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CHENNAI • THURSDAY • MAY 14, 2026 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 20 • LATE CITY EDITION



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## TRUMP BEGINS CLOSELY-WATCHED THREE-DAY STATE VISIT TO CHINA

US President Donald Trump and Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping are expected to discuss US-China trade tensions and the war with Iran

## WILL HOLD TALKS WITH XI JINPING TODAY

The trade war between the two countries will be on top of the agenda. Trump will have a bilateral meeting with Xi on Thursday. The two will meet again on Friday for a bilateral tea and working lunch. They are set to discuss extending the one-year tariff truce that they agreed in October. China's controls on rare earth exports are also likely to be on the menu | P13

## MUSK, COOK AMONG U.S. CEOs ON THE TRIP

Trump is accompanied by several top US CEOs including Tesla chief Elon Musk, Apple CEO Tim Cook and Nvidia boss Jensen Huang. Chinese Vice President Han Zheng welcomed Trump at the airport. The road from the airport was decorated with US and Chinese flags and Beijing skyscrapers lit up with messages welcoming Trump

2017

WAS WHEN PRESIDENT TRUMP LAST VISITED CHINA

PM's high-stakes stopover in Abu Dhabi for talks with UAE prez to focus on energy security

## UAE pacts on strategic oil reserve, LNG likely

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

ENERGY security will emerge as the centrepiece of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-stakes stopover in Abu Dhabi on May 15 for talks with UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, amid escalating tensions in West Asia and shifting global oil equations.

During the three-hour visit to the UAE, en route to his four-nation Europe tour covering the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, India and the UAE are expected to sign two key memoranda of understanding on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) supplies and strategic petroleum reserves, further deepening a partnership critical to India's energy needs, sources familiar with the development said.

The visit comes at a time of heightened volatility in global energy markets and renewed focus on supply diversification. Sources said the proposed agreements are aimed at strengthening long-term energy stability for India while expanding the UAE's role as one of New Delhi's most trusted energy partners.

The UAE currently meets nearly 40% of India's LPG requirements, making it the country's largest supplier. It was also India's fourth-largest source of crude oil last year, accounting for nearly 11% of total imports, while ranking as

the third-largest supplier of LNG. Indian companies and ADNOC Gas have signed long-term agreements for cumulative LNG supplies of 4.5 MMT-PA, making India the largest buyer of UAE-origin LNG.

The two sides are also expected to review cooperation on India's strategic petroleum reserves. In 2018, the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) signed an agreement allowing the UAE to store more than five million barrels of crude oil at the Mangaluru reserve facility, the first such arrangement with any country.

Energy ties have evolved into a broader strategic partnership involving upstream investments and clean energy collaboration. In 2018, a consortium of Indian firms, OVL, BPRL and IOCL acquired 10% stake in Abu Dhabi's Lower Zakum offshore block. A year later, Urja Bharat Pvt Ltd, a joint venture between BPRL and IOCL, secured a stake in Abu Dhabi Onshore Block-1. In January this year, BPRL confirmed an oil discovery in the block, marking one of India's first successful upstream investments in the West Asia region.

Both sides are also enhancing renewable energy ties. UAE's Masdar signed an agreement with the Rajasthan government in 2024 to develop 60 GW of renewable energy capacity.

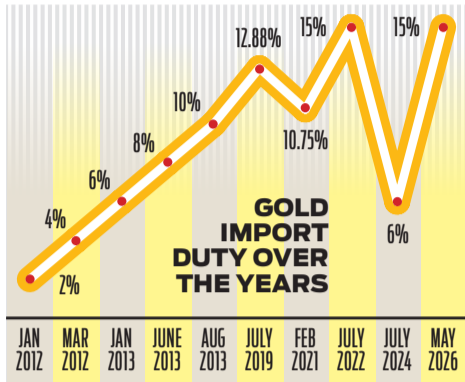


## Spend wisely, Modi urges colleagues

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday urged his Cabinet colleagues to consciously cut down unnecessary expenditure, including on petrol, in the wake of the West Asia crisis. He also urged them to cut their convoy size and foreign visits. Sources said the PM's appeal was not about spending less but spending more wisely

## Nod to ₹38K cr scheme on coal gasification

To enhance energy security and reduce dependence on imports, the Union Cabinet approved a ₹37,500-crore incentive scheme to promote new surface coal/lignite gasification projects. The target is gasification of 75 million tonnes of coal/lignite. The incentive would be disbursed in four equal instalments, linked to project milestones | P14



## Gold, silver import duty hiked to 15%

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

TWO days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to reduce the purchase of gold, the government on Wednesday increased the import duty on gold and silver from 6% to 15% to curb demand and ease foreign exchange pressures. Likewise, the import duty on platinum has been increased from 6.4% to 15.4%.

This newspaper had previously reported that the government was considering various measures, including import restrictions on precious metals. As a large importer of crude oil, India remains vulnerable to elevated energy prices and supply-side disruptions. This could increase the import bill and exert pressure on inflation and the current account deficit.

According to officials, the government aims to prioritise essential imports such as crude oil, fertilisers, industrial raw materials, defence requirements, critical technologies and capital goods. "The increase in customs duty on precious metals is intended to moderate avoidable import demand and ease pressure on the external account. The measure is neither prohibitory nor anti-consumer in nature," said a source in the ministry of finance.

Following the hike in levy, gold prices surged by ₹8,550 to slightly over ₹1.65 lakh per 10 grams in the local market.

## TVK govt clears floor test with 144 MLAs in tow

EPS asks speaker to disqualify 25 AIADMK MLAs who backed Vijay, defying whip



T. MURUGANANDHAM @ Chennai

## EPS divests posts of MLAs supporting TVK

Shortly after the vote, Palaniswami divested 12 of 25 AIADMK MLAs who voted in favour of TVK, of their party posts and appointed new office-bearers. He accused the TVK of horse-trading to secure majority | P4

## If the AIADMK gen sec requests the speaker to disqualify 25 MLAs who voted for TVK, it is a valid request as per the law. However, he can take time to consider the request

M Appavu, ex-speaker

## TVK does not have genuine mandate: LoP

Winding up the discussion on trust vote, opposition leader Udhayanidhi Stalin said the TVK government lacks a genuine mandate, claiming only 1.72 crore of the 4.93 crore voters in TN supported it | P4

## Single vote row: Top court stays HC order, calls it 'atrocious'

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a major relief to Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) MLA R Sreenivasa Sethupathi, the Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed the Madras High Court order restraining him from participating in the floor test in the Tamil Nadu Assembly. The HC had issued the order while hearing a petition filed by senior DMK leader K R Periakaruppan, who had lost to Sethupathi in the recently-concluded election by a margin of one vote.

"This is atrocious to say the least. The HC says the remedy is an election petition but still entertains the Article 226 petition," a bench of justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and Vijay Bishnoi observed after hearing Sethupathi's plea. It is to be noted that Article 226 of the Constitution deals with power of HCs to issue certain writs.

During the hearing on Wednesday, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi appeared for the petitioner and argued that Periakaruppan's writ petition was filed on Saturday and heard on Sunday by the high court. P7



Students celebrate at St Thomas' Girls Senior Secondary School, New Delhi after the CBSE Class 12 results were declared on Wednesday | PARVEEN NEGI

## Kerala CM call at meeting of legislature party today

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

ENDING days of suspense and an intense internal power struggle, the Congress is set to announce its Kerala Chief Ministerial pick on Thursday at a legislature party meeting at the KPCC headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram. The meeting, scheduled at 1 pm, will be attended by AICC state in-charge Deepa Das Munshi, along with observers Ajay Maken, Mukul Wasnik and others.

The day witnessed dramatic twists and turns as the announcement of the CM candidate was widely anticipated following a crucial meeting between Rahul Gandhi and Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge at the latter's residence. However, after the meeting, which lasted over 40 minutes, party general secretary Jairam Ramesh told the media that the decision will be announced on Thursday.

"The high command of the Congress has completed all dis-

cussions, and the decision on who the next chief minister of Kerala will be will be announced tomorrow," he said.

The decision came after a nine-day deadlock involving a fierce three-way contest among senior leaders Ramesh Chennithala, V D Satheesan, and AICC General Secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal.

While Venugopal, considered a close confidant of Rahul, enjoyed the support of a majority of the MLAs and MPs, Satheesan had the backing of influential UDF allies, including the IUML. Although Venugopal was the front-runner, sources said the Satheesan camp gained an edge in the final consultations. Senior leaders A K Antony, V M Sudheeran, and K Muraliedharan urged the leadership to take public sentiment into account, which favoured Satheesan. It was learnt that Priyanka Gandhi also urged Rahul to take the prevailing political atmosphere into account.

## Three Kuki church leaders killed in suspected militant attack in Manipur

PRESANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

THREE Kuki Baptist church leaders were killed and four others injured in an ambush by suspected militants in Manipur's Kuki-dominated Kangpokpi district on Wednesday. Members of the Thadou Baptist Association India (TBAI) and the United Baptist Council were travelling from Churachandpur to Kangpokpi for an inter-association ecclesiastical meeting when they came under attack.

TBAI president Rev Dr Vumthang Sithhou, finance secretary Rev Kaigoulun Lhouvum, and Pastor Paogoulun



(From left) Rev Dr Vumthang Sithhou, Rev Kaigoulun Lhouvum and Pastor Paogoulun Sithhou

Manipur Chief Minister Y. Khemchand Singh called the violence deeply troubling. "Actions that undermine this collective effort of our people to restore normalcy are unacceptable," he said

Sithhou were shot dead. Rev Sithhou was leading the team. Thadou organisations announced a "total shutdown" of Sadar Hills in the district in response to the attack.

Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh condemned the "dastardly terror act". Along with Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho and Home

Minister Govindas Konthoujam, he visited the injured, who are undergoing treatment at a hospital in Imphal.

The Kuki Organisation for Human Rights Trust (KOHUR) pointed fingers at the Isakmuivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim and insurgent group Zeliangrong United Front.

## BJP leader among 5 arrested in NEET paper leak

RAJESH ASNANI & SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Jaipur/Mumbai

THE CBI on Wednesday arrested five persons and conducted searches at multiple locations across the country in the NEET UG paper leak case as protests over the cancellation of the examination intensified amid demands for Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.

An active BJP leader in Rajasthan was arrested in connection with the NEET paper leak. Investigators said BJP leader Dinesh Binwal and his brother

## Vested interests must be reined in: NTA

The Director General of the National Testing Agency (NTA) Abhishek Singh, said there are vested interests who are trying to sabotage the system in place for the NEET-Under Graduate examinations and they must be thwarted.

Mangilal, residents of Jamwa Ramgarh in Jaipur, purchased the paper between April 26 and 27 for nearly ₹30 lakh.

Investigators claimed that Dinesh provided the paper to his son, who was preparing for NEET in Sikar, before distributing it to several candidates on April 29.

Both Binwal and his brother had travelled to Sikar for the operation, police believe.

Dinesh allegedly sold the leaked paper to several individuals in Sikar, including hostel operators and consultancy firms. Police also arrested one Rakesh Mandavriya, who ran a consultancy office opposite a coaching centre in Sikar. He had received the guess paper

several days before the examination through Dinesh Binwal, and had circulated it.

The CBI arrested Dinesh Binwal, Mangilal Binwal and Vikas Binwal from Jaipur, Yash Yadav from Gurugram and Shubham Khairnar from Nashik on Wednesday.

In Pune, police arrested a beauty parlour owner, Manish Waghmare, who is alleged to have helped students get the NEET-UGC exam papers ahead of the final exam.

This is the second arrest in Maharashtra after the first arrest in Nashik. P10



## CBI CHIEF

PRAVEEN SOOD GETS ONE-YEAR EXTENSION

The Centre on Wednesday extended CBI chief Praveen Sood's tenure by one more year. Sood took over as the CBI director in May 2023. This is his second extension in office | P9

## Cop among 6 dead in car-truck collision on Kovai-Tiruchy NH

P. SRINIVASAN @ Tiruppur

SIX people were killed on Wednesday after an SUV drove into a policeman and truck driver before crashing into a parked truck on the Coimbatore-Tiruchy National Highway near Vellakovil in Tiruppur district.

The deceased were identified as: P Ravichandran (36), of Kamarajapuram in Dharapuram, a second-grade police constable attached to Vellakovil station; R Senthil (48), truck driver, of Panruti in Cuddalore; R Ram (22), taxi driver, of Alangulam in Virudhunagar; R Narasimhan (65), a cook, of Ottrai Theru in Mayiladuthurai, his wife Santhalakshmi (62) and their son Balaji (29).

Balaji lived with his wife in Pappanaickenpalayam in Coimbatore where he was a priest at a Srinivasa Perumal Temple. On Tuesday night, Balaji and his parents left from Mayiladuthurai to Coimbatore in a hired SUV driven by Ram. P7

Vijay calls upon union govt to abolish NEET

Says paper leak has exposed 'structural flaws' in exam, asks centre to allow states to fill seats based on Class 12 marks

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

A day after the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) held on May 3 was cancelled due to question paper leaks, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Wednesday called upon the centre to abolish NEET-based admissions to medical courses, stating that the alleged paper-leak incident has once again exposed the "structural flaws" in the national-level examination.

"The cancellation has shattered the hopes of lakhs of medical aspirants across the country," Vijay said in a statement.

Pointing out that the centre has cancelled the exam following investigations by law enforcement agencies into the alleged paper leak, he said the matter has been referred to the CBI for inquiry.

Recalling that NEET was similarly compromised in 2024 with FIRs registered in six states and the matter transferred to the CBI, the CM said the Supreme Court had then directed the centre to constitute a high-level committee of experts



The National Testing Agency has now cancelled NEET examination with the approval of Government of India. This cancellation has shattered the hopes of lakhs of medical aspirants across India



Members of the All India Students' Federation (AISF) staging a protest at Mint Clock Tower in Chennai on Wednesday, demanding the abolition of NEET | ASHWIN PRASATH

under former Isro chairman Dr K Radhakrishnan. He noted that the panel had submitted 95 recommendations for reforms.

"Despite all this, within two years, another paper leak has occurred, and the test has been cancelled. This is a conclusive proof of the structural flaws in the national-level exam," Vijay said.

The CM said the test has severely affected students from rural areas, government schools, Tamil-medium backgrounds and socio-economically disadvantaged families.

Reiterating Tamil Nadu's long-pending demand to abolish NEET, Vijay called upon the centre "to permit the states to fill all seats under the state quota in MBBS, BDS and AYUSH courses based on Class 12 marks".

The Opposition parties had reacted to the NEET incident on Tuesday itself.

More than 22 lakh candidates, including around 1.4 lakh from TN, had taken the NEET-UG 2026 on May 3. The exam, conducted by the National Testing

Agency, was held across 5,432 centres in the country. The test was held in 31 cities across the state.

Exempt Tamil Nadu from NEET: Docs assn to centre

In the wake of cancellation of the exam, Doctors Association for Social Equality (DASE) has once again sought the centre to exempt Tamil Nadu from NEET for admission to medical courses.

In a statement, Dr G R Ravindranath, general secretary, DASE, said the Union Health Ministry should amend National Medical Commission Act, 2019, suitably for exempting TN from NEET for admission to UG, PG and higher specialty medical seats under the control of state government.

NEET should be conducted only for admission to institutions like AIIMS, JIPMER, military medical colleges and others under the control of union government, he said. The recommendations of the K Radhakrishnan Committee should be implemented, Dr Ravindranath added.

Madras HC stays cyber crime notice on anti-TVK posts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE Madras High Court on Wednesday temporarily stayed the notice of the Cyber Crime Wing of Tamil Nadu Police to take down 18 X posts and block certain accounts which are critical of the TVK and its leader Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay.

The interim injunction, on the Cyber Crime Wing's May 8, 2026, notice, was granted by a vacation bench of justices L Victoria Gowri and N Senthilkumar while hearing a petition filed by P Chokkalingam, a leader of Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

Directing the respondents to file a reply to the petition, the bench adjourned the hearing to June 8, 2026.

The petitioner stated that the Cyber Crime Wing had issued notice to X Corp to suspend 18 URLs of different users, including Maridhas (a right-wing YouTuber), under Section 79 (3) (b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, r/w Rule 3 (1) (d) of the IT Rules, 2021

(d) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

He noted the URLs belong to different users and a common direction without separately examining or analysing the contents of each individual post cannot be issued. The account holders were neither informed of the allegations nor afforded any meaningful opportunity to respond before issuance of the coercive removal/blocking directions.

He said the impugned notice is against the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution.

The petitioner had sought the court to stay and quash the impugned notice and direct the respondents to refrain from issuing such blanket or omnibus orders suspending/blocking/removing lawful political criticism, democratic discussion, satire, dissent or strong opinion against political or government actions on social media.



THE HC

Notice to suspend 18 URLs of users

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Bail granted to Savukku in attempt to murder case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE Madras High Court has granted conditional bail to YouTuber Savukku Shankar in connection with an attempt to murder case registered by the Puzhal police for allegedly pelting the policemen escorting him from Andhra Pradesh to the Puzhal Central Prison with stones, besides verbally abusing them.



Savukku Shankar

Justice L Victoria Gowri allowed the petition filed by the YouTuber seeking to enlarge him on bail.

However, in the order passed recently, the judge imposed on the YouTuber conditions of appearing before the respondent police daily at 10.30 am, not to

tamper with the evidence or influence witnesses and not to abscond.

Shankar has already been detained under the Goondas Act.

The judge stated that considering the period of incarceration, the nature of allegations, the alleged inconsistencies pointed out in the prosecution version and the settled principle that bail is the rule and jail is the exception, this court is inclined to enlarge him on bail subject to stringent conditions.

The attempt to murder case was registered by the Puzhal police on April 8, 2026, on charges of attacking the cops escorting him to the prison after being arrested at Ongole in Andhra Pradesh.



TUBBED AGAINST THE SUN

People purchase plastic water tubs on Pudukkottai road in Tiruchy to beat the scorching summer heat, as temperatures in the city hovered around 35°C-36°C on Wednesday. Chennai too recorded temperatures of around 35°C-36°C | MK ASHOK KUMAR

Tamil Nadu's aerospace ambitions gather altitude with Rolls-Royce, HAL expansion in Hosur

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

AS Tamil Nadu sharpens its ambitions to emerge as a major aerospace and defence manufacturing hub, a joint venture between Rolls-Royce and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has expanded its footprint in Hosur.

International Aerospace Manufacturing Private Limited (IAMPL), the 50:50 joint venture between Rolls-Royce and HAL, on Wednesday inaugurated an

expanded 12-acre manufacturing facility in Hosur to scale up production of high-precision compressor and turbine components for civil and defence aerospace programmes.

The move comes months after Rolls-Royce signalled a major expansion of its operations in the state during former chief minister MK Stalin's visit to the United Kingdom last year.

The expansion assumes significance as Tamil Nadu seeks to position itself as a strategic

destination for aerospace and defence manufacturing by leveraging its proximity to Bengaluru's engineering ecosystem while strengthening its own industrial base. Hosur, located near the Karnataka border, has increasingly emerged as a preferred destination for advanced manufacturing investments owing to its connectivity, skilled workforce and industrial infrastructure.

"This joint venture with HAL is not only a testament to our

long-standing commitment to 'Make in India', but also an example of the sustained efforts that have gone into creating a strong and resilient aerospace and defence ecosystem in the country," said Sashi Mukundan, executive vice-president, Rolls-Royce India.

Mukundan said Rolls-Royce aimed to position India as a strategic "home market" and planned to increase sourcing from the country tenfold in line with future programmes and



From left: Seenivasan Balasubramanian of IAMPL, Sashi Mukundan of Rolls-Royce, Ravi K and Barenaya Senapati of HAL, and Sathish S of IAMPL during the inauguration of IAMPL's expanded manufacturing facility in Hosur | EXPRESS

partnerships. The facility was inaugurated by Mukundan along with Ravi K, chairman and managing director of HAL, and Seenivasan Balasubramanian, chief executive officer of IAMPL.

HAL, in a release, said the expansion would help strengthen India's indigenous aerospace manufacturing capabilities at a time when the country is pushing for greater localisation in defence production and engine component manufacturing.

Horoscopes By Holiday

HOLIDAY MATHS

14th May: Sun-kissed Mercury The Sun and Mercury meet in Taurus and get as glossy as a magazine. The spread is intentional, the colors considered, the textures doing tasteful work. What you choose to include matters, and what you leave out does too. This is less about indulgence and more about refinement, the art of noticing what holds up under a longer gaze. What will still feel right next week?

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) You can acknowledge someone's perspective without saying it's wrong or right. Recognizing others doesn't change your position; it simply acknowledges that yours isn't the only one. This reduces tensions and helps everyone find a way forward.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 - May 20) No one can deny that your past efforts are delivering visible rewards. You're still not entirely satisfied with the results, but keep tweaking, adjusting and experimenting and you'll get there. You'll soon be collecting wins across several areas of life.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 21) There's often a difference between what you do for fun and what you do for money, but not today. The activity that falls into both categories will expand your fortunes.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22) It doesn't benefit you to give your trust too readily or too early in the relationship. It would be a gift to make them work for it. You're offering others a chance to earn your trust, which is a very rewarding experience.

LEO (July 23 - Aug 22) How you incorporate or ignore feedback will make all the difference in today's outcomes. It's really OK to let down your defenses. Go into learning mode. Also, people don't have to be totally right to have a point.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22) Replace "why can't I?" with "what would make this outcome inevitable for me?" You have the mind for design. You can create the system, meet the people, forge the alliances, execute the reps; it's all within your ability.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 23) People will show you who they are, not in one moment or with one comment, but with their actions over time. Clock the results, but don't spend a lot of energy analyzing one or two moves. This is a long game, a game of patterns.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 21) Study the failures of others, not to scare yourself, but to know how to avoid. Find out where the traps are. Where did they run out of money, attention or support? You can build buffers of protection.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) You can point to many moments when worry ran wild and nothing came of it. Today you recognize the pattern and refuse to feed it. You'll move forward with steadiness, letting evidence guide your energy instead of fear.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19) A crush isn't always on a person. A shirt could be crushworthy — anything that inspires you. You're open to what lights you up today and when you follow it, your attention attracts.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18) You can elevate a room without spending a dollar. It has to do with how you treat people, the attention you give, the ease you create. You put others at the center for a moment. Add charm. Watch the whole scene rise.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - Mar 20) No need to hold back or play the game with less energy than you have. Life can take the full-strength version of you. Things start to move in a good direction when you show up with everything you've got.

Sudoku puzzle grid with numbers 1-9.

Sudoku MEDIUM TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE. Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

Crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-23.

CROSS WORD ACROSS 1 If rebuffed stay home (8) 2 'The Church' incomplete as address for a priest (4) 3 Written evidence of class distinction - or otherwise! (6,6) 4 Resolve to settle (6) 5 Compelled to jump (5) 6 Weather men caught in a flurry of sleet (8) 7 Communal study of US coal is very involved (6,6) 8 Blundering on stage perhaps (8) 9 Turns in revue do appear to be unpaid (7) 10 Animal that's shy up to a point (6) 11 High attic required by youth leader (5) 12 Check key lubricant (4)

JUMBLE UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS. MPTEO, IBDUL, CTREOK, HDSOLU

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS ACROSS: 1 Reinstate, 8 Arena, 9 Capital, 10 Reg out, 11 Athens, 12 Flaggins, 15 Sanskrit, 18 Evolve, 20 Averse, 21 Habitat, 22 Exile, 23 Tailress. DOWN: 2 Exact, 3 Noised, 4 Transfer, 5 Eating, 6 Deposit, 7 Castigate, 11 Apostates, 13 After all, 14 Inherit, 16 Kismet, 17 Hester, 19 Vails.

Cartoon by David L Hoyt and Jeff Knurek. He was one of the best in and out of the diving well. I hope I can follow in his footsteps. HE WAS A TALENTED HIGH DIVER AND A ROLE MODEL WHICH IS WHY THEY... Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

# Commuters question new bus shelter work near court, say 5 on stretch unused

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@ Chennai

DESPITE five bus shelters in place near the Saidapet court, commuters continue to wait under the scorching sun as buses stop nearly 80 to 100 metres away from the shelters. The ongoing construction of yet another concrete bus shelter at the location has triggered criticism from commuters and activists working with persons with disabilities (PwDs), who claimed it a waste of public fund when the existing shelters themselves remain unusable and encroached upon. The new shelter is being constructed using the corporation deputy mayor's funds.

During a visit to the spot, TNIE found none of the five existing bus shelters accessible to PwDs, as all of them have stairs without ramps.

The new shelter under construction has side walls and has occupied the entire pedestrian pathway leading to the court campus. Commuters pointed out the construction of side walls would obstruct the visibility of passengers waiting for buses.

Corporation sources said, "Usually, concrete structures are not preferred for bus shel-

ters as they may have to be demolished later for storm water drain works or road widening projects. However, since many of these shelters are now constructed using MP, MLA, or councillors' funds, the design specified by them is often followed."

Commuters said the new shelter is unnecessary. Even the entry points of two existing shelters have been encroached upon, with two-wheelers parked by the visitors to the court.

In addition, notary officials are using portions of the shelters for their activities. They added none of the buses stop in any of the existing shelters.



People demand construction aligned with standards prescribed under the Gender Inclusive Design Manual to ensure uniformity and usability | MARTIN LOUIS

"I have been working here for the past month, and buses have been stopping only near the tea stall, almost 80-100m away from the shelters. Elderly passengers are forced to stand in the heat despite the multiple shelters," a tea shop worker said.

A 75-year-old woman waiting for the bus under a tree said, "It's too hot, and there is no space to sit. The shelters exist, but bus stops only here."

A corporation official said, "We have already spoken to MTC to address this issue."

Sathish Kumar, a wheelchair user, said, "The new shelter is already a waste of public money. The existing shelters them-

selves do not have ramps, and now the new shelter is being built at an even elevated level, with side walls blocking the entire pathway. The design is completely flawed. Since the work is still under way, the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) must alter it immediately. The civic body should implement the standards prescribed in the Gender Inclusive Design Manual released last year to ensure uniformity, accessibility, and usability," he said.

Deputy Mayor M Magesh Kumar told TNIE that the new permanent concrete bus shelter is being constructed at ₹10 lakh, and has the same design as the one built at Gandhi Mandapam recently.

"The shelter will have charging points. If there are concerns like the side walls obstructing visibility, we will instruct officials to remove them. Ramps will also be provided to make the shelter accessible for PwDs," he said.

Meanwhile, another concrete bus shelter being built under the MP funds near Anna Centenary Library in Kotturpuram has a similar side-wall design. However, a corporation official said the walls have been raised by mistake and will be demolished.



SEAWORTHY  
A carpenter works away on a mechanised fishing trawler at Kasimedu harbour on Wednesday during the annual fishing ban period | ASHWIN PRASATH

EXPRESS READ

## Students launch health app connecting patients with docs

Chennai: Students under the faculty of pharmacy at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research have developed a digital health application - Meduora - which aims to connect patients with doctors, pharmacies and diagnostic laboratories in tier 2 and tier 3 hospitals through a single integrated platform, thereby simplifying access to healthcare services. The app developed was supported by Sri Ramachandra Innovation Incubation Foundation (SRIIF).



Apollo Hospitals recently launched the Centre for Venous Disorders at the hospital branch on Greaves Road in Chennai. The centre aims to provide comprehensive treatment for all types of venous disorders through a patient-centred approach, a release stated | EXPRESS

## City-based NGO releases salt reduction guide

CHENNAI: The Sapiens Health Foundation, a Chennai-based NGO, released a salt reduction guide on Wednesday, marking the World Salt Awareness week 2026. The guide gives a glimpse of salt consumed by an average Indian and presents tips to reduce consumption while cooking, shopping and even when eating at restaurants.

According to a release, the event was held at the Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) central office, Chennai, with Ajay Kumar Srivastava, IOB MD and CEO, as the chief guest.

Dr Rajan Ravichandran, chairman, Sapiens Health Foundation, appealed to the audience to use low sodium salt substitutes for cooking.

## Youth's higher edu stalled, dies by suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
@ Chennai

A 29-year-old graduate ended his life in Tiruvottiyur after his plan to pursue higher education in London was stalled by financial difficulties. The deceased, identified as R Jothimani, was the son of a retired police sub-inspector.

Following his father's death in 2017, Jothimani lived with his mother Vasantha (67) at Kavara Street. Police sources said Jothimani had enrolled in a degree programme at a London university in 2024 but was forced to return home last year after completing only one year as he did not have the financial means.

Desperate to finish his de-

gree, he had pressured his mother to sell their house to fund his studies. Vasantha refused the request, citing they would have nowhere else to live.

Following the disagreement, on Tuesday night, after dinner, he retired to his room.

When he did not wake up the following morning, his mother raised an alarm. With the help of neighbours, he was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The Tiruvottiyur police have registered a case and the body has been sent to Stanley Government Hospital for post-mortem.

(Assistance for those in distress is a call away on helplines 104 and 044-24640050)

## Man gets 20 years' RI for sexual assault

Chennai: A special court for trial of Pocco Act cases recently sentenced a 44-year-old man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment for the sexual assault of a 10-year-old girl in Vyasarpadi in 2021. The verdict was delivered on Sunday. The court also imposed a fine of ₹1,000. Failure to pay it will result in an additional three months of simple imprisonment. The survivor resided near the house of the accused. When she and her sister were playing in the neighbourhood after school, the man lured the girl to his house and sexually assaulted her. The girl informed her mother, who lodged a police complaint. The MKB Nagar all-women police arrested the man him.

## 32-year-old who escaped from police station held

Chennai: The Kasimedu Fishing Harbour Police on Tuesday re-arrested a 32-year-old man who had escaped from police custody at the station a day earlier. The accused was identified as S Sakthivel of Royapuram. He was arrested on Monday in connection with a criminal case.

According to the police, Sakthivel escaped from the station around midnight while still in handcuffs after taking advantage of a lapse in surveillance by police personnel on duty. A search operation was launched immediately after noticing his absence. On Tuesday, the police tracked him down to the Koyambudu bus terminus and arrested him while allegedly attempting to flee to Puducherry. A separate case has been registered and further investigation is under way.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

Our Client proposes to purchase the property being Land measuring a total extent of 1.215 Acres or thereabouts comprised in S.No.116 / 2A (measuring 0.18 Acre), S.No.116 / 2B and as per Patna S.No.116 / 2B2 (measuring 0.32 Acre), S.No.116 / 2C (measuring 0.23 Acre), S.No.116 / 3A (Old S.No.116 / 3) (measuring 0.085 Acre), S.No.116 / 4 (measuring 0.20 Acre) and S.No.116 / 5B (measuring 0.20 Acre) situated at Vengalval Village, Tambaram Taluk, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu (hereinafter referred to as "the Said Property") from Radha Soami Satsang Beas, a Registered Society, having its Registered Office at Dera Baba Jaimal Singh, Beas, Tehsil Baba Bakala Sahib, Dist. Amritsar, Punjab - 143 204 (hereinafter referred to as "the Owner"). The Owner represents that the Owner is the absolute owner of the Said Property and except the Owner no one has any right, title, interest, demand or claim of whatsoever nature, upon or to the Said Property or any portion thereof, by way of easement or agreements, arrangements, lease, trust, inheritance, gift, partitions, bequests, possession, mortgage, exchange, will or under any deed / instrument or otherwise may lodge his / her / their objection / claim in writing to the undersigned along with supporting documentary evidence within 10 days from the date of this publication, failing which our Client will proceed with the purchase of the Said Property on the basis that there are no claims over the Said Property and any subsequent claim or objection shall be deemed to have been waived.

