

NDA govt assumes office in Pondy for 2nd term in succession, AINRC Founder N Rangasamy sworn-in as CM

Puducherry : AINRC Founder-President N Rangasamy, heading the NDA in Puducherry, was on Wednesday sworn in as the Chief Minister for the fifth time. Along with Mr Rangasamy, heading the NDA government for a second successive term, two other MLAs, one each from AINRC and BJP, were sworn in as Cabinet Ministers.

Puducherry Lt Governor N Kailashanathan administered the office and secrecy to Mr Rangasamy and the two Ministers at a simple swearing in ceremony held at the Raj Nivas here. The two Ministers are BJP Legislative Party leader and former Home Minister A Namasivayam, elected from the Mannadipet constituency and AINRC MLA Malladi Krishna Rao, elected from Yanam Region of the union Territory.

BJP National President Nitin Nabin,



union Minister and BJP Puducherry Observer Mansukh Mandaviya, BJP election in-charge Nirmal Kumar Surana, leaders of the NDA partners, including the AIADMK and the Lakshiya Jananaayaga Katchi (LJK), and senior officials of the territorial administration were among those present in the swear-

ing in ceremony. The new cabinet, which assumed office today, would be expanded in the coming days with the induction of more Ministers.

Of the total 30 seats, the AINRC-led NDA won 18 seats, AINRC alone won 12 seats, the BJP four seats and the AIADMK and LJK one each, while the Opposition Congress-DMK INDIA bloc won six seats , with the DMK bagging five and Congress (one). Of the remaining six seats were won by TVK and it allies and Independents.

In the April 9 elections, Mr Rangasamy won from two seats-his stronghold of Thattanchavady, defeating PCC President and his bete noire V Vaithilingam, also a Lok Sabha MP, who finished a distant fourth, and also from Mangalam constituency. Now having assumed office as the Chief Minister, he

would be resigning one of them, soon.

Mr Rangasamy had served as Chief Minister during his stint with his parent party Congress in the past. In 2008, when he was heading another Congress regime, differences cropped up between him and Vaithilingam leading to his resignation.

The rivalry between the two dated back to their days together in the Congress when Vaithilingam led a rebellion against Rangasamy and succeeded him as Chief Minister in September 2008 for a second time.

However, Rangasamy formed his own party AINRC and became the Chief Minister in 2011, before losing power to the Congress in 2016 only to return back as CM again in 2021 and retained power for second successive term and was sworn-in today.

TRP RAISES CONCERNS OVER AADHAAR ATTENDANCE SYSTEM

Jogulamba Gadwal TSIT Leaders of the Telangana Rajyadhikara Party expressed serious concern over the implementation of the Face Aadhaar Authentication system under the MGNREGS after a labourer reportedly collapsed and died during attendance authentication in Induvasi Village. A TRP delegation led by District Labour Wing President G. Narsimulu visited several villages in Gattu Mandal and interacted with MGNREGS workers regarding difficulties faced at work-sites. According to workers and party leaders, the deceased labourer, identified as Tholu Thimmappa, collapsed while the Face Aadhaar Authentication process was being conducted at the Gangambai Kunta work-site. The incident reportedly occurred under extreme heat conditions.

TRP leaders alleged that the mandatory authentica-

tion system has become a burden on workers and field staff, who are forced to stand in open areas under temperatures exceeding 46 degrees Celsius, often facing network issues while completing attendance procedures twice daily. The leaders also claimed that basic facilities such as drinking water, shade, and first aid were inadequate at worksites, increasing hardships for labourers during the ongoing heatwave. Demanding immediate government intervention, the party called for withdrawal of the Face Aadhaar Authentication system under MGNREGS and sought 5 lakh compensation for the deceased worker's family under the labour accident insurance scheme.

Officials, including MPDO Chennayya, APO Swamy, Gram Panchayat staff, technical assistants, and local representatives, were present during the visit and discussions.



AIADMK chief Palaniswami removes key leaders in major organisational reshuffle

Chennai, May 13 : AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Wednesday announced a major organisational reshuffle within the party, removing several senior leaders and sitting MLAs from their posts as district secretaries and appointing a new set of office-bearers across Tamil Nadu. The sweeping changes come amid internal turbulence within the party following the recent political developments in Tamil Nadu and are being viewed as an attempt by the AIADMK leadership to strengthen the organisation at the grass-roots level and consolidate



control over district units. Among the prominent leaders relieved of their district responsibilities are former Ministers Natham R. Viswanathan from Dindigul East, S.P. Velumani from

Coimbatore Suburban South, C.Ve. Shanmugam from Villupuram, R. Kamaraj from Thiruvallur and C. Vijayabaskar from Pudukkottai North. Other senior functionaries

removed from district secretary posts include P. Thangamani in Namakkal, K.P. Anbalagan in Dharmapuri, B. Benjamin in Tiruvallur Central, Udumalai K. Radhakrishnan in Tiruppur Suburban West and S.T.K. Jakkaiyan in Theni West.

The reshuffle also affected several other district leaders, including Isakki Subbaiah, M.C. Sampath, K.C. Veeramani, M.R. Vijayabaskar, K.V. Ramalingam, P. Balakrishna Reddy and A. Arunmozhiadevan, along with a number of other office-bearers across the state.

HI LIFE EXHIBITION TO SHOWCASE DESIGNER FASHION AND LUXURY COLLECTIONS IN HYDERABAD

Hyderabad (TSIT) Hi Life Exhibition is set to bring a grand showcase of designer fashion, couture collections, jewellery, and luxury accessories to Hyderabad from May 15 to 17 at Hyderabad International Convention Centre. The exhibition will feature exclusive collections from leading designers across India, offering visitors an opportunity to explore the latest trends in fashion, bridal wear, statement jewellery, and premium lifestyle products. Fashion enthusiasts can expect a wide range of elegant couture, contemporary designer wear, handcrafted accessories, and luxury collections under one roof. The event aims to provide a premium shopping and fashion experience for visitors in the



city. Organisers said the exhibition would bring together top fashion labels and emerging designers, making it a major destination for style, glamour, and contemporary fashion trends in Hyderabad.

Farmers Allege Delays, Irregularities in Procurement



Hyderabad (TSIT) Farmers Allege Delays, Irregularities in Procurement Leaders of the Telangana Rajyadhikara Party visited the agricultural market yard in Jogulamba Gadwal and interacted with farmers facing difficulties in maize and paddy procurement. Farmers complained of severe delays in procurement,

shortage of transport lorries and hamalis, and alleged negligence by officials, forcing them to remain in the market yard for nearly 15 to 20 days.

They said that after spending months cultivating crops amid irrigation shortages, rising input costs, fake seed issues, and debts, they were still not receiving proper prices for their

produce. Party leaders alleged irregularities in maize procurement, claiming that traders and officials were deducting up to 2.6 kilograms per quintal instead of the permitted 1.3 kilograms, causing financial losses to farmers. Similar complaints were raised in paddy procurement over excessive deductions in the name of moisture content.

The leaders warned that unseasonal rains could damage the crops lying in the open market yard and demanded immediate completion of procurement and shifting of produce to warehouses. The delegation included district president Morugu Veeresh, working president Uppari Gangadhar Sagar Sindanur, farmers' wing district president R. Tippa Reddy, and other party leaders.

Kamineni Hospitals launches Bone Marrow Transplant Unit

Hyderabad, May 13, 2026: In a significant step towards strengthening advanced healthcare services for patients suffering from blood-related disorders, Kamineni Hospitals on Wednesday inaugurated a state-of-the-art Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) Unit aimed at providing specialised treatment for children and patients battling conditions such as thalassemia, leukemia and aplastic anaemia. The facility was inaugurated by Sri Tridandi Srimannarayana Ramanuja Chinna Jeeyar Swamy, who attended the programme as the chief guest and offered his blessings. The newly established unit is expected to provide advanced treatment options for children suffering from thalassemia, who currently depend on frequent blood transfusions for survival. Hospital authorities stated that bone marrow transplantation offers a long-term and potentially curative solution, particularly for underprivileged families who often find the treatment financially inaccessible. Speaking on the occasion, Sri Tridandi Srimannarayana



Ramanuja Chinna Jeeyar Swamy said supporting children suffering from serious illnesses was a collective social responsibility. He described the treatment and care being extended to thalassemia children as a noble humanitarian service and appreciated the management of Kamineni Hospitals

for taking forward the spirit of "Manava Seva Madhava Seva" (service to humanity is service to God). He expressed hope that the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit would bring renewed hope and a new lease of life to several families. The Swamy also called upon the youth to actively participate

in blood donation initiatives and emphasised that healthcare services should go beyond treatment and uphold compassion and humanity. Later, Kamineni Hospitals Managing Director Dr. Kamineni Shashidhar said the BMT unit was established with the objective of delivering the highest standards of medical care to children suffering from thalassemia and other blood-related disorders. He stated that the management was committed to providing 100 per cent free treatment for children affected by thalassemia and appreciated the efforts of thalassemia coordinators and voluntary blood donors supporting affected children through blood donation drives and awareness activities. Doctors, hospital staff, parents of thalassemia children, devotees and representatives of various service organisations participated in the programme in large numbers. Doctors, hospital staff, parents of thalassemia children, devotees and representatives of various service organisations participated in the programme in large numbers.

