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Congress reduced to a gang of 'Urban Naxals': PM Modi

NATION | PAGE

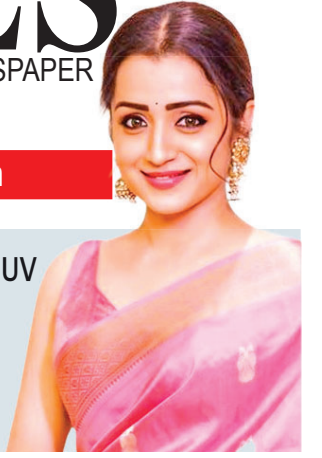
US says military and cargo ships transit Strait of Hormuz after Trump's vow to free stranded ships

WORLD | NEWS



Team Megastar Chiranjeevi, Vassishta, UV Creations' Vishwambhara Extends Birthday Wishes To Trisha Krishnan With A Charming Poster

CINEMA | PAGE



SCAN FOR E-PAPER



OM NAMO VENKATESAYA

03-05-2026
Total pilgrims: 83,091
Tonnes: 22,670
Hundi kansalks: 5.06 CR
Waiting Compartments: 10

Approx. Darsan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens)... 8 H

GOLD RATE
24K ₹
1,52,140/-

IRAN WAR:
3 Indians injured in Fujairah drone attack



Fujairah (TSIT) Three Indian nationals were injured in a drone attack on the Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone (FOIZ) on Monday, May 4, according to the Fujairah Media Office. The injured were taken to hospital, with their condition described as moderate. Authorities said the strike, blamed on Iran, caused a fire at the oil facility, prompting an emergency response from Fujairah Civil Defence teams. Iran says it fired warning shots at US ships near Hormuz. Iran's army said it issued warnings to US destroyers that attempted to approach the Strait of Hormuz after allegedly switching off their radar systems in the Sea of Oman. In a statement, it said its forces fired warning shots using cruise missiles and drones near US vessels that ignored the warnings. The military added that responsibility for any escalation in the Strait of Hormuz would lie with the "enemy", underscoring heightened tensions in the strategic waterway.

WB turns saffron, TVK storms TN; UDF reclaims Kerala, NDA holds Assam & Puducherry

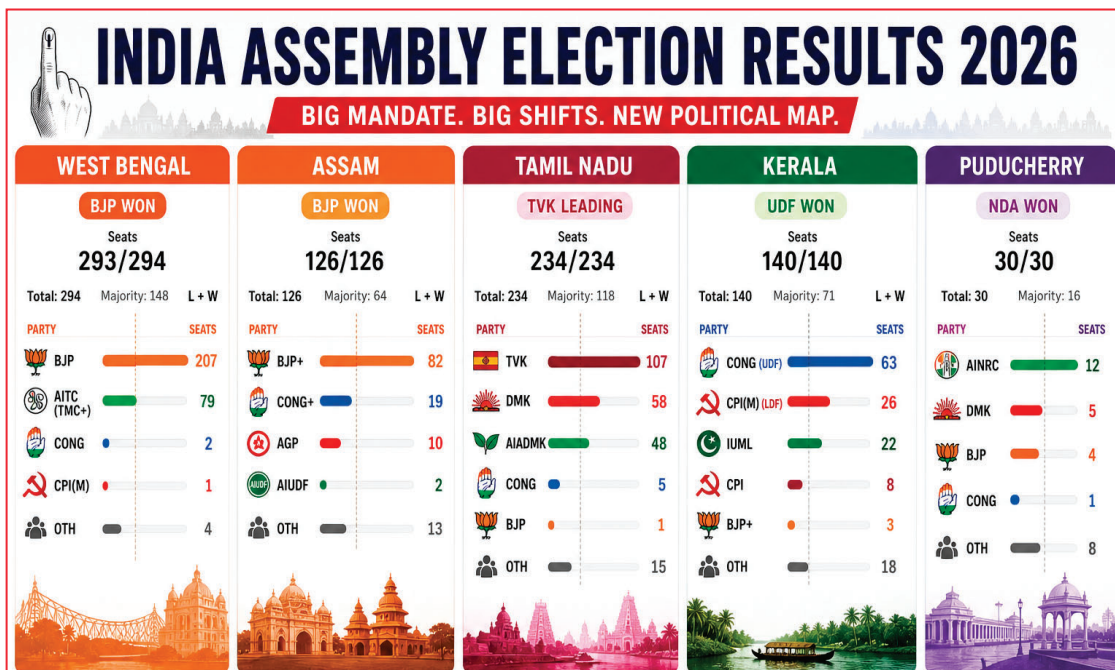
2026 Election Results Reshape India's Political Map

New Delhi (TSIT)

The 2026 Assembly election results across West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam, and Puducherry have delivered a decisive and transformative verdict, reshaping India's political landscape with a mix of historic wins, major upsets, and redefined mandates.

In a landmark development, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has come to power in West Bengal for the first time, ending the long-standing rule of the Trinamool Congress. The victory marks a significant expansion of the party's footprint in eastern India and is being seen as a major political breakthrough.

Tamil Nadu witnessed a political upheaval as actor-turned-politician Vijay led his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), to a sweeping victory. The party's performance has disrupted the decades-long dominance of the DMK and AIADMK, signaling the rise of a powerful new regional force. In Kerala, the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) staged a strong comeback to reclaim power, defeating the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF). The result is significant as it breaks



the state's recent political trend and gives Congress renewed momentum in the southern region.

Meanwhile, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), led by the BJP, retained power comfortably in Assam, securing a third consecu-

ive term and reinforcing its dominance in the Northeast. The alliance also held on to Puducherry, continuing its governance in the Union Territory. Overall, the results reflect a dynamic shift in voter sentiment across regions—highlight-

ing the BJP's continued expansion, Congress's selective resurgence, and the emergence of new political players like TVK. The verdict is expected to have far-reaching implications for national politics in the coming years.

BJP 'looted' over 100 seats, we will bounce back: Mamata Banerjee

TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee on Monday termed the BJP's landslide victory in the state polls "immoral" and alleged that the mandate in more than 100 seats was "looted". "We will bounce back," she said while walking out of the counting centre at her Bhabanipur Assembly constituency.

Banerjee had reached the counting centre at Sakhawt Memorial Government Girls' High School on Lord Sinha Road in the afternoon amid allegations by the Trinamool Congress that one of its counting agents had been forced out of the venue.

As she came out of the centre, the TMC supremo was greeted by "Jai Shree Ram" slogans by BJP supporters emboldened by their party's sweep in the polls. A visibly distraught Banerjee told reporters that the BJP's victory was "immoral". "They have looted more than 100 seats," she alleged. The TMC supremo alleged that the "EC's activities with



'EC's activities with the help of central forces in connivance with PM Modi and Union Home Minister Shah were illegal'

the help of central forces in connivance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah were illegal".

Alleging that she received flak "for speaking out against the EC's malpractices", the TMC supremo said, "I lodged a complaint with Chief Electoral Officer Manoj Agarwal, but to no avail." "The CCTV was switched off while our agents were not allowed to be inside the counting centre," she claimed.

Telangana cabinet okays CBI probe, land reforms & major development decisions

HYDERABAD
TSIT BUREAU

Telangana State Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister A.Revanth Reddy, on Monday approved a series of Important Decisions focusing on transparency, development, farmer welfare, and skill enhancement across the State.

In a significant move, the Cabinet decided to hand over the inquiry report on alleged irregularities in power purchases and the functioning of Bhadradi Thermal Power Plant and Yadadri Thermal Power Plant to the Central Bureau of Investigation for a fair and impartial investigation. The Cabinet also approved rationalisation of land values to align them with prevailing market prices. The revised registration values are expected to come into effect by the end of this month, addressing concerns of landowners and displaced persons over compensation.

Providing relief under the HILT policy, the government allowed applicants to pay 10 percent upfront at existing rates, with the remaining amount to be paid within 90 days. In view of recent unseasonal rains causing crop damage in several districts, the Chief Minister directed concerned ministers to conduct



immediate assessments and extend relief to affected farmers.

Boosting the dairy sector, the Cabinet gave its nod to hand over the Nalgonda Ranga Reddy Milk Producers Cooperative Union Limited to the National Dairy Development Board for improved management and marketing of milk and dairy products. The Cabinet also cleared the establishment of solar power generation units at 33/11 KV substations across nine districts. A pilot project at 18 locations will be implemented with an outlay of Rs.66.50 crore to generate 19 MW power.

To address pending government dues, a One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme was approved for municipal bodies including GHMC, Cyberabad, and Malkajgiri, with an estimated recovery of Rs.1,686 crore out of

Rs.5,864 crore by waiving penalties and interest.

Further, the Cabinet approved the construction of a Left Flood Flow Canal from Bugga Vagu near Kamapalli in Khammam district to support minor irrigation tanks. In a major reform initiative, all ITIs, Advanced Training Centres, Polytechnics, and T-SAT will be brought under the Young India Skill University to streamline skill development and enhance employability. Additionally, 42 acres of land was allocated at Aziz Nagar in Moinabad mandal of Rangareddy district for establishing a modern vegetable market. The decisions reflect the government's commitment to transparent governance, infrastructure development, renewable energy, and strengthening the State's skill ecosystem.

BJP's politics of good governance has triumphed: PM Modi hails Bengal results

New Delhi (TSIT)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s overwhelming performance in the West Bengal Assembly elections, dubbing it as the victory of good governance over regressive rule of Trinamool Congress' governance.

"The Lotus blooms in West Bengal! The 2026 West Bengal Assembly Elections will be remembered forever," Prime Minister Modi said in an emphatic message on social media platform X, even as the election result trends continue to put the party in pole position - after hours of counting which began at 8 a.m. on Monday morning. The Prime Minister is also set to visit the BJP headquarters shortly, to participate in the party's victory celebrations and also delivering a rousing speech to thousands of karyakartas.

Hailing the Bengal's mandate as "display of people's power", he said that the BJP's politics of good governance has triumphed and vowed to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of every person of the state. "I bow to each and every person of West Bengal. The people have given a spectacular mandate to BJP and I assure them that our Party will do everything possible to fulfil the dreams and



aspirations of the people of West Bengal. We will provide a Government that ensures opportunity and dignity to all sections of society," PM Modi added.

The Prime Minister also saluted the 'Karyakartas' (party workers) for their constant endeavours and struggles in ensuring an emphatic victory for the BJP in West Bengal. "For years, they (BJP workers) have worked hard on the ground, overcome all sorts of adversities and spoken about our development agenda. They are the strength of our Party. I salute them," he wrote on X. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also welcomed the Bengal poll outcome and pledged to use this opportunity to turn the state into 'Sonar Bangla'. "With the hopes and aspirations with which Bengal has expressed this trust in the leadership of PM Narendra Modi ji, we will certainly fulfill them. BJP will work day and night to restore the lost glory of Bengal, the sacred land of great personalities like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Swami Vivekananda, Kavi Guru Tagore, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, and Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee, and to realise the dream of 'Sonar Bangla'."

SC refuses to entertain PIL seeking to restrict Aadhaar issuance only to children up to 6 years

New Delhi (TSIT)

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a PIL seeking directions to the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to restrict issuance of Aadhaar numbers only to children up to the age of six years and to put in place stringent guidelines for its issuance to adolescents and adults. Noting that most of the issues raised in the PIL required changes in the legal framework governing the issuance of Aadhaar, a Bench of Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi ordered it to be sent to the Government to consider it as a representation. "As may be seen from the nature of reliefs (sought), most of these require legislative intervention and appropriate amendments in the existing legal framework... Point out these issues to the Parliament and the government. They will take care of them," the Bench said. Alleging that the present system Aadhaar enrolment enabled illegal infiltrators to obtain it.



Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan submits his resignation to Governor

Thiruvananthapuram (TSIT)

Bringing the curtain down on a defining chapter in Kerala politics, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday night submitted his resignation to Governor Rajendra V. Arlekar, hours after the CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) suffered an unprecedented electoral drubbing. The Governor asked Vijayan to continue till the new Chief Minister assumes office.

The LDF was reduced to 35 seats, while the Congress-led UDF won 102 seats, and the BJP three. The resignation formally ends a decade-long tenure that saw Vijayan emerge as the longest-serving Chief Minister of the state, straddling two consecutive terms since 2016. His re-election in



2021 had broken Kerala's long-standing pattern of alternating governments, cementing his position as one of the most formidable leaders in the state's political history. Yet, the exit comes on a distinctly sour note. The scale of the defeat marks a historic low for the LDF, raising serious questions about governance, anti-incumbency, and the party's connect with voters after ten uninterrupted years in power.

Cong cadres in Telangana hail Kerala win as boost for Revanth's governance

By M. Rajanikanth

Hyderabad: Jubilant scenes were witnessed across Telangana as leaders and cadres of the Indian National Congress celebrated the party's decisive victory in Kerala, interpreting the mandate as a strong endorsement of governance models championed by chief minister A. Revanth Reddy.

Party offices in Hyderabad and districts turned festive, with workers distributing sweets, bursting firecrackers and holding celebratory rallies as the Congress-led alliance surged ahead to form the government in Kerala, topping the Left Democratic Front. Leaders in Telangana said the victory



carries wider political significance beyond Kerala, pointing to the active campaign role played by Revanth Reddy, who was deployed as a key cam-

paigner in the state. They argued that the acceptance of the party's messaging in Kerala reflects growing confidence in Congress-led governance, par-

ticularly in southern states. "This is not just a Kerala verdict; it is a validation of the governance model we are implementing in Telangana," a senior leader said, adding that the outcome reinforces the party's credibility among voters seeking welfare-backed growth and administrative stability.

