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U.S. choices are impossible operation or bad deal: Iran

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Sunday said the United States faced a choice between an "impossible" military operation or a "bad deal" with Tehran.

Negotiations between the two countries have been deadlocked since a ceasefire came into effect on April 8, with only one round of direct peace talks held so far.

Iran's Foreign Ministry said Tehran had submitted a 14-point plan "focused on ending the war" and that Washington had already responded to it in a message to Pakistani mediators.

"We are reviewing this and will take whatever response is necessary regarding it," spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei told state television.

Mr. Trump, however, had already dismissed the offer.

> I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity, and the World, over the last 47 years
>
> **DONALD TRUMP**
> U.S. President

"I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity, and the World, over the last 47 years," Mr. Trump said on his Truth Social platform.

U.S. news website Axios reported that the proposal set "a one-month deadline for negotiations on a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, end the U.S. naval blockade and permanently end the war in Iran and in Lebanon".

In a statement on Sunday, the Revolutionary Guards sought to put the onus back on Mr. Trump, saying he must choose between "an impossible operation or a bad deal with Iran".

The day before, Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi told diplomats in Tehran that "the ball is in the United States' court to choose the path of diplomacy or the continuation of a confrontational approach".

Iran, he said, was "prepared for both paths".

SLEEPLESS IN TEHRAN
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Parties brace for verdict; EC promises transparency

Heavy security as counting of votes polled for elections to the Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, T.N., West Bengal, Puducherry, and bypolls to seven Assembly seats in five States will be taken up today

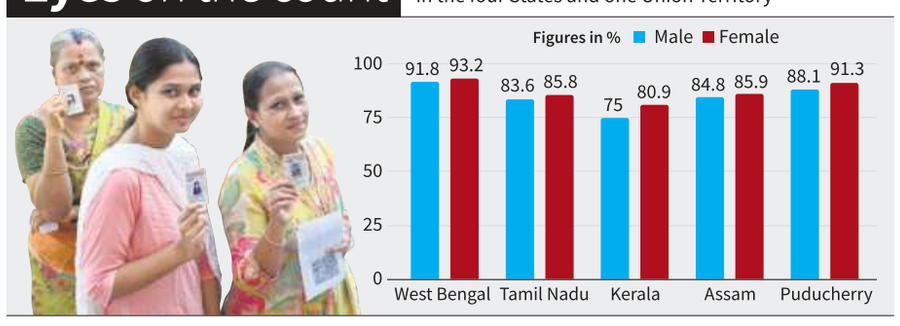
The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Sunday said it would uphold the "highest standards of transparency, security and efficiency" when votes polled in the elections to the Assemblies of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Puducherry and the bypolls in seven Assembly constituencies in five States are counted on Monday.

For West Bengal, the EC had deployed 165 additional counting observers to assist counting observers and 77 police observers to conduct "a secure, peaceful, intimidation-free, and transparent environment".

Exuding confidence, the political parties and fronts are watching the counting preparations closely.

Eyes on the count
The chart shows the gender-wise poll participation in the four States and one Union Territory



In Assam, the Congress-led front of six parties hopes to shed the Opposition tag by preventing the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from scoring a hat-trick of wins. Both the alliances are confident about bagging at least 64 seats, the majority mark in the 126-member Assembly. While the Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-helmed BJP has predicted close to 100 seats for the NDA, the Gaurav Gogoi-steered Congress is confident of a similar number for the Asom Sonmilito Morcha to return to power after 10 years.

With just hours left for the counting of votes polled in the April 9 election, Kerala's voter turnout was updated provisionally to 79.7% on Sunday as election officials factored in 20,028 postal ballots of service voters polled till May 1. The leaderships of all three fronts were confident about the results.

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Registration open as TNEA 2026 procedure begins

CHENNAI
Kicking off the Tamil Nadu Engineering Admissions 2026, the Directorate of Technical Education has released the tentative schedule for the process and online registration has been opened. » PAGE 2

UPSC meeting on May 11 to shortlist DGP candidates

CHENNAI
The UPSC will convene a meeting in New Delhi on May 11 to shortlist three officers fit for appointment as the Tamil Nadu Director-General of Police. » PAGE 2

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Breaking the ice

Paving the way: Ahead of the opening of Gurdwara Sri Hemkund Sahib in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, Army personnel clearing snow from its premises on Sunday. The Hemkund Sahib yatra is scheduled from May 23. PTI

Nine dead as major fire rips through residential building in East Delhi

Shrimansi Kaushik
NEW DELHI

Nine people were killed in a major fire in a residential building at Shahdara in East Delhi in the early hours of Sunday. Fifteen people were brought to safety by rescue teams. Five of the dead were from one family.

The fire was reported around 3.48 a.m. in the building in the Vivek Vihar Phase I residential complex. Eyewitnesses said the fire broke out on the ground floor, likely from an air-conditioner, and quickly spread to the three floors above. Delhi Fire Service (DFS) officials said the blaze was brought under control around 6.25 a.m. Two of the residents had injuries. Several of them were taken to a nearby hospital, while the search continued through the morning. Most of them were discharged immediately, officials said.

Family members of victims mourn after nine people were killed in a fire at Vivek Vihar in East Delhi on Sunday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"The search-and-rescue and firefighting operations were carried out simultaneously. The building comprises a basement, a stilt, and four upper floors spread across an area of over 7,000 sq. ft. There are two flats on each floor [one in the front of the building and the other in the rear]. The rear side was enclosed with grilles which caused problems in the rescue," Mukesh Verma, Duty Officer, DFS, said.

Expressing grief, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced *ex gratia* for the kin of the dead and the injured.

Bodies recovered

As the search operation ended, the DFS and the police confirmed the recovery of nine charred bodies – one from the first floor, five from the second floor, and three from a locked staircase on the third floor. The upper ground floor was empty.

While most of those residing in the flats on the front side were rescued, those on the rear side were affected the most. The deceased belonged to three families. Authorities said they are probing to ascertain the cause of the fire.

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Passenger from Sharjah detained after he opens emergency exit door, runs on tarmac after landing

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

A passenger arriving in Chennai from the United Arab Emirates caused a flutter when he opened the emergency exit door and ran on the tarmac on Sunday. As a result, an international flight reaching the city was diverted to Bengaluru.

Uses evacuation slide

An Air Arabia international flight from Sharjah landed at the Chennai airport around 3.45 a.m. As the aircraft was taxiing, the passenger opened the emergency exit door, came out through the evacuation slide, and ran on the tarmac towards gate no. 102, airport sources said.

Freak incident: It took nearly an hour to close the slide. The aircraft was brought to the bay around 4.45 a.m. and the passengers disembarked. IMAGE USED FOR REPRESENTATION PURPOSE ONLY.

Air Traffic Control officials, who noticed the incident, raised an alert. Personnel of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) rushed to the spot and caught the passenger. He was handed over to the police. It took nearly an hour for the aircraft team to close the evacuation slide. Around 4.45 a.m., the aircraft was brought to the bay, and the passengers disembarked, airport sources said.

Probe launched

Officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said they had begun an investigation.

As the flight was held up on the runway for nearly an hour, an international flight arriving from London was diverted to Bengaluru.

The Greater Chennai Police identified the passenger as Mohamed Najmudeen Sherif, a native of Pudukkottai district. He said he was travelling with a group of eight persons, and he had opened the emergency exit door to escape, as he feared someone was plotting to attack him. He was detained at the airport. Officials questioned the passenger as well as those who had travelled with him.

Later in the day, the police said the passenger was found to be under mental stress, and was admitted to a hospital for evaluation and treatment.

Nepal raises Lipulekh issue; India says no 'historical' record

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's upcoming visit to Nepal came under a shadow on Sunday with Nepal expressing "concerns" to both India and China over the next season of Kailash Manasarovar Yatra through the Kalapani-Limpiyadhura-Lipulekh region. It reiterated that the region is part of Nepal's sovereign territory.

In response to Kathmandu's remarks, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that Nepal's claims on the Lipulekh Pass are not based on "historical facts".

Vikram Misri

The Ministry had announced on April 30 the next round of Kailash Yatra would take place in coordination with China in June-August.

Earlier, Mr. Misri's plans to visit Kathmandu were in focus because of uncertainties in securing a meeting with the new Prime Minister, Balendra Shah, who has refused to meet foreign envoys as he has been following a restrictive diplomatic protocol since taking charge in March.

In an announcement, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, "The Government of Nepal is completely clear and steadfast in the fact that Limpiyadhura, Lipulek and Kalapani east of the Mahakali river are integral parts of Nepal since the Treaty of Sugauli of 1816."

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INBRIEF

Man found dead in Velliangiri Hills in Coimbatore district

A man aged between 35 and 40 was found dead in the Velliangiri Hills in Coimbatore district on Sunday morning, taking the toll of persons who died during the ongoing annual pilgrimage season to seven. According to the Forest Department, pilgrims found the man lying unconscious on a rock at the seventh hill around 3.30 a.m. The Forest Department could not identify the deceased as he did not carry identification cards or a mobile phone. The man wore a purple t-shirt and blue shorts. The Forest Department suspects the deceased trekked the hills alone as no one has approached the staff with complaints of a missing pilgrim.

Perumal Murugan, Medha Patkar to receive award

Social activist Medha Patkar and Tamil writer Perumal Murugan have been selected for the Sukumar Azhikode Birth Centenary National Award, according to a release from the Sukumar Azhikode Trust. The award recognises their exceptional contributions to society and literature and includes a cash prize of ₹50,000 along with a citation. Ms. Patkar is being honoured for her lifelong commitment to social activism, particularly her work advocating for the rights of displaced communities. Mr. Murugan is recognised for his significant impact on Indian literature and his bold exploration of complex social issues. The award will be presented at Kannur on May 12.

Women make up over 80% of the additional voters in 2026 polls

Of about 25.3 lakh more votes polled this time than in 2021, around 20.8 lakh came from women, the highest in the last four Assembly elections

Significant share

A look at the contribution of women voters to the total turnout in Tamil Nadu Assembly elections

Year	Votes polled	Women voters	Overall rise in turnout compared to the previous Assembly polls	Women's share in rise in turnout compared to the previous Assembly election
2011	3,67,56,813	1,83,77,708	37,51,321	22,27,675 (59.4%)
2016	4,35,59,808	2,18,19,756	68,02,995	34,42,048 (50.6%)
2021	4,62,70,157	2,31,76,000	27,10,349	13,56,244 (50.3%)
2026	**4,87,98,833**	**2,52,59,596**	**25,28,676**	**20,83,596 (82.4%)**

T. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

For the first time in the last four Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, women have accounted for over 80% of additional voters in 2026.

Of about 25.3 lakh more votes polled this time than in the 2021 election, around 20.8 lakh have come from women, taking their share to approximately 82%. In the previous three elections (2011, 2016, and 2021), women had more or less shared the honours with men for the increase in voter turnout. The share in 2011 was a little less than 60%, whereas it was about 50% on the two other occasions.

Even though the share of women in additional voters this time has created an all-time high record, the tally of 20.8 lakh more women voters comes third in terms of absolute number, the highest being around 34.4 lakh in 2016 and 22.3 lakh in 2011. Five years ago, approximately 13.6 lakh more women turned up at the polling booths vis a vis 2016.

The strong showing of women can be interpreted this way too: men did not show as much interest in the participation of the polling process as women did. In other words, if the women had not displayed the amount of interest they did, the total tally of extra voters would not have touched the current figure. A number of reasons could be adduced for greater interest of the women. Every major political party has promised schemes that can attract women voters.

For all the hype generated by the political players in wooing more women, the growth rate of women voters this time over the previous poll was subdued. For instance, the number of women who voted this time was about 2.53 crore against 2.32 crore from last time, registering an almost 9% rise.

UPSC to convene committee meeting for shortlisting DGP candidates for T.N. on May 11

S. Vijay Kumar
CHENNAI

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has convened the Empanelment Committee Meeting (ECM) in Delhi on May 11 to shortlist the names of three qualifying officers fit for appointment as Director-General of Police/Head of the Police Force (DGP/HoPF) of the Tamil Nadu Police.

The next DGP/HoPF, expected to be appointed by the newly elected government in the second week of this month, would have a minimum tenure of two years irrespective of the date of superannuation as per the Supreme Court guidelines in the Prakash Singh case. The Chief Secretary and Home Secretary would represent Tamil Nadu in the ECM which was deferred on two earlier occasions.

While the first meeting scheduled on March 20, was postponed due to administrative reasons, the second sitting called on April 23, could not be held as it coincided with the polling day for Assembly elections in the State.

On February 12, the Supreme Court had directed the State government and the UPSC to complete the process of appointing a regular DGP/HoPF within three weeks.

The next DGP/HoPF is expected to be appointed by the newly elected government in the second week of this month.

Soon after the ECM, a panel comprising the names of three DGP-rank officers would be communicated to the State government for choosing one officer to the top post. Among the officers in the DGP rank (Level 16 Scale of Pay), Seema Agarwal belonging to the 1990 batch tops the list. However, she is due to retire from service next month. Though the minimum residual service for an officer to be in the zone of consideration is six months or more from the date of occurrence of vacancy in the post of DGP/HoPF, which is August 30, 2025, in this case, the Supreme Court had in a subsequent order said the extended term beyond the date of superannuation should be a reasonable period.

The new DGP/HoPF will have a minimum tenure of two years irrespective of date of superannuation, as per Supreme Court guidelines

"We say so as it has been brought to our notice that some of the States have adopted a practice to appoint the DGP on the last date of retirement as a consequence of which the person continues for two years after his/her date of superannuation. Such a practice will not be in conformity with the spirit of the direction," the order said, adding that the UPSC should empanel, as far as possible, officers who got clear two years of service.

Apart from Ms. Agarwal, others in contention include Rajeev Kumar, the present DGP/HoPF Sandeep Rai Rathore, who was appointed by the Election Commission of India (EC) and already in the apex scale (Level 17 pay matrix), K. Vanni Perumal, Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal, and G. Venkatraman (who held the post of DGP in-charge till he was shifted by the EC).

Electoral debuts in the State's Assembly elections tell a mixed story

N. Sai Charan
CHENNAI

In Tamil Nadu's political theatre, the arrival of a new political party in the electoral contest has served as both a launchpad for historic realignments as well as a graveyard for grand ambitions. With the high profile debut of actor-politician C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in the 2026 Assembly elections, expectations are high about whether his party could breach the Dravidian duopoly or merely dent its margins.

A cursory look at the history of electoral debuts of select political parties in Assembly elections held in the past in the State offers both a roadmap and a warning. For this analysis only the general elections to the Assembly was taken into consideration and not the byelection or Lok Sabha polls.

One of the most consequential debut in Tamil Nadu's political history was that of the DMK in the 1957 Madras Legislative Assembly election. Formed in 1949 by C.N. Annadurai , the party had built considerable connect with the people through the Dravidian movement's literary and theatrical energy and as an alternative to the Congress.

Though it skipped the first post Independence election, its leaders chose to enter the electoral arena in 1957. The DMK fielded nominees in 112 of the 167 Assembly constituencies. All of them contested as independents and won 15 seats. The prominent leaders elected included Annadurai, M. Karunanidhi, K. Anbazhagan, and Sathiyavani Muthu.

The party's nominees polled 16.53 lakh votes, with a vote share of around 14.8%. Prominent losers included V.R. Nedunchezhiyan, Kannadasan, and S.S. Rajendran . By 1962, its first election under its own symbol, the DMK had won 50 of 143 seats it contested with 27.1%, before sweeping to power in 1967.

A decade later, the political landscape had transformed. In 1972, the DMK's strongman and matinee idol M.G. Ramachandran was expelled from the party and he floated the ADMK, later rechristened the AIADMK. The 1977 Assembly election, held after the Emergency, was a four cornered contest among the DMK, AIADMK, Congress, and the Janata Party. The debutant AIADMK contested 200 seats and won 130. MGR became Chief Minister and the party polled an impressive

C. Joseph Vijay

30.36%. The Pattali Makkal Katchi, founded by S. Ramadoss in 1989 out of agitations demanding exclusive reservation, particularly for Vanniyars, transformed the Vanniyar Sangam into a political vehicle. In its 1991 Assembly debut, the party contested 194 seats but won only one seat. Panruti S. Ramachandran, a former DMK and later AIADMK Minister, won the Panruti constituency. Despite a massive sympathy wave for the Congress-AIADMK alliance following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in Sriperumbudur, the PMK polled a creditable 5.89% vote share.

The 1996 election produced two simultaneous debuts, each with sharply contrasting fortunes. A split in the Congress party saw veteran leader G.K. Moopanar form the Tamil Maanila Congress (Moopanar) only a few months before polling. His party aligned with the DMK and backed by actor Rajinikanth amid a fierce anti-incumbency wave against the AIADMK government. The TMC(M) contested 40 seats and won 39, making an impressive debut with a 9.30% vote share.

Known for his firebrand oratory, DMK Rajya Sabha Member Vaiko broke away from the party to form the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in 1994. The party made its debut in 1996, contesting 177 seats. Though it polled 5.78% of the votes, it failed to win any seats.

Identifying himself as 'Black MGR' and popularly known as 'Captain' in cinema circles, Vijayakant founded the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam in 2005. He chose to go solo in the 2006 Assembly election by contesting in 232 constituencies, with Vijayakant emerging as its sole winner from Vriddachalam. The party polled 8.38%, earning recognition as a State party.

With an ideologically distinct base rooted in Tamil nationalism and opposed to Dravidian parties, the Naam Tamilar Katchi, led by Seeman, made its electoral debut in 2016. It contested 231 constituencies but failed to win any seats, polling a 1.06% vote share.

A breakaway faction of the AIADMK, the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam led by T.T.V. Dhinakaran, made its Assembly election debut in 2021, although it had earlier entered electoral politics in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, with its candidates contesting as independents. In 2021, the AMMK contested 165 seats and polled 2.35%.

Positioning itself as an alternative to the Dravidian majors, the Makkal Needhi Maiam, led by actor-politician Kamal Haasan, also made its Assembly election debut in 2021 and contested 180 seats. The party polled 2.62% vote share. However, it failed to win any seats. Like the AMMK, the MNM had earlier made its electoral debut in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

DMK asks EC to ensure peaceful counting of votes in State

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The DMK on Sunday urged the Election Commission of India (EC) to ensure peace, public order, and the integrity of the vote-counting process across Tamil Nadu on May 4.

In a letter to Chief Electoral Officer Archana Patnaik, DMK organisation secretary R.S. Bharathi said the party had received "credible information" about the alleged plans of the BJP and others to disrupt the counting of votes. He warned that such disruptions could extend to areas around the counting booths and other sensitive locations, raising concerns about possible large-scale law and order issues that might affect free and fair election.

The DMK urged the EC to take immediate steps, including the deployment of adequate security personnel and close coordination with law enforcement agencies. A copy of the letter was also sent to the Director-General of Police.

In another development on Sunday, the AIADMK petitioned election officials to prevent any unauthorised entry into counting centres. There are 62 counting centres all over Tamil Nadu.

In a representation to the Chief Election Commissioner, the Chief Electoral Officer, and the Special Observer, AIADMK functionary and Rajya Sabha Member I.S. Inbadurai flagged the alleged "misuse of press passes to gain unauthorised entry into the counting centres". Such a scenario might "seriously affect the fairness and transparency of the counting process", he said, citing reports that individuals associated with the DMK IT Wing had requested the district authorities for press passes.

Govt. school teacher held under POCSO Act after student ends life in Mayiladuthurai district

The Hindu Bureau
MAYILADUTHURAI

The Manalmedu police on Sunday arrested a 42-year-old teacher at a government school on charges of sexually harassing a Class X student and abetting her suicide. The accused has been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The victim, a 16-year-old girl from a village within the Manalmedu police limits, recently appeared for her Class X board examinations. On April 27, the girl tried to end her life and was rushed to the Thanjavur Government Medical College and Hospital, where she died on April 28.

The girl's mother filed a complaint with the Manalmedu police, naming Karthikeyan, an English teacher at the school where her daughter studied, as being responsible for her death. The complainant alleged that Karthikeyan, a resident of Manakunnam in Thanjavur district, had been frequently calling and messaging the girl, causing her significant mental distress.

The woman said she had warned the teacher to stop contacting her daughter.

Road blockade

Initially, the police registered a case of suspicious death under Section 194 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS). However, local residents and the victim's relatives staged a road blockade, demanding a thorough investigation and claiming that the teacher's sexual harassment was the direct cause of the extreme step taken by the minor.

"During the investigation, it was confirmed through phone records that the teacher had been sending inappropriate messages and making frequent calls to the student, amounting to sexual harassment," a senior police officer said.

Following the investigation, the police altered the case to include charges of abetment of suicide and sections of the POCSO Act.

Karthikeyan, who is married and has two children, was arrested and produced before a local court, which remanded him in judicial custody.

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

TNEA 2026 counselling process kicks off with release of tentative schedule

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The Directorate of Technical Education (DoTE) has released the tentative schedule for Tamil Nadu Engineering Admissions (TNEA) 2026, kicking off the process of admission from Sunday.

The online portals for registration of students have been thrown open. The last date for registration of online application is June 2 and the last date for uploading documents is June 6. Students may log on to www.tneaonline.org and www.dte.tn.gov.in for registration. The fee for the registration process is ₹250 for students of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and ₹500 for the rest.

During the online registration, the students should upload their certificates for verification. In case of discrepancies, the student would be contacted on their registered mobile number and email ID and may have to report to a TNEA Facilitation Centre (TFC) at a notified time.

Awaiting nod: Counselling dates will be announced after approval from the AICTE, say TNEA officials. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

The certificate verification process will be held between June 8 and June 20 and the rank list will be released on June 29. Students will get a chance to redress their grievances pertaining to the TNEA process between June 30 and July 4. According to TNEA officials, the counselling dates will be announced after approval from the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

Students who require assistance for the registration process may walk into any of the 110 TFCs set up across the State. The addresses and phone numbers of the TFCs are available on the TNEA website.

Students may call the integrated call centre set up at the DoTE on the toll free number 1800 425 0110 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. or email tneacare@gmail.com for clarifications about the online registration process.

On the website, the candidates will find detailed instructions in Tamil and English, the tentative schedule, the process for uploading certificates, cut-off marks for the previous five years of TNEA, details of TFCs, and sample certificates for admission under the special quota, the TNEA said in a press release. In 2025, the number of colleges that took part in the counselling process was 443, offering 2,54,585 seats. The number of students enrolled was 2,20,841, a 23.67% increase from the 2024 figures, the release added.

High cost of five kg FTL cylinders keeps new consumers away

Consumers say a new five kg FTL connection costs ₹1,760, which is very high, and the cylinder will not last for 41 days unlike the regular cylinder

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

With liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) distributors only providing five kg cylinders to those opting for new connections, not many are opting for it due to its high cost. A fresh five kg free trade LPG (FTL) connection costs around ₹1,760 including the cost of a cylinder. At the same time, a domestic 14.2 kg cylinder costs around ₹930.

Severe restriction: Distributors limit new connections to migrant labourers, those coming on transfers, and newly-weds.

Distributors say that they are only following instructions from State-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) and are providing these five kg FTL cylinders to migrant labourers, those coming on transfers, and newly-weds. "It is a stop gap arrangement till the situation improves. We stopped all new connections a month back," said a distributor.

D. Rani, who shares her double bottle connection with her daughter-in-law, said both her bottles were empty and when she asked the agency for a new connection, they said it would not be possible. "I cannot afford the five kg cylinder. It is expensive and won't last 41 days like the regular cylinder. As it is, the rate of the 14.2 kg cylinder has gone up since last month," she said. Getting new commercial connections too is not easy now. "We are giving commercial connections only to those whose requirements are small. These are people who were dependent on private companies earlier. If the case is genuine, we provide connections telling them to use the gas wisely," said another distributor.

In such a situation, those running PGs and hostels are having a tough time managing food for their guests.

R. Venkatasubbaiah, secretary, Tamil Nadu IT Hostel and PG Owners Welfare Association, said that there were around 12,000 such facilities in and around the city that had registered with their association. "We cannot cook using wood inside the city due to space constraints. Before the war, we used to take gas cylinders from various agencies. But now, we are forced to obtain cylinders in the black market. Last month, when a cylinder was sold at ₹7,000, many hesitated. Now, the rate in the black market has come down to ₹6,000 a cylinder. We hope we can get connections so that we need not depend on the black marketeers," he said.

Distributors say that their supply of 14.2 kg domestic cylinders has been restricted based on their backlog. "We are being told to ensure that consumers take only one cylinder per month and not more." Over 70 agencies have backlogs of over 10 days.

(From left) Amar Agarwal, Chairman, Agarwals Eye Hospital; C. Sridhar, Vice-Chancellor of the Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research; and Ashvin Agarwal, Chief Clinical Officer, Agarwals Eye Hospital on Sunday. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Meet discusses latest advances in treating in retinal disorder

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Ophthalmology experts from across the country gathered here on Sunday for a conference organised by Dr. Agarwals Group, where discussions centred on recent advances in retinal care.

The one-day event focused on developments in the diagnosis and management of vitreoretinal disorders, highlighting emerging techniques and technologies in the field.

The conference was inaugurated by C. Sridhar, Vice-Chancellor of the Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research, in the presence of Amar Agarwal, Chairman; Ashvin Agarwal, Chief Clinical Officer; and Manoj Khatri, Director, Vitreo-Retinal Services, Dr. Agarwals Eye Hospital.

Around 50 speakers led sessions on medical and surgical retina, covering emerging techniques, retinal vascular disease management, and advances in clinical practice. Wet lab sessions were also part of the programme.

Dr. Khatri outlined a technique developed by the group – pinhole pupilloplasty (PPP) – in which a small, focused opening is created in the pupil to allow only concentrated light to enter, thereby reducing distortion and improving visual clarity.

He said the position of the pinhole could be adjusted to bypass damaged areas of the eye. Based on the principle of the pinhole test used in eye examinations, the procedure has improved visual acuity in selected cases and may help avoid corneal transplants in 20%-30% of the patients.

Dr. Amar Agarwal said PPP could benefit patients who are unable to access corneal donors or face long waiting periods, as it is a day care procedure that can restore vision as early as the next day. He added that India bears one of the highest burdens of diabetes, and urged patients to undergo regular eye check-ups.

Three counting centres inspected

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Ahead of vote counting on Monday, the Chennai District Election Office inspected the preparedness at three counting centres in the district.

Electronic voting machines (EVM) were kept under three-tier security at Queen Mary's College, Loyola College, and Anna University after polling on April 23. Counting observers have been appointed for each constituency to supervise the process.

Counting halls for Dr. Radhakrishnan Nagar, Thiru.Vi.Ka Nagar, Royapuram, Harbour and Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni Assembly constituencies have been set up at Queen Mary's College. Loyola College has been designated as the counting centre for six constituencies - Perambur, Kolathur, Villivakkam, Egmore, Thousand Lights and Anna Nagar.

Counting halls for five constituencies – Virugambakkam, Saidapet, Thiyagarayanagar, Mylapore and Velachery – have been set up at Anna University.

Postal ballots and service voter ballots will be counted at separate tables.

THE HINDU
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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given that Mrs. Foujiya Begam, wife of Mr. Mohamed Abdul Kader, residing atNo. 37, 5th Street, Padmanabha Nagar, Adyar, Chennai – 600020, is intending to sell the property described in the Schedules hereunder, and my client Mr. G. Kaushik, Son of Gurumurthy, residing at No. 1A, Karpaga Vijayam, 1 Subramaniam Street, Abhiramapuram, Teynampet, Chennai - 600018, is intending to purchase same, free from all encumbrances.Any person having any claim, right, title, or interest in respect of the said property, whether by way of inheritance, partition, sale, mortgage, lease, lien, license, gift, possession, or otherwise howsoever, is hereby required to intimate the undersigned in writing within 14 (fourteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, along with supporting documentary evidence. Failing which, the proposed transaction shall be completed without any reference to such claims, if any, and such claims shall be deemed to have been waived and shall not be binding on my client.

THE SCHEDULE ABOVE REFERRED TO:Schedule A

All that parcel of land Plot No. 2-B-1 being part of 25 grounds and 500 sq.ft., comprised in S. No. 169/1 and 169/2 (Part) in Paimash No. 960 and situate in No. 140, Thiruvanmiyur Village in the Registration District of South-Madras and Registration Sub-District of Saidapet Total Extent: 1232 sq.ft.

Schedule B

All that parcel of land Plot No. 2-B-2 being part of 25 grounds and 500 sq.ft., comprised in S. No. 169/1 and 169/2 (Part) in Paimash No. 960 and situate in No. 140, Thiruvanmiyur Village in the Registration District of South-Madras and Registration Sub-District of Saidapet Total Extent: 1300 sq.ft.

SARAVANAN.S
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ISSN 0971 - 751X

INBRIEF

More than 700 guests attend Sri Lanka Food Festival 2026

More than 700 guests attended a three-day Sri Lanka Food Festival 2026 held at Green Meadows Resort in Chennai recently. An expert culinary team led by distinguished chefs from Cinnamon Grand Hotel, Colombo, participated. The festival was organised by the Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Ganesanathan Geathiswaran. It provided a unique platform to showcase the diverse culinary heritage of Sri Lanka. The primary objective was to strengthen the cultural ties between Sri Lanka and South India, while promoting tourism and trade, a release said.

Dementia Care Foundation to hold free summer camp

The Dementia Care Foundation will organise a free summer camp from May 11 to 15, between between 9.30 a.m. and 1 p.m., at CURI Hospital in Thoraipakkam. It aims to foster meaningful inter-generational bonding through engaging activities. For further details, visit www.thedementiacarefoundation.com. To register, call 7397474888/+91 9344257901.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carry explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (May 4, Monday), the following articles are available:

- Between a fatwa and war: how Iran makes sense of its nuclear capability **newsth.live/nuclearrationale**
- How dual-use satellites are blurring the lines of modern space war **newsth.live/spacewar**

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

Metro Rail commuters flag 'sultry' rides, want better air-conditioning

They complain of insufficient cooling inside coaches during peak hours; temperature is set at 24 degrees Celsius and duct modification work is under way to improve ventilation: CMRL officials

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Boiling point: Commuters say though people prefer the Chennai Metro Rail system for the comfort of air-conditioning, the rides over the last couple of weeks had been suffocating. FILE PHOTO

While most people prefer the Chennai Metro Rail system for its convenience, the train rides have recently turned sultry, causing a bit of discomfort.

Amid rising temperatures in the city, commuters say the air-conditioning inside the coaches is insufficient during peak hours.

