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# Current Affairs (29 April 2026 )

Special class

Varun Pratap Singh • Apr 29, 2026

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## IN BRIEF



### Google's AI data centre project kicks off in A.P.

VISAKHAPATNAM
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for the Google Data Centre on the outskirts of Visakhapatnam. » Page 5

### Need unified SCO approach to end terrorism: Rajnath

NEW DELHI
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh called for a unified approach to eliminate terrorism while addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Bishkek. » Page 10

### Now, Sisodia says he won't appear before HC judge

NEW DELHI
AAP leader Manish Sisodia on Tuesday said he will not appear in further proceedings before Delhi High Court Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma in the excise policy case. » Page 2

OPPORTUNITIES » PAGE 8

# Growth in industrial output at 5-month low of 4.1% in March

Slowdown in construction and consumer-centric sectors pulls down IIP growth in the first month of data since the crisis began in West Asia

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) slowed to a five-month low of 4.1% in March 2026, the first month of data after the West Asia crisis began, pulled down by a near-halving in construction sector growth rates and low growth in consumer-centric sectors.

Data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Tuesday showed that growth in the IIP has been slowing since January, even before the West Asia crisis broke out on February 28. Economists point out that the full economic impact of the crisis will play out over the next few months. For the full financial year 2025-26, growth in the IIP stood at 4.1%, marginally faster than the 4.07% recorded in 2024-25.

According to Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at the Bank of Baroda, the growth of 4.1% in March is "impressive given that the core sector growth was negative for the month". Data released earlier this month had shown that the eight core sectors, which make up about 40% of the IIP, had contracted 0.4% in March.

Within the IIP, the manufacturing sector slowed to a five-month low of 4.3% in March, although this was faster than the 4% recorded last March.

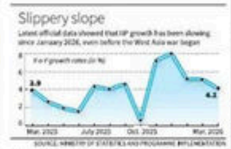
"Domestic manufacturing has begun to bear the brunt of costlier and tighter supplies of petroleum products and natural gas," Dipti Deshpande, principal economist at Crisil, said.

Growth in the capital goods sector, notably, accelerated to a 29-month high 14.6% in March from an already-robust 12.4% in February. While growth in the infrastructure and construction sector slowed to a nine-month low of 6.7%, economists still felt it highlighted strength in the economy. "Importantly, the strength in capital goods and infrastructure goods underscores that investment-led demand remains intact, even as consumer non-durables posted a muted 1.1% rise," Vikrant Chaturvedi, associate director of research at Brickwork Ratings said. The 1.1% rise in consumer non-durables came on a low base as the sector had contracted 4% in March last year.

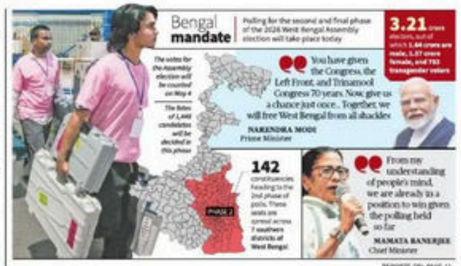
CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

### Slippery slope

Latest official data showed that IIP growth has been slowing since January 2026, even before the West Asia war began




SOURCE: MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION




REPORTS ON PAGE 11

# UAE announces exit from OPEC group

Associated Press
DUBAI

The UAE announced on Tuesday that it will leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) effective May 1, stripping the oil cartel of one of its largest producers and further weakening its leverage over global oil supplies and prices.

Making the announcement via its state-run WAM news agency, the UAE said it would also be leaving the wider OPEC+ group, which Russia had led in order to try to stabilise oil prices.

"This decision reflects the UAE's long-term strategic and economic vision and evolving energy profile, including accelerated investment in domestic energy production, and reinforces its commitment to a responsible, reliable, and forward-looking role in global energy markets," the UAE said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

# U.S. President 'unhappy' with Iran's peace proposal

Reuters
DUBAI/WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump is unhappy with the latest Iranian proposal on resolving the two-month war, a U.S. official has said, dampening hopes for resolution of a conflict that has killed thousands, disrupted energy supplies, and fuelled inflation.

Iran's latest proposal would set aside discussion on its nuclear programme until the war, on hold following a ceasefire announced earlier this month, is ended and disputes over shipping from the Gulf are resolved.

Mr. Trump, whose approval rates are falling amid domestic pressure to end a war for which he has given shifting rationales, is unhappy with the proposal as he wants nuclear issues dealt with from the outset, said a U.S. official briefed on the President's Monday meeting with his advisers.

White House spokesperson Olivia Wales said the U.S. has "been clear about our red lines" as it seeks to end the war.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10
EDITORIAL » PAGE 6
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## INBRIEF



### HC judge recuses from hearing Karti Chidambaram's petition

Delhi High Court judge Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on Tuesday recused herself from hearing a plea by Congress MP Karti Chidambaram seeking quashing of an FIR filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for allegedly helping a liquor company flout norms. When the matter came up for hearing, Justice Sharma said, "List before another Bench." The case will now be heard on July 28. The Sivaganga MP also sought quashing of the FIR registered on January 1, 2025, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act. The case stems from a case registered by the CBI in 2018.

### Auto driver charred to death in Gurugram; probe under way

An autorickshaw driver was charred to death after his vehicle caught fire near Rajiv Chowk in Gurugram on Tuesday, said the police. At 2.30 a.m., the autorickshaw, which was on the move, was abruptly engulfed in flames, said an officer. "The fire spread within seconds. Bystanders tried to rescue the driver, but the flames were so intense that no one dared to come close, and the driver didn't have a chance to escape," the officer said. A rescue team reached the spot and managed to douse the blaze. The police recovered the charred body and sent it for a post-mortem examination. An FIR has been registered at the Sadar police station, and further investigation is under way, the officer added. ►►

# Assembly passes resolution on reservation for women

Women are ready to fight their battles now, quota Bill will be implemented, asserts CM; convening the special House session on the eve of voting for second phase of Bengal election a gimmick: AAP

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly on Tuesday passed a resolution condemning the Opposition's attempts to overturn the measures undertaken by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Central government for the empowerment of women through reservation.

On April 17, a united Opposition defeated the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, which sought to redistribute Lok Sabha seats on the basis of the 2011 Census to expedite the implementation of 33% reservation for women in Parliament and Assemblies through the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023.

Earlier on Tuesday, BJP MLAs led by Chief Minister Rekha Gupta held a protest at the Assembly against the "anti-women" stance of the Opposition parties.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said the one-day special Assembly session, called on the eve of voting for the second phase of the West Bengal Assembly poll, was a "gimmick".

AAP MLA Kuldeep Kumar said the Opposition had supported the women's quota Bill in 2023 and accused the BJP of engaging in "gimmicks" during Assembly elections.




BJP MLAs, led by CM Rekha Gupta, protesting on the Assembly premises against the Opposition parties' 'anti-women' stance. ANI

**Walkout by Opps. MLAs**

The Opposition legislators later walked out during the discussion alleging that they were not allowed to speak freely in the House. However, Speaker Vijender Gupta claimed that every Opposition member was allocated time. He accused AAP MLAs of "creating drama" by staging the walkout to avoid listening to the ruling party members.

The resolution condemning the Opposition was moved by Ms. Gupta, the only woman CM from the BJP. During the debate, she said the Centre had proposed to increase the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha as a "win-win situation" to implement reservation for women without affecting the seats held by male representatives.

"No male representative would ever relinquish his seat for a woman. That is precisely why this formula was introduced," she said, adding that the Lok Sabha discussions on April 16 and 17 over the Bill were "disappointing" and that the proceedings would be remembered as a "sad chapter" in the history of Indian democracy.

The CM said that over the past nearly three decades, the Bill to provide reservation for women was tabled in the Lok Sabha seven times, but several parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, obstructed it because the ruling dynasties feared losing power to women.

The women's quota Bill was passed by Parliament in September 2023.

**The 'reserved' chair**

Taking a swipe at AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, Ms. Gupta said he did not allow Atishi to sit in the CM's chair when she took over from him, referring to Ms. Atishi's practice — during her tenure as the CM — of sitting in a smaller chair next to a larger empty red chair "reserved" for her predecessor. Ms. Gupta added that the AAP chief's decision not to appear before Delhi High Court judge Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma in the excise policy case enlisted time. He accused AAP MLAs of "creating drama" by staging the walkout to avoid listening to the ruling party members.

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AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal and party leader Manish Sisodia paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat. SHRI KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

# Now, Sisodia says he won't appear before HC judge in excise case

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

A day after Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief Arvind Kejriwal announced that he or his lawyer will not appear before the Bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma of the Delhi High Court in the excise policy case, senior party leader Manish Sisodia followed suit and wrote a letter to the judge.

"With utmost respect and regard, I have written to Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma of the Delhi High Court, requesting that in the present circumstances, my conscience does not permit me to continue participating in the proceedings of this case before her," he wrote in a post on X.

Later in the day, the two AAP leaders visited Rajghat and paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. In a post on X in Hindi, the AAP chief wrote: "My only prayer to Bapu is that he give us strength in our resolve to walk on the path of satyagrahu shown by him. I have unshakable faith that with Bapu's blessings, we will stay firmly on this difficult path."

On April 20, Justice Sharma had rejected pleas by Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Sisodia, among others, seeking her recusal from hearing the Central Bureau of Investigation's petition against their discharge by a trial court in the excise policy case.

**'Attempt to evade Justice'**

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta criticised Mr. Kejriwal's "misuse" of 'satyagraha', which she said was not meant to honour Mahatma Gandhi but to "evade" judicial processes.

# Rise in fire emergencies in 2026; April records highest incidents

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Fire Services (DFS) has recorded a rise in fire-related emergencies in the first four months of 2026 compared with the same period in the previous year. April once again emerged as a high-incidence month, accounting for nearly 3,900 calls, according to official data.

Between January 1 and April 27 this year, the DFS received 13,616 calls, up from 12,562 during the same period in 2025. April, traditionally one of the busiest months due to rising temperatures and dry conditions, showed a mixed trend. From April 1 to 27 this year, the fire services logged 3,496 calls — 241 fewer than the 3,737 recorded in the same period last year. Even so, April still saw the highest monthly tally in both years.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer A.K. Malik urged citizens to follow fire safety norms, ensure electrical maintenance and remain vigilant.

# Commercial LPG black market inflating food bills in city

**Nikhil M Babu**
NEW DELHI

Several restaurant and eatery owners in Delhi are buying commercial LPG cylinders at higher prices from the black market, which has led to higher prices for all food and beverages, from tea to dal, over the past few months, *The Hindu* have found.

At his tea stall in Bhogal, Mahesh Kumar says he has been struggling to get commercial cooking gas cylinders. "The situation has improved slightly now. We are getting 14 kg domestic cylinders for ₹2,000-₹2,500. During early March, in the initial days of the war, I bought cylinders for ₹3,500. Moreover, I had to close the shop for three days as I could not buy even at that price," he said.

He has hiked the price of tea from ₹10 to ₹15. "Everyone in the market has increased the rate. What else are we supposed to do?"

In a release on April 13, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's office stated that of the daily allocation of 6,480 commercial LPG cylinders (19 kg-equivalent), the average daily offtake over the previous week was 4,268, indicating that "supply is exceeding demand".

Before the war, around 9,000 commercial LPG cylinders were sold daily, as per the Delhi government.

A gas agency owner said the daily quota of commercial cylinders is not being fully utilised due to the government's supply chain overhaul following the shortage caused by the West Asia conflict.

"Earlier, though a connection was required to obtain commercial cylinders, the delivery persons used to sell to everyone, including those without connections. But all that has changed now. The government allows us to sell only to registered customers," he said.

**Small relief**

Several restaurant owners who do not have authorised commercial LPG connections said they still get commercial cylinders sold in black by gas agencies. The owner of one such establishment in south Delhi's INA said he struggled a lot to keep the restaurant running during the initial days of the war. "Back then, we paid ₹5,000 for a commercial cylinder while the official rate was ₹1,700. Now the situation has improved a little, but we are still paying ₹4,000-₹4,500 per cylinder," he said.

The current official rate for a commercial LPG cylinder is ₹2,078. "The same person who used to supply from the gas agency comes and delivers it. We don't know where he gets it," said the restaurant owner, adding that all items on the menu are costlier by over 20%. "We can't go back to the old rates even if the LPG situation stabilises because prices of other items have also risen. Given that the official price of commercial cylinders has gone up, how can we operate at old rates?" he said.

At another shop in INA, rates have been increased by nearly 15%. "Compared to other owners, we are fortunate, as the owner of our gas agency is a family friend. So, we get cylinders for around ₹2,300," he said.

