

### Congress Leader VH On Modi's Post-election Lecture

Hyderabad: Senior Congress leader and Telangana Government Advisor V Hanumantha Rao (VHR) criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his recent call for citizens to reduce fuel consumption, travel, and gold purchases during a BJP rally in Hyderabad. The Congress leader, while talking to the media at Gandhi Bhavan, questioned the timing of the "new slogan," alleging that the government was shifting the burden of economic management onto ordinary citizens after the elections. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 He said, "They told people that voting for the BJP would bring development. Now they are asking citizens to use less diesel and petrol and buy less gold. After winning the elections, they have come up with this new slogan asking people to cut down on spending. Instead of lecturing the common man, they should ask Adani, Ambani, and the wealthy people of Gujarat to contribute more



towards helping India, VHR stated. Also Read - CM Revanth Directs Expeditious Procurement Of Food Grains From Farmers The Congress Leader had lodged a police complaint against PM Modi over his remarks against the Congress party during the recent BJP public meeting in Hyderabad. He alleged that Modi made "malicious" comments by describing the Congress as a "Muslim and Maoist party". He questioned whether Muslims were not part of Indian society and pointed out that the community had played a significant role in the country's freedom struggle.

### Himanta Takes Oath as Assam CM for Second Successive Term

Guwahati: In presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and a large number of dignitaries including the chief ministers of most of the NDA ruled states, Himanta Biswa Sarma, the BJP's str ongman in the Northeast, took oath on Tuesday as Assam chief minister for a second consecutive term after the party won the elections with a record mandate. Also Read - 55 AAP MLAs Meet Sunita, Say Jailed Kejrival



Should Not Resign Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya administered the oath of office and secrecy to Sarma at a high-profile event attended by a large number of people from all walks of life. With Sarma, four ministers -- senior BJP leaders Rameswar Teli and Ajanta Neog, AGP president Atul Bora and BPF MLA Charan Boro -- also took oath on Tuesday. Sarma is seen as one of the architects of BJP's rapid growth in the northeast - a region where smaller parties and the Congress once dominated politics.

### KCR chairs key BRS meeting with leaders, members; discusses measures to strengthen party



Hyderabad: BRS president and former Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Reddy on Tuesday chaired a key party meeting at his Erravelli residence to discuss organisational restructuring, membership registration and measures to strengthen the party across Telangana. The meeting also focused on the appointment of party in-charges and the internal committees. BRS working president KT Rama Rao attended the meeting along with BRS Assembly deputy floor leaders T Harish Rao, P Sabitha Indra Reddy, and Talasaleaders T Harish Rao,ani Srinivas Yadav, Opposition leader in the Council

S Madhusudhana Chary, and Council deputy floor leaders L Ramana and Pochamapalli Srinivas Reddy. Party general secretaries including MLCs Takallapalli Ravinder Rao, MLC Banda Prakash Mudiraj, MLA Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, former Ministers T Jeevan Reddy and Satyavathi Rathod, former MPs Ravula Chandrasekhara Reddy and J Santosh Kumar, senior leaders RS Praveen Kumar and Soma Bharat Kumar, among others participated. Former MP KR Suresh Reddy, former Minister Mohd Mahmood Ali and senior leader Mareddy Srinivas Reddy attended as special invitees.

## CM Revanth Directs Expeditious Procurement Of Food Grains From Farmers

Hyderabad: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on Tuesday directed District Collectors to expedite the Paddy and Maize procurement and complete the procurement operations in a mission mode across the state. The Chief Minister, who held a video conference with district Collectors, said any negligence in the process of purchase from farmers would not be tolerated. The Collectors were instructed to address the difficulties faced by the farmers and also conduct field visits personally to inspect the arrangements regularly. The Chief Minister reviewed the shortage of gunny bags and Hamalis (loaders) and directed the officials to supply bags adequately. Procured food grains should also be transported to the warehouses without any delay. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops



Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The CM also warned that action would be initiated against the contractors who failed to provide adequate vehicles, mainly lorries, for transportation as per the agreement. The authorities concerned were ordered to initiate criminal proceedings, if necessary, against the contractors who failed to fulfil the agreements. The Chief Minister directed the

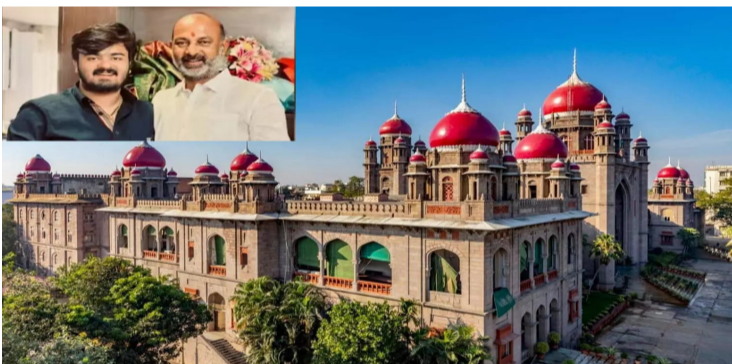
Commissioner of the Transport Department to ensure that vehicles are readily available for the transportation of paddy. The CM stressed that the district Collectors should recognise the gravity of the situation and take appropriate measures. Every official should discharge their duties with accountability and transparency. The government would not hesitate to take

action against Collectors if they neglect their responsibility in challenging times. Also Read - Bandi Sanjay's Son Bhagirath Files Interim Bail Plea In Telangana HC

The officials were ordered to utilise Rythu Bazaars (farmers' markets) and function halls to facilitate the movement and storage of paddy. Formulation of plans to transport Paddy to the permanent warehouses was discussed in the meeting. Fresh Cancellation Shock The Collectors of the districts with high maize production were instructed to remain vigilant during procurement operations and to take all necessary measures to ensure that farmers do not face any difficulties during procurement. The CM advised Collectors to seek police assistance if necessary to ensure the smooth and uninterrupted procurement. Specific instructions were given to the Collectors to submit regular reports to the state Chief Secretary on paddy procurement and maize purchase.

## Bandi Sanjay's Son Bhagirath Files Interim Bail Plea In Telangana HC

Hyderabad: Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Bandi Sanjay Kumar's son, Bandi Sai Bhagirath, has approached the Telangana High Court seeking interim bail in connection with a POCSO case registered against him at the Pet Basheerabad Police Station in the city. With the High Court currently observing summer vacations, the petition was filed before the Vacation Bench. The High Court Vacation Bench is sched-



uled to hear the petition on May 14. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops

Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Bhagirath is currently facing charges of alleged sex-

ual harassment of a minor girl, and the case has taken a serious turn with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy directing officials to start an inquiry into the incident immediately. The Chief Minister, who also holds the Home portfolio, asked Director General of Police (DGP) C.V. Anand to start an investigation

into the case registered against Bhagirath. The Chief Minister questioned why no action had been taken so far when the complaint was lodged on May 8, 2026. On Monday, he announced the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by Kukatpally DCP Ritiraj to expedite the investigation into the POCSO Act case registered against Bhagirath, and the DGP issued orders to constitute the SIT as per his instructions.

### Telangana NEET Aspirants Reel Under Fresh Cancellation Shock

Hyderabad: The cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 examination has triggered anxiety, frustration, and emotional distress among medical aspirants and their families in Telangana, with many students saying the repeated disruptions are taking a serious toll on their mental health and future plans. The National Testing Agency (NTA), in a statement posted on X, announced that the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on May 3 had been cancelled following inputs received from central agencies and investigative findings shared by law enforcement authorities regarding alleged irregularities and paper leak concerns. The agency stated that the examination would be re-conducted on dates to be announced separately. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 According to the NTA, the decision was taken to ensure transparency in the system and maintain



the credibility of national examinations. The Government of India has also referred the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a comprehensive inquiry. In Telangana, the exam was conducted across 199 centres, with 73,024 candidates registered and 71,304 appearing, recording an attendance of 97.64 per cent. Also Read - CM Revanth Directs Procurement Of Food Grains From Farmers Mary Anurupa, a paediatrician and mother of a NEET aspirant, said her daughter was devastated after hearing about the cancellation. "My daughter asked me if she should instead join a BSc course because this is her second attempt. The NEET exam takes a toll on our children. A solu-

tion must be found for these repeated issues and regulations," she said. Another parent, T. Kavya, said her daughter struggled emotionally after the news broke. "To be very honest, my daughter was already anxious while attempting the NEET exam. Sitting through a three-hour examination itself was stressful for her. Last year, she narrowly missed securing a government seat and wanted to get one this time. She is an excellent student with 97 per cent marks, but after hearing the cancellation news, she compl re-conducted examination. No fresh registration or additional fee would be required, and the fees already paid by students would be refunded.

### Rahul Gandhi Slams Newly Elected Bengal Government

New Delhi : Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday strongly criticised the newly elected Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in West Bengal after the State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Manoj Kumar Agarwal was appointed as the Chief Secretary. Shringar X post, the Congress MP once again alleged a collusion between the Election Commission and the BJP. Rahul Gandhi wrote, "In BJP-EC's 'Chor Baazar' (Thieves' Market) - the bigger the theft, the bigger the reward." Investigate Seizure Of Gelatin Sticks Near To PM's Event Earlier on Monday, the BJP government appointed West Bengal CEO Manoj Kumar Agarwal as the Chief Secretary. "The Governor is pleased to appoint Manoj Rumar Agarwal, (AS (WB):1990), Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, and ex officio Additional Chief Secretary, Home and Hill Affairs (Election) Department, Govt. of



West Bengal, as Chief Secretary to the Government of West Bengal until further order(s)," a notification from the West Bengal government read. Also Read - The Politics of Gold In Bengal Impact on Polls The Trinamool Congress (TMC), which had won 212 seats in the last Assembly polls, finished a distant second with 80 seats. This ended TMC's 15-year rule in the State. Congress was restricted to just two seats. Following the victory, Suwendu Adhikari took the oath as the ninth chief minister of West Bengal. The oath of office was administered by Governor RN Ravi at a grand swearing-in ceremony in Kolkata attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers and senior BJP leaders.

it had earlier secured 77 seats in the previous election. Also Read - SC Asks Didi to File Fresh Pleas on SIR Vote Deletion Impact on Polls The Trinamool Congress (TMC), which had won 212 seats in the last Assembly polls, finished a distant second with 80 seats. This ended TMC's 15-year rule in the State. Congress was restricted to just two seats. Following the victory, Suwendu Adhikari took the oath as the ninth chief minister of West Bengal. The oath of office was administered by Governor RN Ravi at a grand swearing-in ceremony in Kolkata attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers and senior BJP leaders.