Sandhya V., who frequently commutes from Anna Nagar to Nanganallur, said, "Efficiency aside, it is mostly for the comfort of air-conditioning that many people use the Chennai Metro Rail system. But recently, I have been sweating within the coaches, and it is pretty disappointing."

John Samuel, a resident of Anna Nagar who often travels to Chennai airport, said, the Metro train rides have been uncomfortable and suffocating, particularly over the last couple of weeks. Intrigued over why it felt warm within the coach, he decided to carry a temperature sensor on a few occasions and found that the temperature went up to 29 degrees Celsius once.

"There is a huge rush of office-goers boarding at Thirumangalam. After this station, when the network turns elevated, the heat becomes more pronounced, and I feel very sultry. On most occasions, I stand under the air-conditioning vent to get some respite from the heat. But it still feels inadequate," Mr. Samuel adds.

According to officials of the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), the temperature was earlier maintained at 25 degrees Celsius, but for the last couple of weeks, they reduced it to 24 degrees Celsius, factoring in the heat.

Additionally, the air-conditioning ducts were being modified for better ventilation within the coaches, they said.

"When there is a huge influx of passengers during rush hour, commuters may feel that the temperature is higher, but that is not the case. We have set the temperature at 24 degrees Celsius, keeping commuters' welfare in mind. It is not advisable for them to switch between 20 degrees Celsius inside the coach and the scorching heat outside. Once the duct modification work is complete, the ventilation will be even better," an official said.

Quite a few commuters took to social media to highlight this issue in the past one month. One of them, S. Sridhar, posted: "@cmrlofficial I am traveling in the St Thomas Mount bound metro and just crossed Shenoy Nagar. There is absolutely no AC inside and it is highly suffocating."

Beating the heat: A Bengal tiger cools off in water at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park in Vandalur. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Heat dents footfall at Vandalur zoo

Geetha Srimathi
CHENNAI

The Arignar Anna Zoological Park has seen a slight dip in visitor numbers, likely due to the intense summer heat.

While the zoo was active on May 1, footfall was lower than what is typically seen during the peak summer holiday period.

The Vandalur zoo usually draws large crowds during summer, prompting authorities to roll out a range of measures to mitigate heat stress for both visitors and animals. These include shade nets for white tigers and exotic birds, water showers for large herbivores, and frozen treats for carnivores and primates.

For animals, sprinklers have been set up across enclosures housing elephants, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses and chimpanzees. Elephants are given regular showers and allowed to wallow in muddy ponds everyday, while primates and bears are provided frozen fruits and meat to help regulate body temperature. A mist walkway has also been installed for visitors, spraying a fine overhead mist to provide relief from the heat.

Despite these efforts, visitor numbers dipped last week. Between April 23 and 26, footfall was lower than usual for this time of year, with around 6,500 visitors recorded on April 26 compared to the typical 12,000 on Sundays.

On May 3, the number rose to about 10,000. Zoo Assistant Director Manikanda Prabhu attributed the decline to the heat as well as consecutive long weekends owing to the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections and Labour Day.

Last year, the zoo recorded around one lakh visitors in April. This April, the visitor count stood at 80,000. Officials said the combined visitor count for April and May this year is likely to be slightly lower than last year's three lakh.

Meanwhile, the zoo is set to receive a pair of lions from Indore zoo in exchange for a pair of hippopotamuses, two male ostriches and yellow anacondas.

Chennai Weather	max	min
Tiruvallur	40	27
Chennai Airport	39	30
Chennai City	36	30

Chennai Airport Today
40°C The morning will be comfortable. The day will be hot and uneasy. The night also will be uneasy. Dry weather to occur.

Chennai Airport Tomorrow
39°C The weather will be hot and uneasy. The night will be comfortable. There are chances of light rain and thundershower.

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Timings
CHENNAI

MONDAY, MAY. 04		
RISE	05:48	SET 18:25
RISE	20:45	SET 07:23
TUESDAY, MAY. 05		
RISE	05:47	SET 18:25
RISE	21:38	SET 08:12
WEDNESDAY, MAY. 06		
RISE	05:47	SET 18:25
RISE	22:27	SET 09:04

Aspirants find NEET moderately difficult, lengthy; physics paper tough

Meghna M.
CHENNAI

Candidates were greeted with applause as they left the exam centres after writing the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET UG) here on Sunday.

They said that while the exam was moderately difficult compared to last year, it was lengthy.

More than 1 lakh students had registered to write NEET in Tamil Nadu.

Unmindful of the scorching sun, candidates arrived at their centres by 11 a.m. to complete the verification of their documents and undergo frisking, before entering the exam hall by 1.30 p.m.

> It takes us nearly a year to understand NCERT syllabus. Pursuing matriculation has left us at a slight disadvantage
>
> **VARSHA R.**
> Candidate

Harshitha S., who wrote the exam for the first time, said that while physics was tough, biology and chemistry were moderate.

Rakshitha D., who has been pursuing NEET coaching for the past two years, found physics tough. "If there were more NCERT-based questions, it would have been better," she said.

Many repeaters

The exam also continued to see many NEET repeaters, several of whom said the matriculation education took away a year that was necessary to prepare for NEET.

Writing the exam for the second time, Rekha (name changed) was worried about her performance. "I feel disheartened that I took a year off to prepare for the exam, and I am not happy with my performance. I studied for nearly 16 hours a day. Biology was very lengthy. It did not go as expected," she said.

Varsha R., who wrote the exam for the third time, said the exam was moderately difficult compared to last year's.

"It takes us nearly a year to understand NCERT and its syllabus. Pursuing matriculation did leave us at a slight disadvantage. While scholarship for government school students have helped in the form of 7.5% reservation, we are not given adequate coaching to pursue our dreams," she said.

Testing time: Students and parents outside the exam centre at New College on Sunday. R. RAGU

Healthcare federation welcomes relaxation of construction rules

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

NATHEALTH - Healthcare Federation of India has welcomed the notification of the National Building Construction Standards (NBCS) 2026, which has eased long-standing height restrictions for hospitals.

It would permit the establishment of intensive care units beyond 45 metres in height, subject to enhanced fire safety provisions.

The federation commends the Bureau of Indian Standards for this important step, and looks forward to continued collaboration in strengthening India's healthcare ecosystem, a press release said.

Sangita Reddy, president, NATHEALTH, and joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals Group, said, "The new NBCS 2026 rules mark a significant and timely step towards enabling future-ready healthcare infrastructure in India. This is a progressive reform that NATHEALTH has consistently advocated for in the larger public good. By unlocking the much-needed capacity across the healthcare ecosystem, it will enable hospitals to operate more efficiently, and optimise cost benefits that can ultimately be passed on to patients, while maintaining the highest standards of safety."

Varun Khanna, vice-president, NATHEALTH, and group managing director, Quality Care India Ltd., and Ashutosh Raghuvanshi, managing director and CEO, Fortis Healthcare, spoke.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

HOMAGE

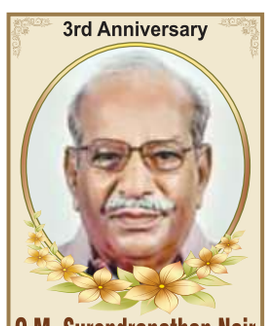
To Our Beloved Aunty
Dr. Smt. MEENA MUTHIAH
Founder Chairman
T.T.Ranganathan Clinical Research Foundation
(TTK Hospital)
&
Madras Voluntary Blood Bureau

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs.Jecintha Peter Alphonse
15.08.1954 - 04-05-2021
Deeply missed by Family members

3rd Anniversary



O.M. Surendranathan Nair
4th May 2023
Three years have passed without you. Your memories are always with us. You live on through the kindness and love you brought in to our lives.
Fondly Remembered by:
Daughter: Janaki
Son-in-law: Venugopal

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

5th Death Anniversary
"We miss you every day. Your presence is always with us, and you live on in our hearts"
WG. CDR (Retd) R. Subramanian
DOD: 04.05.2021
Remembered by Relatives & Friends

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can erase
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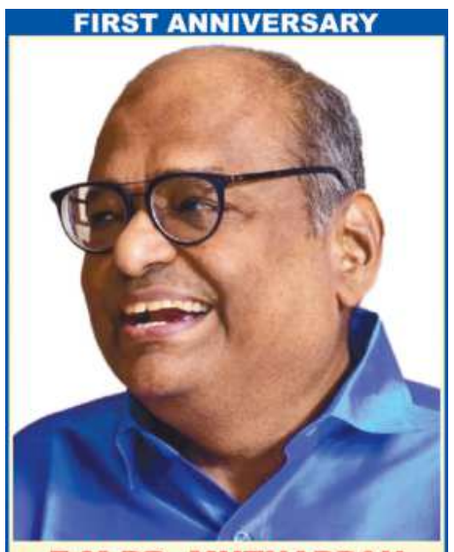
DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

FIRST ANNIVERSARY



E.M.PR. MUTHAPPAN
One year since we lost your towering presence.
He navigated life's complexities with razor-sharp insight.
Unyielding and authoritative, he demanded excellence from all he knew.
M. Sivagami (Wife)
E.M.PR.M. Periannan (Son)
Friends & Relatives

IN MEMORY OF YOUR LOVED ONES
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In a first, NH stretch given red markings to enhance visibility

Two 300-metre-long portions of NH 44 have been painted red, in patches measuring 2m x 3m, with thermoplastic paint. This will keep drivers alert, sources in the NHAI say. The red colour is also aimed at preventing human-animal conflict

Deepa H. Ramakrishnan
CHENNAI

Thoppur Ghat Road, which witnessed over 200 fatalities in the past three years, has become the State's first National Highways stretch to be painted red, in patches, to help reduce speed and improve vehicle stability.

Two 300-metre-long portions of NH 44 have been painted red, in patches measuring 2m x 3m, with thermoplastic paint. This will enhance visibility and keep drivers alert, sources in the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) said. The red colour is also meant to help prevent human-animal conflict.

Novel initiative: The red markings on Thoppur Ghat Road.

"This is the only route for those from Coimbatore and Salem to reach Krishnagiri and Bengaluru. Around 60,000-70,000 vehicles travel on this road on a daily basis, and despite 24x7 monitoring and announcements cautioning drivers, there have been 260 fatalities and 1,500 accidents in the past 10 years," an official said.

The stretch from Dharmapuri to Salem is particularly accident-prone. It passes through two reserve forests – Thoppur and Barigam – where the gradient is quite steep.

"Vehicles pick up momentum due to the force of gravity, and drivers often lose control. In a stretch of 3.5 km, the width of the four-lane road varies from 20 metres to 35 metres, since locations with sharp curves have been widened to allow large vehicles to turn easily," the official said.

To bring a permanent solution to the issue, the NHAI began work in March 2025 to construct an elevated corridor at a cost of ₹905 crore for a length of 3.68 km.

About 34% of the four-lane corridor running from Thoppur Kanigarahalli in Dharmapuri district to Sakkarapatti in Salem district has been completed.

Rain damages electric poles, crops

VIRUDHUNAGAR: At least 25 electric poles in Virudhunagar district were damaged as rain, accompanied by gales, uprooted trees on Saturday night.

A Tangedco official said much of the damage was reported from Kariyapatti and Aruppukottai.

The summer showers also damaged crops.

Interactive workshops make archaeology more accessible to students, says expert

Sahana Mira S
CHENNAI

Ever since the Keeladi excavations began in 2014, interest in why the past matters has been spreading across various demographics, including school students. Beyond what is provided in textbooks on the archaeological sites, students are now visiting the sites and learning about them first-hand through workshops.

Experimental archaeologist Anbazhagan K., a technical staff at the University of Madras, has been conducting workshops for children and adults to decode the basics of archaeology, along with demonstrations to move away from rote learning.

Curiosity abounds

"Many schools and cultural centres have invited me to hold workshops on archaeology, especially for children. Since the students are in their formative stages, they come with a lot of curiosity," says Mr. Anbazhagan.

After the workshop, it doesn't take long for the students to say they aspire to become archaeologists, he adds.

Besides sessions on the methods used in excavations, the progression of culture, and the Neolithic Revolution, he says, what particularly interests the students attending his workshops are the live demonstrations.

"Prehistoric stone tool knapping is the main demonstration that I show students, which is about striking a stone core, chipping the flakes, and making it into a tool. It is to interpret the prehistoric life," he says.

Mr. Anbazhagan also takes the students to the archaeological site at Attirampakkam, and Vadamadurai, a prehistoric archaeological site in Tiruvallur district.

"When we studied, we did not have anything separately for archaeology in the textbook; it was all part of history. School textbooks nowadays include information on Keeladi and other sites, but it is still limited. That is why, through workshops and field visits, students are able to get hands-on experience," he says.

VCK, Left plan protest against LPG price hike

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

The CPI, the CPI(M), the VCK, and the CPI(ML) Liberation have called for joint demonstrations in front of Central government offices at district headquarters across Tamil Nadu on May 7 to oppose the steep increase in the price of commercial LPG cylinders.

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The APTRANSCO invites on-line bids for **Spec No.PMM21-e-23/2026** for "Design, Manufacture, Testing, Supply, Erection & Commissioning of 500MVA 400/220/33kV ATRs in 2 Lots (ie., Lot-1: 3Nos., Lot-2- 4 Nos.) for utilization in Construction works at various substations of APTRANSCO. Date and time of availability of tender **04.05.2026 by 17:00 Hrs.** Further details can be seen in website(s): **www.apeprocurement.gov.in** For further details Contact No: **9491045249.**

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INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 38

Expression of Interest (EOI)

The following Expression of Interest (EOI) is published in the ICF website. For details about Registration and submission of application, please refer website **https://icf.indianrailways.gov.in/ → Tender Information → Expression of Interest.**

Sl. No.	EOI No.	Name of the work	Item Description
1.	ICF/D&D/EOI/VD/2026 Dt. 24.04.2026	Development of new sources	i. Non-Asbestos based K-Type High Friction Composite Brake blocks for coaches with bogie mounted Brake system on Indian Railways (UVAM item id 2300211, sub item id 2300211001)
			ii. Non-Asbestos based K-Type High Friction Composite Brake blocks for EMU stock of Indian Railways (UVAM item id 2300211, sub item id 2300211002)
			iii. Nylon-66 brake gear bushes (UVAM item id 2300201)

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INTEGRAL COACH FACTORY, CHENNAI - 38

Tender Notice No. ICF/PCMM/EOT/18/2026 Dated: 30.04.2026

The following e-tenders are published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to login to **www.ireps.gov.in** and quote against these tenders. Manual quotations will not be entertained for these tenders. Closing and Opening time for all tenders are **14.15 hrs.** Hindi version of tender notice is available on website **www.icf.indianrailways.gov.in**

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Tender Title	Quantity	Due Date
01.	02261285	UNDER FRAME (LWLRRM PP)	7 Nos	15/05/2026
02.	02261227	Coach set of Frame Work and Back Pieces (LWS/BW2)	129 Sets	18/05/2026
03.	05261075	UNF ALU PROFILE L : 2510MM DRG LA10131	15000 Kgs	19/05/2026
04.	02261249	C/S OF BODY SHELL ITEMS AND PARTITION FRAMES (LSCN PP)	142 Sets	19/05/2026
05.	03261248	KEY FOR BRAKE SHOE	19972 Nos	21/05/2026
06.	07261697	SUPPLY OF LAYOUT OF NOTICES (WITH BRAILLE SCRIPT) FOR LHB COACHES	Refer IREPS Website	21/05/2026
07.	01265210	[ONE SET OF tools (11 set of items) for CNC 3-Axis machining center for Bogie Bolster, Qty-01 set (Inv No. 19508) (as per annexure A)]	1 Set	21/05/2026
08.	06265093	Supply of 40W Portable and Rechargeable LED Flood Light	1000 Nos	21/05/2026
09.	03261378	UNF DOUBLE ROW ROLLER BEARING. 22328	19914 Nos	22/05/2026
10.	01265061	GTAW MACHINE FOR AWTI	2 Nos	22/05/2026
11.	03261554	SS SHEET SUS 301L-DLT - DULL FINISH OF SIZE 2 mm X 1250 / 1500 mm X 2150 mm TO JIS G 4305 STANDARD	50183 Kgs	25/05/2026
12.	03261295	UNF GAS SHIELDED FLUX STAINLESS STEEL WIRE ELECTRODE SIZE DIA 1.2 MM	35155 Kgs	26/05/2026
13.	01265214	Supply of Pallets to the attached drawing number ICF/J&T/Misc-3088, for storage of Scrap Sheet off cuts	125 Nos	26/05/2026
14.	03261214	LOWER SPRING SEAT FORGED	1807 Nos	29/05/2026
15.	02260053	C/S OF BODY SHELL ITEMS AND PARTITION FRAMES (MEMU NDMC)	37 Sets	12/06/2026
16.	06260035	SUPPLY OF SS TUBES AND DOUBLE FE FITTINGS	Refer IREPS Website	22/05/2026
17.	01265066	LASER WELDING MACHINE 3000 W	Refer IREPS Website	29/05/2026
18.	02261343	UNDER FRAME (EMU C/HC)	4 Nos	02/06/2026

CORRIGENDUM NO. 18

Corrigendum has been issued to the following tender. Please check IREPS website for further details.

Sl.No.	Tender No.	Existing value		Modified value
01.	02261227	Description Modified and Additions & Deletions of Drawing. Please refer Tender Document for details in IREPS website.		
02.	07261329	27/04/2026		07/05/2026
03.	07261140	27/04/2026		11/05/2026
		Additions & Deletions Commercial Compliance. Please refer Tender Document for details in IREPS website.		
04.	07260104	Additions of Drawing. Please refer Tender Document for details in IREPS website.		
05.	03261537	EMD	223390	399090
		QUANTITY	25968 kGS	46394 kGS

Saurav Kumar, Sevanti Ninan, Sankhadeep Banerjee, Zaen Alkazi, Ayush Tiwari, Nirupama Subramanian, Manish Gupta and Sashi Kumar at the ACJ in Chennai on Sunday. PRABHAT KHANAL

'Skilling in AI will soon be essential across professions'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence are expanding capabilities across understanding, prediction, and creative work, even as concerns around safety, fairness and transparency persist, Manish Gupta, senior director at Google DeepMind, said in Chennai on Sunday. Mr. Gupta was delivering the Lawrence Dana Pinkham Memorial Lecture at the Asian College of Journalism's convocation for the class of 2025-2026. "AI is already enhancing productivity, particularly in software development and media generation. Skilling in AI will soon become essential across professions," he said.

N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group, observed that journalism is unfolding in an era defined by a deep information paradox, where, despite an explosion of available information, citizens in many democracies are less informed about public affairs. The distinction, he noted, lies in the fact that information and journalism are not the same.

He said that while the raw publishing or broadcasting of information was once seen as citizen journalism, there is now a more sober understanding of the landscape."Social media has created the illusion that everyone is a publisher, without providing any of the institutional ways and means to distinguish publishing from simply broadcasting opinion, uncurated, unverified opinion. The crisis is clearly one of market failure, and left to the market, journalism will be underproduced and undervalued," Mr. Ram said.

Sashi Kumar, Chairman of the Asian College of Journalism, said that the 2026 World Press Freedom Index ranks India 157 out of 180 countries, a drop of six places from last year's position of 151.

The ACJ Awards for Journalism were presented. Ayush Tewari won the 2025 ACJ Award for Investigative Journalism for his series on India's cyberscam industry, published in *Scroll*. The K.P. Narayana Kumar Memorial Award for Social Impact Journalism went to Zaen Alkazi for his report on fatalities among railway track maintainers, published in *The Caravan*. Sankhadeep Banerjee received the Ashish Yechury Memorial Award for photojournalism for his image of the Maratha protest, published in *The Indian Express*. The jury also announced Special Mentions across categories. In investigative journalism, Tabassum Barnagarwala was recognised for her report on patient safety in Indian hospitals published in *Scroll*, and Shivnarayan Rajpurohit for his investigation into India's e-waste underworld in *Newslaundry*.

In the social impact category, Aparna Ganesan received a Special Mention for her video report on the hidden costs of solar energy in *The Migration Story*, while Safeena Wani was recognised for her report on the impact of renewable energy projects on Ladakh's pashmina ecosystem in *Down To Earth*.

Alliances map out scenarios as Kerala awaits poll results

Exit polls favouring UDF leave the Cong.-led Opposition feeling bullish while incumbent LDF feels voters will stay the course as in 2021 polls

G. Anand
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

As the clock winds down to the vote count in 140 Assembly constituencies across 14 districts in Kerala, opposing political campaigns were making last-minute attempts on Sunday to map out potential scenarios for their respective alliances in what appears to be a fragmented, multi-party electoral landscape.

For one, exit polls favouring the United Democratic Front (UDF) have left the Congress-led Opposition feeling bullish, with leaders exuding confidence that the alliance would write its comeback story when the results are announced on Monday.

However, despite Congress leaders publicly adopting a sanguine view of the poll outcome, the UDF, which appeared desperate for a rebound from its electoral wipeouts in the 2016 and 2021 elections, seemed acutely aware that the stakes are high for the Opposition alliance.

The UDF leadership has decoded its good showing in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, subsequent Assembly byelections, and the 2025 local body polls as a sign that it stood a fighting chance to win back voters, including minorities and backward classes, which had supposedly drifted towards the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the past two Assembly elections.

BJP-led NDA hopes to shrink the UDF and LDF's margins by positioning itself as a development alternative. FILE PHOTO

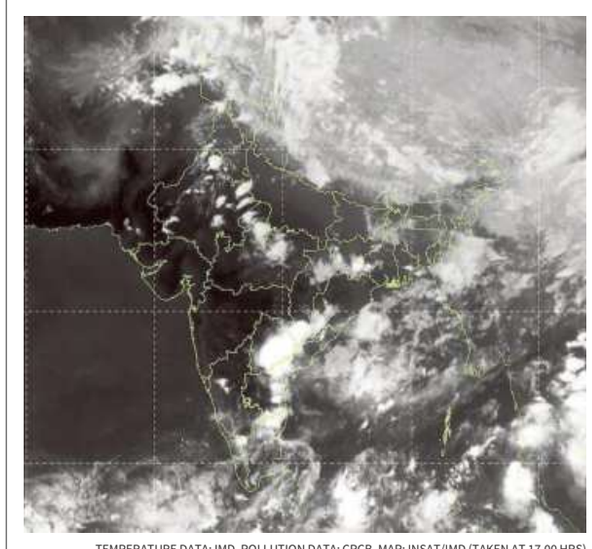
The UDF has also staked its "optimism" on the belief that the sizeable Christian and Muslim communities in the State would return to it as a "stop Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)" option, rather than the LDF, as in the past. Notably, the UDF's campaign theme was a supposedly tacit "anti-minority" alliance between the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] and the BJP in Kerala. It had also spotlighted the Sabarimala gold theft and accused the government of corruption, nepotism, and poor health service delivery.

LDF leaders had signalled confidence that voters were unlikely to risk an alternative, given the government's "track record". It had claimed "good governance", infrastructure development, economic growth, social cohesiveness, and an expanded State benefit net, including social security pensions, housing for the poor, and free college education. The LDF had also framed its campaign as a choice between stability and volatility.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is hoping to shrink the UDF and LDF's margins by positioning itself as a Centre-backed development alternative. The BJP has primarily targeted "dissatisfied LDF and UDF" voters, and sees itself as best placed to benefit from the "unpopularity" of the traditional alliances.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



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

Forecast for Monday: Heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu. Thunderstorm accompanied with hailstorm very likely at isolated places over Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. Dust storm very likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, hot and humid weather very likely at isolated places over coastal Andhra Pradesh.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	29.8	20.7
Ahmedabad	—	42.0	28.0
Aizawl	13.0	28.2	17.5
Allahabad	—	36.0	25.6
Bengaluru	—	35.4	23.4
Bhopal	2.0	40.4	22.4
Bhubaneswar	5.6	30.2	23.0
Chandigarh	19.7	33.2	17.1
Chennai	—	37.8	29.6
Coimbatore	—	36.4	24.0
Dehradun	1.9	29.4	19.4
Gangtok	12.0	19.3	13.0
Goa	—	35.2	26.6
Guwahati	4.0	28.8	20.9
Hubballi	—	38.0	21.0
Hyderabad	—	40.0	22.4
Imphal	3.5	25.3	16.3
Jaipur	5.0	38.3	22.0
Kochi	—	33.0	26.4
Kohima	—	20.0	14.0
Kolkata	11.0	32.6	22.4
Kozhikode	—	37.6	27.9
Kurnool	—	43.1	29.3
Lucknow	7.0	33.3	21.4
Madurai	47.0	34.0	21.1
Mangaluru	—	33.7	25.5
Mumbai	—	34.4	28.0
Mysuru	—	35.6	19.6
New Delhi	—	35.1	23.4
Patna	—	29.4	23.6
Port Blair	—	29.4	23.6
Puducherry	—	38.8	27.0
Pune	—	40.0	24.0
Raipur	—	41.5	—
Ranchi	11.0	33.6	20.0
Shillong	—	—	—
Shimla	5.0	19.6	14.0
Srinagar	3.0	23.2	11.6
Thiruvananthapuram	—	36.2	26.6
Tiruchi	9.0	37.7	22.6
Vijayawada	—	—	—
Visakhapatnam	—	32.4	28.8

(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	.42	.33	.—	60	124	
Bengaluru	4	.—	.41	140	145	
Chennai	4	5	.40	98	63	
Delhi	.12	.51	.77	114	240	
Hyderabad	.19	.16	.21	57	97	
Kolkata	.10	.14	.50	26	47	
Lucknow	8	.40	.34	61	110	
Mumbai	.17	.14	.30	33	102	
Pune	.—	.22	102	33	62	
Visakhapatnam	.26	.56	.27	31	110	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Panipat, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 298 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 21

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

Summer stress

Tough work: A woman carrying firewood for use as domestic fuel at Tarluvada village near Visakhapatnam on Sunday. Summer is when rural communities stock up on firewood for the rainy and winter seasons. V. RAJU

Robbers loot gold from Karimnagar jewellery shop after shooting at staff

The Hindu Bureau
KARIMNAGAR

In a daylight robbery, five armed robbers stormed a jewellery shop in Karimnagar in Telangana and fired at the staff on Sunday, injuring three of them before decamping with gold ornaments.

According to sources, the robbers entered PMJ Jewels Boutique at Jyothinagar near the district court under the guise of customers around 11 a.m. They opened fire at the staff before fleeing the scene with the haul.

It is suspected that an inter-State gang of robbers executed the daring crime in the heart of the town after studying the area.

Union Minister of State of Home Bandi Sanjay at the robbery-hit jewellery shop in Karimnagar on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Police officials rushed to the spot as the news broke out around noon and deployed special teams to trace the robbers.

The three injured staffers were shifted to a nearby hospital and their condition was said to be stable. The exact value of the stolen jewellery is yet to be known.

The footage obtained from a CCTV camera at the entrance of the jewellery showed the five assailants running towards the main road with one of them carrying a large bag. The Karimnagar police have announced a reward of ₹1 lakh for information leading to the identification and arrest of the suspects.

Union Minister of State for Home Bandi Sanjay, who visited the shop on Sunday afternoon, commended the jewellery staff's bravery after they were injured resisting the robbery. He said the miscreants who entered the shop under the guise of customers opened fire on the sales manager and other staff when the latter tried to foil their robbery attempt. The police will ascertain the exact quantity of the stolen jewellery during the investigation, he said, exuding confidence that they will apprehend the robbers soon.

Pending works on Polavaram canal to be completed by July

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The Water Resources Department in Andhra Pradesh is focusing on completing the long-pending gap works in the Right Main Canal (RMC) of the Polavaram irrigation project in West Godavari district by June-July 2026.

These works pertain to small, scattered stretches, ranging between 50 metres and 60 metres, which were left incomplete due to various constraints by the original executing agencies during 2015-16, resulting in discontinuities along the canal. An estimated ₹48 crore to ₹56 crore was being spent to execute these works and the progress monitored on a daily basis by the irrigation divisions in Tadepalligudem, Eluru, and Kovvur to ensure timely completion, a senior department official said.

The completion of these gaps was a crucial step in strengthening the canal infrastructure ahead of commissioning the Polavaram project in 2027. The RMC was designed to handle discharge capacity of 17,500 cusecs, much higher than the current capacity of 6,000 cusecs. Officials were optimistic that the canal would meet future irrigation demands.

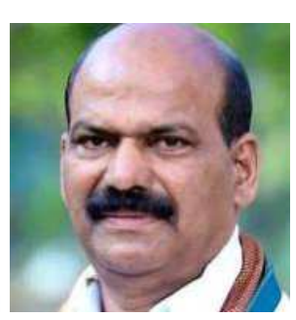
BJP candidate declared elected after recount in Sringeri Assembly seat

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

In a dramatic twist, the Congress's incumbent MLA for Sringeri, T.D. Raje Gowda, slipped to the second position and conceded the lead to defeated BJP candidate D.N. Jeevaraj, as the total postal ballots polled by him in the 2023 Assembly election reduced by 255 votes after the verification and recounting of ballot papers ordered by the Karnataka High Court.

Following this, the Returning Officer of Sringeri declared Mr. Jeevaraj of the BJP as being duly elected to the State Assembly from the constituency. With this, Mr. Jeevaraj has now been declared elected with a narrow margin of 52 votes.

A.N. Jeevaraj



T.D. Raje Gowda

The Returning Officer, Gaurav Shetty, issued the declaration on Sunday following the verification and recount of postal ballots polled during the Assembly election in 2023.

It may be noted that Mr. Raje Gowda, after the original counting in the 2023 election, had won against his nearest rival, Mr. Jeevaraj, by a thin margin of 201 votes. Now, after the verification and recount, his tally has reduced by 255 votes.

The Returning Officer told presspersons after the conclusion of recounting process that Mr. Jeevaraj had challenged the victory of the Congress candidate in 2023 before the High Court which had directed recounting of postal ballots. After the verification and recounting process, the postal ballot tally of Mr. Jeevaraj reduced to 690 from the earlier 692, while that of Mr. Raje Gowda reduced to 314 from the earlier 569 votes.

Earlier, the BJP leaders had expressed anguish over the delay in declaration of results.

Responding to Sunday's developments, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar said that they would take the fight to court.

Kerala yet again acts against suspended IAS officer Prasanth

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government has initiated yet another disciplinary action against N. Prasanth, the Kerala-cadre IAS officer who is on suspension, for making unauthorised comments against the government to the press.

