



Bagmane's Achievement is a Matter of Pride for the Entire Nation: **SHIVAKUMAR**

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SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

13-05-2026  
Total pilgrims: 78,024  
Tonsures: 36,826  
Hundi kanakalu: 3.85 CR  
Waiting Compartments:  
Outside line at ATGH.

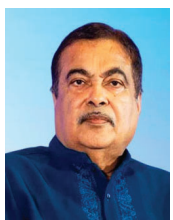
Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 15 H

NIA files 7,500-page chargesheet in Red Fort car bomb blast case that killed 11

New Delhi (TSIT): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a massive 7,500-page chargesheet against ten accused in connection with the deadly car bomb explosion near the Red Fort area in Delhi that claimed 11 lives last year, officials said on Thursday. The high-intensity Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) blast took place on November 10 last year and had also left several people injured besides causing extensive damage to property. According to the NIA, all ten accused, including the alleged mastermind Dr Umer Un Nabi, who is now deceased, were linked to Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH), an offshoot of Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS). The chargesheet was filed before the NIA special court at Patiala House Courts in New Delhi. The Ministry of Home Affairs had designated AQIS and its affiliated organisations as terrorist outfits in June 2018.

Gadkari chooses bus over convoy, pushes fuel conservation drive

New Delhi (TSIT): Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari on Thursday opted to travel by bus instead of using his official convoy while inspecting the Sant Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Palkhi Marg project, reinforcing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's message on conserving fuel amid ongoing global instability. During the inspection visit, Gadkari said the country must focus on reducing dependence on conventional fuels and accelerate the transition toward cleaner energy alternatives. He noted that he has been advocating sustainable mobility and alternative fuels for nearly two decades. The minister highlighted that since 2004, efforts have been underway to promote fuels such as ethanol, methanol, biodiesel, LNG, and green hydrogen.



## CM Revanth slams centre over NEET-UG Cancellation

Hyderabad TSIT BUREAU:

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy strongly criticised the Union Government over the cancellation of NEET-UG 2026, describing the decision as "authoritarian and arbitrary" and accusing the Narendra Modi-led government of repeatedly failing to protect the integrity of the country's examination system. Chief Minister said the unilateral cancellation of NEET-UG 2026 has pushed nearly two crore students and their families into anxiety and uncertainty. He alleged that as many as 93 examination paper leaks had taken place during Prime Minister's tenure, exposing serious systemic failures in the conduct of public examinations across the country.

Revanth Reddy compared the NEET cancellation to the demonetisation decision, stating that both had shocked the nation and severely affected ordinary people. He said the Centre's "thoughtless and negligent" approach has jeopardised the future of lakhs of students who spent years preparing for competi-



tive examinations under intense pressure. Chief Minister expressed concern over the financial and emotional burden borne by parents, many of whom allegedly took loans or sold jewellery to support their children's NEET preparation. He said the cancellation had shattered the aspirations of hard-working students due to the Centre's inability to prevent paper leaks and examination irregularities.

Referring to Congress party's "The Paper Leak Decade" white paper, Revanth Reddy claimed that since 2014, at least 93 paper leak incidents involving central and state-level examinations had affect-

ed nearly two crore students nationwide. He alleged that BJP-ruled states had emerged as major centres for examination leaks, with Gujarat alone witnessing 14 major incidents.

The Chief Minister also recalled that several major national examinations, including NEET-UG, UGC-NET, CSIR-NET and NEET-PG, were cancelled in 2024 following allegations of irregularities. He further pointed out that the Uttar Pradesh Police Constable examination, attended by nearly 48 lakh candidates, was also cancelled within days due to question paper leaks.

Despite the enactment of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act in February 2024, Revanth Reddy alleged that the Centre delayed its notification until June 2024, allowing major scandals to surface in the meantime. Assuring support to students and parents, the Telangana Chief Minister said the State Government would stand firmly with every affected student and family in the wake of the NEET-UG cancellation.

## Pakistan will face unprecedented consequences if it targets India: Rajnath

Jaipur (TSIT)

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday issued a stern warning to Pakistan, stating that any hostile act against India would invite consequences "never witnessed before".

Reaffirming India's policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism, he said the country would respond decisively to any threat to its sovereignty and security. Rajnath Singh said India's national security policy has undergone a historic and comprehensive transformation over the past decade under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said India has adopted a policy of "zero tolerance" against terrorism and conveyed a strong message to the world that any hostile act against the country would invite decisive consequences.

"India has sent a clear message to the world that we maintain a policy of 'zero tolerance' against terrorism. If Pakistan attempts to cast an evil eye on us, then what has never happened before will inevitably occur," he added. The Defence Minister was addressing the unveiling ceremony of the statue of Shri Rao Duddaji in Merta, Nagaur district, on Thursday. He said Rajasthan has always inspired the nation through its



Defence Minister reiterates India's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism, highlights military strength and Operation Sindoor at Rao Duddaji statue unveiling in Rajasthan.

traditions of sacrifice, courage and patriotism, noting that families across the state proudly contribute soldiers to the armed forces. Referring to Rao Duddaji as a symbol of valour and righteousness, he said his life continues to inspire younger generations with ideals of courage, commitment and devotion to justice and dharma. Rajnath Singh said India's armed forces have demonstrated exceptional military capability through the 2016 surgical strikes, the 2019 Balakot airstrikes and, most recently, through "Operation Sindoor".

Referring to the Pahalgam terror attack, he said the nation responded firmly and made it clear that India does not provoke

others, but will respond decisively when challenged. "If Indian citizens are attacked, we will retaliate even across borders. No boundary can stop India from defending its people," he asserted. Emphasising women empowerment, the Defence Minister said respect for women is deeply rooted in Indian civilisation. He highlighted initiatives such as "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" and the Nari Shakti Vandan Amendment Act aimed at strengthening women's representation and safety.

Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, speaking on the occasion, said that under the guidance of the Prime Minister and the leadership of the Defence Minister, rapid modernisation of the armed forces has strengthened India's self-reliance in the defence sector. He praised the role of the Indian Army during "Operation Sindoor" and said Rajasthan's brave heroes continue to inspire the nation with their legacy of sacrifice and patriotism. The Chief Minister said the state government is committed to preserving and promoting Rajasthan's glorious cultural and historical heritage for future generations.

## EC announces staggered rollout of SIR phase 3 in 16 states, 3 UTs

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

The Election Commission on Thursday announced the rollout of phase 3 of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in 16 states and three Union Territories involving 36.73 crore voters in a phased manner beginning May 30. The states and UTs where the SIR will be carried out are Delhi, Odisha, Mizoram, Sikkim, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Telangana, Punjab, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Tripura, Dadar and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. Punjab, Jharkhand, Karnataka and Telangana are opposition-ruled among the states where the SIR exercise will be held.

Over 3.94 lakh booth level officers (BLOs) will go house-to-house of 36.73 crore electors during the latest poll roll revision exercise. They will be assisted by 3.42 lakh booth level agents (BLAs) appointed by political parties during the enumeration phase. The schedule for the SIR in Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir will be announced later keeping in view weather conditions in snow-bound areas, the EC said in a statement. Once phase 3 is completed, the entire country will be covered except



Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The schedule of SIR phase 3 has been fixed keeping in view the common field machinery with the ongoing house listing of the ongoing Census exercise. The final electoral rolls of the 16 states and three UTs will be published on different dates this year, beginning with Odisha, Sikkim, Mizoram and Manipur on September 6 and ending with Tripura on December 23. The final poll roll of Delhi, along with those of Karnataka, Meghalaya, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, will be out on October 7. The SIR has already been conducted in Bihar, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. A "special revision" was conducted in Assam. In his message on the latest phase of SIR, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said, "I appeal to all electors to enthusiastically participate in phase 3 of the SIR and fill their enumeration forms."

## KJS India Expands Manufacturing Presence with New Unit in Telangana

Hyderabad TSIT:

In another major boost to Telangana's rapidly growing industrial ecosystem, KJS India Private Limited is expanding its manufacturing presence in the State with the establishment of its new facility KJS Unit-II at Thogarpally village in Kondapur Mandal of Sangareddy district.

The foundation stone for the new manufacturing unit will be laid on Friday, May 15, in the presence of Telangana IT, Industries and Commerce Minister D. Sridhar Babu, highlighting the State Government's continued trust on attracting investments and promoting industrial growth



across districts beyond Hyderabad.

KJS India, which has already established itself as a reliable co-manufacturing partner for globally renowned brands such as Nestlé, Unilever and Mayora, is expected to further enhance Telangana's profile as an emerging hub for FMCG and allied manufacturing sectors through the new expansion. Industry experts view the

project as a strong reflection of growing investor confidence in Telangana's progressive industrial policies, world-class infrastructure, and proactive governance.

The State Government's focus on ease of doing business and industrial-friendly initiatives has been drawing leading companies to expand operations in Telangana.

## XI SIGNALS 'NEW ERA' IN US-CHINA TIES, ISSUES WARNING ON TAIWAN AT BEIJING SUMMIT

Beijing (TSIT)

Chinese President Xi Jinping has described the emerging phase of relations with the United States as a "new era" of more stable and managed competition, while issuing a pointed warning over Taiwan, calling it the most sensitive and dangerous issue in bilateral ties. The remarks came as Xi and US President Donald Trump opened a landmark bilateral summit at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing,



their first face-to-face meeting in China since 2017, setting the tone for discussions expected to focus on strategic rivalry, trade, and regional security.

Residents have been advised to remain indoors and avoid unnecessary travel.

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's Office has directed district administrations to speed up relief and rescue operations and ensure immediate compensation to the families of victims. Meanwhile, weather officials have warned that another challenge may follow the storm, with temperatures expected to rise sharply from May 15. Forecasts indicate that mercury levels could increase by 6 to 8 degrees Celsius, potentially crossing 45°C in several districts.

## Storm fury kills 74 across UP; Prayagraj worst hit as rain, strong winds wreak havoc

Lucknow (TSIT)

At least 74 people lost their lives and hundreds were injured after a powerful storm accompanied by heavy rain and hail lashed several parts of Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday, leaving widespread destruction across the state.

The sudden storm, with wind speeds reportedly reaching up to 100 kmph, uprooted trees, damaged houses, brought down electricity poles and disrupted normal life in dozens of districts.

Prayagraj emerged as the worst-affected district, recording 17 deaths across five tehsils. Officials



said the victims included five women, four children and eight men. The storm also killed around 20 livestock and damaged at least 16 houses in the district.

Several tragic incidents were reported from different parts of the state. In Unnao, a 70-year-old

farmer, identified as Ram Ashray, died after being crushed by a falling mango tree. In another incident, nine-year-old Ansh lost his life when a eucalyptus tree collapsed in Asiwani.

Other severely affected districts included Bhadohi, where 10 people

died, Fatehpur with eight deaths, and Badaun with six fatalities.

The storm caused massive disruption to electricity supply after hundreds of power poles and trees were uprooted. Roads were blocked in many areas, vehicles were damaged and several localities remained cut off immediately after the storm.

The India Meteorological Department has issued a Yellow Alert for 38 districts, including Lucknow, Prayagraj, Jaunpur and Banda, warning of continued heavy rainfall, lightning and strong winds reaching up to 60 kmph in the coming hours.

Trinamool Congress sharing photographs and reactions on social media platform X.

In its post, the party stated that Banerjee's presence in court reflected her continued commitment towards the people of Bengal and her stand for justice and constitutional values. The TMC claimed that Banerjee continues to stand by the people during difficult times and remains firm in what it



senior Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader and advocate Kalyan Bandopadhyay. The case concerns allegations of attacks on political workers and party offices after the high-voltage elections that ended the TMC's 15-year rule and brought the BJP to power in West Bengal.

The appearance of Banerjee at the High Court drew considerable political attention, with the

described as her fight against injustice and political hostility. The party further praised her for displaying "compassion, courage and conviction" while confronting political challenges posed by the BJP. The matter continues to remain under judicial consideration, with further hearings expected in the Calcutta High Court regarding the allegations raised in the petition.

# EC must be independent as free, fair polls part of basic structure of Constitution: SC

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Thursday said free and fair elections are a part of the basic structure of the Constitution, and this cannot be ensured unless the Election Commission is independent and also appears to be independent. A bench comprising Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma made the observations during the final hearing on a batch of six petitions challenging the constitu-

tional validity of a new law governing the appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the Election Commissioners (EC). The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, which came into force on January 2, 2024, mandates that the CEC and the ECs are appointed by the President on the rec-



ommendation of a Selection Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister,

and the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. The law replaces the Chief Justice of India with a Union Cabinet Minister on the three-member Selection Committee. While hearing the submissions of Attorney General R Venkataramani on behalf of the Centre, Justice Datta said, "It is not sufficient for the Election Commission to be independent; it has to appear to be independent." The attorney general

mounted a robust defence, asserting that Parliament has the absolute right to legislate and is not bound to follow the "stop-gap" arrangement suggested by a five-judge bench in the Anoop Baranwal judgment. The Baranwal judgment was an exercise of Article 142 (discretionary power to do complete justice) and did not constitute a binding law under Article 141 that could override an Act of Parliament.

