

Revanth in Delhi, to Meet Union Minister Khattar Over Hyderabad Metro



New Delhi: Telangan a Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will meet Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Manohar Lal Khattar on Wednesday to push for full central approval for the second phase of the Hyderabad Metro Rail project, a state government official said. The expansion has received in-prin-

ciple clearance from the Centre, but formal Phase II of the Hyderabad Metro includes three corridors of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport to Future City (9.6 km), Jubilee Bus Station (JBS) to Medchal (24.5 km), and JBS to Shamirpet (22 km). The chief minister is also expected to meet Congress party leaders during his stay in the capital.

BRS leader Jeevan Reddy slams govt over deaths of four farmers in Mancherial

Mancherial: BRS leader T Jeevan Reddy demanded that the government take criminal action against higher officials and to provide compensation of Rs 50 lakh to kin of four farmers each who died when walls of tin-roofed sheds collapsed on them. He along with Mancherial former MLA N Diwakar Reddy blocked the traffic on a road in Luxettipet protesting the negligence of officials on Wednesday. Jeevan Reddy said the negligence of the higher officials resulted in the mishap. He slammed the government for delay in procuring paddy this Yasangi season. He wanted the government to initiate action against the officials



and to release the compensation to the kin of each farmer at the earliest. He recalled that the procurement process used to be a smooth affair during the regime of BRS. Diwakar Rao also criticized the government for causing inconvenience by delaying the procurement process. He said that apathy of officials resulted in the

Bodhan SI Trapped by ACB While Taking 7,000 Bribe

Nizamabad: Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials on Wednesday, caught Bodhan Town Sub-Inspector Chitannaju Bhaskara Chari red-handed while accepting a bribe of ₹7,000 at the police station. The accused officer had initially demanded ₹10,000 from the complainant to not implicate his brother's son in a criminal case. Following negotiations, the amount was reduced to ₹7,000. Acting on a complaint, ACB officials laid a trap and apprehended the officer while accepting the bribe. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The tainted amount was recovered from his possession at his instance, confirming that he had accepted the undue advantage



in return for an official favour. Authorities stated that the officer had misused his public position and performed his duties dishonestly. The identity of the complainant has been kept confidential for security reasons. The accused officer has been arrested and produced before the II Additional Special Judge for Trial of SPE and ACB Cases at Nampally, Hyderabad. Further investigation is underway.

Telangana HC grants more time to defected MLAs

Hyderabad: The Telangana High Court on Wednesday, granted additional time for counters to ten MLAs who were elected from BRS party and allegedly defected to the ruling Congress party. Congress in dilemma as Khammam, Warangal civic bodies' terms end. The division bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice GM Mohiuddin was dealing with writ pleas filed by BRS legislators challenging the Assembly Speaker's decision to dismiss pleas seeking disqualification of the alleged defectors. The defected MLAs were



already granted three weeks time on the previous occasion for submitting their response, however the MLAs sought further time on Wednesday. The petitioners' counsel argued that the Speaker had dismissed the disqualification petitions without considering relevant and material evidence. The court, considered MLAs request and granted further time, adjourned the matter to June 26.

The Telangana High Court has granted additional time to ten BRS MLAs accused of defecting to the Congress party, despite objections from petitioners who argued that the Speaker dismissed disqualification pleas without considering key evidence. It was also contended that one of the MLAs had contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections on a Congress ticket, which, according to the petitioners, constituted clear and "foolproof" evidence of defection but was ignored and opposed granting more time. The court, considered MLAs request and granted further time, adjourned the matter to June 26.

Stop pleading, start questioning: KTR asks farmers at BRS Warangal meet

Warangal: Upping the ante against the Congress government, BRS working president KT Rama Rao lambasted it for betraying farmers in the name of Farmers' Declaration in Warangal and failing to implement all 34 promises. He warned that unless the Congress implemented its promises, the Chief Minister and the Ministers will not be able to step out into the public. "Stop pleading and start questioning. It is time to bring down this anti-farmer government to its knees," he declared to a roaring crowd at Rythu Sangrama Sadassu (farmers' meet) organised by the BRS in



Warangal. Addressing a large gathering, Rama Rao launched a blistering attack on Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and the Congress leadership, questioning the fate of the Farmers' Declaration announced by Rahul Gandhi. He targeted Rahul Gandhi for making tall promises and abandoning the farmers of Telangana after the Congress came to power. "Where is the Farmers' Declaration? What is the Chief Minister doing while farmers suffer at procurement centres?" he asked. He alleged that

the Congress had failed to honour its key promises, including Rs 15,000 per acre investment support, loan waivers, crop insurance and procurement guarantees. Calling the declaration a bogus document, he said, "Farmers were handed a scrap of paper in the name of Farmers' Declaration," he remarked. The BRS leader accused the government of failing to procure crops and delaying payments, forcing farmers into distress. While the former procured crops even during COVID-19 crisis, the Congress was proving to be more dangerous than COVID-19 for farmers by abandoning them in dire conditions. The meeting passed a series of resolutions, putting the Congress government in the dock. As Rama Rao read out the resolutions, the farmers responded with loud cheers and claps, extending their support. The BRS meeting demanded Rs 10 lakh ex-gratia for families of nearly 1,000 farmers who died since the Congress came to power, and called for immediate implementation of all 34 promises in the Warangal Farmers' Declaration. "If these promises are not fulfilled, we will make it impossible for the Chief Minister and his Ministers to face the public," Rama Rao declared.

Assam CM Meets Governor, Tenders Resignation, New Govt Likely On May 12

Guwahati : Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday submitted his resignation to Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya to facilitate the formation of a new government in the state. The chief minister also submitted the resignation of his council of ministers to the Governor at the Lok Bhavan. The Governor asked Mr Sarma to continue in office till the formation and swearing-in of the new government. Also Read - Fund Che formal notification of the results of Assam Elections 2026 and to enable the formation of the new government, Mr Sarma tendered his resignation as chief minister along with that of the council of ministers to the Governor Mr Laxman Prasad Acharya, the office of the chief minister said in a social media post. Indicating that a new government would be formed after May 11, Assam chief minister told



reporters that the date for swearing in ceremony would be decided according to schedule of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "We want the presence of the Prime Minister on this occasion as NDA has got a historic mandate of 102 seats in the state," he said. In Murshidabad Leaves One Injured The NDA has secured a third consecutive term in Assam, winning 102 out of 12a Party emerged with 82 seats, while its allies - Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland People's Front - won 10 seats each. He also noted that a meeting of newly elected BJP MLAs will be held based on directions from J. P. Nadda and Nayab Singh Saini,

Vijay Houses TVK MLAs in Mamallapuram Resort Ahead of Govt Formation

Mamallapuram: Following the Tamil Nadu Assembly election results, 108 victorious MLAs from Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), including representatives from distant regions, have been accommodated in a private luxury resort in Mamallapuram on Wednesday. The move comes after a meeting with party leader Vijay. To ensure security, a strong police presence has been deployed around the resort, with heightened surveillance measures in place. Over 50 MLAs are currently staying at the Four Points Star hotel in Poonjeri, Mamallapuram, while more party legislators are expected to arrive throughout the day. The party is continuing its post-election strategy discussions. Also Read - Assam CM Meets Governor, Tenders Resignation, New Govt Likely On May 12 Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee has unan-



imously decided to support TVK in forming the government, sources said, as the Vijay-led party fell 10 seats short of the majority mark in the 2026 Assembly elections. TNCC President K Selvaperunthagai chaired a late-night virtual meeting with party MLAs and senior leaders to deliberate on extending support to TVK, which has emerged as the single largest party with 108 seats. Alappuzha According to party sources, the Google Meet session involved detailed discussions on the evolving political scenario in Tamil Nadu and the strategic implications of aligning with TVK. In New Delhi, Congress General Secretary K. C. Venugopal confirmed that Vijay had sought the party's support in the state. He added that the central leadership has asked the Tamil Nadu unit to take a final decision. Earlier, on May 4, TVK made a historic breakthrough in the Assembly elections, winning 108 seats in the 234-member House and emerging party, though short of a majority. The party is now seeking support from smaller parties across political camps. Also Read - From Mandate to Reckoning: Why Voters Draivda Munnetra Kazhagam in the INDIA bloc. The development may reshape opposition strategies ahead of the 2029 General Elections.

## Controversy Erupts Over Telangana's Shift to DBT for Fee Reimbursement

**Hyderabad:** The fee reimbursement scheme, which supports nearly 14 lakh students every year in pursuing higher and professional education, has been embroiled in controversy with the issue of GO 7 on April 29. The government has proposed to convert the existing model of reimbursing colleges and instead deposit the fee directly into the accounts of students from the upcoming 2026-27 academic year. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The practice of paying the fee to college managements had been the practice since the scheme's inception in 2008 under the Congress government led by then Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy in undivided Andhra Pradesh. The move has triggered widespread concern among students and institutions alike, particularly against the backdrop of the government's dues exceeding Rs.10,000 crore to private college managements, accumulated over the past five years. This has raised serious doubts over whether the government would be able to deposit funds into students' accounts on time every year, and whether colleges would be willing to offer admissions based solely on govern-



ment assurances under the DBT system. Also Read - Gang Trapping Rich Women Busted In Jubilee Hills The shift to direct benefit transfer (DBT) to students is being viewed as a double-edged sword for educational equity. While the system is designed to improve fiscal transparency by eliminating intermediaries, it transfers the burden of delays directly on to students. Any delay in disbursement would leave students personally liable for fee payments, exposing them to institutional penalties and financially weaker students, with experts calling for stringent legal safeguards to prevent institutions from denying admissions or withholding admission

estimating arrears between Rs.10,000 crore and Rs.12,000 crore over the past four academic years. The delay in fund release is having consequences, as nearly 80 per cent of students admitted under the merit quota in professional colleges depend on fee reimbursement. Private institutions, grappling with delayed payments, are reportedly compromising on infrastructure and academic standards, while economically disadvantaged families are increasingly resorting to high-interest private loans to cover upfront expenses. The education commission has warned of a looming crisis, cautioning that continued delays could lead to a sharp rise in dropout rates among vulnerable sections.

## Centre Sets 2029 Deadline for RRR North Stretch as Cost Escalates by Rs.9,000 Cr Due to Delays

**Hyderabad:** The Centre has set a three-year deadline, up to 2029, for completion of the northern part of the Hyderabad Regional Ring Road (RRR-N), with the project cost escalating sharply by nearly ₹9,000 crore due to delays in execution. In a fresh letter to the state government, the Centre stated that the public private partnership (PPP) appraisal committee under the Union finance ministry had approved ₹23,995.60 crore for the RRR-N project, enabling officials to open long-pending tenders and effectively ending a prolonged delay in its execution, official sources said. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The RRR project had remained stalled for nearly a year despite completion of land acquisition and the calling of tenders, as both the Centre and the state government proposed changes to the project, leading to tenders being kept on hold. With the latest approvals now in



place, construction is set to commence shortly. The revised cost estimates have significantly increased the project outlay. Initially pegged at ₹15,000 crore for the 161.518-km ₹9,000 crore-controlled road will intersect national and state highways at nine locations, where large interchanges spanning 100 to 120 acres each will be constructed. The northern stretch will be divided into Package 1 covering 83.518 km from Girmapur in Sangareddy district to Pragnapur in Siddipet district and Package 2 spanning 78 km from Pragnapur to Tangedpalli in Yadadri-Bhuvanagiri district. Also Read - Rain Brings Brief Relief After Week Of 42°C Originally

instalments during this period, with the contractor responsible for maintenance of the road. Also Read - Telangana Students Shine in JEE Main 2026 Paper 2 Results The project includes a range of major and minor infrastructure components, including 44 major bridges, 127 minor bridges, 1,262 box culverts, four road overbridges, 44 underpasses, and one vehicle overpass. A detailed cost break-up showed ₹8,106.19 crore allocated for civil construction, ₹5,357.59 crore for utility shifting, ₹1,366.65 crore towards pre-construction expenses, ₹683 crore for escalation provisions, and ₹5,349.26 crore for land acquisition. Meanwhile, the alignment for the southern stretch of the RRR is yet to be finalised. The state government has a 208-km alignment, which is currently under review by the NHAI, with a detailed project report expected to provide clarity on the costs and execution plan.