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SK. RAHUL VIVEK, B.Com, LL.B.  
Advocate  
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|       |   | Regd office: "Chaitanya", No. 12, Khader Nawaz Khan Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai 600 006<br>Website: www.tvsmotor.com Telephone No. (044) 28332115 Email: contactus@tvsmotor.com<br>CIN:L35921TN1992PLC022845 |            |             |            |               |            |             |            |
|       |   | STATEMENT OF STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2026  |            |             |            |               |            |             |            |
| S. No | Particulars   | Standalone   |            |             |            | Consolidated  |            |             |            |
|       |   | Quarter ended  |            | Year ended  |            | Quarter ended |            | Year ended  |            |
|       |   | 31.03.2026   | 31.03.2025 | 31.03.2026  | 31.03.2025 | 31.03.2026    | 31.03.2025 | 31.03.2026  | 31.03.2025 |
|       |   | (Unaudited)  | (Audited)  | (Unaudited) | (Audited)  | (Unaudited)   | (Audited)  | (Unaudited) | (Audited)  |
| 1     | Total income from operations  | 12,807.63  | 9,550.44   | 47,270.32   | 36,251.32  | 15,052.73     | 11,542.00  | 56,069.52   | 44,089.01  |
| 2     | Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional items)  | 1,358.40   | 1,009.56   | 4,944.89    | 3,521.54   | 1,298.13      | 992.88     | 4,871.82    | 3,505.35   |
| 3     | Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional items)   | 1,358.40   | 1,009.56   | 4,903.52    | 3,521.54   | 1,298.13      | 992.88     | 4,821.74    | 3,505.35   |
| 4     | Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)  | 997.70   | 760.68     | 3,615.22    | 2,633.89   | 819.55        | 697.51     | 3,186.43    | 2,379.81   |
| 5     | Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (Loss) (after tax)) | 1,026.04   | 800.98     | 3,780.58    | 2,666.08   | 1,019.00      | 733.01     | 3,693.34    | 2,427.03   |
| 6     | Paid up Equity share capital (Face value of Re.1/- each)  | 47.51  | 47.51      | 47.51       | 47.51      | 47.51         | 47.51      | 47.51       | 47.51      |
| 7     | Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)  | -  | -          | 11,186.79   | 9,849.71   | -             | -          | 9,516.74    | 8,455.87   |
| 8     | Security Premium Account  | - NOT APPLICABLE -   |            |             |            |               |            |             |            |
| 9     | Networth  | 11,348.62  | 10,006.97  | 11,348.62   | 10,006.97  | 9,187.21      | 8,481.39   | 9,187.21    | 8,481.39   |
| 10    | Outstanding Debt  | 2,733.36   | 1,441.38   | 2,733.36    | 1,441.38   | 27,697.48     | 23,500.76  | 27,697.48   | 23,500.76  |
| 11    | Outstanding Non-Convertible Redeemable Preference Shares  | 1,900.35   | -          | 1,900.35    | -          | 1,900.35      | -          | 1,900.35    | -          |
| 12    | Debt Equity Ratio (Times) (Debt includes NCRPS)   | 0.24   | 0.15       | 0.24        | 0.14       | 2.60          | 2.76       | 2.60        | 2.76       |
| 13    | Earnings Per Share (Face value of Re. 1/- each) (not annualised)  |  |            |             |            |               |            |             |            |
|       | (i) Basic & Diluted (in Rs.) from continuing operations   | 21.00  | 15.78      | 76.09       | 54.81      | 16.24         | 13.41      | 63.53       | 46.42      |
|       | (ii) Basic & Diluted (in Rs.) from discontinuing operations   | -  | 0.23       | -           | 0.63       | -             | 0.23       | -           | 0.63       |
|       | (iii) Basic & Diluted (in Rs.) from continuing and discontinuing operations   | 21.00  | 16.01      | 76.09       | 55.44      | 16.24         | 13.64      | 63.53       | 47.05      |
| 14    | Capital Redemption Reserve  | - NOT APPLICABLE -   |            |             |            |               |            |             |            |
| 15    | Debtenture Redemption Reserve   | - NOT APPLICABLE -   |            |             |            |               |            |             |            |
| 16    | Debt Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiary) (Times)   | 3.82   | 7.13       | 4.77        | 5.18       | 2.12          | 2.34       | 3.03        | 2.88       |
| 17    | Interest Service Coverage Ratio (Excluding NBFC Subsidiary) (Times)   | 29.37  | 37.16      | 29.64       | 29.61      | 18.50         | 18.06      | 17.75       | 14.36      |
| 18    | Current Ratio (Times)   | 0.54   | 0.61       | 0.54        | 0.61       | 0.97          | 1.12       | 0.97        | 1.12       |
| 19    | Long term debt to working capital (Times)   | -  | -          | -           | -          | 2.46          | 1.81       | 2.46        | 1.81       |
| 20    | Bad debts to Accounts Receivable ratio (Times)  | -  | -          | -           | -          | -             | -          | -           | -          |
| 21    | Current liability ratio (Times)   | 0.88   | 0.84       | 0.88        | 0.84       | 0.70          | 0.60       | 0.70        | 0.60       |
| 22    | Total debts to total assets ratio (Times)   | 0.12   | 0.09       | 0.12        | 0.09       | 0.56          | 0.58       | 0.56        | 0.58       |
| 23    | Debtors Turnover ratio (Times)  | 28.08  | 28.08      | 28.08       | 28.08      | 25.66         | 24.80      | 25.66       | 24.80      |
| 24    | Inventory Turnover ratio (Times)  | 20.37  | 16.64      | 20.37       | 16.64      | 14.31         | 11.46      | 14.31       | 11.46      |
| 25    | Operating Margin (%)  | 13.1   | 14.0       | 12.9        | 12.3       | 11.3          | 12.1       | 11.5        | 10.8       |
| 26    | Net Profit Margin (%)   | 7.8  | 8.0        | 7.6         | 7.3        | 5.4           | 6.0        | 5.7         | 5.4        |

Notes:  
1 The above is an extract of the detailed format of financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 and 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.tvsmotor.com).  
2 Figures for the previous periods have been regrouped, wherever necessary, to conform to the current period's classification.  
3 The Detailed Financial Results of the Company for the year ended 31st March 2026 can be accessed through the QR code.



For TVS Motor Company Limited  
Sd/-  
Sudarshan Venu  
Chairman

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B.D.C.No.B1/0827/2026 e-Tender Notice (Two Cover System)  
e-Tenders are invited by the Superintending Engineer (Buildings) for the following works as per details furnished below:-  
**Various Works in Buildings Department in Zone - 01 to 15. (Under Capital Fund & MLA Fund)**  
For more information see <https://tenders.gov.in> & [www.chennaicorporation.gov.in](http://www.chennaicorporation.gov.in)  
Lowest Work Value Rs.65,63,757/- Lowest EMD Rs.66,000/-  
Highest Work Value Rs.4,74,34,357/- Highest EMD Rs.4,75,000/-  
Tender Last date and Time : 01.06.2026 upto 3.00 P.M  
Tender open date and time : 02.06.2026 upto 11.00 A.M  
DIPR/ 1891/TENDER/ 2026 Superintending Engineer (Buildings)

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SN Narain assumed charge as chief public relations officer of Southern Railway on Wednesday. Prior to this assignment, he was serving on deputation as private secretary to the union minister of state for petroleum and natural gas and tourism



AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami addressing the media outside the Assembly; (R) rebel faction leaders C Ve Shanmugham and SP Velumani | P JAWAHAR

# EPS FACES OPEN REBELLION, SACKS 12 PRO-VIJAY MLAs FROM AIADMK POSTS

Asks Speaker to disqualify 25 rebel legislators, accuses them of betraying party & leadership

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

A few hours after 25 AIADMK MLAs of a group led by former minister C Ve Shanmugham extended their support to the TVK government during the trust vote, the party general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami divested 12 MLAs and many other functionaries of their party posts, and appointed new office-bearers. He also wrote to Assembly Speaker JCD Prabhakar seeking immediate disqualification of all the MLAs who voted against the directive of the party whip.

Palaniswami said the MLAs who voted in favour of the TVK government have betrayed the AIADMK. He also denied holding any talks with the DMK to come to power. In his response, C Ve Shanmugham, in the presence of his supporters, strongly criticised Palaniswami, saying after the AIADMK faced a rout in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, a delegation of senior functionaries had met Palaniswami and spent two hours discussing the need to strengthen

## SONS OF VELUMANI & EPS MET UDHAYA: EX-MP

Coimbatore: Former AIADMK MP KC Palanisamy, in a post on X, on Wednesday asked MLA SP Velumani to clarify whether his son, along with the sons of former minister K Thangamani and AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami, met former deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin to discuss the possibility of forming an AIADMK-DMK government. Palanisamy claimed he possesses CCTV footage of the meeting involving the sons of the senior AIADMK leaders and Udhayanidhi Stalin. However, when contacted by TNIE, he declined to share the footage. ENS

the party by bringing back all leaders who had drifted away, but he did not heed their suggestion. Stating that since there were differences of opinion among the party functionaries, and there were reports that the party is heading for a split, Shanmugham said, "At this juncture, Palaniswami has no authority to remove us from party posts. The aim behind this move is to bar them from attending the general council meeting if it is convened. Palaniswami did not seek our explanation but unilaterally divested our party posts."

"Even if God prevents us, we will attend the general council meeting because the AIADMK is ours," Shanmugham asserted

in an emotional tone. He said at every important juncture, Palaniswami ignored the views of the senior party functionaries and acted unilaterally on all issues. "The result of such an attitude is the reason behind the huge defeat in the Assembly election. He disrespected all those who came forward to have an alliance with the AIADMK. He failed to fulfil the promise given to the DMDK," he said. Shanmugham charged that even though the TVK was ready for an alliance with the AIADMK before the election, Palaniswami ignored it, and forged an alliance with the BJP without consulting the headquarters office-bearers. This was in contrast to the fact that the AIAD-

MK had snapped ties with the saffron party at its executive committee meeting in 2023. Shanmugham also claimed Palaniswami had thwarted the attempt to make VCK president Thol Thirumavalavan as the CM. He said the 25 MLAs supported the TVK government just because the objective of the AIADMK as well as the TVK is the same - to defeat the DMK, and that there was no other reason behind supporting Vijay's party. Meanwhile, in a strongly-worded statement, AIADMK deputy general secretary KP Munnusamy accused dissident MLAs of betraying the party leadership and falling prey to the ruling party's 'tempting promises' of ministerial posts and positions. Defending EPS, he said the dissidents are denying their own signatures electing him as the legislative party leader, and alleged that they are acting as puppets of the DMK for personal gain. He also criticised them for targeting the BJP despite its denial of any role in government formation. Stressing that the party's strength comes from its cadre, he said internal issues should have been raised within party forums.

# Vijay & Udhaya trade barbs over mandate after confidence vote

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

CHIEF MINISTER C Joseph Vijay on Wednesday took a sharp dig at the Opposition DMK, saying that about 75% of the people had rejected the Dravidian major in the Assembly election. Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin fired back, accusing the CM of ducking the debate inside the House before issuing a statement from home.

In a post on X after the floor test, Vijay rejected Udhayanidhi's claim in the Assembly that the TVK had not secured a majority. Citing Election Commission data, he claimed the TVK, which contested alone, secured 34.92% of votes, over 10 percentage points more than the DMK's stand-alone vote share of 24.19%. "In absolute numbers, the TVK polled 1.72 crore votes against the DMK's 1.19 crore, a difference of nearly 53 lakh votes," Vijay claimed. By the DMK's own logic of counting rejected votes, he added, 3.68 crore people had rejected the DMK as a stand-alone party. Responding to the DMK's jibe about Vijay contesting in two constituencies, the CM pointed to the margins in Kolathur and other seats, noting that 15 sitting DMK ministers had lost despite the full force of incumbency. He vowed that his government would deliver on welfare through legislation and policy "without fanfare" and uphold secular social justice as a non-negotiable principle. "Let those rejected by the people hurt us however they wish. Only the service to

the people and their welfare matter to us," Vijay said.

In his response on X, Udhayanidhi reminded Vijay that the DMK's votes had directly contributed to his rise to power. "You say we were rejected by the people. But it is the votes that fell to us that made you CM. Have you forgotten that, CM Sir?"

Responding to Vijay's statement wherein he recalled 2006 when the DMK formed a minority government, Udhayanidhi said, "The government that came to power in 2006 was not formed by poaching MLAs, by

# 'Dirty politics': Stalin says TVK trying to poach MLAs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

FORMER chief minister and DMK president MK Stalin on Wednesday accused the TVK government of indulging in "dirty politics" and attempting to poach legislators from rival parties. In a statement, Stalin said the DMK's decision to walk out of the floor test was in line with his earlier position that his party would not be an obstacle to the formation and functioning of the TVK government.

"Those who came to power promising clean politics are now practising dirty politics," he alleged, accusing the TVK of trying to lure AIADMK and AMMK MLAs by taking advantage of the factions within the AIADMK.

Questioning the ruling party's approach, Stalin said, "If this is how you begin, how will you finish? Is this the clean force people voted for, or a force that poaches MLAs from other parties?"

Addressing Chief Minister Vijay directly, Stalin said the public was closely watching every move of the new government and would also observe the "return gifts" offered to AIADMK legislators who crossed over. "The DMK will remain firm in its principles and continue to function as a constructive Opposition," he reiterated.

Stalin also acknowledged the CPI, CPM, IUML and VCK for voting in favour of the government to prevent the imposition of President's Rule in the state, and said the DMK respects their stand.



Udhayanidhi Stalin speaking

horse-trading, by splitting parties, or by sending sofa sets. It was a government formed with the full mandate of the DMK alliance, elected by the people. That seems to have slipped your memory," he said. Taking a swipe at Vijay's government formation process, he added, "Even without a majority, we did not line up daily at Lok Bhavan out of hunger for power."

"The DMK may have lost this election. But the fact that you yourself had to promise the continuation of our welfare schemes and the Dravidian model of governance is our victory as the Opposition," Udhayanidhi stated.

# Wife of palm climber shot by cop to launch hunger strike

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Thoothukudi

THE wife of palmyra climber P Manikandan, who was allegedly shot by sub-inspector Esakki Raja during a spat over toddy in Tenkasi district last month, on Wednesday announced an indefinite hunger strike from May 26 demanding the officer's arrest and dismissal from service. M Ponnmani said she would begin the protest in front of the Kamalarajar statue at Alangulam if the state government failed to act against the police officer.

Manikandan had sustained bullet injuries on both legs after Esakki Raja allegedly opened fire during a raid against illegal toddy tapping on April 7. He was admitted to a private hospital for treatment. The sub-inspector was subsequently placed under suspension.

Addressing reporters along with advocate Siluvai Nadar, Ponnmani said the family was struggling as Manikandan, the sole breadwinner, remains bedridden. The sub-inspector who shot my husband hasn't been arrested yet.

The future of my family and children is at stake, she said, urging the government to dismiss the officer from service. Ponnmani, who is three months pregnant, said she had been unable to even attend regular medical check-ups due to her husband's condition. She also appealed to the government to provide Manikandan with a government job.

Advocate Siluvai Nadar said no concrete step had been taken against the suspended officer despite an FIR being registered. He claimed that the government could not act earlier as the Model Code of Conduct was in force at the time of the incident, but said the present government should now proceed with the arrest and dismissal of the officer.



## WRITING ON THE WALL

Despite the party leadership's warning, large TVK banners continue to dot the footpath near Royapuram railway station in Chennai | ASHWIN PRASATH

# Vijay revokes astrologer's appointment within 24 hours after massive backlash

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

AFTER facing backlash from political parties and on social media, the TVK government withdrew the appointment of astrologer and spokesperson Rickey Radhan Pandit Vetrivel as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Chief Minister (Political). The appointment, announced on Tuesday, had triggered sharp criticism from several quarters, including the VCK and DMDK in the House.

In his speech in the Assembly,

VCK MLA Vanni Arasu, whose party extended support to the TVK to form the government, urged the state to enact a law on the lines of legislation in Maharashtra and Karnataka to curb and punish those who exploit people through superstitious practices. MJMK president Thamimur Ansari said individuals are free to follow their own faith and beliefs, but personal beliefs should not influence governance. DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant, whose party is an ally of DMK, said, "If he is your

Rajaguru, keep it personal. But giving him a high-level government post is unacceptable. Many youngsters have voted for you. What example are you setting for them?" she questioned. Responding to the criticism, Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay said he would reconsider the decision, following which the government issued an order revoking the appointment.

CPI state secretary M Veerapandian and DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant praised the government for listening to the criticism.

# Udhaya leads DMK walkout, oppn corners TVK over 'horse-trading'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

WINDING up the discussion on the confidence motion, Opposition leader Udhayanidhi Stalin said the TVK government lacks a genuine mandate, claiming only 1.72 crore of the 4.93 crore voters supported the party during the election. He also alleged the confidence of the public in the government has been steadily declining, including among those who had voted for it, and questioned the government's ability to provide good governance or protect Tamil Nadu's rights.

Claiming that even supporters of the ruling party are regretting their choice, Udhayanidhi announced DMK MLAs would boycott the confidence vote and stage a walkout to reflect public sentiment. The party also urged the government to continue the welfare schemes implemented during former chief minister MK Stalin's tenure. Responding to this request, the CM, in his speech, said, "I assure this House that the important welfare schemes introduced by previous governments will continue." "The TVK government will function without even slightly deviating from the principles laid down by the leaders who worked for the progress of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, I request all honourable members to unanimously adopt the resolution I have moved," the CM told the house before the trust vote.

Speaking in the Assembly, DMDK general secretary Premalatha Vijayakant said allegations of horse-trading during the trust vote have brought dis-



DMK MLAs staging a walkout from the Assembly | P JAWAHAR

For the first time in the political history of Tamil Nadu, accusations of horse-trading are being discussed during a confidence motion. It is a matter of shame for the entire state

DMK's Premalatha Vijayakant

repute to Tamil Nadu politics. "For the first time in the political history of Tamil Nadu, accusations of horse-trading are being discussed during a confidence motion. It is a matter of shame for the entire state," she said. Referring to Vijay's earlier remark in his speech after swearing-in that nobody needs to conceal their identity to meet him, she asked about the identity of persons who had allegedly visited the chief minister's residence, hiding his face and travelling in covered vehicles. "Television channels showed visuals of masked individuals visiting his residence, but till now, there has been no explanation of who they were. The chief minister should come forward and clarify this to the peo-

ple," she demanded.

Rejecting the allegations, Vijay asserted in the Assembly that his government "functions at the speed of a horse, not through horse-trading." AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami said there are reports that certain individuals are being lured with ministerial berths and board chairmanships, to join the ruling party. "I request that no room be given for such practices since the CM claims to be running a clean and transparent government," he added.

Stating that differences of opinion arising within a party are natural and they occur in every party, Palaniswami said, "But when such a situation arises, how it is justified for the chief minister to extend support to one particular faction." Palaniswami was referring to the CM's visit to the house of C Ve Shanmugham.

Whenever the members raised issues, the CM was taking notes, without showing any emotion.

# Lakhs tune in to watch live telecast of 'unfiltered' trust vote proceedings

SUBASHINI VIJAYAKUMAR @ Chennai

IN a first for Tamil Nadu, the entire confidence vote proceedings of the Assembly were telecast live on Wednesday, turning the floor test into a public spectacle watched by lakhs across television and digital platforms. The uninterrupted

live telecast marked a departure from the previous regime's selective broadcast model.

Though the DMK government began live-streaming Assembly proceedings in May 2022 after promising greater transparency in its 2021 manifesto, opposition parties repeatedly alleged that crucial portions of their speeches were

omitted from the telecast. While Question Hour, ministers' replies and Rule 110 statements were routinely aired, debates critical of the government, particularly during demand-for-grants discussions, were often not shown in full. In October 2025, then Assembly Speaker M

Appavu had said complete live telecast of House proceedings could be implemented only after ensuring MLAs refrained from unparliamentary language and underwent training sessions. A day ahead of the confidence vote, DMDK leader Premalatha Vijayakant and others

had demanded that the entire proceedings be telecast live instead of selectively highlighting the ruling party.

Referring to the telecast, Chief Minister Vijay, in a statement on social media, said, "While live telecasting proceedings, we did not hide or suppress anything in a manner that would show only support

for the ruling party and prevent people from seeing dissent."

The uninterrupted broadcast featured sharp criticism from Leader of Opposition Udhayanidhi Stalin and other opposition MLAs, leading many to hope that complete live telecasts of Assembly proceedings may now become the new norm.

# Asra Garg posted as intelligence chief, replaces Avinash Kumar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE state government on Wednesday transferred Asra Garg, Inspector General of Police, North Zone, Chennai, and posted him as Inspector General of Police, Intelligence, replacing Avinash Kumar.



Asra Garg

Kumar was posted to the intelligence wing by the Election Commission of India (ECI) ahead of the recent Assembly election, after the ECI removed the then IG (Intelligence) KA Senthil Velan. The posting is considered one of the most sensitive one in the state police, particularly in the post-election period. A 2004-batch IPS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, Garg is known for his involvement in several high-profile cases. Most notably, the Madras High Court on October 3, 2025,

constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under his leadership to probe the Karur stampede, which claimed 41 lives at a rally addressed by TVK president and actor Vijay.

Garg had visited the stampede site at Velusamyapuram, examined crowd management arrangements and collected case documents from Karur district police.

The SIT, however, lasted only 10 days, with the Supreme Court staying its formation on October 13, and transferring the probe to CBI.

During his tenure as North Zone IG, Garg led the dismantling of an interstate synthetic drug cartel operating through digital apps, with the Tiruvallur police arresting over a dozen suspects including foreign nationals.

His team also cracked down on the illegal sale of prescription tablets widely abused by youngsters across the zone.

## Headed SIT to probe Karur stampede

The Madras High Court on October 3, 2025, constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under Garg's leadership to probe the Karur stampede, which claimed 41 lives at a rally addressed by TVK president and actor Vijay

Under his watch, Villupuram district issued the country's first protection order under the amended Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Harassment of Women Act in favour of a Pocco victim.

In his earlier postings as SP in Tirunelveli, Madurai and Dharmapuri, Garg earned a reputation for anti-usury drives and tackling caste discrimination. This included brokering peace between warring Dalit and non-Dalit groups in Uthapuram village, an effort the Madras High Court placed on record.

## IAS reshuffle: Darez Ahamed is new health secy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE TVK government on Wednesday carried out a fresh round of bureaucratic reshuffle, transferring several senior IAS officers across key departments. T Udhayachandran, considered one of the most influential officials during the DMK regime, has been posted as additional chief secretary/ chairman and MD of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation Limited. He had been serving as additional chief secretary in the finance department.

Dr Darez Ahamed, who was MD/CEO of Guidance TN, has been transferred and posted as secretary, health and family welfare department. He replaces P Senthilkumar, who has now been posted as secretary to the CM. Anu George, who earlier served as Secretary-3 to the then CM, has been posted as secretary to the animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries and fishermen welfare department.

Mariam Pallavi Baldev, previously special secretary in the industries, investment promotion and commerce department, has been appointed secretary to the social welfare and women empowerment department. Kumar Jayant has been posted as additional chief secretary/ chairman and MD of Tamil Nadu Newsprint and Papers Limited.



## LITTLE PIECES OF HEAVEN

An earthen pot maker crafts miniature clay toys for children during the summer holidays at Kurichi in Tirunelveli | V KARTHICK ALAGU

## State records 95.25% pass in CBSE Class 12 exams

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

TAMIL Nadu recorded a pass percentage of 95.25% in the Class 12 CBSE examinations, which is nearly 3.5 percentage points lower than last year's 98.74%. The overall national pass percentage also declined by 3.19 percentage points. This year, the national pass percentage stood at 85.2%, compared to 88.39% last year.

According to the Central Board of Secondary Education, 88,146 students from 1,123 schools in Tamil Nadu appeared for the examination, of whom 83,962 passed. Among them, 44,086 out of 46,901 boys cleared the examination, while 39,876 out of 41,245 girls passed. The pass percentage of girls stood at 96.68%, which was 2.68 percentage points higher than that of boys at 94%.

Among different categories of schools, government schools recorded a pass of 95.51%, private schools 95.19%, Kendriya Vidyalayas 99.04%, and government-

aided schools 67.31%. However, the number of students from government and government-aided schools who appeared for the exams was relatively low (586 students), compared to 3,014 students who appeared from Kendriya Vidyalayas.

Category-wise, general category students recorded a pass percentage of 97.15%, followed by OBC students at 95.23%, SC students at 92.15%, and ST students at 91.92%.

Region-wise, Chennai region, which includes parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Puducherry, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, recorded a pass percentage of 93.84%, second only to the Trivandrum region, which topped with 95.62%.

Teachers attributed the fall in Class 12 pass percentage to the introduction of On-Screen Marking (OSM), a digital evaluation system implemented by CBSE this year. It is said to have ensured stricter, uniform and error-free evaluation.

## HC CITES 'STIGMA'

### Murder convict denied leave for fertility treatment

JEGADEESWARI PANDIAN @ Madurai

OBSERVING that a child born to a convict, who is serving sentence for committing triple murder, would face stigma throughout its life, the Madurai Bench of Madras High Court refused to grant 21 days ordinary leave to a man convicted in Kachanatham triple murder case, to undergo fertility treatment.

Further, the court agreed with the contention of additional public prosecutor that leave under the Tamil Nadu Suspension of Sentence Rules, 1982, cannot be claimed as a matter of right and it is only a privilege given to the convict.

A bench of justices N Anand Venkatesh and KK Ramakrishnan made this observation while dismissing a petition filed by the convict's wife challenging the rejection order passed by the Superintendent of Madurai Central Prison denying leave to her husband. The judges said the couple, while planning to have a child, has ignored the right of the child, to be born.

"The child, when it enters this world, will grow up with a stigma that it is the child of a life convict, who is serving sentence for having committed a heinous crime involving triple murder.

Reacting to the observations, Retired HC judge, Justice D Hariparanthaman told *TNIE* that while the court's decision may be correct as per the relevant rules, the observations are violative of Article 21 of the Constitution, which says no person should be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

## Vijay Narayan appointed as new AG

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE state government on Wednesday appointed senior counsel Vijay Narayan as the new advocate general. He will be replacing PS Raman who had resigned the post soon after the change of regime in the state. Chief Secretary M Sai Kumar issued the orders for the appointment, which will be in effect from the date on which he assumes charge

of the office. Known for his calm and composed demeanor, Narayan is an erudite practitioner of law on almost all sides of law, particularly writ, civil, commercial and corporate matters.

He served as the AG during 2017-21 when AIADMK was in power. In the recent past, he has represented

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami in a series of cases filed against him and the party by O Panneerselvam, and was instrumental in denying the latter any legal victory.

He was designated as a senior counsel in 2004. He is the nephew of former attorney general of India KK Venugopal.



Vijay Narayan

**WB HIDCO**  
e-N.IT. No. 01 of G.M.(E) – I of 2026-27  
Tender is invited for above NIT Sl. No. a) & b) having experience in similar nature of works from any Govt. Organization. Last date of submitting application 15.05.2026 up to 2.00 P.M. Detailed may be seen in the websites at [wbntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app](http://wbntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app) & [www.wbhidcoltd.com](http://www.wbhidcoltd.com)  
General Manager (Engg.) - I

**WB HIDCO**  
e-N.IT. No. 02 of G.M.(E) – I of 2026-27  
Tender is invited for above NIT "Sl. No. a), b) & c) having experience in similar nature of works from any Govt. Organization. Last date of submitting application 18.05.2026 up to 2.00 P.M. Detailed may be seen in the websites at [wbntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app](http://wbntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app) & [www.wbhidcoltd.com](http://www.wbhidcoltd.com)  
General Manager (Engg.) - I

**WB HIDCO**  
e-N.IT. No. 03 of G.M.(E) – I of 2026-27  
Tender is invited for above NIT "Construction of Boundary walls at Green-DB-01 in AA-1, New Town, Kolkata 700156. Total Length:-282 m." having experience in similar nature of works from any Govt. Organization. Last date of submitting application 26.05.2026 up to 2.00 PM. Detailed may be seen in the web sites at [wbntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app](http://wbntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app) & [www.wbhidcoltd.com](http://www.wbhidcoltd.com)  
General Manager (Engg.) - I

**WB HIDCO**  
NOTICE INVITING TENDER  
e-N.I.T.No.184 (2<sup>nd</sup> Call) of G.M. (Elect) of 2025-26  
Sealed Two Part tenders on Item Rate Basis are invited for the work of "Drawal of Street Light at the Median from city Centre II, Noapara to Haldiram Bridge underneath of Metro Rail line under WBHIDCO" from the agencies having ability in execution of similar nature of work. Last date of Bid Submission (On line) 02.06.2026 upto 06-00 P.M. Detailed may be seen in our website at [www.wbhidcoltd.com](http://www.wbhidcoltd.com).  
General Manager (Electrical) WBHIDCO

**WB HIDCO**  
NOTICE INVITING TENDER  
e-N.I.T.No.183 (3<sup>rd</sup> Call) of G.M. (Elect) of 2025-26  
Sealed Two Part tenders on Item Rate Basis are invited for the work of "Providing lighting arrangement for the street between Ghuni Post Office and Hanumaan Mandir at New Town, Kolkata under WBHIDCO" from the agencies having ability in execution of similar nature of work. Last date of Bid Submission (On line) 25.05.2026 upto 06-00 P.M. Detailed may be seen in our website at [www.wbhidcoltd.com](http://www.wbhidcoltd.com).  
General Manager (Electrical) WBHIDCO

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3A of the Prevention of Money-Laundering (Restoration of Property) Rules, 2016 read with Section 8(b) of the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), notice is hereby given that the Special Court for (PMLA) Cases at Chennai in Cr. MP. No. 12/2025 in Calendar Case No. 59/2016 in ECIR / CEZD-I / 22/2011 has attached / confiscated / frozen the property more particularly described hereunder.  
All persons claiming to have a legitimate interest in the attached/confiscated/frozen property, and who wish to submit and establish their claims for restoration thereof, are called upon to file such claims with supporting documentary evidence before the Special Court within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**  
SCHEDULE: A - 25/100th in 4400 Undivided share in vacant land property bearing Plot No. 6, (Plot approved by L.P.D.M./D.T.P.No. 61/72), Valluvar Street, Krishnamurthy Nagar, Kodungaiyur, Chennai - 600 118, comprised in S.No. 289/3, as per Patta S.No. 288/3A1A2, T.S.No. 21 and Block No. 55 of Kodungaiyur Village, Fort - Tondiarpet Taluk, Chennai District measuring to an extent of 3300 Sq.ft., and bounded on the North by: Survey No. 288/2 (Vacant Lands) South by: 30 Feet Wide Road (Valluvar Street), East by: Plot No. 7 and West by: Plot No. 5. Measuring: East to West on the Northern side: 42 Feet, East to West on the Southern Side: 40 Feet, North to South on the Eastern Side: 81 Feet, North to South on Western Side: 80 Feet. In all admeasuring an extent of 3300 Sq.ft., area, situated within the Registration District of Chennai North and Sub Registration District of Sembiam in Chennai Corporation limits.  
SCHEDULE: B - (Property Hereby Conveyed) 400 Sq.ft., or 37.17 Sq.Mtrs of undivided share / Interest of land out of 3300 Sq.ft., in the land mentioned in Schedule "A" above.  
SCHEDULE: C - Flat constructed in Schedule - A mentioned property bearing Flat No. S-1, in the Second Floor measuring an extent of 1052 Sq.ft., Super built up area (together with proportionate common area) and covered one car park.  
Place: Chennai  
Date: 14.05.2026  
By Order of the Special Court, PMLA  
The Special Judge  
Special Court (PMLA), Chennai

**KONKAN RAILWAY CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A Government of India Undertaking)  
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER  
Principal Chief Engineer, Konkan Railway Corporation Ltd., invites Open Tender in Single Bid system through E-Tendering on IREPS portal from eligible contractors for the following work. Name of Work: Through Deep screening of track and Through sleeper Renewal in Panchuri tunnel under AEN/Ratnagiri section and Ghatwale tunnel SEN/KKW section under Senior Regional Engineer, Ratnagiri section of Konkan Railway in Maharashtra State. Tender Notice No.: KR-W-1-58-2026-04. Estimated Cost: ₹ 4,82,20,972/- excluding GST. Closing Date/Time: 03.06.2026 up to 15:00 hrs for submission of online Offers/Bids. Completion period: Six months excluding monsoon. Manual offers shall not be accepted. Please visit <https://ireps.gov.in> website for details / participation. Corrigendum / addendum will be hosted in this website only.