## Deepa Dasmuni to speak to Chennithala, Cong asserts unity after Satheesan named Kerala CM



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Congress general secretary in-charge of Kerala, Deepa Dasmuni, on Thursday said she would speak to senior party leader Ramesh Chennithala, who has reportedly remained silent since the announcement of the UDF's chief ministerial face, and asserted that all leaders would stand united.

Dasmuni, speaking to reporters in Kerala after arriving in the state in the evening, said reports claiming differences in the number of MLAs supporting each leader—V D Satheesan, Chennithala, and K C Venugopal—were untrue. "It was all untrue. Actually, all of them had authorised the high command to make a decision. So whatever decision they took, the party will stand by it," she said. Dasmuni also said that she and party observers Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik, who are also in Kerala, would be meeting all stake-

holders. Following the announcement by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) that Satheesan would be the CM face of Kerala, Chennithala reportedly left his residence without speaking to anyone. There were reports that he had raised objections to the AICC decision. However, Chennithala skipped the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) meeting scheduled for the evening. Leaders close to him denied these reports, saying that he had not expressed any dissent to the high command. The Congress named Satheesan as Kerala's CM, ending days of suspense over the party's leadership decision. Venugopal, meanwhile, accepted the party's decision and congratulated Satheesan. He also assured full support to Satheesan and the UDF government in Kerala.

## Raj Thackeray questions need for NEET, demands Pradhan's resignation



**MUMBAI:** Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray on Thursday questioned the need for NEET-UG and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi seek the resignation of Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan. Thackeray's demand comes amid massive protests over the cancellation of the examination following allegations of paper leak. The MNS chief said the government is so "obsessed" with bringing everything under a centralised authority that it appears to make no difference if the lives of hundreds of thousands of people are thrown into "disarray". In a post on X, Thackeray said that for several years now, a single individual (Pradhan) has remained entrenched in the position of Union education minister. Despite numerous "irregularities" and "scandals" within the NEET framework during his tenure, this "gentleman" continues to occupy the post, he said. "One wonders: has he been rewarded with this continued tenure because he is so zealously pursuing the agenda of imposing the Hindi language

across the entire nation? I earnestly appeal to the Prime Minister: please demand the immediate resignation of this Minister of yours, who has repeatedly toyed with the lives and future of 22 lakh students," Thackeray said. The National Testing Agency on Tuesday cancelled the NEET (UG) 2026 exam held on May 3 amid allegations of paper leak, with the government asking the CBI to carry out a comprehensive inquiry into the "irregularities". The examination for students seeking admission to undergraduate courses in medical colleges will now be held afresh on dates to be notified separately. Thackeray said the Centre continues its tradition of creating "chaos" in every matter and holding the public to ransom. The "NEET paper leak" has proved this once again, he said. Thackeray sought to know what the Centre did when it found out the alleged malpractice. It merely cancelled the examination and ordered a CBI inquiry, he said. In 2024, a CBI inquiry was ordered in a similar case, but nothing substantial was achieved through it, he said.

## MCD drafts fresh terms to shift 3600 cattle from Bhalswa to Ghoga dairy

**NEW DELHI:** In the long-pending Bhalswa dairy relocation case, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has drafted fresh terms for allotting 333 vacant plots at Ghoga dairy colony to shift nearly 3,600 cattle, officials said on Thursday.



The proposed terms and conditions expected to be placed before the Delhi High Court during Friday's hearing, include stricter eligibility norms, annual licence fees and mandatory surrender of existing plots at Bhalswa after relocation. According to official documents, the allotment committee in meetings held on April 28 and May 7 proposed that dairy operators found with fewer than five adult cattle during the May 2024 survey would not be eligible for allotment at Ghoga. "There are 333 vacant plots of 60 square metres each in F, G and H blocks at Ghoga, besides another 333 plots of 96 square metres in A, C and E blocks. The proposed norm provides around 12 square metres per cattle in a 60-square metre plot," a source said. Under the draft proposal, original allottees from the 1975-76 dairy allotment scheme would pay an annual licence fee of Rs 1,758 for a 60-square metre plot and Rs 2,813 for a 96-square metre plot. Dairy operators regularised under the 2000 MCD circular would pay Rs 3,516 and Rs 5,626 respectively. "For operators found running dairies during the May 2024 survey but who are neither original allottees nor regular-

ised occupants, the proposed licence fee is three times higher: Rs 10,550 annually for a 60-square metre plot and Rs 16,878 for a 96-square metre plot," the source said. The draft also proposes making allotments on a licence fee basis instead of a leasehold basis, while ownership rights over the land would remain with the MCD. The proposed conditions include cancellation of allotment in cases of misuse, overcrowding of cattle, unauthorised construction, subletting or failure to pay licence fees on time. As per the proposal, dairy operators shifted to Ghoga would have to surrender plots they occupy at Bhalswa, where demolition action could also be initiated against plots allegedly being used for residential or commercial purposes.

## Kerala govt to be run on 'remote control' from Delhi, CM chosen under IUML pressure: BJP

**NEW DELHI:** The BJP on Thursday took a swipe at the Congress, saying that its decision to appoint V D Satheesan as the next Kerala chief minister exposes "infighting" within the party and shows that it would be a "remote-controlled government". The BJP asserted that the chief ministerial pick was not the choice of Congress MLAs but of its ally, the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), which is the second-largest constituent of the coalition United Democratic Front (UDF). The Congress on Thursday named Satheesan as the next Kerala chief minister, ending days of suspense and speculation. The decision was announced at a press conference here by AICC Kerala in-charge Deepa Dasmun-



shi and the party's central observers for the state, Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik. The three main contenders for the post were Satheesan, K C Venugopal and Ramesh Chennithala. In an X post, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said the decision was imposed on the state unit by the Congress's central leadership. "It is clear that Kerala's

chief ministerial face was decided in New Delhi and not in Kerala. The announcement was made from the AICC headquarters in Delhi, which shows that this will be a remote-controlled 'sarkar' (government)," he said. The BJP leader also claimed that there was disagreement within the Gandhi family over the leadership choice in Kerala. He alleged that Satheesan was selected due to "pressure from Priyanka Gandhi" who "did not want Rahul Gandhi's candidate K C Venugopal at any cost". "Priyanka Vadra was dead against Rahul Gandhi's pick, K C Venugopal. In fact, there was a huge family fight over who would call the shots in Kerala," he claimed. Poonawalla also blamed internal differences and pressure from alliance partners for the Congress's delay in announcing the new Kerala chief minister. "After 11 days, the Congress party from Delhi has finally announced the name of V D Satheesan ji as the next Kerala chief minister. This has been done under two pressures. The Jamaat and the IUML had read the riot

act to Congress. So, this is the clear influence of the Muslim vote bank," he alleged. Drawing parallels with the Congress government in Karnataka, the BJP spokesperson alleged that factional rivalry will continue to trouble the party in Kerala as well. "It will be the same model as the Karnataka Congress sarkar. There it was D K Shivakumar versus Siddaramaiah. Here it will be Satheesan versus K C Venugopal versus Chennithala versus Shashi Tharoor. There will be four to five claimants, who will constantly rock the boat," he claimed. He said similar internal conflicts had affected Congress governments in states such as Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.

## RJD wrests Bihar legislative council seat from NDA

**ARRAH:** The ruling NDA in Bihar received a setback on Thursday when the opposition RJD wrested the Bhojpur-Buxar legislative council seat, in a by-poll necessitated by the resignation of JD(U) MLC Radha Charan Sah. Sah's son Kanhaiya lost to Sonu Kumar Rai of the RJD by 340 votes, officials said. The total number of valid votes in the bypoll held on Tuesday was about 5,500. Members of local bodies in the districts of Bhojpur and Buxar had voted in the by-election, they said. Sah gave up the seat upon his election to the assembly from Sandesh in November last year, when the NDA had stormed back to power, winning 202 seats in the 243-member assembly. Rai is the son of Laldes Rai, a former MLC from Bhojpur-Buxar, and the son-in-law of Vijendra Kumar Yadav, a former MLA of Sandesh. Altogether six candidates, including four Independents, had stood in the by-election and JD(U) rebel Manoj Kumar Upadhyay, who is said to have quered the pitch for Sah, polled around 636 votes. Meanwhile, RJD working president Tejashwi Yadav expressed delight over the party's victory in the by-election. In a statement, Yadav, who is the leader of the opposition in the state assembly, claimed that "our success in the by-election, conducted through the ballot paper system, proves that we lost the Vidhan Sabha polls because of EVM manipulation".

## Make Vande Mataram singing mandatory in school morning assemblies: WB govt

**KOLKATA:** In a move loaded with symbolism, the West Bengal government has made the singing of 'Vande Mataram' mandatory in morning assemblies across all state-run and state-aided schools with immediate effect. The directive, issued by the school education department, mandates that every student participate in singing the national song before the commencement of classes, with school heads instructed to ensure strict implementation. The order comes against the backdrop of an increasingly assertive emphasis on national symbols in public discourse and follows recent moves by the Centre to strengthen legal provisions concerning respect for national emblems and songs. Announcing the decision on the Assembly premises, Chief Minister Suwendu Adhikari said, "From next Monday, Vande Mataram will be introduced as the prayer song in all schools across the state. I will go to Nabanna today and inform them." Later, in a post on X, the chief minister sought to underscore the significance of the decision and said: "In supersession of all previous orders and practices, the Government of West Bengal has mandated the singing



of National Song of Bharat - Vande Mataram, during School Assembly Prayers before commencement of Classes in all Schools under the School Education Department across West Bengal, effective immediately." He also shared a copy of the official notification along with the post. The formal communication issued by the Director of Education on May 13 left little room for ambiguity. "The singing of 'Vande Mataram' during morning assembly prayers should be made mandatory so that it should be sung by all students in all schools in the state with immediate effect," the order said. The move carries political resonance in a state where debates around identity, nationalism and cultural symbolism have often intersected with electoral politics. For decades, the national anthem, 'Jana Gana

Mana', penned by Rabindranath Tagore, remained the principal song sung during school assemblies. The previous TMC government had introduced 'Banglar Mati, Banglar Jol', another Tagore composition written during the anti-Partition movement of 1905, as the state song. The inclusion of 'Vande Mataram', written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and deeply associated with India's freedom movement, now adds another layer to the assembly ritual and potentially to the state's political narrative. The decision also comes shortly after the Union government-initiated steps to strengthen provisions under the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, including a proposal to make obstruction to the singing of 'Vande Mataram' a punishable offence.

## Police arrest female teacher in Janakpuri POCSO case

**NEW DELHI:** In the latest update regarding the Janakpuri POCSO case, in which a three-year-old girl student was allegedly sexually assaulted inside a private school premises, the Delhi Police said on Thursday that they have arrested a female teacher from the school. "Based on the evidence gathered so far, one female teacher has also been arrested. She will be produced before the court. A thorough investigation is being ensured in the case,"

the police said. The education department of the Delhi Government had issued a show-cause notice to the school on May 8. However, the school did not reply to the said notice. The government is now considering taking over the school's administration. The notice, issued on May 8, 2026, to the school stated that a nursery class girl child was allegedly molested within school premises during school hours, reflecting "grave lapses on the part of the school ad-

ministration, supervisory staff, and management in discharging their statutory and moral responsibilities towards the protection of children." The preliminary inquiry revealed that the school failed to maintain adequate surveillance and monitoring systems, including the absence or non-installation of CCTV cameras at critical locations. The administration allegedly failed to implement proper safeguards and preventive measures for child protection.

A three-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a 57-year-old staff member inside the private school in West Delhi's Janakpuri area. The incident came to light on May 1 when the victim's mother filed a complaint at the Janakpuri police station. According to the complaint, the child had gone to school on April 30, the second day after her admission. After returning home, she complained of pain and said she was taken to an isolated area where the man assaulted her.