Law Must Remain Supreme: Immediate and Impartial Action Needed in Bhageerath Case



BY DR. JITHENDER RAO THANUGULA
Senior Journalist & World Environment Media Cell Chairman

The recent allegations and criminal case registered against Bandi Sai Bhageerath under serious provisions of the POCSO Act have triggered widespread public concern across Telangana and beyond. Whenever allegations involving crimes against women or minors emerge, society expects one thing above all else — swift, impartial, and transparent justice without political influence or selective treatment.

In a democratic nation governed by the Constitution and the rule of law, no individual can be considered above legal scrutiny, regardless of political background, family status, or influence. The law must function equally for all citizens. If the police have



found sufficient grounds to register a serious case under the POCSO Act, then the investigation must proceed fearlessly, professionally, and without delay.

The demand from civil society, journalists, women's organizations, and legal observers is not based on political rivalry but on the principle that justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done. In

cases involving sensitive allegations, any delay in investigation or action naturally raises public suspicion and damages confidence in the system. At the same time, it is equally important to remember that every accused person has the constitutional right to defend themselves before the court of law. The final verdict belongs only to the judiciary. However, legal accountability and proper investigation can-

not be weakened or avoided due to political stature or pressure. As a journalist who has consistently spoken for democratic accountability and ethical governance, I strongly believe that the authorities must ensure complete transparency in this matter. If evidence and investigation justify custodial action, then law enforcement agencies should proceed strictly according to legal procedure without hesitation.

India's democracy derives its strength from public trust in institutions. That trust survives only when justice is applied uniformly — whether the accused is ordinary or influential. Selective silence or selective action weakens democracy and encourages public cynicism. This case must therefore become an example of constitutional fairness, institutional courage, and equality before law. The people of Telangana are closely watching how the system responds. Justice, accountability, and truth must prevail above politics.

CARE Hospitals Restores Breathing of 60-Year-Old Patient

Hyderabad, 13th May, 2026: A 60-year-old patient who had been struggling to breathe and unable to speak comfortably for several months following spinal surgery regained his voice and normal breathing after undergoing a highly specialised minimally invasive airway intervention at CARE Hospitals, Hitech City.

The patient, a Hyderabad resident, had earlier undergone spinal surgery following an accident, after which a tracheostomy procedure was performed to support breathing during recovery. The trachea, commonly known as the windpipe, is the main airway that carries air to the lungs. However, repeated attempts to remove the tracheostomy tube over the following weeks were unsuccessful, leaving the patient dependent on assisted airway support and significantly affecting his ability to speak and breathe normally.

Following repeated unsuccessful attempts to remove the tracheostomy tube and



persistent breathing difficulty, the patient was referred to the Pulmonology team at CARE Hospitals, Hitech City for further evaluation. A detailed bronchoscopy examination revealed severe tracheal stenosis, a critical narrowing of the windpipe, with nearly 90% airway blockage, a potentially life-threatening condition that can occasionally develop in patients requiring prolonged airway support or ventilation.

Following stabilisation, the multidisciplinary team comprising Dr. Sathish C Reddy, Senior Consultant –

Clinical & Interventional Pulmonologist, and Dr. M Abdul Amjad Khan, Consultant ENT, Head & Neck Surgery, performed a complex rigid bronchoscopy procedure using advanced electro-cautery knife techniques and CRE balloon dilatation to carefully reopen the critically narrowed airway. To prevent recurrence and maintain long-term airway patency, a silicone stent was subsequently deployed.

The advanced minimally invasive procedure helped avoid major open airway surgery and resulted in immediate improvement in

the patient's breathing. Soon after the intervention, the patient was able to speak comfortably again and breathe normally without distress, significantly improving his overall quality of life.

Speaking about the case, Dr. Sathish C Reddy, Senior Consultant - Clinical & Interventional Pulmonologist, said, "Tracheal stenosis is a serious but often under-recognised complication in patients requiring prolonged airway support. In this patient, the airway had narrowed almost completely, severely affecting both breathing and speech. In severe tracheal stenosis, even a small delay can turn into a breathing emergency. Using advanced interventional pulmonology techniques, we were able to restore the airway through a minimally invasive approach without the need for major open surgery. Early diagnosis and timely bronchoscopic intervention can make a life-changing difference for such patients."

EDITORIAL

The Beijing Visit: Why Does Trump Suddenly Need Xi Jinping?

The results of US President Donald Trump's visit to China will be carefully watched and analysed in many capitals. It is unlikely that it will produce major or durable results, although both sides would have done advance work to ensure that some positive outcomes can be announced. With his impetuosity and erratic policies, and his disruption of the global system, Trump has seriously eroded trust in the US and damaged its standing in the world. The US is no longer seen as a reliable partner by allies and friends.

Who Trump Is

A transactional approach to foreign relations does not build mutual confidence, as deal-making is based on a short-term perspective, not longer term strategic investment. Trump has shown that the deals he has made can be disavowed by him. Besides, in deal-making, he wants to emerge as the unqualified winner, which means he wants one-sided deals. Trump transgresses US constitutional checks and balances and defies domestic laws to get his way. It is this mindset that is behind his disregard of international law. His kidnapping of the serving head of state of Venezuela, his war on Iran, his blockade of Cuba and open threats to change the regime there show that his foreign policy is based on raw power, discarding even a diplomatic veneer of values or principles.

What Trump Can Do

While, as his wont, Trump is rhetorical about his personal ties with President Xi, lavishes praise on the Chinese leader - which is part of his patronising style and is intended to boost his own persona - the hard-nosed, unsentimental, coldly calculating, self-focused Chinese will hardly be duped by such talk. More to the point, the US is explicit in viewing China as a technology rival, with focus now on the AI domain. It intends to develop over time domestic production in the area of critical technologies and raw materials that China today virtually monopolises, and progressively reduce its dependence on China. The US has accused China of many sins, including supporting Russia and Iran militarily. It has threatened China with sanctions, to which the Chinese react sharply. If the US has denied advanced technology to China, especially its most advanced chips, the Chinese have retaliated with limiting US access to dual-use critical minerals, such as graphite items used in EV batteries, and, in principle, not permitting the export of gallium, germanium, antimony and super hard materials that have widespread military applications and are used in semiconductors.

How NEET Has Now Become A Trauma Machine For 22 Lakh Students

The journey of a NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) aspirant in the post-2024 era is no longer a conventional academic challenge. It has evolved into a prolonged psychological endurance test where uncertainty, institutional mistrust, and emotional exhaustion have become inseparable from preparation itself. For the student who began preparing in mid-2024 for the 2026 examination cycle, the experience did not begin with ambition alone. It began under the dark shadow of investigations, paper leak allegations, grace-mark controversies, and a national debate over the credibility of the examination system itself. For nearly 22 lakh students and their families, the NEET ecosystem transformed from a merit-based competition into an emotionally volatile environment where the rules themselves appeared unstable. From a psychological perspective, this is not merely academic stress. It is systemic trauma generated by repeated exposure to uncertainty, perceived injustice, and the fear that effort may no longer guarantee outcome.

I. Psychological Arc: The Snakes and Ladders of Despair
To truly understand the mental landscape of a NEET aspirant, one must imagine the preparation process as a giant board of Snakes and Ladders. In earlier years, students believed that discipline, consistency, and intelligence would eventually help them climb the ladders toward success. In the post-2024 atmosphere, however, the board itself appears distorted. The ladders are fragile, while the snakes are institutional and unpredictable.



1. The Starting Point (June 2024)

Unlike previous batches, the 2024-2026 cohort entered preparation carrying the psychological baggage of the previous controversy. The widely discussed issue of 67 toppers securing a perfect 720 score, followed by allegations involving grace marks and paper leaks, deeply altered the emotional starting point of aspirants.

This created what psychologists describe as Moral Injury, a condition in which individuals feel betrayed by systems that are expected to uphold fairness and ethics. Instead of studying with optimism, many students developed a defensive mindset. Their motivation subtly shifted from "I will succeed through hard work" to "I must outperform corruption itself". This distinction is critical. One mindset builds confidence; the other builds anxiety. The first major "snake" in the game emerged here: the frightening real-

isation that effort and outcome may no longer have a reliable relationship.

2. The Monastic Grind (2025)

The next 18 months resembled a form of controlled social isolation. Students entered what can only be described as a monastic existence. Social outings disappeared. Friendships weakened. Festivals became distractions.

Hobbies were abandoned. Entire households reorganised themselves around study schedules, coaching classes, mock tests, and rank predictors. This phase generated a condition similar to Sensory Deprivation, where life narrows into a single repetitive objective.

Mock tests became the ladders that offered temporary emotional relief. Yet even these ladders became unstable because of score inflation trends following the 2024 controversy. A score of 600/720 - once cel-

ebrated as exceptional - began to feel inadequate. Students increasingly perceived anything below 680 as dangerous territory.

The emotional damage extended beyond students.

Parents became what trauma psychology calls 'Secondary Victims'. Their emotional states became directly tied to the child's performance. Every test score influenced household mood, financial planning, and even family relationships. This phenomenon is known as Vicarious Anxiety, where the parent psychologically experiences the child's stress as their own. For many middle-class families investing lakhs into coaching, hostel fees, transportation, and study materials, NEET preparation became the emotional and financial centre of life itself.