**MAHARAJA SRIRAM CHANDRA BHANJA DEO UNIVERSITY**  
Sriram Chandra Vihar, Takatpur, Baripada  
Mayurbhanj - 757003, Odisha  
No. MSCBU/ (Estt.-04/2026)/2026/2522 Date: 12.05.2026  
**ADVERTISEMENT**  
Applications are invited, in online mode, from eligible candidates to fill up regular posts of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor (including backlog vacancies), in the Departments of Anthropology & Tribal Studies, Biotechnology, Botany, Business Administration, Chemistry, Computer Application, Computer Science, Economics, Education, Int. B.Ed.-M.Ed., Mathematics, Physics, Social Work, Wildlife and Biodiversity Conservation, Zoology, Odia, Santali of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Baripada.  
Detailed advertisements will be available on the University website [www.nou.nic.in](http://www.nou.nic.in) as well as on the HIMS Portal <https://himsrecruitment.odisha.gov.in/home>. The application process shall be conducted entirely in online mode through the HIMS Portal: <https://himsrecruitment.odisha.gov.in/home> from 18.05.2026 to 17.06.2026. After submitting the application online, a printout of the same, along with all supporting documents duly self-attested by the applicant, must be sent to the "The Registrar, Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Baripada, Odisha-757003" by Speed Post / Registered Post only so as to reach on or before 30.06.2026 by 05.00 PM. The University reserves the right to fill or not to fill any post(s) without assigning any reason thereof.  
For details of vacant Posts, essential qualifications, other terms and conditions, please visit the University website: [www.nou.nic.in](http://www.nou.nic.in) or HIMS Portal <https://himsrecruitment.odisha.gov.in/home>  
By order of Vice Chancellor  
Sd/- Registrar,  
MSCB University

**THE TAMIL NADU DR. AMBEDKAR LAW UNIVERSITY, CHENNAI**  
**ADMISSION NOTIFICATION : 2026-2027**  
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for admissions to the 5 Years Integrated Law Degree Programmes offered in the School of Excellence in Law and Affiliated Law Colleges in Tamil Nadu (Government Law Colleges and Government Quota Seats of Private Law Colleges) through Online Mode for the Academic Year 2026-2027.

| Institutions  | Programmes   | Submission of Applications |                 |
|---|--|----------------------------|-----------------|
|   |  | Date of Opening            | Date of Closing |
| School of Excellence in Law The Tamil Nadu Dr.Ambedkar Law University, Chennai - 600 113.       | B.A.LL.B.(Hons.) Degree Course<br>BBA.LL.B.(Hons.) Degree Course<br>B.Com.LL.B.(Hons.) Degree Course<br>BCA.LL.B.(Hons.) Degree Course | 18.05.2026                 | 05.06.2026      |
| All Affiliated Govt. and Private Law Colleges in Tamil Nadu (Except Central Law College, Salem) | B.A.LL.B. Degree Course  | 18.05.2026                 | 05.06.2026      |

**NOTE:** (1) For Eligibility, Educational Qualifications, Application Processing, Fee Structure and other details please visit: [www.tndalu.ac.in](http://www.tndalu.ac.in)  
(2) Admission notification for 3 Year LL.B.(Hons.) & 2 Years LL.M. (CBCS) Degree Programmes offered in the School of Excellence in Law and 3 Year LL.B. Degree Course offered in the Affiliated Law Colleges in Tamil Nadu will be announced later in the University Official Website: [www.tndalu.ac.in](http://www.tndalu.ac.in)  
(3) Enquiries relating to admissions can be contacted through the Telephone Nos.044-24641919/ 24957414. E-Mail- [thechairmanlawadmissions@gmail.com](mailto:thechairmanlawadmissions@gmail.com)  
DIPR/ 396 /DISPLAY/2026  
REGISTRAR

**ECONOMIC OFFENCES WING, SRINAGAR**  
**CRIME BRANCH KASHMIR**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor ERA Building, Exhibition Ground, Srinagar-190001,  
Email: [spermkmr@jkpolice.gov.in](mailto:spermkmr@jkpolice.gov.in), Phone / Fax: 0194-2479030.  
**HUE & CRY NOTICE**

Case FIR No. 09/2021 U/S 419, 420, 467, 471, 120-B IPC r/w 66-D IT Act is under investigation with Police Station Economic Offences Wing, Crime Branch Kashmir. The individual whose description / particulars are given below, is involved in the said case is absconding and is evading his arrest to scuttle the due process of law.  
Please have a sharp look out, if the accused persons are traced / found he be apprehended / detained and this agency be informed instantly on phone numbers 01942, 471836 / 7780969615 for further appropriate action.  
The description of the accused is as under:

| Particulars of the person. | Gayanchandra, S/o Mevalal, R/o H. No. 107, Village, Lakhmapur Kohara tehsil Phulpur District Azamgarh Uttar Pradesh Cell No. 7618979902. |
|----------------------------|--|
| Aadhar No.                 | 9024-6771-1173   |
| Pan No.                    | NK   |
| Election ID No.            | NK   |
| Date of Birth              | 05-07-1993   |
| Height                     | 5'6"   |
| Hair                       | Black  |
| Pin code No.               | 276288   |

Case FIR No. 09/2021 U/S 419, 420, 467, 471, 120-B IPC r/w 66-D IT Act is under investigation with Police Station Economic Offences Wing, Crime Branch Kashmir. The individual whose description / particulars are given below, is involved in the said case is absconding and is evading his arrest to scuttle the due process of law.  
Please have a sharp look out, if the accused persons are traced / found he be apprehended / detained and this agency be informed instantly on phone numbers 01942, 471836 / 7780969615 for further appropriate action.  
The description of the accused is as under:

| Particulars of the person. | Anil Giri, S/o Munna Giri, R/o Karaul Shivrapur, Varanasi Uttar Pradesh (UP) Cell No. 9519727487. |
|----------------------------|---|
| Aadhar No.                 | 9401-0315-0321  |
| Pan No.                    | NK  |
| Election ID No.            | NK  |
| Date of Birth              | 25-06-1996  |
| Height                     | 5'6"  |
| Hair                       | Black   |
| Pin code No.               | NK  |

Case FIR No. 09/2021 U/S 419, 420, 467, 471, 120-B IPC r/w 66-D IT Act is under investigation with Police Station Economic Offences Wing, Crime Branch Kashmir. The individual whose description / particulars are given below, is involved in the said case is absconding and is evading his arrest to scuttle the due process of law.  
Please have a sharp look out, if the accused persons are traced / found he be apprehended / detained and this agency be informed instantly on phone numbers 01942, 471836 / 7780969615 for further appropriate action.  
The description of the accused is as under:

| Particulars of the person. | Srijay Pal S/o Ramlal R/o H. No. 75, Village Darhiya Naharpur Tehsil Phulpur district Azamgarh Uttar Pradesh (UP), Cell No.7618979902. |
|----------------------------|--|
| Aadhar No.                 | 9679-0323-1737   |
| Pan No.                    | NK   |
| Election ID No.            | UP/45/214/0336211  |
| Date of Birth              | 25-12-1964   |
| Height                     | 5'7"   |
| Hair                       | Black  |
| Pin code No.               | 223225   |

Case FIR No. 09/2021 U/S 419, 420, 467, 471, 120-B IPC r/w 66-D IT Act is under investigation with Police Station Economic Offences Wing, Crime Branch Kashmir. The individual whose description / particulars are given below, is involved in the said case is absconding and is evading his arrest to scuttle the due process of law.  
Please have a sharp look out, if the accused persons are traced / found he be apprehended / detained and this agency be informed instantly on phone numbers 01942, 471836 / 7780969615 for further appropriate action.  
The description of the accused is as under:

| Particulars of the person. | Omkes Singh, S/o Lalasa Singh, R/o H. No. 49, Gram Sahapura Post Purus Hot-Tampur, Narayanpur Nainapur Mirzapur Uttar Pradesh (UP), Cell No. 9584440298. |
|----------------------------|--|
| Aadhar No.                 | 4308-5307-5695   |
| Pan No.                    | NK   |
| Election ID No.            | NK   |
| Date of Birth              | 15-07-1993   |
| Height                     | 5'6"   |
| Hair                       | Black  |
| Pin code No.               | 231305   |

Sd/- Abdul Waheed shah  
Senior Superintendent of Police, Economic offences Wing, Crime Branch Kashmir.  
DIPK-1234/26

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, Robertson Road, Bengaluru.

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (Two Cover System) (Through GOK KPPP only) website: https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in

The Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, BNCC, Bengaluru Tender on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the work mentioned below from the registered contractors of equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES or any State Government Organisations.

Table with columns: Sl. No., Name of the Work, General Category Works, SC Category Works, ST Category Works, Category-1 Works, Category-II(A) Works. Lists various maintenance and repair works with cost estimates.

Calendar of Events: (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from KPP Portal: 18.05.2026, (2) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on : 21.05.2026 at 3:00 p.m. (3) Last Date & Time for Receipts of Tenders: 04.06.2026 up to 4:00 p.m. (4) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: 05.06.2026 after 4:30 p.m.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Pulikeshinagar Division, BNCC. MAYA ANGELOU

Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd. (Arcil) Acting in its capacity as Trustee of various Arcil Trusts

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE THROUGH ONLINE E-AUCTION IN EXERCISES OF THE POWERS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 (SARFAESI ACT) READ WITH RULES 6, 8 & 9 OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower / Guarantor's / Mortgagee's, LAN No. & Selling Bank, Trust Name, Outstanding amount as per SARFAESI Notice, Possession type and date, Date & Time of Inspection, Type of Property and Area, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Reserve Price, Date & Time of E-Auction. Includes details for Mr. Alagurajan AM.

Place : Chennai Date : 14.05.2026 Sd/- Authorized Officer, Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd.

ଓଡିଶା ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଶକ୍ତି କର୍ପୋରାସନ୍ ଓଡିଶା ପାୱାର ଟ୍ରାନ୍ସମିସନ୍ କର୍ପୋରାସନ୍ ଲିମିଟେଡ୍

E-TENDER NOTICE NO.-CGM(Tel)-01/2026-27 Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL), Bhubaneswar, invites bids from reputed manufacturers in two part bidding system for Supply, installation and commissioning of 10 nos. of Weather Sensors. The estimate of the tender amounts Rs. 24,00,990/-.

The interested bidders may visit OPTCL's official website http://www.optcl.co.in and www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL for detail specification.

Chief General Manager (Tel) HIPR-12/2026-27 OIPR-4001/4011/126-27/0012

BENGALURU NORTH CITY CORPORATION Office of The Executive Engineer, Dasarahalli Division, BNCC, Zone-2 Hesaragatta main Road, MEI Layout, Bagalgunte, Bengaluru-560073

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through GOK KPP Portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in only) Tenders on item rate basis are invited by the undersigned on behalf of the Commissioner BNCC for the works mentioned below from the registered contractors of GBA -Bengaluru North City Corporation, or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any State Government Organizations.

Table with columns: Sl. No., Name of the works, Single Cover System, Two Cover System. Lists various maintenance and repair works with cost estimates.

Calendar of Events: (1) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on 22-05-2026 at 3:00 noon in the office of the Chief Engineer, Zone-2, BNCC, Bengaluru (2) Tender Documents can be Downloaded in KPP-Portal from 20-05-2026 (3) Last Date and Time for Tender Queries/Clarifications 22-05-2026, 11:30 am (4) Last Date and Time for uploading the Filled proposals :27-05-2026, 4:00 pm (5) Date and Time for Opening of Technical Bid: 29-05-2026, 4:30 pm (6) Date and Time for Opening of Single cover bid : 29-05-2026, 4:30 pm (7) Date and Time for Opening of Financial Bid : 02-06-2026, 4:30 pm

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Dasarahalli Division, Zone-2, BNCC

Metro Railway, Kolkata e-Tender is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work: Name of work: Renovation of washrooms and toilets at Metro stations from Central (KCE) to Dakshineswar (KDSW) Station of Metro Railway, Kolkata.

Follow us at: @metrorailwaykol @metralkolkata

Kodambakkam Branch No.10, First Main Road, United India Colony, Kodambakkam, Chennai-600 024. Phone : 044-2346 7023 / 2484 2955

NOTICE TO BORROWER (UNDER SUB-SECTION (2) OF SECTION 13 OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002)

1. Mr. Naveen H, S/o. CP Harikrishnan, Flat No.D, 2nd Floor, Anugraha Flats, Plot No.8, Natesan Nagar, Maduravoyal, Mathura Alapakkam, Chennai-600116. 2. Mrs. Deepa Lakshmi N W/o. Mr. Naveen H, Flat No. D, Second floor, Flat No. D, 2nd Floor, Anugraha Flats, Plot No.8, Natesan Nagar, Maduravoyal, Mathura Alapakkam, Chennai-600116 Also Mr. Naveen H & Mrs. Deepalakshmi having residence at 125/3, Periyar Pathai, Thiru Vi Ka Line, Chololaimedu, Chennai 600 094.

Table with columns: S. No., Nature and type of facility, Limit (Rs.), Rate of Interest, O/s as on 19.04.2026. Lists Baroda Home Loan with Rs. 32,00,000- and interest rate of 9.05%.

Security agreement with brief description of securities

All that piece and parcel of 556 Sq.Feet of undivided share of land out of 2057 Sq.ft., undivided share of land in Plot No.8 measuring to an extent of 1076 Sq.ft., approved by CMDA vide P.P No.47/2010-11, Letter D.Dis.No.292/2010/A3 dated 13-05-2010, together with a residential flat in Second Floor bearing Flat No.D having a super built up area of 949 Sq.ft.(Including common area) in the building name as "Anugraha Flats" including Electricity Service Connection with Security deposit, attached Latrine, bathroom and common shares in all other amenities therein, situated at MADURAVOYAL VILLAGE (Mathura Alapakkam), "NATESAN NAGAR", comprised in old survey No.332/2, patta No.5143 as per Patta Present Survey No.332/2A2, in Ambattur Taluk, Thiruvallur district within the Registration district of Chennai South and Sub-Registration District of VIRUGAMBAKKAM. The Entire Plot, Bounded on the : North by : 16 feet Comm. Namanathan's Land. Measuring : East to West on the Northern Side - 36 1/2 Feet, East to West on the Southern Side - 31 Feet, North to South on the Eastern Side - 66 Feet, North to South on the Western Side - 57 Feet. In all measuring 2076 Sq.Ft. Property Tax Assessment No. 11-47-13971-000. Electricity Service Connection Account No. 403-002-565. This property lies within the corporation limits of Greater Chennai.

Place : Kodambakkam Date : 07.05.2026 Authorised Officer Bank of Baroda

RAJAKILPAKKAM BRANCH No.6, VGP Srinivasa Nagar, Madambakkam Main Road, Rajakilpakkam, Chennai - 600073. Phone : 044 22282441/40

POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 18.02.2026, calling upon the Borrower Mr. S. Mayil and Mrs. C Manopriya to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 21,97,220/- (Rupees Twenty One Lakhs Ninety Seven Thousand Two Hundred and Twenty Only) as on 18.02.2026 together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the Public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this 11th day of May of the year 2026.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY All that piece and parcel of land measuring an extent of 754 Sq.ft. bearing Plot No.37A and comprised in Old Survey No.196/5, New Survey No.196/5C as per Patta No.4084 in the layout known as "Hillside Auro Nagar" situated at No.25, Kumzhi Mathura Mettupalayam village, Kumzhi Panchayat, Kattankulathur Panchayat Union, (DTPC Proceedings No.1978/2018 (Se.Ma.S) dated 02.11.2018 and Proceedings vide Na.Ka.No.8(135)/2019/Ku dated 15.03.2019 by Special Officer, Block Development Officer), Vandalar Taluk, Chengalpatt District and bounded on the North by : Plot No.37B, South by : Plot No.36, East by : Plot No.38A, West by : 23 feet Road. And situated within the Registration District of Chengalpatt and in the Sub-Registration District of Thiruvapur.

Place : Chennai; Date : 11.05.2026 AUTHORISED OFFICER BANK OF BARODA

ARMB, PNB Tower, Ground Floor, No.46-49, Royapettah, Chennai-600014. Ph : 9789922002 & 9392387502, email:cs3612@pnb.bank.in

POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of Powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice Dated 30-01-2026 calling upon the borrower Mrs. Thilak Kumar Seefood (Proprietor: Thilak Kumar.S), Thilak Kumar.S S/o. Sekar & Mr. Sekar Arani S/o Arani (Borrower / Mortgagee/ Guarantor) BO: 602800-West Mambalam (CHENNAI) residing H.No.13/2, Raghavendra Apartments, Abdul Razak Street, Saidapet, Chennai, Tamilnadu-600015 & H.No.64, Thiruvallur Nagar, TNHB Tondiarpet, Chennai, Tamilnadu-600081 to repay the amount mentioned in the demand notice being Rs. 20,19,018.81 (Rupees Twenty-Lakhs Nineteen Thousand Eighteen and Eighty One Paise Only) as on 20.01.2026 and with further interest and charges w.e.f 21.01.2026, until payment if full is made (hereinafter referred to as "secured debt") thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower, has failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on 13-05-2026.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY: Property in the name of Mr. A.SEKAR; All that piece and parcel of land measuring 422 Sq.ft. and pathway measuring 58.25 Sq.ft; a total extent of 480.25Sq.ft. with building in Old Door No.44/25 & 44/26 Part, Ward 3, Block No.16, Comprised in Old S.No.191/1/A, Part, New S.No.191/1A1 Part, T.S.No.194, Thiruvottiyur Village 2nd Main Road, Theagarayapuram 2nd Main Road, Madhavaram Taluk within the Registration District of Chennai North and Sub-Registration District Thiruvottiyur. Measurements: North : 26 feet, South : 26 feet, East : 17 feet, West : 17 feet. Boundaries: North : Remaining Land and 5 feet wide Private Pathway, South : Property belonging to Sahina (T.S.No.192), East : Property belonging to Nithyakalyani T.S.No.193, West : Property belonging to Malarvizhi, Comprised in T.S.No.196 Pt.

Date: 13.05.2026 Authorised Officer Place : Chennai Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor

SHRIRAM FINANCE LIMITED ZONAL OFFICE, CHENNAI JEWELS PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE

In our company, jewels pledged to avail loans up to 12 months due 31.01.2025, 6 months due 31.08.2025 are now over due with out redemption the jewels. The borrowers of these loan accounts did not come to the branches either to redeem the jewels or repledge them in spite of our ordinary notices/register post with AD sent by our approved Auctioneer. As per company's auction policy jewels pledged for the loans available by borrowers will be auctioned publicly, if they failed to redeem the jewels within loan period. This paper publication is applicable to deceased customers & their legal heirs and those who are in a situation at present also, and this paper publication is applicable to those who have not received ordinary notices/register AD and those who have changed their residential address with out informing our branches. The company has the right to change the place of auction/date of auction and to hold with some selective jewel pockets from auction. The company has the right to cancel the auction & change of auction date without prior intimation.

Table with columns: AUCTION DATE, TIME, AUCTION PLACE, AUCTION NO., LOAN AGREEMENT NO., FINAL DATE FOR REDEMPTION. Lists multiple auction entries with details.

Auction list is displayed in the Notice Board of our branches with details of Borrowers Name /Loan No./Borrowers Address/details of jewels items pledged etc..The above said borrowers can redeem the jewels on auction date mentioned in the above table before 3.00 p.m by paying full settlement amount (principal + interest due + expenses towards auction process. The proposed bidders should pay Rs 20,000/- as caution deposit by cash and they should produce original Pan Card & Address proof for verification to participate in the Auction.

Date: 14.05.2026 Note: We state that if the auction is unable to be conducted on the above mentioned date, it will be rescheduled to 06.06.2026 Auctioneer M.S.Gurusanthani, Saidapet, Chennai - 15 General Manager (JL), Adyar, Chennai - 20

Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd. (Arcil) Acting in its capacity as Trustee of various Arcil Trusts

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE THROUGH ONLINE E-AUCTION IN EXERCISES OF THE POWERS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 (SARFAESI ACT) READ WITH RULES 6, 8 & 9 OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Borrower / Guarantor's / Mortgagee's, LAN No. & Selling Bank, Trust Name, Outstanding amount as per SARFAESI Notice, Possession type and date, Date & Time of Inspection, Type of Property and Area, Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Reserve Price, Date & Time of E-Auction. Includes details for Mr. P Samraj Pandian.

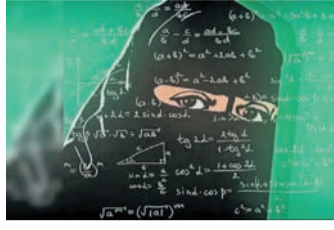
Place : Chennai Date : 14.05.2026 Sd/- Authorized Officer, Asset Reconstruction Company (India) Ltd.

# K'taka allows limited religious symbols in schools & colleges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA government on Wednesday issued orders allowing students to wear 'limited' religious and traditional symbols along with prescribed uniforms, withdrawing its February 5, 2022 order, empowering institutions to enforce uniforms and effectively bar attire considered disruptive to equality, discipline and public order in classrooms. The earlier order was issued by the then BJP government following controversies erupting over students attending classes wearing hijab.

Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Madhu Bangarappa told a press conference that the new order has been issued following the April 24 incident where three students were



asked to remove their janivara (sacred thread) by the authorities at a college in Koramangala before allowing them to write the Common Entrance Test.

The new order, issued under the Karnataka Education Act, 1983, stated that students in government, aided and private schools and pre-university colleges can wear symbols such as hijab/headscarf, turban, janivara, rudraksha and similar customary attire, provided they complement the prescribed uni-

form and do not affect discipline, safety or identification. "No student should be denied entry into classrooms, examination halls or academic activities for wearing such permitted symbols," he said. However, the order stated that during exams and tests, authorities should follow the dress code prescribed.

School Development and Monitoring Committees, College Development Committees and heads of institutions have been directed to ensure no student faces discrimination or humiliation. However, the legal stand around the hijab issue remains unchanged as the matter is pending before the Apex Court.

The opposition BJP criticised the state's decision and alleged that the move is aimed at appeasing minority voters following the Davanagere bypoll.

# Perarivalan: HC issues notice to Home Ministry

CHENNAI: The Madras High Court has ordered notice to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Legislative and Legal Affairs, the Bar Council of India and the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on a petition filed by Congress MP R Sudha seeking to quash the enrolment of AG Perarivalan, one of the convicts in the assassination case of former PM Rajiv Gandhi, as an advocate with the BCTNP.

The petitioner sought a declaration that Section 24A of the Advocates Act, 1961, is unconstitutional insofar as it permits persons convicted and sentenced to death or life imprisonment to practise as advocates.

The bench directed the respondent authorities to file their replies by June 9, 2026, the bench adjourned the matter to the same date.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

A well-marked low-pressure area over the southwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining westcentral Bay is expected to trigger widespread rainfall across Tamil Nadu over the next few days, with the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC) forecasting isolated heavy rain in several western and ghat districts till May 19.

The RMC said conditions are turning favourable for the advance of the southwest monsoon over parts of the south Bay of Bengal, the Andaman Sea, and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands around May 16.

RMC officials said light to moderate rain accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning is likely at isolated places over the Western Ghats and coastal



Mangled remains of the SUV; (inset) P Ravichandran, the cop who was killed | EXPRESS

# 'SUV driver likely fell asleep'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

SENTHIL left for Vellokoil on Tuesday night, carrying a load of casuarina logs in a truck.

"On Wednesday, at 3.30 am, the truck Senthil drove rammed into the barricade near a checkpoint on the Tiruchy-Coimbatore NH in Kurukkathi village," police said. Ravichandran, who was on duty at the checkpoint, stopped the truck. "While the policeman and the truck driver were placing the barricade back at the same spot, the SUV hit him and crashed into the rear of the parked truck," po-

# Low-pressure system set to drench TN, heavy rain warning for ghat dists



Rain-soaked roads and reduced visibility followed sudden showers in Tirunelveli district | V KARTHIK ALAGU

districts of Tamil Nadu. Similar weather conditions are expected over the delta districts on Thursday.

The Nilgiris district has been placed under a heavy rainfall warning on May 14, 15 and 17. Heavy showers are also likely over the ghat areas of Coimbatore on May 15 and in Theni dis-

trict on May 16.

Meanwhile, maximum temperatures dipped by 2-3°C at isolated places across Tamil Nadu during the past 24 hours. Chennai is likely to witness partly cloudy skies with light rain over the next two days, with temperatures expected to hover around 35-36°C.

# 'AIADMK MLAs may be disqualified for TVK support'

TVK STRENGTH SINCE POLL RESULT

- May 4:** Assembly election results were declared, TVK won 108 seats. The party only had 107 MLAs as party chief C Joseph Vijay contested in two seats.
- May 5:** The Congress, which won five seats as part of the DMK alliance, broke ties and extended support to TVK, taking the tally to 112.
- May 8:** The CPI and CPI(M), which had won two seats each in the DMK alliance, extended support to TVK upset over reports that the AIADMK and DMK were attempting to form the government. Their support increased the count to 116.
- May 9:** After prolonged deliberations, the VCK gave support letters for its MLAs to TVK. The IUML, also a DMK ally, followed suit. With this, TVK's tally touched 120, helping it cross the majority mark.
- May 11:** AMMK MLA and TTV Dhinakaran loyalist Kamaraj, who had earlier denied supporting TVK and alleged that his support letter was forged, announced in the Assembly that he would back the TVK government. He was subsequently expelled from his party. The tally rose to 121.
- May 12:** JCD Prabhakar from Thousand Lights was elected Speaker, bringing the effective strength down to 120.
- May 12:** The Madras High Court restrained the TVK MLA from Tiruppattur, who had won by a margin of one vote, from participating in the confidence motion, reducing the tally to 119.
- May 12:** A faction of AIADMK MLAs led by former minister C Ve Shanmugam announced support for TVK. A total of 25 AIADMK MLAs voted in favour of the TVK government, taking its support to 144.



CM Vijay with SP Velumani, who led the faction that voted in favour of TVK on Wednesday | x

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

VELUMANI was also allowed to speak by the speaker despite opposition from the Palaniswami faction.

After the vote, CM Vijay assured the Assembly that his government is guided by the ideals of Periyar, Kamarajar, Ambedkar, Velu Nachiyar and Anjalai Ammal, and would uphold social justice, equality, secularism and true democracy. He said the administration would work for ordinary people without caste, religious or political discrimination, while protecting Tamil culture and acting with courage and civility. Stressing that the government was formed not for power or authority but to serve the people who trusted it, he said it would be inclusive, non-intimidating and focused solely on public welfare. He also thanked alliance leaders and legislators for supporting the government.

Asked if the 25 AIADMK MLAs voting in favour of the TVK government

will incur disqualification as MLAs, senior lawyer K M Vijayan told TNIE, "These are clearly grounds for disqualification since all these MLAs contested on the 'Two Leaves' symbol and took oath as members of the AIADMK."

On the argument that since the speaker has not recognised the whip appointed by the Palaniswami faction, the directive given by him to the 47 AIADMK MLAs is invalid, Vijayan said, "Appointing a whip is an internal affair of a party and the speaker does not decide it."

Former speaker M Appavu of the DMK told TNIE that the 25 AIADMK MLAs supporting the TVK government against the party's directive is a clear case for disqualification. "If the AIADMK general secretary requests the speaker to disqualify the 25 MLAs who voted for the TVK government, it is a valid request as per the law. However, the speaker can take time to consider this request."

Appavu added that the speaker has to appoint the person proposed by the leader of a political party as the whip. "If the speaker refuses, then the concerned party can move the court," he added. Retired judge of the Madras High Court, K Chandru, said, "What is going on in the AIADMK is only a factional fight and not a split in the party. Palaniswami possesses full powers within the party. There cannot be changes in the legislature party without changes in the party structure."

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www.joinindianarmy.nic.in

## OFFICER ENTRY

Online applications are invited for 10+2 Technical Entry Scheme (TES-56) course (Jan 2027) of Indian Army. Online applications will open on **www.joinindianarmy.nic.in** from **13 May 2026** to **12 Jun 2026**. JEE (Mains) 2026 is Mandatory for TES-56 Course. This is in addition to the criteria of minimum 60% marks in PCM (Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics) in Class 12<sup>th</sup>.