State IT and industries minister Duddilla Sridhar Babu, who also participated in the campaign, said the coordinated effort between state units played a role in strengthening grassroots mobilisation and connecting with key voter segments. The celebrations in Telangana also reflect the party's broader momentum in the south, where it is already in power in

Telangana and Karnataka. Leaders said the Kerala victory further consolidates the party's footprint in the region and strengthens its narrative of governance-driven politics.

Political observers noted that the Telangana unit's prominent involvement in Kerala points to an evolving campaign strategy where successful state leadership is leveraged across regions to build electoral traction. As celebrations continued through the day, party cadres expressed confidence that the Kerala result will energise the organisation ahead of future electoral challenges, positioning Congress as a central force in shaping the political discourse across southern India.

PM Modi thanks TN voters, congratulates TVK; assures continued Central support

Chennai, May 4 : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed gratitude to the people of Tamil Nadu for supporting the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the 2026 Assembly elections, while also congratulating actor-turned-politician C. Joseph Vijay and his party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), for their strong electoral performance.

In a message posted on social media following the declaration of results, the Prime Minister thanked voters across the state for reposing their trust in the NDA. He reiterated that the alliance would remain committed to addressing



the concerns of the people and ensuring that governance remains focused on development and welfare. "Gratitude to the voters

of Tamil Nadu who supported the NDA in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. We will always remain at the forefront in

addressing people's issues and improving their lives," PM Modi said in his post. The Prime Minister's remarks came

at a time when the Tamil Nadu election results indicated a significant political shift, with the debutant TVK emerging as a major force in the state's political landscape.

Acknowledging this development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his congratulations to Vijay and his party, calling their performance "impressive".

"Congratulations to TVK on their impressive performance," he added, signalling recognition of the changing political dynamics in Tamil Nadu, long dominated by Dravidian parties. Reaffirming the Centre's commitment to the state, the Prime Minister said

that the Union government would continue to prioritise Tamil Nadu's development and the welfare of its people.

He assured that efforts would be intensified to support infrastructure growth, economic progress and social welfare initiatives in the state.

"The Centre will leave no stone unturned in furthering the progress of Tamil Nadu and the well-being of its people," he said. The Prime Minister's message underscores the NDA's intent to strengthen its political and developmental engagement in Tamil Nadu, even as the state witnesses the rise of a new political contender in TVK.

Dasari 80th Birth Anniversary Celebrated Grandly

Short Films Competition under Writers Academy – Murali Mohan Appreciates



The South India Times, Visakhapatnam The 80th birth anniversary of Dasari Narayana Rao, who rendered immense services to the Telugu film industry, was celebrated in the city with great grandeur. On this occasion, the "Dasari Short Films Competition-2026" awards ceremony was held magnificently under the aegis of the Writers Academy at VMRDA Children's Arena, located at Siripuram Junction. Prominent film actor Murali Mohan, who attended the event as the chief guest, said that the achievements of Dasari Narayana Rao were unparalleled and that celebrating his birth anniversary every year would inspire the youth. He also recalled the opportunities given to him by Dasari during his film career.

VMRDA Chairman Pranav Gopal and former minister Dadi Veerabhadra Rao participated in the event and paid tributes to Dasari's portrait. Presiding over the meeting, Writers Academy Chairman V.V. Ramanamurthy said that Dasari Narayana Rao was his mentor and that he grew in the field of journalism inspired by him. He informed that a total of 50 short film entries were received for the competition. Special guest Pranav Gopal stated that such competitions would help encourage the talent of young directors. Former minister Dadi Veerabhadra Rao congratulated Murali Mohan on being announced for the Padma Shri award. A documentary made on Dasari Narayana Rao impressed the audience during the event. The dance performances by international Kuchipudi dancer Nadia were a special attraction of the programme. In the short films competition, "Amma Nannu Kshaminchu" won the first prize, "Chivara Page" secured the second place, "Humanity" stood third, and "Chinna Maata Pedda Maarpu" won the fourth place. Several prominent personalities from the film, cultural, and social sectors attended the event.

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Grand Birthday Celebrations for Devarakadra MLA; Couple Felicitated by Municipal Leaders*

Wanaparthy District, Kothakota: The birthday celebrations of the Devarakadra MLA were held in a grand manner at ATR Function Hall in Kothakota mandal. A large number of supporters, party workers, and leaders attended the event, creating a festive atmosphere.

Earlier in the day, at around 11 AM, the

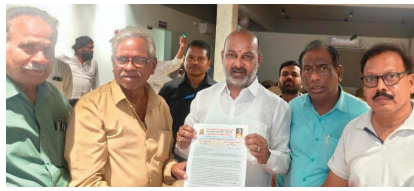


MLA offered special prayers at the Ambabhavani Temple in Kothakota and sought blessings.

Later, he participated in a vehicle rally, greeting the public and supporters on the way to the function venue.

Request for Development of Karimnagar Broadcasting Centre

Karimnagar, May 4, TSIT : S a b b a n i L a k s h m i n a r a y a n a, President Secretaries of Sharath Sahitya Kala Shrovanthi Karimnagar, who are local residents, artists and writers, to develop the Karimnagar Akashvani (AIR) center with modern facilities. Sankapalli Nagendra Sharma, Sri Aurobindo Society Karimnagar Center presidents Kola Anna Reddy, Uppala Ramesham, retired teachers and poet friends Velmula Jaipal



Reddy requested the central government. To this end they submitted a request letter along with Karimnagar MP and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar. They stated that at present, the Karimnagar Broadcasting Center

does not have adequate facilities for programme design and recording, thereby reducing opportunities for local talent. He said that the radio programmes are very useful for the farmers in Karimnagar, which is an agricultural area. Karimnagar center opposite Warangal, Adilabad and Kothagudem centers should also be developed and converted into a high power transmission center along with setting up program design and recording studios with adequate staff.

EIGHT PEOPLE WERE ARRESTED FOR CIRCULATING FAKE NOTES

WARANGAL, May 4, TSIT : Three persons who were circulating in the market by making (printing) fake notes and for low amounts in Telangana, Warangal Task Force and Narsampet Police have jointly arrested five persons who were handing out black notes in the size of Rs 500 notes to those who asked for more money in 1:3 ratio.

Fake notes, original Rs 1,48,000 and laptops, printers, 13 cell phones and two cars worth around Rs 28 lakh were seized from the

arrested accused. The accused arrested by the police are: 1) Saganti Kiran, Residence : Narsampeta, 2) Neerati Siva, Residence : Narsampeta, 3) Neerati Ranjit, Residence : Narsampeta, 4) Gudikandula Ravi, Residence : Narsampeta, 5) Porika Rajkumar @ Raju, Residing : Ghanpur (Mulugu), 6) Tanamala Rajasekhar, Residing : Vemsuru, Khammam, 7) M u d u r u k o l a Yakambaram, Residing :



Tatanagar, Bhuvanagiri, 8) Chenu Saikiran, Residence : Karakagudem (Mandalam) Police identified him as belonging to Kothagudem. Regarding this arrest, East Zone DCP

Ankit Kumar disclosed the details and said that three persons from Narsampet were detained and interrogated and they were circulating original 100 rupees notes using lap-

top and printer in color and circulating in the market. While interrogating the remaining five persons, they said that they would make less money in Telangana state and give more money in 1:3 to make them believe the victims.

According to their plan, original 500 rupee currency notes could be blackened by dipping them in iodine tincture solution and then dipped in 'hyppo' (sodium thiosulphate) solution, causing the chemical reaction to

return to their original form. They tie the black papers into bundles, give them to the aspirants, and take the original notes from them, believing that if they do as above, they will pass as original notes.

In the same way they were earlier in Ghanpur (Mulugu), Monda Market (Secunderabad), Vemsoor, Kothagudem, Cases were registered against them for cheating in KUC and Subedari and they were sent to jail.

Kukatpally Congress Leaders Meet Newly Appointed Zonal Commissioner

HYDERABAD : Kukatpally Congress Party in-charge and Vice President Bandi Ramesh met the newly appointed Zonal Commissioner, Mayank Singh, at his office on Monday. He was accompanied by several local Congress leaders.

During the meeting, the delegation extended a warm



welcome to Mayank Singh by presenting him with a flower bouquet and honoring him with a shawl. Bandi Ramesh

congratulated the commissioner on assuming his new role. Ramesh expressed confidence that, under Mayank

Singh's leadership, the issues facing the Kukatpally zone would be addressed effectively and resolved in a timely manner. Prominent local leaders present at the meeting included Nagireddy, Thoomu Venu, Gali Balaji, Koppishetti Dinesh, Thoomu Santosh, Lakshmaiah, Narayana, Rangamohan, and Sai Tulasi.

Persistent Cough May Signal Undiagnosed Asthma, Warn CARE Doctors

Hyderabad, May 4: Doctors from CARE Hospitals have cautioned that a persistent cough lasting more than two to three weeks—especially if it worsens at night or early morning—could be a sign of undiagnosed Asthma, rather than a routine cold or allergy.

Speaking ahead of World Asthma Day 2026, experts highlighted a steady rise in respiratory illnesses due to increasing air pollution, construction dust, vehicular emissions, weather changes, and growing indoor air pollution. This year's theme, "Access to Anti-Inflammatory Inhalers for Everyone with Asthma – Still an Urgent Need," emphasizes the importance of making inhaled corticosteroids accessible, as they significantly reduce asthma attacks and prevent avoidable deaths. According to the Global Initiative for



Asthma (GINA), asthma affects over 260 million people worldwide and causes more than 450,000 deaths annually—most of which are preventable. India alone has an estimated 34.3 million asthma patients, making it one of the highest-burden countries.

Dr. Sudhir Prasad, Senior Pulmonologist at CARE Hospitals, Malakpet, said asthma attacks can severely impact daily life, disrupting sleep, education, and work, and in severe cases

may lead to hospitalization or death. He stressed that timely diagnosis and appropriate inhaler therapy can prevent most complications.

Explaining further, he noted that asthma occurs when airways narrow due to muscle tightening, inflammation, and mucus buildup, restricting airflow and oxygen supply. He added that chronic cough is often overlooked as a symptom, with many patients being diagnosed only after prolonged coughing episodes.

Highlighting emerging concerns, Dr. Prasad pointed out that indoor air pollution—caused by prolonged AC use, poor ventilation, dust, fungal growth, and pet dander—is increasingly triggering asthma flare-ups, sometimes more than outdoor pollution.

Dr. Syed Abdul Aleem, Senior Pulmonologist at CARE Hospitals, Musheerabad, emphasized that poor adherence to inhaler therapy remains a major cause of preventable asthma emergencies. He warned that discontinuing medication once symptoms improve can lead to severe attacks, as asthma requires long-term management.

Doctors also noted that symptoms tend to worsen during summer, dusty conditions, and seasonal transitions, when allergens and respiratory infections are more prevalent.

DR. T. R. K. RAO HONoured AS "IPSE DOYEN OF THE DECADE"

A landmark recognition in india's public sector leadership



BY DR. JITHENDER RAO THANUGULA, SENIOR JOURNALIST

New Delhi: In a moment of immense pride for India's public sector and strategic resource governance, Dr. Tanugula Rama Kishan Rao, Director General of the Directorate of Geology and Mining, Government of Maharashtra, and Managing Director of Maharashtra State Mining Corporation Limited (MSMC), has been conferred with the prestigious "IPSE Doyen of the Decade" Award at the grand 7th India Public Sector Enterprises (IPSE) Awards ceremony 2026 held at the SCOPE Convention Centre, New Delhi.

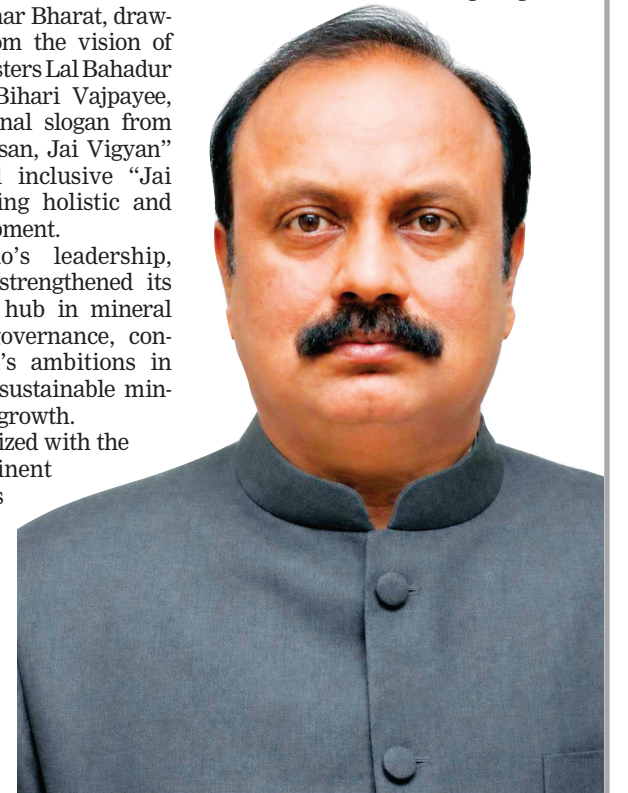
The award, instituted by PSE Journal in association with the ENERTIA Foundation, is regarded as one of the highest recognitions in India's public sector ecosystem, celebrating exceptional leadership, governance excellence, and contribution to national economic growth. Dr. Rao was unanimously selected by an eminent jury panel for his remarkable contributions to the mining, power, and strategic critical miner-

als sectors, particularly his significant role in advancing India's capabilities in Rare Earth Elements (REE), a crucial area for technological advancement and energy security. The IPSE Awards 2026 reflect the spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat, drawing inspiration from the vision of former Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Atal Bihari Vajpayee, evolving the national slogan from "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan" to a broader and inclusive "Jai Insaan," symbolizing holistic and sustainable development.