## Illegal sand mining: SC slams Raj govt, asks top officials to appear before it on May 20

**NEW DELHI:** Slamming the Rajasthan government for "administrative apathy and institutional paralysis", the Supreme Court on Thursday directed its several top officials to remain personally present before it on May 20 to apprise about the steps undertaken pursuant to the directions to stop illegal sand-mining activities. The top court said the conduct of the Rajasthan government reflected a "wholly casual, indifferent, and indolent approach" towards the grave issues prevailing in this matter, which relates to rampant illegal mining, irreversible envi-

ronmental degradation and the destruction of protected wildlife habitats within the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary. The National Chambal Wildlife Sanctuary, also called the National Chambal Gharial Wildlife Sanctuary, is a 5,400-sq km tri-state protected area. Besides the endangered gharial (long-snouted crocodile), it is home to the red-crowned roof turtle and the endangered Ganges river Dolphin. Located on the Chambal river near the tripoint of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the sanctuary was first de-



clared a protected area in Madhya Pradesh in 1978 and now constitutes a long and narrow eco-reserve co-administered by the three states. A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta passed the order in a suo

motu case titled 'In Re: Illegal sand mining in the National Chambal Sanctuary and threat to endangered aquatic wildlife'. It directed the additional chief secretary of the home department, principal secretaries of the departments

of mining and geology, finance, forest, environment and climate change and transport and road safety of Rajasthan to remain personally present before it on May 20. "The aforesaid officers shall also file comprehensive individual compliance affidavits placing on record the steps undertaken in furtherance of the directions issued by this court vide orders dated April 2, 2026 and April 17, 2026, as well as the present order, together with the timelines within which the remaining measures proposed to be undertaken shall be fully implemented," it said.

## Kumaraswamy Opposes Bidadi Township Project



Bengaluru : Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy launched a sharp attack on the Siddaramaiah Government, stating that "running a real-estate business is not the job of a State Government," and demanded that the Bidadi Township Project, which farmers are opposing, be immediately scrapped.

with their land. "But the real-estate operators inside the State Government are determined to snatch away the land and carry out their business. Whose land is this for them to threaten and seize?" he questioned. "This Government, which is supposed to govern the people, has instead taken up the role of a broker. It is trying to snatch land from poor farmers and run a real-estate mafia. It has entered into square-foot business dealings. The Chief Minister himself has taken responsibility for this brokerage," Kumaraswamy alleged. He further charged that the State Government is directly involved in a "land racket" by attempting to acquire fertile horticultural land belonging to farmers from eight villages for real-estate purposes. "Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is acting like a puppet in the hands of the land mafia," he alleged.

Kumaraswamy asserted that farmers are being threatened and intimidated despite repeatedly stating that they will not give up their land under any circumstances. "These intimidation tactics will not work in front of us. There is absolutely no question of surrendering land. Not a single farmer is willing to part with his land. Let them come and try to take over the land if they can," he challenged directly.

## Bagmane's Achievement is a Matter of Pride for the Entire Nation: DCM D K Shivakumar



Mumbai : Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar praised the progress and achievement of Bengaluru-based Bagmane Group on its listing on the National Stock Exchange. Speaking at the Bell Ringing ceremony at the head office of Bagmane, he said, "It is a matter of pride not just for Bengaluru and Karnataka, but for the entire nation." "This is a truly remarkable event, and today marks a new milestone in Bagmane's 30-year journey. This event is not merely a

financial one — it is a testament to the trust that has been earned. This institution has never forgotten its roots from the day one. The trust placed in Bagmane Prime Office REIT is enormous. There has been tremendous hard work behind this organization's growth," he said. "When I was the Urban Development Minister during S M Krishna's tenure, then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee attended the foundation-laying ceremony of Bengaluru International Airport. At that time, leaders from four or five countries visited Bengaluru. Vajpayee remarked that world leaders used to come to Delhi first and then travel to other cities. But now times have changed — world leaders come to Bengaluru first and then go to other cities. Last year, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to inaugurate the Yellow Metro line, he described Bengaluru as a 'global city'. We should be proud that Bengaluru is receiving such recognition.

## Women Driving KPCL's Success: Gaurav Gupta



Bengaluru : Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary of the Energy Department and Managing Director of Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), praised the achievements of women employees and officers of KPCL in the state's power generation sector. Speaking after presiding over the International Women's Day 2026 celebrations organized by KPCL at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Kincha Auditorium on Thursday, he said: "KPCL, which generates electricity required for the state, has a significant number of women officers and employees. They have worked on par with men and contributed immensely towards achieving maximum power generation." "About 40 years ago, when I studied at IIT, there were only 8 girls among more than 300 students. But times have changed now. Many women are studying engi-

neering and excelling in various fields. At KPCL too, many women engineers are taking up leadership roles and performing exceptionally well," Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta added. "KPCL is not just a power generation company; it is like a family where everyone works together with mutual cooperation and equality," he said while extending Women's Day greetings to all women employees of the corporation. Dr. Prema Siddaraju, Principal of SJR Women's Degree College, Rajajinagar, said: "When both women and men in society are educated and true equality — including economic equality — is implemented effectively, any nation can emerge as a developed country. If girls in India had not received opportunities equal to men, the country would still have remained backward. Women work with 100 percent capability in every field. That is why India is progressing as a developing nation."

## Oben Electric Bets Big on Karnataka, Targets 30% Sales Contribution for New Rorr EVO

Bengaluru : Oben Electric, India's fastest-growing R&D-driven electric motorcycle manufacturer,

hosted an exclusive showcase for the newly launched New Rorr EVO at its flagship showroom in HSR Layout, Bengaluru.

Reinforcing Karnataka's growing importance in the company's expansion strategy, Oben Electric said it expects nearly 30% of total New Rorr EVO sales in FY2026 to come from Karnataka, driven by strong EV adoption momentum, increasing demand for its motorcycles, and rising consumer preference for practical electric mobility solutions.

Karnataka contributed over 20% of Oben Electric's overall sales in the last financial year, making it one of the company's strongest-performing markets. The company also emerged as Karnataka's highest-selling electric motorcycle brand during the same period.

Speaking at the regional showcase, Madhumita Agrawal, Founder & CEO, Oben Electric, said, "Karnataka continues to be one of the most strategic markets for Oben Electric, not just from a sales perspective, but also as the foundation of our innovation and manufacturing ecosystem.



Bengaluru has played a pivotal role in our growth journey, and with the New Rorr EVO, we are further strengthening our commitment towards riders looking for a motorcycle that delivers design, performance, practicality and technology in one compelling package."

Designed for today's riders seeking style, performance and practicality in one package, the New Rorr EVO combines premium motorcycle attributes with everyday usability at an accessible price point.

The motorcycle features a bold streetfighter-inspired design and delivers a top speed of 110 km/h along with an IDC-certified range of 180 km. It supports fast charging from 0 to 80% in 90 minutes and introduces SmartIQ, Oben Electric's intelligent ride optimization technology designed to enhance riding efficiency and extend range by up to 15%.

Powered by Oben Electric's proprietary 9 kW motor and advanced 3.4 kWh LFP battery technology, the Rorr EVO has been engineered specifically for Indian road and

weather conditions, offering superior thermal resistance, enhanced safety, and longer battery life. The motorcycle also integrates several rider-focused features including a segment-longest seat, 10-litre storage capacity, reverse mode, connected vehicle technology, and multiple safety alerts aimed at improving everyday comfort and rider confidence.

The New Rorr EVO is currently being offered at a special introductory price of 99,999 (ex-showroom) for the first 10,000 customers, following which the price will be revised to 1,24,999 (ex-showroom). Bookings are open at 777, while customer deliveries are scheduled to commence nationwide from June 2026.

Oben Electric currently operates 10 showrooms across Karnataka and nationally operates across 18 states and major metropolitan markets in India through a network of 150 showrooms. Oben also plans to expand this footprint to 350 showrooms by the end of the year. Bengaluru also serves as the company's manufacturing and innovation hub, with Oben Electric operating a manufacturing facility in the city with an annual production capacity of one lakh units, scalable up to three lakh units annually.

## Awareness and Training Programme on Child Rights Protection and POC SO Act



Bengaluru: The Department of Social Work of Dr. Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University, in association with the Directorate of Child Protection, District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, District Child Protection Unit, and Prakruthi Social Organization, organized a special training camp on the role of students in protecting child rights and legal safeguards. Dr. C.V. Sneha, Director of the Directorate of Child Protection, explained the importance of the POC SO Act. She emphasized the need to spread awareness in society regarding this highly effective legislation. She appealed to students to actively participate in creating public awareness against social evils such as

child marriage, child labour, teenage pregnancy, female foeticide, begging, and the exploitation of children in prostitution. She also encouraged the youth to play an active role in

preventing atrocities against children and the sexual abuse of girl children occurring at various levels of society, including within families. Presiding over the programme, Vice Chancellor Prof. Ramesh B. expressed concern that nearly 80,000 cases of teenage pregnancies had been identified in Karnataka during the past one year. He cautioned students to remain vigilant against fraudulent networks that misuse social media platforms to lure and exploit adolescent girls.

## Commissioner's Meeting Regarding Health and Solid Waste Management Departments of Malleshwaram Division



Bengaluru : The Commissioner of Bengaluru West City Corporation, Dr. Rajendra K.V., held a meeting today regarding the Health and Solid Waste Management departments of the Malleshwaram division. He stated that everyone's cooperation is essential to keep the Malleshwaram area clean. In this regard, he instructed all Health Inspectors, Junior Health Inspectors, and Pourakarmika Supervisors to take strict

measures. Unauthorized action must be taken against any issues hindering city cleanliness, including footpath encroachment, failure to hand over garbage, non-segregation of waste, and the systematic disposal of dry leaves. Action should also be taken against unauthorized shops. He mentioned that Pourakarmikas who perform well should be recognized, while necessary action should be taken against those who are unau-

thorizedly absent or not performing their duties properly. He warned that ward-wise inspections will be conducted in the coming days. If the overall work in the city is not carried out systematically, strict action will be initiated against the concerned officials. Health Officer of Malleshwaram Division Dr. Manohar, AGM Rekha, Health Inspectors, Junior Health Inspectors, Ward Marshals, and Pourakarmika Supervisors were present at the meeting. Register a Complaint: A grievance center has been established for city cleanliness, for which a separate WhatsApp number 9448197197 has been provided. Complaints can be registered by sending a message along with a photograph to this number. Subsequently, the concerned officials will provide information regarding the disposal of waste/garbage and the resolution of the problem within a specified timeframe. Furthermore, complaints can be registered by calling the 1533 helpline. Complaints can also be registered through the Namma Bengaluru (Sahaaya 2.0) mobile app software.

## BWSSB's Robotic Tech Prevents Road Digging at 399 Sites, Spares Bengaluru Commuters Traffic Nightmare



BENGALURU : In a major relief for the city's daily commuters, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has successfully deployed advanced robotic technology to inspect underground pipelines, averting disruptive road excavations at 399 locations over the past six months.

The state-of-the-art initiative, officially launched by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar last November, was introduced to address pipeline leaks and sewerage faults without paralyzing city traffic. By sending robotic units directly into the underground networks, the board surveyed over 32 kilometers of infrastructure, identifying and repairing critical faults without tearing up the asphalt.

"We understand how frustrating road excavations can be for motorists and the public in a metropolis like Bengaluru," said Dr. Ram Prasath Manohar, Chairman of

BWSSB. "Previously, digging up entire stretches of roads was inevitable to detect pipeline leaks or sewerage faults, leading to massive traffic jams. Following the directives of the Deputy Chief Minister, we deployed this robotic technology. These machines travel inside the pipelines and accurately pinpoint faults without the need for surface digging, saving the public from immense hardship." Key Operational Milestones (November 2025 - May 2026): - Extensive Subsurface Survey: BWSSB's robotic units traversed a staggering 32,661 meters (32.66 km) inside the city's pipeline network to conduct precise, scientific inspections.

- Pinpoint Fault Detection: The non-invasive inspections accurately identified 394 specific defects, allowing engineers to execute targeted repairs with minimal damage to road infrastructure.

**TATA CAPITAL LIMITED**  
Reg. Office: 11th Floor, Tower-A, Peninsula Business Park, Ganpat Rao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400 013.

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
(Under Rule 8(i) R/W Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002)

**E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(i) R/W Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.**

**LOAN ACCOUNT NO. TCFLA0471000011057868: Mr. SHIVAS P A**

This is to inform that Tata Capital Ltd. (TCL) is a non-banking finance company and incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956 and having its registered office at Peninsula Business Park, Tower A, 11th Floor, Ganpat Rao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013 and a branch office amongst other places at Thiruvur (Branch). That vide orders dated 24.11.2023, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Mumbai has duly sanctioned the Scheme of Arrangement between Tata Capital Financial Services Limited ("TCFSL") and Tata Cleantech Capital Limited ("TCL") as transferees and Tata Capital Limited ("TCL") as transferee under the provisions of Sections 230 to 232 read with Section 66 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 (said Scheme). In terms thereof, TCFSL and TCL (Transferor Companies) along with its undertaking have merged with TCL, as a going concern, together with all the properties, assets, rights, benefits, interest, duties, obligations, liabilities, contracts, agreements, securities etc. w.e.f. 01.01.2024. In pursuance of the said Order and the Scheme, all the facility documents executed by TCFSL and all outstanding in respect thereof stood transferred to Applicant Company and thus the TCL is entitled to claim the same from the [Borrowers/Co-Borrowers] in terms thereof.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the below Borrower/Co-Borrower that the below described immovable property mortgaged to Tata Capital Limited (Secured Creditor/TCL), the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Tata Capital Limited (Secured Creditor), pursuant to notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) (No. 54 of 2002). The following immovable properties will be sold on 09th Day of June, 2026 on "As is where is basis" & "As is what is and whatever there is & without recourse basis".

