SATURDAY
May 2, 2026
CHENNAI
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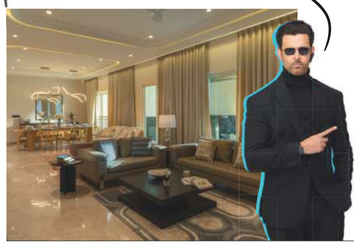

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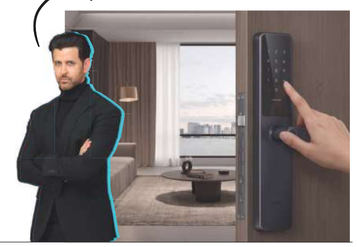

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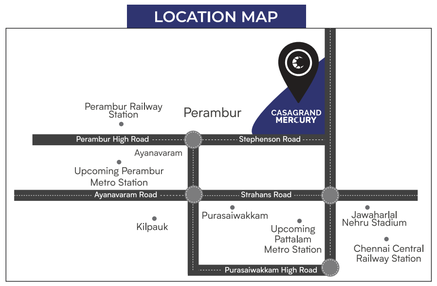

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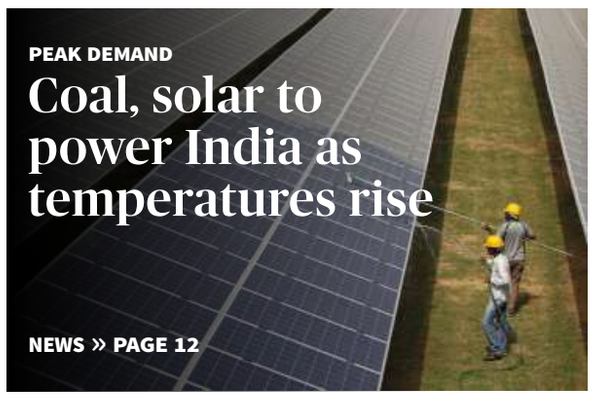
STANDING STRONG
Ladakhis serve as first line of defence: Shah
NEWS » PAGE 10



PEAK DEMAND
Coal, solar to power India as temperatures rise
NEWS » PAGE 12

NARCOTICS RING BUSTED
NCB seizes 349 kg cocaine in Mumbai
NEWS » PAGE 11

POLICING THE FEED
Far from a safe harbour
Critics, comedians, and media face blocking orders, legal scrutiny
GROUND ZERO » PAGE 9

THOMAS CUP
Lakshya, Ayush power India into semifinals
SPORT » PAGE 15

Commercial LPG, 5-kg cylinders to cost more

Price of commercial LPG hiked by ₹993 a cylinder and that of 5-kg cylinder by ₹261; price of ATF for international carriers raised; govt. also reduces excise duty on export of diesel, aviation fuel

Saptaparno Ghosh
NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Friday sharply hiked the price of commercial LPG by ₹993 per cylinder and that of 5-kg free trade LPG by ₹261 per cylinder. Further, the price of bulk diesel was raised from ₹137 to ₹149 per litre.

Whilst the OMCs did not hike the price of LPG meant for domestic usage and that of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) for domestic scheduled carriers, the price of ATF for international airlines has been pushed up by $76.55 per kilolitre from $1,435 per kilolitre.

The prices of retail petrol and diesel are unchanged.

In a separate move, the Ministry of Finance reduced the excise duty on the export of diesel to ₹23 for every litre from ₹55.5 per litre and that of ATF to ₹33 per litre from ₹42 per litre, whilst the special additional excise duty (SAED) on the export of petrol continues to remain nil.

The previous revision to the excise duties on the export of diesel and ATF was done on April 11. The government said that the earlier upward revisions were to ensure the availability of these products in the domestic market and cushion against any impact on supplies. A reduction in the duty on exports is thus a change in that stance.

Whilst the prices of domestic LPG being unchanged offer respite, the steep hike in prices of commercial LPG and that of 5-kg free trade LPG raise concerns.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Fuel crisis: Commercial LPG cylinder delivery workers unload cylinders from a truck at a distribution centre. J. ALLEN EGENUSE

Congress slams government on hike in LPG rates

NEW DELHI
The Congress on Friday slammed the Narendra Modi government over the latest price hike for commercial LPG cylinders, with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi calling it the "bill for elections". » PAGE 11

GST revenue hits record ₹2.43 lakh crore in April

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

The government's Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue in April 2026 surged to an all-time high of ₹2.43 lakh crore, up 8.7% over April last year. Growth was once again driven by collections on imports, with revenue from domestic sales growing slower.

Tax experts, however, note that collections in April, which represent activity in March, typically come in higher as both industry and the tax administration make a final push to achieve the financial year-end targets.

Data show that there has been a record collection every April ever since the GST was rolled out in 2017, except for April 2020, which was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown.

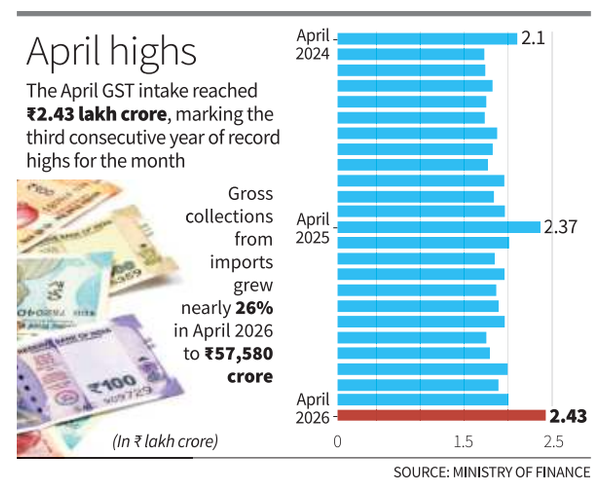
"April 2026 GST collections cap off a resilient FY26 for the GST regime, with gross revenues rising 8.7% year-on-year to about ₹2.43 lakh crore compared to April 2025, despite continued global uncertainty and West Asia-related geopolitical headwinds," Mahesh Jaising, partner & indirect tax leader at Deloitte India, said.

The data show that net collections, once refunds are accounted for, stood at ₹2.11 lakh crore in April 2026, up 7.3% over April last year.

Notably, the data also show that the growth in collections was once again driven by imports.

Gross collections from imports grew nearly 26% in April 2026 to ₹57,580 crore. Collections from domestic sales grew at 4.3% to ₹1.85 lakh crore in the period.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10



NEARBY

'Hard work of DMK cadre will yield results'

CHENNAI
Due to the hard work of DMK cadre in the run-up to the Assembly election, the party will secure the desired result on counting day on May 4, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said in Chennai on Friday. » PAGE 6

Two booked for abetment of suicide

CHENNAI
Two constables of the Chennai police and three others were booked by the Rajasthan police on the charge of abetment of suicide, sources said on Friday. » PAGE 6

METROPLUS WEEKEND » 6 PAGES
PROPERTYPLUS » 10 PAGES

Trump 'not satisfied' with Iran's peace bid

Stanly Johny

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday he was "not satisfied" with Iran's latest proposal in negotiations to end the war between the countries, rejecting the plan almost as soon as it was delivered.

Tehran delivered the new proposal for talks with the U.S. via Pakistan, which is acting as a mediator between the two sides, even as the Revolutionary Guards warned that American warships "will burn" like U.S. bases in the region, if Iran is attacked again.

The text of the proposal was handed to Pakistan on Thursday evening, state-run Islamic Republic News Agency reported on Friday.

"Ending the war and establishing a sustainable peace remain Tehran's main priorities in negotiations with the U.S.," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei said in a TV interview.

"They want to make a deal, I'm not satisfied with it, so we'll see what happen," Mr. Trump told presspersons on Friday at the White House, Associated Press reported. He did not elaborate on what he saw as the latest proposal's shortcomings. "They're asking for things I can't agree to," he said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

Watery grave

Rescue workers, including NDRF personnel, conduct operations to recover an overturned cruise boat at the Bargi Dam in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh on Friday. Nine bodies have been recovered, while four persons remain missing. PTI (REPORT ON PAGES 6&12)

SC to hear Trinamool plea against EC today

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

A Special Bench of the Supreme Court is scheduled to urgently hear a petition from the Trinamool Congress on Saturday. The petition challenges a Calcutta High Court decision from April 30, which had dismissed their challenge to an Election Commission order on April 13, mandating that at least one counting supervisor and assistant at each counting table for the West Bengal Assembly elections must be a Central government or Central Public Sector Unit employee.

A Bench of Justices P.S. Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi will hear the petition as the counting of votes for West Bengal election is scheduled for May 4.

The communication insisting on the presence of Central government employees at every counting table was issued by the Additional Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, who is arraigned as a respondent in the petition along with the Election Commission.

The High Court had refused to entertain the petition filed by West Bengal's ruling party, invoking the bar under Article 329(b), which mandated that no election to Parliament or State Legislatures could be questioned except through an election petition.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

T.N. to experience hotter May, with above-normal rainfall

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The IMD has said the temperature may remain above average in most parts of the State

Tamil Nadu will experience above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures in May, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in its outlook released on Friday. However, above-normal rainfall could bring some respite to the State, it added.

The IMD outlined the likely impact of increased temperatures, including on agriculture, and issued an agromet advisory.

The State's coastal region so far as the Cauvery delta districts is expected to record three-five heatwave days.

Sizzling weather had scorched the State in April and the IMD said mercury levels may remain above average in most parts of the State this month, except in some Western Ghats districts.

Nights may be warmer as the minimum temperature may increase above normal levels.

The IMD has warned of the likely impact of heatwave conditions and urged the authorities to take preparedness measures. Early warnings and impact-based forecasts will be issued on heatwave conditions. A heatwave is declared when a place experiences a temperature that is four to five degrees Celsius above the average daytime temperature.

V.R. Durai, Director, Regional Weather Forecasting Centre, Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC), said the coastal belt alone would experience hot and humid weather conditions. North coastal districts close to Andhra Pradesh might record three to five heatwave days.

Daytime heating and convective activity might influence above-average rainfall in the State, which usually receives 66.3 mm of rain in May.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 6

Four-year-old gets trapped in parked car, dies in Karur

The Hindu Bureau
KARUR

A four-year-old boy died of suffocation after he accidentally got himself locked in a parked car near his house at Kazhugur, near Kulithalai, in Karur district on Thursday.

The deceased, identified as Sanjeevi, was the son of Velu, 36, a construction worker, and Mariswari, 30. Police sources said that as he did not return home for long, his parents started a search and found him unconscious in the car. He was rushed to the Government District Headquarters Hospital, Kulithalai, where he was declared brought dead.

SC grants anticipatory bail to Congress leader in case filed by Assam CM's wife

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has granted Congress leader Pawan Khera anticipatory bail in a criminal case instituted on a complaint filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, saying the case appears to be motivated by political rivalry and does not warrant custodial interrogation.

A Bench headed by Justice J.K. Maheshwari cautioned the State of Assam against using the power to arrest so casually, as if to strike a blow at a political rival. The 22-page order said the right to personal liberty cannot be jeopardised lightly. The order was published on May 1.

"Criminal process must be applied with objectivity and circumspection so as to ensure that individual liberty is not imperiled by proceedings that may be coloured by political rivalry. We are further of the opinion that the allegations and counter-allegations, as apparent in the present case, prima facie, appear to be politically motivated and seemingly influenced by such rivalry, rather than disclosing a situation warranting custodial interrogation, and the veracity of the allegations can be tested at trial," the Supreme Court Bench, also comprising Justice Atul S. Chandurkar, observed in the order.

The court said shackling a cherished fundamental right like personal liberty should be justified at a higher threshold than what seemed to be political rivalry.

Pawan Khera

Mr. Khera had accused Mr. Sarma's wife, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, of holding three passports of Egypt, the UAE, and Antigua and Barbuda. He had stated that two of these nations were "Muslim countries, however, the husband's politics is based on hatred against the Muslim community in the State". He had also exhibited documents stating that she had a company registered in the U.S. with an investment of more than ₹50,000 crores, besides owning assets in Dubai.

Mr. Khera had stated that Mr. Sarma's election affidavit had not disclosed any of these details of wealth.

The FIR was registered by the Assam Police after Ms. Sharma denied the veracity of these documents and stated that they were fabricated with forged seals and QR codes.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

THE HINDU GROUP

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Teens today hear a lot of opinions. What they don't get enough of is space to form their own.

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To engage, educate, and enlighten.

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INBRIEF

DRBCCC Hindu College granted autonomous status

The Dharmamurthi Rao Bahadur Calavala Cunnan Chetty's Hindu College (DRBCCC), Pattabiram, has been granted autonomous status by the University Grants Commission, with effect from the 2026-27 academic year. The recognition is expected to allow the college greater academic flexibility, including designing its own curriculum in line with current academic and industry requirements, N. Rajendra Naidu, director, DRBCCC Hindu College, said in a release. He said autonomy would enable the introduction of innovative teaching methods, skill-based courses and interdisciplinary programmes.

'10.83% real economic growth encouraging moment for T.N.'

Tamil Nadu recording 10.83% real economic growth in 2025-26, after an impressive 11.19% growth in 2024-25, is a proud and encouraging moment for the State, said president of Credai Chennai Habib W.S in a statement. "It places Tamil Nadu well above the national growth estimate of 7.4% and confirms that the State's economic momentum is both broad-based and consistent," he added. He further said the growth was significant for the real-estate sector.

Spotlight
Read longform articles from our regional editions

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- **Delhi:** Being Kejriwal **newsth.live/kejriwal**
- **Karnataka:** New Corporations, same old problems in Bengaluru **newsth.live/corporations**
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Health dept. moves to rationalise posts of cardiologists; doctors rue redeployment

The dept. has proposed rationalisation of posts from various government medical college hospitals to ensure optimal utilisation and performance of cath labs; doctors ask why State govt. continues to redeploy doctors instead of creating new posts, seek at least 300 new super speciality posts

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In a bid to ensure optimal utilisation and performance of cath labs in the State, the Health department has proposed rationalisation of cardiologist posts from various government medical college hospitals by upgrading, redeploying and surrendering "excess" posts.

However, a section of government doctors and associations have once again argued that redeployment is not a sustainable solution, and that creating new posts is essential in the long run.

In an official communication to deans of government medical college hospitals, the Directorate of Medical Education (DME) and Research sought details for rationalisation of cardiologist posts, such as status of posts proposed for surrender, upgrade and redeployment. A few posts of associate professors are being upgraded to that of professors, whereas nine posts – professor (one), assistant professor (one), assistant professors (two) and senior residents (five) – are being redeployed. In addition, posts of nine senior residents (cardiologists) are being created by surrendering nine excess junior resident posts as per National Medical Commission (NMC) norms.

Duty concerns: Doctors said redeploying personnel from institutes like the MMC will affect patient service.

While upgrading posts and strengthening manpower for cath labs are welcome, the department continues to redeploy doctors instead of creating new posts, doctors said. "There are 18,000 to 20,000 doctors working across the three health directorates. Of this, at least 50% of the cadre – nearly 10,000 – work in the DME. There are specialists in the directorate but when we take the number of super specialists into account, there are only 1,000 to 1,400 doctors. Only 10% of specialist posts are super speciality doctors in government medical college hospitals," a senior assistant professor in a medical college said.

New posts

Doctors noted that they have been urging the Health department to add at least 300 new posts of super specialists. "We agree that new medical college hospitals require super speciality manpower and cath labs should be started for service delivery. But when the number of sanctioned posts for super specialist cadre is less, existing posts should not be redeployed. Rather, new posts should be created," he said. In this case, cardiologist posts from Madras Medical College (MMC), Stanley Medical College Hospital (MCH), Kilpauk MCH, Coimbatore MCH and Salem MCH have been redeployed citing excess numbers as per NMC norms. "What we have been reiterating is that the cadre strength should be on the basis of patient load. MMC, for instance, is an important cardiology centre in Chennai and gets several referrals. Redeploying doctors from institutes like MMC will affect patient service," a government doctor said.

Super speciality cadre is already in deficit, he said, adding: "Posts are lying vacant owing to delays in counselling. Rationalisation of posts, especially in super speciality, cannot be done on the basis of NMC norms as the patient load is twice as high as what can be handled by the existing cadre strength. The department must increase the number of super speciality sanctioned posts by at least 30%."

P. Saminathan, president, Service Doctors and Post Graduates Association, said that Tamil Nadu's health human resource has been less than Indian Public Health Standards recommendations.

"In-service doctors are hesitant to pursue super speciality (DM/MCh) courses fearing lack of vacancies in medical colleges under the DME as seen year after year in NEET-Super Speciality counselling. If this redeployment policy continues, and if posts are going to be reduced further, the Health department, in the next five years, will face a lack of super speciality workforce to serve the ever increasing patient load at government medical college hospitals."

Roll back labour codes, allocate 3% of budget for workers' welfare: federation

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Unorganised Workers' Federation on Friday demanded the withdrawal of the four labour codes, the allocation of 3% of government budgets for the social security of informal workers, and the expansion of welfare measures, at a May Day meeting held near the Labour Statue.

The federation – which comprises trade unions representing workers across the unorganised sector – called for the protection of workers' rights, strengthening of welfare boards, and expansion of social security measures.

'Restore protections'

It also sought the restoration of earlier protections under the existing labour laws and stronger implementation of welfare schemes for unorganised workers, including construction workers, fishermen, agricultural labourers, and artisans. It urged the government to introduce sector-specific welfare cess and regulate the prices of essential commodities and construction materials.

The federation further called for improved healthcare access through ESI (Employees' State Insurance), enhanced compensation for workplace accidents, maternity benefits, pension schemes, and educational assistance for workers' families.

Special focus must be placed on migrant workers, women workers, and those in informal sectors, by providing better housing, food security, childcare facilities, and protection against workplace exploitation. It said the demands would be pursued through continued mobilisation and engagement with authorities.

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TODAY: 02.05.26: 5.30 P.M: INAUGURATION : ACTOR KUM.SACHU, FORMER MEMBER SECRETARY OF TAMIL NADU EYAL ISAI NATAKA MANDRAM WILL INAUGURATE THE SUMMER DRAMA FEST AND CONFER "NATAKA CHOODAMANI" ON APPA RAMESH AND "IYAKKUNAR SIGARAM K.BALACHANDER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE IN THEATRE" ON KARTHIK BHATT. FELICITATION BY MAADHU BALAJI
7.00 P.M: CRAZY CREATIONS PRESENTS MAADHU BALAJI & HIS CRAZY TEAM IN "MEESAI AANALUM MANAIVI" BY CRAZY MOHAN (TICKETED)
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MISCELLANEOUS

MISCELLANEOUS

3 injured after car crashes into truck near Padappai

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Three persons were injured after their car crashed into a stationary truck near Padappai in Kancheepuram district on Friday.

The police said Arunachalam, Asif Ali, and Murali, residents of Cheyyar in Tiruvannamalai district, were travelling to the Koyambedu flower market in Chennai on Thursday night. Asif Ali fell asleep behind the wheel at Athanancheri near Padappai and crashed into a truck that was parked on the roadside. The car was completely damaged in the impact, trapping all three occupants inside.

On being alerted, the Padappai police, along with Oragadam Fire and Rescue Services personnel, rescued the occupants.

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	40	26
Chennai Airport	39	29
Chennai City	36	29

Chennai Airport Today
39°C Morning will be comfortable. Day will be hot and uneasy. Night also will be comfortable. Dry weather to occur.

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

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PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RAJENDRAN KUNJAPPAN S/o. Kunjappan R/o 175, Sainikethan Flats, West Mambalam, Chennai–33 have changed my name to Rajendra Kunjappan for all future purposes

I, B.ARAVINDAN, DOB: 13/09/1990, S/o. G.R.Baskar, Residing at No.14/29, Arumugam Street, Perambur, Chennai–600011. Shall Henceforth be known as B.JUSTIN ARAVIND – B.ARAVINDAN

LOST & FOUND

HDFC ID Card Missing ID card No: 250504973100111.if anyone found please Cont: Mageshwari A Ph: 8778640192

PERSONAL

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- FMAS: Fellowship in Minimal Access Surgery (2009)
- MRCS: Edinburgh, UK (2004)

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ISSN 0971 - 751X

INBRIEF

Robotics centre established at Easwari Engineering College

A Global Excellence Center for Robotics was set up at SRM Group's Easwari Engineering College by Switzerland-based ABB Robotics on Friday. This is the third such robotics centre in the world to be established by ABB Robotics. The centre features advanced AI-enabled robotic systems and intelligent automation labs, including 3D pin picking. The setup integrates autonomous mobile robots, generative AI, vision systems, digital twin technologies, and smart manufacturing solutions. The centre will provide college students with hands-on experience in AI and robotics.

Rotary Club, Right Hospitals to open dialysis centre

A new dialysis facility will be inaugurated at Kilpauk on May 3, expanding access to affordable renal care. The centre, set up by the Rotary Club of Chennai Suncity, in collaboration with Right Hospitals, will offer advanced dialysis services with a focus on safety and hygiene. The inauguration will be led by R.S. Munirathinam, and attended by Rotary district officials.

IIT-M reports sharp rise in blackbuck population on campus over six years

It increased from 12 in 2021 to 77 in 2026; IIT-Madras took stricter measures such as reducing speed limits on campus after wildlife casualties were reported in 2024; targeted measures, including removal of fences, control of stray dog population, and closure of wells helped stabilise population

ECO WATCH

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Stepping up safety: Blackbucks, which prefer open grasslands with patches of taller vegetation for breeding and protection, are highly sensitive to environmental pressures and territorial disturbances. FILE PHOTO

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) has reported a rise in its blackbuck population from 12 in 2021 to 77 in 2026.

The institute's 611-acre campus, which is a part of the Guindy National Park ecosystem, once saw blackbuck numbers decline sharply – from several hundred in the 1980s to fewer than 20 in 2003.

Targeted measures over the years, including removal of fences in academic zones, control of stray dog population, and closure of open wells and pits, helped stabilise the population at 21 by 2009.

The increase in recent years was announced by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in a recent social media post.

Blackbucks, which prefer open grasslands with patches of taller vegetation for breeding and protection, are highly sensitive to environmental pressures and territorial disturbances. Campus planning at IIT-M has increasingly factored in these ecological needs through regulated land use and habitat protection.

Following wildlife casualties reported in 2024, the institute introduced stricter measures to prevent further harm. Speed limits on campus were reduced to 20 kmph, with penalties for violations. Vehicles involved in injuring wildlife face fines of up to ₹1 lakh and seizure.

An IIT-M spokesperson said the institute had created four acres of open space by removing *Prosopis juliflora* and paved the way for a grassland, benefiting the blackbucks. Landscaping efforts incorporate indigenous plant species, reducing water requirements by up to 40% compared to non-native plants.

In addition to the endangered blackbuck, the campus continues to provide an ideal habitat for 298 plant species and 35 animal species, the spokesperson said. It also attracts 51 species each of birds and butterflies and is home to about 250 spotted deer.

Green Committee

He added that the institute's 'Green Committee', an initiative launched in 2023 to bring about sustainable change within its campus and beyond, aims at developing and implementing a comprehensive Climate Action Plan tailored to the unique needs of the campus.

A Forest Department official said the recovery of the blackbuck population shows the importance of sustained habitat management in urban ecosystems, where even small changes in land use, traffic regulation, and predator control can significantly influence the survival and breeding of sensitive species.

Three persons drown in two separate incidents

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Perumal died while trying to rescue his 15-year-old grandson from drowning in a lake in Pallikaranai

A 15-year-old boy was among two persons who drowned in a lake in Pallikaranai on Friday.

A senior official from the Tambaram Police Commissionerate said one of the deceased, Perumal, was a resident of Sengazhani Amman Kovil Street near Narayanapuram lake in Pallikaranai. On Friday morning, he, along with his grandsons, Bharath and Dinesh, went to bathe in the lake.

While Perumal was bathing, Bharath ventured into a deeper part of the lake and lost his footing. Perumal tried to rescue him but got trapped in the mud, and subsequently, drowned.

On seeing them struggling to get out of the water, Dinesh, who was standing on the bank of the lake, called for help. Residents near the lake rushed to their rescue. While they retrieved the body of Perumal, they could not find Bharath.

Search under way

The Pallikaranai police, along with personnel from the Medavakkam Fire and Rescue Services station, launched a rescue operation.

In a separate incident, Aravind Prakash, 31, of Pammal, drowned in the Kosasthalaiar near Minjur.

A police official said Prakash, who was working as a collection agent for a private finance company, had gone for a swim with his friends at the Seemavaram checkdam near Minjur in Tiruvallur district. While swimming, he ventured into the deeper portion of the river and drowned.

Body retrieved

The Minjur police and the fire and rescue services personnel from Ponneri station retrieved the body from the river.

The police later sent the body to Stanley Government Hospital for a post-mortem.

