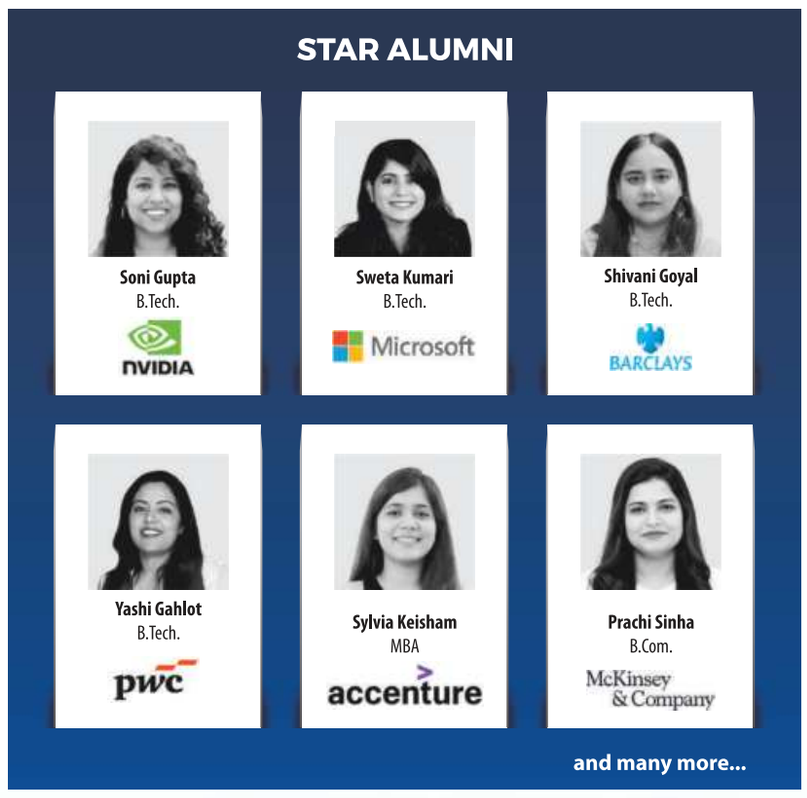
Through Sharda Launchpad, the university enables young innovators with 100% scholarships, expert mentorship, industry access and seed funding, ensuring that promising ideas are never limited by lack of resources or guidance. Ideas are encouraged. Innovation is supported. Entrepreneurship is nurtured.

- Rs. 400+ Crore is the total value of StartUps incubated
- Supported by 10+ Govt bodies and institutions
- 100+ Startups Incubated to support Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission
- Rs.18 Crore highest startup turnover
- 100% scholarships, mentorship and seed funding

EMPOWERING BUDDING WOMEN ENGINEERS

Score above 90 Percentile in JEE Mains. Get 100% Scholarship to pursue B.Tech./B.Sc. at Sharda.

STAR ALUMNI



and many more...

- **Special 100% Scholarship for Female Students** who score above **90 Percentile in JEE Mains**
- **Honouring Jain values with 5% scholarship**
- **Upto 100% Scholarship For Meritorious Students**

ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR 135+ UG/PG/Ph.D. PROGRAMMES

- Computer Science & Engineering
- AI Enabled Fintech
- Cyber Security & Forensics
- Information Technology
- Computer Science & Medical Engineering (AI)
- AI & ML
- AI & Data Science
- Robotics & Automation
- Computer Applications
- Electrical & Electronics Engg.
- Electronics & Communication Engg.
- Robotics & Automation
- Renewable Energy Systems
- VLSI Design & Technology
- Civil Engineering
- Mechatronics
- Mechanical Engineering
- Medical • Dental
- Biotechnology
- Physics
- Chemistry
- Mathematics
- Zoology
- Bio-Chemistry
- Microbiology
- Food Science & Technology
- Management
- Economics
- Commerce
- Animation, VFX & Gaming Design
- Interior Design
- Fashion Design
- Communication Design
- Film, TV & OTT Production
- Journalism & Mass Comm.
- English
- History
- Sociology
- Geography
- Psychology
- Jain Studies
- Political Science
- Integrated Law
- Forensic Sciences
- Optometry
- Physiotherapy
- Medical Laboratory Technology
- Radiological Imaging Technology
- Cardiovascular Technology
- Nutrition & Dietetics
- Clinical Psychology
- Pharmacy
- Nursing

SCAN TO APPLY NOW

Campus: Plot No. 32, 34, Knowledge Park-III, Greater Noida (Delhi-NCR)
8800398726, 826998009
www.sharda.ac.in

The smiles are back: Deepti is the toast of her teammates after picking up a wicket. X@BCCIWOMEN

Deepti to the fore as India pulls one back

The all-rounder marks her return to form with an unbeaten 36 and a maiden five-wicket haul in T20Is; Jemimah and Richa, too, chip in

INDIA IN SA

ANI
JOHANNESBURG

An all-round performance from Deepti Sharma set up India's 14-run win over South Africa in the fourth T20I at Johannesburg on Saturday.

Deepti's unbeaten 26-ball 36 and five-wicket haul marked her comeback after a lean patch.

Eliz-Mari Marx got Shafali Varma for a run-a-ball nine and Tumi Sekhukhune dismissed a fluent-looking Anushka Sharma for a 18-ball 27 after the home side opted to bowl.

India was 47 for two in the PowerPlay. It was Jemimah Rodrigues' 55-run partnership with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur which helped India reach the 100-run mark in 11 overs. But Jemimah (43, 29b, 4x4, 2x6), Bharti Fulmali (two) and Harmanpreet (22, 16b, 2x4, 1x6) fell in quick succession, reducing India to 120 for five in the 14th over.

Deepti and Richa Ghosh brought the much-needed momentum to the Indian innings.

Deepti smashed five fours, while Richa scored an unbeaten 18-ball 34 (5x4, 1x6) to take India to 185 for five. The duo's 65-run stand off 38 balls gave India a competitive target to defend.

In South Africa's chase, Sune Luus delivered a fine start from one end. But Kranti Gaud drew first blood by removing the in-form Laura Wolvaardt for 18 with the total on 32.

Luus put on a 44-run stand with Tazmin Brits, before Deepti had her first wicket of the evening. She removed Luus for 40 (24b, 54x, 1x6). South Africa collapsed from 76 for one to 135 for six in 15.5 overs.

The cream of the Proteas batting, including Brits (30), Annerie Dercksen (nine), Chloe Tryon (nine), back in the pavilion. The spinners continued to dominate as the Proteas were restricted to 171 for nine. Deepti (five for 19) was sensational with the ball, while Kranti, Kashvee Gautam, Shree Charani and Shafali claimed one wicket apiece.

The scores:
India 185/5 in 20 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 43, Deepti Sharma 36 n.o., Richa Ghosh 34 n.o., Eliz-Mari Marx 2/28, Kayla Reyneke 2/10) bt South Africa 171/9 in 20 overs (Sune Luus 40, Tazmin Brits 30, Deepti Sharma 5/19).

Toss: SA; **PoM:** Deepti.