## NEET UG 2026 exam cancelled, re-test to be conducted soon

**Hyderabad:** In a major development for MBBS admissions this year, the National Testing Agency (NTA), with the approval of the Government of India, has officially cancelled the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on May 3 for allocating MBBS seats across the country. The NTA stated that the integrity of the original examination process could not be maintained. To ensure transparency and protect the interests of students, the examination will be re-conducted on dates to be notified shortly, the NTA posted on its X handle on Tuesday. The Government of India has referred the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a comprehensive inquiry into allegations of irregularities. The NTA has committed to full cooperation and will provide all necessary materials and records to assist the Bureau's investigation, the agency said. To minimise further stress on students, the NTA said there will be no need for fresh registration. Data and candidature from the



May 2026 cycle will be carried forward automatically. The centres previously opted for by candidates will remain the same for the re-conducted examination. No additional examination fee will be levied. Moreover, Tuesday cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination held on May 3 and announced that the medical entrance test will be conducted again on fresh dates to be notified separately. This comes after allegations of a large-scale "guess paper" leak pushed the exam into a nationwide controversy. The government has also ordered a comprehensive

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the alleged irregularities surrounding the examination, which was attended by nearly 22.79 lakh students across India and abroad. On the basis of inputs submitted across India and subsequently examined by NTA in coordination with students across India and abroad. The inputs received by NTA, taken together with the findings of the CBI, will be used to fund the new examination cycle. The revised admit card schedule for NEET will be issued through official NTA channels in the coming days. Candidates have been urged to disregard unverified social media reports and rely strictly on official communications, the NTA said. Official Contact Information

with the findings... ppsst fees already paid will be refunded to students, as the NTA will use internal resources to fund the new examination cycle. The revised admit card schedule for NEET will be issued through official NTA channels in the coming days. Candidates have been urged to disregard unverified social media reports and rely strictly on official communications, the NTA said. Official Contact Information

## SC Advises Judiciary To Support Young Lawyers

**Vijayawada:** The Supreme Court of India advised members of the judiciary at all levels to exhibit patience, compassion, and a spirit of encouragement towards all, especially young members of the Bar. A two-judge Bench comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi heard two writ petitions registered suo motu in New Delhi on Monday over an incident in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. In the incident, Justice T. Rajasekharao had allegedly threatened a young advocate with 24-hour police custody for his indolent behaviour on May 4. Also Read - GRP Opens 10 Rounds Of Fire To Nab Signal Tampering Suspects The apex court observed that no directions were necessary in relation to the incident, as the issue had been amicably settled at the High Court level



with the involvement of the Chief Justice and the Bar Association. The court noted that the judge's oral remarks did not translate into an executable order and that the comments were made under the impression that the young advocate had struck the files on the podium in anger. However, the advocate claimed that the files had accidentally slipped from his hands.

Also Read - Journalist Booked On Charges Of Sexually Harassing Sweeper Noting that the issue had been resolved and that the advocate had no complaint, the apex court chose not to pursue the matter further. However, it made certain pertinent observations on the need for judges to exercise patience and to be encouraging towards young advocates. The

court also observed that it would be appropriate for High Courts to constitute grievance redressal committees involving members of Bar Councils and Bar Associations. It noted that such mechanisms would help ensure that issues between the Bar and the Bench are resolved amicably, effectively, and in a timely manner.

## Chicken Rates Cross Rs 350 Per Kg in Hyderabad

**Hyderabad:** Chicken prices in Hyderabad have crossed Rs 350 per kg, putting pressure on household budgets across the city. Traders say the increase ongoing wedding season and a fall in supply caused by the intense summer heat. Over the past week, chicken prices have risen sharply from around Rs 300 per kg to between Rs 350 and Rs 370 per kg. Boneless chicken is now being sold at nearly Rs 500 per kg in several markets. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 The rates for live chicken are currently ranging between Rs 190 and Rs 220 per kg. Poultry traders say the



wedding season has led to a rise in demand for chicken as large gatherings and celebrations continue across Hyderabad and other parts of the country. With more weddings taking place, the consumption of chicken has

increased significantly in recent weeks. At the same time, the summer heat has affected poultry supply in the state. High temperatures have reduced production levels at farms, leading to lower availability in the market. Traders believe

the prices may come down once the monsoon reaches the state and temperatures begin to fall. Improved weather conditions are expected to help poultry production recover and stabilise supply in the coming weeks.

## Fraud Vitiates Everything: Telangana High Court Quashes Land Claims Based on Fabricated 1973 Stamp Paper

**Hyderabad:** The Telangana High Court has made it clear that no mutation or revenue entry obtained through deceit, fraud or fabricated documents would survive in the eyes of law. Justice Nagesh Bheemapaka stated that "fraud vitiates everything", hence such entries obtained by using fraud would not be sustainable. The Judge was dealing with a petition filed in 2013 by Karri Koteshwar Rao and, after his demise, his legal representatives, regarding 14.09 acres of land in Survey No.s 148/3 to 148/9 of Chunchupalli village, in the mandal of the same name, in Bhadradi-Kothagudem district. They bought the land through a sada bainama sale deed dated 14.04.1959 from Nagubandi Mallaiah, before Regulation 1 of the 1970 Act (total alienation of land in Scheduled Area) came into force. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 However, one Molothu Sreenu relied upon forged and fabricated documents to claim ownership over the disputed land and he submitted a sada sale deed of the year 1973 and claimed that he was a member of the Lambada (Scheduled



Tribe) community. The controversy revolved around the crucial documents produced by the Sreenu before the appellate tribunal was a "Sada Sale Deed" purportedly executed on March 29, 1973. However, the petitioners argued that the stamp paper itself exposed the fraud since it carried the national motto "Satyameva Jayate" along with the Ashoka Chakra emblem — features that were introduced on stamp papers printed by the India Security Press, Nashik, only from February 25, 1977. Based on the fabricated documents and by playing fraud, he obtained favorable orders in the lower tribunals. Also Read - Chicken Rates Cross Rs 350 Per Kg in Hyderabad When it reached the High Court, Justice Bheemapaka found serious substance in the allegation and observed that a docu-

ment allegedly executed in 1973 could not have contained a feature introduced several years later, indicating prima facie fabrication. The court also examined 'pahani' and 'adangal' records allegedly showing possession of the land by Sreenu's father during 1973-76. However, the tahsildar informed the court that no such records were available in official archives. Also Read - Miyapur: 13-Year-Old Girl Dies After Falling Into Open Water Tank Th no such entries existed in the revenue records for those years, leading the court to draw an adverse inference that the documents relied upon before lower tribunals were forged. The court also noted that Lambadas were declared as a Scheduled Tribe in 1976 under Article 342 of the Constitution, hence, purchase of properties by Lambada com-

munity members after the Regulation came into force was not in contravention of Section 3 of the Regulation. The Telangana Police Despite the interim stay orders issued by the High Court, Sreenu sold the plots in the disputed land to around 130 tribal people and constructions were made by them, based on the sada bainama papers. The court found that Sreenu's advocate on record on his behalf made false statements and cautioned counsel to be cautious and diligent while filing affidavits and making submissions. The court ordered rectification of revenue records that were allegedly manipulated on the strength of fabricated documents and observed that parties who suffered due to such fraud were free to initiate both civil and criminal proceedings against those responsible. The court also reminded purchasers that if the vendor's title itself collapsed due to fraud, subsequent purchasers could not claim protection merely on the ground that they purchased the property for consideration. The court observed that the only remedy available for them was to sue their vendors for recovery of sale consideration.

## Satavahana University Pushes Industry-Ready Training, Inks Four MoUs

**WARANGAL:** Satavahana University on Monday signed four Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with technology and education firms to enhance student employability and research capabilities, as part of the Telangana State Education Week celebrations in Karimnagar. Vice Chancellor Prof. U. Umesh Kumar said the collaborations aimed to provide students with internships and industry-oriented training, while equipping faculty with advanced research tools. He said the university was strengthening its academic and infrastructural base through such partnerships to make



students industry-ready and competitive in national-level examinations. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Under an agreement with Skill Dezire Technologies Private Limited, the university will facilitate internships, workshops and access to online UGC platforms such as SWAYAM, NPTEL and

MOOCs, along with secAcademy of Technology Private Limited will focus on applied research and hands-on training in hardware systems and intelligent software solutions, with joint certification programmes tailored to regional needs. Also Read - Chicken Rates Cross Rs 350 Per Kg in Hyderabad For engineering students, the

university partnered with Ramesh IES GATE Academy to provide training for competitive examinations such as IES, GATE and public sector undertakings. Students at the Husnabad B.Tech campus will be given access to digital study materials, video lectures and mock tests through a mobile application. The fourth agreement, with NGO Ignite Swarna Bharathi, will offer a 30-day online coaching programme for Civil Services aspirants from rural and economically weaker backgrounds, covering subjects including Geography, History and Indian Polity.

## Miyapur: 13-Year-Old Girl Dies After Falling Into Open Water Tank

**Hyderabad:** A 13-year-old girl died after accidentally falling into an open water tank at an apartment complex in Miyapur on Monday evening. The incident came to light when the girl's father, who had been searching for her since evening, discovered her body in the tank. According to the Miyapur police, Charan and Renuka, a couple from Maddirala Thanda in Tekulapalli mandal of Bhadradi Kothagudem district, have been working in Gokul Plots, Miyapur, for the past ten years. The couple has two daughters and a son. Charan had joined Sri Residency apartment as a watchman just a week ago. Also Read - Part Time Job Fraud Tops Cyberabad Crime in 2025 Police said Charan's daughter, Sara, accidentally fell into a



water tank that had been left open on the apartment premises at around 7:30 pm. When the girl could not be found, her worried parents began searching for her. Upon noticing the open tank, they found Sara ached the spot and gathered details about the incident. The girl's parents

have expressed suspicions regarding her death. Police have registered a case and are investigating whether it was a tragic accident or unconscious in the water. She was immediately rushed to a private hospital in Nizampet, where doctors declared her dead on arrival.

Miyapur police reached the spot and gathered details about the incident. The girl's parents have expressed suspicions regarding her death. Police have registered a case and are investigating whether it was a tragic accident or if there were any other circumstances involved.

## Karnataka Alert On SIR Process, Seeks To Avoid 'Bengal-Like' Controversies

**Bengaluru:** Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara, speaking to the media on Saturday, said, "In our state as well, the SIR (Special Intensive Revision) process will begin. We also need to be careful. Anything that happened in West Bengal should not be allowed here." "This is our opinion, and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has already held a meeting regarding the matter. Mapping has already been completed in some places, while in others it is still pending," he said. He said, "Yesterday, I was invited to a meeting regarding the SIR, but I could not attend due to various reasons. In West Bengal, many people



claim that the government lost power because of alleged SIR manipulation. Analysts say that due to such manipulation, the BJP won nearly 100 seats by margins of around 5,000 votes." "This should not be allowed in Karnataka and we are careful," he added. "Probably, there will be more clarity after a few days. Once the process is completed fully, a clear

picture will emerge," he added. "We have already given instructions to our party workers and Booth Level Agents (BLAs) regarding monitoring the process and holding discussions with Booth Level Officers (BLOs). Additions and deletions in the voter list have to be monitored carefully. The party has conveyed all these directions to the BLAs, and they will carry

out the work," he stated. Speaking about the preparations for the mega event in his native Tumakuru city to mark the occasion, he said, "This can be described as a major achievement of the Karnataka government." "In continuation of this initiative, property documents will be distributed to 1.40 lakh people under the programme that has been planned," he said. "We had not imagined that the Congress government would soon be completing three years in office. However, after May 20 was suggested to the Chief Minister's Office, and everything fell into place. Since the swearing-in ceremony

was held on May 20 and the government came into existence on that day, it has been decided to celebrate the occasion as the completion of three years of the government," he added. "More importantly, this is primarily a programme of the Revenue Department," he said. "More than 50 per cent of the assurances promised in the manifesto have already been fulfilled. There is also a need to review this achievement," he added. Responding to a question on a possible Cabinet reshuffle, Parameshwara said, "It is the decision of the party high command. I have been repeating this to the media time and again."