WESTERN RAILWAY
Material Management Department
VARIOUS MATERIALS SUPPLY
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No. S/21/2026 Date 28.04.2026

S.N.	Tender No	Short Description of items	Quantity	T.O.D.
132	07265700	Running contract for one year:-PVC insulated armoured, unscreened, underground railway signalling cable of size 12 coreX1.5 Sq.mm conforming to RDSO SPECN No. IRS:S-63/2014 (REV 4.0)	6000 KM	28-May-26
133	22263113	Set of Suspension Tube Bearing (Driving and Non Driving)	193 Set	27-May-26
134	22262803	Reverser J1 & J2, Capacity 1500 Amps	27 Nos	25-May-26
135	11255051	Supply, Installation and commissioning of EOT CRANE 15/5 TON as per attached specification	1 Nos	25-May-26
136	11245057	Supply, Erection & Commissioning of 25/10 Ton EOT Crane	1 Nos	25-May-26
137	04261706A	Liquefied Petroleum Gas	59785 KG	23-May-26

CORRIGENDUM
Please read the due date as **"11.05.2026"** for the **Tender Notice No: S-13-2026 Dated: 11.03.2026 at Sr. No. 87**
Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** and **wr.indianrailways.gov.in.** 0051
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उत्तर पश्चिम रेलवे
निविदा संशोधन सूचना संख्या -2
No. NWR-HQ0COMM-PA-2-2026 Date: 30.04.2026
इस कार्यालय की निविदा सूचना समसंख्यक दिनांक 02.04.2026 के द्वारा Contract for Monetization and Facility Management of Jaipur Gandhi Nagar Railway Station के लिए निविदा आमन्त्रित की गयी है। इस निविदा में संशोधन किया गया है जिसका अवलोकन www.ireps.gov.in पर किया जा सकता है :- Contract for Monetization and Facility Management of Jaipur Gandhi Nagar Railway Station के लिए निविदा खुलने की दिनांक 06.05.2026 तक बढाई गयी थी उसे प्रशासनिक कारणों के कारण निविदा को दिनांक 12.05.2026 तक बढ़ाया जाता है, साथ ही उक्त निविदा हेतु संशोधित किये गये नियम एवं शर्तों की निविदा बुकलेट www.ireps.gov.in पर अवलोकन कर डाउनलोड की जा सकती है, शेष नियम एंव शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।
635-PS/26 मंडल रेल प्रबंधक (वाणिज्य), जयपुर

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NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS
No: 52265080 Date: 27.04.2026
"THROUGH E- PROCUREMENT TENDERS"
Sr.DMM/NWR/AJMER acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-tenders on www.ireps.gov.in site as follows. E- Tender will be closed at **11.05.2026 14:30 Hrs.**
CORRIGENDUM

Sr. No.	Tender No:	Tender Notice No	Tender Description	Amendment as	Tender Opening date
1	52265080	52265080 DT 26.03.26	Supply, Installation & Commissioning of IoT Based Water Level Indicator System	Prototype Approval Plan (Annexure-A) clause added in tender as per RDSO Specifications. For details, please refer to IREPS website.	11.05.2026 at 14:30 Hrs.

Note (1) Interested tenderers may visit the website ireps.gov.in for full details/ description/Specification/EMD & tender cost etc. All tenderers are requested to obtain digital signatures and get them registered on above site and quote electronically only. **(2)** For viewing and participating in other tenders such as open tender costing below Rs. 50 Lakh, limited tenders, special limited tenders and low value tenders, please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**.
621-PS/26 Sr. Divisional Material Manager, Ajmer

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS
"THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT TENDERS"
TENDER NOTICE No: S/2026/18 Date:27.04.2026
The Principal Chief Material Manager, North Western Railway, Headquarter Jaipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-tenders on **www.ireps.gov.in** site as follows.

Sr.No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Unit	Due date
1	20261693	Suspension Tube for WAG-9 and WAP 7	50	Nos	15.05.2026
2.	40251832A	DISCONNECTING AND EARTHING DEVICE, 8-POLE, 2-WAY	214	Nos	20.05.2026
3	20261402	Air Compressor [Main] with motor	10	Nos	20.05.2026
4	10251614A	COIL SOLENOID	562	Nos	29.05.2026
5	6325ENG40	Manufacture and supply of 6.0 mm thick Nylon Cord Reinforced Grooved Rubber Sole Plates (Pocket Type)	2300	Set	15.06.2026

Note:. (1) Interested tenderers may visit the website **ireps.gov.in** for Full details/ description/Specification/EMD & tender cost etc. All tenderers are requested to obtain digital signatures and get them registered on above site and quote electronically only. **(2)** For viewing and participating in other tenders such as open tender costing below Rs. 50 Lakh, limited tenders, special limited tenders and low value tenders, please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**
Follow us at /NWRailways NWRailways_ 619-PS/26

THE HINDU
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हमें /NWRailways NWRailways_ पर फॉलो करें

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender
DRM(S&T) NWR, Ajmer on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tender for the following work up to 15.00 Hrs. on the mentioned date. **Tender No.:** 1. DRM-S&T-10-2026-27, 2. DRM-S&T-11-2026-27, 3. DRM-S&T-12-2026-27, 4. DRM-S&T-13-2026-27, **Name of Work:** 1. Ajmer Division: Provision of S&T work in C/W Construction of RUB in lieu of LC 9, 15, 17, 38, 40 and 50 with Covering shed at these LCs for elimination in COR-UDZ section over Ajmer Division NWR. 2. Ajmer Division: Provision for reliability improvement and upkeep/sustaining of various components/parts of DAC (MSDAC) at various stations over Ajmer Division. 3. Ajmer Division:- Provision of S&T Associated work in C/W Madar - Karjoda TTR (FS+TWS+WCMSC) -1 in 12- 111-Nos. in Ajmer Division NWR. 4. Ajmer Division-Provision of 4x48F OFC for Indigenous Train Collision Avoidance System over All Division of NWR (568.24 R kms) (Umbrella Work 2024-25). **Approximate cost of work:** 1. Rs. 9451711.55, 2. Rs. 21752585.65, 3. Rs. 18435142.90, 4. Rs. 409040063.27, **Bid security:** 1. Rs. 189000.00, 2. Rs. 435100.00, 3. Rs 368700.00, 4. Rs 8180800.00. **Date & Time of opening E-Tender-** 25.05.2026 at 15.30 Hrs. The details of above E-Tender are available on website www.ireps.gov.in 624-PS/26
Follow us at /NWRailways NWRailways_

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

Smt. Shanti Rangarajan
26 June 1934 – 27 April 2026

Sri-vaikunta-prapti on the auspicious day of Ekadashi, in shukla-paksha, uttarayana .
She led a fulfilled life of devotion and prayer, undertaking numerous pilgrimages (including 27 Badrinath yatras). Although widely travelled in India and abroad, she was steadfast to tradition. A woman of grace, discipline, and resilience.

On her final day, after her bath and prayers, she partook of a simple meal and passed peacefully. She touched many lives with her warmth, generosity, and hospitality. She is lovingly remembered by her children Mala, Anu, Bharath, and Deepta as well as her extended family.

DEATH

2 Timothy 4:7 – "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

With deep sorrow, we announce the passing of **Santhosh Varughese, (11.01.1971 – 30.04.2026)**
S/ o Late Mr Abraham Varghese & Late Mrs A.C.Saramma (Thiruvathilil family))
His mortal remains will be at New No 25 Old No 1669, Nedyath Cottage, 15th Main Road, Anna Nagar, Chennai 600040 - for viewing from 12.30pm onwards on 03.05.2026
-Funeral services will begin at the above address at 2pm, May 3, 2026, Sunday
-Service will resume in Jerusalem Mar Thomas Syrian Church, Anna Nagar, Chennai, at 3pm
-Final rites at the Kilpauk Cemetery at 4 pm
Phone: +91 9884092825/ +91 8015128275

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

" Forever .... Together "

Mr.R.MASILAMONI
(Retd. DCAO - TNHB)
06-06-1938 to 02-05-2001
Mrs.BEULAH MASILAMONI
(Retd. HM - SINGARAM PILLAI GHSS)
03-03-1940 to 21-04-2021
Gone from our Presence... But, always in our Heart...
Fondly remembered by
Radhika - Raveen - Suresh John - Sujitha & Family. Ph:95000 29340

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

11TH ANNIVERSARY

PREMA RAJAGOPAL
Date of Death : 02.05.2015
"You are always with us"
Fondly remembered by
K. Rajagopal, Meenakshi & Raghu
Sudha & Praveen, Radhika & Gopinath
and Grandchildren.

15TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY IN FOND MEMORY OF

J.K. RAAGUL (a) Kiran
B.E.(ECE)
DOB: 10.09.1992 - DOD: 02.05.2011
Ever Living in Our Hearts
We deeply miss your love and care
Your unfortunate Parents
R.Jayakumar & Sangeetha Jayakumar
98405 55999

DEATH

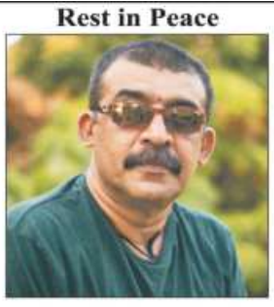
OBITUARY

Born : 19.07.1955
Died : 01.05.2026

Mrs. ASHA VIJAYARAGHAVAN
RETD. JUDICIAL MEMBER, ITAT,
W/o Mr. R.VIJAYARAGHAVAN
D/o Mr.K.R.RAMAMANI - Mrs. HEMALATA RAMAMANI
DEEPLY MOURNED BY
R. Vijayaraghavan, Mridula, Vikram, and Family Members
Staff and Advocates - SAPR Advocates
Staff RMT SCHOOL
Last Rites on 3rd May 2026 (Sunday) at 9.00 AM
New No:75A, Old No:105A, Dr. Radhakrishnan Salai, Mylapore, Chennai - 4.
Mobile : 98402 96186

DEATH

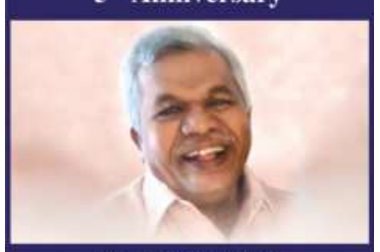
Rest in Peace



VENUGOPAL MENEN
15th March 1963 - 1st May 2026
It is with deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved Venu Sir on May 1st, 2026.
The funeral will be held on May 2nd, 3 PM onwards from his residence.
Your prayers and support means a great deal to our family.
+91 99627 17126 / 89395 28068

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

5th Anniversary



K.S.Natarajan
(14-01-1948 - 2-May-2021)
Chairman - Gandhi Seva Sangham, Dindigul
Manager - CESCI Organics, Nagapattinam
Ex-Secretary - TN Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Madurai
Ex-Member - Central Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, New Delhi
Ex-Correspondent - Gandhi Centenary Memorial School, Coimbatore
We miss you everyday
Veethiammal N, Krishna Kumar N & Aruna V, Sarojini N & Kumaran Karthikeyan K, Samyukta.K, Mithraveena.K, Mughilkarthik.K
Mobile: 9500086008

Helplines for students writing NEET

Contact telemental health service at 14416 or State's health helpline 104 for free counselling

Dos and Don'ts

Tips for students preparing to write the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test on May 3

- Take short breaks while studying
- Drink adequate water
- Getting good sleep is vital
- Avoid using mobile phones and watching television as much as possible. Instead, take short walks or talk to parents or friends
- Eat easily digestible food. Avoid eating outside food to prevent gastritis
- Be prepared with whatever is required for the examination a day ahead
- Read the instructions for the exams and follow them
- Reach the examination centre ahead of time
- Avoid last-minute conversations or discussions on portions covered to prevent stress
- Parents should avoid stressing their children and provide emotional support instead. Take them for a walk or talk to them

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

With the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to medical courses scheduled to be held on May 3, students and parents in need of counselling can contact the toll-free telemental health service at 14416 (*Natpudan Ungalodu*) or 104, the State's health helpline for tele-counselling.

To protect the mental well-being of students, the State government was continuously providing tele-counselling services through its *Natpudan Ungalodu* initiative.

Those requiring counselling services can contact the phone numbers without hesitation.

The service is available round the clock through trained counsellors and doctors, a press release said.

Residents complain of poor air quality, health issues due to illegal garbage burning

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Residents of Semmanchery and Perumbakkam have raised concerns over the persistent illegal garbage burning in a marshy area behind the Perumbakkam bus depot and the apartment complex nearby.

Residents complained that thick smoke from the burning garbage had engulfed the neighbouring areas. This resulted in poor air quality and breathing difficulties. It also emitted a persistent foul smell, particularly at night.

Harsha Koda of the Federation of OMR Residents' Associations (FOMRRA) said the dumping was illegal as the site was not designated for the purpose. It was located in close proximity to educational institutions, a private hospital, and an upcoming multi-specialty hospital.

Ananta, who resides in the complex, posted pictures of the burning garbage on his social media handles on Thursday.

Ananta said, "The burning continued on Friday [May 1]. Experts have warned about the severe environmental impact of burning waste on marshlands, including water contamination and destruction of sensitive ecosystems."

Source of worry: Residents of Semmanchery and Perumbakkam raise concern about the persistent burning of garbage in a marshy area behind the Perumbakkam bus depot. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The illegal dumping site is close to an apartment complex and educational institutions

Medical waste

Residents also claim that medical waste was being incinerated alongside regular garbage, as discarded masks were recently spotted at the location.

'GCC not involved'

An official from the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) clarified that the civic body was not involved in the dumping and that the plot belonged to the Perumbakkam panchayat.

An executive engineer with the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board tenements in the locality said the garbage was being burnt by workers of the panchayat on their designated revenue land near the graveyard.

Panchayat yet to act

"We formally wrote to the panchayat two to three months ago, requesting it to remove the garbage dumped. However, no action was taken. Officials said they were engaged in election work and that was the reason for the delay," he said.

Since the Model Code of Conduct is in force, the panchayat representatives could not give an official reply, the official added.

THE HINDU
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Timings
CHENNAI

SATURDAY, MAY. 02			
RISE	05:48	SET	18:24
RISE	19:01	SET	05:53
SUNDAY, MAY. 03			
RISE	05:48	SET	18:24
RISE	19:53	SET	06:36
MONDAY, MAY. 04			
RISE	05:48	SET	18:25
RISE	20:45	SET	07:23

ADMISSION NOTICE

Common Entrance Test-2026 F for Admission at

INSTITUTE	COURSES
Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities (Divyangjan) (PDUNIPPD) 4, Vishnu Digamber Marg, New Delhi-110002 Website: https://pdunippd.nic.in, E-mail: cetpdunippd2026@gmail.com	• BPT • BOT • BPO
Swami Vivekanand National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research (DIVYANGJAN), Cuttack (SVNIRTAR) Olatpur, PO- Bairoi, Cuttack, Odisha - 754010 Website: https://svnirtar.nic.in, E-mail: nirtar@nic.in	• BPT • BOT • BPO • BASLP
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Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech & Hearing Disabilities (Divyangjan), Mumbai (AYJNISHD(D) K.C. Marg, Bandra (W) Reclamation Mumbai - 400 050 Website: http://ayjnishd.nic.in, E-mail: ayjnishh-mum@nic.in	• BASLP
Composite Regional Centre, Secundrabad Manovikas Nagar, Bowenpally, Secunderabad, Telangana-500009.	• BASLP
Composite Regional Centre for Skill Development, Rehabilitation & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, (DIVYANGJAN), Guwahati (CRCSRE) Guwahati Medical College Hospital Campus Post Office Indrapur, GMC Hospital Rd, Bhangagarh, Guwahati, Assam-781032 Website: creguwahati.nic.in	• BASLP
Composite Regional Centre, Patna Sheikhpura, (Old Dharamshala), Near Nursing College, Patna-800014 Website: https://crcpatna.nic.in, E-mail :crcpatna@rediffmail.com	• BPO

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Closing date of online receipt of Application form
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From Page One

T.N. may see hotter May, above-normal rainfall

Increased cloud cover and convective activity may keep the minimum temperature on the higher side and the nights warmer, he said.

The RMC has forecast heavy rainfall to persist in the Western Ghats and interior districts, including the Nilgiris and Namakkal, till Monday owing to the prevailing trough. Mercury levels are likely to climb a few notches above normal in some pockets.

Coastal Tamil Nadu and Puducherry have to brace for uncomfortable weather owing to high temperature and humidity till May 5. On Friday, the day temperature went above 40 degrees Celsius at four places, including Chennai and Vellore.

At a virtual meeting on Friday, IMD Director-General of Meteorology Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the south peninsular region, including Tamil Nadu, recorded low rainfall this summer, especially in April. The region had registered low rainfall in 2016, 2017, and 2024. "Such instances need not be interpreted as the impact of climate change as they are not frequent," he said. The reduced rainfall in the region, including in Tamil Nadu, in April could not be associated with El-Nino conditions as many El Nino years like 1997 and 2015 did not coincide with low rainfall in the region.

The State has received 41 mm of rain – a deficit of 33% – since March 1.

INBRIEF

15 devotees hurt as makeshift roof collapses near temple

At least 15 devotees, including seven children, were injured when a makeshift tin roof sheet collapsed near Sri Dhandayuthapani Temple in Palani on Thursday night. Officials of the HR&CE Department said a group of pilgrims from Thanjavur and Virudhunagar were about to climb the hills after taking a dip in the tank when heavy rain, accompanied by strong winds, lashed the area. They were taking shelter under the makeshift roof when it collapsed. The devotees, who suffered multiple injuries, were rushed to the Government Hospital in Palani. Their condition was said to be stable.

TVK's temporary election office set afire near Tiruchi

A temporary election office of the TVK was set on fire by unidentified persons at Pettavaithalai near Tiruchi in the early hours of Friday. Police sources said the office, functioning from a thatched pandal at the entrance of a house, belonged to Veerasiva, 48, secretary of the district farmers' wing of the party. The police said the structure served as an election office for the Srirangam constituency. Around 2.30 a.m., unidentified persons allegedly set fire to the pandal, which was gutted. On information, the police rushed to the spot and doused the flames with the help of residents. C. Shankar, Anthanallur North Union secretary of the TVK, lodged a complaint.

How T.N. waited for Assembly poll results over the decades

The longest gap between polling and counting in the State's electoral history was in 2011, when polling was held on April 13 and the results were declared only on May 13. In the 2026 election, the gap between polling and counting is only 10 days

N. Sai Charan

The wait between polling and counting of votes during an election is always a nail-biting period for politicians and electors. While the gap between voting (April 23) and counting (May 4) is only 10 days for the current election, there have been instances where the wait exceeded 30 days.

The 1967 Madras State Legislative Assembly election, a watershed moment that rewrote the State's political destiny as the DMK dethroned the Congress, was held following a delimitation exercise. The number of constituencies was expanded from 206 to 234. Polling took place in three phases – on February 15, 18, and 21. However, only 233 constituencies went to the polls. Polling in Thirumangalam was cancelled due to the death of a candidate, and it was held on April 29. Counting for the main phases commenced on February 23.

The 1971 Assembly election also spanned three days. Voters went to the polling booths on March 1, 4, and 7, while counting began on March 10. The DMK secured a massive majority, and M. Karunanidhi retained power. In June 1975, the Indira Gandhi government at the Centre promulgated the Emergency, and in the following January, the DMK government was dismissed.

By 1977, when the State went to the polls, the dynamics had shifted. After being expelled from the DMK, actor M.G. Ramachandran (MGR) floated the ADMK (later rechristened the AIADMK) in 1972. For the first time in Tamil Nadu, all 234 constituencies voted on June 12, and the counting concluded on June 14. MGR captured power.

Technological shift: For the first time in Tamil Nadu's history, EVMs were deployed in all 234 segments in the 2001 Assembly election. The picture shows a counting centre in Vellore in 2001. FILE PHOTO

Despite the success of the single-day format, the State saw a two-phase contest in the 1980 election, held following the MGR government's dismissal. A total of 114 Assembly segments voted on May 28, while electors in 120 constituencies exercised their franchise on May 31. The results were declared on June 1, and MGR returned as Chief Minister.

Breaking away from the tradition of pre-summer or summer polls, established since 1967, the 1984 election was the first to be held at the end of the year. With MGR hospitalised, his Cabinet opted for an early election. Simultaneously at the Centre, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi sought a fresh mandate following the assassination of his mother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

A total of 232 seats went to the polls on December 24. Polling in Egmore (SC) and Perambur (SC - now a general seat) were countermanded due to candidate deaths, and eventually took place on January 28 the following year. The results for the 232 Assembly segments were declared on December 28, with the AIADMK securing a third consecutive victory.

By 1989, the State was plunged into political turmoil. The death of MGR in 1987 resulted in his widow, Janaki Ramachandran, and protege, Jayalalithaa, heading AIADMK factions. Out of the 234 segments, 232 voted on January 21. Polling in Marungapuri and Madurai East was deferred to March 11 due to candidate deaths.

Counting for the 232 constituencies was held on January 22, and the DMK returned to power after 13 years.

No election in Tamil Nadu carries a more tragic history than the one in 1991. The State was slated to vote on May 26. However, on the night of May 21, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated in Sriperumbudur. The Election Commission postponed Tamil Nadu's polling to June 15. Barring Egmore (SC) and Musuri, 232 segments went to the polls, and the results were declared on June 16. The AIADMK-Congress alliance swept the polls, and Jayalalithaa became Chief Minister for the first time.

End of ballot papers

The 1996 election was the last election in which ballot papers were used. Polling was held in 150 constituencies on April 27, and in 83 seats on May 2.

The results were declared on May 8, with the DMK-TMC alliance securing a landslide victory. Voting in Modakurichi was held only on June 1, as 1,033 candidates had filed their nominations, making the printing of ballot papers difficult.

For the first time in Tamil Nadu's history, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were deployed in all the 234 Assembly segments in the 2001 Assembly election, mirroring simultaneous roll-outs in Kerala, Puducherry, and West Bengal. The State went to the polls on May 10 in a single phase, and the results were declared on May 13. The AIADMK stormed back into power.

The 2006 Assembly election was held on May 8, when all the 234 Assembly segments went to the polls. The results were announced on May 11, with Karunanidhi forming the government with outside support from allies.

The longest gap between polling and counting in the State's electoral history was in 2011. Polling was held on April 13. Since the Election Commission was coordinating multi-state schedules, voters had to wait till May 13 to see Jayalalithaa getting elected to power. Notably, the DMDK, led by actor Vijayakant, whose party aligned with the AIADMK, came second.

The 2016 election was a multi-cornered battle that saw the AIADMK fielding candidates on its symbol in all 234 seats. In all, 232 seats went to the polls on May 16.

The votes were counted on May 19, and Jayalalithaa retained power. Voting in Aravakurichi and Thanjavur, where the polling was, for the first time, deferred due to large-scale bribery charges, was held only on November 19.

The 2021 election was fought under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. Voters exercised their franchise amidst mandatory safety protocols and extended polling hours.

Despite these hurdles, the State recorded 73.63% turnout on April 6. However, the people waited for nearly 26 days as the counting took place only on May 2. This election was symbolic, being the first since the passing of political stalwarts Jayalalithaa and Karunanidhi.

The DMK clinched 133 seats on its own, while the DMK front won 159 seats. DMK president M.K. Stalin became Chief Minister.

3 of a family from Tiruchi among the victims of M.P. boat tragedy

The Hindu Bureau
TIRUCHI

A family from Navalpattu Anna Nagar in Tiruchi is in mourning after three of its members died when a cruise boat capsized at Bargi Dam in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh on Thursday evening.

Kamaraj, 38, who had been working at the Ordnance Factory in Jabalpur, his wife Karkuzhali, 38, and their younger son Tamilventhan, 5, died in the accident. Their elder son, Puvitharan, 11, was rescued, and is said to be safe.

The body of Karkuzhali has been recovered. Efforts are on to retrieve the remaining bodies. Sources in the Revenue Department said the remains of the victims were expected to be brought to Tiruchi for performing the last rites.

Gone on an outing

Kamaraj had been working in Jabalpur for several years. His relatives from Tiruppur district had come to visit him, and the family had gone on an outing on Thursday when the tragedy occurred.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, S. Sujith, a colleague of Kamaraj at the Ordnance Factory, who has been by the family's side since the tragedy struck, said neighbours and relatives had gathered at the family home, grief-stricken and waiting for further news.

Tiruchi Collector V. Saravanan said the bodies of the victims would be brought to Tiruchi after a post-mortem. The Tamil Nadu government was coordinating with the authorities concerned to facilitate the return of the bodies.

Two Chennai constables booked for abetment of suicide in Rajasthan

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

Two constables of the Chennai police and three others, including a businessman, were booked by the Rajasthan police on the charge of abetment of suicide, police sources said on Friday.

The constables – Shiva and Gopi – attached to the Prohibition Enforcement Wing, Madhavaram, along with businessman Mahaveer Mehta, had allegedly threatened Vardaram, alias Vinod, 24, of Pali district in Rajasthan, that he would be implicated in a theft case. Subsequently, Vardaram died, allegedly by suicide. He had sent a voice message to his brother, Budharam, 22, explaining the reasons for taking the extreme step.

Upon receiving the voice message, Budharam also attempted suicide. He was admitted to AIIMS Jodhpur, where he is undergoing treatment, the sources said.

Acting on a complaint lodged by Vardaram's wife, Kiran Devi, a resident of Raiko Ka Bas near Bagri in Pali district of Rajasthan, the Sojat city police registered a case against Shiva, Gopi, Mehta, and two others under Section 108 (Abetment of Suicide) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

The complainant said that on April 21, the constables picked up her husband around 4 p.m., and took him to the Bagri police station for an inquiry. They let him go around 8.30 p.m. Later, Mehta, two of his associates, and the constables called her husband over phone and threatened to implicate him in a theft case, and even kill him, the sources said, quoting the FIR.

The next day, Mehta called Vardaram to a hotel in Sojat, and warned him that if he did not give 1 kg of gold, he would be booked in a false case and killed. Fearing arrest and a threat to his life, Vardaram ended his life.

On receiving information that the constables from Chennai were involved in the alleged abetment of suicide case in Rajasthan, the office of the Director-General of Police has called for a report from the City Commissioner of Police, the sources said.

(Assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts is available on the State's health helpline 104, Tele-MANAS 14416. and Sneha's suicide prevention helpline 044-24640050)

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at an event marking International Workers' Day at May Day Park in Chennai on Friday. R. RAGU

Hard work of DMK cadre will yield results on May 4, says Stalin

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Due to the hard work of DMK cadre in the run-up to the Assembly election, the party will secure the desired result on counting day on May 4, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said in Chennai on Friday.

Addressing party workers on the occasion of International Workers' Day at the May Day Park, Mr. Stalin said there would be no change (in the government), adding that he was not saying this based on the exit polls, but because he understood the feelings of the party workers.

"The election results will be out in a couple of days, and I believe you will get good news," the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Stalin said the State would continue to be guided by the DMK's principle of "everything for everyone". He noted that Chennai was the first city in India to celebrate May Day, under the leadership of labour organiser M. Singaravelar.