Under Dr. Rao's leadership, Maharashtra has strengthened its position as a key hub in mineral exploration and governance, contributing to India's ambitions in energy transition, sustainable mining, and industrial growth.

The event, organized with the support of prominent institutions such as ENERTIA Foundation, MARKENOMY Foundation, New Delhi Institute of Management (NDIM), Renewable Energy Promotion Association (REPA), and Alliance for SMEs of India (ASMEI), brought together leading policymakers, industry experts, and thought leaders. The IPSE Awards also pay tribute to legendary figures like Dr. V. Krishnamurthy and Yogendra Prasad for their pioneering contributions to India's public sector enterprises. The recognition of Dr.

T. R. K. Rao marks not only a personal milestone but also a significant moment for India's mining and energy sectors, highlighting the importance of visionary leadership in address-



ing global challenges such as resource security, sustainability, and economic resilience. His achievement stands as a powerful inspiration for professionals across the public sector, demonstrating how dedication, expertise, and forward-looking governance can drive progress and innovation in PSUs

Victory for PM Modi's Development Governance and National Security: R. Ashok

Bengaluru : Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development-oriented governance and commitment to national security have led the people to vote for the BJP. This election result signals that the country is moving towards becoming Congress-free, said Opposition Leader R. Ashok.

Reacting to the poll results in the five states, he said voters have sent a clear message that only Prime Minister Narendra Modi can keep the country secure. There is widespread discussion everywhere about the massive change that has taken place in West Bengal. The political career of Mamata Banerjee, who turned West Bengal into a gateway for terrorists and issued identity cards to 2 crore Bangladeshi infiltrators, has come to an end. The people have decided that only Narendra Modi is suitable for ensuring the country's security. In that state, TMC goons used to

Congress, which has pushed the state into a debt spiral, will be wiped out in the next election — this is clear



attack people and officials every day. The people have rejected such a party. The country is preparing to become Congress-free in the coming days, he said.

Voter list revision will help drive out anti-national elements and traitors from the country. Only

when such people are removed from the country will the nation truly prosper. Genuine voters will vote for the country's development. If outsiders remain, they will vote for parties that engage in anti-national activities. The voter list revision is being

carried out properly. The same process is underway in Bengaluru as well. People from places like Ramanagara and Channarayana come to Bengaluru to vote. There is no question of whether the voter list revision benefits or harms the BJP.

This is a matter related to national security, and this process will only benefit the country, he said.

The Congress government in Karnataka should learn a lesson from the election results in Assam, Puducherry, and West Bengal. Congress came to power in the name of guarantees, imposed heavy taxes on the people, and trapped the state in a debt spiral. It is now clear that it will be routed in the next election. Farmers' suicides, deaths of mothers in government hospitals, loss of lives due to rain in Bengaluru, pending salaries for transport employees and all other staff, massive corruption in the Excise Department — through all these failures, Congress has invited the wrath of the people. Instead of focusing on governance, Congress leaders are busy fighting over the Chief Minister's chair. In the next Assembly election, the people will give them a fitting reply.

Sringeri Recount 'Dangerous Trend for Country': D.K. Shivakumar



Bengaluru: Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar has termed the recount results of the Sringeri Assembly constituency as a "dangerous trend" for the country, alleging serious irregularities and conspiracy.

Speaking to reporters at his Sadashivanagar residence, Shivakumar said that while wins and losses are part of democracy, the developments in Sringeri were "extremely shocking" and indicated a larger conspiracy. He alleged that ballot papers were tampered with after count-

ing, claiming additional marks were inserted on votes originally cast in favour of his party.

He further stated that the matter would be investigated at the government level and also challenged legally. "If we had prior suspicion, we would have approached the Supreme Court of India. The process followed raises serious questions about the integrity of the system," he said.

Shivakumar alleged that after the counting process was completed and bundles were sealed, they were reopened and altered,

and later counted based on a court directive. He called for a thorough probe into the issue, stating that all officials had earlier endorsed the original result and that records were available with the Election Commission.

The Deputy CM described the incident as a "disgrace for the state" and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of indulging in malpractice, claiming he had not expected such "criminal minds" within the party.

He also raised concerns over other election-related issues, including pending matters in court and narrow-margin defeats, stressing the need for transparency and accountability in the electoral process. Responding to allegations by the Janata Dal (Secular) (JDS) regarding misuse of ballot papers in local body elections, Shivakumar remarked that it remains to be seen whether the party will contest independently or align with the BJP.

Ensure cleanliness of roadside drains, shoulder drains, and gratings along major roads: Maheshwar Rao



(5 on each side) to verify whether water is flowing freely or whether silt accumulation is obstructing the flow. Necessary measures should then be undertaken to remove silt and ensure proper drainage, as per the following instructions.

- On all arterial and sub-arterial roads, keeping in view the low-lying areas, existing drains on both sides, and intersecting drainage points, drain slabs/gratings shall be opened at a minimum of 10 locations per kilometre stretch (5 on each side) to inspect whether rainwater is flowing freely or whether silt accumulation is obstructing the drainage system.

- It shall be ensured that all such rainwater drains are properly connected to the nearby storm water drains, and inspections shall be carried out to verify whether there are any obstructions or blockages at the points of connection.

- In certain locations, sewerage lines or drinking water pipelines may be passing across the path of rainwater drains. Such locations shall be inspected, and in coordination with BWSSB officials, necessary action shall be taken to relocate such pipelines to appropriate locations wherever required.

- If trees or any other utilities are obstructing the rainwater drains, necessary action shall be taken in coordination with the Forest Department or the concerned departments for their relocation or removal.

- All City Corporations have been instructed to immediately verify all the above-mentioned aspects on priority. For this purpose, available Assistant Engineers, Assistant Executive Engineers, Executive Engineers, outsourced engineers, project consultant engineers, and engineers of contractors engaged in recent CMIDP, SIP, White Topping, World Bank storm water drain works, and other development projects within their respective corporations shall be mobilized.

Bengaluru (TSIT) : As part of pre-monsoon preparedness, Chief Commissioner Maheshwar Rao has directed city corporation officials to ensure the desilting of rainwater drains and the cleanliness of shoulder drains and gratings along all arterial, sub-arterial, and other major roads falling under the jurisdiction of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA).

As the monsoon season is approaching in the month of June and pre-monsoon rains have already commenced, during the recent rainfall on 29-04-2026, it was reported in the media that rainwater had accumulated on roads at several locations across the city, and in some places, water had entered the basements of houses. Additionally, numerous complaints were registered through control room telephone lines and helplines regarding these issues.

In view of the above, it is highly essential to ensure the desilting of rainwater drains along arterial and sub-arterial roads, which primarily connect to storm water drains and carry drainage water from other ward roads into these main drains.

Therefore, teams should be constituted within the jurisdiction of the city corporations to inspect all arterial and sub-arterial road rainwater drains under their respective limits. For every one-kilometre stretch, drain slabs or gratings must be opened at a minimum of 10 locations

to ensure public safety during the upcoming monsoon season, the Commissioner of Bengaluru East City Corporation, D.S. Ramesh*, has directed officials to initiate an urgent drive to identify and remove dilapidated, unsafe, and unstable structures, including buildings, compound walls, and retaining walls within the Corporation limits.

Background for Emergency Action
Taking serious note of the recent compound wall collapse at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital, the Commissioner stated that the Corporation is committed to preventing such incidents during the monsoon.

As a precautionary measure, a special drive has been launched to ensure public safety and prevent recurrence of such accidents.

Scope of Comprehensive Inspection
Officials have been instructed to identify the following types of hazardous structures: Old, dilapidated, abandoned, fire-damaged, or partially demolished buildings Compound walls near schools, hospitals, markets, and parks. Retaining walls and drain-side walls. Weak culverts, old slabs, and buildings with visible cracks or structural damage Temporary unsafe scaffolding, hoardings, and poles at construction sites. Structures with weakened foundations due to soil erosion or water flow

Timelines for Action
The Commissioner has set strict deadlines for the completion of this exercise; Submission of preliminary ward-wise list of dangerous structures within 48 hours & Submission of detailed inspection reports with photographs within 5 days.

Immediate action on structures identified as highly dangerous.

Public Safety Measures
The following safety measures are to be implemented in areas with unsafe structures: Barricading of dangerous zones with caution boards in Kannada and English Immediate evacuation of occupants in life-threatening situations Restriction of parking, vehicular movement, commercial activities, and public gathering near such structures Coordination with BESCOM, BWSSB, and GAIL for safe disconnection of electricity, water, and gas connections

Public Advisory
Citizens are requested to report any dilapidated or dangerous structures within the Corporation limits by contacting the BECC Control Room at 9480685706. The public is also advised to avoid taking shelter, standing, moving around, or conducting any activities near such unsafe structures. Commissioner's Warning The Commissioner warned that any negligence in identifying or acting against dangerous structures will invite strict disciplinary action against the concerned officials. He emphasized that this initiative is directly linked to the safety of citizens, and all officials must act with urgency and responsibility.

Midnight accident turns violent in Udupi, chain snatching alleged

Udupi, May 4: A late-night motorcycle accident reportedly escalated into a violent clash, with allegations of assault and gold chain snatching. A case and counter-case have been registered at the Udupi Town police station. According to one complaint, on May 2, S Vaibhav B Nayak of Badagabettu was at home with friends Shashwath Shetty, Abhay Samuel, Yashas, and Aditya Bhat. After dinner, around midnight, Abhay and Shashwath left on a motorcycle. Near Babbuswami Temple, a dog allegedly crossed the road, causing the bike to skid and both riders to fall. Abhay then contacted Vaibhav, claiming that locals had gathered and were assaulting them. Vaibhav, along with two others, reached the spot by car. A confrontation reportedly followed, during which members of the gathered group allegedly abused and assaulted them.

Immediate Identification and Demolition of Dilapidated Structures Directed – D.S. Ramesh

Bengaluru : The time has come to put an end to the injustice faced by marginalized communities for decades. A new direction has now emerged in the struggle for social justice, equal rights, and empowerment of the oppressed sections, and Vijay Dalapathi has risen as the transformative force behind this change, said S. Sangamesh, State President of the Karnataka State Youth Association.

"This is not just politics – it is a movement. This is not just words – it is the roar of self-respect of the oppressed. The time has come to answer the pain of people who have been suppressed for decades. The leadership that is guiding this struggle is that of Vijay Dalapathi,"

Roar of Social Justice: A New Political Revolution in Tamil Nadu Under Vijay Dalapathi's Leadership: S. Sangamesh



he stated.

The changes taking place in Tamil Nadu politics today are not ordinary. This is the rising voice of the oppressed. "For self-respect and equality, it is now time for power to come into the hands of the marginalized," he said. In his statement, he further emphasized that Vijay Dalapathi possesses the strength



to unite the aspirations of youth, the rights of the backward classes, and the dream of equality. He has the determination to move forward by taking every section of society along.

The time has come to rewrite the history of social justice. The dream of a proud son of the Madiga community becoming the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is not just a dream – it is our dignity, our right, and the victory of our struggle. He also expressed confidence that the TVK party will certainly enter the upcoming Bengaluru (GBA) urban local body elections, and with the strong support of organized youth power and backward communities, TVK candidates are expected to achieve significant success.

BJP VICTORY IN WEST BENGAL AND ASSAM: MP BASAVARAJ BOMMAI CONGRATULATES PM MODI AND AMIT SHAH

" CONGRESS W ON IN STATE USING MONEY AND LIQUOR POWER"

Bengaluru: In Karnataka, the Congress party won both Davanagere South and Bagalkot through the use of money and liquor power. However, the real situation in the state is different, said former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament Basavaraj Bommai. In a post on X, he stated that the BJP has come to power with a clear majority in Assam and West Bengal. The people there have shown their appreciation and support for the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Therefore, I extend my congratulations to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. I also congratulate Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and West Bengal BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari, he said.

Immediately clear fallen trees and branches caused by rain and strong winds to restore smooth public movement: Daljit Kumar

Bengaluru: Following the heavy rain accompanied by hailstorm on April 29 last week in Bengaluru city, numerous trees and branches had fallen within the jurisdiction of the Bengaluru Central City Corporation, causing significant obstruction to public movement. The Forest Division of the Central City Corporation has been carrying out the removal of fallen trees and branches caused by rain and strong winds on a highly war-footing

basis. Due to the large number of fallen trees and branches obstructing roads and pedestrian pathways, daily clearance operations are being undertaken, and the work is nearing completion. Daljit Kumar, Additional Commissioner (Development) of the Central City Corporation, has instructed Forest Department officials to immediately clear all remaining fallen trees and branches on roads and footpaths to facilitate the smooth movement of

vehicles and pedestrians. A total of 136 trees and 257 branches had fallen within the jurisdiction of the Central City Corporation. Of these, all 136 trees and 242 branches have already been cleared, while operations to remove the remaining fallen trees and branches are progressing swiftly.

