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

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

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**RAM CHARAN'S PEDDI MANIA** begins, team drops nationwide first-of-its-kind promotional campaign - Peddi powerplay tour

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SCAN FOR E-PAPER

**OM NAMO VENKATESAYA**

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

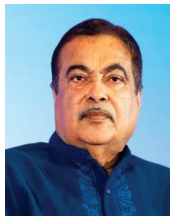
Approx. Darshan Time for Sarvadarshanam (with out SSD Tokens): 15 H

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

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

Gadkari chooses bus over convoy, pushes fuel conservation drive

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



Lucknow (TSIT)

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

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

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

## Andhra Pradesh sets Rs 1.27 lac cr own revenue target

Amaravati (TSIT):

The government of Andhra Pradesh has set a target of Rs.1.27 lakh crore revenue during the current financial year. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday directed all revenue-earning departments to intensify efforts to increase the state's own revenues while aggressively pursuing pending central funds.

Reviewing the performance of key revenue departments at the Secretariat in Amaravati, the Chief Minister said Andhra Pradesh must convert growing investments into higher tax revenues and sustainable economic growth.

Officials informed the Chief Minister that the State Own Revenue rose from Rs.1,04,345 crore in 2024-25 to Rs.1,10,643 crore in 2025-26, registering 6 per cent growth. Major contributions included Rs.33,679 crore from Goods and Services Tax, Rs.10,300 crore from the Mines Department, and Rs.11,047 crore from the Stamps and Registration Department. For 2026-27, the state has set an ambitious revenue target of Rs.1,27,506 crore. According to an official release, the Chief Minister stressed that every



revenue-earning department, including Commercial Taxes, Excise, Mines, Transport, and Registration, must operate at full capacity and prevent any revenue leakage. He noted that resolving land disputes, particularly issues related to Section 22A properties, could significantly increase registration revenues.

"As investments increase, tax revenues must rise proportionately," he said, adding that the state had already recorded nearly 38 per cent revenue growth in the first 42 days of the current financial year.

Calling districts "growth centres", the Chief Minister said economic expansion at the district level would help Andhra

Pradesh achieve statewide revenue targets faster.

He urged departments to adopt innovative systems, improve the Speed of Doing Business, and use technology to eliminate tax evasion and irregularities. Emphasising the role of Artificial Intelligence, the Chief Minister directed departments to implement Artificial Intelligence-driven Goods and Services Tax scrutiny systems, strengthen analytics, and use technology to identify leakages and improve compliance without harassing taxpayers.

He also asked officials to create awareness among taxpayers about the benefits of tax payments and ensure transparency in collections.

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

Jaipur (TSIT)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

NEW DELHI (TSIT):

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

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



Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

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

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

Hyderabad TSIT:

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

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



across districts beyond Hyderabad.

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

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

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

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

Beijing (TSIT)

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



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

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

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

## Mamata appears in lawyer's robe at Calcutta HC over Bengal post-poll violence case

Kolkata (TSIT)

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday appeared before the Calcutta High Court wearing a black lawyer's gown in connection with a case relating to alleged post-poll violence in the state following the Assembly elections.

The petition was filed by Shirshanya Bandopadhyay, son of

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

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



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

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

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

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

Lucknow (TSIT)

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

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

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



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

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

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

Other severely affected districts included Bhadohi, where 10 people

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Congress general secretary in-charge of Kerala, Deepa Dasmuni, on Thursday said she would speak to senior party leader Ramesh Chennithala, who has reportedly remained silent since the announcement of the UDF's chief ministerial face, and asserted that all leaders would stand united. Dasmuni, speaking to reporters in Kerala after arriving in the state in the evening, said reports claiming differences in the number of MLAs supporting each leader—V D Satheesan, Chennithala, and K C Venugopal—were untrue. "It was all untrue. Actually, all of them had authorised the high command to make a decision. So whatever decision they took, the party will stand by it," she said. Dasmuni also said that she and party observers Ajay Maken and Mukul Wasnik, who are also in Kerala, would be meeting all stake-

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

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



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

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

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

**NEW DELHI:** In the long-pending Bhalswa dairy relocation case, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has drafted fresh terms for allotting 333 vacant plots at Ghoga dairy colony to shift nearly 3,600 cattle, officials said on Thursday. The proposed terms and conditions expected to be placed before the Delhi High Court during Friday's hearing, include stricter eligibility norms, annual licence fees and mandatory surrender of existing plots at Bhalswa after relocation. According to official documents, the allotment committee in meetings held on April 28 and May 7 proposed that dairy operators found with fewer than five adult cattle during the May 2024 survey would not be eligible for allotment at Ghoga.