**High expenses**

At a smaller eatery in Bhogal, owner Anil Kumar says, "We had two 14 kg cylinders when the crisis started, and we got one more from our registered domestic connection. Then we bought an induction cooktop and started using a chulha (firewood stove) to cut down on gas requirements. But still, the expenses are high."

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I, Mrs. Harbir J Singh w/o Gp.Capt.Jatinder Singh (Late) resident of House no. 2414, Mandakini Enclave, Alaknanda, New Delhi-110019, with birth date being 17/5/1946 have changed my Name from Mrs. Harbir J Singh to Mrs. Harbir Jatinder Singh vide Affidavit dated 22/04/2026

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Defendant
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# Two cousins returning home after watching IPL match killed in hit-and-run

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

**A goods carrier hit the motorcycle that the victims, aged 20 and 14, were riding**

A 20-year-old student and his minor cousin were killed when a goods carrier hit their motorcycle on Ashoka Road in New Delhi on Monday night, the police said. The two were returning home after watching an Indian Premier League (IPL) match.

**11 p.m. incident**

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Sachin Sharma said the accident occurred around 11 p.m. on Mahadev Road T-point. Neither of them was wearing a helmet, he added.

The victims were promptly shifted to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, where doctors declared them dead on arrival, said the officer.

The truck driver immediately fled the spot with the vehicle, making it a hit-and-run case, Mr. Sharma said. The victims were identified as Yagya Bhatia, a BSc student, and his cousin Abhav Bhatia, 14, a school student. Both were residents of Ashok Nagar.

The police later found the goods carrier in the trans-Yamuna area, where the driver had abandoned it. A case has been registered against the driver under sections pertaining to rash driving and causing death by negligence.

"Efforts are under way to apprehend the driver. Further investigation is in progress," said the DCP.

Timings DELHI
WEDNESDAY, APR. 29
SUN RISE 05:41 SET 18:55
MOON RISE 16:50 SET 04:09
THURSDAY, APR. 30
SUN RISE 05:42 SET 18:56
MOON RISE 17:52 SET 04:52
FRIDAY, MAY. 01
SUN RISE 05:41 SET 18:56
MOON RISE 18:49 SET 05:33

Delhi Weather
Delhi City 39 28
Safdarjung 39 27
Palam 39 27

Delhi Palam Today
39°C The weather will be hot and sweaty. Spell of dust storm with light rain and thunderstorm along with strong winds is likely.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
41°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be hot and sweaty. Night will be comfortable.

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# M.P. govt. sets 60-day deadline for UCC draft Bill, forms committee

Panel headed by retd. SC judge to examine legal, social and administrative aspects of personal laws; State govt. plans to bring in law before Deepavali

Mehul Malpani
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has constituted a high-level committee, headed by retired Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prasad, to examine the legal, social and administrative frameworks of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the State and prepare a draft Bill.

According to an order issued late on Monday night, the six-member panel will also comprise retired IAS officer Shatrughan Singh, legal expert Anoop Nair, academician Gopal Sharma, social worker Badhpal Singh, and Additional Secretary in the General Administration Department Ajay Kateriya. The committee has been asked to submit the draft Bill, along with a detailed report of its findings, to the State government within 60 days.

"In Madhya Pradesh, marriage, divorce, maintenance, inheritance, and other related matters are governed by separate provisions under various personal and family laws. In the current context, there is a need to comprehensively examine these laws and develop a uniform, balanced, and practical legal framework, ensuring equality, justice, and legal clarity for citizens," stated the order issued by the Law and Legal Affairs Department.

It added that to achieve this objective, a high-level committee is "required to be formed to study the legal, social, and administrative aspects of the subject and submit appropriate recommendations".


M.P. CM Mohan Yadav chairing a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday. SHRI

The panel will evaluate models adopted by other Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled States, especially Uttarakhand and Gujarat. While Uttarakhand became the first State to implement the UCC in 2024, Gujarat passed the Bill in March this year. Chhattisgarh has also formed a similar panel to prepare a draft UCC Bill for the State.

**CM's appeal**

Earlier this month, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav told an Singh, legal expert Anoop Nair, academician Gopal Sharma, social worker Badhpal Singh, and Additional Secretary in the General Administration Department Ajay Katheriya. The committee has been asked to submit the draft Bill, along with a detailed report of its findings, to the State government within 60 days.

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**CM's appeal**

Earlier this month, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav told Ministers during a Cabinet meeting that the State government is working towards implementing the UCC and asked them to be well-versed in the subject.

According to government sources, Mr. Yadav is overseeing progress on the matter and the government hopes to introduce the Bill in the Assembly to implement the UCC before Deepavali this year.

# 142 guest teachers face termination over refusing Census duty

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

As many as 142 guest teachers in Delhi face termination of service for allegedly refusing to perform their statutory duty as Census enumerators, with the administration terming the act "gross negligence and indiscipline".

In a letter to the Director of Education dated April 24, the Old Delhi District Magistrate stated, "The teachers had declined to carry out assigned Census work."

The District Magistrate requested that their services be discontinued or terminated with immediate effect.

Meanwhile, the Government Teachers' Association (GTA) of Delhi has requested Education Minister Ashish Sood to withdraw the proposed termination of the guest teachers. In a letter to Mr. Sood, GTA general secretary Ajay Veer stated that all the guest teachers facing termination are currently employed under annual contracts that are set to expire on May 8.

# Jamia students stage protest against RSS event on campus

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Students of Jamia Millia Islamia on Tuesday protested against the 'Yuva Kumbh' programme organised on the campus by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to mark its centenary.

Amid heavy deployment of Delhi Police and Rapid Action Force personnel, the students protested outside the auditorium, alleging that hosting such an event is against "the secular nature of the university space".

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GENERAL

भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक सर्विसेज बोर्ड
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA SERVICES BOARD
Advt. No. RBI/2025-26/28
Recruitment for the Posts of Officers in Grade 'B' (Direct Recruit) (DR) (On Probation-OP) (General/DEPR/DSIM) Cadres - Panel Year 2026 in Reserve Bank of India
Applications are invited for recruitment to the above posts in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the Panel Year 2026.

| Sr. No. | Name of the Post | Vacancies |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Officers in Grade 'B' (DR)- General | 45 |
| 2 | Officers in Grade 'B' (DR)- Department of Economic and Policy Research (DEPR) | 19 |
| 3 | Officers in Grade 'B' (DR)- Department of Statistics and Information Management (DSIM) | 19 |
| | Total | 83 |

1. For other details such as eligibility criteria, examination scheme, selection procedure, centres of selection, submission of online application and other instructions, please refer to the detailed advertisement to be published on the Bank's website (www.rbi.org.in) on April 29, 2026 (tentative) and on the Employment News/ Rozgar Samachar soon after. May 02, 2026 - subsequent issue. Candidates can apply for the aforementioned posts only by online mode through the Bank's website (www.rbi.org.in).
2. Important Dates**:
Online Link Open For Online Registration of Applications and Payment of Application Fees/Intimation Charges: April 29 to May 19, 2026 (11:00 AM to 7:00 PM)
Phase-I Online Examination of Grade 'B' (DR) - General: June 13, 2026
Phase-I Online Examination of Grade 'B' (DR) (Paper-I and II) - DEPR (Paper-I): June 14, 2026
Phase-II Online examination for Grade 'B' (DR)- General: July 25, 2026
Phase-II Online - Written Examination for Grade 'B' (DR)- DEPR (Paper-I and II), DSIM (Paper-I and II): July 26, 2026
** The Board reserves the right to make any changes in these dates.
NOTE: Corrigendum, if any, issued in the above advertisement, will be published only on the Bank's website (www.rbi.org.in).

GENERAL

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> Social Work
> English
> Forensic Science
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## IN BRIEF



### BMC announces 10% water cut across city from May 15

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Tuesday announced a 10% water cut across the city starting May 15. BMC Commissioner Ashwini Bhide said, "The decision was taken to ensure that Mumbai's water supply remains in good condition amid uncertainty over rains due to the El Niño effect. We have requested the State government for additional reserves from Bhatsa and Vaitarna dams." The overall stock in the seven lakes supplying water to the city stood at 28.35%, which is expected to last till July 6, he said.

### Stray dogs maul 8-year-old to death in UP's Saharanpur

An eight-year-old boy was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs in Fatehpur police station area here, police said on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday evening when the victim, identified as Lavish, had gone to a field on the outskirts of his village to collect wheat husk, they said. Station House Officer Virendra Singh Rana said the boy was attacked by a group of stray dogs when he was alone, leaving him critically injured. After being alerted over phone, his family members rushed Lavish to a primary health centre, where doctors declared him dead. The officer said that they have received a written complaint from the family. ■■

# CITU knocks on ILO's door over 'suppression' of workers' rights

**Trade union asks UN agency to recommend that Union and Uttar Pradesh govts. release detained workers, withdraw criminal proceedings, guarantee non-repetition of such violations, and for independent judicial inquiry into police excesses**

**A.M. Jigyesh**
NEW DELHI

The Delhi State Committee of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) has complained against the Union and Uttar Pradesh governments to the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the violations of workers' fundamental rights and assault on trade union rights in the industrial regions of Noida and Greater Noida. The CPI(M)-affiliated trade union, in its complaint to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) on Monday, has raised concerns of "grave, widespread, and systematic violations" of freedom of association, right to organise, right to collective bargaining and right to peaceful assembly. It urged the ILO to admit its complaint under the "Freedom of Association" procedure and hold that the Government of India and the Uttar Pradesh government are in violation of fundamental ILO principles.

Workers in the industrial area staged a series of protests earlier this month over issues like wage hike, working hours and better overtime pay, with violence reported during one such stir on April 13.

The complaint, seen by *The Hindu*, says the violations arise from coercive state action, including mass arrests, use of force, and criminalisation of labour protest, during the workers' mobilisations. CITU leader Anjyan P.V. said in the complaint that stagnant real wages, increasing costs of living amid the LPG crisis, and large-scale false propaganda by the government on Labour Codes created conditions in which the workers' anger exploded in mass demonstrations.

The trade union leaders said the minimum wages at the dawn of the strike for unskilled workers in Uttar Pradesh was ₹11,704. "The workers were expected to live below-par subsistence wages across Delhi-NCR where the cost of living has increased manifold in the last decade," the complaint read. It added that around 350 juveniles and 800 adults have been detained at Kasna, Ghaziabad. "Many people were also arrested at their workplaces between 15-17th April, while workers were entering or punching in at their workplace, at the behest of the HR officials of the companies. Police have sealed the CITU offices in Sector 8 Noida as well as Bhangel," the complaint added.

The CITU has urged the ILO to recommend that both the Union and State governments must immediately release detained workers and union leaders, withdraw criminal proceedings arising from peaceful protests and guarantee non-repetition of such violations. Mr. Anjyan said in the complaint that the ILO must direct the governments to institute an independent judicial inquiry into police excesses, restore collective bargaining mechanisms and strictly adhere to the existing labour laws.



**Raising pitch:** Security personnel standing guard as factory workers stage a protest in Noida. FILE PHOTO

### Noida not a law and order issue: activists

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

In a statement, about 500 cultural activists, academics and artists, including actor Nasseruddin Shah, musician T.M. Krishna, and poet K. Satchidanandan have demanded that the government engage with protesting workers in the Delhi-NCR region sympathetically and not treat the protests as a 'law and order' issue. "Immediately release all workers and their leaders," a release issued by them stated.

Separately, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha and a platform of 10 central trade unions rejected the narrative about the involvement of "anti-national forces and Pakistan" in the workers' uprising and demanded that the governments own up to their "criminal neglect" of the workers' genuine demands and fulfil them immediately.

**'Textbook coercion case'**

"The events in Noida represent a textbook case of suppression of labour rights through state coercion, where workers asserting minimum economic demands have been met with criminalisation, violence, and institutional hostility," Mr. Anjyan said in the complaint.

### KPCC notice to district leader for ad on Chennithala

**The Hindu Bureau**
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) has issued a show-cause notice to Thiruvananthapuram District Congress Committee (DCC) general secretary A. Prajin Babu, who published a full-page focus feature advertisement on the political journey of senior leader Ramesh Chennithala in an English newspaper, on the charge of embarrassing the party in public in violation of the Congress's political positions and directives.

KPCC president Sunny Joseph viewed the act as a serious breach of discipline and directed the general secretary in charge of organisational affairs, Neyyattinkara Sanal, to issue the show-cause notice to Mr. Babu.

All India Congress Committee (AICC) and the KPCC had previously directed that the Congress leaders and workers should not make public statements in print, visual, or social media or any other platform in a manner that bring disrepute to the organisation, particularly regarding the selection of the Chief Minister after the elections.