Whereas the sale of secured asset is to be made to recover the secured debt and whereas there was a due of a sum of Rs. 1,56,94,252.54/- (Rupees One Crore Fifty Six Lakhs) Ninety Four Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Two And Paise Fifty Four Only) vide Loan Account No. TCFLA0471000011057868 as on 07-May-2026 from Borrower & Co-Borrowers/Guarantors i.e. (1) Mr. Shivas P A, Puthiyaveetil House, Pazhuvil Post, Thiruvur - 680564; (2) Mr. Shivas P A, M/s. Bluebell India Traders, Door No. 16/197, Near Ayyankavu Mairthanam, Irinjalkuda, Thiruvur - 680121; (3) Mrs. Nisa Shivas, W/o. Shivas P A, Puthiyaveetil House, Pazhuvil Post, Thiruvur - 680564; (4) M/s. Bluebell India Traders represented by Mr. Shivas P A, Door No-16/197, Near Ayyankavu Mairthanam, Irinjalkuda, Thiruvur - 680121.

Notice is hereby given that, in the absence of any postponement/ discontinuance of the sale, the said property shall be sold by E-Auction at 2.00 PM, on the said on 09th Day of June, 2026 by TCL, having its branch office at Trichur Trade Center, Kuruppam Road, Thiruvur-680001. The sealed E-Auction for the purchase of the property along with EMD Demand Draft shall be received by the Authorized Officer of the TATA CAPITAL LIMITED till 5.00 P.M. on the said 08th Day of June, 2026.

Description of Secured Assets	Type of Possession/ Constructive/ Physical	Reserve Price (Rs)	Earnest Money EMD (Rs)
District	Thiruvur		
Sub District	Kattoor		
Taluk	Thiruvur		
Village	Kurumpilavu		
Desom	Pazhuvil		
Limit	Chazhoor Panchayath		
Sy No	65113	Rs. 1,07,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Seven Lakhs Only)	Rs. 10,70,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakhs Seventy Thousand Only)
Extent in Ares	8.09		
Extent in Cents	20		

All that is part and parcel of property having an extent of 8.09 Ares (20 Cents) in Survey No. 65113 of the Kurumpilavu Village, Pazhuvil Desom, Chazoor Panchayath, Thiruvur Taluk, Thiruvur District and Kattoor Sub District along with the residential RCC roofed house and with all rights and improvements therein which is more particularly described in the schedule of the Sale Deed No. 1233/2004 of SRO Kattoor with the following boundaries: East: Panchayath Road and Property of Joseph; North: Balance Property, West: Balance Property; South: Property of Malyekkan Joseph.

The description of the property that will be put up for sale is in the Schedule. Movable articles/House hold inventory if any lying inside and within secured asset as described above shall not be available for sale along with secured asset until and unless specifically described in auction sale notice. The sale will also be stopped if, amount due as aforesaid, interest and costs (including the cost of the sale) are tendered to the Authorized Officer or proof is given to his satisfaction that the amount of such secured debt, interest and costs has been paid. At the sale, the public generally is invited to submit their tender personally. No officer or other person, having any duty to perform in connection with this sale shall, however, directly or indirectly bid for, acquire or attempt to acquire any interest in the property sold. The sale shall be subject to the usual conditions prescribed under the SARFAESI Act, 2002. The E-auction will take place through portal <https://bank.auctions.in> on 09th Day of June, 2026 between 2.00 PM to 3.00 PM with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each. All the Bids submitted for the purchase of the property shall be accompanied by Earnest Money as mentioned above by way of a Demand Draft favoring the "TATA CAPITAL LIMITED" payable at Thiruvur. Inspection of the property may be done on 26th Day of May, 2026 between 11.00 AM to 5.00 PM.

Note: The intending bidders may contact to Tata Capital Limited at Mobile No. +91-8691005238 / Authorized Officer, Mr. Rakesh Dawny Kokkattu, Email id: rakesh.kokkattu@tatacapital.com and Mobile No. +91-6282658075.

For detailed terms and conditions of the Sale, please refer to the link provided in secured creditor's website, i.e. <http://www.tatacapital.com/content/dam/tata-capital/pdf/e-auction/cfs103rd-E-Auction-Sale-Notice-News-Publication-Shivas-P-TCFLA0471000011057868.pdf>

Place: Thiruvur (Kerala) Sd/-Authorized Officer, Tata Capital Ltd.  
Date: 15-05-2026  
Branch Address: Trichur Trade Center, Kuruppam Road, Thiruvur-680001.

EDITORIAL

Over-Confidence  
Without Numbers

Rahul Gandhi's recent assertion at a rally in Gurugram, that the Congress alone can defeat the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is puzzling. Not only does it betray a blissful misreading of the outcome of the recent round of five assembly elections, but it also suggests that Rahul hasn't quite grasped the gravity of the upcoming political and electoral challenges the Congress must overcome before he can position his party as the sole viable opposition force. The eight-day delay in choosing V D Satheesan as the new Kerala chief minister illustrates the sloth that pervades the party's political responses. Even so, it would be churlish to begrudge Rahul Gandhi and the Congress their moment of joy. They have ended a nearly two-year-long drought of assembly victories by reclaiming Kerala from the Left with a handsome margin. Rahul Gandhi also made an adroit manoeuvre in Tamil Nadu, which is likely to see the Congress back in government in the state after 59 years. He signed on to a long-term partnership with actor Vijay and his TVK, hoping to ride on the back of their stunning electoral performance to regain relevance in a state once dominated by the Congress till the Dravidian parties swept it into a political wilderness in 1967.

Taking Chances

The decision to dump DMK, a loyal ally for 23 years, will have its own repercussions within the Opposition INDIA bloc. But Rahul Gandhi, buoyed perhaps by his Kerala victory, seems to have decided to take his chances and go with the flow. However, these gains must be juxtaposed with the verdicts from Assam and West Bengal. In Assam, the BJP posted a third consecutive victory and its best-ever performance to win a three-fourths majority with its alliance partners. The Congress managed just 21 seats and had to swallow the humiliating defeat of its state president and chief ministerial face, Gaurav Gogoi. But it is the BJP's phenomenal storming of the West Bengal citadel that should set alarm bells ringing in the Congress and send it scurrying to the drawing board to chalk out future strategies. Apart from strategic defections in the ruling Trinamool Congress party's strongholds through a contentious Special Intensive Review of electoral rolls by the Election Commission and the overwhelming presence of nearly half the country's parliamentary forces for the duration of the election, the BJP successfully trumped Bengal's famed cultural and regional sub-nationalism with an emotive paradigm that few thought would overwhelm the state.

One Person In Gandhi Family Is Smiling Over Satheesan's Kerala Win - Despite Rahul

After what seemed like a lifetime in the political timeline of Kerala, the Congress has chosen VD Satheesan as the state's next Chief Minister. Satheesan's elevation is, first and foremost, a political lesson of immense significance for every aspirant to high office across parties. The establishment may have had its preferences. The arithmetic within the system may have appeared to favour others. Yet, what ultimately prevailed was sustained political capital earned through relentless groundwork, public credibility, and organic acceptability among cadres and citizens alike. For five years, Satheesan invested in the ground. In the end, even the high command had to concede to the weight of public sentiment conveyed by those who truly understood the pulse of Kerala. That is why this is not just Satheesan's victory. It is also KC Venugopal's defeat. More importantly, it is a major face loss for Rahul Gandhi. Venugopal was no ordinary contender. He was the AICC general secretary in charge of organisation, widely regarded as one of the most powerful figures in today's Congress, and seen as Rahul Gandhi's preferred choice for Kerala. Reports indicated that a substantial bloc of newly elected Congress MLAs backed him; one account put the number at 47 out of 63. Yet, despite that institutional heft, and despite Rahul's apparent preference, he could not cross the final line. Satheesan did. When Kamal Nath became Chief Minister in Madhya Pradesh, Digvijaya Singh was seen as having played a part; when Ashok Gehlot edged ahead in Rajasthan, Ahmed Patel's influence mattered; in Chhattisgarh, Bhupesh Baghel refused to yield to the alleged two-and-a-half-year power-sharing



arrangement; in Karnataka, Siddaramaiah has continued to resist recurring pressure over leadership change. Against that background, Kerala stands out. Here, it was not a regional strongman defying Delhi, but Rahul Gandhi's own preferred man - Venugopal himself, supposedly among the most powerful men in the party - failing to secure the office he wanted. The question many Congressmen will ask is stark: if Rahul Gandhi and KC Venugopal together could not deliver Kerala, who will fear their displeasure now?

How Kerala Forced Delhi To Retreat

After the UDF's emphatic victory - 102 seats in a 140-member Assembly, with the Congress winning 63 - the party should have moved swiftly to install a government. Instead, it spent 10 bruising days unable to settle the leadership question. What ought to have been a moment of consolidation became an exhibition of hesitation. The delay deepened the contrast between the two principal claimants. Venugopal had organisational clout, Delhi access, and legislative numbers projected in his favour. Satheesan had the political

In the opening hours of Donald Trump's first day of meetings in China, Xi Jinping appears to be sending a clear message: let's address the hard stuff upfront. Central to Xi's messaging was the warning that the "Taiwan question" remains fundamental to the future of Sino-US ties. At the same time, Xi emphasised the possibility of Washington and Beijing evolving into economic partners rather than strategic rivals. And in his outreach to American CEOs, he signalled China's willingness to further open its economy to US businesses. These almost perfunctory messages are along expected lines, and most don't expect much to come out of Trump's maiden visit to China during his second term. The real intrigue regarding this trip stems from the domestic and global political circumstances Trump finds himself in. As he boarded the Air Force 1 to Beijing, the general perception was that a significantly weakened American leader was meeting his Chinese counterpart. "The question is, is this perception accurate? And if yes, does it give Xi greater leverage? Let's consider Trump's position across three different parameters. On the broad question of geopolitics and the US's position in the world as the preeminent power, America has taken an undeniable beating. The summit with Xi was originally scheduled to take place in April, but Trump postponed it to May with the hope that he could end the war in Iran before taking the trip to Beijing. But that didn't happen; the Strait of Hormuz continues to be closed, and Washington and Tehran are arguably as close to a deal as they were before this war started. More than the actual outcome of the war, what seems to be looming in the background is the supposed reputational hit the US will suffer from



initiating this stalemate of a war. Standard international relations speak suggests that historically, empires die when they overstretch. However, neither this war will end the US's superpower status, nor has any of the US's previous reckless outings in Iran, Afghanistan or Vietnam. On the question of reputational ramifications, the verdict so far seems to be a bit mixed. While the US Central Command's inability to retain its dominance over Hormuz is striking, it might be a stretch to extrapolate from it. After all, Hormuz is arguably the trickiest of chokepoints. More structurally, the fact that no other country has the capacity to even pretend to be a security partner (or guarantor) to such a vast number of countries makes Washington distinctly indispensable. When it comes to Trump's economic performance, while the US markets seem to be scaling new heights, a closer look paints a

much darker picture. According to research by UBS, just 42 stocks are responsible for the S&P 500's total returns. This number generally hovers around 100. Rapid economic growth and booming markets - driven by the AI boom - seem increasingly schizophrenic in the face of rising inflationary pressure from the tariff and energy shocks. The US just recorded its highest wholesale inflation reading since 2022, with producer prices rising 6.1%. Its ramifications are being felt across the economy. "Higher energy and food costs, combined with SNAP and Medicaid cuts, are pressuring the bottom-income quintile," noted a recent research note by Goldman Sachs. It shows how even the US middle class is beginning to see a fall in its disposable income. Another report by the Financial Times shows that the prices for petrol have risen to \$4.55 a gallon, from \$1.9 on the eve of the war. Meanwhile, diesel, which fuels the US industry and trans-

portation, has hiked to \$5.66, close to the all-time high of \$5.82. Expectedly, this is affecting Americans unevenly. While the top third of US income earners have been unaffected, the bottom third have reduced their consumption by 7%. Additionally, the hit to the US fiscal math is also significant. Before the war commenced, the US Federal Reserve was expected to cut interest rates. It was precisely to cut rates that Trump brought in his handpicked choice as the next Fed Chair, Kevin Warsh. As inflationary pressure begins to creep up, the Fed might have to seriously contemplate a rising rate. For Trump, rate cuts seem mostly off the table before the midterm elections later this year. Lastly, what does this mean for Trump politically, especially given the lingering midterms? Trump rose to power by positioning himself as the messiah of large swathes of the US population that had been left out during

the decades of US-led hyperglobalization. During the 2024 polls, Trump was highly popular among the lower-middle- and middle-income Americans. These will be the most hit sections by the rising costs. Besides, the MAGA consensus was all about staying away from mindless wars. How the protracted Iran war will affect Trump's popularity among his MAGA base also remains to be seen. Now add to it China's stranglehold over a large portion of merchandise goods and its growing willingness to weaponise its dominance over critical inputs and rare earth magnets, and Trump's relatively weak hand vis-à-vis Xi makes itself obvious. "Trump arrives in Beijing as an unpopular leader in a weakened position. But Xi may be satisfied with incremental gains for now. He can afford to play a long game," argued Gideon Rachman in the Financial Times. However, it is precisely this "long game" being played by China that requires some unpacking. There are primarily two components here. First, China's dominance over global supply chains has now reached unprecedented levels, as was evident in its \$1.2 trillion goods surplus in 2025. But much like the US, headline numbers hide the real story. The Chinese model is built on severe financial repression, which suppresses household savings and consumption, and directs the financial surplus to industries in the form of cheap credit. Following the 2020 real estate crash, the surplus money was rapidly directed to a plethora of industries - batteries to electronic vehicles to solar - in the form of staggering central and local government subsidies. These are precisely the sectors that are now flooding global markets with cheap exports and account for China's gargantuan trade surplus.