Indian women revive hopes with win over Ukraine

THOMAS AND UBER CUP

Press Trust of India
HORSENS (DENMARK)

The young Indian women's team received a massive morale boost with a commanding 4-1 victory over European Championship bronze medallist Ukraine in its second Group-A Uber Cup badminton clash here, bouncing back strongly after a narrow 2-3 loss to host Denmark in the opener.

India opted to rest former world champion P.V. Sindhu in singles, handing 2026 Thailand Masters champion Devika Sihag a chance in the third singles, and the youngster delivered. Unnati set the ball rolling with a 21-19, 22-20 win over Polina Buhrova before junior world championships silver medallist Tanvi Sharma doubled the lead by beating Yevheniia Kantemyr 21-12, 17-21, 21-10.

Focused: Tanvi doubled India's lead by defeating Kantemyr. X@BAI_MEDIA

Devika sealed the tie in emphatic fashion, putting the result beyond doubt with a 23-21, 21-13 victory over Mariia Stoliarenko.

India's only loss came in the first women's doubles where Kavipriya Selvam and Simran Singhi lost 11-21, 17-21 against Buhrova and Kantemyr before Sindhu and Tanisha Crasto completed the scoreline with a 21-18, 21-15 win over Stoliarenko and Sofiia Lavrova.

India will now face formidable defending champion China in its final group match on Monday, with a win crucial to keeping alive its hopes of progressing to the quarterfinals.

The result:

Uber Cup:

India bt Ukraine 4-1 (Unnati Hooda bt Polina Buhrova 21-19, 22-20; Tanvi Sharma bt Yevheniia Kantemyr 21-12, 17-21, 21-10; Devika Sihag bt Mariia Stoliarenko 23-21, 21-13; Kavipriya Selvam & Simran Singhi lost to Buhrova & Kantemyr 11-21, 17-21; Tanisha Crasto & Sindhu bt Sofiia Lavrova & Stoliarenko 21-18, 21-15).

Anirudh and Vijay Shankar continue MRC-A's domination

FIRST DIVISION

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

Centuries from skipper B. Anirudh Sitaram (118, 215b, 9x4, 1x6) and Vijay Shankar (121, 219b, 11x4) put MRC-A in a commanding position against Globe Trotters on the second day of Qualifier-1 in the TNCA first division league playoffs at the Gojan-A ground on Sunday.

Resuming at 275 for five, the duo extended its sixth-wicket stand to 221 runs as MRC-A posted 400. Off-spinner R. Srinivasan returned five for 92. Globe Trotters was 141 for four at stumps, still trailing by 259 runs.

In the Eliminator at Gojan-B, R. Samarth struck a maiden first division century (109, 220b, 9x4) and added 127 runs for the eighth wicket with R. Sonu Yadav (70) to lift Jolly Rovers to 375 against Nelson SC.

Star performers: Anirudh (MRC-A, 118); Vijay Shankar (MRC-A, 121); Samarth (Jolly Rovers, 109); Srinivasan (Globe Trotters, 5/92); Shoaib (Nelson, 5/126).

Off-spinner Shoaib Mohd. Khan claimed five for 126 – his fourth five-wicket haul of the season – while wicketkeeper T. Saran took six catches.

In reply, Nelson was struggling at 188 for seven at stumps.

The scores (playoffs, day two):

Qualifier-1: At Gojan-A: MRC-A 400 in 127 overs (B. Anirudh Sita Ram 118, Vijay Shankar 121, R. Srinivasan 5/92) vs. Globe Trotters SC 141/4 in 49 overs (D. Santhosh Kumar 52, A.B. Dhiyash 67 batting).

Eliminator: Gojan-B: Jolly Rovers 375 in 119.5 overs (S. Lokeshwar 67, C. Senthil Kumar 48, R. Samarth 109, R. Sonu Yadav 70, Shoaib Mohd. Khan 5/126) vs. Nelson SC 188/7 in 57.5 overs (Shivam Singh 41, Robin Bist 44 batting, S. Lakshay Jain 4/67).

TNCA opens medical centre at MAC Stadium

Spectator friendly: The facility has advanced infrastructure to handle a wide range of medical emergencies for fans. R. RAGU

Sports Bureau
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) has unveiled a medical centre for spectators at the MAC Stadium. The facility is equipped with first-aid services as well as advanced infrastructure to handle a wide range of medical emergencies for fans. U. Bhagawandas Rao, secretary, TNCA, said the medical centre was not limited to IPL alone and will remain functional throughout the year.

"We have three Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulances, three Basic Life Support (BLS) ambulances, and one standby ambulance. On non-match days, they can function as a medical unit for state training camps".

SNAPSHOTS

India finishes on top

CAIRO: Hemant Burman won the men's 50m rifle 3 positions silver while Zuhair Khan and Addya Katyal won the trap mixed team event bronze as India topped the ISSF junior shooting World Cup with 16 medals, including five gold, six silver, five bronze.

Burman finished second with 351.7.

The 18-year-old had qualified for the final in seventh place with a score of 578-24x.

Zuhair and Addya secured bronze with a final score of 19 after qualifying for the medal round with a qualification score of 137.

Hemant Burman.

The pair, which was in the silver medal hunt after the first two series, faltered in the third with Addya missing four of her five shots and Zuhair missing one.

The shooters will now shift their focus to the ISSF junior World Championship, which will be held at Suhl, Germany, in June.

Mohammedan fights back to hold SC Delhi

NEW DELHI: Mohammedan SC came from behind twice to secure a 2-2 draw against Sporting Club Delhi in an ISL match on Sunday.

The hosts began on the front-foot and took the lead in the 17th minute when Mohammed Aimen drew a foul from goalkeeper Padam Chhetri.

Matija Babovic calmly converted the penalty.

The visitors' attacking intent was rewarded in the 40th minute when Thokchom Adison Singh went past the on-rushing goalkeeper Nora Fernandes and restored parity.

Sporting regained the lead in the 52nd minute through Babovic, but Mohammedan drew level once again when an unmarked Hira Mondal headed home Lalngaihsaka's cross.

The result: Sporting Club Delhi 2 (Babovic 17-pen, 52) drew with Mohammedan SC 2 (Adison Singh 40, Mondal 65).

आर्मर्ड व्हीकल्स निगम लिमिटेड
भारत सरकार का उद्यम
रक्षा मंत्रालय

ARMOURED VEHICLES NIGAM LIMITED
A GOVT. OF INDIA ENTERPRISE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

CIN-U35990TN2021GOI14550

Advt. No. AVNLCO / HR / 2026 / 05
ENGAGEMENT OF RETIRED EXPERTS / CONSULTANTS / ADVISORS

Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVANI) (AVNL) is a new Defence PSU with its headquarters at Avadi (Chennai). It has five (05) constituent production units and has around 12,000 employees. AVNL produces battle tanks i.e. T-72, T-90, MBT Arjun and Infantry Combat Vehicles, support vehicles (MPV, AERV etc.) and Defence mobility solutions (Stallion, LPTA etc.) for the armed forces and homelandsecurity agencies. It is the current market leader in this segment. It is a new Government Company with Great Future. It offers great work environment and challenging opportunities for the professionals to prove their mettle.