Removal of trees identified in the list provided by the Joint Commissioner of Traffic Police. In view of the monsoon season, the Additional Commissioner (Development) has direct-

ed Forest Department officers and staff to jointly inspect, along with Traffic Police officials, the dried, dangerous, and structurally weak trees and branches falling under the Bengaluru Central City Corporation limits, as identified in the list submitted by the City Traffic Police Commissioner to the Hon'ble Greater Bengaluru Authority Chief Commissioner, and to undertake precautionary removal measures on priority.

Belagavi : The guarantee schemes implemented by our government in Karnataka are not mere promises, but have become a real support system in the day-to-day lives of people. By responding to the struggles, pain, and needs of the our government has now received clear validation through the by-election results, said Minister for Women and Child Development, Laxmi Hebbalkar.

In her statement, she



said that the victory of Congress candidates in Davanagere South and

poor, and farmers alike. This is precisely why people have stood firmly in

support of the Congress party. People have delivered a clear message against the BJP. The Janata of Karnataka has given a fitting response to false propaganda and anti-people policies, she stated.

These results are a certificate of approval for our government's work. We remain committed to strengthening pro-people schemes further and continuing to uphold the trust reposed in us by the people. Laxmi Hebbalkar added.

EDITORIAL

Falta No Outlier: Bengal's Long, Troubled Romance With Political Violence

The Election Commission of India's decision to order re-polling in the entire assembly constituency of Falta is a manifestation of the 'endemic' political violence in West Bengal. Ordering a re-poll for an entire assembly constituency is an extremely rare and drastic measure, but this has been ordered because the "integrity of the recorded votes" was compromised in over 21 per cent of the booths. Such large-scale 'intervention' into the electoral process in the presence of historically the largest numbers of CAPFs and Union government officials, underscores that the violent brigands are not of little means in resources, as well as abilities. The elections in West Bengal this year has been one of the most peaceful in the state's history, yet the violent past provided a backdrop, even if only in the form of the BJP raising the spectre of its return in the event of the Trinamool being re-elected. Although the by-poll in Falta will, in all likelihood, have little bearing on the nature of the electoral mandate in the state - barring affecting the political fortunes of Mamata Banerjee's aide and Trinamool candidate Jahangir Khan - the episode underscores the paradoxical facet of the state wherein, political-driven ferocious brutality co-exists with distinguished scholarly traditions and an epic cultural canvas. In almost a century and quarter of sustained existence, political violence remained a constant because it was not solely a series of isolated criminal acts. Instead, violence in Bengal has emerged as a deeply structural phenomenon with political power, local muscle, and economic survival being intertwined. Often, the roots of political violence in the state are traced back to three major post-independence periods - the Naxalite movement (1967-72), the Left Front era (1977-2011) and the continuing Trinamool era. However, the 1905 Partition of Bengal by the Viceroy of India, George Nathaniel Curzon acted as the primary catalyst for what has evolved into the current nature of violence. It has to be recognised that protests to this decision, eventually rescinded in 1911, in most parts of India, largely remained within the constitutional boundaries. However, in (United) Bengal, it gave rise to the phenomenon of revolutionary or militant nationalism. Innumerable revolutionaries secured their space in history even as the British administration labelled them 'terrorists'. Secret societies like Anushilan Samiti and Jugantar were formed and some spread to other parts of India too - contemporary Maharashtra for instance - and many of these groups or individuals, even assassinated British officials and came to be seen as heroes or martyrs, if they died in action or were executed by the colonial administration. Such influence also crossed the proverbial seven seas and saw Madan Lal Dhingra, under the influence of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, assassinating a British official and walking to the gallows. The cult of martyrdom, starting with Bengal, established political and cultural precedent. Over time, sacrifice and violence in the name of a 'cause' came to be justified in the region. Independence was preceded by protracted and extreme levels of violence in Bengal, starting with communal rioting and targeted killings, triggered by Muslim League's call for Direct Action in 1946. It took little time for this trend to transit from being initially directed against the British, to becoming visible in the form of inter-party violence. Eventually in Bengal, for the most part even today, 'politics' is not seen as an amphitheatre of anyone genteel. In any case, as Indian nationalism began directing the agitation for freedom with greater focus, the 1940s in Bengal saw escalated levels of violence. The Great Calcutta Killings of 1946 were preceded by the Tebhaga Movement in which Bengali peasants rose in violent protest against landlords demanding two-third share of the harvest. This radical phase of politics in Bengal was interwoven into the nationalistic upsurge and emerged from the tragic Great Bengal Famine of 1943 that resulted in complete collapse of the province's economy and completely eroded trust between citizens and administration. As the local elite profited greatly by hoarding grain and trading unscrupulously, the peasants and urban poor were greatly radicalised and they, in time and in some parts, repositioned themselves into violent brigades, acquiring characteristics from the local goons to being part of a structured forces under the control of economic and political mafia or leader. The Congress government headed by Siddharth Shankar Ray (1971) remains, in the state's history, as one of the most violent and repressive eras. The regime is known for its systematic "state-sponsored" crackdown, which although primarily aimed at neutralising the Naxalite movement, also targeted other political dissenters and even ordinary citizens. This period was also noted for initiating extra-judicial killings. The mainstream Left, led by the CPM, had to face state onslaught and when after the 1977 assembly election, Jyoti Basu became the Chief Minister, his regime, took on the precise character of the Ray regime, with a few modifications. Within no time, the party virtually became a parallel government, right down to the grassroots. Ordinary citizens, it became known, went to the local party apparchhik for resolving all disputes - intra-family, with other individuals and with the state apparatus and its officials. This 'party-society' system survived the defeat of the Left Front and shifted its allegiance to the Trinamool, which accepted it. However, unlike the Left Front, which kept party hordes within the confines of self-drawn limits due to the presence of the party chieftain, Pramod Dasgupta, the Trinamool leadership was unable to curtail the 'autonomy' of over-zealous muscle-money strongmen. It is a tragedy for Bengal and its people that the legatees of the ones, who at the onset of this phenomenon were seen as 'romantic' nationalists, are now perceived as those who must be shunned by the populace, failing which, they need to be mollified by handing over whatever is demanded by them. In course of this election, the tradition of 'extortion' from local businesspersons, or the practice of forcing them to accept a business 'advice', emerged as a major issue. The BJP tried to harness this sentiment and fear of a 'repeat' episode electorally, even as its regimes in certain states have taken the extra-judicial path. Regardless of the verdict and whichever party gets a chance to 'govern' the state for the next five years, it is time to whittle down this tradition of endemic violence. It remains to be seen if the new government charts this course or continues with it.

BJP In Bengal, Vijay In Tamil Nadu: A STORY OF 'UNDERDOGS'

A certain breed of liberals has always tried to convince the masses that the lotus is a poisonous flower. Now, they might seek to persuade the same masses that the whistle symbolises eve-teasing at its worst. Facile remarks aside, this round of assembly elections has delivered two tectonic shifts in just one day. A few weeks ago, the authors had written about the five Presidency districts of West Bengal that made Mamata Banerjee, and asking whether the same five districts would be her undoing. Exactly that, and more has been proven today as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) obliterates TMC bastions and storms to power in Bengal for the first time in independent India's history. A few thousand kilometres down south, superstar Vijay has shocked virtually every self-confessed political pundit as his brand new party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), decimates Dravidian bastions in Tamil Nadu. Both the astonishing performances destroy long-held political beliefs. Both are victories carved against all odds. Both were underdogs that refused to blink. And both have been beneficiaries of the hubris of their principal rivals. Don't forget, the BJP had become arrogant prior to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The voters gave a jolt to the party - who knows, a better-led Congress might even have spelt defeat for it. Today, even as a section of the "liberal commentariat" means the "death of democracy", many Indians celebrate the two unseemly victories as yet another manifestation of the success of Indian democracy, albeit with its own unique flaws. Why do the authors say this? For one, the spectrum of opinions. The future chief minister of Tamil Nadu (in all probability), Vijay, has stated repeatedly that the DMK is his main political opponent and the BJP is his main ideological opponent. BJP sup-



porters have not liked such remarks. But that is the strength of the ordinary Indian voter. She refuses to follow the "narrative" set by the elite. In West Bengal, the opposition BJP leader, Suwendu Adhikari, and many others stated repeatedly that the 2026 elections were an existential battle for Hindus in the state. The statement was so politically incorrect that "secular liberals" were frothing at the mouth. But once again, the voters have decided to be politically incorrect. Politics has become so polarised and coarse that some analysts have already pronounced the beginning of the end of "Bangla" culture. Beyond such hyperbole, the reality remains that the TMC governed poorly and the voters punished the party. The surprise is that the BJP was successful in convincing ordinary Bangla voters that it is not a party of outsiders. Even more surprisingly, it broke through seven decades of suspicions. Way back in 1952, a leader called Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

had formed the Bhartiya Jan Sangh that became the BJP in 1980. Back in 1952, the Jan Sangh had won four Lok Sabha seats in the state. But since then, voters of West Bengal had preferred not to touch the BJP even with a barge pole. Even as recently as 2016, the BJP won merely three seats in the assembly elections. In that context, this sweeping victory of the BJP breaks all old patterns of voter behaviour. The victory of superstar Vijay has also broken an array of old and established patterns of voter behaviour. For close to six decades, Dravidian parties DMK and AIADMK enjoyed a stranglehold over the electorate. Sure, there have been many small caste-based parties in the state with their own loyal vote banks. But they have usually allied with either of the two big powers. In 2006, another superstar, Vijaykanth, had thrown his hat in the ring. He did well, but not well enough and gradually faded away. Rajinikanth nursed his own ambitions but even-

tually decided not to take the electoral plunge. Kamal Hasan, too, launched his own party but came a cropper and became a junior partner of the DMK, which rewarded the star by sending him to the Rajya Sabha. Many analysts had concluded that the era of film stars winning elections in Tamil Nadu was over. Not surprisingly, almost everyone was sceptical when Vijay joined the fray. But he has proven that old patterns can be breached. Even more important, Vijay has broken through caste barriers in a state where caste calculations have always played a major role. The young voters who voted overwhelmingly for Vijay have set aside these considerations in their quest for change. The authors will write in more detail in a day when all the details are out in the open. But the immediate message is threefold: old voting patterns are not sacrosanct. Second, the youth are no longer in awe of dynasties. The fate of Gaurav Gogoi in Assam, of Tejaswini Yadav

in Bihar, of Abhishek Banerjee in his fortress Diamond Harbour, of MK Stalin and his son Udaynidhi in Tamil Nadu, of the Hoodas in Haryana and of the Thackeray clan in Maharashtra is telling evidence of that. Third: it is unwise to gratuitously and needlessly insult and denigrate Hindu culture, symbols and aesthetics. Vijay and his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), a band of many young and some seasoned politicians who joined him, have decisively neared the halfway mark. MK Stalin, the Chief Minister, has lost his Kolathur seat to the TVK's AS Babu, a former DMK man. His son and Deputy Chief Minister, Udaynidhi, has managed to scrape through in his Chepauk seat. This story isn't unique. Young TVK candidates, such as Ramesh from Srirangam and scores more whose names weren't even heard by the Tamil Nadu electorate before this election, are giving veterans on both DMK and AIADMK a run for their money - and winning in many cases. The two leaves and Edappadi Palaniswami have held on to some of their rural strongholds, but are nowhere near a shot at power. The AIADMK has been relegated to the No. 3 position in the state, and there now hangs a question mark over its future. Vijay is the big winner, MK Stalin the big loser. Palaniswami may not be as big a loser as Stalin, but not a winner either. He is now stuck in the middle and will have to survive between Vijay and what's left of the DMK. The first big take-away from these result is that the age factor and the Vijay wave defied caste, religion and regional divides. For Tamil Nadu and India's youth, this is a moment of reckoning. The other big aspect is that Vijay's TVK did not have to bribe voters to vote for it or gather at its rallies. This is a heartening change in a state where it's an open secret that money wins elections.

THE 'SILENT' BENGAL VOTER WAS ALWAYS KEEPING SCORE

West Bengal has always been a place that refuses to be reduced - by any empire, by any ideology, by any single story that pretends to be whole. So when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sweeps the Bengal polls - when saffron seems to move through the state with the inevitability of weather - one is tempted, at first, to blame the strange mechanics of politics: alliances, strategies, the choreography of rallies. But politics in India is never merely choreography. It is also climate. A Mandate for Porivorton In this monumental mandate for change, BJP has swept the Bengal polls leading in over 190 seats at the time of writing - a first, almost an astronomical rupture, because until now the party had not truly broken through West Bengal's long-held emotional geography. Even the narrative built by non-BJP politicians had been a kind of fatalism: that BJP was a creature of the Hindi heartland, trapped in its narrow "Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan" mold; destined, it was said, to remain a visitor rather than a resident. Then came the wave. Not just an electoral rise, but a re-routing of belief - what you can call, without metaphor too excessive, a silent tsunami in the popular wave. The TMC - once the unshakable architect of the state - has reduced from 215 seats in 2021 to just 92. This is not merely loss; it is displacement, a kind of collective rearrangement. Numbers, of course, are cold. But when the numbers gather into a pattern - when the swing is large enough to feel like a tectonic shift - they become the visible surface of something harder to measure: the mood of a people. Why the Saffron Sweep? And what, exactly, caused this saffron sweep? The first and loudest answer is fierce anti-incumbency. For three

consecutive terms, the TMC didn't only govern; it became the background texture of daily life - its successes remembered, its failures repeated, its promises worn into familiarity until familiarity itself began to feel like stagnation. In democracies, time can act like a solvent. What once felt like stability begins to feel like delay. What once felt like progress begins to feel like management of disappointment. Voters don't always switch because they suddenly fall in love with a new party - they switch because they can no longer live inside the old story. Then came the second force: the presence of massive central security forces during elections. Fear is a shadow that changes quickly into hope when people believe the threat can be controlled. The election wasn't just about who would speak; it was also about whether speaking would be safe. In a country where the political and the personal often overlap, that kind of security reframes the decision. People who had been hesitant began to step forward - not with certainty of perfect outcomes, but with confidence that their vote could actually matter. What followed was visible in the great, almost communal act of turning up. Unprecedented Turnout The silent euphoria among voters was measurable in the turnout itself. The first phase on 23rd April recorded an unprecedented 93.16% turnout. The second phase, in South East of Bengal across 142 constituencies, showed around 91% turnout. The average turnout across the entire state was over 92% - the highest turnout ever recorded, not only in the state but in the entire country. Democracy, for once, looked less like a ritual and more like an emergency response: a society moving together because it felt the moment demanded it.