As Chief Minister, VD Satheesan Will Now Have To Learn To Dance To Many Congress Tunes

During the culmination of the massive Pudukkottai Yatra - led by the then Leader of the Opposition and now Chief Minister-designate, V.D. Satheesan - Rahul Gandhi had remarked, "All these leaders dance well, but they need to dance well together." It was a pointed reminder of the necessity for unity in Kerala. Indeed, the only way the UDF could have squandered this election was through internal friction, and they all danced together to a fascinating mandate. The "dance together" advice is still important for Satheesan, as he has been chosen as the next Kerala Chief Minister by the Congress high command and soon will be chosen by the Congress Legislative Party after a tough power-struggle dance with the High Command. Satheesan's case was strong. He led the charge from Kerala's northern tip to its southern coast from February 6 to March 7, with the Pudukkottai Yatra projecting his position as the face of the Congress campaign. As the LoP who took the fight directly to Pinarayi Vijayan for the last five years, he made himself a clear alternative. He had, and still has, the categorical trust and support of the IUML, the UDF's most powerful ally, and is clearly the most dominant public face of the UDF. In contrast to Satheesan's public-facing role, KC Venugopal (KCV) operated as the party's primary decision-maker. Leveraging his proximity to Rahul Gandhi, KCV acted as the master strategist, handpicking candidates and keeping the campaign on track. By choosing not to contest the assembly polls, he avoided sending mixed signals to the electorate. As the central power axis in Kerala, KCV deserves credit for



maintaining party discipline and stepping back from the limelight to prevent any optics of friction. Meanwhile, Ramesh Chennithala, the quintessential Nehru-Gandhi loyalist, served as the campaign committee chief. Though he made a pitch for the top job, many view him as past his prime following the 2021 failure. His only realistic path to the Chief Minister's post this time was as a "consensus candidate" if the rivalry between KCV and Satheesan reached a total deadlock. The Congress High Command faced a dilemma: choose a loyalist like KCV, who would strictly follow the leadership's diktat, or appoint Satheesan, a powerful public figure who often marches - or dances - to his own beat. The main dynamic seems to have been VDS's refusal to budge. He apparently said he will resign from the assembly and not be part of a government under anyone else. This would have

been a disaster. Letting him go would have led to enormous instability and a massive public backlash - the party couldn't afford that after such a stupendous victory. The other dynamic was the categorical support of the biggest ally, the IUML, which has 22 MLAs. In fact, the BJP has seized on the IUML's support, accusing the Congress of buckling under the pressure of the League to appoint Satheesan. While this may be a standard political allegation, it appears the BJP is deliberately framing Congress as a "minority-driven" entity, a narrative the party has peddled nationally repeatedly. By doing so, they aim to consolidate a Hindu vote bank in Kerala, seeking an opening in the vacuum left by the LDF's crushing defeat. Leaving political allegations aside, Satheesan is widely regarded as a firmly secular ideologue who views the UDF as a broad social coalition. Unlike many of his prede-

cessors, he has not appealed powerful communal or caste-based interest groups, such as the NSS or SNDP. While this reinforces his secular credentials, it also means he will likely face stiff opposition from these influential lobbies that are used to having a say in the state's governance. Fearing a repeat of the leadership "civil wars" seen in Karnataka, the Congress High Command realised that sidelining Satheesan would trigger a massive public backlash and immediate instability. This decision is one for categorical clarity and dispelling any confusion. Kerala will hope this will be the case for five full years. KCV, as a confidante of the Gandhis, was deemed easier to placate. Interestingly, his initial contention for the post suggests he had the High Command's blessing; he likely wouldn't have challenged Satheesan without a green light from Delhi. VD Satheesan is known for a streak of authoritarianism. A wildlife enthusiast who has scaled all the peaks of the Western Ghats and a voracious reader, he is a bit of a loner who writes his own scripts. This independent "rebel" streak is precisely what worries the High Command; they are loath to lose control over Thiruvananthapuram the way they have over Bengaluru. As Satheesan takes the oath of office, his greatest challenge will be inclusivity. To succeed, he must accommodate the loyalists of both KCV and Chennithala in key positions. He may be the Chief Minister, but he must remain "first among equals" in a large, convoluted dance troupe. To lead Kerala, Satheesan must finally learn to dance together and to dance many tunes between Delhi and Thiruvananthapuram.

# US drops \$15,000 visa deposit for foreign fans with World Cup tickets



The Trump administration will exempt football fans from 50 countries subject to a \$15,000 (£11,000) visa deposit requirement, provided they are travelling to the US for the World Cup with valid match tickets. Five of these countries - Algeria, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and Tunisia - have qualified for the tournament, to be co-hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico from 11 June.

Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Mora Namdar said in a statement to the BBC. The bond requirement, introduced last year, was intended to reduce visa overstays, according to a notice published by the state department. Players and coaches for the tournament were already exempt from the bond requirement, but ordinary fans with confirmed tickets for the World Cup had not been included until Wednesday. The 12-month pilot programme, launched last

August, was part of the administration's wider immigration crackdown. According to the state department, it was intended to curb visa overstays or cases "where screening and vetting information is considered deficient". The bond would be refunded at the end of the visitor's stay. In a statement, FIFA said the announcement demonstrates the ongoing collaboration with the White House "to deliver a successful, record-breaking and unforgettable global event". "We are

### Highlights

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grateful to the Administration for the ongoing partnership." While the requirement has now been suspended for football fans from the 50 affected countries, travellers from Iran and Haiti remain barred. But players and coaches from those countries are exempt for World Cup-related travel. Travellers from Ivory Coast and Senegal, both of which have qualified for the tournament, face partial restrictions under an expanded version of that travel ban.

Late last year, the US government also announced that tourists from dozens of countries could be required to provide a five-year social media history as a condition of entry - another immigration policy that could affect visitors coming to the US for the World Cup. Rights groups have warned travellers that such policies could lead to denied entry, arrest risks, expanded travel restrictions, social media screening, racial profiling and increased surveillance.

# Wholesale price inflation rises to 8.3 pc in April

New Delhi: Wholesale price inflation shot up to 8.30 per cent in April, from 3.88 per cent in March, led by a sharp spike in prices of fuel, power and crude petroleum. Wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation in fuel and power jumped to 24.71 per cent in April, from 1.05 per cent in March. In crude petroleum, inflation was 88.06 per cent in April compared to 51.5 per cent in the previous month. The sharp rise in WPI inflation reflects the impact of the West Asia crisis and the effective blockade of the Strait of Hormuz through which the majority of the crude oil is imported to India. Inflation in food articles was 1.98 per cent in April, compared to 1.90 per cent in March. In non-food articles, inflation rose to 12.18 per cent during April, 11.5 per cent in the previous month, data released by the commerce and industry ministry showed. "Positive rate of inflation in April 2026 is primarily due to an increase in prices of mineral oils, crude petroleum & natural gas, basic metals, other manufacturing and non-food articles,



etc.," the ministry said in a statement. In the fuel and power basket, inflation in LPG was 10.92 per cent in April, against (-) 1.54 per cent in March, while in petrol it was 32.40 per cent, against 2.50 per cent in the previous month. In high-speed diesel, inflation was 25.19 per cent in April against 3.26 per cent in March. Despite a 50 per cent spike in global crude oil

prices, the government has so far held fuel pump and household LPG rates stable to shield households from the impact of the retail price rise of petrol, diesel and LPG. However, prices of commercial LPG cylinders have been raised. WPI-based inflation in fuel and power jumped to 24.71 per cent in April, from 1.05 per cent in March.

# HPCL Dealers Allege Forced Sale Of Expensive 'Power' Petrol Over Regular Fuel

**Highlights**  
■ A fresh controversy has surfaced in the fuel retail sector after petroleum dealers alleged that Hindustan Petroleum Corp. officials were pressuring outlets to sell higher-priced "power petrol" instead of ordinary petrol, despite growing calls for fuel conservation and austerity.



A fresh controversy has surfaced in the fuel retail sector after petroleum dealers alleged that Hindustan Petroleum Corp. officials were pressuring outlets to sell higher-priced "power petrol" instead of ordinary petrol, despite growing calls for fuel conservation and austerity. In a letter addressed to HPCL's director-marketing, the Consortium of Indian Petroleum Dealers claimed that dealers in several regions were being forced to push premium petrol to consumers and that ordinary petrol

indents were allegedly being restricted unless converted into power petrol orders. The allegations assume significance at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed for austerity measures, including work-from-home practices and judicious fuel consumption to reduce unnecessary usage. The dealers' body said consumers have a fundamental right to choose their preferred fuel and asserted that retail outlets cannot compel motorists to purchase premium petrol. It also argued that denying

ordinary petrol, which is cheaper by around Rs 19 per litre, places an unfair financial burden on consumers. According to the letter reviewed by NDTV Profit, dealers further alleged that some HPCL regional offices were refusing to clear valid fuel indents unless retailers agreed to increase premium petrol orders. The consortium claimed such practices were creating "artificial constraints" despite public assurances from oil marketing companies that there was no fuel shortage. The CIPD also pointed out

that Indian Oil Corp. and Bharat Petroleum were allegedly continuing regular fuel supplies without similar restrictions in the same regions. Raising regulatory concerns, the dealers warned that any artificial restriction on ordinary petrol availability could amount to a violation of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The consortium sought HPCL's immediate intervention to ensure dealers are not coerced into selling specific fuel variants and that fuel indents are processed fairly.

# Honda makes its first annual loss in 70 years

Japanese car giant Honda made its first annual loss in 70 years as its investments in the electric vehicle (EV) market failed to pay off. Demand for EVs has not been as strong as the company forecast, with Honda reporting a total operating loss for the year ending March 2026 of ¥423bn (\$2.68bn; £1.99bn.). The firm said it was scrapping some of its EV production targets and would source parts from China, where prices are lower, to keep costs down. It cited changes in US policy as adding to its losses, including tax incentives having been taken away for US consumers purchasing EVs, and the imposition of tariffs. US consumers could previously receive up to \$7,500 (£5,500) in tax credits if they purchased a new EV, but this was scrapped by President Donald Trump in September 2025. His tariffs on imported cars and auto parts in 2025 also bruised profits at several major auto manufacturers, despite a reduction in the tariffs from 25% to 15%. Honda, which was first listed on the stock market in 1957, has grown over the years to become Japan's



second largest car firm. Analysts said its huge size and legacy nature make it difficult to adapt quickly to fast dips and rises in EV demand. Honda said it was now going to focus on growing its successful motorcycle business, its financial services and its hybrid vehicle manufacturing. It cited North America, Japan and India as "priority markets for its future growth" - although it suspended its plans to build EVs and batteries in Canada. Chief executive Toshihiro Mibe said Honda would scrap its

aims for EVs to make up a fifth of new car sales by 2030. He added that Honda was also scrapping its target for all of its vehicles to be EV by 2040. Honda expects ¥512bn in EV-related losses in the next financial year ending March 2027. "Bleak milestone" It's a bleak milestone for Honda but not a surprising one," said Danni Hewson, head of financial analysis at AJ Bell. "Like many legacy automakers it gambled on motorists making a quick move to EVs - and lost as the world shifted." She said

that politics, the cost of living and competition from Chinese companies forced Honda to roll back EV plans and "swallow the costs". Hewson added that even though demand for EVs has risen in the last few months because of rising petrol costs from the US-Israel war with Iran, "companies like Honda are having to adapt on the fly which is tough for businesses of this scale". She said things could get tougher with more "twists and turns" on the horizon for the market.