3. The Crescendo (May 3, 2026)

Exam day represented the climax

of two years of accumulated pressure. However, unlike earlier generations, the 2026 aspirant entered the examination hall carrying not only academic fear but also historical distrust. This produced a state of Acute Performance Pressure amplified by Historical Trauma. The internal dialogue of many students became painfully paradoxical: "If the paper is easy, cut-offs will become impossible. If it is difficult, I may fail. If another leak occurs, none of this effort will matter anyway." This is psychologically devastating because it creates a no-win cognitive environment. Physiologically, students experienced chronic activation of the sympathetic nervous system. Elevated cortisol levels, shallow breathing, nausea, tremors, headaches, digestive disturbances, and "tunnel vision" became common. The brain, instead of functioning as an adaptive learning organ, entered survival mode.

4. The 10-Day Purgatory (May 3 - May 12)

Traditionally, the post-exam period serves as psychological decompression. Students reconnect with life, sleep normally, and slowly regain emotional balance. For the 2026 cohort, the opposite occurred. The days after the examination became a phase of Hyper-Vigilance. Every news update involving the NTA, the CBI, alleged leaks, or discussions of cancellations triggered anxiety spikes. Students remained trapped in a suspended emotional state where the finish line constantly shifted. Instead of entering the restorative "Rest and Digest" phase, aspirants remained locked in "Fight or Flight" mode, resulting in emotional exhaustion without closure.

THE GREAT GULF DIVORCE:

The UAE Has Broken From The Arab Order - But For What, Really?

Between May 4 and 10, the UAE was struck by drones and missiles, with vital installations, including the Fujairah Oil Industry Zone, being hit. Even though Iran's Revolutionary Guards formally denied these strikes on May 4, they occurred after the US made a fresh naval attempt to open the Strait of Hormuz (Project Freedom). But while the US suspended the operation by May 6 (after the strikes on Fujairah), skirmishes between US naval forces and the IRGC Navy led to the United States bombing Iran's Qeshm Island and Bandar Abbas port on May 7. Iran's retaliation has specifically targeted the UAE along with US naval forces; the Emirati Defense Ministry issued announcements on May 8 that it was "dealing with missile and drone attacks originating from Iran". Iran's special focus on hitting the UAE has long been clear across this war. According to the Wall Street Journal's May 11 report, this had also led to unprecedented Emirati (unacknowledged) strikes on Iran's Lavan refinery on April 8 as the ceasefire began to take shape (which Iran had responded to with reciprocal strikes). Overall, the UAE has faced more drone/missile strikes than Israel - more than, in fact, what other GCC states have suffered combined. Among other aspects, these Iranian strikes represent a major challenge to the UAE's attempt at "strategic breakout" - a categorical break to decades of geopolitical alignment with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This attempt was crystallized on May 1,



when the UAE quit the OPEC after spending 59 years as the second most powerful member of the world's largest oil cartel.

The Saudi Shadow

Since its formation in 1971, the UAE has had to contend between two foreign policy objectives - leveraging its economic might to project power and avoiding misalignment with Saudi Arabia on regional geopolitical choices. This equation was established firmly by Riyadh early, when it made the recognition of the UAE contingent upon the concession of the Buraimi Corridor - which otherwise made the UAE a border state to Qatar - through the 1974 Treaty of Jeddah. For the UAE, this concession was necessary to pre-empt a dangerous rivalry, if not to gain an uneasy and considerably larger ally. Functionally, this meant that the UAE's geopolitical choices would necessarily have to align with Saudi Arabia or keep Riyadh in confidence. This meant that in the decades since, while Iran

has been the UAE's most potent threat, the Emirates has consistently sought to build its bargaining power vis-à-vis both Tehran and Riyadh. Indeed, by 2009, US officials assessed that "while publicly expressing close ties with Riyadh, the UAE privately regarded the Kingdom as its second greatest security threat after Iran". In the subsequent decade, the UAE kept Iran diplomatically and economically engaged, especially at times when Riyadh maintained distance (such as in 2013-14 during negotiations for the US-Iran nuclear deal), and has consistently ranked among Iran's top regional trading partners; the annual UAE-Iran trade reached roughly \$29.2 billion (despite US sanctions) by early 2025. However, ultimately, the Emirati objective was not to seek ideological reconciliation with Tehran but to craft an independent approach to enhancing deterrence against the Islamic Republic, without being held down by Saudi sensitivities. To offset its

lack of geographic and military-industrial depth necessary to achieve this, the UAE's preference has long been to build a robust security relationship with both the United States and Israel. This has led to the UAE categorically aligning itself with Washington militarily, unlike the more partnership-of-equals strategy prioritised by Saudi Arabia, America's oldest Arab ally and a state that prides itself on its civilisational status and strategic depth. For Iran itself, this Emirati strategy has often caused discomfort, but Tehran has historically reciprocated the UAE's modus vivendi by keeping diplomatic and economic channels open.

MBZ Arrives

It is by 2017 that the UAE found fresh space to draw Saudi Arabia closer to the Emirati position vis-à-vis the US and Israel. Becoming de facto ruler of the UAE himself in 2014, Mohammad bin Zayed had already come to share a mentor-mentee relationship with Riyadh's Mohammad bin Salman (MBS), who became Crown Prince in 2017 and is primed to become the first Saudi king from a new generation. MBS's disregard for strict ideological rigor, unlike past Saudi kings, and preference for ruthless modernisation and economic diversification was a natural fit for MBZ, who leveraged his relationship with Washington to help sideline former Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Nayef and personally lobbied for MBS with the incoming first Trump administration in 2016.



The ever-rising debt-to-GDP ratio of Indian states is no longer just an economic indicator, but a serious warning for the country's financial stability and cooperative federalism. Public debt in most states has risen sharply over the past few years. Revenue deficits, populist schemes, weak tax collection systems, and off-budget borrowings have weakened state finances. The Reserve Bank of India and Finance Commissions have also periodically expressed concern about this rising debt trend. If corrective measures are not taken in time, this crisis could impact both the state's growth potential and federal balance in the future. The biggest reason for the rising debt of states is the ever-growing revenue deficit. Many states are unable to meet expenses such as salaries, pensions, interest payments, and subsidies from their regular income. As a result, they are forced to borrow even for normal administrative activities. This situation is considered highly unsustainable from an economic perspective because borrowing is being used for daily expenses rather than productive investment. In states like Punjab, Kerala, and West Bengal, interest payments and pension expenses are continuously increasing, which is limiting resources for developmental projects. Populist politics has also

exacerbated this fiscal crisis. Electoral competition has led to the expansion of free electricity, farm loan waivers, free transportation, cash assistance, and various subsidy schemes. While social welfare schemes are essential to democratic governance, when they exceed fiscal capacity, they undermine fiscal discipline. Most freebies do not enhance long-term economic productivity, reducing future revenue generation potential and increasing the debt burden. The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax regime has also limited the financial autonomy of states. Previously, states had independent revenue sources through value-added tax and other indirect taxes, but now they are largely dependent on central transfers and goods and services tax compensation. Delays in goods and services tax compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated states' financial problems. This increased fiscal differences between the center and states, undermining the spirit of cooperative federalism. A weak tax base is also a significant factor contributing to the economic weakness of states. In many states, property taxes, user fees, and local body taxes are not effectively collected. Weak financial positions of municipalities and panchayats place additional pressure on states. The lack of digital tax administration and data-based monitoring contributes to the problem of tax evasion and revenue loss. Furthermore, off-budget borrowings and hidden liabilities further complicate the true financial situation of states. Many states borrow through public sector

undertakings, power distribution companies, and special purpose vehicles, which are not fully reflected in the official budget. This makes it difficult to accurately assess the actual debt situation. The Reserve Bank of India has repeatedly warned that such hidden liabilities could lead to a major financial crisis in the future. Low productivity of capital expenditures is also a major reason for debt growth. If borrowed projects are not completed on time or do not yield the expected economic benefits, they become a financial burden rather than a source of development. In many states, administrative delays, corruption, and poor project management prevent the full benefits of investments from being realized. The growing debt dependence of states is also affecting Indian federalism. When states are financially weak, they demand greater central assistance, special packages, and additional borrowing limits. This reduces their financial autonomy and increases their dependence on the central government. On the other hand, the central government's imposition of borrowing limits and financial conditions creates political controversy. The growing differences between the central government and states on issues such as goods and services tax compensation and central tax transfers are examples of this tension. Regional inequalities are also growing due to this crisis. Economically stronger states are able to mobilize resources relatively well, while weaker states are increasingly trapped in debt. This upsets the balance of development and reinforces inequality with-

in the federal structure. To address this growing debt crisis, states must practice fiscal discipline. Strict adherence to the goals of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act is essential. Borrowing should be used primarily for capital expenditures and productive investments, not for daily expenses. States must strengthen their tax base. Increasing Goods and Services Tax compliance, implementing property tax reforms, and promoting digital tax administration can increase states' own revenues. Rationalization of unnecessary subsidies and populist schemes is also essential. Governments should increase investment in sectors such as education, health, infrastructure, and skill development, as these promote long-term economic growth and revenue growth. Furthermore, off-budget borrowings and government guarantees should be included in the budget with complete transparency to clarify the true fiscal situation. Structural reforms in loss-making public sector undertakings and power distribution companies are also the need of the hour. Financially empowering local bodies can reduce the burden on states. Decentralization will also be strengthened by providing municipalities and panchayats with greater financial powers and resources. In a vast and diverse country like India, the financial strength of states is the cornerstone of national development. Therefore, striking a balance between fiscal discipline and social welfare is the need of the hour. Simply borrowing and running free schemes is not a long-term solution.

