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MANIPUR CM CALLS
for statewide disarmament,
urges peace amid
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Virat Karrra's Nagabandham
Creates Buzz With
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OM NAMO
VENKATESAYA

20-05-2026
Total pilgrims: 96,315
Tonsures: 44,107
Hundi kamukala: 3.94 CR
Waiting Compartments: Outside
line at Octopus building (Near
Gogabam Dam Circle).
Approx. Darshan Time for Saravardashnam
(with out SSO Tokens): 24 - 30 H

Gold, silver trade
lower as investors
track global tensions

Mumbai, May 21 : Gold and silver prices traded lower on Thursday, while investors closely monitored safe-haven demand and ongoing geopolitical uncertainties. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5) fell as much as 0.42 per cent or Rs 687 to hit an intraday low of Rs 1,59,319 at around 12 pm. The yellow metal was trading at Rs 1,59,400, down 0.38 per cent or Rs 606. It touched an intraday high of Rs 1,59,992. Silver futures (July 3) declined 1.4 per cent or Rs 3,864 to Rs 2,70,401, its intraday low so far. The white metal was trading at Rs 2,70,810, down 1.26 per cent or Rs 3,455. During the session, it touched an intraday high of Rs 2,73,196. Earlier in the day, gold and silver opened on the commodity exchange at Rs 1,59,900 and Rs 2,72,275, respectively. In the international market, precious metals were also trading lower.

IPL ticket racket sparks fan outrage; Hyderabad cricket association faces severe criticism

SPORTS CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD (TSIT)

The excitement surrounding the high-voltage SRH vs RCB clash at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal, turned into frustration for

inflated prices, while ordinary fans struggle to gain entry. Social media posts and online resale listings have intensified concerns about profiteering. Particularly alarming is the alleged sale of VIP passes—meant only for invited guests—reportedly

amounts to watch matches. Fans express disappointment that cricket, traditionally an affordable sport for the masses, is increasingly becoming inaccessible.

The Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) faces severe backlash for its failure to ensure transparent ticketing. Rapid online sell-outs and the subsequent appearance of the same tickets on black-market platforms have raised suspicions of negligence.

Senior Journalist Dr. Jithender Rao Thanugula condemned the situation, stating, “It is the responsibility of the HCA to protect the trust of cricket fans. But the ongoing ticket racket and black-market sale of VIP passes during the SRH vs RCB match at Uppal Stadium are damaging the reputation of Hyderabad cricket. This is truly very shameful.” Fans and sports enthusiasts are demanding an immediate investigation, stricter enforcement against black-market sales, and measures to make tickets affordable and accessible for genuine spectators.



cricket fans, as allegations of a massive ticket racket and black-market sales came to light.

Reports suggest that middlemen and influential individuals have been illegally selling tickets at

fetching Rs.30,000 to Rs.40,000 each in black markets.

The spike in regular ticket prices has also drawn criticism, as middle-class families are forced to pay exorbitant



PM Modi's five-nation visit secures nearly \$40 billion investment

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent five-nation visit has helped India to secure an investment pipeline worth nearly \$40 billion, with several global companies committing fresh investments and outlining expansion plans across key sectors, officials said. During the visit, PM Modi held meetings with chief executives and senior representatives of more than 50 multinational companies spanning sectors such as semiconductors, logistics, infrastructure and technology.

The combined market valuation of these firms is estimated at around \$2.7 trillion to \$3 trillion, reflecting the scale of global corporate participation during the visit.

Many of these companies already have a significant presence in India, with their cumulative investments and business exposure in the country estimated at nearly \$180 billion. According to officials, several firms are now looking to expand their India operations to tap into the country's strong economic growth trajectory and rising domestic consumption demand.



Among the major announcements during the tour, the United Arab Emirates committed fresh investments worth about \$5 billion in India. The total estimated value of fresh investment commitments and proposed business expansion plans discussed during the visit stands at nearly \$40 billion, officials said, describing the outcome as a strong endorsement of India's long-term economic prospects and investment potential.

PM Modi's five-nation visit covered the UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy, during which India signed multiple agreements and elevated ties with several countries.

TN cabinet expansion reshapes Vijay govt; portfolios distributed as 23 new ministers take over

CHENNAI (TSIT)

In a major political and administrative exercise aimed at strengthening governance and broadening representation, Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay on Thursday carried out the first major expansion of the Tamil Nadu Cabinet, inducting 23 new ministers and simultaneously restructuring key portfolios. The move significantly expands the administrative structure of the Tamilaga Vettir Kazhagam (TVK)-led government that assumed office earlier this month.

The cabinet expansion comes less than two weeks after the formation of the Vijay-led government and is being viewed as an effort to accommodate regional, social and alliance considerations while filling several important departments that had remained unassigned during the initial phase of government formation. Among the politically significant developments was the inclusion of Congress representatives in the ministry.

S. Rajesh Kumar of Killiyoor and P. Viswanathan of Melur were inducted into the cabinet, marking Congress' entry into the Tamil Nadu government after nearly six decades.

Rajesh Kumar was assigned



the Tourism portfolio while Viswanathan was given charge of Higher Education, including Technical Education, Electronics, Science and Technology. Apart from the induction of new faces, the government also revised responsibilities among senior ministers. Chief Minister Vijay retained core departments including Home, Police and General Administration, while adding Special Initiatives and Poverty Alleviation-related subjects under his direct control. Minister N. Anand relinquished poverty alleviation responsibilities, while R. Nirmalkumar's Law and Energy portfolios underwent modifications.

A major reshuffle involved K.A. Sengottaiyan, who was shifted from Finance to Revenue and Disaster Management. The

crucial Finance, Planning and Development portfolio has now been assigned to the newly inducted minister N. Marie Wilson. Several long-pending sectors also received dedicated ministers. Agriculture was assigned to Vinoth, Housing to B. Rajkumar, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Services to Kumar R., Labour Welfare and Skill Development to Mohamed Farvas, and Social Welfare and Women Empowerment to Jegadeshwari. The government also created dedicated responsibilities for Non-Resident Tamils Welfare and AI-driven digital governance initiatives. Officials said the expansion is expected to improve administrative efficiency while helping the government address sector-specific priorities as it moves into its first full phase of governance.

No shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG at retail outlets: Govt officials

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

There is no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG in the country and petrol pumps that are not giving fuel or giving fuel in reduced quantities are being pulled up, according to senior government officials on Thursday. The government is receiving feedback about petrol pumps across India and full supply of fuels is being maintained to all retail outlets. There has also been no reduction in oil imports coming from Russia in order to ensure adequate

crude supplies to the refineries of oil marketing companies, the officials pointed out. There has been an increase in sales at some pumps because of the higher demand for diesel due to the harvesting season. There has also been a shift in customers from private oil marketing companies, who have started charging higher prices, to retail filling stations belonging to public sector oil companies.



Besides, institutional or commercial sales, which are priced around Rs 20 higher as per actual international price, have also shifted to petrol pumps, they added. The officials also pointed out that India's increase of Rs 3.91 per litre in the prices of petrol and diesel announced this week, works out to 4.4 per cent, from 10 to 90 per cent in the retail prices of the two fuels.

The pass-through has been steepest in liberalised emerging markets directly exposed to West Asian supply and freight, where governments do not absorb volatility. The Pakistani consumer is paying about 55 per cent more for petrol today than three months ago, the Malaysian about 56 per cent more, and the Emirati consumers about 52 per cent higher prices, the figures show.

In the advanced economies, the increases are smaller in percentage terms but still substantial. American petrol prices, which respond quickly to crude because federal and state excise loadings are modest, have risen by close to 45 per cent and diesel by 48 per cent.

which is the smallest hike of any major economy outside the directly subsidising Gulf producers such as Saudi Arabia, according to figures compiled by GlobalPetrolPrices.com. An IndianOil official pointed out that the Rs 3.91 increase, which restores only part of the rise of cost in crude, has been undertaken after 76 days of complete absorption of costs by the public sector oil companies. In sharp contrast, the rest of the world has been adjusting price for the rise in crude costs through increases ranging

Bengal's mandatory 'Vande Mataram' order for madrasas sparks political row

BENGAL (TSIT)

The West Bengal Government's decision to make the singing of 'Vande Mataram' mandatory in all madrasas triggered both administrative action and fierce political backlash on Thursday, sharpening the debate over nationalism and identity in the state's educational landscape within a fortnight of the new BJP dispensation assuming power. The state administration pitched the move as an effort to ensure uniformity in assembly practices in education institutions, while opposition parties have accused the ruling dispensation of pushing an "arbitrary" agenda that risks unsettling the state's pluralistic fabric.



The Suvendu Adhikari-led government has made the singing of 'Vande Mataram' during assembly prayers compulsory in all madrasas with immediate effect, according to an official notification issued by Directorate of Madrasa Education. The directive will apply, the notification stated, to government model madrasas, government-aided

madrasas, approved Shishu Shiksha Kendras and Madhyamik Shiksha Kendras, as well as recognised unaided madrasas functioning under the Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education Department. "Singing of 'Vande Mataram' during assembly prayers, prior to the commencement of classes, is hereby made mandatory," it said. A senior official of the department said the decision was aimed at bringing "uniformity in assembly practices" across institutions functioning under the department.

Manipur CM calls for statewide disarmament, urges peace amid ongoing tensions

Imphal, May 20: Manipur chief minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh on Wednesday said that removing all firearms from circulation is an urgent step needed to restore peace and normalcy in the violence-affected state.

During a meeting with a delegation from the Tangkhul Naga community of Sinakeithe village in Ukhrul district, the chief minister stressed that peace remains the only viable path forward to resolve the ongoing crisis in Manipur.

“There are no other options except peace,” he told the delegation, urging all communities to work together to end violence and rebuild harmony across the state.

The chief minister also highlighted the government’s focus on employment generation through skill development programmes aimed at youth, saying such initiatives are intended to steer young people away from conflict and toward sustainable livelihoods. He called upon community leaders and public



representatives to play an active role in persuading youth to abandon violence and participate in peace-building efforts. Singh also cited global examples of reconciliation, referring to South African leader Nelson Mandela as an inspiration for conflict resolution and unity.

The Tangkhul Naga delegation, accompanied by Ukhrul MLA Ram Muivah of the Naga People's Front,

raised concerns over security conditions in Sinakeithe village and requested deployment of Manipur Rifles and Indian Reserve Battalion personnel in the area.

They also sought adequate staffing at the local police station and urged the government to ensure smooth functioning of administrative offices in the region. The villagers said repeated attacks in

recent months had created fear and insecurity, and appealed for stronger security arrangements, better healthcare facilities, and improved infrastructure, including safe road connectivity between Mahadev and Sinakeithe.

They also expressed gratitude for the deployment of Border Security Force personnel in the area and for government-supported infrastructure projects such as the inter-village road and a Bailey bridge over the Ilang river.

Meanwhile, tensions between Kuki and Naga groups have continued in parts of Ukhrul, Kangpokpi and Senapati districts since February. Recent clashes have resulted in multiple hostage situations following the killing of three church leaders in Kangpokpi district earlier this month. Officials said several individuals were later released through coordinated efforts by authorities, community leaders and civil society organisations, though the situation in the region remains sensitive.

Air India Delhi-Bengaluru flight suffers tail strike while landing, grounded

New Delhi, May 21: An Air India flight from Delhi to Bengaluru suffered a tail strike while landing at Bengaluru International Airport, the airline said on Thursday.

The Air India flight AI2651, with 179 people on board, was grounded after it experienced a tail strike during landing at the Bengaluru airport.

The airline said the aircraft landed safely and all passengers and crew members disembarked normally.