## Nearly Half Of Meghalaya's Population Above Age Of 15 Years Consume Tobacco: Official

**Shillong:** Nearly half of Meghalaya's population above the age of 15 consumes tobacco in smoked or smokeless forms, while close to 8,000 people die annually from tobacco-related diseases in the state, a senior health official said on Monday. Speaking at the launch of the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) 2026 campaign, State Nodal Officer of the National Tobacco Control Programme Dr Nabaneeta D Mawrie described the situation as a major public health concern and called for urgent intervention to protect the youth and the wider population. "Tobacco is not just a habit, it is a trap carefully designed to addict our youth and communities," she said. "With nearly half of adults above 15 years in Meghalaya using tobacco and close to 8,000 lives lost annually due to tobacco-

related illnesses, the urgency to act now is extremely high," Mawrie added. The WNTD 2026 campaign has been launched under the theme "Tobacco! The Business of Death", in line with the global theme "Unmasking the appeal, countering nicotine and tobacco addiction". The awareness drive, which began on April 6, will continue in schools and colleges across the state throughout April and May before concluding on May 31, officials said. Mawrie said the campaign aims to mobilise educational institutions to organise rallies, signature drives and community outreach programmes against the tactics employed by tobacco companies while encouraging students to make informed and healthy choices. "This campaign



seeks to expose the harmful tactics of tobacco industries, empower students to make informed and healthy decisions, and transform awareness into meaningful community action," she said. She also highlighted the achievements of the Tobacco Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) programme being implemented in collaboration with

the Sambandh Health Foundation. According to officials, more than 9,000 schools and nearly six lakh students in Meghalaya have participated in anti-tobacco awareness programmes over the last four years. Education department official Jennyfer J Synrem said the increasing participation in recent years reflected

growing public awareness. "In 2026, we are not just continuing a campaign; we are building a movement," she said. "Schools are not only centres of learning but agents of change." Deputy Commissioner of South West Garo Hills Anendya Raajshre stressed the need for sustained efforts to translate awareness into action. "Real change will happen only when awareness transforms into action," she said. "Initiatives like WNTD and ToFEI are not just campaigns; they are commitments to protect human lives." Officials said the campaign is expected to witness participation from schools, colleges, government departments, civil society organisations and community groups ahead of World No Tobacco Day on May 31.

## Himanta Biswa Sarma Takes Oath As Assam CM For Second Consecutive Term; PM Modi, Other Top Leaders Present

**Guwahati:** After NDA's landslide victory in the recently-concluded Assam elections, senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in as the Chief Minister for a second consecutive term here on Tuesday (May 12), becoming the first non-Congress leader in the state to achieve the feat. The ceremony was graced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, chief ministers, deputy chief ministers from several NDA-ruled states and top leaders of the Union government. Along with Sarma, Rameswar Teli, Atul Bora, Charan Boro, and Ajanta Neog also took oath as ministers in the ceremony. Senior BJP leader and MLA Ranjit Das has been named as the candidate for the post of Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly. Ahead of the oath ceremony, Sarma, considered the BJP's Northeast strongman, on Monday reaffirmed his administration's commitment to the state's growth, stating that the new team will work with "full dedication" to build a "stronger, more developed, and prosperous



Assam." "My heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to all ministers. Together, we will continue to work with full dedication for a stronger, more developed and prosperous Assam," he said in a post on X. He also stated that the first Cabinet meeting of the new government would be held shortly after the swearing-in ceremony. He said implementation of the BJP's electoral commitments and development agenda would

remain the government's top priority in its new term. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance secured a decisive mandate in the recently concluded Assam Assembly elections, winning its highest-ever 102 seats, with the BJP bagging 82 seats, while its allies AGP and BPF won 10 each, in the 126-member House. With NDA forming its government for a third consecutive term in the state, Union

Minister Sarbananda Sonowal termed it a "great day for the people of Assam." Speaking to reporters ahead of the ceremony, Sonowal credited the people of Assam for reposing faith in the NDA for a third consecutive term and expressed confidence that the state would emerge as one of the most developed states in the country under the leadership of CM-designate

Himanta Biswa Sarma. "With the support of the people of Assam, NDA for the third term is going to form the government under the leadership of Himanta Biswa Sarma... This is a great day, and we are really thankful to the people of Assam... I'm sure that in this third term of NDA, Assam is going to become one of the most developed states in the country," Sonowal said.

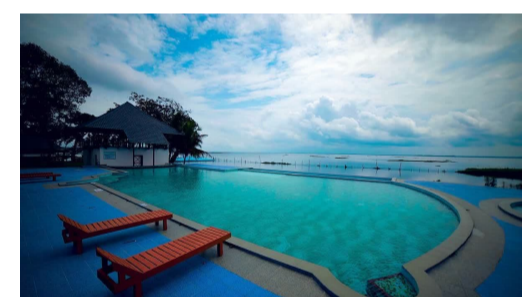
## Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker Elected Unopposed; Who Is TVK's JCD Prabhakar



**Chennai:** Tamil Nadu Assembly unanimously elected TVK legislator JCD Prabhakar as its Speaker on Tuesday. Prabhakar, a three term MLA, had earlier won from Villivakkam constituency in As the House convened to elect the Speaker, Pro-Tem Speaker M V Karuppaiah said Prabhakar has been elected as his was the only nomination received for the Speaker's post. Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Monday proposed Prabhakar's name for the post of Speaker. The DMK did not name any candidate. The AIADMK which was in disarray over its poorest electoral performance yet its founding also did not field any candidate. Minutes before the House convened Tuesday more than 26 AIADMK MLAs led by CV Shanmugham announced that the party would support the Vijay-led government. In the House, Karuppaiah announced that his role as Pro-Tem Speaker has ended, paving the way for Prabhakar to be installed as Speaker of the House. He asked Leader of the House K A Sengottaiyan and Leader of the Opposition (LoP) Udhayanidhi Stalin to escort the newly elected Speaker to his chair, as per the tradition followed in the House. He announced that Prabhakar would conduct the House from there on. As suggested, Sengottaiyan and Udhayanidhi approached Prabhakar and congratulated him. After shaking hands, the duo escorted him to his chair, which is at the Centre of the House. Treasury benches and opposition members sit facing each other on either side of the Speaker's chair. Immediately after assuming his chair, Prabhakar conducted the election for the deputy speaker. He member to file his nomination for the deputy speaker's post, and his nomination was proposed by Sengottaiyan. In the absence of any contest, Ravishankar has been elected unopposed, he said. Who is JCD Prabhakar? A senior leader from the MGR era in the AIADMK is an alumnus of prestigious Loyola College and Madras Law College. The septuagenarian who knows the House procedures has first won as an AIADMK MLA from Villivakkam in 1980. In 2026, he contested from the Thousand Lights constituency. He defeated Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) candidate Ezhlian Naganathan and relegated former AIADMK Minister B Valarmathi to a distant third. He unsuccessfully contested from the same seat in the next two elections--1984 and 1989.

## Experts Anticipate Significant Boost In Inbound Tourism After PM Modi's Appeal To Avoid Foreign Travel

**New Delhi:** The Indian tourism industry is anticipating a boost in inbound tourism after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens to conserve foreign exchange reserves by cutting down on unnecessary foreign travel, overseas vacations and destination weddings abroad. Industry stakeholders believe the appeal could lead to a significant shift in travel preferences, encouraging Indians to explore domestic destinations instead of opting for international tours and weddings. Travel operators and hospitality players said the move may particularly benefit domestic tourism hotspots, heritage circuits and luxury wedding destinations across India. Experts noted that affluent travellers, who often choose foreign locations for trips and weddings, may now increasingly look at destinations that offer comparable experiences. Tourism and hospitality operators are now hopeful that the Prime Minister's appeal will translate into higher bookings, increased footfall at Indian destinations and renewed interest in destination weddings within the country. Sharing his views, Rajnish Kaishta, tourism expert and senior vice president of the Indian Association of Tour Operators, told ETV Bharat, "Outbound tourism has already been under pressure due to the ongoing West Asia conflict over the past several months. Many tourists are avoiding foreign travel as airfares have increased significantly, affecting middle-class travellers the most." He said the industry has been consistently urging the government to focus on boosting inbound tourism to strengthen the country's foreign exchange reserves. "For increasing inbound tourism, the government needs to undertake aggressive publicity and promotion of Indian tourist destinations and attractions at the international level," he stated.



turn, will help boost Indian hotels and the economy." He further said the government should now focus on increasing inbound foreign tourist arrivals, as international visitors bring valuable foreign exchange that can strengthen the Indian economy. "Foreign tourists contribute significantly to the country's foreign exchange reserves, and increasing inbound tourism will help improve our economy further," he added. Expressing similar views, Ravi Gosain, president of the IATO, told ETV Bharat, "Outbound tourism has already been under pressure due to the ongoing West Asia conflict over the past several months. Many tourists are avoiding foreign travel as airfares have increased significantly, affecting middle-class travellers the most." He said the industry has been consistently urging the government to focus on boosting inbound tourism to strengthen the country's foreign exchange reserves. "For increasing inbound tourism, the government needs to undertake aggressive publicity and promotion of Indian tourist destinations and attractions at the international level," he stated.

Another tourism expert, Garish Oberoi, honorary treasurer of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India, said, "This is positive news for Indian hotels as it is expected to generate more business for the domestic hospitality sector. If outbound tourism declines by 20 to 30 per cent, it will provide a significant boost to the dothe resilience of India's outbound travel market, supported by rising consumer confidence, expanding aviation networks, and growing demand for international leisure and business travel. According to official data, outbound travel by Indian nationals in 2024 was largely driven by leisure and recreational purposes, which accounted for 42.52 per cent of total departures. Indian diaspora followed closely at 34.69 per cent. Business and professional travel contributed 14.92 per cent to the total outbound movement, while pilgrimage travel accounted for 3.99 per cent. Education-related travel made up 2.45 per cent, and the remaining 1.43 per cent was attributed to other purposes, the data showed.