PM MODI'S UAE VISIT TO PUSH ENERGY SECURITY

Pacts Likely On LPG, Petroleum Reserves: Sources

AGENCY
UAE: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to the United Arab Emirates on May 15 will focus heavily on strengthening India's energy security amid escalating tensions in West Asia, government sources said. The stopover in Abu Dhabi was added to the Prime Minister's wider Europe tour at a later stage as concerns grow over disruptions to global oil and gas supply routes. According to the sources, Modi's talks with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan are expected to centre on securing long-term crude oil, LNG and LPG supplies for India, while also exploring alternative export routes that bypass the strategically sensitive Strait of Hormuz. A key area of discussion is likely to be deeper cooperation around the Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone on the Gulf of Oman. India is exploring the possibility of increasing oil and LPG shipments from Fujairah, which offers a safer route outside



the Strait of Hormuz. The sources also said that both countries may also discuss expanding the Fujairah oil terminal and enhancing pipeline connectivity from Abu Dhabi's Habshan fields. The visit comes days after the UAE accused Iran-backed forces of targeting Fujairah's oil infrastructure with drones and missiles. PM Modi had strongly condemned the attack and stressed the importance of safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz for global

energy stability. Energy cooperation remains central to India-UAE ties. The UAE currently supplies nearly 40 per cent of India's LPG requirements and is among India's top crude oil and LNG suppliers. Both countries are also expected to review cooperation on India's strategic petroleum reserves, where ADNOC already stores crude oil at the Mangaluru facility. Besides energy, discussions are expected to cover trade, investment and the welfare

of nearly 4.5 million Indians living in the UAE, sources added. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi shared an article by Union Minister Shri Ravneet Singh Bittu, on how modern railway stations and an improved network are opening new paths to progress in Punjab. Shri Modi remarked that this transformation is bringing a wealth of opportunities for the people.

Shri Modi posted on X:
"In Punjab, modern railway

stations and an improved network are opening new paths to progress. This transformation is bringing a wealth of opportunities for the people here. This article by Union Minister @RavneetBittu Ji illustrates how Punjab is changing. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi today recalled the historic Nuclear tests conducted by India in Pokhran in May 1998, describing them as a defining moment in our nation's resolve. "After the May 11 tests, the entire world brought pressure to bear on India, but we demonstrated that no power can bend India", Shri Modi remarked.

Energy security is expected to emerge as one of the key focus areas during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to the United Arab Emirates, with two important agreements in the areas of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Strategic Petroleum Reserves likely to be concluded, according to sources.

“Lalla Don’t Buy” by Bandhan Mutual Fund Highlights Every Mother’s Late-Night Concern

TSIT DESK
Hyderabad, May 2026: This Mother's Day, Bandhan Mutual Fund launched a quirky and relatable campaign film titled 'Lalla Don't Buy', a humorous twist on the traditional lullaby, where mothers lovingly urge their adult children to put the phone away, stop doom-scrolling shopping apps, sleep on time, and invest in their tomorrow. Speaking about the campaign, Vishal Kapoor, CEO, Bandhan AMC said, "Mothers have always encouraged us to think about tomorrow - whether it was asking us to sleep on time, save wisely, or avoid unnecessary spending. 'Lalla Don't Buy' takes that timeless emotion and places it in today's world of endless scrolling and impulsive shopping. The campaign uses humour and nostalgia to remind people to make more mindful choices, enjoy the present while also choosing to invest for the future." Set against the all-too-familiar backdrop of late-night scrolling, flash sales, and instant purchases, the film captures a uniquely modern parenting truth,



mothers never stop worrying about their children, even when the children are fully grown adults with salaries, credit cards, and questionable mid-night shopping habits. The lullaby humorously nudges viewers toward smarter habits and long-term financial thinking. The campaign is conceptualised by Bandhan Mutual Fund and All In. The campaign brings back a moment many people have grown up with - nights that seemed to stretch on, until a mother's lullaby gently brought everything to a pause. Jane Sequeira, Creative Head at All In added, "As kids, lullabies helped us

sleep. As adults, we stay up scrolling, shopping and spending. 'Lalla Don't Buy' came from reimagining the lullaby for a generation that needs help sleeping and spending a little better. It felt only natural for that reminder to come from Moms" The campaign strikes a balance between entertainment and insight, tapping into a growing cultural reality where online shopping, algorithm-driven recommendations, and late-night browsing have become everyday habits. By turning a mother's concern into a catchy lullaby, the film aims to create both smiles and self-reflection among audiences.

Danone India and Government of Uttar Pradesh introduce Iron-Anthem to drive anemia awareness

Highlights

■ The film is developed in association with the Directorate of Family Welfare, Government of Uttar Pradesh The TVC was conceptualized and brought to life by Womb A simple tiffin box can often reveal the reality of a child's daily nutrition.



TSIT DESK
Hyderabad: The film is developed in association with the Directorate of Family Welfare, Government of Uttar Pradesh The TVC was conceptualized and brought to life by Womb A simple tiffin box can often reveal the reality of a child's daily nutrition. Building on this everyday insight, Danone India, in partnership with the Government of Uttar Pradesh, has introduced a campaign anthem, "India ka Iron UP karenge", aimed at making awareness around iron deficiency and anemia

more relatable, memorable, and actionable. Developed in association with the Directorate of Family Welfare, Government of Uttar Pradesh, the 40-second film brings children to the forefront of the narrative. It opens with a familiar visual of school tiffins, ranging from balanced meals to packaged snacks. Te film later transitions into a lively, child-led rally anchored by a simple, catchy anthem: "India ka Iron UP Karenge, Abh nahi toh kab karenge..." By using children as messengers, the film shifts the conversation from

instruction to participation, encouraging families to reflect on everyday nutritional habits. The anthem reinforces a clear and actionable message, ensuring regular iron intake can play a crucial role in supporting children's growth, health, and development. The TVC was conceptualized and brought to life by The Womb. By anchoring the message in a relatable, everyday setting, the film makes the issue of iron deficiency both visible and immediate. It closes with a clear call to action for parents to rethink what goes into their children's lunch-

boxes, reinforcing that small, consistent choices today can help build a healthier, stronger generation of tomorrow. Bachon ko roz iron khilayein. India ka bhavishya banayein! This initiative builds on IRON UP!, Danone India's broader national movement to address iron deficiency and anemia through early screening, awareness, and community engagement. Through these efforts, the company continues to work alongside healthcare professionals, government bodies, and partners to drive sustained impact at scale.

Shailesh Chaturvedi Raises 90 Cr for Neopolis Brands, to Drive the Next Growth Phase of Global Fashion in India

TSIT DESK
May 13, 2026: — Fashion retail industry veteran Shailesh Chaturvedi today announced launch of his new venture Neopolis Brands Private Limited, supported by a fund raise of 90 Cr from a curated set of marquee investors. Neopolis is targeting tie up with global brands which are market leaders in their home turf and exhibit strong propensity for similar market leadership position in the Indian market. Initial funding of 90 Cr is arranged from strategic wealth creators, including prominent investor Ashish Kacholia and Lashit Sanghvi of Alchemy Capital and strategic partners like Brandix Sri Lanka and Manipal Technologies. The Neopolis team brings together seasoned domain experts who have worked closely with Shailesh earlier, including CFO Ankush Tibrewal, and trusted teams from his previous tenures to drive high quality execution. Speaking on the launch, Shailesh Chaturvedi, Founder, Neopolis brands



said "Scaling is important for profitability, and I am enthused about building few large brands each with min 100 stores in India, each with a large-scale ecommerce share in tune with current consumer trends, alongside distribution in min 40 to 50 cities. Also, I am truly happy to see very strategic investors coming on Board to support this new journey of Neopolis."

Lucky Investments Managers said "Women fashion and accessories continue to present a large, untapped opportunity in India, with strong consumer demand but limited organized scale. Neopolis' focussed approach and industry expertise positions it strongly for building large scale category leading brands." Lashit Sanghvi of Alchemy Capital added "We closely observed how a large public listed company was turned

around rapidly under Shailesh's leadership and his track record of more than 3 decades in scaling up global brands profitably gives us strong confidence in potential of Neopolis brands." India's premium fashion and lifestyle segments continue to experience strong structural tailwinds driven by rising disposable incomes, premiumisation and growing fashion adoption. Categories such as accessories, handbags remain significantly underorganised. The total market is estimated at ₹20,000 Cr with the organised segment at ~ ₹7000 Cr, indicating substantial headroom for brand-led growth. With its deep local insights, high domain expertise and strong focus on product excitement, Neopolis Brands aims for market leadership in this expanding landscape. The capital raised will be deployed towards organizational set up, growth working capital, investments into brands, supply chain and stores, and building digital capabilities.