Recalling the Dravidian movement's role in institutionalising the day, he said former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai declared May Day a government holiday, while his successor M. Karunanidhi ensured it became a paid and legally recognised holiday. He added that sustained efforts by DMK leaders led to its adoption as a paid public holiday across the country during the tenure of former Prime Minister V.P. Singh.

Mr. Stalin said workers' dignity, rights, and fair compensation remain central to the government's approach.

He also noted that the May Day Memorial Park in Chennai was established under Karunanidhi's leadership, reflecting his commitment to labour welfare.

Calling for continued collective effort, Mr. Stalin urged the cadre and the public to work together in upholding workers' rights.

Lord Kallazhagar enters the Vaigai amid sea of humanity

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI

Lord Kallazhagar entered the Vaigai in the early hours of Friday – the highlight of the annual Chithirai festival in Madurai. Lord Kallazhagar, draped in green silk attire and mounted on a golden horse, was carried from the Prasanna Venkatachalapathy Temple at Tallakulam to Alwarpuram, the venue of the event, around 5.50 a.m. He was received there by Lord Veera Raghava Perumal, mounted on a silver horse.

The deity was adorned with the garland brought from the Andal Temple at Srivilliputtur before he left for the river. Lord Kallazhagar entered the Vaigai amid the chanting of 'Govinda, Govinda' by devotees.

The Lord was taken out in a procession around the *mandagapadi* erected at the venue. As Lord Kallazhagar made his entry into the river, women devotees held pots with jaggery and camphor to offer prayers. Children sat on the shoulders of their parents to catch a glimpse of the deity. Lord Kallazhagar, the presiding deity of the Sundararaja Perumal Temple at Alagarkoil, began his journey to Madurai on Wednesday evening. On Thursday, the Lord's visit to Madurai was celebrated with pomp and gaiety, as devotees gathered for *Ethir Sevai*, the tradition of offering prayers to the Lord who visits his devotees instead of devotees visiting the temple. On Friday, the streets of Madurai were flooded with devotees who came from far and near.

Grand procession: Lord Kallazhagar entering the Vaigai as part of the Chithirai festival in Madurai on Friday. R. ASHOK

People waited on the riverbed from Thursday night itself. Many were perched on vantage points and the Albert Victor Bridge to witness the entry of the Lord into the Vaigai.

According to legend, Lord Kallazhagar embarks on a journey to Madurai from Alagarkoil to witness the celestial wedding of his sister Goddess Meenakshi with Lord Sundareswarar. On reaching Madurai, he learns from Lord Veera Raghava Perumal that the wedding has already been solemnised. A dejected Lord Kallazhagar chooses not to cross the river.

The deity left the river around 7.10 a.m. for the Rama Rayar Mandapam for 'Theerthavari'. There, the devotees, dressed as Lord Kallazhagar and Pathinettam Padi Karuppu, sprayed water on the deity, from bags made of goatskin, to cool him down. The deity would halt at the Veera Raghava Perumal Temple at Vandiyur on Friday night.

The Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple festival and the Lord Kallazhagar festival were separate events. Around 400 years ago, King Thirumalai Nayak clubbed them to boost the harmony and economy of Madurai.

INBRIEF

IPS officer C.V. Anand takes charge as Telangana DGP

Senior IPS officer C.V. Anand on Friday assumed charge as the Telangana Director General of Police, succeeding B. Shivadhar Reddy, who retired from service on April 30. Mr. Anand spent the first nine years of his service in Naxal-affected districts, where he personally led operations and participated in anti-Naxal action. Since then, he had held several key positions in the police department.

Kerala probe panel gives IPS officer Sujith Das a clean chit

IPS officer Sujith Das has been reportedly given a clean chit by an inquiry committee constituted by Kerala Police in connection with the controversial phone call case involving former Nilambur MLA P.V. Anvar. Mr. Das had been suspended from service in September 2024 when he was serving as the District Police Chief (Pathanamthitta), shortly after Mr. Anvar publicly released audio clips and made disclosures alleging misconduct by the officer.

Six killed, one injured in road accident in Hyderabad

Six persons, including three minors, were killed and a woman injured after their car rammed a lorry on the Outer Ring Road near Thondupally village in Shamshabad mandal in Hyderabad on Friday evening. The accident was reported around 4:50 p.m. near the exit number 16 of the ORR. The family was travelling back home from Yadadri Swarangiri temple. Shamshabad police registered a case and further investigation is under way.

Karnataka launches official portal to assist gig workers

They can lodge complaints on pay, working conditions and other disputes on the portal; these grievances will be automatically routed to aggregators for settlement; govt. to monitor the process

Shilpa Elizabeth
BENGALURU

In a move to secure the rights of the growing platform-based labour force, the Karnataka government has officially operationalised a specialised grievance redressal mechanism for platform-based gig workers.

The mechanism, a first of its kind in India, has been developed by the Karnataka Platform-based Gig Workers' Board in collaboration with the Department of e-Governance.

The gig workforce has so far operated without a formal or legal dispute resolution framework. FILE PHOTO

Ensuring transparency

With the new mechanism coming into force, gig workers can now officially lodge grievances, including regarding pay, working conditions, and platform-specific disputes, through the Integrated Public Grievance Redressal System (IPGRS) portal.

This creates a formal bridge between the lakhs of gig workers in Karnataka and the technology aggregators they serve. This is expected to bring transparency and legal recourse for a workforce that has so far operated without a formal dispute resolution framework.

Committees mandatory

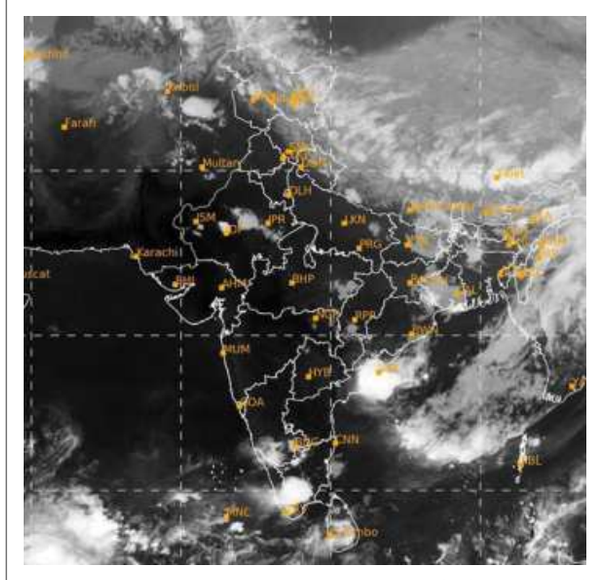
Under the Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act and Rules, every aggregator platform must constitute an internal dispute resolution committee (IDRC). Grievances filed on the IPGRS will be automatically routed to the respective platform's IDRC to be addressed and settled within a strictly defined timeframe. The government will act as a central facilitator, monitoring the process to ensure a smooth and transparent flow of communication between workers and platforms.

So far, details of 12 lakh active gig workers have been shared by platforms, according to G. Manjunath, Additional Labour Commissioner and CEO of the Board.

Schemes for gig workers, depending on the platform they are working for, are also being worked out and will be placed for deliberation in the next board meeting.

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 Saturday: Heavy Rainfall very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mahe, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Heavy to very Heavy Rainfall very likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, West Bengal and Sikkim.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	2.0	25.8	22.9
Ahmedabad	0.0	43.3	27.4
Aizawl	0.4	24.3	18.1
Allahabad	2.0	35.7	22.4
Bengaluru	1.0	34.4	21.0
Bhopal	—	—	22.2
Bhubaneswar	0.0	32.8	18.4
Chandigarh	0.7	35.2	19.8
Chennai	—	30.3	28.8
Coimbatore	0.0	37.4	25.2
Dehradun	—	—	—
Gangtok	4.0	17.1	12.4
Goa	0.0	34.8	27.5
Guwahati	—	—	—
Hubballi	—	36.6	20.0
Hyderabad	0.0	40.2	27.0
Imphal	0.0	21.2	16.4
Jaipur	13.0	40.0	21.2
Kochi	0.0	33.2	24.6
Kohima	—	—	—
Kolkata	—	—	—
Kozhikode	10.0	35.7	24.9
Kurnool	—	41.4	28.7
Lucknow	—	33.3	21.3
Madurai	—	40.0	27.0
Mangaluru	—	34.9	26.8
Mumbai	—	34.8	26.8
Mysuru	34.0	36.2	20.0
New Delhi	—	—	—
Patna	—	28.2	22.6
Port Blair	—	34.3	26.7
Puducherry	—	39.1	28.4
Pune	—	—	24.7
Raipur	—	—	24.0
Ranchi	3.0	33.6	17.0
Shillong	—	19.8	12.2
Shimla	34.0	27.6	13.4
Srinagar	0.6	25.7	10.2
Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.8	26.1
Tiruchi	—	40.1	28.6
Vijayawada	—	32.4	29.0
Visakhapatnam	—	—	—

(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	.56	.34	..—	61	...122	
Bengaluru	.10	..—	.23	36	49	
Chennai	.15	..11	.24	30	48	
Delhi	.31	..24	.78	64	...104	
Hyderabad	.17	..16	.32	62	93	
Kolkata	...8	..35	...9	17	27	
Lucknow	.36	..51	.56	64	94	
Mumbai	.18	..13	.24	36	96	
Pune	..—	..23	108	35	61	
Visakhapatnam	.13	..29	.22	19	71	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Chhapra, Bihar recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 308 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

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

Two killed in Kerala as elephants brought for temple fests run amok

The Hindu Bureau
THRISSUR

A 40-year-old man was killed and another man injured after a captive elephant ran amok near the Mahavishnu Temple at Kidangoor, Angamaly in Kerala on Friday.

In a similar case, an elephant brought for the annual festival at Koodalmanikyam temple, Irinjalakuda, Kerala, turned violent and killed one of its mahouts and injured another on Friday afternoon.

The deceased in Kidangoor is Kollam-native, Vishnu, the driver of the lorry which transported the elephant. The mahout of the elephant, Pradeep, has been hospitalised with injuries. The elephant, brought from Kollam for a festival at a nearby temple, Mayyanad Parthasarathy, flipped a vehicles parked on the premises of the temple and damaged a compound wall, spreading panic in the area.

The deceased in Irinjalakuda identified as Sreekuttran, 25. Elephant Vazhvadi Kashinathan, turned violent around noon and attacked its two mahouts, Amal, 28 and Sreekuttan. Though both were rushed to hospital, Sreekuttan succumbed to his injuries. Eyewitnesses said the elephant trampled Sreekuttan, causing severe chest injuries. Amal is currently undergoing treatment.

According to reports, the elephant had shown signs of aggression on Thursday night as well and attacked two persons with its trunk.

Burglars drill into jewellery shop, flee with valuables worth a crore

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Burglars drilled through the wall of a jewellery store in northwest Bengaluru earlier this week and made away with valuables worth approximately ₹1.2 crore.

The incident unfolded on the intervening night of April 27 and 28 at R.B. Jewellers, located in a complex in Havanur Layout near Hesaraghatta Main Road.

No security at night

The complainant stated that the shop was securely closed on the night of April 27, around 9.15 p.m., and that security guard arrangements were in place only during the morning hours.

The burglary came to light early the next morning. Around 7.30 a.m., the owner of the complex alerted the complainant that the rear wall of his store had been drilled.

Upon inspection, the complainant found that the burglars had also broken into an adjacent shop belonging to a person named Madhusudhan. After entering his shop, the accused had drilled through the wall to gain access to the jewellery store.

Once inside, the accused reportedly made away with silver articles weighing around 70 kg.

In addition, electronic items including a laptop, a mobile phone, and a digital video recorder were stolen.

The accused also took silver items worth approximately ₹50,000 and cash amounting to ₹1,500. The total value of the stolen items is around ₹1.2 crore.

Harvest rescue

After rain: Farm workers dry harvested paddy after sudden downpour at Nunna near Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, on Friday. K.V.S. GIRI

Under-performing MLAs won't be renominated, says Naidu

The Hindu Bureau
PAMIDIMUKKALA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday, launched a blistering attack against the Opposition, accusing it of pursuing destructive politics, while asserting that only performance-driven leadership would have a place in his government.

Addressing a public meeting in connection with the May Day and 'Pedala Sevalo' programmes at Pamidimukkala, Andhra Pradesh (Krishna district), Mr. Naidu made it clear that under-performing MLAs would not be renominated.

"I will directly seek feedback from the people. Those who fail to deliver will not get another chance," he warned, signalling a strong stand on accountability.

Terming the NDA a force of "reconstruction," Mr. Naidu said Andhra Pradesh was witnessing a renewed phase of development.

Striking a chord with the residents, Mr. Naidu highlighted Krishna district's importance in the State's growth story, noting that it ranked among the top regions for development and revenue generation.

Key infra projects

Emphasising infrastructure expansion, the Chief Minister pointed to rapid development in the Vijayawada-Machilipatnam corridor. Key projects, including the six-laning of the Machilipatnam bypass road, expansion of the beach road, and development of a six-lane highway between Vijayawada and Machilipatnam, were progressing at a fast pace, he said, reiterating plans for an Expressway linking Hyderabad to Machilipatnam, aimed at boosting connectivity and economic growth.

'Vindictive mindset'

Targeting the previous regime led by Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, the Chief Minister alleged that crucial projects such as the Polavaram irrigation project and Amaravati capital city were derailed owing to its "negligence and vindictive governance."

He said that partially completed works too were neglected.

Facility manager quits job in Bengaluru, turns barren land into self-sustainable green farms

Nagesh Prabhu
BENGALURU

Solthadi Nanda Kishore Nayak was employed ase a facility manager in a tch firm in Bengaluru for 18 years. During COVID-19, he decided to return to his native village of Polali in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, leaving desk jobs to take up farming on a land that belonged to his parents, but was left uncultivated.

"I never considered agriculture as a career because it did not seem profitable. But during the lockdown, when people rushed to stock up on food, I realised how essential farming is for our survival," said the 55-year-old, standing in his field. "I turned to organic farming."

Nanda Kishore invested over ₹40 lakh to transform the seven acres barren land into a thriving farm in less than five years.

On his land, which is in Kariyangala Gram Panchayat in Bantwal taluk, Mr. Nayak has adopted multi-cropping pattern and an innovative technique to earn a steady income from seven acres of what was once barren.

Drawing on nearly two decades of experience in both private and public sectors, he transformed the seven acres of sloping, rugged, barren land into a thriving farm in less than five years. He invested over ₹40 lakh, sourced from his gratuity and provident fund, towards land development and irrigation.

"I have planted around 3,200 arecanut saplings, 125 coconut trees, 400 banana plants, 300 cocoa plants, 100 sandalwood, 75 red sandalwood, and about 70 varieties of fruit-bearing plants to ensure income throughout the year," he said.

Mr. Nayak currently earn about ₹7 to ₹8 lakh a year, spends around ₹1 lakh a month on maintenance and says that the income is expected to rise significantly as the areca and coconut trees are yet to start yielding fully. Noting the growing demand for organic produce, he added that traders from nearby towns regularly visit his farm to buy tender coconut, banana, and breadfruit.

Mr. Nayak has adopted intercropping, growing multiple crops together. The mix of commercial and fruit crops- with different growth cycles and root systems- helps maximise land use and maintain soil moisture for most of the year, he said.

The farm now attracts regular visits from farmers to learn about organic and multi-crop farming.

Kerala consumer rights activist Dijo Kappan passes away

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

Social activist Dijo Kappan, 68, passed away at Pala in Kottayam district of Kerala on Friday. He breathed his last at a private hospital where he had been undergoing treatment after being injured in a car accident in October last year in Thiruvananthapuram.

Kappan was known for his activism focusing on consumer rights and awareness. In 1988, he founded the Centre for Consumer Education, which aimed at protection of the rights of consumers and farmers. He had led several legal battles in his capacity as the trustee of the centre. His notable legal interventions include on a variety of public causes such as hike in electricity charge and road tax, waste management crisis in Kochi and inconveniences caused by display of advertisement boards on public roads. He had led a prolonged battle against the hurdles in allowing insurance claims to victims of road accidents.

He was also active in civil rights movements and discussions in news channels. He was the chairman of the Sabari Railway Central Action Council.

Work in progress

India must strengthen public sector hospital capacity

The 80th, and latest, round of the household social consumption (health) survey conducted by the National Statistical Office is the first comprehensive survey of its kind in both the post-pandemic era and the period in which the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) scheme attained maturity. The previous two surveys of the same kind revealed that most Indians did not have any form of health insurance. Since PMJAY's launch in 2018, the 80th round shows that insurance coverage has expanded around threefold, accounting for an increasing share of health-care financing in hospitals. However, the hospitalisation rate has not recovered to the 2014 level, meaning that having an insurance card still does not guarantee access to a bed, and hidden costs continue to limit access. The reimbursement rates under PMJAY and State-funded insurance schemes are often below market rates, so private hospitals compensate by billing patients separately for diagnostics and ancillary services. In other words, while state-funded health insurance is subsidising private health-care providers' access to low-income markets without also enforcing regulated prices, the combined system provides a safety net where insurance covers hospitalisation and the public network has improved financial protection for households seeking primary care. Second, the Proportion of Population Reported Ailing has doubled, while infectious diseases have declined and non-communicable diseases have increased. Economists have interpreted this as a sign of more people seeking care, thus becoming 'visible' to the health-care sector.

Previous surveys singled out out-of-pocket expenses (OOPE) on health care as a leading cause of poverty. In the 80th round, while the mean OOPE has roughly doubled, the median OOPE has dropped, to ₹11,285 per hospitalisation and at nearly nothing for public outpatient care. Health-care expenses in India are a mix of many low-cost consultations and a few significant and expensive interactions, such as surgeries and chronic care. The two trends thus mean that while health care is becoming more affordable, thanks to the public sector absorbing the cost of primary and secondary care, health care's ability to inflict financial deprivation in a few cases remains high. Part of the problem is the AAM network, which provides free medicines and diagnostics, of Ayushman Bharat still being significantly underfunded relative to the needs of managing chronic diseases, and where the private sector dominates. Thus, overall, the poor have nominal coverage but are often excluded from the benefits of coverage in practice while the more insured middle class faces rising catastrophic costs. The next phase of health-care reform, after shielding care-seekers from poverty and achieving near-universal institutional delivery, will need to strengthen public sector hospital capacity to compete with the private sector for tertiary care.

Primary league

In Kerala, the UDF is engaged in ugly manoeuvres for the CM's post

The Congress in Kerala has been counting its chickens before they hatch. For several weeks, senior leaders have been positioning for the Chief Minister's post, assuming that the United Democratic Front (UDF) would win the Assembly elections on May 4. Just as the party sought to put a lid on the unseemly public display of personal ambition, its most important ally muddied the waters. Panakkad Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal, State president of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), publicly backed V.D. Satheesan for Chief Minister, citing exit polls of dubious authority, and urging the Congress's central leadership to let public sentiment guide the choice. The blowback was immediate. Sectarian leaders who have been whipping up anti-Muslim sentiment were quick to claim that the Congress and the UDF were in the IUML's stranglehold. The charge has a history to feed on. The IUML's maximalist demands for seats, cabinet berths and portfolios have contributed to that impression, and are at least partly linked to rising tensions between the Muslim community on the one side and Hindus and Christians on the other – a realignment that has proved beneficial for the BJP. The UDF may have barely stalled the disintegration of its social base in this election, if at all. The IUML's public posturing is a stinging reminder of what to avoid if the Front is to remain viable in the face of rapid social change.

The conventions of Kerala's coalition politics are clear and have held for decades. A single party rarely wins an absolute majority; the partners of a Front collectively win those numbers. The leading party – Congress in the UDF, CPI-M in the LDF – elects its legislature party leader, who is then accepted by the Front as Chief Minister. There is no record of that decorum being broken by any junior partner in either Front. Neither Front contested this election with a declared chief ministerial candidate; even the sitting Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan, was not named as the LDF's CM candidate. In both Fronts, the Chief Minister has emerged through a two-step process involving newly elected MLAs and the central leadership of the party concerned. In the UDF and LDF, popular leaders have often missed the top post simply because there are always multiple contenders but only one post. The IUML would serve itself, the culture of coalition politics and the social fabric of Kerala far better by respecting that decorum. The Congress high command, for its part, must demonstrate that manoeuvres that embarrass the party carry a cost, not a reward.

India's global right linkages, costs and consequences

Salman Khurshid

Former Minister for External Affairs

Pushparaj Deshpande

Director, Samruddha Bharat Foundation

Philosopher John Locke tellingly argued that "things of this world are in so constant a flux, that nothing remains long in the same state". Seemingly localised events such as the French Revolution, the two world wars, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the September 11 attacks and Lehman Brothers' crash all kickstarted profound global disruptions. The 2008 financial crisis unleashed socio-economic pressures that heralded a tsunami of populist-autocrats leading right-wing parties (henceforth the Right). As evidenced by contemporary global upheavals (the conflict in West Asia being just the tip of the iceberg), this tsunami is the single biggest threat to the liberal world order.

Most analyses focus on the 'what' of this phenomenon, namely that the Right is fashioning a neo-conservative world order – where nations have spheres-of-influence and might is right; are culturally pure (code for xenophobia and racism); and where the liberal world order's norms are vilified as impediments to a mythical golden period. Other analyses outline the similarities in the Right's domestic politics or how it embeds undemocratic and atavistic norms in the new world order they are forging. What is understudied is how the Right breathes life into its shared goals and why it acts like it does.

In deciphering the how, the Right has colluded to establish an "international ideological axis" over decades. Networks such as the International Democracy Union, the Movement, the National Conservatism Conference, the Conservative Political Action Conference, the Heritage Foundation (whose Project 2025 United States President Donald Trump is scrupulously unleashing globally) either train parties on manufacturing consent, create networking opportunities for right-wing politicos, frame coordinated responses on global issues, and weaponise their respective diasporas to support populist-autocrats. Through these, the Right has unleashed undemocratic upsurges against progressive values and parties, as well as the liberal world order. It is no coincidence that 91 countries representing 72% of the world's population are classified as autocratic by the Varieties of Democracy Institute.

A global right alignment

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s role in this counter-hegemonic project is illustrative. Having effected a gleichschaltung on the Indian state, the BJP has redeployed the nation's foreign policy systems to help redraw the global map ideologically. As outlined in a recent book, *India's Tryst with the World*, Indian missions are bypassed as the BJP's ideological outposts (the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh or HSS, the Overseas Friends of BJP and other Sangh Parivar affiliates) map and harass liberal academics working on India, obfuscate the targeting of foreign citizens (highlighted in a 2024 Canadian Security Intelligence Service report) and support the Right as part of an ideological internationalism.

Evidence of boots-on-the-ground collaboration can be found in the Operation Dharmic-Vote campaign in the 2019 British general election, which saw the Overseas Friends of BJP campaigning for Conservative Party candidates in 48 constituencies. Similarly, the 'Howdy Modi' and 'Namaste Trump' rallies stumped for Mr. Trump, as did Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pre-Operation Roaring Lion visit, which politically endorsed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ahead of Israel's national elections.

> The Bharatiya Janata Party's collusion with the global right hurts India

Likewise, exorbitant funds are channelised for extremist causes (a 2022 report by Jasa Macher found that just seven Sangh Parivar affiliates in the United States spent over $158.9 million on right-wing causes). Some of this has yielded results, as democratic regressions in France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. testify.

Although this evokes a perverse epicaricacy among some in India, the BJP's Janus-visage lies bare abroad. Belying efforts to project Mr. Modi as a Gandhian *vikas-purush*, the BJP's role in this international axis has sparked deep unease.

First, transparency groups have alleged that the Prime Minister's personalised diplomacy transcends collusion with populist-autocrats, and furthers the interests of crony-capitalists (who support the BJP's politico-ideological objectives).

Second, progressive parties increasingly perceive the BJP's ideological internationalism as arming the Right in their respective nations. For example, as a *Daily Mail* report alleged, the BJP's involvement in fomenting tensions in Leicester vitiated politics and tried to strengthen the Right. Likewise, BJP delegations actively courting far-right parties across Europe has sparked deep unease among global progressives.

Third, the BJP's ideological adventurism has triggered diplomatic reprisals (including the expulsion of Indian intelligence officials from various nations – a historic first).

Fourth, hate speech and racist attacks on Indian students abroad has mushroomed, while restrictions to visas for skilled Indian immigrants have escalated. Both suggest that the BJP-enamoured-diaspora's efforts to ingratiate themselves with the Right yield no returns.

Finally, the BJP's adventurism has also compromised India's national interests. For example, by condoning kidnappings and assassinations of heads of state, wilfully ignoring the conversion of India's strategic backyard into a conflict-theatre, circumscribing India's historical support for a two-state solution and peace (because of an iron-alliance with Mr. Netanyahu's Likud party) and tacitly sanctioning coercive unilateralism in West Asia and South America, the BJP has undermined India's case on Pakistan Occupied Kashmir while imposing massive geo-economic and geo-political costs on India (as the adverse impacts of the war in West Asia prove).

The response to India's reticence

The world reads India's reticence under the BJP government as an abdication of India's moral leadership of the Global South, and not responsible statecraft. Contrary to Jawaharlal Nehru's principled internationalism (which successive Indian governments continued), in doing nothing to mitigate conflicts between NATO/Ukraine-Russia, or America/Israel-Iran, or on the Palestine issue, the BJP government is tacitly conceding that nations can violently forge hemispheric hegemonies, which is why few nations condemned China's aggression in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, or Pakistan after Operation Sindoor (2025).

This brings us to why the Right is dismantling the liberal world order. Focusing on the domestic to illustrate the point, even though the BJP blithely continues India's long-standing efforts to forge a multipolar world, it is primarily striving to inscribe itself into a global conservative cartography (partly because of its ideological proclivities, and partly because it mistakenly buys into its self-propagated synonymity with the nation-state). The reason why the BJP's covert support for the dismantling of the rules-based world order (evocatively wrapped in decolonisation rhetoric) has traction is because of the injustices of the neoliberal world order – dealt with in the article in this daily, "Navigating the global economic transformation", October 16, 2025. After all, the Global North's economic colonialism (including structural adjustments, capital accumulation, cheap labour, environmental colonisation and trickle-down economics), and ruthless pursuit of national interests (including through sanctions and tariffs) predate the Right.