Mr. Prasanth has in recent days appeared in chat shows on television and YouTube channels and made comments against the State government.

Mr. Prasanth was placed on suspension on November 11, 2024, for levelling serious allegations against A. Jayathilak, then Additional Chief Secretary and now the Chief Secretary of Kerala, and then Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan. The suspension has since been extended multiple times.

Last week, the government had placed senior IAS officer B. Ashok, Principal Secretary of the Sainik Welfare Department and Vice-Chancellor of Kerala Agricultural University, under suspension for criticising the State's policies on social media.

Both Mr. Ashok and Mr. Prasanth have appeared together on YouTube videos and on public forums, levelling allegations against the LDF leadership.

EDUCATIONPLUS

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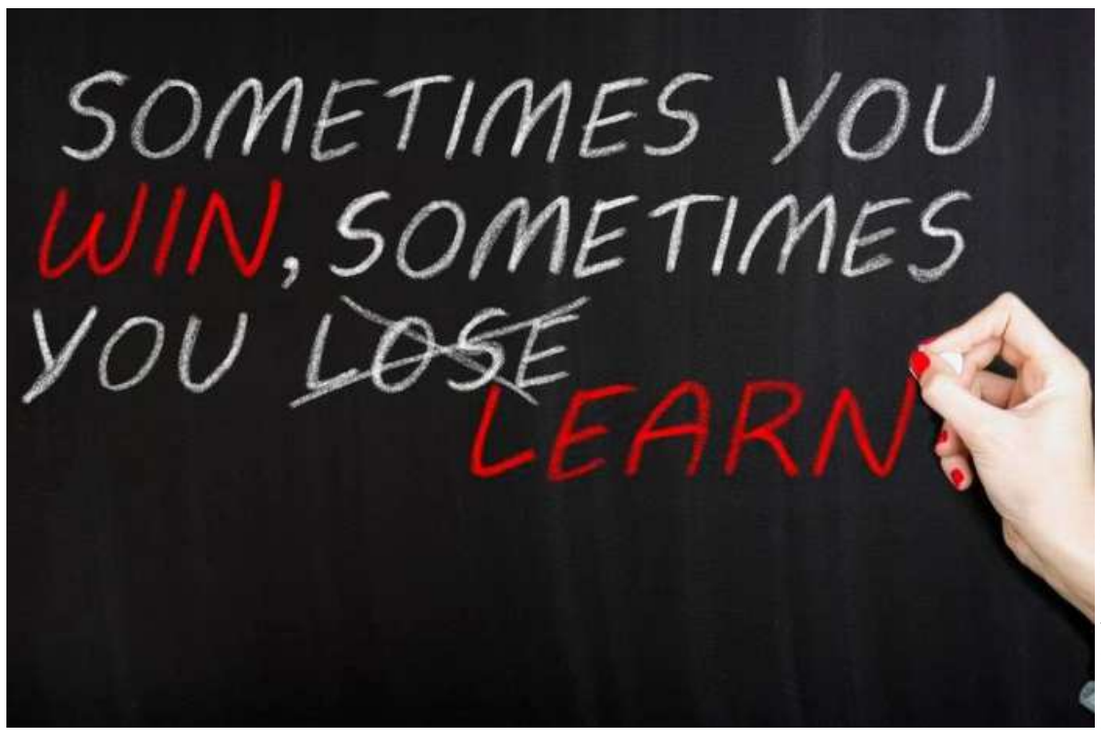

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Beyond the marksheet

As board exam results season begins, an educator reflects on what marks mean and how to deal with success and failure

Ponmythili Muralidharan

May is here and the Board exam results are out. Your phone is buzzing with calls from relatives and your parents are fielding calls from people you barely remember. Everyone wants to know how you did. Before you answer that, can we pause for a moment? Not to avoid the question, but to ask a better one: what is a result, really?

Think of it like a milestone on a highway. It tells you where you are right now, not where you are going; definitely not who you are. When you see a board that says 500 km to Chennai, it is just a marker. It does not tell you if Chennai is even where you want to go. What matters is what you do when you reach it.

Clues to yourself

If you did well in the exam, enjoy it. But do not stop there. Did you find your own way of understanding things? Did you stay consistent when it got tiring? Was there a subject you genuinely enjoyed? These are clues, not just about exams, but about you.

Each of us has what I like to call a power zone. It is that space where the way your mind naturally works meets something the world actually needs. Some people make complicated things simple without trying. Some carry 10 moving parts in their head without dropping any. Some are the person everyone calls when a conflict needs sorting. These are not soft skills but the engines that run careers and lives.

However, if you did not do well, stay with me. An exam you did not clear is not a wall. It is a question: what happened here? Not "am I a failure?" Because that is a story you are telling yourself. Instead, ask "What did this exam expect from me? Where did I fall short?" Was it time-management? A gap in understanding? Anxiety taking over? Each has a different answer.

Own both

Panic will not help you find it, but an honest question will. Own both the win and the miss. If you did well, do not brush it aside saying you were lucky. A win you do not accept does not teach you anything. If you did not do well, own that too. Not to be hard on yourself but to stay in control of what comes next. The moment you start blaming the paper or the situation, you give away your ability to change things. The gap it shows will stay until you are willing to look at it.

If success goes to your head, it makes you careless. If failure goes to your heart, it makes you shrink. What you need is for both to reach your mind. However, be careful of quick fixes.

After the results are declared, there will be a lot of advice: do a course. Take a certification. Try something else. Some of this may genuinely help. But, sometimes, it is just a way to avoid a difficult question. If you move on without understanding why you struggled, the same pattern will repeat itself. The real question is not just "what next?" but "what am I building towards?"

Here is something we do not talk about enough. Many people go through life without asking what they are good at. It is easier to compare marks, colleges, placements. But that is someone else's measure, not yours. What comes naturally to you? What do you enjoy? What makes you lose track of time? If you do not know yet, it is okay. Look at where the world is heading, then look at what you are drawn to. Where those two meet is a good place to begin. You do not need perfect clarity. You just need direction.

A word to parents. Your child's result is not your report card. When we make it about our own image, we add to the pressure they are already carrying. What they need is someone who can stay calm and say "this is one moment. I see you beyond this."

You know your score. Ask yourself what it is telling you and what it is not. The people who go on to do meaningful things are not always the ones with the highest marks. They are the ones who learned to understand themselves and keep moving forward, through both success and failure.

That confidence does not come from marks. It builds when you choose honesty over excuses and curiosity over comparison. May is a good month to begin.

The writer is Junior Faculty - Organisation Behaviour and Human Resource at Great Lakes Institute of Management, Chennai.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Sports Global Excellence Scholarship
Offered by the University of Gloucestershire, the U.K.
Eligibility: Open to international self-funded fee-paying students, who are enrolled in a full-time UG or PG taught degree programme and can demonstrate performance at the required level in their respective sports categories.
Rewards: Waiver of up to £7,500
Application: Online
Deadline: May 31
www.b4s.in/edge/SGSE2

King's College London Vice-Chancellor's Awards
Offered by the King's College London, the U.K.
Eligibility: Open to domiciled Indian students pursuing full-time, on-campus postgraduate taught degree under one of the specified faculties.
Rewards: £5,000 reduction in fees
Application: Online
Deadline: May 31
www.b4s.in/edge/KCLV1

Nottingham Trent University International Scholarships
Offered by the Nottingham Trent University, the U.K.
Eligibility: Open to international students seeking enrolment in the first year of an eligible UG or PG programme or pursuing second/third year of a UG course in September 2026.
Rewards: Fee waivers
Application: Online
Deadline: June 24
www.b4s.in/edge/NTUI2

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

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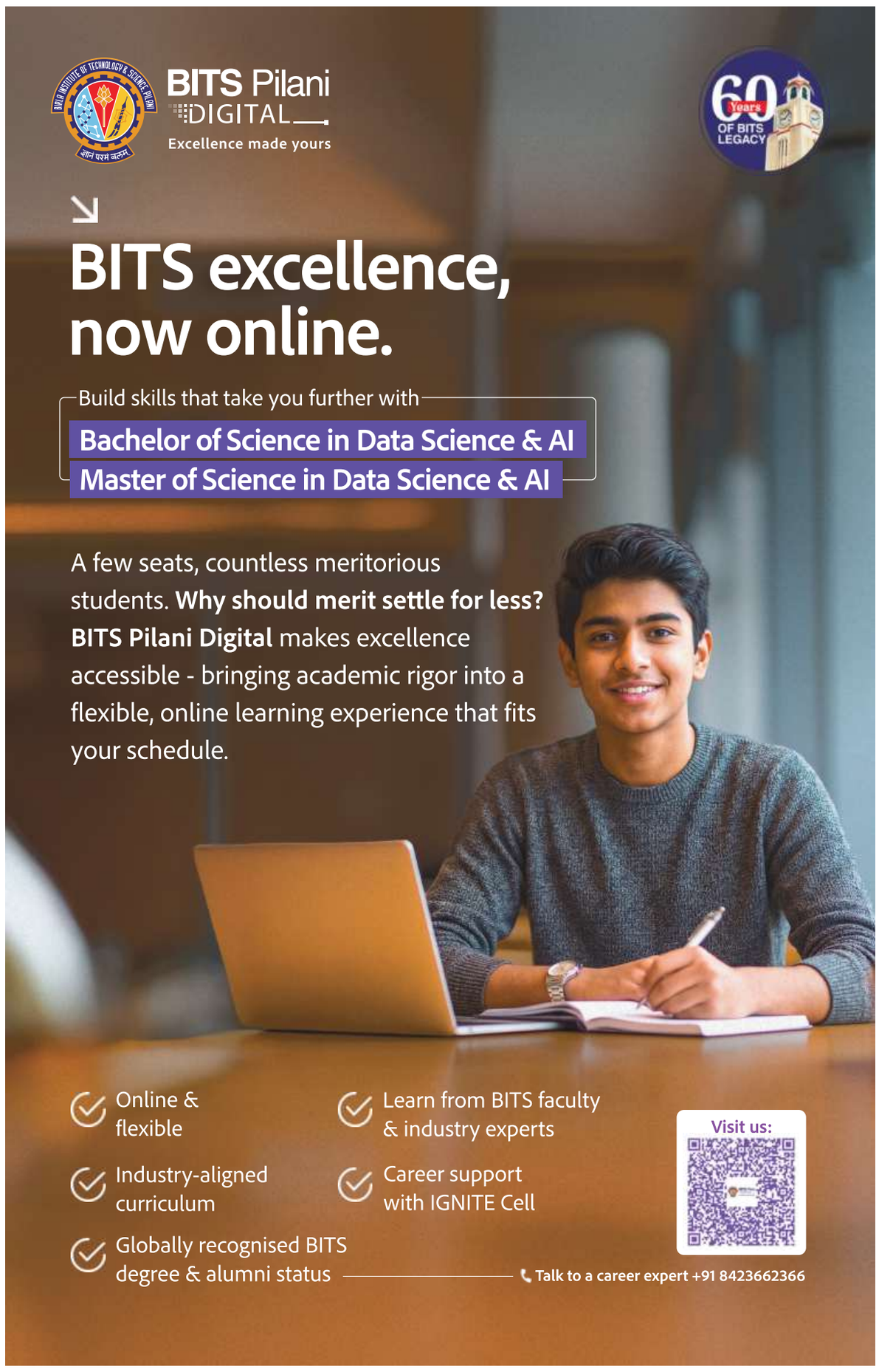


Tackling takedowns

Online censorship is a threat to the fundamental right to free expression

The Union government's enthusiastic misuse of its spurious powers to censor lawful speech online is an alarming and exponentially growing threat to India's democracy. With amendments to the IT Rules, 2021 – which are themselves on shaky constitutional ground – the government has successfully pressured Meta and X to take down content within three-hour timelines that leave little time to push back, lest they lose "safe harbour" protections and be dragged into court or, worse, have their employees face personal criminal liability. Under the cover of fighting AI-generated content, all speech is being subjected to a despotic regime where the state can silence speech at will, destroying the promise of the Internet, which has emerged as an important alternative voice to express everyday concerns. Visceral, hard-hitting expressions of independent voices are an integral part of a society led by free ideals and representative democracy. Weaponising Sections 69A and 79(3)(b) of the IT Act, 2000 to take down such content, and accounts wholesale, distorts the public conversation in a way that benefits the ruling party, with scant regard for the freedoms of audiences and the livelihoods of creators. Often, entire accounts of the Opposition are deleted. Since this infrastructure of censorship has been built brick by brick without any moral compunctions on the path down which they lead, takedowns of independent media outlets and critical commentators have grown. Some have been reversed, at the cost of revealing their identity. The government continues to enjoy these powers under a veil of secrecy, publishing no meaningful data on how its hold on online discourse has tightened.

By opening up the so-called Sahyog portal to police officials around the country, requests under Section 79(3)(b) have been supercharged as a censorial rubber stamp that the IT Act simply does not give them. The clear Supreme Court precedent outlining what "actual knowledge" of illegality online constitutes for takedown orders has been reduced to a mockery. The Karnataka High Court has even brushed aside binding Court precedent under *Shreya Singhal vs Union of India*, even as the government has not dared to formalise the powers that it is exercising by passing a law in Parliament. Social media platforms have failed miserably in acting as a check in this ongoing rampage for power over online speech and have instead chosen the peace of mind that comes with automatically processing takedown notices. X continues to resist the Sahyog portal, but faces pressure from proceedings in the Karnataka and Delhi High Courts. The political elite must ponder the consequences of its campaign against online speech. Opposition-ruled States have quickly leapt to leverage the Sahyog portal's powers. A future government run by today's Opposition will likely play by the same sordid rules.

Doctors decide

Decisions to go for abortion must be guided by sound medical advice

With freedom comes great responsibility; decisions made as a consequence of any freedom must be informed by reasonable awareness of the fall out. In seemingly vesting reproductive autonomy with the woman, the Supreme Court might have edged out the essential role of a clinical review of the situation. The Court asked the Union government to amend the abortion law to remove the time limit on medical termination of unwanted pregnancies in the case of minor rape victims. The Bench of the Chief Justice of India, Surya Kant, and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made the observation while refusing to entertain a petition against an earlier Court decision allowing a 15-year-old survivor of rape to terminate the pregnancy during the 30th week. In the original judgment on the case, which was on curative appeal, the judges remarked that the right of the minor child to continue a pregnancy that is illegitimate must be considered, to safeguard a woman's right to reproductive autonomy. The Bench of Justices B.V. Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan had noted that the minor had shown a clear and consistent unwillingness to continue the pregnancy. The Court cannot compel any woman, much less a minor, to complete her pregnancy if she otherwise did not intend to do so, they said. They also indicated that if the legal routes were closed, women might take the dangerous path to quacks, risking life. However, counsel for the All India Institute of Medical Sciences stoutly opposed the termination, and the curative petition; leveraging the same safety consideration. Terminating the pregnancy at an advanced stage – 30 weeks – would be inimical to the health of the teenage mother. Currently, Indian law allows for the termination of pregnancy up to 24 weeks of gestation.

The entire argument hinges on gestational age, which, as an indicator of how far along the pregnancy is, is crucial to deciding whether an abortion would be safe. Most countries that have legalised abortion restrict the period of safe abortion to 24 weeks of gestation, primarily because of the negative implications for the life and health of the mother, after that. But, central to legal abortion is a medical assessment of risks. Will a child or her parents alone, with lay knowledge, be able to make a studied assessment of such risk? While the minor expresses her desire to be rid of a forced pregnancy, it is the role of her parents and the system to provide her with safe options, within the permissible period. Making an uninformed decision at this stage could be counterproductive, if it compromises on her health or life, while allowing the right to bodily autonomy.

AI and a gathering storm of unchecked power

Suhrith Parthasarathy

Advocate practising in the Madras High Court

On April 19, the American tech-giant Palantir tweeted a 22-point summary of its CEO Alexander C. Karp's book, *The Technological Republic* (co-authored with Nicholas Zamiska). In it, the company decries corporate inclusivity, the equality of cultures, and, more worryingly, the limits of soft power. "The ability of free and democratic societies to prevail requires something more than moral appeal," it says. "It requires hard power, and hard power in this century will be built on software." Palantir then proceeds to point out that the question is no long whether Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be used to build weapons, but who it will build them for and for what purpose.

It is difficult to read Palantir's programme and not feel a foreboding sense of anxiety about where AI is taking us. It has after all crept into every stream of life, often with devastating consequences. With every passing day, it is evident that these companies will shape how people interact with each other, how the economies of the world develop, and even how nations wage wars.

Indeed, Palantir's tweet is no corporate dogma. Among the more striking influences of AI in recent times is the news of its use in the United States' attacks in Iran. Reports have shown us that the company's AI-powered defence platform, the Maven Smart System, had a substantial role to play in selecting the targets, including the primary school in Minab, Iran, where American forces killed between 175 and 180 people, most of them girls between the ages of seven and 12.

What is eerily disquieting

The speculative dystopias from a few years ago are now with us in the present. No doubt, we have reached this moment due to an accretion of choices that we have made over many years. But so eerily disquieting is the lack of regulation over its use and growth that AI's potential appears to concern even the savants of today's technological world, Sam Altman of OpenAI among them, more than it does the state.

In a 13-page document released on its website, titled "Industrial Policy for the Intelligence Age: Ideas to Keep People First", OpenAI claims that the technology it is building is coming at a pace far faster than society is prepared to handle. The paper argues that in normal times, markets can work on their own and competition can lead to better living standards and expanded opportunity.

"But the magnitude of the changes we expect and the potential risks we foresee demand even more," it says. "We are entering a new phase of economic and social organization that will fundamentally reshape work, knowledge, and production. It requires not just incremental policy responses but ambitious policy ideas for tomorrow."

> Corporate control of AI raises urgent questions about power, accountability and a weakening of democratic safeguards

To that end, governments, according to Open AI, should implement common sense regulation, which, far from entrenching incumbents, would "help protect children, mitigate national security risks, and encourage innovation".

But the absence of regulation could not be more glaring. Open AI's rival, Anthropic, which operates Claude, has a resident philosopher and ethicist, Amanda Askell, supposedly doing the job for it. Ms. Askell has written up what is now described as "Claude's Constitution" – known to the corporation's employees as the "soul doc". It purports to provide the large language model (LLM) a set of moral precepts.

In this case, it seeks to ensure that Claude is "broadly safe", "broadly ethical", "compliant with Anthropic's guidelines", and "genuinely helpful".

For example, the safety standards it prescribes demands that Claude should never, among other things, provide uplift to those seeking to create biological, chemical, nuclear, or radiological weapons with the potential for mass casualties; provide uplift to attacks on critical infrastructure; engage in an attempt to kill the vast majority of humanity as whole; and generate child sexual abuse material.

But, ultimately, these efforts must be viewed with the greatest scepticism. They are the LLMs' way of telling us to thank them for keeping the world a safe place. Even if we treat them at face value, consider what happens when Claude chooses to override its constitution? Or if one of Anthropic's competitors, say, Palantir, feels no urge to control how its LLMs grow?.

From warfare to surveillance

Consider Anthropic's latest model, Claude Mythos, which has already raised a raft of ethical concerns over its hacking skills, outperforming humans. Thus far, the company has not released the new version to the public, because of the serious threats it poses to cybersecurity. In Palantir's case, not only has its manifesto and its use in recent warfare been alarming, but so too has its role in America's surveillance efforts. The corporation has reportedly built software that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) uses to profile and track individuals. While some may argue that the software's surveillance efforts have been used to enhance public good in the past – notably in contact tracing efforts in some countries during the COVID-19 pandemic – it has increasingly become a tool for brazen surveillance in breach of civil liberties.

Palantir's software is also in use across States in the U.S. where predictive policing has become the norm. Multiple investigations have shown the problems inherent in the technology's use – its profiling is racially charged and biased and based on information that is collated with unabashed disregard for privacy.

Beyond issues of surveillance, privacy and warfare, there are other concerns too. These include the impact that AI has had and will continue to have on jobs, on our climate, and on our creativity, will, and endeavour, ultimately, impinging on what it means to be a human being. There are also worries over how LLMs are trained on man-made writing, by using novels, poems and essays as data points. Whether this constitutes fair use of copyright remains a point of contention.

But the idea that these corporations are to be trusted to do the right thing shifts the burden of public accountability otherwise fundamental to constitutional democracies onto private entities. By any account, this portends dangerous consequences.

Across the world there appears to be a sense not too distinct from how we have reacted to the various arrangements of affairs in the neo-liberal world order, that "there is no alternative", a maxim once made famous by Margaret Thatcher. This allowed Thatcher, as the writer Cory Doctorow has argued, to "paint her ideological choices as historical inevitabilities".

The rest of the world must react

But there are alternatives. That the U.S. and the West are unwilling to regulate AI must not mean that the rest of the world should stay silent. Thus far, India has adopted a relatively soft regulatory regime. Its Governance Guidelines, released in November 2025, recognises many of the problems characteristic to the technology, but stops short of recommending legislative intervention.

The cue is in what Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said at the AI Impact Summit held in February 2026 in New Delhi. Big tech needs regulation, with the "imperative of safeguarding human rights in the digital sphere, promoting information integrity, and protecting our countries' creative industries".

As he correctly recognised, the companies' business model depends on exploitation of personal data and the erosion of privacy. To that end, allowing technological expansion to go unchecked would only deepen inequalities and concentrate power in a few nations and corporations.

At a time like this, when international law is flailing, to be cheery about global cooperation may seem desperate. But frameworks exist, the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act, Brazil's proposals, and even India's own guidelines, among them. What we must do is compel our leaders to show the political will to make these binding and multilateral.

The problem is that most of us have not so much as started asking ourselves what a just future with AI would look like. Instead, we seem to have accepted that there is no alternative. In the process, we have all fallen into the Thatcherite trap.

Keeping India's carbon money at home

Archie Parnell

Professor of Law, O.P. Jindal Global University School of Law

On January 1, 2026, the European Union (EU)'s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) came into effect, and is fully in force. Europe calls it fairness: European producers pay a carbon price, so imports should too. On paper, it sounds equitable; in practice, the door to fair competition is only half-open for India.

European steel, aluminium and cement producers enjoy large decarbonisation subsidies and subsidised public finance. They also continue receiving free allowances under the EU Emissions Trading System, which will be phased out gradually from 2026 to 2034, lowering their effective carbon costs even as CBAM phases in. Indian exporters, by contrast, face the full weight of CBAM charges without equivalent state support.

This tilt sits uneasily with the spirit of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article III, which bars deploying internal charges to shield domestic producers from fair competition.

What the deeper issue is about

The new India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), whose negotiations concluded on January 27, 2026, provides no exemption from CBAM for India. The EU held firm: no country gets country-specific flexibility. The FTA's Annex on Carbon Border Measures (Annex 14-A) does, however, establish a formal technical dialogue on CBAM implementation – including how any effective carbon price paid in India can be taken into account at the EU border, and a most-favoured-nation commitment that any flexibility extended to other countries will automatically extend to India. That narrow opening matters enormously.

The deeper issue is climate justice and sovereignty. CBAM shifts part of Europe's decarbonisation burden onto developing-country exporters while keeping the resulting revenue in European hands. A country that cannot shape the carbon price on its exports, or direct the associated revenues, risks becoming a rule-taker rather than a rule-maker in the green transition.

> When Europe sets carbon rules, India must not remain the price taker

India is not starting from zero. The Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS), notified in 2023, establishes a domestic carbon price through tradable certificates, and will, over time, cover key industrial sectors including steel. Under CBAM Regulation Article 9, European importers may deduct embedded emissions that have already borne a carbon price in the country of origin. That is the legal hook for recognising India's carbon price as an offset to CBAM. The principle, and the legal mechanism, are sound.

Crediting CCTS under Article 9 is both legally defensible and environmentally coherent. CCTS is a compliance-grade market: installations must hold carbon credits against measured emissions, carrying a rupee-denominated value per tonne. Crediting that effective price against CBAM obligations – subject to robust monitoring, transparent exchange-rate conversion, and guarantees that no export rebates neutralise the burden – would prevent double-pricing while preserving CBAM's stated aim of levelling the playing field.

As a counter adjustment

India's next move should be a counter adjustment: an India Border Adjustment Mechanism (IBAM). Rather than accepting CBAM as an inescapable external levy, India could impose its own carbon-based charge on CBAM-covered exports, collected at the point of export. But IBAM must not be rushed or announced unilaterally. It should be developed only through Annex 14-A, so that its design is clearly recognised in advance as a "carbon price paid in the country of origin" for purposes of CBAM Article 9. If India sequences this carefully – using Annex 14-A to lock in how CCTS payments and any IBAM charges will be credited – Indian exporters need not face any higher overall carbon cost than CBAM alone would impose. What they would otherwise pay implicitly as a levy retained in Europe, they would instead pay explicitly through domestic obligations, fully offset at the EU border. The net carbon burden on exporters would be capped at the CBAM level in any event.

Make IBAM a constructive offer

The crucial difference is where the money goes. IBAM revenues would stay in India. Every rupee raised should be ring-fenced in a dedicated, transparently governed fund restricted to verifiable green projects: modernising blast furnaces, expanding low-carbon electricity, scaling hydrogen and scrap-based steelmaking, supporting affected workers – all subject to strict measurable, reportable and verifiable standards, independently audited and publicly disclosed.

Seen this way, IBAM is not a spoiler but a constructive offer. If the EU is serious that CBAM is about preventing carbon leakage rather than protecting revenue, it should recognise credible Indian carbon pricing under Article 9 and treat those payments as genuine offsets. European consumers would still see a carbon-priced product. Indian producers would face no higher net carbon cost.

Most importantly, India would keep its carbon revenues and use them to finance a green transition designed, at least in part, on its own terms.

India should "IBAM the CBAM" – treating FTA Annex 14-A and CBAM's Article 9 not as footnotes, but as levers to keep carbon money at home while engaging seriously with a carbon-priced world.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The day of election results

May 4, 2026 should witness grace in victory, dignity in defeat. As the electorate in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry render their verdict on May 4, all stakeholders must honour democracy's covenant. The winners must resist triumphalism — a mandate is a trust, not a trophy. The vanquished must concede with grace, for dignified defeat strengthens democracy more than hollow victory. Party cadres on both sides must shun provocation and violence; the street is not an extension of the ballot box. Voters, having exercised their sovereign right, must now demand accountability regardless of affiliation. Election officials must ensure an orderly, transparent count. And the media — democracy's sentinels — must report facts, not fervour; results, not narratives.

Gopalaswamy J.,
Chennai

Many who saw the election system as robust and the Election Commission of India (ECI) as beyond reproach have been taken by surprise. The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls was introduced in haste ahead of the Assembly polls; "logical discrepancy" was cited in West Bengal to exclude lakhs of voters. Judicial intervention, too, did not offer relief in time. With results due and new governments set to take office, these concerns may fade away for now, only to return before the next election. A clear and well-defined process must be put in place leaving no room for doubt about the ECI's credibility.

V. Nagarajan,
Chennai

MI and IPL 2026

Mumbai Indians are an incredible case study in franchise cricket. The most successful team in the IPL, alongside Chennai Super Kings, is now fighting not only for qualification to the play-offs in the 2026 season but also for its identity. MI looks especially bedraggled. Loyal MI fans want to see Rohit Sharma back at the helm. The 2026 season seems to have signalled a decline in MI's dominance.

R. Sivakumar,
Chennai

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

A countdown to International Day of Yoga

Prataprao Jadhav

Union Minister of State (IC) for Ayush and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare

At a time when the world is navigating conflict, uncertainty, and rising psychological strain, the idea of peace demands renewed attention. Traditionally approached through diplomacy and policy, peace is often framed as an external goal, negotiated across borders and institutions. Yet, despite these efforts, societies remain increasingly unsettled, suggesting that peace cannot be secured externally alone. It must also be cultivated within. Yoga facilitates this journey.

The global community recognised this potential when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a resolution in 2014, leading to the declaration of June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. The proposal itself was visionary, first articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his address to the 69th Session of the UNGA, where he described yoga as an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition – one that embodies the unity of mind and body, thought and action. The first observance in 2015, under the theme "Yoga for Harmony and Peace," reflected a shared aspiration to build more balanced and cohesive societies. This vision was further reinforced in 2018 with the theme "Yoga for Peace," underlining the role of Yoga as a unifying force in an increasingly fragmented world.

Importantly, this emphasis has not been confined to individual years. Across successive International Day of Yoga observances, the ideas of balance, interconnectedness, and collective well-being have remained central. These themes are not merely symbolic – they represent a sustained global effort to position yoga as a practice that connects individuals across cultures, geographies, and ideologies, reinforcing peace as a shared and participatory process.

This growing global recognition was further strengthened in 2016, when yoga was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. While deeply rooted in India's civilisational ethos, Yoga today belongs to the world. Its universality lies in its simplicity – it requires no elaborate infrastructure, no exclusive access, and transcends cultural boundaries.

It is in this spirit that the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India organised the 'Yoga Mahotsav 2026' on May 2, at the Kanha Shanti Vanam.

Bridging the gap

Yoga offers a way to bridge the gap between inner imbalance and external discord by strengthening the individual's capacity for awareness, balance, and restraint. Rooted in India's traditional knowledge systems, Yoga is not merely a physical routine but a discipline that harmonises the body, mind, and breath.

Through this integration, it enables individuals to respond to situations with clarity rather than impulse.

This distinction is critical. Much of the conflict witnessed today, whether in personal interactions or public discourse, does not arise solely from deep divisions but from the inability to regulate response. Yoga, through practices such as breath control and meditation, develops precisely this capacity. It creates space between stimulus and reaction – where reflection replaces reaction, and understanding tempers instinct. It is through this shift in individual behaviour that Yoga begins to shape peace at a broader, societal level. In a world reacting faster than it reflects, Yoga restores the discipline of pause.

In this context, Yoga has also emerged as one of India's most significant instruments of soft power. Unlike conventional forms of influence that rely on assertion, yoga operates through participation and shared experience. It creates moments of collective stillness in an otherwise fragmented world, fostering trust, mutual respect, and a sense of global unity – values that are essential for lasting peace.

> By encouraging mindfulness and emotional regulation, Yoga equips individuals with the ability to manage stress and respond thoughtfully

The relevance of Yoga becomes even more pronounced in the present global landscape. Rapid urbanisation, digital overstimulation, and shifting social dynamics have contributed to rising stress levels, shrinking attention spans, and increasingly reactive forms of communication. In such conditions, the absence of inner equilibrium often translates into external friction. Yoga addresses this challenge at its root. By encouraging mindfulness and emotional regulation, it equips individuals with the ability to manage stress and respond thoughtfully. When adopted widely, this shift in behaviour has the potential to influence collective outcomes, strengthening social cohesion and fostering more resilient communities.