# Large office space leasing expands by 69% YoY in Hyderabad; now makes up 75% of transaction volume: Knight Frank India



Hyderabad May, 2026: According to Knight Frank India, Hyderabad witnessed 4.4 million square feet (mn sq ft) of leasing in large office spaces, above 100,000 sq ft, in Q1 2026. The city witnessed a significant increase of 69% in large office transactions from 2.6 mn sq ft in 2025. Large office spaces contributed 75% of the overall office transaction of 5.9 mn sq ft of the overall office transaction of 5.9 mn sq ft. Joseph Thilak, National Director, Occupier Strategy and Solutions

(Hyderabad, Chennai and Kochi), Knight Frank India "Overall growth in office transaction volumes in Hyderabad was significantly supported by large office space deals in Q1 2026. This reflects a clear and sustained shift in occupier preferences towards higher-quality spaces that support evolving workplace strategies, efficiency requirements and ESG considerations." Mid-size, 50,000 sq ft - 100,000 sq ft, contributed 17% of the overall transactions in the city, recording leasing volumes of 1 mn sq ft in Q1 2026. The remainder 8% of the transactions were witnessed in small offices (below 50,000 sq ft) in Q1 2026.

# CUBA CONSIDERS \$100M US AID OFFER AS ENERGY CRISIS WORSENS

The Cuban government says it is open to reviewing a US offer of \$100m (£74m) in aid, hours after rare protests over worsening power cuts erupted on the Communist-run island. Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez said on Thursday that Cuba was "ready to hear the details of the proposal and how it would be implemented". The shortages have been exacerbated by a US-imposed blockade of oil which has squeezed the country's supplies of essentials such as diesel and fuel oil. Hospitals have been unable to function normally, and schools and government offices have been forced to close. Tourism, an economic engine for Cuba, has also been impacted. Cuba has in the past relied on Venezuela and Mexico to supply oil to its refinery system. However, the two countries have largely cut off supplies since US President Donald Trump threatened tariffs on countries that send fuel to Cuba. On Wednesday, the US state department said it was renewing an offer to "provide generous assistance to the Cuban people". Last week, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio had said that Havana had rejected a previous US offer of humanitarian aid worth



\$100m (£74m), a claim Cuba denied. In its statement, the US state department repeated its offer but made it clear that the aid would have to be distributed "in coordination with the Catholic Church and other reliable independent humanitarian organisations", bypassing the Cuban government. It added that the decision now rested with the Cuban regime "to accept our offer of assistance or deny critical living-saving aid and ultimately be accountable to the Cuban people for standing in the way of critical assistance". In his response, Cuban Foreign Minister Rodriguez

said it was unclear whether the US aid offer would be in cash or in-kind assistance. He added that "the Cuban government does not, as a matter of practice, reject foreign aid offered in good faith and with genuine aims of cooperation, whether bilateral or multilateral". He added that the best way the US could help Cuba would be to "de-escalate energy, economic, commercial, and financial blockade measures, which have intensified as never before in recent months". Thursday's comments by Rodriguez follow a warning from the country's Energy Minister Vicente de la O Levy that

Cuba had completely run out of diesel and fuel oil. In an interview with state-run media, de la O Levy said there were limited amounts of gas available, but that Cuba's energy system was in a "critical" state due to the US-led blockade of oil. Cubans have been suffering from extensive blackouts, some of them nationwide, for months. On Wednesday, after the latest power cut affecting large parts of eastern Cuba, hundreds took to the streets in Havana, blocking roads with burning rubbish and shouting anti-government slogans. It marked the biggest single night of demonstrations in the city since Cuba's energy crisis began in January, Reuters reported. Residents of the San Miguel del Padrón neighbourhood could be heard shouting "turn on the lights!", AFP news agency reported. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel acknowledged the "particularly tense" situation across the island, which he blamed on the US. "This dramatic worsening has a single cause: the genocidal energy blockade to which the United States subjects our country, threatening irrational tariffs against any nation that supplies us with fuel.

# Flattery and fanfare as Trump welcomed to China - but thorny issues remain

Xi Jinping threw a grand welcome for Donald Trump on the first day of a visit that could reset ties between the rival superpowers. The military honour guard lined up outside the Great Hall of the People to welcome Trump, complete with a gun salute and a band playing the US national anthem. The president paused twice to say hello to schoolchildren cheering with Chinese and American flags. As he shook hands with Xi, he leaned in to pat him on the arm in what appeared to be a gesture of warmth. And he lavished praise on his host. "You're a great leader. I say it to everybody," he declared in what appeared to be unscripted remarks. Later, on his tour of the 15th Century Temple of Heaven, he remarked to reporters that China was beautiful. At the banquet this evening, he called the talks a "cherished" opportunity. It was a remarkable day given



Trump built up his political brand by talking tough on China. "We can't continue to allow China to rape our country, and that's what they're doing," he told a campaign rally in 2016. In 2020, he claimed China has "ripped off the United States like no one has ever done before", and described the Covid-19 pandemic as the "Chinese virus". Before

returning to power, he vowed to "make China pay". At the height of the trade war last year, the two sides had levied tariffs that crossed 100% on each other. A fragile truce followed but one of the main questions hanging over this visit is whether that will last, and what deal would take its place? The others are around Iran - can Beijing help bro-

ker a deal? - and Taiwan, the US ally and self-governed island that China claims as its territory. Beijing put on a spectacle designed to flatter Trump ahead of any deal to prove China's door is open to guests. However, soon after talks began, state media published comments from Xi making clear that tensions over Taiwan could prove challenging. But the meticu-

lous choreography was not just for the benefit of Trump and the 30 CEOs who accompanied him. It was also a show of strength, which Beijing knows will be beamed live across the US and the world. "We are witnessing a historical change," says John Delury, a senior fellow from the Centre on US-China Relations at the Asia Society. "I hesitate to put too much on this specific summit, but the inexorable rise of China to a place where it is legitimately rivaling the U.S. - that is now happening before our eyes. Beijing is now the second world capital." A show for everyone President Xi has been eager to portray himself as a stable global leader in contrast to a mercurial US president. Given the size of China's economy, a number of world leaders, including those from US allies such as Canada, the UK and Germany, have turned up, eager to do a deal with Beijing. China's trade

with the rest of the world has expanded since Trump's first term as it braced for exactly what he warned of: more tariffs. Last year, it flexed its economic and diplomatic muscle, responding to Trump with tit-for-tat tariffs and restricting the export of rare earth minerals essential for advanced manufacturing. Washington came to the table and tariffs were lowered. Xi will believe he has shown the US and the world just how dependent they are on Chinese manufacturing and technology. China now makes a third of the world's goods, processes more than 90% of its rare earth minerals and produces around 60 to 80% of all solar panels, wind turbines and electric vehicles. While concerns about its record on human rights, and its relationships with regimes like Moscow and Pyongyang persist, they seem to have been overshadowed as Trump shakes up the world order.

## LATVIAN PM RESIGNS AFTER ROW OVER STRAY UKRAINIAN DRONES



Latvian Prime Minister Evika Silina has resigned following a political crisis over Russian-bound Ukrainian drones straying into Latvian territory. She had fired her Defence Minister Andris Spruds last week after two drones crashed down in eastern Latvia, criticising his response and appointing a replacement. In protest, Spruds's Progressives party pulled their support for Silina's governing coalition, causing it to collapse months before a planned general election in October. "Seeing a strong candidate for the post of defence minister... political windbags have cho-

sen a crisis," Silina said on Thursday. "I am resigning but I am not giving up." The political fallout was triggered by the incursion of three drones into Latvian airspace on 7 May - the second such accident since the start of 2026. Both Latvia and Ukraine acknowledged that the drones may have been Ukrainian UAVs intended to target Russia whose signals had been jammed, leading them to stray into Latvia. One drone crashed on the ground while another struck an empty oil product storage facility near the town of Rezekne. The third flew in and out of Latvian airspace. There were no casualties or injuries - but local residents told media that the official response to the incident had been delayed and insufficient. "They said the cell broadcast alert system had not been activated for an hour after one of the drones crashed near Rezekne. Silina had said after the incident: 'Something went wrong. We cannot afford for this situation to continue.'

## Former Nigerian minister sentenced to 75 years in rare corruption verdict



Saleh Mamman, a former Nigerian power minister, has been sentenced to 75 years in prison for laundering 33.8bn naira (\$24.7m; £18.5m), a rare conviction against corrupt officials in the West African nation. Last week, Mamman was found guilty of 12 counts, including using private firms to funnel money linked to government-funded power plants. The 68-year-old was sentenced in absentia on Wednesday - according to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mamman has been "out of circulation" and "without trace" since his conviction. On Monday, the high court in the capital Abuja issued an arrest warrant for Mamman, who was power minister from 2015 to 2021. Mamman, who led the ministry of power under then President Muhammadu Buhari, has not publicly commented on his conviction. However just weeks before he was sentenced, the former minister announced plans to run for Taraba State governor in the 2027 elections, on behalf of Nigeria's ruling party. "Today marks a defining moment in my journey of service to our dear state. With a deep sense of responsibility and unwavering commitment, I have officially

obtained the Expression of Interest and Nomination Forms under the All Progressives Congress (APC) to contest for the governorship of Taraba State," he wrote on social media. Mamman led the ministry of power at a time when President Muhammadu Buhari's administration had promised to tackle corruption. Mamman was eventually sacked by Buhari in a cabinet reshuffle, after what the president called an "independent and critical self-review". During Mamman's sentencing on Wednesday, the high court ordered him to repay 22bn naira (\$16m; £12m). The case is part of a wider anti-corruption drive targeting former government officials. Other high-profile investigations by the EFCC have involved former Justice Minister Abubakar Malami and former Humanitarian Affairs Minister Sadiya Umar Farouq, who was recently declared wanted by the agency. They have both denied the allegations. Mamman's conviction has reignited public anger over Nigeria's long-running electricity crisis - especially as the former minister had promised he would improve matters.

## 'Floating armoury' ship reportedly seized by Iran



A vessel reportedly operating as a "floating armoury" in the Gulf of Oman has been seized by Iranian military personnel, according to the maritime risk management company Vanguard. The ship is now "bound for Iranian territorial waters", the UK's Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) organisation said. BBC Verify has checked ship-tracking data from MarineTraffic which

shows the vessel - identified by Vanguard as the Honduras-flagged Hui Chuan - last broadcast its location 70km (40 miles) north-east of Fujairah in the UAE on Wednesday. Hui Chuan's operators told Vanguard it was operating as a floating armoury which stores weapons for security firms who protect ships at sea from attack by pirates. BBC Verify cannot confirm what was on the ship or who it was used by.

## Warning of record global temperatures as chance of very strong El Niño grows

New forecasts show increasing confidence that the developing El Niño in the tropical Pacific Ocean could be one of the strongest on record with warnings of record global temperatures and huge humanitarian impacts. Parts of the Pacific have been warming rapidly with data this week showing sea surface temperatures around 0.5C above normal - one threshold used to suggest the onset of El Niño, a natural warming of the Pacific. It is expected to strengthen over the next few months, peaking potentially as a very strong - or so-called super El Niño - in the autumn. Scientists are concerned about the consequences it could have on global weather patterns, including the likelihood of 2027 being the warmest year on record. In their latest out-



look, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) suggest El Niño will begin within the month. "They have increased the confidence to a two-in-three chance that it will be strong or even very strong by this winter. The rate of warming seen in the tropical Pacific over the last few weeks has been rapid. Nathaniel Johnson, a mete-

orologist at NOAA described it as a "rare occurrence" should it continue at the current pace - going from the La Niña (a similar cooling pattern) we saw in winter to a potentially strong El Niño, within a year. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) in Australia also forecasts El Niño using a slightly stricter criterion where sea surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific must exceed 0.8C above average. They also look for indications that the trade winds in the western Pacific have reversed; signalling that the warming ocean is beginning to influence the atmosphere. Spring forecasts of El Niño have historically been quite poor, but forecasters have been much more confident than normal this year. While El Niño forms across the tropical Pacific, forecasters look at one region in particular called the Niño3.4, monitoring a three-monthly average of the sea surface temperature compared to the long-term average. A strong or 'super El Niño' is when that goes above 1.5C. Forecasts from the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), NOAA and BoM are all pretty much aligned in their outcomes.

## Ukraine rescuers pull dead from rubble of Kyiv flats after massive Russian strikes

At least eight people have been killed, including a 12-year-old girl, in Kyiv after Russia launched a massive overnight drone and missile strikes on the Ukrainian capital and other regions, officials have said. The victims' bodies were pulled from the rubble of a partially destroyed apartment building in Kyiv, where rescuers are still searching for at least 20 people feared missing. Ukraine's emergency service DSNS said. It said 45 people, including two children, were injured. Friday has been declared a day of mourning in the city. It is the third day in a row Ukraine has reported deaths, as Moscow ramps up its assault after a three-day ceasefire expired on Monday.