LINKEDIN LAYOFFS:

Job Search Platform To Axe 5% Of Workforce, Says Report

AGENCY
Mumbai: Job search platform LinkedIn is planning to announce cut 5% of its workforce news agency Reuters reported as saying on Wednesday. The announcement will likely be made later in the day, the report said, adding that the layoffs come as the microsoft-owned company reorganises teams and concentrates staff on areas where its business is growing. The potential layoffs come in the backdrop of a rising year-on-year revenue. According to Microsoft's securities filings, the revenue has risen 12% in the latest ended quarter. The report underscored that an AI takeover of jobs is not the rationale for the job cuts. Currently, LinkedIn has over 17,500 full-time employees globally, according to its website. With over 1.3 billion members, it is the world's largest professional networking



platform. Before its acquisition by Microsoft, the company publicly listed on the New York Stock exchange, following an initial public offer (IPO) in 2011. Later, in 2026, Microsoft acquired the LinkedIn for \$26.2 billion. As of 10:30 a.m. EST, microsoft's stock ticked 1.15% lower to trade at \$403.02. 2026: The Year Of Layoffs? The tech industry saw the highest layoffs in two years in March 2026. Over 46,500 employees were let go, according to data compiled by Layoffs.fyi. Up to 1,03,571

tech employees were dismissed from 131 tech companies so far in 2026, as per the website on May 13. April and May saw comparatively lesser job axing, with the total number of dismissals standing at over 11,000 and over 9,000 (so far), respectively. Oracle had a considerable lead in the volume of employees that it laid off across the globe in March, with up to 30,000 employees fired. The official reason it gave was that they were part of a "broader organizational change".

UWA INDIA ANNOUNCES LANDMARK ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP COMMITMENT

TSIT DESK
Hyderabad, 13 May, 2026: The University of Western Australia (UWA) has announced a landmark scholarship program through UWA India, which is among the most significant standalone commitments in the Indian market. The initiative reinforces UWA's long-term commitment to making globally recognised education more accessible to high-potential students across diverse academic, socioeconomic and regional backgrounds. Professor Amit Chakma, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia, said: "This landmark scholarship commitment reflects UWA's deep and enduring commitment to India. We are expanding access to a globally recognised UWA education and ensuring that financial constraints do not limit ambition. Our goal is to empower talented students across India to realise their full potential and prepare for global careers." Applications for UWA India are now open. With campuses in Mumbai and Chennai, UWA India will offer a portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate programs



across STEM, business and technology disciplines, aligned with global industry demands and India's evolving workforce needs. Students can explore programs and apply via the official website: <https://www.uwa.edu.au/india>. Delivered primarily through

tuition fee reductions, the multi-stream scholarship framework recognises academic merit, financial need, leadership potential and regional inclusion, while aligning with Indian regulatory requirements and UWA's global standards. The program includes merit schol-

arships, global excellence scholarships, equity and CSR-supported funding, State Government co-funded opportunities (initially in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu), and alumni-backed scholarships. Designed to balance scale with academic rigour, the program allows eligible students to combine multiple forms of support—significantly reducing financial barriers while maintaining strong academic outcomes. All scholarships will be governed under UWA's established policies, with transparent eligibility criteria published ahead of each admissions cycle. The scholarship program will be rolled out alongside UWA India admissions, with scholarships incorporated into offers from the first intake. The framework will be formally reviewed after its first year to assess demand, outcomes, and opportunities for expansion. By placing scholarships at the core of its India strategy, UWA is reinforcing its commitment to access, affordability, and academic excellence—while strengthening long-term education and skills partnerships between India and Australia.

TRUMP ARRIVES IN CHINA FOR HIGH-STAKES MEETING WITH XI JINPING

AGENCY
Washington: US President Donald Trump descended the steps of Air Force One in Beijing on Wednesday evening, greeted with pomp and pageantry ahead of a high-stakes meeting with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping. During his two-day visit, the global superpowers are expected to discuss tariffs, competition over tech, the Iran war and the US's relationship with Taiwan. Trump returns to a more assertive China since his last visit in 2017, as he faces growing scrutiny of his military campaign in the Middle East. Trump was originally scheduled to make the trip in March, but it was delayed because of the US and Israel's war in Iran, which continues to roil the global economy. When Trump exited the plane on Wednesday evening, he was greeted by Chinese Vice-President Han Zheng, one of China's top



leaders. The move is being read as a show of respect for the US president from Beijing, after a lower-level leader received Trump on his last visit. Also spotted at the welcome - as a red carpet

was unravelled across the tarmac - was Trump's son Eric Trump, and a slew of US tech industry titans, with Tesla's Elon Musk and Nvidia's Jensen Huang among them. "I will be ask-

ing President Xi, a Leader of extraordinary distinction, to 'open up' China so that these brilliant people can work their magic, and help bring the People's Republic to an even higher level,"

Trump said in a post on social media ahead of his landing. Trump said that will be his "very first request" when he meets the Chinese leader. The war in Iran is expected to dominate

the agenda as Trump meets Xi Jinping. China relies a considerable amount on Iran for oil exports, which have effectively been cut off as ships are unable to navigate the Strait of Hormuz. The country also faces growing pressure from the US to use its economic and political influence over Iran. China and Iran have an alliance dating back decades, and Beijing is Tehran's biggest trading partner. The meeting will also be marked by tensions over Taiwan in the back-drop. The Trump administration has take a mixed approach with Taipei, approving a massive arms deal while downplaying its willingness to defend the island from Chinese aggression. As for trade, Trump is expected push to increase Chinese purchase of US agricultural products, while Beijing looks to pressure the US to reduce its tariffs on Chinese goods.

Woman isolating on British island in South Pacific after hantavirus contact



AGENCY
London: A woman is isolating on the Pitcairn Islands, a remote British Overseas Territory in the South Pacific, after travelling on a hantavirus-hit cruise ship. A local government spokesperson told the BBC the person "had contact with a hantavirus-exposed individual" but was "showing no signs of illness". The UK foreign office said it was "aware of an individual from the MV Hondius who has travelled on to the Pitcairn Islands". Officials said she was not a suspected case and the risk to the public was low. The woman had flown from San Francisco on 7 May and travelled through

the island of Tahiti and then Mangareva in French Polynesia, the French Polynesian government said. No details have been released about when and where she left the cruise and travelled to the US. Three people have died after travelling on the Dutch-flagged MV Hondius ship. Two of them were confirmed virus cases. The third had earlier developed symptoms and is believed to have been the first infected in the outbreak, but died before he could be tested. The World Health Organization (WHO), the UN global health agency, has since confirmed nine cases, with two others suspected.

More than 1,000 passengers held on cruise after gastrointestinal illness outbreak



AGENCY
Washington: More than 1,000 passengers are being held on a UK-operated cruise ship in France after 49 people fell ill from gastrointestinal sickness. Local health authorities in Bordeaux said three passengers had been isolated in their cabins on the Ambition, while other passengers will not be able to disembark in the port. They added that there was "no reason" to link the outbreak to the hantavirus outbreak on a separate cruise ship. The Essex-based Ambassador Cruise Line told the BBC a 92-year-old man had passed away on board on Sunday, but he did not report any related symptoms and his cause of death is yet to be established by a coroner. The cruise operator added: "We are providing every support to the deceased's friends and family and extend our most sincere condolences to them at this difficult time." Ambassador Cruise Line said in a separate statement that as of 11:00 BST on Wednesday, 48 passengers were displaying symptoms consistent with gastrointestinal illness, as well as one crew member. The cruise ship set sail from Belfast on 8 May, before heading to

Liverpool the next day. There are currently 1,187 guests and 514 crew members onboard the ship, according to its operator. In its statement, Ambassador said there was a reported increase in cases after guests boarded in Liverpool. It said "a number of guests and crew onboard Ambition have displayed or are displaying symptoms consistent with gastrointestinal illness". Gastrointestinal illness is a common condition that causes diarrhoea and vomiting. Cases in adults are usually caused by norovirus or food poisoning. David Munster from Dundonald in County Down is on the cruise with his wife. He said that after departing Liverpool they were informed that a number of passengers had "become ill". Munster said: "At this stage we don't know if we will be kept on the ship and just have to sit here until this is dealt with, or whether we'll be allowed to get off and see Bordeaux, which is obviously what we'd love to do." He said passengers were free to use the facilities that were open, but the people who were ill were isolating in their cabins.

PHILIPPINE SENATE IN LOCKDOWN AFTER GUNSHOTS FIRED



AGENCY
Philippines: The Philippine Senate was locked down with military personnel seen entering the building where a senator wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) had sought refuge. Rounds of gunfire were heard but officials have not revealed who fired the shots. They said there were no casualties. Senator Ronald Dela Rosa said earlier

he believed his arrest was imminent and urged Filipinos to prevent it. He is safe and with security personnel, officials said. He is accused by the ICC of killing dozens of people when he was police chief during former president Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs, in which thousands of alleged dealers were shot and killed. Duterte has been held at The Hague since March 2025.