The Ministry of Ayush has been committed to advancing this vision by integrating Yoga into public health, education, and community initiatives. The objective is not periodic participation, but sustained behavioural transformation that supports both individual well-being and societal harmony. Events like the 'Yoga Mahotsav 2026' are not merely commemorative – they are catalytic, bringing people together in a shared experience of awareness, balance, and collective intent. Peace, ultimately, is not a singular milestone but a continuous process, shaped by how individuals think, act, and engage with one another. Yoga, in its depth and universality, offers a practical means to nurture this process.

As the world moves toward the International Day of Yoga 2026, the message is both simple and profound: lasting peace will not be negotiated only across tables, but also cultivated within individuals. Yoga, in this sense, is not merely a practice – it is a quiet, enduring architecture of peace.

Naidu's industrial push for Andhra

The Chief Minister's ambitious drive for investments has given rise to concerns

STATE OF PLAY

Sumit Bhattacharjee
sumit.b@thehindu.co.in

In 1995, when Nara Chandrababu Naidu became the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh (then undivided), he began pitching Hyderabad as the new IT destination of the country. He was able to make due on that claim, when in 1998, IT giant Microsoft established a global R&D centre in the city. This proved to be a game changer for both Mr. Naidu and the State as soon Hyderabad came to be regarded as a major IT destination for global firms, with other majors such as Oracle, Google, Amazon, and Cognizant making a beeline for Hyderabad.

Ever since then, Mr. Naidu has basked in the success of transforming Hyderabad, with the achievement featuring prominently in all his subsequent political campaigns.

After a setback in 2004, Mr. Naidu returned to power in 2014 as part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), following the bifurcation of the State, and once again focussed on IT; only this time, he pitched Visakhapatnam as the IT destination of the residuary Andhra Pradesh. Apart from IT, Mr. Naidu also proposed developing a greenfield capital at Amaravati.

However, his 2014-19 tenure was riddled with controversies, and his formidable Opposition – the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) led by a much younger Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy – picked holes in several of the initiatives he had undertaken. Towards the end of his term, he bitterly parted ways with the NDA. Mr. Reddy capitalised on this vulnerability and won the 2019 elections with a thumping majority.

But Mr. Naidu is not one to be written off easily. He highlighted the shortcomings of his opponents; mended ties with the NDA leadership; brought Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena Party into the alliance; and reduced the YSRCP from 151 seats to just 11 seats in 2024. He is now back at the helm of affairs and appears to be leading an industrial push in the State.

A new vision

Mr. Naidu has now succeeded in roping in Google to set up its first 1 GW (gigawatt) hyperscale AI data centre outside the U.S., in the Tarluvada village near Visakhapatnam, with an investment plan of about $15 billion.

While there are several concerns surrounding the project – including issues related to water, power, land holdings and the environment – Mr. Naidu has stated that these will be addressed with both the State government and Google working to resolve them. There is a strong view within the tech community that although Google may not directly employ a large number of people, it could act as an anchor, attracting companies in IT, AI, finance and banking. This could mirror the catalytic role Microsoft played in Hyderabad.

Unlike the 1990s, when Mr. Naidu primarily focussed on an IT-driven growth model, this time he is also emphasising on core sectors. He has encouraged stakeholders to leverage regional strengths and optimise resource utilisation across districts. Leveraging Visakhapatnam's coastline, port infrastructure and iron ore supply, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India has grounded a 17.8 MTPA steel plant at Rajayyapeta in Anakapalli. Mr. Naidu has also pitched for investments from MNCs such as LG and Carrier in Sri City in the Tirupati region, along with several other big-ticket proposals, including an ₹82,000 crore green energy project from ReNew. He has also identified zones for a drone city, defence hub and space city in the Rayalaseema region. At present, Mr. Naidu's image as a 'CEO-style' administrator seems to be attracting investments.

However, the question of continuity looms large. In 2019, when Mr. Naidu lost power, several projects were stalled and tenders were reversed. This cycle of policy reversals has had an adverse impact on the State. Therefore, ensuring continuity of these projects, irrespective of which party is in power, will augur well for Andhra Pradesh.

Another key challenge for Mr. Naidu is to effectively capitalise on these big-ticket investments. Following Google, Reliance Industries is also in talks with the State to set up a 1.5 GW data centre. But the question is whether the government will be able to attract MNCs to set up shop by leveraging the advantage of high-speed data transfer through the sub-sea cables that will land in Visakhapatnam.

Also, fostering subsidiary industries to boost local employment while ensuring that environmental safeguards are not compromised will be equally important.

Electoral participation has been on a steady rise in India

Voter turnouts have been increasing over decades across States, and is not a sudden phenomenon

DATA POINT

Sanjay Kumar
Arindam Kabir

India's electoral participation has been rising across States, with the pattern being much broader than the recent trends in West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Assam. Data shows that, over the past decade or so, voter turnout has increased in most States, with only a few exceptions, suggesting a sustained deepening of electoral engagement rather than a sudden increase.

The clearest takeaway from the data is that higher participation is not confined to one region or one political context. In Gujarat, voter turnout rose from 59.77% in 2007 to 64.84% in 2022, while in Uttar Pradesh, it moved from 45.96% to 61.08% in the same period. Goa saw a jump from 70.51% to 81.89%, and Manipur's voter turnout increased from 86.73% to 90.28% **(Table 1)**. These are very different States in terms of geography, party competition, social composition, and turnout history, yet they show the same broad direction – more people are voting.

Karnataka's turnout rose from 64.84% to 73.84%, Madhya Pradesh's increased from 69.63% to 77.74%, Rajasthan from 66.49% to 75.33%, and Chhattisgarh's from 70.66% to 76.75% **(Table 2)**.

Exceptions to the rise

The overall pattern is upward, but it is not universal. Punjab fell from 76.04% in 2007 to 72.15% in 2022, while Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura show decline or near-stability over time. Haryana is another important exception, moving from 72.37% in 2009 to 67.89% in 2024 **(Table 3)**. These cases matter because they show that turnout growth is not automatic and can be shaped by local political conditions, competition, and administrative factors.

At the same time, several States that had already registered high voter turnout continued to do the same. Arunachal Pradesh's voter turnout rose from 79.45% in 2009 to 86.89% in 2024 **(Table 3)**. Puducherry moved from 86.19% in 2011 to 89.85% in 2026 **(Table 5)**. Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have also shown increases. Kerala's voter turnout increased from 75.26% to 78.27%, Tamil Nadu's increased from 78.29% to 85.15% and West Bengal's from 84.72% to 92.47% **(Table 5)**. West Bengal deserves special attention because it shows that rising turnout can occur even in a politically intense, highly competitive State. The State has long had one of the highest participation levels in India, yet turnout still moved upward from 84.72% in 2011 to 92.47% in 2026.

This is important because Bengal is often treated as an exceptional case in debates about electoral mobilisation. However, the numbers suggest something broader – participation has not only expanded in low-turnout States, it has also deepened in places where voting was already strong. Bengal therefore reinforces the central argument that the recent rise in voter turnout is part of a wider and long-term trend, not a sudden or isolated development. Even in States that already had relatively high turnout, the increase is visible, which suggests that participation gains are not limited to low-turnout States alone.

The data across different election cycles suggests that voter turnout has been building over time. Andhra Pradesh increased its voter turnout from 72.72% in 2009 to 81.79% in 2024, Odisha increased it from 65.35% to 74.79%, and Jharkhand has gone from 57.03% to 67.66% **(Table 3)**. Similarly, Bihar has also increased its voter turnout from 52.73% in 2010 to 67.67% in 2025 **(Table 4)**. Taken together, these numbers indicate a steady broadening of electoral participation across India's electoral landscape, and not a sudden increase.

This is important because it places the recent surge in voter turnout across a longer time frame. The rise in participation is best understood as a decade-long trend with uneven outcomes across States, rather than as a sudden event limited to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).

Not much impact

The SIR may have further increased voter turnout by changing the denominator, which can push the voter turnout percentage upward even when the underlying number of voters changes only modestly. That means its effect should be seen as additive rather than foundational. The more fundamental story is that voter turnout was already moving upward in many States well before any such exercises. This distinction is important for interpreting the numbers correctly. If voter turnout rises because the eligible voter base is recalibrated, that may amplify the final percentage. But the broader picture shows that the direction of movement was already upward across many States, so the SIR most likely worked on top of an existing trend rather than initiating it.

The broad increase in voter turnout points to stronger political engagement and possibly more effective mobilisation by parties and institutions. It may also reflect changing voter attitudes, better awareness, or a greater sense that elections matter. Whatever the mix of causes, the evidence suggests that India's electoral participation has become more expansive across States.

At the same time, the exceptions remind us that participation is not uniform. Some States have shown a downward trend too, and these variations deserve attention instead of being flattened into a single national story. Still, the overall direction is clear – across India, voter turnout has generally gone up, and recent factors like the SIR may have added to a rise that was already underway.

Parsing participation

The data for the tables were sourced from the Election Commission of India

Electoral mandate: An election officer puts the indelible ink mark on the index finger of a women at a polling booth in the Dr.Radhakrishnan Nagar constituency on April 23, 2026. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Table 1: Voter turnout (in %) in the Assembly elections of 2007 and 2022

States	2007	2022
Gujarat	59.77	64.84
Punjab	76.04	72.15
Uttar Pradesh	45.96	61.08
Goa	70.51	81.89
Manipur	86.73	90.28

Table 2: Voter turnout (in %) in the Assembly elections of 2008 and 2023

States	2008	2023
Karnataka	64.84	73.84
Madhya Pradesh	69.63	77.74
Rajasthan	66.49	75.33
Chhattisgarh	70.66	76.75
Meghalaya	89.39	86.72
Mizoram	82.33	82.26
Nagaland	87.16	88.1
Tripura	92.49	89.83

Table 3: Voter turnout (in %) in the Assembly elections of 2009 and 2024

States	2009	2024
Andhra Pradesh	72.72	81.79
Haryana	72.37	67.89
Maharashtra	59.68	65.11
Odisha	65.35	74.79
Jharkhand	57.03	67.66
Arunachal Pradesh	79.45	86.89
Sikkim	83.37	83.43

Table 4: Voter turnout (in %) in the Assembly elections of 2010 and 2025

State	2010	2025
Bihar	52.73	67.67

Table 5: Voter turnout (in %) in the Assembly elections of 2011 and 2026

State	2011	2026
Assam	76.04	85.96
Kerala	75.26	78.27
Tamil Nadu	78.29	85.15
West Bengal	84.72	92.47
Puducherry	86.19	89.85

Higher participation is not confined to one region or one political context. Recent factors like SIR may have added to a rise that was already underway

Note: Sanjay Kumar is a professor, psephologist and election analyst.

Arindam Kabir is a researcher with Lokniti-CSDS

Views expressed by the authors are their own independent views, it does not reflect the views of the institution

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 4, 1976

Big haul from pawnbrokers' banker

Madras, May 3: One hundred and sixty kilograms of gold ornaments ranging from a ring to a huge gold necklace stored in 48 boxes and valued at Rs. 65 lakhs – claimed to be one of the biggest hauls in the country – were seized by the Central Excise officers from the residence of a "pawnbrokers banker" last Monday. These boxes had been stored in a strong room in the premises at Govindappa Naicken Street, George Town. The officers also seized cash of Rs. 63,000. The banker had neither declared possession of this huge quantity of gold ornaments nor even his personal jewellery.

Disclosing this at a press conference to-day, Mr. L.J. Rao, Collector of Central Excise said each box contained 100 to 1,500 items of gold jewellery. These boxes belonged to various pawnbrokers who had re-pledged them with their 'banker' and received advance of monies. Two Inspectors Mr. P. R. Krishnan and Mr. K. Rangaraj spent over 10 days gathering intelligence and finally located the premises. Fifteen officers led by Mr. E. J. Coelho, Assistant Collector and Mr. N.V. Kumaraswamy, Superintendent, entered the premises on April 26 and started an inventory of all the ornaments.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 4, 1926

Ootacamund horse show

Ootacamund, May 3: The Ootacamund horse show was brought to a successful conclusion this afternoon. The show was voted one of the finest held in India and attached large number of prominent visitors who are now at the station. Among these were, besides His Excellency the Governor and the Hon'ble Cicely Goschen, Sir C.P. Ranaiswami Iyer, the Maharaja and Junior Maharani of Travancore, the Maharani of Cooch Bebar, the Maharaja of Bobbili, the Nawab of Tander, General Ponsonby the Raja of Kollengode, Sirdar Kaniaraj Ors and Devarj URs of Mysore.

The Open Jumping Competition for horses and ponies aroused keen competition, the prize eventually going to the Maharani of Cooch Behar's "Roulette." The prize for the best pony or horse in the show went to the Maharani of Cooen Bihar "Broad Fort" and that of the best pony to Mrs. Hildebrand's "Theodra."

From Page One

Parties brace for verdict; transparency promised

With exit polls hinting at a United Democratic Front (UDF) comeback, the Congress-led Opposition is already in a celebratory mood. Meanwhile, CPI(M) State secretary M.V. Govindan was confident that the Left Democratic Front (LDF) would return for a straight third term. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is pinning its hopes on a handful of constituencies, such as Nemom, where it had fielded its State president, Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

In West Bengal, after a bitter contest, the votes polled in 293 Assembly constituencies will be counted on Monday, while that of Falta Assembly seat in South 24 Parganas will be counted on May 21 after repolling on account of electoral malpractices.

The Trinamool Congress led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is seeking to return to power for the fourth consecutive term, while the BJP, the principal Opposition party, is trying to defeat the Trinamool over the promise of "*paribortan* [change]".

The Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front, which had administered the State for 34 years till 2011, had allied with the Indian Secular Front and contested the Assembly polls. The Congress also fielded candidates in all the 294 seats, after a gap of 15 years.

All eyes on TVK

A record number of 4,87,98,833 voters, constituting 85.1% of the electorate in Tamil Nadu, will reveal to what extent the political landscape of the State, dominated for nearly half-a-century by the DMK and its offshoot AIADMK, is disrupted by Kollywood superstar C. Joseph Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in its debut Assembly election. Also in test will be the performance of the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK), a recognised State political party, headed by film director Seeman, who has fielded candidates in all 234 constituencies, giving nearly 50% representation to women and one transperson.

The ruling DMK steered by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin is seeking to set a record by retaining power, a feat last achieved by the party in 1971.

In Puducherry, the fate of 294 candidates, including AINRC founder and Chief Minister N. Rangasamy, who were in fray to elect the 16th Assembly, will be known on Monday as election officials gear up for counting of votes in centres spread across all the four regions of the Union Territory. The Union Territory had registered a record voter turnout of 91. 23% in the polls held on April 9 to elect a 30-member Assembly.

Also, the results of the byelections to Umreth in Gujarat, Bagalkot and Davanagere South in Karnataka, Rahuri and Baramati in Maharashtra, Koridang in Nagaland and Dharmanagar in Tripura will be announced on Monday.

(With inputs from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Assam, Kerala and West Bengal)

Nine dead as fire rips through Delhi building

Dousing the blaze required 14 firefighting units, including fire tenders, water bowsers, and other special equipment used for rescue operations.

The tragedy has struck more than a month after nine members of a family were killed in a similar incident in Palam Colony in southwest Delhi on March 18.

In a post on X, Mr. Modi said, "The loss of lives due to a fire mishap in Delhi's Shahdara district is extremely distressing. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. Praying for the speedy recovery of the injured." He announced an *ex-gratia* of ₹2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the next of kin of each deceased and ₹50,000 for those injured.

Nepal raises Lipulekh issue; India counters

The MoFA said Kathmandu has conveyed its opposition to the yatra through the region "to both India and China through diplomatic channels".

Responding to the Nepali remarks, Randhir Jaiswal, official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, said late on Sunday, "...such claims are neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence."

"Lipulekh Pass has been a long-standing route for the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra since 1954 and the pilgrimage through this route has been going on for decades. This is not a new development".

"India remains open to a constructive interaction with Nepal on all issues in the bilateral relationship, including on resolving agreed outstanding boundary issues through dialogue and diplomacy," Mr. Jaiswal posted on X.

The development comes at a time when Indian and Nepali diplomats have been in consultation over the past three months about the way forward to further bilateral ties and accordingly, Mr. Misri's visit to Kathmandu was being planned.

Adhering to existing diplomatic practices, Mr. Misri had met the then-Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli in August 2025, just days before he was ousted in a youth-led uprising on September 8.

Official sources here are maintaining a studied silence about the possibility of a meeting between Mr. Misri and Mr. Shah in the coming days, though diplomatic sources had earlier confirmed to *The Hindu* that the official visit was on track.

Govt. on major diplomatic outreach in May

Modi, Jaishankar to host counterparts from BRICS, Quad, Africa, Europe, and the Indian Ocean Region, and travel to different parts of the world this month; outreach efforts follow the 11th Heads of Missions meet where envoys were urged to improve India's image through 'positive messaging'

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Days after a major conference of India's Ambassadors and High Commissioners, where they were urged to be more "proactive" in projecting India's message worldwide, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar are kicking off a busy summer season, with travels to different parts of the world and hosting a number of their counterparts from BRICS and Quad groupings, Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Indian Ocean Region, all in this month alone.

On Sunday, Mr. Jaishankar arrived in Kingston, Jamaica, at the start of his own nine-day visit to the Caribbean 'CARICOM' grouping of countries, and he will also travel to Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

At the 11th Heads of Missions conference last week, the Prime Minister addressed India's envoys worldwide, urging them to improve India's image through more proactive and "positive messaging". According to a number of officials present, who asked not to be identified, Mr. Modi expressed concern over the "slow speed" in communication, in projecting stories about India, and in reacting to developments in their host countries. Putting a special emphasis on India's neighbourhood, Mr. Modi referred to his decision to appoint a politician, Dinesh Trivedi, as the next High Commissioner to Dhaka and indicated that he was seeking more "*anubhavi*" (experienced) hands in nearby countries.

A post by the Prime Minister on social media said the discussions focused on "strengthening India's global engagement through advancing trade, technology and strategic partnerships, while deepening the connect with our diaspora".

Significantly, the Heads of Mission conference was held almost annually in the previous decade. However, after a break during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 10th Heads of Mission meeting was held in October 2022, and the 11th conference was held in April 2026, nearly four years later. In the interim, the External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary addressed Regional Heads of Mission conferences in different parts of the world.

While S. Jaishankar is on a visit to the Caribbean, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Europe for a five-nation tour. FILE PHOTO

The Prime Minister has expressed concern over 'slow speed' in projecting stories about India

The Prime Minister's first major visitor this month will be Vietnamese President To Lam (May 5-7), who will be in Delhi to discuss strengthening the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that was upgraded in 2016, with talks on defence cooperation, trade, and critical technologies. The Ministry of External Affairs will also host the 'Indian Ocean Dialogue', a track 1.5 (officials and academics) of the 23-nation Indian Ocean Rim Association, in Delhi (May 7-8), where the war and the Hormuz Strait blockades are expected to be at the top of the agenda.

When Mr. Jaishankar returns from the three-nation Caribbean tour, he will prepare for the BRICS Ministers meeting in May (14-15), where he has invited counterparts from Brazil, Russia, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and Indonesia. Previous rounds of BRICS meetings have been disrupted by the war in West Asia, and a joint statement was elusive at the meeting of Deputy Ministers and Special Envoys due to deep differences between the "parties to the conflict", Iran and the UAE, as well as opposition to India's moves on softening the language on the Israel-Palestine issues and the Gaza conflict.

The Prime Minister will then travel to Europe for a five-nation tour to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Italy, and the Vatican (May 15-20). In Oslo, Mr. Modi will also attend the Nordic-India Summit with the leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. With the European Free Trade Association in operation and the EU-India Free Trade Agreement finalised, both sides are discussing partnerships in strategic and defence areas as well.

However, the war in West Asia, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, and ties with the United States are expected to overshadow the meetings. Mr. Modi is also expected to stop over at the UAE, his first visit to the region since the war began.

Later this month, the outreaches will continue, with a visit from Cyprus President Christodoulides to Mumbai and Delhi (May 20-23). U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to travel to India for his first such visit as Mr. Jaishankar hosts the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting (May 26). The India-Africa Summit, to be held after more than a decade, will be one of the year's major conferences (May 28-30), while later this year, India is due to host the BRICS summit and the Quad Summit as well.

SIT to probe murder of 4-year-old in Maharashtra

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to probe the rape and murder of a four-year-old girl in Pune district of Maharashtra.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday said that the government will push for the death penalty for the accused and the trial will be held to ensure justice in "record time".

The father of the four-year-old has demanded the death sentence for the accused and appealed to political leaders not to visit his home to offer condolences until the sentence is pronounced.

The crime which occured on May 1 triggered criticism of the Maharashtra government from the Opposition and protests by the public. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut termed the State government "useless" and "incompetent" over the law and order situation in the State.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visits the headquarters of the National Testing Agency in New Delhi on the day of the NEET-UG 2026 examination. ANI

NEET-UG 2026 held across 551 cities in India and 14 abroad

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The NEET-UG 2026 examination was conducted on Sunday across 551 cities in India and 14 cities abroad.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan visited the National Testing Agency (NTA) headquarters to assess on-ground readiness for the examination, officials said.

The Minister oversaw key operational aspects, including examination logistics, coordination with centres, and monitoring systems put in place to conduct the test seamlessly, they said. Officials briefed him on measures taken to handle the large number of candidates and maintain discipline at examination venues.

The examination was conducted by the NTA for nearly 23 lakh registered candidates at centres across the country under strict protocols, officials said. NEET-UG continues to be one of the largest undergraduate entrance examinations in India and serves as the gateway for admission to MBBS, BDS and other allied medical programmes across institutions in the country.

Revoke extra charge collected from Haj pilgrims, says Cong.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday demanded the immediate withdrawal of the April 28 circular issued by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, which requires Haj pilgrims to make an additional payment by May 15, alleging that the circular was issued without justification or prior consultation and was a result of mismanagement by the government.

Rajya Sabha member Syed Naseer Hussain, in a post on X, also sought a full refund of all amounts collected under the circular and structural reforms of the Ministry's management of the Haj pilgrimage. He called for a Haj Price Stability Framework before the 2027 season. "Pilgrims had already paid the full amount in multiple instalments over many months... The hardship they face is not only financial. It is the direct consequence of mismanagement and of being treated as a revenue consideration rather than as citizens entitled to basic protection and dignity," Mr. Hussain said.

A woman bids goodbye to her relatives as they depart for Haj pilgrimage in New Delhi. PTI

He said the Centre's justification that rising fuel prices had necessitated the additional charge ran contrary to its own claims that the energy sector had remained stable and citizens had been insulated against external shocks. "If fuel costs have not warranted a broader public burden, why are pilgrims being asked to absorb this increase?" he asked.

Interactive session in Chennai to explore the changing world of work

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRM IST), in association with *The Hindu*, will hold a discussion on the changing world of work as part of the Future Career Conversations series on Tuesday (May 5). The event will be held at Taj Connemara, Chennai, bringing together industry leaders, entrepreneurs and academic experts.

The by invitation-only event is designed to help students and professionals navigate an evolving professional landscape. Register at newsth.live/SRMFCCC02 or by scanning the QR code. The programme will feature two sessions – 'The Rejigged Employee' and 'The Learning Entrepreneur' – focusing on adaptability, upskilling and innovation. The first session, moderated by Prince Frederick, Civic Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*, will include Prof. A. Vinay Kumar, Pro Vice-Chancellor of SRM Institute of Science and Technology; Abhishek Paul of Kissflow; Amardeep Devadason of RR Donnelley & William Lea; and Bijumon Jacob of Ejada, Dubai.

The second session, moderated by Sangeetha Kandavel, Senior Assistant Editor, *The Hindu*, will feature N. Bhalaji of SRM IST; Balaji Sampath, founder of AhaGuru; and Puru Gupta, co-founder and CEO of True Elements.

Congress demands discussion on Great Nicobar Project in Parliament

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Countering the Union government's claim that the Great Nicobar Island Development Project will be undertaken with "due diligence", the Congress on Sunday said the government had failed to address concerns surrounding the project, and called for a parliamentary review of the initiative.

Congress general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh claimed that the Centre, rattled by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi's "hugely impactful" visit, issued a clarification three days later in an attempt at "damage control". Underlining the ecological uniqueness of Great Nicobar, Mr. Ramesh, in a four-page statement, said the government's claims that only 1.82% of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands's land area was being used for the project were "irrelevant and misleading". He said that Great Nicobar was ecologically distinct and biologically rich.

> The government's claim that only 1.82% of the total land of the island group is being used for the project is irrelevant and misleading. It ignores the ecological and biological richness of the Great Nicobar ecosystem, which is unique both in the island group and in the world
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress general secretary (communications)

Institutions like the Wildlife Institute of India and Zoological Survey of India were literally coerced to play a key role in environmental clearance and related processes for the project, Mr. Ramesh said.

Mr. Ramesh said the Nicobarese tribal community had repeatedly expressed concerns about the project's impact on their forests and way of life. He raised questions about consent from the Shompen, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). The Shompen are a primarily uncontacted community with no non-Shompen speakers among them. "It is not clear then how the project authorities have taken their informed consent," Mr. Ramesh said.

Mr. Ramesh pointed out that key documents including Forest Advisory Committee deliberations and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) field studies were not made public.

He also countered the government's claim that the project is strategically crucial, citing a recent piece by former Navy chief Arun Prakash that security concerns for Andaman and Nicobar must be separated from developments under the Great Nicobar project. Mr. Ramesh accused the government of trying to "muzzle genuine debate" by hiding behind "security considerations". "These considerations must, at the very least, be discussed and debated in Parliamentary forum," he said.

Bengal waits with bated breath for Assembly election results

Counting will be held across 77 counting centres spread across 23 districts of the State today; 432 counting observers are deployed to ensure transparent and smooth counting of votes; BJP chief calls for peace after the counting of votes

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

Political parties and people across the State are waiting with bated breath for counting of votes of the West Bengal Assembly election on Monday.

Election to the 294-member Assembly was held in two phases on April 23 and 29. After a bitterly contested election, the votes for 293 Assembly seats will be counted on Monday as the Election Commission (EC) has announced repolling for the Falta seat in South 24 Parganas district on May 21 on account of electoral malpractices.

The Assembly election was held against the backdrop of the special intensive revision (SIR) of electoral rolls which resulted in the electorate of the State shrinking by 90 lakh.

About 6.83 crore electors were eligible to cast their vote in the election, which witnessed a record voting with more than 92 % of the electors exercising their franchise.

On high vigilance: Security personnel deployed outside the strongroom at the Netaji Indoor Stadium ahead of vote counting for the Assembly election in Kolkata on Sunday. ANI

Security tightened

Counting will be held across 77 counting venues spread across 23 districts of the State. Security arrangements have been beefed up with apprehensions of irregularities made by the Trinamool Congress.

The Trinamool Congress, led by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, has sought to return to power for the fourth consecutive term.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the principal Opposition party, has attempted to defeat the Trinamool Congress over the promise of "*partibortan* (change)".

The Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left front, which administered the State for 34 years till 2011, allied with the Indian Secular Front to contest the 2026 polls. The Congress fielded candidates in all 294 seats, after a gap of 15 years. While the political landscape of the State was abuzz with anticipation ahead of the election results, the Trinamool Congress and the BJP have already begun claiming victory.

The Election Commission of India has deployed 432 counting observers (COs) across the State to ensure transparent and smooth counting of votes. It has also directed that no contractual employee be engaged in the counting process.

The Supreme Court on Saturday disposed of the Trinamool's petition challenging appointment of counting officials and asked EC to follow the April 13 circular in "letter and spirit".

West Bengal BJP president Samik Bhattacharya held a press conference on Sunday and called for peace in the State after the counting of votes.

He expressed hope that there would be no repeat of the post-poll violence in 2021.

The Trinamool Congress is making last-minute arrangements for the counting. A meeting of counting agents for the Bhabanipur Assembly constituency was held at the Chief Minister's residence.

Amid allegations of attempts at tampering of postal ballots at some counting centres in Kolkata over the past few days, VVPAT slips of the Noapara Assembly seat were found scattered on a road in the area on Sunday evening, a day before the counting.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast rain and thunderstorms across all districts of the State on Monday. The IMD has issued an orange alert and said that thunderstorms, accompanied by rain and gusty wind reaching speeds of 50 to 60 kmph, are very likely to occur over all the districts of south Bengal on Monday.

Assam verdict: Congress hopes to stop BJP run

Rahul Karmakar
GUWAHATI

The Congress-led front of six parties hopes to shed the Opposition tag by preventing the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) from scoring a hattrick of wins after the April 9 Assam election results are declared on Monday.

Both alliances are gung-ho about bagging at least 64 seats, the simple majority mark in the 126-member Assembly. While the Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma-helmed BJP has predicted close to 100 seats for the NDA, the Gaurav Gogoi-steered Congress is confident of a similar number for the Asom Sonmilito Morcha (ASM) to return to power after 10 years.

"Our people voted with one clear resolve – to protect our land, our identity, and our culture from illegal infiltration and demographic aggression," Mr. Sarma said after the elections. He headed the BJP's poll campaign for the first time. In 2016 and 2021, Sarbananda Sonowal had led the party's electoral campaign.

Mr Gogoi, however, claimed that the people of Assam, fed up with misrule and large-scale corruption of the "divisive" BJP, voted for a change. "People voted with the hope of '*Notun Bor Asom*' (New Greater Assam) and new leadership," the State Congress president had stated.

Civic action: People wait in queues at a polling station in Guwahati to cast votes in the Assam Assembly polls on April 9. RITU RAJ KONWAR

The ASM's confidence is derived from the highest-ever voter turnout of 85.96%. On the other hand, the BJP's hopes have been fuelled by the exit polls that have predicted over 90 seats for the NDA.

The BJP's campaign was focused on development, and identity politics. The party warned voters that its exit would empower the "illegal" Miyas (Bengali-speaking Muslims) to renew their political and land "jihad".

The NDA wooed voters by promising to drive out the "infiltrators" already identified, sustain the State's development growth, maintain peace, and strive toward making Assam flood-free. The last five years of the NDA government were marked by anti-Miya rhetoric and a series of eviction drives, specifically against the community. Apart from targeting the Chief Minister for alleged corruption and communal politics, the Congress promised to ensure justice for cultural icon Zubeen Garg within 100 days of coming to power. He died while swimming off an island in Singapore in 2025.