"There are 333 vacant plots of 60 square metres each in F, G and H blocks at Ghoga, besides another 333 plots of 96 square metres in A, C and E blocks. The proposed norm provides around 12 square metres per cattle in a 60-square metre plot," a source said. Under the draft proposal, original allottees from the 1975-76 dairy allotment scheme would

pay an annual licence fee of Rs 1,758 for a 60-square metre plot and Rs 2,813 for a 96-square metre plot. Dairy operators regularised under the 2000 MCD circular would pay Rs 3,516 and Rs 5,626 respectively. "For operators found running dairies during the May 2024 survey but who are neither original allottees nor regular-

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

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

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



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

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

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

## RJD wrests Bihar legislative council seat from NDA

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

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

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



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

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

## Police arrest female teacher in Janakpuri POCSO case

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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# ANDHRA TO EXAMINE FEASIBILITY OF 2 DAYS OF WFH FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES



Amaravati, May 14: The Andhra Pradesh government will examine the feasibility of implementing work-from-home for two days a week in government offices as part of austerity measures in view of the ongoing conflict in West Asia.

Chairing the State Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu asked officials to examine the feasibility of work-from-home for two days a week in certain wings of government departments.

The Chief Minister gave

specific directives regarding these austerity measures in the backdrop of the prevailing situation in West Asia and in response to PM Modi's call.

Under the 'My country, my responsibility' initiative, public representatives and officials will voluntarily reduce the number of vehicles in their convoys, conduct meetings virtually, and observe a "No Vehicle Friday" every week, Minister for Information and Public Relations Kolusu Parthasarathy said while briefing the media about

the decisions taken by the Cabinet.

The Chief Minister appealed to people to participate in the initiative and voluntarily adopt austerity measures.

The Cabinet meeting felt that, in light of the prevailing geopolitical tensions, reducing fuel consumption, conserving foreign exchange reserves, facilitating the export of agricultural produce grown by farmers, and minimising imports such as oil, gas, and urea would prove beneficial. It was noted that the ongoing conflict could potentially impact the export of commodities such as bananas, food grains, and various agricultural and horticultural crops. Consequently, public representatives and officials were called upon to set an example for the public in adopting austerity measures by strictly adhering to these practices themselves.

# Rs.1.57 Crore Sanctioned for Water Works in Nagalapuram

Tirupati (TSIT)The government has sanctioned Rs.1.57 crore for 68 water conservation works under the Jaladhara-Jalaharati programme in Nagalapuram Mandal to improve irrigation and groundwater levels. The works include restoration of feeder canals, field canals, village tanks, check dams, recharge structures, and water ponds, benefiting 3,612 acres across several panchayats.

Special desilting works are also being taken up in Rajulakandrig Gram Panchayat under MGNREGA, where workers are restoring canals to improve water flow into tanks and support agriculture. Officials said the programme would help increase groundwater levels, provide irrigation benefits, create rural employment, and reduce water scarcity in villages.



# AP PGECET-2026 Results Released 93.29% PASS PERCENTAGE RECORDED



The South India Times, Visakhapatnam: The results of AP PGECET-2026 entrance examination conducted for admissions into M.Tech and M.Pharmacy courses across the state were released on Thursday by state education minister Nara Lokesh. Announcing the results through Twitter, the minister congratulated the students who qualified in the examination. He stated that the results can also be accessed through the Higher Education Council website as well as through WhatsApp number 9552300009.

Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof. G.P. Rajasekhara released the detailed results at his office. He stated that a total of 12,012 candidates had applied for the entrance examination, out of which 9,990 candidates appeared for the test. Among them, 9,320 candidates qualified, registering a pass percentage of 93.29 percent. AP PGECET Convener Prof. P. Mallikarjuna Rao said that the examinations in 13 subjects were successfully conducted from April 28 to 30. The Vice-Chancellor congratulated the officials for conducting the examinations peacefully and efficiently. Registrar Prof. K. Rambabu participated in

# Special Trains Introduced to Clear Summer Rush

The South India Times, Visakhapatnam : In view of the heavy passenger rush during the summer season, Indian Railways has announced special train services between Visakhapatnam and SMVT Bengaluru. According to railway officials, Train No. 08581 Visakhapatnam - SMVT Bengaluru Weekly Special Express will depart from Visakhapatnam at 3:20 PM every Friday from May 23 to June 26, 2026, and will reach Bengaluru at 1:50 PM the following day. In the return direction, Train No. 08582 SMVT Bengaluru Visakhapatnam Weekly Special Express will leave SMVT Bengaluru at 3:50 PM every Saturday from May 23 to June 27, 2026, and arrive in Visakhapatnam at 1:30 PM the next day. A total of six trips will be operated under this special service. The trains will halt at Duvvada, Anakapalle, Elamanchili, Samalkot, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Vijayawada, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, Renigunta and Jolarpettai stations.

Railways has also decided to operate a one-way special train between Kacheguda and Visakhapatnam to ease additional passenger congestion. Train No. 07810 will depart from Kacheguda at 8:45 PM on Friday, May 15, 2026, and reach Visakhapatnam at 9:30 AM the following day. The train will stop at Malkajgiri, Charlapalli, Kazipet, Warangal, Rayanapadu, Eluru, Rajahmundry and Samalkot stations. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager K. Pawan Kumar appealed to passengers to make use of these special train services.