Note:

1. Recruitment in the Army is totally transparent and free. Beware of touts.
2. For detailed Notification, Visit **www.joinindianarmy.nic.in**

CBC 10601/11/0003/2627

**Tube Investments of India Limited**  
Regd. Office: 'Chola Crest', C54 & C55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032 Tel: 91 44 4217770-5  
Website: [www.tiindia.com](http://www.tiindia.com) E-mail id: [investorservices@tii.murugappa.com](mailto:investorservices@tii.murugappa.com)  
CIN:L35100TN2008PLC069496

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED AS AT 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2026

| Particulars   | Consolidated         |                      |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|   | Quarter ended        |                      | Year ended           |                      |
|   | 31-03-2026 (Audited) | 31-03-2025 (Audited) | 31-03-2026 (Audited) | 31-03-2025 (Audited) |
| Total Income from Operations  | 6,214.74             | 5,149.96             | 22,847.43            | 19,464.65            |
| Profit Before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items   | 508.95               | 341.69               | 1,918.49             | 1,664.25             |
| Profit Before Tax, After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items   | 497.98               | 333.61               | 1,850.53             | 1,653.20             |
| Profit After Tax, After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items (from continuing operations)                                       | 232.06               | 158.19               | 1,116.27             | 1,054.29             |
| Profit After Tax, After Exceptional and / or Extraordinary Items (including discontinued operations)                                | 234.01               | 158.19               | 1,118.22             | 1,054.29             |
| Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)] | 258.49               | 169.02               | 1,179.05             | 1,044.21             |
| Paid up Equity Share Capital  | 19.36                | 19.35                | 19.36                | 19.35                |
| Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve) (i.e) Other Equity   |                      |                      | 7,732.05             | 5,516.38             |
| Networth  |                      |                      | 7,751.41             | 5,535.73             |
| Earnings Per Share (of ₹1/- each) - (for Continuing operations)   |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| a. Basic (in ₹)   | 4.36                 | 2.41                 | 32.85                | 34.83                |
| b. Diluted (in ₹)   | 4.36                 | 2.40                 | 32.84                | 34.80                |
| Earnings Per Share (of ₹1/- each) - (for Discontinued operations)   |                      |                      |                      |                      |
| a. Basic (in ₹)   | 0.06                 | -                    | 0.06                 | -                    |
| b. Diluted (in ₹)   | 0.06                 | -                    | 0.06                 | -                    |

Notes:  
1. Company's Standalone Financial information is as below: (₹ in crores)

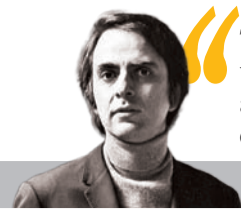
| Particulars                                | Standalone           |                      |                      |                      |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|  | Quarter ended        |                      | Year ended           |                      |
|  | 31-03-2026 (Audited) | 31-03-2025 (Audited) | 31-03-2026 (Audited) | 31-03-2025 (Audited) |
| Total Income from Operations               | 2,278.57             | 1,957.25             | 8,556.35             | 7,892.53             |
| Profit Before Tax and Exceptional Items    | 364.96               | 895.71               | 1,105.55             | 1,543.53             |
| Profit Before Tax, After Exceptional Items | 357.21               | 880.04               | 1,082.80             | 1,524.40             |
| Profit After Tax, After Exceptional Items  | 283.52               | 813.65               | 827.35               | 1,296.66             |
| Total Comprehensive Income                 | 293.71               | 820.06               | 831.52               | 1,294.05             |

2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly financial results for the quarter and year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Annual Financial Results are available on the stock exchange websites [www.bseindia.com](http://www.bseindia.com) and [www.nseindia.com](http://www.nseindia.com) and on our website [www.tiindia.com](http://www.tiindia.com). The financial results can be accessed by scanning the QR code provided below:



Place : Chennai  
Date : 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026

For Tube Investments of India Limited  
Mukesh Ahuja  
Managing Director



The reliable cases of UFO sightings are uninteresting and the interesting cases are unreliable. Unfortunately, there are no cases that are both reliable and interesting

Carl Sagan

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Rammath Goenka

DIGITISE SYSTEM FURTHER, CONDUCT REGULAR AUDITS TO MAKE EXAMS LEAKPROOF

THE cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 for over 22 lakh candidates is a huge setback for India's examination system. A re-examination has become necessary for what was supposed to be over on May 3. At such a moment, waiving fees for the re-examination would not address the issue of prolonged and heightened anxiety for the candidates and their families. Rebuilding the frame of mind to revisit a make-or-break moment cannot be easy.

The sophistication of the alleged leak network makes this case especially worrying. Investigators believe the suspects used high-definition portable scanners, not smartphones, to photograph the papers. The scanned copies were reportedly shared through encrypted messaging applications, suggesting a coordinated operation. The investigation has spread across several states. The CBI has taken custody of a Nashik-based undergraduate student suspected of being linked to the alleged network. In Maharashtra's Latur district, a complaint alleges that a coaching institute conducted a mock test containing questions similar to those in the actual examination. The Rajasthan Police have also detained several suspects.

This is the first time since the National Testing Agency took over NEET-UG in 2019 that the examination has been cancelled in its entirety. Notably, in 2024, the Supreme Court rejected re-test demands despite a leak controversy, saying the material did not show a systemic breach, though it noted that the leaks reported in Hazaribagh and Patna were undisputed.

These developments expose a larger structural problem. India's examination system still depends heavily on the physical handling and transport of question papers through multiple layers—printing presses, transport agencies, district officials, private centres and invigilators. Every additional layer creates another point of vulnerability. The matter has reached the Supreme Court, but it is really for the NTA, created to professionalise and standardise competitive examinations, to go back to the drawing board. The issue is about weak systems and poor safeguards. Many countries now use encrypted digital transfer, time-bound access, biometric checks and secure printing at centres shortly before tests begin. Even in India, the Union public service examinations have largely retained their credibility because of tighter rules and stricter monitoring. India now needs reform of its examination system, not temporary fixes. Security audits and stronger accountability must become standard practice along with safer logistics. Competitive examinations should test students' knowledge, not their patience with a failing system.

POLL DELAY GIVES CHANCE TO MEND BENGALURU

IT has been 11 years since Bengaluru's last municipal council was elected. Meanwhile, the coalition helming the Karnataka government changed in 2023 and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahasabha Palike (BBMP) metamorphosed into the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) in 2025 to include five corporations and 369 wards. Delimitation was conducted and reservation was notified, too. This February, the Supreme Court ordered that the municipal election be held before June 30, with a tentative dateline between June 14 and 24. Yet, it remains jinxed. In a new twist to the saga, the State Election Commission has gone to court claiming it is burdened by the special intensive revision of electoral rolls and census work, and sought a three-month deferment. On their part, GBA officials have cited the monsoon, examinations and staff shortage to seek a delay.

This would vex the civic organisations and resident welfare associations that are increasingly wary of unelected administrators running the GBA, with the chief minister and his deputy holding charge. Much water has flowed under the legal bridge ever since citizens took up the matter at the high court in 2020. In 2022, the Supreme Court asked the government to complete the delimitation process for BBMP and set the poll ball rolling. Over three years, the election was put off on one pretext or another. Now the SIR complicates matters further. As per the rolls released in April, the GBA had 88,95,361 voters, but that count will surely be revised by the SIR. Given this, the SEC appears justified in seeking more time to conduct a fair election.

For the government, any deferment comes as a breather, as more potholes can be covered up, greater road lengths tarred, drains and garbage cleared, and flyovers thrown open to give the city a quick shine. Though citizens largely view the government's 'Brand Bengaluru' promise as unfulfilled, party strategists have been offering ideas on issues like mobility, waste management and water supply. At stake is a region that has traditionally voted BJP, which won 16 of the city's 28 Assembly seats in 2023, and all the four Lok Sabha seats in 2024. Whoever wins the corporations will get a fillip for their 2028 ambitions. Hopefully, in the bargain, the citizens will get a cleaner, better managed metropolis.

QUICK TAKE

JAILHOUSE BLUES

ONE can only marvel at the recent initiative of Hyderabad's Chanchalguda Central Jail to offer a 'Feel the Jail' experience to citizens at a price—₹2,400 for a 24-hour stay behind bars and half-price for a half-day sojourn. Many former prisoners play on jail fetish, with those converted into hotels in Oxford, Boston and Helsinki leaning on their unsavoury history to sell rooms. On any visit to Andaman's Cellular Jail, the panopticon built in 1906 to house Indian political prisoners, one may see honeymooners taking pictures of each other behind bars. But Hyderabad throws up a rare chance at prospective justice. If the politicians who scoff at criminal charges lodged against them can be coaxed to stay overnight, maybe they will be tempted to stay on the straight and the narrow thenceforth.

FIVE years ago, when the campaign for West Bengal's 17th legislative Assembly got underway, there was foreboding across the border in Bangladesh about its outcome. Many Bangladeshis who consider Kolkata as an extension of their home were worried that the BJP may come to power. Scores of tourists from Dhaka and Gazipur, among the hundreds who thronged Kolkata's New Market, told me they wanted Mamata Banerjee back as chief minister. She was their Didi too.

This time it is different. Bangladesh has changed dramatically since Sheikh Hasina was driven out of power nearly two years ago. In the three months that Tarique Rahman has been Hasina's elected successor, the younger prime minister has shown that there is light at the end of the tunnel. The BJP has also changed enough in Bengal, at least in optics, to set at rest the fears that pervaded Bangladeshis' during the 2021 poll campaign. There were, of course, far fewer Bangladeshis in New Market last month. The suspension of tourist visas during the interim government in Dhaka meant only medical tourists or emergency visitors constituted the scant numbers in Kolkata.

For Bangladeshis, language was the biggest concern about the BJP five years ago. The rumour mill on social media had spread the canard that if the BJP formed a government in West Bengal, Hindi would progressively replace Bengali. The BJP did not help matters when it released its first list of candidates only in English and Hindi, not in Bengali. The party's press conference announcing the list was also entirely in Hindi. The Left parties, on the other hand, put out their candidates' list solely in Bengali and Banerjee's press conference announcing the Trinamool Congress candidates was also in the state language. This must be set against the background of the martyrdom of East Bengalis in 1952, when they were struggling for the primacy of Bengali over Urdu. Their martyrdom is commemorated to this day on every February 21—Amar Ekush-e or Immortal Twenty-first.

What is it that concerns Bangladeshis today about their neighbouring province with which they share a common language, history and culture? They want visas to visit Kolkata for medical treatment, for the delights of the hospitality business of this metropolis, for its shopping—and not the least, to hop across its bars, because drinking in

Dhaka's recent overtures and Delhi's choice of the next high commissioner bode well for the revival of bilateral relations. Resumption of full visa services will be an eagerly-awaited milestone

GOOD AUGURIES ON BOTH SIDES OF LONGEST BORDER

K P NAYAR

Strategic analyst



SOURAV ROY

Dhaka is a shady business although there is no total prohibition. On May 5, when a fake media post was circulated in India that from September 30, alcohol would not be available in West Bengal, it caused huge consternation across the border. The fake news went viral in Dhaka and the state government had to put a big red "FAKE" stamp on the post and re-circulate it.

Ordinary Bangladeshis are the least concerned if China is competing with India for influence in their country, or if the interim government of Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus looked at Pakistani fighter jets made in collaboration with China for possible purchase. That is the stuff for pundits in television studios in Noida Film City. News was leaked in New Delhi about 10

days ago by the ministry of home affairs that India was contemplating full resumption of visa services for Bangladeshi nationals. This was greeted like the late arrival of a festival—not only in Dhaka, but from Sylhet to Satkhira, Rajshahi to Rangpur—in all the 15 cities and towns where Indian Visa Application Centres (IVACs) are located.

It is not widely known that a fifth of India's foreign visitors come from Bangladesh, including on family visits. The peak year for such arrivals in recent times was 2023, when 21.2 lakh Bangladeshis visited. After Hasina's escape to India and a deterioration in bilateral relations—including threats to Indian diplomatic posts in prominent cities like Chittagong—this figure spiralled down to less than 5 lakh last year. Bangladesh,

IN PURSUIT OF PIES IN THE SKY

ON May 8, the US department of war released the first tranche of declassified files on unidentified anomalous phenomena (UAP, also called unidentified flying objects) at the order of President Donald Trump. The first release included 162 documents, photos and videos, with further updates planned through the grandiosely-named PURSUE programme, or the Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters. The effort also involves the White House, Nasa, FBI, Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office.

Immediately, the Iran-aligned Legostyle satirical viral brigade, Explosive Media, released a rapid-fire rap video telling Trump to "Keep the UFO files, drop the Epstein list", highlighting off-the-bat what many Americans already feel—that Trump is in serial deflection mode trying to wrench attention from his domestic economic, foreign policy and Epstein files disasters.

The Spectator's take on the infodump was scathing: "The release is the latest example of UFO activity that began with a controversial 2017 article in the New York Times describing a secret Pentagon programme to investigate UFOs. It was controversial because two of its three authors were UFO enthusiasts who omitted to add that the project also included looking into ghosts and werewolves."

Controversial or not, the NYT revealed the existence of the Pentagon's secret Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program, a \$22-million government project that in 2007-12 was tasked with investigating UFOs/UAPs. In 2022, the Biden administration established the AARO, which built up a caseload of more than 2,000 by early 2026.

In 2021, the Pentagon showed disdain at evidence of aliens. A Nasa report in 2023 hedged a bit but said more or less the same thing. SpaceX owner Elon Musk, well-known for advancing the theory that the universe could be an artificial construct, said that thousands of his satellites had seen no evidence of unexplained visitations.

But does political deflection really explain the slow revelations of PURSUE? What do the released files have in hold for extraterrestrial hypothesisers (of whom many have been quietly embedded in various US administrations down the decades)?

US presidents themselves have been coquettish on the issue. Jimmy Carter

had filed a personal UFO sighting report. Ronald Reagan had breathlessly reported seeing from his aircraft a light "shoot straight up into the heavens". Barack Obama said, "They're real—but I haven't seen them."

The released files are unusually—or, as detractors claim, expectedly—anodyne. They show little that was not known before: fuzzy dots speeding about, too tiny to figure out what they are, often in frames with portions redacted with black masking; an ornate four-pointed star dipping and rising; two enhanced photos with unexplained smears taken on the moon by Apollo 12 and 17 astronauts.



Even if Donald Trump is releasing Nasa and Pentagon's UFO files to divert attention from other news, he isn't the first US president hinting at the possibility of alien activity. The way it's being done is keeping armchair pseudoscientists thirsting for more

It is all nebulous enough for Sean Kirkpatrick, physicist and former director of AARO, to say that minus analysis and context, it "will only serve to fuel more speculation, conspiracy and armchair pseudoscience, particularly from the playhouse politics theatre company".

But Kirkpatrick has often been dismissed by 'UFologists' as inordinately sceptical. AARO's first report in 2024 divulged hundreds of new UAP sightings—the growing scale of which is breathtaking given the slow crawl over the past decades—but no US government report that had confirmed alien

technology. A second report of more recent sightings is due soon, but expectation of revelations is low.

The files already in the public domain include videos of unidentified aerial phenomena taken over Greece (2023-24), Iraq (2022-24) and the UAE (2023-24)—and while they are not many, their inclusion is significant in that perhaps for the first time, the rest of the world is included in UAP sightings. This includes an American football-shaped UAP that the US-Indo Pacific Command reported near Japan in 2024. An ellipsoid, a shape mentioned as unusual in UFO lore, a similar object had been rendered by FBI Lab from eyewitness reports of a sighting in the US in 2023.

It is all very intriguing. But here's the thing: of the 162 files initially released, four were retracted soon after and 108 bear redactions. In effect, the majority of Trump's "transparency release" is blacked out. The Pentagon's explanation is that the masking protects "eyewitness identities, location of government facilities, and sensitive military information not related to UAP". In short, confirming everything that UAP researchers have been convinced about for more than half-a-century—that the US government continues to keep eyewitnesses from the public eye, conceals xenotech skunkworks and hides military confirmation (not just suspicion) of evidence.

But redaction is a Trump administration standard operating procedure. It knows full well that they act as an incentive, a challenge, a promise: they keep the public eye tightly focused while the action, so to speak, takes place elsewhere. They maintain the public desire to be gifted more. And they leak hope from Olympus into the public domain. But this promissory does not come with an estoppel. It cannot be enforced.

Whatever the Trump administration's intent, it has paid off. The citizenry's attention is pinned. There were more than 340 million hits on the war.gov/UFO, which is hosting the files, within the first half-day. That's more than 97 percent of the US population. (Views are personal) (kajalbasu@gmail.com)

MAIL BAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Conservation effort

Ref: Longer oil shock (May 13). The austerity measures advocated by the PM is nothing but an admission that all is not well on the economic front of our country. There is no second opinion that in crisis, all citizens should be prepared for sacrifices. At the same time, it is not paramount on the part of politicians to follow conservation norms and give up their needlessly long convoys? Tharish S Fernando, Chennai

Costly project

Ref: Andhra data centre push (May 13). The potential benefits against possible hazards need to be thoroughly studied before any government embarks on a mega project. Besides forgoing vast tracts of land, the government has to spend on providing huge amounts of resources in spite of the investors planning for captive power sources. In contrast, the benefit to the state in terms of employment and revenue generation is abysmally low. AG Rajmohan, Anantapur

War machines

Ref: Robot warriors (May 13). India's unmanned capability is real but lopsided. The air force's institutional head start is an asset that should be shared systematically with the army and navy rather than replicated independently. Operation Sindoor demonstrated what coordinated unmanned systems can achieve. Land and sea domains deserve equal urgency now. Swathi Senthilkumar, Coimbatore

Failing students

Ref: NEET-UG cancelled (May 13). The National Testing Agency never fails to disappoint with its recurring security lapses compromising the integrity of examinations throughout the country. This time again it's the NEET exam swirling the future of nearly 23 lakh candidates into a whirlpool of despondence and dejection. Quite ironically, reports of a coaching institute's mock test matching 42 out of 45 actual questions only deepen the crisis. Such colossal failures not only trivialise students' efforts, but also stain the credibility of India's examination systems. Abhinandan Bhatia, New Delhi

Incongruous claims

Ref: Astrologer gets key post (May 13). That the CM, who is a self-confessed follower of the dyed-in-the-wool rationalist E V Ramasamy, has appointed an astrologer as his officer on special duty is ironic. Periyar, who fought all his life against superstition and pseudoscience, would turn in his grave. Kurian Mathew, Bengaluru



**Priyanka Chaturvedi** @priyankac19  
On one hand PM Modi has asked people to use public transport, on the other Mahayuti government which is hell bent on finishing off transport options available



**Mallikarjun Kharge** @kcharge  
This cruel BJP model strips disadvantaged citizens of their economic dignity while spending extravagantly on political spectacle!



**Yogi Adityanath** @myogiadityanath  
Heartiest congratulations to all the students who have passed the 12th class examination of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)

# MSP for 14 Kharif crops increased

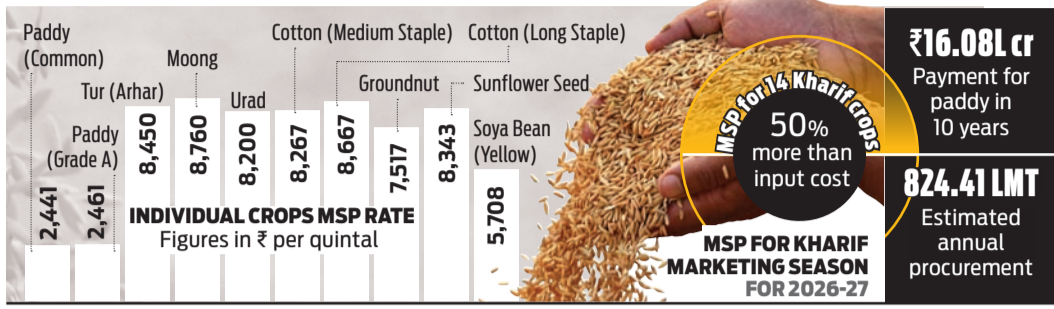
₹2.60L cr payout for '26-'27 season, semi-high-speed rail line in Gujarat okayed by cabinet

**MUKESH RANJAN** @ New Delhi

THE Union cabinet on Wednesday approved an increase in the minimum support prices (MSPs) for 14 kharif crops for the marketing season 2026-27. The decision is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices at more than 50% over and above the input cost for farmers. The total payout for this season will be ₹2.60 lakh crore.

The cabinet also approved a greenfield Ahmedabad-Dholera Semi High-Speed Double Line railway project with an estimated cost of ₹20,667 crore and upgradation of existing civil aviation facility in Nagpur under public-private partnership as an international airport.

While approving the increase in MSP, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by PM Modi, approved the agriculture ministry's proposal recommending the highest absolute increase in the MSP over the previous year for sunflower seed at ₹622 per quintal, followed by cotton (₹557 per quintal), niger-seed (₹515 per quintal), and sesamum (₹500 per quintal). The MSP announcement is in line with the announcement made in the Union Budget 2018-19 on fixing the MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production. According to data, paddy pro-



urement during 2014-15 to 2025-26 stood at 8,418 lakh metric tonnes, compared with 4,590 lakh metric tonnes during 2004-05 to 2013-14. The procurement of 14 kharif crops during 2014-15 to 2025-26 stood at 8,746 lakh metric tonnes, compared with 4,679 lakh metric tonnes during 2004-05 to 2013-14.

The government said MSP payments to paddy farmers during 2014-15 to 2025-26 amounted to ₹16.08 lakh crore, compared with ₹4.44 lakh crore during 2004-05 to 2013-14. For all

14 kharif crops, MSP payments to farmers during 2014-15 to 2025-26 stood at ₹18.99 lakh crore, compared with ₹4.75 lakh crore during 2004-05 to 2013-14.

Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, while commenting on the importance of the Ahmedabad railway line, said that it would provide faster connectivity between Ahmedabad, Dholera Special Investment Region, the upcoming Dholera airport, and the Lothal National Maritime Heritage Complex in Gujarat.

Connecting Ahmedabad with Dholera will cut down passenger travel time, enabling comfortable daily commuting and same-day return trips, the minister said. The project is planned on the PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan, with a focus on enhancing multi-modal connectivity and logistic efficiency through integrated planning and stakeholder consultations.

In another decision, the cabinet approved the extension of lease period of the Airports Authority of India land leased to MIHAN India Limited beyond August 6, 2039, to enable MIL to licence Nagpur Airport to the GMR Nagpur International Airport Ltd for 30 years from the start of the date of the start of commercial operations.

This marks a milestone for Nagpur airport in becoming a regional aviation hub under the Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN) project.

# Russia will fulfill energy supply, Indian interest won't suffer, says Lavrov

**JAYANTH JACOB** @ New Delhi

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held detailed talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in New Delhi on the eve of the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting, reaffirming the continuity of the India-Russia "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership" amid shifting global alignments. "Had a productive exchange of views with FM Sergey Lavrov of Russia here in Delhi," Jaishankar said after the meeting. "Our conversation touched upon several aspects of the Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership, including trade & investment, energy & connectivity, science & technology, as well as facilitating mobility of skills & talent. Other global and multilateral issues of mutual interest were also discussed."

The meeting comes at a time when BRICS nations are preparing for deliberations on global governance, energy security, and regional conflicts, with consensus continue to elude the grouping on the issue of West Asia war. The two leaders also discussed cooperation within the UN, BRICS and G20, along with transport, logistics, financial systems resilient to

external pressure, and cooperation in space and science.

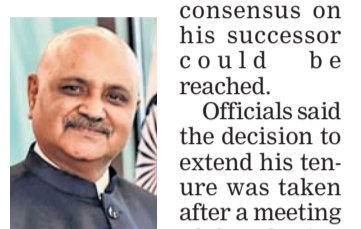
Ahead of his visit, Lavrov reinforced Moscow's commitment to its energy and economic ties with New Delhi, asserting that external pressures would not affect bilateral commitments. "I can guarantee that India's interests as they apply to Russian supplies will not suffer. We will do everything to ensure that this unfair and dishonest competition does not damage our agreements," he said in an interview to Russia Today-India. He underlined that Russia has consistently met its obligations to India, particularly in the energy sector. "We continue supplying hydrocarbons such as gas, oil, and coal," Lavrov said, and added that cooperation on nuclear energy remains central to the relationship. Highlighting the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in Tamil Nadu, built with Russian assistance, he said it remains a flagship project of bilateral cooperation.

Lavrov also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, describing him as "one of the most energetic leaders the world has ever known," and said India's pursuit of strategic autonomy aligns with deeper Russia-India ties.

# Sood gets 1-yr extension as CBI director

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ New Delhi

FOR the first time after the Opposition's dissent, the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet withheld the appointment of a new CBI director and extended the tenure of the incumbent chief, Praveen Sood, by one year. This is the second extension for Sood, a 1986-batch Karnataka cadre IPS officer. In May last year, he was given a one-year extension after no



consensus on his successor could be reached. Officials said the decision to extend his tenure was taken after a meeting of the selection committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by the Chief Justice of India and Leader of Opposition on Tuesday night.

"I have written to the PM recording my dissent from the CBI director selection process. I cannot abdicate my constitutional duty by participating in a biased exercise. The Leader of Opposition is not a rubber stamp," Gandhi said in a post on X after attending a meeting of the high-powered committee. He accused the government of "institutional capture" of the probe agency to target political opponents and journalists.

# ATF prices, airspace curbs prompt AI to halt multiple international flights

**ARSHAD KHAN** @ New Delhi

AIR India has decided to suspend several international routes, including Delhi-Chicago, Mumbai-New York, Delhi-Shanghai, and Chennai-Singapore, to cut costs amid uncertain jet fuel prices and airspace closures. The airline said on Wednesday that the curbs are likely to stay in place between June and August.

An airline statement said, "The adjustments have been made in response to a combination of factors, including continued airspace restrictions over certain regions and record-high jet fuel prices for international operations, which impact the commercial viability of certain planned services."

In North America, the airline, apart from suspending the Delhi-Chicago route, has reduced the frequency on the Delhi-San Francisco route from 10x weekly to 7x weekly through August. The Delhi-Toronto sector has been reduced from 10x weekly flight to 5x weekly through July, which will increase to daily operation from August. The Delhi-Vancouver



## Reduced frequency

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sector will see a reduction from 7x weekly to 5x weekly. There are similar reductions on European and Southeast Asian routes as well.

The airline said it will operate more than 1,200 international flights every month, including 33 flights per week to North America, 47 flights per week to Europe, 57 flights per week to the UK, eight flights per week to Australia, 158 flights per week to the Far East,

Southeast Asia and SAARC regions, and seven flights per week to Mauritius.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices have more than doubled since the war broke out in West Asia on February 28. The government in April limited the hike to ₹15 per litre for domestic operations. However, for international operations, ATF prices have risen twice in two months. ATF prices generally account for about 30% to 40% of an airline's operating cost. Following the last hike in April, this has increased up to 60%, according to the Federation of Indian Airlines.

Earlier this month, Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson had cited similar factors as the reasons for its international flights becoming unviable. He had stated that the situation left the airline with no option but to trim international schedules for June and July.

Observers expect Air India to post losses exceeding ₹22,000 crore for FY26 due to these challenges. If the numbers turn out to be true, it will be the highest loss posted by Air India for any financial year.

# Ministers, depts take to austerity steps

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ New Delhi

IN line with PM Narendra Modi's push for austerity in government functioning amid the crisis in West Asia, Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday reduced the size of his convoy by over 50%. Besides Shah, others, including JP Nadda, Jitendra Singh, also the suit.

The reduction in Shah's convoy, however, maintained the essential vehicles mandated under the Central Reserve Police Force's (CRPF) 'Z+' security, but still a significant reduction from the earlier fleet of nearly a dozen vehicles has been done, officials said.

Citing security considerations, the officials said though detailed information about the home minister's protection set-up cannot be disclosed, the reduction in his convoy is among the first visible signs of implementing the PM's austerity directive, indicating a shift in governance optics and priorities at the highest levels.

Officials, however, clarified that the downsizing of Shah's convoy has not led to any dilution of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The move comes shortly af-



PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. (R) Shah's curtailed convoy in view of PM Modi's appeal for austerity | FILE/PTI



ter the PM urged ministers and officials to adopt a more restrained and cost-effective approach in official protocols, emphasising the need to set an example of simplicity and efficiency in public life.

The PM, himself, has directed the SPG to make a 50% reduction in the number of vehicles in his convoy to promote austerity and curb fuel use amid prevailing global conditions. He directed the SPG to induct more electric vehicles into his motorcade without making any new purchases.

The officials indicated that more ministers may follow the suit in the coming days.

Jitendra Singh, the Union Minister (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and PMO, also travelled alone in his car from his residence to

his office, drastically cutting down the size of his protocol-based convoy. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda responded to the Prime Minister's appeal for austerity by nearly halving the size of his convoy until the emerging fuel crisis linked to the West Asia situation improves.

Almost all the ministers in the Modi government, including those from both the BJP and its allies, have begun reducing the size of their convoys to nearly half of their existing strength, while adhering to established security protocols.

A senior central government official stated that nearly 40 crore vehicles are currently on Indian roads and if even 40 percent of vehicle owners adopt the Prime Minister's austerity appeal, substantial fuel savings

could be achieved through more judicious vehicle use.

Apart from Union ministers, chief ministers of BJP-ruled states have also started trimming the size of their convoys. The practice is gradually gaining momentum across government departments and NDA-ruled states. In Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and several other BJP- or NDA-ruled states, steps have also been initiated to reduce the number of vehicles in ministers' convoys.

Almost all BJP-ruled states have instructed government departments to conduct meetings through video conferencing, while offices have been advised to encourage work-from-home arrangements.

# 'Hinduism way of life, temple visit not a must'

**SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY** @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday observed that Hinduism is a way of life and that it is not necessary for a Hindu to mandatorily go to a temple or perform a ritual in order to remain a Hindu. Even lighting a lamp inside the house is enough to prove one's belief.

During a hearing in the Sabarimala reference case, advocate Dr G Mohan Gopal, appearing for one of the intervenors in the case, said that there has been a demand for social justice emerging from within religious communities.

"Hinduism was defined as a religious category. Thereafter, in 1966, it was held that a Hindu is one who accepts the Vedas as the highest authority in all matters of religion and philosophy. They never asked me. None of us ever said that. I have the highest respect for the Vedas and great admiration for them. But is it a fact that every person today classified as Hindu accepts the Vedas as the highest authority in all spiritual and philosophical matters?" he submitted to the apex court.

Hearing his submissions, Justice B V Nagarathna, the lone

## ALSO IN TOP COURT

### SC laments lack of lane driving on roads

The Supreme Court on Wednesday lamented that India virtually has "no concept of lane driving", a major contributor to road accidents, while issuing directions to strengthen road-safety enforcement across the country. The court ordered all states and UTs to ensure that VLTs and panic buttons are installed.

lady judge on the bench, said, "That is why Hinduism is called a way of life. It is not necessary for a Hindu to mandatorily visit a temple or perform a ritual in order to remain a Hindu. One need not be ritualistic, and nobody can come in the way of people having their faith."

Echoing similar voices, the CJI said even if an individual lights a lamp inside his hut, it's enough to prove his religion.

The nine-judge Constitution bench, headed by CJI Surya

### SC quashes criminal case against hospital

The Supreme Court quashed a criminal complaint against a Kolkata-based hospital and its chairman, saying that billing discrepancies and service-related grievances are primarily civil in nature. A bench comprising Justice Pamidighantam Sri Narasimha and Justice Alok Aradhe set aside a 2023 order of the Calcutta HC.

Kant, passed these strong observations while hearing a batch of petitions related to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala temple, and on the ambit of religious freedom practised by multiple faiths, including Dawoodi Bohras.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta made his submissions before the bench and argued against the court's intervention into matters of religion.

# Plea on murders of BJP workers to be heard: SC

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** @ New Delhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday said it would hear plea concerning the alleged murder of three BJP workers in West Bengal after the 2018 local bodies elections, in July.

"What remains in this matter now?" a bench of Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and Vijay Bishnoi asked senior advocate Gaurav Bhatia, who had filed the plea in 2018 and was also appearing for the brother of one of the deceased. Bhatia referred to the change in circumstances in the state.

During the hearing on Wednesday, Bhatia requested the court to list the plea in July to enable him to seek further instructions. "You should take a proactive step in ensuring that things move in the right direction," the bench observed. Earlier, on February 17, the court had asked the petitioner why the Calcutta High Court had not been approached.