Similarly, the Global North's liberal incrementalism on overhauling international institutions (a *sine qua non* for India and the Global South) and inertia (despite conflicts afflicting five continents, there has not been a substantive United Nations Peacekeeping operation since 2014) has made the attack on transnational institutions seem kosher. Likewise, the Global North's promotion of cloud-capitalism has not only exacerbated socio-cultural fault-lines, but inevitably rewarded populist-autocrats.

Ironically then, it is the "progressive" establishment's standpattism that has paved the way for the Right. If progressives are to reclaim the centre, they must cut the self-created Gordian knot and shed familiar comforts. This means restoring confidence in shared futures, accommodating rising powers, honouring historical grievances, rewriting the geo-economic norms underpinning the world order, and reimagining multilateral institutions.

What the fightback must entail

Given the polycrisis engulfing us, progressives must shed their Macbeth-like fog of nostalgia, bureaucratic hesitation and technocratic chimeras. Eschewing liberal echo-chambers, progressives should mould new value-aligned partnerships with each other (especially between the Global-North and Global-South parties) and non-political stakeholders. This necessitates new institutional arrangements (like what Spain's Global Progressive Mobilisation and India's Bharat Summit promise) that allow structured dialogues between evangelical accelerators from all nations (which the Non-Alignment Movement once was). This means exerting unprecedented political will, and recalibrating operational methodologies (such as the recent Hungary, Poland and New York campaigns) to sway the silent majority more effectively than the Right. Only then can we weave multiple national visions into a global symphony, and put democracy back on track.

Abu Dhabi exits OPEC for an ascent of 'peak oil'

Mahesh Sachdev

Retired Indian Ambassador with an interest in West Asia and oil matters

Although in recent years the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has frequently threatened to leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), its actual announcement, on April 28, took observers by surprise. It was also conspicuous in its context. It provided only three days' notice for exit from OPEC and OPEC+ on May 1, just five days before the next OPEC meeting. The decision was also counterintuitive to the ongoing double blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, staunching oil exports of the UAE and other Gulf states.

A subsequent Emirati official statement was elaborate but elliptical. It sought to both rationalise the decision aimed at pursuing national interest and reassure the stakeholders of its continued intention "to contribute to stability (of the oil market) in a measured and responsible manner", promising "to bring additional production to market in a gradual and measured manner".

These anodyne references prompt the analysts to look deeper to fathom the real reasons for the Emirati step and assess its impact on the global market.

The UAE's grouse

The UAE's oil and gas reserves, estimated at 113 billion barrels, are the world's sixth largest. These are almost exclusively in the Abu Dhabi emirate. The UAE has a $150 billion investment plan (2023-27) to raise its oil production capacity to five million barrels per day (mbpd). However, its OPEC production quota is limited to 3.45 mbpd, leaving it with nearly 1.5 mbpd unutilised spare capacity. This has been a source of the UAE's grouse against OPEC, which is perceived to operate under Saudi hegemony. Riyadh, as OPEC's 'swing producer', often trims its oil production to absorb the global oil glut; it resists Abu Dhabi's pressure for a larger OPEC quota. The UAE's ambitious plans for a post-oil advanced technologies-based economy require mega-investments in Artificial Intelligence, and data centres, ironically, requiring higher oil revenues.

> The UAE's exit marks a potential turning point for global oil governance

War's impact

Over the long run, Emirati strategists believe that global oil demand is approaching a "Peak Oil" moment after which crude requirement and unit value would begin their decline. Consequently, they wish to sell as much oil as possible before the "Peak Oil". They contend that the Iran war brings "Peak Oil" even closer by causing an unsustainable surge in oil prices, destroying the demand and accelerating the shift towards alternative fuels. In the short run, the UAE wishes to take advantage of the current higher oil prices. With the 1.5 mbpd Abu Dhabi (Habshan)-Fujairah oil pipeline already operational outside the Strait of Hormuz, the UAE is well placed to do so. By quitting OPEC, Abu Dhabi has unfettered itself from any quota restrictions in anticipation of a scramble among the Gulf exporters for greater market share once the two blockades on the Strait of Hormuz are lifted.

The Emirati statement conspicuously omits the Gulf geopolitics, the 640-pound gorilla in the room. Iran hurled over 2,200 drones and missiles at the UAE during the war as retribution for its strategic ties with Israel. Separately, during the past decade, the barely concealed political and economic rivalry between Saudi Arabia and the UAE has reached a crescendo. It is hardly coincidental that the UAE's OPEC exit announcement was timed with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Consultative Summit, in Jeddah, on the Iran war, where the UAE was under-represented by its Foreign Minister. The move was widely interpreted as Abu Dhabi flaunting its regional autonomy of action to the GCC states and Iran. By ditching OPEC, the UAE, apparently, aims to steal a march over Iran and Saudi Arabia, both OPEC members, for Asia's very large and thirsty crude markets. The move may also favour U.S. President Donald Trump, who desperately needs lower oil prices before the mid-term Congressional elections. At a wider ambit, this may be the opening overture of the UAE openly pursuing a more nationalistic foreign policy. Most observers believe that the exit of the UAE, OPEC's third-largest producer, would not derail the cartel, although its grip on the global market would slip further below that of independent producers, such as the U.S., Canada, Brazil, and Norway. For some, the departure of the UAE, the fifth member to leave OPEC since 2016 and the biggest producer so far, may even mark the beginning of the end for OPEC.

An opportunity for India

While the Emiratis have their reasons for quitting OPEC, consumers in India, the world's third-largest and fastest-growing crude importer, would see it with tentative hope for lower pump prices. India enjoys strategic ties with the UAE, its third-largest trading partner and fourth-largest crude supplier. To anchor the hydrocarbon relationship with the "OPEC-free" UAE, India may propose strategic joint investments in Indian downstream projects.

For the past half a century, the OPEC dictates often made Indians shudder and issue a "May Day!" call. Thanks to the UAE quitting the producer cartel, this May could have a different ring.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Iran war and U.S. line

The U.S. administration's claim that the war on Iran has already ended is one that would perhaps allow the White House to circumvent the requirement of Congressional approval under the War Powers Resolution, which constrains the President's military powers. Obviously, such a process would have raised serious questions about the reckless and dangerous misadventure that the U.S. began on February 28. It is important that nations come together to persuade all three — the U.S., Iran, and Israel — to eschew the path of violence. Deeply regrettable in all this is the UN's virtual absence.

Angara Venkata Girija Kumar,
Chennai

Vaping incident

The recent incident of vaping during the IPL 2026 season is alarming, and the BCCI's response of imposing a mere fine is inadequate. The IPL commands a vast audience, including impressionable youth, and an incident such as this risks normalising harmful behaviour. Accountability must go beyond token punishment to uphold discipline and responsibility.

Nagarajamani M.V.,
Hyderabad

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

Sanjay Sharma, editor of *4pm News* on YouTube, recording a video for his channel at a makeshift studio in Mumbai. EMMANUAL YOGINI

Far from a safe harbour

An infrastructure of censorship is emerging, enabling the Central and various State governments to take social media content down using existing laws and rules. Independent media outlets and online critics now find their reach at a precipice. **Aroon Deep** reports on how in an environment of misinformation and deepfakes, opposing voices also become targets

Six months after the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh in 2017, in which the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) achieved a landslide victory, Sanjay Sharma, the editor of an evening newspaper in Lucknow, was summoned by a senior official close to the Chief Minister's Office.

"The officer told me, 'The Chief Minister is very upset with you; he thinks you are Akhilesh's man,'" said Sharma, referring to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who was Chief Minister of the State from 2012 to 2017. He was recounting the episode over Zoom at a public policy event in April 2026.

Responding to the officer's allegation, Sharma showed him a series of articles published in *4PM News*, the evening newspaper he edited, scrutinising the previous government led by Yadav.

The officer was not convinced. Sharma said the officer asked him to change at least the front page of the newspaper on a regular basis, since politicians from the Opposition were highlighting portions of what the paper had published.

Sharma said he refused. This decision allegedly came at a cost. His State press accreditation, which gave him access to subsidised housing and a host of other benefits, was not renewed. He was compelled to move houses.

In 2018, even as he continued as editor of *4PM News*, he decided to start a YouTube channel of the same name, anchoring most of the videos himself. "I didn't know that a new world awaited me," he said at the policy event. In the eight years that followed, his follower count increased to over 8 million, far from the reach of the Uttar Pradesh police. He had found a national audience.

However, during the India-Pakistan conflict last year, Sharma ran into trouble again for his videos on Operation Sindoor. The *4 PM News* channel was blocked in India by a government order. He approached the Supreme Court, which remarked that blocking was a "chilling assault on journalistic independence". The government withdrew the order.

In March, the *4PM News* channel was blocked in India again. This time, the government defended its decision in the Delhi High Court, accusing Sharma of spreading "conspiracy theories" around the Pahalgam attack and *4PM News* of being a "foreign influence infrastructure".

A problem across States

Sharma is not alone. Over the last few months, across States, several YouTube videos, Facebook posts, Instagram reels, and posts on X have gone missing and so have entire accounts that posted them. Those affected include individual users, at least one political party, independent journalists, and online news outlets.

In Kerala this March, police sent notices to many users for sharing images of an Election Commission document with a BJP seal. The document and seal were real, but the Commission later said it was just a party annexure that was mistakenly included in an official reply.

> These kinds of takedowns make you think twice about posting about the government.
>
> **SANDEEP SINGH**
> Activist

In Tamil Nadu last year, the police issued notices for posts on X by BJP party and politicians' accounts about the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET), and also for a cartoon by an All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam-associated news account, according to an affidavit made by X in the Karnataka High Court.

West Bengal, too, has issued notices under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, on content about Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. In Punjab, the Press Di Azaadi Bahal Karo Sangharsh Committee Punjab (Committee for the Struggle to Restore Press Freedom) described growing number of notices against independent media by the Aam Aadmi Party-led government in the State.

Gone in a jiffy

On March 18, 2026, multiple accounts were removed from X and Instagram. *The Hindu* counted dozens of such posts in a review of takedown orders posted by affected users, but comprehensive statistics are not available, as these orders are confidential. Many of the accounts were critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi or mocked him. One such reel, made by the comedian, Pulkit Mani, mimicked Modi's mannerisms while interacting with foreign dignitaries. While the takedown triggered the Streisand effect, as Opposition politicians and content creators such as Dhruv Rathee reposted it, that did not stop more censorship from following.

DrNimoYadav, an anti-establishment handle on X with over 1.3 lakh followers, was censored the same day; so were Nehr_who? (2.4 lakh followers) and ActivistSandeep (1.2 lakh followers). Some of the owners of these accounts complained about the ban from other handles, while some accounts had such a large number of followers that their absence was noticed.

Sandeep Singh, who runs ActivistSandeep, lives in Delhi. "I am a Dalit activist, and a lot of my activity is on the ground. I have been posting about it on social media since 2018," Singh says. His following – 1.2 lakh followers on X and 7 lakh subscribers on YouTube – did not contribute much by way of revenue, he adds. He has also done public relations and campaigning work for Nitin Raut, a Congress leader in Maharashtra.

On the night of March 18, Singh got an email from X, informing him that his account had been withheld in India under Section 69A of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000, which allows the Indian government to block public access to online information in the interest of India's sovereignty, defense, security, friendly relations with foreign states, or public order. He had received no warning and no copy of the legal order. There was no way of finding out what he had posted that had led to his account being blocked.

Singh contacted the Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) advocacy group in Delhi, which has been helping people with cases such as his. IFF lawyers approached the Delhi High Court for Singh, DrNimoYadav, and Nehr_who? The latter two were compelled to disclose their real names in the process. On April 6, after receiving a list of the actual posts that had led to the expulsion, the court ordered that their accounts be unfrozen.

On April 13, Singh was granted a post-decision hearing at the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. "There were 11 officers there," he says, many of them from the Indian Administrative Service. Some of the senior-most officers allegedly grilled the activist on why he invoked the Prime Minister's name so often. Singh says he declined to take down the posts and will continue to challenge the government in court.

The rules that govern speech online

The IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 established a framework for social media intermediaries and streaming platforms in India. They govern a concept known as 'safe harbour' under which social media platforms are generally exempt from legal action in court, including criminal proceedings against their employees, as long as they take down content when they receive "actual knowledge" of "illegal content". The *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* case (2015) had narrowed down "actual knowledge" to mean a court order or a Section 69A order.

Over the years, the IT Rules have created an alternative interpretation that is yet to be tested fully by the legal system: actual knowledge could be a message from the government or from authorised police officers around the country. Ignoring such communication could mean loss of safe harbour. The IFF, in a filing with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, argued that the IT Rules' use for takedowns is improper.

These concerns became more immediate in February this year, when an amendment reduced the deadline for removing unlawful content to secure safe harbour protection from 36 hours to three. In April, it turned out that those concerns came true for Meta. As *The Hindu* reported, the Facebook and Instagram parent now immediately takes down content referred to it under Section 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, which removes 'safe harbour' immunity for intermediaries if they fail to expeditiously remove unlawful content after receiving actual knowledge or a government notification.

However, not all firms have reacted the same way. A review by *The Hindu* of takedown notices sent to X shows that while the firm notifies users, it continues to only act on a narrow slice of Section 79(3)(b) notices, something the government flagged in submissions with the Delhi High Court.

The Union government had created the Sahyog portal under the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2014 for the rapid removal of unlawful content. This has taken a larger role in online content governance in recent months. Within a year, over 1 lakh pieces of content were flagged by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) alone. It is unclear how many were taken down. The government does not disclose blocking orders. Social media platforms disclose government takedown orders in bulk on a biannual basis. The extent of takedowns on Meta's platforms will only be known well into the second half of this year.

While the Union government is in charge of amending the IT Rules, its use as a takedown mechanism is far from restricted to the IT Ministry and the I4C. There is growing usage of Section 79 (3)(b) in non-NDA-led States, such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala, where police have over the last few months not only used the Sahyog portal to issue takedown notices, but also separately contacted social media platforms directly with such communications.

India has always provided broad exceptions to freedom of expression under Article 19(2) of the Constitution. These restrictions are extensive, covering anything that may affect the "sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality," as well as matters involving contempt of court, defamation, or incitement to an offence.

The IT Act has long had a procedure for forcing "intermediaries", such as internet service providers, and later social media platforms, to take down content. These blocking rules, largely under Section 69A, allow the government to block content that falls within a subset of Article 19(2) exemptions.

The IT Rules, 2009, mandate a committee to review each blocking request made by designated officers and provide the affected party a chance to be heard. IT Ministry officials have argued in recent years that time is of essence on social media, and that quickly taking down "illegal content" is appropriate. One official quoted the maxim, "Lies go around the world before the truth has put on its shoes."

Choice of targets

The choice of targets so far – critics and media outlets – largely "follows a template," said Susan Koshy, an assistant professor at the Department of Media Studies, GITAM School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hyderabad. "They target the fringe elements before going for the main guys. Even when they go after political people, there is some material based on which they pursue them," she said.

Some of the pushback has not been as fierce in the past: "There is a certain exhaustion which sets in," she conceded. "But there are memes in response to the censorship that are a positive aspect," she said, referring to online reactions to some viral instances of takedowns.

Platforms, on their part, are not keen on emphasising user rights, but they are voicing concerns. "Let me begin by saying that we are not doubting the intention of the government," Vertika Misra, director of public policy at Nasscom, whose members include Google and Meta, said on April 30 in a small online discussion held over Zoom with tech policy speakers from the industry. "There are duplications, there is ambiguity, and there is a great deal of confusion regarding the obligations being introduced."

She was referring to a new batch of amendments to the IT Rules, which propose making guidelines issued by the IT Ministry "binding" on platforms. "If the government keeps coming up with these amendments and regulations on a regular basis, how do you plan your systems and how do you cater to such large volumes of user-generated content in real time?"

When asked at a press conference in March about accounts being taken down on a large scale, IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw denied such actions. "A huge quantity of deepfakes has started coming in the social media world. And the world and social media platforms have ramped up their efforts in removing deepfakes. Platforms themselves have doubled or tripled their own takedowns, which are basically deepfake takedowns. It is a new menace and a new threat for the society," he said.

Rajneil Kamath, vice president at the Trusted Information Alliance, a group of fact-checkers which debunks deepfakes, does not buy this argument. Speaking during a small discussion, Kamath said, "The word deepfakes in many ways is being used as a blanket term to describe any content that you don't like, and that becomes a pretext for content being taken down."

Singh said that social media was the only space left with unfiltered criticism of the government. "This kind of takedown makes you think twice about posting about the government," he said.

Activist Sandeep Singh during an interview in New Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

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From Page One

Commercial LPG, 5-kg cylinders to cost more

The latter primarily caters to the needs of migrant populations in urban and semi-urban areas who do not have a local address proof to avail a regular connection. Commercial LPG is used by businesses, both big and small, on a daily basis. Key among these are restaurants and hotels. Higher costs are expected to be passed on to their customers.

According to government estimates, 5-kg cylinders comprising more than 22.54 lakh kg of LPG were sold in April. The price of the smaller cylinder was last hiked by ₹51 per cylinder in April. It was on April 7 that the government had also doubled the allocation of the cylinders in all States.

The hike in commercial LPG prices follows a ₹195.5 per cylinder hike on April 1, when the crisis in West Asia had completed a full month.

GST revenue hits record ₹2.43 lakh crore in April

"Post GST 2.0, a steady 7-8% monthly growth seems to be emerging as the norm which is broadly in line with budget estimates," Pratik Jain, partner, Price Waterhouse & Co., said. "Notably, growth in import-led revenues continues to outpace domestic transactions, which could indicate some softness in consumption."

Manoj Mishra, partner and tax controversy management leader at Grant Thornton Bharat, said that the growth in tax revenue from imports also "points to resilient external demand linkages and supply chain normalisation".

Mr. Jaising, on the other hand, pointed out that the growth in revenues from domestic sales has remained steady, which reflects the nature of consumption activity in the economy.

That said, Saurabh Agarwal, tax partner at EY India, did warn that the coming months are not likely to replicate these record collections. "A note of caution for the quarter ahead: April's record figures reflect the year-end push for targets by both industry and administrators," he said. "As we transition into the new fiscal year, we should anticipate a stabilisation in the coming months."

Trump 'not satisfied' with Iran's peace bid

After Mr. Trump announced a ceasefire on April 8, Pakistan hosted direct talks between Iran and the U.S. which ended without any breakthrough. Following the collapse of the Islamabad talks, Mr. Trump announced a blockade of Iranian ports, which remains in place.

Last week, Iran reportedly submitted a proposal to Pakistan to ease its control of the Strait of Hormuz if the U.S. lifts its blockade. Mr. Trump said in an interview on Wednesday that he would keep the blockade in place until a deal is reached over Iran's nuclear programme.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei said on Thursday that the country would protect its "nuclear and missile" facilities and vowed to introduce a new legal framework to manage the Strait of Hormuz.

U.S. media reported that the U.S. Central Command would brief Mr. Trump about potential military options, including strikes on Iranian infrastructure. Brig. Gen. Seyyed Majid Mousavi, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force, warned U.S. Centcom on Thursday that any such strike would be met with a swift response.

SC to hear Trinamool plea against EC order

"Appointing counting supervisors and assistants, who perform the most critical task of vote counting, exclusively from a pool of employees under the administrative control of the Central government, which is run by the petitioner's main political adversary, creates a manifest and reasonable apprehension of bias," the Trinamool's petition said. It challenged the High Court's reasoning that the presence of a micro-observer (who is also a Central government employee) and CCTV cameras as "sufficient safeguard" against foul play.

SC grants anticipatory bail to Pawan Khera

Mr. Khera was booked for conspiracy, forgery and criminal defamation.

Through senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, he said the FIR was driven by an ulterior political motive and was intended to humiliate him with his arrest.

The court said *prima facie* it seemed Mr. Khera's statements were designed to gain "some political momentum in favour of his party". On the other hand, the court highlighted that it could not "lose sight of the fact that the Chief Minister of the State, who is also the husband of the complainant, has made certain unparliamentary remarks against the appellant in various press statements which have been filed before this court". The Bench ordered that Mr. Khera would be released on anticipatory bail in the event of his arrest.

Ladakhis serve as nation's first line of defence: Shah

On his first visit to Ladakh in seven years, the Home Minister says the demand for U.T. status stemmed from lack of development, noting that there has been significant progress since 2019

Peerzada Ashiq
LEH/JAMMU

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is on a two-day visit to Ladakh, on Friday said Ladakhis have proven to be the first line of defence whenever the country faced external threats. He also highlighted the upward development graph of the region after attaining the Union Territory status in 2019.

"Whenever an external threat emanated, people of Ladakh reached long before the security forces and took bullets on their chests for the country. The bravery of Ladakh Scouts is well known across the length and breadth of the country. Every citizen of the country praises the patriotism of Ladakhis and remains indebted to them," said Mr. Shah.

Mr. Shah is visiting Ladakh after a gap of seven years. It is also his first visit to Ladakh since street protests over the demands of Statehood and Sixth Schedule left four dead and 80 injured in Leh in September last year.

Mr. Shah inaugurated a series of key initiatives at the Central Institute of Buddhist Studies, Leh. They included dairy plant with capacity of 10,000 litres per day at Kargil, dairy processing units in Leh, a bulk milk cooler system and transportation infrastructure. He also launched an Android-based Automated Milk Collection System (AMCS) "to streamline procurement processes and ensure transparency in payments to farmers".

Amit Shah interacts with a novice monk at the inauguration of the first international Buddha relics exposition in Ladakh. PTI

Mr. Shah said the Centre fulfilled the long pending demand of Union Territory status for Ladakh in 2019. "The main reason behind the U.T. demand was the lack of development in the region. However, the region has witnessed a leap in many sectors since 2019. It is because Prime Minister Narendra Modi remains focused on the region," said Mr. Shah. Mr. Shah said the region was granted around 193 panchayats, five new districts and official language status for Bodhi and Purgi alongside Urdu, Hindi and English.

He said the road infrastructure took a leap from 1,800 km in 2019 to 4,040 km in 2026, from 19 bridges to 72 bridges, from 344 mobile towers to 653 towers, from seven helipads to 41, from 60 snow machines to over 200. Mr. Shah said Ladakh's budget has gone up to ₹6,000 crore compared to ₹1,000 crore when it was a part of J&K.

"The Kashmir-Zojila, which used to remain closed for 127 days, remained closed for just 19 days this year. The Kargil-Zanskar road, which would remain closed for 175 days, was closed for just 11 days. The work on Zojila Tunnel is on and the Shinkula Tunnel has already started," said Mr. Shah.

Earlier in the day, he addressed the first international exposition of the sacred relics of Lord Buddha in Leh.

"In a way, the significance of today's Buddha Purnima has increased greatly. After 75 years, these sacred relics have arrived in Ladakh. When these relics came here 75 years ago, very few people were able to have their sacred viewing, experience their spiritual energy, or receive the message of Lord Buddha," he said. "It was through Ladakh and adjoining routes that the teachings of Tathagata Buddha, which originated in India, spread to China and several other countries. The Silk Route linking Kashmir, Leh, Yarkand, Khotan and Tibet became a channel not only for trade but also for ideas, monks, manuscripts and artistic traditions."

Congress questions govt. 'silence' on Ladakh's demands

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

It has asked whether the Centre is willing to grant full Statehood to the Union Territory

The Congress on Friday criticised Union Home Minister Amit Shah for remaining "silent" on key political demands of the people of Ladakh during his ongoing visit, even as he participated in events linked to the display of sacred Buddhist relics.

In a post on social media, Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh said the Home Minister appeared to be "basking in the glory of the Piprahwa relics" while sidestepping pressing issues such as Statehood.

"The HM is in Ladakh today basking in the glory of the Piprahwa relics, while remaining silent on the demands of the people there for statehood, Sixth Schedule status, and protection of land and employment. He will be unaware of previous such displays in Ladakh," Mr. Ramesh said in a post on *X*.

The Congress, however, sharpened its attack by contrasting the visit with what it described as the Centre's continued reluctance to engage with long-standing local demands.

Recalling history, Mr. Ramesh invoked Jawaharlal Nehru's engagement with Ladakh in the early years after Independence. He noted that sacred relics of the Buddha's disciples – Sariputta and Maha Moggallana – were brought back to India in 1949 from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and later taken to Ladakh following a request by Kushok Bakula Rinpoche during Nehru's visit to the region.

According to him, the relics were taken across Ladakh for several weeks in 1950 before being enshrined at multiple locations, underscoring what he suggested was a more responsive political engagement with the region in the past. The Congress has, in the recent days, repeatedly flagged the Centre's "silence" on Ladakh's political aspirations. It has demanded clarity on whether the Centre is willing to grant full Statehood to the Union Territory and extend Sixth Schedule protections.

'India's commitment to normalise ties with Bangladesh intact'

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

A day after Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) summoned the Indian envoy over remarks by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, officials distanced themselves from Mr. Sarma's observations saying those were "individual opinions".

Stakeholders aware of the formal direction of India's neighbourhood policy said India's commitment to normalise ties with Bangladesh will not be affected by remarks from individual commentators who may have differing opinions.

The Hindu was told that stakeholders at multiple levels, especially at the level of States, may look at India's neighbourhood from their point of view. However, that cannot be interpreted as a reflection of Delhi's current position which remains focused on re-tracking ties with Dhaka after the turbulence that followed the toppling of the Sheikh Hasina government in 2024.

Mr. Sarma had earlier revealed an aggressive policy of the Assam government on preventing 'infiltration' from Bangladesh into the State. He said that the Border Security Force "pushes" infiltrators back into Bangladesh through border areas that are not manned by Bangladesh. He explained that it was not possible to process such a "push-in" policy through the Centre and that is why his government has been following this tactic. The remarks by Mr. Sarma drew a tough response from Dhaka with the MoFA terming them "disparaging". On Thursday, India's Deputy High Commissioner Pawan Badhe met chief of MoFA's South Asia wing Israt Jahan.