## Rain Brings Brief Relief After Week Of 42°C

**Hyderabad:** Light to moderate rain brought some relief to parts of Hyderabad on Tuesday night after nearly a week of temperatures hovering around 42°C, even as several districts in Telangana continued to record severe heat during the day. According to Telangana Development Planning Society (TGDPs), highest rainfall was reported in Sangareddy district, with 20.5 mm at RC Puram (Ramachandrapuram) and 17.3 mm at BHEL Factory. In the districts, Mancherial recorded 20 mm at Bheemaram, while Rangareddy saw 16.8 mm at Lingampally and 12.3 mm at Chandanagar. Kumuram Bheem district recorded up to 16.5 mm at Dahegaon. Several other areas, including Bachupally, Asifabad,



Gachibowli and Maisaipet, recorded between 5 mm and 10 mm rainfall. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Despite the showers, the overall rainfall across the state remained low, with TGDPs classifying most districts under "very light" rain, while many districts including Hyderabad recorded no rain in cumulative terms through the day. Earlier in the day, intense heat

conditions prevailed across Telangana. The highest temperature in the state was 45.4°C at Mendora in Nizamabad district. Jagtial recorded 45.3°C, while several districts including Nirmal and Siddipet touched 44.7°C. The state's average maximum temperature stood at 41.4°C. Also Read - Gang Trapping Rich Women Busted In Jubilee Hills In Hyderabad, temperatures remained above

normal, with a city average of 41.4°C. The highest temperature within GHMC limits was 42.6°C at Musheerabad, followed by 42.4°C in Mehdiapatnam. LB Nagar and Begumpet, and around 42°C across most circles. While the late evening showers offered temporary relief, high daytime temperatures continue across the state, indicating that heatwave conditions are likely to persist in several districts.

## Medak: Newborn sold by hospital staff for Rs 1.5 lakh, rescued and reunited with parents

**Medak:** Two nursing staff at a private hospital were arrested on charges of selling a just born baby after misleading the parents that the baby died soon after birth. Those who bought the child were also arrested and the infant was restored to the parents. This shocking incident was reported to have occurred on April 12, but came to light after the parents approached the Medak police. According to information available, the parents grew suspicious following some information that the nurses took the just born baby to the laboratory, then informed the parents that the baby died and that they had disposed of the



child's body. Believing their version, the woman Nasra Fathima of Lakshminagar locality in papannapet mandal then informed the parents that the baby died and that they had disposed of the ad got discharged and went home. However, some hospital later informed

her and her husband that two nurses had in fact sold the child to Mohammed Iqbal and Akthari Begum in then informed the parents that the baby died and that they had disposed of the. The alarmed parents then approached the police who launched investigation into the

allegation. Soon the police teams traced the baby girl and reunited her with the parents 24 days after her birth. The couple are elated to receive their child from the hands of police and the ICDS staff. More details of the case are expected to be released by the police shortly.

## Anantapur Police Bust Philippines-Based Online IPL Betting Gang

**Anantapur:** In a major breakthrough, Anantapur police busted an online IPL betting racket network based in the Philippines using the Dream Play 1 application. Ten members of the syndicate have been arrested and cash, vehicles, electronic gadgets and betting-related materials, collectively worth around ₹60 lakh, have been seized. Addressing media on Tuesday, SP P. Jagadeesh said the racket with links across several Indian states had been coordinated by a kingpin identified as Shiva from Philippines. Shiva and another accused Sachin from Karnataka are absconding. Also Read - Post-Poll Violence Takes 3 Lives In West Bengal: TMC Offices Ransacked Across The State Police have arrested Talari Madhu, Veparalla Mohammaad alias Moula, Shaik Babjan, Shaik Roshan Wali, Makodiki Srinivasulu, Thimmaiah, Raghavenkata Pawan Kumar, Sunkaravaina



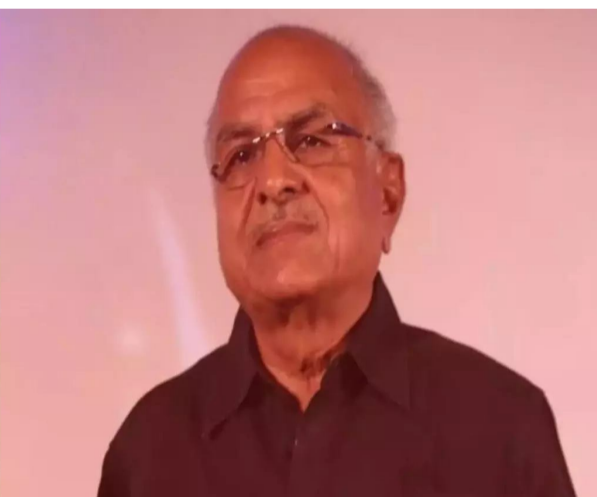
Kiran, Rapaka Prashanth and Gaddavalasa Manikantha Raja in connection with the case. During its raid, police seized ₹19.70 lakh cash, an SUV, four motorcycles, three laptops, one tablet, 15 mobile phones, 15 SIM cards, 13 ATM cards, four cheque books, scanners, pen drives, card readers, publicity cards linked to the Dream Play 1 app, and other electronic devices. Also Read - Proddutur: Man Murders Wife Over Her Weight, Eating Habits Police have initiated the freezing of ₹18.20 lakh lying in bank accounts linked

to 49 persons across nine banks. The gang had been running illegal online casino, roulette, dragon, monopoly and cricket betting operations for nearly three years from Makati Metro Manila in the Philippines using the Dream Play 1 app. The accused took betting transactions mainly through PhonePe and other digital payment platforms. Also Read - Rs 25000 Fine On Parents For Minor's Two-Wheeler Ride SP Jagadeesh said Talari Madhu had come into contact with Shiva through Instagram

around three years ago. Shiva promised him a 40 per cent share in the betting proceeds while retaining 60 per cent for himself. Madhu subsequently recruited local associates and expanded the network in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Police said the gang opened bank accounts in the names of nearly 70 persons. It paid around ₹10,000 to account holders for obtaining passbooks and banking access. SIM cards obtained in the names of others had been used for online betting and digital payment transactions.

## AP CM, Leaders Condole Demise Of South Film Producer RB Choudary

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, his deputy Pawan Kalyan, and YSRCP chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy on Wednesday expressed shock and grief over the passing of prominent film producer R B Choudary. Choudary died in a road accident in Rajasthan on Tuesday. The Chief Minister said Choudary had provided opportunities to several actors in over 90 films made in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi languages. Conveying his sympathies to the family members of the deceased producer, the CM termed his death an "irreparable loss" to the film industry. Also Read - Kakinada: Family Hospitalised After Eating Datura Flower Dal Seen On Reel Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan remarked that the news of the tragic accident left him stunned. I cannot believe the tragic news that Shri Chowdary Garu met with a fatal end in a road



accident near Udaipur in Rajasthan. I pray to God that his soul attains peace. He produced the film 'Suswagatham' in which I acted. It achieved great success. Expertise in film production and related business was his forte. He selected stories suitable for family viewing and produced films featuring excellent songs. The sister sentiment in the Annavaram film captivated family audiences. He earned a special place as a producer in

both the Telugu and Tamil film industries. I convey my deepest condolences to his family, he wrote in a message posted on X. He produced the film 'Suswagatham' in which I acted. It achieved great success. Expertise in film production and related business was his forte. He selected stories suitable for family viewing and produced films featuring excellent songs. The sister sentiment in the Annavaram film captivated family

audiences. He earned a special place as a producer in Former Chief Minister and YSRCP leader Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed grief over the untimely demise of Choudary. He recalled that Choudary had earned a distinguished place in both the Telugu and Tamil film industries through his contributions as a producer. Reddy prayed for the departed soul to rest in peace and conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family.

# Congress Backs TVK For Govt Formation In Tamil Nadu; DMK Calls It 'Foolhardy Decision'

Tamil Nadu Congress has decided to support TVK leader Vijay in forming a secular government in the state. The decision was taken at an urgent meeting of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) of Tamil Nadu Congress late on Tuesday night. AICC in-charge for Tamil Nadu Affairs of the party Girish Chodankar convened the meeting, PAC unanimously decided to support TVK leader Thiru Vijay to form a secular government in Tamil Nadu, sources said. Meanwhile in West Bengal, violence flared up after the poll results, as two workers - one from BJP and another from TMC, were killed in separate incidents on Tuesday. In view of the situation, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar directed strict action against those involved in violence and vandalism. The CEC



ordered the Chief Secretary of West Bengal, the Director General of Police (DGP), the Kolkata Police Commissioner, and the Director General of the Central Armed Police Forces, as well as all District Magistrates, Superintendents of Police (SPs), and police officers, to maintain constant patrolling. DMK spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai criticised the Congress for deciding to support TVK, saying the party's move amounts to a

betrayal of the people's mandate in Tamil Nadu. He said Congress has pledged the support of its five MLAs to TVK without proper deliberation and questioned who took such a "foolhardy" decision. Annadurai argued that the alliance was announced hastily, even before the formal election process had fully concluded. He also pointed out that Congress' decision contradicts its ideological opposition to the BJP, and expressed disappointment that the party shifted its stance despite consistent support from the DMK. Recalling DMK leader MK Stalin had earlier backed Rahul Gandhi as a prime ministerial candidate, he said the sudden move to support TVK goes against the expectations of the people of Tamil Nadu. After losing the Jorhat seat in the Assam Tamil Nadu Congress led by Vijay, to form a government in the state, after the latter fell 10 seats short of the majority mark in the 2026 Assembly elections. Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC) Selvaperunthagai chaired a late-night virtual meeting with party MLAs and senior leaders to discuss the possibility of extending support to TVK and decided that they will support Vijay in forming a "secular government"er Gaurav Gogoi acknowledged the party's defeat

and took responsibility for the outcome. In a post on X, he said, "We regret that we could not live up to their expectations of the people of Assam in the recent elections. I take full moral responsibility for this election outcome. Nonetheless we thank the people of Assam for their support and their valuable vote." "Soon the Congress party will conduct a massive public drive reach to seek your suggestions on how we can improve, and better serve the interests of our beautiful state Assam. BJP should not think that we will be sitting idle, from today onwards the Congress party will start reaching out to the people. We will offer our suggestions to the government, both inside and outside the Assembly, in the interest of Assam. Whenever this government resorts to injustice and oppression, we will stand firmly against it," he added.