Following the incident, the aircraft has been grounded for a detailed inspection. Air India added that the matter will be investigated in line with established procedures.

Due to the grounding of the aircraft, the return flight AI2652 from Bengaluru to Delhi was cancelled.

The airline said alternative arrangements are being made to accommodate affected passengers at the earliest.

Meanwhile, Civil



Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said recently that the investigation into the crash of Air India Flight AI 171, which claimed 260 lives in Ahmedabad, is in its final stages and is likely to be completed within a month.

“The crash investigation is in the final stage and could even be completed in a month. However, the investigation is being done by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) and we don’t

interfere in it. We are giving them all the resources they need,” the minister said.

Emphasising the need for transparency in the probe, Naidu said the final report would be subject to international scrutiny as the ill-fated flight had foreign nationals onboard.

The AAIB had submitted its preliminary investigation findings to the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation on July 12, 2025.

Responding to concerns raised by some

families of the victims regarding a lack of communication and delays in compensation from the airline, Naidu said the ministry was closely monitoring the situation and remained in touch with Air India.

The tragic crash took place on June 12, 2025, when a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner operating as Air India flight AI 171 took off from Runway 23 of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport for London Gatwick.

Comprehensive Neuro Care and DBS Offering Hope for Advanced Parkinson’s Patients



Secunderabad, May 21, 2026: Parkinson’s Disease, a progressive neurological disorder that commonly affects the elderly population, is increasingly becoming a major health concern in India due to rising life expectancy and ageing-related conditions. Experts estimate that nearly 1% of individuals above the age of 60 are affected by Parkinson’s Disease, with symptoms gradually impacting mobility, independence, and overall quality of life.

Addressing the media, the Neuro Sciences team at Medicoover Hospitals stated that Parkinson’s Disease occurs due to the gradual degeneration of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain. Dopamine plays a crucial role in controlling smooth body movements and coordination. Patients suffering from Parkinson’s Disease commonly experience tremors of the hands at rest, stiffness of limbs, slowness of movement, imbalance while walking, frequent falls, sleep disturbances, and in some advanced cases, memory impairment and cognitive decline.

The specialists explained that Parkinson’s Disease progresses through different stages. In the early

phase, patients may experience mild unilateral tremors, slowing of daily activities, and difficulty initiating movements. As the disease advances, rigidity, imbalance, and reduced movement become more prominent, significantly affecting day-to-day functioning. In advanced stages, patients may become severely dependent on caregivers due to stiffness, impaired mobility, and cognitive decline.

The Neuro team highlighted that while medications remain the primary treatment in the initial stages by helping improve dopamine levels in the brain, advanced Parkinson’s Disease may require additional interventions for better symptom control. One such well-established treatment modality is Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), which is increasingly being used globally in carefully selected patients to improve symptom management and quality of life.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Srinivas Dussa said, “Deep Brain Stimulation is not a cure for Parkinson’s Disease, but it can significantly help selected patients by reducing tremors, rigidity, and movement fluctuations. The procedure can improve mobility, enhance

functional independence, and help patients maintain a better quality of life.”

The doctors shared the case of Mr. Rakesh, a 60-year-old patient diagnosed with advanced Parkinson’s Disease, who recently underwent DBS surgery and has shown encouraging improvement in movement control and overall stability following the procedure.

The multidisciplinary Neuro Sciences team involved in the patient’s care included Dr. Srinivas Dussa, Dr. Ramesh Shighakolli, Dr. Rohit Ramesh, Dr. Vikas Agarwal, and Dr. Sudheer, along with neuro-anesthesia, rehabilitation, physiotherapy, critical care, and nursing teams. The team emphasized that successful Parkinson’s management requires a strong multidisciplinary approach involving neurologists, neurosurgeons, rehabilitation specialists, physiotherapists, and caregivers working together to provide long-term comprehensive care. They also stressed the importance of early diagnosis, regular medical follow-up, physiotherapy, and lifestyle support in helping patients maintain better mobility and independence for longer periods.

Railways to Run Summer Special Trains Between Tambaram and Santragachi

To manage the increased passenger rush during the summer season, the Railways will operate special trains between Tambaram and Santragachi.

Train Schedule:

Sl. No	Train No.	Route	Day	Departure	Arrival (Next Day)	Dates
1	06075	Tambaram – Santragachi	Tue	18:30 hrs	26.05.2026 to 02.06.2026	2
2	06076	Santragachi – Tambaram	Wed	10:30 hrs	27.05.2026 to 03.06.2026	2



The Tambaram-Santragachi-Tambaram special trains (04 trips in total) will halt at major stations including Chennai Egmore, Gudur, Nellore, Ongole, Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Duvvada, Vizianagaram, Palasa, Khurda Road, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Bhadrak, Baleshwar, and Kharagpur in both directions. The special trains will feature AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper, and General Second Class coaches to accommodate passengers during the peak summer travel period. Passengers are advised to plan their journeys accordingly and book tickets in advance.

LIC Reports Record Performance for FY26: PAT Rs.57,419 Crore, VNB Up 41.63 %

Mumbai, May 21: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) announced its financial results for the year ended March 31, 2026, reporting strong growth across key metrics.

Profit After Tax (PAT): Rs.57,419 crore, up 19.25% from Rs.48,151 crore in FY25.

Total Premium Income: Rs.5,35,984 crore, a 9.8% increase year-on-year.

Individual New Business Premium: Rs.67,676 crore, up 8.29%; total individual business premium Rs.3,39,375 crore, up 6.37%.

Group Business Premium: Rs.1,96,609 crore, a 16.26% increase.

Value of New Business (VNB): Rs.14,179 crore, up 41.63% with VNB margin rising to 21.2% from 17.6%.

Individual Non-Par APE: Rs.15,214 crore, up 43.78%; Non-Par share in individual business grew to 35.11% from 27.69%.

Assets Under Management (AUM): Rs.57,29,396 crore, up 5.08%.

Solvency Ratio: Improved to 2.35 from 2.11.

Expense Ratio: Reduced to 11.91% from 12.42%.

Bonus to Policyholders: Rs.59,726 crore.

LIC maintained its market leadership with a 56.66% overall share in Indian life insurance for FY26, including 36.6% in individual business and 70.11% in group business. A total of 1.84 crore individual policies were sold, up 3.7% from the previous year.

Shri R. Doraiswamy, CEO & MD, LIC, highlighted,

“FY26 has been a satisfying year with record growth across all business verticals. Our strategy of channel diversification, especially through Bancassurance and Alternate Channels, has exceeded Rs.5,000 crore in premium. The Indian insurance market continues to trust LIC, reflected in our Non-Par growth, VNB margins, and shareholder bonus issue.”

The Board has recommended a final dividend of Rs.10 per equity share (equivalent to Rs.20 pre-bonus issue), subject to shareholder approval.

For full details, LIC’s standalone financial results and notes are available on the Corporation’s website www.licindia.in and stock exchanges.

Union Minister Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar to Lay Foundation Stone for Road Over Bridge at Chinapalakaluru, Guntur

Guntur, May 22, 2026: Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar, Hon’ble Union Minister of State for Rural Development and Communications, Government of India, will lay the foundation stone for the construction of a Road Over Bridge (ROB) in place of Level Crossing No. 6 at Chinapalakaluru, Guntur, under the Guntur Railway Division.

The event will be attended by several dignitaries including Shri Kandula Durgesh, Minister for

Tourism, Culture & Cinematography and Guntur District In-charge Minister; Shri Nara Lokesh, Minister for Human Resources Development, IT & Electronics, RTG; Shri Nadendla Manohar, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs, along with senior railway officials and other government representatives. The ROB at Chinna Palakaluru, located on the main Guntur-Nadikude line, lies on a busy route connecting Guntur to Pericherla Road. Designed

to ease congestion and improve commuter safety, the project is estimated at Rs. 41.32 crore, fully funded by the Railways.

Upon completion, the ROB will ensure smooth movement of both road and rail traffic, facilitate hassle-free connectivity to the State Capital Amaravati, and significantly reduce travel distance between Pericherla and Guntur City. This project is expected to enhance local transport efficiency and safety for daily commuters.

CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills Saves Critically Ill 48-Year-Old with Near-Fatal Cardiac Emergency

Hyderabad, 21st May 2026: In a powerful example of how every minute counts in emergency care, doctors at CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills, saved the life of Mr. Panthangi Dhanunjayudu, a 48-year-old man from Vijayawada, morbidly obese above 100 Kgs. He arrived in critical condition from outstation with severe breathlessness, dangerously low oxygen levels, rapidly failing heart function, along with multiple comorbidities. Mr. Dhanunjayudu, a morbidly obese patient with diabetes-related kidney disease, was diagnosed with a massive pericardial effusion—a large collection of fluid around the heart that was compressing the cardiac chambers and severely affecting blood circulation.

Family members said the



patient’s condition had deteriorated rapidly during transit, and by the time he reached Hyderabad, he was struggling to breathe and slipping into a critical cardiac emergency.

Given his unstable condition and the technical difficulty of conventional drainage, the Emergency team quickly stabilized him while the multidisciplinary Heart Team, led by cardiology and cardiothoracic sur-

gery specialists, made the swift decision to perform an emergency pericardial window procedure. During the high-risk emergency surgery, doctors successfully removed 750 ml of fluid from around the heart, immediately relieving pressure and restoring cardiac function.

Doctors stated that delayed treatment in such cases can rapidly lead to cardiac tamponade, multi-organ failure, and sudden

cardiac death, making immediate emergency intervention absolutely critical.

Following the procedure, the patient was shifted to intensive care for close monitoring and advanced supportive management. After 72 hours of intensive care, the patient was extubated, recovered steadily, and was discharged home walking in stable condition.

“This patient came to us with extremely low chances of survival. His recovery highlights the critical importance of rapid emergency stabilization, quick clinical decision-making, and the availability of expert specialists working together under one roof. Timely intervention made all the difference.”- Dr. V. Surya Prakasa Rao, Clinical Director & Head of Cardiology, CARE Hospitals, Banjara Hills

Needle-Based Cryoablation Relieves Chronic Testicular Pain without Surgery

Hyderabad, May 21, 2026: Doctors at KIMS Hospitals, Secunderabad, successfully treated a patient suffering from chronic testicular pain without performing surgery. Using advanced Cryoablation technology, doctors provided long-term relief through a minimally invasive needle-based procedure. Details of the treatment were shared by Consultant (Interventional Pain Physician) Dr. Anusha Karumuri.

A 51-year-old patient from Hyderabad, had been suffering from severe scrotal pain for the past eight months. The pain persisted while sitting, standing, or even lying down, significantly affecting his quality

of life. He also experienced severe discomfort during intimate moments with his wife. Despite consulting multiple hospitals and undergoing various treatments, he found no relief.

After approaching KIMS Hospitals, led by Dr. Anusha Karumuri first identified the exact pain-generating area using

ultrasound guidance. heading the pain medicine department performed the procedure Cryoablation therapy. In this procedure, a thin needle is inserted into the affected area and extremely cold gas is delivered through it. This creates a small “ice ball” around the targeted nerve tissue, temporarily dis-

abling the pain-transmitting nerve cells. As a result, the patient experiences immediate and significant pain relief.

“This treatment does not require surgery and can be completed in a short duration. It offers long-term relief with minimal discomfort to the patient. To our knowledge, this is the first time such technology has been used in the Telugu states for chronic testicular pain at KIMS Secunderabad,” said Dr. Anusha Karumuri. Doctors added that this advanced technique can also be used to treat several other chronic pain conditions affecting different parts of the body.

No intention whatsoever of raising electricity charges: TN Minister Nirmalkumar

When asked whether the state government plans to increase power tariffs, the Energy Resources Minister told reporters, “The government has no intention whatsoever of raising them. False information is being circulated in this regard. Neither the government nor the CM has any intention at this time of increasing electricity charges.”