First dialogue under new Manipur govt. held with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

Both sides agree on need to relocate some SoO camps to reduce friction with local populations

Amid fresh unrest in Manipur, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the State government on Friday resumed talks with Kuki-Zo insurgent groups who are in a suspension of operations (SoO) pact with the government.

The dialogue, which resumed after a gap of two months, is significant as it was also attended by Manipur government officials – the first such meeting after an elected government under Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh was restored in Manipur on February 4.

The Biren Singh government had refused to extend the SoO pact when it came up for an annual renewal on February 9, 2024. The pact was signed with "re-negotiated terms and conditions or ground rules" on September 4, 2025 when the State was under President's Rule, days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit on September 13 since ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei people erupted in the State on May 3, 2023.

The tripartite pact was first signed in 2008 by the United Peoples' Front (UPF) and the Kuki National Organisation (KNO), an umbrella of 24 insurgent groups.

The meeting held in Delhi was led by Ajit Lal, Adviser, North East, MHA and attended by Intelligence Bureau (IB) officials, Manipur Home Secretary N. Ashok Kumar and Additional Director General of Police Ashutosh Kumar Sinha.

A joint statement by the KNO and the UPF said that the day-long discussions focused on operational and security-related issues and "both sides broadly agreed on the need to relocate certain SoO camps to reduce friction with local populations and improve security".

The government has asked the SoO groups to relocate seven of the 14 camps. Kuki-Zo groups said they have decided to consolidate their camps to 12. Kuki-Zo groups said they drew the attention of MHA officials to the unrest in Ukhrul district, claiming that the Kuki people continue to live under constant fear of attacks, allegedly by Tangkhul armed groups.

Allahabad HC junks plea for sedition case against Rahul

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

Stating that criticism of government action or policies is not only permitted but is essential in a parliamentary democracy, the Allahabad High Court on Friday rejected a petition seeking the registration of a sedition case against the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, over his alleged remark that he was engaged in a "fight against the Indian state".

The single-judge Bench of Justice Vikram D. Chauhan upheld a lower court's order that declined a plea for registration of a criminal case against Mr. Gandhi.

The issue stems from a speech delivered by Mr. Gandhi on January 15, 2025, at the inauguration of the Congress party's new headquarters where he alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) had taken control of key institutions, including the judiciary and the media. He added that he was in a fight against the two organisations along with 'Indian state'.

The petitioner, Simran Gupta, a member of a right-wing organisation, approached the High Court challenging the Sambhal court order that had refused to register an FIR against Mr. Gandhi.

The petitioner told the court that his statements would trigger instability, rebellion, and discontent in society and were against the basic spirit of the Constitution.

The court said the 'offending' speech is alleged to have been made in January 2025. Even after a year, it had not been shown before the court that the aforesaid speech had resulted in any of the mischief covered by Section 152 [covering acts endangering sovereignty of India] of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, the court said.

AAP govt. wins confidence motion in Punjab Assembly

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

The ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab sailed through the confidence motion in the State Assembly moved by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann during a one-day special session on Friday.

Before the passage of the motion, Mr. Mann said the party was "united", but it was moved to counter "false rumours and news". He asserted that the confidence motion should be passed unanimously in the State Assembly. "In today's national politics, the Aam Aadmi Party has established its position in such a way that candidates – from councillors to the Chief Minister, and Mayors in cities – have been winning," he said.

Bhagwant Mann

Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema, who seconded the motion, slammed the BJP-led Centre over the issue of defection of AAP's seven Rajya Sabha MPs.

The ruling party had earlier issued a whip to all legislators to attend the one-day session.

In the 117-member Punjab Assembly, AAP enjoys an overwhelming majority with 94 MLAs, while 16 belong to the Congress, one BSP, three Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), two BJP and one Independent.

When Mr. Mann moved the confidence motion, no one from the Opposition camp was present in the House, barring lone Independent MLA Rana Inderpratap Singh, with the Congress having staged a walkout and the BJP boycotting the session.

SAD MLAs and the lone BSP legislator were also not present. The ruling party's move came amid chaotic scenes in the State Assembly with Opposition parties levelling allegations against CM, claiming he appeared intoxicated during the Vidhan Sabha proceedings.

(*With PTI inputs*)

HC bars RTI disclosure of husband's income amid matrimonial row

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ruled that a man's net taxable income details cannot be disclosed to his estranged wife under the RTI Act, holding that income tax returns are personal information exempt from disclosure.

Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav passed the order on April 28 while hearing a petition filed by a man challenging the July 22, 2021 decision of the Central Information Commission ordering disclosure of details of his net taxable income for the financial year 2007-08 and onwards.

The case stemmed from an ongoing matrimonial dispute, with the wife seeking maintenance and arguing that she had a legitimate interest in knowing her husband's income details to pursue her claim.

The husband contended that the information sought was personal and exempt from disclosure under the RTI Act, which bars release of personal information unrelated to public interest, or that would cause an unwarranted invasion of privacy.

The court ruled that the information directed to be disclosed, by way of the CIC order, does not fall under the exception of "larger public interest". It said the RTI Act was enacted to promote transparency.

NCB seized ₹1,745-crore cocaine in Mumbai: Shah

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has busted a major international narcotics ring, seizing 349 kg of high-grade cocaine estimated at ₹1,745 crore in Mumbai.

Announcing the drug haul on X, Mr. Shah said, "We are resolved to ruthlessly crush the narcotics cartel." "The @narcoticsbureau has cracked down on a major international narcotics ring, seizing 349 kg of high-grade cocaine worth ₹1,745 crore in Mumbai. This is a trailblazing example of a bottom-to-top approach where the agency traced back a smaller consignment to net a massive network," he wrote.

The major chunk of the seized contraband was found concealed in the cavity of machinery imported from abroad. The NCB busted the network after the driver of a van in which the first lot was seized spilled the beans during the interrogation.

An intensive investigation is under way to apprehend the mastermind, handlers, financiers, and intended receivers of the consignment.

Cong. slams govt. on hike in commercial LPG price

Rahul Gandhi calls the latest increase 'bill for elections'; K.C. Venugopal says hike will affect 'crores of Indians who rely on small eateries'; Kharge hits out at Modi govt. on International Labour Day

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday slammed the Narendra Modi government over the latest price hike for commercial LPG cylinders, with Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi calling it the "bill for elections".

Attacking the steep increase in commercial LPG prices, Mr. Gandhi said the hike – the largest ever in a single day – was proof that the burden of inflation would intensify after elections. "Today, commercial gas cylinders have become ₹993 more expensive. This marks the single largest hike in a single day. This is an election bill," Mr. Gandhi said in a post on X, warning that petrol and diesel prices could be next.

He noted that commercial LPG prices had risen sharply in recent months. "Since February: a hike of ₹1,380, an 81% increase in just three months. Tea stalls, *dhabas*, hotels, bakeries, sweet shops – the burden on every kitchen has increased. And this will inevitably impact your plate as well," the Opposition leader added.

> Since February: a hike of ₹1,380, an 81% increase in just three months. Tea stalls, dhabas, hotels, bakeries, sweet shops — the burden on every kitchen has increased. And this will inevitably impact your plate as well
>
> **RAHUL GANDHI**
> Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha

The price of a 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder – used by hotels and restaurants – was raised by ₹993 to ₹3,071.5 (in Delhi). Rates had earlier been hiked by ₹195.5 on April 1 and ₹114.5 on March 1.

'Election over'

Congress general secretary K.C. Venugopal said the timing of the hike showed the government's "disregard" for ordinary citizens. "Just as the election cycle concluded, the Modi government wasted no time to increase prices of LPG cylinders. A whopping increase of nearly ₹1,000 on commercial cylinders will affect crores of Indians who rely on food from small eateries for sustenance. Similarly, crores of small food businesses will have to bear the burden of this hike," Mr. Venugopal said.

Mr. Gandhi had earlier alleged that the government had "profiteered" when global crude prices were low and would now shift the burden to the public as prices rise.

Anti-labour policies

Meanwhile, on International Labour Day, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge accused the government of pursuing policies detrimental to workers and demanded a review of the new labour codes. "Driven by the 'Hum Do, Hamare Do' policy, the Modi government implemented an anti-worker Labour Code. As a result, unrest has erupted everywhere – be it in Noida, at the IOCL facility in Panipat, Adani's factory in Raikheda, NTPC Patratu, or the Samsung factory in Sriperumbudur," the Congress chief posted on X.

He alleged that the new labour framework promoted "contractualisation" and "hire and fire" practices while weakening job security. The Congress chief also called for reviving the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and introducing a national minimum wage of ₹400 per day.

Claiming that wages had stagnated and unemployment had risen, Mr. Kharge said nearly 69% of workers earned below the statutory minimum wage and the government had failed to fill about 30 lakh vacancies. He also reiterated demands for universal health coverage for workers and insurance for those in the unorganised sector.

Govt. absorbed global oil shock, didn't pass it on to consumers: Hardeep Puri

Abhinay Deshpande
AHMEDABAD

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday that India had maintained stable energy supplies and shielded consumers from global price shocks despite a prolonged disruption caused by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz amid the West Asia crisis.

Mr. Puri said the country had remained resilient even after 60 days of supply disruption, attributing the stability to long-term planning and timely policy interventions by the BJP government.

"The government absorbed the global shock at the fiscal level instead of passing it on to consumers," Mr. Puri said, adding that India ensured uninterrupted availability of crude oil, LNG, LPG, petrol, diesel and aviation fuel through continuous monitoring since the crisis began.

He noted that disruptions of 20%-30% in global supply chains typically forced countries into difficult trade-offs, including higher freight and insurance costs. "No country can remain insulated from such shocks," he said.

Hardeep Singh Puri

Mr. Puri, who was speaking at the third Vibrant Gujarat Regional Conference (VGRC) in Surat, said fuel prices rose significantly across major economies between February 28, when the strait's closure began, and April 23. Diesel prices in the U.S. surged by as much as 58%, while neighbouring regions saw increases exceeding 40%.

"In India, there has been zero increase at the retail pump during this period," he said.

Mr. Puri dismissed allegations that fuel price stability was linked to recent State elections, stating that prices had remained steady over the past four years. "If the time comes, the government will take necessary decisions, but the commitment to consumers remains paramount," he said.

The Minister said India activated contingency measures developed over the past decade to respond to such crises. As part of its strategy, the country expanded its crude sourcing base from 27 to 41 countries and diversified LPG imports to include suppliers such as the U.S., Norway, and Algeria.

Domestic LPG production was increased by 60%, while industrial consumption was optimised by shifting users from LPG to piped natural gas, ensuring uninterrupted supply for households, he said. Overall daily LPG consumption was reduced through this strategy.

Mr. Puri said a coordinated national response under Operation Urja Suraksha brought together oil marketing companies, Union Ministries, State governments, and global suppliers. Measures included absorption of under-recoveries by oil companies, excise duty adjustments, and export levies to stabilise domestic markets.

'Missing Link' inaugurated on Mumbai-Pune highway

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Friday inaugurated the much-anticipated "Missing Link" project of the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, aiming to cut travel time and bypass the risky ghat section near Lonavala in Maval district.

However, the launch time also coincided with commuters getting stuck in heavy traffic for nearly three hours on the Bhor ghat.

Calling it a world-class example of Indian engineering excellence, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Along with saving time, it will also act as an economic multiplier, accelerating the State's economy by ₹70,000 crore."

"It should be called 'Connecting Link' instead of 'Missing Link'. Despite obstacles during the COVID-19 pandemic, the ₹7,181 crore project is now completed," he added.

The Mumbai-Pune Expressway 'Missing Link' project is seen on the day of its inauguration, in Mumbai, Maharashtra on Friday. PTI

Mr. Fadnavis apologised to the public for the traffic caused during inauguration of the project. NCP (SP) leader Supriya Sule was among those stuck in the traffic in the morning.

The cable-stayed bridge comprises Asia's broadest tunnel and the project has been included in the Guinness Book of World Records. The project cuts away the difficult ghat terrain road and the bridge passes from under Lonavala lake.

The distance between the two cities will be reduced by 13.3 km after the opening of the link.

According to Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) officials, the road will ease congestion at Khandala Ghat saving commuters around 25 to 30 minutes of travel time.

The foundation stone was laid in 2019, as per the MSDRC officials.

Strongrooms under strict watch, says Bengal CEO; repoll in 15 booths today

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

A day after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee spent hours at an EVM strongroom in the Bhabanipur constituency alleging malpractices, State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Agarwal on Friday said there was no scope for wrongdoing at the counting centres.

"There is CCTV surveillance round the clock and people can monitor the counting centres from outside," Mr. Agarwal said.

The CEO visited several counting centres and took stock of the security arrangements. "Only making allegations is not enough, there has to be some ground, reason and evidence of the allegations made," the CEO said, alluding to Ms. Banerjee's remarks.

The Election Commission has assured parties of a triple-layer security at all counting centres with specialised patrols in vulnerable zones. Only authorised personnel with QR-coded IDs are permitted entry in the counting venue.

Officials look at the CCTV camera footage of different Assembly constituencies ahead of counting in Bankura on Friday. ANI

On Thursday, there were dramatic developments outside two counting centres in Kolkata, where the Trinamool Congress alleged attempts to tamper with the EVMs and postal ballots.

Ms. Banerjee landed at the Sakhawat Memorial School counting centre where the EVMs of Bhabanipur constituency are stored, and stayed there for about four hours. She came out of the premises past midnight, claimed that there were attempts at EVM tampering, and urged her party leaders and supporters to keep a vigil outside the counting centres.

There was also a gathering outside Khudiram Anushilan Kendra on Thursday, a counting centre in Kolkata where Trinamool candidates Shashi Panja and Kunal Ghosh held a sit-in. The supporters of the Trinamool and the BJP came face-to-face outside the counting centre.

On Friday, the Leader of Opposition and BJP candidate from Bhabanipur, Suvendu Adhikari, visited the counting centre at the Sakhawat Memorial School.

Repoll ordered

The EC on Friday ordered repolling in 15 polling stations in two Assembly constituencies, Magrahat Paschim and Diamond Harbour, in South 24 Parganas district on May 2.

There have been allegations of electoral malpractices at several booths in the Falta constituency. The EC is yet to decide on the repolling at Falta.

LNG ship from India sailing near Hormuz drops anchor

M. Kalyanaraman
CHENNAI

*Umm Al Ashta*n, the LNG carrier that had set sail from Dahej, Gujarat, to the Persian Gulf for loading, has dropped anchor at Khor Fakkan, just downstream of the Strait of Hormuz, as per marinetraffic.com.

The ship would have been among the first to cross the Strait of Hormuz from the Gulf of Oman to load cargo if it had made the scheduled transit on Friday.

Umm Al Ashtan had stayed close to Oman during its transit unlike typical Iran-approved transits that hug the Iranian coast. The scheduled passage of the ship had given hope of normalcy returning.

Idemitsu Maru, the supertanker bound for Nagoya, Japan, had hugged the Iranian coast.

Govt. empowered ED to fight financial crimes; not to target anyone: Minister

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary on Friday said that under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has been vested with the powers necessary to effectively combat financial crimes and terror funding, not to target anyone.

"There exists an ecosystem in the country that finds problems in every solution and criticises every action. Ever since Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office in 2014 and started taking tough decisions in the national interest, this ecosystem has been unsettled. Such critics often claim that excessive powers have been given to the Enforcement Directorate, but they only present half the truth," said Mr. Chaudhary at the 70th Enforcement Day event.

MoS Finance Pankaj Chaudhary, right, with ED Director Rahul Navin at the Enforcement Day celebration in New Delhi on Friday. PTI

Crimes on the rise

"The complete truth is that these powers have been granted to the ED to combat financial crimes, not to target anyone. These powers became necessary because money laundering, 'hawala' transactions, 'benami' properties, corporate frauds, and terror financing were on the rise. Black money was being diverted abroad, banking scams were increasing, and the common citizen's money was being misappropriated," he said.

"Such offences are no less than cancer for the country, and they cannot be curbed through mild measures. Therefore, the ED has been strengthened to effectively tackle these threats," Mr. Chaudhary said, while lauding the agency for its achievements, including the attachments worth ₹2.36 lakh crore since 2005.

Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act (FEOA), criminals have so far been deprived of properties worth ₹65,872.72 crore till March 31, 2026, of which assets valued at ₹63,142 crore were restored to rightful claimants till now.

Congress hails SC relief for Khera, terms it a victory of the Constitution

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Welcoming the Supreme Court order that granted anticipatory bail to party spokesperson Pawan Khera in a defamation case filed by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife, the Congress on Friday termed it a "victory of the Constitution" and said the ruling reaffirmed that the law stands above all.

Addressing a press conference with Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh, senior leader and Rajya Sabha member Abhishek Manu Singhvi said the verdict underscored that courts remain the "ultimate bedrock of hope" when personal liberty is at stake.

Mr. Singhvi, who argued the case in the Supreme Court, urged the Assam Chief Minister to reflect on his "deeply inappropriate" remarks against Mr. Khera, noting that portions of these had been cited by the court, and called on him to express regret.

Congress leaders Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Jairam Ramesh at a press conference at AICC office on Friday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Supreme Court had granted pre-arrest bail to Mr. Khera in connection with allegations he had made regarding the Assam Chief Minister's wife, observing that the dispute appeared to stem from political rivalry.

Constitution on top

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the ruling demonstrated that "constitutional values have prevailed", alleging that the Constitution was under "continuous attack" under the BJP-led government.

Mr. Singhvi argued that in cases involving reputational damage, arrest should be a "last resort", alleging that the intent behind seeking Mr. Khera's arrest was to "humiliate and harass" him. He pointed out that most of the charges invoked were bailable. "In any democracy, space must be preserved for political dissent. Without that, the fundamental right to free speech is at serious risk," he said.

Hitting back in a post on X, Mr. Sarma said that the issue was not about politics but about the "character assassination of a woman on national television using forged documents".

INBRIEF

Sixth Nilgiri-class frigate joins fleet, boosting naval power

The Indian Navy on Thursday, took delivery of *Mahendragiri* (Yard 12654), the sixth ship of the Nilgiri-class (Project 17A) and the fourth constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in Mumbai. According to Indian Navy, the delivery marks a major milestone in India's push for self-reliance in warship design and construction. Project 17A frigates are advanced multi-mission platforms built to tackle evolving maritime challenges. Designed by the Warship Design Bureau, the ships represent a significant leap in stealth, firepower, automation, and survivability, reinforcing India's indigenous defence capabilities, it further added.

Flight aborts take-off after monkeys spotted on runway

An IndiGo flight bound for Raipur aborted its take-off at Lucknow airport after a group of monkeys was spotted crossing the runway, airport officials said on Friday. Flight 6E 6521 with around 150 passengers aboard had begun its take-off roll and was about 20%-30% down the runway around 9 a.m. on Thursday when the pilots noticed monkeys moving across. The pilots immediately aborted the take-off and informed air traffic control, following which the aircraft returned and departed about an hour later, after refuelling. Following the incident, the airport's wildlife management team acted as per standard operating procedures and cleared the runway.

Jabalpur boat capsize toll rises to 9; survivors allege negligence by crew

Survivor says they were not provided with life vests until water started entering the cruise boat; operator paid no heed to passengers' cry to take vessel ashore, instead he took it towards the middle of the dam, she says; M.P. govt. orders probe

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

Five more bodies were recovered on Friday from the Bargi Dam in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, where a cruise boat capsized the previous evening. Rescuers faced a difficult moment when they found the body of a mother clutching her four-year-old son under her life jacket.

The death toll has now reached nine, while four people, including three children, remain missing.

A diver of the Indian Army's 411 Parachute Field Company who recovered the bodies of Marina Messi and her son Trishaan, residents of Delhi, said, "It was very difficult to pull her out as she was holding her son. They were stuck behind a small window [in the vessel] and it proved tough to bring them out together because the mother's grip on the child was unyielding."

Ms. Marina's husband, Pradeep Messi, and their daughter survived the incident.

The tragedy unfolded on Thursday evening when a cruise boat of the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Department ran into a storm on its way back to the shore and overturned in the reservoir on the Narmada river. The boat was carrying 39 tourists and two crew members.

Officials recover the cruise boat, which overturned in the Bargi Dam due to a sudden storm, from the Narmada river in Jabalpur. ANI

28 people rescued

According to officials, some of the 28 survivors, including the crew members, were rescued shortly after the tragedy by workers of a private construction company nearby; personnel of the NDRF, SDRF, local police, and home guards took over later.

Special rescue and diving teams of the Indian Army from Hyderabad and Agra also joined the efforts on Friday morning with authorities deploying heavy equipment, including excavators to look for people who might have been trapped under the vessel.

Jabalpur Deputy Inspector-General of Police Atul Singh told *The Hindu* that the 18-tonne cruise vessel was stuck about 20-25 feet under water and divers were unable to reach some parts of the boat.

"After the Army divers recovered five bodies in the morning, some people were still missing so we decided to pull the vessel out of the water. The whole task took about seven hours," Mr. Singh said, adding, however, that no more bodies or survivors were found in the boat.

Several witnesses and survivors recounted the horrors of the tragedy. They alleged lack of safety protocols, and negligence on part of the crew. They said they were not provided with life vests until water started entering the boat.

Ms. Marina's teenage daughter said, "All of a sudden, we were beset by strong winds and waves. People began screaming in terror and asked the pilot to take the vessel ashore, but he would not listen and took it further towards the middle of the dam. Then water began gushing into the cruise boat and it overturned."

"Nobody was providing life jackets, so my father and another person broke a locker and got the jackets. Since, the boat overturned suddenly and there was no time, my mother covered my brother with her jacket. We found them the same way," she said, adding that the crew did not help anyone. The State government has announced financial assistance for the victim families and the injured.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav visited Jabalpur on Friday evening to supervise the rescue efforts. Mr. Yadav said a high-level committee had been formed to conduct a probe.

He said that the services of cruise pilot Mahesh Patel, helper Chhotelal Gond, and ticket counter in-charge Brijendra had been terminated with immediate effect due to negligence in the incident. "Sunil Maravi, manager of Hotel Maikal Resort and Boat Club Bargi, has been suspended for negligence in the discharge of his duties. Regional Manager Sanjay Malhotra has been attached to the headquarters, and a departmental inquiry has been initiated against him," Mr. Yadav said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the tragedy and announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh from the PM National Relief Fund (PMNRF) for the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 for the injured.

Changes to Citizenship Rules notified by Centre

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Thursday notified changes to the Citizenship Rules, 2009, introducing a digital shift across various processes for Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders and citizenship applications.

In a gazette notification published on Thursday, the government has added a specific proviso for citizenship applicants that "the minor child cannot at any time hold the passport of any other country while also holding the Indian passport".

The Citizenship Rules, 2009, allowed a person to submit an application for the registration of the birth of his minor child born outside India to the Indian consulate in the country where the child was born, together with a declaration that the child does not hold a passport of any other country.

The changes, known as the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2026, introduce a slew of online initiatives for OCI cardholders, including a digital application and renunciation process through an official portal, https://ociservices.gov.in.

'48% of NSE firms have no women as key managers'

A M. Jigeesh
NEW DELHI

Almost half of the 2,647 companies listed on the National Stock Exchange do not have any women in key managerial positions at all, according to an analysis of company submissions.

On average, there were 0.64 women in these positions per company in 2024-25, with only 10% of firms listed on the NSE employing more than one woman in such leadership positions.

Formal workforce

The study, conducted by the Udaiti Foundation, a non-profit organisation, found that women's representation in the formal workforce remained at 18%, a decrease of one percentile point compared to 2020-21. The situation is even worse among formal workers earning more than ₹18,000 per month – while women made up 21% of this group in 2020-21, their share had shrunk to just 12% in 2024-25. In contrast, the representation of women among lower-paid employees, as defined by the Code on Wages, rose from 19% to 23% over the same period, indicating that women are being shut out of higher-paying jobs in the formal sector, and shunted to lower-wage positions.

The largest employment provider for women in the formal sector are hospitals and lab services, where women make up 48% of the workforce, followed by textiles (37%), consumer services (34%), and information technology (34%). In banks and fast-moving consumer goods firms, women account for 26% and 21% of employees respectively. Women make up only 2% of employees in the construction sector, according to the Close the Gender Gap (CGG) data, collected by the Foundation.

Udaiti Foundation chief executive officer Pooja Sharma Goyal said the latest periodic labour force survey data (PLFS 2025) reiterates the fact that even when women secure regular wage jobs, the "quality" of that work often fails the test of true formalisation. "Women represent only 24% of regular wage employees. A staggering 57% of women in regular wage jobs have no written job contract and they earn ₹5,664 less than men in a month (₹18,353 vs ₹24,217). The new Labour Codes have clear provisions for pay parity and non-discriminatory hiring. But as the rules are finalised, it is critical that clear ground-level mechanisms are built in to translate these provisions into practice," Ms. Goyal said.

India to tap augmented solar capacity, coal to weather El Nino, summer power demand

Saptaparno Ghosh
Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Amidst expectations of further increase in energy demand with peak summers approaching and an El Nino in sight, India could be looking at meeting its increased power requirements from the traditional coal-powered thermal plants and augmented solar plants.

In fact, when the country scaled its peak demand of 256.1 gigawatts on April 25, thermal plants nearly retained its dominant position accounting for 66.9% of the generation, while solar augmented its position to account for 21.5% of the power generated.

The augmented solar capacity and traditional thermal plants are of pivotal importance in the dual paradigm of peak summers and El Nino effects.