## Madhya Pradesh HC Extends Stay On Arrest Of Abhishek Banerjee In Defamation Case, But With A Warning

**Jabalpur:** The Madhya Pradesh High Court here on Monday extended the stay on execution of an arrest warrant issued against Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee by a special court in Bhopal, but said if his counsel doesn't argue the case on the next date of hearing on June 16, the court will decide his application on merit. A single-judge bench of Justice Pramod Kumar Agarwal has granted this interim relief, albeit with a warning, to Abhishek Banerjee, the nephew of former West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, in connection with a defamation suit filed by Akash Vijayvargiya, son of Madhya Pradesh minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, in 2021 alleging that Banerjee had called him a "goonda" at a public meeting in Kolkata in 2021. Citing this statement as one that tarnished his personal and familial reputation, Akash Vijayvargiya



filed a defamation suit against Banerjee in the MP-MLA Court in Bhopal in 2021. Hearing the defamation case, the MP-MLA Court in Bhopal issued an arrest warrant against Banerjee. Banerjee filed a petition in the Madhya Pradesh High Court challenging the mentioned order, granting a final opportunity to the applicant. In its order, the HC stated, "If his counsel fails to present arguments during the next hearing, the application will be considered on its merits, and the interim

relief shall not be extended further." While extending the stay on the arrest warrant he issued by the MP-MLA court. The petition argued that he is currently a sitting TMC MP and that there is no likelihood of him absconding. While hearing the petition, the High Court stayed the execution of the arrest warrant while hearing the petition issued by the court. During the hearing of the petition, the applicant also sought an adjournment. After the hearing, the single

bench issued the aforementioned order, granting a final opportunity to the applicant. In its order, the HC stated, "If his counsel fails to present arguments during the next hearing, the application will be considered on its merits, and the interim relief shall not be extended further." While hearing the petition, the High Court stayed the execution of the arrest warrant while hearing the petition issued by the court. During the hearing of the petition, the applicant also sought an adjournment. After the hearing, the single

## CBI Arrests 'Middleman' in Rs 25-lakh Bribery Case, Raids Punjab Vigilance Bureau Office

**Mohali:** After the Enforcement Directorate (ED), the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is now in action in Punjab. Late night on Monday, a CBI team arrested Raghav Goyal, an alleged middleman in a bribery case of Rs 25 lakh, and recovered Rs 13 lakh in cash from his possession. Sources said the CBI first raided a five-star hotel in Chandigarh, where Inspector O P Rana, Reader to Vigilance Chief Sharad Satya Chauhan, along with "middleman" Raghav Goyal, were striking a deal with a complainant. Rs 13 lakh in bribe was seized. Goyal, a resident of Muktsar's Malout, was arrested, while Rana managed to escape, they said. In a significant follow-up operation, a CBI team also raided the Punjab Vigilance Bureau headquarters in Mohali late night on Monday. An official statement on



this is yet to come. Akali leader and former Cabinet Minister Bikram Singh Majithia claimed on X that the Central agency "recovered Rs 13 lakh from a vigilance official in a Rs 20 lakh bribery scandal". In another post, he wrote, "My source reveals that Vigilance DGP office has been sealed by the Central agency after the raid. Vigilance chief is reportedly missing, and

currently, his phone is switched off. It is believed that the Vigilance chief may be on the run after the crackdown." Earlier, in Sri Muktsar Sahib city, a Chandigarh CBI team led by DSP Pavit Singh, raided the house of Raghav Goyal, son of Vikas Goyal, on Water Works Road in Malout, late evening on Monday. According to reports, Raghav and his

father Vikas were not present at the house during the raid. This raid is related to FIR No. 12/26, dated May 11, 2026, Prevention of Corruption Act, registered at the CBI police station in Chandigarh. According to information, the team searched the house till around 1 am. The team took some documents and cash with them. (with agency inputs)

## HC Junks SpiceJet's Plea To Review Rs 144 Cr Payment Order In Dispute With Maran

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed pleas by SpiceJet and its promoter Ajay Singh seeking a review of an earlier order to deposit Rs 144 crore in connection with its legal dispute with media baron Kalanithi Maran and Kal Airways. Justice Subramonium Prasad also imposed a cost of Rs 50,000 on the airline and Singh. "Dismissed with cost of Rs 50,000," the judge said while pronouncing the verdict. On January 19, the court had directed SpiceJet and Singh to deposit Rs 144 crore with the registry within six weeks against an admitted liability of Rs 194 crore. On March 18, time to make the deposit was extended by four weeks. his budget airline sought reconsideration of the March 18 direction on several counts, including financial distress amid the ongoing



war in West Asia. SpiceJet instead offered a commercial property in Gurugram as security and informed the court that the Centre was willing to offer it some assistance. Maan and Kal Airways opposed the

review petitions, saying the issues arising from financial distress had already been conby the transfer of ownership to Singh, the controlling shareholder of SpiceJet. The dispute started after Singh took back control

of SpiceJet in February 2015 amid a financial crisis at the airline. Maran and Kal Airways had transferred their entire 35.04 crore equity shares, amounting to a 58.46 per cent stake, in SpiceJet, to its co-

## Respecting People's Verdict: Shanmugam-Led AIADMK Faction Extends Support To TVK In TN



**Chennai:** A faction of the AIADMK led by senior leader CV Shanmugam on Tuesday announced that the party will support Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), accepting the people's mandate in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. AIADMK was pushed to third place in the 2026 Assembly elections. Addressing reporters at MRC Nagar in Chennai, Shanmugam said, "The people have voted for TVK leader Vijay. Respecting the people's verdict, we have resolved to support TVK leader Vijay." Respecting People's Verdict: Shanmugam-Led AIADMK Faction Extends Support To TVK In TN (ANI) Shanmugam also announced the appointment of former minister S.P. Velumani as the leader of the AIADMK legislature party, former minister C. Vijayabaskar as party whip, MLA Hari as deputy leader in the Assembly, and former minister Kain in opposition to the araj as secretary. He added that an official letter regarding these appointments had been submitted to the Pro Tem Speaker. The AIADMK leader said that the proposal laid by the party's General Secretary Edappadi

Palaniswami, following the defeat, surprised many of them. "He stated that the DMK was ready to support him as Chief Minister. This came as a huge surprise to us, he added." We opposed this move, Shanmugam said, adding EPS refused to accept our view. "AIADMK was founded in opposition to the DMK, and we have upheld that ideology for the past 53 years. If AIADMK aligns with the DMK, the party itself will cease to exist," the AIADMK leader said. Following this, a majority of AIADMK MLAs met and passed a resolution opposing Edappadi Palaniswami's stand. He further said that they have also requested that the party's General Council be convened to thoroughly examine the reasons behind the party's store the kind of governance once led by former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa. AIADMK is no longer part of any alliance. The party must now take a noncontinuous defeats and to take the party's growth to the next level. "Alin opposition to the vl leaders must come together, analyse the reasons for the defeats, and take decisions to re-w direction and be safeguarded," he added.

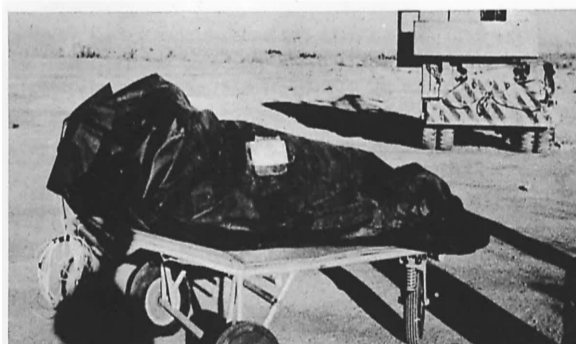
Former minister SP Velumani, who spoke after Shanmugam refused reports claiming they were splitting the party. "There is propaganda claiming that we are trying to split the AIADMK into two factions. That is not our intention. This is the party founded by former Chief Minister MGR. Continuous defeats have raised several questions within the party. A healthy discussion on these matters will take place today. We believe the General Secretary will take the right decision," he said. In closely fought assembly elections, contesting 169 of 234 constituencies, the party won only 47 seats. Several senior leaders, including former minister D. Jayakumar, lost even their deposits in the election. The party had also suffered in opposition to the d defeats in the 2021 Assem Palaniswami, following the defeat, surprised many of them. We were ready to support him as Chief Minister. This came as a huge surprise to uin opposition to the s, he added." We opposhim as Chief Minister. ed this move, Shanmugam said, adding in opposition to the EPS refused to accept our view. "AIADMK was founded

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## Pentagon Begins Releasing New Files On UFOs And Says The Public Can Draw Its Own Conclusions

**WASHINGTON:** The Pentagon has begun releasing new files on UFOs, saying members of the public can draw their own conclusions on "unidentified anomalous phenomena." Besides the Pentagon, the effort is led by the White House, the director of national intelligence, the Energy Department, NASA and the FBI. The Pentagon said Friday in a post on X that while past administrations sought to discredit or dissuade the American people, President Donald Trump "is focused on providing maximum transparency to the public, who can ultimately make up their own minds about the information contained in these files." The Pentagon says additional documents will be released on a rolling basis. Trump, a Republican, has been teasing the announcement since February. He

has previously released records related to the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. that revealed little beyond what was already known. The Pentagon has been working on declassifying documents related to UFOs for years, and Congress created an office in 2022 to declassify material. Its 2024 debut report revealed hundreds of new UAP incidents but found no evidence that the U.S. government had ever confirmed a sighting of alien technology. Congress ordered the Pentagon to begin releasing decades of files on UFO sightings in 2022 as some members of the military shared encounters with unexplained aircraft. A small group of Republicans in Congress has pressed for further



transparency, accusing the Pentagon of holding documents back. A March letter from Rep. Anna Paulina Luna demanded 46 UAP videos identified by whistleblowers. On social media on Friday, Luna said those videos are expected to be released in a later Pentagon release. Rep. Tim Burchett thanked Trump for "keeping his word" on transparency and disclosure. "I would like to remind

people that transparency won't all happen at once, it will take some time," Burchett said in a statement. Experts have urged caution around the release of the new files, warning that UAP videos are often misinterpreted and mischaracterized by those unfamiliar with advanced military technology. The Pentagon's 2024 report rebutted claims that the U.S. government has recovered alien technology or confirmed evi-

## UK Sets Out Fuel Contingency Plans For Flights Amid US-Iran Conflict

London: Airlines will be expected to consolidate schedules on certain routes with multiple flights to the same destination on the same day as part of contingency measures the UK government announced on Sunday. The Department for Transport (DfT) issued a series of temporary plans amid ongoing jet fuel supply issues caused by the US-Iran conflict and the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.



It stressed that while UK airlines say they are not currently facing supply issues, the government is stepping in to protect travellers from the likelihood of last-minute flight cancellations over the upcoming summer holiday period in the event of significant disruption caused by the conflict.

"Since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the government has been monitoring jet fuel supplies daily and working with airlines, airports and fuel suppliers to stay ahead of any problems," said UK Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander. "There are no immediate supply issues, but we're preparing now to give families long-term certainty and avoid unnecessary disruption at the departure gate this summer." This legislation will give airlines the tools to adjust flights in good time if they need to, which helps protect passengers and businesses," she said. Alexander said that the UK "will do everything we can to insulate" the country from the impact of the situation in West Asia. The contingency plans are designed to enable airlines to plan realistically and lock in schedules earlier so that people are less likely to be affected by short-

notice changes at the airport. Instead of cancelling flights at the last minute, the temporary measures would help move passengers onto similar services, prevent running flights which have not sold a significant proportion of tickets and reduce wasted fuel from flying near-empty planes. DfT said it will be consulting with the aviation industry in order to act quickly and before any travel disruption is allowed to take hold. The measures will allow airlines to proactively hand back a limited proportion of their allocated take-off and landing slots without losing the right to operate them the following season. Such "hand backs" would help airlines build realistic schedules and avoid last-minute cancellations rather than flying empty "ghost flights" or cancelling at short notice, putting passengers' plans at risk, DfT stated. "Airlines have a duty to look after their passengers when they face disruption, and should offer a choice between a refund or alternative travel arrangements, including with another airline, if a flight is cancelled," said Rob Bishton, Chief Executive of the UK

Civil Aviation Authority. "Relaxing the rules around slots at airports will allow airlines more flexibility, and so we expect them to give passengers as much notice as possible of cancellations during this period," he said.