**SRG HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED**  
 Corporate Office: Unit No. 2401, 24th Floor, Altimus, Dr. G. M. Bhosale Marg, Worli, Mumbai - 400 018 (Maharashtra)  
 Registered Office: 201 and 202, 2nd Floor, APB1, Koregaon Park Annex, Mundhwa, Pune - 411 036 (Maharashtra)

**SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE RULE 8(1) (For Immovable Property)**

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorized officer of SRG Housing Finance Limited, 321, SM Lodha Complex, Near Shastrji Circle, Udaipur - 313001 (Rajasthan), under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notices on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrowers/borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors, to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the demand notices. The borrowers/borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby issued to the borrowers/co-borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors and the public in general, that the undersigned has taken Symbolic Possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act, read with rule 9 of the said rules, on the dates mentioned against each account. The borrowers/co-borrowers/mortgagors/guarantors in particular and public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of SRG Housing Finance Limited, 321, SM Lodha Complex, Near Shastrji Circle, Udaipur - 313001 (Rajasthan), for the amounts mentioned below plus future interest and cost/charges thereon until the realization.

The Borrowers/Co-borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors attention are invited to the provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the said Act, in respect of time available to redeem the available secured assets.

S. No.	Loan Account Number (Lan)/ Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors	1) Date Of Demand Notice 2) Date Of Symbolic Possession 3) Claim Amount As Per Demand Notice	Description Of Immovable Property (Together With Buildings And Structures Constructed, To Be Constructed There Along With Fixtures And Fittings Attached To The Earth And Anything Attached To The Earth.)
1.	HLR0000000022801 Mr. Kummari Vinodh Kumar S/o Mr. Somanna (Borrower) Mrs. Kummari Sujatha C/o Mr. Kummari Vinodh Kumar (Co-Borrower) Mr. Kondala Suresh Babu S/o Mr. K Dhalagathi (Guarantor)	1. Date Of Demand Notice- January 10, 2026 2. Date Of Symbolic Possession- May 12, 2026 3. Claim Amount As Per Demand Notice- ₹ 16,01,010/- In Words Rupees Sixteen Lakh One Thousand And Ten Only As On January 08, 2026 Plus Future Interest, Incidental Expenses, Cost, Charges, Etc. W.e.f. January 09, 2026.	All That Piece And Parcel Of Land Owned By:- In The Name Mr. Kummari Vinodh Kumar S/o Mr. Somanna Having Plot No. 132, H.No. 25-72-42, Survey No. 541/A2B, Assessment No. 1125003398, Ward No. 25, Konda Peta, Tehsil-Ohine, District-Nadapalli (Andhra Pradesh) Having Land Area Of 48.00 Sq.Yards, Surrounded By:- East - House Of Kummari Arjun, West - House Of Kummari Narasimhulu, North - Cement Road, South - Cement Road

PLACE: Andhra Pradesh  
 DATE: 15-05-2026

Sd/-  
 Authorized Officer, SRG Housing Finance Limited

**POONAWALLA FINCORP LIMITED**  
 Corporate Office: Unit No. 2401, 24th Floor, Altimus, Dr. G. M. Bhosale Marg, Worli, Mumbai - 400 018 (Maharashtra)  
 Registered Office: 201 and 202, 2nd Floor, APB1, Koregaon Park Annex, Mundhwa, Pune - 411 036 (Maharashtra)

**DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002**

You the below mentioned Borrowers/Co-borrowers have availed Home loans/Loans against Property facility (ies) by mortgaging your immovable property/ies from Magna Fincorp Ltd (MFL) now renamed as Poonawalla Fincorp Ltd (PFL). You defaulted in repayment and therefore, your loan/s was classified as Non-Performing Assets. A Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Asset and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 for the recovery of the outstanding dues sent on last known addresses however the same have returned un-served. Hence the contents of which are being published herewith as per Section 13(2) of the Act read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 and by way of Alternate Service upon you.

Details of the Borrowers, Co-borrowers, Securities, Outstanding Dues, Demand Notice sent under Section 13(2) and Amount claimed there under are given as under:

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrowers, Co-Borrowers, Loan Amount and LAN No.	Details of the Secured Asset	Demand Notice Date	Amount Due in Rs.
01.	<b>Borrowers, Co-Borrowers:</b> KUMARI VUDDANTI NAVEEN KUMAR VUDDANTI <b>Loan Amount:</b> Rs. 25,000,000/- (Rupees Twenty Five Lacs only) <b>Loan No.:</b> HL/0089/H/13000066	<b>SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY:</b> ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL OF PROPERTY AT SR SRIRAMULU NELLORE REGISTRATION DISTRICT, NELLORE SUB-REGISTRAR OFFICE, NELLORE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION, NELLORE CITY, DARGAMITTA, BRAHMNANDAPURAM, OLD WARD No. 24, OLD DOOR No. 386/20A2, DOOR No. 1762, OLD ASSESSMENT NO. 22075, NEW DOOR No. 1558, NEW ASSESSMENT NO. 1031034636 CONSISTING OF RCC ROOFED HOUSE, SITE, ETC. BOUNDED BY: (NEW WARD No. 24/1) EAST: RAJA STREET, SOUTH: OWN COMPOUND WALL OF THIS HOUSE, WEST: SITE AN EXTENT OF 07 ANKANAMS BELONGS TO VENDOR, ROOFED HOUSE TO SOME EXTENT, PASSAGE TO SOME EXTENT, NORTH: OWN COMPOUND WALL OF THIS HOUSE, WITHIN THESE BOUNDARIES AN EXTENT OF 16.3/4 ANKANAMS OR 112,040 SQ. FT. OR 134 SQ.YARDS OF VACANT SITE, IN AN EXTENT OF 10 ANKANAMS OR 720 SQ. FTS OF RCC ROOFED HOUSE, FOR THIS HOUSE DOORS, DOOR FRAMES, WINDOWS, RACKS, CEILING MATERIALS, ONE FEET SITE, MUNICIPAL TAP MOTOR, WELL, LATRINE, BATHROOM, CURRENT METERS NO. 020986 INCLUDING ALL EASEMENT RIGHTS.	24.03.2026	Rs. 60,62,626/- (Rupees Sixty Lacs Sixty Two Thousand Six Hundred Twenty Six only) and interest till 24.03.2026 is due and payable by you along with future interest @ 16.50% per annum.

You the Borrowers/Co-Borrowers are therefore called upon to make payment of the above mentioned demanded amount with further interest as mentioned hereinabove in full within 60 days of this notice failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to take action under the act to enforce the above-mentioned securities. Please Note that as per Section 13(13) of the Said Act, You are in the meanwhile, restrained from transferring the above-referred securities by way of sale, lease or otherwise without our consent.

Place: Andhra Pradesh  
 Date: 15.05.2026

Sd/-  
 Authorized Officer  
 For Poonawalla Fincorp Limited

**ICICI Home Finance** Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India  
 Branch Office: 1st Floor, Unit No. 5, Shriharis Krishna Towers, D No. 26-15-27, FF 5-6 Ison City, Nellore City- 524004  
 [See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs. Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage
1.	Vallepu Ashok (Borrower) Vallepu Manjula (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHNEL00001400387	S. No. 341 Sy. No. 342 Sy. No. 322-A Sy. No. 317 Sy. No. 118-A.P. No. 59/95 in it "Prameela Nagar" Plots As Per Plan Plot No.7 Spsr Nellore District, Nellore Registration District, Kovur Sub- Registrar Office, Kovur Mandalam Kovur Panchayathi, Kovuru Village	Rs. 5,73,283/- May 08, 2026	Rs. 21,14,730/- To Rs. 473,121/- 03:00 PM	09, 2026 11:00 AM To 16, 2026 02:00 PM	09, 2026 03:00 PM	15, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession
2.	Nidiginti Subbarani Reddy (Borrower) Nidiginti Saraswathi (Co-Borrower) Loan No. LHNEL00001545415	Item No. I :- In It Plot No. 102 Consisting of 20.83 Ankanams or 166.64 Sq.yards. Item No. II :- Plot No. 103 Consisting of 20.83 Ankanams or 166.64 Sq.yards. Item No. III :- Plot No. 114 Consisting of 50.54 Ankanams or 404.32 Sq.yards S.P.S.R. Nellore District, Nellore Registration District, Buchireddypalem Sub Registrar Office, Buchireddypalem Mandal, Kanupur Bit-1 Gram Panchayat, Kanpur Bit-1 Village, Old Sy. No. 732/2, New Sy. No. 753, At Present As Per Revenue Records Adangol, 1B Sub-Divided in Sy. No. 753/2 Consisting of Ac. 7.84 Cents of Land Was Divided Into Approved Lay-Out Plan Plots By Nellore Urban Development Authority (Nuda) Vide L.P. No. 2/2023/1105/Venkatachalam DPMS, Dated 21.03.2023 Naming Gureddy Preethi Jewer in it.	Rs. 63,69,544/- May 08, 2026	Rs. 85,07,261/- To Rs. 8,59,726/-	09, 2026 11:00 AM To 16, 2026 02:00 PM	09, 2026 03:00 PM	15, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Physical Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-https://BidDeal.in) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Mortgagors/ notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till June 15, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before June 15, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before June 15, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 992807300.