# Maharashtra defers action over Marathi rule, to begin training campaign for taxi, auto drivers

**Chinmay Gaikwad**
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday decided not to strictly enforce its decision to make Marathi mandatory for autorickshaw and taxi drivers. It has instead opted to launch a special verification drive from May 1, Maharashtra Day, to August 15 across all 59 Regional Transport Offices (RTOs).

Following a meeting at the Transport Commissionerate, Transport Minister Pratap Sarnaik clarified that while the mandate to speak in Marathi remains in effect, driving licences will not be revoked solely on the grounds of inadequate language proficiency during this period. After August 15, the rule will be strictly enforced, he said.

Following the decision, non-Marathi drivers' unions withdrew their call for a strike on May 4.



Taxi and autorickshaw drivers protesting the State government's decision to make Marathi mandatory, in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

Mr. Sarnaik said the focus during the drive will be on compliance and training. "Marathi must be spoken. It is our State language. We are providing the tools for drivers to learn Marathi," he said.

The Minister said RTOs will provide dedicated spaces and guidebooks for drivers to learn Marathi. Functional Marathi skills will become a prerequisite for renewal of permits and licences for cabs, including app-based aggregators such as Ola, Uber, and Rapido, he said. A draft amendment to the Maharashtra Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 is being codified, he added.

Mr. Sarnaik said drivers are not required to be scholars, but need to know "practical Marathi" for daily communication about fares and locations.

# AAP MLA walks out of jail, urges youth to join him in seeking change

**Press Trust of India**
JAMMU

After his release from Kathua jail on Tuesday, AAP MLA Mehraj Malik rued the entanglement of politics with the slapping of legal cases, but asserted that no change is possible without political engagement. He vowed to continue his struggle for public welfare unabated and asserted that it is driven by thoughts rather than politics.



AAP MLA Mehraj Malik after his release from the Kathua Jail in Jammu on Tuesday. ANI

The legislator's release follows the quashing of his detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

Mr. Malik emphasised the need to rise above religious divisions and focus on humanity, asserting that his political struggle is aimed at reform and public welfare in Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to his recent imprisonment, the MLA said he had gone to jail while fighting for the rights of the people. "I went to jail for this struggle. It was for the people, and it will continue," he added.

Calling for greater participation of young people in public life, Mr. Malik urged youth to step into politics. "I am alone right now. I want youth to join politics. Only politics can change the fate of the people and this country," he said.

# 'Light a spark of harmony': SP chief visits BJP MLA who got injured while burning his effigy

**Mayank Kumar**
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday visited Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA from Bahraich Anupama Jaiswal at a private hospital in Lucknow. Ms. Jaiswal is undergoing treatment for burn injuries sustained while setting fire to the effigies of Mr. Yadav and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during an event last week.

The incident happened during BJP's "Mahila Janakrosh March" in Bahraich, intended to rally support for the Centre's Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, which provides 33% reservation for women in Parliament and State Assemblies.

Sharing a picture on X after his visit, the SP chief wrote, "We don't want a fire to ignite within society. We want to light a spark of harmony. Our healthy tradition of positive politics has taught us this. That's why we visited BJP MLA Anupama Jaiswal and wished her a speedy recovery. Politics has its place, as do human relationships."

According to doctors, the Bahraich legislator is receiving medical attention in an ICU isolation ward. She has suffered significant burn injuries, with around 75% of her face affected, said doctors.



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav with BJP MLA Anupama Jaiswal, who is recuperating at a private hospital in Lucknow. X/@AKHILESH_YADAV

Doctors said that in burn cases, the full extent of injuries may take 48 to 72 hours to manifest, and the severity of her condition is being assessed accordingly.

As per eyewitnesses, flames suddenly erupted as Ms. Jaiswal tried to set the effigies afire and engulfed her face. She was initially taken to a district hospital and later referred to Lucknow for advanced treatment.

# In centenary year, KEM Hospital caught in name-change row

**Snehal Mutha**
MUMBAI

For over a century, the nameplate on the gate of the King Edward Memorial (KEM) Hospital, established on January 22, 1926 in Mumbai's Parel, has weathered monsoons and witnessed midnight emergencies and the quiet grief of waiting rooms.

Now, in its centenary year, the hospital run by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has found itself at the centre of a row over its name.

A political war of words has erupted after the BMC's Health Committee on April 24 gave its nod to rename the hospital as 'Kasturbaiyashreshtha Ekatriya Memorial Hospital'.

The name was suggested by Maharashtra Cabinet Minister and BJP leader Mangal Prabhat Lodha in a letter to Health Committee chairman Harish Bhandirge. "Many institutions still use colonial-era names, which are reminiscent of the days of slavery. These names should be replaced with names that honour our own culture, values, and inspiring historical figures," stated the letter dated March 25.

**Plea to scrap move**

On April 27, the Shiv Sena (UBT), a constituent of the Opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance, staged a protest against the move.

A delegation from the party, including MLA Ajay Choudhari and Leader of the Opposition in the BMC Kishori Pednekar, submitted a petition to the hospital's Dean, Sangeeta Rawat, demanding that the proposal be scrapped.

However, the proposal requires the Municipal Commissioner's approval before it is placed before the civic general body for final clearance.



A rush of patients at the KEM Hospital in Mumbai's Parel. FILE PHOTO

Meanwhile, doctors and patients say improving services at the hospital should be the main priority. According to authorities, the 1,800-bed hospital is one of the largest in Maharashtra, with about 950 doctors treating nearly 20 lakh patients annually. It also trains about 2,000 students in undergraduate, postgraduate, and superspeciality medical courses.

A senior doctor, speaking on condition of anonymity, said at least 2,000 to 3,000 people are treated daily in the hospital's outpatient department. "It is no secret that there is always room for improvement. I believe we should focus on that instead of pasting energy into trivial matters," he said.

Patients and their family members have repeatedly raised concerns about a broken CT scanner, a non-operational MRI machine, flooded ICUs, staff shortages, and unavailability of beds at the hospital.

Data obtained under the Right to Information Act by Aapatal Bachao, Nijikaran Hatao Kriti Samiti - a coalition of 25 civic organisations - show that only 473 of the 1,017 permanent positions at the hospital have been filled so far.

Ramesh, 26, a resident of Parel who often visits the hospital with his mother, said, "Most of the time I overlook the poor quality of facilities because treatment is free. When the MRI machine is broken, I pay hefty charges outside, thinking the rest of the care costs nothing. If a minister's letter can push through a name change so fast, then KEM's issues can be resolved just as easily."

**'Unnecessary confusion'**

Dr. Amar Agame, a key member of the Maharashtra Association of Resident Doctors at the hospital, said the BMC's most visible move to address the hospital's issues has been to propose a new name for the front gate, which "distorts KEM's long-standing legacy in health care, teaching, and medical service".

He added that the issues requiring immediate attention include poor maintenance of lifts, irregular disbursement of stipends, and an overwhelming patient load. He noted that a change in name would also lead to "unnecessary confusion and complications in academic and administrative documentation".

# Bail for 'honeymoon murder' case accused

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI/BHOPAL

A local court in Meghalaya's capital, Shillong, has granted bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi, the prime accused in the murder of her businessman husband Raja Raghuvanshi in May 2025.



Sonam Raghuvanshi

In her order on Monday, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Judicial) D.R. Kharbeng said the accused was entitled to be released on bail, as the "facts constituting grounds of arrest" in Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur were not effectively communicated" to her in clear terms. The order was made available on Tuesday.

The court, however, granted bail to Ms. Sonam on conditions that she attend court on every date fixed, not leave the jurisdiction of the court except with due permission, and execute a personal bond of ₹50,000.

"We are following necessary legal procedures and will continue to pursue the matter according to the law," East Khasi Hills District Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem said, indicating that the police may challenge the bail order.

In Indore, Raja's mother, Uma Raghuvanshi, expressed her displeasure at the court's decision and said that her family is "still waiting for justice".

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## IN BRIEF

### Karnataka HC issues notice to CBI on ex-Minister's appeal

The High Court of Karnataka on Tuesday ordered the issue of a notice to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on a petition filed by Congress MLA and former Minister Vinay Kulkarni challenging a special court's order convicting and sentencing him to imprisonment for life for the murder of BJP leader Yogeshgouda Gowdar in Dharwad in 2016. Kulkarni will not be able to continue as MLA if the court refuses to stay his conviction.

### Bullet train to link A.P. and Telangana capitals: Vaishnaw

The travel time between Andhra Pradesh capital Amaravati and Telangana's Hyderabad will be cut to 70 minutes (from eight hours at present) on the proposed high-speed rail corridor, Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Tuesday. He also announced that the South Coast Railway zone would be notified on June 1.

### Two assailants hack journalist to death in Chittoor district

Two unidentified assailants hacked to death a vernacular newspaper journalist in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday. The victim was identified as Jagannohan Reddy. Police sources said Reddy had differences with a person with criminal antecedents and this might have led to the killing.

# Google's AI data hub project kicks off in Andhra Pradesh

**Chief Minister Naidu lays foundation for 1-Gigawatt centre on 600 acres on Vizag outskirts; it will be one of India's largest FDI projects with data storage, AI cloud, at an investment of ₹1.35 lakh cr.**

**Y. Kamalakara Rao**
VISAKHAPATNAM



The project will be managed by Google's subsidiary Raiden Infotech in partnership with Adani Infra. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday laid the foundation stone for the Google Data Centre at Tarluvada, on the outskirts of Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, one of the largest single Foreign Direct Investment projects in India.

The 1-Gigawatt hyperscale AI data centre is coming up on 604.4 acres at an investment of ₹1.35 lakh crore. It will be managed by Google's subsidiary Raiden Infotech in partnership with Adani Infra, AdaniConneX and Airtel Nutra are also partners in the wider Google-Adani-Airtel venture, which forms part of Google's announced $15 billion investment.

The facility will offer large-scale data storage along with AI cloud infrastructure, and an upcoming subsea cable system will give Visakhapatnam direct digital links with several countries.

Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said the port city was set to become India's next technology landmark. "Visakhapatnam will become AI-patnam," he said.

Adani Digital Labs Director Jeet Adani said India currently had about 1.3 Gigawatts of total data centre capacity, and that the Visakhapatnam project alone would add nearly 1 Gigawatt at a single location.

Laura Williams, Consul General at the U.S. Consulate General in Hyderabad, said the Google project embodies the strength of the U.S.-India partnership.

The government said the project had been enabled by its "speed of doing business" policy, and that it planned to build a 6.5-Gigawatt digital hub in the State. The centre would create jobs in AI, cloud operations, cybersecurity and data science, and to draw allied investment in power systems, cooling technologies, server manufacturing and networking.

Speaking at the event, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu called the project a matter of pride for north Andhra and said it would place the State on the global technology map.

Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw drew a parallel between Hyderabad's Cyber Towers and the Google AI hub in Visakhapatnam, saying the port city was set to become the country's next technology landmark.

SECOND CENTRE
» PAGE 13



Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Deputy CM Harsh Sanghavi and State BJP president Jagdish Vishwakarma in Gandhinagar on Tuesday. ANI

# 'Development model behind BJP's sweep in Gujarat local polls'

**Abhinay Deshpande**
AHMEDABAD

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) surged ahead in Gujarat's local body elections on Tuesday, with early results indicating a commanding lead across civic bodies, prompting Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel to call it a resounding mandate for "development-oriented governance".

"I am grateful to the people of Gujarat for again supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's development-focused politics and delivering a big victory to the BJP," Mr. Patel said in Gandhinagar.

According to results available, the BJP has won 6,472 of over 9,900 seats across municipal corporations, municipalities, district panchayats and taluka panchayats. The Congress secured 1,442 seats.

"The bond between Gujarat and the BJP gets even stronger! Gratitude to the people for a sweeping mandate. People have voted for the politics of good governance," Mr. Modi said in a post on X.

# 'Why should third parties challenge faith or rituals in places of worship?'

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

The direct descendant in the Chishti-Nizami lineage associated with the Dargah of Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi found common ground with the devotees and foster family of Lord Ayyappa, the deity at Sabarimala temple in Kerala, when he submitted in the Supreme Court on Tuesday that the faith of a believer could not yield to the whim of a third-party interloper or a tourist to walk into the *sanctum sanctorum*.

Appearing before a nine-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, Syed Altamash Nizami said the basti in which the dargah was located and the hill on which the Sabarimala temple was situated were unique in the minds of the believers.