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Minister R Nirmalkumar on Thursday dismissed the possibility of any increase in electricity charges in the State. On his first day in office, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay signed three files, one of which approved a scheme granting 200 units of free electricity to domestic consumers with a bi-monthly consumption of up to 500 units.

When asked whether the state government plans to increase power tariffs, the Energy Resources Minister told reporters, “The government has no intention whatsoever of raising them. False information is being circulated in this regard. Neither the government nor the CM has any intention at this time of increasing electricity charges.” After



conducting a detailed review of the functioning of the State electricity distribution corporation, he said it is currently burdened with a debt of nearly 2.5 lakh crore rupees. “Moreover, there is a severe staff shortage in the corporation. Against the required 1.4 lakh employees, only 70,000 are currently working. This manpower deficit persists,” he said.

The minister added, “As the CM has pledged, this department will be

dedicated entirely to public service, free from irregularities, malpractices, and corruption. We have been working tirelessly over the past few days, sitting together to carry out the necessary tasks continuously. Two senior officials from Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited were suspended following allegations of irregularities in approvals of TNGECL. The irregularities were detected during a series of review meetings

chaired by Nirmalkumar. He said that whether the wrongdoing involves a former minister or their predecessor, appropriate action will be taken irrespective of who is responsible, adding that all necessary legal measures will be implemented.

The minister further stated that there would be no leniency or favouritism in this regard, regardless of who is responsible, especially in cases involving public funds or government assets. Regarding solar panel investments, Nirmalkumar said, “For anyone wishing to invest in solar panels from outside, a transparent system with a clear framework will be established. No one will be able to secure approvals through informal means, such as submitting requests on slips of paper.”



STATE GENERAL SECRETARY AND NATIONAL SECRETARY OF INDIAN UNION MUSLIM LEAGUE CALLED ON THE HONBLE CHIEF MINISTER

27 LAKH GUNNY BAGS ARRIVE FROM WEST BENGAL TO TACKLE PADDY PROCUREMENT CRISIS IN CHENGALPATTU

CHENNAI: In a major relief for farmers and procurement agencies, a freight train from West Bengal has arrived in Chengalpattu district carrying 27 lakh gunny bags. The bags are intended to address a severe shortage that had disrupted paddy procurement across several parts of Tamil Nadu, including Chengalpattu.

Chengalpattu, a district bordering Chennai, ranks second only to the Delta districts in paddy cultivation. With the ongoing Samba crop season in full swing, farmers have been harvesting and bringing their produce to government procurement centers. However, a lack of gunny bags had led to large piles of paddy being left uncovered near these centers.

The situation worsened due to unseasonal summer rains, causing the exposed paddy grains to sprout and go to waste. Farmers had repeatedly urged the government to

ensure timely procurement to prevent such losses, but the bag shortage remained a critical hurdle.

In response, the Tamil

Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation initiated efforts to source gunny bags from West Bengal. The consignment of 27 lakh bags arrived

by goods train at Chengalpattu railway station on Tuesday. Heavy lorries were used to unload the parcels from the train compartments.

Ex Tirupur South MLA quits DMK, says loyalists neglected

COIMBATORE: Senior DMK leader and former MLA K Selvaraj on Thursday resigned from the party and announced his decision to step away from active politics, expressing deep disappointment over the sidelining of long-time party loyalists. Addressing the media in Tirupur, Selvaraj alleged that the DMK leadership had increasingly given undue importance and influential positions to leaders who had recently joined from rival parties, while sidelining grassroots workers who had remained committed to the party for decades.

“I endured the pain silently despite receiving invitations from other political parties because I wanted to remain loyal to the party leadership. But now, with a heavy heart, I am resigning from all party posts, including my primary membership in the DMK,” he said.

Selvaraj further claimed that a prominent industrialist from Tirupur had influenced the party leadership to deny him the opportunity to contest again from



the Tirupur South assembly constituency in the Palladam constituency assembly polls. “I was

asked to contest from the Palladam constituency without prior consulta-

tion, which eventually led to my defeat. Despite repeated attempts, I was not allowed to explain the ground realities to the party leadership. If this is the situation faced by a senior functionary like me, one can imagine the plight of ordinary party workers,” he said.

ICMR study finds Ayurvedic treatment effective for moderate anaemia in women



New Delhi, May 21: A large multicentric Phase III clinical trial conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has found that certain Ayurvedic formulations are therapeutically comparable to conventional iron-folic acid supplements in treating moderate iron deficiency anaemia among women.

The findings were announced during the “1st ICMR Annual Clinical Trial Meet 2026,” organised to strengthen India’s clinical trial ecosystem and promote evidence-based integrative medicine research, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The clinical study was carried out jointly by ICMR and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS). It involved nearly 4,000 non-pregnant women aged between 18 and 49 years who were diagnosed with moderate anaemia.

Researchers evaluated the effectiveness of Ayurvedic formulations such as Punarnavadi Mandura, both independently and in combination with Drakshavale-

ha, and compared the outcomes with standard iron-folic acid supplementation over a 90-day treatment period.

The study assessed changes in haemoglobin levels as well as broader clinical outcomes and found the Ayurvedic treatments to be similarly effective in managing the condition.

During the event, officials also launched a new report focused on strengthening First-in-Human Phase 1 clinical trials in India.

The report highlighted several challenges slowing the progress of early-stage clinical trials in the country, including regulatory hurdles, lengthy approval procedures and limited coordination among agencies involved in clinical research.

To address these issues, the report recommended measures such as improving regulatory capacity, simplifying approval systems and encouraging stronger collaboration between research institutions, regulators and industry stakeholders to support innovation-driven medical research.

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After the above mentioned period, any person(s) having any queries or unresolved business with any of this branch can contact us on +91-1800-266-3204 (Toll Free) or e-mail at customercare@grihumhousing.com

Northern Arc Capital Ltd
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ANNEXURE-V
E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
(Under proviso to Rule 8(6))

SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS CHARGED TO THE BANK UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.
The undersigned as Authorized Officer of Northern Arc Capital Ltd has taken over Physical possession of the following properties/ies u/s 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act. Public at large is informed that e-Auction of the charged properties/ies under SARFAESI Act in the below mentioned cases for realisation of NORTHERN ARC's dues will be held on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and on the terms and conditions specified hereunder.

Name Of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Outstanding Dues for Recovery of which Property/ies is/are being Sold	Description of The Property
1/ M/S. MUMOTA CATERERS 2(a). Mr. KARTHIKEYAN MUTHAIH 3(a). MR. MUTHU KARTHIKEYAN 4(a). MRS.SAMPATH SHRUTHI MONISHA 5(a). MRS.KARTHIKEYAN LAKSHMI	Rs. 20,75,764 and interest thereon w.e.f. as on 12th March 2025 plus other charges	All That Piece And Parcel Of Flat No.g-1 On The Ground Floor, Having Plinth Area Of 782 Sq.ft. Excluding The Appointed Common Area And Covered Parking No.1, Together With An Undivided Share Of 409 Sq.ft. Out Of Total Land Measuring 2580 Sq.ft. Bearing Plot No.11, Raveendra Nagar, (approved Layout No. D.d.t.p. In D.t.c.p.m.83-1911/p.No.146) Comprised In Old Survey No.237/32, New Patta No.3069, As Per Patta New Sub-division Survey No.237/32, Situated At Athanancheri Village, Sriperumbudur Taluka, Kancheepuram District, And The Land Bounded On : North : 20 Feet Road, South :Plot No. 14, West:Plot No.10, East: Plot No.12.

DETAILS OF SALE ARE AS BELOW:-

Reserve Price	Last Date For Submission Of Bid And EMD (10% Of The Reserve Price)	Bid Increment Amount	Date And Time Of E-Auction Sale
Rs. 39,10,000/- (Rupees Thirty Nine Lakh Ten Thousand)	23rd June, 2026 Rs. 3,91,000/- (Rupees Three Lakh Ninety One Thousand Only)	Rs. 25,000/-	25th June, 2026 Time 11.00 am to 01.00 pm

DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION OF THE PROPERTY: 13th June, 2026 11: 00 am to 5:00 pm and upon request on call to the Authorised officer Mr Sunil Verma 9987030148.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE E-AUCTION ARE AS UNDER:

- E-Auction is being held on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and will be conducted "Online". The auction will be conducted through Northern Arc Capital Limited's approved service provider M/s E-Procurement Technologies Ltd Auction Tiger Ahmadabad (Contact Person - Mr. Ram Sharma Cell no. 800002397 ,Email ramprasad@auctiontiger.net & (Contact Person - Mr. Sunil Verma Cell 9987030148 Email sunil.verma@northernarc.com, Mr. Ramesh Rao 897828455 and Mr. Sriniath S -Cell 9840578388 Email sriniath.s@northernarc.com, Sameer Suke Cell 8850482129 Email Sameer.suke@northernarc.com at the web portal (<http://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net>). E-Auction Tender Document containing online e-Auction bid form is available in websites, <http://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net>.
- The intending purchasers / bidders are required to deposit EMD amount either through NEFT/ RTGS in the Account No.65252037994, Northern Arc Capital Limited : State Bank of India & IFSC Code: SBIN0009930 or by way of demand draft drawn in favour of Northern Arc Capital Limited, drawn on any Nationalized or Scheduled Bank.
- Bidders shall hold a valid email ID (e-mail ID is absolutely necessary for the intending bidder as all the relevant information and allotment of ID & password may be conveyed through email.
- The intending bidder should submit the evidence for EMD deposit like UTR number along with Request Letter for participation in the E-auction, self-attested copies of (i) Proof of Identification (KYC) viz. Voter ID Card/Driving License/ Passport etc.,(ii) Current Address-Proof for communication, (iii) PAN card of the bidder, (iv) valid e-mail ID, (v) contact number (Mobile/Landline) of the bidder etc. to Northern Arc Capital Limited by Date **23rd June, 2026, Time 11:00 AM to 02:00PM** time. Scanned copies of the original of these documents can also be submitted to the e-mail Id of Northern Arc Capital Limited.
- Names of the Eligible Bidders will be identified by the Northern Arc Capital Limited to participate in online e-auction on the portal, <http://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net> (Auction Tiger) will provide User ID & Password after due verification of PAN of the Eligible Bidders.
- It shall be the responsibility of the interested bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the property before submission of the bid.
- The e-Auction/bidding of above properties will be conducted exactly on the scheduled Date & Time. The bidder shall improve their offer in multiple of the amount mentioned under the column "Bid Increment Amount" against the property. In case bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the e-Auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes. The bidder who submits the highest bid amount (not below the Reserve Price) on closure of e-Auction process shall be declared as Successful Bidder and a communication to that effect will be issued through electronic mode which shall be subject to approval by Northern Arc Capital Limited /Secured Creditor.
- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of the successful bidder shall be retained towards part sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidders shall be refunded.
- The Sale confirmation/Sale Certificate will be issued in the name of the purchaser(s) / applicant(s) only and will not be issued in any other name(s).