# 'Shiva Nataraja' among Chola period bronze sculptures repatriated from US

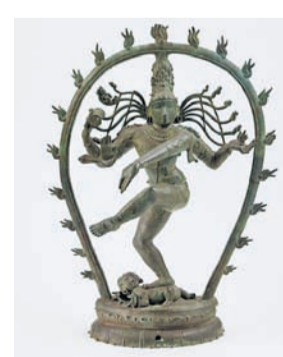
**PARVEZ SULTAN** @ New Delhi

THE government's archival records and historical documentation in other institutions have helped the culture ministry to successfully reclaim three momentous antiquities, including a Chola period bronze sculpture, "Shiva Nataraja", which were illegally taken away from temples in Tamil Nadu decades ago.

The objects were part of the collection at Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art in the US. The other two articles also bronze casting—"Saint Sundarar with Paravai" (16th century of Vijayanagara period) and "Somaskanda-Shiva and Uma" (12th century of the Chola period)—reached New Delhi on Tuesday night.

But the Shiva Nataraja will return in 2028 as they are displayed in an ongoing exhibition at the US museum. The government had agreed to leave the sculpture there till 2028 as a long-term loan.

While announcing the repatriation of the idols, culture minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Wednesday said the Archaeological Survey of India



## 2 artefacts now in India

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(ASI) had traced three valuable artefacts, and after thorough provenance research using archival records, field documentation and photographs of the temple taken in the 1950s-60s, it was established that they were taken out of the country in an unauthorised manner. The retrieved idols will be placed in the Gallery of Retrieved Antiquities at the Red Fort.

Following the research based on the photos of Tamil Nadu temples archived at the French Institute of Pondicherry, it was confirmed that the sculptures were with the temples. The photos were taken between 1956 and 1959. The ASI subsequently reviewed the findings and af-

firmed the sculptures had been removed in violation of laws.

"With the findings supported by structured negotiations initiated by the ASI with the ministry of culture, the sustained evidence-driven engagement led to acceptance of the provenance claims and paved the way for repatriation of the artefacts," said Shekhawat. The "Shiva Nataraja" belonged to the Sri Bhava Aushadesvara Temple in Thiruthuraiipoondi Taluk (Thanjavur), Tamil Nadu, where it was photographed in 1957.

Shekhawat said that the funds to bring objects from the US back had been approved.

A 26-year-old student from Kerala, doing PhD in Goa Campus of BITS Pilani allegedly died by suicide at his rented flat located behind the institute, police said on Wednesday

2 HELD FOR FIRING IN DOCKYARD RD AREA IN MUMBAI

| INDIA     | Max | Min | Mumbai     | Max | Min |
|-----------|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|
| Ahmedabad | 44  | 29  | Mumbai     | 34  | 27  |
| Bhopal    | 41  | 27  | Panaji     | 33  | 26  |
| Jaipur    | 43  | 29  | Patna      | 41  | 29  |
| Amritsar  | 40  | 24  | Lucknow    | 44  | 27  |
| Chennai   | 38  | 29  | Port Blair | 32  | 27  |
| Kolkata   | 36  | 28  | Imphal     | 28  | 18  |
| Srinagar  | 24  | 11  | Chandigarh | 41  | 27  |

Accused allegedly shared paper with his NEET aspirant son in Sikar • Coaching institutes used leaked sample as mock tests multiple times

# BJP, Cong spar after arrest of BJP 'worker' in Raj

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

A BJP 'worker' of Rajasthan, Dinesh Binwal, has been arrested in connection with the paper leak scam that has hit the country's biggest medical entrance examination, NEET-UG. The arrest has sparked a major political storm on social media, and the platforms have been flooded with photographs showing Binwal, one of the prime accused, with several senior BJP leaders. However, Rajasthan BJP vice-president Mukesh Dadhich said that Binwal holds no post in the party and that he has no confirmation of his arrest.



**Dinesh Binwal bought paper for ₹30L**

Investigators claim that Binwal and his brother Mangilal, residents of Jamwa Ramgarh in Jaipur district, purchased the paper for nearly ₹30 lakh between April 26 and 27. Dinesh allegedly provided the paper to his son, who was preparing for NEET in Sikar, before distributing it. Both brothers had reportedly travelled to Sikar for the operation. Notably, four children from Dinesh Binwal's family reportedly qualified for the NEET last year.

has further indicated that the racket may have been deeply entrenched in the coaching hub, where institute administrators, students and middlemen allegedly operated WhatsApp groups and channels to circulate leaked material.

The investigation also brought another accused, Rakesh Mandavriya, under the lens. Rakesh allegedly operated a consultancy office opposite a coaching institute in Sikar. Investigators believe he had received the paper several days before the exam. The SOG later detained Rakesh and his associates from Dehradun. Officials suspect that he had procured the paper through Binwal.

Rakesh circulated the paper not only among students but also among PG operators and coaching faculty members, investigators say, adding that the agencies are struggling to determine the exact number of beneficiaries involved.

According to the Special Operations Group, Dinesh allegedly sold the leaked paper to several individuals in Sikar, including hostel operators and consultancy firms. The probe

The CBI has now formally taken over the case. On Tuesday night, a CBI team reached SOG headquarters in Jaipur to collect details. So far, the SOG has arrested 15 people, while the opposition claims that more than 45 individuals have been detained or questioned.

The opposition Congress has gone on the offensive against the government. Former CM Ashok Gehlot has questioned whether the government tried to suppress the matter as the accused was linked to the BJP. The Congress staged protests on Wednesday.

In a post on X, Gehlot alleged that the government deliberately avoided filing an FIR despite repeated questions being raised since May 11. "Dinesh Binwal, arrested in the NEET paper leak case, is a BJP office-bearer. Is this the reason why the BJP government tried to conceal the matter and did not register an FIR?" Gehlot wrote.

**NEET-UG PAPER LEAK**

## After Nashik, Latur link in scam; 1 nabbed, coaching centres under Maha lens

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

PUNE police on Wednesday arrested a beauty parlour owner, Manish Waghmare, who is alleged to have helped students get the NEET-UG exam papers ahead of the final exam. This is the second arrest in Maharashtra after the one in Nashik. Waghmare has links with the conspirators in the NEET paper leak case.

The police also exposed the Latur connection with the exam leak case. Private coaching institutes in the town circulated the same questions in mock tests that appeared in the actual exam paper on May 3.

According to the Latur police, one of the student's parents complained on May 12 that 42 questions that figured in a mock test at the private coaching in Latur also appeared in the exam. The parents suspected the coincidence might be linked to the paper leak and demanded a probe. Latur is a den of private coaching classes, especially for the NEET entrance exam.



## Plea moved in SC over NTA's 'systemic failure'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

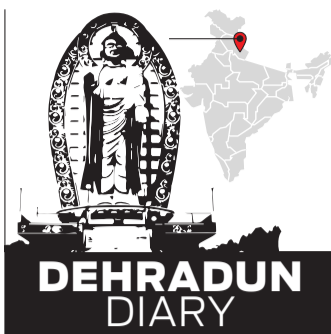
THE Federation of All India Medical Association (FAIMA) has moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday alleging "systemic failure" in the conduct of the NEET-UG 2026 examination and sought reforms in the system following the cancellation of the exam.

The plea was filed on Wednesday and the matter is likely to come up for hearing in a day or two, considering the sensitivity and importance of the matter.

The plea sought a complete overhaul of the national testing framework, including the replacement of the NTA with a more robust, "technologically advanced and autonomous body" to restore the integrity of medical entrance exams.

The plea further sought "dissolution of NTA" and formation of a "court-appointed committee" for the conduct of NEET-UG exam. "The association has requested a high-powered committee to be formed to ensure transparency in the entire process," it said.

The petition also includes a request for the timely conduct of re-examination.



**DEHRADUN DIARY**  
NARENDRA SETHI  
Our correspondent in Uttarakhand  
narendrasethi@newindianexpress.com

## Namami Gange boost ahead of Kumbh '27

Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Patil has assured CM Pushkar Singh Dhama of full central support under the Namami Gange mission to ensure the Ganges remains pristine for the 2027 Kumbh Mela. Responding to Dhama's request for ₹408.82 crore in funding, Patil confirmed that proposals for solid and liquid waste management, ghat cleaning, and public health initiatives are currently undergoing third-party evaluation by the National Institute of Urban Affairs. Further action will proceed upon receipt of the evaluation report, reinforcing the Ministry's dedication to a seamless, environmentally conscious 2027 spectacle.



## Lokayukta appointment delay creates tension

An HC bench, led by Chief Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta, has hauled up the government over the recurring, unexplained delays in appointing a lokayukta. "What was meant to be a simple administrative appointment has spiralled into a saga of missed deadlines and elusive search committee meetings," it observed. The court, visibly unimpressed by the government's pleas for more time, has now demanded an explanation within 24 hours. Failure to comply will see the relevant secretary summoned personally. With the PIL originally filed in 2021 still awaiting fruition, the judiciary's stern ultimatum signals that the era of seeking extensions is effectively over.

## Jewellers to protest import duty hike

Jewellers across the state have announced statewide peaceful protests to voice their opposition to the recent hike in gold import duties and the PM's appeal to citizens to abstain from purchasing the precious metal. Traders in Dehradun and other key cities will hold candlelight vigils on Thursday evening to register their dissent. The jewellery community argues that the government's policy shift and the PM's public appeal are destabilising the market. Jewellers contend that discouraging gold purchases directly threaten the livelihoods of small shopkeepers and artisans. They emphasise that gold is deeply woven into Indian culture and rituals.

## Motorcycle club founder sent to jail in California

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

TWENTY-seven-year-old Jashanpreet Singh, the Punjab-origin founder of the Stockton-based Punjabi Devils Motorcycle Club (an outlaw motorcycle club), has been sentenced to five years and four months in prison for illegally dealing in firearms and possessing a machine gun by a federal court in California of the US.

According to the US Department of Justice, Singh pleaded guilty earlier this year to unlawfully dealing in firearms and unlawfully possessing a machine gun.

Singh was sentenced by US District Judge Dale A Drozd in Sacramento on May 12. Last year, Singh had attempted to flee to India after the offences came to light but was arrested at San Francisco International Airport before boarding his flight. Initially he faced charges in San Joaquin County and failed to appear in court on July 21 triggering a bench warrant.

US Attorney Eric Grant announced the sentence, saying Singh had been convicted of unlawful firearms dealing and unlawful possession of a machine gun. Federal prosecutors stated that Singh tried to sell a large cache of weapons to an undercover officer on June 6 last year.

## Akhilesh stepbrother dies from massive blood clot in lungs: Autopsy report

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

PRATEEK Yadav, the stepbrother of Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and spouse of BJP leader Aparna Yadav, died early Wednesday in Lucknow. He was 38.

According to Syama Prasad Mookerjee Hospital (Civil Hospital) director Dr GP Gupta, a team of doctors was sent to Prateek Yadav's residence on getting the information about his deteriorating health condition at 5 am on Wednesday. He was brought to the hospital and was declared dead at 5.55 am.

However, wife Aparna was not in Lucknow when Prateek breathed his last. His last rites will be held on Thursday at 12.30 pm in Lucknow.

As per sources, Prateek was found unconscious in the kitchen early in the morning, following which the doctors at Civil Hospital were called in.

The body was taken to King George's Medical University for autopsy, the report of which revealed sudden cardiac arrest as the reason for his death.

The report also flagged massive pulmonary thromboembolism, a medical condition under which the arteries of the lungs get blocked due to a blood clot moved from the lower portion



of the body to the lungs through the bloodstream. The report also mentioned that all injuries found on the body were "antemortem", some having occurred 4-5 days before the demise and some a day before it.

CM Yogi Adityanath, BJP state chief Pankaj Chaudhury, UP Finance Minister Suresh Khanna and other senior BJP leaders visited Aparna Yadav's residence to pay tribute to the departed soul.

Reacting to the untimely demise of his stepbrother, former UP CM and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav hinted at possible financial losses and business-related stress that might have led Prateek into depression and other health issues. "It is an extremely sad moment that Prateek is no longer among us. A very good person, he wanted to achieve something through his own hard work," he said.

## Frame charges against babus, no state nod needed: Suvendu

SUBHENDU MAITI @ Kolkata

FROM now on, central investigating agencies will no longer require state government clearance to frame charge sheets against officials allegedly involved in scams, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari announced on Wednesday.

Adhikari said the government had cleared the way for the CBI to begin the judicial process against officials accused of corruption in recruitment irregularities in schools, municipal services, and cooperative departments. He said the government has zero tolerance for corruption. He alleged that the previous Trinamool government delayed approval for the CBI in four corruption cases involving senior officials across three departments for nearly 4 years.

"The previous government withheld approvals to save corrupt officials," he told reporters. "Today, we gave clearance to CBI to take steps against these officials. The CBI may have already received the approval letter," he said.

Under law, an investigating agency requires sanction from the state to file charge sheets, prosecutions, or initiate action against officials accused of corruption," Adhikari said. He claimed the Trinamool Congress government withheld permissions to shield corrupt bureaucrats and officials.

Meanwhile, the CM held a review meeting with senior officials, and 10 MLAs including Swapan Dasgupta, Roopa Ganguly, Rudranil Ghosh, Indranil Khan, Dr Saradwat Mukherjee, Hiran Chatterjee, Piyush Kanti Das, Arup Das, Harekrishna Bera, Ajay Poddar and Sumoy Heera were present, intensifying speculations.

## Assam to table draft UCC bill on May 26

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @ Guwahati

THE Assam cabinet on Wednesday approved the draft Uniform Civil Code (UCC) Bill. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the UCC Bill would be tabled in the state Assembly on May 26. He said the Bill would deal with matters such as property succession, marriage, live-in relationships, and the compulsory registration of marriage and divorce.

"We have completely exempted tribals, as well as religious rituals, customs, practices and traditions from the purview of UCC," Sarma said. "Our decision on UCC is in sync with our last election commitment," he added.

One of the BJP's biggest election promises was to give two lakh government jobs in the next five years. Sarma said, adding that the cabinet decided that a task force, headed by the chief secretary, would be formed to look into it. The task force will submit its report to the government in three months.

The cabinet also approved the construction of the Bhupen Hazarika museum at the Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati at a cost of ₹32 crore. The North Eastern Council will contribute ₹13 crore, while the state government will allocate ₹19 crore, Sarma said.

The cabinet also approved the appointment of Devajit Saikia as the Advocate General for a second term of five years.

# Gujarat's textile industry hit by West Asia crisis No govt benefits to SIR-deleted electors trigger Bihar blame game

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

GUJARAT'S textile industry is battling a severe financial crisis caused by the West Asia conflict, soaring crude oil prices, rising yarn costs, and emerging global trade dynamics. According to industry estimates, the sector has lost between nearly ₹2,500 crore and ₹3,000 crore in the last 60 days. The situation has forced many weaving units to operate at only half their capacity.



**'Double blow to the industry due to war, US tariff'**

"On one side, the war has increased raw material costs, and on the other side, the 18% tax imposed by US is hurting exports. At the same time, China is supplying yarn and textile products in global markets at cheaper prices than India," said Jitu Vakharia, president of trade body.

losses worth crores of rupees every day," he added.

Since the artificial fabric industry is heavily dependent on petroleum-based raw materials, the sharp rise in crude oil prices triggered by the ongoing war has sent yarn prices soaring. This has led to an increase in the production cost.

South Gujarat, especially Surat, produces crores of meters of fabric daily, making it one of

the largest textile production hubs in the country. Yet, the industry is bleeding financially. Jirawala stated that the impact in daily turnover has reached nearly ₹50 crore to ₹60 crore.

The crisis is no longer confined to factory floors. Its ripple effects are now reaching banks. Industrialists struggling with shrinking margins are finding it increasingly difficult to manage bank interests and install-

ment repayments. Several weaving units in Surat have already cut operations drastically. Many factories that once ran day and night are now functioning at barely 50% capacity because owners have chosen to reduce operational losses.

But reducing production has created the fear of the loss of skilled labour in the industry. Many business owners feel that if factories stop work completely, thousands of skilled migrant workers may return to their hometowns. Once that skilled workforce disperses, rebuilding production capacity could become a challenge.

The situation has become complicated due to changing dynamics of global market conditions. Jitu Vakharia, president of the South Gujarat Textile Processors Association, described the situation as a "double blow". "On one side, the war has increased raw material costs, and on the other side, the 18% tax imposed by the US is hurting exports," he said.

RAMASHANKAR @ Patna

A political slugfest has erupted in Bihar over denial of government benefits, including cancellation of ration cards of those whose names had been deleted from the electoral roll ahead of state assembly elections held in November last year.

Media reports have quoted Bihar chief minister Samrat Choudhary as saying that people whose names had been deleted from the Bihar electoral roll would not be entitled to any government benefits, including rations and other schemes.

Reacting sharply to it, senior RJD leader and party spokesperson Chitrangan Gagan said, "Our leader (Tejashwi Yadav) has been talking about denial of government benefits to SIR-deleted voters from the very beginning, and it is now coming true." He alleged that the state government wanted to deny



**5L names already deleted**

Bihar food and consumer protection minister Ashok Choudhary said that names of about five lakh people had been deleted from among ration-card holders after the completion of SIR process in the state.

State CPI (ML) secretary Kunal strongly condemned reports regarding preparations to remove the names of PDS beneficiaries from their ration cards. He termed the move as "anti-poor, unjust, and contrary to the spirit of the Constitution".

He stated that for any poor family, a ration card served as the most critical link between life and hunger. In this context, using SIR as a pretext to carry out large-scale deletions of names was a step that pushed lakhs of needy families toward hunger and insecurity.

bank passbooks of those deleted in the SIR would also be cancelled in due course.

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**SOUTHERN RAILWAY**  
Construction Organization, Ennakulam Jn.  
Tender Notice No. 09-CE-CN-ERS-2026-OT Dated : 08.05.2026

**Name of work : Conducting Final Location Survey (FLS)/Detailed field survey for the following :**

- Final location survey for 3rd line between TVC-NCJ & Other New Line / Doubling / future projects including soil investigations
- Detailed field survey & preparation of drawing & documents including soil investigation for AFK-Sabari New Line
- Detailed field survey & preparation of drawing & documents including soil investigation for AMPA-TUVR doubling section under the jurisdiction of CAO/CN/ERS.

**Tender Value : Rs. 3088.36 Lakhs**  
**Bid Security : Rs. 61,76,700/-**  
**Completion Period : 24 Months**  
**Date and time of tender closing : 09.06.2026, 15.00 hrs.**

Complete details and tender document will be available at <https://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Chief Engineer / Construction, Ennakulam Jn.

**SBI State Bank of India**  
No.44, 1st Floor, Edilams Road, Tenampet, Chennai - 600018.  
Stressed Assets Recovery Branch (For Immovable Property)

**(RULE - 8 (1) POSSESSION NOTICE - For Immovable property)**

Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the State Bank of India, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 14.11.2025 calling upon the Borrower Mr.Vasanthakumar K S/o Mr. Krishnan RK Devar Chikkar Centre No.18, Kodambakkam Road Metupalayam, West Mambalam Chennai-600033 Property Address:(Borrower) Mr. Vasanthakumar K S/o Mr. Krishnan Flat No.12, First Floor, Plot No. A160, Door No.1, V.M. Balakrishna Street Sathiyamurthy Block, Jafferkhanpet Chennai-600083 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.62,16,646/- (Rupees Sixty Two Lakhs Sixteen Thousand Six Hundred and Forty Six only) as on 13.11.2025 with further interest at contractual rate from 14/11/2025 and incidental expenses, cost, charges, etc., within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 11th day of May of the year 2026.

The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the State Bank of India for an amount of Rs.63,86,777/- (Rupees Sixty Three Lakhs Eighty Six thousand Seven Hundred Seventy Seven only) as on 11.05.2026 and further interest, costs, etc., thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section 13of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

**DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

Property belongs to Mr. Vasanthakumar K S/o Mr. Krishnan Schedule of the Property Schedule-A All that Piece and Parcel of vacant land, bearing Plot No.A-160, Door No.1, V.M. Balakrishna Street, Sathiyamurthy Block, Jafferkhanpet, Chennai-600083, comprised in Old survey No.360/1, Block No.127, T.S.No.1, of Kodambakkam Village, Mambalam Taluk, Chennai District, measuring, East to West on the Northern Side : 58 Feet East to West on the Southern Side : 59 Feet North to South on the Eastern Side : 35.6 Feet North to South on the Western Side : 35.6 Feet In all measuring an extent of 2077 Sq.Ft., and being bounded on the North by : Plot No.A-159, T.S.No.4, South by : Plot No.A-161, T.S.No.6, East by : Private Land, T.S.No.2, West by : 30 Feet wide V.M. Balakrishna Street, Block No.126 And lying within the Registration District Central Chennai and Sub-Registration District of Ashok Nagar. SCHEDULE B Flat No.12, in First Floor, measuring 91 Square Feet Super Plinth Area (inclusive of common areas and common spaces) with 508 Square Feet of UDS and One Car Parking.

Our all previous possession notice herewith stands withdrawn.

Date: 11.05.2026 Authorized Officer, State Bank of India

Place: Chennai



130 counts of rape and child sexual abuse filed against a paediatrician in Germany

GLOBAL WEATHER

|          |    |    |     |             |    |    |     |
|----------|----|----|-----|-------------|----|----|-----|
| Beijing  | 21 | 1  | SNY | Los Angeles | 20 | 12 | SNY |
| Colombo  | 28 | 24 | SNY | Melbourne   | 26 | 15 | LC  |
| Dhaka    | 31 | 19 | SNY | Moscow      | 4  | 2  | SNY |
| Dubai    | 26 | 21 | SNY | New York    | 7  | 2  | SNY |
| Houston  | 31 | 19 | TDS | Singapore   | 28 | 25 | TDS |
| Istanbul | 33 | 21 | SNY | Toronto     | 1  | -5 | SNY |
| London   | 13 | 9  | SNY | Washington  | 3  | -2 | SNY |

LR: Light Rain • HR: Heavy Rain • LS: Light Snow  
TDS: Thunderstorm • LC: Light Cloud • SNY: Sunny

# Russian ship that sank in '24 may have carried submarine nuclear reactor parts

**BARCELONA**  
A Russian ship that sank in the Mediterranean over a year ago after its engine room exploded may have been carrying pieces for nuclear reactors used in submarines, a Spanish government document shows.  
The Ursa Major sank on December 23, 2024, between Spain

and Algeria while allegedly on a journey from St Petersburg to Russia's eastern port of Vladivostok. Two crew members were lost while 14 other people were saved by Spanish rescue craft.  
In a written response to opposition lawmakers, the Spanish government wrote that the ship's captain "confessed" that the ship was carrying "components for

two nuclear reactors similar to those used in submarines." The response was included in a document registered by the Spanish parliament on February 23 and was first reported by CNN on Tuesday. The document has been seen by The Associated Press. At the time of the sinking, the Russian state-owned ship owner, Oboronlogistika, said that the Ursa Major was sabotaged. It said three powerful explosions damaged the boat just above the waterline in what the company described as a "terrorist attack."  
Oboronlogistika was established under Russia's defense ministry and placed under U.S. and European Union sanctions for its ties to Russia's military.



Ursa Major seen by Portuguese Air Force as the Russian vessel sailed through Portuguese waters in Dec 2024 | x

According to the document, the boat's manifest said the boat was carrying 129 containers, two large cranes and "two well covers." Officials said that when questioned upon rescue by the Harbor Master in Cartagena, Spain, the boat captain revealed that the well covers were nuclear components.  
He added that the boat was

not carrying nuclear fuel.  
Spanish authorities said the ship could not be searched during rescue efforts for the crew and two missing members. The wreck lies 2,500 metres underwater. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he had not seen reports on the ship's cargo and added there was "nothing for us to comment on". AP

# King Charles opens Parliament, Starmer set to face challenge

**LONDON**  
THE pomp of a speech by King Charles III to Britain's parliament on Wednesday failed to quell speculation that a senior government minister is poised to launch a leadership challenge against embattled Prime Minister Keir Starmer.



Britain's King Charles III reads out as he sits besides Queen Camilla during the State Opening of Parliament at the Palace of Westminster in London | AP

The monarch's address opening a new parliamentary session was overshadowed by reports that allies of Health Secretary Wes Streeting had said he was preparing to resign to trigger a contest to oust Starmer from office.  
The Labour party leader had seen off an immediate threat on Tuesday despite four junior ministers resigning and more than 80 MPs urging him to quit, when no one broke ranks to formally challenge him. But shortly before King Charles read out Starmer's forthcoming legislative plans from a golden throne in the upper House of Lords, UK media reported that 43-year-old Streeting was preparing to quit government on Thursday to run for the top job.  
The reports came after Streeting met Starmer at Downing Street early Wednesday for talks that lasted less than 20 minutes. A spokesman for Streeting did not respond to a request for comment from AFP. Open warfare has broken out in

the Labour party over Starmer's future following disastrous local election results last week.  
The ballot-box drubbing followed months of scandal regarding the appointment, and sacking, of ex-Jeffrey Epstein associate Peter Mandelson as envoy to the US.  
Some 110 Labour MPs have signed a statement saying now is not the time for a leadership contest — highlighting the deep divisions that Starmer's team hope can keep him in power.  
Other plans include fully nationalising British steel, reforming the asylum system, lowering the voting age to 16 and cracking down on ticket touts. But questions remain over whether Starmer will even be around to implement them. AFP

# Trump lands in Beijing, all eyes on high-stakes summit with Xi today

Bilateral tariff regime, West Asia crisis, AI chip curbs and arms trade to Taiwan on agenda

**BEIJING**  
US President Donald Trump landed in Beijing on Wednesday for a high-stakes summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping aimed at easing deep tensions between the rival superpowers.  
Giving a fist pump, Trump descended the steps of Air Force One after touching down at Beijing Capital International Airport, kicking off the first visit to China by a US president in nearly a decade. Right behind him were Tesla boss Elon Musk and Nvidia chief Jensen Huang — potent symbols of the business deals that Trump hopes to sign between the world's biggest economies.  
Trump was greeted with a bunch of flowers and then walked along the red carpet, which was lined with 300 Chinese youth in white uniforms chanting "welcome" and waving small Chinese and US flags in unison. While en route to Beijing, Trump said on social media he would "be asking



US President Donald Trump is greeted by Chinese Vice President Han Zheng and receives flowers upon arriving at Beijing Capital Airport | AFP

President Xi, a Leader of extraordinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic". Nvidia's Huang was a surprise late addition to the trip, joining the plane at a stopover in Alaska. China is currently banned under US national security rules from buying the cutting-edge AI chips that the company produces.  
But Iran, trade and Taiwan loom over the highly anticipated meeting, which Trump had already delayed from March because of the war the United States and Israel started in the West Asia. Visiting China for the first time since 2017 during his previous term, Trump is expected to receive a lavish welcome from Chinese authorities. Trump and Xi will hold talks

at 10 am (0200 GMT) on Thursday in Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People. The US president will also visit the historic Temple of Heaven, a world heritage site where China's emperors once prayed for good harvest.  
The leaders will then enjoy a state banquet in the evening.  
On Friday, they are set to have tea and a working lunch before Trump heads home.  
As he departed the White House, Trump said he expected a "long talk" with Xi about the joint US-Israeli war with Iran, which sells most of its US-sanctioned oil to China.  
But he also downplayed disagreements, telling reporters that "I don't think we need any help with Iran" from China and that Xi had been "relatively good" on the topic.  
The Chinese foreign ministry said Wednesday it "welcomes" Trump's visit and that "China stands ready to work with the United States... to expand cooperation and manage differences". AFP

# 1,700 confined on cruise after passenger dies

**BORDEAUX**

FRENCH authorities on Wednesday confined more than 1,700 passengers and crew on a British cruise ship after an elderly passenger died and dozens suffered upset stomachs, health officials said. They insisted there was no connection with the hantavirus outbreak, suspected of killing three passengers on the Dutch MV Hondius cruise ship that set sail from Argentina, which has sparked international alarm.  
Around 80 people suffered from "symptoms consistent with an acute digestive infection" aboard the Ambition — most of whose 1,233 passengers are from Britain or Ireland — which arrived in the western port of Bordeaux on Tuesday, with 514 crew members also on board. One 92-year-old British passenger on the Ambition, operated by the UK-based Ambassador Cruise Line company, had died of a heart attack, health authorities said.  
"At this stage, no link has been established with the gastroenteritis episode," they added on Wednesday. Port authorities said his body remained on board, "in accordance with international conventions". Initial tests ruled out an outbreak of norovirus, a highly contagious form of gastroenteritis which causes vomiting and diarrhoea, but secondary tests were still underway, they added. Food poisoning had not been excluded. AP

the Labour party over Starmer's future following disastrous local election results last week. The ballot-box drubbing followed months of scandal regarding the appointment, and sacking, of ex-Jeffrey Epstein associate Peter Mandelson as envoy to the US. Some 110 Labour MPs have signed a statement saying now is not the time for a leadership contest — highlighting the deep divisions that Starmer's team hope can keep him in power. Other plans include fully nationalising British steel, reforming the asylum system, lowering the voting age to 16 and cracking down on ticket touts. But questions remain over whether Starmer will even be around to implement them. AFP

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### ASIA MATTERS

**INDONESIA**

#### GOLD DEMAND JUMPS AMID UNCERTAINTY

Demand for gold bars and coins jumped 47 percent in the first quarter of 2026 from a year earlier, driven by investors seeking safe-haven assets amid economic uncertainty, the World Gold Council said. Gold rose 14 percent in local currency terms during the quarter, while domestic stocks fell 13 percent. The council said gold has historically protected purchasing power during financial crises and currency weakness. Globally, demand for bars and coins rose 42 percent to 474 tonnes, led by buying across markets and United States

**THAILAND**

#### INVESTIGATION ORDERED INTO NOMINEE FIRMS

Authorities have launched an investigation into suspected nominee company structures allegedly used by foreigners to control land and property businesses through Thai-registered firms. Officials inspected a luxury villa on Koh Phangan allegedly linked to an Israeli national as part of the probe. Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said authorities would examine shareholders and financial trails to see if foreign ownership laws were bypassed. Investigators are probing shell firms allegedly linked to one person through over 200 companies.

**MALAYSIA**

#### PARK SHUT AFTER LEPTOSPIROSIS SCARE

Authorities closed the Ulu Bendul recreational park after four suspected leptospirosis cases were detected among visitors in water activities. One patient was hospitalised while three received outpatient treatment. Health officials said the area was conducive to spreading the disease and ordered sanitation and water-quality checks.

### B'desh clears Padma barrage project to counter Farakka issue

**DHAKA**  
BANGLADESH on Wednesday approved a mega project to build a barrage on the Padma river, saying the structure is expected to help "negate the negative impact" of India's Farakka Barrage upstream. The development comes months before the 1996 Indo-Bangladesh Ganges Water Sharing Treaty is due to expire in December. Padma river is known as Ganges in India.  
The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), chaired by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, cleared the first phase of the Padma Barrage project at an estimated cost of Tk 34,497.25 crore, officials here said.  
One objective of the project is to store water in Bangladesh to "negate the negative impact of the Farakka Barrage" on the Ganges, Water Resources Minister Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anee said after the ECNEC meeting. He clarified that issues involving 54 India-Bangladesh shared rivers are unrelated to the project. PTI

**BEFORE THE DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - III, AT CHENNAI**  
Q.A. No. 916 of 2025

M/s. Axis Bank Ltd  
West Mambalam Branch,  
Door No.16/20, Brindavan Street Extn,  
West Mambalam, Chennai - 600 033.  
Represented by its Authorized Signatory ... Applicant

Versus

1. M/s. RGS Creations Pvt Ltd,  
Rep by its Directors,  
2. Govindasamy, S/o Jayaraman  
3. Ranjani W/o Govindasamy ... Defendants

To  
2nd Defendant Govindasamy, S/o. Jayaraman  
No.14/1B, G3, Nagathammal Plot,  
Rajaji Street, Gandhi Nagar, Saligramam,  
Chennai - 600 093.