## Vijay Ahead in Gaining Assembly Majority

Chennai: On yet another day of hectic political activity, Vijay's TVK was getting closer to being assured of enough support to sail through any floor test even as the Dravidian major DMK was left fuming over its main ally in its secular alliance, Congress, ditching it to offer support to Vijay. Just as the TNCC members were meeting to formalise the support of 5 MLAs to Vijay's TVK, DMK was raging about having been stabbed in the back by the Congress. With Rahul inclined to back the leader of Gen Z in Vijay, the new alignment was talked of even before the polls. It is nearer fruition now with an announcement expected any moment. Also Read - Vijay Houses TVK MLAs in Mamallapuram Resort Ahead of Govt Formation The Congress support may come with the condition that TVK not seek the support of any party that was

in the AIADMK-BJP led NDA alliance. Meanwhile, the AIADMK was on the verge of splitting with 35 of its 47 MLAs prepared to back Vijay so he can form the government without any threat. Gathering at the home of veteran leader CV Shanmugam, the AIADMK MLAs, whose meeting with party leader Palaniswami at party HQ in the morning was cancelled were determined to seize the opportunity to get on the right side of the popular wave and stave off the prospect of the party becoming irrelevant in TN politics after it finished thiecoming irrelevant in TN politics after it finished third in the polls. Also Read - EC Issues Notification for Constitution of New Assembly in Bengal The TVK seems determined to accept the Congress offer that will also prompt the sealing of the support of 2



MLAs each from the VCK, CPI(M) and CPI, rd in the polls. Also Read - EC Issues Notification for Constitution of New Assembly in Bengal The TVK seems determined to accept the Congress offer that will also prompt the sealing of the support of 2 MLAs each from the VCK, CPI(M) and CPI, which means that the DMK+ that went to the

polls might be left with at least four allies. With the swearing-in fixed for Thursday, Vijay will be in a more confident frame of mind as his majority in the legislaturecoming irrelevant in TN politics after it finished third in the polls. Also Read - EC Issues Notification for Constitution of New Assembly in Bengal The TVK seems determined to

accept the Congress offer that will also prompt the sealing of the support of 2 MLAs each from the VCK, CPI(M) and CPI, e is assured. He has riches in terms of choice now in support either from the C o n g r e s s - V C K - Communist parties or a majority AIADMK MLAs defying their leader E Palaniswami to offer unconditional support.

## Even in Defeat, There is No Failure, Says Congress MP Manickam Tagore

Chennai: Congress MP Manickam Tagore on Tuesday expressed optimism following the recently concluded Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, asserting that "victory is certain" and that even in defeat, there is no failure. In a post on X, he quoted poet Bharathiyar, reinforcing confidence within the party despite the evolving political situation. Meanwhile, cracks within the INDIA alliance have come to the fore, with the long-standing partnership between the Congress and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) appearing to be under strain. The tension escalated after Congress extended its support to a government led by Vijay in the state. Also Read - Vijay Ahead in Gaining Assembly Majority Reacting sharply, DMK spokesperson Saravanan Annadurai criticised the Congress, calling its decision "short-sighted" and accusing it of "backstabbing" alliance partners. He warned that the move



could damage trust in the Congress ahead of the 2029 general elections and weaken Opposition unity against the BJP. Sources said the Congress unanimously decided to support the Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) ar His Political Debut The decision followed a late-night virtual meeting chaired by Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K

Selvaperunthagai, where party MLAs and senior leaders deliberated on the political scenario and the implications of aligninfter it emerged as the single largest party in the 2026 Assembly elections with 108 seats, falling 10 short of the majority mark in the 234-member House. Also Read - How Vijay's Movies Laid Groundwork for His Political Debut

The decision followed a late-night virtual meeting chaired by Tamil Nadu Congress Committee president K Selvaperunthagai, where party MLAs and senior leaders deliberated on the political scenario and the implications of aligning with TVK. With Congress holding five seats, and smaller parties such as PMK (4), CPI, CPI(M), and VCK (two

each) in contention, additional support is expected to help TVK stake claim to form the government. The development signals a significant political shift in Tamil Nadu and could have wider ramifications at the national level, especially within the INDIA bloc, where Congress and the M. K. Stalin-led DMK have been key allies.

## West Asia Conflict: Govt Announces Credit Line Guarantee Scheme For Airlines, MSMEs

New Delhi: The government on Tuesday announced an Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) with an outlay of Rs 18,100 crore to provide relief for MSMEs and airlines impacted by the West Asia conflict. The scheme -- expected to help in providing additional credit flow of Rs 2.55 lakh crore, including Rs 5,000 crore for airlines -- was approved by the Union Cabinet on Tuesday. Briefing the media on the Cabinet decisions, Information and Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the ECLGS 5.0, having an outlay of Rs 18,100 crore, would help airlines as well as MSMEs impacted by the West Asia crisis. "The scheme has been brought to address the stress in MSME and airline sectors due to the West Asia conflict," he said. According to the minister, passenger airlines would be eligible for up to 100 per cent of peak credit up to Rs 1,500 crore while institutions can access up to 20 per cent of fund-based working capital up to Rs 100 crore.

In an official release, the government said



The scheme aims to enable businesses to tide over the challenges arising from the West Asia conflict. "Additionally, this is expected to help businesses maintain their operations, protect jobs, and sustain supply chains. The proposed credit guarantee scheme is a major step to help businesses, particularly MSMEs and airline sector, to ensure their additional working capital needs are catered by the banks short-term liquidity mismatches in view of West Asia crisis," the release said. There will be conditions for availing the loans. The tenor for the airline sector would be seven years from the date of first disbursement, including a moratorium of two years, and for MSMEs and non-MSMEs, it would be five years from the date of first disbursement, including one year of moratorium.

The scheme would be applicable to all loans sanctioned during the period from the date of issue of these guidelines by NCGTCLGS was a very imperative initiative, especially for the aviation sector, enabling airlines to navigate short-term liquidity challenges and maintain seamless operations amid global disruptions. "It will provide strong financial backing to safeguard jobs, sustain connectivity, and ensure resilience across the aviation ecosystem, while also supporting MSMEs," he said in a post on X. MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) as well as airlines have been facing substantial financial headwinds due to the West Asia conflict that started in February. ECLGS was first launched in May 2020 to mitigate economic distress during the coronavirus pandemic.

## Operation Sindoor Anniversary: Experts Say Red Lines Redrawn, Call For Stronger Air And Cyber Warfare Capabilities

New Delhi: Operation Sindoor, launched a year ago on the intervening night of May 6-7, saw India carrying out decisive, technology-driven strikes against terror infrastructure in Pakistan, in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack. The operation destroyed several terror camps, killed scores of terrorists, and showcased advanced military capabilities like drones and precision-guided munitions. A year on, experts believe the Operation not only redrew red lines when it comes to India's response to acts of terrorism, but also offered some key military lessons, including joint and cohesive use of air power, bolstering of drone technology and building a robust communication system. Operation Sindoor Anniversary Experts Say Red Lines Redrawn Calls For Stronger Air Cyber Warfare Capabilities A view of diyas on the Operation Sindoor theme during Deep Utsav, near Clock Tower in Srinagar on Oct 21, 2025. (ANI) Several defence and strategic affairs experts concurred that the military operation also emphasised that future conflicts would play out not only in airspace, but also in cyberspace and information and cognitive domains. And, indeed, the Indian military wasn't just battling against a barrage of hostile drones that came



from across the western border, from Leh to Sir Creek, in multiple waves during the nearly four-day conflict, but also countering an intense misinformation campaign that sought to damage the morale of the forces and the masses. Operation Sindoor Anniversary Experts Say Red Lines Redrawn Calls For Stronger Air Cyber Warfare Capabilities School teachers celebrate the success of 'Operation Sindoor', in Bikaner on Dec 30, 2025. (ANI) Air Commodore Gaurav M Tripathi (retired), who also played a role during the operation, while acknowledging the criticality of air power in deciding the outcome of a conflict, underlined that in any future scenario, "combined air power" of the three services should be leveraged so that it can work cohesively against a "capable adversary." "During (Operation) Sindoor, we saw a mass of drones used by Pakistan. Most of them were harmless, just to engage Indian weapons and munitions so that attack drones could come in

later. Operation Sindoor Anniversary Experts Say Red Lines Redrawn Calls For Stronger Air Cyber Warfare Capabilities Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the cultural program based on Operation Sindoor at INS Vikrant, in Goa on Oct 20, 2025. (ANI) "But the enemy is smart. Next time, what they will send will be hardened drones, which will probably be more difficult to jam... have better navigation at the end, might not need GPS, (and) they might have electro-optical homing devices. However, there is no change in the have been kept unchanged as state-owned oil companies rise in global fuel prices to protect airlines and consumers. As per the norms, ATF prices are revised on the 1st of every month based on input cost. "No change in ATF prices for domestic airlines (scheduled operations). Prices of Bulk Diesel and ATF for international airline operations have been adjusted upward," IOC said in its statement.

## Police Find Skeletal Remains Of Woman 'Killed' 34 Years Ago In Ahmedabad, Send Them For Forensic Test

**Ahmedabad:** Acting on a tip-off, the Crime Branch on Thursday recovered the skeletal remains of a woman who was suspected to have been murdered in Ahmedabad's Vatva area 34 years ago. The police exhumed the remains from a 20-foot-deep house pit and sent them for forensic examination. ACP (Crime Branch) Bharat Patel said that although this case is very old, important evidence has been found based on technical and scientific investigation. After DNA testing of the human remains, the correct identification and further legal action will be taken. Strict action will be taken against all the accused involved in this matter. Case background According to sources,



the victim, Farzana, was married in Surat, but got divorced after a year. Later, she returned to her father's house at Dholka and then started living in Ahmedabad. She was rumoured to have been involved in prostitution and had relationships with many men. In Ahmedabad, she met Samsuddin and fell in

love with him. Later, the two got married. Sources said even after marriage, when Farzana's behaviour did not change, Samsuddin hatched a conspiracy to kill her and discussed the plan with his brother Iqbal and friend Abdul Karim. Karim's acquaintance Sadia Bibi too was included in this plan.

Since Bibi lived alone, the plan was made to kill her at her house. Farzana and Samsuddin stayed there at night. At midnight, sources said, all four accused allegedly strangled Farzana to death. Before the murder, a pit was dug outside Sadia Bibi's house. After the murder, the body was hidden in the pit and covered with brickwork. During this entire incident, a relative of Sadia Bibi witnessed this scene, whom the accused threatened to kill. ACP Patel said the woman's husband and his brother have been detained for questioning while other suspects are no longer alive. Since the brother of Farzana is alive, the identity will be confirmed through DNA test, the police said.

## NIA Chargesheets Doctor, 2 Others In ISIS-Linked Bioterror Plot To Carry Out Mass Poisoning

**New Delhi:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against three people, including a doctor, for their alleged involvement in an ISIS-linked conspiracy to carry out mass poisoning in public spaces using a biological toxin, an official statement said. The accused -- Hyderabad-based Dr Syed Ahmed Mohiuddin and co-accused Azad and Mohammad Suhel from Uttar Pradesh -- have been chargesheeted before a special NIA court in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, the statement, issued on Tuesday, said. Working under the guidance of their respective Islamic State-linked foreign-based handlers, the accused had operated in a coordinated manner to recruit vulnerable youth radicalised by the handlers to support jihad and spread terror through prohibited weapons and bioterrorism, said the NIA statement. They had planned to use ricin, a highly toxic substance derived from castor seeds and classified under Schedule I of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to carry out the "nefarious agenda of ISIS", it said. The case was originally registered by the Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) following



the arrest of Dr Mohiuddin, an MBBS from China, after he was caught at a toll plaza carrying illegal weapons, a bottle containing four litres of castor oil, and other incriminatory articles in his car in November 2025. Investigation by the ATS had led to the arrest of the otmonitoring in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar to the Army c. Amritsar her two accused the same day. Azad and Suhel were found to have earlier picked up parcels of money and prohibited weapons from a dead-

drop site in Hanumangarh, Rajasthan, and dropped them at a location in Chhatral, Gujarat, for Moinuddin to pick up, the probe agency said. After taking over the investigation in January 2026, the NIA found that Moinuddin had been promised the position of ISIS "Amir" of South Asia by his handler. He monitoring in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar the Army c. Amritsar handler and other co-accused for recruitment, coordination, and handling of funds and weapons consignments. He also con. Amritsar handler and other co-accused for recruitment, coordination, and handling of funds and weapons consignments. He also conducted reconnaissance, recorded Bay'ah (oath of allegiance) videos, and prepared ISIS flags, it said.