Date: 21st May, 2026
Place: SIVAKASI
For, Northern Arc Capital Ltd
Authorised Officer

Northern Arc Capital Ltd
HEAD OFF: 10TH FLOOR – PHASE 1, IIT- MADRAS RESEARCH PARK, KANAGAM VILLAGE, TARAMANI, CHENNAI 600113

ANNEXURE-V
E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE
(Under proviso to Rule 8(6))

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Name Of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s)	Outstanding Dues for Recovery of which Property/ies is/are being Sold	Description of The Property
(1) GUNALAKSHMI B (2) BABU	Rs. 20,10874.61 and interest thereon w.e.f. as on 14th August 2025 plus other charges	Survey No.192, Sub division New Grammathan Survey No.336/12,as per Grammathan Joint Patta No.267 situated at no.14, alamelumangapuram, Village Thiruthani Taluk, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu Within following Boundaries; NORTH: Survey No.335/17 Kundakatta Street, SOUTH :Survey No.342/1, Allassamy Kil Street, EAST: Survey No.336/13, Nagarathinam Naidu, 336/14 Raghupathy Naidu, WEST: Survey No.336/10, Munusamy Naidu, 336/14 Murathinam Naidu.

DETAILS OF SALE ARE AS BELOW:-

Reserve Price	Last Date For Submission Of Bid And EMD (10% Of The Reserve Price)	Bid Increment Amount	Date And Time Of E-Auction Sale
Rs. 26,08,900/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakh Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Only)	23rd June, 2026 Rs. 2,60,890/- (Rupees Two Lakh Sixty Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Only)	Rs. 25,000/-	25th June, 2026 Time 11.00 am to 01.00 pm

DATE & TIME OF INSPECTION OF THE PROPERTY: 13th June, 2026 11: 00 am to 5:00 pm and upon request on call to the Authorised officer Mr Sunil Verma 9987030148.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE E-AUCTION ARE AS UNDER:

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- The intending purchasers / bidders are required to deposit EMD amount either through NEFT/ RTGS in the Account No.65252037994, Northern Arc Capital Limited : State Bank of India & IFSC Code: SBIN0009930 or by way of demand draft drawn in favour of Northern Arc Capital Limited, drawn on any Nationalized or Scheduled Bank.
- Bidders shall hold a valid email ID (e-mail ID is absolutely necessary for the intending bidder as all the relevant information and allotment of ID & password may be conveyed through email.
- The intending bidder should submit the evidence for EMD deposit like UTR number along with Request Letter for participation in the E-auction, self-attested copies of (i) Proof of Identification (KYC) viz. Voter ID Card/Driving License/ Passport etc.,(ii) Current Address-Proof for communication, (iii) PAN card of the bidder, (iv) valid e-mail ID, (v) contact number (Mobile/Landline) of the bidder etc. to Northern Arc Capital Limited by Date **23rd June, 2026, Time 11:00 AM to 02:00PM** time. Scanned copies of the original of these documents can also be submitted to the e-mail Id of Northern Arc Capital Limited.
- Names of the Eligible Bidders will be identified by the Northern Arc Capital Limited to participate in online e-auction on the portal, <http://sarfaesi.auctiontiger.net> (Auction Tiger) will provide User ID & Password after due verification of PAN of the Eligible Bidders.
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- The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of the successful bidder shall be retained towards part sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidders shall be refunded.
- The Sale confirmation/Sale Certificate will be issued in the name of the purchaser(s) / applicant(s) only and will not be issued in any other name(s).

Date: 21st May, 2026
Place: Tiruvallur
For, Northern Arc Capital Ltd
Authorised Officer



EDITORIAL

Twisha Sharma And The Case Of The Ever-Innocent Indian Husband

On the morning her family found her, Twisha's death had already been scripted by everyone except the investigators. The initial post-mortem report noted ligature marks. The nylon rope that her in-laws' neighbours distinctly recalled seeing on the terrace that morning was never recovered, never tagged, never produced before the magistrate. Within 72 hours of her death, a media narrative had overtaken the forensic one: anonymous sources whispered to local reporters about "erratic behaviour", a "history of depression", and alleged drug use. None of it was ever substantiated in a chargesheet. But it did not need to be. The media trial had served its purpose - it muddled the waters just enough to give investigators an excuse to look the other way. This procedural failure is not an anomaly. It is a symptom of a deeper institutional problem - one in which the machinery of investigation, prosecution, and public discourse collectively conspires to ensure that the crime of dowry death remains simultaneously rampant and unpunished. And critically, Twisha's case makes an argument that no poverty statistic can: her husband held a postgraduate degree, her in-laws were prosperous, English-speaking professionals. If entitlement was a disease of the uneducated or the economically desperate, her story could not exist. That it does reveals that dowry death is not a relic of a feudal past, but a thoroughly modern pathology. The Entitlement Framework Dowry is the proof of a deeply entrenched sense of entitlement in our society. The word 'dowry' may make an urban Indian think of a village scene, wherein a frightened bride in a rural household is being married off to a family while her father gathers his life earnings and property to give to the groom's family as a gift to accept their daughter. This image, however, is not only highly inaccurate but also dangerous, because it allows the educated, affluent, and the aspirational to exempt themselves from accountability. The logic of dowry in urban areas is, however, different from rural areas. Here, dowry demand is based on the qualifications and achievements of the groom or his family members. This status makes his family feel "entitled" to dowry in the form of gifts or payments for the wedding functions. The Supreme Court addressed this issue in Rajinder Singh v. State of Punjab (2015), ruling that the word "dowry" must be understood broadly. The Court held that any demand for property or valuable items tied to the marriage - whether asked for before, during, or any time after the wedding - is considered a dowry demand. Because of this, failing to give into these demands, no matter the area, results in cruel behaviour toward the bride and her family by the groom's side. The Law On Paper The Indian Parliament identified this deeply entrenched societal ill and responded to it with considerable force, or so they thought, with the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961. It was the first ever legislative attempt to criminalise this practice. The failure of this Act could be seen in its light enforcement and poor prosecution, as nothing in the practice has changed apart from the word itself, by calling these transactions "gifts". The 1986 amendment to the IPC added Section 304B (now Section 80 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023) to make "Dowry Deaths" a specific crime. To use this law, certain facts must be proven: an unnatural death within seven years of marriage, and proof that the woman faced cruelty or harassment for dowry "soon before" her death.

Teachers should teach and also fill the portal – how can we do it without a mobile?



PRIYANKA SAURABH

(Mobile crime in the classroom, but department orders on WhatsApp!)

The debate over teachers' mobile phone use in schools has once again intensified. New orders are being issued, teachers are being warned during inspections, and comments like, "Mobile phones in the classroom are a sign of teacher negligence." At first glance, this seems reasonable in the interests of discipline and education. Indeed, when teachers are seen busy with mobile phone screens instead of teaching, it's natural for students and parents to question them. But when we look beyond the surface, a different truth emerges. The question arises: is the mobile phone really the problem, or is it the system that has so deeply digitally entrenched education that it's nearly impossible to remove the mobile phone from the teacher's hand? Today, almost every function of the education system is based online. Student attendance is recorded on a portal, departmental letters are received on mobile phones, exam results are uploaded online, scholarship data is digitized, the U-DISE portal is updated, various surveys are completed, meeting information is sent to WhatsApp groups, and on top of that, every few days, teachers are presented with a new link or app. Ironically, while the government and the department promote "Digital India" and "Smart Education," a teacher implementing the same digital processes is immediately suspect if they pick up a mobile phone. Departmental orders are sent via WhatsApp, prompting responses, and accountability for delays.



However, if a teacher uses a mobile phone, they are labeled a symbol of indiscipline. This situation exposes the dual nature of the education system. Of course, it cannot be said that mobile phones are not misused. In many places, there are instances where some teachers engage in personal calls, social media, or unnecessary chatting during teaching hours. This not only violates the dignity of education but also harms the future of students. The classroom is a temple of knowledge, not a platform for personal entertainment. But is it fair to impose harsh restrictions on the entire teaching community because of the mistakes of a few? If a driver causes an accident, should the entire community be banned from using vehicles? If some students misuse mobile phones, should all technology be blamed? Misuse of a tool does not eliminate its necessity and utility. The real problem is not the mobile, but the culture of its use. Today, teachers are no longer just teachers. They also perform the roles of data entry operator, portal manager, survey staff, and administrative assistant. Sometimes the portal doesn't open, sometimes the link fails, sometimes reports are requested

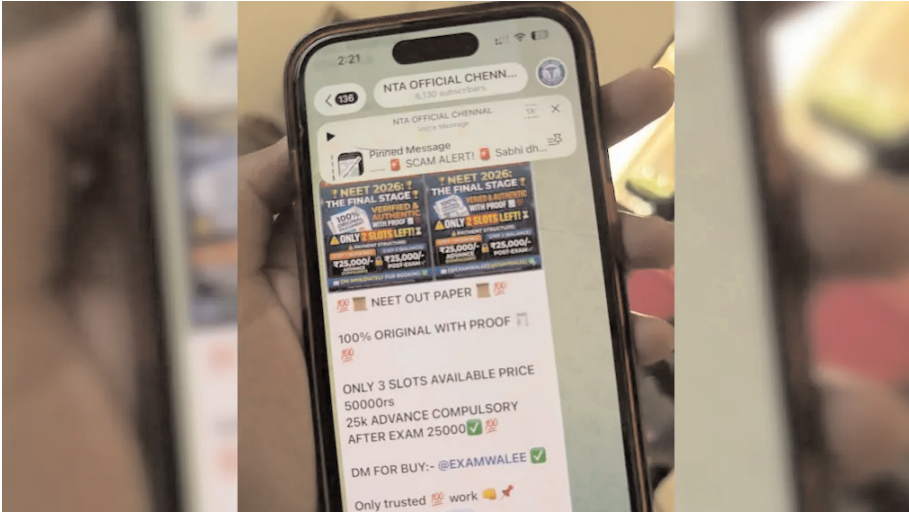
late at night, and sometimes even on holidays, messages about online meetings arrive. A large segment of teachers is realizing that more time is spent on paperwork and digital processes than on teaching. The situation has become so bizarre that teachers often spend half their day teaching students and the other half completing official work on their mobile phones or laptops. On top of that, they expect excellent results, up-to-date records, timely submission of all portals, and a mobile phone to be kept out of sight. It's like telling someone not to get wet while wading into water. The most serious question is: if there's so much opposition to mobile phones, is the Education Department willing to issue all its orders offline? Are there adequate computers, fast internet, and technical staff in every school? Are each teacher assigned separate digital resources? Are there separate institutional tools for government work? The truth is that most schools lack even basic digital infrastructure. Many teachers use their personal mobile phones, their own internet data, and their own resources to perform government work. They also comply with departmental orders at their own expense, but

when those same mobile phones are seen in the classroom, it creates an atmosphere of suspicion. This contradiction has become a part of not only the education system but also our social outlook. Today, society desires the benefits of technology, but it doesn't want to acknowledge the complexities of its use. We want teachers to be modern, digital, and up-to-date on all information, yet the moment they pick up a mobile phone, they are put on trial. During the COVID-19 pandemic, mobile phones became the biggest support for education. When schools were closed, teachers used their mobile phones to conduct online classes, send notes, record videos, and make every effort to deliver education to students. At that time, society called teachers "digital warriors." But after the pandemic, those same mobile phones were suddenly declared the enemy of discipline. The problem isn't technology, but rather a lack of balance. If a teacher uses a mobile phone to display educational materials, search for information, answer student questions, or complete departmental assignments, that technology can make education modern and effective. However, if it's used for personal entertainment and time-wasting, it's

wrong. Therefore, what's needed is not a blanket ban, but a clear and balanced policy. Schools could establish guidelines that limit mobile phone use during class to academic and administrative purposes. There should be a clear prohibition on personal calls, social media, and unnecessary chats. If a teacher consistently misuses the phone, individual action should be taken, but the entire teaching system should not be viewed with suspicion. Along with this, the education department must also understand its responsibility. If education is to be digitalized, adequate resources must be made available in schools. Uploading every government task to a teacher's personal mobile phone and then questioning the use of that mobile phone reflects the inconsistency of the system. Today's students live in a digital age. They are part of a world of internet, smartphones, and artificial intelligence. In such a time, if teachers are completely isolated from technology, the education system will fall behind the times. The need is not to take away mobile phones, but to ensure they are used responsibly and with dignity. Teachers are the guides of society. If they don't use technology in a balanced way, who will teach students digital discipline? The goal of schools is not just to complete the curriculum, but also to prepare responsible citizens. Digital discipline is part of that education. Today, the need is to change the mindset of blaming teachers. We must understand that the system has placed not only chalk in their hands, but also a mobile phone. When every order is online, every report is digital, and every information is available on WhatsApp, then the mobile will be visible not in the teacher's pocket, but in their responsibilities. Therefore, the solution isn't restriction, but balance. The education system can't progress by treating mobile phones as the enemy. Wisely embracing technology and setting limits on its use is the most pressing need of the hour. Otherwise, the situation will remain the same—teachers tasked, fill out portals, and then be asked why they're using their mobile phones.