Renewable growth

Solar contribution reaches new highs amid rising peak demand

* in million units

Date	Peak demand during the day (GW)	Solar generation* (contribution to total daily generation in %)	Wind generation* (contribution to total daily generation in %)	Total generation*
30-05-2024	250	421 (7%)	437 (7.4%)	**5,887**
09-01-2026	245	488 (9.4%)	274 (5%)	**5,168**
24-04-2026	252	665 (11%)	199 (3%)	**6,014**
25-04-2026	256	657 (10.8%)	156 (2.5%)	**6,102**

Although, speaking to *The Hindu*, highly placed government officials said the country was in a stable position with adequate supplies of coal to meet a potential increase in power demand.

While the historical data assessing contribution of each of the power sources could not be traced, for context, an average contribution of each of the sources through the day indicates solar energy accounted for about 8.9% of power generated on the day of peak power demand in 2025, 7.3% in 2024, about 6% in 2023 and 5.63% in 2022. Though solar power makes up about 30% of India's installed power capacity at present, it cannot be fully utilised due to limited battery storage. In fact, solar power is frequently curtailed to keep the grid stable.

Manoj Kumar, India Analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) says: "With stronger transmission networks, more flexible grid operations, and faster battery deployment, a larger share of evening and night-time demand can also be met through non-fossil sources."

Essential to note here that India added a record 44.61 gigawatts of solar capacity in the fiscal year 2025-26, which was more than the double it had added in the preceding fiscal.

Hotter months ahead

On Friday, the India Meteorological Department said El Nino conditions – which usually translate to weak monsoon rains and therefore longer dry spells – are likely to prevail during most of the monsoon months from June to September. Temperatures in May, broadly, would be less searing with more rain than what is usual for May expected over most parts except eastern India. Gujarat, Maharashtra, coastal Odisha, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh and Himalayan foothills are likely to see more than its usual share of 'heatwave' days.

Ample coal stocks

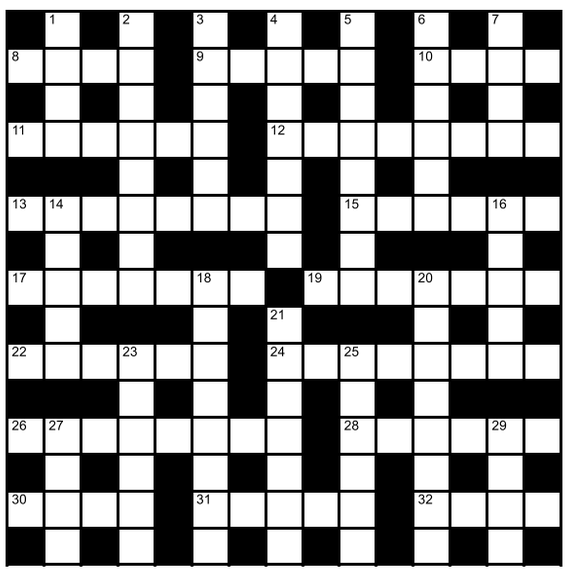
India has approximately 200 million tonnes of coal stocks as on date, thus, with approximately 2.3-2.4 million tonnes being utilised daily by thermal plants, the stocks would suffice for more than 83 days, a highly placed government official told *The Hindu*.

TH CROSSWORD + 14783

(set by Incognito)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

8 A student leaves Salem, India in a type of truck (4)
9 Thai travels around one Caribbean country (5)
10 Lake that is next to latter part of river (4)
11 9 flying around model island (6)
12 Serpent from broken down tipper encircles 6 (3,5)
13 Direct, "Nothing to be added to drink" (8)
15 Confused, Greta follows team leader's goal (6)
17 State: "Mona hugs Brown" (7)
19 Facial expression from stern and highly successful fighter pilot (7)
22 Rose climbed (4,2)
24 On secret agents having temperature in breaks (8)
26 Indian make up? (3,5)
28 Adds, "Kid is no longer asleep" (4,2)
30 Arabic leader's French friend is at end of pier (4)
31 Ship some tailoring material (5)
32 Stagger in short video (4)

Down

1 Wrongly gave a star (4)
2 Watchful soldier initially living wildly after losing bearing (8)
3 Drawing back, throw gin cocktail (6)
4 Argument from princess? Terribly upset! (7)
5 Perhaps what Hitler's steno called him? (8)
6 Spanish gentleman hugging setter is an old person (6)
7 Take on rent in Sitamarhi region (4)
14 Them having a type of shirt and hosiery item (5)
16 Dash, perhaps, in front of church with English host of a ceremony (5)
18 I stun pal dancing for weddings (8)
20 Wetness from our items going bad (8)
21 Act before nurse (7)
23 Animals from Paris roundabout appearing after tea, I hear (6)
25 God took seat on pot (6)
27 Top class manuscript ends (4)
29 Consumed and sued wrongly (4)

SUDOKU

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

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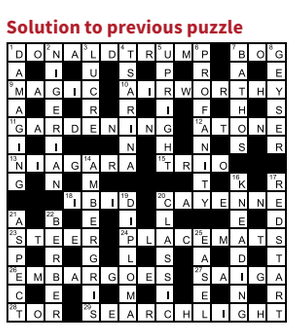
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Variyar's lessons of life

Sri Vadhauran Ayya shared spiritual insights and meaningful anecdotes about renowned scholar Sri Kripananda Variyar. Variyar Swami often advised people not to focus on writing new books. Instead, he emphasised the importance of preserving and studying the great works that already exist, such as *Thirukkural*, *Thiruvasagam*, *Thevaram*, and *Divya Prabandham*.

He also expressed a strong desire that children read traditional moral texts such as *Aathichudi* and *Neethi Neri Venba*, which instil essential values and discipline.

Variyar Swami laid down simple yet powerful principles for effective communication: speak with sweetness, speak the truth, speak in moderation, and speak in context. These guidelines help build meaningful and respectful relationships.

In his *Manimozhigal*, Variyar Swami shared traditional insights on health. Exposure to the gentle evening sun is believed to promote longevity, while harsh midday sun may reduce it. The sacred smoke from a *homa* (ritual fire) can contribute to well-being and a longer life, he said.

Another important teaching highlights the hierarchy of guidance: "*Mata, Pita, Guru, Deivam*" – mother, father, teacher, and the God. The mother introduces the child to the world, the father guides the child to the guru, and the guru ultimately leads one to God.

Variyar Swami often mentioned a teaching from the *Mahabharata*, where Bhima speaks about four important virtues: Treat all other women as one would treat one's mother, consider others' property as poison, refrain from backbiting, and feel the suffering of others as one's own.

INBRIEF

Noida airport to start flights on June 15 after CEO change

Noida International Airport will commence commercial flight operations from June 15 after appointing an Indian CEO, following the security regulator's refusal to grant clearance to its previous Swiss chief, which had delayed the airport's launch. The airport said the start date follows the 'receipt of approval for its Aerodrome Security Programme (ASP) from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), certifying that its security framework, systems and operating procedures meet regulatory requirements for commercial operations,' according to a press statement. Last week, the airport appointed its chief financial officer, Nitu Samra, as interim CEO after the BCAS denied security clearance to Christoph Schnellmann, a Swiss national who was earlier heading the project.

'Govt. to sustain capex push despite fiscal stress on war'

The government will proceed with the planned ₹12.22 lakh crore capital expenditure in the current fiscal to maintain the growth momentum despite the fiscal stress arising from the ongoing West Asia conflict, a senior official said on Friday. Expenditure Secretary V. Vualnam said the upcoming few quarters and the coming year would possibly have a "lot of stress points". Tax buoyancy could be impacted by a cut in excise duties on petrol and diesel brought about in late March. "The fiscal stress is indeed very much a reality, but at the same time... the capex would really be a priority item, which we would like to preserve and ensure that it continues at the budgeted level," Mr. Vualnam said at the ICPP Growth Conference here. He said highways, railways, shipping, ports and urban development sectors would be the focus areas for FY27 capex. India's fiscal prudence has put it on a good stead in these unpredictable times, he added. PTI

Auto firms' wholesales surge in April

Most automakers reported a double-digit growth and lower inventory, indicating sustained demand despite the West Asia conflict; Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., the country's biggest passenger car maker, sold 2,39,646 units, the highest-ever monthly sales volume, increasing 33% year-on-year

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Passenger car sales continued to gain momentum in April backed by the velocity created by the September cut in GST rates. Most automakers reported a double-digit growth and lower inventory, indicating sustained demand despite the West Asia conflict.

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., the country's biggest passenger car maker, sold 2,39,646 units, the highest-ever monthly sales volume, up 33% year-on-year.

Domestic sales touched an all-time high of 1,91,122 units, up 35%.

In fast lane: Maruti Suzuki Ertiga cars parked at the company's plant in Manesar, Haryana. REUTERS

Backed by a reduction in the GST rate, sales of small cars, attracting 18% duty, skyrocketed. The firm's mini segment, comprising Alto and S-presso, reported sales of 16,066 units, up 154%.

The sales to other OEM slid 14% to 8,470 units from 9,827 units a year ago while exports stood at 40,054, up 44%.

Maruti sales to other OEMs slid 14% to 8,470 units while exports stood at 40,054, up 44%

Tata sales rise 31%

Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd. reported domestic and international sales at 59,701 units, up 31%. This includes sales of Tata Passenger Electric Mobility Ltd., a subsidiary of Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles Ltd.

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (M&M) said the overall auto sales stood at 94,627 vehicles, up 14%.

In the Utility Vehicles segment, the firm sold 56,331 vehicles in the domestic market, a growth of 8% and overall, 57,833 vehicles, including exports. The domestic sales of commercial vehicles stood at 23,427 units, up 7%.

Hyundai Motor India Ltd. achieved monthly domestic sales of 51,902 units in April, up 17%. HMIL logged monthly export sales of 13,708 units.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said it sold 32,086 units, reflecting a growth of 17% compared with 27,329 units sold in April 2025. This includes 30,159 units sold in the local market and 1,927 in exports.

Kia India for the month of April reported wholesale volumes of 27,286 units, marking a 16% year-on-year growth over 23,623 units sold in April 2025.

JSW MG Motor India registered a 3% YoY growth clocking 6,018 in wholesales during the month.

Nissan Motor India Pvt. Ltd. recorded 75% growth in sales at 5,388 units. The firm recorded total sales of 5,388 units, including 3,203 units in the domestic market and 2,185 units through exports.

Centre eyes new E-bus scheme

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The Centre may roll out a fresh electric bus scheme for States after completing the tendering and allocation of all 14,000 buses under the PM E-DRIVE programme, a government official said.

Under the ₹10,900 crore PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) scheme, almost half the outlay –₹4,391 crore– is meant for the procurement of 14,028 electric buses.

"The Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) has successfully tendered all 14,000 buses and allocated them (to States). States will receive them in the next 2-3 years. This is a huge push for electrification of public transportation," the official said, adding "we will ask States if they want more buses, and then we may think of providing more buses by either extending the current scheme or launching a new one."

The official said absorbing such a large fleet poses a huge challenge for operators in terms of depot capacity and route planning.

Review of pharma, medical devices' supply-chain resilience on cards

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

India is undertaking an assessment of the industrial supply chain resilience and manufacturing capabilities of the pharmaceutical and medical devices sector.

It is a crucial exercise and the Supply Chain Division of the Department of Commerce is behind this, pharmaceutical exporters body Pharmexcil informed members, seeking inputs.

The information provided will play a crucial role in identifying critical supply chain dependencies and in shaping policy steps to boost local domestic manufacturing in the pharmaceutical and medical devices sector, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India Director General Raja Bhanu said.

The assessment assumes significance in the backdrop of India's plans to boost local manufacturing

Sector-specific inputs from industry experts and stakeholders is sought in Pharmexcil's questionnaire. Production capacity and utilisation; supply chain dependencies and disruptions; import vulnerabilities and logistics risks are some of them.

The respondents have been asked about key constraints impacting manufacturing competitiveness; challenges around staff availability, skills and productivity; costs, pricing pressures and global price fluctuations; regulatory issues and policy impacts.

Information on market conditions, competition, and domestic ecosystem gaps as well as the business outlook, expansion plans and support needed from government, especially the factors that can help raise investment in local production and biggest challenges in manufacturing are other aspects on which Pharmexcil has sought inputs from its members.

The assessment assumes significance in the backdrop of India's plans to ramp up domestic manufacturing, through the PLI or the production-linked incentive scheme and reduce dependence on imports ever since the COVID-19 pandemic.

How prediction markets are making their way into top newsrooms

Risk laden: Gannon Ken Van Dyke 'used classified information' to win money on Polymarket. AP

NEWS ANALYSIS

Mohamed Yunuss
CHENNAI

Major news publishers such as CNBC, CNN, Fox News, have struck deals with prediction market platforms recently. While the platforms operate by betting on various topics, including sports, finance, science, and culture, the question of why they sign deals with news outlets looms large.

Deal goals unclear

The two largest prediction market platforms, Polymarket and Kalshi, say that their media partnerships are a boon for journalism. However, the deals' details and goals are unclear.

"The world of finance depends on real-world outcomes, Kalshi predicts those outcomes," said Kalshi CEO Tarek Mansour after signing a deal with CNBC in December, 2025.

According to Bernstein Research, prediction markets are expected to grow up to $1 trillion by 2030. U.S. President Donald Trump's Truth Social has also announced its own prediction platform: Truth Predict, which is yet to be released publicly.

Sports gambling and sports news outlets have long co-existed even before the boom of major prediction market platforms.

Danny Funt, the author of Everybody Loses: The Tumultuous Rise of American Sports Gambling, told *The Hindu*, "In the U.S., many news outlets are fighting for survival, or at least facing difficult financial times. Under those circumstances, it is difficult to decline a potential new revenue stream, and these prediction market platforms certainly have a lot of money to spend."

He said that it's advantageous for these companies to be promoted on big news platforms. "These partnerships typically require news outlets to incorporate references to prediction markets in their coverage, which legitimises prediction markets and gives them more visibility."

"These partnerships will likely motivate journalists to go out of their way to reference prediction markets, even when it doesn't necessarily benefit their coverage. Worse, it might silence journalists, who'd otherwise be inclined to cover negative aspects of it," he added.

Inherent risks

Apart from this, experts suggest that people who have access to confidential information may buy cheap shares in that outcome when market probability is low.

When the news officially breaks, the probability and share price skyrocket, allowing insiders to cash out for massive profit.

On April 23, a U.S. special forces soldier involved in the military operation to capture Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was charged with using classified information about the mission to win more than $400,000 in Polymarket.

"It is very important that journalists are seen as serving their audience, looking out for their best interests. Promoting gambling potentially undermines that commitment, especially at a time when gambling problems are surging in the U.S., and people are already losing faith in the media," Mr. Funt added.

More flight cuts loom at Air India amid cost pressures

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

After implementing a 10-12% cut on international flights in April and May, Air India (AI) is preparing for further cuts in June and July amid soaring fuel prices and longer flight paths that have raised operating costs and impacted profitability.

"The airspace and ATF price situation are extremely challenging, leaving us with no choice but to further trim schedules for June and July," AI CEO Campbell Wilson told staff.

This, he said, was on top of cuts enforced for April and May as many international flights had "become unprofitable to operate".

Airline and government sources said cancellations were to the tune of 10-12%. But domestic flights were not impacted thus far, said AI sources. AI operates 1,100 international and domestic fights daily. AI-sources said the carrier had not withdrawn from any destination but cut frequencies on select routes.

Services to San Francisco, New York, Toronto, Vancouver and parts of Europe, including Copenhagen, Paris and Zurich have seen some curtailment, while routes to London, Milan, Vienna and Amsterdam remain unaffected.

Though AI maintains no cuts had been effected for domestic flights, the CEO said its profitability too had "been significantly affected, but to a lower degree" as the government limited the hike in ATF prices from April 1 to 25% even as international flights saw a 100% rise. AI posted a wider-than-expected annual loss exceeding ₹22,000 crore for FY26, as per reports.

PESHAWAR

13 militants killed in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: military

AP

At least 13 militants have been killed by Pakistani security forces along the Afghanistan border in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military's media wing said on Friday. The militants, belonging to Fitna-al-Khwarij, were killed in Mohmand and North Waziristan districts on April 28 and 29, Inter-Services Public Relations said. PTI

ABU DHABI

U.S.'s Hormuz plan 'not competing' with France, U.K.-led bid: French FM

REUTERS

France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot on Friday said a new U.S.-led coalition to reopen the Strait of Hormuz would complement and not compete with a similar mission spearheaded by France and Britain. The U.S. mission is "not of the same nature as the one we established", Mr. Barrot said. AFP

UNITED NATIONS

UN extends peacekeeping mission in South Sudan, but shrinks it

AP

The UN Security Council on Thursday passed a resolution extending the United Nations peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) by one year but reducing its size, despite pushback from several member states. The resolution, adopted with 13 votes in favour, prolongs the mission until April 30, 2027. AFP

ISTANBUL

Turkish police fire tear gas, arrest dozens at May Day demonstrations

REUTERS

Turkish police on Friday fired tear gas and arrested dozens of people holding May Day demonstrations in Istanbul, as thousands rallied nationwide. According to the CHD Lawyers Association, nearly 200 people were arrested in Istanbul, where police fired tear gas from riot-control vehicles into the crowd. AFP

Ukraine says it hit Russia's Tuapse oil terminal, fourth attack in region

Explosions and a fire were recorded on the premises; repeated strikes on April 16, 20, and 28 have damaged infrastructure; Russia launches over 50 drones at Ternopil, injuring at least 10; damages recorded in Kryvyi Rih city and Kharkiv region

Associated Press
KYIV

Ukrainian forces struck an oil terminal in the Russian Black Sea city of Tuapse, Ukraine's General Staff said on Friday, marking the fourth attack targeting the region's oil infrastructure in just over two weeks.

Explosions and a fire were recorded on the premises of local oil infrastructure, the statement from the General Staff said. Local officials in Russia said a Ukrainian drone attack sparked the blaze and that no casualties were reported.

The facility had been hit previously on April 16, April 20, and April 28. Regional governor Veniamin Kondratyev said a fire at the city's oil refinery had also been extinguished on Thursday, less than 24 hours before the latest strike.

Meanwhile, Russian attacks continued to strike Ukraine.

A satellite image showing a plume of smoke rising from the Tuapse oil refinery in the Russian port of Tuapse on April 28. AFP

Russia attacked the western Ukrainian city of Ternopil with over 50 drones on Friday, according to mayor Serhii Nadal.

Hits were recorded in industrial facilities and infrastructure, he said. At least 10 people were wounded, he added, while some neighbourhoods remain without electricity as a result of the mass attack.

Two multi-story residential buildings and port infrastructure in Odesa were damaged after Russian forces launched another overnight drone attack on the southern region, local authorities said.

As a result of the strikes, an apartment in a 16-story building was destroyed and the roof caught fire. In another high-rise residential building, a fire engulfed the 12th floor, according to Ukraine's Emergency Service.

In a post on Telegram, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said at least five persons were wounded in the region. He said damage from overnight attacks was also recorded in the central city of Kryvyi Rih and the northeastern Kharkiv region, where railway infrastructure was hit.

"Russia continues to attack our energy infrastructure, critical infrastructure, and civilian objects," Mr. Zelenskyy wrote.

Israel's death penalty law perpetuates racial bias: UN

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

Israel's new death penalty law permitting the execution of Palestinians convicted of deadly attacks perpetuates racial discrimination against them, a United Nations committee said on Friday, urging its immediate repeal.

The law amounts to a grave erosion of human rights, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination said in a statement.

Under the new law, passed by the Israeli Parliament in March, Palestinians in the occupied West Bank convicted by military courts of carrying out deadly attacks classified as "terrorism" will face the death penalty as a default sentence.

Displaced Palestinian activists hold a rally in support of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, in Gaza City on April 20. AFP

"The new law is a severe blow to human rights, rolling back Israel's long-standing de facto moratorium on executions since 1962 and expanding the use of the death penalty," the committee said.

The law is "de facto applicable to Palestinians only" and sets a 90-day deadline for executions once a final judgement is rendered, the committee said.

The committee also called on Israel to "end all policies and practices that amount to racial discrimination against and segregation of Palestinians".

In March, UN rights chief Volker Turk branded Israel's new law "cruel and discriminatory".

Taiwan expresses concern after China calls it 'biggest risk'

Associated Press
TAIPEI

Beijing asks the U.S. to 'make the right choices' on Taiwan for 'stability' between the two nations

Taiwan's government expressed concern on Friday hours after a call between China and the United States' top diplomats in which Beijing stressed that self-ruled Taiwan was the biggest risk in relations.

"Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned about the press release issued by China ... which again unilaterally made threatening remarks on the Taiwan issue," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

In a call with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged the United States to "make the right choices" on Taiwan in order to safeguard "stability" between the two nations, according to a statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

The call came about two weeks ahead of a highly anticipated summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

China sees self-ruled Taiwan as its own breakaway province.

Echoing unity

Steady flame: Girls sing a song as they show the movement of missiles with their hands next to the portraits of late Iranian revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini, late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, in a state-organised rally celebrating the birthday of Imam Reza, the 8th Shia Muslims' Imam, in Tehran on Wednesday. AP

Trump orders new sanctions against Cuban government

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday ordered new sanctions against Cuba, targeting a broad set of people in the communist-run country and threatening foreign banks that work with them.

In an executive order, Mr. Trump said he would impose sanctions on people involved in sweeping sections of the Cuban economy, which is steered by the government.

Mr. Trump will target people known to "operate in or have operated in the energy, defence and related materiel, metals and mining, financial services, or security sector of the Cuban economy".

BRIC NABI

NATIONAL AGRI-FOOD AND BIOMANUFACTURING INSTITUTE
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(Deptt. of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. Of India)
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Scientific
[Advt. No. NABI/ADMIN/1/(001)/2026-01/Rectt.]

Sr. No	Name of the Post	No. of Post & Category	Age Limit	Level as per 7th CPC
1.	Scientist D	01 (EWS)	50 years	Level-12 (₹ 78,800 – ₹ 2,09,200)

Administrative & Technical
[Advt. No. NABI/ADMIN/1/(001)/2026-02/Rectt.]

2.	Sr. Private Secretary	01 (UR)	35 years	Level-8 (₹ 47,600 - ₹ 1,51,100)
3.	Assistant Engineer (Civil)	01 (OBC)	30 years	Level-7 (₹ 44,900 - ₹ 1,42,400)
4.	Assistant Engineer (Electrical)	01 (UR)	30 years	Level-7 (₹ 44,900 - ₹ 1,42,400)
5.	Senior Technical Assistant	02 (UR)	30 years	Level-6 (₹ 35,400 - ₹ 1,12,400)
6.	Senior Technical Assistant	01 (ST)	30 years	Level-6 (₹ 35,400 - ₹ 1,12,400)

*Age relaxation shall be as per the Government of India (GOI) norms.
The detailed advertisement and procedure for submitting the online application are available at our website www.nabi.res.in.
If there is any Corrigendum/ Amendments in the advertisement, it shall be published on institute website only. Before applying, candidates may refer to the BRIC-NABI website and apply accordingly.

(Manager Administration)

Trump 'to raise' EU autos tariffs to 25%, accuses it of non-compliance with deal

Associated Press
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he will increase the tariffs charged on cars and trucks from the European Union next week to 25%, a move that could jolt the world economy at a fragile moment.

Mr. Trump said in a social media post that the EU "is not complying with our fully agreed to Trade Deal," though he did not flesh out his objections in the post.

Asked by presspersons on Friday about the increase in import taxes as he departed the White House for Florida, Mr. Trump said the EU was not "as usual" adhering to last year's trade framework, without detailing the source of the tension. He added that he believed the shift to higher tariffs "forces them to move their factory production much faster" to the U.S.

Donald Trump and Ursula von der Leyen had agreed to a trade deal last July, which set a tariff ceiling of 15% on most goods. AFP

Mr. Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had agreed to the trade deal last July. It set a tariff ceiling of 15% on most goods, though the Supreme Court this year ruled against the legal authority that Mr. Trump had used to charge that tax. This left Mr. Trump looking for substitute authorities, and his administration has imposed a 10% tax while investigating trade imbalances and national security issues to put in new tariffs to make up for lost revenues.

Both the U.S. and the EU had previously confirmed their commitment to preserving the trade framework, known as the Turnberry Agreement, which was named after Trump's golf course in Scotland.

The value of EU-U.S. trade in goods and services amounted to 1.7 trillion euros ($2 trillion) in 2024, or an average of 4.6 billion euros a day, according to EU statistics agency Eurostat.

Israel takes 2 activists on flotilla bound for Gaza for questioning

Associated Press
BARCELONA

Israeli authorities say they are taking two activists who led an aid flotilla bound for Gaza – and who were captured by Israel in international waters of the Mediterranean Sea – to Israel for questioning.

The activists – Palestinian-Spanish citizen Saif Abukeshek and Brazilian citizen Thiago Ávila – were among dozens of activists intercepted by the Israeli navy off the coast of Crete.

They are members of the Global Sumud Flotilla's steering committee, whose mission was to break Israel's naval blockade and bring some humanitarian aid to the Palestinian territory. In all, some 20 boats and 175 activists were intercepted by the Israeli navy.

On Friday, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said on X that it was taking the two activists to Israel for questioning, and that Mr. Abukeshek was "suspected of affiliation with a terrorist organisation" and Mr. Avila was "suspected of illegal activity," without providing evidence.

The Global Sumud Flotilla appealed for international support.

"We demand that all governments pressure the Israeli regime to release all the illegal abductees."

TACTICAL TALK

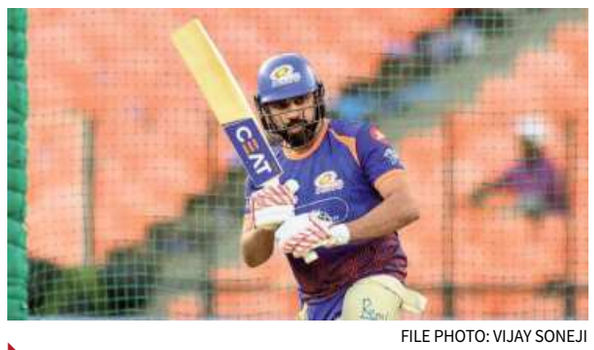
'Wanted to keep Dube and Brevis for the middle phase against GT'

B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

We've been experimenting a little bit. We'd like to be stable now and then use the Impact Player towards the end of an innings. In the last match [against GT], our idea was to have Brevis and Dube come in the middle phase. And that's why Sarfaraz came in after those two early wickets — CSK batting coach Hussey.