Under UK rules, if a flight is cancelled by the airline, passengers have a legal right to a choice between being re-routed or a refund. If it is subject to a significant delay – at least two hours for short-haul, three hours for medium-haul and four hours for long-haul – passengers are entitled to care and assistance, including food, drink and overnight accommodation where necessary. The British government said it is increasing awareness around consumer rights as it works to increase flexibility on jet fuel supply and domestic jet fuel production. The UK imports jet fuel supplies from a range of countries not reliant on the Strait, including the United States. The UK's four refineries have been asked to maximise jet fuel supply, as the government explores options to increase supplies from the US. The Transport Secretary discussed the government's contingency plans to

protect summer holiday plans at a roundtable with key industry figures earlier this week, including representatives from Heathrow and Gatwick Airports as well as British Airways, Virgin Atlantic and easyJet. "UK airlines continue to operate normally and are not experiencing issues with jet fuel supply," said Tim Alderslade, CEO of Airlines UK. "We welcome the government's contingency planning, including slot alleviation, which is one measure which enables airlines to adjust schedules responsibly, avoid unnecessary flying and continue operating efficiently while protecting connectivity for passengers," he said.

Karen Dee, Chief Executive of AirportsUK, added: "While our partners across the aviation sector continue to report no shortage of jet fuel supplies, it is sensible for the government to consult on possible action if this were to change. "We will now work closely with our airport members, ministers and officials to examine the proposals and respond on the best way to proceed that will lead to the best outcomes for passengers."

## US, Israel Be Held Accountable By International Community for What They Started, Says Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson

New Delhi: With the West Asia conflict disrupting global supply chains, a top Iranian official has said that Tehran is "not happy" about India and other countries facing its consequences and asserted that this was "caused" by the US and Israel.

In an interview to India Today, Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei also said the US and Israel have to be "held accountable" by the international community for "what they started and are still continuing". Asked if he saw any end to this conflict as countries like India are suffering because of its impact and choking of the Strait of Hormuz, Baghaei said, "You have to see what happened on February 28. Before that, the Strait of Hormuz was open and free to every country." "Iran was forced to take certain measures under international law, and I



have to stress this: what Iran did is allowed under international law because we had to face aggressors, the United States and Israel, who were abusing the soil of other Persian Gulf states to attack Iran. That was absolutely unlawful. It was an act of aggression," he charged during the interview held in other Persian Gulf states Tehran. "So we had to fight back. We had to take measures in order to prevent these aggressors

from abusing this water lane for conducting military aggression against Iran. It was not Iran's fault," he said. The US has justified its attack on Iran claiming that Tehran's nuclear programme is a threat. "We are not happy about what is happening in India and other countries, but this was caused by the United States and Israel. Iran depends on this strait more than many other countries

because we are a coastal state. We want to see security and safety in this water lane," Baghaei said. "But the problem is that the United States and Israel initiated this war of aggression and inflicted these consequences on the whole economy," Baghaei charged, adding "they have to be held accountable by the international community for what they started and are still continuing".

## Over 1 Lakh Schools Run With Single Teacher, Without Electricity; Nearly 99,000 Lack Girls' Toilet: Niti Aayog Report

New Delhi: India's school education system has witnessed major expansion over the last decade, but thousands of schools across the country still lack basic amenities such as electricity, toilets, drinking water and digital infrastructure, revealed a report recently released by NITI Aayog.

The report titled "School Education System in India: Temporal Analysis and Policy Roadmap for Quality Enhancement", paints a mixed picture of progress and persistent inequality in the country's education sector. While overall school infrastructure has improved between 2014-15 and 2024-25, the study highlights that critical gaps continue to affect learning conditions, especially in rural, tribal and economically weaker regions.

India has approximately 14.71 lakh schools catering to nearly 24.69 crore students. Despite this significant growth, disparities among states and across school categories in access to essential services continue to remain a major issue. Nearly 99,000 Schools Lack Functional Girls' Toilets: One of the key issues highlighted in the report is lack of sanitary facilities in many schools. According to the findings, around 98,592 schools still do not have functional girls' toilets, while 61,540 schools do not have any usable toilet at all. In addition, around 14,505 schools do not have drinking water facilities and nearly 59,829 schools lack handwashing infrastructure. The report says these shortcomings have a direct impact on student attendance and retention, par-



Secondary School Dropout Rate At 11.5%

Student retention after primary education has emerged as another area of concern. The national average secondary school dropout rate currently stands at 11.5 percent. However, several

states have reported much higher dropout levels. The Gross Enrolment Ratio drops to 58.4 percent at the higher secondary level, according to NITI Aayog report 2026, indicating that nearly 40 percent of all students do not pursue education until 12th grade. The study links dropout rates to poverty, migration, lack of infrastructure, a shortage of teachers and the difficulties faced by students in transitioning between schools from one level to another, particularly in rural areas.

West Bengal recorded the highest secondary school dropout rate at 20 percent, followed by Arunachal Pradesh and Karnataka at 18.3 percent each. Assam reported a dropout rate of 17.5 percent. The report also noted a worsening trend in states such as Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. In Bihar, the secondary school dropout rate increased from 2.98 percent to 9.3 percent, while in Uttar Pradesh it rose from 0.52 percent to three percent over the study period. Another major issue highlighted by the report is the presence of nearly 7,993 schools with zero enrolment across the country, commonly referred to as "ghost schools". West Bengal accounted for the highest number of such schools at 3,812, followed by Telangana with 2,245 schools.

to be at a disadvantage, highlighting the prevailing digital divide in the education sector.

Academic Infra And Staff Shortage

The report also outlines concerns over academic infrastructure in schools. It states that only 51.7 percent of all government secondary schools contain any type of science laboratory, raising concerns regarding the quality of science education or opportunities for experiential learning for students. Also outlined in the report is the impact of teacher shortages and deployment mismatches on the edwith only a single teacher, and almost 89 percent of these schools are located in rural areas.

Several HERS Scored 70% Marks In Maths: Apart from shortages, the report has also questioned teacher competency levels in government schools. In Mathematics was particularly poor. The report states that only two percent of teachers scored above 70 percent marks in mathematics assessments, while the average score stood at just 46 percent. Teaching time is also being affected by administrative responsibilities. Nearly 14 percent of teaching days are reportedly lost every year due to non-academic duties such as election work, surveys and other government-related administrative tasks.

## Must Avoid Dependencies On Adversarial Nations In AI: US Official

Washington: India and the US must be guided by the principles of openness and avoid any dependencies on adversarial nations to fully realise the potential of areas such as artificial intelligence, a senior US official said here on Friday.

Addressing the US-India AI and Emerging Technology Forum, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Bethany Morrison said the US wants to make sure that countries in the region have access to world-class technology and get that integrated into society to deliver the best value and results for their people. "But in order to fully realise the benefits of this incredible technology, we must be guided by the principles of openness, as well as focus on our security and our interoperability, and avoid any dependencies on adversarial nations," Morrison said at the event organised by the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum, ORF America and the Motwani Jadeja Foundation. She said the private sector has already invested more than USD 300 billion in the development of AI technologies in the first quarter of 2026 and more than half of these investments have come to US companies. "Indian companies are making



incredible strides in this space and making real investments," Morrison said, adding that Indian businesses announced investments of USD 1.1 billion at the SelectUSA Investment Summit here this week. She said the US was excited to see the investment and technology relationship with India because it shares the US vision on AI. "The Indian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, sees clearly that AI technology must contribute to prosperity for our nations, while also being clear-eyed about the security threats that we both face," Morrison said. "I truly believe the United States and India are fantases and next are a fantastic match for this next phase of tech innovation, and I look forward to working with my counterparts in the Indian government, the private sector, the community of experts to help shape the future of AI in our American leadership and Indian leadership," Morrison said.

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## Congress split with DMK and the rise of Third Front



The ink on the 2026 Tamil Nadu election results has barely dried, yet the political landscape of India has been hit by a seismic shift that threatens to bring down the entire house of the I.N.D.I.A bloc. In a move that can only be described as a master-class in political opportunism, the Indian National Congress has decided to pivot away from its steadfast anchor, the DMK, to court Vijay's Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK). Opinion: Back to coalition era

While the TVK emerged as the single largest party with 108 seats, falling just short of the 118-seat majority mark, the Congress' sudden shift in loyalty is more than a localised strategy; it is a signal that the grand old party may be the very architect of the I.N.D.I.A bloc's demise. This manoeuvre appears particularly irrational given that TVK stands as the single largest party. Yet, the Congress' eagerness to leap into a new bed of convenience reveals a startling lack of political principle and a total disregard for the emotional intelligence of the Tamil people.

Shattered Foundation For decades, the DMK was not just an ally; it was the Congress' life support system in the South. When the Congress faced its darkest hours, the DMK stood like a rock, providing a foundation of support that was as much emotional as it was tactical. This was a friendship forged in the fires of adversity. During the peak of the National Herald case and the legal tempests surrounding Rahul Gandhi, the DMK and the Communists provided the loudest and most consistent defence. They did not flinch even when the 2G Spectrum storm, later proven to be nothing more than a whirlwind of smoke and mirrors, sent their own leaders, A Raja and Kanimozhi, to prison. They stood by the Congress leadership with an emotional depth rarely seen in the sterile corridors of political power. To watch the Congress now turn its back on such a "rock-solid" companion is to witness a deep emotional fracture, a total collapse of trust that leaves the spirit of the alliance in ruins. Friendly Fire, Death of Federalism

This is not an isolated squall; it is a recurring hurricane of self-destruction. Across the map, the Congress has developed a habit of poisoning its own wells. In

Kerala, the "unity" of the I.N.D.I.A bloc is a hollow echo as the party continues its bitter struggle with the Left Front.

In West Bengal, the Congress' decision to contest seats independently only serves to fragment the anti-incumbency vote, effectively acting as the wind beneath the BJP's wings by keeping regional heavyweights like Mamata Banerjee in check.

As the Congress pivots toward short-term regional gains, the vacuum created by its fading commitment to federal unity is already being filled by emerging Third Front forces. Perhaps most tragically, we see the echoes of the Arvind Kejriwal saga, where the rhetoric of federalism was buried under a mountain of indifference as the BJP's alleged "conspiracy to kill" a sitting Chief Minister through medical neglect in jail was met with a deafening silence from the Congress high command. Both the BJP and the Congress now appear as two sides of the same storm, seeking to uproot every regional tree until only their own monoliths remain standing. Their shared vision is a scorched earth where regional identity is discarded like fallen leaves, and "Federalism" is a word spoken only when the cameras are rolling.