3rd Defendant Ranjani, W/o. Govindasamy,  
7A, Alwar Apartment, Agathiyar Street,  
Gandhi Nagar, Dasarathapuram,  
Saligramam, Chennai - 600 093.

**SUMMONS TO 2nd and 3rd DEFENDANTS THROUGH SUBSTITUTED SERVICE**

Whereas the above-named applicant has filed the above referred application in this Tribunal for Recovery of a sum of Rs.1,42,59,488/- from the defendants.

Whereas the service of summons could not be effected in the ordinary manner and whereas substituted service has been ordered by this Tribunal, and hence this notice through paper publication.

You are therefore directed to appear before this Tribunal in person or through a duly instructed Advocate and file written statement on or before 18/05/2026 at 11.00 am and show cause as to why reliefs prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default, the application shall be heard and decided in your absence, in accordance to law.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this 17th day of April 2026.

Signature of Registrar  
Debts Recovery Tribunal III-Chennai

## CLASSIFIEDS

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Contact:  
yashwin.v@supergas.com

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
CHANGE OF NAME  
**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, REVATHI V, W/o. Vijay Viswanath G.K., Aged about 40 years, Residing at: No.70/16A, New Street, Thathangkuppam, Villivakkam, Chennai - 600049, Tamilnadu shall henceforth be known as **REVATHI H.**

**NAME CHANGE**  
My daughter, V. PREETHI, D/o. Thirumathi M.K.Deepa, born on 22nd August 2009 (Native District: Chennai), residing at Pearl Queens Park, Banyan G1, Ravi 1st Cross Street, Medavakkam, Chennai - 600100, shall henceforth be known as **PREETHI SHANKAR.**  
Deepa (Mother)

**NAME CHANGE**  
My son V. RAKSHEETH, D/o. Thirumathi M.K.Deepa, born on 5th August 2011 (Native District: Thiruvallur), residing at Pearl Queens Park, Banyan G1, Ravi 1st Cross Street, Medavakkam, Chennai - 600100, shall henceforth be known as **RAKSHEETH SHANKAR.**  
Deepa (Mother)

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, G GEETHA, daughter of Thiru Boopathy, born on 30th December 1984, (District of Birth: Chennai), residing at No. 30, 6th Street, New Kumaran Nagar, Sholinganallur Chennai-600 119, shall henceforth be known as **B SUJATHA**  
G Geetha  
Chennai, 24th February 2026

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
MY SON, K.K. KEERTHAN, born on 20th November 2012, (District of Birth: Chennai), residing at No. P-16/5, Taisha Phase-2, West Natesan Nagar, Virugambakkam, Chennai-600 092, shall henceforth be known as **KAIRAIV KANNAN**  
Kannan Palaniraj (Father)  
Chennai, 30th April 2026

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I, SRIDEVI T, daughter of Thiru Bhaskara Rao Challagulla, born on 10th November 1971, (District of Birth: Chennai), residing at Flat No. 8B, Jamals Luxor Apartments, No. 47, Poonamallee Road, Kattupakkam, Chennai-600 056, shall henceforth be known as **SRIDEVI CHALLAGULLA**  
Sridevi T  
Chennai, 30th April 2026.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
MY DAUGHTER, K. SHANVI, daughter of Thiru Kamalraj.M, born on 24th May 2014, (District of Birth: Chennai), residing at No. 33/20, SG Creek Front Apartment, 2nd Floor, 1st Steet, Aspiran Garden, Kilpauk, Chennai-600010, shall henceforth be known as **SHANVI KAMALRAJ**  
Seetha Muniyandi (Mother)  
Chennai, 16th April 2026.

**QuoteExpress**  
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BENJAMIN DISRAELI

# Iran sees economic gains from Hormuz control

**TEHRAN**  
IRAN's military spokesman said on Wednesday that Tehran's control over the Strait of Hormuz could generate "significant" economic revenue and strengthen the country's international position.  
Iran has largely blocked shipping through the strait since the outbreak of war with the United States and Israel on February 28. In peacetime, the route accounts for roughly a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments, along with other key commodities.  
Iran's grip over the waterway has rattled global markets and given Tehran significant leverage, while the United States has imposed its own naval blockade

on Iranian ports despite a fragile ceasefire in place since April 8.  
"Our oversight of the Strait of Hormuz will generate significant economic revenues for our country — potentially even doubling our oil income — and will strengthen our influence on the international stage," military spokesman Mohammad Akraminia said, according to ISNA news agency. He added that the western part of the strait was controlled by the naval forces of the Revolutionary Guards, while the eastern section was overseen by the Iranian navy.  
Iran's control over the strait remains one of the key sticking points in negotiations with the United States, which have so far failed to produce a breakthrough. AFP



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**TAMIL NADU CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION**  
HEAD OFFICE, CHENNAI - 600 107.  
**NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER**  
e-Tender Notice No.02/CE/4050/2026 dt.12.05.2026  
e-tenders are invited for the following work from the Registered contractors upto 2.00 P.M on 02.06.2026 and will be opened on 02.06.2026 at 2.30 P.M.

| Sl. No. | Name of work  | E.M.D in Rs. |
|---------|---|--------------|
| 1.      | Formation of Cement Concrete Road around godown campus and Providing chain link fencing at Balance portion at south and east side in the work of Construction of Scientific Storage Godown of 2000M.T capacity in TNCS campus at Survey No.48/17 to an extent of 1.62,00 Hectare at Uthirakudikaval Village in Senthambangalam Taluk in Namakkal District | 80,560.00    |

Schedule Downloading from website by : From 15.05.2026 to 02.06.2026 upto 2.00 P.M  
Free of Cost  
Last Date for receipt of online tender : 02.06.2026 upto 2.00 P.M  
Date of Opening of Online tender : 02.06.2026 at 2.30 P.M  
For further details please visit website:- www.tntenders.gov.in  
DIPR/1889/TENDER/2026  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**UT of Jammu & Kashmir**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, Trans. Line Maintt. Division-VII, JKPTCL, Bemina, Srinagar-190010  
Ph.No. 0194-3516481 e-mail: tlmd-vii.sgr@jk.gov.in

**TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE**

Due to Technical reasons the e-NIT No. TLMD-7/15 of 2025-26 Dated: 14/03/2026 (Tender ID 2026\_PDD\_306128\_1) for "Augmentation of Grid Station Alusteng from 320 MVA to 475 MVA at 220/132kV level alongwith allied works" is hereby cancelled abinitio.

The e-NIT shall be floated afresh.

No: TLMD7/TS/446-50  
Dated: 12/05/2026  
DIPK-NB-461/26

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
TLMD-VII Srinagar

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# ₹37,500 cr coal gasification scheme to cut fertiliser, LNG import reliance

Scheme aims to enable India to substitute imports, insulate itself from global supply crisis

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

IN a bid to cut down dependence on liquefied natural gas (LNG) and fertiliser imports, the government on Wednesday approved a coal gasification scheme with an outlay of ₹37,500 crore. The incentive will be provided for production of syngas and its downstream products, targeting gasification of about 75 million tonne of coal/lignite.

India holds one of the world's largest coal reserves (401 bn tonne) and lignite reserves (47 bn tonne). Coal accounts for 55% of India's energy mix. Gasification converts coal/lignite into 'synthesis gas' (syngas), a versatile feedstock for producing fuels and chemicals domestically, enabling India to substitute imports

## Targets 75 mn tonne of coal/lignite gasification

The incentive will be provided for the production of syngas and its downstream products, targeting the gasification of about 75 million tonne of coal/lignite. India holds one of the world's largest coal reserves (401 bn tonne) and lignite reserves (47 bn tonne)

and insulate itself from global supply disruptions and price volatility.

As per the scheme, the incentive will be provided at a maximum of 20% of the cost of plant and machinery. The incentive for any single project will be capped at ₹5,000 crore; for any single product (except synthetic natural gas and Urea), it will be capped at ₹9,000 crore; and for any single entity group, it will be capped at

₹12,000 crore across projects. India's import bill for key substitutable products like LNG, urea, ammonium nitrate, ammonia, coking coal, methanol and DME stood at ₹ 2.77 lakh crore in FY25.

Building on the National Coal Gasification Mission (2021) and a ₹8,500 crore scheme approved in January 2024 — under which eight projects worth ₹6,233 crore are under implementation —

the new scheme seeks to accelerate momentum with enhanced support. Industry bodies welcomed the move. Balasaheb Darade, founder & MD of New Era Cleantech, said, "India is sitting on one of the world's largest coal reserves. The question is no longer whether we use coal — the question is whether we use it intelligently to build national strength, energy independence and industrial resilience."

Atanu Mukherjee, CEO, Dastur Energy, is of the view that the success of this programme will depend on execution discipline. The right gasification technology must be matched to the right coal. Indian coal is high-ash and has different characteristics from coal used in global gasification systems.

## FILLING THE GAP

- India holds one of the world's largest coal reserves
- Coal accounts for 55% of the country's energy mix
- Incentive: 20% of the cost of plant and machinery

# Petitioner withdraws Tata Trusts case as court questions locus standi

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

THE Tata Trusts embattled by widening internal rifts and many a legal challenge, received a reprieve from the Bombay High Court, after the court questioned the locus standi of the petitioner who sought a legal stay on the board meetings of the trusts citing some legal violations, leading the petitioner to withdraw the plea on Wednesday.

The boards of the two main trusts—the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, which between them own as much as 52% of the 66.4% ownership of Tata Sons, were to meet on May 8 but because of the petition, filed last on May 6, postponed the same to May 16, even though there was no court stay on the same as the court did not see any urgency for listing the petition filed one Thane resident Sunil Tulsiram Patilkhede, who had sought an interim injunction, restraining the trusts from



holding the board meetings and passing resolutions until the boards were reconstituted in line with provisions of section 30A(2) of the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act, 1950.

The board meeting was to finalise their nominee on the Tata Sons board where it has only two representatives—Noel Tata and Venu Srinivasan—now as against its eligibility for three. Typically the trusts can have one-third of the nine-member board of the holding company and they enjoy veto powers. Tata Sons board is also scheduled to meet next month to decide on whether to give or not to give third extension to chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran.

# Rupee falls to new low of 95.80 despite duty hikes on gold, silver

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ Mumbai

DESPITE the initial boost from the steep import duty hike on gold and silver to 15% from 6%, the rupee continued to bleed for the fourth consecutive day and hit a new low of 95.80 before settling at 95.68, marginally lower than the record closing low of 95.63 on Tuesday. Rising crude prices and continuing fund outflows continue to put pressure on the local currency.

Forex traders said possible RBI intervention and duty-led compression of gold imports might have helped moderate further weakness, but the rupee is still pressured by the trajectory of crude and the West Asia situation. Many analysts are seeing the unit testing 96 sooner than later. The rupee opened marginally stronger at 95.52 compared to Tuesday's close of 95.63, while gold and silver prices surged over 6% each on the MCX amid continued demand for safe-haven assets after the government hiked the import duty.

The rupee is the worst-per-



## SENSEX, NIFTY CLOSE MARGINALLY HIGHER

The Sensex and Nifty ended marginally higher on Wednesday, snapping their four-session losing streak. BSE Sensex rose 49.74 points, or 0.07%, to settle at 74,608.98. NSE Nifty50 closed at 23,412.60.

forming Asian currency for the year, losing over 6% so far this year, which is on the back of a 9.9% cut last fiscal, as elevated crude prices, a strong dollar and Iran war weigh on investor sentiments. Brent crude continues to hover near \$107 a barrel, while WTI crude traded above \$101 a barrel, keeping

concerns around inflation and the rising fuel import bill.

Dilip Parmar, senior research analyst at HDFC Securities told TNE that "the rupee weakened for the fourth consecutive session as the dollar continues its steady ascent. Despite the duty hike on gold and silver imports to deter higher purchases, underlying weakness persists amid ongoing foreign capital outflows. In the near term, spot the rupee faces resistance at the 96-mark, with immediate support at 95.30."

Anil Kumar Bhansali of Finrex Treasury Advisors said the duty hike will help in curbing the CAD directly which in turn can help the rupee to some extent. The Sensex and Nifty ended marginally higher on Wednesday, snapping their four-session losing streak, following bargain hunting in metal, energy, and consumption stocks amid a largely supportive trend overseas. The BSE Sensex rose 49.74 points, or 0.07%, to settle at 74,608.98. During the day, the index touched a high of 75,191.57 and a low of 74,134.48.



# Duty hike may curb demand, increase sale of used gold

PUSHPITA DEY & BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @ New Delhi/Mumbai

WITH the government increasing import duties on precious metals, jewellers believe near-term consumer demand is likely to be impacted, making purchases more value conscious.

However, the industry expects recycled and exchanged gold to increasingly drive jewellery purchases in the coming quarters, even as investors assess the impact of higher domestic prices and widening gaps with international markets.

"The duty revision may lift retail jewellery prices in the near term, and customers, particularly first-time and investment-led buyers, will take a moment to recalibrate. What we expect over the coming quarters is not a contraction in demand so much as a shift in how that demand is met. Exchange of old gold for new jewellery, a large share of transactions at organised retailers, will become the dominant mode of purchase," said M P Ahammad, chairman of Malabar Group.

The government on Tuesday raised effective import duty on gold, silver and other precious metals to 15% from 6% in a move aimed at curbing non-essential imports and conserving foreign exchange amid rising geopolitical crisis in West Asia.

Analysts said organised retailers with strong exchange programmes and better financ-

ing capacity are likely to fare better than smaller, unorganised jewellers. As per Renisha Chainani, head of research at Augmont, retailers focusing on exchange programmes, lightweight collections and low-caratage jewellery are likely to outperform those dependent on heavy bridal jewellery demand.

"The duty hike has accelerated a structural shift in India's jewellery retail model — away from heavy solitaire buying toward exchange-led, design-first purchasing," Chainani said.

The higher duties are also influencing investor sentiment in the bullion market. Vastupal Ranka, director at Rare Jewels, said rising domestic gold prices could encourage short-term profit booking among existing investors. He flagged concerns over illegal gold trade.

"A wider gap between global and Indian gold prices can encourage unofficial channels and put pressure on organised jewellers," Ranka said, adding that exporters may also face

challenges as Indian jewellery becomes costlier in markets like the UK and the US. Commodity analysts expect domestic bullion prices to remain elevated in the near term as markets absorb the impact of new duty structure. Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst, commodities, at HDFC Securities, said the revised levy is likely to keep domestic gold and silver prices higher than global benchmarks.



A wider gap between global and Indian gold prices can encourage unofficial channels and put pressure on organised jewellers

Renisha Chainani, Augmont

# TII lines up nearly ₹600 cr capex for FY27

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

TUBE Investments of India (TII), part of the Murugappa Group, plans to invest about ₹600-650 crore in the current financial year as it targets growth in the medical equipment and electric vehicle segments.

During the earnings call, the management said the company would invest ₹300-350 crore towards capital expenditure this financial year and another ₹300 crore in its subsidiaries.

The company aims to drive its next phase of growth through investments in medical equipment manufacturing and the ramp-up of electric vehicle production, particularly in the small commercial vehicle and three-wheeler segments.

The company on Wednesday reported a consolidated net profit of ₹234.01 crore for Q4FY26, compared with ₹158.19 crore in the corresponding quarter of FY25. Revenue for the quarter rose to ₹6,018.82 crore from ₹5,017.29 crore a year earlier. The company has guided for 15-18% revenue growth in the current financial year.

Sales volumes during Q4 stood at 87 units for heavy trucks, 241 units for small commercial vehicles and 1,176 units for three-wheelers. In January, TII Mobility became the first company to receive PM E-Drive certification from the Union government.

Revenue from the mobility division rose to Rs 208 crore during the quarter, compared with Rs 181 crore in the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

# TVS TARGETS ₹3,500 CR CAPEX, PROFIT UP 19%

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ Chennai

TVS Motor Company on Wednesday said it plans a total capital expenditure of nearly ₹3,500 crore in the current financial year as it scales up two- and three-wheeler production capacity by another 1.5 million units.

During the earnings call, K N Radhakrishnan, director and CEO of the company, said: "Our overall investment for the current financial year will be about ₹2,000 crore. Additionally, we are putting in another ₹1,000 crore to raise production capacity by 1.5 million units and focus on R&D. So, the total capex will be nearly ₹3,500 crore." The Chennai-based company reported a consolidated net profit of ₹771.52 crore in Q4FY26, up 19% YoY from ₹648.16 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Revenue for the quarter rose 30% to ₹15,052.73 crore. For FY26, it posted its highest-ever annual revenue of ₹47,270 crore as against ₹36,251 crore in FY25.

## Anand Mohan assumes charge as director (Technical) at CMPDI

Ranchi: Anand Mohan assumes charge as Director (Technical), CMPDI on 11th May, 2026. Prior to this, he served in various capacities at NCL, CCL and ECL along with other Coal India (CIL) subsidiaries.



Mohan graduated in Mining Engineering from National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK), Surathkal in the year 1989 and began his career with NCL, Amlohri Project in the same year. He later earned his M.Tech. in Open Cast Mining from the Indian School of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad in 2005. He holds the First-Class Mines Manager's Certificate of Competency (DGMS), a testament to his technical proficiency and statutory expertise.

# Business & Beyond



## Bharat Masala announces launch of new television commercial featuring Bobby Deol

Bhubaneswar: Bharat Masala, one of Eastern India's leading spice and food brands, has announced the launch of its new television commercial (TVC) featuring celebrated actor Bobby Deol. The TVC was officially unveiled during a press meet held at the Press Club in Bhubaneswar. The event was attended by MD, Susant Kumar Panda, Director, S.N. Millenium, and GM (Operations) Arun Kumar Nayak.

# Airtel Q4 profit falls 33.5%, ARPU rises to ₹257

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

TELECOM service provider Bharti Airtel reported a 33.5% decline in consolidated net profit to ₹7,325 crore for the January-March quarter of FY26, compared to ₹11,021 crore in the year-ago period.

The company had a one-time net tax gain of ₹2,892 crore in the previous quarter. On a sequential basis, it reported a 10.4% rise in profit and a 2.5% increase in revenue. Revenue from operations surged 15.6% YoY to ₹55,383.2 crore in Q4FY26 from ₹47,876.2 crore in the corresponding quarter last year. Airtel's India revenue grew



7.7% YoY to ₹39,566 crore. Consolidated EBITDA rose 16.9% YoY to ₹32,038 crore in Q4FY26, while the consolidated EBITDA margin stood at 57.8%. India EBITDA margin came in at 60.6%. For the full FY26, Airtel's consolidated profit fell 20.4% to ₹26,695 crore from

₹33,556 crore in FY25. Annual revenue rose 21.9% to ₹2,10,972.8 crore. The company reported a strong growth in average revenue per user (ARPU), which rose to ₹257 in Q4FY26 from ₹245 in Q4FY25. Airtel's postpaid segment added 0.8 million customers during the quarter,

taking the total postpaid customer base to 29 million.

The number of smartphone data customers increased by 20 million over the past year, registering a 7.2% YoY growth. Airtel said during Q4 FY26, it deployed 2,426 towers and 16,746 mobile broadband base stations. Over the past year, it added 7,883 towers and deployed 43,290 km of fibre to strengthen its digital infrastructure.

Capital expenditure during the quarter stood at ₹16,066 crore, driven by investments in 5G densification, accelerated fibre deployment, connected homes expansion, Airtel Business and data centres.

# AI spends hit budgets for traditional IT services

PADMINI DHURVARAJ @ Bengaluru

ENTERPRISE spending on artificial intelligence is no longer sitting on the sidelines of technology budgets. It is beginning to take money away from traditional IT services, ERP systems and business process outsourcing, according to a new analysis by research firm UearthInsight.

The report estimates that global technology spending will cross \$6 trillion in 2026 and rise to more than \$8.5 trillion by 2030. At the centre of that growth is AI infrastructure, cloud computing and enterprise AI applications.

But beneath the growth numbers, the report points to a deeper shift in how compa-

nies are allocating technology budgets.

"Enterprise buyers AI/Gen AI spend growing and biting into traditional Tech/ERP/IT Services portfolios," the report said. One example in the report tracks the technology spending pattern of a large global banking client with revenues above \$100 billion. Between FY20 and FY26, the share of AI and GenAI spending in the company's technology wallet rose from 3% to 16%.

According to the report, every one percentage point increase in AI allocation at that scale redirects nearly \$1 billion away from traditional technology spending areas such as ERP software, IT services and BPM operations.



Chennai Super Kings all-rounder Jamie Overton will be returning to the England for further assessment after picking up a thigh injury. His franchise announced the same on social media. This comes as a big blow to the side as Overton had been instrumental in their rise up the leaderboard over the last few weeks.

# MUDDLE IN THE MIDDLE FOR MUMBAI INDIANS

Senior core not stepping up has cost five-time champions dearly

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @ Chennai

WHEN the Indian team won the T20 World Cup in Ahmedabad in March, Mahela Jayawardene may have allowed himself a smile or two. Four of India's first XI — Tilak Varma, Jasprit Bumrah, Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav — had displayed their form during multiple phases of the tournament. After a short break, when all four were fit enough for the opener, it further enhanced the franchise's already strong tag as favourites.

Yet, after 45 days and change, one of the league's most storied sides is staring into the middle distance. Another year lost. Another season where there was a yawning gap between expectations and reality. They have, within their ranks, a former Indian all-format captain, India's current T20 captain, their current captain has already won an IPL with another franchise, and a captain who has led the Test side. So, no dearth of leadership but it just hasn't worked out.

Worse still, the side has been left with a potentially dicey position because some of their biggest non-performers this season have been the senior Indian players, including the current captain. In season's past, Yadav has been a shining light for them. In 2026, he has scored 195 across 11 games at 17.2 (SR of 144.4). Hardik, currently down with an injury, has been a point of thrust for them in the middle-order. This year, he has hit 146 at 20.8 in eight games (SR of 136.4).

But it's not like the coaching staff and the leadership group can just turn around and take them out of the firing line. When Mahela Jayawardene, the coach, was asked how political it would be to have that conversation with them, he smiled. "No, I don't think it is," the Sri Lankan said after their last-ball defeat to Royal Challengers



| Team | M  | W | L | Pts | NRR   |
|------|----|---|---|-----|-------|
| RCB  | 12 | 8 | 4 | 16  | 1.05  |
| GT   | 12 | 8 | 4 | 16  | 0.55  |
| SRH  | 12 | 7 | 5 | 14  | 0.32  |
| PBKS | 11 | 6 | 4 | 13  | 0.43  |
| CSK  | 11 | 6 | 5 | 12  | 0.18  |
| RR   | 11 | 6 | 5 | 12  | 0.08  |
| DC   | 12 | 5 | 7 | 10  | -0.99 |
| KKR  | 11 | 4 | 6 | 9   | -0.19 |
| MI   | 11 | 3 | 8 | 6   | -0.58 |
| LSG  | 11 | 3 | 8 | 6   | -0.90 |

Bengaluru in Raipur on Wednesday. "They're also trying to do their best. If I knew that it was something to do with that, I would have spoken to them. But the commitment, the effort that they're putting in is unbelievable. So I was quite determined. With Ro (Rohit Sharma) getting injured and coming back and batting the way he batted, it sums up. I mean, the core group is quite valuable for us. You can't just keep changing."

"We went with the trust, the confidence that we had with them. And then it is what it is. Like I said, it's difficult for me to go beyond that. They had a

really good World Cup, winning it and all that. So I think it's just that as a unit, we haven't been good enough." To be fair to Jayawardene, he didn't shy away from answering the tough questions following the defeat that officially eliminated them from the latter stages.

The one mitigating factor is the injuries. In all, they have used 24 players, including eight overseas players. When there's so much flux in the set-up in what's ostensibly a two-month tournament, there can't be enough time to build chemistry and partnerships. "I don't think it was chopping and changing," he said when a question around 'chopping and changing' was put to him. "What you guys probably didn't know is that we had a lot of injuries, a lot of niggles, players getting injured, and some players were not available."

"Tactically, we would have made very few (changes) during the season. I would have loved to have our main core guys consistently being out there. But there's no excuses. I think we had a quality squad. It's just that, like I said, we had to put our hand up and say that we were not good enough overall. But the season is still on and we're still playing some good cricket. We just need to continue to do that." One thing that will hurt them is almost all of their losses have been by huge margins.

In the very short-term, they have the chance to harm the chances of both Punjab Kings and Rajasthan Royals from qualifying. In the medium term, though, they will have to sit down and decide what to do with. Will they want to trade Pandya, who's bound to have offers from elsewhere? What to do of Sharma and Yadav, two batters who may well be past their prime. These questions could be existential to a side who haven't known life without some of these stars but therein lies an opportunity for a fresh start. A clean slate.

## RACE FOR TOP-FOUR HEATS UP

With just 13 league stage matches to go, the mad scramble for top-four has begun. A look at who needs to do what to make it to the play-off stages...



### Titans, Bengaluru in pole position

Mathematically, no team has advanced to the next phase of the competition but Gujarat Titans and Bengaluru must think they are in there. Since the IPL moved to the current 10-team iteration in the 2022 season, no team with 16 points has failed to advance. But, they will want to finish in the top two so that they get two chances.

### Punjab's chance to cement their place

At the end of April, they seemed like sure-shot candidates to qualify in first place. But four consecutive losses have seen them slip to fourth. But they do know that two of their remaining three games are against already out MI and LSG. Now the challenge is to turn both games into wins.

### Hyderabad's double test

Sunrisers Hyderabad, after winning six of their last eight games, have the play-off places within their sight but their remaining two games are against sides who are also in contention. Both Chennai and Bengaluru are also after the wins and, at best, only two of these three sides will make it.

### Royals look to make statement

In sixth place, they are more out than in right now. But all their remaining games are against sides below them in the table. Apart from facing Lucknow and Mumbai, they also face Delhi, a side who have been very inconsistent. Win two of these games and they may have a place in the play-off.



## PBKS seek turnaround

Punjab Kings desperately need a win to arrest a slide while Mumbai Indians need a win to finish on a high. A look...

### Chahal's poor run

At one point of time, Yuzvendra Chahal was one of the best wrist-spinners going around. These days, not so much. He has picked up just five wickets in his last eight games. In the last of those matches, he didn't even come out to bowl.

### Noise around Surya

Mahela Jayawardene defended one of his prized assets but the noise surrounding Suryakumar Yadav is bound to increase. Indian captain has endured a prolonged slump, his place could come under a cloud if he doesn't find form soon.

PBKS vs MI, Dharamsala, 7:30 PM  
Live on Star Sports and Jio HotStar



RCB's Virat Kohli celebrates his century in Raipur on Wednesday | bcci

## Centurion Kohli shines bright

ENS/AGENCIES

VIRAT Kohli smashed a sensational century as Royal Challengers Bengaluru beat Kolkata Knight Riders in Raipur on Wednesday. Chasing 193, the former captain scored 105 n.o off 60 balls to take the team to 16 points.

Earlier, Angkrish Raghuvanshi led the charge with his career-best 71 to help KKR get to 192 for four. The KKR wicket-keeper-batter struck three sixes and seven fours in a fluent knock off 46 balls while forging

crucial partnerships along the way to give his side the necessary impetus, which their openers had failed to provide. With a wet outfield delaying the contest by more than an hour, RCB opted to field in search of early assistance, but there was no particular help for the seamers as compared to the last game here when new ball had made its impact. KKR lost momentum as soon as they had found some. **Brief scores:** KKR 192/4 in 20 overs (Raghuvanshi 71, Green 32, Rinku 49; Bhuvneshwar 1/34) **lost to** RCB 194/4 in 19.1 overs (Kohli 105 n.o., Padikkal 39; Yajaj 3/32).

## EXPRESS READ

### Swiatek steamrolls Pegula to reach semis

ROME: Three-time champion Iga Swiatek crushed Jessica Pegula of the United States in straight sets on Wednesday to advance to the Italian Open semifinals. Swiatek was ranked fourth, one place above Pegula. But the difference seemed vast as the Polish player took just 67 minutes to win 6-1, 6-2. Swiatek's impressive form bodes well for the upcoming French Open, which she has won four times.

### Neeraj set for exposure tour in Switzerland

NEW DELHI: Recuperating from a back injury, Indian javelin throw ace Neeraj Chopra will head to the Olympic Training Centre in Switzerland from May 25, while shooter Manu Bhaker has jetted off to Italy after the sports ministry approved their foreign exposure proposals. While Chopra is expected to show up for both the events, Bhaker will compete only in the Asiad.

### Lifter Gyaneshwari bags 2 medals at Asian meet

GANDHINAGAR: India's Gyaneshwari Yadav bagged a double by winning silver and bronze medals in the 53kg category at the Asian Weightlifting Championships here. Gyaneshwari won a silver in the snatch section and then an overall bronze medal in the event with a combined lift of 194kg. The gold medal was claimed by Jinlan Zhao, while the silver went to Vietnam's Hoai Huong Nguyen.

### Former Mohun Bagan prez Tutu Bose no more

KOLKATA: Former Mohun Bagan President Swapan Sadhan Bose, fondly known as "Tutu Babu" in Kolkata's Maidan circles, has died after suffering a cardiac arrest. He was 79. Bose is survived by his sons Srinjay and Soumik. Bose, one of the most influential figures in Indian football administration, had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital here for multiple health complications.

### Taylor named ENG Test team fielding coach

LONDON: Former England wicketkeeper Sarah Taylor, one of the greatest to have graced the women's game, has been appointed fielding coach of the senior men's Test team for the upcoming series against New Zealand, ECB's Director of Cricket Rob Key announced. The 37-year-old Taylor is believed to be first woman coach to work with the men's Test team.

## HOCKEY

# I was fired, says Sreejesh; HI denies his allegations

ENS @ Chennai

PR SREEJESH and Hockey India (HI) traded words after the former's contract as chief coach of the junior team was not renewed following last year's age-group World Cup. On a day when the governing body confirmed that they would be appointing a 'coach with distinguished qualification' for the junior team going forward, Sreejesh, in a post on X, said '... seems like my coaching career comes to an end after 1.5 years.' "We played five tournaments, secured five podium finishes, including a junior World Cup bronze."

"I have heard about coaches getting fired after bad performances. But this is the first time I am experiencing being removed to make way for a foreign coach." While Sreejesh had led the junior team to a podium finish at the junior World Cup (bronze medal in Chennai in December 2025), that result and performance was, at best, greeted with lukewarm response from the management group within the federation. They wanted to see more, in terms of results and performances.

HI, reacting to the former custodian's charge, claimed that the two-time Olympic medallist rejected the offer of taking charge of a developmental team 'which plays a critical role for LA28'. "We have in no terms 'fired' Sreejesh and in fact had offered him the position of Coach for the Development team which plays a critical role for LA 28 and the next Olympic cycle as well,"

the statement read. "This would have furthered his experience and exposure as a coach. However, he did not accept this position despite being asked to reconsider the decision."