The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit https://www.icicifhc.com/

Date: May 15, 2026  
 Place: Nellore

Sd/- Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited",  
 CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

**E-AUCTION NOTICE (DAMAGED STOCK OF PARTITION BOARD OF APPROX. 159 PIECES.)**

E- Auction forms are invited from interested buyers for disposal, strictly on "As Is Where Is Basis", for salvage on Lumpsum Basis, Damaged Stock of Partition Board of Approx. 159 Pieces. (survey handled by McLaren ISLA Pvt. Ltd.) belonging to M/S Godrej & Boyce, at APCRDA Office Building, Amaravati, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh can inspected between 15/05/26 to 19/05/26, after taking prior appointment from Mr. Nitin-8810331841. E-Auction to be held on 20/05/26. For E-Auction forms, Contact Ms. Khushi at Mob-9990857386 of

**SALVOR SETTLERS PRIVATE LIMITED**  
 (Auctioneers), Address: 203 2nd Floor, Usha Kiran Building Azadpur Commercial Complex, Delhi-110033 or download from website: www.salvorsesttlers.com.

Last date for submission of E-auction form is 20/05/26 before 12.30 PM.

**Utkarsh Small Finance Bank**  
 Zonal Office: Rupa Sapphire, 21st Floor, Sector 18, Opp Sampada Rly Station, Vashi, Navi Mumbai (MH) - 400705  
 Registered Office: Utkarsh Tower NH - 31 (Airport Road), Sehmajpur, Kazi Sarai, Harhua, Varanasi, UP - 221 105.

**POSSESSION NOTICE FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**

Notice is hereby given under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 3 of Security Interest (enforcement) rules 2002, the authorized officer issued a demand notice on the dates noted against each account as mentioned hereinafter, calling them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the under noted borrowers having failed to repay the amount that the undersigned has taken Physical Possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said act read with rule 8 of the said rules on the dates mentioned against each account. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of UTKARSH SMALL FINANCE BANK LIMITED for the amounts and interests thereon mentioned against each account herein below.

The attention of the borrowers detailed hereunder is invited to the provisions of subsection (8) of section 13 of the act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Sr. No.	Name of the Branch	No. of the Account	Name of the Borrower/Guarantor (Owner of the Property)	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession Notice	Amount Outstanding as on the date of Demand Notice
1	Hyderabad	15421400000615	Mr. Addala Narasimha Murly S/o. Satyanarayana (Borrower) /Mortgagor and Mrs. Addala Durga Varalakshmi W/o. Addala Narasimha Murly Mrs. Addala Durga Varalakshmi W/o. Addala Narasimha Murly (Co-Borrower)	24/03/2025	13/05/2026	₹ 3,21,521.17/-

Description of Properties (all part & parcel of the property consisting of): All that part and parcel of the Open Plot bearing near Door No. 285, R. S. No. 106/2, situated in Rachapally Village & Grampanchayat, Pithapuram SRO, East Godavari District (Andhra Pradesh) 533430, Admeasuring Area 501 Sq. Yards. Property bounded by:- East: 66.66 Ft. = Site belongs to Arugulli Sunibabu, West: 68.03 Ft. = Site belongs to Addala Raju, North: 67.00 Ft. = Path way for a width of 3 Ft. for this property and Bura Venkanna, South: 67.00 Ft. = Panchayat Site.

Date: 15/05/2026  
 Place: Hyderabad

(Authorized Officer)  
 Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Ltd.

**ICICI Home Finance** Corporate Office: ICICI Home Finance Company Limited ICICI HFC Tower, Andheri - Kurla Road, Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400059, India  
 Branch Office: Door no. 23-8-156/A, 1st floor, R. R. Enclave, Near Balaji Colony, A.I.R. Bypass Road, Above ICICI Bank, Tirupati - 517502  
 [See proviso to rule 8(6)] Notice for sale of immovable assets

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd., will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is", as per the brief particulars given hereunder:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Legal Heirs. Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of Auction	One Day Before Auction Date	SARFAESI Stage
1.	V Ramana Reddy Yennam (Borrower) Suhasini Yennam (Co-Borrower) Loan No. NHPRO00000810837	Flat No. 201, In Second Floor S. Nos 662/2B3, 659/2, Gopavaram Gram Panchayat, Gopavaram Village Proddatur, Andhra Pradesh 516205	Rs. 13,02,136/- May 12, 2026	Rs. 27,70,200/- To Rs. 2,77,020/-	May 26, 2026 11:00 AM To 03:00 PM	June 02, 2026 02:00 PM To 03:00 PM	June 01, 2026 Before 05:00 PM	Symbolic Possession

The online auction will be conducted on website (URL Link-https://BidDeal.in) of our auction agency ValueTrust Capital Services Private Limited. The Mortgagors/ notice are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till June 01, 2026 before 05:00 PM else these secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.

The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) RTGS/ Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before June 01, 2026 before 04:00 PM. The Prospective Bidder(s) must also submit signed copy of Registration Form & Bid Terms and Conditions form at ICICI Home Finance Company Limited Branch Office Address mentioned on top of the article on or before June 01, 2026 before 05:00 PM. Earnest Money Deposit Demand Draft (DD) should be from a Nationalized/Scheduled Bank in favor of "ICICI Home Finance Company Ltd. - Auction" payable at the branch office address mentioned on top of the article.

For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact ICICI Home Finance Company Limited on 992807300.