Governor's Deadlock and Stifled Breeze While the Congress plays its game of opportunism, Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arekar ensured the political atmosphere remains stagnant and foul. By stalling the government formation and refusing to let Vijay take the oath, the Governor played an unholy game of constitutional delay that defies the will of the people. Vijay represents a fresh breeze in Tamil Nadu politics, a new, energetic force that has blown the dust off the old Dravidian duopoly. The Democratic convention dictates that such a mandate should be given the chance to breathe. Instead, the Governor suffocated this mandate in a vacuum of "resort politics" and technicalities, providing the perfect cover for, may be persuaded by his allies to return to centre stage to lead this upcoming Chandrashekar Rao has already done the heavy lifting in the past, making pioneering efforts to unite disparate regional forces under a common federal agenda. If he takes the mantle, the national political

dynamics will undergo a radical transformation:

The Federal Third Front: Chandrashekar Rao's deep understanding of coalition arithmetic and his history of challenging the "big brother" attitude of national parties make him the natural choice to bridge the gap between leaders like Mamata Banerjee, MK Stalin, and Akhilesh Yadav.

A Proven Development Blueprint: His "Telangana Model" of welfare and development provides a tangible alternative to the rhetoric of the two national behemoths, offering the Third Front a constructive national agenda rather than just an anti-incumbency platform.

Filling the Leadership Vacuum: With the Congress abdicating its role as a reliable partner, KCR's entry provides the intellectual and the Congress to complete its treachery.

The Final Nail

Ultimately, the sabotage of the I.N.D.I.A bloc appears to be a self-inflicted wound that will irrevocably alter the national landscape. As the Congress pivots toward opportunistic localised gains, evidenced by its stunning desertion of the DMK to support the TVK, the vacuum left by its fading commitment to federal unity is already being filled. In a significant post-election recalibration, Mamata Banerjee has already begun reaching out to the DMK, while Akhilesh Yadav has moved to extend the solidarity to the TMC and the DMK. Akhilesh Yadav went ahead to openly tweet that "we are not the ones who abandon each other in times of difficulty", which is a dig at the Congress and also gives a signal for a probable Third Front. Also, we have seen during the West Bengal and Tamil Nadu campaign, Arvind Kejriwal campaigned for them, while Tejaswi Yadav campaigned for the TMC in West Bengal. This rapid quiet and convergence of regional heavyweights — Mamta Banerjee, MK Stalin, and Akhilesh Yadav — points toward the likely inevitable formation of shifting sands, there is a Third Front, born from the ashes of broken trust.

KCR's Concept of Third Front In this climate of shifting sands, there is a distinct possibility that K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), a legenshifting sands, there is a dary leader and the original architect of the non-

Congress, non-BJP alternative, may be persuaded by his allies to return to centre stage to lead this upcoming Third Front. Chandrashekar Rao has already done the heavy lifting in the past, making pioneering efforts to unite disparate regional forces under a common federal agenda. If he takes the mantle, the national political dynamics will undergo a radical transformation:

The Federal Third Front: Chandrashekar Rao's deep understanding of coalition arithmetic and his history of challenging the "big brother" attitude of national parties make him the natural choice to bridge the gap between leaders like Mamata Banerjee, MK Stalin, and Akhilesh Yadav.

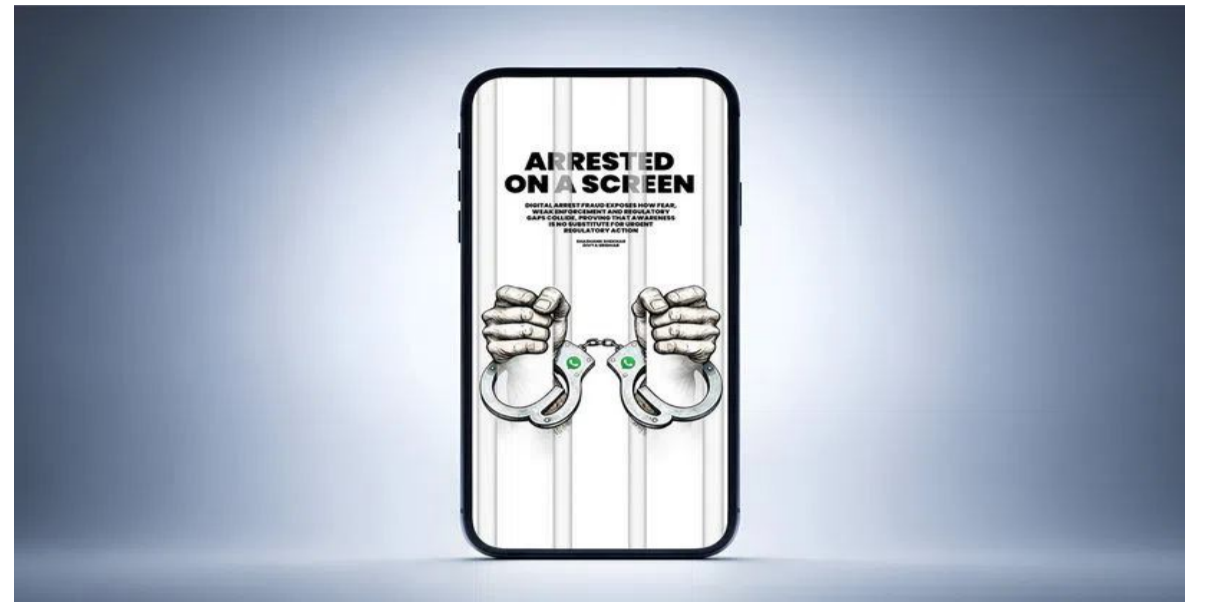
A Proven Development Blueprint: His "Telangana Model" of welfare and development provides a tangible alternative to the rhetoric of the two national behemoths, offering the Third Front a constructive national agenda rather than just an anti-incumbency platform.

Filling the Leadership Vacuum: With the Congress abdicating its role as a reliable partner, KCR's entry provides the intellectual and strategic gravitas needed to stabilise a front of regional titans.

The Congress' betrayal in Tamil Nadu might finally push the 'Federal Front' from theory into practice, and whether Chandrashekar Rao accepts to lead in this transformation remains an open question that only time will clarify.

In any case, the very emergence of this alternative front serves as the final nail in the coffin of the I.N.D.I.A bloc, a structure intended to be a sanctuary but now reduced to rubble. It is a profound political tragedy that the very party that acted as the alliance's architect has, through its own shortsightedness, become its primary executioner. By abandoning long-standing allies for the sake of a kingmaker role in Chennai, the Congress has left the path clear for a bipolar struggle that ignores the diverse, regional heartbeat of India. A strong democracy requires a strong opposition, but by dismantling its own foundation, the Congress has not only committed a grave political blunder but has also given rise to a potential Third Front, which could be a strong opposition to protect democracy and the Constitution.

## Arrested on a screen — Inside India's digital arrest fraud



In recent months, thousands of citizens have been 'arrested' without even stepping into a police station. A video call flashes a uniform and a forged warrant on screen, accompanied by a stern voice warning of immediate detention unless the victim cooperates. What unfolds is not law enforcement, but fraud, a sophisticated cybercrime now commonly known as 'digital arrest'. Editorial: New ideas to fight digital arrest. The name itself is a misnomer. Indian law does not have any concept of arrest via video call or screen-shared warrant. Yet the success of this scam lies in how convincingly it imitates the rituals and language of the criminal justice administrative system. Cybercriminals have turned authorities under the law into a tool of deception, weaponising the fear of law itself.

The Illusion of Authority Digital arrest fraud generally entails the impersonation of law enforcement personnel or officials from agencies such as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), or Customs authorities. Victims are informed of their association with money laundering, narcotics trafficking, or courier fraud schemes. The situation intensifies rapidly: separation from family, constant surveillance via video calls, and requests for "verification payments" to prevent arrest.

The efficacy of this scam arises not merely from technological expertise, but from its psychological design. The threat of arrest carries stigma, uncertainty and panic. When presented with seemingly official attributes, it eclipses rational scepticism. That such tactics succeed highlights a deeper vulnerability — not merely digital illiteracy, but legal illiteracy.

Why th Fraud Works Digital arrest scams thrive at the intersection of fear and asymmetry. Most citizens encounter the criminal justice system at the moment of crisis. The laws relating to arrest, search, seizure, rights of the accused, requirement of physical custody or judicial oversight remain poorly understood. This knowledge gap gives criminals the opportunity to substitute procedure with performance. Further, the perceived imbalance of power between authorities and individuals discourages questioning. Victims fear that refusal to comply may itself be considered an offence. In such an environment, urgency replaces verification. The fraud succeeds, not in the absence

of law, but in the shadow of how law is commonly perceived: distant, punitive and beyond question. It does not exploit a legal vacuum; it exploits public fear of the law.

It's a scam — If it's on a screen and demands money. The Video Call Arrest: Indian law enforcement will never arrest you, record a statement, or serve a warrant via WhatsApp, Skype, or Zoom. The 'Secret' Probe: Genuine officials will never ask you to stay on a video call for hours or prevent you from contacting a lawyer or family member.

Money demands: No government agency will ever ask for a "verification deposit" or "security payment" into a private bank account.

Is the Law Ineffective? It would be incorrect to argue that India lacks legal tools to address the issue of digital arrest.

India's legal framework sufficiently contains provisions such as Personating a public servant (Section 204 BNS), Cheating (Section 318 BNS), Cheating by personation (Section 319 BNS), Criminal Intimidation (Section 351 BNS), Extortion (Section 308 BNS), Cheating by personation using a computer resource (Section 66D, IT Act), and Identity theft (Section 66C, IT Act). Dedicated cybercrime portals and helplines exist, with repeated advisories issued by enforcement agencies. The problem lies in the enforcement deficit and institutional lag. Cybercriminal networks operate across jurisdictions, often beyond Indian borders.

Between 2020 and 2022, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, only about 1.6% of registered cybercrime cases led to convictions across all States — ie, just 2,706 convictions of the roughly 1,67,000 cybercrime cases. In India, the number of cases registered under the cybercrimes category rose to 86,420 in 2023 from 65,893 cases in 2022. The crime rate under this category increased from 4.8% in 2022 to 6.2% in 2023. Conviction rates remain poor, investigation is slow, and recovery of funds continues to be the exception rather than the norm. The law on paper struggles against the speed and scale of digital crime in practice. When law exists only on paper and criminals act with impunity, deterrence collapses, and advisories ring hollow without enforcement. State's Response and Its Limits A detailed reply by the Ministry of Home

Affairs in the Lok Sabha on December 2, 2025, illustrates that to strengthen enforcement, the government has established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), launched the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>) for public reporting, and operationalised the Citizen Financial Cyber Fraud Reporting and Management System (CFCFRMS), which has helped save over Rs 7,130 crore through more than 23.02 lakh complaints. Through coordinated action, authorities reported blocking over 11.14 lakh SIM cards and 2.96 lakh IMEIs linked to cybercrime, alongside multi-agency efforts including the Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre and enhanced forensic support to state law enforcement. The government has also rolled out nationwide awareness campaigns through media, caller-tunes and outreach programmes to educate citizens about such scams. These are necessary steps. However, advisories function primarily as awareness tools. They do little for victims in the moment of crisis, when fear eclipses recall. They also do not impose systemic obligations on digital intermediaries whose platforms enable such scams at scale. Awareness without structural safeguards leaves citizens exposed.