Applications are invited from professionals for the following position on Fixed Term Contract basis in AVNL Corporate Office, Avadi, Chennai – 600 054:

S. No	NAME OF THE POST	NO OF VACANCY	TOTAL REMUNERATION (PER MONTH)
1.	Expert (Security)	01 [UR]	Basic - Rs. 1,20,000/- + IDA as applicable Special Allowance – 5% of Basic Conveyance – Rs.20,000/- Medical – Rs.3000/-

The last date of receipt of application will be **15 Days** from the date of publication of this advertisement. This advertisement is indicative in nature. For further information please visit our AVNL website www.avnl.co.in under "Careers" for detailed job description, qualifications, experience, tenure, remuneration, procedure, application format, terms and conditions for applying for the said posts.

Note:
Any corrigendum / amendment in this advertisement will be published / uploaded on **AVNL website ONLY**. Candidates are requested to visit the website regularly for latest updates /corrigendum.

HR Division, AVNL CO
Email: tacp.avnl@avnl.co.in
Tele: :044 – 26843341/26844808

Chennai
Dated: 27.04.2026

यूको बैंक UCO BANK
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) (A Govt. of India Undertaking)
सम्मान आपके विश्वास का Honours Your Trust

Total Business 14.95% (Y-o-Y) | Advances 19.44% (Y-o-Y) | Deposit 11.59% (Y-o-Y) | CD Ratio 80.21% | CRAR 18.61% | PCR 97.32% | Net NPA 0.27% | GNPA 2.17%

AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER / YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026

₹ in Lakh

Sl. No.	Particulars	Quarter Ended 31.03.2026 (Audited)	Quarter Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2026 (Audited)	Year Ended 31.03.2025 (Audited)
1.	Total Income from Operations (net)	736522	813679	2974098	2947353
2.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	124711	103614	437349	383355
3.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	124711	103614	437349	383355
4.	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	80115	65243	276786	244496
5.	Total Comprehensive income for the period (comprising Profit/Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)	Refer Note 2			
6.	Paid Up Equity Share Capital	1253956	1253956	1253956	1253956
7.	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserves)	1756007	1541844	1756007	1541844
8.	Securities Premium Account	504211	504211	504211	504211
9.	Net Worth	2446221	2110741	2446221	2110741
10.	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	0.09	0.07	0.09	0.07
11.	Debt Equity Ratio	0.70	0.93	0.70	0.93
12.	Earning Per Share (of ₹10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)				
	1. Basic :	0.64	0.54	2.21	2.04
	2. Diluted :	0.64	0.54	2.21	2.04
13.	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-
14.	Debenture Redemption Reserve	-	-	-	-

Notes : 1. The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly and yearly ended financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under regulation 33 and 52 of the Listing Regulations. The full format of the quarterly and yearly ended financial results is available on the websites of the Stock Exchanges (www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com) and Bank's Website (www.uco.bank.in/investors) 2. Information relating to total comprehensive income and other comprehensive income is not furnished as Ind AS is not yet made applicable to the bank.

For UCO Bank

Place : Kolkata
Dated : 25th April, 2026

Sd/- Vijaykumar Nivrutti Kamble, Executive Director
Sd/- Rajendra Kumar Saboo, Executive Director
Sd/- Ashwani Kumar, Managing Director & CEO
Sd/- Aravamudan Krishna Kumar, Chairman

Follow us | 1800 8910 (Toll free) | 7666399400 | 8334001234 | Missed Call for CKYC Card : 7799022129 | www.uco.bank.in

You can get anything done out of me for the team

Venkatesh Iyer, despite being an IPL winner, has found opportunities tough to come by at his new team Royal Challengers Bengaluru. But the 31-year-old remains in good spirits, and considers the chance to play for RCB an important step in his cricketing development

K. MURALI KUMAR

INTERVIEW

Venkatesh Iyer

N. Sudarshan

At the Indian Premier League mini auction ahead of the 2026 edition, Venkatesh Iyer, at ₹7 crore, was Royal Challengers Bengaluru's costliest buy. But the 31-year-old has played just one out of RCB's seven games so far – as an Impact Player in the six-wicket loss to Rajasthan Royals.

To his immense credit, the all-rounder is not losing sleep over it. Defending champion RCB is a well-settled outfit, and the fact that it is currently second in the table provides very little room for tinkering.

In a way, it is representative of Venkatesh's own IPL career arc. Bought at a base price of ₹20 lakh, he played a stellar role in Kolkata Knight Riders' run to the IPL final in 2021.

The subsequent year, his value zoomed up to ₹8 crore, and he was part of KKR's IPL-winning team in 2024.

Ahead of the IPL 2025 mega auction, he was released but bought back by KKR for a whopping ₹23.5 crore. But after just one season, KKR let go of him again, and he has now found a haven at RCB.

The Madhya Pradesh cricketer spoke to the media about his journey so far, the evolution of T20 cricket, sharing a dressing room with Virat Kohli and more. Excerpts:

How has the change been from KKR to RCB? Did you take time to settle down?

Being a professional, it's my duty to blend into whatever set-up I am in. But I spent a lot of time at KKR, learnt a lot of things. I'd be lying if I say that I don't have any emotional connection to them. But as professional cricketers, you are signing up for this. Whenever you enter an auction, there is an opportunity for you to play for any team. In this case, I am extremely happy to play for RCB because who does not want to. With the kind of fans, the atmosphere at Chinnaswamy [Stadium], to share a dressing room with one of the greatest icons in sporting history, and with a dear friend in the captain as well. With my skill-set, I know that I can contribute, and if given an opportunity, I will put in my best.

How hard is it for someone like you, who has won the IPL and done well, to stay motivated for that one playing opportunity?

It is hard to be honest. But I'm a practical person. When I look at the team, I know that there's a realistic chance that I can be benched and that's okay. That's the beauty of this game. It shows you so many things. But it's extremely important to stay motivated because you can easily get desperate and lose your work ethic. So I train my mind in such a way that I'm going to play every game. With the Impact Player [rule], anything can happen. I've always lived my life in a way that I compare myself with where I was yesterday. I have had a great time over the past few years. I'm married now. I have a family. So all these things kind of add to it. No one can take away what I have achieved till now. At the same time, you have to keep working hard, keep creating an impact on the coaches to get that opportunity.

What's the advice you are getting from Dinesh Karthik?

DK is someone who believes in a lot of hard work because he's done that himself. His coaching agenda is based on hard preparation, and that's what he keeps us motivated through. It's important to understand it is very tough to be a batting coach and mentor in a set-up like RCB. You have someone like Virat Kohli who has achieved feats that no one can imagine. And you have a fresher in the form of a Vihaan Malhotra walking in. DK has to take care of both, and the overseas players. Working with him, one thing I've understood is how to be flexible when it comes to your batting - how I can assess situations, be smart in terms of staying ahead of others, and combine that with total hard work. Then, the results will take care of themselves. And even if they don't, there won't be any regret.

One year you go for ₹23 crore, then you are let go of, and then you are picked up for ₹7 crore by another franchise. How easy or hard is it to process all of this?