MAMATA'S FORT COLLAPSES, SAFFRON WAVE RISES



Priyanka Saurabh

BJP's historic victory in Bengal, political implications and the crisis for the opposition The BJP swept the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, winning 165+ seats and ousting the TMC's 15-year rule. Anti-incumbency, infiltration, corruption, and the CAA consolidated the Matua vote. Mamata Banerjee's "invincible" image shattered, weakening the opposition. The National India Alliance suffered, and the BJP expanded in eastern India. The new government will focus on development and law and order, but curbing violence remains a challenge. This victory marks a shift in democracy. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s historic victory in the 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections not only ended the 15-year rule of Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress (TMC) but also forever changed the landscape of Indian politics. According to trends and final results, the BJP secured a clear majority by winning over 165 seats in the 294-seat assembly, while the TMC was reduced to around 100 seats. Traditional opposition parties like the Congress and CPI(M) were limited to 2-3 and 1-2 seats, respectively. This result is a stark contrast to the 2021 elections, when the TMC won a landslide majority with 213 seats. The BJP's

vote share increased from a mere 10% in 2016 to 39% in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and it has now become a force to reckon with. Several multifaceted factors were at play behind this victory. First, the anti-incumbency wave was strongly evident. The Mamata Banerjee government faced serious allegations of corruption, bribery, infiltration, and political violence. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) campaign removed 2.7 million allegedly fake names from voter lists, bringing the issue of Bangladeshi infiltration to the forefront. The Matua community—the largest vote bank of Bangladeshi Hindu refugees—fully supported the BJP after the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Furthermore, the deteriorating law and order situation, especially violence by TMC workers in rural areas, mobilized non-TMC voters. The record turnout of 92.88% in the first phase was a testament to this dissatisfaction. Aggressive campaigning by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah further fueled this wave. Modi championed BJP rule in "Ang-Bang-Kalinga" (Bengal, Bihar, Odisha), while Shah claimed a lead in 110 of the 152 seats. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath mobilized Hindu voters with Hindutva, development, and the image of "Bulldozer Baba." The BJP countered opposition claims that the Women's Reservation Bill was a failure of the central government, linking it to the TMC's misgovernance. The high voter turnout brought out suppressed voters—especially women

and youth—who were not swayed by the TMC's "Khela Hoga" slogan. Mamata Banerjee's image as "invincible Didi" was completely shattered with this defeat. The TMC, which has held power in Bengal since 2011, will now have to assume the role of opposition, an unfamiliar challenge for it. Fears of internal strife within the party have increased, as former TMC leaders like Suwendu Adhikari have proven successful in the BJP. Mamata termed the exit polls as "paid narrative by the BJP" and accused the central government of misusing government machinery, but the trends clearly pointed to losing the government. The TMC also questioned the Election Commission, but evidence of fairness—such as record voter turnout—undermined these claims. Reorganizing the TMC in the future will be difficult, as its grassroots organization has been tainted by corruption. This victory has profound implications at the national level. Bengal provided a strong base for the Modi 2.0 government, which had a narrow majority, to form a full state government in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The BJP's expansion in eastern India—now Bengal, along with Assam and Bihar—is a testament to the immense success of the Hindutva and development model. The INDIA alliance will be weakened as the TMC's national stature will diminish. This will have a direct impact on the Uttar Pradesh 2027 and Bihar elections, where the BJP will be in a strong position. The Sangh Parivar's organizational strength provided a tough fight to regional parties, which will influence future electoral strategies. The opposition is now in a state of limbo. The insignificant role of the Congress and the Left Front continued into 2021, raising questions about the unity of the national opposition. Mamata Banerjee's political career is now uncertain—will she become the leader of the opposition, or will a new generation emerge within the party? The opposition will have to adopt a new strategy: either a strong Congress-Left alliance, or a new regional front. Bengal has now become a stronghold of the BJP, further dimming the opposition's voice on the national stage. From a socio-economic perspective, the new BJP government will focus on development, law and order, and prevention of infiltration. The Matua community will benefit from the CAA, while Bengal's faltering economy—which suffered under the TMC's misrule—may receive a new direction. However, ending political violence and balancing the saffron wave with Bengali identity will be key challenges. Issues related to women, youth, and minorities—such as reservation, employment, and education—will remain on the new government's agenda. A development model must be implemented while preserving Bengal's cultural diversity. The future prospects are interesting. The BJP must avoid internal strife, a long-standing weakness of its Bengal organization. The opposition needs regeneration—perhaps a new aggressive stance under Mamata Banerjee's leadership or a revival of the Congress.

India's LPG consumption slides 16 pc in April amid West Asia conflict

AGENCY
New Delhi: India's cooking gas LPG consumption fell by a steep 16 per cent in April as supply disruptions linked to the West Asia conflict hit availability for both household kitchens and commercial users, according to latest official data. LPG consumption stood at 2.2 million tonnes in April, 16.16 per cent lower than 2.62 million tonnes consumed in the same period last year. The consumption was 10.5 per cent lower than the 2.45 million tonnes of LPG sales in April 2024. It was also down month-on-month, lower than the 2.379 million tonnes of consumption in March, according to data from the Oil Ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC). India imports about 60 per cent of its LPG requirements, much of it via the Strait of Hormuz, which was effectively shut following US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliation. With supplies from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates disrupted, the government cut LPG supplies to commercial establishments like hotels and industries to safeguard household cooking gas availability. Also, supplies to households were regulated by increasing the gap



between two refills. According to PPAC, the decline in LPG consumption in April was lower than the 12.8 per cent year-on-year fall in March. LPG consumption had grown at a steady pace in recent years, driven by government efforts to replace firewood and other polluting fuels with cleaner alternatives. With the war leading to airspace closure in many Gulf countries and suspension of flights, jet fuel or ATF consumption fell 1.37 per cent to 761,000 tonnes in April when compared to the previous year. It was also down month-on-month from 807,000 tonnes of sales in March. Other than

the two war-impacted fuels, diesel sales also moderated with just a 0.25 per cent rise to 8.282 million tonnes. In March, diesel sales had risen 8.1 per cent to 8.727 million tonnes. Petrol sales were up 6.36 per cent to 3.67 million tonnes in April. The growth was lower than the 7.6 per cent rise in March to 3.78 million tonnes. Consumption of diesel was 4.5 per cent higher than 7.925 million tonnes in April 2024. A number has been doing the rounds - 10,790 litres, the amount of water needed to produce just one litre of

ethanol from rice. The figure has since led to a sharp critique of India's ethanol blending programme. The industry is fighting back, and the truth, as it turns out, is more complicated than it looks. The Grain Ethanol Manufacturers Association (GEMA) called the 10,000-litre figure "factually misleading and devoid of context," saying it refers to the total lifecycle water footprint of the crop, including rainfall absorbed during cultivation, and not what ethanol plants actually consume. GEMA says modern distillers use only three to five litres of process water per litre of ethanol. On this specific

point, GEMA is correct. The 10,000-litre number, shared by Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra at a global conference in Delhi last year, is drawn from virtual water accounting - a methodology that adds up all water a crop absorbs across its growing cycle, including rainwater that would have fallen on that land. It is a tool for understanding agricultural water stress, not industrial water consumption. Conflating the two is a methodological error, and critics of ethanol production have gone all guns blazing on it without the caveat. However, the industry's rebuttal skips over a few things. The more serious concern is not how much water a distillery draws from a pipe, but what grows in the fields feeding it. India's ethanol programme runs primarily on sugarcane and, increasingly, rice. These two are the most irrigation-heavy crops in the country. Growing one kilogram of rice requires an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 litres of water, the bulk of which is drawn from groundwater, not rain. The government has allocated 52 lakh tonnes of rice for ethanol in 2024-25, with a target of 90 lakh tonnes the following year, according to a report by India Today.

GAMESTOP MAKES \$55.5BN TAKEOVER OFFER FOR EBAY

AGENCY
London: Video game retailer GameStop has made a surprise \$55.5bn (£40.9bn) offer to buy e-commerce giant eBay. The cash and stock offer values eBay at \$125 a share, \$20 more than the company's value when trading ended in New York on Friday. GameStop's chief executive, Ryan Cohen, said eBay could be much more successful under his leadership and even rival Amazon. He also said he was prepared to take his bid directly to shareholders if eBay's board rejected it. eBay said it will consider the proposal but analysts expressed doubts about the idea. Morgan Stanley said the two companies had "fundamentally different" business models, while Bernstein pointed to GameStop's smaller balance sheet, saying it would be "surprised if anything became of it". GameStop rose to prominence during the Covid-19 pandemic when it became the centre of the so-called meme stock craze. This saw retail investors buy up shares in unloved companies that professional investors had bet against, causing their share price to rise and fall sharply. The chain still has around 1,600 outlets in the US and has seen something



of a turnaround under Cohen. Its net profit rose to \$418.4m in 2025 - up from \$131.3m the previous year - although sales fell. eBay, which is worth about four times more than GameStop, was launched in 1995 as a marketplace for hobbyists and became one of tech's best-known brands. But its user base has shrunk amid competition from the likes of Amazon. It currently has 136 million users worldwide, down from 175 million in 2018. "eBay should be worth - and will be worth - a lot more money," Cohen told the Wall Street Journal. "It could be a legit competitor to Amazon," he added. Under the proposed deal to buy eBay, Cohen would become the chief executive of the new firm and receive no salary or bonuses, being "compensated solely based on the performance of the combined

company". GameStop, which currently has a stock market valuation of around \$11.9bn, said it has a commitment letter from TD Securities to provide around \$20bn in debt to help finance the takeover. Cohen said he planned to cut costs at eBay by \$2bn within a year of a deal being completed. This would mainly fall across eBay's sales and marketing division, which GameStop said had failed to attract more users to a "marketplace with near-universal brand recognition". "The proposal does not sound like a 'terribly good offer' as it would saddle eBay with GameStop's debt," said Sucharita Kodali, a retail analyst at research firm Forrester. It makes sense for GameStop because it could lift its valuation by being linked with a larger company like eBay, she told.

Airlines can cancel flights in advance over fuel shortages under new plans

AGENCY
UAE: Airlines will be able to cancel flights weeks in advance, without losing valuable take off and landing slots at busy airports, if they face fuel shortages this summer. New contingency plans have been drawn up by the government to let carriers plan ahead, helping to avoid disruptive last-minute cancellations for passengers. The proposals would allow airlines to merge flights on routes with multiple trips to the same destination on the same day, meaning passengers could be moved from their original booking to a similar one to save fuel. Transport secretary Heidi Alexander said she was confident most people travelling this summer would have a similar experience to last year. Travel journalist Simon Calder told the BBC the aim was "prioritise holiday flights over business departures." Calder used the German airline Lufthansa as an example of how the new plans could work. Lufthansa currently runs 10 flights a day between London Heathrow



and Frankfurt, he said. "In the middle of summer there aren't many business travellers around, so therefore Lufthansa could say we're going to cancel two or three of these," and could move passengers on one of these services from an 08:30 departure to a 10:30 departure. "The idea is it would save fuel for people who are on flights from Manchester to the Greek island of Skiathos where there aren't daily departures," he said. Airlines say they are not currently experiencing fuel supply problems, but experts have warned that disruption to deliveries because of the Iran war

could bring shortages within weeks. The UK imports about 65% of the jet fuel it uses, a significant portion of which comes from the Middle East under normal circumstances. But the closure of the Strait of Hormuz means those supplies cannot get through. The International Energy Agency has warned that unless more fuel can be brought in from elsewhere, Europe as a whole will face shortages by June. Alexander said there was currently no disruption to the supply of jet fuel, but "this clearly is an evolving situation". She told the BBC's Sunday with Laura

Kuensberg programme: "On the basis of the information that I've got today, I am confident that the majority of people that are travelling this summer will have a similar experience to last year. There may be a need for airlines to trim their schedules slightly." She said the UK was importing more jet fuel from the US and the west coast of Africa, as well as asking four domestic refineries to maximise production. The government wants to allow airlines to save fuel by adjusting their schedules in advance, for example by cutting one or two flights a day on a route where they have many services to the same destination. Airlines are usually reluctant to do this because it would place at risk their right to retain their allotted take off and landing slots at airports like London's Heathrow and Gatwick. The most popular slots can be worth tens of millions of pounds, when traded between airlines. The allocated slots over a summer or winter normally roll over to the following year.