Awareness is not protection. The response to digital arrest fraud must, therefore, move beyond alerts towards a comprehensive regulatory strategy. Prevention: Stop Before It Starts Effer private numbers. Such communication protocols must be standardised nationally and publicly notified, with agencies restricted to verifiable channels — official landlines, registered email domains, and in-person procedures — leaving no ambiguity for citizens to exploit. Telecom service providers should be assigned obligations that are technically feasible and within existing regulatory reach. Rather than behavioural surveillance, the focus must be on number integrity and misuse control. Telecom operators should strictly implement caller line identification verification to prevent the spoofing of law enforcement numbers, with flagged numbers subject to time-bound suspension and mandatory re-verification rather than discretionary blocking. Prevention: Minimising Har to Victims Even the most robust preventive framework

cannot eliminate fraud entirely. Protection, therefore, must be designed around speed, certainty and victim support, not post-facto sympathy. Financial harm in digital arrest scams escalates within minutes, making immediate fund freezing the single most effective protective measure. While complete recovery remains challenging due to rapid cross-border fund transfers, the UK's approach (see Lessons from the UK) offers instructive precedent. Under English law, financial institutions are required to implement verification protocols before processing transfers, particularly for large sums to new payees. Until verification is completed, transfers should be frozen. Similar mandatory verification mechanisms could significantly slow the movement of fraud proceeds, creating critical windows for intervention.

Lessons from the UK The United Kingdom's experience with Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams, where victims are tricked into authorising payments to fraudsters, offers valuable lessons for India. Recognising the scale of the problem, in 2024, the Payment Systems Regulator introduced mandatory reimbursement requirements for most APP scam victims, with banks required to reimburse victims up to 85,000 pounds within five business days unless the customer acted with gross negligence. This shift placed greater responsibility on financial institutions, incentivising stronger fraud prevention. Alongside deposit protection (up to 85,000 pounds) under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, the approach demonstrates how regulation can both delay and intimidate his requires disrupting. The answer is not to abandon technology, but to ensure that legality travels with it. In a constitutional democracy, arrest is not a threat over a call, or a payment extracted through fear: it is a serious act carried out openly, through procedure and accountability. When citizens are made to believe otherwise, what is lost is not just money, but trust.

The state's task is therefore urgent: to make the law visible, understandable and impossible to fake. The legitimacy of law depends not only on its enforcement, but on its recognisability, and in an age of digital deception, that recognisability must be built, protected and constantly reinforced.

## Miller, Axar keep DC Alive



David Miller and captain Axar Patel engineered a record run chase for Delhi Capitals with their counterattacking knocks as the visitors upstaged Punjab Kings by three wickets to stay alive in the Indian Premier League here on Monday. Aggressive knock from Miller (51 off 28) and skipper Axar Patel (56 off 30) allowed Delhi Capitals to gun down 211 in 19 overs for the highest chase at the HPCA Stadium. Priyansh Arya hit half a dozen sixes in his whirlwind 33-ball 56 before Delhi Capitals pacers tweaked their lengths to limit Punjab Kings to 210 for five. Having remained unbeaten in the first half of the tournament, Punjab Kings have now lost four in a row and need at least two wins from their remaining three games to make the play offs. Barring Arshdeep Singh, the bowlers let the team down with their wayward display. However, the home team's bowlers did the job in the powerplay. Punjab Kings struck

thrice for the first time in the powerplay, leaving Delhi Capitals reeling at 47 for three in the first six overs. Arshdeep Singh, who has been rather expensive this season, returned impressive figures of two for 21 in four overs. It was Yash Thakur who provided the first breakthrough by casting Abhishek Porel with a ball that seamed back in from length to knock out the middle stump. K L Rahul was caught at fine leg after mistiming a whip off Arshdeep. The young Sahil Parakh played a few impressive strokes in his brief stay before being crammed up for space by Arshdeep to be caught at short third man. It became 74 for four with the run out of Tristan Stubbs extending the struggles of DC batters. However, Miller (51 off 28) and Axar (56 off 30) brought life back into the game with their counterattacking 64-run stand off 34 balls. Eventually, Ashutosh Sharma (24) and Madhav Tiwari (18) delivered

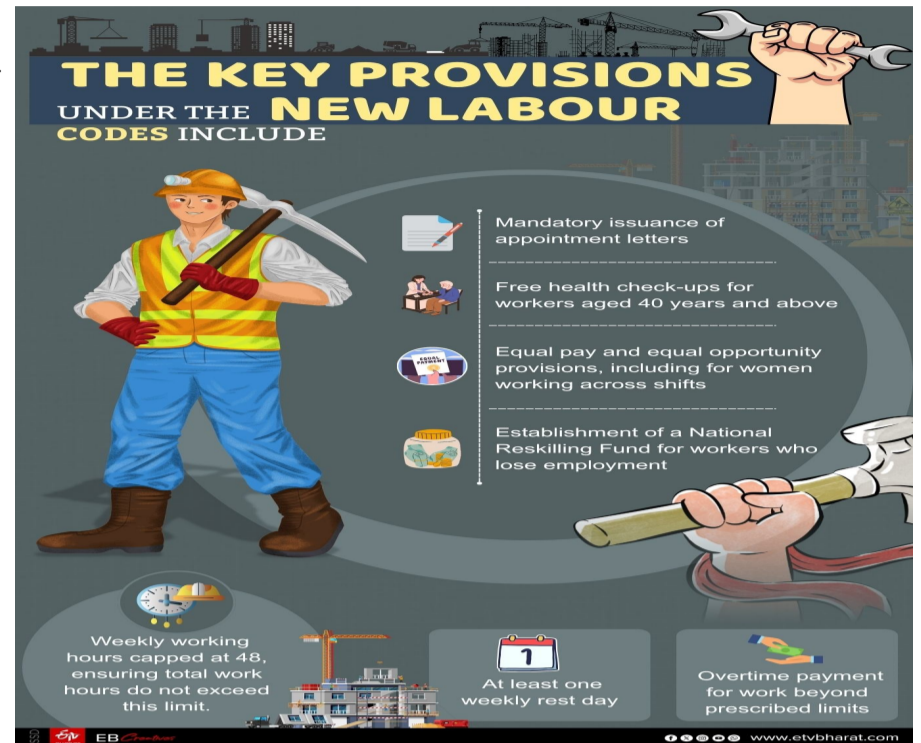
timely cameos to keep DC alive in the competition. DC, struggling to stay alive in the tournament, opted to field in the first game of the season at the scenic venue here after making five changes to their side. The ball generally flies off the bat in the high altitude of Dharamsala, and that was very much evident in the first over of the game from Mitchell Starc, who proved rather expensive on the night. Priyansh took the veteran Australian pacer to the cleaners in the over that went for 22 runs. His onslaught included a six square of the wicket on either side, not only dispatched Starc for a first-ball six, but he also meted out the same treatment to the wily Lungi Ngidi and Mukesh Kumar. Starc understandably went all-in to search for the swing, but DC pacers realised that bowling full was not the way to go on this surface after conceding 51 runs from the first three overs. Aquib Nabi was the man

behind DC's comeback as he got the ball to seam from length, particularly making life tough for Priyansh in the second half of the powerplay. Priyansh's opening partner, Prabhsimran Singh, did not have much rhythm in his 15-ball 18 before getting caught at fine leg off Mukesh. Madhav Tiwari got his first wicket of the IPL by getting Priyansh caught at deep point in the ninth over. Punjab Kings were off to a flyer, but by the halfway mark, they could only reach 107 for two in 10 overs. Captain Shreyas Iyer (59 not out off 36) and Cooper Connolly (38 off 27) shared 83 off 52 balls for the third wicket, but they were not able to change gears as swiftly as they would have liked. In the 19th over, Starc got rid of Marcus Stoinis and Shashank Singh off successive balls before Suryansh Shedge hit a couple of breathtaking sixes off the high-profile speedster. Ngidi bowled a brilliant final over to ensure Punjab Kings don't push beyond 210.

## New Labour Codes Cap Weekly Working Hours At 48, Mandates Extra Pay For Overtime Work

The Centre has recently fully operationalised the four Labour Codes after notifying the final set of rules in the official gazette, bringing changes that include a 48-hour weekly work cap, mandatory weekly rest day provisions, and overtime work norms. The new rules were implemented through nearly 30 gazette notifications issued on May 8 and 9. The four codes, namely the Code on Wages, 2019, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, originally came into effect from November 21, 2025. They were introduced to replace 29 existing labour laws with a unified framework. Though the labour codes became law on November 21, 2025, certain explanations were not provided due to the absence of rules. Later, the draft rules were published on December 30, 2025, to seek feedback from stakeholders and were notified after legal vetting. However, in a critical omission from the draft rules published earlier, the Centre has now dropped the criteria for calculating minimum wage in the final Code on Wages (Central) Rules, 2025, stating that the criteria will be "separately specified by the central government by special or general order".

Labour Codes Infographics for New Labour codes (ETV Bharat) This is likely to result in lower minimum wages



and higher wage disparities for the same worker category across states, experts said. Separately, the new wage rules state that a floor wage will be fixed by the central government, taking into account "the minimum living standard clothing, housing and any other factor considered appropriate by the central government from time to time". Section 9 of the Code on Wages, 2019, the central government has the power to fix the floor wage, taking into account minimum living standards of a worker, provided that different floor wages may be fixed for different geographical areas. The floor wage will act as a baseline wage below which states cannot fix their minimum wages, which is going to be closely eyed given the recent backdrop of a spate of workers' protests across several

industrial hubs in the country. Arvind Goel, President, Employers' Federation of India, asserted that it marks a crucial milestone in India's labour reform journey and demonstrates the government's dedication to establishing a modern, streamlined, and inclusive labour ecosystem. He said the newly introduced framework is expected to bolster industrial harmony, streamline compliance processes, improve the ease of doing business, and facilitate job creation, all while safeguarding worker welfare and promoting social security. Citing the operationalisation of four labour codes, Goel, who is also Chairman, CII National Committee on Industrial Relations & Labour told ETV Bharat, "The operationalisation of the four Labour Codes marks a signifi-

cant milestone in India's labour reform journey and reflects the Government's commitment towards creating a modern, simplified and inclusive labour ecosystem." He said the notification of the Rules under the Codes provides benefits for both industry and workers, enabling smoother implementation across sectors. Asserting that the new framework is expected to strengthen industrial harmony, simplify compliance, enhance ease of doing business, and support employment generation while ensuring worker welfare and social security, Goel said, "Industry has consistently supported reforms that balance economic growth with the creation of a resilient, competitive, and future-ready workforce ecosystem."