There will be days when you think if I had a good year last season, my bank account would go up by another 24 crores. But you're signing up for it. There was amazing communication between me and Abhishek Nayar [at KKR], who wanted to release me. He told me what the team required, and you can get anything done out of me if it's good for the team. When I hang up my boots, all I would think about is how many titles my team won.

People won't remember records. Some may, but only from the cricketing fraternity, not those in your society. In Indore, there is a place called Rajwada. When RCB won last year, people were dancing there. It goes to show how important the victory of a team is. When I got released [from KKR], I did feel bad. Money is money. But as long as I understood that it was going to be better for the team, I had to be okay with it.

At KKR, you first had a lot of success opening. Then you shifted a bit down. Did that have an impact?

I've had very good records batting in the middle-order as well. I had a couple of 400-plus seasons (404 runs in 2023 and 370 in 2024). I've even batted at No. 8. I've never had a preferred batting position, but Brendon McCullum pushed me to open. If you choose to bat in a particular position and there's no vacancy there, you're pushing yourself into a corner. That's something that I don't want to do because I believe in contributing in multiple facets of the game. If you restrict yourself to one, you've got to be bloody good at it. And that doesn't necessarily happen. So I want to give myself the maximum opportunity to contribute to the team, be it by batting at the top, in the middle, bowling a few overs, in leadership, or fielding.

What are your learnings from sharing a dressing room with Kohli?

He is extremely down to earth and humble. He's got that aura around him which never ceases to amaze people. It's an opportunity for you to take as many things from him as possible. Because, the situations that you have faced in life, that person has seen it 50 times more. Not just about the game, but fame, money, family. To see a complete person like that is nothing but inspiration. You see how he celebrates every wicket. You see him running. You never see him jogging on the field. He sprints. That's all the more reason for you to increase your fitness, intensity and be on top of your game. Virat Kohli improves each and every individual in the team through his actions.

T20 cricket has evolved. At RCB, what are the kinds of conversations that you have had about adding to your skill-set?

The game has definitely changed from when I started to where it is right now. You're seeing big scores. And you're seeing bowlers bringing in new types of deliveries. But one thing that hasn't changed is the way the game is being assessed. If you're smart, then you'll be assessing the game differently. Every team has amazing talent. Six-hitters, conventional cricketers, fast bowlers, spinners, fielders, captains, you name it. One thing that will always keep you ahead is how smart you are and how you adapt to pressure. And that is what the conversation is all about - how to assess quickly and how to adapt to the conditions.

A lot of runs are being scored, so there's more pressure on bowlers to defend. But everyone is working extremely hard to hit those fours and sixes. People easily say 'It has now become a batter's game, that they are scoring 230 and 240 every time'. But there is so much hard work behind hitting those boundaries and sixes. People spend so much time practising. I always give this example: No one has been able to decode Sunil Narine till now. He's still bowling four overs for 30 runs. On his worst day, he gives 40. For others, it is a great day if they go at 40. So, if people have the talent, and keep up their competence, it's definitely a level playing field.

In terms of evolution, we are seeing relay catches more regularly. How much has elite athleticism changed things?

That has now become step one. It is no longer about how you are hitting or how you are bowling. It's now about how fit you are. This is something people have started to consider in basic coaching as well. In my mind, I can actually bowl 150 kmph. But if I am not fit enough to do that, it will just be a thought and it will just be in the interviews.

So the game has reached a point where you are looking at potential which can be achieved only through apex fitness routines.

It has to be combined with investment. And by investment, I mean investing in a nutritionist, a trainer, a physio. And those investments in the long run will give you rewards in terms of your performance.

How AI helped community-led development in Rajasthan

A project to improve water resilience in two Rajasthan districts strengthened existing government efforts by using AI to improve last-mile responsiveness; the application was also lightweight enough to sit inside any large programme that depends on frontline behaviour change and local coordination

Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee
Alan Nicol

India is in an artificial intelligence (AI) moment. Across agriculture, health, finance, and governance, the race is on to deploy AI-enabled services that reach the last mile. Chatbots answer farmer queries. Agentic tools navigate entitlement schemes. And advisory platforms push the right information to the right person (presumably) at the right time.

Many of these tools share a similar logic. While exceptions exist, they are often designed around the assumption that communities have an information deficit that AI can fill. But what if that's not all communities need?

In public services, the gap is not always between people and information. It is often between people and the local institutions meant to serve them. India's villages are shaped by the complexities of caste, class, gender, and land ownership. Numbers alone cannot track what actually makes an intervention work. Why a volunteer stops showing up, what makes a woman hesitate to speak in a Gram Sabha, and why an approved plan isn't being implemented rarely makes it back to the people designing and funding these programmes.

This is not because institutions don't want qualitative information. In many cases, they simply lack the means, time, and resources to consistently gather it at scale.

Technology must empower the human intermediary, like the community volunteer water champions in the AI4WaterPolicy project, rather than replace them. GETTY IMAGES

Different question for AI

The authors designed a pilot project, called AI4WaterPolicy, in the water-stressed Sirohi and Pali districts of Rajasthan. And rather than deploy AI to push information outwards, the project used it to listen.

Working with a field partner, Centre for Microfinance (CmF), and technology partner Colectiv, an AI model conducted 352 interviews across 50 villages in six months. The team had trained the model using a brief of the programme context and the questions it needed to know.

The AI chatbot then held 20-minute WhatsApp conversations in Hindi and local dialects via voice notes or text with 'Pani Mitras' (community volunteer water champions), Panchayat leaders, and CmF's frontline staff. Follow-up questions were adapted to each respondent on the fly. The model finally translated anonymised transcripts and organised them thematically, after which the field and research team reviewed and validated them.

The answers revealed three things:

(i) **Pride in the results**: "Water level in my village, which was at 150 feet, has now come to below 100 feet. This is a matter of great pride for me";

(ii) **The double burden for women**: "I manage my family by waking up early, then I visit other women in the village to discuss water-related issues. After returning home, I resume my household work"; and

(iii) **Funding and approval delays**: "Because of delayed approval of proposals in the Panchayat department, we could not complete the work on time"

The project then deployed 'Pani Mitras' to address these issues. During the project's structured workshops to share and discuss findings with respondents, called 'Pause and Reflect' sessions, participants validated some interpretations and pushed back on others. Mainly, they said their limited understanding of Panchayat procedures and government schemes was a challenge.

In reply, CmF redesigned its training programme mid-cycle to add a Panchayati Raj orientation programme and structured workshops with block-level officials from rural development, agriculture, and water resources departments. This pivot was not part of the original plan. It happened because the AI model helped the project turn insights around quickly enough to act within the same programme cycle.

Follow-up interviews with 'Pani Mitras' three months after the workshops found that more than half of the community members had since engaged directly with government officials – something many had hesitated to do before.

They reported more confidence navigating scheme application processes and mentioned the feedback had prompted their Panchayat or department to act more quickly.