They also refuted Sreejesh's assertion that they wanted a foreign chief coach over an Indian. "In no terms has it ever been conveyed to him that there has been any preference for a foreign coach by the chief coach," it said. "We are collectively working towards the vision of our government to build a pathway towards 2036 and a big part of that process is to develop our Indian coaching talent."

The 38-year-old Sreejesh, who had been in charge of the men's junior team till the World Cup, was hopeful of getting a new contract. He claimed that the HI president "stated that the chief coach of the senior men's team prefers a foreign head coach for the junior team, believing it will help develop Indian hockey from the junior level through to the senior level. Hence, the continued preference for foreign coaches — Can't Indian coaches develop Indian hockey?"

In his post, he also recalled a conversation he had with the union sports minister. "On 07-03-2026," he posted "during a meeting with the Hon'ble Sports Minister Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, I was told, 'Sreejesh, we need coaches like you to step up and lead our country as we prepare for 2036.' However, Hockey India continues to place its trust in foreign coaches over Indian ones across all four teams."



## No bond for foreigners with FIFA WC tickets

AGENCIES @ Washington

THE Trump administration is suspending a requirement that foreign visitors from certain countries pay as much as \$15,000 in bonds if they are confirmed World Cup ticket holders, the State Department said on Wednesday. The department imposed the bond requirement last year for countries that it said had high rates of people overstaying their visas and other security issues as part of the Republican administration's broader crackdown on immigration.

Travellers to the United States from 50 countries are required to pay the new bond, and five of those countries have qualified for the World Cup — Algeria, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal and Tunisia. "The United States is excited to organise the biggest and best FIFA World Cup in history," Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Mora Namdar said.

FIROZ MIRZA @ Lucknow

A DAY after the conclusion of the 2026 Senior Open Ranking Tournament in Nandini Nagar, Gonda (Uttar Pradesh), focus now has shifted to selection trials for the Asian Games scheduled to be held on May 30 and 31. The trials for women wrestlers will be held in New Delhi while men wrestlers' competition will be organised in Lucknow.

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has already announced the criteria for the trials a few days ago, rendering two-time World Championships medallist Vinesh Phogat ineligible. And if everything goes as per plan, the trials will be held in the presence of the newly-appointed foreign coaches and the high performance director.

The WFI last month appointed Georgia's Emzarios Shako Bentinidis as the men's freestyle coach, Japan's Kosei Akaishi was made coach of women wrestlers while Russian Gogi Kogushvili was handed the charge of men's Greco-Roman wrestlers. American Ian Butler was announced as the high performance director. A WFI source confirmed to this daily that a letter has been issued to Indian Embassies at the respective countries of the foreign coaches.



Coach Emzarios Shako Bentinidis is expected to attend the trials

"Through the letter, the Embassies have been requested to issue visas to these coaches. A copy of the letter has also been forwarded to the coaches," said the source. Shako, who coached Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist Bajrang Punia in the past, confirmed the development and hoped that he will get the visa in a day or two. "Once I get the visa, I will head for India. The trials for the Asian Games are scheduled, so I will reach Lucknow, where the camp for men freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestlers is going on," Shako said. Butler also confirmed that he has received the letter sent to the Indian Embassy in the USA for visa. The Japanese coach, who was in India, has left for his

## THAILAND OPEN

# Srikanth, Sindhu advance; early exit for Ayush, Tanvi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

IT was a mixed day for India in the ongoing Thailand Open, a BWF Super 500 meet, with senior pros PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth and Lakshya Sen posting wins while youngsters like Ayush Shetty, Anmol Kharb and Tanvi Sharma suffered defeats to exit.

Double Olympic medallist Sindhu, who's the No 6 seed, eased past Tung Chiu-Tong of Chinese Taipei in the women's

singles category. Sindhu won 21-9, 21-12 in 33 minutes. Kharb, meanwhile, squandered a big lead against Chen Yu Fei, 2020 Olympic gold medallist, to crash out. With the match locked at 1-1, Kharb was in a dominant position, leading 11-2 in the decider. However, Chen recovered before going on to capture the game and the tie (21-19, 13-21, 18-21) in the process. Srikanth had a notable win as he beat World No 13 Loh Kean Yew of Singapore in straight games (21-14, 21-15) in men's singles category



PV Sindhu in action on Wednesday | BADMINTON PHOTO

while Lakshya beat Jason Teh Heng, also of Singapore, 21-16, 21-17. Tanvi, a World Junior Championships silver medallist, lost 17-21, 8-21 against Hina Akechi of Japan. Isharani Baruah also suffered a hard-fought defeat (15-21, 21-19, 21-15) against Thalita Ramadhani Wirayawan of Indonesia. Unnati Hooda also went down fighting (11-21, 21-17, 21-16) against World No 8 Pornpavee Chochuwong.

Malvika Bansod and Devika Sihag also had gruelling matches but they ended up on the

winning side. Bansod, who's still looking to find her footing after an ACL injury last year, beat Wen Yu Zhang 13-21, 26-24, 21-13. Devika beat World No 26 Natsuki Nidaira of Japan 21-19, 13-21, 21-15. All the Indians in the doubles category lost on the day. Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto lost against Danish mixed doubles combination of Mathias Christiansen and Alexandra Boje. Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde also suffered a similar fate.



Vanin by Araiya Anthology, a newly built boutique retreat in Ranthambore, is set to open in late 2026



Ennismore's first Morgans Originals hotel in India opens near Mumbai airport with 109 suites

# KAAS KALEIDOSCOPE

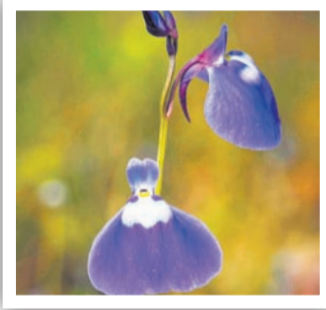
This Maharashtra plateau boasts blooms that flower on their own terms, cascades, forts and more...



A couple at Kaas



Entrance of Kaas



SRUSHTI KULKARNI

**E**VERY seven to ten days, the colour of Kaas Plateau changes as a different floral species blooms. Kaas Pathar, as it is known locally, sits at 1,200 metres in the Sahyadri range near Satara — a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site supporting over 850 wildflower species across a laterite tableland unusual enough to sustain orchids, carnivorous plants and the rare Karvy shrub, which flowers only once every seven to eight years.

The floral cycle typically opens in late August with yellow and white flowers. *Smithia*, a bright herb from the pea family nicknamed the Mickey Mouse Flower for its resemblance to the Disney character, appears alongside *Sonki* — golden, daisy-like flowers that cover the hill slopes — and *Eriocaulon*, tiny white puffball blooms that sit like pins on a cushion. By mid-September, the plateau moves into blues, purples and pinks. *Impatiens Lawii*, a Magenta Balsam, spreads across the damp, thin soil. *Utricularia* — known locally as *Sithechi Sasawe* or *Sita's Tears* — is a carnivorous plant that blankets large sections of the plateau in vivid purple. *Cyanotis Tuberosa*, called *Aabhali*, produces a

densely hairy purple flower found only in the Sahyadri. Among them grows *Drosera indica*, the sundew, its leaves covered in sticky, dewlike traps that catch insects.

Many of the flowers are tiny — some no larger than a fingernail — which makes the collective density of the bloom across the tableland all the more remarkable. Macrophotographers find conditions here exceptional and the plateau supports endemic butterfly species that peak alongside the flowering season. A two-to-three-kilometre walk from the main entrance leads to Kumudini Pond, where the Water Snowflake flowers on the surface. Kaas Lake, a century-old reservoir supplying water to Satara, sits fifteen to twenty minutes' walk from the main flower beds and makes for a serene stop.

The forest department controls access strictly. Entry is capped at 3,000 visitors per day across three time slots — 7 am to 11 am, 11 am to 3 pm and 3 pm to 6 pm — and booking through the official Kaas portal is compulsory on weekends and public holidays. Entry fees run approximately ₹100-150 per adult,

with small additional charges for cameras or guides. Private vehicles are restricted to the parking areas and tourists must utilise the shuttle buses services offered at the entrance.

The fenced walkways are non-negotiable: stepping off them, picking flowers and littering is prohibited. The early morning slot offers the best light and the fewer people; by mid-morning, both conditions change considerably. The surrounding region holds enough to extend a visit well beyond the plateau.

Thoseghar Waterfall drops nearly 1,000 feet through dense forest, with maintained viewpoints along the descent. Vajrai Waterfall,

the three-tiered origin of the Urmodi River, can be easily reached via a jungle walk. Fort Sajjangad, the final resting place of the saint Ramdas, sits above the Urmodi Dam, which offers panoramic views of the Sahyadri hills. For more demanding terrain, Vasota Fort near Kasbe Bannoli involves a jungle trek to ancient ruins overlooking Shivsagar Lake, with camping available at the base. The backwaters of Shivsagar Lake are accessible from Bannoli village for boating and rowing on the reservoir.

If you're planning a visit, you can club Kaas Plateau with Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani during August for a complete three-day monsoon circuit that combines the floral heritage of Kaas with the misty viewpoints of the hill stations, offering strawberry farm tours and valley views from Sydney Point.



A BLOOMING JOURNEY



LATE AUGUST

Yellow & white blooms begin the season.



MID-SEPTEMBER

Blues, purples & pinks take over the plateau.



EVERY 7 YEARS

Catch the Karvy shrub in bloom, at least once in a lifetime.



MACRO PARADISE

Tiny blooms, rare insects & butterflies — a photographer's paradise.

## PLAN YOUR VISIT

**Nearest railhead:** Satara

**Nearest airport:** Pune

**Traveller's tip:** Wear comfortable, slip-resistant walking shoes as the terrain can be uneven and slippery when wet. Carry a raincoat or poncho, as sudden heavy downpours are common during the blooming season.

Entry is capped at 3,000 visitors per day across three time slots — 7 am to 11 am, 11 am to 3 pm and 3 pm to 6 pm — and booking through the official Kaas portal is compulsory on weekends and public holidays. Entry fees run approximately 100-150 rupees per adult, with additional charges for cameras or guides. Private vehicles are restricted beyond the car parks, with shuttle buses running to the entrance.



## STAY

**Stay:** Most visitors base themselves in Satara, 25 kilometres away or in Mahabaleshwar, roughly an hour's drive. Accommodation immediately near the plateau is limited and given the value of an early entry slot, being close matters.

## EXPLORE BEYOND KAAS



**Thoseghar Waterfall**  
A 1,000-foot cascade in the lush green forest.



**Vajrai Waterfall**  
Three-tiered cascade, reachable via a jungle walk.



**Fort Sajjangad**  
Resting place of Saint Ramdas, with stunning views.



**Vasota Fort & Shivsagar Lake:** Trek, camp, boat and explore ancient ruins.

## TRAVEL DIARY



### Hatching season of Olive Ridley begins in Odisha

If you have ever wanted to witness one of nature's most unforgettable sights, plan a trip to Rushikulya in Odisha, where thousands of Olive Ridley turtle hatchlings are now emerging from the sand and making their way to the Bay of Bengal. The annual hatching season turns this coastline into a rare wildlife experience, drawing nature lovers and photographers from across the country.



### Have you visited this Blue-Flag beach near Dwarka?

If you have been dreaming of a beach escape with clear blue waters and soft white sands, Shivrajpur Beach near Dwarka deserves a spot on your travel list. Gujarat's first Blue Flag-certified beach draws visitors with its clean shoreline, calm Arabian Sea views and easy access from Dwarka. Plan a slow sunset evening here or spend the day soaking in one of mainland India's most well-maintained coastal stretches.



Marine sightings

## Diving deep into Lakshadweep

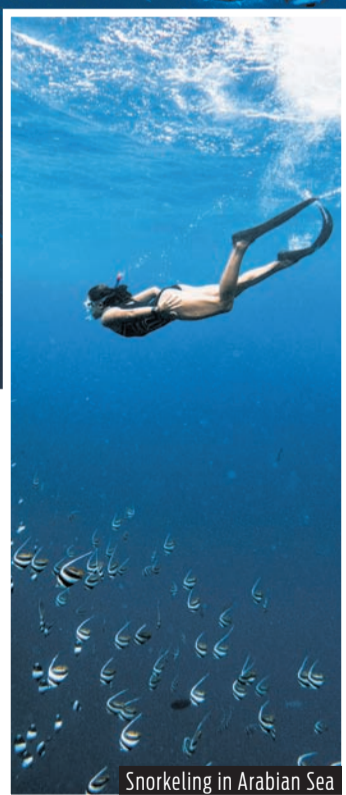
WITH NEWLY EASED TRAVEL RULES, HERE IS YOUR SIGN TO EXPLORE CHERIYAM, KALPENI, THINNAKARA AND OTHER ISLANDS THAT LAKSHADWEEP HAS RECENTLY ADDED ONTO THE TOURIST MAP...

SRUSHTI KULKARNI

**F**OR years, Lakshadweep has been the final frontier for Indian travellers — a stunning collection of coral atolls that felt nearly impossible to visit. Unless you were booked on a Cordelia Cruise, which offered one of the few reliable ways to see Agati Island. The logistical hurdles often outweighed the allure of the turquoise waters even after the destination went viral back in 2024. For most, these islands remained a distant dream, locked behind complex per-

mits. However, a major shift in policy has made travel easier.

The government has overhauled the entry process to encourage independent travel. Most notably, visitors no longer need a local sponsor to vouch for them and the requirement for a *Police Clearance Certificate* from your home town has been abolished. Verification is now handled internally by the Lakshadweep administration after you apply online. Furthermore, the new system allows for group applications of up to six people, making it far simpler for families to plan a trip together. This administrative ease is part of a massive ₹3,600-crore development plan designed to turn Lakshadweep into a world-class destination. The government isn't just making it easier to visit existing hubs like Agatti and Bangaram; they are opening 12 new islands to tourism.



Snorkeling in Arabian Sea



The most exciting addition is the introduction of India's first luxury water villas. Partnering with the Taj Group, high-end

resorts are being developed on Suheli and Kadmat islands, offering an over-water experience. Beyond luxury stays, islands like Cheriya and Thinnakara are being positioned as eco-tourism hotspots, perfect for those looking for untouched natural beauty. Thinnakara is a tiny teardrop island ideal for beach tent camping and stargazing. Its shallow lagoons make it perfect for beginners to try undersea walking and night-time kayaking. Cheriya, often visited as part of a cluster with Kalpeni, is being developed for exclusive day-trip infrastructure and snorkelling tours through its vibrant coral gardens. While already known, Bangaram is being further improved for dolphin-watching tours and deep-sea fishing expeditions.

Accessibility is also getting a major upgrade. Plans are underway for a new airport at Minicoy and an expansion of the Agatti runway to accommodate larger commercial aircraft. With new jetties being built at Kalpeni to support cruise vessels and better inter-island connectivity, the archipelago is moving away from being a one-stop cruise destination to a place where you can spend a week island-hopping.

## Witness the largest congregation of Asian elephants

Every summer, the backwaters of Kabini host the largest congregation of Asian elephants on the subcontinent — and it happens for two very simple reasons...

SRUSHTI KULKARNI

**A**S the Kabini reservoir shrinks and dries through the summer months, it exposes thousands of hectares of moist land where fresh, tender grass sprouts along the receding waterline. That combination — water and fodder in one place — is what draws herds from Wayanad in Kerala, Bandipur, Nagarhole and Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu, converging on the backwaters after migrating for hundreds of kilometres. The congregation begins in mid-March, builds through April and peaks in May before the first pre-monsoon rains arrive and the herds disperse back into the forests.

On a single day, during peak season, sightings can range from 100 to 600 elephants, making this the largest gathering of Asian elephants recorded anywhere in India. The backwaters function as more than a survival stop. Different family groups that have spent months separated across vast forest corridors meet here and the social dynamics on display — greeting



behaviours, inter-herd interactions, young calves navigating the waterline under close watch — are as compelling as the sheer numbers.

The window is specific: mid-March to late May. Come too early and the reservoir hasn't dropped enough to expose the grass beds; wait until June and the monsoon has already broken the spell. The boat safari on the Kabini River is widely considered the best way to witness the elephants as land vehicles often cannot reach the soft, marshy edges where these mammals gather. You glide parallel to the shore, watching herds swim, bathe and graze.

**Boat safari price:**

₹2,000 to 3,000 per person

**Operating times:**

Two slots daily —

6:30 AM and 3:30 PM.

The afternoon slot is generally preferred for the congregation as elephants come to the water to cool off.





DAY'S DIARY

Mrs Dalloway out

Virginia Woolf's novel 'Mrs Dalloway' was published by The Hogarth Press, run by Virginia and her husband, on this day in 1925

THE PLOT

Set on a single day in June 1923, Mrs Dalloway charts the experiences of various isolated individuals as they move across the bustling capital, with focus on two characters



TWO MAIN CHARACTERS

The privileged, socially elite Clarissa Dalloway, and Septimus Warren Smith, a shell-shocked veteran of the First World War, play a major role in the novel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Virginia Woolf was an English novelist, essayist, biographer, and feminist, whose modernist style changed with each new novel

Interview with Indrans

PG 4

AKSHAY KUMAR

WHEN something falls into place, it is easy to call it a 'miracle' or a 'generational event' and move on without understanding the true nature of the incident. On May 14, 1976, when theatres across Tamil Nadu blared out a debutant's songs, not many would have realised that they were the initial audience of a musical revolution. One that began with Ilaiyaraaja, a charismatic 'young king', deciding to change the music's soundscape. The age of that soundscape is now...50.



With the music maestro completing 50 years in the industry today, CE explores the different facets of the musician

But things fell into place in the 70s, when Tamil cinema underwent a silent shift in power centres. Younger filmmakers with visionary ideas came into picture. Filmmakers like Bharathiraja, Mahendran, and Balu Mahendra sought to introduce a new visual grammar to Tamil cinema, and they needed an aural grammar to draw audiences. They found their sync in Ilaiyaraaja, who was raring to redefine the soundscape that was toeing the line of Hindi cinema aesthetics. He spearheaded a movement that changed Tamil cinema in the 70s, 80s, 90s, 00's, 10's, and even in 2026.

Destined for disruption

Although his debut album *Annakili* was a breakout in every sense, Ilaiyaraaja was seen more as a disruptor for a while. Songs like 'Kettela Ange' from the Sivakumar-starrer *Bhadrakali* (1976) and 'Oram Po' from *Ponnu Oorukku Pudhusu* (1979) were banned on All India Radio. The latter is of particular interest because there were attempts to sabotage it both locally and nationally for its perceived 'crudeness' and 'unartistic' nature. However, the song served as an attack on caste hegemony and a fitting response to Ilaiyaraaja skeptics who refused to accept that he was here to stay. Interestingly, it found support from former CM J Jayalalitha, who wrote a piece condemning All India Radio for banning it.

Almost a decade later, he initiated a similar disruption with *Sindhu Bhairavi* (1985). Carnatic music purists weren't pleased with Ilaiyaraaja composing a Tyagaraja *keerthanam*, 'Mari Mari Ninne,' with a different *raga* from the one it is usually sung in. The criticisms notwithstanding, Ilaiyaraaja walked away with his second National Award for Best Music Direction for the film, and it was also just the second time a Tamil film won this distinction.

## THE AGELESS ILAIYARAAJA, THROUGH THE AGES



Raja, for one and all

The star stature of the protagonists of his films never really affected the quality of Ilaiyaraaja's work. In fact, it is his music that has been instrumental in cementing many a superstar's legacy, right from Kamal Haasan and Rajinikanth to Mohan and Ramarajan, and even Vikram and Vijay. In the 80s and 90s, his music enriched the careers of young actors such as Sathyaraj, Sarath Kumar, Murali, Suresh, Pratap K Pothen, Ramesh Aravind, Pandiyan, Bhagyaraj, Pandiyan, Parthiban, and Rajkiran, among others. It won't be a stretch to say that many of these actors are remembered less for their films and more for their songs. Even in 2026, he is composing music for Lenin Pandiyan, the debut of legendary superstar Sivaji Ganesan's grandson Dhaarsan Ganesan. His love for the art, irrespective of the scale of a film,

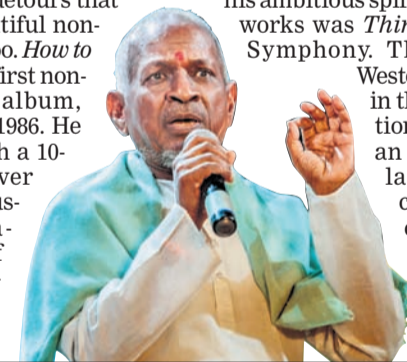


Flair beyond films

In his 50-year career, which once saw him compose for over 50 films in a single year, it is clear he was never satiated. In fact, if his film career wasn't enough, he also took detours that gave us beautiful non-film music, too. *How to Name It*, his first non-film music album, came out in 1986. He came up with a 10-song crossover album that fuses the Baroque-style of Western classical music



with Carnatic music. He has also produced several devotional albums, including *Geetha Vazhipadu*, *Thiruvasagam*, *Raajavin Ramanamalai*, *Baba Pugazh Maalai*, and *Diya Pasurams*. Another epoch-making feat in his inimitable career came in the form of symphonic music. This is a fascinating aspect of his career, as he did not use orchestras in film songs. Still, he ventured into full-fledged Western classical composition, a rare accomplishment for an Indian composer. One of his ambitious spiritual-classical works was *Thiruvasagam* in Symphony. Though not a Western symphony in the strict traditional sense, it is an oratorio — a large-scale orchestral and choral composition. In 2025, he performed



*Valiant*, a 77-piece orchestra following a four-movement structure atypical of European symphonies, becoming the first Indian to do so.

Electrifying innovator

He also introduced avant-garde technology. He moved film compositions that largely relied on analogue instrumentation and simple orchestrations toward sophisticated sound engineering, electronic instrumentation, and layered orchestral arrangements. One of his major innovations was the extensive use of multi-track recording and complex orchestration. Among many firsts, Ilaiyaraaja was the first Indian composer to record a soundtrack on a computer for *Vikram* (1986). His songs in films such as *Moula Ragam* and *Nayakan* showcased a level of orchestral layering and stereo clarity uncommon in Indian cinema in the 80s. He also popularised the use of synth, electronic rhythm programming, and digital sequencing while retaining the emotional depth and melodic richness of Indian music. His innovations not only modernised Tamil film music but also raised the technical standards of recording and background scoring across Indian cinema.

The misunderstood trailblazer

In recent times, nothing has divided the Tamil film buffs as much as the controversy surrounding Ilaiyaraaja's legal battle over copyright claims for the use of his songs. Whenever he knocked on the court's doors, people, including music artistes, were made aware of intellectual property rights. The observations made on his cases will be entered into the books that explain intellectual rights. The cases threw light on composers' royalties, moral rights, legacy music catalogues, streaming-era ownership, and reuse culture in modern cinema. The disputes went to the heart of India's older film contracts and their ambiguity regarding future digital rights, streaming, remastering, and international licensing.

Through this battle and his music Ilaiyaraaja has done what he has always done: Improve on the past, develop the present, and look out for the future of music. The legend also became one of Indian cinema's most consequential legal trailblazers, forcing an entire industry to rethink who truly owns a song long after it leaves the recording studio — ever the man for the ages.

## Rediscovering Raaja

LEGEND FOR ALL SEASONS

GOMESH S

GROWING up, my first memory of being obsessed with an Ilaiyaraaja song was when my dad got his first mobile phone. It was in the early-2000s and I was not even in my teens as I tried to add *Ilaya Nila* — a famous Raaja sir (expect the 'sir' to continue) number from *Payanangal Mudivathillai* — in a 2MB phone memory as ringtone.

Despite his songs playing on the radio or cassette, it was not like I was a Raaja sir fan then. In fact, my mix-tapes, would often have songs of Deva, AR Rahman and the rest. And yet, for some reason, I thought that *Ilaya Nila* suited my dad, or that he liked it.

In the years that followed, I gravitated towards the youngest Raaja in the family — Yuvan Shankar. I found Yuvan in my teenage years and have continued to remain his ardent fan till date. But, as fate would have it, I found Raaja sir again. Or rather rediscovered him in my late 20s. The more I listened to people, directors, writers I admire talk about him, the more I understood why he and his music mean so much to Tamil people. How the songs in the popular parlance are only scratching the surface of the magic he has produced and it would take a lifetime to fully to study and absorb the sheer magnitude of what he has done for not just one or two, but four generations in five decades.

His music and songs are omnipresent in our lives no matter where we are and what we go through. For every situation, every mood, every life experience — hope, love, despair, travel, dream, solitude, assertion, grief — there is a Raaja sir *paatu* that holds us together and makes us feel like we are not alone. The list of songs here, as subjective as it can be, is an attempt to show just that.

Over the last seven years, several people have played a part in me growing affectionate towards Raaja sir and his music, but perhaps none more than Sharanaya, one of my closest friends. For an average fan like me, her love for Raaja sir and his music helped me navigate past the famous tracks and discover the lesser known songs that we don't necessarily see in everyday conversations — *Kadhala Un Leelaya*, *Alaigale Vaa Avarudan Vaa*, *Poonkaatre Ini Podhum*, *Vandhale Allippodu*, and the under appreciated album *Eera Vizhi Kaaviyangal*. This list is as much as hers as it is mine.

People will have their own preference of his songs of such situations, and there could be thousands of such choices. It only reiterates one thing, Raaja sir is for all of us and in all seasons.

Hope  
Mozart I love you (Nothing But Wind/Geetanjali), Thendral (Modern Love Chennai)

In the nature  
Ithu Oru Ponmalai (Nizhalgal), Kodai Kaala Kaatre (Panneer Pushpangal)

Dreamy  
Oru Poonga Vanam (Agni Natchathiram), Ninaivo Oru Paravai (Sigappu Rojakkal)

Crushing over someone  
Nenjil Oru Minal (Modern Love Chennai), Poonthalir Aada (Panneer Pushpangal)

Love  
Un Paarvaiyil (Amman Kovil Kizhakale), Rojavai Thaattattum Thendral (Ninaivellam Nithya)

Sadness  
Pazhaya Soghamakal (Eera Vizhi Kaaviyangal)

Grief  
Kanne Navamaniye (En Bomrukutty Amnavukku)

Hopelessness  
Kaanum Santhosham (Eera Vizhi Kaaviyangal)

Existentialism meets devotion  
Bikshaipaththiram (Rajavini Ramanamalai)

Gaana  
Machi Mannaaru (En Uyir Thozhan)

Fun vibes  
Per Vachatum (Michael Madhana Kama Rajan)

Assertion  
Poradada (Alai Oasi), Oram po Oram po (Ponnu Oorukku Pudhusu)



## THEATRE FOR ALL

RAKSHITHA PRIYA G

AS one thinks of theatre, the visuals can vary. For many, the term resonates more with cinema halls than performance arts. But in cities like Mumbai, weekends at auditoriums are as packed as a movie house. Over the years, Chennai's theatre ecosystem has been steadily growing. But it is still striving to navigate through the economy and fast content. Independent theatre collectives in the city are now attempting to change the narrative by making live performances more accessible to a wider audience.

Returning for its third edition, KISS, an acronym for Keeping It Slightly Short, a theatre festival hosted by Poochus Productions, is underway at Alliance Française of Madras. The festival features close to 60 plays, spread across two weekends (May 8-10, and May 15-17), with one rule for each production: 15 minutes.

For festival director Dakshana and the team, the idea stemmed from the need to create a common space for the

city's growing theatre community. "We've been doing productions for a while now, working with people from various backgrounds, like students, homemakers, and a diverse range of people within the theatre community. We always wanted to create a space that puts the community together in one space. As we continued creating different kinds of shows, curating a festival felt like the natural next step for us," says Dakshana.

Given the creative freedom by not fixing a central theme for the plays, resulted in an eclectic lineup ranging from comedies, social dramas, and bitter-sweet plays, to experimental movement theatre — a genre that prioritises the body, gesture, and movement over spoken dialogue. Dakshana adds that the festival has created room for both newcomers and the experienced equally.

Among them is Asha Sampath, a sexagenarian who returned to theatre after more than two decades with her play *Life: Unlimited*. "A friend for-

warded the poster and I decided to write a script based on my experiences. It also brought back fond memories of writing scripts and staging performances 20-plus years ago. I wanted to give it a go again," she says.

For Asha, the festival became more than just a performance opportunity. "The KISS festival gave me an opportunity to showcase not only a story close to my heart but also brought out the director in me, helping me discover another side of myself." Her "greatest award" out of the festival is that her sons flew down to the city to watch and support her first production on this scale.

At the other end of the spectrum is 19-year-old Rajnish R, the youngest writer-director participating in the festival. For him, KISS represents a chance to experiment beyond conventional audi-

ence expectations. "Being part of theatre for the past two to three years, I realised that we are always stereotyped working around one group of audience and making our scripts according to their mindsets," he says. "But suddenly, when I'm getting a new avenue of audience, I'm able to explore my content and explore new perspectives as a writer-director."

Rajnish is staging two sharply contrasting productions: the comedy *Operation Muthulakshmi* and the darker *Eyes Wide Shut*, inspired by the Jeffrey Epstein case files but within an Indian context. Rajnish hopes audiences leave reflecting on themes of feminism, violence, and vulnerability.

KISS also presents awards under various titles with cash prizes for multiple participants, including People's Choice. One of the new initiatives is that the jury this year are the participating writers-directors. Dakshana says that this will give the creators an opportunity to be accountable. For Rajnish, this judging system seems exciting "because only we as directors, writers or actors know the effort to take

up a role until the show day before one month of it from being just a one-liner."

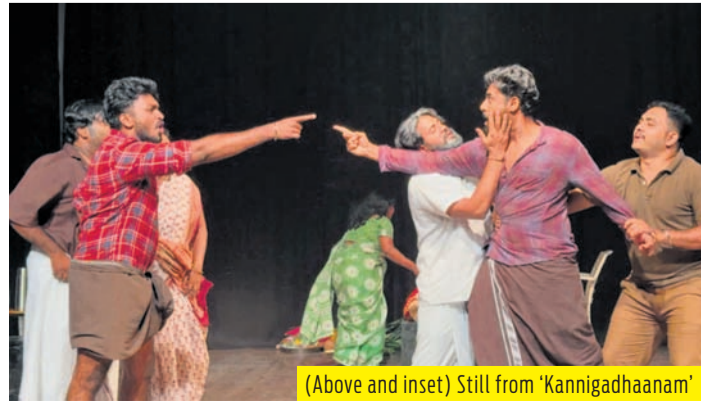
Yet behind the performances lies the larger challenge of sustaining independent theatre in Chennai. Dakshana points out that venue costs and production logistics remain major hurdles for emerging groups. "Theatre here is surviving, but in Bombay it's thriving. It's difficult to even stage a play because the cost of halls are incomparable unless you have sponsors," she says. Support from Alliance Française of Madras, she adds, has played a crucial role in helping the festival scale up over the years.

Amid the logistical chaos of 60 plays, shared green rooms, lighting cues, and rehearsals, the organisers hope the festival's biggest success lies in building a culture of showing up for live art. Dakshana believes, "If they (audience) leave from here hoping to catch another live performance or another play at some point in time, I think that is a win."

The second half of the KISS theatre festival will be held from May 15 to 17 at Alliance Française of Madras.