The verdict in Assam is expected to impact the other northeastern States going to the polls in the next few years. The BJP's dream of putting the eight-State region, once considered its "final frontier", on the saffron map began when it won the Assam election in 2016.

The BJP gradually came to power, mostly in alliance with regional players, in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura. Polls in ethnic conflict-hit Manipur are due in 2027, while Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura vote in 2028.

Rajnath to open 3-day symposium in Prayagraj

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the North Tech Symposium 2026 in Prayagraj on Monday. The event is centred on the theme "*Raksha Triveni Sangam* - Where Technology, Industry & Soldiering Converge".

According to the Ministry of Defence, the three-day event is jointly organised by the Indian Army's Northern Command and Central Command, and the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers.

The symposium will highlight indigenous technologies tackling armed forces' operational challenges, with 284 companies showcasing their latest solutions.

'I am one of the six victims,' says Vinesh Phogat ahead of WFI event at Brij Bhushan's hometown

The Hindu Bureau
GURUGRAM

Making a startling revelation that she was among the six women wrestlers allegedly sexually harassed by former Wrestling Federation of India chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, three-time Olympian wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Sunday said she won't be able to give her "100%" at the upcoming WFI ranking tournament scheduled in his hometown, Gonda, in Uttar Pradesh.

Ms. Phogat had led protests at Delhi's Jantar Mantar against the six-time former BJP MP in 2023, accusing him of sexual harassment of women wrestlers. Mr. Singh has denied the charges.

In a video of over four minutes posted on her X account, Ms. Phogat raised strong objections to the tournament venue, saying it is being held at a place where Mr. Singh has "a house and a private college".

Protracted row: Vinesh Phogat had led the protests at Delhi's Jantar Mantar against Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh in 2023. AFP

Ms. Phogat, now the Congress MLA for Julana in Haryana, had announced her retirement from wrestling in 2024 after being disqualified from the 50-kg category in the Paris Olympics finals, but decided to return to the sport four months ago.

In a poignant video, Ms. Phogat said competing in Gonda would put her under extreme pressure.

"You can think for yourself about me going to his house... his college... where every person will be related to him, and competing in such a difficult situation. I don't think I will be able to give my 100% there," she said. "It is very difficult for a girl to compete in such a situation," she added.

Choice of venue

Ms. Phogat said it seemed impossible and unlikely that any hardworking player would get their due in Gonda. "Which referee will judge which game, who is to be defeated, who is be declared a winner – all will be controlled by Brij Bhushan and his people," she said. Ms. Phogat noted that as per Supreme Court guidelines, the identity of sexual harassment victims should not be revealed.

"But due to some compulsions, I want to tell you all what I did not want to speak about, because the matter is pending before the court," she said.

"I want to say that I am one of those six victims who had given that complaint and our testimony is going on in court."

"If any untoward incident happens to anyone, I want to state categorically that the Indian government will be responsible for it," Ms. Phogat said, adding that she was "not seeking any privilege or special treatment" but wanted "the decision on the mat" to be fair and an outcome that was not "dictated by any goons".

She urged sports lovers and the media to attend the event "so the entire country knows the truth".

Kharge slams Sangh Parivar over press freedom curbs

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday attacked the Sangh Parivar over press freedom, saying its message is clear that independent journalism will be punished and compliance rewarded.

Calling for deep introspection by all stakeholders on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, Mr. Kharge, in a post on X, alleged that sections of the media have been reduced to echoing the ruling establishment, while those who persist in asking questions are "targeted relentlessly".

He alleged that the Sangh Parivar has increasingly "weaponised" legal frameworks to silence newsrooms. The nation must confront a stark and undeniable reality that since 2014, India's position in the World Press Freedom Index has steadily declined, falling to 157th place, under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led governments, he said.

Not satisfied with its existing control, the BJP government, in its quest for total dominance, is now seeking to tighten its stranglehold over social media in an attempt to silence it, he claimed.

"The message of the BJP-RSS is clear: independent journalism will be punished, and compliance will be rewarded. Sections of the media have been reduced to echoing the ruling establishment, while those who persist in asking questions are targeted relentlessly," he alleged.

Mr. Kharge said: "A free press, in its truest sense, does not exist to amplify the government's narrative or conceal its failures. It exists to question authority, to scrutinise power, and to hold those in office accountable" .

Mallikarjun Kharge

"Journalists are the custodians of public truth. As Pandit Nehru had said, 'the freedom of the press is not just a slogan but an essential attribute of the democratic process'. That essential attribute stands gravely compromised under the present regime," Mr. Kharge alleged.

"The Sangh Parivar has increasingly weaponised legal frameworks to silence newsrooms. Defamation laws, national security provisions, and sweeping criminal statutes are deployed not as instruments of justice, but as tools of intimidation," he said.

Around 36 journalists were imprisoned between 2014 and 2023 while over 135 journalists were arrested, detained, or interrogated between 2014 and 2020, he said, adding that the scale of persecution has risen sharply, with several journalists booked under draconian laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

"Journalists are being murdered in BJP-ruled States for doing their job," he alleged. "Raghvendra Bajpai in Uttar Pradesh, Mukesh Chandrakar in Chhattisgarh, Rajeev Pratap Singh in Uttarakhand, and Dharmendra Singh Chauhan in Haryana, each of them was reporting on corruption and issues of public interest. Today, they stand as grim reminders of the cost of speaking truth to power," he said.

L-G galvanises major rally against drug abuse in Srinagar

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday galvanised a major rally in Srinagar for the ongoing anti-drug initiatives and issued a stern warning to narco-terror networks and anti-national elements.

On Mr. Sinha's invitation, the Speaker of the House, Cabinet Ministers, legislators, heads of regional parties, top security officials, religious leaders, educational institutes and administrators of hospitals attended a 2-km-long rally from the Tourist Reception Centre ground to Lal Chowk.

"Determination to uproot drugs is not only a declaration from administration but it is collective resolve of people, who, after enduring decades of suffering, have risen to say: enough is enough," said Mr. Sinha. Without naming Pakistan, he hinted that the country was "using drug money to run terrorism and radicalisation in J&K". "Drug syndicates and anti-national element's time on J&K's soil is over. We are tracking the financial trails of drug cartels. Every link will be broken, every mechanism destroyed," he said.

Determination to uproot drugs is a collective resolve, not merely an administrative declaration, says L-G

Nishant launches Sadbhav Yatra from Bihar's West Champaran

Amit Bhelari
BETTIAH (BIHAR)

Former Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's son, Nishant Kumar, on Sunday, launched his 'Sadbhav Yatra' from Bagaha in West Champaran district, following his father's long-held tradition of launching all political yatras from the Champaran region.

The young leader was welcomed by Janata Dal (United) workers and supporters while passing through the different districts before reaching Valmiki Nagar, where he would stay. Bihar JD(U) president Umesh Singh Kushwaha and JD(U) Legislature Party leader Shrawon Kumar accompanied him in a modified vehicle equipped with an elevator for public addresses.

Former Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar in Bettiah during his Sadbhav Yatra began on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Party workers showered marigold petals using earthmovers at several places along the route. Nishant Kumar also addressed supporters through a public address system at multiple locations. He began his journey from Patna after seeking his father's blessing and touching his feet. His convoy passed through Hajipur, Muzaffarpur and Motihari, accompanied by local leaders and MLAs.

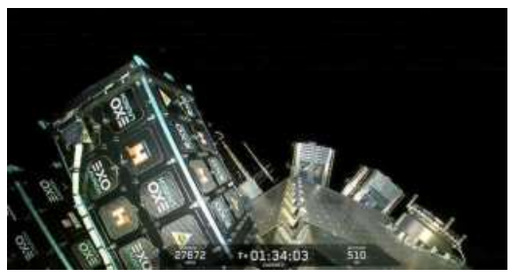
While addressing the people in Bettiah, he said that just as his father started all his yatra from Champaran – the land of Mahatma Gandhi – he too had done the same thing.

He said, "This immense love and support from the public is my greatest strength. I hope this same affection, trust, and blessings will continue in the future, so that this journey of harmony and development moves forward continuously."

The 44-year-old leader added, "This campaign is not only strengthening harmony within society but also infusing energy into development and unity of Bihar."

His political entry is being seen as an important move for the survival of the party. On Monday, Nishant Kumar will hold his first public meeting in Bettiah.

INBRIEF



Mission Drishti, world's first OptoSAR satellite, launched

Mission Drishti, the world's first OptoSAR satellite developed by the Bengaluru-based space start-up GalaxEye has been successfully launched on Sunday aboard a Falcon 9 by SpaceX from Vandenberg, California. Weighing 190 kilograms, it is India's largest privately developed earth observation satellite. "It is the first satellite globally to integrate Electro-Optical (EO) and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) sensors into a single operational platform, enabling all-weather, day-and-night imaging capabilities. This approach addresses long-standing limitations of conventional systems and enables more reliable and consistent data acquisition across diverse environmental conditions," GalaxEye said.

Andaman sets two Guinness World Records in two days

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands on Sunday created another Guinness World Record with the formation of the tallest human stack underwater at Swaraj Dweep, formerly known as Havelock Island, officials said. Fourteen people, including Lt. Gov. D.K. Joshi, took part in forming the 22.3-metre-long stack, and they stayed under water for three minutes. The feat comes a day after the Union Territory administration unfurled the world's largest underwater national flag, measuring approximately 60 by 40 metres, near the same island. Officials said the back-to-back achievements are part of a larger initiative to showcase the islands as a premier global diving destination, highlighting their pristine marine ecosystem and advanced diving capabilities.

Govt. issues guidelines on childhood diabetes care

New framework provides for universal screening, district-level diagnosis and free lifelong care, including insulin, regular monitoring, and emergency response under public health system

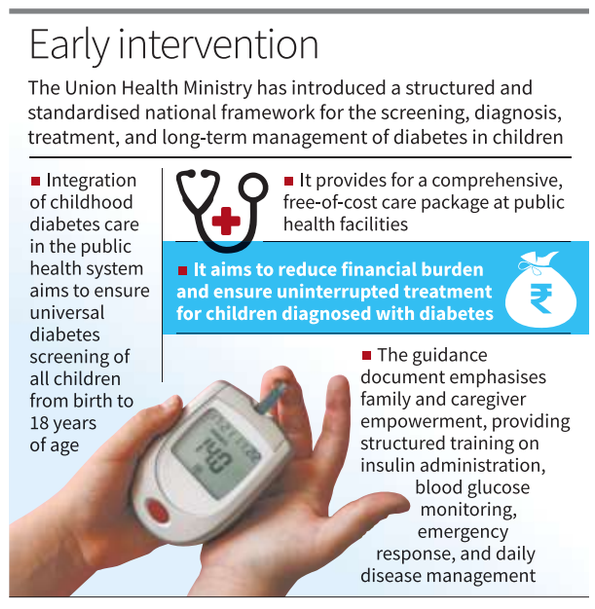
Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Integrating childhood diabetes care into the public health system, the Union Health Ministry has, for the first time, introduced a structured and standardised national framework for the screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management of diabetes in children.

Releasing the *Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children* recently, the Ministry said this aims to ensure universal diabetes screening of all children in India from birth to 18 years of age.

"Suspected cases will undergo immediate blood glucose testing, followed by timely referral to district-level health facilities for confirmatory diagnosis and treatment," a senior Health Ministry official said.

He added that a key feature of the framework is the provision of a comprehensive, free-of-cost care package at public health facilities. This includes screening, diagnostic services, lifelong insulin therapy, monitoring devices such as glucometers and test strips, and regular follow-up care. The approach is designed to reduce financial burden and ensure uninterrupted treatment for children diagnosed with diabetes.



Integrated care

While the initiative positions India among a select group of countries that have integrated childhood diabetes care into the public health system, the document also introduces an integrated continuum of care, linking community-level screening with district hospital-based management and advanced care at medical colleges.

"This convergence ensures that no child is lost in the system and that care continues seamlessly from detection to long-term follow-up," the Health Ministry noted in a release issued on Sunday.

According to the World Health Organization, diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Hyperglycaemia, or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes and over time leads to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

"4Ts" framework

The initiative seeks to support early detection and promote the "4Ts" awareness framework – Toilet, Thirsty, Tired, and Thinner – enabling parents, teachers and caregivers to recognise early warning signs of Type 1 diabetes.

In addition to clinical protocols, the document emphasises family and caregiver empowerment, providing structured training on insulin administration, blood glucose monitoring, emergency response and daily disease management. It also outlines evidence-based treatment guidelines, regular monitoring schedules, and protocols for preventing complications.

The initiative is expected to deliver public health benefits, including reduced mortality due to early detection, prevention of complications, and improved quality of life for affected children. Over the long term, it will contribute to lowering healthcare costs and strengthening health system capacity for managing non-communicable diseases among children.

Rescue personnel conduct a search operation after the cruise tragedy in Jabalpur district on Thursday. PTI

Jabalpur cruise tragedy: two more bodies recovered

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The death toll in the Jabalpur cruise tragedy rose to 13 on Sunday after the bodies of the last two victims were recovered from the Bargi dam reservoir, authorities said.

Jabalpur Collector Raghvendra Singh told *The Hindu* that the body of nine-year-old Mayuram was recovered around 5 a.m., while remains of his uncle Kamraj Arya were found around 8 a.m. during a search operation in the reservoir. Both are residents of Tamil Nadu's Tiruchirappalli.

A cruise vessel of Madhya Pradesh Tourism, carrying 39 tourists and two crew members, capsized after facing a sudden storm in the Bargi dam on the Narmada river in Jabalpur on Thursday. Twenty-eight people were rescued safely while bodies of four victims were recovered soon after.

While five bodies and the vessel wreckage were brought out on Friday, two deceased children were found on Saturday.

Mr. Singh said that while Indian Army's rescuers and divers have returned, NDRF, SDERF and local administration are continuing the search efforts to look for parts of the cruise boat and belongings of the victims.

"We are continuing it today [Sunday] and will evaluate the situation if we should keep it going on Monday. We are also preparing the list of injured victims to provide them the financial relief announced by the government," he said.

'India needs future-ready workforce to sustain its leadership in pharma'

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Experts at a webinar underscored the need for India to strengthen its innovation ecosystem, streamline regulatory frameworks, and build a future-ready workforce to sustain its global leadership in pharmaceuticals.

The webinar, "Pharma 2030: Innovation, Regulation and the Rise of India", held on Sunday was organised by *The Hindu* and SRM Institute of Science and Technology as part of the Future Career Conversations series.

It focused on India's evolving role in the global pharma landscape and the shifts required to move up the value chain. Setting the context, S. Vincent, Member-Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Council for Science and Technology, spoke about government initiatives, policy direction, and the broader research ecosystem.

He highlighted efforts to strengthen innovation through science and technology policy and enable the translation of academic research into real-world applications. "A cohesive ecosystem that aligns policy, research, and industry is essential to drive sustainable growth and ensure that innovation translates into real-world impact," he said.

Vasan Sambandamurthy, Senior Vice-President, Strategy and Global Operations, at Bugworks Research Inc., spoke on regulatory frameworks and the role of regulatory bodies in enabling innovation. He noted that while India had strong capabilities in manufacturing and generics, there was a need to strengthen systems that support cutting-edge drug discovery. "Regulatory systems must strike the right balance between safety, speed, and innovation to enable next-generation drug development," he said.

Stronger partnerships

V. Chitra, Dean and Professor and Head, Department of Pharmacology, SRM College of Pharmacy, spoke about academia and the persistent gaps in collaboration with industry. She highlighted challenges in translating research into market-ready solutions and stressed the need for stronger partnerships and interdisciplinary approaches.

N. Damodharan, Vice-Principal and Professor and Head, Department of Pharmaceutics, SRM College of Pharmacy, highlighted the growing role of advanced drug delivery systems, nanotechnology, and formulation science, noting a shift towards more complex and value-driven products.

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

The webinar can be viewed at newsth.live/pharma

AICTE's Internship Portal sees 4.7 cr. student registrations in over 4 years

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The National Internship Portal run by the Ministry of Education's All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) has recorded over 4.7 crore student registrations in four-and-a-half years, AICTE's Chief Coordinating Officer (CCO) Buddha Chandrasekhar said.

Mr. Chandrasekhar told *The Hindu* that of the over 4.7 crore registered students, AICTE had been able to verify the credentials of over 2.9 crore. "We have a vetting process in place to ensure those students who have registered for internships are attached to a college or an academic institution," he said.

Over 79.57 lakh internship opportunities have been offered by the portal, and more than 32.78 lakh students have completed their internships, official AICTE data say. "We have tied up with 81,483 companies and signed formal MoUs with 12,077 colleges," Mr. Chandrasekhar added.

The scheme is aimed at bridging the gap between theory and workplace reality.

Asked if these internships were converting into employment, Mr. Chandrasekhar said that while AICTE offers internships, employment does not come under its purview. "We make students employable, but giving employment is not under our purview. We did start asking students if internships translated into jobs; however, we note that once the internship is over, students' contact with the college is drastically reduced. So, we have limited data on the students' employability trajectory. We are trying to collect that data," the CCO said.

The initiative, operating under the National Educational Alliance for Technology and the National Educational Technology Forum, has bridged the gap between academic theory and workplace reality, said the official.

"AICTE is running the portal as per the mandate of National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, building a 360-degree loop where industry feedback is taken in for curriculum design," Mr. Chandrasekhar said.

"As a result, we are attempting to turn students from job-seekers into innovators."

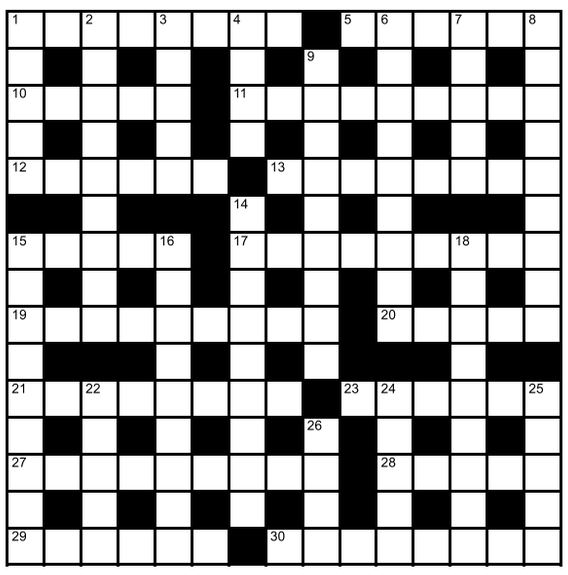
According to him, AICTE data revealed a shift in India's skilling landscape, with the portal expanding to students in rural and semi-urban areas who previously lacked access to Tier-1 corporate exposure. The platform has integrated employers ranging from global tech companies to government institutions.

TH CROSSWORD + 14784

(set by Incognito)

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

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Without being bidden, captured male removed face covering (8)
5 Cheops managed for long periods (6)
10 Confused vets with head of terrier in small screen (2,3)
11 Poem covering composition of Reagan's drink (9)
12 Repeated broadcasts from insurer unsavoury (6)
13 Wrongly say, "Putts and remains in the same place" (5,3)
15 Implements used to make stool (5)
17 Leave the decision to Penny, for example (4,1,4)
19 Excited deer circled around small water body and gave a reaction (9)
20 Shake firkin to some extent and drink (5)
21 Cone jet is modified to contain current discharge (8)
23 Paths in space created by bistro reconstruction (6)
27 Will, perhaps, try American ward (9)
28 Extraterrestrial Neil Armstrong initially sent back (5)
29 Upshot from Ulster revolution (6)
30 Professionals who give oral exams (8)

Down

1 Say, "Abject" (5)
2 Sum up, "Hot chambers for fungi" (9)
3 Soft material from South Africa placed in front of container (5)
4 Musk-melons hiding his name? (4)
6 Kids love this swine accepting money (5,4)
7 Charlie gets light fixture (5)
8 For example, honey, ewes enter haphazardly (9)
9 Whispered remark after group of actors get dropped (4,5)
14 Card game Kurd poets played (4,5)
15 Persecutor and soldiers trapped between a couple of mountains (9)
16 Deficit from brief decline (9)
18 Restricted film is oft horrible (3-6)
22 Makes it easy when seaplanes fly without plan (5)
24 Reprimand star consuming egg at sea (5)
25 Drowns ship carrying writing material (5)
26 Eye problem from dusty environment (4)

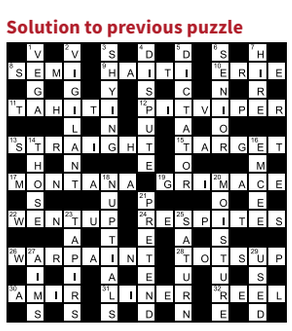
SUDOKU

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

No.SS6870 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Nrusimha keeps 8 promises

Sri Desika Srinivasa Thathachariar Swamy explained in a discourse that God's manifestation as Nrusimha was to fulfil eight promises. The idea of the eight promises is a theological elaboration emphasising that the Lord's actions are never arbitrary. They are perfectly aligned to protect dharma and honour His devotees, and yet respect the cosmic order, including the boons granted earlier. When Hiranyakasipu knocked down a pillar (created by him, knowing nothing inside), the Lord appeared instantaneously from the pillar to uphold the words of His devotee Prahlada, who said God dwells everywhere, including the pillar. God says He is present in all five elements of nature, and the pillar is associated with the element Earth.

The gatekeepers of Sri Vaikunta who incurred the curse of Sanaka and other rishis were destined to be born as devils for three births, but they prayed to Lord Narayana to be slain and retrieved by the God. Hiranyakasipu's birth was one of the three, and God fulfilled that promise. Hiranyakasipu prayed to Lord Brahma that he should not be killed by any of Brahma's creations, and Nrusimha fulfilled that promise also, as He was not created by Brahma. Hiranyakasipu also prayed that he should not be killed during the day or night, nor indoors or outdoors. To fulfil this condition, God chose to kill him on the threshold and at twilight. Though Hiranyakasipu had obtained numerous boons, he was inwardly certain that his persecution of Prahlada would ultimately lead to his destruction, a fate that the Lord indeed brought to a conclusion. Sage Narada assured Indra that Prahlada could never be slain by Hiranyakasipu, a truth that the Lord unfailingly upheld.

Dodge that mis-selling bullet

COVERNOTE

K. Nitya Kalyani

Awareness is safety. Let the buyer beware. Nowhere is this truer than when buying insurance.

By the time you realise you have been a victim of mis-selling you are looking at a closed door. You have a useless or sub-optimal product and you cannot exit without considerable loss. You may even be in hospital or have lost a loved one - and the policy you bought is useless. Is there no way out? There is and it will take your effort, time and yes financial loss.

The escape hatch

The first opportunity for you to wiggle out of a bad insurance decision is in the fortnight after you receive your policy document. That window - the free-look period - is provided to you by the regulator enabling you to return the policy and seek a refund.

Read through the policy documents, see whether it suits your requirements, see if the terms, benefits and premium payment schedules are what you were told and promised when you bought it.

If you are unhappy for any reason, you can cancel the policy and get a refund. Amazing as that sounds, not too many people use this safety net. They are not aware or they are not that vigilant and also avoid an unpleasant job.And then there is the biggie: the document is daunting and

For relief: A customer can also use IRDAI's Bima Bharosa portal. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

discouraging to read with its clauses and difficult language. No matter, each policy bond has to be accompanied by a customer information sheet. Please read that if you want to backtrack from the policy.

The process

How to do it? Write to the insurer about what you were told and what you got and why it is unsuitable for you. Ask for cancellation and refund. If there is misrepresentation, the insurer may offer to modify or cancel and refund most of the premium.

The customer care/grievances officer's contact information will be on your policy and he has to respond by a certain time frame and address your issue. Escalate it within the company until you get a response. If unsuccessful use the IRDAI's Integrated Consumer Grievances Portal, now called Bima Bharosa, and then further the Insurance Ombudsman, consumer courts and regular courts as well.

It is not what happened, but what you can establish as happened that will be your strength. Your alertness has to start at the time of buying. Please put all queries in writing and get all promises, terms and conditions and assurances in writing. Be alert about disclosures and undertakings you sign as they are binding. Make sure to fill and sign the proposal form yourself and keep a photocopy.

Prevention better than cure

The final truth is you are better off avoiding mis-selling than fixing it. This means commitment to invest time and effort during the purchase. Be clear about the purpose of buying a cover. Learn which policies suit your needs. Ask all difficult queries until you get clear answers (in writing!) Get a second opinion! Talk to experts and family before buying. In the next instalment of CoverNote, we will give a wish list of consumer, seller and regulator behaviour to avoid the mess.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history.)

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

Reading the mind: Marshmallow Test aimed at showing self-control predicts better life outcomes such as higher academic success. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

Marshmallow myths and the waiting child

Perhaps, one of the world's most famous psychology experiments was run on full stomachs. But what about the child who is starving without a morsel of food?

CANDY CRUMBLES

Vaishali R. Venkat

> There is a third category of children. In this, the child is neither the Gaza nor the Washington type. It is in the middle of us. Who is the child?

> From a classroom in Stanford, tumbled out an entire philosophy of wealth creation. Delay gratification. Control impulses.

This week, I'm taking you not to stock exchanges, banks or mutual fund houses, but to a different corner of the earth: war-torn streets. Imagine a child crying near a place where her home once stood. The roof is gone. The walls are gone. Her parents are gone. Only she remains. Now, place a marshmallow in front of the child. Tell her that if she waits for 15 more minutes, she would get one more. Ask yourself: will she wait?

Walk into a crumbling classroom in Sudan. Meet a girl who hasn't seen her home for more than two years. Will she wait to grab the second marshmallow?

Enter a ravaged shelter home in Syria, where millions of people still need humanitarian aid. You see a bony boy with torn clothes. Will he wait? Now, ask the same question to a refugee child at a camp in Jordan, in Lebanon, in Turkey, in Afghanistan or elsewhere on this earth where children wait not only for a morsel of food, but also for safety, security and a breath of peace.

Now walk into a school in Washington DC. The hallways smell of fresh paint. The heater hums in the classroom. Crayons lie scattered on the floor. Toys spill from shelves. You see a boy with a lunch box in his hands. Inside it, a sandwich, an apple, a chocolate bar, wafers and berries. Now, hold the marshmallow in front of him. It has now become the poorest thing of all that's inside his lunchbox. Will he wait? Not at all. He doesn't care a damn about your marshmallow.

Same marshmallow but two reactions. The children in war-ravaged areas grab it immediately. Not because they lack self-control. But because in their world, it is the only thing that is real. For them, the promises of tomorrow were shattered several times. They were genuinely starving and so grabbed the marshmallow. The boy with berries in lunchbox does not even care to look.

But there is a third category of children. In this, the child is neither the Gaza nor the Washington type. It is in the middle of us. Who is the child?

The Marshmallow Test

In the U.S., in the late 1960s, Stanford University Professor Walter Mischel set out to study one of the most fundamental questions of human behaviour: Can a child's ability to control impulses predict its future success? He placed a marshmallow in front of almost 600 children aged 4-6. One simple offer: wait for 15 minutes to get two. His follow-up research into the same children showed those who waited grew up with better grades, careers and financial habits. From a classroom in Stanford, tumbled out an entire philosophy of wealth creation. Delay gratification. Control impulses. And over a period, every money guru found a financial sermon – Save. Wait. Resist.

'Sermon' cracked

Not everyone appreciated the sermon. In 2013, Psychology professor Celeste Kidd made a startling discovery. She found children's wait-times reflected not only self-control but also reasoned beliefs about whether waiting would ultimately pay off.

Children who lived with reliable parents viz. those who kept up promises, waited longer. Children from unstable, unpredictable environments grabbed the marshmallow immediately. Not because they lacked self-control. But because their world had taught them that waiting rarely pays off. Five years later in 2018, researchers Tyler Watts, Greg Duncan and Haonan Quan ran the same test on a broader sample of children from diverse backgrounds. When they took into account family background, early cognitive ability and the environment at home, the advantage of waiting reduced significantly.

The child who waited wasn't more disciplined. She simply came from a more stable home with caring parents.

Recent study

And in 2024, a study published in Child Development followed 702 children from the age of four all the way to age 26. The conclusion was simple: Grabbing the marshmallow instantly or waiting for the second one made no reliable difference to how successful the children became in their adult life.

Three studies. One quiet verdict. It was never about self-control, but was about circumstances. The first child's circumstances forced it to grab. The marshmallow itself became irrelevant for the Washington types.

But the third child is eagerly waiting. Faithfully. Patiently. Believing every word of the sermon. Who is the child? To know the answer, and to understand what it means for your money and your future, you will have to wait for your second marshmallow.

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

Gold, silver listless

PRECIOUSMETALS

B. Krishnakumar

Precious metals prices were confined to a narrow range in April, influenced more by the developments surrounding the Middle East geopolitical conflict. The ceasefire between Iran and the U.S. sparked positive sentiment towards gold but the yellow metal cooled off in the last couple of weeks.

Comex gold closed a tad lower at $4,636 by April end, a fall of 1.35%. Echoing the price behaviour of gold, Comex silver, too, closed a bit lower in April, sliding 1.5% to $74.23/ ounce.

The performance of the precious metals in the domestic market was a little better owing to the weakening of the rupee against the U.S. Dollar.

Marginal gain

MCX Gold rose 0.26% in April to settle at ₹1,51,225/10-gram. MCX Silver closed 0.75% lower to ₹2,44,638/kg.

Comex gold price stays stuck in the $4,400-$5,650 zone mentioned in the prior months. There are no signs yet of a breakout from this range. In the near term, the price has to rise above $5,050 to suggest the possibility of a meaningful upside move thereafter.

Until then, expect volatile,range-bound price action within the $4,400-4,950 zone. While the long-term trend for Comex gold remains positive, the price has to move above $5,260 for any significant upside move.

Comex silver price too was range-bound and devoid of any meaningful trend. The short-term outlook for silver does not appear too positive. A cool off to $65-$66 appears likely. On the upside, there is resistance at $81-83 zone. As long as the price stays below $83, a drop to $65-$66 is most likely. The long-term uptrend in silver would resume only a breakout above $85.

In the domestic market too, the price action in gold was listless with the price being confined to the ₹1,45,000-₹1,75,000 range.

Only a breakout from this range would trigger the next big directional move in gold. In the near-term, there is a possibility of a rise to ₹1,53,000-₹1,55,000, a price is likely to drift lower thereafter to ₹1,40,000-₹1,43,000.