UNMARKED VANS, 'OMR' TRICKS, 'SOLVER-FOR-HIRES': THE DARK UNDERBELLY OF MULTI-CRORE NEET SCAMS

Every year, 24 lakh young Indians wake up believing the same dream: that hard work, not wealth, will earn them a white coat and a stethoscope. They believe that one exam - NEET, the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test - will judge them fairly, measure their merit purely, and open the doors to becoming a doctor. But here's what they don't see: beneath the answer sheets and OMR bubbles, beneath the invigilators and sealed envelopes, lies a system so fragile, so vulnerable, and so compromised that it has stopped being a test of knowledge. It has become an auction. And the price? Lakhs of rupees that only some families can afford to pay. This is not a story about a few isolated cheating incidents. This is the anatomy of a national betrayal - where outdated infrastructure meets billion-dollar desperation, and merit quietly dies in the gap between them. Here's Part I of this operation. When Your Future Travels In An Unmarked Van Imagine this: your entire future-12 years of schooling, sleepless nights, sacrificed friendships, your parents' hopes-all of it compressed into a single set of question papers. Now imagine those papers moving through the country like ordinary cargo. They start at a high-security printing press. Good so far. But then they're loaded into transit vehicles - ordinary trucks driven by contract workers



paid a pittance. They're stored in state bank vaults overnight. Fine. Then moved again to district strongrooms. Still manageable. But then comes the final, fatal step: distribution to thousands of local exam centres - often small-town schools, managed by underpaid staff, guarded by temporary security, located in neighbourhoods where everyone knows everyone. This is where the system breaks. The sophisticated vaults at the top of the chain? Nearly impossible to breach. But that suburban school on the outskirts of town, where the physics teacher doubles as the exam coordinator and the security guard is someone's cousin? That's where organised criminals don't break in - they just knock politely and negotiate. The Single-Day Gamble Now here's what makes it worse. NEET happens on a single

day, in a single shift, across the entire country. Every candidate, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, answers the same paper at the same time. Compare this to the engineering entrance exam, JEE. It's computer-based, runs across multiple days, with different question sets for different shifts. If there's a leak at one centre or one shift, only a small group is affected. The damage is contained. A localised re-exam can fix it. But NEET? If even one question paper leaks in one small town in Bihar or Rajasthan or Tamil Nadu, the entire national exam is compromised. Because everyone, everywhere, is answering the same questions at the same time. It's a ticking time bomb. And when it goes off? The National Testing Agency has only two choices, both terrible: cancel the entire exam nationwide and face

public fury, or deny the leak happened and let the cheaters win. Either way, 24 lakh honest students pay the price. The OMR Trick: Changing Answers After Time's Up Here's a detail most students never think about: while the question papers are physical, the evaluation is digital. You fill in bubbles on an OMR sheet-those optical mark recognition forms-and later, those sheets are scanned by machines that read your answers. Sounds secure, right? Except there's a gap. A window of time between when you hand in your sheet and when it actually gets scanned at a central facility. Hours. Sometimes days. And in that gap, things can happen. Allegations have surfaced - not proven in every case, but persistent enough to worry - of blank OMR sheets being filled out after the exam.

KNOWLEDGE OF SAVING PETROL, FAMILY IN GOVERNMENT VEHICLES

- Dr. Priyanka Saurabh

Whenever petrol and diesel prices rise in the country, governments, officials, and politicians suddenly become concerned about "fuel savings." Messages begin to air on TV channels, advertisements appear in newspapers, and public platforms urge the public to stop unnecessary vehicle use, adopt carpooling, travel shorter distances on foot, and conserve fuel in the national interest. This all sounds idealistic and responsible, but as soon as the average person takes to the streets, they begin to see the other side of this idealism. On one hand, ordinary citizens calculate every extra rupee spent at the petrol pump, while on the other, convoys of government vehicles ply the roads like symbols of power. The very people who preach saving to the public are often seen using government vehicles for even the smallest of their family's personal needs. Whether dropping children to school, taking their wives to the market, picking up relatives, or attending a private event—government vehicles are always at their disposal. The natural question then arises: why does the burden of saving fuel fall solely on the common man? In reality, this isn't just a problem of petrol or diesel, but of mindset. In our country, power and position are often mistaken for privileges, not service. As soon as someone reaches a high position, a circle of privileges develops around them, where government resources are considered a part of their personal lives. Government



vehicles then cease to be merely a means of administrative work, but instead become a symbol of prestige and influence. This is why government vehicles are often seen serving family needs more than the office. Ironically, in a country where millions of people are limiting their daily travel due to high petrol prices, personal use of vehicles funded by public taxes is considered normal. The average person balances paying their child's fees with refueling, while in the corridors of power, families continue to enjoy comfort on government fuel. This very scenario breeds public discontent, as those preaching sacrifice are those who themselves seem unwilling to sacrifice. History shows that society doesn't change through speeches alone, but through examples. If leaders and officials are truly serious about saving fuel, they should start

at home. If government vehicles are restricted to official purposes, and are not used for personal activities like transporting children to school or shopping, this will send a more powerful message than any major campaign. The public embodies what they see in their leadership. The biggest problem today is the growing moral distance between power and the public. When the public sees that those who preach simplicity and frugality themselves live in luxury and privilege, their trust weakens. Democracy is not just governed by laws, but also by moral credibility. If those in power don't follow the rules themselves, expecting discipline from the public becomes a mere formality. It's also true that not every official and leader does this. Many perform their duties with honesty and simplicity. Many officials do not misuse government facilities in their

personal lives and follow the rules. But the problem is that the habits of some individuals tarnish the image of the entire system. The public only sees what is visible on the road—the ostentation of red-light vehicles, long convoys, and the blatant use of government resources for personal purposes. The saddest thing is that society often considers the misuse of government resources a status symbol. If an official's wife is seen going to the market in a government vehicle, some people consider it a symbol of status. This mentality gradually erodes the system from within. Government facilities should be a means of service, not a display of prestige. Today, we face both an environmental and an energy crisis. The world is grappling with climate change. In a vast country like India, fuel efficiency is not just an economic issue but also an environmental necessity.

SpaceX files for stock market debut that could make Elon Musk a trillionaire

Elon Musk's SpaceX has revealed its plans to go public in the US, allowing people to trade shares in the firm on the stock market. SpaceX makes rockets, offers a satellite internet service called Starlink, and also owns Musk's controversial artificial intelligence (AI) firm xAI. The initial public offering (IPO) on the US stock market is set to be the largest in Wall Street history and could start next month under the ticker symbol SPCX. Because of the shares he will own in SpaceX, the IPO could make billionaire Musk, who is already the world's richest person, a trillionaire. SpaceX values itself at \$1.25tn, and Musk's majority ownership of the company means his share could be worth more than \$600bn. Last year, Musk, who is also the boss of electric vehicle maker Tesla, became the first person to achieve a net worth that topped \$500bn. This means the SpaceX listing could take his total net worth to over \$1tn. The filing offers a long-anticipated look at the financial state of SpaceX. Last year, Space Exploration Technologies - as it's officially known - brought in \$18.6bn (£13.8bn) in revenue but had a net loss \$4.9bn. In the first three



months of this year, it achieved \$4.7bn in sales but made a net loss of \$4.3bn. Meanwhile, its balance sheet shows it has \$102bn in assets, such as rockets and other equipment, but also carries \$60.5bn of debt. Ruth Foxe-Blader, managing partner at US venture capital firm Citrine Venture Partners, told the BBC "it's not shocking for a project like this to be loss making, even at the point of IPO". She said the planned flotation had been expected but was "extremely exciting". "SpaceX is just an absolutely sprawling, enormous proj-

ect with so many different selling points, and so many points that really point to the future." SpaceX flagged more than half a billion dollars in expected legal costs stemming from a long list of claims. Some of these come from "multiple lawsuits" alleging that Grok, the chatbot made by xAI, is being used to create sexualized deepfakes of real women and girls. Musk has said he intends to dissolve xAI and pursue his AI ambitions under SpaceX. SpaceX also owns X, the social media app previously known as Twitter which Musk pur-

chased in 2022. Other ongoing cases against SpaceX listed in the IPO include patent infringement claims, claims of noncompliance with EU content moderation, music copyright infringement claims, and data breach claims. AI rivals Also revealed in the filing on Wednesday were the financial terms of the deal that SpaceX recently struck with an AI competitor, Anthropic, the developer of Claude. Anthropic will pay \$15bn a year to access data centres in the American South for Musk's xAI which was recently

acquired by SpaceX. While Musk's AI ambitions have struggled amid a spate of controversies, SpaceX's rocket business and Starlink are considered leaders in the industry - both possess a comfortable lead over the competition. The IPO filing comes just days after Musk lost a high-profile legal battle against rival AI company OpenAI and its boss, Sam Altman. Musk had accused Altman of breaching a non-profit contract by shifting the ChatGPT-maker to a for-profit after Musk had donated millions of dollars. The jury voted unanimously to throw out the case, finding that the timeframe to bring his claims expired because Musk had waited too long to file his 2024 lawsuit. At trial, Musk told jurors that his AI start up xAI was small relative to OpenAI which is also expected to sell shares to the public imminently. SpaceX's Starship megarocket is set to launch this week but the company has also come under scrutiny for endangering workers at its facilities. Musk himself has also been criticised for his right-wing politics and alignment with US President Donald Trump, with whom he travelled to China last week.

Japan logs higher April exports, imports despite oil concerns

Tokyo: Japan's exports soared 14.8 per cent in April from the same month a year earlier, according to Finance Ministry data released on Thursday, May 21, showing that its trade remained robust despite worries over supplies of oil and gas due to the war in Iran. Exports were stronger than expected, rising for the eighth straight month as shipments of semiconductors surged nearly 42 per cent by value from the previous year. The booming demand for computer chips and other infrastructure needed to power artificial intelligence has yielded a windfall for many high-tech Asian manufacturers. Imports rose 9.7 per cent from a year earlier. The trade balance shifted to a surplus of 301.9 billion yen (USD 1.9 billion) from a deficit in the same month the year before. Japan recorded a surplus of nearly 643 billion yen in March. Higher exports of medical products, paper goods and electrical machinery also contributed to the stronger export performance in April. Exports to China rose 15.5 per cent, and exports to the US rose 9.5 per cent. Imports from



China climbed 15 per cent while those from the US jumped 23 per cent, the data show. While overall imports rose, Japan's oil imports fell nearly 50 per cent by value from a year earlier, while imports of liquefied natural gas, or LNG, dropped 20 per cent. Supplies have been crimped by the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the main transport route for exports from the Persian Gulf, due to the war in Iran. Japan imports almost all of its oil, and Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has sought to offset lower supplies by ordering the

release of some national oil reserves. However, shortfalls have pushed prices higher and also impacted the production of oil-related products such as naphtha. The price of Brent crude, trading at USD 70 a barrel before the war in Iran, has shot above USD 100, and a weakening yen has made imports of oil denominated in dollars still more costly for Japan. Exports were stronger than expected, rising for the eighth straight month as shipments of semiconductors surged nearly 42 per cent by value from the previous year.