Advocate Nizam Pasha, appearing for Mr. Nizami, submitted that a particular place of worship and the faith attached to it could not operate in other dimensions. It was not for third parties to challenge the faith, belief or mode of rituals attached to these distinctive places of worship. The location of the temple or the dargah and the peculiar rituals associated to them could not be segregated.

Mr. Pasha said the case of the dargah stemmed from an incident of a woman law student attempting to enter the *sanctum sanctorum* of the dargah in declaration of her rights under the Sabarimala judgment.

Mr. Pasha said the mere fact that members of other faiths were not banned from entry did not take away the denominational character of a religious place of worship.

Mr. Pasha argued that core religious practices were impervious to social reforms and outside the reach of the State.

# Fuel supply stabilises in Andhra Pradesh; crisis continues in Telangana

**The Hindu Bureau**
VISAKHAPATNAM/CHITTOOR

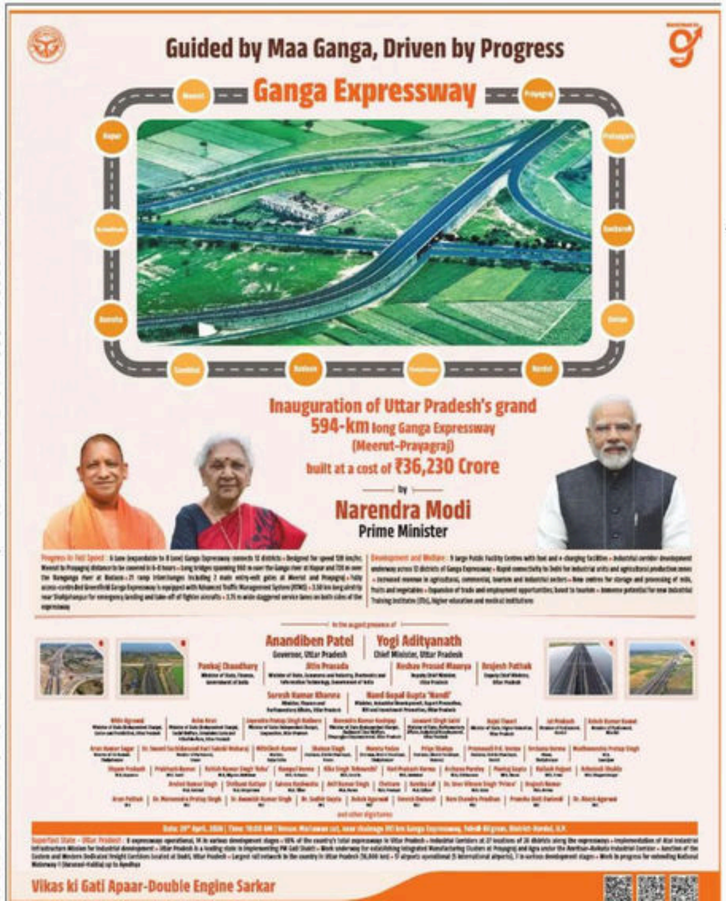
Fuel supply began stabilising across Andhra Pradesh on Tuesday, after days of widespread supply disruptions, long queues and panic buying. However, panic buying continued for the second day in Telangana, particularly in Hyderabad.

In Andhra Pradesh, many petrol bunks resumed operations as the authorities stepped up efforts to address the issue. Petrol bunks saw shorter queues compared to Monday.

Dealers said the supply disruption seemed to be an engineered crisis. Oil companies had recently brought in a 'no-credit' policy, seeking immediate payment, they said. Many bunk operators, unable to clear old dues for want of credit, faced interruptions in supply.

In Hyderabad, long queues were seen outside petrol pumps on Tuesday.

The Telangana Civil Supplies department said three tankers were behind the demand surge. Following the recent hike in industrial diesel price to ₹150 a litre, several commercial users were buying the fuel from retail outlets where the price is around ₹95 a litre. Two, supply issues in neighbouring States have driven out-of-State

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## A false high

**The SIRs impact must be factored in before reading turnout figures**

There is a tendency in India to reduce democracy to the mere conduct of elections, and to confine political life to "political society" — that subset of the population actively engaged in setting policy and in mediating welfare delivery. This points to a democracy that falls short of a deliberative or deeply participative model, even in socio-economically better-off States such as Tamil Nadu (T.N.) and Kerala. Yet, elections are not a one-off event, and turnout remains a useful dipstick for the vibrancy of the democratic exercise, particularly in India where the poorer sections vote in large numbers. By that measure, the headline figures from T.N. and the first phase of the poll in West Bengal appear disarming and unprecedented. According to provisional Election Commission of India (ECI) data, 93.2% of voters turned out in the first phase in West Bengal and 85.1% in T.N. These record numbers must be read against the backdrop of the ECI's Special Intensive Revision (SIR), which led to massive net voter deletions. In T.N., the rolls shrank by 10.5% from the pre-SIR figure, while in West Bengal nearly 1 in 10 of the electorate was deleted, with the eligibility of lakhs of voters still being heard by tribunals. If this is factored in, the percentage turnout begins to look inflated by a reduced denominator (total electorate) rather than by genuinely expanded participation (the numerator). The absolute increase in turnout in T.N. — about 27 lakh votes on provisional figures — was in fact among the lowest in recent electoral cycles, suggesting that wrongful deletions may have suppressed real participation even if the SIR did clear the electoral rolls of those who had died or moved out. The effect was sharpest in cities such as Chennai, where several constituencies recorded turnout above 100%, a jump of over 20 percentage points, even though the absolute number of voters — around 24 lakh — remained virtually unchanged from the 2021 elections.

It is also difficult to read too much into turnout in either State. High turnout has long been a feature of politically charged West Bengal, and T.N. has also been no slouch in recent electoral cycles compared to the rest of India. Also, political scientists have found little correlation between turnout levels and pro- or anti-incumbency outcomes. Once polished, 'turnout' percentages tend to acquire a life of their own and are cited as proof of democratic enthusiasm or the strength of a mandate, or, in T.N.'s case, the impact of a new political player such as actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam. But a percentage is only as meaningful as the denominator it rests on, and in these two States, the denominator itself has been substantially altered. Turnout figures must therefore be read alongside how the electorate was determined before any conclusions about the mandate are drawn from the actual results.

## Battle of wills

**The U.S. should lift its blockade so that Iran can open the Strait of Hormuz**

The U.S. war on Iran has turned into a battle of wills in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, marked by duelling naval blockades and stalled diplomacy. Iran, which has effectively restricted the free flow of traffic through the Strait of Hormuz since the U.S. and Israel attacks on February 28, has refused to ease its control over the critical waterway. The U.S. insists that its blockade of Iranian ports will stay in place until a deal is reached. Last week, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi travelled to Pakistan, which mediated the first round of direct talks on April 11, but Iran declined further direct talks with Washington. The White House had earlier said it would send special envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad, but President Donald Trump cancelled their trip after Mr. Araghchi left the Pakistani capital. Mr. Trump has repeatedly said that Iran wants a deal. Yet, Tehran continues to refuse talks with the U.S., citing Israel's attacks on Lebanon and America's blockade in the Gulf of Oman. On paper, a ceasefire is in place in Lebanon, and Mr. Trump said earlier this month that Israel was "prohibited" from attacking the country, but Israeli air strikes have continued. He has also indicated no urgency to lift the blockade, betting that sustained economic pressure will force Iran to change its position.

The only silver lining is that the Iran ceasefire, announced on April 8, is still holding. Despite Mr. Trump's threats, he has held fire even after Iran seized ships in the Persian Gulf. Tehran, too, despite warning retaliation over a U.S. seizure of an Iranian tanker, has not followed through. Both sides have remained diplomatically engaged through Pakistan. The alternative to diplomacy is disaster. The U.S. and Israel bombed Iran for 40 days but failed to secure a favourable strategic outcome, and the global economic fallout of this illegal war is now being felt. For diplomacy to succeed, Mr. Trump and the Iranian leadership should adopt a phased approach. Rather than acting as if the war has not changed the region's strategic realities, the U.S. should offer tangible concessions to Iran in return for compromises on core issues. Iran has demonstrated a measure of deterrence by asserting control over the Strait of Hormuz. But if it continues to disrupt commercial traffic, further damaging the global economy, it risks squandering the goodwill it enjoys as the underdog. A practical first step would be reciprocal de-escalation: the U.S. lifting its blockade and Iran reopening the Strait to commercial shipping. This would also reinforce the fragile ceasefire and build confidence, paving the way for the next round of direct talks on outstanding issues. In-

## A recusal test the Delhi High Court failed



**Kaleeswaram Raj**
Lawyer at the Supreme Court of India

Judicial recusal principles have been tested in the Delhi liquor policy case

Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma of the Delhi High Court refused to recuse herself from hearing the Delhi liquor policy case — *Central Bureau Of Investigation vs Kuldeep Singh and Ors.* (April 20, 2026) — involving the former Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, and others. This episode marks an unfortunate deviation from India's jurisprudence on judicial recusal.

Mr. Kejriwal argued the recusal plea by appearing as party in person in the High Court. He submitted that the judge should not hear the Central Bureau of Investigation's plea against the discharge of the accused, including himself, in the excise policy case, as ordered by the trial court. The prominent grounds cited in his plea included adverse findings by the judge in earlier proceedings in the same case; the judge's alleged ideological proclivity, as reflected in her attendance at events organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Adhivakta Parishad, or ABAP (a lawyers' organisation inclined towards the political philosophy of the ruling regime at the Centre); the fact that the judge's children were working as panel advocates under the Centre/government, with case files to be allotted by the Solicitor General, who, incidentally, was representing the opposing side in the case; and a statement by Home Minister Amit Shah implying that Mr. Kejriwal would lose the case in the High Court. Because of these factors, he contended that he reasonably apprehended bias in the process of adjudication.

**Law on recusal**

The law on recusal of a judge is not codified in India. It is more an ethical issue than a technical one. Yet, the jurisprudence on recusal is rich as it takes in precedents and best practices across the globe. The 19th century idea about judges with its Victorian overtones is reflected in the British case of *Leeson vs General Council of Medical Education and Registration* (1889) where Lord Bowen said that like Caesar's wife, judges should be above suspicion. The proverbial idea that justice should not only be done but also be seen to have been done was articulated by *Lord Hewart in R vs Sussex Justices* (1923).

What transpired in the Delhi High Court exposes the risk of judges not strictly adhering to the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct, the draft of which was finalised at the Round Table Meeting of judges from many countries at The Hague in 2002. They enumerate independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality, competence and diligence as accepted 'judicial values'. Among other things, they say that " a judge shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all of the judge's activities" .

In *Ranjit Thakur vs Union Of India And Ors.* (1987), the Supreme Court of India explained that the 'proper approach' for a judge when faced with a request for recusal "is not to look at his own mind and ask himself, however, honestly, 'Am I biased?', but to look at the mind of the party before him". In *P.K. Ghosh, I.A.S. and Anr. vs J.G. Rajput* (1995) the Court said that when the litigant feels on reasonable basis that a particular judge should not hear his case, and when there are alternatives, recusal by the judge is the appropriate course, for maintaining public confidence in the system. In *State Of Punjab vs Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar and Ors. Etc.* (2011), the Court said that "a mere ground of appearance of bias and not actual bias is enough to vitiate the judgment/order".

In *Supreme Court Advocates-On-Record Association vs Union Of India* (2015), the Court reiterated some of the judicial values. The judgment said, "The simple question is, whether the adjudication by the judge concerned, would cause a reasonable doubt in the mind of a reasonably informed litigant and fair-minded public as to his impartiality." Unlike administrative decision making, where the adjudicative authority is often stipulated in the statute or the rule, there is no doctrine of necessity in judicial proceedings when there are alternatives.

The judgment of the top court in *State of W.B. vs Shivananda Pathak* (1998) was an admonition against judicial obstinacy. Thus, with the possible exceptions such as Justice Arun Mishra's refusal to recuse in *Indore Development Authority vs Manoharlal And Ors.* (2019), the Supreme Court has, by and large, rejected the "duty to sit doctrine" evolved in the United States.

**The challenge before the Judge**

Legal scholar James Sample opined that "the teachable moments on disqualification are in the Court's Court". This, again, is a call not only for ensuring fairness but also for maintaining the appearance of fairness. The real challenge before the judge is to overcome the possibility for subjectivity in adjudicative process especially when the very same judge whose recusal is sought is deciding the question of recusal.

Distinguished American jurist Benjamin N. Cardozo famously wrote, "We may try to see things as objectively as we please. None the less, we can never see them with any eyes except our own.". The maxim that no one should sit in judgment in her own cause is too well settled.