A move above ₹1,58,000 would suggest the possibility of a spike to ₹1,65,000-₹1,68,000.

Mimicking the trend in the global markets, MCX silver too was range-bound in April.

The price is may be confined to ₹2,26,000-₹2,61,000 range in the near term. Expect a meaningful trend to emerge in the direction of the breakout once the price gets off this short-term trading range. Until the breakout happens, volatile back and forth action within this range is the most likely.

Conclusion

To summarise, precious metals are likely to stay range bound in the near term. The long-term trend however stays strong for gold and silver.

(The author is a Chennai based analyst / trader. The views and opinion featured in this column is based on the analysis of short-term price movement in gold and silver futures at COMEX & Multi Commodity Exchange of India. This is not meant to be a trading or investment advice.)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%) Highest Slab	1-year Tenure	3-year Tenure	5-year Tenure
Small Finance Banks				
AU Small Finance Bank	7.25	6.35	7.25	6.75
Equitas Small Finance Bank	7.40	6.90	7.00	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	8.00	4.75	6.00	5.75
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.77	7.00	7.50	7.77
Shivalik Small Finance Bank	7.80	6.00	6.75	6.25
slice Small Finance Bank	7.75	6.25	7.50	7.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.10	7.25	7.25	7.90
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	7.45	7.25	7.20	7.20
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.00	7.50	7.00
Private Sector Banks				
Axis Bank	6.45	6.25	6.45	6.45
Bandhan Bank	7.25	7.00	7.25	5.85
City Union Bank	7.00	6.50	6.50	6.25
CSB Bank	7.35	5.00	5.75	5.75
DBS Bank	6.60	6.30	6.40	6.25
DCB Bank	7.15	6.90	7.00	7.15
Federal Bank	6.75	6.25	6.75	6.40
HDFC Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.40
ICICI Bank	6.50	6.25	6.45	6.50
IDFC FIRST Bank	7.25	6.50	7.25	7.15
IndusInd Bank	7.00	6.75	6.90	6.65
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	7.25	6.75	6.65	6.60
IDBI Bank	6.50	6.20	6.35	6.25
Karnataka Bank	6.75	6.50	6.15	6.15
Kotak Mahindra Bank	6.80	6.50	6.40	6.25
RBL Bank	7.20	7.00	7.20	6.70
SBM Bank India	7.85	7.10	7.10	7.00
South Indian Bank	6.80	6.25	6.20	5.70
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.25	6.80	6.70	6.70
YES Bank	7.00	6.65	7.00	6.75
Public Sector Banks				
Bank of Baroda	6.45	6.10	6.25	6.30
Bank of India	6.60	6.25	6.25	6.00
Bank of Maharashtra	6.65	6.20	5.25	5.00
Canara Bank	6.60	6.25	6.25	6.25
Central Bank of India	6.50	6.20	6.00	6.00
Indian Bank	6.60	6.10	6.05	6.00
Indian Overseas Bank	6.60	6.50	6.10	6.10
Punjab National Bank	6.60	6.25	6.30	6.10
Punjab & Sind Bank	6.75	5.85	5.85	5.95
State Bank of India	6.45	6.25	6.30	6.05
Union Bank of India	6.60	6.25	6.20	6.00

Home Loan Interest Rates

(In %)

Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.) Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh
Public Sector Banks			
State Bank of India	7.25-8.95	7.25-8.95	7.25-8.95
Bank of Baroda	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.00	7.20-9.25
Union Bank of India*	7.15-9.50	7.15-9.50	7.15-9.50
Punjab National Bank	7.30-9.30	7.25-9.20	7.25-9.20
Bank of India	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.00	7.10-10.25
Bank of Maharashtra	7.10-9.90	7.10-9.90	7.10-9.90
Punjab and Sind Bank	7.30-10.70	7.30-10.70	7.30-10.70
Indian Overseas Bank	7.10 #	7.10 #	7.10 #
Indian Bank	7.15-9.55	7.15-9.55	7.15-9.55
Central Bank of India	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15	7.10-9.15
Private Sector Banks			
Kotak Mahindra Bank	7.70 #	7.70 #	7.70 #
ICICI Bank	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
Axis Bank	8.00-11.90	8.00-11.90	8.00 - 9.10
HSBC Bank	7.45 #	7.45 #	7.45 #
South Indian Bank	7.20 #	7.20 #	7.20 #
Karur Vysya Bank	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65	8.50-10.65
Karnataka Bank	7.31-11.69	7.31-11.69	7.31-11.69
Federal Bank	8.30 - 10.75	7.30 - 10.75	7.30 - 9.75
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30	7.90 - 9.30
Bandhan Bank	8.41-13.38	8.41-13.38	8.41-13.38
RBL Bank	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
CSB Bank	8.30 #	8.30 #	8.30 #
HDFC Bank	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
City Union Bank	8.25-9.50	8.50-10.00	8.75-10.50
Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)			
LIC Housing Finance	7.15 #	7.15 #	7.15 #
Bajaj Housing Finance	7.15 #	7.15 #	7.15 #
Tata Capital	8.00 #	8.00 #	8.00 #
PNB Housing Finance	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
GIC Housing Finance	8.20 #	8.20 #	8.20 #
SMFG India Home Finance	10.00 #	10.00 #	10.00 #
Sammaan Capital	8.75 #	8.75 #	8.75 #
Aditya Birla Capital	7.75 #	7.75 #	7.75 #
ICICI Home Finance	7.50 #	7.50 #	7.50 #
Godrej Housing Finance	7.65 #	7.65 #	7.65 #

*Extra 0.05% rate concession to borrowers opting for insurance
Rates as on April 29 #onwards Source:Paisabazaar.com

JERUSALEM

Israel approves fighter jet deal with the U.S. to boost aerial superiority

AFP

Israel on Sunday approved a multi-billion-dollar deal to acquire two combat squadrons of F-35 stealth fighter jets and F-15IA warplanes from the U.S., with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying it would "reinforce" its air superiority. Israel's air force played a key role in the war in Gaza and in the ongoing conflict with Iran. AFP

ASHKELON

Israeli court extends detention of two Gaza-bound flotilla activists

AFP

An Israeli court on Sunday extended by two days the detention of two foreign activists from a Gaza-bound flotilla, who were brought to Israel for questioning, a rights group said. The aid flotilla of more than 50 vessels set sail from France, Spain and Italy but was cut off by Israeli forces in international waters off Greece on Thursday. AFP

OTTAWA

Khalistan extremists declared a 'national security threat' by Canada

AFP

Canada has declared Khalistani extremists a "national security threat", adding that the group uses institutions to promote its "violent extremist agenda" in the country. The report comes a year after the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Air India Flight 182, whose suspects were members of Khalistani extremist groups. PTI

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka arrests 37 Chinese at suspected scam centre, say police

AFP

The Sri Lankan police have arrested 37 Chinese nationals suspected of running a cyberscam centre in the capital Colombo, a spokesperson said on Sunday, in the latest crackdown on foreign-run online fraud. "They had entered the country on tourist visas and were illegally employed," a spokesperson said. AFP

Sleepless in Tehran as crowds rally behind the flag

The slogan on a wall in Farsi read, *Meydan bashuma, khayabane ba ma*, meaning 'The battlefield is yours. The streets are ours'; addressed to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, it was a message to soldiers to focus on the battlefield with ordinary Iranians in control of their homes; the regime change that was spoken of so confidently during the conflict is not visible in Tehran, not in any form

DISPATCH FROM IRAN

Saurabh Shukla
Saurabh Shahi
TEHRAN

Fifty-three-year-old Mulook stood for hours at the same spot in a crowded square holding her phone aloft. Late into the night, its screen displayed two images – one of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was assassinated on February 28 by U.S.-Israeli air strikes, and the other of the new Supreme Leader, Mojtaba Khamenei.

These past 62 days, through the fasting of Ramzan, come rain or cold, she has been among tens of thousands who gather each night at the centre of the Meydan-e Vali Asr in the Iranian capital to express solidarity with their nation amid an ongoing war.

"We will keep coming until Iran has given a befitting reply for the martyrdom of our Supreme Leader," says Mulook, who lived through eight years of the war with Iraq. "We supported our leader then. We supported our country then. What is happening now is nothing compared to those eight years."

Gathering in unity

Meydan in Farsi or *Maidan* in Hindi and Urdu is a gathering ground. Meydan Vali Asr is Tehran's largest public square, where the city's radial roads converge from every direction. Friday nights draw the largest crowds here following the evening prayers. The reason is practical, almost cynical. Attacks tend to happen on weekends while U.S. markets open on Monday.

People here understand Donald Trump's calculations though the American President clearly miscalculated their resilience and nationalism.

Historically, Iranians have gathered in the past here to speak in one voice whenever the need arose. Above the square hung a billboard bearing a caricature of Donald Trump, his mouth sealed with the image of the Strait of Hormuz and a caption: "At the breaking point".

The Strait has been cast in Iran's strategic imagination as a weapon – a chokepoint for the world's oil supply that Tehran has made no secret of its willingness to use. The billboard was not a threat, but a reminder.

A second slogan on a wall nearby in Farsi read, "*Meydan bashuma, khayabane ba ma*" (The battlefield is yours. The streets are ours). Addressed to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), it was a message to the soldiers to focus on the battlefield with ordinary Iranians in control of their homes.

'Look ahead'

People say they do not want the army 'to worry about what is behind you', referring to the reports of mass protests against the government earlier in January this year. Iranian authorities called the protests "terror" incidents provoked by pro-American and pro-Israeli elements.

Vehicles drive past a billboard with graphic showing the Strait of Hormuz and sewn lips of Donald Trump, in Tehran on Saturday. AP

There was a serpentine queue to register when we entered the square to carry a large Iranian national flag aloft at the centre of the gathering. Hundreds of men and women – young and old – waited patiently for their turn, each allotted 10 minutes. A girl, no more than seven or eight, held the flag with a sense of pride, despite the visible effort required to carry the weight. As her time ended, a young man stepped forward and quietly took it from her.

Twenty-four hours a day, since the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, this ritual has carried on without any interruptions. The atmosphere also reminds one of Sikh Langars or community kitchens. People brought food, donuts, tea, whatever they could carry or afford.

Strong resolve

Last Friday, May 1, also happened to be Iran's National Teachers' Day. And a young teacher stood at Meydan until the very end of the night. Her parents, she admitted, were not happy with her decision to return home so late. "I think this is a duty. I have to come. I have to stand here with other people," she said not willing to be named.

She was not speaking of ideology but of obligation. The square, for her, was not a political statement so much as a place she felt she had to be. Around her, women with headscarves stood shoulder to shoulder with those without watching visuals of the late Supreme Leader play out on the large screen.

A 63-year-old cleric wearing a long robe lifted a copy of the Koran to his lips choked with tears. Since the war broke out on February 28, he has attended these gatherings every singe day in Tehran and beyond. "America wanted to break our confidence, to make us feel weak. I come here to show that we are stronger than before," he says.

Two flags

Look carefully at the crowd and you see two flags being carried together.

The Iranian tricolour, green, white and red. And the yellow flag of Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant movement and political party that is at war with Israel.

A reminder that Washington and Tel Aviv have failed in many of their objectives cited for justifying this unilateral war. From regime change to weakening the 'axis of resistance' (the network of Iran's allies in the region). To separate Iran from Lebanon, to isolate Hezbollah, to make each front fight alone. Iranians defied again and again.

Nationalist songs, invoking Imam Ali, mixing religious sentiment with pride in the Iranian nation played out loud in signs of shifting sands. Historically, religious identity was primary in Iran's public life and national identity was secondary.

But last year's 12-day conflict changed the dynamics. The establishment's message to the people now reads: "Even if you do not believe in the Islamic Republic, you believe in Iran. Come on that basis. You are welcome here."

The night does not end

As midnight passed, the square did not thin out. The flag changed hands again and again, the queue replenishing itself sipping cups of Iranian chai. A child slept off against a parent's shoulder somewhere in the crowd.

When Mr. Trump had said, some weeks ago, that he would "obliterate" their civilisation, people had come to the bridges and the overpasses and stood there in the open. Come then, was the answer. "We are here".

The regime change that was spoken of so confidently in the early days of this conflict is not visible here, not in any form. What is visible is a city that has decided, for now, that the street is where it needs to be.

Tehran does not sleep any more.

(Saurabh Shukla and Saurabh Shahi are senior editors with The Red Mike)

Russia and Ukraine drones kill four, hit 'shadow fleet' tankers

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Russian drone strikes on Ukraine killed three persons across the country, while Ukrainian attacks killed one near Moscow and targeted Russia's lucrative oil facilities, according to statements by the warring countries on Sunday.

The two neighbours have been firing hundreds of explosive-packed drones at each other on a daily basis throughout the four-year war, as talks to end the conflict have gone nowhere.

Russia fired 268 drones and one ballistic missile in the overnight attack, Kyiv's Air Force said.

Ukraine's Army, meanwhile, launched at least 334 drones at Russia, Moscow's Defence Ministry said.

The northwestern Leningrad region was heavily targeted.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said two of Russia's so-called shadow tankers – ageing vessels that ferry its sanctioned oil – were struck off the southern Black Sea port of Novorossiysk.

Back to school

Secondary school students wave the Kuwaiti flag as they gather in the grounds of Fajr al-Sabah School in Kuwait City on Sunday to attend in-person classes after these were suspended for more than two months following military strikes by the U.S. and Israel against Iran. AFP

'U.S. to reduce troops in Germany a lot further than 5,000'

Associated Press
WEST PALM BEACH

Donald Trump

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday that the U.S. will significantly reduce its troop presence in Germany, escalating a dispute with Chancellor Friedrich Merz as he seeks to scale back America's commitment to European security.

The Pentagon on Friday had initially announced it would pull some 5,000 troops out of Germany, but when asked on Saturday about the reason for the move, Mr. Trump didn't offer an explanation and said an even bigger reduction was coming.

"We're going to cut way down. And we're cutting a lot further than 5,000," Mr. Trump told presspersons in Florida.

'RSF drone strike kills at least five near Sudan capital'

Associated Press
CAIRO

Sudan's paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) killed at least five people in a drone attack that hit a civilian vehicle on the outskirts of Khartoum, a local Sudanese rights group said.

Emergency Lawyers condemned the attack and held the RSF responsible. "What happened was a brazen violation of international humanitarian law."

OPEC+ hikes oil production quotas without mentioning UAE pull-out

Agence France-Presse
VIENNA

Saudi Arabia, Russia and five other OPEC+ countries increased their oil production quota on Sunday in an expected move aimed at demonstrating continuity at the cartel after the shock withdrawal of the United Arab Emirates.

The seven major producers will add 188,000 barrels per day to their total production quota for June amid the price pressure unleashed by the West Asia war, as part of "their collective commitment to support oil market stability", according to a statement published by OPEC+.

Untapped OPEC+ reserves are mainly located in Gulf region.

The statement, following an online meeting of Algeria, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Oman, Russia and Saudi Arabia, made no mention of the United Arab Emirates, which quit the body on Friday, three days after announcing its withdrawal.

'Tense relations'

Rystad Energy analyst Jorge Leon said that the silence on the UAE's departure was a sign of tense relations.

Oil market analysts had widely expected the increase of 188,000 barrels, similar to the 206,000-barrel daily increases OPEC+ announced in both March and April when the portion allotted to the UAE was subtracted.

But raising the quota on paper may not have much impact on actual production, which is already short of the limit.

Untapped OPEC+ reserves are mainly located in the Gulf region, and exports there are trapped by the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, imposed by Iran in response to the U.S.-Israeli strikes since February 28.

Israel strikes south Lebanon, kills one and wounds rescuers

Agence France-Presse
BEIRUT

Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon killed at least one person and wounded four rescuers on Sunday, the Lebanese Health Ministry said, as Israel maintained its attacks on the country despite a fragile truce in its war with Hezbollah.

In separate statements, the Ministry said the a strike on Arabsalim killed at least one person and wounded three, including a child, and another strike on Srifa wounded five persons including four rescuers from the Hezbollah-affiliated Islamic Health Committee, as the strike hit near one of their centres.

Israel issues new evacuation warnings in southern Lebanon for villages beyond the area it occupies

"The Ministry reiterates its condemnation of these repeated attacks and recalls what is included in Article 19 of the Geneva Convention regarding the need to verify that medical facilities are safe from any danger caused by attacks in conflict zones, while what is happening is exactly the opposite."

Israel's military on Sunday issued new evacuation warnings in southern Lebanon for villages beyond the area it occupies.

The warning covers more than 10 villages and towns including several in the district of Nabatieh, which lies north of the Litani River, south of which Israel has stationed troops.

KKR'S OWN

Narine first overseas bowler to join 200-wicket club in the IPL

NAGARA GOPAL

Sunil Narine joined the 200-wicket club in the IPL, becoming the third bowler after Yuzvendra Chahal and Bhuvneshwar Kumar to reach the mark. The KKR veteran is the first to achieve the feat with a single franchise. He is the first overseas bowler to enter the elite club. He now has 201 wickets in 197 matches at an average of 25.53.

SKIPPER'S PRIDE

'Varun is always confident, works very hard and has a great attitude'

NAGARA GOPAL

I'm happy for Varun. He was struggling before the IPL and even in the first couple of games going into the tournament. The way he has come back has been amazing. He is always confident, works hard and has a great attitude. He's been bowling the tough overs. I'm sure he'll continue to shine — KKR skipper Ajinkya Rahane.

MISSED CHANCE

We should've found a way to get around 180 to 200: Cummins

NAGARA GOPAL

We got off to a pretty good start and after that, we weren't at our sharpest. We should've found a way to get around 180 to 200. The wicket did slow up. With the bowling unit, we dragged it right to the end. My over costing 27 runs probably made a difference — SRH captain Pat Cummins.

JOY TO ANGUISH

CSK's Ramakrishna ruled out of the season with foot fracture

B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Chennai Super Kings' Ramakrishna Ghosh has been ruled out of the tournament after suffering a right foot fracture on his IPL debut on Saturday. Ramakrishna returned figures of one for 24 from three overs, taking the key wicket of Suryakumar Yadav. He is the third CSK player after Khaleel Ahmed and Ayush Mhatre to be ruled out.

Deadly duo: Holder's four-for restricted Kings to 163 for nine before Washington sealed a nervy chase for the home team. VIJAY SONEJI

Holder, Washington star as Titans win a thriller

IPL-19

Abhishek Saini
AHMEDABAD

Gujarat Titans once again took the hard route in pursuing a middling total but avoided a catastrophic middle-order slump by a whisker to claim a four-wicket win over Punjab Kings in IPL 2026 at the Narendra Modi Stadium here on Sunday.

The task of chasing 164 was tailor-made for B. Sai Sudharsan's calibrated approach. He struck a half-century (57, 41b, 5x4, 1x6) and was the constant in neatly-compiled partnerships after the early fall of Shubman Gill.

However, his dismissal in the 15th over left the door open for PBKS to snatch an unlikely win.

If Sai Sudharsan's measured cover drive off Xavier Bartlett in the first over was of the classic mould, the southpaw's ramp off Marco Jansen over short third came from his reserve for the daring.

In dewy conditions, Yuzvendra Chahal was held back till the 14th over and Sai Sudharsan duly grabbed the match-up by pocketing two boundaries off sweep shots. But the game turned on its head after Sai Sudharsan and Rahul Tewatia holed out to deep square leg in similar fashion off Vyshak and Jansen, respectively.

Jason Holder was snaffled at long on in the penultimate over. GT needed to get 11 off the final six balls. It was finally down to Washington Sundar (40 n.o., 23b, 5x4, 1x6) to hold his nerve and end the chase with a lap off a full toss from Marcus Stoinis.

But a nail-biter was the least probable outcome when Suryansh Shedge (57, 29b, 3x4, 5x6) and Stoinis (40, 31b, 5x4, 1x6) were asked to steer PBKS from 47 for five.

Their 79-run sixth-wicket partnership was direly-needed after the visitor's top-order was blown away by the Titans pacers on a green surface. They came up bang for their buck as PBKS managed its lowest PowerPlay score of the season (35 for three).

Mohammed Siraj snared Priyansh Arya and Cooper Connolly off the first three balls of the contest. Rabada bookended the PowerPlay with a wicket-maiden that accounted for Prabhsimran Singh.

PBKS sank further after Shreyas Iyer, who was plotting to navigate the tumultuous period in singles, chopped a length ball from Holder onto his stumps in the ninth over.

But thanks to Shedge, PBKS lived to fight on despite the sloppy start. But it was not enough.

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS
Priyansh Arya c Nishant b Siraj 2 *(2b)*, Prabhsimran Singh c Manav b Rabada 15 *(14b, 2x4)*, Cooper Connolly c Buttler b Siraj 0 *(1b)*, Shreyas Iyer b Holder 19 *(21b, 3x4)*, Nehal Wadhera c Buttler b Holder 0 *(6b)*, Suryansh Shedge c Buttler b Rabada 57 *(29b, 3x4, 5x6)*, Marcus Stoinis c Washington b Holder 40 *(31b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Marco Jansen c Gill b Rashid 20 *(11b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Xavier Bartlett b Holder 0 *(1b)*, V. Vyshak **(Impact Player for Wadhera)** (not out) 1 *(3b)*, Arshdeep Singh (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-7): 8; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 163.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-2 (Priyansh, 0.2 overs), 2-2 (Connolly, 0.3), 3-35 (Prabhsimran, 5.2), 4-36 (Wadhera, 6.3), 5-47 (Shreyas, 8.4), 6-126 (Shedge, 15.6), 7-141 (Stoinis, 17.4), 8-141 (Bartlett, 17.5), 9-162 (Jansen, 19.5).

TITANS BOWLING
Siraj 4-0-28-2, Rabada 4-1-22-2, Holder 4-0-24-4, Arshad 3-0-29-0, Rashid 4-0-32-1, Manav 1-0-27-0.

GUJARAT TITANS
Sai Sudharsan c Bartlett b Vyshak 57 *(41b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Shubman Gill c Connolly b Arshdeep 5 *(4b, 1x4)*, Jos Buttler c Shreyas b Vyshak 26 *(22b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Nishant Sindhu c Vyshak b Stoinis 15 *(11b, 1x6)*, Washington Sundar (not out) 40 *(23b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Rahul Tewatia **(Impact Player for Siraj)** c Bartlett b Jansen 2 *(6b)*, Jason Holder c Connolly b Arshdeep 5 *(7b)*, Arshad Khan (not out) 8 *(5b, 1x4)*; Extras (lb-2, w-7): 9; Total (for six wkts. in 19.5 overs): 167.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-16 (Gill, 1.3), 2-69 (Buttler, 8.1), 3-94 (Nishant, 11.3), 4-124 (Sai Sudharsan, 14.5), 5-140 (Tewatia, 16.6), 6-152 (Holder, 18.5).

KINGS BOWLING
Bartlett 4-0-38-0, Arshdeep 4-0-24-2, Jansen 4-0-33-1, Vyshak **(Impact Player for Wadhera)** 4-0-31-2, Stoinis 2.5-0-26-1, Chahal 1-0-13-0.

Toss: Titans; **PoM:** Holder.
Titans won by four wickets with one ball to spare.

Next assignment

PBKS: May 6 vs. SRH Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

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

Varun and Narine set up KKR's emphatic victory

The two spinners share five wickets to bowl out Sunrisers for a below-par 165 after a stunning onslaught by opener Head; the Kolkata side's top-order fires in unison in the modest chase

Anirudh Velamuri
HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad, in quintessential fashion, began its IPL clash against Kolkata Knight Riders with an onslaught so ferocious it felt like the game might be over before it had properly begun. Boundaries flew, the scoreboard spiralled, and KKR was pushed to the brink as SRH went past the 100-run mark in a blink-and-you-miss-it 8.5 overs.

That chaos, stunning and without warning, gave way for a spectacular collapse, courtesy an adamant spin chokehold by Varun Chakaravarthy and Sunil Narine that eventually set up a seven-wicket victory for the visitors at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Sunday.

Travis Head lit up a sweltering afternoon. Four crisp boundaries - threaded through backward point, lofted over point, driven past mid-on, and whipped through square leg - in Vaibhav Arora's opening over put SRH firmly on the front foot.

Despite losing Abhishek Sharma early, the Australian motored on to a blistering half-century off just 22 balls. But Varun had the last laugh, with a mishit promptly landing in Cameron Green's hands at deep midwicket. While SRH eyed another 200-plus score, a stingy KKR happily played spoilsport.

It all began with a sensational one-handed catch by Rovman Powell to dismiss Heinrich Klaasen. From then on, it was a forlorn procession back to the dugout for the home side. The only double ton one witnessed was Narine joining the 200-wickets club, the first overseas bowler to do so in the competition.

Seeing six wickets fall to spin, Pat Cummins opened the defence of a brittle 165 with Abhishek. Finn Allen then went for the jugular, smacking Cummins for 27 runs before holing out to Klaasen. Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi then stitched an 84-run stand of calm assurance to guide the Knight Riders through a largely comfortable chase.

SRH opted for an extra seamer in Sakib Hussain as its Impact Player and tried to turn the tide. It only delayed the inevitable as Rinku Singh applied the finishing touch to a commanding victory.

Connecting thin air: Salil is bowled neck and crop by Narine. NAGARA GOPAL

SCOREBOARD

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD
Abhishek Sharma c Green b Tyagi 15 *(10b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Travis Head c Green b Varun 61 *(28b, 9x4, 3x6)*, Ishan Kishan c Anukul b Narine 42 *(29b, 4x4, 2x6)*, Heinrich Klaasen c Powell b Green 11 *(8b, 1x4, 1x6)*, R. Smaran c Rahane b Varun 4 *(4b, 1x4)*, Aniket Verma c Rahane b Varun 6 *(8b, 1x4)*, Salil Arora b Narine 2 *(6b)*, Pat Cummins c & b Anukul 10 *(8b, 1x6)*, Shivang Kumar c Raghuvanshi b Vaibhav 1 *(2b)*, Harshal Patel c Vaibhav b Tyagi 6 *(5b, 1x4)*, Eshan Malinga (not out) 2 *(6b)*; Extras (b-1, w-4) 5; Total (in 19 overs): 165.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-44 (Abhishek, 3.4 overs), 2-105 (Head, 8.6), 3-117 (Klaasen, 10.4), 4-122 (Smaran, 11.3), 5-135 (Aniket, 13.4), 6-139 (Salil, 15.1), 7-148 (Kishan, 15.6), 8-156 (Cummins, 16.6), 9-156 (Shivang, 17.1).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Narine 4-0-31-2, Vaibhav 3-0-25-1, Tyagi 4-0-30-2, Green 3-0-34-1, Varun 4-0-36-3, Anukul 1-0-8-1.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Ajinkya Rahane c Smaran b Sakib 43 *(36b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Finn Allen **(Impact Player for Vaibhav)** c Klaasen b Cummins 29 *(13b, 3x4, 2x6)*, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c Malinga b Shivang 59 *(47b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Rinku Singh (not out) 22 *(11b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Cameron Green (not out) 3 *(3b)*; Extras (lb-1, w-12): 13; Total (for three wkts. in 18.2 overs): 169.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-49 (Allen, 3.6), 2-133 (Rahane, 14.6), 3-151 (Raghuvanshi, 16.4).

SUNRISERS BOWLING
Abhishek 2-0-14-0, Cummins 4-0-47-1, Malinga 3.2-0-42-0, Shivang 4-0-31-1, Harshal 2-0-17-0, Sakib **(Impact Player for Aniket)** 3-0-17-1.

Toss: SRH; **PoM:** Varun.
KKR won by seven wickets with 10 balls to spare.

Next assignment

SRH: May 6 vs. PBKS Hyderabad, 7.30 p.m.

KKR: May 8 vs. DC Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

Impact Index

1 Holder registered the best figures (4/24) by a GT bowler against PBKS

3 At the age of 24, Sai Sudharsan (18 in 50 innings) has the third-most half-centuries after Gill (24, 100) and Jaiswal (20, 76)

4 Narine bowled the first over of an innings for the fourth time in the IPL, the previous one in 2020

6 Narine and Varun combined to take five or more wickets in an innings for the sixth time

7 Head's 50-plus scores as an opener at a strike-rate of 200-plus. Only Warner (9) and Gayle (8) have more

18 Number of wickets GT has taken in the PowerPlay this season, the third-best after RR (21) and RCB (19)

19 Pandey joined Kohli and Rohit in the list of players to figure in every season of the league

Compiled by **ANIRUDH VELAMURI**

In focus: Pant and Rohit have a lot to ponder. EMMANUAL YOGINI

MI meets LSG in a do-or-die encounter

Shayan Acharya
MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians has long built a reputation as masters of the turnaround, a side that has repeatedly defied the odds to lift the IPL trophy a record five times.

This season, however, has been a different story.

The star-studded lineup has managed just two wins from nine outings, leaving it on the brink of elimination. While mathematical possibilities of a playoff berth remain, the equation is unforgiving: win every remaining game and rely on favourable results elsewhere.

Even that fragile hope could unravel quickly. A defeat against Lucknow Super Giants at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday would extinguish any chance of a late resurgence.

Despite boasting some of the biggest names in Indian cricket, MI has struggled across departments. Captain Hardik Pandya (146 runs in eight innings) and Suryakumar Yadav have lacked consistency, the latter has managed just 183 runs in nine innings, including a solitary fifty.

Coming off a stellar campaign last year, where he amassed over 700 runs, expectations were high. However, Suryakumar has been troubled by hard-length deliveries, a key factor behind his lean run this season. Batting issues are worsened by Rohit Sharma's absence with a hamstring injury. Rohit, though, trained on Sunday.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has been off-colour.

Things have not been much better for LSG.

The bowlers, led by pacers Mohammed Shami and Mohsin Khan, have put up a fighting show. However, the batting has faltered as partnerships have been rare, and PowerPlay returns inconsistent. Captain Rishabh Pant has struggled for form, further compounding the woes.

On paper, it is a clash between two bottom-ranked sides, but when they meet, pride will be at stake along with a fading hope of a miracle.