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## Pregnant Woman 'Murdered', Minor Brother-in-law Detained

**Ganjam:** A pregnant woman was allegedly hacked to death on Tuesday while she was sitting on a dharna in front of her in-laws' house in Ganjam district of Odisha, demanding rights for her daughter, the police said. The deceased was identified as 21-year-old Puja Swain of Agastinuagam area under Ganjam police station. The Hinjili police registered a case and detained the accused brother-in-law. A forensic team reached the spot on Tuesday evening. According to the statement given by Puja to the media before her death, she fell in love with Chintu Gouda of Kharida village two



years ago through social media. After this, the two got married in a Shiva temple at Delang, Puri district. For the past few months, both of them had been living at a rented house in Puri. They have a daughter, with the woman four-months into another pregnancy. While both were living in Puri, Chintu had left her 15

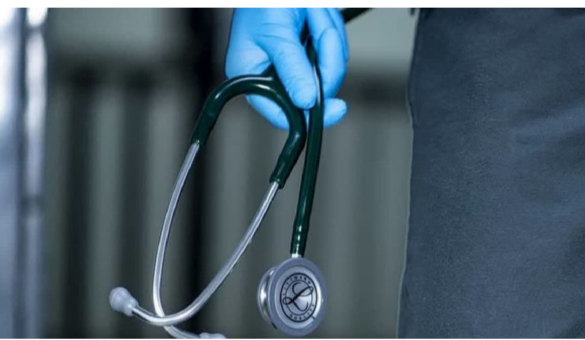
days ago after asking her to go back to her family. On this, Puja filed a complaint at Hinjili police station hoping to get justice. Based on the complaint, a case was registered at Hinjili police station under case no. 241/26. After this, Chintu's father, mother and sister were called to the police station. On Monday, the woman

went to her husband's house at Kharida village, demanding justice, and sat on dharna. On Tuesday, it is alleged that Chintu's minor younger brother Litu beat and stabbed Puja to death with an axe. The body lay there in a pool of blood while Puja's daughter sat next to her and crying. On receiving the news, the supervision of Asika Sub-district Police Officer Santosh Kumar Jena and Hinjili rihether anyone else is involved in this murder. Before her death, the woman had expressed her grief in front of the local media. It was found that she was murdered a few hours later.

## Health Ministry Gears Up To Roll Out Centre's Flagship Health Insurance Programme AB PMJAY In West Bengal

**New Delhi:** The Union Health Ministry has geared up to roll out the Centre's flagship health insurance programme, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PMJAY) in West Bengal, a day after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) registered a historic win in the state assembly election. "The AB PMJAY is an ambitious health scheme of the central government. West Bengal was the only state left behind in implementing the scheme," a senior official in the health ministry told ETV Bharat here on Tuesday. According to the official, once the new government is formed in West Bengal, AB PMJAY will be the first health scheme announced in the state. In fact, on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the victory day speech, also said that the first cabinet of the BJP-led West Bengal government will announce the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. expert and director general of the Association of Healthcare Provider

(AHCP-India) Giridhar Gyani said that implementing Ayushman Bharat in West Bengal could lead to integration challenges, particularly in aligning beneficiary databases and hospital networks. "It may also open up access to a larger pool of hospitals nationwide and bring additional central funding into the state's healthcare system," he said. West Bengal, until now, remained the only state that had opted out of the scheme, choosing instead to run its own flagship programme, Swasthya Sathi. These ambitious health protection models are designed to reduce out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure but differ in scale, structure, and funding mechanisms. Launched by the Centre in 2018, Ayushman Bharat is widely regarded as the world's largest government-funded health assurance scheme. It provides an annual health cover of Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation. The scheme targets economically vulnerable populations, identified primarily through depri-



vation and occupational criteria based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) database. Significantly, the scheme has recently been expanded to include all citizens aged 70 years and above, regardless of income, significantly wideh card is issued in the name of the female head of the family, aimed at empowering women and portability, allowing beneficiaries to avail treatment at any empanelled hospital across India. This feature is particularly beneficial for migrant workers and families who may seek treatment outside their home state. Swasthya Sathi, while extensive within West Bengal, has limited interstate portability, restricting access largely to hospitals within the state's network," Gyani said.

Hospital empanelment and package rates also differ. Ayushman Bharat has a standardised package rate system across states, aimed at maintaining uniformity and cost control. Whereas Swasthya Sathi allows the state more flexibility in determining package rates and hospital participation, which has led to wider inclusion of private hospitals within West Bengal but also raised concerns over cost variations.

There are also questions about the future of Swasthya Sathi. Officials indicate that the state may either merge the scheme with Ayushman Bharat or run both in parallel, as seen in some other states that have topped up central coverage with additional benefits.

## Twin Blasts Put Punjab On High Alert: Explosion Near Amritsar Cantt, Scooter Blast Near Jalandhar BSF HQ

**Amritsar:** Punjab is on high alert after blasts occurred near high-security zones in Amritsar and Jalandhar hours apart on Tuesday evening, triggering a major investigation into the incidents and whether or not they were the first explosion took place near the Border Security Force's (BSF) Punjab Frontier headquarters in Jalandhar at around 8 pm. Around three hours later, another blast near the Army cantonment area in Amritsar's Khasa rocked the entire area. The blast in Amritsar occurred around midnight, triggering panic among residents, many of whom rushed out of their homes after the loud bang. As soon as information about the incident was received, teams from Amritsar Rural Police, the city police, the Army, the Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS), and the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) rushed to the site. Punjab is on high alert after blasts occurred in Amritsar and Jalandhar. (ETV Bharat) Officials said no casualties or injuries were reported in both incidents. The first explosion in Jalandhar took place near BSF Chowk after an Activa scooter allegedly caught fire and exploded. CCTV footage of the explosion surfaced shortly. Police are currently questioning the scooter owner, Gurpreet Singh, who works with a courier company. Investigators are examining whether the incident was an accident or an attempt to trigger a larger security threat. The back-to-back incidents have raised concerns among



security agencies across the region. Sources said teams from the National Investigation Agency (NIA) are currently on their way to the blast sites in Jalandhar and Amritsar. The teams are expected to arrive shortly to gather information and assist Punjab Police in the ongoing investigation into both incidents. Amritsar SSP Says Object May Have Been Thrown Towards Boundary Wall Amritsar Rural Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Suhail Qasim Mir said that a preliminary investigation suggests an object may have been hurled at the cantonment wall, leading to a low-intensity blast. He said, "Around 11 PM or 11:15 PM, we received information about a loud sound coming from the road leading towards Khasa. After this, our team immediately reached the spot. We noticed a wall in front of the Khasa cantonment. Our preliminary inspection and analysis suggest that someone may have thrown an object towards the wall, resulting in a low-intensity explosion. No damage or casualties were

reported. However, a joint inspection and investigation are currently underway." Officials said forensic experts collected samples and evidence from the site. These have been sent for testing and analysis to determine the exact nature and cause of the explosion. On Wednesday morning, police restricted public movement in certain areas near Khasa as part of the ongoing investigation. Security agencies temporarily closed roads around the blast site to maintain surveillance and allow uninterrupted forensic examination. Assistant Sub-Inspector Karam Singh said, "I came to know that an explosion has occurred in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar taken place here. We are closing the roads for surveillance." Authorities have intensified monitoring in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar Rural SP Aditya S Warrier said police received information regarding the blast around 10:50 PM, following which senior officers and Army officials stationed at the cantonment immediately

reached the location. He said, "Police teams reached the spot along with senior Army officials residing in the cantonment area. The Bomb Disposal Squad conducted checks at the scene. The FSL team gathered evidence and sent it for testing and analysis. We are currently investigating how many blasts occurred and in what areas near Khasa as part of the ongoing investigation. Security agencies temporarily closed roads around the blast site to maintain surveillance and allow uninterrupted forensic examination. Assistant Sub-Inspector Karam Singh said, "I came to know that an explosion has occurred in the area due to its proximity to the Army c. Amritsar nd forensic examinations are completed. In a post on X, he wrote, "Back-to-back blasts have shaken Punjab. Yesterday in Jalandhar, and now near Khasa Camp in Amritsar, this is deeply alarming. Who is trying to destabilise our state? Why has the Punjab Government failed to prevent such incidents? What is the Government of India doing? Repeated lapses point to a serious breakdown of intelligence and security. Punjab's peace cannot be compromised. We demand accountability and immediate action."

# India, Jamaica Agree To Boost Trade, Skilled Mobility: Jaishankar

**Kingston:** India and Jamaica agreed to further strengthen trade linkages and explore cooperation for recruitment and mobility of skilled professionals, including healthcare workers and teachers, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said. Addressing a joint press conference here after talks with his Jamaican counterpart Kamina J Smith on Monday, Jaishankar said the discussions were comprehensive, and they reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral ties, identifying new avenues to deepen the partnership. "We signed several important agreements and discussed effective implementations of MOUs which have been recently concluded in the fields of digital transformation, cultural exchange, sports and digital payments to ensure tangible outcomes on the ground," he said. India recognised Jamaica's growing role as a logistics hub and gateway to the Caribbean for trade and investment, Jaishankar said. "We agreed to further strengthen trade, business and investment linkages, explore cooperation for recruitment and mobility of skilled professionals, including nurses, healthcare workers and teachers," he said. The two sides also discussed expanding cooperation in defence and security, healthcare, digitisation, agriculture, education and the minister said. Highlighting development cooperation as a key pillar of ties, Jaishankar noted the successful completion of the Improving Rural Livelihoods Project in Kitson Town in March 2026, implemented with Indian assistance of USD 1 million under the India-UN



Development Partnership Fund, benefiting over 200 individuals and impacting thousands more. He said India is also discussing the feasibility of establishing an artisan empowerment hub in Jamaica and reiterated support for the country's recovery following Hurricane Melissa. As part of humanitarian assistance, India has supplied relief material, deployed a medical team and is in the process of providing 30 dialysis units. It is also sending 40 fishing boats and 200 GPS units to aid recovery efforts, reaffirmed close cooperation in multilateral fora and discussed issues such as reformed multilateralism, climate justice and priorities of the Global South. India appreciated Jamaica's support for its candidature for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for 2028-29. Both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and called for early finalisation of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

country's development. He announced a contribution of two million Jamaican dollars towards celebrations marking 181 years of the arrival of Indians in Jamaica on India Heritage Day. According to the website of the High Commission of India in Kingston, Jamaica, the Indian diaspora of around 70,000 people, whose forefathers came mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as indentured labour between 1845 and 1917. Some also came from South India. The diaspora constitutes around 3 per cent of Jamaica's population and continues to nurture an abiding interest in Indian culture, music, dance and history, serving as a cultural bridge between the two countries. May 10 is observed as India Hemultilateralism, climate multilateralism, climate ritage Day in Jamaica. Jaishankar arrived in Kingston on Saturday, marking the first multilateralism, climate multilateralism, climate g of hivmultilateral fora and discussed issues such as reformed multilateralism, climate justice and priorities of the Global South. India appreciated Jamaica's support for its candidature for a non-permanent

seat at the UN Security Council for 2028-29. Both sides strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and called for early finalisation of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Jaishankar also highlighted growing people-to-people ties, noting the popularity of yoga and Ayurveda in Jamaica and a nine-day tour of Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago, aimed at further strengthening India's strategic and cultural ties with the Caribbean nations. Later in the day, Jaishankar interacted with Jamaica's industry and business leaders, underlining the need to deepen economic engagement as countries diversify partnerships globally. "Emphasised that as we all diversify and seek reliable partners, the imperative to deepen India-Jamaica business ties is that much stronger," he said in a social media post, noting that the potential for bilateral and regional economic cooperation should be "explored more vigorously". Jaishankar also appreciated Industry Minister Aubyn Hill for convening the interaction with business leaders.