The overnight barrage saw more than 670 drones and 56 missiles targeting the country, President Volodymyr Zelensky said. This is among the largest attacks Russia has mounted since the start of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The strikes hit more than 180 sites across Ukraine,

including more than 50 residential buildings, Zelensky added. He said a total of more than 1,560 Russian drones had targeted Ukrainian cities since Tuesday night, describing Moscow's assault as "definitely not the actions of those who believe the war is coming to an end" and urging allies to hold

Moscow accountable. After an urgent meeting with Ukraine's top military and security officials, Zelensky said a "significant number" of drones were shot down, with an "overall interception rate" of 93%. But the same figures for missiles stood at 73%, the Ukrainian leader said, admitting that the "key challenge" remained in how to defend against Russian ballistic missiles. He said the "priority number one" was to secure more deliveries of "anti-ballistic systems and missiles for them". Ukraine has repeatedly said it has a massive shortage of US-made Patriot missile systems which can effectively intercept Russian ballistics. Reacting to the latest Russian attacks.

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



A South Carolina court has overturned the 2023 murder convictions of Alex Murdaugh, a disgraced lawyer who was convicted of killing his wife and son. The state's supreme court on Wednesday ordered a new trial for Murdaugh over the June 2021 killings. Murdaugh has been in prison serving two life sentences for the murders of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh. He is also serving two additional 27- and 40-year sentences for state and federal financial crimes. Once a powerful lawyer, the 56-year-old and his legal troubles captivated a global audience and inspired documentaries, podcasts and book deals. The trial itself was also televised. In a 5-0 ruling, the South Carolina Supreme Court said Murdaugh deserved a new trial because the local county clerk had unfairly biased a jury against him. "Both the State and Murdaugh's defense skillfully presented their cases to the jury as the trial court deftly presided over this complicated and high-profile matter," the justices wrote. "However, their efforts were in vain because Colleton County Clerk of Court Rebecca Hill placed her fingers on the scales of

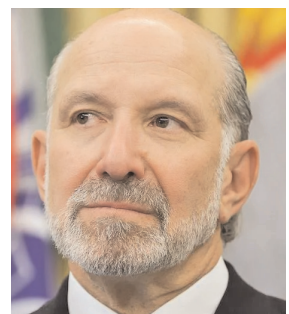
justice, thereby denying Murdaugh his right to a fair trial by an impartial jury." In a statement, South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson said his office would "aggressively seek to retry Alex Murdaugh for the murders of Maggie and Paul as soon as possible". Murdaugh's lawyers told US media that their client "has said from day one that he did not kill his wife and son". Last December, Hill pleaded guilty to charges of misconduct in office, obstruction of justice and perjury over accusations that she misused public funds as a clerk and shared sealed court information with a reporter, among other claims. Wednesday's ruling cites a number of comments that Hill allegedly made to jurors during the trial. One juror wrote in an affidavit that Hill made comments telling jurors to "watch [Murdaugh] closely", which she said influenced her decision to find Murdaugh guilty because she thought the clerk was implying he was. A jury found Murdaugh guilty of the murder of his wife and son - who were shot at close range near the family's dog kennels - after an extensive six-week long trial.



Israeli strikes in southern Lebanon kill 22 people, health ministry says

## US commerce secretary details 'off-putting' interaction with Epstein in testimony

A congressional panel investigating late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has released transcripts of interviews with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Ted Waitt, the billionaire co-founder of Gateway computers. Lutnick discussed having three interactions with Epstein - a neighbour of his in New York - which included a visit to the financier's home next door and a trip to his island in the Caribbean after he was thought to have cut ties with Epstein. Waitt testified about his years-long relationship with Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's convicted co-conspirator, and his concerns about her working for him. Neither Lutnick nor Waitt



have been accused of any wrongdoing by Epstein's victims. Lutnick appeared voluntarily on 6 May as part of the House Oversight Committee probe. He said he and his wife were invited to Epstein's New York home in 2005 but they left abruptly when he showed them his massage table and made a remark about the kinds of massages he enjoyed.



## IPL 2026: PUNJAB KINGS SETS A TARGET OF 200/8 FOR MUMBAI INDIANS



## Absent WWE Star Shares Recovery Video And Injury Update After Disappearing From TV For 55 Days

WWE fans have been wondering what happened to Elio LeFleur after the NXT star suddenly disappeared from in-ring action earlier this year. It has now been 55 days since he was last seen competing, and the young WWE talent has finally shared a fresh update about his recovery journey. While there's still no confirmed return date, his latest social media post gave fans a small but positive sign that things are moving in the right direction. For those who missed it, Elio LeFleur suffered a shoulder injury during an eight-man tag team match at a WWE live event on March 20. The injury was serious enough that he needed surgery on his right shoulder. After the operation, LeFleur confirmed that the surgery went successfully, but the setback also forced him to give up the WWE Speed Championship since he could no longer compete regularly. Since then, fans had barely heard



much from him until this newest update dropped online. Elio LeFleur shares the workout clip as recovery continues after shoulder surgery Elio LeFleur recently posted a short recovery update on social media, and fans quickly noticed one major detail: his shoulder sling is finally off. In the clip, the WWE NXT star can be seen slowly using an Air Bike while continuing rehab work on his shoulder. The video was pretty simple, but it still caught attention because it's the first real physical update fans have

seen from him in weeks. He captioned the post with just one word: "Everyday." The workout itself looked controlled and careful, clearly showing he's still avoiding too much pressure on the injured shoulder. Even though he's back in the gym, LeFleur still seems to be taking things slowly during recovery. Why Elio LeFleur has been missing from WWE programming for nearly two months LeFleur has been part of WWE since October 2024 and was slowly building momentum before the injury stopped everything.

## Travis Kelce's Former Teammate Explains Why Taylor Swift Fell For The Charismatic NFL Star

Long before Travis Kelce became one of the NFL's biggest personalities and started dominating celebrity headlines alongside Taylor Swift, former teammate Mitch Morse already believed the Kansas City Chiefs star had a rare presence. Morse recently reflected on his years playing with Kelce and explained why the tight end naturally stood out inside the locker room. From his confidence and humor to his ability to connect with people, Morse said Kelce's larger-than-life personality was impossible to ignore even before the fame, Super Bowl success, and global attention arrived. Mitch Morse says Travis Kelce's personality always made him stand out in the Chiefs



locker room Morse, who played alongside Kelce with the Kansas City Chiefs from 2015 to 2018, recently appeared on TMZ Sports and shared why he was never surprised by Kelce's rise to superstardom. According to Morse, Kelce's charm and confidence naturally attracted attention, but it was his

personality off camera that truly impressed teammates. "I mean, charismatic, and talk about comforting eyes. My goodness, I see it. I mean, I know why Taylor did it, right? He's a brutally handsome dude," Morse said during the interview. The former Chiefs center also dismissed the idea that Kelce

behaves differently in public. Morse explained that fans often ask whether the NFL star's larger-than-life personality is simply for show, but he insisted Kelce is actually even more genuine in real life. "He's even cooler. He's even sweeter. He's even nicer. He takes the time," Morse added while describing his former teammate. Travis Kelce's reality TV days gave teammates an early look at his star power. Morse also recalled one memorable moment from Kelce's early NFL years when the tight end was starring in the reality dating show Catching Kelce. During an OTA practice session, Kelce jokingly promoted the show to teammates while breaking down the team huddle.

## IPL 2026 Side 's Entire Coaching staff Likely To Be Sacked After Disappointing Season: Report

Two teams in the IPL 2026 are already out of the playoffs race - Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants. While all the other teams are still in contention, it can be safely said that seventh-placed Delhi Capitals (10 points from 12 games) have only a mathematical chance of qualifying for the next stage. In the midst of this, a report has claimed that DC might be in for some wholesale changes following their big, disappointing season. The report by news agency PTI said Axar Patel is unlikely to remain captain next season, while the coaching staff will be changed too. Axar's numbers as captain and player make for poor reading. He has scored only 100 runs in nine innings at a strike-rate



of 112.50, with 56 coming in one innings and the remaining 44 aggregated across eight knocks, despite batting mostly in the top five. In 12 games, Axar has bowled only 36 overs, exactly three overs per game, and picked up 10 wickets at an economy rate of 8.08. While the economy rate looks respectable consider-

ing the punishment endured by fellow spinner Kuldeep Yadav, Axar has often under-bowled himself. With Delhi Capitals having an arrangement of equal owners - JSW and GMR split management responsibilities in alternate cycles - next season will see Parth Jindal and JSW taking charge of cricket operations.

"With Axar completely failing to prove his leadership worth and mostly being dependent on Hemang Badani and Venugopal Rao for decision-making, it will be a miracle if he retains captaincy next year. "The entire coaching staff is also unlikely to be retained," an IPL source tracking developments told PTI on conditions of anonymity. The decision to ignore a flamboyant batter like Abhishek Porel, not using an all-rounder like Madhav Tiwari consistently, and throwing an out-of-sync youngster like Sahil Parakh into the deep end expecting him to do a Vaibhav Suryavanshi have not gone unnoticed. Parakh undoubtedly has talent but remains a work in progress.

## ChudTheBuilder Shot In The Arm, Facing Aggravated Assault And Attempted Murder Charges After Tennessee Shootout

The update came just hours after videos and alleged audio recordings connected to the shooting started spreading across X and Reddit. The situation has since become one of the most talked-about streamer controversies online, with many people now closely following the legal developments surrounding the case. Montgomery County Sheriff's Office confirms charges against ChudTheBuilder in an official Facebook statement released on Wednesday, May 13, 2026, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office shared more details about the courthouse shooting investigation. Authorities stated that officers



responded to a shots-fired incident outside the Montgomery County

Courthouse earlier that day before launching an immediate investigation. After the investigation, Dalton Eatherly, 28, was reportedly detained by criminal investigators and later booked into the Montgomery County Jail. Officials also confirmed that he was being held pending arraignment.

## Sports Presenter Grace Hayden, Daughter Of Matthew Hayden, On Facing Hate Over 'Glamorous' Appearance

Sports presenter Grace Hayden, the daughter of former Australia cricketer Matthew Hayden, has opened up about facing social media trolls. Grace has become a familiar face in the sports media industry, having been associated with organisations such as Channel 7, Star Sports, and Fox Sports. Despite enjoying significant success at such a young age, the 23-year-old is often scrutinised for her glamorous presence in the male-dominated industry. However, Grace remains unfazed by public opinion and continues to focus on her work. "I think conversations around women in media and sport are constantly evolving, and with social media there's naturally a lot more commentary around public figures in general now,"



Grace told News.com.au on the sidelines of the Australian Fashion Week. "Honestly, I try not to focus too much on labels at all. My priority has always been the work itself - being prepared, continuing to learn and showing up professionally in every role I take on. Grace insisted that women can be both glamorous and credible in their profession, regard-

less of what trolls think. "I feel incredibly grateful to work across sport, entertainment and fashion, and for me it's always about growing, challenging myself and enjoying the opportunities that come with the job. "I've always believed you can be professional, prepared and respectful of the role while also embracing confidence and personal style.

## Why Jasprit Bumrah Is Leading MI For The 1st Time In Place Of Hardik Pandya, Suryakumar Yadav vs PBKS



Jasprit Bumrah is leading Mumbai Indians in their IPL 2026 match against Punjab Kings in Dharamsala on Thursday. This is the first time in his IPL career that the pace great is captaining MI. Hardik Pandya, MI's regular captain, is down with a back spasm, while Suryakumar Yadav, who led MI in two matches before, is out due to personal reasons. Mumbai Indians are already out of the IPL play-offs race. MI made two changes from their previous match playing XI. Suryakumar Yadav, who captained MI in the previous match, is missing this fixture "due to personal reasons". AM Ghazanfar is the other MI player who will sit out. "I did not expect to be a Test captain before becoming an IPL captain," Bumrah said. PBKS, on the other hand, have included Azmatullah Omarzai and Xavier Bartlett, with Marcus

Stoinis and Ben Dwarshuis missing out. "We decided to bowl first. We saw the last game and felt that maybe with the cold weather coming down, the wicket would settle down. I didn't think that I would be a Test captain before becoming MI captain (smiles). As much as we can, we can play three games left, and we want to enjoy and maybe ruffle a few teams. Surya is not here for personal reasons, and Allah is not there as well," Bumrah said during the toss. "We would have bowled first as well. The wicket looks a bit drier. Still don't know how the pitch will play, so just being positive about it. We should stop thinking about what has gone wrong. We have to think about being in good shape and having a positive mindset. Harpreet Brar, Xavier Bartlett and Azmatullah Omarzai come in," PBKS skipper Shreyas Iyer said.