Today's match

MUMBAI INDIANS vs LSG

Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 8
MI 2 | LSG 6

PREVIOUS MEETING
MI won by 54 runs, 2025

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Points table

	M	W	L	NR	PTS	NRR
Punjab Kings	9	6	2	1	13	0.855
Royal Challengers	9	6	3	0	12	1.420
Sunrisers Hyderabad	10	6	4	0	12	0.644
Rajasthan Royals	10	6	4	0	12	0.510
Gujarat Titans	10	6	4	0	12	-0.147
Chennai Super Kings	9	4	5	0	8	0.005
Delhi Capitals	9	4	5	0	8	-0.895
Kolkata Knight Riders	9	3	5	1	7	-0.539
Mumbai Indians	9	2	7	0	4	-0.803
Lucknow Super Giants	8	2	6	0	4	-1.106

Teen sensation Antonelli completes hat-trick

FORMULA ONE

Sports Bureau

Mercedes' teen sensation Andrea Kimi Antonelli held his nerve under intense pressure from reigning champion Lando Norris to clinch his third career Grand Prix victory in an action-packed Miami Grand Prix on Sunday.

The 19-year-old has now made it a hat-trick of wins this season and extended his championship lead over teammate George Russell to 20 points.

McLaren's Norris, who briefly led the race, had to settle for second.

The second McLaren of Oscar Piastri clinched the final podium position, getting past Ferrari's Charles Leclerc in the penultimate lap of the race.

Making history: Antonelli has become the first driver to win his first three races from pole position. AP

The results (58/58):

1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes); 2. Lando Norris (McLaren); 3. Oscar Piastri (McLaren); 4. George Russell (Mercedes); 5. Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing); 6. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); 7. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari); 8. Franco Colapinto (Alpine); 9. Carlos Sainz (Williams); 10. Alexander Albon (Williams); 11. Ollie Bearman (Haas); 12. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi); 13. Esteban Ocon (Haas); 14. Arvid Lindblad (RB Formula One Team); 15. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin); 16. Sergio Perez (Cadillac F1 Team); 17. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin); 18. Valtteri Bottas (Cadillac).

DNF: Nico Hulkenberg (Audi), Liam Lawson (RB), Pierre Gasly (Alpine), Isack Hadjar (Red Bull).

Standings: Drivers: 1. Antonelli 100; 2. Russell 80; 3. Leclerc 63; 4. Norris 51; 5. Hamilton 49.

Constructors: 1. Mercedes 180; 2. Ferrari 112; 3. McLaren 94; 4. Red Bull Racing 26; 5. Haas 17.

South Korean women dethrone China

UBER CUP

Sports Bureau

South Korean women stunned China to reclaim the Uber Cup, for the first time in four years, after a 3-1 victory in the summit clash at Horsens on Sunday. Korea won its third crown after the triumphs in 2010 and 2022.

The results: Uber Cup: Final:

South Korea bt China 3-1 (An Se-young bt Wang Zhi Yi 21-10, 21-13; Lee So-hee & Jeong Na-eun lost to Liu Sheng Shu and Tan Nin 15-21, 12-21; Kim Ga-eun bt Chen Yu Fei 21-19, 21-15; Kim Hye-jeong & Baek Ha-na bt Jia Yi Fan & Zhang Shu Xian 16-21, 21-10, 21-13.

The angle of invention: how Kamboj answered CSK's death-bowler SOS

The 25-year-old, who bowled just three deliveries between overs 16 and 20 in his first two seasons, became the first to take 10 wickets during that phase this edition; 51 of his death-over deliveries came either outside off (34) or wide outside off (17)

IPL-19

Sankar Narayanan E.H.
CHENNAI

The adage 'necessity is the mother of invention' stands true for Anshul Kamboj and his emergence as a dependable death-bowler.

From bowling just three deliveries in overs 16 to 20 in his first two IPL seasons to being the first to take 10 wickets in that phase in the 2026 edition, Kamboj's evolution has come at the right time for Chennai Super Kings.

The 25-year-old put his hand up and performed in the death overs (economy of 8.6 and a dot-ball percentage of 44.7) as the franchise leaned on him after losing two premier pacers – Nathan Ellis (ruled out for the season) and Khaleel Ahmed (sidelined after five games) – to injuries.

Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming waxed eloquent about Kamboj's perseverance after CSK's eight-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians, a game in which the pacer scalped two of his 10 death-over victims (Robin Minz and Hardik Pandya).

"It's not a surprise for us. He's worked hard with Eric Simons (bowling coach) around the concept of death bowling," Fleming said on Saturday.

"All we really needed was evidence. We put in a lot of work during pre-season with open wickets to understand the angles, which helped him gauge what he can and cannot do from certain sides of the wicket," Fleming explained.

The numbers validate Fleming's point on Kamboj using angles to his advantage. The right-armer fancies bowling round the wicket in the death overs, dishing out 62 of his 84 deliveries (including wides and no-balls) from that side of the stumps.

The mode of attack reaped rewards aplenty, with eight of his death-over wickets coming this way. He has preferred to keep the ball away from the batter, with 51 of his death-over deliveries coming either outside off (34) or wide outside off (17).

Beyond stats and strategies, it is Kamboj's tenacity that demands recognition. In other words, he had a will and he found a way!

The week ahead

May 4	MI vs. LSG	Mumbai	7.30 p.m.
May 5	DC vs. CSK	Delhi	7.30 p.m.
May 6	SRH vs. PBKS	Hyderabad	7.30 p.m.
May 7	LSG vs. RCB	Lucknow	7.30 p.m.
May 8	DC vs. KKR	Delhi	7.30 p.m.
May 9	RR vs. GT	Jaipur	7.30 p.m.
May 10	CSK vs. LSG	Chennai	3.30 p.m.
May 10	RCB vs. MI	Raipur	7.30 p.m.

Reaping the benefits: Kamboj's work during pre-season has paid off in spades. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Kartik repays Super Kings' faith

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

On the eve of the match against the Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings batting coach Michael Hussey backed Kartik Sharma – one of the two uncapped players the team bought for ₹14.20 crore this year – to come good sooner rather than later.

The Rajasthan batter had a tough start to his IPL career, managing 25 runs in his first three appearances before being dropped for a few games.

The Australian legend, however, felt that the youngster had great potential and just needed one good game. "I think he's shown signs in the last couple of matches that he's starting to believe in himself that he can perform well at this level. Hopefully, there'll be a little breakout game that will give him that self-belief moving forward. We think very highly of him and love to give him as many opportunities as possible, and then watch him really grow into that CSK shirt," Hussey said on Friday.

A day later, that breakout game came as the 20-year-old repaid the faith shown by the management, scoring his maiden half-century (54 n.o.) in the league and helping CSK secure a crucial victory over MI. Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming, too, praised Kartik's knock and felt the break after the first three games had helped him.

"They (youngsters) can have all the talent in the world, but the temperament is what we're looking for, and his introduction was tough, and then he had a little bit of time out. He worked hard, and today was a good reward for that," the Kiwi added after CSK's eight-wicket win.

A modest target (160) allowed Kartik the leeway to take his time, and he played smartly. He was impressive against the spinners, using his feet well to hit down the track and, importantly, finished the job.

Kartik made one part of Hussey's prescient remarks come true. Fans and the CSK management will hope he now builds on this performance.

Proving his worth: Impact Player Kartik scored his maiden IPL fifty and helped CSK secure a vital win. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

Baranica bests own National pole vault mark

GENERAL

Sports Bureau

Baranica Elangovan set a new National record (4.23m) to win the women's pole vault title in the Indian Indoor Open combined events and pole vault meet at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar on Sunday.

Eshitaa Rewale and Vaishnavi Vyas won the women's senior and junior vault gold medals respectively on the concluding day of the National artistic gymnastics championships at the same venue.

The results: Indoor athletics: Men: Heptathlon: 1. Thowfeeq N. (NCoE, Tri) 5350, 2. Usaid Khan (Army) 5288, 3. Jashbir Nayak (Odi) 5250; **U-20:** 1. Kirthik Vasan S. (TN) 4609, 2. Jinoy Jayan (NCOE, Tri) 4518, 3. Aryan Prakash (MP) 4509.

Women: Pole vault: 1. Baranica Elangovan (TN) 4.23m (NR, old 4.22m, Baranica, 2026), 2. Nitika Akare (MP) 3.90m, 3. Blessy Kunjumon (Ker) 3.90m; **Pentathlon: Elite:** 1. Purnima Hembram (Odi) 3835, 2. Isha Chander Prakash (Utk) 3671, 3. Bidisha Kundu (WB) 3600; **U-20:** 1. Jaskiran Kaur (Utk) 3272, 2. Priya (Har) 3133, 3. Alfaz Kaur Grewal (Pun) 3066.

The results: Artistic gymnastics: Individual apparatus: Women: Senior: Floor exercise: 1. Karishma (RSPB) 11.60, 2. Ashmi Debnath (WB) 11.067, 3. Eshitaa Rewale (Mah) 10.433. **Vault:** 1. Eshitaa Rewale (Mah) 12.300, 2. Piyasa Kundu (RSPB-A) 12.117, Soumili Karar (WB) 12. **Uneven bars:** 1. Tannu (Odi) 11.100, 2. Diya Thakore (Guj) 10.533 (higher e-score), 3. Amani Dilshad (Ker) 10.533. **Balancing beam:** 1. Niranjana Punia (Har) 11.467, 2. Anoushka Patil (Mah) 11.300, 3. Priyanshi Bansal (Odi) 11.233.

Junior: Floor exercise: 1. Sreeparna Debnath (Tri) 11.000; 2. Shreyanshi Roy (Tri) 10.800, 3. Dhanishtha Ugalmugle (Mah) 10.500. **Uneven bars:** 1. Paromita Bera (WB) 9.733, 2. Abhidha Singh Dev (UP) 9.067, 3. Sakshi Dali (Mah) 8.833.

Balancing beam: 1. Anusua Howlader (WB) 11.633, 2. Shreyanshi Roy (Tri) 11.300, 3. Shreya Ghosh (WB) 10.900. **Vault:** 1. Vaishnavi Vyas (Tel) 12.084, 2. Shreyanshi Roy (Tri) 11.783, 3. Tora Sani (WB) 11.684.

Picture perfect: Baranica crossed 4.23m on her third attempt. Eshitaa in action in the women's senior gymnastics vault event. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Manchester United edges Liverpool to lock up Champions League berth

EURO LEAGUES

Agence France-Presse
MANCHESTER

Manchester United secured Champions League football next season as Kobbie Mainoo's strike earned a thrilling 3-2 victory over old rival Liverpool on Sunday.

United was 2-0 up inside 15 minutes through Matheus Cunha and Benjamin Sesko, but imploded after the break to allow Liverpool to level before Mainoo stroked home the winner in the week he signed a new five-year contract at Old Trafford.

Earlier, Bournemouth moved into sixth place with a 3-0 win against Crystal Palace that bolstered its bid to qualify for Europe.

Robert Lewandowski and Ferran Torres took Barcelona to the brink of the LaLiga title with late goals to earn a 2-1 win at Osasuna on Saturday.

The Catalan giant moved 14 points clear of second-placed Real Madrid and will be crowned champion if its rival drops points at Espanyol.

If Real does defeat Espanyol, then Barcelona's next opportunity to clinch the title will be in the Clasico on May 10.

Clinching it: Mainoo scores United's third past a flailing Liverpool defence. REUTERS

The results: Premier League: Bournemouth 3 (Lerma 10-og, Kroupi 32-pen, Rayan 77) bt Crystal Palace 0; Manchester United 3 (Cunha 6, Sesko 14, Mainoo 77) bt Liverpool 2 (Szoboszlai 47, Gakpo 56).

LaLiga: Celta Vigo 3 (Alvarez 14, Aspas 30, Iglesias 85) bt Elche 1 (Silva 82-pen).

Serie A: Bologna 0 drew with Cagliari 0; Sassuolo 2 (Berardi 5, Lauriente 47) bt AC Milan 0.

On Saturday: Premier League: Arsenal 3 (Gyokeres 9, 45+4, Saka 40) bt Fulham 0.

LaLiga: Alaves 2 (Blanco 8, Tenaglia 68) lost to Athletic Bilbao 4 (Munoz 46, Sancet 74, Nico Williams 83, 87); Osasuna 1 (Garcia 88) lost to Barcelona 2 (Lewandowski 81, Torres 86).

Serie A: Udinese 2 (Ehizibue 45+1, Kristensen 51) bt Torino 0; Como 0 drew with Napoli 0; Atalanta 0 drew with Genoa 0.

INBRIEF

Sinner beats Zverev to claim his maiden Madrid Open

World No. 1 Jannik Sinner dispatched Alexander Zverev 6-1, 6-2 on Sunday to win the Madrid Open for the first time. It was a record fifth consecutive Masters 1000 title for the Italian and stretched his winning streak to 23 matches. Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk had beaten Mirra Andreeva 6-3, 7-5 to win the women's crown.

Manas loses in his maiden ATP Challenger singles final

India's Manas Dhamne fell short of a title finish in his maiden ATP Challenger singles final, going down 6-7(8), 4-6 to Belgium's Buvaysar Gadamauri in the summit clash in Shymkent, Kazakhstan, on Sunday.

LIVE TELECAST

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

ISL: Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 7.30 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

Prokofiev calls the tune in the Ranquelino Cup

BENGALURU: Prasanna Kumar-trained Prokofiev (Neeraj up) won the Ranquelino Cup (1,400m), the feature event of the races held here on Sunday (May 3). The winner is owned by Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla, Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla, Mr. Yohan Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Michelle Y. Poonawalla, Ms. Delna Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Simone Poonawalla Pandole, Mr. Rishad N. Pandole & Ms. Tania Y. Poonawalla. Jockey Trevor won three races on the day.

1. ROYAL COMMAND PLATE (DIV. II) (1,400M): 1. BLUE STORM (Pavan) 1, LG's Script (L.A. Rozario) 2, Versace (Indrajeet K) 3 and Ransomware (Kiran Rai) 4. Not run: Shock And Awe. 5, 3 and 6-3/4. 1m, 27.74s. ₹10 (w), 10, 13 and 10 (p), SHP: 35, THP: 28, FP: 46, Q: 38, Trinella: 111/21, Exacta: 303/255. Favourite: Blue Storm. Owner: Sans Craintes Stud Farm [p] Ltd. Trainer: Irfan Ghatala.

2. BELMONT PARK PLATE (DIV. II) (1,200M): MNEMOSYNE (Akshay K) 1, Night Raider (Arvind K) 2, Mutual Trust (Asirvatham) 3 and Tiger Bay (S. Shareef) 4. Not run: Allegro Dance. 1-1/2, Shd and Nose. 1m, 14.51s. ₹23 (w), 11, 10 and 12 (p), SHP: 28, THP: 39, FP: 71, Q: 41, Trinella: 89/34, Exacta: 219/116. Favourite: Mutual Trust. Owner: Mr. Satish G Kundapur. Trainer: Azhar Ali.

3. ROYAL COMMAND PLATE (DIV. I) (1,400M): FILS DE FRANCE (Antony) 1, Steffen (S. Sachin) 2, Supreme Success (Darshan) 3 and Breeze Bluster (Vaibhav) 4. 3, 2-1/4 and 3-1/2. 1m, 28.51s. ₹17 (w), 10, 29 an 13 (p), SHP: 88, THP: 38, FP: 293, Q: 163, Trinella: 675/152, Exacta: 7,033/7,033. Favourite: Fils De France. Owner: M/s. Rapar's Galloping Stars LLP. Trainer: Arjun Mangalorkar.

4. BELMONT PARK PLATE (DIV. I) (1,200M): 1. JADE MOUNTAIN (Trevor) 1, Splendid Dream (Shreyas S) 2, Sapporo (Pavan) 3 and Inicio (S. Sachin) 4. Not run: Lockheed. 3-1/4, 2-1/2 and 3/4. 1m, 13.17s. ₹20 (w), 14, 12 and 12 (p), SHP: 26, THP: 38, FP: 54, Q: 24, Trinella: 111/65, Exacta: 1,551/1,076. Favourite: Jade Mountain. Owners: Mr. Sharath M. Narayana, Mr. H.K. Lakshman Gowda & Mr. V. Lokanath. Trainer: V. Lokanath.

5. RANQUELINO CUP (1,400M): PROKOFIEV (Neeraj) 1, Rieko (Trevor) 2, Crosswater (Aleemuddin) 3 and Inspire (Antony) 4. 3-1/4, 1-1/4 and 1. 1m, 25.60s. ₹14 (w), 10, 12 and 33 (p), SHP: 25, THP: 83, FP: 30, Q: 21, Trinella: 416/254, Exacta: 507/122. Favourite: Prokofiev. Owners: Poonawalla Racing & Breeding Pvt Ltd rep. by Mr. Zavaray S. Poonawalla, Mrs. Behroze Z. Poonawalla, Mr. Yohan Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Michelle Y. Poonawalla, Ms. Delna Z. Poonawalla, Mrs. Simone Poonawalla Pandole, Mr. Rishad N. Pandole & Ms. Tania Y. Poonawalla. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

6. WELCOME PLATE (1,200M): BULLETPROOF (Trevor) 1, Osaka (Suraj) 2, Monstera (L.A. Rozario) 3 and Bellucci (Arvind K) 4. 4-1/4, 1-3/4 and 3/4. 1m, 14.42s. ₹16 (w), 10, 16 and 41 (p), SHP: 43, THP: 109, FP: 47, Q: 33, Trinella: 774/531, Exacta: 15,591/6,682. Favourite: Bulletproof. Owners: M/s. Blazing Saddles(PF), Mr. Marthand Singh Mahindra, Mr. Rama Seshu Eyunni & Mr. Maloji Baburao Bhosale. Trainer: S. Attaollahi.

7. SQUANDERER PLATE (1,200M): MONEY BAGS (Trevor) 1, Pole Star (Mukesh K) 2, Defence Counsel (Rayan) 3 and See The Light (Suraj) 4. 7-1/2, 2-1/2 and 1-1/4. 1m, 12.56s. ₹16 (w), 11, 17 and 74 (p), SHP: 48, THP: 211, FP: 72, Q: 65, Trinella: 3,284/2,033, Exacta: 6,340/1,293. Favourite: Money Bags. Owners: Capt. Jamshed J Appoo, Mr. K. Manoj Kumar, Mr. K. Kaliyaperumal & Mr. J. Ramesh. Trainer: Prasanna Kumar.

Jackpot: ₹236; Runner-up: 52; Mini Jackpot: 187; Treble (i): 114; (ii): 52.

AROUND THE CITY

Pristine bags second division title, earns promotion

Pristine CC won the TNCA second division league championship for the CP Johnstone Shield 2025-26 after winning 10 of its 11 matches and finishing with 40 points.

Swaraj CC was runner-up, securing 32 points with eight wins from 11 matches. Both teams earned promotion to the first division for the forthcoming season.

Meanwhile, UFCC (T. Nagar) and Indian Bank S&RC, who finished with 12 points each, have been relegated to the third division.

Champion: Pristine CC, winner of the TNCA second division league championship for the C.P. Johnstone Shield.

It's Globe Trotters vs. MRC-A in final

Globe Trotters, riding on a massive first-innings lead of 177 runs over Jolly Rovers, entered the TNCA first division league title clash on the final day at the Gojan-A ground on Sunday.

Resuming on 89 for five, Rovers fought back through a 70-run seventh-wicket stand between S. Lakshay Jain (44) and R. Samarth (75).

However, it proved insufficient as Trotters wrapped up the innings for 286. Globe Trotters will take on MRC-A in the final, which begins on Thursday.

The scores: Globe Trotters 463 drew with Jolly Rovers 286 in 93.3 overs (B. Sachin 31, S. Lokeshwar 42, S. Lakshay Jain 44, R. Samarth 75, P. Saravanan 33 n.o., T.D. Lokesh Raj 3/49).

Praveen (Lucas TVS, 5/6); Aravindan (Ashok Leyland, 5/10).

Praveen scalps five wickets in Lucas TVS' victory

G. Praveen Kumar (five for six) starred in Lucas TVS' eight-wicket win over EPFO by eight wickets in a Group-B match of the 21st Lucas TVS-Tiruvallur DCA Trophy.

In Group-A, V. Aravindan's five for 10 enabled Ashok Leyland VVC beat Wheels India Limited by three wickets.

The scores: TDCA league: I div. Play-offs: Qualifier 2: MAS 130 in 26.3 overs (Aditya Venkatesh 38, R. Nilesh Subramanian 34, G. Shailender 4/41, S. Hemanth 3/26) lost to Seshadhri MCC 132/4 in 27.1 overs (B.B. Muguntha Vathanan 52, M. Arvindh 44 n.o.).

II div. Play-offs: Qualifier 2: Sriher 152 in 28 overs (M. Bharath 34, K. Sankaj Kumar 60, K. Kirupakaren 25, S. Naveen Kumar 4/23) lost to Aththis 154/6 in 27.1 overs (S. Gautam Anand 57, S. Sathyananth 36).

III div. Play-offs: Qualifier 2: CPCL 204/9 in 30 overs (J. Chinnadurai 79, C. Manikandan 42 n.o., J. Agastin 3/32) bt Sunder 178/6 in 30 overs (J. Soorya Raj 40, K. Sudhakar 50).

IV div. Play-offs: Qualifier 1: Jaya Education Group 157/9 in 30 overs (V. Poovendhan 27, R. Pratheep Kumar 41) lost to Thiruthani 158/2 in 24.1 overs (T. Kapil 66, V. Ilamaran 32 n.o., A.C. Kasi Vignesh 29 n.o.).

Eliminator: United 169/8 in 30 overs (B. Barath 73, E. Surender 49) bt Frankworell 114/8 in 30 overs (M. Sreejith 38, P. Yashwanth 4/24).

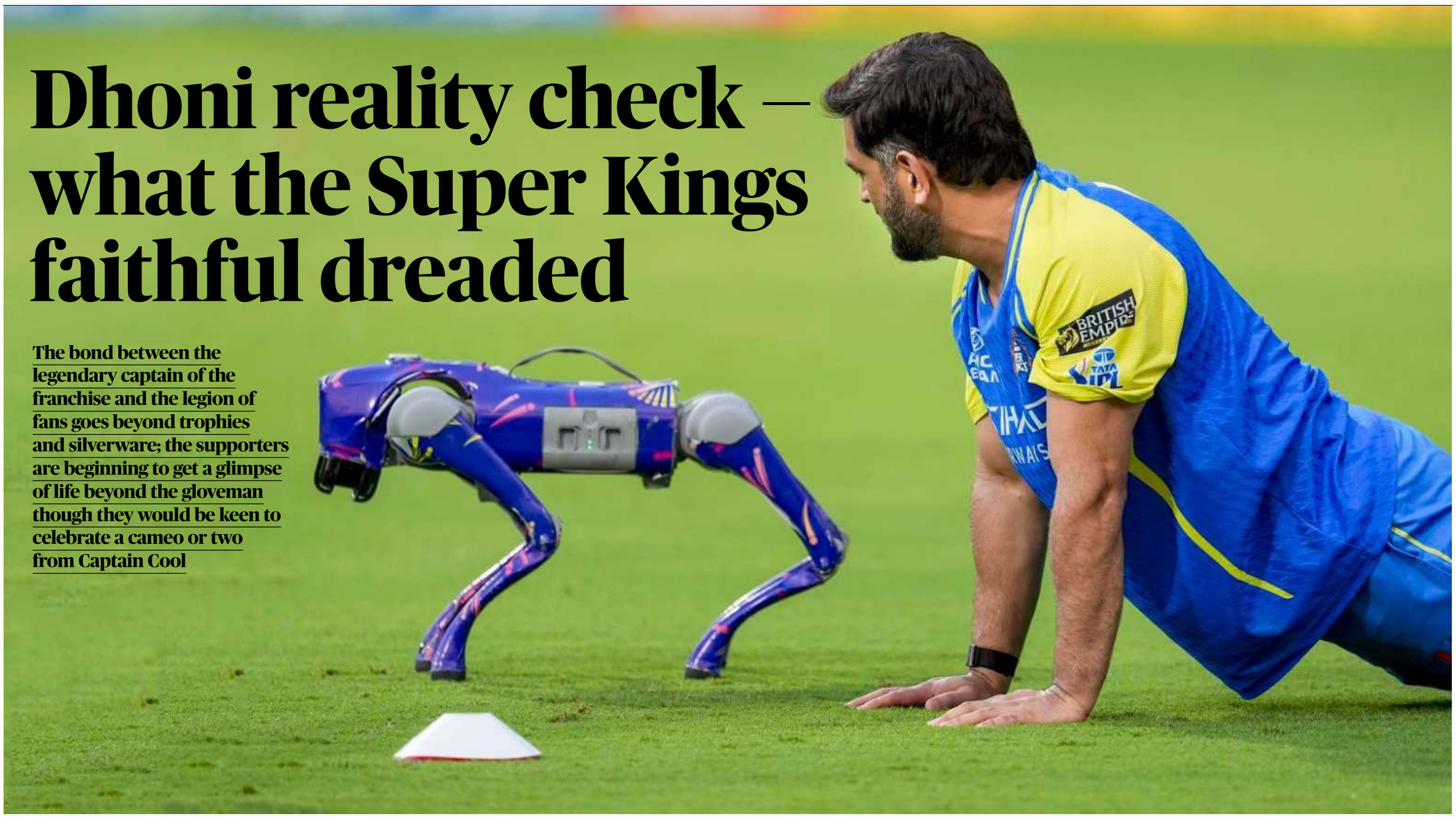
Lucas TVS-TDCA Trophy: Group-A: Wheels India Ltd. 53 in 14.4 overs (V. Aravindan 5/10, Himanshu Kandpal 3/24) lost to Ashok Leyland VVC 55/7 in 11.4 overs (M. Elumalai 3/13, S. Karthik 3/16).

Ashok Leyland (Ennore) 153 in 28.2 overs (D. Krishna Kumar 41, Rupendra Singh 25, V. Aravindan 3/24) lost to Ashok Leyland VVC 156/6 in 26.1 overs (Praveen Kumar 40, D. Krishna Kumar 3/28).

Group-B: EPFO 40 in 13 overs (G. Praveen Kumar 5/6, Karthick Sekar 4/5) lost to Lucas TVS 41/2 in six overs (S. Karthik 28 n.o.).

Dhoni reality check — what the Super Kings faithful dreaded

The bond between the legendary captain of the franchise and the legion of fans goes beyond trophies and silverware; the supporters are beginning to get a glimpse of life beyond the gloveman though they would be keen to celebrate a cameo or two from Captain Cool



R. Kaushik

For those who love yellow, Chepauk is heaven on earth when Chennai Super Kings come calling. All roads leading up to the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in the Tamil Nadu capital are draped in an endless sea of yellow, the colour of the franchise which has won the Indian Premier League a joint record five times. On match days, thousands flock the venue, trooping in by various modes of transport, proudly wearing the team's jersey, blowing yellow whistles with abandon and waving the franchise flag uninhibitedly.

Every match evening, a ritual that precedes the arrival of the buses carrying the players to the ground. Outside Gate No. 2 on the Victoria Hostel Road, through which the buses of both the home and the away outfits enter the stadium premises, Leo, the affable mascot, is joined by numerous drum-beating individuals who summon admirable intensity in the extreme humidity, their efforts peaking to a crescendo as the buses near the entry gate. 'Snake bombs' emitting yellow smoke add to the drama, the acrid, pungent smell causing throats to burn and eyes to tear up, but that doesn't stop hundreds from whipping out their cell phones and capturing videos for posterity, even though they are often greeted by walled up windows and therefore no sighting of their heroes.

When CSK were suspended from the IPL for two years and Dhoni went to RPS, he made it clear that his heart didn't exactly bleed for his temporary home

An overwhelming majority of those that come dressed nattily in the team jersey sports No. 7, one of the more easily identifiable numbers in Indian cricket. Not everyone will immediately be able to remember what Jasprit Bumrah's jersey number (93) is. But like No. 10 (Sachin Tendulkar), No. 18 (Virat Kohli) and No. 45 (Rohit Sharma), No. 7 leaves no scope for doubt or argument, no need for that extra fraction of a second to figure out who dons that famous number.

Just for extra help, No. 7 is sub-texted by 'Dhoni'. Five letters which, when placed in that sequence, drive the passionate, respectful and knowledgeable CSK fans into a frenzy, forcing them to suspend belief and to convince themselves that impossible is nothing.

Impossible truly was nothing - or was nothing truly impossible? - when Mahendra Singh Dhoni was at his peak, which was for an incredibly long time. His evolution from long-haired muscler to a more nuanced finisher is a story too well documented to bear extensive repetition. While he was making waves internationally with his calmness under pressure, his wondrous decision-making abilities and his extraordinary swiftness behind the stumps, Dhoni came to represent an emotion in Chennai, seeming singularly unprepared for the unprecedented Dhoni wave that has left thousands in rhapsody and delirium.

An emotional bond

It didn't take Dhoni long to win over the affections of the Chennai millions. What appeared a mismatch - suave, slow-paced, reverential Chennai and a rustic Jharkhandi with a love for fast bikes and fast bowling - became a match for the ages. Dhoni stormed the consciousness of the average Chennaiite with his organic charm and his uncommon propensity to be himself instead of feeling the pressure to conform to norms. The bond didn't need victories and titles to become unbreakable, but five title runs didn't hurt.

Dhoni took CSK to the top of the IPL podium for the first time in 2010 and pulled off an encore in 2011. By the second of those triumphs, he had a near full set of international accomplishments as captain - the T20 World Cup Trophy, the No. 1 Test ranking and the 50-over World Cup crown. Two years later, he would add the Champions Trophy to the kitty. Dhoni wasn't just Captain Cool, he was Skipper Superlative, Leader Loved.

When CSK were suspended for the IPL for two years and Dhoni went to Rising Pune Supergiant(s), Dhoni made it clear that his heart didn't exactly bleed for his temporary home. He was desperate to return to Chennai, to the warm embrace of the franchise and its adoring, uncomplaining fans. When, on the eve of CSK's return to the IPL in 2018, Dhoni shed tears in a rare public show of emotion, thousands wept. When he capped a fairytale comeback with a third title in 2018, they wept again - tears of joy and gratitude, of redemption and vindication. CSK's supporters hadn't taken kindly to the suspension owing to the infractions of one of their owners; Dhoni had helped salvage pride and self-respect, character traits that Chennaiites and, by extension, the franchise's followers, value immensely.

Further triumphs in 2021 and 2023 merely added to the Dhoni aura. By the fourth title run, Dhoni had officially announced his retirement from international cricket, more than two years after playing his last match for the country on 10 July 2019, the semifinal loss to New Zealand in the 50-over World Cup. But the yellove still burned bright in him, and he wasn't going anywhere.