Viewed in the light of these principles, Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma should have recused herself or at least insisted that the recusal plea should be placed before another judge for hearing. Such a course would have facilitated a more objective evaluation of the contentions raised by Mr. Kejriwal apart from averting the present scenario. But neither of these happened and the present judgment followed.

**Fairness of process**

The judgment issued on April 20, 2026 does not reflect the correct judicial approach. The judge said that she had to decide between a litigant and herself. It was further stated in the judgment that the suspicion of bias expressed in the recusal plea was unfounded and that the allegations were manufactured. The judge asked, "... if the children of politicians can enter politics, how would it be just to question the children of a judge who study like others, struggle like others, and prove themselves in Court like others to earn their livelihood?" One would wonder if this was the argument made by Mr. Kejriwal.

Mr. Kejriwal, in his rejoinder, had reportedly said that "conflict arises not from prior participation in the present proceedings, but from the admitted existence of a live, active and ongoing professional relationship with the prosecuting side". The judge also justified her attendance at an event organised by the ABAP, and stated that she had attended events conducted by academic bodies as well. The judgment mistakes criticism of the judge as one of judicial establishment. The verdict is also self defensive, argumentative and accusational rather than analytical. It is vulnerable to further legal challenge. After the judgment, Mr. Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia wrote letters to the judge stating that they would not participate in further proceedings before her in the present matter.

In a case with serious political ramifications, the grounds raised by Mr. Kejriwal and others were relevant and required a more objective assessment, rather than a subjective affirmation based on a notion of a "presumption of impartiality", as stated in the judgment. The verdict substitutes the well-settled legal position that a reasonable apprehension of bias is sufficient for a plea of recusal with a requirement to demonstrate actual bias. This is patently erroneous.

The judge rightly said that, in the recusal plea, she was effectively being tried by the litigant. But the outcome of this "trial", unless corrected, will remain an embarrassing precedent for a system already in crisis.

## The RTE Act and the idea of social inclusion



**Arushi Khare**
Senior Lead, Government Relations, Vidya Action



**Karthika Annamalai**
Consultant, Right to Education (RTE), Vidya Action

The Supreme Court of India's judgment strengthens the vision of a socially integrated education system

In its January 2026 judgment, the Supreme Court of India reaffirmed the purpose of Section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, the landmark provision that reserves 25% of seats in private schools for students from economically weaker sections and socially disadvantaged groups. In words that are deeply symbolic, the Court observed that this provision makes it possible for "the child of a multi-millionaire or even of a Judge of the Supreme Court of India to sit in the same classroom and at the same bench as the child of an autorickshaw driver or a street vendor". The judgment reasserted that this provision is a deliberate constitutional strategy to operationalise equality of status by creating shared learning spaces for all children.

This sentiment of social integration often comes alive in thousands of stories across the country. Take Karthik, a footwear vendor, and his wife, Sunita, for example. They always dreamed of providing their children with quality education despite their modest income. This became possible when their younger son joined a reputed private school through this provision. The boy thrived in the new environment, excelling in academics and his favourite sport, kabaddi. Teachers nurtured his growth, while classmates became close friends. For Karthik and Sunita, the RTE Act did not just change their son's future; it altered their family's life trajectory, with the potential to lift them out of poverty. Stories such as Prem's are often told as narratives of access — of doors opened and opportunities unlocked. But at stake is not simply where a child studies, but whether the circumstances of their birth continue to determine the boundaries of their social world.

**A constitutional strategy**

Despite its intent, Section 12(1)(c) is frequently mischaracterised as a tool to promote private schooling or to allow the state to outsource its constitutional duty to public education, citing falling government school enrolment alongside rising private school admissions.

This reading is misplaced. First, Section 12(1)(c) does not dilute the state's duty to invest in public schools, but recognises that the right to free and compulsory elementary education, and the creation of shared learning spaces, must be realised within a schooling ecosystem where private schools are not incidental actors but natural participants in fulfilling a constitutional mandate. The RTE Act does not create a zero-sum contest between public and private institutions; it seeks to foster integrated educational spaces.

Second, the shift towards private schooling predates the RTE Act. The Annual Status of Education (ASER) Report of 2006 documents significant movement into private schools "at the expense of government school enrolment". Declining admissions in government schools are rooted in deeper concerns around infrastructure, teacher presence, and perceived quality — not in Section 12(1)(c) itself.

**Evidence from the ground**

Since its rollout, over five million children have walked through the doors of educational spaces previously out of reach, with retention rates averaging over 90%. In cities such as Delhi and Ahmedabad, blended classrooms are no longer exceptions; they are the norm. Research (such as that by Rao, Gautam, 2018) indicates that mixed classrooms lead to increased generosity, reduced discrimination, and stronger pro-social behaviour, without any adverse impact on academic outcomes or classroom discipline. At scale, implementation has also stabilised: reimbursements under Section 12(1)(c) are centrally streamlined, and State-level online Management Information Systems (MIS) ensure transparent, low-discretion processing.

For children from disadvantaged backgrounds, these classrooms offer more than just academics. They provide access to social capital, previously unexplored aspirations, peer networks, and institutional cultures. These experiences translate into higher self-belief, enhanced ambition, and a broader worldview.

**Acknowledging challenges**

There is no denying the challenges that persist in the implementation of Section 12(1)(c). Some private schools continue to resist full inclusion, while families often bear hidden costs for uniforms, books and materials. Implementation remains uneven across States, with persistent gaps in transparency, grievance redress, and last-mile outreach and disbursements.

These challenges do not change the fact that Section 12(1)(c) was not meant to rely solely on moral persuasion — it requires clear, enforceable rules to succeed. Encouragingly, recent experience has demonstrates that these gaps are neither inevitable nor insurmountable. State-driven digital admission systems and improved monitoring mechanisms — particularly in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi — have significantly strengthened access and accountability.

The Court's reaffirmation of Section 12(1)(c) makes clear that it is neither a retreat from public education nor an endorsement of private schooling. The challenge now is administrative. States must ensure timely reimbursements, remove hidden costs by private schools, strengthen grievance redress, and enforce inclusion norms so that equality is experienced. The real test is whether we can operationalise the constitutional promise of social integration with the seriousness needed to match the ambition we hold for our children.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**The New Zealand FTA**

India's strategy of "friendship diversification" is necessary for safeguarding against global supply chain volatility, especially after experiencing U.S. President Donald Trump's overwhelming friendship, which brought our labour-intensive industries to their knees. The New Zealand FTA serves as a masterclass in "defensive liberalisation". While New Zealand is a powerhouse in dairy and horticulture, India has successfully ring-fenced its is non-negotiable for rural livelihood security. The FTA should be viewed not as a primary market for volume, but as a chance to engage with a quality and technology partner.

**A. Thirugnanasambantham,**
Coimbatore

**The serpent's bite**

The issue of tackling snakebites in India highlights a crisis sustained as much by superstition as by systemic gaps. Harmful practices persist, such as making the snake bite again in the hope that it will take delaying treatment while seeking faith healers. Sleeping on the ground further increases exposure in rural areas. Therefore, public health strategy must prioritise behavioural change alongside antivenom supply. Targeted awareness campaigns, school-level education, and community health worker training can replace myths with first-aid protocols grounded in science.

**Harsh Pawaria,**
Rohtak, Haryana

*Kisan Mitra Chhadi* — a sensor-based stick that warns farmers of nearby snakes — is a practical, low-cost complement to clinical solutions. Prevention and cure must advance together.

**A. Mythami,**
Coimbatore

In India, where snakebites remain a serious public health concern, administering anti-snake venom and managing its reactions cannot be left to a few specialists. Most patients first reach primary delays can be fatal. While infrastructure gaps may take time to address, training can be implemented immediately. Structured training in snakebite first aid, anti-snake venom administration, and anaphylaxis management must be made mandatory for all doctors.

**Anahatha D. Kalyani,**
Pallipuram, Pookkad, Kerala

Officials of the Kerala Forest Department have showcased "SARPA" (the tool that can help save the lives of snakebite victims and connect users with snake rescuers. However, the app is currently available only on the Android platform and can be downloaded only from the Google Play Store. I request the Forest Department to make the app available on the App Store as well, so that iPhone users can also benefit from it.

**Surendran K.T.,**
Kalale, Ernakulam, Kerala

Letters emailed to

unacademy



# The fight to eliminate cervical cancer



**Neerja Bhatla**
Professor Emeritus, National Cancer Institute Jhajjar, Former Head of Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi

In 2008, Professor Harald zur Hausen received the Nobel Prize for his discovery that persistent infection with high-risk strains of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is the cause of cervical cancer, an important cause of morbidity and mortality globally, but more so in low and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs). His discovery paved the way for the development of prophylactic vaccines as well as tests to detect the infectious agent. A decade later, in 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced an initiative for the elimination of cervical cancer, and the global strategy was formally launched on November 17, 2020, endorsed by 194 countries, India among them.

**Disease and prevention**

Cervical cancer is a source of extreme physical misery, emotional strife and financial hardship. It is the second most common cancer among women in India, with approximately one lakh new cases every year, and half as many deaths, which is one quarter of the global burden. The years of life lost to cervical cancer are more than that of other cancers as these women are relatively younger, with active family and social responsibilities. Women diagnosed with stage 4 cervical cancer could develop urinary fistulas, postmenopausal bleeding, extreme sciatic and lumbar pain, obstruction to their ureters and renal failure. If one is lucky enough to get diagnosed at an earlier stage, the cancer is curable, but only with radical surgery or chemo-and radiation therapy. There is also a risk of recurrence which will require even more difficult exenteration procedures, stomas etc. That is, while the cancer is curable by providing symptom relief, hormone replacement and other supportive care, it comes at a physical and financial cost.

However, such suffering was preventable. Since the 1940s, secondary prevention by regular pap smear screening had been set up in the West, enabling detection of not just cancer but also precancerous stages. The natural history of cervical cancer has been well documented for over a century. It has a long precancerous phase of 10-15 years termed Cervical Intraepithelial Neoplasia (CIN) which can be detected by the microscopic examination of cells collected on a slide by brushing the cervix. At this stage, the cancer can be easily treated by simple day care procedures that do not require the removal of the uterus.

However, in India and other LMICs, we lacked the infrastructure and manpower to implement a screening of all women over the age of 30 years even once, let alone the recommended three-year interval period. Even in good tertiary centres, the laboratory placed a limit on the number of women that could be screened in a day. Outreach camps were conducted at regular intervals by gynaecologists and pathologists around the country, but these were merely a drop in the ocean. Even today, despite a national programme for screening with visual inspection, the screening coverage does not exceed 5%. Moreover, bringing women who test positive into the hospital for a confirmatory biopsy and treatment has extremely poor compliance rates.

**The promise of a vaccine**

HPV vaccination entered this scenario in 2006 like a superhero for the primary prevention of cervical cancer. Starting off as a three-dose vaccination, research showed that it could be reduced to two, and then it was found that just one dose was sufficient to provide protection against 85-90% of cancers. Over 500 million doses have been delivered worldwide, and nearly four million in India.

Cumulative data from systematic trials and post-marketing surveillance show no increase in adverse events among vaccinated women than in the general population

Cumulative data from systematic trials and post-marketing surveillance show no increase in adverse events among vaccinated women than in the general population. Transient mild reactions have been observed that are common to all vaccines. There have been no negative effects on reproductive performance, fertility rates, congenital malformations or menstrual patterns. The efficacy of the HPV vaccine is remarkable, with nearly complete protection against the strains which are present in the vaccine. The first generation of vaccines were directed against the two most virulent strains, HPV 16 and 18, that account for 70% of cervical cancers globally but 85% in India. Countries like Australia and the U.K. which introduced the HPV vaccine soon after its launch in 2007-8 have already witnessed significant reductions in pre-cancer and cancer. Similar reports have come from other countries like Sweden, Denmark, Canada and the U.S.

**Widespread accessibility**

The WHO's cervical cancer elimination initiative envisions making cervical cancer a rare cancer, with an incidence rate of four per 1,00,000. To reach this goal, we must achieve certain targets by 2030: HPV vaccination of 90% of girls before the age of 15 years, screening of 70% of women with an HPV test at 35 and 45 years, and treatment of 90% of those detected with lesions. While the country has already crossed the halfway point since the launch of the global declaration, we are still far away from reaching these targets. However, the launch of the National HPV Vaccination Campaign on February 28, 2026 by the Prime Minister himself signals the highest political commitment to women's health and reproductive rights. All parents need to be aware of this opportunity so that their 14-year-old daughters can avail free vaccination at the nearest government health facilities. One small jab will take us towards a cervical cancer-free future and a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

# A question of choice

A retracted ban on government staff joining parties has led to intense debate

STATE OF PLAY

**Shubhomoy Sikdar**
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An order by Chhattisgarh's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government that – at first glance seemed innocuous – and its hasty withdrawal – has triggered a debate on the political leanings of serving government employees.