The AI4WaterPolicy pilot succeeded not just because of the algorithms used but also because its organisers budgeted time, funds, and people to return findings to respondents and co-develop follow-up actions

Listening with intent

There is an important distinction here: responsive systems and actively listening systems are not the same thing. The former takes community input as a signal and returns an answer. The latter is shaped by what it hears and the community moves from being a passive beneficiary to an active co-designer.

In this pilot, AI made active listening possible in three ways. First, a voice-enabled WhatsApp channel gave 'Pani Mitras' a private space to speak freely. As one respondent put it, "When a person is in front of you, you feel hesitant. On your own phone, there's no hesitation." Second, the AI model identified recurring themes across 352 conversations without requiring weeks of manual coding. Third, because the findings were synthesised within weeks, the implementing team could redesign training mid-cycle. Traditional monitoring can't easily provide such responsiveness.

The AI4WaterPolicy pilot succeeded not just because of the algorithms used but also because its organisers budgeted time, funds, and people to return findings to respondents and co-develop follow-up actions. CmF had also spent years working in these villages, identifying and training the 'Pani Mitras'. During the interviews, their staff facilitated access to shared devices for participants without smartphones, helped navigate connectivity problems, and ensured the 'Pause and Reflect' sessions were genuine deliberations. The AI could listen at scale precisely because human relationships had already created the conditions necessary for honest conversations.

Empower, not replace

The digital divide is real and manifests in gender, class, and caste-based differences, and any honest conversation about AI and the last mile must reckon with this reality. Technology must empower the human intermediary, like the 'Pani Mitras', rather than replace them. This was not a one-off pilot from Rajasthan. The approach strengthened and complemented existing government efforts by enhancing feedback loops and improving last-mile responsiveness. It was also lightweight enough to sit inside any large programme that depends on frontline behaviour change and local coordination.

Policies, programmes, and systems like Jal Jeevan Mission, VB-G RAM G, and sectoral extension systems all include such last-mile implementation.

(Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee is a Policy Engagement Specialist at the International Water Management Institute (IWMI). S.Bhattacharjee@cgiar.org

Alan Nicol is a Principal Researcher at IWMI. A.Nicol@cgiar.org)

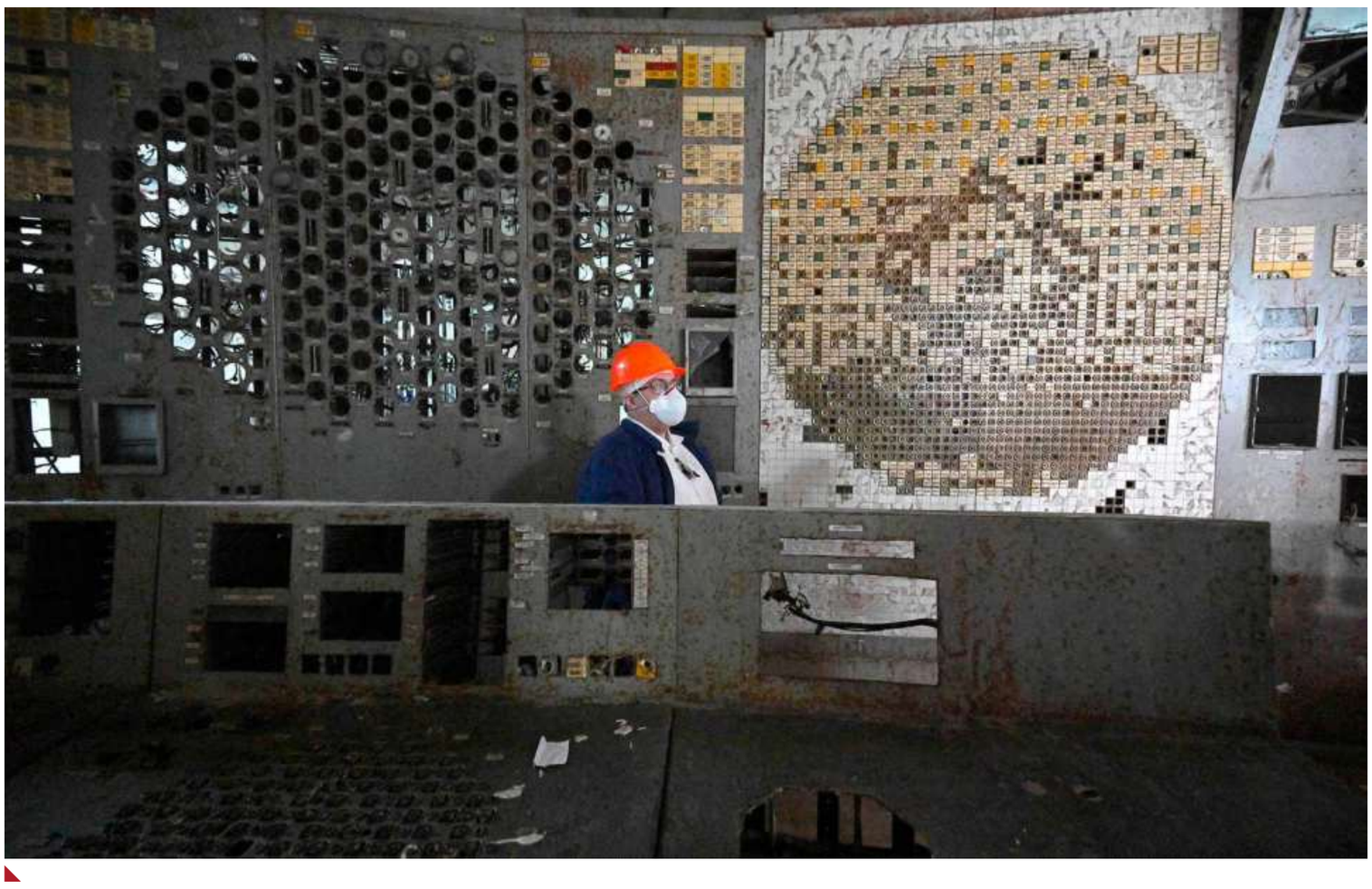
THE GIST

The authors designed a pilot project, called AI4WaterPolicy, in the water-stressed Sirohi and Pali districts of Rajasthan

The AI chatbot held 20-minute WhatsApp conversations in Hindi and local dialects via voice notes or text with 'Pani Mitras' (community volunteer water champions), Panchayat leaders, and CmF's frontline staff

The AI could listen at scale precisely because human relationships had already created the conditions necessary for honest conversations

BIG SHOT



A view of the reactor core mimic display, a.k.a. the mnemonic table, that was part of the SKALA computer system at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. By looking at the coloured tiles on the display, operators could quickly understand the distribution of activity across the core, helping them balance the reactor's power output and identify where heat was building up. AFP

QUESTION CORNER

Neanderthal mystery

Q: How did the Neanderthals go extinct?

A: Pursuing the mystery of how the Neanderthals went extinct, researchers from the Universities of Cambridge and of Montreal have now asserted that climate change was not the primary reason. Instead, they have reported that *Homo sapiens* succeeded because of their better social connectivity whereas the Neanderthals' populations suffered the effects of poor social connections.