FY26 Direct Tax Collections Miss Revised Target, Show Modest Growth

AGENCY
Mumbai: India's direct tax collections for fiscal 2026 recorded a moderate year-on-year increase but missed the government's revised estimates, highlighting a mixed fiscal performance amid evolving economic conditions. According to provisional data, net direct tax collections grew 5.1% year-on-year to Rs 23.4 lakh crore in fiscal 2026. However, this fell short of the Revised Estimate (RE) of Rs 24.21 lakh crore by approximately Rs 81,000 crore, highlighting weaker-than-anticipated buoyancy in tax revenues. The revised estimate itself had been scaled down from the Budget target of Rs 25.20 lakh crore, underscoring that collections not only missed the original projection but also underperformed the downgraded target. Gross direct tax collections for the financial year rose 4% year-on-year to Rs 28.1 lakh crore, reflecting a gradual expansion in the tax base. A key factor supporting net



collections was a marginal decline in refunds, down about 1% year-on-year, which helped cushion the overall revenue outcome. Lower refund outgo typically boosts net collections, even when gross inflows grow at a slower pace. Corporation tax collections emerged as a relative bright spot during the year, indicating healthy profitability in the corporate sector. Strong earnings across key industries, along with improved compliance, supported steady inflows from companies. In contrast, non-corporate taxes, including personal

income tax, remained broadly stable, suggesting limited acceleration in income growth or tax buoyancy among individuals and smaller businesses. One of the standout contributors was the Securities Transaction Tax (STT), which witnessed a sharp jump during fiscal 2026. The rise reflects robust activity in equity markets, including higher trading volumes and sustained retail participation through the year. As the fiscal year 2026 nears its end, India's direct tax collections show moderate growth. Provisional data

indicates net direct tax receipts have reached ₹22.80 lakh crore as of March 17, a 7.2% rise from the previous year. Gross collections increased by 4.9% to ₹27.14 lakh crore. This steady rise, a sign of improving revenue collection near the fiscal year's end, is often called tax buoyancy. However, the current pace falls short of the Union Budget's more aggressive growth targets for FY26. The budget had anticipated sharper growth rates, specifically 9.7% for net corporate tax and 21.6% for non-corporate taxes. This gap indicates that revenue is growing, but perhaps not fast enough to meet the government's ambitious fiscal goals without additional administrative efforts. Meanwhile, the economy is projected to grow strongly, with Fitch Ratings forecasting 7.5% GDP growth for FY26, driven by robust domestic demand. This economic strength typically supports higher tax revenues, making the current collection pace a point of close observation.

BHEL Q4 net profit jumps two-fold to Rs 1,290 crore

AGENCY
New Delhi: State-owned BHEL on Monday posted a two-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 1,290.47 crore during the quarter ended March 31, supported by growth in revenues. It had reported a net profit of Rs 504.45 crore in the same period a year ago, the company said in an exchange filing. During the fourth quarter, its total income surged to Rs 12,553.50 crore from Rs 9,142.64 crore in the January-March period of preceding 2024-25 financial year. For the entire FY26, the company's net profit jumped to Rs 1,600.26 crore from Rs 533.90 crore in the year ago. The board of the company also approved a final dividend of Rs 1.40 per share of Rs 2 each for the fiscal ended March 31, 2026. BHEL is India's largest engineering and manufacturing enterprise in the energy and infrastructure sectors. State-owned BHEL on Monday posted a two-fold jump in consolidated net profit to ₹1,290.47 crore dur-



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Prudent Launches Edge+ AI-Powered Platform to Transform the Way Mutual Fund Distributors Grow Their Business

TSIT DESK
Ahmedabad, May 2026 - Prudent Corporate Advisory Services Limited, a leading fintech platform for mutual fund distributors (MFDs), today announced the launch of its AI-powered business management tool build to help partners plan smarter, service clients better, market faster and grow their business with precision. No software will ever know a client the way our mutual fund distributor does. That is the Emotional Quotient (EQ), and it stays with the partner. Edge+ is the Intelligence Quotient (IQ), the support system which will make every partner faster, sharper, and ready for what comes next. Edge+ is built around two outcomes that matter most to a partner: growing business and saving time.



ommendations. Partners can send a ready-made email communication and initiate transactions all from the same AI-powered screen.

2. Business Edge
Distributors can now spot and act on every growth opportunity sitting within their existing book. Age-wise and AUM-wise segmentation can help distributors pitch appropriate products to clients. Reach out to clients with large MF AUM but no broking account, no or low SIPs, ₹50 lakh+ stock portfolios yet to explore PMS, lapsed SIPs or a declining net sales trend. External AUM data adds a complete view for sharper, more informed

conversations. Ready-made client communications are built in, making it effortless to reach the right client with the right message at the right time.

3. Marketing Engine
Edge+ built-in marketing module enables distributors to run SIP and lumpsum campaigns, drive event-based outreach, and send bulk emails to existing and prospective client, all powered by the platform's AI engine. Reaching existing and prospective clients has never been this fast and efficient.

4. Research

Edge+ Research module puts every critical fund parameter at a distributor's fingertips. P/E, P/B, Beta, Sharpe Ratio, Jensen's Alpha, market cap distribution, sector exposure, rolling returns and more. No more switching between tools or hunting for data. Everything needed to evaluate and recommend a fund is in one place. Once decided, distributors can instantly share a FundzCard, a sleek client-ready fund summary, via email or WhatsApp. Research done. Client informed. In minutes.

5. Beyond Mutual Funds
A mutual fund distributor today is much more than that. Edge+ allows distributors to present themselves as multi-product distributors, offering health insurance, life insurance, broking, PMS/AIF, fixed deposits, bonds, loan against mutual funds and NPS, wherever they are qualified to do so. Across every module, distributors can share ready-made product PDFs curated by Prudent. The result is seamless cross-selling, stronger client relationships and a practice that grows well beyond mutual funds. Edge+ AI platform is now live in beta version and available to all our mutual fund distribution partners.

US says military and cargo ships transit Strait of Hormuz after Trump's vow to free stranded ships

AGENCY
Tehran: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has called the US claim about ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz "outright lies". Earlier, US Central Command said two US-flagged merchant vessels had "successfully transited through the Strait of Hormuz". Now, Iranian state media have shared a statement from the IRGC saying "no commercial vessels or oil tankers" have passed through the Strait of Hormuz in "recent hours". The IRGC says the US statements are "baseless and entirely false", and warns that any other movements against the instructions of the IRGC Navy "face serious risks". There's been a suspected strike on a South Korean cargo vessel anchored in the Strait of Hormuz, according to the country's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries. At about 12:40 BST (11:40 GMT), a "suspected strike" was reported on a cargo vessel



named HMM Namu in the Strait of Hormuz, the ministry says. The vessel was reportedly anchored in waters near the UAE. There are 24 crew members on board, including six South Koreans and 18 foreign nationals, according to the ministry. No casualties have been reported. The ministry says an explosion is believed

to have occurred on the port side of the engine room during the suspected strike. This comes after reports from the UAE that a tanker linked to Adnoc, its state-owned oil company, was hit in the Strait of Hormuz earlier today. Earlier, Iranian state media reported that the military had hit a US destroyer trying to enter the Strait of

Hormuz - something the US has denied. We've now had further comment from the Iranian military. It says the Iranian Army Navy "issued a warning and fired warning shots along the route of the hostile enemy destroyers". The Iranian military says US destroyers turned off their radars before approaching the strait, and were "detected

immediately" after reactivating them. The destroyers then received a radio warning from the Navy "regarding the dangers of violating the ceasefire", the Iranian military adds. Another "explicit warning" was sent to the destroyer, according to the Iranian military, saying that "any attempt to enter the Strait of Hormuz would be considered a violation of the ceasefire and would be met with a response from naval forces". It says warning shots were fired after the Americans "disregarded" the warning. We've been checking the ship tracking tool MarineTraffic after US Central Command (Centcom) said two US-flagged merchant vessels "successfully transited through the Strait of Hormuz". We haven't seen vessels matching this description on MarineTraffic but are continuing to monitor the site. As we mentioned earlier, MarineTraffic publishes

details about vessels including their locations using information broadcast by an onboard tracker called Automatic Identification System (AIS). But vessels can also turn off their location transmissions, meaning they wouldn't be visible on tracking platforms like MarineTraffic. It's also possible for vessels to falsify their positions, a process known as spoofing. Donald Trump says the US military will guide ships through the Strait of Hormuz - but Iran insists any ships wanting to cross the crucial shipping passage will need its permission. Here's what else to know: Centcom says plan is working: In an update, it says two US-flagged merchant ships have crossed the strait - Iran has yet to comment. Conflicting messages: Iran says it stopped a US destroyer from entering the strait. US Central Command (Centcom) denies this, saying none of its ships have been struck.

NEW ALLIANCES SHAKES UP NIGERIAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

AGENCY
Nigeria: Two of Nigeria's most prominent opposition figures have announced they have switched parties in a dramatic political realignment ahead of next year's presidential election. Peter Obi and Rabiu Kwankwaso, who finished third and fourth respectively in the 2023 presidential race, have both joined the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC), raising the prospect of a joint ticket to challenge President Bola Tinubu. They were previously in the African Democratic Congress (ADC), along with former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar, who came second in the last election. While this could be seen as a fragmentation of the opposition, supporters of Obi and Kwankwaso say it will give their alliance greater focus. Both men are former governors and command significant grassroots followings. Obi is hugely popular among young voters across the south, while Kwankwaso wields considerable influence in the north.

The move comes just nine months after Obi, Kwankwaso and Abubakar joined the ADC but that alliance quickly became mired in legal battles over party leadership - something Obi blamed on the government. "The same Nigerian state and its agents that created unnecessary crises and hostility within the Labour Party that forced me to leave now appear to be finding their way into the ADC," Obi said on Sunday. He was the Labour Party candidate in the 2023 election. Allies of President Tinubu have denied that they have been trying to sabotage opposition parties. Obi, 64, and Kwankwaso, 69, were formally received at the NDC's national headquarters in Abuja by the party's national leader, Senator Seriake Dickson, on Sunday. Speaking afterwards, both men called for national unity, greater opportunities for young people, and an end to the infighting that has plagued Nigeria's opposition.

Antisemitism 'allowed to come into the open' says Bondi victim's daughter



AGENCY
Tel Aviv: The daughter of a Bondi Beach attack victim has described how, since the shooting, she has received messages saying she too should have been killed. Sheina Gutnick was the first witness appearing before Australia's royal commission into antisemitism, set up in the wake of a shooting at a Hanukkah event in December in which 15 people were killed. Gunman Sajid Akram, 50, was shot dead by police at the scene and his son Naveed Akram - the other alleged attacker - was critically injured and later transferred from hospital to prison. The 24-year-old has been charged with 59 offences, including 15 counts of murder and one of committing a terrorist attack. "I saw people trying to excuse and justify the events as only anti-Zionist," Gutnick told a public hearing in Sydney on Monday as she listed the ways in which she was made to feel unsafe in her own country. Her father Reuven Morrison was killed while hurling objects at the gunman to stop them shooting. Gutnick also told the hearing she'd seen a huge

shift in antisemitism since October 2023. "I felt as though antisemitism was allowed to come into the open," she said. "All of a sudden it was socially, morally acceptable for antisemitic comments to be made in public discourse." Her father Reuven Morrison was "deeply proud" of being Australian, Gutnick said in her evidence. He had fled the USSR at the age of 14 and later met her mother on Bondi Beach. Now though, Gutnick said Bondi held "complicated" feelings for her, despite having beautiful childhood memories at the famous beach. Another person giving evidence, known only as AAL, described how he had moved to Australia from South Africa in the 1980s and loved it from the start. "I treated Australia as home from the day I stepped off the plane," said AAL, appearing to break down during his testimony. "I have to admit things have changed - I have to think very seriously whether this is the country for my grandchildren." The royal commission said that as of Monday morning, nearly 7,500 submissions had been made.

NIGERIA PLANS TO REPATRIATE NATIONALS WILLING TO LEAVE SOUTH AFRICA AFTER ATTACKS

AGENCY
Nigeria: is planning to repatriate its nationals in South Africa willing to return home voluntarily, amid growing fears that recent attacks on foreigners there could escalate. Foreign Minister Bianca Oduumegwu-Ojukwu said 130 applicants had already registered for the exercise, adding that the number was expected to rise. She expressed President Bola Tinubu's concern about the attacks in the southern African nation, and condemned the violence against foreign nationals and demonstrations characterised by "xenophobic rhetoric, hate speeches and incendiary anti-migrant statements". Nigeria has summoned South Africa's acting High Commissioner over the issue. Nigeria will



formally convey its "profound concern" at a meeting later on Monday over the incidents in South Africa, saying they could affect existing relations between the countries, according to a foreign ministry statement. The meeting will focus on recent marches held by anti-immigrant groups and "documented instances of mistreatment of Nigerian citizens and attacks on their businesses", it said.