Court overturns Alex Murdaugh's murder convictions and orders new trial

AGENCY
Washington: A South Carolina court has overturned the 2023 murder convictions of Alex Murdaugh, a disgraced lawyer who was convicted of killing his wife and son. The state's supreme court on Wednesday ordered a new trial for Murdaugh over the June 2021 killings. Murdaugh has been in prison serving two life sentences for the murders of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh. He is also serving two additional 27- and 40-year sentences for state and federal financial crimes. Once a powerful lawyer, the 56-year-old and his legal troubles captivated a global audience and inspired documentaries, podcasts and book deals. The trial itself was also televised. In a 5-0 ruling, the South Carolina Supreme Court said Murdaugh deserved a new



trial because the local county clerk had unfairly biased a jury against him. "Both the State and Murdaugh's defense skillfully presented their cases to the jury as the trial court deftly presided over this complicated and high-profile matter," the justices wrote. "However, their efforts were in vain because Colleton County Clerk of Court Rebecca Hill placed her fingers on the scales of justice,

thereby denying Murdaugh his right to a fair trial by an impartial jury." Last December, Hill pleaded guilty to charges of misconduct in office, obstruction of justice and perjury over accusations that she misused public funds as a clerk and shared sealed court information with a reporter, among other claims. Wednesday's ruling cites a number of comments that Hill allegedly made to jurors dur-

ing the trial. One juror wrote in an affidavit that Hill made comments telling jurors to "watch [Murdaugh] closely", which she said influenced her decision to find Murdaugh guilty because she thought the clerk was implying he was. A jury found Murdaugh guilty of the murder of his wife and son - who were shot at close range near the family's dog kennels - after an extensive six-week long trial. Murdaugh was sentenced to life in prison. In their bid to overturn his conviction, Murdaugh's lawyers had argued that Hill tampered with the jury, telling them not to trust his testimony and to speed up the verdict. In the ruling, the justices cite testimony from jurors who say Hill told them "not to be fooled" by the evidence presented by the defence team.

Israeli strikes on cars in southern Lebanon kill 12, health ministry says

AGENCY
Tehran: At least 12 people have been killed in seven separate Israeli air strikes on cars south of Beirut, Lebanon's health ministry says, as the war between Israel and the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah continues despite a ceasefire. Eight people, including two children, died when drones targeted three vehicles on the coastal highway in the Barja, Jiyeh and Saadiyat areas, around 20km (12 miles) from the capital, according to the ministry. The others were killed in strikes on four cars further south, in the city of Sidon and the towns of Maaliyeh, Chaaitiyeh and Naqoura. The Israeli military has not yet commented. But it



did say Israeli forces struck Hezbollah infrastructure in several southern areas. Hezbollah fighters also launched a number of drones that exploded near an area where Israeli troops were operating in southern Lebanon, it added, without reporting any casualties. On Tuesday, two

paramedics from the state-run Civil Defence emergency service were among 13 people killed in strikes in southern Lebanon, according to the Lebanese health ministry. It says more than 400 people have been killed across the country since the ceasefire was announced by US President

Donald Trump almost a month ago. Israel has intensified its air and artillery strikes in recent days, particularly in southern Lebanon, saying it is targeting Hezbollah fighters and infrastructure. Hezbollah has carried out drone, rocket and mortar attacks on Israeli troops occupying parts of southern Lebanon and on communities in northern Israel. On Thursday, Israeli and Lebanese officials are expected to hold a third round of direct talks in Washington to try to find a way to stop the fighting. In a letter released on Tuesday, Hezbollah's leader Naim Qassem dismissed those efforts and said his group would "not abandon the battlefield".

Russian drone attacks kill 13 in Ukraine after ceasefire expires



AGENCY
Moscow: Thirteen people have been killed and at least 41 injured in a slew of Russian drone and bomb attacks across Ukraine between Tuesday and Wednesday, officials have said. The worst-hit was the central Dnipropetrovsk region, where eight people were killed and 11 injured throughout Tuesday. One casualty was reported in the eastern Donetsk region the same day. Russian attacks continued on Wednesday, with three people reported killed in the western Rivne region and one person in Zaporizhzhia, in the south. President Volodymyr Zelensky said 800 drones had been launched by Russia throughout the day and warned that missile launches could follow. In Russia, officials said Ukrainian drones hit three industrial facilities overnight. No casualties were reported. The latest attacks come shortly after a three-day US-brokered ceasefire expired late on Monday. Both Russia and Ukraine reported multiple violations - mostly along the vast frontline - during the truce, but no major aerial attacks. Russian President Vladimir Putin launched a

full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. In a post on Telegram on Wednesday morning, Dnipropetrovsk regional head Oleksandr Hanzha reported more than 30 Russian attacks on three districts throughout Tuesday. He said two people were killed in Zelensky's hometown of Kryvyi Rih, and another six in the Synelnykove district - just south-east of the regional capital Dnipro. "More than two dozen houses were damaged," Hanzha added. In the north-eastern Kharkiv region, five people were reported injured and a number of residential houses damaged. Russian drone strikes were also reported in the southern Odesa, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, as well as in Poltava - Ukraine's central region. Writing on Telegram on Wednesday morning, Zelensky said 14 Ukrainian regions were attacked throughout Tuesday, and there were more attacks overnight. He accused Russia of "purposefully" targeting Ukraine's railway infrastructure and other civilian facilities. Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 139 drones in the past 24 hours.

Epstein abused me while under house arrest, survivor tells US lawmakers

AGENCY
Washington: A survivor of Jeffrey Epstein's abuse has told how the late sex offender sexually abused her while he was under house arrest for soliciting prostitution from a minor. Roza, who was recruited from Uzbekistan as a teenager by Epstein's associate and modelling agent Jean-Luc Brunel, spoke publicly for the first time alongside a number of victims in a field hearing that was organised by House Democrats. She told the session that she was introduced to Epstein by Brunel in July 2009, was offered work by Epstein "to help me with my financial troubles", and he later subjected her to rape over a period of three years.



Democratic lawmaker Robert Garcia said the unofficial hearing was held in West Palm Beach, Florida, because it was where Epstein's "crimes first came to light". The hearing, which Garcia pointed out was also held in close proximity to US President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago residence, was held by Democrats from the US House Oversight

Committee and local Democratic members. The committee, which has a Republican majority, is currently investigating the financier's crimes. Democratic members of the committee have focused on scrutinising the Trump administration's handling of the Epstein files. The hearing carries no legal authority, but was planned with the

intention of keeping the Epstein case in the spotlight. Democratic lawmakers heard how Epstein and his accomplices evaded accountability for years, and how victims were repeatedly failed by the justice system. Roza, whose first name was only given in the hearing, said she was 18 when she met the late Brunel in 2008 and "promised a modelling career beyond my dreams". "Coming from a financially unstable background I was a perfect target for coercion," she added, during the tearful testimony. By May 2009, she was in New York City on a visa, and in July she met Epstein at his house in West Palm Beach while he was under house arrest, Roza said.

Gaza sisters win prize for turning rubble into reusable bricks



AGENCY
Gaza: Two teenage sisters from Gaza have won an environmental award for turning rubble into reusable bricks, saying they wanted to "turn destruction into something useful". Farah and Tala Mousa, who live in a tent and have been repeatedly displaced since their home was bombed, have been named the Middle East regional winners of the youth-focused Earth Prize. "After our entire city turned

into rubble, everything around us pushed us to think about a solution," 17-year-old Tala told the BBC. The sisters plan to use their \$12,500 (£9,245) prize to teach others to produce the bricks and "participate in reconstruction themselves, instead of waiting only for outside help." 15-year-old Farah said. The UN estimates 1.9 million people in Gaza - nearly 90% of the population - have been displaced since war began in 2023.

IPL 2026: KKR SETS A TARGET OF 153/3 FOR RCB



Cody Rhodes Receives Scary 4-Word Warning From Former Two-Time WWE World Heavyweight Champion

AGENCY
Texas: Cody Rhodes might still be carrying the Undisputed WWE Championship, but things on SmackDown are already getting very uncomfortable for The American Nightmare. Ever since Gunther moved to the blue brand after WrestleMania 42, the former WWE World Heavyweight Champion has made one thing pretty clear; he's coming for Cody's title. And honestly, he's not even trying to be subtle about it anymore. The tension between the two stars got even bigger after Gunther once again attacked Rhodes on SmackDown before posting a cold four-word warning on Instagram. "One's gonna run through," wrote The Ring General, sending WWE fans into full speculation mode online. With Gunther looking more dangerous than ever and Cody already having a target on his back, many fans think this feud could quickly become the

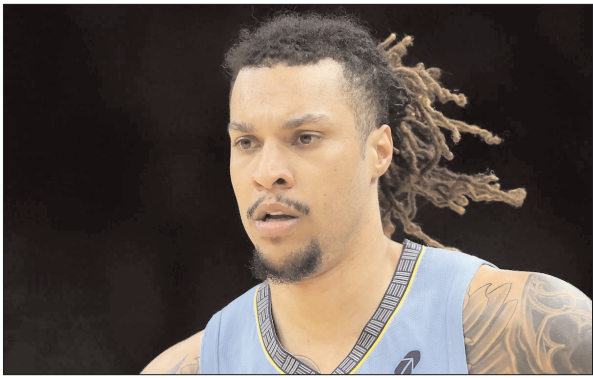


biggest storyline on SmackDown heading into Clash in Italy. Gunther sends Cody Rhodes a warning after another SmackDown ambush Gunther has been absolutely unstoppable lately, and Cody Rhodes is now the latest superstar standing in his path. After WrestleMania 42, the former World Heavyweight Champion officially shifted to SmackDown and immediately started going after Rhodes and the Undisputed WWE Championship. Last week on SmackDown, Gunther once again blind-sided Cody Rhodes, continuing the rivalry between the two top stars. Soon after the show, The Ring General took to Instagram and posted a short but intense four-word message: "One's gonna run through." That line instantly started making rounds among WWE fans online, especially because of how dominant Gunther has looked over the last year. The Austrian powerhouse has already defeated major names like Goldberg, John Cena, and AJ Styles in what were promoted as their final career matches.