The findings, published on April 1 *Quaternary Science Reviews*, were based on habitat suitability modelling: using algorithms to estimate where ancient humans might have preferred to live based on simulations of the climate over 60,000 years.

Based on these simulations, the team said that both species maintained "core" regions in Spain and Italy, among other areas, that should have provided shelter and protection as the populations negotiated Marine Isotope Stage 3 — a time when the earth was cold even as its climate oscillated rapidly.

The researchers also said that these two groups rarely crossed paths: based on their estimated maps, the researchers said the species' ranges overlapped by less than 5% — a figure they said weakened the theory of "competitive exclusion", which claims that Neanderthals went extinct because *H. sapiens* outcompeted them for resources.

Scientist Svante Pääbo poses with a replica of a Neanderthal skeleton on October 3, 2022. AP

If the new findings are to be believed, Neanderthal groups in Eastern Europe were too isolated to survive demographic pressures, while *H. sapiens* benefited from superior networks along coastal migration routes. Ultimately, the paper concluded, the process in which *H. sapiens* replaced Neanderthals was "regionally differentiated", meaning it happened for different reasons in different locations.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of Lebanese towns asked to be evacuated by Israel

7 Israel's military issued evacuation orders for southern Lebanon on Sunday, ordering residents to leave seven towns that lie beyond the "buffer zone" it occupied before a ceasefire that has failed to bring a full halt to hostilities. A spokesperson for the Israeli military said that Lebanese armed group Hezbollah was violating the ceasefire and that Israel would act against it. REUTERS

Motorists penalised by Delhi Police during enforcement drive

11,800 The Delhi Traffic Police penalised over 11,800 motorists during a special three-hour enforcement drive conducted across the city, officials said. The intensive drive was carried out on Saturday across all traffic ranges and districts as part of efforts to curb congestion and enhance road safety. PTI

Area burned by the Otsuchi fires in Japan as of Sunday morning

1,373 hectares. Japan has deployed 1,400 firefighters and dozens of Self-Defence Force personnel to battle mountain blazes that have been raging in the north for five days, officials said on Sunday. Two more wildfires broke out elsewhere in the north — one in Kitakata city and the other in Nagaoka. PTI

Value of projects proposed by the Himachal government

5,400 in ₹ crore. Himachal Pradesh government has proposed projects of over ₹5,400 crore under the Urban Challenge Fund, said Public Works and Urban Development Minister Vikramaditya Singh. In a meeting held in Delhi, he requested earmarking of ₹1,350 crore for the State as the Centre's share, a statement said. PTI

E-checkposts in coal-rich Singrauli to curb illegal transport

3 Three AI-powered e-checkposts have been installed in the coal-rich Singrauli district of Madhya Pradesh to curb illegal transportation of minerals, enhance revenue and improve transparency, officials said on Sunday. Singrauli, situated in the northeast of MP close to Uttar Pradesh, is widely known as the "Energy Capital of India". PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

Follow us facebook.com/thehindu X.com/the_hindu instagram.com/the_hindu

SIR pause on way to a billion electorate

The SIR has trimmed India's electoral roll by removing absent, shifted, dead, and duplicate names, leading to record turnout percentages across States despite shrunken electorates; while the exercise strengthens the accuracy of the roll, the challenge now is to ensure it remains inclusive and free of disenfranchisement

FULL CONTEXT

Akshay Rout

Tamil Nadu finished its single-day poll on April 23 with a record turnout of over 85%, surpassing the earlier best of 78.29% in 2011 and a huge 12% higher than the 73.63% turnout in the last Assembly election. The base for the turnout was a trimmed-down electorate of 5.67 crore. While factoring in the high-octane political contest and mobilisation, the turnout rate would arguably be lower if the State electoral roll had retained "ghost electors" – the dead, shifted, absent, and duplicate names – that existed as of October 2025, when the special intensive revision (SIR) kicked in. Similar trend is seen in West Bengal, with a turnout of 92.88% in the first phase. Assam, Puducherry, and Kerala also delivered record turnouts earlier this month, all following the pattern of shrunken electorates. Therein lies a story.

Before the turn

In the run-up to its 75th Foundation Day on January 25 last year, also called the National Voters' Day, the Election Commission (EC) announced a grand celebration 'in light of the fact that India's total electorate is approaching the 100-crore mark.' That was a well-made observation by available arithmetic. The electoral database then stood at 99.1 crore, including 21.7 crore young voters aged 18-29. The steadily rising electoral gender ratio had further jumped from 948 in 2024 to 954. With an estimated population of 1.4 billion, India went into the last Lok Sabha elections with 96.88 crore registered voters. International observers have long watched in awe the elephantine Indian electorate, with the United States a distant second and countries such as Brazil and Indonesia trailing far behind. As the SIR completed its second phase earlier this month, India's grand list of electors appears poised to be significantly reversing its advance, though it may still be celebrated for other reasons.

India's electorate has been growing constantly, keeping pace with population growth. The logic is simple: all citizens above the age of 18, unless otherwise disqualified, are to be included in the electoral roll of their respective constituencies, where they are ordinarily resident. Broadly estimated at 75% of the population, a billion voters would look natural in the case of a wholesome registration. Interestingly, the electorate has often grown faster; during the 1951-2021 period, the population grew fourfold, from 36 crore to 138 crore, while the electorate grew more than fivefold, from 17 crore to 91 crore.

Starting with 17.32 crore electors in 1951, India's electoral roll has swelled steadily year after year, except for minor aberrations after accounting for births and deaths by lakhs of ground-level staff. Each January, the country releases updated and revised electoral rolls based on a summary revision with reference to 1st January.

The SIR twist

But then came SIR 2025. The revision, which has already covered 13 States and Union Territories, including Bihar in the first phase, has disrupted the usual elector count based on the logic of growing population. In the 12 States and Union Territories where SIR was ordered on October 27 last year – spanning 321 districts and 1,843 Assembly constituencies – the number of electors has dropped to less than 46 crore from a base of 51 crore. All major States, such as Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Gujarat, and Chhattisgarh, have each reported a reduction of more than 10%.

A voter checks his name on the electoral roll after the Election Commission published West Bengal's post-SIR voter list in Kolkata on February 28. PTI

The SIR is not the answer to the alleged adulteration of demography by non-citizens or infiltrators, nor is the EC in charge of policing this part. But, SIR has cured the electoral roll of its obesity, giving it a new look

Much of the downsizing is due to the removal of ASDD names (absent, shifted, dead, or doubly enrolled), purification being a basic purpose of any electoral revision. States such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have a history of job-related migration, warranting the removal of names. The ASDD burden has also accumulated because the last SIR was conducted between 2002 and 2004.

In substantial consideration, SIR entails drafting a new roll, compared to annual revisions, which are corrections on the existing list. But notably, there are a sizable number of deletions on account of non-return of enumeration forms, non-traceability of persons, objections received through the designated Form 7, and, importantly, for failing the eligibility criteria stipulated for electors under the Constitution, determined through verification of documents.

With the burden of proof shifting to the citizen, for a sizeable section of the population, the SIR has been like re-earning the franchise.