FITNESS CHECK

Let's see how Rohit feels and what the medical team tells us: MI coach



FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

Rohit Sharma is progressing well. We are assessing him on a daily basis with the medical team. We'll see how he feels and pulls up. We'll make a decision tomorrow (Saturday). Let's see how he feels and what the medical team tells us — MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene on Rohit's participation against CSK.

LATEST ADDITION

Sunrisers name teen all-rounder Ambrish as a replacement for Mavi

FILE PHOTO

Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday picked R.S. Ambrish as an injury replacement for Shivam Mavi for the remainder of IPL 2026. The 18-year-old was part of the triumphant India under-19 squad at the World Cup earlier this year. Ambrish, who is a right-arm medium pacer and a left-handed batter, will join SRH for ₹30 lakh.

MATURE RESPONSE

My score and innings don't matter if we lose: Royals skipper Parag

SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

We could've bowled way better in the middle phase. We conceded a lot of boundaries in a single over, and that repeated. Hopefully, my injury is not too serious. I don't think I need to answer any critics. At the end of the day, my job is to get two points. My score and innings don't matter if we lose — RR captain Riyan Parag.

Lakshya, Ayush power India into the semifinals

Satwiksairaj-Chirag duo pulls off a crucial win in the commanding show against Taiwan; the 2022 champion is now assured of a medal

Never-say-die attitude: Lakshya saved two match points to prevail over Chou. GETTY IMAGES

THOMAS CUP

Press Trust of India
HORSENS (DENMARK)

Lakshya Sen saved two match points to beat World No. 6 Chou Tien Chen, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty added a gritty doubles win, before Ayush Shetty delivered the final blow as India registered a 3-0 victory over Taiwan to storm into the semifinals of the Thomas Cup on Friday.

Lakshya, who was trailing for the better part of the contest, showed remarkable resilience to script an 18-21, 22-20, 21-17 victory in a marathon clash.

World No. 4 Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty defeated Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin 23-21, 19-21, 21-12 to put India 2-0 ahead.

The onus then was on Ayush, and the youngster delivered.

The 20-year-old, who recently reached the final of the Badminton Asia Championships, produced a breathtaking display.

He registered a 21-16, 21-17 win over World No. 8 and reigning All England champion Lin Chun-Yi in the second singles match to seal the contest.

India, the 2022 champion, will face either France or Japan in the semifinals. The victory also assured India a medal in the prestigious event.

Earlier, with the head-to-head locked at 4-4, Lakshya and Chou engaged in another absorbing duel marked by long rallies and intense momentum swings.

Chou displayed his experience in the opening game, recovering from 10-15 down and overturning a late deficit to take the lead.

Lakshya, however, responded under pressure. Trailing 13-17, the Indian reeled off four straight points to draw level.

Chou earned two match points, but Lakshya held his nerve, saving both before closing out the game to force a decider.

The results:

Quarterfinal: India bt Taiwan 3-0 (Lakshya Sen bt Chou Tien Chen 18-21, 22-20, 21-17; Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty bt Chiu Hsiang Chieh and Wang Chi-Lin 23-21, 19-21, 21-12; Ayush Shetty bt Lin Chun-Yi 21-16, 21-17).

Rahul, Nissanka keep DC's hopes alive

IPL-19

P.K. Ajith Kumar
JAIPUR

Delhi Capitals has experienced cricket's much celebrated glorious uncertainties.

Axar Patel's men scored more than 260, and still managed to lose. In the very next match, they were dismissed for 75.

Capitals chased down a target of 226 without fuss, on Friday night against Rajasthan Royals at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium, posting a badly-needed win – with seven wickets and five balls to spare – to stay in contention in IPL 2026.

An opening-wicket stand of 110 off 57 balls between K.L. Rahul and Pathum Nissanka ensured Capitals' chase was on the right track. An unbroken fourth-wicket stand of 49 between Tristan Stubbs and Ashutosh Sharma finished off the job for Capitals.

The tone was set by Nissanka as the Sri Lankan justified the faith put in him by his team. A one-bounce boundary over mid-on was followed right up by a lovely wristy flick for six against Jofra Archer in the opening over.

Rahul (75, 40b, 6x4, 5x6) also produced some delectable sixes. The partnership came to an end when Nissanka (62, 33b, 6x4, 3x6) was trapped in front, while reverse-sweeping Ravindra Jadeja.

Earlier, Riyan Parag (90, 50b, 8x4, 5x6) played a captain's knock, after Royals lost both their in-form openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and Vaibhav Suryavanshi within the first two overs. Suryavanshi was yorked by Kyle Jamieson, who appeared to have given his much shorter victim something of a stare.

The Kiwi could do well to remember how the wunderkind replied to Sunrisers Hyderabad's Praful Hinge. Before that, Mitchell Starc, playing his first game of the season, removed Jaiswal, who was undone by the pace of a full toss and skied a return catch. The stage was set for Parag, whose previous best from nine innings this season was 29.

And he came to this match a day after being fined for vaping inside the dressing room.

He showed courage under fire, but it still wasn't his night. Even Donovan Ferreira's unbeaten 47 (14b, 2x4, 6x6) would not help.

Highlights: Rahul and Nissanka added 110 for the opening wicket after Starc scalped three in his first match of the season to restrict Royals to 225 for six. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

SCOREBOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Yashasvi Jaiswal c & b Starc 6 *(3b, 1x6)*, Vaibhav Suryavanshi b Jamieson 4 *(2b, 1x4)*, Dhruv Jurel c Stubbs b Axar 42 *(30b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Riyan Parag c Axar b Starc 90 *(50b, 8x4, 5x6)*, Ravindra Jadeja c Ashutosh b Starc 20 *(14b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Donovan Ferreira (not out) 47 *(14b, 2x4, 6x6)*, Shubham Dubey c Ashutosh b Natarajan 6 *(6b, 1x4)*, Jofra Archer (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-3, w-6): 9; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 225.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-6 (Jaiswal, 0.3 overs), 2-12 (Suryavanshi, 1.5), 3-114 (Jurel, 11.4), 4-167 (Jadeja, 16.2), 5-168 (Parag, 16.4), 6-208 (Shubham, 19.1).

CAPITALS BOWLING
Starc 4-0-40-3, Jamieson 4-0-48-1, Axar 4-0-39-1, Kuldeep 4-0-41-0, Natarajan 4-0-54-1.

DELHI CAPITALS
Pathum Nissanka lbw b Jadeja 62 *(33b, 6x4, 3x6)*, K.L. Rahul c Ferreira b Archer 75 *(40b, 6x4, 5x6)*, Nitish Rana c Jurel b Deshpande 33 *(17b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Tristan Stubbs (not out) 18 *(11b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Ashutosh Sharma (not out) 25 *(15b, 4x4)*; Extras (b-4, lb-1, nb-1, w-7): 13; Total (for three wkts. in 19.1 overs): 226.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-110 (Nissanka, 9.3), 2-171 (Nitish, 14.3), 3-177 (Rahul, 15.2).

ROYALS BOWLING
Archer 4-0-46-1, Burger 3-0-41-0, Deshpande **(Impact Player for Shubham)** 4-0-38-1, Brijesh 3.1-0-35-0, Bishnoi 2-0-28-0, Jadeja 3-0-33-1.

Toss: Royals; **PoM:** Rahul.
Capitals won by seven wickets with five balls to spare.

Next assignment

DC: May 5 vs. CSK
Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

RR: May 9 vs. GT
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

CSK and MI in desperate need of a victory

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Whenever two of IPL's most successful sides clash, there is a sense of anticipation and buzz unlike any other contest. It is not for nothing that a Chennai Super Kings-Mumbai Indians clash is called the 'El Clasico' of IPL.

They have won five titles each and dished out some of the finest games in the league's history.

Yet, when these two franchises meet here in the reverse fixture at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday, the conversation is more about how the mighty have fallen.

Sailing in the same boat

After eight matches, CSK and MI are in the bottom half of the table, with the Super Kings in a slightly better position, having three wins compared to just two for Hardik Pandya's men.

Anxious faces: Suryakumar has failed to get going this season while Samson has blown hot and cold. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Chennai and Mumbai come into this fixture on the back of chastening losses to Gujarat Titans and Sunrisers Hyderabad, respectively.

The root of their struggle has been the inability to nail the right playing combination, as evidenced by the fact that Mumbai has fielded 22 players while CSK has used 19 so far.

In their previous meeting at the Wankhede Stadium, Sanju Samson's century and Akeal Hosein's brilliant spell in the Power-Play helped CSK hand MI its biggest defeat by runs (103) in history. The Kerala batter will once again hold the key to propping up a misfiring batting unit that struggled against GT's pace attack at Chepauk.

Meanwhile, for MI, it is a question of whether it can recover from the shellacking at the hands of Travis Head and Heinrich Klaasen, who made mincemeat of a 244-run target a couple of nights ago.

The visitor will hope the setback fires up the likes of Suryakumar Yadav and Jasprit Bumrah, who have had a quiet tournament.

Considering another loss could pretty much bring down the curtain on their campaign, CSK and MI fans would expect a hard-fought game befitting the storied rivalry.

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Punjab Kings	8	6	1	1	13	1.043
Royal Challengers	9	6	3	0	12	1.420
Sunrisers Hyderabad	9	6	3	0	12	0.832
Rajasthan Royals	10	6	4	0	12	0.510
Gujarat Titans	9	5	4	0	10	-0.192
Delhi Capitals	9	4	5	0	8	-0.895
Chennai Super Kings	8	3	5	0	6	-0.121
Kolkata Knight Riders	8	2	5	1	5	-0.751
Mumbai Indians	8	2	6	0	4	-0.784
Lucknow Super Giants	8	2	6	0	4	-1.106

Today's match

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS vs MUMBAI INDIANS

Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: **40**

CSK **19** | MI **21**

PREVIOUS MEETING

CSK won by 103 runs, 2026

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

'Dhoni will return once he is confident about his calf'

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

That he would be asked to give an update on M.S. Dhoni's availability was clear in Michael Hussey's mind.

The Chennai Super Kings batting coach came prepared for the query, explaining that the team was "being guided" by Dhoni.

"Hopefully, he'll be back as soon as possible. I don't know if it's tomorrow [Saturday] or the match after that. I know he's been upping his running speeds, and that was the sticking point," Hussey said at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Friday, on the eve of CSK's IPL 2026 fixture against Mumbai Indians.

"We're very confident from a skill perspective [batting and wicketkeeping], but it was just about making sure that he could maintain good running power. So as soon as he's got the confidence in his calf, I'm sure he'll give it the tick to be ready to go. And so we're kind of being guided by him... we're waiting," Hussey said.

Dhoni... the suspense continues. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

On Dhoni not travelling to the stadium on matchdays, Hussey added: "Yeah, he hasn't been coming. He always wants what's best for the team, and he was worried that if he came, there'd be a bit too much of a distraction. Whether that's right or wrong, that's not my decision. But that's the thinking behind Dhoni not wanting to come to the matches."

MI head coach Mahela Jayawardene gave an honest assessment of the season so far (four points in eight games).

"It's not about pointing fingers at the batting or bowling group. It's just a combination of us not being able to play consistent cricket... I don't think anyone is shying away from the challenge, but execution sometimes fails them. It's not on purpose; it just happens in sport. I'm not giving excuses, and we need to be better," he explained.

INBRIEF

Taking Green Jacket to India was cool experience: McIlroy

Masters champion Rory McIlroy said the biggest memory from the past year was taking the Green Jacket to India. "One of the coolest experiences for me was being able to bring the Green Jacket to India. It was the first time a Green Jacket has ever been in that country. And I did an event with Sachin Tendulkar, which was absolutely incredible. Just to think about Sachin, cricket, the reach that it has in that country... We talk about growing golf, and a real way to grow the game is to be able to have these collaborations with other sports stars in other countries," said the Irishman at the Laureus Sports Awards.

Japanese tennis star Nishikori to retire at the end of season

Kei Nishikori, one of Asia's most decorated men's tennis player, on Friday said that he will retire at the end of the season after a career ravaged by injury. The 36-year-old became the first Japanese player to reach a Grand Slam final at the 2014 US Open, eventually losing to Croatia's Marin Cilic. He was the first Japanese man to climb into the top-10 in the ATP world rankings, reaching a career high of No. 4, and won 12 titles on tour. Nishikori also won bronze in the men's singles event at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Infantino confirms Iran will play WC games in the US

The FIFA president Gianni Infantino reiterated that Iran will play its World Cup games in the United States as scheduled. "Let me start by confirming straightaway that Iran will be participating at the FIFA World Cup 2026...and of course, Iran will play [in] the United States," he said in Vancouver. Infantino's remarks drew swift support from US President Donald Trump, who said he was "OK" with Iran's participation. Iranian officials had floated the idea of shifting the team's group games to Mexico, but the proposal had been nixed by Infantino.

Wood's penalty gives Forest the advantage

Nottingham Forest's Chris Wood smashed a penalty into the top corner to secure a 1-0 win over Aston Villa in the first leg of the all-English Europa League semifinal on Thursday.

The results (semifinal, first leg): Braga 2 (Tiknaz 8, Dorgeles 90+2) bt Freiburg 1 (Grifo 16); Nottingham Forest 1 (Wood 71-pen) bt Aston Villa 0.

ISL: Jamshedpur gets past Goa, jumps to top spot

Jamshedpur FC scored a 2-0 win over FC Goa in the ISL at Jamshedpur on Friday. Rei Tachikawa drew first blood in the 83rd minute. Madih Talal made it 2-0 in the fifth minute of added time. JFC jumped to the top spot with 21 points from 11 games while Goa slipped to third (19 from 11).

Salah 'deserves big send-off', says Liverpool coach Slot

Liverpool manager Arne Slot said Mohamed Salah "deserves a big send-off" and added he was expecting the departing superstar to return from injury before the end of the season. "We expect him to be back in the final part of the season, but not for Sunday," Slot said on Friday. "It's a big relief that his injury is minor, so that he's able to play for us, that he's able to play at the World Cup. And if there's ever a player who deserves to get a big send-off, it's definitely Mo."

Figuring it out: Coach Muzumdar and captain Harmanpreet handed opportunities to several untested players during the recent South Africa tour. FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

India squad for T20 World Cup to be picked today

The shortest format has remained a work in progress for the Women in Blue; youngsters like Anushka and Vaishnavi have staked their claim

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

India will name its squad for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup – to be held in England from June 12 to July 5 – on Saturday, with Amita Sharma-chaired selection committee facing its toughest test so far.

It comes at an interesting juncture. India enters the tournament as reigning ODI World Cup champion, having ended a long wait for a global title at home last November. But in the shortest format, the journey has been less convincing.

T20Is have remained a work in progress in the post-pandemic phase. The Women in Blue India lost to eventual champion Australia in the semifinals of the 2023 edition and failed to make the last-four stage in the following year.

The recent results reflect inconsistency. Since the ODI triumph, India swept Sri Lanka 5-0 at home in December, followed it up with a 2-1 series win in Australia earlier this year, but then slipped to a 1-4 defeat in South Africa last month.

That South Africa tour could prove particularly influential. The team management used the series to experiment extensively, handing opportunities to several untested players and even resting vice-captain Smriti Mandhana for the final two T20Is.

The question now is how much of that experimentation translates into World Cup selection. Young prospects like Anushka Sharma, the promising top-order batter from Madhya Pradesh, and left-arm spinner Vaishnavi Sharma have pushed their cases during the recent outings. Considering the swinging conditions in England, pace-bowling all-rounder Bharti Fulmali was also recalled for the South African series after a long break.

Whether the selectors back youth or fall back on experience for the mega event will be closely watched.

The meeting will not be limited to the World Cup squad alone.

The committee is also set to pick teams for the upcoming away assignments against England – a three-match T20I series and a one-off Test – as well as the India-A squads for the three one-dayers and as many T20s against England-A.

Solanki gushes about the Holder effect for Titans

N. Sudarshan
AHMEDABAD

For the first eight games of the ongoing IPL season, Gujarat Titans lacked a cutting edge. It didn't put up big totals and barely intimidated opponents as it oscillated between the sublime and the ordinary, winning four games and losing four.

But that was until Jason Holder arrived like a Swiss Army knife in the four-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bengaluru on Thursday - well-rounded, adaptable and the ideal combination of form and function.

The West Indies all-rounder conceded just 29 runs from his four overs, dismissed Jitesh Sharma and Romario Shepherd, held on to fine catches to send back Rajat Patidar, Tim David and Krunal Pandya, and was involved in a nerveless 30-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Rahul Tewatia in the 156-run chase.

Holder. AFP

For a top-heavy Titans outfit with an airy middle-order, the 34-year-old has given balance, security and a progressive option. So much so that GT's director of cricket Vikram Solanki called him the "perfect storm".

"He's a world-class all-rounder, isn't he?" gushed Solanki. "When we were pursuing Jason at the auction, it was with the mind to him being able to fulfil both roles - with bat and ball. He offers us exactly that. He's physically strong and has great reach and leverage.

"He is also bringing an added dimension - a sprinkling of stardust of being a really experienced campaigner. Often you get individuals with experience who perhaps can't communicate well. But Jason is always willing to have conversations, with the coaching group and the young guys."

Interestingly, Holder warmed the bench for the first six games as Titans gave an extended run to Glenn Phillips. There is little doubt that the same courtesy would have been extended to Holder, though the beefy man has struck gold in no time.

In the manic, chop-and-change world of T20 cricket, GT is an aberration. A Swiss knife, with its "guarantee for life", seldom needs replacing too.

IPL is a massive platform: Ambrish

Tarun Shastry
CHENNAI

From grinding it out in Tamil Nadu first-division cricket to achieving u-19 World Cup glory, R.S. Ambrish has seen a phenomenal rise. The teenager scaled another peak on Friday when he earned his maiden IPL contract after being picked up as a replacement by Sunrisers Hyderabad.

In an exclusive interaction with *The Hindu*, the all-rounder revealed how he made the cut. The announcement came while Ambrish was on the field during a TNCA first-division match. "I got to know during a water break," he said. For the TN youngster, the call-up is a natural progression after knocking on franchise doors. The 18-year-old had attended trials with Chennai Super Kings and Kolkata Knight Riders, but it was the Orange Army that secured his services.

Ambrish. FILE PHOTO

"IPL is a massive platform. I wanted to carry forward the momentum from the World Cup and reach a bigger stage," Ambrish said. "It feels good to be part of an IPL team. I'll try to learn from experienced players and absorb as much as possible. My dad is my coach, and I called him right after the day's play (in the first-division game). We discussed what I need to do next," he said.

Regulatory tweaks were necessary... drivers will be much happier: Button

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

Formula One champion Jenson Button backed the FIA and F1's recent decision to make tweaks to the new regulations ahead of this weekend's Miami Grand Prix.

F1 introduced new hybrid power units for 2026, with 50% of the power coming from electric power as part of its push towards sustainability. However, the new cars have come under intense criticism from drivers who have bemoaned that they are too complex and not fun to drive.

"It always takes a little bit of time to fine-tune new regulations. I think the changes we have here will lead to a more consistent car for the drivers. They'll have a better understanding of what it's doing. I think they'll be much happier," said Button, the 2009 world champion.

Familiar hunting ground: Button said the Miami race would be interesting as Antonelli 'was really fast last year'. GETTY IMAGES

"We want drivers to be out there having fun and enjoying themselves when they're racing. So it plays a big part in it because when they get out of the car, and they're unhappy, it doesn't look great. So yes, I think fine-tuning was necessary," he added.

Following the cancellations of the Bahrain and Saudi Arabian GPs, the teams have had a five-week break since the previous round in Japan. Button feels this gap in the calendar would have given teams valuable time to assess things and expects the field to bunch up in Miami.

"I think we will see the field a bit closer this weekend, especially the top teams. Mercedes still has a bit of an advantage. But if they slip up, McLaren and Ferrari will be there waiting. The Ferraris are very good off the line. So if they get into the lead, it's going to be difficult to overtake them," the former McLaren driver remarked.

Commenting on the drivers' championship battle between Mercedes teammates Andrea Kimi Antonelli and George Russell, Button reckoned that whoever gets on top this weekend could have an advantage.

"I think it's interesting here in Miami because Kimi was really fast last year. So it's going to be a tough fight for both of them this weekend. We're back from a big break, and whoever gets down to the top step of the podium has bragging rights," said Button.

(Watch F1 live on FanCode)

Deep Respect wins the feature event

BENGALURU: Satish Narredu's ward Deep Respect (Suraj Narredu astride) won the International Labour Day Trophy (1,100m) the feature event of the races held here on Friday (May 1). The winner is owned by Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gollapudi, Dr. Prabhakar Chowdary Tripuraneni & Mr. Ashok Ranpise.

1. CAMINO PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): ZAYANA (Pavan) 1, Mystical Queen (Asirvatham) 2, Embosom (Jagadeesh) 3 and Star Of The Future (Rayan) 4. 2-1/4, 8 and 4. 1m, 14.56s. ₹16 (w) 11, 14 and 25 (p). Shp: 32, Thp: 48, Fc: 55, Q: 29. Trinella: 270/240. Exacta: 5,525/3,382. Favourite: Zayana.
Owners: M/s. Arun Alagappan Racing & Sans Craintes Stud Farm. Trainer: I. Ghatala.

2. EPSOM PLATE (DIV. II) (1,300M): FREDERIKA (A. Asbar) 1, Queendom (Shreyas) 2, Vibrant Queen (Rozario) 3 and Imperador (K. Mukesh K) 4. 2-14, 2-1/2 2-1/4. 1m, 19.43s. ₹45 (w), 23, 10 and 13 (p). Shp: 30. Thp: 38, Fc: 145, Q: 60. Trinella: 589/ 235. Excata: 2,265/ 1,025. Favourite: Queendom,
Owner: Mr. P. Arun Kumar. Trainer: Pradeep.

3. CAMINO PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200M): ZEPHYRINE (Pavan) 1, Royal Jewel (Shareef) 2, Windcleaver (Vishwa) 3 and Recreator (Arshad Alam) 4. 2-1/2, 3/4 and 3. 1m, 16.10s. Not run: Agrima and Blue Saint. ₹12 (w), 11, 10 and 17 (p). Shp: 25, Thp: 45, Fc: 16, Q: 16. Trinella : 62/36. Excata: 248/194. Favourite: Zephyrine.
Owner: Mr. Arun Alagappan Racing. Trainer: I. Ghatala.

4. PATTADAKAL PLATE (1,400M): BELLAVITA (S. Sachin) 1, Thrill Of Brazil (K. Mukesh K) 2, She Rules (Laxman S) 3 and Golden Time (Rozario) 4. 2, 3-1/4 and 1. 1m, 28s. ₹34 (w), 14, 13 and 14 (p). Shp: 24, Fc: 76, Q: 33. Trinella: 246/124. Exacta: 1,979/1,074. Favourite: Thrill Of Brazil.
Owner: Mr. Nirash Bothara. Trainer: Neil Devaney.

5. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY TROPHY (1,100M): DEEP RESPECT (Suraj Narredu) 1, Legacy Field (Akshay Kumar) 2, Burevestnik (P. Trevor) 3 and Portieux (K. Mukesh K) 4. 1/2, 1-1/5 and 1-1/2. 1m, 08.61s. ₹61 (w), 13, 12 and 11 (p). Shp: 21, Thp: 85. Fc: 438, Q: 156. Trinella: 213/87. Exacta: 1,231/1,231. Favourite: Burevestnik. Owners: Mr. Daulat Chhabria, Mr. Teja Gallapudi, Dr. Prabhakar Chowdary Tripuaneni & Mr. Ashok Rampise. Trainer: S. Narredu.

6. USHA STUD PLATE (1,400M): TOLKIEN (Akshay Kumar) 1, D Fronx (A. Asbar) 2, Eagle Eye (P. Trevor) 3 and Winfield (Antony) 4. 1-1/4, 1 3/4 and 4. 1m, 26.25s. ₹37 (w), 11, 85 and 10 (p). Shp: 159. Thp: 68, Fc: 1,126, Q: 515. Trinella: 1,843/267. Exacta: 12,049/10,328. Favourite: Eagle Eye. Owner: M/s. Sarainaga Racing. Trainer: D. Byramji.

7. EPSOM PLATE (DIV. I) (1,300M): HAZEL (Akshay Kumar)1, Auctav (Laxman S) 2, Larissa (P. Trevor) 3 and Magestic Persona (Suhas) 4. Lnk, Hd and 6-1/2. 1m, 20.38s. ₹26 (w), 12, 32 and 11 (p). Shp: 127. Thp: 45. FC: 583.Q. 754. Trinella: 939/ 227. Exacta: 13,020/5,580. Favourite: Larissa.

Owners: Mr & Mrs. Sahpoor P. Mistery rep. Manjiri Horse Breders' Farm. M/s. DT. Racing & Breeders & Mr. Ashoke Rampise. Trainer: Prasana Kumar.

Jkt.: ₹4,235; runner-up: 835, mini jkt.: 4,641; Treble: (i): 393, (ii): 943.

AROUND THE CITY

All smiles: Besant Nagar Club 'A', winner of the Sanmar-TNTA 45+ A-zone crown. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ajitesh's ton propels Globe Trotters

G. Ajitesh (107 batting, 144b, 12x4) and his 162-run unbroken sixth-wicket stand with V. Shavin (61 batting, 162b, 5x4) enabled Globe Trotters end the first day of the TNCA first division Qualifier 2 at 297 for five against Jolly Rovers here on Friday.

The scores: Globe Trotters 297/5 in 89 overs (S. Radhakrishnan 72, G. Ajitesh 107 batting, V. Shavin 61 batting, D. Deepesh 3/46) vs. Jolly Rovers. **Toss:** Trotters.