Ukrainian drone hits upmarket Moscow high-rise ahead of Victory Day celebrations

AGENCY
Kyiv: A Ukrainian drone hit an upmarket residential high-rise in Moscow in the early hours of Monday, resulting in no casualties but causing visible damage to the facade of the building. It was the third night in a row that the Russian capital came under attack from drones, days before Russia holds a scaled-back 9 May parade to mark the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany. An unverified video circulating on social media showed firemen entering a heavily damaged flat covered in dust and rubble and with blown-out windows, while another showed drone debris strewn across the street below. Two other drones were intercepted, Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said. Vnukovo and Domodedovo international



airports suspended operations overnight. A total of 117 were intercepted over several Russian regions between Sunday and Monday, the Russian defence ministry said. Sixty alone were aimed at the region of St Petersburg in what the regional governor Aleksandr Drodzhenko said had been a "massive" attack. The residential building that was hit is located in an upscale neighbourhood in

south-west Moscow, less than 10km (six miles) from the Kremlin and Red Square, where Saturday's parade will be held. Ukrainian drones have attacked Moscow several times since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Drone alerts regularly shut down airports on the outskirts of the capital and disrupt aerial traffic, but much of the capital is protected by the Pantsir-S surface-to-air missile system and successful strikes so close to the centre are relatively rare. Betraying a sense of nervousness ahead of the 9 May celebrations, the Kremlin last week announced that due to a "terrorist threat" from Ukraine it would scale back the yearly grand military parade on Red Square. For the first time since 2008, no armoured vehicles or missile systems will feature. Several local phone operators announced that mobile internet will be restricted in Moscow for much of the week ahead for "security reasons", Russian media reported on Monday. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that the Kremlin was afraid that "drones will fly over Red Square."

THREE DEAD IN SUSPECTED VIRUS OUTBREAK ON ATLANTIC CRUISE SHIP

AGENCY
London: Three people have died and a UK national is seriously ill in hospital after a suspected hantavirus outbreak on a small cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean. The operator of the MV Hondius ship, tour company Oceanwide Expeditions, said a Dutch husband and wife, as well as a German national, have died but the cause has not yet been established. However, the Dutch company said hantavirus has been confirmed in the case of the 69-year-old UK national who is in intensive care in Johannesburg, South Africa. Hantavirus is usually passed to humans from



rodents via their faeces, saliva or urine. It can cause severe respiratory illness. Rarely, it can be transmitted between people. Oceanwide Expeditions said there were two crew members on board "with acute respiratory symptoms, one mild and one

severe". They both require urgent medical care and are of British and Dutch nationality, it said, before adding that no other persons with symptoms had been identified at this time. The World Health Organization (WHO) said it was "acting with urgency" to support the MV

Hondius and thanked South African authorities for taking care of the British patient. WHO's regional director for Europe, Dr Hans Henri P Kluge, said: "I am in close contact with our teams to ensure a co-ordinated, science-based response." Hantavirus infections are uncommon and usually linked to exposure to infected rodents. "While severe in some cases, it is not easily transmitted between people. The risk to the wider public remains low. There is no need for panic or travel restrictions." The MV Hondius vessel is currently off the coast of Cape Verde and has 149 people onboard.

RUDY GIULIANI IN CRITICAL CONDITION IN HOSPITAL



AGENCY
Washington: Rudy Giuliani, the former New York City Mayor and a long-time champion of President Donald Trump, is in a "stable but critical condition" in hospital, his spokesman has said. "Mayor Giuliani is a fighter who has faced every challenge in his life with unwavering strength, and he's fighting with that same level of strength as we speak," Ted Goodman said in a social media post. Shortly afterwards, Trump described Giuliani as "the Best Mayor in the History of New York City, BY FAR" on Truth Social and praised his efforts in contesting the 2020 election, won by Democrat Joe Biden. No further details on his illness have been released. Giuliani, who is 81, was injured in a car accident late last year. Goodman added at the end of his post: "We do ask that you join us in prayer for America's Mayor Rudy Giuliani." Giuliani earned that nickname after leading New York City through the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. In recognition of his leadership, he was awarded an honorary knighthood (KBE) by Queen Elizabeth in 2002.

His second term in office ended at the end of 2001 and he later made an unsuccessful presidential run for the Republican Party. He was key backer of his fellow New Yorker's 2016 White House run, most publicly at the Republican National Convention. He later became Trump's personal lawyer. After the 2020 presidential election, Giuliani and other advisers travelled across the country making false claims about the results, accusing Trump's opponent Biden of attempting to steal the election. Later, a jury forced him to pay two election workers whom he had accused of ballot fraud \$148m (£108m) for defamation. In his social media post expressing concern for Giuliani's health, Trump repeated his false claims about Democrats stealing the 2020 election. "They cheated on the Elections, fabricated hundreds of stories, did anything possible to destroy our Nation, and now, look at Rudy. So sad!" he said. Last September, Giuliani was a passenger in a Ford Bronco when it was struck from behind in the US state of New Hampshire.

EUROPEAN LEADERS CONVERGE ON ARMENIA AS RUSSIA LOOKS ON

AGENCY
Moscow: European leaders are descending on Armenia for two unprecedented summits in a country long considered Russia's closest ally in the South Caucasus. The symbolism for this country of fewer than three million people is hard to overstate; Armenia is a member of Russian President Vladimir Putin's Eurasian Economic Union, and Moscow hosts a military base on Armenian soil. On Monday, more than 30 European leaders and Canada's prime minister will take part in a European Political Community (EPC) summit in the capital Yerevan. Tuesday will then see the first ever bilateral EU-Armenia summit, attended



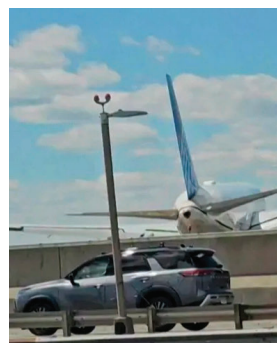
by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Antonio Costa. Armenia is heavily dependent on Russia for energy resources. It buys Russian gas at a preferen-

tial rate - which Putin made a point of spelling out when Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan visited Moscow on 1 April. Russia sells gas to Armenia for \$177.50 (£130.30) per 1,000 cubic metres, he noted, while in

Europe it costs \$600 (£440.40). "The difference is large, it is significant," the Russian president said. How did a country this embedded in Russia's orbit end up hosting most of Europe's leaders? The turning point was Armenia's 2023 war with its neighbour Azerbaijan. When Azerbaijan launched a lightning military operation to complete its takeover of Nagorno-Karabakh - expelling more than 100,000 ethnic Armenians - Russia, which had peacekeepers on the ground, stood aside. Earlier Azerbaijani incursions into Armenian territory had also gone unanswered by the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

ONE INJURED AFTER PLANE HITS TRUCK WHILE LANDING IN NEWARK

AGENCY
UAE: A truck driver has suffered minor injuries after a United Airlines plane clipped his vehicle and a streetlight as it approached Newark Liberty International Airport in New Jersey on Sunday. The Boeing 767, operating a flight from Venice, Italy, managed to land safely, with no reported injuries among the 231 passengers and crew on board. One of the plane's tyres appears to have gone through one of the truck's windows and windscreen, the driver's employers told CBS News, the BBC's US news partner. In dash camera footage from the truck, the sound of a low-flying plane can be heard, and it shows the impact which sent glass flying every-



where. The driver was treated for injuries from glass in his arm and hand. The truck was travelling on a road near one of the airport's runways when it was struck. United Airlines said in a statement it would "conduct a rigorous flight safety investigation into the incident and our crew has been removed from service as part of this process".



IPL 206: LSG SETS A TARGET OF 228/5 FOR MI



Rishabh Pant Mentions Sanjiv Goenka At Toss Ahead Of Mumbai Indians Clash, Makes Big Promise Amid Poor Run

AGENCY

Mumbai: Lucknow Super Giants skipper Rishabh Pant mentioned owner Sanjiv Goenka at toss ahead of the IPL 2026 encounter against Mumbai Indians on Monday. It has been a tough campaign for LSG till now as they have won just 2 out of their 8 matches and face an uphill battle when it comes to qualifying to the playoffs. The Pant-led side need to win all of their remaining matches and depend on other results to make sure that they finish in the Top 4. Pant was asked about their form during toss and he said that Sanjiv Goenka is extremely passionate about the game as well as the team before adding that the team wants to improve



their form in order to deliver consistent results for the fans as well as their owner. "We would have done the same. In Wankhede it's a good wicket to bat on and you can chase any target. (How does a week off help? Did it help to kind of get together?) It definitely

[did], a lot of reflection, what we can do and what we can do as a team and as an individual. One thing we always found out, it's been a tough season for us and there is no running away from that, but one person for us has the most difficult time was our

owner Mr. Goenka, he's one of that guy. Everyone knows how passionate he is about cricket and about his team. But at the same time we let down our fans down. The only promise is from this break is, we're gonna give our 200%, try to bring that happiness back and hopefully we can do it for our owner and the fans for sure." "(Having a good record against MI) Records help but at the same time when you're clearing your mindset, when you're free, when you're raring to go everything comes together. (Changes for you?) We have three changes. Josh Inglis comes in and Mukul goes out and Raghuvanshi is making his debut and bowling will decide later," Pant said at the toss.

Hardik Pandya Not Part Of Mumbai Indians Playing XI vs Lucknow Super Giants Amid Poor Form

AGENCY

Mumbai: Hardik Pandya was not part of the Mumbai Indians playing XI for the IPL 2026 encounter against Lucknow Super Giants at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Monday. Hardik has not been enjoying a good run of form in the ongoing competition with just 146 runs with the bat and 4 wickets with the ball. In his absence, Suryakumar Yadav took over the captaincy duties and when asked about Hardik, he said that the all-rounder was not well. "We will look to bowl first. Looks good, little humid also tonight, second innings we saw it became better. He (Hardik) is not well tonight, so going into his shoes. Corbin comes in for Boult, Rohit is back. You can run away from the fact, MI is not known for this position, put your hands up and play your best game. Can't say it will make us dangerous, we have five games left and try



to win them," Suryakumar said at the toss.

Mumbai Indians won the toss and opted to bowl against Lucknow Super Giants in an Indian Premier League (IPL) match. Suryakumar Yadav is leading MI in place of regular skipper Hardik Pandya, who is unwell

while Rohit Sharma is back as an impact player. Corbin Bosch has come in place of Trent Boult. For LSG, Josh Inglis comes in. Akshat Raghuvanshi has replaced Mukul Choudhary. "We would have done the same. It is a good wicket to bat on, and you can chase any target. A lot of reflection.

FIRST TIME IN 8 YEARS - NORTH KOREAN FOOTBALL TEAM TO PLAY MATCH IN SOUTH

AGENCY

Pyeongyang: A North Korean women's soccer team is scheduled to play at a regional tournament in South Korea later this month, in a rare sports exchange between the war-torn rivals. The South's Unification Ministry, which handles inter-Korean affairs, said Monday that the Pyongyang-based Naegohyang Women's FC is expected to face Suwon FC Women on May 20 in the semifinals of the Asian Football Confederation Women's Champions League in Suwon, south of Seoul. The AFC notified South Korea's soccer body that the team's participation in Suwon had been confirmed, the ministry said in a statement. However,



North Korea's state media has not reported on the soccer club's expected trip. North Korea last sent athletes to South Korea in December 2018 for a table tennis event, continuing a period of diplomatic engagement highlighted by the participation of North

Korean athletes alongside a high-level delegation at the Winter Olympics in the South earlier that year. North Korea also sent its national women's soccer team to the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon, which was the last time its female soccer players competed in

the South. Since 2019, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has suspended meaningful diplomacy with Washington and Seoul and has pushed a domestic campaign to eliminate the influence of South Korean culture and language among his population.

KKR Star Sends Special Message As Vijay And TVK Sweep Tamil Nadu Election

AGENCY

Mumbai: Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Varun Chakravarty took to social media to send a special message as Vijay and his political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), made a stunning debut in the Tamil Nadu elections. TVK looks all set to win more than 100 seats in the assembly election, and it is highly likely that Vijay will become the next Chief Minister of the state. Varun posted an old picture of himself with Vijay on his Instagram story along with the caption, "Anna". The Indian cricket team spinner earlier revealed that he was a fan of Vijay and legendary actor Rajinikanth. Earlier, Chakravarty, after being named Player of the Match in his side's Indian Premier League (IPL) clash against



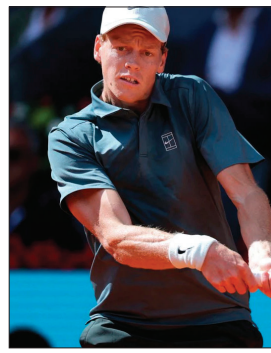
the Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), reflected on how IPL conditions evolve, noting that early-season pitches tend to be flat, making life difficult for spinners. He felt this was a common challenge for all spin bowlers, but conditions generally become more favourable as the tournament progresses. Commenting on the opposition, he mentioned how

Travis Head was batting aggressively and extending his reach well, and said his focus was on disrupting that rhythm. He also expressed confidence in his team's growing cohesion, stating that both the bowling and batting groups are coming together well, and if they maintain this momentum, they can make a strong impact in the tournament.