ZEPTO PLANS TO FLOAT RS 11,000-CR IPO IN JULY

New Delhi: Quick commerce platform Zepto plans to launch its Rs 11,000-crore initial public offering (IPO) in July, people familiar with the matter said on Thursday, May 21. If the listing goes through, Zepto will join rivals Zomato and Swiggy, which are already listed on stock exchanges. The Bengaluru-based startup, which secured approval from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) earlier this month for its maiden public issue, is now expected to submit its Updated Draft Red Herring Prospectus (UDRHP) to the regulator. The delivery app filed its IPO papers using the confidential route in December 2025. People familiar with the matter told PTI that Zepto, founded by Stanford University dropouts Aadit Palicha and Kaivalya Vohra, is aiming to list on the bourses before July 31. According to a recent report by brokerage Bernstein, Zepto is pursuing a markedly different



growth strategy from its rivals by focusing on market density and operational intensity rather than rapid geographic expansion. A present, Zepto has the highest dark-store concentration in the quick commerce segment, with nearly 21 stores per city, compared to around nine stores per city for peers, it added. Zepto operates 1,255 dark stores across 61 cities, compared to rival Blinkit, which has 2,222 stores spread across 243 cities. Bernstein also noted that the company has the highest store-to-

pincode ratio in the category, indicating a strategy centred on saturating existing markets instead of aggressively expanding into newer cities. According to the analysis, Zepto's network remains heavily concentrated in metro markets, reflecting a deliberate focus on dense urban clusters where faster deliveries, higher order frequency and stronger customer engagement can improve over time. Instead of chasing GMV through expansion, Zepto appears to be building usage intensity and

operational leverage with in fewer markets, the report said. The brokerage said the approach stands out in a sector where scale is often measured by the number of cities served. Bernstein suggested that Zepto may be betting that deeper penetration in high-density markets could create stronger unit economics than broader but thinner national coverage. This public-market push comes following strong private funding support. In October 2025, the company raised USD 450 million (about Rs 3,757.5 crore) in a funding round led by the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) at a valuation of USD 7 billion. It achieved unicorn status in August 2023, after raising USD 200 million in its Series E funding round, which valued the startup at USD 1.4 billion. The delivery app filed its IPO papers using the confidential route in December 2025.

Airtel postpaid customers to get benefit of 'Priority Postpaid' service: MD

New Delhi: Airtel postpaid customers will be automatically moved to the company's recently launched "Priority Postpaid" plans, which promise consistent speed even in crowded markets, a senior company official said on Thursday, May 21. Airtel India, MD and CEO, Shashwat Sharma, in a letter to customers, said prepaid customers will need to upgrade to postpaid plans to avail similar services. "Airtel Priority Postpaid is available on all our Postpaid plans. If you are already on postpaid, you will start enjoying the benefit automatically. If you are currently prepaid, you can upgrade your existing plan to postpaid by visiting the Airtel App," he said. On May 19, Bharti Airtel introduced Priority Postpaid 5G plans to offer its subscribers faster and more reliable telecom services, even during peak traffic times, by allocating a dedicated portion of the network for these users and separating them from other service categories. The company has



leveraged network slicing technology for rolling out "Priority Postpaid" plans. "Many of you have told us how you sometimes struggle to make that video call or download an email or upload a photo in a crowded market, a traffic jam or an event. "This is a problem that we have been keen to solve. That's why we have launched Airtel Priority Postpaid. Airtel Priority Postpaid is specially designed to give you a consistent experience even in congested areas," Sharma said. The slicing technology will separate subscribers of postpaid customers from the rest of the services, and

in a way, provide a dedicated fast lane separated from the large bulk of prepaid subscribers. Global telecom vendors Ericsson and Nokia have called the use of network slicing technology for "Priority Postpaid" a new milestone in India's mobile services landscape. Nokia claimed to be the vendor behind enabling network slicing technology. "We are proud that Nokia technology is helping to power this capability. Our 5G core and slicing capabilities are already powering differentiated connectivity for operators across North America, Europe and Asia, and now India. It builds on more

than 20 years of partnership with Airtel across mobile, fixed and transport networks," Nokia, President and CEO, Justin Hotard said in a social media post. He said India continues to lead with innovation, scale and speed. Ericsson President and CEO Borje Ekholm, in a social media post, said that India continues to be a digital frontrunner, and the very successful implementation of "Digital India" over the last decade has been on top of a strong mobile infrastructure. "Following one of the world's fastest 5G deployments, India continues to strengthen its position among the most digitally advanced nations with Bharti Airtel's pioneering launch of differentiated connectivity services for its postpaid customers. Bharti Airtel joins frontrunner service providers across the USA, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand that are offering differentiated go-to-market experiences, enabled by advanced 5G solutions," he said.

Owaisi urges Finance Minister to step in as SBI staff head for two-day strike

Hyderabad: All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (AIMIM) MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday, May 20, urged Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to intervene and resolve the long-pending demands of State Bank of India (SBI) employees, days before a proposed two-day nationwide strike by the All India State Bank of India Staff Federation on May 25 and 26. Sharing a representation he received from the SBI Staff Union Hyderabad Circle, Owaisi said it was "disheartening" to see employees of the country's largest bank being forced to go on strike. "This requires your immediate attention," he said, tagging the Finance Minister on X. The letter, addressed to Members of Parliament, lists five unresolved grievances that the union says have compelled employees to resort to agitational action despite 67 years of cordial industrial relations with the management. Messenger recruitment, safety concerns Chief

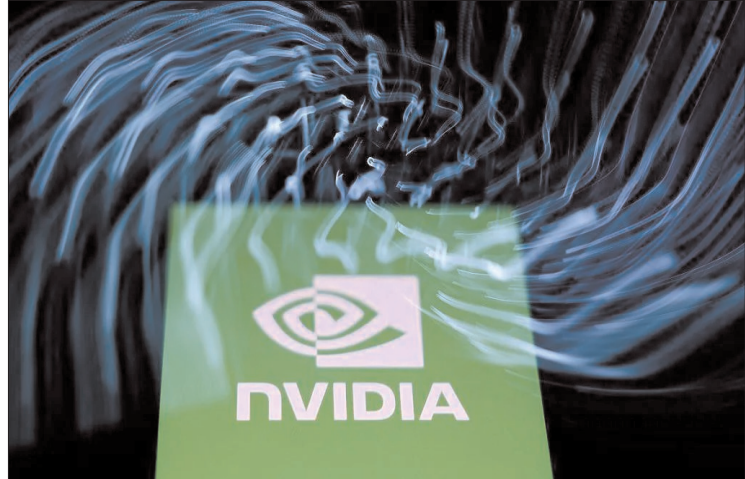


among them is the stoppage of messenger recruitment for 29 years, which the union says has shut the doors of dignified employment on the poor, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and other underprivileged communities who have traditionally depended on such positions for social mobility. The union also flagged the absence of fresh armed guard recruitment since 2022, saying the declining strength of guards due to retirements, and their replacement with outsourced contractual person-

nel, had exposed bank premises, customers and assets to heightened security risks at a time when ATM thefts and robbery attempts were on the rise. On pension, the letter said over 55,000 award staff and 55,000 officers were suffering erosion of retirement savings due to poor returns from pension fund managers, and that SBI continued to deny employees the right to change their Pension Fund Manager under the National Pension System - a right explicitly directed by the Ministry of Finance in September 2025 and implemented by all other public sector banks.

NVIDIA'S LATEST RECORD EARNINGS FAIL TO IMPRESS INVESTORS

US chip giant Nvidia reported yet another record quarter with sales and profits beating expectations, seemingly suggesting there's no slowdown in sight for the artificial intelligence (AI) boom. Nvidia is a central player in AI infrastructure, providing chips to leading AI model developers including OpenAI and Meta, meaning its results are closely watched. The company said first-quarter revenue was up 85% on the year to \$81.6bn (£60.7bn), while net income more than tripled to \$58.3bn. However, shares in the firm fell 1.6% in after-hours trading with analysts saying investors have got used to Nvidia delivering stellar results and amid some concerns that it will face growing competition. Nvidia is the world's most valuable company, with a stock market value of around \$5.3 trillion. In its latest results, it said sales were driven by strong growth in its data centre division. It forecasts spending on AI infrastructure to be between \$3tn and \$4tn a year by the end of this decade. "Demand has gone parabolic," chief executive Jensen Huang told analysts on a conference call. "The reason is simple: the era of agentic AI is here."



The company also said it was returning cash to shareholders by raising its quarterly dividend from one cent per share to 25 cents, and announcing an \$80bn share buy-back programme. It predicts overall revenues to continue growing and to reach \$91bn in the second quarter. "The bar is very high" But its shares fell in extended trading, which Ruth Foxe-Blader, managing partner at US venture capital firm Citrine Venture Partners, put down to "a law of large numbers". "Nvidia represents 8% of the S&P 500.

Unless there's a belief in this continued parabolic growth it's difficult for investors to get super excited, although Nvidia posted outstanding numbers," she told the BBC. "But it's just investors seeking that hypergrowth, which is indicating an early sell-off." Victoria Scholar, head of investment at interactive investor, agreed that while it was a strong quarter for the company, "the bar is very high for the artificial intelligence bellwether which has made a habit out of delivering incredibly impressive results. "Plus

investors 'bought the rumour, sold the fact' as shares had already rallied ahead of earnings," she added. "There are some concerns among Nvidia investors about the growing threat of competition as the data centre landscape shifts and hyperscalers develop their own chips." "Largely conceded" China Nvidia's AI chips have been a major focus of the rivalry between the US and China. In January, the Trump administration began allowing the company to sell its H200 chips to Chinese customers under certain conditions. The H200, Nvidia's second most advanced semiconductor, had previously been restricted by Washington over concerns that it would give China's technology industry and military an edge over the US. However, to date the company has not been given approval to sell the chips by the Chinese authorities who want to boost their own domestic suppliers. Last week, Huang was a last-minute addition to a host of top US CEOs accompanying President Donald Trump on his official trip to Beijing, though it is unclear whether semiconductors were discussed and if so, to what degree.