Additions factored

During the SIR process, the trimming is most visible at the draft roll stage and is largely driven by ASDD factors. There is, however, some recovery on the way to the final roll, thanks to fresh enrolments. In Uttar Pradesh, the initial roll of 15.44 crore slumped to a draft of 12.55 crore, before rising to a final tally of 13.39 crore following substantial additions. Tamil Nadu started with a list of 6.41 crore, which fell to 5.44 crore in the draft roll, but the net final roll was of 5.67 crore electors.

In June last year, Bihar started the intensive revision with a base of 7.89 crore electors and ended up with a final roll of 7.42 crore, improving upon the published draft of 7.24 crore. West Bengal, however, has been a different case, with issues of logical discrepancies affecting the final roll and spilling over into politics and the streets.

Reverse journey

Close to 60 crore of India's electors have already gone through the SIR exercise. The aggregate number has declined by nearly six crores even after additions. The remaining 40 crore electors, spread across 23 States and U.T.s, are now preparing for the scrutiny. With standard extrapolation, by the time SIR is completed across the country, the size of India's electorate could fall to around 90 crore.

The stated goal of SIR is to ensure that all eligible citizens, including newly eligible youth and temporary migrants, are included in the electoral roll. The details of the post-SIR final rolls, especially the addition of new electors, bear testimony to this effort. But the activity missed the profile, drowned in the overwhelming narrative of deletion.

In recent years, inclusivity has been a key focus in electoral roll management, addressing gender disparities, improving youth cohorts, and ensuring that persons with disabilities, the third gender community, and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) are fully enrolled in a campaign mode.

Crux of democracy

India has prided itself on both the scale and quality of its elections over the last 75 years. The starting manifestation of both these is in the country's electoral roll. The litmus test for a credible election begins with the accuracy and completeness of the electoral roll and culminates in the general acceptance of the electoral outcome. Despite the scepticism from Western powers at the dawn of India's independence, the country has stood firm in sustaining an electoral democracy through credible and respectful exercise of the franchise. This is an outstanding fact, irrespective of the recent disputes over the electoral process and management. All interventions, including SIR, have to strengthen the cause.

Renew focus on inclusion

The SIR is not the answer to the alleged adulteration of demography by non-citizens or infiltrators, nor is the EC in charge of policing this part. However, the SIR has cured the electoral roll of its obesity, giving it a new look. The quantitative expansion of India's electoral roll has received a discernible pause.

It is now for election managers to ensure and provide all stakeholders with the confidence that the new slim roll is accurate and free of disenfranchisement. Concerns that the SIR process, in its uncompromising pursuit, should not strip people and groups of their democratic rights on technical grounds must not be seen as hostile.

After the high-profile focus on removing ineligible names, the EC should now invest its energy in reaffirming its celebrated resolve that no eligible voter is left behind.

(Akshay Rout is former Director General, Election Commission of India. Views expressed are personal)

THE GIST

- India's electorate, which had steadily expanded faster than population growth, is now poised for a reverse trajectory, with numbers potentially falling towards 90 crore as the exercise progresses across the remaining States and U.T.s.
- The revision process, involving draft rolls, verification of documents, objections through Form 7, and non-return of enumeration forms, has in many cases shifted the burden of proof to citizens, making it akin to re-earning the franchise for sections of the population.
- Despite the dominant narrative of deletions, final rolls show recovery through fresh enrolments, reflecting efforts to include newly eligible youth, migrants, and underrepresented groups, even as discrepancies in some States continue to spill into politics and public debate.

CACHE

Has Anthropic's Mythos made the cure worse than the disease?

In the world of cybersecurity, defenders are, to put it crudely, your anti-virus sellers, helping you fix security vulnerabilities and keep data safe. But that simple business model is being disrupted by speed and scale

John Xavier

A few weeks back, Anthropic made two major announcements. The AI company said it was forming an alliance with who's who of the tech industry and it said, with those alliance members, it will share its latest AI model that is skilled at identifying hidden weaknesses in software.

That created a sort of cartel-style alliance sans price fixing in an industry that is increasingly facing cyber threats as the mushrooming of AI-powered applications is making the already difficult threat terrain harder to navigate for defenders.

In the world of cybersecurity, defenders are, to put it crudely, your anti-virus sellers, helping you fix security vulnerabilities and keep data safe. But that simple business model is being disrupted by speed and scale.

AI models like Anthropic's Mythos are capable of finding flaws in the software architecture that have gone unnoticed for years, despite running the most capable security checks.

And the company has claimed that it has identified many such issues in the currently used software in several critical systems.

A small group of unauthorised users, those not part of Project Glasswing, have gained access to the Mythos model. REUTERS

A new problem

The frontier AI company has said that only those in its alliance network have access to Mythos Preview. That means only they can find legacy flaws and fix them.

But the company is now fighting a problem it helped create – and one it may have already lost a round of.

A small group of unauthorised users, those not part of Project Glasswing, have gained access to the model. Based on reports, they haven't entered it through a back door. They seem to have made an educated guess about where the model lived online, based on the URL formats Anthropic uses for its other models, and leveraged credentials belonging to a contractor.

The group has been using Mythos regularly for some time, though not for cybersecurity purposes, according to a report by Bloomberg.

Anthropic confirmed it is investigating the incident and said there is currently no evidence that the activity extended beyond the third-party vendor environment.

The safeguard question

The incident raises serious questions about whether Anthropic, valued at approximately $380 billion, can effectively safeguard its most powerful technologies from falling into the hands of malicious actors.

This is also not the company's first stumble. The Mythos breach comes shortly after Fortune reported earlier that Anthropic had accidentally made nearly 3,000 internal files publicly accessible, including a draft blog post describing Mythos itself.

A company asking the world to trust its guardrails has now tripped over two of them in quick succession.

Mythos is not a database of known vulnerabilities. It is not a smarter version of the scanners security teams already run. It operates through interaction rather than inspection.

Mythos's capability

Instead of scanning code for known patterns, the system engages with it. It executes functions, tests different inputs, and observes how the software responds. Each result feeds into the next step, allowing the model to refine its approach and move deeper into the system.

If an attempt fails, it does not stop the process. But that failure acts as an input for the next process. Unlike conventional cybersecurity products, it acts like a senior security engineer who can reason about the software. And its biggest differentiation is that it won't get tired. It can persevere indefinitely.

The model has already found thousands of high-severity vulnerabilities, including some in every major operating system and web browser. It is capable of chaining multiple vulnerabilities together into working exploits. In controlled evaluations, it could execute multi-stage attacks on vulnerable networks, tasks that would take human professionals days of work.

Limited patches

Fewer than 1% of the potential vulnerabilities Mythos has discovered so far have been fully patched by their maintainers. The rest sit in a growing pipeline of known-but-undisclosed flaws. That pipeline is not a database in the traditional sense. But for anyone who gains access to Mythos, it functions as a live, continuously expanding map of weaknesses in software that runs banking systems, hospitals, power grids and supply chains.

Which returns us to the Discord group in the vendor environment – the small group of unauthorised users who access Mythos Preview. While their reported reason behind accessing is reassuring for now, it ignores the structural problem entirely. Access is access.