The Authorized Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit https://www.icicifhc.com/

Date: May 15, 2026  
 Place: Proddatur

Sd/- Authorized Officer, "ICICI Home Finance Company Limited",  
 CIN Number- U65922MH1999PLC120106

**Vridhi Finserv Home Finance Ltd**  
 Registered & corporate office address - 1st Floor, No. 38, GKR Sathagiri Vaishadhama, 12th Cross, Office CBI Road, Gangaganar, Bangalore 560032

**DEMAND NOTICE**

Notice u/s 13(2) of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (Hereinafter called 'Act')

**Subject: Financial assistance sanctioned to you by Vridhi Finserv Home Finance Ltd., -Defaults committed by you in payment of installments of Principal, interest etc.**

We, Vridhi Finserv Home Finance Ltd, had issued Demand Notices under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 by Registered Post with Acknowledgement Due (RPAD) to the addresses furnished to the Bank as mentioned above. Since the notice has been returned due to non-availability of addressees at the said addresses / due to evading of service of the notices sent by RPAD, notice could not be served. Further, Bank had served the said demand notices by affixure at the addresses given. The contents of the said notices are mentioned herein below.

**1. Name and Address of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower /Mortgagor /Guarantor : Applicant: 1. Mr. Manjula Viswanath S/o Manjula Venkataramudu, 2. Mrs. Manjula Alivelamma W/o Manjula Venkataramudu, 3. Ms. Manjula Saileela D/o Manjula Venkataramudu, All are residing at: 9-32, Kumaraveedhi Tadimari, Anjanapur, Andhra Pradesh-515631.**

Sl.No.	A/c No	Amount (Rs)	Amount outstanding as on 08.05.2026 repayable by you
1	VHF1000002512	5,00,000/-	Rs.4,22,229/- together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**Amount Outstanding :Rs.4,22,229/- (Rupees Four Lakh Twenty Two Thousand Two Hundred & Twenty Nine Only)** as on 08.05.2026 together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**NPA Date: 05.05.2026 Demand Notice Dated: 12.05.2026 Branch: Dharmavaram**

**(Details of Hypothecated assets and details of mortgaged properties of the Borrower)**

All that piece and parcel of the property bearing Registered Sale Deed Dt. 30-12-2023, Regd.Doc No. 11598/2023, Executed by MALIVELAMMA in favour of M VISWANATH, Sri Sathya Sai Dist Puttaparthi Regd Dist- Dharmavaram Sub Dist- Tadimari-Gramapalam-Tadimari Panchayathi Area-D.No. 3-17- Sy No.304 Admeasuring an extent of 39 Sq Yds of Site in this 351 Sq ft of house and bounded by the following boundaries. Bounded on: East by: House of Suryanarayana, West by: House of Venugopal, North by: Road, South by: Place of Nani. Measurements: East West-13.5 ft or 4.114 mts, North South-26 ft or 7.924 mts, House Measurement: East West-13.5 ft, North South-26 ft. In Between ad-measuring an extent of 39 sq yds of site.

**2. Name and Address of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : Applicant: 1.Mr. Pujari Somashekhar S/o P Peddanna, 2. Smt. P Sunitha W/o Pujari Somashekhar, Both are residing at: 14B, Chandramakulapalli Punganur, Chittoor-517247.**

Sl.No.	A/c No	Amount (Rs)	Amount outstanding as on 08.05.2026 repayable by you
1	VHF10000001461	17,00,000/-	Rs.15,90,687/- together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**Amount Outstanding Rs.15,90,687/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakhs Ninety Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Seven Only)** as on 08.05.2026 together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**NPA Date: 05.05.2026 Demand Notice Dated: 12.05.2026 Branch: Madanapalle**

**(Details of Hypothecated assets and details of mortgaged properties of the Borrower)**

**ITEM NO.1:** All that piece and parcel of Land measuring an extent of 1058 square feet or 117.5 square yards vacant site full situated in S.No. 2177/C of Chandramakulapalle Village, Chandramakulapalle Survey Group, Punganur Mandal, Punganur Sub-District, Chittoor District. Bounded on: East by: The House and vacant site of P Somashekhar, West by: The vacant site of P Chengareddy, North by: The House of K Chinappa, South by: The House of P Janardhan Reddy, Within the above boundaries: East to West: 23 feet or 7.010 Sq.mts, North to South: 46 feet or 14.028 Sq mts, Total 1058 Sq feet or 117.5 Sq Yards vacant site full.