On April 21, a circular issued by the General Administration Department – which comes under Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai – stated that no government employee could become a member of any political party or organisation, participate in any of its activities; or hold office within it. Referring to the provisions of the Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, it said that it was mandatory for all government servants to discharge the duties of their office with complete "impartiality, honesty, and integrity". It also said that no government employee was to assume any position or responsibility that might affect his or her official duties. Further, the circular warned of action in accordance with the provisions of the Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1965, and the Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1966 for violation of those rules.

However, the very next day another circular was issued which stated that the earlier instructions were suspended till further orders.

**On attending RSS events**

The suspension of the notice evoked a debate centred on the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS). State Congress President Deepak Baij linked both the circulars to the organisation. He said that with respect to the first order, it seemed to indicate that a section of the BJP government was targeting the RSS, angered by its interference in the government. The subsequent suspension, he claimed, was issued after the RSS expressed its displeasure. The BJP government used to pressure and lure employees to attend RSS events, but the April 21 order would have automatically put a stop to this, he said.




Invoking history, the Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president reminded that the RSS had been banned in the past and that many State governments had considered the RSS as "dangerous for the country". He argued that government employees should never be given an exemption to join the RSS.

While there was no explicit mention of the RSS in the government's circular, the matter is understood to have ruffled a few feathers within the BJP too with its rank and file questioning the timing and logic of the move.

**Questions to the centre**

Within the ruling party and the RSS, there was criticism of the move as it could directly affect government employees attending the events of the organisation, and because it could invite more public scrutiny especially via social media. The silence of top Ministers of the State on the issue has bolstered the belief that the withdrawal was due to pressure.

It is also understood that State BJP leaders have raised the matter with the party's central leadership. There are voices in the party that are asking if such a circular is in contravention of a 2024 order through which the Centre lifted a ban on government employees taking part in RSS activities.

Another view within the ruling establishment is that it was not a very well-thought out order. One of the top leader's interpretation was that it was issued to dissuade government employees from joining other political groups opposed to the ruling BJP or to check proselytisation which had been a raging issue. However, the decision was taken without calculating the impact it would have on the party and the RSS itself.

**Against unionisation**

In the context of Chhattisgarh, it is common knowledge that lower-level employees associate with semi-religious organisations or caste-based forums. Any attempts to prohibit the same can erode political support.

However, representatives of the employee organisations, on whom the restrictions would have applied had they not been lifted, have a different interpretation of the whole move. They say the scope of the ban as far as the language of the first circular was concerned was wide. They saw this as a move to prevent them from unionising and demanding welfare measures for themselves. Some of them even claim credit for the withdrawal.

# Greater Chennai, northern T.N. may shape poll results

The Dravidian majors had pronounced successes in specific regions in recent elections

DATA POINT

**Sambavi Parthasarathy**
**Pon Vasanth R.A.**

As Tamil Nadu braces for the results of its Assembly elections, the two Dravidian majors – the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) – are keeping their fingers crossed to see whose votes the debutant Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) eats into more.

A region-wise and margin-wise analysis of the last two elections, in 2016 and 2021, shows that the AIADMK, in the recently concluded voting for 2026, needs to not only retain its hold in the western region but also gain ground in the northern, central and Greater Chennai regions, which it had ceded to the DMK-led alliance in 2021, to get back to power. For this analysis, the parties have been grouped based on their alliances in 2026.

The 2016 Assembly election, which the AIADMK won, stands out as one of the most closely contested elections in Tamil Nadu in the past few decades. The AIADMK and the DMK won 89 seats each in the 178 seats in which they were facing each other.

In 2021, the north and Greater Chennai regions – which include the most urbanised areas of the State – tipped the scales heavily in favour of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA). The Greater Chennai region consists of constituencies from Chennai, Kanchipuram, Chengalpattu and Tiruvallur districts. As shown in **Chart 2**, most of the gains of the SPA, which won a total of 159 seats, were concentrated in the central, southern and Greater Chennai regions. The central region includes constituencies from the Ariyalur, Karur, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Perambalur, Pudukkottai, Thanjavur, Thiruvarur and Tiruchirappalli districts. The southern region includes those from Dindigul, Kanniyakumari, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Tenkasi, Theni, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Virudhunagar. Its gain in vote share was a negligible 0.3 percentage points.

The AIADMK-led alliance, however, retained its dominance in the western region in 2021 despite a small decline in its vote share. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 41 of the 57 seats in the region, which comprises Coimbatore, Dharmapuri, Erode, Krishnagiri, Namakkal, Salem, The Nilgiris and Tiruppur. Its vote share in the region was 47.7%, nearly five percentage points lower than in 2016.

Data also indicates that the number of close contests came down overall. In 88 constituencies, the victory margins were within 5% in 2016 (**Chart 4**). This came down to 67 in 2021. The western region was an outlier, as the constituencies where victory margins were within 5% went up from 22 in 2016 to 25 in 2021.

The entry of actor Vijay's party is expected to throw up surprises. An intense battle between all three would lead to closer margins in more constituencies. Conversely, if the TVK competes with one of the two Dravidian majors for the runner-up spot, the winner may gained about 19 seats in the central region. This was followed by gains of 14 seats each in the Greater Chennai and southern regions. Interestingly, though the seats gained were more in the central region, the SPA's gains in terms of vote share were higher in the Greater Chennai region.

In the Greater Chennai region, the SPA secured over 55.1% of the votes, about 9 percentage points higher than what it had secured in 2016 (**Table 3**). In the northern region, the alliance secured over 49.4% of the votes, about 5 percentage points higher than in the previous election.

While the SPA gained 14 seats in the southern region, which includes constituencies from Dindigul, Kanniyakumari, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, Tenkasi, Theni, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Virudhunagar, its gain in vote share was a negligible 0.3 percentage points.

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## Battle for regions

Data for the charts were sourced from Lok Dhaba. The alliances for the analysis are based on current alliances



CHART 1: Regionwise split of constituencies

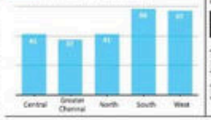



TABLE 3: The regionwise vote share secured in 2021 Assembly election, and change (in % points) when compared to 2016 polls

| Region | SPA | | AIADMK | | NTK | | Others | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021 | +/- | 2021 | +/- | 2021 | +/- | 2021 | +/- |
| Central | 50.1 | 4.7 | 40.2 | -8.7 | 7 | 5.9 | 2.7 | -2.9 |
| Greater Chennai | 55.1 | 9.1 | 34.4 | -14.8 | 8.2 | 6.7 | 2.4 | -0.8 |
| North | 49.4 | 4.6 | 42 | -7 | 5.1 | 4.5 | 2.4 | -2.3 |
| South | 46.2 | 0.3 | 42.4 | -4.7 | 7.8 | 6.6 | 3.5 | -2.3 |
| West | 44.6 | 1.8 | 47.7 | -4.5 | 5.1 | 4.2 | 2.6 | +1.1 |

CHART 2: Seats secured by the SPA and AIADMK-led alliance in 2021, and change (in % points) when compared to 2016 polls

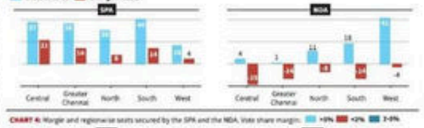



CHART 4: Margin and regionwise seats secured by the SPA and the NDA. Vote share margin: +5% <5% 2-5%




FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

**FIFTY YEARS AGO** APRIL 29, 1976

## CIA activities: MPs' fears allayed

New Delhi, April 29: The Deputy Home Minister, Mr. F.H. Mohsin, to-day assured members who expressed concern in the Lok Sabha over the activities of CIA that the Government had taken serious notice of all that had been published in this regard. The Government was in no way less concerned about the security of the country than the members and the utmost vigilance was being maintained.

Mr. Mohsin who was replying to points made in a half-hour discussion raised by Mr. Bhogendra Jha (CPI) said what was being done by the Government was not a matter to be publicised. Mr. Jha and four other members – Mr. C.K. Chandrappan, Mr. Ramavatar Shastri and Mr. S. M. Banerjee (all CPI) and Mr. B.V. Naik (Congress) – referred to the disclosures of CIA activities made by the press and in a report of a committee of the United States Senate. They also sought to know whether the Government had gone into allegations of CIA links with some of the organisations in India. Mr. Mohsin said the Government had no information to prove CIA links with some of the organisations mentioned by members in the debate. However, the Government was vigilant not only about organisations mentioned in the discussion but there were many more organisations on which a watch was "necessary".

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** APRIL 29, 1926

## Liquor smuggling in Canada

Ottawa, April 28: Sensational statements with regard to the alleged connection of high officials with smuggled liquor and motor cars are made in a confidential report of Inspector Duncan to the Special Committee of the Commons, which is enquiring into this matter. Mr. Duncan asserts that investigations showed that large quantities of liquor were being shipped from the Government warehouses at Montreal to various officials at Ottawa, contrary to liquor laws, during the past three years.

The report also implicates a number of customs officers of Montreal in connections with the seizure of smuggled or stolen motor-cars, which Mr. Duncan alleges were secured for the

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# Text&Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

**Accounts involved in digital arrest scams banned by WhatsApp**

**9400** The action was detailed by the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The DoT and the Telecom Service Providers have set a strict new timeline for neutralising fraudulent SIM cards, and aiming at a mechanism to block suspicious cards within 2-3 hours of identification, it said. PTI

**Expected reduction in carbon emissions by Indore solar plant**

**1.46** In lakh tonnes. The Indore Municipal Corporation's solar power plant is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 1.46 lakh tons annually through its 60 MW renewable energy unit. A bulk of ₹308 crore cost of the plant, spread over 211 acres in Khargone district, was raised through a public issue of green bonds. PTI

**Investment in the new Google data centre near Visakhapatnam**

**1.35** In ₹ crores. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Tuesday laid the foundation for a $15 billion Google Artificial Intelligence data centre near Visakhapatnam. Mr. Naidu said this project was started in September 2025. According to the CM, the Google data centre will generate "thousands of jobs" for the youth of the State. PTI

**Foreigners held in Uganda in crackdown on illegal migration**

**231** Ugandan authorities said Tuesday that they have detained dozens of foreigners in a crackdown on illegal migration, that the Internal Affairs Ministry suggested was linked to human traffickers and cybercrime operations. Authorities say they acted on intelligence showing large groups of foreigners living or working in Uganda without necessary documents. AP

**Electors cleared by tribunals to vote in phase 2 of Bengal polls**

**1,468** A total of 1,468 people, who have been added to the West Bengal electoral rolls following the SIR-linked tribunal orders, will be able to exercise their franchise in the second phase of the Assembly polls on April 29, an EC official said on Tuesday. The second phase will cover 142 constituencies PTI

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# On TCS harassment and conversion case

Concerns have been raised about the Tata Consultancy Services sexual exploitation and alleged forcible conversions case that involves nine FIRs, related to complaints of alleged sexual exploitation, rape and forcible conversion at the company's office in Nashik, Maharashtra, between 2022 and 2026.

EXPLAINER

Vinaya Deshpande Pandit

**The story so far:**

Last month, Nashik Police claimed that they had busted a racket of alleged forced conversions and sexual exploitation at a multi-national company's office in the city. Nine FIRs were registered and eight persons were arrested. Police said they were looking for one more accused, who they claimed is on the run. A Nashik court has heard her anticipatory bail plea and will give an order on May 2. TCS has ordered an internal probe, suspending all the persons named in the FIRs, adding that no formal complaint has been registered with it yet.




GETTY IMAGES

**Overview of the sexual harassment and forcible conversions case**

The TCS case involves nine FIRs. They are related to complaints of alleged sexual exploitation, rape and forcible conversion at Tata Consultancy Services in Nashik, Maharashtra, between 2022 and 2026.

**Timeline of the complaints**

On March 26, 2026, the first FIR was registered at Deolali Camp Police station. It was filed by a 23-year-old woman employee of TCS, claiming that since 2022, an accused had tried to convince her into a relationship with him. She said that the accused had asked her to apply to TCS, where he was already working. She claimed that after she got selected, she was allegedly forced into physical relations by the accused, on the pretext of marriage. She further alleged that another co-accused, on learning of their relations, also sought physical favours from her.

She has claimed that three accused – Danish Sheikh, Tausif Akhtar and Nida Khan, used to allegedly speak ill about Hinduism, trying to dissuade her from following Hinduism. She claimed that she learnt in February 2026, that the main accused was already married with two children. She further alleged that the three accused hurt her religious sentiments, that Danish Sheikh kept physical relations with her on the promise of marriage, and that Tausif Akhtar sexually harassed her multiple times.