# Indian Investments In US On Rise, Creating American Jobs: Official

**Washington:** Foreign direct investment from India to the United States was approximately USD 16.4 billion, which supported about 70,800 jobs, a senior US official said. Addressing CII India Reception on the sidelines of the SelectUSA Investment Summit at National Harbour in Maryland on Monday evening, US Deputy Undersecretary (Policy and International Trade Administration) in the Department of Commerce, Brandon Remington, said Indian firms also spent USD 330 million on research and development in America to welcome your investment from India. According to available cumulative data, the total stock of foreign direct investment from India to the United States was approximately USD 16.4 billion, which supported approximately 70,800 jobs, USD 313 million in research and development spending and USD 1.5 billion worth of exports," Remington said, without any reference to the period under



review. A CII report released in 2023 had pegged Indian investments in the US in the range of USD 40 billion, which had led to the creation of 4.25 lakh jobs. According to the 'Indian Roots, American Soil' report released by CII in 2023, Indian companies invested USD one billion in US-based research and development projects and also contributed USD 195 million to corporate social responsibility projects. Last week, India's Sun Pharmedaceutical Industries Ltd announced a USD 12 billion deal to acquire New Jersey-based Organon &

Co. Nearly a dozen Indian companies are scheduled to make fresh investment announcements at the SelectUSA Investment Summit on Tuesday. Delaware Governor Matt Meyer, Guam Governor Loun Leon Guerrero, Maryland Lt Governor Aruna Miller and a host of US officials and business leaders attended the CII India reception at National Harbour. Indian companies are also making a growing contribution to the US economy, bringing in capital, supporting jobs, strengthening supply chains, and contributing to communities across

states," Namgya Khampa, Deputy Chief of Mission in the Indian Embassy here, said. She said in areas like advanced manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, energy, and many more sectors, Indian companies were supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs across the US, including in the Maryland-DC area.

According to the CII report, the top three states with the most reported FDI from Indian companies were Texas (USD 9.8 billion), Georgia (USD 7.5 billion) and New Jersey (USD 4.2 billion).

# Prejudiced And Partisan Opinion: Indian Envoy On NYT Article On IT Rules

**New Delhi:** India's envoy to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, on Tuesday dismissed an article in The New York Times on India's IT Rules as "prejudiced and partisan opinion". "Describing well-intentioned efforts aimed at protecting against viral misinformation and possible harm to the Indian society under India's IT Rules as 'censorship' makes for a catchy headline, but a lazy argument in the op-ed piece by Arman Khan in @nytimes," Kwatra said in a post on X. "India takes pride in its credentials as the world's largest democracy, with a written constitution, an independent judiciary, a vibrant English and vernacular



press, and a long history of rights-based litigation," Kwatra said. The Indian ambassador said framing what is essentially about platform accountability as "free speech vs censorship" deliberately and disingenuously conflates different issues. "Always welcome an exchange of views on

finding the right balance between free speech and accountability to further strengthen India's cherished democracy. Unfortunately, prejudiced and partisan opinion is not a constructive starting point," Kwatra said. An opinion piece in The New York Times characterised India's IT Rules as an extension of

government control over digital speech designed to throttle criticism by targeting ordinary users and independent creators. The article alleges these rules weaponise legal liability for tech platforms and lack sufficient judicial oversight to prevent government-led censorship.

# Trump Says Pausing Hormuz Operation In Push for Iran Deal

**Washington:** President Donald Trump said Tuesday he was halting the US military operation to escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz after just one day, in a bid to reach a deal with Iran to end the Middle East war. Trump's so-called "Project Freedom" to help vessels leave the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow chokepoint to the Gulf where Iran has seized control in response to being attacked, began on Monday. But the US leader said on Truth Social that he was now pausing it after a request by mediator Pakistan and other countries, saying that "Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement" with Tehran. "We have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom... will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed," Trump said. Washington is maintaining a blockade of Iran's ports in a bid to pressure Iran to make a deal to end the war that the United States and Israel launched on February 28. Tensions had been soaring over the Hormuz operation, with the United States saying it had sunk seven Iranian boats, and several civilian vessels coming under attack, allegedly from Iran.



US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said earlier Tuesday that the United States has completed its offensive operations against Iran, which it dubbed "Operation Epic Fury". Rubio's comments echoed statements to Congress nearly a month into a fragile ceasefire. "The operation is over -- Epic Fury -- as the president notified Congress. We're done with that stage of it," Rubio told reporters at the White House. The clashes in the Strait of Hormuz were not part of the original war, he said. "This is not an offensive operation; this is a defensive operation," Rubio said. "And what that means is very simple -- there's no shooting unless we're shot at

first." Israel and the United States attacked Iran on February 28, killing top leaders and destroying major military and economic sites but not forcing the collapse of the Islamic republic, which has responded with missile and drone attacks across the region. Trump on April 8 declared a ceasefire with Iran that he has since extended even though negotiations with Tehran have been at a standstill. Rubio said the United States has "achieved the objectives" of the war. "These guys are facing, they are facing real, catastrophic destruction to their economy," he said, while adding that Trump still preferred a negotiated deal with Iran.

# India's Approach To Migration Grounded In Dignity, Respect For Rights: MoS Kirti

**United Nations:** India's approach to migration remains people-centric and grounded in dignity, Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said, underlining that mobility will remain an integral feature of a dynamic global economy. "India's approach to migration governance is holistic and pragmatic. It is driven by coordinated institutional efforts and broad societal engagement," Singh said here Tuesday. He emphasised that "welfare and protection of our people" remains central to India's approach. "We have strengthened mechanisms to support migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, through initiatives such as the Indian Community Welfare Fund and the MADAD portal," he said. "Our responsive consular services also provide timely assis-



tance, legal, financial, and insurance coverage to our nationals overseas," he said. Singh, who arrived here Sunday, is leading the Indian delegation for the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), being held under the auspices of the UN General Assembly from May 4-8. He addressed a round table at the UN headquarters on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. In a post on X, Singh said that at the round table, he outlined measures taken by India

to facilitate safe and regular migration through leveraging Digital Public Infrastructure, strengthening consular services, concluding migration and mobility agreements, while upskilling, training and providing pre-departure training of the country's skilled labour. "Highlighted that our approach to migration remains people-centric - grounded in dignity, inclusion, and respect for rights," he said. India's experience underscores the importance of leveraging technology, strengthening

partnerships, and adopting a holistic lifecycle approach to migration governance, Singh said in his remarks. "We are also aware that challenges remain, especially when it comes to strengthening social protection, addressing vulnerabilities, and improving data systems," he said. Singh stressed that India recognises that mobility will be of an increasingly interconnected and dynamic global economy. India's policies remain closely aligned with the objectives and principles envisaged in the Global Compact, while evolving in response to emerging global dynamics. "With the objective that migration should be a choice, supported by opportunity and dignity, we have invested in inclusive growth, livelihood and financial inclusion," he said.

# Fish, freebies, and the death of development politics in Bengal



'We will eat both fish and meat. I have come out with fish today to stop this propaganda.' This was Bengal's election discourse in 2026. A BJP candidate in Bidhannagar goes door to door, dangling a five-kg Katla and trying to assure voters that his party will never interfere in their dinner plates. Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar, another former BJP State president, along with the party's local candidate Bidyut Kumar Roy, launched his campaign from the fish market in Balurghat on April 8, 2026.

Entire Union cabinet, 19 CMs won't help BJP win Bengal polls: Mamata Banerjee. Between rallies, the Chief Minister announces a Rs 500 hike in Lakshmir Bhandar allowances. The BJP responds by serving dim-bhaat (egg curry and rice) at some rallies. And so the campaign season passes in a State with over 10 million young people without stable employment, only talking about fish and allowances. Not about employment, closed factories, transport corridors, or why Bengal's engineering graduates leave for Bengaluru or Pune every year. Fish and allowances. That is the full menu.

Slogan War And then there was the other theatre — the slogan war. Step into any constituency during campaign season, and you would find BJP and TMC supporters screaming 'Jai Shree Ram' and 'Joy Bangla' at each other like rival war cries, faces contorted, fingers pointed, each side trying to drown the other out. Jai Shree Ram was barely heard in Bengal before 2017; Joy Bangla was adopted by the TMC as a counter.

In the last 35 years of watching Bengal's elections, this is new — politics reduced to a screaming match between two slogans, neither of which contained a single word about policy, employment, infrastructure, or which scheme worked and which one failed. No one asked what the government built. They asked which slogan you shout. This is not accidental. It is economically manufactured. The shift from development-based elections to identity-based ones is the product of deindustrialisation, welfare dependency, and the shared refusal of

both the TMC and the BJP to fight on the ground where they would actually have to deliver. BNP that enables cow vigilantism in Uttar Pradesh paraded Katla fish in Kolkata constituencies. The dinner plate became a proxy war over whose Hinduism is real. Start with the factory. Or rather, the absence of one. When Tata Motors pulled the Nano project out of Singur in October 2008, Mamata Banerjee rode the agitation to power. But what was left was not just one car plant; rather, it lost an entire ecosystem of firms, and also created a damaging perception of Bengal's business environment. No major manufacturer has since committed at a comparable scale. Bengal's industrial base, already hollowed by decades of Communist-era trade union militancy, received its final blow not from the Left but from the movement that replaced it. Welfare Cheques What replaced the factory is the welfare cheque. 'Lakshmir Bhandar', 'Kanyashree', 'Yuba shree', 'SwasthyaSathi'. TMC's transfer schemes reach over 2.15 crore women beneficiaries ([https://wb.gov.in/pdf/report\\_card/WBGovRC\\_English.pdf](https://wb.gov.in/pdf/report_card/WBGovRC_English.pdf)) and put real money where the formal economy cannot. But they create a loyalty stipend becomes a political relationship; the beneficiary is grateful not to an institution but to a party. Development builds capacity; welfare, when it substitutes for economic opportunity, builds dependence. So when election season comes, the Chief Minister does not talk about new factories. She talks about raising the allowance by Rs 500. On the other hand, the BJP could be arguing for industrial revival. It has found something cheaper than factories, ie, identity. The Hindutva project in Bengal is not a grassroots spiritual revival but an imported political instrument. Ram Navami processions with saffron flags and DJ-mounted trucks, cow-protection rhetoric — these are North Indian aesthetics transplanted into a Bengali Hindu culture that never organised itself along these lines. Its ethos runs through the Baul tradition, through Durga,

Kali, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, through a religiosity that sees no contradiction between praying to the goddess and eating fish curry after the puja the same afternoon. The same BJP that enables cow vigilantism in Uttar Pradesh now parades the Katla fish in Kolkata constituencies. The dinner plate became a proxy war over whose Hinduism is real, and unfortunately, neither party's position on it has anything to do with development.

Hollow Claims This reveals the hollowness beneath the BJP's Bengal project. No campaign to revive jute, build logistics corridors, or fix employment exchanges. What it offered was belonging. The Ram Navami procession through a mixed neighbourhood is not primarily about devotion; it is a choreographed performance that gives unemployed young people a sense of purpose that a job would otherwise provide. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey, India's youth unemployment rate among graduates is around 13%. A young person with a degree and no job is not merely poor; he is humiliated with no economic identity, no social standing, no path to marriage or household formation or trying to do some petty informal business like a tea shop or 'chop-erdokan'.