**ITEM NO.2:** All that piece and parcel of Land measuring an extent of 1058 square feet or 117.5 square yards vacant site full and constructed RCC roofed house in and extent of 1058 Sq.ft in D.No. 1-29, situated in S.No. 2177/C of Chandramakulapalle Village, Chandramakulapalle Survey Group, Punganur Mandal, Punganur Sub-District, Chittoor District Bounded on: East by: Road, West by: The vacant site of P Chengareddy, North by: The House of K Chinappa, South by: The House of P Janardhan Reddy, Within the above boundaries: East to West: 23 feet or 7.010 Sq.mts, North to South: 46 feet or 14.028 Sq mts. Total 1058 Sq feet or 117.5 Sq Yards vacant site full and constructed RCC roofed house in entire extent of 1058 Sq.ft with doors, door frames, windows, roof, adugu nivesam, electric fixtures, electric meter, stair case and four side walls full right etc.,

**3. Name and Address of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : Applicant: 1.Mr. Pujari Somashekhar S/o P Peddanna, 2. Smt. P Sunitha W/o Pujari Somashekhar, 3. Pujari Manoj Kumar S/o Pujari Somashekhar, All are residing at: 14B, Chandramakulapalli Punganur, Chittoor-517247.**

Sl.No.	A/c No	Amount (Rs)	Amount outstanding as on 08.05.2026 repayable by you
1	VHF10000003844	4,25,000/-	Rs.3,89,278/- together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**Amount Outstanding Rs.3,89,278/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Eighty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Eight Only)** as on 08.05.2026 together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**NPA Date: 05.05.2026 Demand Notice Dated: 12.05.2026 Branch: Madanapalle**

**(Details of Hypothecated assets and details of mortgaged properties of the Borrower)**

**ITEM NO.1:** All that piece and parcel of Land measuring an extent of 1058 square feet or 117.5 square yards vacant site full situated in S.No. 2177/C of Chandramakulapalle Village, Chandramakulapalle Survey Group, Punganur Mandal, Punganur Sub-District, Chittoor District. Bounded on: East by: The House and vacant site of P Somashekhar, West by: The vacant site of P Chengareddy, North by: The House of K Chinappa, South by: The House of P Janardhan Reddy, Within the above boundaries: East to West: 23 feet or 7.010 Sq.mts, North to South: 46 feet or 14.028 Sq mts, Total 1058 Sq feet or 117.5 Sq Yards vacant site full.

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**4. Name and Address of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower /Mortgagor /Guarantor: Applicant: 1.Mr. Tatiparthi Seneasila S/o Tatiparthi Venkateswarulu D. No.00, Mulumudi, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh-524004. Also at: D.No.16-9-115, Muthyalapalem, Ramalingapuram, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh-524003. 2. Rukmini C/o Tatiparthi Seneasila, Arundathiwada, Near By: Govt. School, Mulumudi, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh-524004. Also at: D.No. 16-9-115, Muthyalapalem, Ramalingapuram, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh-524003.**

Sl.No.	A/c No	Amount (Rs)	Amount outstanding as on 08.05.2026 repayable by you
1	VHF10000002050	5,50,000/-	Rs.5,07,084/- together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**Amount Outstanding Rs.5,07,084/- (Rupees Five Lakhs Seven Thousand Eighty Four Only)** as on 08.05.2026 together with further interest thereon with effect from 09.05.2026 at the contractual rates together with costs, charges, other monies until payment or realization.

**NPA Date: 05.05.2026 Demand Notice Dated: 12.05.2026 Branch: Nellore**

**(Details of Hypothecated assets and details of mortgaged properties of the Borrower)**

All that piece and parcel of the Property Sri Pottireeramulu Nellore Regd Dist: Bujabai Nellore Sub-Regd - Nellore Rural Mandal - Mulumudi village Panchayathi- Mulum

## EDITORIAL

### Over-Confidence Without Numbers

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

#### Taking Chances

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

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

After what seemed like a lifetime in the political timeline of Kerala, the Congress has chosen VD Satheesan as the state's next Chief Minister. Satheesan's elevation is, first and foremost, a political lesson of immense significance for every aspirant to high office across parties. The establishment may have had its preferences. The arithmetic within the system may have appeared to favour others. Yet, what ultimately prevailed was sustained political capital earned through relentless groundwork, public credibility, and organic acceptability among cadres and citizens alike. For five years, Satheesan invested in the ground. In the end, even the high command had to concede to the weight of public sentiment conveyed by those who truly understood the pulse of Kerala.



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

#### How Kerala Forced Delhi To Retreat

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

During the culmination of the massive Pudukkottai Yatra - led by the then Leader of the Opposition and now Chief Minister-designate, V.D. Satheesan - Rahul Gandhi had remarked, "All these leaders dance well, but they need to dance well together." It was a pointed reminder of the necessity for unity in Kerala. Indeed, the only way the UDF could have squandered this election was through internal friction, and they all danced together to a fascinating mandate. The "dance together" advice is still important for Satheesan, as he has been chosen as the next Kerala Chief Minister by the Congress high command and soon will be chosen by the Congress Legislative Party after a tough power-struggle dance with the High Command.