IRAN STEPS UP CLAIM TO CONTROL STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Iran has said it is significantly expanding the area around the Strait of Hormuz over which it claims military control in an effort to assert its sovereignty of the key trade route. A map published by Iran's newly-created "Persian Gulf Strait Authority" claims "Iranian armed forces oversight" across more than 22,000 sq km (8,800 sq miles). It extends into the territorial waters of Oman and the UAE. The UAE described Iran's claims of control as "nothing but fragments of dreams". Iran's new authority added that all transit through the strait "requires coordination with and authorization from the Persian Gulf Strait Authority". The US and Gulf allies have repeatedly rejected Iranian attempts to assert control over the strait. The US has told ships not to comply with Iran's rules. The diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, Anwar



Gargash, said Iran is "trying to consecrate a new reality born from a clear military defeat, but attempts to control the Strait of Hormuz or encroach on the UAE's maritime sovereignty are nothing but fragments of dreams". Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ships are guaranteed safe passage through another country's waters - but Iran has not rati-

fied this convention. Media linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) this week published footage showing what it claimed was a "punishment" strike on a tanker in the strait. BBC Verify analysis shows key characteristics of the vessel in the footage match with Barakah, a Liberian-flagged tanker which reported being struck by unknown projectiles in

early May, according to the ship's operators. Iran's push for greater control over the area around the Strait of Hormuz comes as US forces boarded an Iran-bound oil tanker on Wednesday. The US military's Central Command (Centcom) said it was "suspected of violating the American blockade of Iranian ports. Footage published by Centcom shows US marines rappelling from a

helicopter on to the deck of a ship, said to be the oil tanker Celestial Sea, in the Gulf of Oman. In a post on social media Centcom said the ship was "suspected of attempting to violate the US blockade by transiting toward an Iranian port". "US forces subsequently released the vessel after conducting a search and directing the crew to alter course," according to maritime risk management company Vanguard. Celestial Sea has previously been sanctioned under a previous name by the US for its links with Iran. Tracking data from MarineTraffic shows the ship is now reporting its destination as the port of Duqm in Oman. Centcom said on Thursday it had redirected 94 commercial ships and disabled four vessels since the US blockade of Iranian ports came into effect on 13 April. Donald Trump said on Monday he was holding off a

military attack on Iran planned for the following day at the request of Gulf states because "serious negotiations are now taking place". In a post on Truth Social, the US president said he had been asked to do so by the leaders of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Pakistan's military chief is reported to be visiting Tehran on Thursday in an attempt to mediate peace efforts between Iran and the US. Iranian state media reported Asim Munir will be continuing talks with senior Iranian officials. The Iranian foreign ministry said it was reviewing the latest proposals from the US on ending the war. Trump suggested he could wait a few days for Tehran to agree to the new deal but was also willing to resume attacks on the country. "Believe me, if we don't get the right answers, it goes very quickly. We're all ready to go," the president said.

Dozens of vehicles burnt as Mali jihadists enforce blockade ahead of Eid holiday



Dozens of vehicles, including fuel tankers, minibuses and trucks, have been set on fire near Mali's capital, Bamako, as jihadists step up a blockade of the city, the BBC has confirmed. Videos filmed from passing vehicles and verified by the BBC show the charred remains of the vehicles on a road about 45km (28 miles) west of Bamako. There are no reports of casualties - those on board were said to have been asked to get out before the vehicles were burnt. Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), a jihadist group affiliated to al-Qaeda, imposed a fuel blockade on Bamako last year, which it

tightened after attacking the city last month. The BBC has contacted Mali's government for comment. Mali is a landlocked country and depends heavily on fuel transported from neighbouring coastal countries like Senegal and Ivory Coast. The militants have kidnapped drivers and burnt more than 100 fuel trucks on major highways in the country since last year, but some have made it to Bamako under military escort. The blockade is leading to shortages and sharp increases in the price of many goods ahead of the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Adha, which falls next week.

Gaza flotilla activists set for deportation from Israel as backlash over treatment grows



Hundreds of pro-Palestinian activists who were detained in Israel after their flotilla bringing symbolic aid to Gaza was intercepted are set to be deported from the country. It follows international backlash in response to a video posted by far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir showing himself taunting activists kneeling with their hands tied behind their backs. On Thursday, the UK confirmed it had summoned Israel's top diplomat in Britain, charge d'affaires Daniela Grudsky Ekstein, over the incident. In a statement, the UK Foreign Office said the move reflected the UK's "strong condemnation of [Ben Gvir's] conduct in taunting those involved in the Global Sumud Flotilla". "We are also deeply concerned by the detention conditions depicted and have demanded an explanation from the Israeli authorities. We made clear their obligations to protect the rights of all those involved," the statement said. There has also been condemnation from the US, France, Italy and Canada, and Ireland. On Thursday, Italian politician

Dario Carotenuto and journalist Alessandro Mantovani, who were part of the flotilla, were pictured arriving at Rome Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci International Airport, after first being flown to Athens. Speaking to reporters, Carotenuto said they had been beaten after arriving in Israel. Adalah, an Israel-based rights group representing the detainees, earlier said there had been "severe, widespread injuries", with at least three people taken to hospital for treatment. Israeli authorities have not commented on the allegations. Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said his country was conducting special flights that would bring Turkish citizens as well as third country participants to Turkey. Spain's foreign minister said its diplomats in Israel had been informed that some 44 Spanish flotilla members would depart from Israel at 15:00 local time (12:00 BST). Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Helen McEntee, said 15 Irish citizens who had been detained were expected to be flown to Turkey.

GONORRHOEA AND SYPHILIS HIT RECORD LEVELS IN EUROPE

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including gonorrhoea and syphilis have hit record levels in Europe, according to new data. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said both diseases had reached their highest levels in over 10 years in 2024. Gonorrhoea hit 106,331 cases - a 303% increase since 2015 - while syphilis more than doubled in the same period to 45,557. The health agency said "widening gaps in testing and prevention" were partly behind the surge in transmission, and called for urgent action. "These infections can cause severe complications, such as chronic pain and infertility and, in

the case of syphilis, problems with the heart or nervous system," said Bruno Ciancio, the head of the agency's Directly Transmitted and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases unit. He said congenital syphilis cases - "where infections pass directly to newborns, leading to potentially lifelong complications" - had nearly doubled from 2023 to 2024. "Protecting your sexual health remains straightforward. Use condoms with new or multiple partners, and get tested if you have symptoms." Spain had the highest number of confirmed gonorrhoea and syphilis cases of the participating European countries in 2024, at 37,169 and 11,556.

China says US should stop 'threats' against Cuba after ex-leader charged

China has called on the US to stop using "coercion" and "threats" against its ally Cuba, after Washington indicted former leader Raúl Castro on murder charges. An American court has accused the 94-year-old former president of conspiracy to kill US nationals over the 1996 downing of two planes, an incident which killed four people and fuelled diplomatic tensions between Washington and the Caribbean island. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly sought to exert pressure on Cuba and has openly discussed toppling its communist regime. On Thursday, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said the US should "stop threatening force at every turn", and that Beijing "firmly supports Cuba". On



Wednesday, Castro was charged alongside five others of involvement in the shooting down of two planes travelling between Cuba and Florida three decades ago, and was indicted with offences which carry penalties of life in prison or death. The aircraft, which were operated by the Cuban-American dissident group Brothers to the Rescue, were carrying three US citizens

when they were downed, all of whom were killed. At the time, Castro - who stepped down as president in 2018 - was head of the country's armed forces. The incident caused outcry among Cuban exiles living in the US and has long been a source of contention between Washington and Havana. Cuba's president Miguel Diaz-Canel has described the charges as "a political manoeuvre, devoid

of any legal foundation". The foreign minister of China, a long-standing supporter of Cuba, said Beijing opposed "any attempt by external forces to exert pressure on Cuba under any pretext". Guo continued: "The United States should cease using sanctions and judicial apparatus as tools of coercion against Cuba and refrain from making threats of force at every turn. "China resolutely supports Cuba in safeguarding its national sovereignty and dignity and opposes external interference." It comes as the White House continues to ratchet up pressure on Cuba. The US has imposed new sanctions on the country and imposed a blockade on oil to Cuba, a move which has resulted in blackouts and food shortages. Earlier this month.

Air France and Airbus found guilty of manslaughter over 2009 plane crash

Air France and Airbus have been found guilty of manslaughter over a 2009 plane crash which killed 228 people. The Paris Appeals Court found the airline and aircraft manufacturer guilty of corporate manslaughter over the incident, in which flight AF447 between Rio de Janeiro and Paris crashed into the Atlantic Ocean. The passenger jet stalled during a storm and plunged into the water, killing all on board. A court had previously cleared the companies in April 2023 but they were found guilty after this appeal. The Airbus A330 vanished from radars during a storm on 1 June 2009,



with its wreckage found after a long search of 10,000 sq km (3,860 sq miles) of sea floor. The black box was found after months of deep-sea searches in 2011. All 12 crew members and 216 passengers on board the flight were killed when the plane crashed into the sea from a

height of 38,000ft (11,580m), making it the deadliest incident in French aviation history. Relatives of some of the passengers, which included mainly French, Brazilian and German nationals, gathered to hear the verdict on Thursday. The companies have been asked to pay the

maximum fine, 225,000 (\$261,720; £194,500) each - but some of the victims' families have criticised the amount as a token penalty. However, the ruling may be seen as causing damage to the companies' reputations. During their closing arguments in November, the deputy prosecutors said the companies' behaviour had been "unacceptable", accusing them of "spouting nonsense and pulling arguments out of thin air". Both Airbus and Air France had repeatedly denied the charges, and French lawyers believe they are likely to launch further appeals. The BBC has contacted Airbus and Air France for comment.

Trump says he will speak to Taiwan's president in break from protocol



US President Donald Trump says he will talk to Taiwanese leader Lai Ching-te about a possible arms sale, in what would be a sharp departure from diplomatic tradition. US and Taiwanese leaders have not spoken directly since 1979 - when Washington severed formal ties with Taiwan to recognise the Chinese government in Beijing. China claims Taiwan as its territory and has not ruled out taking it by force. The US has long supported the self-ruled island and is bound by law to provide it with a means of self-defence, but has balanced this with maintaining diplomatic relations with China. As president-elect in 2016, Trump took a phone call from Taiwan's then leader Tsai Ing-wen, angering Beijing. President Lai, who took office in 2024, is behind one of the strongest pushes in years to strengthen the island's defence. When asked on Wednesday if he planned to speak to Lai ahead of making a decision on US arms sales, Trump said: "I'll speak to him. I speak to everybody.. We'll work on that, the Taiwan problem." He also hailed his relationship with China's

President Xi as "amazing", on the back of a two-day summit in Beijing last week. When asked about the potential conversation between Trump and Lai, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Thursday that China "firmly opposes official exchanges between the United States and Taiwan", as well as US arms sales to Taiwan. China urges the US to "stop sending wrong signals to the separatist forces in Taiwan," the spokesperson said. In 1979, the US passed the Taiwan Relations Act which states that the US can "provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character" - which is why it continues to sell weapons to Taiwan. Trump has said he has yet to decide if the sale of a \$14bn (£10.4bn) arms package to Taiwan, reportedly including anti-drone equipment and air-defence missile systems, will go ahead. According to a report by the Financial Times, Beijing is currently holding up a proposed visit by the Pentagon's top policy official, Elbridge Colby - saying it cannot approve a visit until Trump decides how he will proceed with the arms deal.



Samsung strike on hold as workers push for AI bonus

Sierra Leone becomes latest African country to receive deportees from US



Sierra Leone has become the latest African country to receive migrants deported from the United States amid Donald Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration. A plane carrying nine West African migrants landed at Sierra Leone's international airport, just outside the capital, Freetown, on Wednesday morning. Last week, Foreign Minister Timothy Musa Kabba told the Reuters news

agency his country had agreed to accept up to 300 people a year expelled by the United States. However, he added that the new arrivals must originally come from member states of Ecowas, west Africa's economic bloc. The US has already sent deportees to several other African countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and South Sudan.