## No IPL Stars In Australia Squad As Fresh Faces Included For Pakistan And Bangladesh Tours



Australia has announced their squad for the upcoming white-ball series against Pakistan and Bangladesh. Notably, experienced fast bowlers Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc, and Josh Hazlewood have been left out of the squad. All three players are currently participating in the Indian Premier League 2026. Australia has included several new faces in the squad for this tour, including the captain of the 2026 Under-19 World Cup team, Ollie Peake, and all-rounder Liam Scott. Both players have been selected for the three One-Day International (ODI) matches against Pakistan. Mitchell Marsh will captain the Australian team in all

white-ball matches against Pakistan and Bangladesh. Meanwhile, there is no place in the T20I squad for experienced all-rounder Glenn Maxwell. No impact on the participation of Australian players in IPL. The report also states that Australian players whose teams are likely to reach the IPL playoffs will miss the three-match ODI series against Pakistan. Notably, the ODI series against Pakistan is scheduled to begin on May 30, while the IPL 2026 final is set to be played on May 31. Travis Head (Sunrisers Hyderabad), Cooper Connolly, Xavier Bartlett, and Ben Dwarshuis (Punjab Kings), along with Cameron Green (KKR),

who will join the squad in Bangladesh ahead of the three-match ODI series, once their IPL commitments have concluded. Matthew Short has retained his spot in the ODI squad for the series against Pakistan. However, due to the return of Head, Connolly, Bartlett, and Dwarshuis, he has been left out of the squad for the Bangladesh tour. Australia squad for Bangladesh tour Squad for ODIs: Mitchell Marsh (c), Xavier Bartlett, Alex Carey, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Matthew Renshaw,

Tanveer Sangha, Liam Scott, Adam Zampa. Squad for T20Is: Mitchell Marsh (c), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Tim David, Joel Davies, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Aaron Hardie, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Matthew Kuhnemann, Riley Meredith, Josh Philippe. Australia squad for Pakistan tour Mitchell Marsh (c), Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Marnus Labuschagne, Riley Meredith, Oliver Peake, Matthew Renshaw, Tanveer Sangha, Liam Scott, Matt Short, Billy Stanlake, Adam Zampa.

## Gold Price Today: Rates Climb In Major Indian Cities, Except Chennai



New Delhi: Amid renewed tensions in West Asia, gold prices recorded an increase across major Indian cities except Chennai on Friday. In the latest trading session, the price of 24 karat gold stands at Rs 1,51,530 per 10 grams in Delhi, registering a hike of Rs 450. Meanwhile, 22 karat gold is priced at Rs 1,39,407.60 per 10 grams, up by Rs 414. The trends were similar in Hyderabad, where the price of 24 karat gold stands at Rs 151,370.00 per 10 grams, marking an increase of Rs 440. Meanwhile, the price for 10 grams of 22K gold is Rs 139,260.40, marking an increase

of Rs 404.80. The country's financial capital, Mumbai, also reported a rise in gold rates today. The price of 24 karat gold in the city is Rs 151,370.00 per 10 grams, up by Rs 440. The 22K gold rate is Rs 1,39,260.40, showing an increase of Rs 404.80. The gold prices in Kolkata also witnessed a marginal rise. The 24K gold rate is Rs 1,51,370.00, reflecting a daily increase of Rs 440, while 22 karat gold is priced at Rs 1,39,260.40, reflecting a daily increase of Rs 404.80. Bengaluru also reported a rise in gold rates on Friday. The price of 24 karat gold in the city is Rs

151,370.00 per 10 grams, up by Rs 440. The 22K gold rate is Rs 1,39,260.40, showing an increase of Rs 404.80. In Kochi, the gold prices followed the same trend, with 24K gold priced at Rs 1,51,370.00, reflecting a daily increase of Rs 440, while 22 karat gold is priced at Rs 1,39,260.40, reflecting a daily increase of Rs 404.80. Meanwhile, gold prices followed a downward trend in Chennai, with 24K gold priced at Rs 152,190, which reflects a decrease of Rs 1,630. The 22K gold rate in Chennai is Rs 1,42,010, which has increased by Rs 9.17.

## 'Allu Arjun Property' Remark Leaves Seerat Kapoor Furious; Actor Hits Back With Befitting Reply



Actor Seerat Kapoor gave a strong reply to a social media user who referred to her as Allu Arjun's "property" in the comments section of her recent Instagram post. The actor's response is now winning praise online, with many fans supporting her for speaking against disrespectful remarks directed at women. The issue began after Seerat shared a picture of herself in a lacy brown outfit on Instagram. Along with

the photo, she wrote, "Entering the weekend like my own muse (followed by a star emoji)." While many fans filled the comments section with compliments and heart emojis, one user left a comment saying, "Allu Arjun property (followed by heart-eyed emoji)." Seerat did not ignore the comment and decided to respond directly. Calling out the misogynistic remark, she wrote, "Adding a 'heart-eyed emoji' doesn't make it sound

any respectful, Sir. A woman is never anyone's property. She's her own person, with her own identity, dreams & voice. Admire with dignity, not ownership. Stay blessed." Her reply quickly caught attention online, with several fans appreciating the way she handled the situation. Many users came out in her support and praised her for standing up against such comments. One fan wrote, "I know how respectful you are. They are poor people, do

not answer them." The trolling reportedly started after Seerat shared unseen pictures with Allu Arjun from his private jet during his birthday celebrations earlier this year. On April 8, when the Pushpa star turned 44, Seerat posted a few candid photos with him and wished him warmly on social media. Sharing the pictures, she wrote, "Happy Birthday, Bunny @alluarjunonline. You've always carried both your craft and your relationships with such natural ease- graceful, grounded and authentic. Wishing you endless success, great health and everything that truly aligns with you, on and off screen. Always rooting for you!" Many fans were surprised to learn that Seerat and Allu Arjun share a close friendship. However, a section of social media users began making unnecessary comments linking the two actors. On the work front, Seerat Kapoor was last seen in the web series Save the Tigers and films like Bhamakalapam 2 and Manamey. She also has upcoming projects like Jhatasya Maranam Dhruvam and The Black Gold in the pipeline. Meanwhile, Allu Arjun is currently busy with filmmaker Atlee's upcoming project Raaka alongside Deepika Padukone. He also has a film lined up with director Lokesh Kanagaraj.

## Karuppu: Advance Booking, U/A Certificate, Plot & Everything To Know About Suriya-Trisha Starrer



The excitement around Karuppu is growing rapidly as the film gears up for its theatrical release on May 14, 2026. Starring Suriya and Trisha Krishnan in the lead, the Tamil action-fantasy drama has already created strong buzz among fans with its trailer, advance booking response, and storyline. Directed by RJ Balaji, the film marks the reunion of Suriya and Trisha after nearly two decades. Advance bookings for Karuppu opened on May 10 at 7 PM IST across India and overseas markets. Within just a few hours, the film witnessed a massive response, especially in Tamil Nadu. According to data shared by industry tracker Sacnilk, the movie has earned Rs

1.61 crore in advance bookings, including blocked seats. Tamil Nadu has emerged as the biggest market for the film so far, with fans rushing to book tickets soon after bookings went live. Overseas pre-sales are also said to be performing well, and industry experts believe the numbers may rise sharply in the final days before release. The strong advance booking response has become even more important for Suriya, as his previous releases, Kanguva and Retro, did not meet expectations at the box office. Karuppu U/A Certification Confirmed Ahead of release. Karuppu has officially received a U/A certificate from the censor board. This means viewers above 13 years can

watch the film with parental guidance. Karuppu Plot Karuppu is described as an action-fantasy thriller mixed with village folklore and social drama. Suriya plays Saravanan, a fearless lawyer who fights against corruption and injustice. However, the character also appears to possess supernatural powers connected to the village deity Karuppusamy. The trailer hinted at a mass-packed entertainer filled with action sequences, emotional moments, powerful dialogues, and supernatural elements. It also showcased Trisha in a strong lawyer role, while RJ Balaji surprised audiences by appearing in a negative role. Speaking about the film earlier, RJ Balaji said the

story imagines a superhero-like figure arriving during difficult times to fight evil and restore hope among people. Karuppu Cast And Crew Along with Suriya and Trisha, the film also stars Yogi Babu, Indrans, Natarajan Subramaniam, and Swasika in important roles. Karuppu is produced by Dream Warrior Pictures. The music has been composed by Sai Abhyankar, while cinematography is handled by G. K. Vishnu. Interestingly, the film was initially planned for a 2025 release but got delayed due to post-production work and election schedules. The Telugu dubbed version of the movie will release under the title Veerabhadrudu.



## Is Money Heist Season 6 Finally Happening? Netflix Drops Major Hint Ahead Of Berlin Season 2

The craze around Money Heist refuses to fade away. Even after the blockbuster Spanish series ended, fans across the world have continued waiting for updates about the future of the franchise. Now, Netflix has once again created huge excitement by teasing that the famous heist universe is set to grow even bigger in the coming months. The latest buzz started ahead of the release of Berlin Season 2, which is scheduled to premiere globally on Netflix on May 15, 2026. While promoting the upcoming season, the streaming platform hinted that more projects connected to the Money Heist world are already being planned. Although Netflix has not officially announced Money Heist Season 6 yet, the recent teaser has left fans convinced that another major chapter could soon arrive on OTT. Netflix made the announcement in grand style in Seville, where thousands of fans gathered for a special promotional event inspired by the series. Videos from the celebration quickly went viral online and brought back memories of the show's most iconic moments. As part of the event, a boat carrying people dressed in the famous red jumpsuits and Salvador Dalí masks moved across the Guadalquivir River while the song Bella Ciao played loudly in the background. The atmosphere looked similar to scenes straight from the original series and instantly grabbed the attention of viewers on social media. Along with the event, Netflix also dropped a new teaser video teasing the future of the franchise. The video revisited some of the biggest moments from the original show, including the Royal Mint robbery and the Bank of



Spain heist. However, the biggest talking point came at the end of the teaser when Netflix used the line, "The revolution never ends." That short message has now become the centre of discussion among fans, with many believing the platform is preparing either a direct continuation of the original series or another spin-off connected to the same storyline. A particular scene from the teaser has especially sparked curiosity online. The clip briefly showed a hidden gold bar being dug out from underground. Fans quickly connected the moment to the gold robbery storyline from the original series finale. Several viewers believe this could be Netflix's way of teasing what might happen next in the Money Heist universe. However, the streaming giant has not officially revealed any plot details so far. For now, Netflix has only confirmed that the franchise will continue after Berlin Season 2. The company has remained secretive about whether the next project will be a sixth season, a prequel, or an entirely new spin-off featuring fresh characters. Meanwhile,

excitement is already high for Berlin Season 2. The spin-off focuses on Andrés de Fonollosa, famously known as Berlin, one of the most popular characters from the original series. Pedro Alonso returns in the lead role as the clever and stylish thief plans another dangerous heist. According to Netflix engagement reports, the franchise reportedly recorded nearly 1.3 billion viewing hours between 2023 and 2025. Multiple seasons of the original series still remain among Netflix's most-watched non-English shows of all time. The spin-off Berlin also turned out to be a huge success after its release. Reports suggested the first season became the most-watched global series during its debut week and entered Netflix's Top 10 rankings in 91 countries. It reportedly stayed in the global Top 10 for seven consecutive weeks. Apart from spin-offs, the franchise has also expanded through projects like Money Heist: Korea - Joint Economic Area and gaming content inspired by the show. At present, Netflix is keeping its future plans under wraps.