If another group, one with malicious intent, had gained access to this AI tool, it is very likely they would have sabotaged some critical software. With a ready-to-attack set of vulnerabilities, the power asymmetry is significant between the user and the attacker.

Also, the window between discovering a vulnerability and exploiting it by an adversary has now collapsed. What once took months now can happen in minutes with AI, as Microsoft noted in its Project Glasswing statement.

Alarming asymmetry

The unauthorised users don't need to understand everything Mythos can do. They need only to understand enough to start asking the right questions of it.

This is the asymmetry that should alarm security leaders more than any specific vulnerability. Defenders are constrained by set processes like patch validation, deployment windows, coordination across teams, and the operational cost of downtime.

Mythos leaves the defensive cost of answering those questions inside a real enterprise largely unchanged. The right lesson now is preparation. Attackers, meanwhile, have no such constraints. They only need one door left open. If thousands of vulnerabilities can be identified quickly, organisations may not have the capacity to address them all.

Prioritisation becomes critical, and errors become more costly. In this environment, more visibility does not automatically mean more secure.

Mythos-class capabilities will become more broadly available. Within the next year or two, enterprises will have direct access to AI-powered discovery tools that can scan their own proprietary codebases with similar depth.

Beyond Anthropic's Mythos

It is easy to stay stuck on a single model but it is quite possible that Anthropic may be overstating Mythos's capabilities as some experts have pointed out that smaller open models have demonstrated meaningful portions of what Mythos does, at a fraction of the cost.

While this means that the gap between a frontier model and a sufficiently motivated attacker with access to cheaper alternatives is narrowing, it also shows that hackers can get access to cheap, Mythos-level models.

That means organisations should be well prepared for a constantly evolving threat landscape where attackers are moving faster than patch cycles. There is also a need for a hard rethink of risk tolerance for operational downtime: if adversary timelines are now measured in minutes, the old calculus about acceptable patch delays no longer holds.

The deeper question is whether any single company can be trusted as the gatekeeper of technology this consequential. Project Glasswing was designed to put defenders ahead of attackers. But if the guardrails can be bypassed by a Discord group with a contractor's login and a good guess about a URL, the cure may be running on the same fragile infrastructure as the disease.

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

The committee is nothing but a paper tiger

Govt. is under pressure to address the needs of the unhoused

S. Upendran

What is the meaning and origin of the expression 'paper tiger'? (Jyot Gulati, Madina)

A tiger is an animal that usually puts the fear of God in most people; no one chooses to take any risk with this powerful and formidable animal – people often flee as soon as its name is uttered. When we see the same animal in the form of a child's stuffed toy, however, instead of running away, we choose to hold it in our hand. We are not overcome by a sense of fear. When you refer to a person as being a paper tiger, what you are suggesting is that the individual, though he looks threatening, is, in reality, harmless. His outward appearance is just a show; he is, in fact, a toothless tiger – a very weak individual. The expression can be used with anything - countries, organisations, rules, etc. Here are a few examples.

Despite their leaders' bluster, people across the world have realised that both America and Russia have been reduced to paper tigers.

The new committee is nothing more than a paper tiger. It doesn't have the power to either fire or punish erring individuals.

How is the word 'bristle' pronounced? (S. Devender, Mysore)

The word consists of two syllables; the 't' in the second is silent. The vowel in the first syllable sounds like the 'i' in 'sit', 'bit' and 'lit', while the vowel in the second syllable sounds like the 'a' in 'china', The word is pronounced 'BRIS-el' with the stress on the first syllable. It comes from the Old English 'byrst' meaning 'stiff hair', and it was initially used to refer to the thick hair found on the neck and back of animals - especially, hogs. With the passage of time, the word began to be used to refer to the short, thick hair that grows on our chin as well. The synthetic nylon at the end of a toothbrush began to be called 'bristles' because originally, toothbrushes were made from the bristles of hogs and boars.

You could see several bristles sprouting on my grandmother's chin.

The dentist recommended that I use a brush with softer bristles.

Bristle is also used as a verb to mean 'to be angry' – when animals get angry, their bristles stand up.

What is the difference between 'homeless' and 'unhoused'? (Nandini Rao, Warangal)

The term 'unhoused' is not anything new; it has been part of the English language since the late 16th century. Of late, the word has become popular among native speakers of English. In terms of meaning, there is no difference between 'unhoused' and 'homeless' - both are used to refer to people who do not have shelter. But since PC or political correctness is a big thing nowadays, there is a tendency to use 'unhoused' instead of 'homeless' – careful users of the language argue that 'unhoused' is a much more sensitive term than 'homeless'.

In our country, the number of unhoused people has doubled in the past decade.

The Government is refusing to discuss the problems of the unhoused.

upendrankye@gmailcom

Word of the day

Foolhardy: marked by defiant disregard for danger or consequences

Synonyms: reckless, careless, daring

Usage: *She made a foolhardy decision without thinking.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/foolhardy

International Phonetic Alphabet: /fu:lhɑ:di/

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

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on the occasion of International Design Day being observed today

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1
Why is April 27 celebrated as International Design Day and what is the theme for 2026?

QUESTION 2
One of the areas where designers can innovate is typefaces. So, which famous typefaces does one associate with Stanley Morrison, the duo of Robin Nicholas and Patricia Saunders and the Max Miedinger-Eduard Hoffmann pairing?

QUESTION 3
Which designer is credited with the famous '10 Principles of Good Design' and for which company did he create many iconic products?

QUESTION 4
Which famous saree from eastern India is renowned for designs on the 'pallu' depicting mythological scenes and epic stories?

QUESTION 5
What is the term for the mathematical proportion (~1.618) often used in design and architecture for aesthetic balance?

QUESTION 6
The Statue of Liberty was the handiwork of sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi. But which famous engineer is said to have designed the internal metal framework for the statue?

QUESTION 7
With which famous brands would one associate the iconic designs 'Swoosh', 'Pecten' and 'Bibendum'?

Visual Question:
Name the Iranian architect who designed this famous edifice in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. West Bengal's first Chief Minister was a veteran freedom fighter with roots in the Anushilan Samiti and he served very briefly before being succeeded by one of the State's longer-serving CMs. **Ans: Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Bidhan Chandra Roy**

2. When Jyoti Basu was first elected in the State Assembly, he was just one of three MLAs elected on the Communist Party of India ticket. Who among the other two, was elected from Darjeeling? **Ans: Rattanlal Brahmin**

3. Ajoy Mukherjee founded a party that launched the political career of a future President of India. **Ans: Bangla Congress, Pranab Mukherjee**

4. When Tamil thespian Sivaji Ganesan fiercely raged against social orthodoxy in Parasakthi, he was reciting dialogue written by a prolific screenwriter who also served as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. **Ans: M Karunanidhi**

5. Name this Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu who was a school topper. **Ans: J Jayalalithaa**

Visual: Identify this popular CM from Tamil Nadu. **Ans: K. Kamaraj**

Early Birds: K.N. Viswanathan | Tamal Biswas | Sunil Madhavan | Dodo Jayaditya | Prodosh Mitra