Into that vacuum, Hindutva offers a ready-made identity — you are a Hindu, your community is under threat, and here is a brotherhood that will give you standing. The unemployed man's economic despair is alchemised into communal anger. And even the one escape route that middle-class India still believes in — the 'sarkar naukri' (Government job) — is a mirage. According to reports, nearly 10 lakh posts in central government ministries remain unfilled; railways alone account for close to three lakh vacancies. Include state-level gaps, and estimates cross 60 lakh posts sitting empty. Recently, recruitment itself has become a theatre of corruption. One of the ugliest recent examples — the SSC scam, in which the entire 2016 recruitment of over 25,000 teachers and staff was declared void by the

Supreme Court in April. But Bengal is not exceptional. In Bihar, the BPSCT teacher exam was cancelled after confirmed paper leaks. The UPPSC review officer exam faced similar allegations. Most of the government jobs have become a broken promise, and the rage of the aspirant who spent five years preparing for a rigged exam is combustible. Those aspirants are politically available to whoever offers the most satisfying target for that anger. The TMC benefits from this dynamic just as much as the BJP. If elections are fought on identity, on who is the real Bengali, on whose procession was stopped by the police, then the TMC never has to answer for its development record. Like, why is the Deocha Pachami coal block still not operational? Why does Bengal's per capita income trail Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, or why does Kolkata's infrastructure groan under neglect, while Hyderabad and Bangalore sprint ahead? Identity politics is a shield for those with weak records.

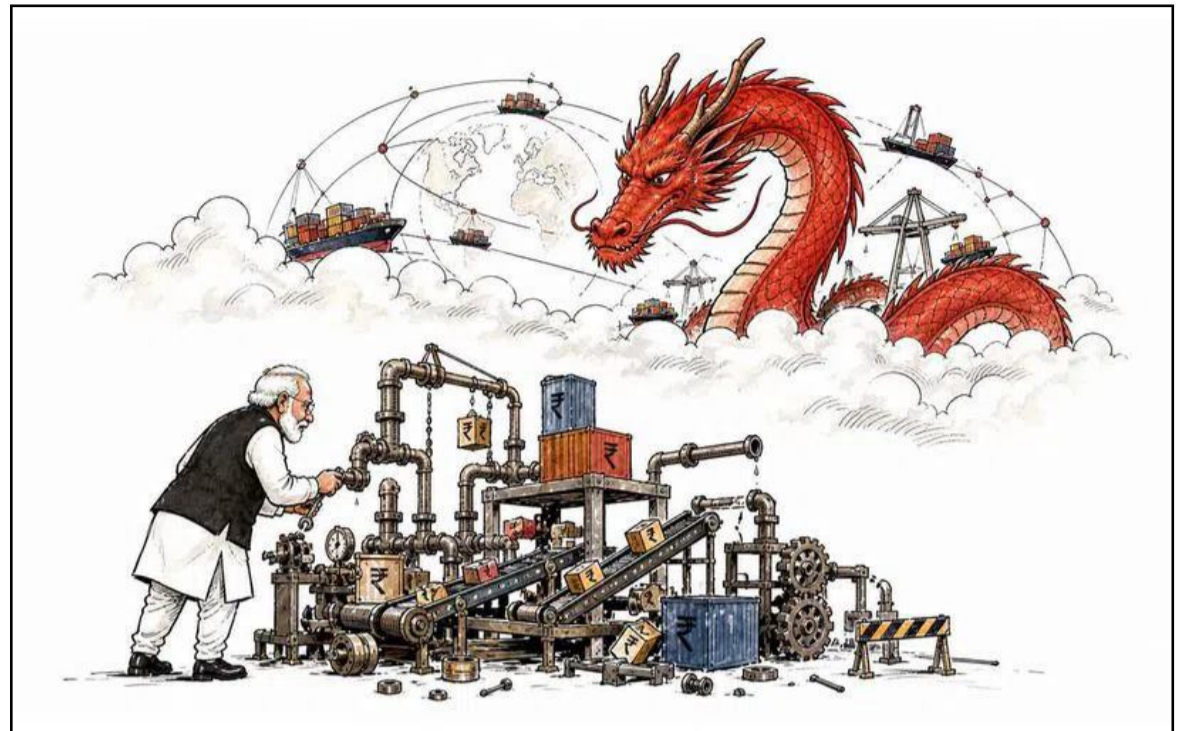
Degradation of Discourse There is mutual complicity in the avoidance of these facts, indicating a degradation of political discourse in total. The BJP does not fight on development because Hindutva is cheaper and emotionally more potent than a 10-year industrialisation plan. The TMC does not fight on development because its record cannot survive scrutiny. The voter is caught between a welfare trap and an identity trap — a monthly allowance or a saffron flag. What they actually need is a job. It prioritises Bengal, rejecting both the empty catchphrases of the opposition and the transactional politics of the establishment. What Bengal needs is an honest contest over economic futures with industrial policy, higher education, and why the State that once produced India's managerial elite now exports its young to Karnataka and Maharashtra. Until one party is forced to contest elections on that ground, the pattern will repeat. Factories will remain closed. Procession will keep marching. Allowance will keep rising before every elec-

tion. The 'China+1' strategy has become a defining feature of global trade in recent years. As multinational firms reassess their dependence on China, they are diversifying production across alternative locations. Rising labour costs in China, geopolitical tensions such as the US-China trade war, and supply chain disruptions during Covid-19 have accelerated this shift. India's foreign policy faces tougher tests ahead. Opinion: India needs a supply chain strategy amid Hormuz, Red Sea crises. For India, this moment appears to offer a historic opportunity. Yet the reality is more complex: India is gaining, but not as much as it could. At first glance, the optimism is justified. India has made visible progress in attracting global manufacturing. The government's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has played a catalytic role, particularly in electronics. Mobile phone exports have surged from roughly \$11 billion in FY23 to over \$15 billion in FY24, indicating that global firms are beginning to shift parts of their supply chains toward India. Electronics Sector: The experience of Apple Inc illustrates this shift. iPhones now account for nearly two-thirds of India's mobile phone exports, and production has expanded rapidly over the past two years. Even more significant is the emergence of component exports: Apple's suppliers in India are increasingly exporting intermediate goods, suggesting that the country is moving, albeit gradually, beyond simple assembly. More broadly, India's electronics sector has expanded dramatically over the past decade, with production rising several-fold and exports growing even faster. India is now the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer. These trends indicate that India is, at least partially, integrating into global manufacturing networks. Only part of the story. Despite rapid growth, India's global position remains modest. Its share of smartphone exports remains 2-3%, far below China's dominance and trailing competitors like Vietnam, which has steadily increased its share to 10-12%. In labour-intensive sectors, Bangladesh continues to dominate textiles, while Mexico has benefited

from nearshoring due to its proximity to the United States. Even in electronics, India's strongest performing sector, the depth of integration remains limited. Domestic value addition is estimated at just 18-20%, compared to roughly 40% in China. This implies that India continues to rely heavily on imported components, capturing only a small portion of the value chains. China+1 is not an automatic windfall. It is a competitive race. Countries that are already embedded in global value chains have a clear advantage. The shift underway is not about building entirely new supply chains, but about relocating segments of existing ones. In this context, Vietnam's success is not accidental; it reflects years of integration through trade agreements and export-oriented policies. India, by contrast, has historically been more inward-looking, limiting its participation in cross-border production networks. Major Bottleneck Structural constraints further weaken India's position. Logistics remains a major bottleneck. While improvements have been made, costs are still significantly higher than in competing economies. Delays at ports, inefficiencies in transport, and fragmented supply chains raise operational costs for firms that operate on thin margins. Labour presents another paradox. India has an abundant workforce, but skill availability remains uneven. Modern manufacturing requires precision, consistency, and technical capability, areas where gaps persist. The issue is not the quantity of labour, but its readiness for complex production processes. Policy uncertainty adds another layer of friction. Frequent tariff changes and evolving compliance requirements create unpredictability for global firms. While some of these measures aim to promote domestic industry, they can inadvertently discourage integration into global value chains, which depend on seamless cross-border flows of inputs. Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Mexico advanced rapidly in global supply chains through consistent policies and strong ecosystems; India must shift focus from protection toward competitiveness. Perhaps the most

critical limitation is the absence of a deep industrial ecosystem. China's dominance is not simply about low costs; it reflects decades of coordinated investment in supplier networks, infrastructure, and logistics. Even today, China accounts for most of the global smartphone production. Replicating such an ecosystem is not a matter of short-term incentives, but of long-term institutional alignment. None of this negates India's progress. In fact, recent trends are encouraging. India's role in global electronics manufacturing is expanding, and there are signs of deeper integration. A growing share of exports is now linked to global firms, and the country is increasingly seen as a viable alternative production base. Beyond Schemes But early gains should not be mistaken for structural transformation. The assumption that global firms will automatically shift to India as they diversify away from China is flawed. The evidence suggests otherwise. Countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Mexico have moved quickly to position themselves within global supply chains, often with greater policy consistency and stronger ecosystem support. For India, the policy implication is clear: the focus must shift from protection to competitiveness. Incentive schemes like PLI can attract investment, but they cannot substitute for deeper reforms. Reducing logistics costs, improving skill development, ensuring policy stability, and expanding trade integration are essential. India's cautious approach to trade agreements has limited its access to global markets, particularly when compared to Vietnam's aggressive strategy of signing multiple free trade agreements. Equally important is manufacturing competitiveness does not depend on a single policy lever; it requires alignment across infrastructure, labour markets, trade policy, and governance. Fragmented reforms will deliver incremental gains at best. The China+1 moment represents a rare window of opportunity. Global supply chains are being reconfigured in real time. But such windows do not remain open indefinitely. As firms establish new production bases, the scope for late India can move from potential to performance, from promise to delivery. The country has secured a foothold, but not yet a leading position. India has a seat at the table. But it must still compete for it.

# China+1 strategy — less windfall, more a test for India



The 'China+1' strategy has become a defining feature of global trade in recent years. As multinational firms reassess their dependence on China, they are diversifying production across alternative locations. Rising labour costs in China, geopolitical tensions such as the US-China trade war, and supply chain disruptions during Covid-19 have accelerated this shift. India's foreign policy faces tougher tests ahead. Opinion: India needs a supply chain strategy amid Hormuz, Red Sea crises. For India, this moment appears to offer a historic opportunity. Yet the reality is more complex: India is gaining, but not as much as it could. At first glance, the optimism is justified. India has made visible progress in attracting global manufacturing. The government's Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme has played a catalytic role, particularly in electronics. Mobile phone exports have surged from roughly \$11 billion in FY23 to over \$15 billion in FY24, indicating that global firms are beginning to shift parts of their supply chains toward India. Electronics Sector: The experience of Apple Inc illustrates this shift. iPhones now account for nearly two-thirds of India's mobile phone exports, and production has expanded rapidly over the past two years. Even more significant is the emergence of component exports: Apple's suppliers in India are increasingly exporting intermediate goods, suggesting that the country is moving, albeit gradually, beyond simple assembly. More broadly, India's electronics sector has expanded dramatically over the past decade, with production rising several-fold and exports growing even faster. India is now the world's second-largest mobile phone manufacturer. These trends indicate that India is, at least partially, integrating into global manufacturing networks. Only part of the story. Despite rapid growth, India's global position remains modest. Its share of smartphone exports remains 2-3%, far below China's dominance and trailing competitors like Vietnam, which has steadily increased its share to 10-12%. In labour-intensive sectors, Bangladesh continues to dominate textiles, while Mexico has benefited

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## HCA launches sweeping measures for league and player development

The Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) annual league season will start from May 12, featuring the A-Division and B-Division T20 Championship, according to HCA Secretary M Jeevan Reddy. "Detailed schedules, team registrations and playing conditions will be communicated to all affiliated units well in advance to ensure smooth conduct of the league," he said on Tuesday. The HCA Secretary also informed that a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) committee will be constituted shortly to ensure a safe and inclusive



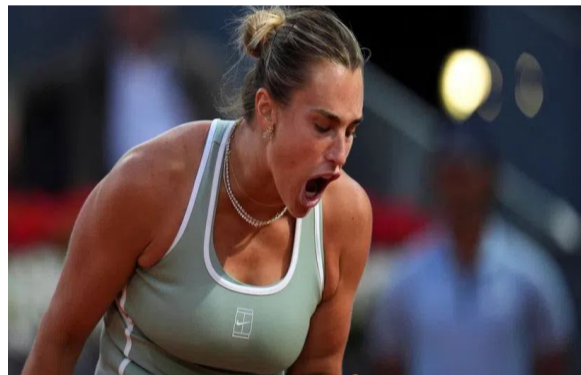
environment for all stakeholders. The committee will comprise members as mandated under the POSH Act, 2013, and will establish a strictly confidential and sensitive mechanism for reporting and addressing complaints, ensuring that no com-

plaintant faces retaliation or bias. Reddy added that the HCA Academy will undergo comprehensive revamping to enhance player development, infrastructure and training standards. The revamped Academy will focus on structured age-group programs, qualified coaching staff, modern training equipment and regular assessment systems to identify and nurture talent at the

grassroots level. "The whole objective is to build elite-level cricketers through scientific training, provide year-round coaching and performance programmes, and establish Hyderabad as a high-performance cricket hub," the HCA official said. "These initiatives reflect the commitment of the Apex Council to promote transparency, professionalism and the overall growth of cricket in Hyderabad," he added. "A redressal process to protect the identity and interests of the complainant," Reddy explained.

## Sabalenka calls for boycott if players don't get bigger cut of Grand Slam revenues

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka believes tennis players should organize a boycott if they don't start receiving a bigger share of tournament revenues at the Grand Slams. Sabalenka and fellow No. 1 Jannik Sinner were among leading players – most of them ranked in the top 10 – who issued a statement on Monday expressing "deep disappointment" over the French Open prize money. "Without us there wouldn't be a tournament and there wouldn't be that entertainment. I feel like definitely we deserve to be paid more percentage," Sabalenka said on Tuesday at the Italian Open as she celebrated her 28th birthday. "I think at some point we will boycott it. I feel like that's going to be the only way to fight for our rights." The players are also seeking better representation, health options and pensions from the four Grand Slam tournaments: Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon and



U.S. Open. French Open organisers announced last month they were increasing overall prize money by about 10% for an overall pot of 61.7 million euros (\$72.1 million), with the total amount up 5.3 million euros from last year. Men's and women's singles champions in Paris will each receive 2.8 million euros and the runners-up 1.4 million euros. Semifinalists earn 750,000 euros and first round losers get 87,000 euros. But the players' statement said "the underlying figures tell a very different story," claiming they will receive a smaller share

of tournament revenues. "Players' share of Roland Garros tournament revenue has declined from 15.5% in 2024 to 14.9% projected in 2026," the players said. Atek, a four-time French Open champion, said "the most important thing is to have proper communication and discussions with the governing bodies so we have some space to talk and maybe negotiate." "Hopefully before Roland Garros there's going to be opportunity to have these type of meetings and we'll see how they go," Swiatek added. "But boycotting the tournament, it's a bit

extreme kind of situation." The players statement said Roland Garros generated 395 million euros in revenue in 2025, a 14% year-on-year increase, yet prize money rose by just 5.4%, reducing players' share of revenue to 14.3%. "With estimated revenues of over 400 million euros for this year's tournament, prize money as a percentage of revenue will likely still be less than 15%, far short of the 22% that players have requested to bring the Grand Slams into line with the ATP and WTA Combined 1000 events," the players said. French Open organizers did not respond to a request for comment after the players issued their statement. The Australian Open this year offers benefits, such as maternity leave, and retirement plans. "There's a lot of things that the Slams are not doing," Paolini said, "that the WTA and I think the ATP are doing." The French Open starts on May 24

## India's young boxers shine at Asian U15 & U17 championships with multiple wins

Hyderabad: India's young boxers delivered another day of impressive performances at the Asian Boxing U15 & U17 Championships 2026, registering multiple victories across the Under-15 and Under-17 categories in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. In the Under-15 boys' competition, Nong poknganba Meitei Oina (46kg) secured a convincing 5:0 victory over Kazakhstan's Abdurakhman Vushanlo, while Parshant (49kg) mirrored the result with a dominant 5:0 win against Bakdaulet Akhmet. Mohd Yasser (58kg) stood out with a commanding performance, sealing his bout via RSC (Referee Stopped Contest) in the first round against Kyrgyzstan's Akbarzhan Nabdizhanov. Nivesh Pal (54kg) also impressed with a 5:0 victory over Kazakhstan's Adilet Galiyev, while Ranveer (66kg) pro-



gressed after a walkover against Chinese Taipei's Ying-Chieh Chen. In other Under-15 bouts, Lilmani Singh Lukram (61kg) lost via RSC in the third round to Uzbekistan's Azizbek Egamberganov, and Mehul Rana (70kg) suffered a first-round RSC defeat against Bauyrzhan. In the Under-17 boys' evening session, Nivesh Pal (54kg) continued his

strong form with another 5:0 victory over Adilet Galiyev of Kazakhstan. Ranveer (66kg) registered a win by ABD (Abandonment) against Chinese Taipei's Ying-Chieh Chen. Lakshay Phogat (75kg) delivered a dominant performance, clinching a first-round RSC victory against Sri Lanka's Ranc higo dagama Arach chila. However, Pradeep (63kg) and Hanjra

Jaideep Singh (80kg) faced tough opponents and lost 0:5 against Uzbekistan's Rusken Saydullaev and Kazakhstan's Alibek Alpamys, respectively. With a mix of dominant wins and hard-fought bouts, the Indian contingent continues to showcase strong depth and promising talent across age groups as the championships progress in Tashkent.

## FDI Easing Under FEMA For Foreign Companies

The decision to ease foreign direct investment norms for overseas companies with up to 10 per cent stake in Chinese companies will be notified soon under the FEMA law, a senior government official said on Thursday. After that, the changes will come into effect. In March, the Union Cabinet approved amendments in the press note (PN) 3 of 2020 under which foreign companies having a Chinese shareholding of up to 10 per cent will be eligible to invest in India under the automatic route across sectors. However, the relaxed FDI rules will not apply to entities registered in China/Hong Kong or other countries sharing land borders with India. The government has also decided that FDI proposals in specified sectors/activities of manufacturing in capital goods, electronic capital goods, electronic components, polysilicon and ingot-wafer or any other sector/activity added by the committee of secretaries headed by the Cabinet Secretary will be processed within 60 days. Though the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has notified these changes, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) has not yet noti-



fied them. "The DEA will have to issue the notification under FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act). It will be notified very soon. It requires a lot of fine-tuning," DPIIT Joint Secretary Jai Prakash Shivahare told reporters here. He added that the department is working to bring during April-February 2025-26 against USD 959 million in the full fiscal year of 2024-25. The media, DPIIT Secretary Amardeep Singh Bhatia said the investment (FDI) is likely to reach USD 90 billion in the full 2025-26 fiscal. He said that reform measures, free trade agreements and fast-growing economic growth are helping the country to attract healthy investments. The depart-

ment also informed that Invest India, the national investment Promotion and facilitation agency, has facilitated the grounding of 60 projects worth over USD 6.1 billion during 2025-26. These investments span 14 states and are estimated to generate more than 31,000 potential jobs. About 42 per cent of the total grounded investment value originates from European nations. Continued participation from the United States, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and other key source markets affirms broad-based international confidence in India's regulatory environment and manufacturing capabilities. Emerging source nations such as Brazil, New Zealand, and Canada indicate diversi-

fication in the country's investment base. "India's investment momentum is a direct outcome of policy clarity, institutional commitment, and the trust global investors place in our systems," Bhatia said. Invest India MD and CEO Nivruti Rai said chemicals, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, and food processing sectors account for about 65 per cent of grounded investments, driven by high-value projects. The agency, she said, key emerging sectors such as electronics system design and manufacturing, aerospace and defence, and auto/EV have recorded significant activity. She added that the agency is focusing on 11 countries for attracting greater inflows.

## India Could Consider Tweaking Inflation Target If Growth Stays Robust, Global Shocks Persist: RBI DG



New Delhi: India could consider lowering the inflation target and trimming the tolerance band if GDP growth remains robust with a more stable inflation over the next five years, RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta said on Tuesday. However, if the global environment remains as challenging as it has been during the past six years, it would warrant both predictability and flexibility inherent in the existing framework, she said. The government, after consultation with the RBI, has notified the inflation target framework for a five year period through March 31, 2031. As per the framework, the Reserve Bank has to keep inflation at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent) from FY27-FY31. Speaking at an NCAER seminar, Gupta said the future of the inflation targeting framework in India would depend on the combination of inflation and growth outcomes as they evolve during the next five years. Also, the future inflation targeting framework would have

to take into account the global shocks that the economy may have to weather. "If growth-inflation mix evolves as it has in the past 10 years in the sense that we continue to have robust growth and lower and more stable inflation, perhaps one could consider going the way other economies have gone," she said. "Perhaps there would be a case to lower the level and narrow the band. But much would depend on the experience of the next four years, which would be taken as input into the next review," Gupta said. Going by international experiences, it would point towards a slightly lower inflation target and a slightly narrower band, Gupta said. On retaining the 4 per cent inflation target with a 2 per cent tolerance band for 5 years through March 2031, Gupta said there is "very little reason to be moving away from this target for now." Gupta said the frequency and intensity of external shocks that every economy has been facing lately, perhaps the

band size remains quite valid. However, if the global environment remains as challenging as it has been during the past six years, it would warrant both predictability and flexibility inherent in the existing framework, she said. The government, after consultation with the RBI, has notified the inflation target framework for a five year period through March 31, 2031. As per the framework, the Reserve Bank has to keep inflation at 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent) from FY27-FY31. Speaking at an NCAER seminar, Gupta said the future of the inflation targeting framework in India would depend on the combination of inflation and growth outcomes as they evolve during the next five years. Future inflation targeting framework would have to take into account the global shocks that the economy may have to weather. "If growth-inflation mix evolves as it has in the past 10 years in the sense that we continue to have robust growth and lower and

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## Riteish Deshmukh Starrer Logs Highest Marathi First Monday; Beats Sairat, Ved

Riteish Deshmukh's historical drama Raja Shivaji is off to a powerful start at the box office. After a strong opening weekend, the film has now set a new benchmark by recording the highest-ever first Monday collections for a Marathi film, beating records set by Sairat and Ved. Raja Shivaji Box Office Collection Day 4 Directed by and starring Riteish Deshmukh, Raja Shivaji earned Rs 5.60 crore net on its first Monday (Day 4), as per data shared by industry tracker Sacnilk. This is now the highest Monday collection ever for a Marathi film in India.

With this, the film's total domestic net collection has reached Rs 39.50 crore in just four days, while the gross stands at Rs 46.95 crore. The film is now inching closer to the Rs 50 crore mark, which is a big achievement for a Marathi release. Raja Shivaji Becomes Second-Highest-Grossing Marathi Film in just four days, Raja Shivaji has already become the second-highest-grossing Marathi film in India. It has crossed the lifetime collection of Natsamrat, which had earned Rs 46.12 crore net. Now, the film is only behind Sairat, which still holds the top spot with Rs 110 crore lifetime collection.