## Stephen Curry Not Ready To Retire As Warriors Eye Another Title Run: "He Wants To Play 20 NBA Seasons"

est dynasties. Every roster move, contract decision and offseason gamble now revolves around maximising whatever elite years Stephen Curry still has left. The urgency has intensified after new reports suggested Curry wants to keep playing long enough to complete at least 20 NBA seasons, a target that could reshape Golden State's long-term plans heading into another critical offseason. Even at 38, Curry remains the centre of everything the Warriors are trying to build. The franchise is still chasing championships rather than

preparing for a rebuild, and the upcoming contract extension window in August is expected to play a major role in determining how long the NBA's greatest shooter continues leading Golden State's title hopes. Stephen Curry's Warriors Future Tied To New NBA Contract Extension There has been growing speculation around how much longer Curry intends to continue playing, especially with retirement conversations beginning to follow nearly every veteran superstar still competing at an elite level. Internally, though, the Warriors reportedly believe Curry is nowhere near finished.

"Stephen Curry has internally told people with the Warriors that he wants to play at least 20 seasons in the NBA," said Brett Siegel, adding, "Will see what that means for an upcoming contract extension for him in August as he will be getting a new deal with the Warriors." Curry still has one year left on his current \$62.5 million contract, but August opens the door for fresh negotiations with Golden State. That timing matters because the Warriors have no interest in allowing Curry to approach unrestricted free agency in 2027 without clarity around his future. The veteran guard continues performing at a level most franchises

would still build entirely around. Last season, Curry averaged 26.6 points, 4.7 assists and 3.6 rebounds while remaining one of the NBA's most dangerous offensive players despite his age and workload. Warriors Still Building Around Stephen Curry's Championship Window Golden State's off-season approach makes it obvious the organization still believes another title run is realistic with Curry leading the locker room. The Warriors already secured head coach Steve Kerr on a long-term deal and are expected to stay aggressive in trade discussions and roster upgrades moving forward.

The Golden State Warriors know the next few seasons could define the closing

chapter of one of the NBA's great-

## ZEE5's 'Memu Coplam' Turns A Missing Prized Rooster Into A Wildly Entertaining Rural Mystery

The official trailer of Memu Coplam, the upcoming Telugu ZEE5 Original series, promises a deliciously chaotic entertainer packed with rural madness, mystery, comedy, and unexpected twists. Set against the colorful backdrop of a village obsessed with cockfighting, the series premieres on May 22 exclusively on ZEE5.

When a prized rooster vanishes from a village where cockfighting is treated like pride, politics, and prestige rolled into one, chaos erupts instantly. The responsibility of solving the bizarre case falls into the least capable hands possible - Ravi and Mohan Sotari, two delightfully clueless cops with more confidence than common sense. What begins as a comically overblown poultry pursuit soon spirals into a tangled mystery far bigger than either of them bargained for.

As the investigation stumbles from one ridiculous mishap to another, the duo accidentally begins uncovering secrets that threaten to shake the very foundations of their quirky village. With black magic rumors, bloodshed warnings, political pressure, activist outrage, and growing paranoia spreading across the village, Memu Coplam steadily transforms from a hilarious rural comedy into an unpredictable mystery filled with escalating madness. The trailer has already struck a chord for its rooted atmosphere, eccentric characters, sharp



visual style, and uniquely chaotic energy. Rather than relying on forced punchlines, the humor organically emerges through misunderstandings, social absurdities, and the sincere seriousness with which every character treats the missing rooster crisis. At the center

of the madness stands Nagendra Babu as the commanding Gajapati Raju, while Getup Srinu as Mohan Sotari and Raviteja Nannimala as Ravi Sotari bring an entertaining blend of confusion, desperation, and accidental investigation brilliance. The series

also stars Reethu Chowdary as Meenakshi, Charan Lakkaraju as Akash Reddy, Siri Parvathy as Sanghavi, and Kireeti Damaraju as Giri in key roles. Visually, Memu Coplam stands apart with its vibrant rural aesthetic, atmospheric night sequences, stylized presen-

tation, and earthy Godavari-rooted texture. The trailer hints at a world where folklore, politics, village ego, superstition, and chaos collide in the most entertaining ways possible. Produced by B.V.S. Ravi under RAW Entertainments, Memu Coplam is directed by Pradeep Maddali with story by Shoban Chittuprolu. The screenplay is written by Shoban Chittuprolu and Chanakya Varma, while dialogues are penned by Shoban Chittuprolu, Chanakya Varma, and Gopala Krishna Vidmahe. The technical crew includes cinematographer Kishore Boyidapu, editor Michael D'selva, music composer Saket Komanduri, Creative Producer Gopala Krishna Vidmahe, and First Assistant Director Raj Kumar Koosana.

Over the years, ZEE5 Telugu has built a strong identity in the OTT space with successful originals like Paruvu, Aha Naa Pellanta, Maya Bazaar For Sale, Puli Meka, and Vikkatakavi, consistently exploring rooted Telugu stories across comedy, mystery, thriller, and rural drama genres. With Memu Coplam, the platform once again dives into a distinctly Telugu world filled with eccentric characters, village politics, folklore, cockfight culture, and a wildly entertaining mystery setup. Promising laughs, suspense, chaos, and nonstop rural madness, Memu Coplam premieres exclusively on ZEE5 on May 22.

## MEGA POWER STAR RAM CHARAN'S PEDDI MANIA BEGINS, TEAM DROPS NATIONWIDE FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN - PEDDI POWERPLAY TOUR

The buzz surrounding Mega Power Star Ram Charan's much-awaited rural action-sports drama Peddi is only getting louder as the team amps up its nationwide promotions. With two high-voltage songs and two contrasting glimpses already winning over audiences across the country, the film is riding a strong wave of anticipation. Mounted on an impressive scale by producer Venkata Satish Kilaru under Vriddhi Cinemas, in collaboration with Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings, Peddi is set for a grand Pan-India release on June 4, preceded by special premieres on June 3. Meanwhile, the team has unleashed a promotional blast unlike anything seen before, redefining how a Pan-India film reaches its audience.

The Peddi Powerplay Tour kicks off on the 18th in Mumbai, where the team will launch the theatrical trailer across all major languages. From there, the momentum only intensifies. One of the biggest attention-grabbers is the team's grand appearance during the SRH vs RCB showdown at the Uppal Stadium on the 22nd. The journey then barrels across the map with back-to-back city stops - Bhopal on the 23rd, Bengaluru on the 24th, Delhi on the 28th, Chennai on the 30th,



Vizianagaram on June 1st, and a massive homecoming celebration in Hyderabad on June 2nd. And the makers aren't stopping there; they hint at more surprises set to drop through the summer, keeping the hype sizzling nonstop. "This is just the beginning. Many more surprises are loading. We've moved mountains to bring you the ultimate summer treat! To make sure your holidays are

packed with entertainment, we are arriving early on JUNE 4th. Our team has poured their hearts into every frame - we can't wait for you to experience it on the big screens," announced the makers. Needless to say, the first-of-its-kind promotional campaign will act as a major power booster, pushing the expectations for the movie to new heights.

## "Thimmarajupalli TV" Left Me with Great Satisfaction as a Producer - Kiran Abbavaram

Encouraging new talent, hero Kiran Abbavaram produced the film "Thimmarajupalli TV" under his KA Productions banner in association with Sumaira Studios. Teja Velpucharla worked as the co-producer. Sai Tej and Veda Jalandhar played the lead roles in the film, while V. Muniraju made his directorial debut with this project. Set against a village backdrop, "Thimmarajupalli TV" is a period drama that recently released in theatres and emerged as a grand success.



The film is now gearing up for its digital premiere and will start streaming on Aha OTT from May 15. On this occasion, the "Thimmarajupalli TV" celebrations event was held grandly in Hyderabad. Speaking at the event, Srinivas from Aha said, "I first interacted with Kiran Garu during the time of SR Kalyanamadapam. Since

then, our journey with him on Aha has continued. Films like Sammathame, Rules Ranjann, KA Ramp and many others are streaming on our platform. We are happy to bring 'Thimmarajupalli TV' to Aha subscribers as well. Personally, I connected deeply with this film while watching it. We hope the movie reaches many more audiences through Aha." Art Director Sudheer

Muniraju gave me tremendous support and freedom while composing the music. I proudly say that I am the music director of this film." Director V. Muniraju said, "The kind of success and response we expected for this film is exactly what we received. Audiences supported our movie in theatres, and I hope they make it a success on Aha as well from May 15. After watching the film and appreciating it, our team even took me to meet CM Chandrababu Garu. The actors and technicians who worked on this film have all earned a good name." Actress Swathi Karimireddy said, "Audiences who watched 'Thimmarajupalli TV' in theatres were reminded of their own memories. They personally connected with our film. Now that the movie is coming to Aha, I hope to meet everyone again at another success event after it becomes successful there too."

## "EDAINA SADHYAME" MOVIE INSPIRED BY SRI AMMA BHAGAVAN'S TEACHINGS

A new spiritual and emotional film titled "Edaina Sadhyame" (Anything is Possible), with the tagline "Daivam Thodunte.." (When God is With You), is being produced under the banner of Sri Adi Lakshmi Pictures. The title launch event was held grandly at the Film Chamber in Hyderabad.

Director Madduri Raja, producer Anil Munaganuri, executive producer N. Subrahmanyam, and members of the film team attended the event.

The film aims to portray how people can overcome sorrow and suffering in life by building a strong bond

with their chosen deity. The makers stated that the movie is completely inspired by the teachings of Sri Amma Bhagavan and focuses on spirituality and human relationships. According to the team, the storyline revolves around five core principles taught by Sri Amma Bhagavan:

"You are a unique being"  
"Your inner world is your outer world"  
"There is no individual, only personalities"  
"Inner truth"  
"Life itself is relationships"

The film's narrative is built around these philosophical concepts. Speaking on the occasion,

producer, writer, lyricist, and dialogue writer Anil Kumar Munaganuri said that today's youth are extremely important for the nation, but many are struggling with depression and hopelessness. He explained that the film intends to show how a deep connection with God can bring miracles into one's life and transform impossibilities into possibilities.

"This movie is being made based on spiritual teachings. When people connect with their beloved deity, miracles can happen," he said. Apart from producing the film, Anil Munaganuri is also providing the story, dialogues, and lyrics.



## Suriya's 'Karuppu' release issue: Director R J Balaji urges fans to keep faith



Even as the makers of actor Suriya's eagerly awaited action entertainer 'Karuppu' continued to make desperate efforts to find a way to ensure the film's smooth release on Thursday, the film's director R J Balaji has put out a post on X, exuding faith in God and urging fans to keep the faith, saying the film would definitely release on Thursday.

Taking to his X timeline to give an update to fans, R J Balaji said, "Dearest fans, I don't have a concrete answer to the current situation. Producers are doing their best to solve the hurdles. This film has always had hurdles, and somehow God has made us sail through all that and here we are after 32 months. This time as well, I have faith, complete faith in him."

He went on to add in Tamil, "Karuppan (the deity) will shatter all obstacles. #Karuppu will release tomorrow in a fantastic fashion. Keep the faith. It will happen." Sources in the industry say that the makers of the film were trying their best to resolve the financial hurdles facing the film and ensure its smooth

release on time on Thursday. However, negotiations that went late into Wednesday night and early Thursday morning had not borne fruit. The makers have already announced that the morning (9 a.m.) shows scheduled for Thursday had been cancelled.

Dream Warrior Pictures, the production house producing the film, took to its X timeline to retweet an announcement by the film's producer S R Prabhu in this regard.

It said, "Due to unavoidable reasons, 9am shows will be cancelled for Karuppu. Our sincere apologies to everyone!" The film has triggered huge excitement among fans and film buffs. Excitement about the film doubled after the makers released a teaser on the occasion of Suriya's birthday last year.

The teaser that was released begins with the deity of Karuppu being worshipped with chilli powder even as a voice says, "It's not a calm deity that you worship with grace. If you pray with sincerity and offer chillies, it's a fierce deity that will deliver instant justice." We then get

introduced to Suriya's character in the film. We get to know he plays a lawyer called Saravanan and that he has another name -- Karuppu as well.

The rest of the teaser shows that the film will be a proper commercial entertainer with a lot of action sequences in it. Suriya is also seen delivering several punch lines in the film. For instance, Suriya says, "Blast! My brother, this is our time, I'm gonna give you all a whacking."

Actress Trisha plays the female lead in this film, which will also feature Malayalam actors Indrans, Ashvada, Swasika and Tamil actors Yogi Babu and cinematographer and actor Natty in pivotal roles.

The film has music by young music sensation Sai Abhyankar, and cinematography by GK Vishnu, the very same cinematographer who impressed with his work in films like Vijay's 'Bigil', 'Jawan' and 'Mersal'. R Kalavanan is the editor of this film, which had Vikram Mor choreographing stunts for the film and Arun Venjaramoodu as its art director.