G. Ajitesh (Globe Trotters, 107 batting).

Besant Nagar Club 'A' reigns supreme

Besant Nagar Club 'A' (BNC) defeated host Anna Nagar K Block 'A' 2-1 to lift the 45+ A-zone title of the 33rd Sanmar-TNTA Chennai City Club tennis league championship.

The results (final): 45+ A-zone: BNC 'A' bt Anna Nagar K Block 'A' 2-1 (Ramkumar Rajagopal & Rameez Samad bt Vijayakumar Rajasingh & Vinodkumar Ramakrishnan 7-6(2), 7-5; Uday Kumar Reddy & Paramarthalingam Pillai bt Kamalharan & Gajapathy Venkatraman 6-2,6-3; C. Ram Prasada Reddy & Karthik Kailash lost to Karthik Iyemperumal & G. P. Balaji 2-6, 6-1, 2-6).

ENGAGEMENTS

Cricket: IPL, CSK vs Mumbai Indians, MAC, 7.30 p.m.; Cricket: TNCA I div. play-offs, Qualifier 2, Globe Trotters vs Jolly Rovers, day two, Gojan-A, 9.30 a.m.; TDCA league, II div. play-offs, Qualifier 2, Sriher vs Aththis (8 a.m.); Gojan 'C' (T); III div. play-offs, Qualifier 2, CPCL vs Sunder (1 p.m.), Gojan 'C' (T); 21st Lucas TVS-TDCA Trophy, Group-A, Wheels India Ltd. vs Ashok Leyland Velvoyalchavadi (8 a.m.), OCF Giri Nagar.

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs New Zealand: 3rd T20I, FanCode, 1.30 p.m.
ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 5 & 7.30 p.m.
LaLiga: FanCode, 5.30, 7.45, 10 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Sunday).
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 5, 2 & LIV, 7 & 10 p.m.
Serie A: DAZN, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Sunday).
Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 & 10 p.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.
Formula One: Miami GP (Sprint Race), F1 TV, F1 TV Pro App & FanCode, 9.30 p.m; Qualifying, 1.30 a.m. (Sunday).

Samson season: Sanju eventually bends time to his will

The 31-year-old has long been considered an elite talent, but it has taken him a while to show just how exceptional he can be. Things looked bleak for him at the end of January before circumstances conspired to give him another shot at the international level. He won India the T20 World Cup and then got his new IPL team, CSK, going with two unbeaten hundreds

PTI

P.K. Ajith Kumar

The young scorer from the Kerala Cricket Association spoke of the two boys who had moved to the city from New Delhi just a couple of days earlier.

"Could you take a look at them?" Sudhir Aly asked Biju George, the SAI coach who conducted training camps at the Govt. Medical College Ground in Thiruvananthapuram and had earned a reputation for nurturing young talent.

Of course, Biju would.

The following day, the kids came with their father, a former footballer who had returned home after leaving his job with the Delhi Police for the sake of his sons' careers in cricket.

> He was lovely to watch, and had a beautiful on-drive. I knew he was special
>
> **BIJU GEORGE**
> Coach

Early impression

The coach was impressed with both. The elder was sent to Wayanad, the other end of Kerala, where the State's under-16 camp was going on. The younger one stayed back.

Biju felt the boy was an exceptional talent. "He had a lot of time to play his shots," the former India women's fielding coach tells *The Hindu*. "He was lovely to watch, and had a beautiful on-drive. I knew he was special."

Sanju Samson certainly is. Like Biju, everyone who saw him bat knew it.

It, however, took the world long to find out that he is special enough to win India a World Cup. After leading India's chase with an unbeaten 97 in a virtual quarterfinal against the West Indies, he made 89 both in the semifinal and the final, against England and New Zealand respectively, to headline India's memorable title defence at home in the T20 World Cup a couple of months ago.

It had indeed been a long wait for Samson to fully realise his potential. He had made his India debut way back in 2015 but couldn't establish himself in the team despite being one of the most prolific and impactful batters in IPL history. In cricket's most glamorous tournament, he played for Rajasthan Royals for much of his career, until he moved to Chennai Super Kings this season. He has already hit two unbeaten hundreds to revive the hopes of the five-time champion after a poor start (for him as well).

GETTY IMAGES

> Sanju has tremendous fighting spirit. He comes back strongly from hopeless situations. He has the ability to introspect and find the answers himself. His strength lies in grit, determination and persistence
>
> **TINU YOHANNAN**
> Former India cricketer

The highs of the World Cup were followed by lows at the IPL: six, seven and nine were his scores before he struck 115 not out against Delhi Capitals to give CSK its first win of the season. He already looks rather at home in Chennai; he probably left Jaipur at the right time, after 11 seasons.

In his time in Rajasthan, he had lit up the Sawai Mansingh Stadium on those warm summer nights – the sun would reluctantly retreat behind the horizon only after lingering well past seven o'clock in Jaipur – with his silken, clean shots. His sixes and fours came not from brute power but more from sheer timing and a sense of placement.

Among his admirers were Brian Lara, who picked him as a future superstar, and Gautam Gambhir, who argued he should be in the Indian team. Years later, the gritty former India opener walked the talk: when he became the national coach, he got him in the team and gave him opportunities, although the decision to push him down the order to accommodate Shubman Gill was debatable.

Even Gambhir may have been disappointed after Samson's string of poor scores in the T20I series against New Zealand, and all those tame dismissals. And this was after a sensational run on his return to the Indian team in late 2024, with three hundreds in the format within the space of a month. That, however, was followed by a horrendous face-off with Jofra Archer in the home series against England.

The low before the highs

The five-match New Zealand series had been slotted as India's dress rehearsal before the World Cup. But Samson failed big time. To be fair to the team management, he was played in every game, as opener: his highest score was 24.

The last match of the series was played at Thiruvananthapuram. And it was Samson's first match for India in his hometown despite having made his international debut a decade earlier. Watching him trudge back after edging a 146 kmph ball from Lockie Ferguson was a sorry sight.

And there was more to come: the wicketkeeper's gloves were given to Ishan Kishan, who had forced his way into the World Cup squad with some stunning batting after spending more than two years out of international cricket.

History, Samson – and his large number of fans – feared, could repeat itself. He might have to warm the bench, like he did at the 2024 T20 World Cup in the Americas.

Now, to get a slot in the Indian top-order, even after the retirement of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, is perhaps the toughest challenge in cricket. It is like breaking into Clive Lloyd's West Indies team as a fast bowler or into the Indian team as a spinner at the time of the famous quartet. If you don't utilise your opportunity, you may not get another one easily.

Circumstances, however, conspired to give Samson another chance.

Injuries, family emergencies, and an abundance of left-handedness in the batting order resulted in him returning to the eleven. Suddenly, he could afford to dream the dream which he feared had died: to be the player of the tournament in India's World Cup win.

Tinu Yohannan, the first cricketer from Kerala to play for India, isn't surprised that Samson fought back from the dead. "Sanju has tremendous fighting spirit," says Yohannan, who has worked with him as a coach in domestic cricket. "He comes back strongly from hopeless situations. And he has the ability to introspect and find the answers himself. There has been some criticism about his technique, but I think Sanju must have found the solution from within. His strength lies in grit, determination and persistence."

He believes Samson is good enough for Test cricket, too. Several years ago, Lara had said that he and Rishabh Pant could control all forms of cricket for India.

All-format potential

Batters with better First Class records (Samson averages 39.27) might be struggling to make the Test team, but Yohannan believes Samson could serve India well on lively tracks overseas. "And he showed how good he could be against the red ball in the Duleep Trophy in 2024-25," says Yohannan. "He has the game to succeed in the long format, too. And when he stays at the wicket, runs come fast, regardless of the format."

That has been the case since Samson was a boy. One recalls interviewing him after he made 200 not out off 138 balls in a South Zone Vijay Merchant Trophy (Under-16) match, out of his team's total of 240 for one; he had already scored 10 hundreds for Kerala in age-group cricket.

That was in 2010.

Samson has taken his time, yes. But, he still has enough time to delight fans even more and further enhance his legacy.

STACKING UP

ATP Men's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Jannik Sinner	24	13,350	20
2	Carlos Alcaraz	22	12,960	18
3	Alexander Zverev	28	5,255	22
4	Novak Djokovic	38	4,710	17
5	Felix Auger-Aliassime	25	4,100	25
6	Ben Shelton	23	4,070	22
7	Taylor Fritz	28	3,870	23
8	Alex de Minaur	27	3,845	22
9	Lorenzo Musetti	24	3,715	23
10	Daniil Medvedev	30	3,560	24
11	Alexander Bublik	28	3,445	26
12	Andrey Rublev	28	2,630	24
13	Flavio Cobolli	23	2,600	28
14	Jiri Lehecka	24	2,540	22
15	Casper Ruud	27	2,535	21

Top Indians ▶

Sumit Nagal
Rank 277 ▲ 15 spots

Karan Singh
Rank 420 ▲ 14 spots

WTA Women's Top 15

#	Player	Age	Points	Events
1	Aryna Sabalenka	27	10,895	19
2	Elena Rybakina	26	8,500	23
3	Coco Gauff	22	7,279	19
4	Iga Swiatek	24	7,273	19
5	Jessica Pegula	32	6,136	21
6	Amanda Anisimova	24	5,995	20
7	Elina Svitolina	31	3,910	15
8	Mirra Andreeva	18	3,746	21
9	Jasmine Paolini	30	3,722	20
10	Victoria Mboko	19	3,531	21
11	Karolina Muchova	29	3,318	17
12	Belinda Bencic	29	3,090	19
13	Linda Noskova	21	2,849	23
14	Ekaterina Alexandrova	31	2,789	26
15	Naomi Osaka	28	2,324	21

Top Indians ▶

Vaishnavi Adkar
Rank 385 ▲▼ No change

Sahaja Yamalapalli
Rank 386 ▲▼ No change

English Premier League Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Arsenal	34	22	7	5	64	26	38	73
2	Man. City	33	21	7	5	66	29	37	70
3	Man. United	34	17	10	7	60	46	14	61
4	Liverpool	34	17	7	10	57	44	13	58
5	Aston Villa	34	17	7	10	47	42	5	58
6	Brighton	34	13	11	10	48	39	9	50
7	Bournemouth	34	11	16	7	52	52	0	49
8	Chelsea	34	13	9	12	53	45	8	48
9	Brentford	34	13	9	12	49	46	3	48
10	Fulham	34	14	6	14	44	46	-2	48
11	Everton	34	13	8	13	41	41	0	47
12	Sunderland	34	12	10	12	36	45	-9	46
13	Crystal Palace	33	11	10	12	36	39	-3	43
14	Newcastle	34	12	6	16	46	50	-4	42
15	Leeds United	34	9	13	12	44	51	-7	40
16	N. Forest	34	10	9	15	41	45	-4	39
17	West Ham	34	9	9	16	42	58	-16	36
18	Tottenham	34	8	10	16	43	53	-10	34
19	Burnley	34	4	8	22	34	68	-34	20
20	Wolves	34	3	8	23	24	62	-38	17

Italian Serie A Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Inter Milan	34	25	4	5	80	31	49	79
2	Napoli	34	21	6	7	52	33	19	69
3	AC Milan	34	19	10	5	48	27	21	67
4	Juventus	34	18	10	6	57	29	28	64
5	Como	34	17	10	7	59	28	31	61
6	Roma	34	19	4	11	48	29	19	61
7	Atalanta	34	14	12	8	47	32	15	54
8	Lazio	34	12	12	10	37	33	4	48
9	Bologna	34	14	6	14	42	41	1	48
10	Sassuolo	34	13	7	14	41	44	-3	46
11	Udinese	34	12	8	14	41	46	-5	44
12	Parma	34	10	12	12	25	40	-15	42
13	Torino	34	11	8	15	39	56	-17	41
14	Genoa	34	10	9	15	40	48	-8	39
15	Fiorentina	34	8	13	13	38	45	-7	37
16	Cagliari	34	9	9	16	36	49	-13	36
17	Lecce	34	7	8	19	22	46	-24	29
18	Cremonese	34	6	10	18	26	51	-25	28
19	Verona	34	3	10	21	23	56	-33	19
20	Pisa	34	2	12	20	24	61	-37	18

Spanish LaLiga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Barcelona	33	28	1	4	87	30	57	85
2	Real Madrid	33	23	5	5	68	31	37	74
3	Villarreal	33	20	5	8	59	38	21	65
4	Atletico Madrid	33	18	6	9	56	37	19	60
5	Real Betis	33	12	14	7	49	41	8	50
6	Getafe	33	13	5	15	28	34	-6	44
7	Celta Vigo	33	11	11	11	45	43	2	44
8	Real Sociedad	33	11	10	12	52	52	0	43
9	Osasuna	33	11	9	13	39	40	-1	42
10	Athletic Club	33	12	5	16	36	48	-12	41
11	Rayo Vallecano	33	9	12	12	33	41	-8	39
12	Valencia	33	10	9	14	37	48	-11	39
13	Espanyol	33	10	9	14	37	49	-12	39
14	Elche	33	9	11	13	44	50	-6	38
15	Girona	33	9	11	13	36	50	-14	38
16	Alaves	33	9	9	15	38	49	-11	36
17	Real Mallorca	33	9	8	16	41	51	-10	35
18	Sevilla	33	9	7	17	40	55	-15	34
19	Levante	33	8	9	16	37	50	-13	33
20	Real Oviedo	33	6	10	17	26	51	-25	28

German Bundesliga Standings

#	Team	GP	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	PTS
1	Bayern	31	26	4	1	113	32	81	82
2	Dortmund	31	20	7	4	65	31	34	67
3	RB Leipzig	31	19	5	7	62	38	24	62
4	Stuttgart	31	17	6	8	63	43	20	57
5	Hoffenheim	31	17	6	8	61	45	16	57
6	Leverkusen	31	16	7	8	62	42	20	55
7	Eintracht	31	11	10	10	56	58	-2	43
8	SC Freiburg	31	12	7	12	44	52	-8	43
9	FC Augsburg	31	10	7	14	39	55	-16	37
10	Mainz	31	8	10	13	39	49	-10	34
11	M'gladbach	31	7	11	13	36	50	-14	32
12	Werder	31	8	8	15	36	54	-18	32
13	Union Berlin	31	8	8	15	35	55	-20	32
14	Cologne	31	7	10	14	45	53	-8	31
15	Hamburg	31	7	10	14	34	50	-16	31
16	St Pauli	31	6	8	17	26	53	-27	26
17	Wolfsburg	31	6	7	18	41	66	-25	25
18	Heidenheim	31	5	7	19	35	66	-31	22

Test Batting

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

Test Bowling

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

ODI Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Daryl Mitchell	815	840
2	Virat Kohli	791	908
3	Ibrahim Zadran	756	756
4	Rohit Sharma	748	879
5	Shubman Gill	716	841
6	Babar Azam	684	894
7	Shai Hope	679	782
7	Harry Tector	679	730
9	K.L. Rahul	664	676
9	Salman Agha	664	664

ODI Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Rashid Khan	705	775
2	Jofra Archer	649	682
3	Keshav Maharaj	645	737
4	Adil Rashid	629	671
5	Josh Hazlewood	626	725
6	Maheesh Theekshana	624	680
6	Kuldeep Yadav	624	757
8	Mehidy Hasan	621	722
9	Mitchell Santner	599	656
9	Adam Zampa	599	696

T20I Batting

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Abhishek Sharma	875	931
2	Ishan Kishan	871	871
3	Sahibzada Farhan	848	848
4	Phil Salt	792	881
5	Pathum Nissanka	766	796
6	Tilak Varma	742	845
7	Suryakumar Yadav	722	912
8	Jos Buttler	716	794
9	Tim Seifert	705	749
10	Dewald Brevis	702	738

T20I Bowling

#	Player	Rating	Career best
1	Rashid Khan	753	828
2	Varun Chakaravarthy	740	818
3	Abrar Ahmed	736	757
4	Adil Rashid	721	747
5	Jasprit Bumrah	702	783
6	Adam Zampa	682	746
7	Corbin Bosch	669	745
8	Matthew Forde	667	679
9	Mujeeb Ur Rahman	663	757
10	Nathan Ellis	661	678

GETTY IMAGES

Talent, training, fuel, shoes: behind Sawe's historic London sub-2

The 31-year-old Kenyan became the first man to take less than two hours to run a marathon in race conditions. What went into the shattering of a once-unapproachable barrier? And just how much faster can Sawe go?

Associated Press
Agence France-Presse

What do you eat before running the fastest marathon in history? Sabastian Sawe chose a pre-race breakfast of two slices of bread with honey, washed down with a cup of tea – a modest meal, but one that experts say fuelled him with easily digestible, fast-acting carbohydrates and sugar, hydration and a caffeine boost.

The 31-year-old Kenyan, who on Sunday became the first man to take less than two hours to run a marathon in race conditions, is assured of immortality. His feat is a first-ballot candidate for any sporting hall of fame; his breakfast has a strong case for entering the culinary wing.

Cultural significance

Sawe's shattering of the long-unapproachable two-hour barrier in London ranks alongside Roger Bannister's first sub-four-minute mile at Oxford in 1954 in terms of cultural significance. Both achievements have expanded the perception of what was thought humanly possible. For context, the first sub-2:30 marathon came in 1925 and the 2:15 barrier was broken 38 years after that; at the turn of the century, the world's best time was 2:05:42, set in 1999.

> I have shown that nothing is not possible. I had courage to push even when the pace was so fast. I was not bothered because I was ready for it
>
> **SABASTIAN SAWE**

Sawe's time of 1hr 59min 30 sec was an astonishing 65 seconds inside the previous best of 2:00:35 set in Chicago in 2023 by Kelvin Kiptum, whose death in a car crash in 2024 plunged Kenya into mourning. Two years later, Sawe gave his country reason to rejoice.

Incredibly, 11 seconds after the unthinkable happened, it happened again. The marathon had its second sub-two runner. Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha, 28, finished second in 1:59:41 on his marathon debut. (Kenyan great Eliud Kipchoge did run a marathon in under two hours in 2019, but his 1:59.40 did not make the record books, as it was a specially tailored event in favourable conditions, not a competitive race.)

Sawe's statistics were dizzying. He completed the London Marathon – on a relatively flat course on a mostly sunny day (15 degrees Celsius), ideal for running – with a negative split. The second half of his race was faster than the first. With the assistance of pacemakers in the initial kilometres, he did the first half in 60:29 and then sped up, clocking a remarkable 59:01 for the second. He averaged 21.2 km per hour, or 2 minutes 49.9 seconds per kilometre. "I have shown that nothing is not possible," said Sawe. "I had courage to push even when the pace was so fast. I was not bothered because I was ready for it."

Running 42.195 kilometres – a distance that has been around since ancient times – in less than 120 minutes was once treated as a natural physiological ceiling. A marathon tests a human being's energy supply (accessing and burning 'fuel' without dropping pace), aerobic limit (maximal oxygen uptake), and biomechanical precision (running form and cadence).

Punishing intensity

So how did Sawe ace this test? The Kenyan, born in the Rift Valley Province to a father who worked as a maize farmer and raised by his grandmother in a mud-walled house, is extraordinarily talented and trains with punishing intensity.

"Definitely physiologically, Sabastian has to be a good one," said Claudio Berardelli, the Italian coach who recognised Sawe's potential and has since guided him on the path to greatness. "But all the pieces come together perfectly because of his attitude, because of his character. In 22 years I've been coaching in Kenya I thought I'd seen pretty much everything, but then Sabastian started to show me something which I thought was almost impossible."

Sawe's high-volume training at altitude in Kapsabet, Nandi County, with a strong group of athletes who push him, has contributed significantly to his progress. In London, Berardelli said his athlete had been even fitter than in Berlin in September when the late-summer heat had spoiled his previous assault on the world record.

> When I started dealing with Sabastian, I immediately realised this is not just one of the best Kenyan guys. At least for my experiences, he is a different human being. An outlier
>
> **CLAUDIO BERARDELLI**
> Sawe's coach

"In the last six weeks he was averaging 200km and above a week, while the peak was 241km," said Berardelli. "I knew he was super-good for Berlin, but he couldn't express himself because of the conditions. But when I started to see him running the way he ran before London, I was like, hey, something special might come out."

While a large part of Sawe's success is a consequence of his talent and its careful nurturing, there is no doubt that he has benefited from the developments in nutrition and – to a greater degree – the technological arms race launched by shoe companies a decade ago, when they began using carbon-fibre plates and other materials to make shoes lighter and springier.

"We are in the new era of marathon running because of the shoe and proper fuelling," Berardelli said. According to the *BBC*, Sawe reportedly worked with a research team from a sports nutrition brand which specialises in hydrogels. He trained to absorb 90-120 grams of carbohydrates per hour during the race without feeling distress. This tops the glycogen levels up, allowing the body to use carbohydrates, rather than slower-burning fat reserves, as fuel.

The newly developed Adidas shoes Sawe wore to navigate the streets of London were the lightest in history, the first 'super shoe' to weigh under 100g. They clearly made a difference – second-placed Kejelcha was wearing them too.

The combination of thick foam in the sole, shaped with a 'drop' from heel to forefoot to keep runners 'forward' in their stride cycle, and stiff carbon in the midsoles, which store and return energy, reportedly acts as a lever and spring system.

The result is better running economy – in 'super shoes', athletes burn less energy at a given pace than in regular running shoes. There has been criticism of 'super shoes', the argument being that using them is akin to mechanical doping. World Athletics has tried to regulate the revolution, but there is no doubt that it has played a major role in the lowering of times.

Sawe's achievement will inevitably be viewed against the backdrop of an appalling series of doping cases among Kenyan athletes in the last few years. But, in a bid to allay such suspicions about his own performances, he has voluntarily subjected himself to extra drug testing. Adidas provided $50,000 to the Athletics Integrity Unit to frequently test Sawe over a 12-month period.

That began with a reported 25 out-of-competition tests in the lead-up to Berlin in September, continuing at a similar rate as he prepared for London.

Next up: Mission 1:59?

The obvious question is whether Sawe can run even faster. Berardelli believes that his athlete could breach 1:59 on a quicker course such as Berlin or Chicago. "Sabastian hasn't reached his maximum potential. It was only his fourth marathon, if we think of long-term adaptations, which is a process requiring time, I believe Sabastian has not reached this yet," said Berardelli.

"When I started dealing with Sabastian, I immediately realised this is not just one of the best Kenyan guys. At least for my experiences, he is a different human being. An outlier."

Sawe's 5km splits: breaking down the Kenyan's run

	Time	Split
5km	14:14	**14:14**
10km	28:35:00	**14:21**
15km	43:10:00	**14:35**
20km	57:21:00	**14:11**
25km	1:11:41	**14:20**
30km	1:26:03	**14:22**
35km	1:39:57	**13:54**
40km	1:53:39	**13:42**
42.195km	1:59:30	**5:51**

SOURCE: OLYMPICS.COM

GAME THEORY

Still chasing Marita Koch: the four-decade wait

Marita Koch's mark in the 400m, set in 1985, is the second-longest-standing individual world record in athletics. It has been the subject of some debate because Koch competed in an era when East Germany was known to be systematically doping its athletes. Koch never failed a drugs test, however, and has maintained she did nothing wrong. Last year, four decades after Koch's benchmark run, two athletes, Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone and Marileidy Paulino, went under 48 seconds. Are those performances an indication that Koch's record might finally be under threat? And could 2026 be the year?

400M (WOMEN): FASTEST TIMES

Mark	Competitor	Venue	Date
47.60	Marita Koch	Canberra	06 Oct 1985
47.78	Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone	Tokyo	18 Sep 2025
47.98	Marileidy Paulino	Tokyo	18 Sep 2025
47.99	Jarmila Kratochvilova	Helsinki	10 Aug 1983
48.14	Salwa Eid Naser	Doha	03 Oct 2019
48.16	Marita Koch	Athina	08 Sep 1982
48.16	Marita Koch	Praha	16 Aug 1984
48.17	Marileidy Paulino	Paris	09 Aug 2024
48.19	Salwa Eid Naser	Tokyo	18 Sep 2025
48.22	Marita Koch	Stuttgart	28 Aug 1986
48.25	Marie-Jose Perec	Atlanta	29 Jul 1996
48.26	Marita Koch	Dresden	27 Jul 1984
48.27	Olga Bryzgina	Canberra	06 Oct 1985
48.29	Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone	Tokyo	16 Sep 2025
48.36	Shaunae Miller-Uibo	Tokyo	06 Aug 2021
48.37	Shaunae Miller-Uibo	Doha	03 Oct 2019
48.45	Jarmila Kratochvilova	Praha	23 Jul 1983
48.53	Salwa Eid Naser	Paris	09 Aug 2024
48.57	Nickisha Pryce	London	20 Jul 2024
48.59	Tatana Kocembova	Helsinki	10 Aug 1983

MARITA KOCH

SYDNEY MCLAUGHLIN-LEVRONE

MARILEIDY PAULINO

SOURCE: WORLD ATHLETICS

PICTURE THIS

GETTY IMAGES

In a bind

This photograph captures action from the women's open weight class at the 41st Empress Cup All Japan Women's Judo Championship in Yokohama.

Japanese judoka consider the event one of the sport's three major competitions, along with the Olympic Games and the World Championships.

Judo, created in 1882 by Kano Jigoro, is an unarmed Japanese martial art, with an emphasis on 'randori' (free sparring) rather than 'kata' (pre-determined forms).

A foundational principle of judo (Japanese for the 'gentle way') is maximum efficient use of energy. The three basic techniques, when it is taught as a martial art or a form of self-defence, involve throwing, grappling and striking.

Striking, however, is not allowed in competitive judo, where the objective is to throw an opponent forcefully onto their backs, immobilise them with a pin, or force them to submit with a joint lock or a choke. The sport's international governing body is the International Judo Federation (IJF), with professional judoka competing on the IJF circuit. Judo was first contested at the Olympics in 1964.