**Occupancy Rates**  
Over the opening weekend, it recorded 32.3% occupancy across more than 6,000 shows. On Monday, the occupancy dropped to around 21.5% with over 5,000 shows, which is still a good sign for a weekday. However, the Hindi version has not performed

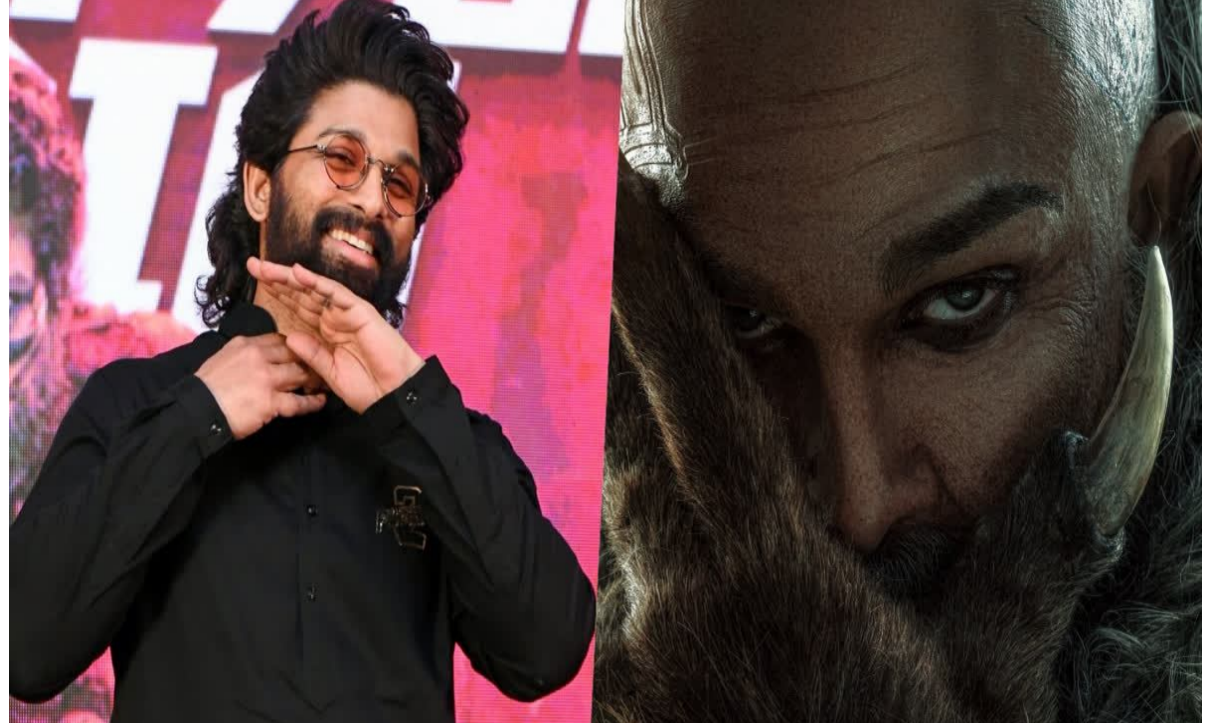


as strongly, with occupancy around 11%, showing that most of the film's success is coming from the Marathi audience. Clash With Ek Din Doesn't Affect Performance  
Raja Shivaji released alongside Ek Din, but the clash has not impacted its box office run. The film continues to attract

audiences, especially in Maharashtra. About Raja Shivaji The film is based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, one of India's greatest warriors and the founder of the Maratha Empire. It focuses on his early years and his fight to establish Swarajya (self-rule) against powerful enemies. Apart from

Riteish Deshmukh, the film also features Abhishek Bachchan, Genelia Deshmukh, Sanjay Dutt, Mahesh Manjrekar and Sachin Khedekar. The film features a special cameo by Salman Khan. Interestingly, Riteish and Genelia's son Rahyl has made his acting debut with this film.

## Allu Arjun-Atlee's Raaka Title Named After Pushpa's Massive Success? Here's What Makers Say



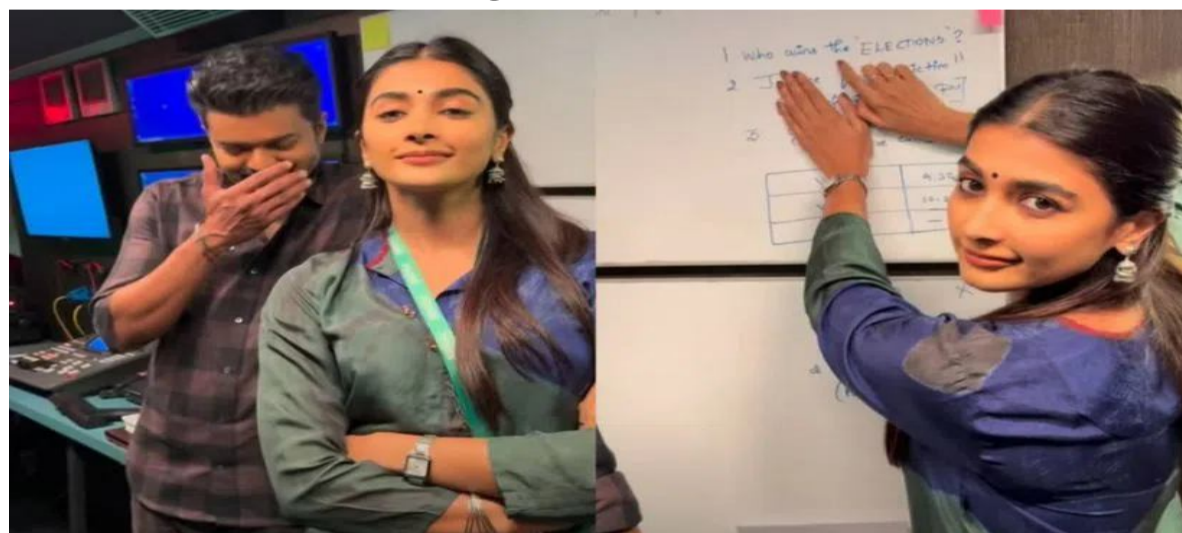
Allu Arjun is currently busy shooting his much-awaited big-budget film Raaka, directed by Atlee. While the makers recently revealed the title along with a striking first-look poster, new reports suggest that the name of Allu Arjun's Raaka may not have been the original title, and that the final name was chosen with a clear strategy in mind. According to a report by a newswire, the team consciously decided to name the film after Allu Arjun's character. This idea reportedly came after the massive nationwide success of the Pushpa franchise. In those films, Arjun's character became more than just a role; it became the identity of the film itself. A source quoted in the report claimed that the makers

wanted to recreate that same magic. Instead of choosing a generic or thematic title, they built the film's identity around the lead character. This means Raaka is not just a title but likely the name of Allu Arjun's role, designed to leave a strong impact on audiences. Interestingly, this also hints that the film may have had a different working title earlier. However, after seeing how Pushpa connected with viewers, the team appears to have shifted direction and chosen a more character-driven title. The first-look poster of Raaka, unveiled on Arjun's birthday, grabbed instant attention. The actor was seen in a fierce, almost beast-like avatar, with sharp features, intense

eyes, and claw-like hands. His look even sparked comparisons to a werewolf, while some fans noticed tattoo-like markings on his forehead resembling Viking symbols. Though the makers have kept most details under wraps, Raaka is expected to be a visually grand film with heavy use of CGI and VFX. There are also strong rumours that the story could explore parallel universes, with Allu Arjun possibly playing multiple roles. The film also stars Deepika Padukone as the female lead. There are unconfirmed reports that Rashmika Mandanna might appear. Interestingly, this also hints that the film may have had a different working title earlier.

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## Jana Nayagan actress says she predicted Vijay's Assembly election win



: Congratulatory messages have not stopped pouring in ever since TVK chief Vijay Thalapathy's impressive win in the recently held Tamil Nadu Assembly Election. The fact that this is the actor-turned-politician's first election made the win even more special. However, his 'Jana Nayagan' co-star Pooja Hegde claimed that she had predicted Vijay's win in advance. Taking to her official Instagram handle, Pooja dropped a behind-the-scenes video from the set of "Jana Nayagan", where she was seen playfully suggesting that Vijay would win the

election. The 'Deva' actress pointed to a question on a whiteboard that read, "Who wins the elections?" Next, Pooja stood in front of Vijay and winked at him, suggesting he and his party would win the election. This adorable gesture made Vijay blush. Embarrassed, he covered his face and walked away. "Guess I called it before it happened? Here's to dreams turning into reality, Vijay sir @actorvijay (sic)," Pooja captioned the post. Before this, Pooja published a photo featuring herself with Vijay on her Instagram Stories,

along with the text, "Congratulations actor Vijay sir. This Thalapathy Kacheri is just getting bigger and bigger. Onwards and upwards only. Party time. Let's gooo." For the unversed, Vijay managed to win not one, but two constituencies where he chose to contest, Perambur in Chennai and Tiruchirappalli East. Besides Pooja, many mberut two constituencies mbers from the entertainment world decided to send their wishes to Vijay through social media posts. Actor Riteish Deshmukh congratulated Vijay, saying, "The verdict is out !!

Huge congratulations to @actorvijay on this incredible and monumental victory. May the force be with you, may you tirelessly work for the good of the people." Keerthy Suresh added, "You don't get here by just being loved, but by also being hated. Through the noise & all but two constituencies that hatred, you never gave up & always showed up. This is pure hard work, commitment and passion for the people. Like I've said before, you're an emotion & this win is a testament to that very; the start of a new legacy!"

## Who Plays What In Christopher Nolan's Epic And Key Moments From The New Trailer



Christopher Nolan is heading into mythological territory with his next big film, The Odyssey, and the newly released trailer has given audiences their first proper look at the director's ambitious take on Homer's ancient Greek epic. Known for films like Oppenheimer, Interstellar and Inception, Christopher Nolan is now tackling one of the oldest and most influential adventure stories ever written. The film follows Odysseus, the king of Ithaca, as he struggles to return home after the Trojan War. His journey, which lasts 10 years, is filled with monsters, storms, temptations and divine interferences. At its heart, though, the story is about family, survival and the need to reclaim home after years of loss. The trailer opens with dark ocean visuals and a tense atmosphere, immediately setting a serious tone. Unlike many fantasy epics

that focus only on spectacle, Nolan appears to be building a more emotional and character-driven story. Matt Damon leads as Odysseus. Matt Damon takes on the role of Odysseus, the legendary warrior and strategist trying to return to Ithaca after victory at Troy. In the trailer, Damon appears rugged, battle-worn and physically transformed for the role. One of the trailer's standout moments features him declaring that nothing, "not even the Gods," will stop him from returning home. The "not even the Gods," line has already sparked major discussion online. Tom Holland plays Telemachus, the son of Odysseus and Penelope. He has grown up without knowing his father and is determined to believe that Odysseus is still alive. The trailer hints at Telemachus having a big-

ger role than some earlier adaptations. He is shown confronting enemies inside the palace and defending his father's legacy. His emotional scenes suggest Nolan is placing strong focus on the father-son relationship. Anne Hathaway as Penelope. Anne Hathaway reunites with Nolan as Penelope, the queen of Ithaca and Odysseus' wife. Penelope is shown as strong, patient and politically sharp. She is trying that nothing, "not even the Gods," to hold her household together while fending off powerful suitors who believe Odysseus will never return. Robert Pattinson Takes Antagonist Role. Robert Pattinson appears as Antinous, one of Penelope's most aggressive suitors. His brief scenes already suggest he could be one of the film's standout characters. Antinous is portrayed as arrogant, dangerous and eager to seize control of Ithaca.