Satheesan's case was strong. He led the charge from Kerala's northern tip to its southern coast from February 6 to March 7, with the Pudukkottai Yatra projecting his position as the face of the Congress campaign. As the LoP who took the fight directly to Pinarayi Vijayan for the last five years, he made himself a clear alternative. He had, and still has, the categorical trust and support of the IUMU, the UDF's most powerful ally, and is clearly the most dominant public face of the UDF. In contrast to Satheesan's public-facing role, KC Venugopal (KCV) operated as the party's primary decision-maker. Leveraging his proximity to Rahul Gandhi, KCV acted as the master strategist, handpicking candidates and keeping the campaign on track. By choosing not to contest the assembly polls, he avoided sending mixed signals to the electorate. As the central power axis in Kerala, KCV deserves credit for

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

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

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

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



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

"We are waiving visa bonds for qualified fans who bought World Cup tickets," Assistant

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

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

## Highlights

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

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

# Wholesale price inflation rises to 8.3 pc in April

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



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

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

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

## Highlights

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



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

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

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

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

# Honda makes its first annual loss in 70 years

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## LATVIAN PM RESIGNS AFTER ROW OVER STRAY UKRAINIAN DRONES



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

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

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



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

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

## 'Floating armoury' ship reportedly seized by Iran



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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



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



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



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

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

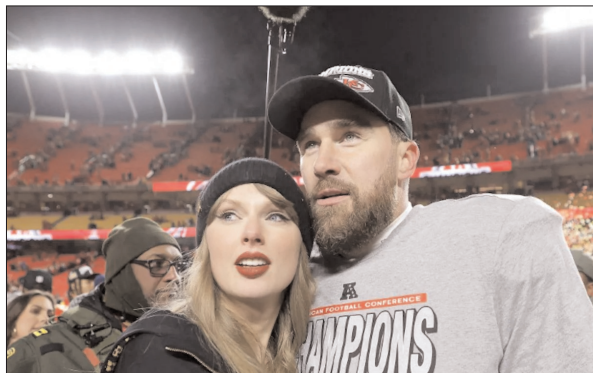


much from him until this newest update dropped online. Elio LeFleur shares the workout clip as recovery continues after shoulder surgery Elio LeFleur recently posted a short recovery update on social media, and fans quickly noticed one major detail: his shoulder sling is finally off. In the clip, the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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



responded to a shots-fired incident outside the Montgomery County

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

chapter of one of the NBA's great-

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Encouraging new talent, hero Kiran Abbavaram produced the film "Thimmarajupalli TV" under his KA Productions banner in association with Sumaira Studios. Teja Velpucharla worked as the co-producer. Sai Tej and Veda Jalandhar played the lead roles in the film, while V. Muniraju made his directorial debut with this project. Set against a village backdrop, "Thimmarajupalli TV" is a period drama that recently released in theatres and emerged as a grand success. The film is now gearing up for its digital premiere and will start streaming on Aha OTT from May 15. On this occasion, the "Thimmarajupalli TV" celebrations event was held grandly in Hyderabad. Speaking at the event, Srinivas from Aha said, "I first interacted with Kiran Garu during the time of SR Kalyanamadapam. Since



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

Macharla said, "It feels great to reunite with the entire team once again at the Aha event. Audiences appreciated our film very well in theatres, and we believe it will receive an even bigger response on Aha. Everyone who worked on this film has a bright future in the industry." Music Director Vamsikanth Rekha said, "I experienced many mixed emotions during this film. Kiran Garu and director

Muniraju gave me tremendous support and freedom while composing the music. I proudly say that I am the music director of this film." Director V. Muniraju said, "The kind of success and response we expected for this film is exactly what we received. Audiences supported our movie in theatres, and I hope they make it a success on Aha as well from May 15. After watching the film and appreciating it, our team even took me to meet CM Chandrababu Garu. The actors and technicians who worked on this film have all earned a good name."

Actress Swathi Karimireddy said, "Audiences who watched 'Thimmarajupalli TV' in theatres were reminded of their own memories. They personally connected with our film. Now that the movie is coming to Aha, I hope to meet everyone again at another success event after it becomes successful there too."

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

A new spiritual and emotional film titled "Edaina Sadhyame" (Anything is Possible), with the tagline "Daivam Thodunte.." (When God is With You), is being produced under the banner of Sri Adi Lakshmi Pictures. The title launch event was held grandly at the Film Chamber in Hyderabad. Director Madduri Raja, producer Anil Munaganuri, executive producer N. Subrahmanyam, and members of the film team attended the event. The film aims to portray how people can overcome sorrow and suffering in life by building a strong bond

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

"You are a unique being"  
"Your inner world is your outer world"  
"There is no individual, only personalities"  
"Inner truth"  
"Life itself is relationships"  
The film's narrative is built around these philosophical concepts. Speaking on the occasion,

producer, writer, lyricist, and dialogue writer Anil Kumar Munaganuri said that today's youth are extremely important for the nation, but many are struggling with depression and hopelessness. He explained that the film intends to show how a deep connection with God can bring miracles into one's life and transform impossibilities into possibilities. "This movie is being made based on spiritual teachings. When people connect with their beloved deity, miracles can happen," he said. Apart from producing the film, Anil Munaganuri is also providing the story, dialogues, and lyrics.



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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