Police have claimed that the three accused taught her Islamic practices, and convinced her to follow them. The original FIR accessed by *The Hindu* does not mention it, and supplementary statements, if any, could not be accessed.

After the first FIR was registered, till April 3, 2026, eight more FIRs were registered in quick succession, at Mumbai Naka Police station. While seven FIRs were registered by women, one was filed by a man who alleged that he was forced to convert, Nashik Police said. The complainant claimed that he was allegedly forced to eat beef, offer namaz and recite *kalma*. He has told the police that the efforts allegedly started in 2023-24. When the victim's father suffered from paralysis, the accused allegedly said he would only recover if the victim accepted Islam, he told the police.

The other cases pertain to rape, obscene comments, insult of modesty, and hurting religious sentiments by making fun of Hindu gods and goddesses to impress on the victims that they should accept Islam. Police say that the cases pertain to incidents in the last four years, starting 2022. The police have claimed that the accused held senior or influential positions, and allegedly misused their position to take advantage of vulnerable men and women, influencing them or attempting to forcibly convert them.

**Steps taken by the police**

Nashik Police have formed a 12-member Special Investigation Team led by an Assistant Police Commissioner to investigate the matter. Several stringent sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, have been invoked for sexual intercourse through deceitful means, sexual harassment, stalking, insulting the modesty of a woman, abetment, criminal defamation, intentional or malicious acts to outrage religion, intentionally wounding religious sentiments, common intent, etc. The sections include Sections 69, 75, 78, 79, 85, 356, 302, 299, 3(5) of BNS. In the first FIR, Sections 3(l)(w)(i), 3(l)(w)(ii), 3(2)(v) and 3(2)(i) of the SC, ST Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989, have been invoked.

According to the police, they were alerted by a local social-political activist after the parents of the first complainant allegedly expressed apprehensions about her changed behaviour pattern. The police thereafter conducted a covert operation in the concerned TCS office, where police teams went disguised as housekeeping staff to gather intelligence. The FIRs were registered after the police spoke with several complainants and asked them to register formal complaints. A woman officer played a key role in gathering information from women survivors of alleged sexual harassment, police said.

**Concerns raised in the issue**

Civil rights activists have raised concerns about the process, narrative, and impartiality of the probe. They have claimed that cases of sexual harassment are allegedly being portrayed as 'corporate jihaad' or 'love jihaad'. They have sought an impartial probe into the alleged sexual harassment faced by the women, and about the structural lapses in addressing them. They have also raised concerns about an alleged 'media trial', where a woman accused was allegedly termed an HR professional. TCS later clarified that she was neither an HR manager nor responsible for recruitment, but that she was employed as a process associate without any leadership responsibilities. Civil rights groups have raised concerns about the lack of evidence for any externally funded religious conversion network or organised conspiracy.

**Arguments by the defence**

The lawyers of the accused have primarily argued on two issues: There is no law against conversions in Maharashtra. They have questioned the legal basis for booking the accused for alleged forcible conversions. They also contend that acts of voluntary choice are being incriminated.

**THE GIST**

- Nashik Police have formed a Special Investigation Team to probe the sexual harassment and forcible conversions case. Several sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, have been invoked.
- Civil rights activists have questioned the process, narrative and impartiality of the probe, calling for an independent inquiry into the alleged harassment faced by the women, and the structural lapses in addressing it.

# The tragedy of recurring Rohingya refugee deaths

The capsizing of a fishing trawler carrying refugees draws attention to the cost of protracted displacement

Sacr Pande

**Story so far:**

A fishing trawler carrying around 280-280 people, including Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi nationals, capsized in the Andaman Sea in mid-April 2026 while attempting to reach Malaysia. According to UNHCR - the UN Refugee Agency and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), around 250 people are feared dead or missing, based on preliminary estimates. The vessel departed from Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and was reportedly overcrowded and overwhelmed by rough seas.

Only around 9-10 survivors were rescued. Survivors reported that the boat travelled for about four days before capsizing, with some people floating for over 36 hours before being rescued by

**Life-threatening sea journeys**

Since the 2017 Rohingya crisis in Rakhine State, over 7,00,000 Rohingya have fled to Cox's Bazar, in Bangladesh. Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law rendered them effectively stateless, denying basic rights. In Bangladesh, more than one million refugees live in congested camps with limited or no access to education and formal work. According to the UNHCR, funding cuts since 2023 have sharply reduced food rations. Smuggling networks exploit this vulnerability, charging high fees for passage to Malaysia, where informal labour opportunities and diaspora links exist.

The 1,500-nautical-mile Bangladesh-Malaysia route relies on unseaworthy boats, often carrying over 200 people with minimal supplies, for a journey that could take 5-7 days. Reports by humanitarian agencies indicate that vessels are sometimes denied

leaving migrants stranded at sea.

According to a UNHCR report released on April 17 this year, 2025 was the deadliest year on record for Rohingya sea crossings, with nearly 900 dead or missing. The report observes that 6,500 attempted the journey, with about one in seven perishing. The trend has continued into 2026, with over 2,800 departures recorded between January and mid-April.

A comparison with the Mediterranean Sea highlights both parallels and contrasts. The IOM estimates nearly 26,000 deaths there since 2014, as migrants fled conflicts in Syria, Eritrea, and Afghanistan.

Europe's response, though contested, is relatively structured. Following the 2013 Lampedusa shipwreck, Italy launched Operation Mare Nostrum, rescuing around 1,50,000 people. It was followed by EU-led missions such as Operation Sophia, beginning in 2015, which rescued

rescue efforts. The Frontex coordinates joint operations, while the Common European Asylum System sets standards for asylum processing.

Legal accountability also plays a role. In *Hirsi Jamaa v. Italy* (2012), the European Court of Human Rights ruled that pushbacks violated international law. NGOs such as Médecins Sans Frontières and SOS Méditerranée have also rescued thousands. In contrast, Southeast Asia lacks binding frameworks. During the 2015 Andaman crisis, thousands were stranded at sea amid delayed responses. Without legal obligations or coordination, responses remain ad hoc.

**The governance vacuum**

The Rohingya maritime crisis exposes a governance vacuum in South and Southeast Asia. Conflict has strengthened the Arakan Army (a local Buddhist armed group), which by 2024 controlled large parts of Myanmar's Rakhine State, driving displacement in the region. Countries such as India, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Malaysia are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, limiting formal protections. The ASEAN's 2021 Five-Point Consensus has been constrained by the non-interference principle and internal divisions between Indonesia and Malaysia versus Thailand and Myanmar, reinforcing policy paralysis.

**THE GIST**

- According to a UNHCR report, 2025 was the deadliest year on record for Rohingya sea crossings, with nearly 900 dead or missing. The report observes that 6,500 attempted the journey, with about one in seven perishing.
- The Rohingya maritime crisis exposes a governance vacuum in South and Southeast Asia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY







GETTY IMAGES

# Everyone is busy building intelligence, but no one can define what it is

In their books, Karen Hao, Max Fisher, and Dwarkesh Patel explore the AI industry that has become a juggernaut even as it still struggles to define intelligence, measure its costs, or agree on its end goal

Aryena Arora

American journalist and author Karen Hao spent years reporting from inside and around OpenAI, and what she found was less a portrait of a company and more an autopsy of the larger idea of artificial general intelligence (AGI).

OpenAI was founded on the premise that if AGI was coming regardless, it was better to have safety and ethics conscious researchers at the frontier than to cede it to those with fewer compunctions. The CEO, Sam Altman, even went as far as to design the company's board such that it could fire him too if he ever came in the way of its core mission. That board, briefly did fire him, but reversed the decision quickly. Hao traces this arc not as a scandal, but as something inevitable; as an outcome of the ideas that come from Silicon Valley founders who have vast resources and the freedom to push boundaries. OpenAI is described in the early chapters of her book, *Empire of AI*, as "a rare intellectual playground without strings attached, a haven for fringe ideas." By the time she finished reporting, it had become one of the most powerful and least accountable corporations on earth.

**No clear definition**

What is artificial intelligence? Alan Turing's 1950 paper is widely considered the founding document of AI. In it, he begins with the question, "Can machines think?" and quickly reframes it as the imitation game. He proposes that any machine with the ability to convince a human of its sentience more than 30% of the time, passes his test. He never defined what intelligence really is. By his test, most agentic AI models today seem to "think". But what thinking actually is, remains unresolved, even among those who have staked billions on replicating it.

Hao spends a chapter of her book trying to pin down a definition of intelligence with impressive intensity. The AI industry's working answer, for now, borrows from the "pure language" hypothesis: the idea that all human knowledge is encoded in language, and that AGI might therefore emerge from language alone. The cost for training a generative AI model is already approaching a billion dollars, and projections for the coming years are only shooting up. All this money is being spent on a process whose foundation and end goal both remain largely unarticulated.

**The consequences**

Max Fisher, in *The Chaos Machine*, shows us that this pattern is not new, but that its consequences have grown manifold. While Fisher's book is ostensibly about social media algorithms and radicalisation, it also holds up a clear mirror to what happens when a technology that shapes human behaviour is deployed before anyone has asked what it is shaping us towards.

The early conventional wisdom about platforms such as Facebook, he argues, vastly understated their power. Their algorithms amplify moral fury, compress complexity into viral fragments rewarded with small doses of digital dopamine, and make polarisation not a bug but an intended, even celebrated, output.

By the time insiders began to acknowledge this, the architecture was global and deeply embedded. Facebook's founding president, Sean Parker, eventually admitted the goal was to consume as much of conscious human time and attention as possible. By then, a billion people were already inside the ecosystem.

Max Fisher wrote about a previous technological wave, but there are parallels in the inherited arrogance. The same incentives – engagement maximisation, attention as a commodity, and uncontrolled growth as the only metric of success – now underpin the expansion of AI. Fisher's book, read alongside Hao's reporting, gives readers both a long view and a more immediate story: this pattern has played out before, and in building disruptive technologies, their makers are often aware of the very real human cost of progress – and continue anyway. To be clear, neither author rejects scientific progress, but both hold up an important mirror to what it costs to get there.

**The God complex**

Dwarkesh Patel's *The Scaling Era* is an oral history stitched together with conversations with researchers, engineers, and thinkers who made the last six years of AI possible. Unlike Hao and Fisher, Patel and his interviewees are not cynical of AI. They are, for the most part, people who believe they are doing something necessary and sacred even as they do acknowledge its shortcomings. For instance, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei in the book says that if agentic AI were to become super powerful and weak hasoc, "we'd have basically no ability to stop it."

The God complex here is not megalomaniacal in the conventional sense; it is more subtle. It is the conviction that because the intelligence being built is unprecedented, the ordinary human frameworks of accountability, consent, and cost-distribution can be changed too.

Patel's book is highly technical, diving into the scalability of AI models and what intelligence is. Curiously, both Hao and he touch on this question and seem to conclude that there is still no unified definition of "intelligence" or "thinking.".

Altman in particular, who is the primary subject of Hao's book, has signed up for Neuxome, a startup whose premise is that the brain can be chemically preserved at death to be digitally uploaded to a server later. This is where the pure language hypothesis and the God complex finally converge. If all human knowledge is in language, and language can be extracted and replicated, then perhaps consciousness too can be preserved, transferred, and ultimately made everlasting. The question Turing called too meaningless to discuss has become the basis of an afterlife business. The arrogance is not in the ambition itself, it is in the certainty that whatever the "tech bros" of Silicon Valley end up building will be the answer.

**Paying a price**

In the meantime, as Hao sharply points out, communities in South American countries are paying a hefty price right now, with their water and land resources. The AI we have has already reshaped medicine, science, and daily life in useful ways. But the industry is not focused on refinement or more environment-friendly improvements to what already exists; it is aiming at something much larger.

What these three books produce, read together, is less a verdict on AI and more a map of its (often) unacknowledged shortcomings. Hao calls these companies an empire – ruthless in their conquest like royal empires of the bygone era. Scaling, discussed in great technical detail in Patel's book, asks an important question: what happens when we run out of data to train models on? Billions of dollars are being spent per model, land and water are being taken to replicate millions of years of evolutionary biology, but to what end? That remains unclear.

## THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Here's a quiz on the animated TV series *The Simpsons*, which aired its 636th episode on this day in 2018, becoming the longest-running scripted prime-time show in the U.S.

Sindhu Nagaraj

**QUESTION 1**
Which magazine has named the show the greatest television series of the 20th century?

**QUESTION 2**
This is the most famous catchphrase used by the fictional character Homer Simpson. It has been adopted into the English language. What is it?