BRANDON CLARKE CAUSE OF DEATH:

What Reports And Investigators Revealed About Grizzlies Star's Tragic Passing

AGENCY
Berlin: Brandon Clarke is a basketball player with the Memphis Grizzlies in the NBA. Clarke, who was born in Vancouver, Canada, and grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, was drafted 21st overall in the 2019 NBA Draft and quickly established himself with his athleticism, defense, and energy off the bench. He was also selected to the NBA All-Rookie First Team in 2020. However, Clarke died tragically at the age of 29 in May of 2026. The authorities believe he may have died from an overdose, but no cause has been confirmed because a death certificate or a toxicology report is not



yet available. Everyone is in shock at the unexpected death, and many NBA fans, teammates, and professional players have sent condolences to the Athletic department. What do reports and investigators say about Brandon Clarke's death?

Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke died on May 11, 2026. No official cause of death has been determined, but the incident is being investigated as a possible drug overdose after drug substances were reportedly found at the scene, according

to multiple sources. In another report, Clarke's death is being probed as a possible overdose. The outlet cited authorities, reporting that the Los Angeles Fire Department responded to a 911 call of a medical emergency shortly after 5 p.m. local time Monday at a residence in the San Fernando Valley. Paramedics found Clarke deceased, and reports say drug paraphernalia was found in the home. By Tuesday, May 12, the medical examiner's website showed Clarke's body was ready to be released, but not the explanation his family, team, and the wider basketball world are still waiting for.

RCB vs KKR Washout Will Deal Big Blow To Playoff Hopes Of This Team In IPL 2026

AGENCY
Mumbai: Rain threat looms large over the Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Kolkata Knight Riders IPL 2026 match in Raipur on Wednesday. In fact, the match has seen a delayed start due to a wet outfield. While the toss was supposed to happen at 7 pm, wet outfield at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium meant that there will be an inspection not before 8:15 pm. If the match is washed out, it will be a massive blow to KKR. Here's a look at how things stand now. Gujarat Titans lead the table with 16 points from 12 matches. Following them are RCB (14 from 11 matches) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (14 from 12 matches). Punjab



Kings are the fourth-placed team with 13 points from 11 matches. KKR are at the eighth spot with nine points from 10 matches. What Happens If RCB vs KKR Is Washed Out Now, if the RCB vs KKR match is washed out, RCB will reach 15 from 12 matches while KKR will have 10 points from 11 matches. If

rain persists, this will be KKR's second match that will be washed out. They shared a point with PBKS earlier in the season due to a washed out match. 16 points is generally considered the magic number to qualify for the playoffs. A washed-out result will effectively mean RCB need one more win from their remaining two matches to have a great chance to enter the playoffs. But for KKR, a washed-out match will make things very tricky. The maximum they can reach, in case Wednesday's match is washed out, is 16. They will not only have to win their remaining matches but will also have to look forward to results of other matches. They will also play their final three group-stage matches at home at Eden Gardens. What About The Other Teams If RCB vs KKR match is washed out GT will have an advantage. RCB are GT's nearest team currently. A washed out match will mean the defending champions stay on one point less than GT having played equal number of games.

Insider Look Into NFL's Complex Scheduling Strategy That Predicts Viewer Behavior

AGENCY
Washington: The NFL schedule release has become one of the biggest offseason news stories in the league. But for every primetime game or international battle, there is now a highly advanced and complex scheduling strategy that involves data from well beyond football. As the league prepares to announce the schedule for the regular season of 2026, the NFL will make heavy use of predictive analytics, looking at everything, including weather and streaming behavior. Given the NFL's increased use of streaming services, its holiday games, and even its games abroad, maximizing TV audiences has been difficult in recent years. This problem, in turn, has driven



the league further into advanced scheduling algorithms in conjunction with its analytics partner Receptive Analytics. How NFL Uses Advanced Analytics To Predict Fan Behaviors Beyond Football Receptive Analytics' founder Andy Tabrizi stated that their algorithms are purposefully more centered on what's happening outside football

rather than the sport itself. "Where we really try to focus all of our efforts is everything that has nothing to do with the NFL," said Tabrizi. "That may sound really strange to say when we're talking about forecasting NFL viewership, but the reason why our model is so accurate is that we've really been able to figure out the NFL as a function of everything else."

Travis Hunter's Wife Leanna Lenee Drops Honest Comment About Their Past

AGENCY
Texas: Long before Travis Hunter became one of football's most talked-about young stars, life was far from glamorous for him and his family. The Jacksonville Jaguars rookie reportedly spent part of his childhood living in a cramped room with his parents and siblings while chasing his football dream. Now enjoying the rewards of NFL success, Hunter and his wife, Leanna Lenee, are back in the spotlight after her recent social media comment revealed how she once financially supported him during the early stages of their relationship. Leanna Lenee's honest message about Travis Hunter's past quickly sparks reactions online



Leanna Lenee recently caught attention after responding to social media criticism surrounding her relationship with Hunter. While replying to a TikTok comment suggesting Hunter now provides everything for her, Lenee shared a different side of their story. "When I met Travis, he didn't have a dollar to his name. I was the

bread winner. Miss me with that, respectfully," she wrote. The comment surprised many fans because it painted a picture of their relationship before Hunter became a nationally recognized football player. It also shifted attention toward the couple's early struggles and how their relationship developed before fame and financial success arrived.

Who Is Maya Higa? Twitch Streamer Gets Standing Ovation After Becoming First-Ever Creator To Give A TED Talk



AGENCY
Berlin: Maya Higa just did something no Twitch streamer has ever done before, and the internet cannot stop talking about it. The popular streamer and wildlife conservation advocate officially became the first Twitch creator to give a TED Talk, and the moment quickly turned emotional after she received a full standing ovation from the audience. What started years ago as regular livestreams has now turned into one of the biggest crossover success stories between internet culture and real-world impact. The event happened in Vancouver, Canada, where Maya stepped onto the TED stage to talk about how livestreaming helped her create a global community around animal conservation and wildlife education. By the end of the speech, the audience stood up and applauded while

Maya looked visibly overwhelmed before quietly saying, "Thank you." Clips from the moment immediately spread across social media, with fans and fellow creators calling it a huge moment not just for Maya, but for Twitch as a whole. Maya Higa becomes the first Twitch streamer to deliver an official TED Talk. During the TED Talk, Maya explained how her content slowly evolved from gaming and variety streams into something much bigger. She shared that she originally wanted to teach people about animals through traditional classroom outreach, but livestreaming allowed her to reach way more people at once. According to Maya, instead of speaking to a few students in one room, she was suddenly connecting with thousands of viewers around the world every single stream.

RADUCANU TO MAKE RETURN WITH WILDCARD IN STRASBOURG

AGENCY
London: British number one Emma Raducanu will make her return to action in Strasbourg after being granted a wildcard, as she seeks match practice before the French Open. Raducanu, 23, withdrew from the Italian Open on health grounds earlier this month and has not competed since a third-round loss to American Amanda Anisimova at Indian Wells on 8 March. The clay-court event in Strasbourg begins on Sunday, one week before the start of the French Open on 24 May. Raducanu is set to miss out on a seeded position

at the second Grand Slam of the year following the post-viral infection which has kept her away from the tour. The 2021 US Open winner is currently ranked 30th in the world but will drop several places following the conclusion of this week's tournaments in Rome and Paris. Raducanu was granted a wildcard for last year's WTA 500 event in Strasbourg, where she beat top-20 player Daria Kasatkina before losing to American Danielle Collins. The Briton has won seven of her 14 matches this year, with four of those victories coming during her run to

the final of the Transylvania Open in February after her second-round exit at the Australian Open. Raducanu gave no clear indication that she would pull out of the Italian Open in March despite speaking to the media just 30 minutes before that decision was announced, but said she only wanted to return to competition when "100% ready". Taking a wild card into Strasbourg means the 23-year-old will gain valuable time on the clay ahead of the French Open, which begins on May 24. Raducanu also received a wild card into the tourna-

ment 12 months ago, reaching the second round, and an announcement from the tournament on social media reading: "Welcome back, Emma! The 2021 US Open champion will be back on the clay courts in Strasbourg." It has been another difficult start to a season health-wise for Raducanu, who began 2026 battling to recover from a foot problem. Speaking to reporters in Rome about her illness, the former US Open champion said: "Post-viral, it's quite hard. You feel drained, you feel tired, no energy. It's difficult, and it lingered for quite a while.



Distributors and Producers Also Have Their Own Challenges... The Industry Survives Only When Cinema Survives: Telugu Film Producers



Telugu film producers stated that not only exhibitors, but distributors and producers are also facing serious challenges in the current theatrical ecosystem. It is known that exhibitors recently held a press meet demanding the implementation of the percentage system, claiming they are under severe financial pressure. Responding to this issue, Telugu film producers held a press meet on Wednesday evening. Producers Yalamanchili Ravi Shankar, Suryadevara Naga Vamsi, Sahu Garapati, Sudhakar Cherukuri, Venkata Satish Kilaru and others participated in the media interaction. The producers stated that it was not appropriate for

exhibitors to conduct a one-sided press meet and speak in a threatening manner. They emphasized that all stakeholders should sit together and resolve the issue through discussions. While they are ready to address exhibitors' concerns, they also insisted that the problems faced by distributors and producers must be equally considered. **Producer Yalamanchili Ravi Shankar said:** "The main purpose of this press meet is to present the producers' perspective after yesterday's exhibitors' press meet, where they claimed injustice was being done to them. We want to clarify the facts and present the reality from our side.