Every season for the last five or so years has ended with the fear that Dhoni had played his last competitive fixture. Every March, those fears have been laid to rest with Dhoni checking into Chennai to begin/further his preparations for another tilt at the most coveted non-international silverware in men's cricket. He has thought little of going under the knife to address niggling knee issues so that he can extend his IPL career, further endearing himself to the vast legions who simply can't imagine a CSK without Dhoni in the playing mix.

Now, however, one suspects, the fans are beginning to come to terms with the fact that nothing in life is permanent, not even Dhoni in CSK colours as a player. When the CSK bus trailing escort vehicles turned left at Gate No. 2 on Saturday evening, 'Dhoni, Dhoni, Dhoni' rent the air like they have been for the last 18 years. Little did those who were screaming their lungs out realise that the object of their affection, admiration and adulation wasn't on the bus, still to recover from the calf injury that has compelled him to miss the first nine games of the ongoing campaign.

Diminishing returns

Dhoni's returns with the bat have been dropping over the last six years, perfectly understandable given that he is not just a one-format player but also that he is now only a one-tournament competitor. Apart from a standout run in 2024 when he struck 13 sixes from his 73 balls faced to rack up a strike-rate of 220.55 to go with an average of 53.67 (boosted by eight not outs in 11 innings), Dhoni has been in the wars. From 2020, the first IPL he entered after playing his last match for India, his strike-rates have read 116.27, 106.54 (2021), 123.40 (2022), 182.46 (2023, when he faced just 57 balls in 12 innings) and 135.17 (2025). Some of the aura began to dim with those thinking with their heads rather than their hearts questioning his very late entry point and using that as an acknowledgement on Dhoni's part that he too believed his best was well behind him.

One suspects that the fans are beginning to come to terms with the fact that nothing in life is permanent, not even Dhoni in CSK colours as a player

In a little over two months' time, Dhoni will turn 45 - 30 years older than the newest sensation from the same state in which Dhoni was born in July 1981. Unlike Ranchi-born Dhoni, who played for Jharkhand after Bihar's bifurcation, Vaibhav Sooryavanshi hails from Tajpur, a town in Samastipur district, and represents Bihar in domestic cricket. Sooryavanshi and Dhoni have yet to lock horns - the young lad hadn't made his Rajasthan Royals debut when the teams met in Guwahati in March last year - and may not do so this year either unless the sides meet in the playoffs, which is a shame because, well, because we all know why...

In some ways, it appears as if CSK are gradually beginning to comprehend what life without (after?) Dhoni looks like. This prolonged nine-game absence was clearly unplanned; Dhoni's preparation was well on track until he picked up a calf strain days before the start of the tournament, and when he finally seemed to shrugged that off came a fresh setback, which means that more than halfway through their campaign, Dhoni has yet to take the field - often, he hasn't even arrived at the ground.

It hasn't been smooth sailing, needless to say, but CSK are still in the hunt following Saturday's eight-wicket drubbing of a beleaguered Mumbai Indians which has pushed them up to sixth spot with eight points from nine matches. They perhaps need to double that tally in the remaining five fixtures to be in the playoff race, a tall ask but not necessarily beyond them because finally, after several misses, they are beginning to rack up a few hits. Blighted by injures (including to left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed), they are just about hitting on the right balance to their playing XI, with skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad's return to run-making ways during his Player-of-the-Match-winning effort on Saturday one of the most positive developments for them in recent times.

Sporting crowd

Chepauk on Saturday lived up to its reputation of being a sporting crowd. It cheered on Bumrah and Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav vociferously, and was generous in its applause when Naman Dhir brought up a stylish half-century.

The loudest roars for the Mumbai camp were reserved for Rohit Sharma, still to recover from a hamstring injury that's rendered him *hors de combat*, but even that paled into insignificance when Ruturaj tried to speak at the toss, when Sanju Samson walked out to take guard in the quest for 160 and two points, and when young Kartik Sharma brought up his maiden half-century.

Dhoni wasn't entirely forgotten - sporadic and sudden shouts of 'Dhoni, Dhoni' rang around the stands - but one got the sense that his giant shadow no longer eclipsed all else CSK. One could sense optimism and the promise of a new beginning among the teeming thousands more than resignation at the possible end of Dhoni's playing days, which perhaps is a first for the multitudes that have hero-worshipped Dhoni to the exclusion of all else. Dhoni owes them a cameo or two in the next few weeks. He has taken Chennai to heart as much as they have him. Don't rule out a final flourish, one last sting in the tail with welcome ramifications, because without intending to be, Dhoni is a showman supreme, failing memory or not. Oh, what fun that will be.

THE GIST

Every season for the last five or so years has ended with the fear that Dhoni had played his last competitive fixture. Every March, those fears have been laid to rest with Dhoni checking into Chennai to begin/further his preparations for another tilt at the most coveted non-international silverware in men's cricket

Dhoni's returns with the bat have been dropping over the last six years, perfectly understandable given that he is not just a one-format player but also that he is now only a one-tournament competitor

Dhoni... when will he swing back into action? R. RAGU

How dual-use satellites are blurring the lines of modern space war

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and international humanitarian law require warring parties to differentiate between civilian objects and military targets; however, modern satellites are dual-use by default as civilian GPS networks, broadband constellations routinely support intelligence gathering and drone targeting

Shrawani Shagun

When we imagine space warfare, we picture shattered satellites and orbital debris. The reality is quieter but also more dangerous. The markers of modern orbital conflict are signal loss, deliberate misdirection, and sudden system failures.

In the initial hours of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a cyber-attack crippled Viasat's KA-SAT network, severing vital communications across Europe. GPS spoofing incidents have similarly misled civilian aircraft and maritime vessels, luring ships into hazardous shoals or corrupting flight computers to trigger false terrain alerts effectively weaponising a platform's own safety logic against its operators.

The next conflict in space will begin with silence, with jammed signals, altered coordinates, and compromised systems. Space is today critical infrastructure and vulnerabilities related to space are often tantamount vulnerabilities in human society.

This vulnerability is built into the architecture of space systems. Interference leaves no physical trace yet it can be devastating. It operates using three tools: jamming (or blocking signals), spoofing (sending false data), and ground station hacking (taking control of satellite systems).

As a result, no physical destruction is needed to paralyse an adversary – which is an important shift in the way conflict plays out in orbit. As financial, energy, and communication networks depend on satellites, such intrusions can also trigger cascading failures on the earth.

Conflict in orbit no longer requires satellites to be physically destroyed in order to paralyse an adversary. IMAGE CREATED WITH CHATGPT

THE GIST

- The markers of modern orbital conflict are signal loss, deliberate misdirection, and sudden system failures
- As financial, energy, and communication networks depend on satellites, such intrusions can also trigger cascading failures on the earth
- This change exposes a deeper legal problem. The United Nations Charter does not clearly address cyber operations within its Article 2(4) prohibition on the 'use of force'

Legal blindspot

This change exposes a deeper legal problem. As the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz observed, war is defined by its effects. If cyber operations can disable satellites that support power grids, financial systems or emergency communications, their consequences are indistinguishable from a physical strike. However, the United Nations Charter does not clearly address cyber operations within its Article 2(4) prohibition on the "use of force".

A functional, effects-based test is therefore essential to interpret "use of force" in the orbital domain. As of 2026, several states have moved to the position that a cyber operation does not require physical 'smoke and fire' to violate Article 2(4). Instead, if a digital intrusion functionally disables a satellite, effectively bricking it, the strategic and economic consequences are identical to a kinetic strike. In this context, loss of functionality is the new shattered glass.

However, it also comes with a challenge, called the attribution gap. Under the International Law Commission framework on state responsibility, legal liability is contingent on identifying the perpetrator with high evidentiary certainty. In the digital domain, operations routed through proxy networks and spoofed identities create a layer of strategic anonymity that complicates traditional deterrence.

This is less a technical flaw and more a structural tension: as long as evidentiary standards are based on visible, physical proof, the invisible nature of cyber-disruption will continue to offer a significant strategic advantage to aggressors. In other words, existing international law recognises force by its consequences – yet it remains in a reactive posture as both the act and the actor remain obscured.

Collapse of civilian-military divide

The legal protections designed to safeguard non-combatants are deteriorating in the face of modern technology. The Outer Space Treaty and international humanitarian law rely heavily on the principle of distinction, requiring warring parties to differentiate between civilian objects and military targets.

However, modern satellites are dual-use by default. Civilian GPS networks, commercial broadband constellations, and financial timestamping systems now routinely support intelligence gathering and drone targeting. Because militaries piggyback on commercial infrastructure, these assets often lose their protected civilian status under international humanitarian law.

That said, in practice, the 'civilian satellite' is becoming a legal fiction. When commercial constellations provide 'space as a service' for military kill-chains – also known as the Starlink Precedent – they dissolve the distinction entirely. In this environment, an entire network can become a legitimate grey-zone target, even if it simultaneously serves schools or hospitals.

States must move from advisory norms to enforceable 'secure-by-design' standards, clarify when cyber operations in space constitute a use of force, and strengthen cooperative attribution mechanisms. Without this, ambiguity will continue to favour the attacker

Former British army officer and author Emile Simpson has distinguished between traditional Clausewitzian war and contemporary conflict: the former seeks a definitive military decision while the latter functions as a direct instrument of political communication aimed at fragmented audiences.

In space, cyber operations enable ambiguous, deniable attacks that are designed to shape perceptions of state power rather than to secure territorial gains. Because they avoid the debris and visibility of kinetic strikes, they incentivise constant, low-level disruption. This creates a persistent state of friction that never crosses the threshold of war but continuously undermines the political legitimacy of the targeted state.

For India, the 2026 CERT-In/SIA-India Guidelines institutionalised a "secure-by-design" doctrine for space systems. They embed cybersecurity into every stage of the satellite lifecycle, from design and launch to in-orbit operations and decommissioning. They also identify threats such as signal jamming, spoofing, and unauthorised command access, and recommend layered safeguards across space, ground, and communication segments. However, an enforcement gap remains: India is expanding its presence in orbit faster than it is building the ability to detect and trace cyberattacks in real time.

Objective of disruption

The response cannot remain reactive. States must move from advisory norms to enforceable "secure-by-design" standards, clarify when cyber operations in space constitute a use of force, and strengthen cooperative attribution mechanisms. Without this, ambiguity will continue to favour the attacker. In a digital battlefield, if an attacker cannot be identified within minutes, they cannot be deterred at all.

For the Global South, this digital battlefield poses the unique threat of orbital dependency. When the digital backbones of developing economies are hosted on third-party commercial constellations, a silent strike can blind a military and, more importantly, effectively paralyse a state's ability to govern, disenfranchising a nation in a single digital stroke.

In this new era, the objective is no longer to destroy a satellite but to disrupt the society that depends on it.

(Shrawani Shagun is a researcher focusing on environmental sustainability and space governance. shrawani.shagun@gmail.com)

BIG SHOT

Samples of coral collected from the Abrolhos National Marine Park in Brazil on April 23, 2026. The Abrolhos reefs are the most biodiverse coral ecosystem in the South Atlantic. Their biodiversity has dropped by around 15% over 18 years due to marine heatwaves, a new study has found. REUTERS

WHAT IS IT?

Sustainable mining: oxymoron?

Vasudevan Mukunth

Humans are trying to build a low-carbon future. Ironically, this future won't be possible without mining today. This is because wind turbines, solar panels, and electric batteries all require lithium, cobalt, copper, and rare-earth elements.

Mining doesn't leave the earth intact. Instead, it extracts finite, non-renewable resources. The processes of mining also often pollute the environment, permanently change landscapes, and destroy biodiversity. So in a commonsensical way, mining is not sustainable. No amount of money or technologies can bring back, say, a pristine rainforest.

However, some people, including the UN and the International Energy Agency, have floated an idea called 'weak sustainability' with regards to mining. They argue that mines can be 'sustainable' if the extracted resources create greater value, like human capital — like education and infrastructure — that outlasts the mine. They have also said that green technologies of the future make mining inescapable today.

There is a related concept called 'sustainable mining'. The minerals we remove from the ground don't grow back. But once we start using them, we need to recycle them almost indefinitely. The problem is that the current recycling rate for critical minerals is at best 5%.

Mining is not sustainable in a commonsensical reading of the word. ABDUL BASIT/UNSPLASH

Industries have also adopted a framework called 'responsible mining', where the focus is on using green hydrogen as fuel for trucks, solar and wind power for mining equipment, and seeking the permission of local communities to operate and sharing profits with them, among others.

For feedback and suggestions for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Appointments cancelled by Nepal government

1,500 Nepal's new government has effectively cancelled more than 1,500 major public appointments through a sweeping ordinance issued by President Ram Chandra Paudel, local media reported. These appointments were made before March 26 — the date marking leadership change in the country. PTI

Foreign nationals arrested in Sri Lanka for cyber fraud

130 More than 130 foreign nationals were arrested in Sri Lanka for alleged cybercrime operations over the last two days, police said. The police actions are part of a wider crackdown on cross-border online fraud networks operating from the island nation. In a raid in Thalangama, a suburb of Colombo, the police arrested 37 Chinese nationals on Saturday. PTI

Coal imported in Meghalaya without valid papers

3 lakh metric tonnes. Two cement companies in Meghalaya have been accused of violating prescribed norms, a High Court-appointed committee said in its report. The single-member panel of retired judge B. P. Katakey said that they transported the dry fuel from outside between February 2025 and February this year "without obtaining mandatory approvals under the SOP, 2024". PTI

Number of IPS officers transferred in a major reshuffle in M.P.

62 In a major reshuffle, the Madhya Pradesh government on Sunday transferred 62 IPS officers, including 19 Superintendents of Police, assigning new roles from Additional Director General to Deputy Commissioner of police levels. The Home department transferred Manish Khatri, Singrauli SP, posting him as Assistant Inspector General at the police headquarters in Bhopal. PTI

Kerala's voter turnout after inclusion of service voters' ballots

79.70 per cent. Kerala's voter turnout in the April 9 Assembly elections has tentatively risen to 79.70% after the inclusion of service voters' postal ballots, CEO Rathan U. Kelkar said on Sunday. He also outlined elaborate arrangements for the counting of votes scheduled for Monday. PTI

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Rationalising Iran's nuclear capability

How does the NPT regulate nuclear programmes? Why is uncertainty about nuclear intent a problem? Why does Iran say its nuclear programme is peaceful? Why has the international community sanctioned the country? Can Iran's stance on nuclear weapons change?

EXPLAINER

Vasudevan Mukunth

The story so far:

Under pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump to abandon its nuclear programme, Iran has "vowed" to protect its nuclear stockpile. At the same time, former supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei disapproved of the use of nuclear weapons on religious grounds. How does Iran reconcile the two positions?

What does the NPT allow and restrict?

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons – NPT for short – discourages countries from developing nuclear weapons, but does not prevent them from developing the ability to make these weapons. This is ostensibly because some of the same technologies and processes are necessary in a civilian nuclear programme, such as generating nuclear power and making nuclear isotopes for medical use. But the NPT does not turn a blind eye altogether: it expects the civilian programme to include some safeguards that resist the ability to develop from becoming the possession of a nuclear weapon. Examples of such safeguards include closely monitoring the use of technologies like uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing.

This said, even these safeguards are focused on diversion, which is only one of the two pieces of the gap between ability and possession, the other being capability. That is, a country can have the capability to develop a nuclear weapon, but the NPT's safeguards have been designed to deter the diversion of that capability to military uses. Countries interested in helping tame the spread of nuclear weapons have enforced this fuzzy barrier using export controls and diplomacy, including sanctions. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) contributes as an independent watchdog that performs intrusive inspections.

Why is not knowing a country's nuclear intent a problem?

This is one way the world has kept itself from downsliding into nuclear catastrophe. It is a fragile setup because the regulatory regime decision focusing on weaponisation rather than capability has created important downsides. Perhaps foremost among them is the threshold state: a country that learns about and builds everything required to make a nuclear weapon but stops just short of building one. This country may also strategise its breakout – the rapid sequence of events from enriching weapons-grade fissile material to deploying a nuclear warhead. This way, the country does not draw sanctions, but the moment its policy changes, it can 'breakout' quickly. North Korea was once an example of a threshold state – and now so is Iran.

Not knowing whether a country will actually build nuclear weapons, especially since it has the ability to do so, is also bad for the non-proliferation regime for a few reasons. When a country breaks out, the regime will be forced to respond very close to weaponisation, which may warrant drastic measures, which does not bode well to limit escalation. Second, a non-nuclear-capable country has to guess whether another country – perhaps a neighbour – intends to build nuclear weapons. Figuring it out requires judgment, diplomacy, and acting in good faith, all of which are powerful but hard to enforce using external pressure. It also muddies international waters. For example, South Korea does not view Japan with suspicion but it may not extend the same courtesy to, say, Argentina.

Another consequence is the nuclear cascade: if Country A is a threshold state and is not on good terms with its neighbours, the neighbouring countries may find it necessary to arm themselves with nuclear weapons in case Country A decides to break out. This is why the world has clusters of nuclear-capable states: South Asia, West Asia, North America, and Eastern Europe.

A child holds an Iranian flag through the window of a vehicle in northern Tehran, Iran, on May 1. AP

How close is Iran to a nuclear weapon?

Iran joined the NPT in 1970 but has recently expressed doubts about its participation. It is also a threshold state with a breakout time widely understood to be in the order of a few weeks. It is also thought to possess around 500 kg of uranium enriched to 60%. According to *The New York Times*, in fact, Iran possesses 11 tonnes of uranium overall enriched anywhere from 2% to 60%. Nuclear power reactors require uranium enriched to significantly under 20%. Weapons-grade uranium requires 90%. The way enrichment works, the road from 60% to 90% is much shorter than getting to 60%. In other words, Iran is for all practical purposes a nuclear-capable state – yet it is not known to have developed a nuclear weapon.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei spoke against using nuclear weapons, calling them '*haram*'. Many have claimed that he issued a *fatwa* – a ruling based on Islamic law – against the nuclear bomb. Tehran has held that its stockpile and nuclear infrastructure are "peaceful" and intended for civilian use. This is technically possible because uranium enriched to 20% or more can be transformed in a process called downblending to a lower enrichment and used for civilian purposes. The NPT also treats the use of nuclear technologies for scientific progress as every country's "inalienable right".

Iran's claims to that end were also politically credible as it abided by the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a.k.a. the Iran deal, until Mr. Trump unilaterally exited it in 2018. In effect, Mr. Trump sought to back Iran into a corner, which backfired after Tehran took licence from Israel's aggression across West Asia to resume higher enrichment.

Despite the Joe Biden administration's attempts to restore parts of the deal, Iran progressively scaled back its commitments under the JCPOA. In Islamic jurisprudence, Iran has a valorous duty to defend its homeland against "Zionist" aggression – which includes defending its enrichment sites and, by appealing to its right to scientific progress, its nuclear stockpile as well.

Why are the regulatory options limited?

These reasons alone have not convinced the international community, however, much of which agrees Iran is a threshold state. The UN Security Council, the U.S., and the European Union have sanctioned Iran pre-2015 over Tehran's failure to declare uranium particles the IAEA found at three undeclared sites and the related past uranium processing activities, as required by its safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

Today, Iran's stockpile and the extent and sophistication of its nuclear infrastructure are believed to mean its breakout time could be short – yet the non-proliferation regime has limited courses of action because Tehran is technically toeing the line.

The U.S. and Israel have nonetheless repeatedly gone to war against Iran because they are nervous and want to eliminate even its status as a threshold state. This includes the ongoing conflict as well as the Twelve-Day War last year, and attempts over the years to assassinate Iranian nuclear scientists and mount covert attacks, such as the Stuxnet virus in the late 2000s.

How did the Iran-Iraq war shape Iran's stance?

In fact, the fatwa is also not necessarily binding, thanks to a policy called Maslahat-e-Nizam, meaning 'expediency of the system'. Specifically, in Shia Islam, a fatwa is not necessarily eternal but can be a ruling based on existing circumstances. If those circumstances change, so can the decision. Since the threats to Iran from Israel and the U.S. have been deemed existential of late – a point the U.S. has been happy to parrot as part of its brinkmanship – the Supreme Leader, currently Mojtaba Khamenei, could supersede his predecessor's diktat.

In the post-revolution era, Iran's leadership has been opposed to nuclear weapons on religious or ethical grounds because of the country's experiences during and after the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). In the early and mid-1980s, Iraq deployed chemical weapons against Iranian soldiers as well as civilians, killing tens of thousands. The Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini famously resisted retaliating in kind, appealing to his religion forbidding indiscriminate killing and securing a moral victory for his regime.

But Tehran revived its interest in the nuclear programme after officials argued that the international community, including the UN, had however failed to respond adequately to Iraq's use of chemical weapons.

THE GIST

- Iran is a "threshold state"; it has the capability to develop nuclear weapons and a short breakout time, but has not moved to possession.
- The NPT allows civilian nuclear programmes but seeks to prevent diversion to military use, creating a gap between ability and weaponisation.
- Iran maintains its programme is "peaceful" and within its rights, even as sanctions, uncertainty, and limited options define the global response.

CACHE

GETTY IMAGES

Why does EU want Google to open up Android to AI rivals?

The European Commission has unveiled draft measures requiring Google to open the Android ecosystem to rival AI services, focusing on interoperability and third-party access; it found Google favours its own AI, while Google warns the move could affect privacy, security, and costs

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

On April 27, the European Commission unveiled draft measures as part of its requirement for Google to open its Android ecosystem to AI rivals. These measures cover features such as third-party "wake words," custom long-press rules, wider access to app data, context-based intelligence, and AI-powered task completion, with the regulator aiming for Android interconnections to allow even Google's competitors to provide AI services to users via the Android ecosystem. The EU regulator's proposed rules could have far-reaching implications for both Google and Android users worldwide.

What are the European Commission's proposals for Google?

While Google was deemed to be lagging behind OpenAI and Microsoft in terms of its Generative AI releases, the search giant caught up last year and infused its widely used products – ranging from its search engine and smartphones to personal email and workplace suite – with AI, exposing billions to its latest tech.

Under the current system, the European Commission observed that Google was favouring its own AI offerings (namely Gemini) on Android devices, while third parties (such as competing AI service providers) did not enjoy comparable levels of access to Android's capabilities when serving customers.

The Commission is particularly focused on "interoperability," or how smooth it is for non-Google services to work with the Android ecosystem. The regulator's proposed measures explored what such free-of-charge access could look like and what new features users could receive as a result.

First and foremost, the regulator wants Google-parent Alphabet to allow third parties to be invoked by Google's long-press home (LPH)/long-press navigation handle (LPNH) feature. It would also allow these rivals to access Google Search via Circle to Search.

Another measure was that Alphabet would allow third-party app developers/users to create a custom always-on 'wake word' for their app and support such integrations, instead of offering "Hey Google" as the default option for hands-free assistance.

Alphabet was also asked to support interoperability with the feature linked to centralised access to apps' data stored on-device, to allow "efficient cross-app data access, search and retrieval".

A key Google Android feature is the ability to surface helpful information, such as flight details, calendars, etc., with much of this due to Gemini. The European Commission's draft measures direct Alphabet to allow other services to carry out these tasks for users, as well as access features including context-aware intelligence, background execution, on-device model implementation, system integration, screen automation, and more.

In simpler words, rival AI services should be able to interact with apps on users' Android devices and "effectively" carry out tasks such as sending emails, ordering food, and sharing photos – via the app the user chooses, instead of the one Google favours. However, these measures are not finalised. The European Commission may replace or alter some measures if Alphabet provides good cause for an exemption. The regulator has also invited "all citizens, companies and organisations" to share their feedback and contribute to the consultation until May 13. A final decision is set to be adopted by July 27. Google will have to further support and document these technical implementations in detail, as well as submit reports.

What was Google's response to the EU regulator?

Google's Senior Competition Counsel, Clare Kelly, was against the move and shared concerns about security and affordability for users.

"This unwarranted intervention would strip away that autonomy, mandate access to sensitive hardware and device permissions; unnecessarily driving up costs while undermining critical privacy and security protections for European users," Kelly was quoted as stating in an email, per Reuters.

Google has also criticised the DMA more widely. In a September blog post, Google's Oliver Bethell, Senior Director, Competition, wrote that the DMA's aim was more fairness but that it was "causing significant and unintended harm" to European users and many small businesses. The post claimed that the DMA was focused on the commercial interests of intermediary sites connecting businesses and customers, instead of allowing customers and businesses to connect directly via Google.

Furthermore, Bethell claimed that the DMA forced Google to remove "legitimate safeguards" protecting Android users from scams and malicious links.

Why does this issue matter?

As Big Tech giants race to develop new AI tools and market them to users through their search engines (in the case of Google/Microsoft) or messaging apps (in the case of Instagram/WhatsApp), regulators are concerned that these companies may cut off access to rivals who have competing AI products. This, in turn, would hurt fair competition.

For example, both OpenAI's ChatGPT and Microsoft's Copilot announced last year that they would be leaving WhatsApp after Meta changed platform usage policies that affected how AI chatbots could access the WhatsApp backend. In December, the European Commission opened a formal antitrust investigation into Meta over the policy change.

In scenarios like these, customers could be forced to rely on the default AI product offered by the platform or device they are using, instead of freely choosing the one they want. On the other hand, tech companies have opposed opening up their hardware and software ecosystems to rivals, claiming that such permissions reduce security or pass on increased costs to users.

The enforcement actions taken by the European Commission in Google's case could also influence the business outlook of other Big Tech companies designated as gatekeepers under the DMA. Furthermore, these proceedings have the power to influence how Indian courts and competition regulators handle such antitrust questions at home.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

A quiz for the true Star Wars fans on the occasion of Star Wars Day, observed today

V.V. Ramanan

QUESTION 1

According to George Lucas, the creator of Star Wars, the stories were taken from an ancient journal chronicling the history of the galaxy and written by immortal beings. What were the beings called?

QUESTION 2

Fans use BBY and ABY as primary timeline markers in the Star Wars lore for Before and After BY. What is BY?

QUESTION 3

What are the surnames of the following characters in the Star Wars universe: Mace (Jedi master), Princess Leia, Lando (administrator of Bespin and Han Solo's friend) and Ahsoka (former Padawan of Anakin Skywalker)?

QUESTION 4

To which planets do Chewbacca, Admiral Ackbar, Wicket and Jar Jar Binks belong?

QUESTION 5

Which craft measures 34.37 meters by 25.61 meters, is powered by Girodyne SRB42 sublight engines and can attain a speed of 75 Megalights per hour in the vacuum of space?

QUESTION 6

What is the actual name of the 'Cantina band' that played the famous 'Mad About Me', a jazz-like tune, at the Mos Eisley bar on Tatooine?

QUESTION 7

Name the trio of actors who provided the physical presence, voice, and face of Darth Vader in the original trilogy.

Visual Question:

Identify these loveable characters and name the actor who played the taller droid to have featured in all nine films of the Skywalker Saga? AP

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. International Workers' Day is observed on May 1 in more than 80 countries, but not officially in X. Name X (a country). **Ans: USA**

2. International Workers' Day commemorates the _____ affair. On May 4, 1886, a peaceful rally for the eight-hour workday in Chicago turned violent after someone threw dynamite at the police. The name of the incident refers to the square where the incident occurred; the incident is also considered the climax of the Great American Upheaval. Fill in the blank. **Ans: Haymarket**

3. The Y adopted the date of May 1 in 1889 as International Workers' Day to honour the events of Q2. Name Y. **Ans: Second International**

4. India celebrates its first May Day in 1923 in P (a city) thanks to the efforts of labour leader Q. Name P and Q. **Ans: Chennai, M. Singaravelu**

5. In February 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered a famous speech in which he denounced Joseph Stalin's excesses, behind closed doors. What was the title of Khrushchev's speech? **Ans: 'On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences'**

Visual: Name this activist and Gandhian who helped found the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA). **Ans: Ela Bhatt**

Early Birds: Arun Kumar Singh | Dil Bahadur Airee | Arpit Kullu | Naveen Kumar B. L. | Varghese Joseph

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

He got out to a grubber on the first ball

There was quite a hubbub when the players walked in

S. Upendran

"You must be in a foul mood. Heard you guys lost the match by a hundred runs."

"Please don't remind me about yesterday. I'd like to forget about it."

"But how could you lose so badly? Heard you, the so-called star batsman, got out on the first ball. What did..."

"The ball that I got out to didn't even bounce. It was kept very low."

"I heard that you got out to a grubber."

"A what? Grubber?"

"It's spelt g...r...u...b...b...e...r! Rhymes with 'rubber'. It's what the English and the Australians call a ball that keeps very low. Something that the poor batsman has no chance against."

"In other words, an unplayable delivery."

"I guess you could say that. The grubber I got, hit me on the toe – not even on the pad. I was given out LBW."

"It was a procession. None of the batsmen had a clue about playing grubbers."

"That's a good example. Are you going to complain about the pitch?"

"It was a friendly match. Tell me, how do you pronounce 'h...u...b...b...u...b'?"

"The first syllable rhymes with 'sub', 'tub' and 'pub'. The 'ub' in the second sounds like the 'ub' in 'cub', 'dub' and 'rub'. The word is pronounced 'HUB-ub' with the stress on the first syllable. Any idea what the word means?"

"I'm guessing it means 'commotion'."

"Very good! That's one of the meanings of the word. 'Hubbub' is usually used to talk about commotion or noise. The noise that results when several people talk at the same time."

"It could also be the noise present in a situation, I suppose."

"Here's an example. People who come from small towns find it difficult to put up with the hubbub of a city."

"The hubbub at the station made it impossible to hear what my grandmother was saying."

"The CEO's unexpected resignation created quite a hubbub."

"Meaning it created quite a commotion?"

"That's right! As expected, there was quite a hubbub when Sachin and Kohli walked in."

"I can imagine. Whenever Sachin used to walk out to bat, the hubbub in the stadium was deafening."

"I know! It was unbelievable."

"I heard that you got a raise last week."

"I didn't tell you because it was nothing to shout about."

"Nothing to shout about?"

"It means that the raise wasn't significant. Nothing to make one feel excited or happy."

"I see. I read my favourite author's latest novel. It's nothing to shout about."

"Our new recruit is good, but definitely nothing to shout about."

"That's the way I felt about the new restaurant that's opened on RP Road."

"I was planning to take you there this weekend."

"I saved you a trip, I guess. The food is nothing to shout about."

"That's a pity!"

upendrankye@gmail.com

Word of the day

Cadge:
ask for and get free; be a parasite

Synonyms: beg, borrow, demand

Usage: *He tried to cadge a free meal from his friends.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/cadge

International Phonetic Alphabet: /kæʤ/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'