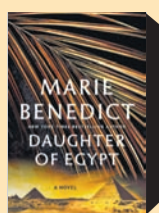


Still from 'P.H.O.N.E.Y'



(Above and inset) Still from 'Kannigadhaanam'

## BOOK NOOK



### Daughter of Egypt: A Novel

by Marie Benedict

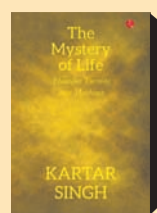
Propelled by high adventure and deadly intrigue, Daughter of Egypt is the story of two ambitious women who lived centuries apart. Both were forced to hide who they were during their lifetimes, yet ultimately changed history forever.



### The Curse of the Maharani

By Neil D'Silva

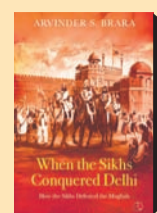
The men of the Ruhera family have died under strange, brutal circumstances and they only ever produce male heirs. Now, another heir is on the way.



### The Mystery of Life: Humans Turning into Machines

By Kartar Singh

This book traces suffering to ignorance and false assumptions, and points inward to the awakening that restores the self's power and reveals lasting happiness and ananda as the very nature of being.



### When the Sikhs Conquered Delhi

By Arvinder S. Brara

The book examines periods of persecution and resilience, the rise of Sikh political authority, colonial rule, Partition, and the global Sikh presence today.



## RISKY RIDE

Ignoring traffic norms, a boy rides against the high-speed traffic on Poonamalai High Road at Aminjikarai. | P JAWAHAR

## QUICKFIX

### SPICED RICE WITH SAUTÉED MUSHROOM ON THE SIDE

#### INGREDIENTS

- **Mushrooms:** 150 g, sliced
- **Garlic:** 2 cloves, minced
- **Cumin powder:** 1 tsp
- **Rice:** ½ cup (uncooked)
- **Soy sauce and butter:** 1 tbsp each
- **Salt, and chilli flakes:** As per taste

#### METHOD

- Boil ½ cup rice in one cup water with a pinch of salt for 10-12 minutes; fluff and set aside.
- Heat butter in a pan over medium heat; sauté garlic for 30 seconds until fragrant.
- Add mushrooms, soy sauce, cumin, chilli flakes, and salt; stir-fry 4-5 minutes until golden and tender.
- Mix half the spiced mushrooms into the rice. Serve mushrooms atop spiced rice.



Contributed by Purba Majumder, Bengaluru



Wanitha Ashok is a Fit India Movement Ambassador and celebrity fitness coach

## FITBIT

### FIVE BENEFITS OF EATING COCONUT

Summer has been at its peak and people are trying to find alternatives to drinking water. Well, coconut is one such food which has been globally recognised for its nutrients. From coconut water and coconut milk to raw coconut and coconut oil, this ingredient offers several health benefits when consumed in moderation. Rich in healthy fats, fibre, antioxidants, and essential minerals, coconuts can support energy, digestion, immunity, and overall wellness.

#### A NATURAL ENERGY BOOSTER

- Coconut contains Medium-Chain Triglycerides (MCTs), a type of fat that the body converts into quick energy.
- Unlike heavier fats, MCTs are metabolised faster, helping support sustained energy levels, reduced fatigue, and better endurance during physical activity.
- This makes coconut a popular addition to smoothies, breakfast bowls, and post-workout meals.

#### SUPPORTS GUT AND DIGESTIVE HEALTH

- Coconut is naturally rich in dietary fibre, which supports healthy digestion and gut function.
- It may help reduce bloating, improve bowel regularity, and support a balanced gut microbiome.
- Coconut water and coconut milk can also be lighter alternatives for people seeking dairy-free options.

#### HELPS STRENGTHEN IMMUNITY

- Coconut contains compounds like lauric acid, known for its antimicrobial and antiviral properties.
- Along with antioxidants and minerals like potassium and magnesium, coconut may help reduce inflammation, support immune function, and protect the body from oxidative stress
- Including natural, minimally processed coconut products can contribute to overall wellness.

#### PROMOTES HEALTHY SKIN

- Healthy fats and antioxidants in coconut may help support skin hydration and elasticity.
- Coconut is often associated with improving skin moisture, better skin barrier support, and reduced dryness and irritation
- Adding coconut to meals can complement a healthy skincare routine from within.

#### MAY SUPPORT BLOOD SUGAR BALANCE

- Coconut is relatively low in carbohydrates and high in fibre and healthy fats, which may help slow glucose absorption.
- Coconut sugar also has a lower glycaemic index compared to refined sugar, making it a popular alternative for some individuals.
- However, moderation is important, especially with coconut-based desserts and processed products.

#### EASY WAYS TO ADD COCONUT TO YOUR DIET

- Add shredded coconut to oat meal or smoothie bowls.
- Use coconut milk in curries and soups.
- Drink fresh coconut water for hydration.
- Add coconut oil in moderation while cooking.
- Blend coconut into smoothies or healthy desserts.

## ASK AN EXPERT

- Muscles help regulate body weight, blood sugar levels, and insulin sensitivity.
- Building and preserving muscles helps maintain balance, mobility posture, bone strength, and age gracefully. It reduces the risk of falls, fractures, and injuries later in life.
- Muscles protect joints and reduce pain. Many common aches, especially around the knees, lower back, and shoulders are linked to weak muscles rather than ageing itself. Muscles are like shock absorbers so they take friction and keep your joints safe. In many cases, strength training works better than endless painkillers and rest.
- Resistance training has been shown to improve mood, confidence, stress, and even sleep quality.
- Strength changes how people carry themselves, not just how they look. Building muscles is not about vanity. It's preparation for life.

## WHATWHENWHYWHERE

### New fusion

Berklee College of Music graduate Rohit H Sivaram's live performance at Bay 146 MainStage promises an engaging evening of high-energy music and genre-defying artistry.

WHEN: Tomorrow, 8 pm onwards



### Flavours of south

Taj Coromandel's South Indian specialty restaurant Southern Spice invites guests to savour the comforting, time-honoured pairing of appam and stew. For reservations: 7824862311

WHEN: Till May 17, 12.30 pm to 3 pm / 7 pm to 11 pm



### 'Is it gourmet?'

The corporate buffet at Svar, Turyaa gets a gourmet twist. From vibrant salads, flavour-packed Indian delicacies, to Continental favourites, the spread is thoughtfully designed to satisfy diverse palates with elegance and ease. For reservations: 7358099335

WHEN: Till May 31

### Crafted stories

Step into a unique cultural experience that brings together play, craft and storytelling. Explore Odisha through their crafts and art with Vinita Sidhartha of Kreedaa and historian Chithira Madhavan, at Kamala Crafts Shop.

WHEN: May 16, 10.30 am to 12.30 pm



### Celebrating biryani

Embark on a rich and flavourful culinary journey with The Great Indian Biryani Festival, at Spice Haat, Hyatt Regency Chennai, celebrating India's most iconic dish – biryani, every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Price: ₹2,599 ++

WHEN: Till May 31, 7 pm-11 pm

### Exhibition and sale

Kalaa Utsavam, an exhibition at Arul Murugan Towers, Pallavaram, features handicrafts, textiles, jewellery, sarees, home decor, and organic products from across India.

WHEN: Till May 17, 11 am -9 pm



### Malaysian extravaganza

Sobé Decor presents Everyday Malaysia - Curated Cultural Showcase at Kukoo Pop Up inside Sobé Decor, bringing together Malaysian craft, cuisine, and cultural storytelling in an intimate experiential setting.

WHEN: Tomorrow, 3pm-7 pm



## EXPRESS CONNECT

HAVE A RECIPE OR ART WORK TO SHARE, OR A QUESTION TO ASK?

@xpresstn

cityexpresschn@gmail.com

@newindianexpress



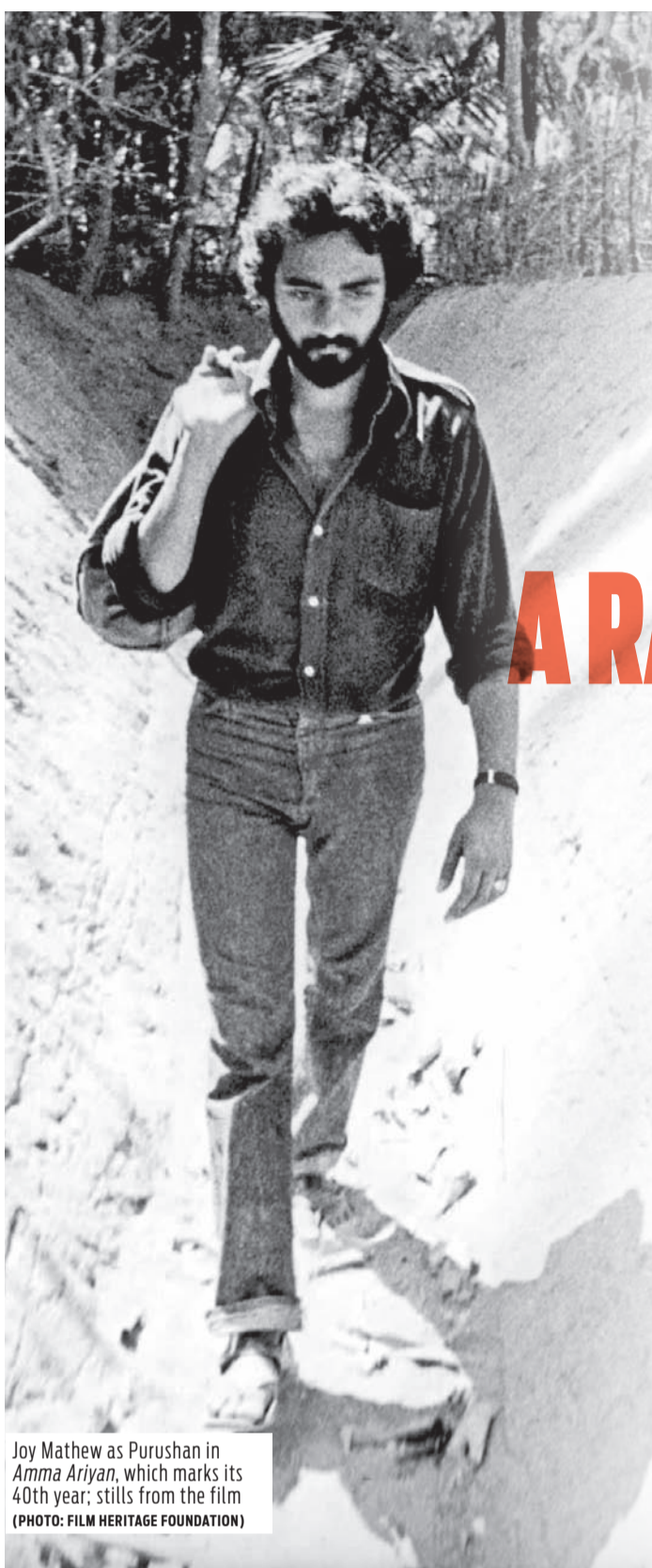
By Madhura P Behki, nutrition expert, cult – a fitness and wellness platform

## ARTCORNER



### EYES IN THE WILD

Artist Aayushi captures the watchful gaze of a Bengal tiger, hidden yet alert within the forest.



Joy Mathew as Purushan in Amma Ariyan, which marks its 40th year; stills from the film (PHOTO: FILM HERITAGE FOUNDATION)

Revisiting John Abraham's film, an Indian cult classic, set to be 'rediscovered' at the ongoing Cannes Festival



John Abraham (PHOTO: VENU)

AMMA ARIYAN: A RADICAL REWIND

PARVANA K B

MOST films end with their runtime. Some sustain long after the screen goes dark — in film society discussions, classrooms, political conversations, and among generations of cinephiles who keep returning to them through rediscovery. Amma Ariyan is one of them. Forty years after maverick filmmaker John Abraham and his Odessa Collective took Amma Ariyan across Kerala through a people-funded alternative distribution movement, the cult Malayalam film is now set to reach a new global audience with its restored 4K version premiering at the Cannes Film Festival (May 12 to 23) as India's only selected feature for a world premiere this year. Gerald Duchaussoy, head of Cannes Classics, describes the film as "a trip in itself", adding that he was "blown away by the intensity". For a film born outside the structures of mainstream cine-

ma, Amma Ariyan was shaped as much by the people and places around it as by the filmmaker behind it. Moving between documentary realism and abstract fiction, the film follows a young man's journey to inform a mother of her son's death, gradually unfolding into a reflection on ideology, dissent, and a generation caught between hope and disillusionment. Returning to screens Four decades later, its return to the international screen stands as a reminder of a cinematic vision that refused to separate art from the society it emerged from. Actor Joy Mathew, who played the protagonist (Purushan), met John during the final years of the Janakeeya Samskarika Vedi, a radical cultural organisation tied to Left movements in Kerala during the 1980s. According to him, the film emerged from the emotional and political turmoil of that period. "Many people who were active in the movement got scattered. Some struggled with de-



JOHN, THE REBEL

John Abraham remains one of the most singular figures in Indian parallel cinema, remembered as much for the way he made films as for the films themselves. He initially studied at Mar Thoma College in Tiruvalla, before pursuing a diploma in film direction at FTII, Pune. Deeply influenced by filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak, John rejected the conventions of commercial filmmaking. His works such as Vidhyarthikale Ithile Ithile, Agraharathil Kazhuthai, Cheriya-chante Kroorakrithyangal and Amma Ariyan earned him a devoted following among cinephiles and filmmakers for their raw energy, radical politics, and refusal to conform. Beyond directing, he also co-founded the Odessa Collective, a grassroots movement that attempted to take cinema directly to people. John passed away on May 31, 1987, at the age of 49, shortly after he completed Amma Ariyan. "His existential and political conflicts were one and the same (the existential was political to him), and he dared to look into both with great courage, openness, and freedom. The John legend lives on," says veteran film critic CS Venkiteswaran.

pression, some died by suicide," says Joy. "John was initially planning another film about the Kayyur revolt, but when that didn't happen, he started thinking about making a film around these experiences and the people affected by them. That is how Amma Ariyan took shape." For Joy, the experience of making the film went far beyond acting. "We were involved in everything — collecting 'bucket fund' from the public, gathering food from nearby houses, travelling with projectors and screening the film in villages, camping at libraries and public grounds. I even dubbed for several characters because we didn't have money to bring in junior artistes," he recalls. Behind the camera Cinematographer Venu remembers working in difficult and unpredictable conditions, often shooting handheld amid real

crowds. "We wanted it to feel like reportage, almost like news footage. That's why there were so many handheld shots," he says. "The decision to shoot in 35mm black-and-white — despite colour cinema having become the norm by then — emerged from both practical limitations and aesthetic choices." Venu describes the film as a once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. "It was special in the way it was produced, distributed, and shown to people. We stayed in ordinary people's houses during the shoot," he says. One of his strongest memories from the production was John's decision to shoot crowd scenes in reverse order. "John knew people would gradually leave during the shoot because we couldn't hire crowds. So we filmed the larger crowd portions first and slowly reduced them," he says. He bills Amma Ariyan as a "rebellion" that challenged the "dominance of capital in filmmaking". "The cinéma vérité

style emerged organically. We travelled from town to town like a troupe, often not knowing what we would encounter. That unpredictability was both the risk and the excitement," he adds. Film editor Beena Paul shares the thrill. She remembers first hearing about John while studying at FTII, where he already had a reputation because of his other classic, Agraharathil Kazhuthai. Later, after moving to Kerala, she became associated with him through Venu, her partner. "Amma Ariyan was documentary, fiction, memory and journey, all at once. John helped many of us move beyond rigid ideas of cinema and editing," says Beena. "His understanding of the medium and even his sense of humour — all of that feels rare to find even now. Amma Ariyan was a classic in every sense. I don't know if a film like that can be made today." Lasting Impressions Veteran film critic CS Venkiteswaran describes the film as a journey. "It travels through the ruins of radical movements, through memories of violence, loss, and disillusionment," he notes. The renewed attention around Amma Ariyan also marks another milestone for the Film Heritage Foundation, whose previous restorations of films such as Thamp, Ishanou, Manthan and Aranyer Din Ratri have premiered at Cannes in recent years. "The restoration was challenging due to the absence of the original camera negative and the survival of only a single unsubmitted print," says Film Heritage Foundation director Shivendra Singh Durgapur. "John Abraham was a true original. Amma Ariyan left a lasting impression on many of us during our film school years. We are excited that contemporary global audiences will now get to discover his cinema," he adds. Decades later, as the film returns to the big screen, that line still feels inseparable from both the filmmaker and the film he left behind.

THE VENUS FLYTRAP

The survivor script needs a swap

THE Delhi High Court has just absolved an abusive man, his mother and his brother — who colluded to set his wife on fire while she was pregnant, because of dowry demands — on the basis that the survivor has forgiven him. In the years since the attack, which took place in 2000, she had more children with him and reconciled with the family. Delivering the verdict that the sentences of previously-convicted family members were upheld but have been commuted to time already served, Justice Vimal Kumar Yadav made this remark: "Indeed, women have very large heart (sic)." The woman in this case may indeed be large-hearted, or not, but the fact that she has remained within a family that attempted to murder her indicates nothing about her character. If this result says anything at all, it reiterates how much harder living on her own or trying to, especially as a single parent, was for her. Again, that she did not manage to do it says nothing about her moral fibre, bravery, or intelligence — and least of all her desire to succeed. It only reminds us that the world, or at least this country, is not designed for individual independence. It is not even designed for interdependence. It is designed, deliberately, to retain power within guarded paradigms and hierarchies, relying on conditioning and complicity as much as on mandates and oppression. Escaping an abusive household or relationship is an excruciating, multi-pronged, and often prolonged process. It is far more dependent on external circumstances than on inner resources or willpower. A person operates with agency whenever they weigh their options, assesses them realistically and stays honest with themselves — regardless of the outcome. Not being able to leave is not an indication of weakness, but nobody "chooses" to stay. Returning after leaving is also not a revelation of character. Neither are these markers of large-heartedness, and the Delhi High Court's statement is shocking because it valorises suffering. It upholds the patriarchal and misogynistic trope that women's resilience is to be celebrated, rather than demanding that the structural causes of their suffering be dismantled. People witnessing or opining on abuse and harm liberally use the F-word when it comes to survivorship, both when it comes to rebuilding life after leaving the abuser(s) or to coming to the acceptance that one will continue to stay with them. The F-word here is "forgiveness". It is an ugly, and ironically merciless, word. The concept of forgiveness is merely another place where survivors are failed. Lip service also often stops at claiming the idea is "misunderstood", or that it's "for oneself". The truth is that a survivor's grief, rage, bitterness, fear, or other forms of anguish are often deeply inconvenient to those around them, and once again the onus is spun back onto the survivor themselves to make a change. On their own, and in silence. No survivor on earth has to forgive those who acted against them, and doing so or not doing so has absolutely no bearing on whether or not they are good, strong, wise, or healing well. Why not turn the gaze onto the perpetrator and examine their nature instead?



SHARANYA MANIVANNAN @SHE\_OF\_THE\_SEA The columnist is a writer and illustrator



JITHA KARTHIKEYAN jithakarthekeyan2@gmail.com (Jitha Karthikeyan is an artist and curator, passionate about making art accessible to the larger public)

CHILDHOODS were once filled with magic. Hours disappeared watching magicians pull rabbits out of tall hats and pigeons from modest handkerchiefs. No matter how many magic shows we watched, the sudden appearance of an object never failed to fill us with innocent wonder. The impossible seemed perfectly believable for a few brief moments. Then adulthood arrives, and nothing magically appears anymore. Disappearances, however, are plentiful — your monthly salary, your precious time, elected political representatives who once appeared endlessly with glittering speeches about a promised paradise, your belief in universal goodness and of course, your peace of mind. The last item, unfortunately, is largely irretrievable. The world of art, however, has brought back the magic of surprise appearances. The man responsible is the anonymous artist Banksy. For the uninitiated, Banksy is a street artist whose identity remains unknown despite decades of speculation. Since the 1990s, the elusive artist has challenged authority and commented on everything that is going wrong with the world, turning public spaces into se-

TALKING ART

The surprise remains



cret canvases. His artworks appear overnight without warning, delivering sharp satirical messages before the world wakes up. The artworld's magician indeed! His latest work — a sculpture — was installed under the

cloak of darkness on April 29, 2026. The piece depicts a suited man holding a flag that blows backward and completely covers his face as he unknowingly walks off a plinth. The sculpture was erected overnight in London's Waterloo Place, an

area known for its 19th-century monuments celebrating British military history and imperialism. This work has widely been interpreted as a commentary on blind patriotism — a man in power whose vision is obstructed by the very

flag he carries, inevitably leading him towards a fall he cannot see coming. In an age where nationalism has been marketed to justify wars and genocides, the symbolism hardly requires detailed explanation. Imagine the surprise of citizens waking up one morning to find the statue standing there unannounced. How did Banksy manage it, especially in a busy public square? In a video posted on Instagram the following day, workers can be seen marking off the area with traffic cones, placing the base and then lifting the sculpture onto the plinth with a hook. A Banksy expert explained the likely operation: "They've probably surveyed the area, worked out what happens when, gone in during the early hours with a low-loader truck, and possibly installed it within minutes at the quietest possible time." The sculpture has since drawn huge crowds, and authorities have stated that they do not intend to remove it. Protective safety barriers have also come up around it. Banksy, however, has not always been so fortunate. A mural from last year, depicting a judge poised to strike a protester with his gavel, was removed within days by authorities. But perhaps that is the nature of Banksy's art. The artwork may disappear, yet the appearance remains. Long after the walls are cleaned, the statues removed and the paint erased, the surprise lingers in public memory — like the final trick of a magician who has already vanished from the stage.

CHENNAI DIGEST



Bank of Maharashtra strengthens Chennai presence Bank of Maharashtra inaugurated its new branch at Maduranthakam on May 13, marking the 52nd branch in the Chennai zone. The branch was inaugurated by KR Narendran, revenue district officer of Maduranthakam, in the presence of VP Srivastava, chief general manager and zonal manager, Bank of Maharashtra, Chennai Zone. With this expansion, the bank reinforces its commitment to providing modern banking facilities for individuals, businesses, and institutions, while fostering community development and financial inclusion.



Ambica Empire bags awards for excellence Ambica Empire has once again received three prestigious awards at the grand Achievers Award Ceremony 2026, hosted by the Indian Seafarers Welfare Organisation (ISWOT) & Malai Murasu. The awards bagged are Culinary Excellence Award 2026, Leadership Excellence Award 2026, and Outstanding Woman Achiever Award 2026. R Kalathinathan, general manager of Ambica Empire Hotel and Ambica Group of Hotels, has been honoured with the Leadership Excellence Award 2026. RK Pushpalatha, administrative manager, has been conferred with the Outstanding Woman Achiever Award 2026.



# 'I DON'T GET OFFENDED BY BODY SHAMING'

Karuppu star Indrans discusses his early struggles, working with Suriya and RJ Balaji, his train travels, why he chooses to be part of big ensembles, and more

generation may not have the privilege to have such experiences. We do have a lot to learn from them, but they cannot be free birds like us. I guess this is purely because of the change in times." Speaking of time, despite the growth in stature over the years, Indrans has still not forgotten his roots. Take his small role in Mahesh Narayanan's *Patriot*, opposite Mohanlal, for instance. "I still want to act with a talented team and big artists. That said, I still get roles with greater prominence. For example, one of my upcoming projects is a multilingual film from Mini Studio, titled *Ananthan Kaadu*, scripted by Murali Gopi and co-starring Arya. I also have an upcoming Tamil-Malayalam film titled *Chinna Chinna Aasai*, co-starring Madhoo."

While the makers of *Ananthan Kaadu* are yet to call Indrans for dubbing, team *Karuppu* granted his request about dubbing for his portions himself. Speaking of his experience working with Suriya on the film, he says, "I usually stay away from such big stars on set out of sheer respect, and they all ask me why I do this. Suriya sir is no different. He is such a respectful and loving person. When he sees me on set, he would come running towards me. It is a delight to act with him, too. His expressions make scenes engaging even without any dialogues, and his presence brings a renewed spirit to his co-stars." On the other hand, recalling his experience collaborating with RJ Balaji, Indrans shares, "He is quite energetic and keeps everyone alive and buzzing on set even while shooting intense sequences. He would also bring out the best in us and appreciate us when he likes our performance." While Balaji has mentioned that he only has a cameo in *Karuppu*, Indrans clarifies, saying, "His character has importance, and I have combination scenes with him." Indrans' credits in Tamil also include *Aadam Koothu*, writer-director TV Chandran's 2006 film. He attributes his sparse filmography in Tamil to linguistic challenges and a demanding schedule in Malayalam. "We can do justice to the character only if we know the language really well. Otherwise, we will not be able to deliver the right expressions, even when there are no lines to speak. Further, they take time to shoot films in Tamil and operate more peacefully than over here. So I cannot just run back and forth for films in both industries," he explains. The actor is also looking for author-backed characters with a soul that make audiences forget his appearance. "I like such characters, regardless of whether they are heroes or antagonists," he reveals.

SREEJITH MULLAPPILLY

INDRANS' journey has been all about desire. At the *Karuppu* audio launch, Suriya praised the actor, highlighting his background as a tailor and costume designer and his long journey in cinema. He spoke about the evolution of Indrans from an actor who faced body shaming while being relegated to small roles in ensemble comedies to one who now makes his presence felt with lead characters. He also discussed Indrans' hunger and passion for learning, underscoring how his *Karuppu* co-star recently completed seventh standard. Addressing his early struggles, Indrans says, "I belong to a generation that does not get easily offended by body shaming. The current generation is more conscious of it, which is not a bad thing. People feel sad about it when they do not recognise their strengths well enough. I have

been called many names to identify my characters in films, but it has also made people laugh. This has made me realise that my appearance is my strength as well." Throughout his career, Indrans has played characters with great recall value. *Karuppu* brings him back to Tamil cinema after 2012's *Nanban*, featuring him in a blink-and-you'll-miss-it cameo. This lack of ego drives his career choices, as he continues to balance marquee projects with nuanced supporting roles, some of which have made him viral. Long before he became an on-line sensation, Indrans was known for something virtually unimaginable in the digital age: his preference for public transport. The social media generation may not know about his legendary train travels. It made the headlines when he once boarded a general compartment in a passenger train. "Even today, I travel by train to the set. Sometimes, I talk to the TTE and find empty compartments. When at the

**RJ Balaji is quite energetic and keeps everyone alive and buzzing on set even while shooting intense sequences. He would bring out the best in us and appreciate us when he likes our performance.**

—Indrans, Actor

station, I hide my face with a cap to ensure that there is no chaos, but when I board the train, I do not mind revealing my identity to my fellow passengers, and their recognition delights me." Indrans says that the post-COVID popularity of Malayalam cinema contributed greatly to this greater recognition. That is when he started getting solid lead characters in films, such as *Home*, which earned him a National Award. His train travels serve as a testament to the fact that Indrans interacts with the public with no vanity or ego. Interestingly, he says that today's film personalities do not have the same freedom. "We had great fun on and off the set. I think today's



**RIYA SHIBU  
 JOINS CHIYAAN 63**

ACTOR-PRODUCER Riya Shibu has joined the cast of *Chiyaan 63* as the female lead. The Vikram starrer, directed by Anand Shankar, will

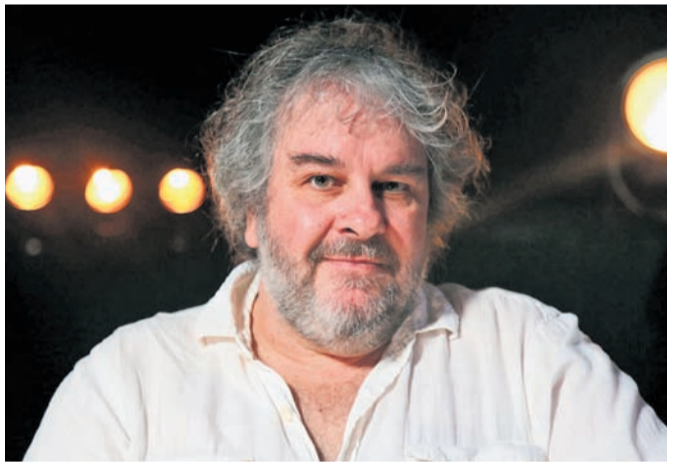
mark her Tamil acting debut. Interestingly, Riya Shibu backed Vikram's *Veera Dheera Sooran - Part 2* (2025) under HR Pictures. Vikram and Anand Shankar's first collaboration was *Iru Mugan* in 2016. *Chiyaan 63* will feature music by Santhosh Narayanan, who last worked on Vikram-Karthik Subbaraj's *Mahaan* in 2022. The upcoming film has cinematographer RD Rajasekar, editor Raymond Derrick Crasta, production designer Rajeevan, and art director Surya Rajeevan. Reports also suggested that MS Bhaskar and Urvashi are set to join the cast in prominent roles, but the makers are yet to confirm the same. Riya Shibu is currently gearing up for the release of her second film as an actor, *Athiradi*, which is scheduled for release on May 15. She earned fame for her performance in *Sarvam Maya*, in which she starred alongside Nivin Pauly.



## Dennis To returns to Ip Man spinoff

DENNIS To is set to reprise his role as the legendary Wing Chun grandmaster in *Ip Man: Kung Fu Legacy*, the next film in the martial arts franchise. Dennis To's films are a spinoff of the original *Ip Man* franchise, which Donnie Yen fronted. Over the years, the spinoff franchise has carved its own niche and gained popularity. Dennis' portrayal of the grandmaster; Bruce Lee's mentor, is unique for its younger, and more traditional presentation.

To starred in the spinoff film *The Legend Is Born: Ip Man* in the titular role. He went on to star in *Ip Man: Kung Fu Master* (2019) and *Ip Man: The Awakening* (2021).



## New Tintin film in the works

FIFTEEN years after Steven Spielberg's animated film, *The Adventures of Tintin*, hit the theatres, it looks like the franchise has been finally revived. Speaking at a Cannes Film Festival masterclass a day after receiving an Honorary Palme d'Or, filmmaker Peter Jackson revealed that he is working on a new *Tintin* film.

Jackson revealed that he has been working with Fran Walsh, his writing partner Peter

Jackson and Spielberg famously made a pact years ago, which would see Spielberg direct and Jackson produce the first film, then Jackson direct and Spielberg produce the second.

Popular for his *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films, Jackson last directed *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* (2014). With his recent announcement,

Jackson is set to return to the director's chair after over a decade.



## It's a wrap for Con City

THE shooting for Arjun Das and Anna Ben's *Con City* has been completed, the makers announced on Wednesday. The film also stars Yogi Babu and Vadivukkarasi in prominent roles and will mark the directorial debut of Harish Durairaj.

The ensemble cast of *Con City* also includes Thambi Ramaiah, Ramesh Thilak, Imman Annachi, Baradwaj Rangan, Ponvannan, Madhan Dhakshinamoorthy, Sathanand M, Ragu Esaki Radha Ravi, VTV Ganesh, Arul Doss, Shaji Chen, Dheepa Ramanujam, and

Nanda Gopal. On the technical team, the film has music by Sean Roldan, cinematography by Aravind Viswanathan, editing by Arul Moses A and art direction by Raj Kamal. A release date for *Con City* is yet to be announced. Besides Tamil, the film will also be released in Telugu.