Players Keep Up Battle With Tennis Majors As They Decry Roland Garros Prize Money

AGENCY

Mumbai: Top players including world number ones Jannik Sinner and Aryna Sabalenka kept up the pressure on the Grand Slam tournaments with a letter to Roland Garros on Monday expressing "deep disappointment" over the French major's 2026 prize money. Last year almost all the leading players signed two letters to the four Grand Slam bosses demanding an increase in prize money, payments into a player welfare fund to improve retirement and maternity benefits, as well as involvement in decisions that affected them. The letters set a target of a 22-percent share in tournament revenue, which would bring the majors in line with the nine combined 1000-level



events run by the ATP men's tour and the women's WTA tour. On Monday, players said in a statement that an announcement by Roland Garros on April 16 of a 9.5 percent prize money rise was not good enough. It said that the French

Open generated 395 million euros (\$463 mn), a 14-percent increase. However the total purse went up by just 5.4 percent, reducing player share of revenue to 14.3 percent. It estimated that this year's revenues would pass 400mn euros, leaving the player cut still below 15 percent. The letter also complained that Roland Garros was ignoring the other issues raised by players. "The announcement does nothing to address the structural issues that players have consistently and reasonably raised over the past year," it said.

Rohit Sharma Accidentally Hits Ground Staff In Nets, What Followed Next Was Magical



AGENCY

Mumbai: Working hard to make a comeback for the Mumbai Indians, especially as the team's play-off qualification hopes hang by a thread, Rohit Sharma was spotted putting in the hard yards in the nets on Sunday. Rohit, who has been out of action due to an injury, accidentally hit a member of the ground staff. Despite being told to continue batting and not worry about the injured person, Rohit dropped everything and ran to his aid. The ground staff member, Siban Biswas, spoke to Mid-Day about the incident, explaining how he was hit by Rohit. "When Rohit Sharma sir told us to remove the off-side net, we did so and stood at the side. Just then, while I was wrapping the rope and not paying attention to the players nearby, the ball hit

me on my left knee. Rohit sir immediately came and inquired about the injury, but I told him to continue batting and not to bother. Yet, he returned with an ice pack and also sent someone to give me some medicine and a spray to put on my leg." Biswas, 27, said. Despite being in pain, Biswas said that he was delighted to get a handshake from Rohit, who was apologetic for what happened. "It was mixed feelings... though my knee was in pain, it also feels good because I got a handshake with Rohit sir," added Biswas. Mumbai Indians' Campaign in Tatters Despite a star-studded lineup and a successful history with five IPL titles, Mumbai have experienced fluctuating performances over the past three seasons.

Teen Kimi Antonelli Wins Again In Miami To Extend Title Race Lead

Teenager Kimi Antonelli extended his lead in the drivers' world championship with a historic victory for Mercedes ahead of McLaren world champion Lando Norris in Sunday's dramatic Miami Grand Prix. The 19-year-old Italian became the first F1 driver to claim his first three wins in a row from his first three pole positions, after triumphs in China and Japan had hoisted him to the top of the title race. Driving with determination and élan, Antonelli struggled for ascen-

dancy in the first part of the race before enjoying an undercut pit stop to win his duel with Norris in the closing stages. In the first race following a five-week hiatus due to the conflict in the Middle East, Antonelli came home 3.264 seconds clear of Norris. Norris's McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri finished third, 23.828 seconds adrift. Mercedes driver George Russell, who began the season as championship favorite and won the opening race in Melbourne, finished fourth

ahead of Red Bull's fiery and rejuvenated four-time champion Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who spun on the penultimate lap. Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton was seventh in the second Ferrari ahead of Franco Colapinto of Alpine and the two Williams drivers, Carlos Sainz and Alex Albon. Mercedes had dominated the opening three Grands Prix and arrived in Miami as the only top team without an upgrades package. But despite losing to Norris in



Saturday's sprint race, they showed they remain on top. "What a race, man, woo!" exclaimed Antonelli on team radio after winning. "Oh my God!" He later said: "The team did a great strategy and we had a massive undercut - and I was able to bring it home. It was a tough race.

Team Megastar Chiranjeevi, Vassishta, UV Creations' Vishwambhara Extends Birthday Wishes To Trisha Krishnan With A Charming Poster

Megastar Chiranjeevi's much-awaited socio-fantasy epic *Vishwambhara*, directed by Vassishta and produced on a grand scale by Vikram, Vamsi, and Pramod under UV Creations, is inching closer to release with post-production in its final stages. The special glimpse unveiled on Chiranjeevi's birthday received an overwhelming response, further boosting expectations. Marking the birthday of Trisha Krishnan, who plays the female lead, Avani—the makers unveiled a charming new poster. The image shows Trisha radiating warmth as she holds a plate of glowing lamps, dressed in a softly embroidered light-colored ethnic outfit. The backdrop, filled with gentle golden hues, adds a serene and festive aura to the poster. Director Vassishta is crafting *Vishwambhara* as a grand cinematic realm blending scale, visual richness, and mass appeal. Chiranjeevi, sporting a striking new makeover, will be seen in a larger-than-life role. The film also features Ashika

Ranganath and Kunal Kapoor in important roles, with Mouni Roy appearing in a special song. A team of seasoned technicians is shaping the film across multiple departments. Cinematography is by Chota K Naidu, while AS Prakash is designing the immersive world of *Vishwambhara*. The background score is composed by Oscar winner MM Keeravani, and the energetic dance number is scored by Bheems Ceciroleo. Leading Hollywood studios are handling the extensive VFX work. *Vishwambhara* is gearing up for a grand

theatrical release in Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, and Hindi.



"Endhaya Saami" from Ranabaali, starring Vijay Deverakonda and Rashmika Mandanna, is trending with over 100,000 reels on social media



Ranabaali is a grand pan-India film directed by Rahul Sankrityan. The movie is being produced on a huge budget by Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar under the banner of Mythri Movie Makers, and presented by T-Series. Recently, the song "Endhaya Saami" released from the film has been receiving a great response. It is currently trending across social media with over a lakh

reels. This beautiful song is filmed during the wedding sequence of Vijay and Rashmika's characters in the movie. It showcases the rich traditions and festive atmosphere of 19th-century weddings in an elegant way. Ranabaali is set to release worldwide on September 11. The film is based on real historical events that took place between 1854 and 1878 during British rule, set against a 19th-century backdrop.

'Godari Gattupaina' is a film that provides a good theatrical experience with a universal emotion that connects to everyone. The audience will definitely enjoy it: Producer Abhinav

Young hero Sumanth Prabhav is going to entertain with the rural love and family drama 'Godari Gattupaina'. Directed by Subhash Chandra, it is produced by Red Puppet Productions. Nidhi Pradeep will be seen as the heroine in this film, while Jagapathi Babu will be seen in a key role. The teaser and trailer songs have received a wonderful response. The film will be released worldwide on May 8. On this occasion, producer Abhinav shared the features of the film in a press conference.



What about your background?

-I have been in different businesses for 10 years. I have a passion for cinema. While looking for a good script, I really liked the story told by Subhash garu. I wanted to make a story with emotions that would connect with everyone universally. Such a story has been achieved with this film.

How was the journey of making your first film?

Very good. It's tough. It's good to be tough in any industry. I feel like doing something tough.

Whose title choice is it?

We thought of two or three titles. But this title seemed very close to Nativity. I suggested it. The director also liked it. Also, since it was a title that would connect universally to everyone, we finalized the name 'Godari Gattupaina'.

What is the reason for choosing Sumanth Prabhav, who speaks Telangana fluently, for this film?

An actor wants to do a challenging role. It is easy for him to do it in Telangana. But for this role, he learned the Godari accent perfectly and took it as a challenge. An actor is satisfied only when he takes it tough. He did a wonderful job in this film. Everyone will appreciate this film equally.

About Director Subhash?

I listened to about ten stories before making this film. I really liked the story told by

Subhash. I also like him as a director. He works with a lot of dedication. He has no other focus than the film. Subhash is technically very strong. I need everything on paper. He showed me everything related to the shooting on paper, including the frame. He planned everything in detail. The entire shooting of the film was done according to a precise plan.

What about Sunil Narang?

-Sunil garu is my well-wisher and guide. He supports me in every way. The reason why I got the opportunity to work with experienced actors like Jagapathi Babu garu, Laila garu, Rajiv Kanakala garu in my first film is because of Sunil garu's encouragement.

-The film is being released by Tirupati Prasad in Seeded, by Sunil and I in Nizam, and by Suresh Babu in Andhra. We are planning a premiere on the evening of the 7th. The film has come out with very good quality. We are giving the best product to the audience.

Kiara Breaks Silence on 'Toxic Bold Scene Cut' Rumours



Recent speculation surrounding Kiara Advani and her upcoming film *Toxic* has been firmly addressed by the actor herself. Reports had claimed that she requested the makers to modify a few bold scenes featuring her alongside Yash in the stylish action drama *Toxic*. The rumours quickly gained traction online, sparking widespread discussion among fans and media alike. However, Kiara Advani took to Instagram to dismiss these claims, calling them completely baseless. Her clarification puts an end to the growing assumptions and highlights how quickly unverified information can spread across platforms. The buzz around *Toxic* intensi-

fied after its teaser release, which showcased visually striking moments and hinted at a glamorous portrayal of Kiara's character. This led to further speculation that the film contains several bold sequences and that the actress features prominently in them. Despite the chatter, no official confirmation has supported these claims. At present, *Toxic* remains one of the most talked-about upcoming projects, though its release has been delayed. The makers are yet to announce a new release date, adding to the curiosity surrounding the film. Kiara's response serves as a reminder to approach entertainment news cautiously, as not every circulating report reflects reality.

Grand Pre-Release Event Held for Jo Sharma – Mohan Vadlapatla's Film 'M4M'

The suspense thriller *M4M* (Motive For Murder), starring American actress Jo Sharma in the lead role and directed by Mohan Vadlapatla, is all set for a worldwide release on May 8. The film will be released through PVR Inox Pictures in multiple languages including Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam.

A grand pre-release event was at Prasad Labs in Hyderabad to mark the occasion. The event was graced by prominent guests including V. N. Aditya, President of the Telugu Film Directors Association (TFDA), and senior director V. Samudra, who extended their best wishes to the film team. The celebration also coincided with Director's Day, observed nationwide on the birth anniversary of Dasari Narayana Rao, adding special significance to the event. Speaking at the event, V. N. Aditya praised Mohan



Vadlapatla and his team for showcasing remarkable talent on screen and expressed confidence in Jo Sharma's bright future. Director and TFDA Vice President V. Samudra wished for the film's grand success upon its release and

hoped that Mohan Vadlapatla would achieve greater heights as a filmmaker. Opportunities are being denied. We will soon go on hunger strikes and intensify our protests against this mafia." He emphasized that small films provide employment to thousands but are being systematically sidelined.

ed the team for bringing the film to a pan-India level. Actor Gharshana Srinivas mentioned that the film was crafted by coordinating all 24 departments of filmmaking and highlighted the team's dedication. He added that the storyline is highly engaging.

Lead actress Jo Sharma expressed gratitude to director Mohan Vadlapatla for the opportunity. She shared that she worked very hard for the film after coming from the United States and revealed that the movie has already won over 50 international awards across 25 countries. She appealed to audiences to support the film.

Director-producer Mohan Vadlapatla announced a cash prize of ₹1 lakh for anyone who correctly identifies the serial killer in the film. He described *M4M* as a universal subject and stated that the climax would leave audiences surprised, promising a new cinematic experience.

"Those Four People Crushed 'O Andala Rakshasi' – No Theatres Even for Re-release"

Actor-producer Sheraz Mehdi has expressed serious concern over the alleged suppression of small films in the Telugu film industry. Speaking at a press meet held at the Telugu Film Chamber, he stated that even the re-release of his film *O Andala Rakshasi* was denied theatre allocation. "They are killing good films. Small films are being crushed by four powerful individuals. Not even a single theatre was given in the Nizam area. This is happening systematically," said Sheraz Mehdi. He added that he has initiated a legal fight and issued notices to industry and the Chief Minister. He described the situation of small films as alarming. "Such a situation doesn't exist anywhere in the world. Even in Bollywood, things are not this bad," he remarked. He also pointed out that censor board regulations and charges like

ADCC are becoming a heavy burden for small producers.

"Small films provide livelihood to thousands"

Producer and actor Lion Sai Venkat said, "The attitude of industry ??? has become a curse for small filmmakers. Opportunities are being denied. We will soon go on hunger strikes and intensify our protests against this mafia." He emphasized that small films provide employment to thousands but are being systematically sidelined.

"Media support is crucial"

Actress Madhu said, "I came from Delhi and am getting opportunities in Tollywood. But small films need strong media support. Only if small films survive can actors like us get opportunities."



Raj Tarun's "Tortoise" Wraps Up Shooting; Post-Production Underway



The upcoming film "Tortoise," featuring Raj Tarun and Amritha Chowdary in the lead roles, has officially completed its filming phase. Directed by Rithvik Kumar, the movie is being jointly produced by Vijay Chowdhary, Sashidhar Nalla, Ramisetty Rambabu, and Madhupala Suresh under the banners of SK Golden Arts, Prashvitha Entertainment, NVL Creations, and Madhupala Maha Movies.

A Landmark Film with a Gripping Concept
The film marks a significant milestone as Raj Tarun's 25th film. The makers are confident that this will be a standout performance in his

career. The plot revolves around a unique and chilling premise: the protagonist suffers from sonnambulism (sleep-walking), and during one of these episodes, he unintentionally kills a girl. The story follows the gripping consequences and the mystery that unfolds afterward.

Key Highlights
The film is described as a high-concept thriller with a fresh screenplay. The music is composed by the renowned Anoop Rubens. Alongside the leads, Srinivas Avasarala and Dhanya Balakrishna play pivotal, well-defined roles. Currently, the shooting is 100% complete, and the team is busy with post-production to ensure a speedy release.