We agree that exhibitors are facing difficulties. But distributors and producers are also suffering. Please understand that this is not a problem of one section alone. For many years, producers, distributors, and exhibitors have worked together as one system. Today, none of the three sectors are truly comfortable. We cannot simply think only about our own benefit and move forward. All three sectors must sit together and discuss. These are not issues that can be solved overnight. This issue surfaced during the release of 'Hari Hara Veera Mallu,' and many films have been released since then. Why is this problem suddenly being pushed again now? Why the

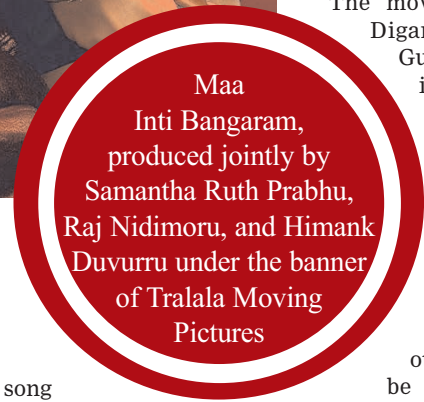
urgency only at this moment? This is not the right approach. For the last four to five months, everyone has been struggling due to the lack of strong theatrical content. At a time when a big film is arriving, creating such situations is not appropriate. We are not denying the issue exists, but all concerns must be discussed together and a solution acceptable to everyone should be reached. Theatres must be graded because not all theatres offer the same facilities. Single-screen theatres especially need better infrastructure. These issues can only be solved through collective discussions. Let us all move forward together."

Producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi said: "If one part of the ecosystem suffers, all three suffer. Exhibitors, distributors, and producers are all going through difficulties. Exhibitors themselves admitted that theatres had to be shut down due to lack of content in recent months. If such conditions and restrictions are imposed now, it will only reduce content further from producers, and that helps no one. Please do not make unilateral decisions and issue deadlines in a threatening tone. Among the producers present here, there are at least 25 films that have already crossed 50% of shooting completion, with 70-80% of the budgets already spent.

Star Heroine Samantha's Action-Comedy Family Drama Maa Inti Bangaram Set for Release on June 19



film will hit theatres on June 19th, 2026. Along with the release date announcement, they unveiled a striking new poster featuring Samantha in a traditional saree while holding a gun. Her intense expression and fierce look resemble a huntress heading into action, adding even more excitement around the film. Since Maa Inti Bangaram marks the reunion of Samantha and Nandini Reddy after the success of Oh! Baby, the project has naturally created strong anticipation among audiences. The hype has grown further as Raj Nidimoru is providing the story and screenplay for the film. The movie also stars Diganth and Gulshan Devaiah in prominent roles. Sreemukhi, Gautami, Anand, Lakshmi, Srinivas Gavireddy, Manjusha, and several others will also be seen in key roles. Maa Inti Bangaram is being promoted as a wholesome entertainer that can be enjoyed by the entire family, irrespective of age. The film is set for a grand theatrical release on June 19.



Maa Inti Bangaram, produced jointly by Samantha Ruth Prabhu, Raj Nidimoru, and Himank Duvurru under the banner of Tralala Moving Pictures, has already generated huge expectations among audiences. Directed by Nandini Reddy with Samantha playing the lead role, the film has created strong buzz ever since the release of its teaser. The

“MUSALODIKI DASARA PANDUGA” RELEASING ON MAY 15

A full-length comedy entertainer is gearing up to entertain Tollywood audiences with nonstop laughter. Produced by young producer Raman Valle under the banner of Ramana Films, with the blessings of Raji Naidu and Seethamma Valle, the bilingual film "Musalodiki Dasara Panduga" is all set for a grand theatrical release this Friday, May 15. Veteran actor Nassar plays the lead role in the movie. The film has already generated strong buzz in the industry with its trailer and promotional content receiving a highly positive response from audiences. Speaking on the occasion, producer Raman Valle said, "We have crafted this film in such a way that audiences can forget all their worries and enjoy two hours of pure laughter and entertainment in theatres. We are



extremely confident about the film's output. The promotional content released so far has received a wonderful response, and we strongly believe the movie will entertain everyone. We are dedicating this film to our father figure, the late legendary director E. V. V. Satyanarayana."

Trailer Released for ‘Gurtimpu’ — Starring KJR and Jointly Produced by Ganga Entertainments and Swastik Visions

Gurtimpu' is a sports and court drama film starring KJR as the lead, jointly produced by Ganga Entertainments and Swastik Visions, with SK Prashanth, Ajith Bhaskar, and Arun Murugan serving as producers. The film was directed by J.P. Thenpathiyen. 'Gurtimpu' was crafted around themes exploring the country's sports ecosystem, political landscape, government functioning, and the extent to which the underprivileged remain distanced from the world of sports. The trailer for the film was recently released. "Cricket is our national game"... "Hockey is our national game"... "Our country doesn't actually have a national game at all." "My life isn't just the ten seconds you all watch, Sir... Behind that lies 29 years of my life and hard work. If we could just make it to the meet, we would win... but we aren't even able to get that far." "For people like us, sports isn't just a casual pastime... it is our very liberation." "If you search for 'sports' online, the news that pops up is exclusively about cricket." "The

nation owes a great debt not only to those who fight on the battlefield but also to its athletes." "People like that will always find something to complain about—some perceived shortcoming—no matter how much the government does for them." "When it comes to athletics—the very field you boast about, puffing out your chest and chanting 'Gold! Gold!'—three-quarters of the medals have been won by those very people you dismissed as 'destitute!'" "I have only one hope: that your life changes for the better within your own lifetime." With dialogues such as these, the trailer delivers a powerful punch. A close look at the trailer sparks curiosity about the journey of a poor young man rising as an athlete: What circumstances did he have to overcome? Why did he end up taking the Sports Minister to court during this journey? What specific obstacles did he face from the government? And ultimately, did he receive the justice he sought in the courts, or not? The trailer has been cut in a way that keeps the audience guessing.



Alia Bhatt Gets Trolled For Her ‘Male Centric’ Comments



Alia Bhatt is facing heavy trolling on social media after her recent comments at the Cannes Film Festival about male-centric Indian cinema. During an interaction, Alia questioned why Indian film-makers still focus heavily on films targeted toward male audiences despite the global success of women-led movies. Her remarks quickly triggered a wave of backlash online, with many netizens accusing her of hypocrisy. Several moviegoers argued that in Indian cinema, especially in commercial Bollywood and South Indian films, a movie's theatrical success largely depends on the male superstar.

According to many users, audiences primarily visit theatres for the hero, while actresses receive equal praise during success but rarely face the same level of criticism when films fail at the box office. Social media users pointed out that actors often carry the burden of box office pressure, fan expectations, and negativity after flops. The criticism intensified because Alia had earlier praised Animal, starring her husband Ranbir Kapoor, a film often criticized for its aggressive male-centric narrative. Many users also questioned her silence on films like Dhurandhar while speaking about gender imbalance in cinema.

“Audiences who watch ‘Doordarshini’ will feel like they’ve gone back to their hometowns”: Hero Suvikshit

A feel-good love entertainer based on a real-life incident, Doordarshini, stars Suvikshit and Geethika Ratan in the lead roles. The film carries the tagline "Kalipindi Iddarini." Directed by Karthikeya Kommi, the movie is produced by Jaya Shankar Reddy M and Patimeedi Santosh under the Varaha Movie Makers banner. Having completed all formalities, the film is set for release on May 15. On this occasion, hero Suvikshit shared several details about the film. Here are the highlights.

What is your background? I am from Rayachoti in Kadapa district and I run a business. Since childhood, I've been passionate about cinema and inspired by films. Unexpectedly, I am now making my debut as a hero through this movie.

How did you get the opportunity to play the hero in this film? Writer Narayana garu developed this story based on the life story of a beggar he met in Arunachalam. Initially, we planned to make this film with another hero. But since the story required a fresh face, and because of my interest, we felt I would suit the role well, so I ended up playing the protagonist. The teaser, songs, and trailer released recently have received a very positive response. We are confident the audience will support the film.

How did you prepare yourself for this role? I too had experienced the kind of emotions portrayed in this story. Since the film is set in the 1990s, the lead character had to reflect the emotions people experienced during that



era. I was one among those who lived through those moments, so I felt I could portray it naturally. I didn't particularly "act" in this film — I simply behaved the way people did during that time.

Are you planning a grand release? Initially, we thought of releasing the film in a limited number of theatres. But now, the film is gearing up for release in more than 250 theatres.

People say the hero and heroine die in the film. Why reveal that point? The story is about how we still delivered a happy ending even after the hero and heroine die. It also explores how the old man reached Arunachalam and what happened in his life. That elderly character appears as the hero's father in the film. Audiences will feel like they've revisited their own villages from the 1990s.

Why did you choose to act in the hero's role yourself? Almost everyone in this film is new. We wanted natural performances, so

we cast fresh faces. If well-known artists had acted in it, audiences would see their popularity rather than the characters. That's why we chose newcomers to preserve the film's natural feel.

How was the working experience on this film? Like every film, we too faced several challenges. But all the artists and technicians supported us immensely. Bringing the movie to the release stage itself feels like a big achievement for us. We strongly believe audiences will definitely support a good film. We took our time to ensure the best quality output without compromising. We shot the film in natural locations around Yanam and Kakinada, recreating the atmosphere of the 1990s through detailed sets. We never compromised on quality.