IPL 2026: GUJARAT TITANS SETS A TARGET OF 197/2 FOR CHENNAI SUPER KINGS



'DONE FOR GOOD': FORMER WWE INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION CONFIRMS RETIREMENT

Ryback is once again getting wrestling fans talking, but this time, it's not because of a surprise comeback rumor. The former WWE Intercontinental Champion has now made it pretty clear that his time inside the ring is over for good. Fans have been asking for years if "The Big Guy" would ever return to WWE in some role, especially now that retired wrestlers regularly appear as commentators, managers, interviewers, or backstage personalities. But according to Ryback himself, none of that is happening. Even though WWE has brought back several former stars in non-wrestling roles over the years, Ryback says he has zero interest in returning to television in any capacity. The former Nexus member has stayed away from in-ring action for nearly eight years due to multiple injury issues, and he's repeatedly said that his health comes first now. Recently, he shared an old backstage clip from his WWE days and used it to explain why commentary

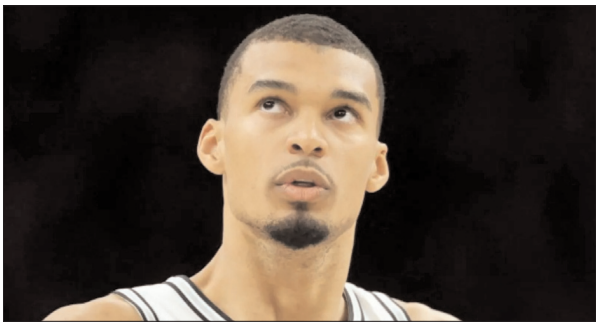


and interview roles never worked for him either. Ryback shuts down WWE return talks after sharing old backstage clip The former WWE star recently uploaded a throwback SmackDown backstage video on Instagram, and fans instantly started asking whether he would ever return to WWE TV. But instead of teasing a comeback, Ryback pretty much did the opposite. In the caption, he joked about how WWE once tried using him outside the ring as a commentator or interviewer, but according to him, it just didn't click. Ryback said people

often ask why he doesn't come back in a non-wrestling role now that he's retired from active competition. His answer was simple: they already tried it once, and it failed badly. He also made it clear again that he has no plans to wrestle anymore. Over the past few years, Ryback has talked openly about the physical damage from injuries and why stepping back into the ring is not worth the risk anymore. Ryback's relationship with WWE has changed a lot over the years For a long time, Ryback and WWE were not exactly on good terms.

NBA To Host Victor Wembanyama's San Antonio Spurs In Paris Before Historic Regular-Season Debut In Manchester

The NBA's growing obsession with Europe is no longer limited to preseason exhibitions and marketing tours. With global stars driving fan engagement across borders, the league is now leaning harder into international regular-season games and Victor Wembanyama is once again at the centre of it. The San Antonio Spurs will face the New Orleans Pelicans in Paris on January 14, 2027 before both teams travel to Manchester for another regular-season clash three days later, marking another major step in the NBA's overseas expansion plans. Wembanyama has already become one of the league's biggest international attractions and the decision to send San Antonio back to France



speaks volumes of how heavily the NBA views him as the face of its European growth strategy. The Manchester game also carries historic weight, with the city preparing to host its first-ever NBA regular-season contest. Victor Wembanyama headlines NBA Paris Game as league expands into Manchester The NBA's latest international schedule reveal was

less about novelty and more about long-term intent. Paris has become one of the league's strongest overseas markets, particularly after Wembanyama's rise from French basketball prodigy to NBA superstar. San Antonio previously played two games in the French capital against the Indiana Pacers in January 2025, splitting the series months after Wembanyama helped

France capture an Olympic silver medal. Now, the league is doubling down. With the NBA continuing to explore new revenue streams, overseas broadcasting opportunities and future expansion models, league executives appear increasingly confident that Europe can sustain a stronger year-round basketball footprint. Addressing that momentum, George Aivazoglou pointed directly to the sport's rising popularity across the continent. "Playing games in Paris and Manchester reflects the strong momentum we're seeing for basketball and the NBA in France, the UK and across Europe," said George Aivazoglou, NBA managing director for Europe and the Middle East.

Who Is Vanessa Trump? Tiger Woods' Girlfriend And Donald Trump's Ex-Daughter-In-Law

As golf legend Tiger Woods finds himself back in headlines following a recent DUI arrest in Florida, another question comes to mind for fans: Who is standing beside him? The woman is named Vanessa Trump, and her role in Tiger Woods' life has significantly increased during this difficult time. The love affair between them seems to be gaining momentum lately, considering that Vanessa is still by the side of Tiger during his troubles, health issues, and controversies. Both of them have been seen hanging around in golf tournaments recently, showing how well they seem to be getting along, even without any media attention around them. Who Is Vanessa

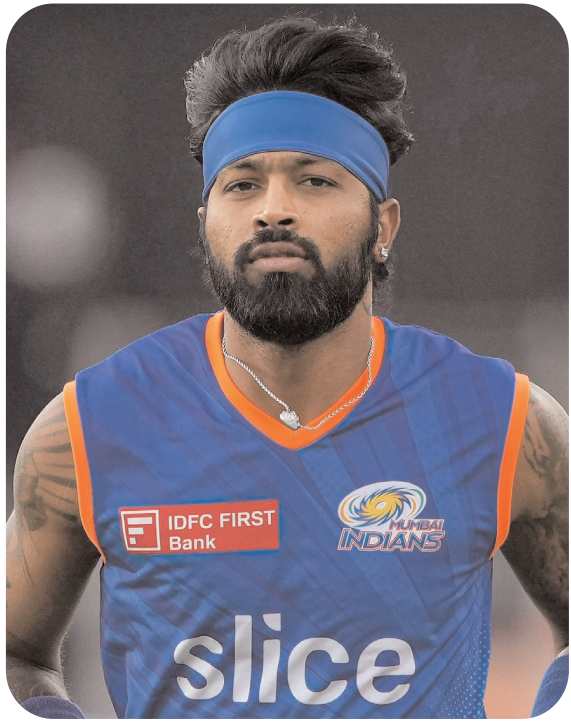


Trump? Meet Tiger Woods' Girlfriend And Ex-Daughter-In-Law Of Donald Trump Vanessa Trump is widely recognized as being the ex-wife of Donald Trump Jr. and the mother of his five children. Trump Jr. was her husband for more than a decade before the two divorced, but they

maintained a close relationship through their children. The connection between Vanessa and Tiger Woods apparently stems from their kids, who go to the same school. Woods, who has two children with his ex-wife, Elin Nordegren, and Vanessa, started dating around late 2024 and has

since been seen attending several golf tournaments together in early 2025. Their relationship took an official turn when Woods posted pictures of the two on Instagram in March 2025, expressing how love was in the air and requesting privacy as they went about their business. The couple can be seen regularly attending various events together. Tiger Woods and Vanessa Trump's Net Worth Amid Recent Controversies The couple's relationship has attracted further interest in light of a recent health announcement by Vanessa, in which she expressed that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer and was beginning treatment.

BCCI HANDS STRICT PUNISHMENT TO HARDIK PANDYA FOR 'CODE OF CONDUCT' BREACH



Harmanpreet Kaur Eyes New Era For Indian Women's Team After Historic ODI World Cup Triumph

Ahead of the Women's T20 World Cup, India captain Harmanpreet Kaur said that the Women in Blue want to make 'winning a habit' after their historic Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 title win. She believes the landmark victory has shifted the team's ambitions from chasing history to building sustained dominance. India's maiden ICC women's title transformed the mood around the team and intensified expectations ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup in England. But for Kaur, the achievement was only the beginning of a larger journey. "Winning that World Cup was a seminal moment for women's cricket in India. It was bigger than one trophy. Most importantly, it brought belief and showed young girls that the highest stage is not out of



reach," Kaur wrote in her ICC column. "The Women's World Cup 2025 win gave us a massive boost in confidence. However, it was only the beginning. We want to make winning a habit. While the 2025 World Cup win gave us immense joy, it also gave us responsibility. We know expectations will rise, and that brings pressure, of course, but it is a good kind of pressure. It tells you that

you have earned something important, and now you have to recreate it again," she mentioned. India head into the tournament after a demanding stretch of international cricket that tested the side across different conditions and situations. They swept Sri Lanka at home, secured a milestone T20I series win in Australia, their first there in ten years, before suffering a difficult

series defeat in South Africa. With a tour of England next on the schedule, Kaur believes the experiences have helped sharpen the squad ahead of another global challenge. "We would like to carry forward the confidence and belief from that win into the T20 World Cup. We know the standards we want to maintain, and the recent T20I series against Sri Lanka, Australia, and South Africa have helped us test ourselves and given us plenty of learnings," she stated. Kaur acknowledged that success in the T20 format leaves little room for error, particularly in high-pressure ICC tournaments where games can turn within a few deliveries. "Winning this tournament would mean a great deal. Every ICC trophy has its own challenges.

Alexandra Eala, Janice Tjen Bring Southeast Asian 'Sense Of Pride' To Roland Garros



Alexandra Eala and Janice Tjen have taken different routes to the women's top 40, but both began their journeys from a region that is rarely on the tennis map. In January, Eala, who turns 21 the day before Roland Garros starts, became the first player from the Philippines to break into the top 50. Tjen turned 24 earlier in May. When she entered the top 40 in February, she became the highest-ranked Indonesian woman since Yayuk Basuki, who reached the top 20 in 1997 and 1998. While their far-flung countries are more than 1,500 kilometres apart, they share a maritime border. The impact of the sometime doubles partners, not only on the court but in the stands, has brought them the nickname 'SEASters'. The huge Filipino expat population flock to see their first tennis star everywhere she plays. "The start of the season is when I seriously noticed that people were really coming, they were buying tickets, they were taking time out of their day. It was like, wow," world number 38 Eala told the

Served website. She added she had been a "little bit in denial" about her popularity. "After I broke that barrier of not accepting, thinking, 'I don't think I'm really famous,' every week they just kept coming, so I was, 'Okay, you have to accept it, absorb it, it's here, it's a really good position.'" Her opponents notice. "I love that she has such an incredible fan base. I've seen the atmosphere. It's amazing," American Amanda Anisimova said in Dubai. Yet, Eala is cautious. "I want to give back all the support they give me, but my first obligation is to myself," she told the Puncto de Break website. "I try to find the healthiest way to deal with all of this, because I feel like many things could go wrong... It's all about balance." Representing a nation of 288 million, 41st-ranked Tjen is also proving a draw. "I don't think too much about it," she told the Times of India ahead of a Billie Jean King Cup match in Delhi in April. "I know that as long as I keep working hard and giving my best, I always have Indonesia behind me.

Travis Kelce Drops Surprising Valentine's Day Remark As Taylor Swift Wedding Talk Heats Up

Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce are once again at the center of wedding speculation after the NFL announced that Super Bowl LVI will fall on Valentine's Day in 2027. During a recent episode of New Heights, Kelce reacted to the unusual timing, sparking fresh discussion around how the couple's future plans could be affected if the Kansas City Chiefs return to football's biggest stage as wedding rumors continue to grow. Travis Kelce reacts to Super Bowl LVI date as Taylor Swift wedding speculation grows While discussing the NFL's future Super Bowl schedule

on New Heights, Travis Kelce admitted he was surprised after learning next year's championship game will land on Valentine's Day. "I don't think I could ever remember it being that late in February," Kelce, 36, said. "In my mind, it's, what's going on? Is it just kinda how the month of September starts here?" Jason Kelce joined the discussion and recalled how Valentine's Day had previously landed close to the Super Bowl, joking that it once became "big news" for men trying to balance football and romance. The timing quickly sparked fresh curiosity

around Kelce and Taylor Swift's future plans. Reports surrounding a possible wedding have continued to gain attention in recent months, though neither Swift nor Kelce has publicly confirmed engagement or marriage details. If the Chiefs return to Super Bowl LVI at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles, Kelce could end up spending Valentine's Day preparing for football's biggest night. Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce may face major financial decisions amid wedding buzz Alongside growing wedding speculation, public conversations about financial planning have also

followed the couple. With Swift's reported billionaire status and Kelce's successful NFL career, questions around whether the pair could eventually sign a prenuptial agreement before marriage have drawn attention. Reports and legal discussions have pointed to states including Tennessee, Missouri, Kansas, California, Rhode Island, and New York as possible options if the couple chooses to move forward with a prenup in the future. Since both stars own properties across multiple states, legal and financial considerations could become part of long-term planning.