**QUESTION 3**
What is the name of the greyhound and a cat the family owns?

**QUESTION 4**
What is the name of the character named after the title character of a celebrated series by Satyajit Ray?

**QUESTION 5**
What is the name of the episode which mentions billionaire Donald Trump having been President of the United States at one time and leaving the



**Visual question:** Name the characters from the show featured in this

**Questions and answers to the previous day's daily quiz:** 1. The Mutiny on the Bounty took place in this year, and in this ocean **Ans: 1789, Pacific Ocean**
2. Who led the mutiny against William Bligh? **Ans: Fletcher Christian**
3. What was the primary botanical objective of the HMS Bounty's voyage? **Ans: Transporting breadfruit plants to the West Indies**
4. Name the remote island where the remaining mutineers ultimately established a settlement. **Ans: Pitcairn Island**
5. Who was the last surviving mutineer discovered on Pitcairn Island? **Ans: John Adams**
Visual: This 19th-century etching captures the dramatic end of the HMS Pandora, wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef. State its connection to the HMS Bounty. **Ans: The Pandora was dispatched by the Royal Navy to hunt down and capture the mutineers from the Mutiny on the Bounty**
Early birds: Edwards Oppenau | Sudhir Thapa |



FROM THE ARCHIVES

## *Know your English*

S. Upendran

**What is the meaning of the idiom "by the skin of one's teeth"? (B. V. Satish Kumar, Vizag)**

Everyone knows that the teeth are not covered by skin. Then what is the meaning of this rather strange idiom? It first made its appearance in the Bible. Job is the man who is believed to have made first use of it. Job suffered many misfortunes in his life, but throughout his trials and tribulations, his belief in God remained firm. "I am escaped with the skin of my teeth" is what Job says in the Bible. What he meant was that he "narrowly escaped".

If you do something by the skin of your teeth, you just manage to do it; you achieve something by the narrowest of margin. Here are some examples.

*Narsimha got through his maths exam by the skin of his teeth.*
*We thought we would miss the train. But we caught it by the skin of our teeth.*

**What is the meaning of "nickname"? How do you use it? (K. J. Ramnarayanan, Cuddalore)**

The word "nickname" is from Middle English "eke name" meaning "additional name". A nickname is therefore an additional name given to someone or something by a group of people – like friends or relatives. When I was growing up, I had a friend who was really tall. Everyone started calling him "coconut tree" and it soon became his nickname. Animals too can have nicknames. You may have a dog called "Jacky", but you may affectionately call it "Ugly" all the time.

**Which of the following sentences is correct? "Which class are you studying?" "In which class are you studying?" (L. Velumany, Coimbatore)**

The second sentence is correct. The first would be acceptable if you had "in" at the end of the sentence. "Which class are you studying in?" – that's what people who are fond of grammar would say. It's also possible to say "Which class are you in?" Here are a few more examples.

*Which city were you born in?*
*Which bedroom do you sleep in?*

**How is the word "shoppe" pronounced? (Rajani Krishnamurthy, Chennai)**

Most people pronounce it like the word "shop". It is also possible, however, to pronounce the final "e" like the "i" in words like "pie", "hie", and "sie". Even when pronounced in this manner, the stress remains on the first syllable.

**What is the origin of 'hat trick'? (Krishna Kumar, Mumbai)**

This is a term which originated in cricket. A bowler is said to have performed a hat trick when he takes three wickets in three consecutive balls. Nowadays, whenever a bowler performs a hat-trick in international matches, he's given lots of money – either by the Board or by some sponsor. And if rumours are to be believed, even if the Board isn't willing to pay the bowler, there are plenty of bookies who are! Just kidding. In the old days when cricket was a gentleman's game, when a bowler performed the "trick" of getting three wickets off three balls, he got a... You guessed it, a hat!

*Published in The Hindu on June 13, 2000*

## Word of the day

**Abominable:** exceptionally bad or displeasing

**Synonyms:** atrocious, awful, dreadful

**Usage:** *The refugees were forced to live in abominable conditions.*

**Pronunciation:** newsth.live/2164lb/abominable

**International Phonetic Alphabet:** /ə'bɒm.ɪ.nə.bl/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

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## From Page One

### Growth in industrial output at 5-month low

According to Ms. Deshpande, this is not the first data point showing the stress in the manufacturing sector.

"The Purchasing Managers' Index also slipped in March from February but remained in the expansion zone, indicating the likely uneven impact of the conflict across sectors and time based on their ability to absorb the shock."

"The March data captures only a part of the shock as uncertainty and weak producer sentiment have yet to fully manifest in production data," she added. "The deeper impact is expected to show up down the road, particularly in the first quarter of this fiscal."

### UAE announces exit from OPEC group

"Following its exit, the UAE will continue to act responsibly, bringing additional production to market in a gradual and measured manner, aligned with demand and market conditions," it added.

The move had been rumoured as a possibility for some time, as the UAE pushed back in recent years against production quotas it felt had been too low – meaning it was not able to sell as much oil to the world as it had wanted.

The UAE has had increasingly frosty relations with Saudi Arabia, OPEC's largest producer, over political and economic matters in West Asia, even after both came under attack by fellow OPEC member Iran during the current war.

### Trump 'unhappy' with Iran's peace proposal

Meanwhile, Iran's Deputy Defence Minister Reza Talaei-Nik said on Tuesday that Tehran was ready to share defensive weapons capabilities and experiences gained from "America's defeat" with "independent" nations including those of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which includes Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and Central Asian states.

Iranian government spokesperson Fatemeh Mohajerani told state media on Tuesday that the Islamic Republic had prepared for maritime blockade scenarios as early as the U.S. presidential election in 2024, and made necessary arrangements so that "there is nothing to worry about".

She added Tehran was using northern, eastern, and western trade corridors that do not rely on Gulf ports to neutralise the blockade's effects.

**Decline in shipping**

Between 125 and 140 ships usually crossed in and out of the strait daily before the war, but only seven have done so in the past day, according to Kpler ship-tracking data and satellite analysis from SynMax, and none of them were carrying oil bound for the global market.

Senior Iranian officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the proposal carried by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to Islamabad over the weekend envisioned talks in stages, with the nuclear issue to be set aside at the start.

Mr. Araghchi has shuttled in and out of Islamabad twice during the weekend. He also visited Oman and on Monday went to Russia, where he met President Vladimir Putin and received words of support from a longstanding ally.

A first step under the Iranian proposal would require ending the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran and providing guarantees that the U.S. cannot start it up again. Then negotiators would resolve the U.S. Navy's blockade of Iran's trade by sea and the fate of the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran aims to reopen under its control. Only then would talks look at other issues, including the longstanding dispute over Iran's nuclear programme, with Iran still seeking some kind of U.S. acknowledgment of its right to enrich uranium.

# Rajnath Singh calls for unified SCO approach to eliminate terrorism

**The Minister says the real test for SCO members lies in maintaining consistency and rejecting double standard, particularly in addressing state-sponsored cross-border terrorism; he calls for a more 'orderly world' rather than a 'new world order'**

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Terrorism remains the most serious threat to global peace and the emerging world order, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said while addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in Bishkek.

Emphasising zero tolerance, he called for a unified and consistent approach to eliminate terrorism, extremism, and radicalism in all forms.

Mr. Singh underscored that terrorism cannot be justified under any circumstances, asserting that it has no nationality and no theology. He stressed that no grievance, real or perceived, can excuse violence against innocent people.

Highlighting the importance of credibility, he said the real test for SCO members lies in maintaining consistency and rejecting double standard, particularly in addressing state-sponsored cross-border terrorism and safe havens.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressing the SCO Defence Ministers' meet in Bishkek on Tuesday. ANI

Referring to the Pahalgam terror attack, Mr. Singh said the carnage had shaken the conscience of humanity and reaffirmed India's resolve to hold perpetrators accountable. He noted that through Operation Sindoor, India demonstrated that terrorism epicentres were no longer immune from response. He also recalled the Tianjin Declaration, which reflects the collective commitment of SCO nations to combat terrorism decisively.

**'Three evils'**

The Defence Minister highlighted the role of SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in countering radicalisation and extremism.

He said tackling the "three evils" – terrorism, separatism and extremism – required a unified front, stronger cooperation, and decisive action against those who supported or sheltered terror networks.

Beyond security concerns, Mr. Singh pointed to the broader global context marked by increasing unilateralism, conflicts, and a fractured world order. He noted that nations were becoming more inward-looking, weakening global consensus, and cooperation. In such a scenario, he said, the SCO has a pivotal role to play in promoting stability, dialogue and mutual respect.

Describing the SCO region as home to some of the world's most ancient civilisations, Mr. Singh said it reflected a shared heritage of cultural exchange, trade and cooperation. He emphasised that this legacy should guide member nations in addressing present-day challenges collectively.

Calling for a more "orderly world" rather than a new world order, Mr. Singh stressed the need for dignity, respect, and peaceful coexistence among nations. He urged SCO members to prioritise diplomacy over conflict and ensure that the current era was defined by peace and prosperity, not war.

Reaffirming India's commitment, Mr. Singh invoked the philosophy of *'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'* – the world is one family – and expressed confidence that stronger cooperation within the SCO could transform regional security challenges into opportunities for lasting peace and stability.

## 44 illegal telecom hubs shut in 2 years: Centre tells SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Department of Telecom "dismantled" 44 illegal telecom centres, including SIM box operations, across the country in the past two years, according to a Home Ministry report submitted in the Supreme Court.

The department said the sustained action happened between April 2024 and October 2025, and was carried out in coordination with local law enforcement agencies.

It was responding to a question from Attorney-General R. Venkataramani during an Inter-Departmental Committee meeting of the Home Ministry in March. The minutes of the meeting were part of the records annexed to a status report submitted by Mr. Venkataramani on the Centre's behalf.

The meeting was attended by representatives of telecom service providers, such as Airtel, Vodafone-Idea, Reliance Jio and BSNL.

The records were placed before the top court in connection with a suo motu case on digital arrests and other cybercrimes.

## SC seeks meeting to discuss CCTV funds for police stations

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

**SC asked Centre to install CCTVs in offices of all agencies which have the power to arrest**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked *amicus curiae* and senior advocate Siddharth Dave to convene a meeting of representatives of States and Union Territories on the question of utilisation of Central funds to install CCTV cameras in police stations.

A Bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath asked Mr. Dave to hold the meeting on May 6. The hearing was based on *suo motu* cognisance taken by the court on the issue of video coverage of police stations, especially in lock-up areas and interrogation rooms, to prevent custodial torture.

Mr. Dave informed the court that the Centre fully funds CCTV installations in Union Territories and bears 90% of the costs in hilly States. It provides 60% of the funds for other States, which pitch in with 40%. The court posted the next hearing for May 13.

In 2015, the court had directed States to install CCTV cameras in jails and consider the same in police stations and lock-ups. In 2020, it ordered the Centre to install CCTVs and recording equipment in offices of the Central Bureau of Investigation, National Investigation Agency, Enforcement Directorate, Narcotics Control Bureau, Department of Revenue Intelligence, Serious Fraud Investigation Office and "any other agency which carries out interrogations and has the power of arrest".

## ED attaches assets worth about ₹3,035 cr. in RCom bank fraud case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth about ₹3,034.9 crore in the Reliance Communications Ltd. (RCom) "bank fraud" case. The value of total attachment in the Reliance Anil Ambani Group cases is now over ₹19,344 crore.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted on the Supreme Court's directions is probing the cases of alleged diversion and laundering of funds.

"Investigation was initiated based on multiple CBI FIRs registered on the complaints of State Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, and Life Insurance Corporation of India, against RCom, Anil D. Ambani, and others," the ED said.

RCom and its group companies took loans from domestic and foreign lenders of which a total amount of ₹40,185 crore is allegedly outstanding.



Anil Ambani after being questioned by the CBI in New Delhi on March 19 in connection with a complaint filed by SBI. ANI

"ED investigation revealed certain assets of the Reliance Anil Ambani Group, including a flat in the Usha Kiran Building (Mumbai), a farmhouse in Khandala (Pune), and a land parcel in Sanand, Ahmedabad. Besides, 7.71 crore shares of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd., held by Risee Infinity Pvt. Ltd., a group entity of Anil Ambani under the Riseli Trust umbrella (a private family trust of the members of Anil Ambani's family), were also attached.

"The Riseli Trust was set up to ensure wealth preservation and resource generation by aggregation of properties in Riseli Trust and shield it from the personal liabilities of Anil Ambani in the form of personal guarantees extended by him to lender banks against the loans sanctioned to RCom," it said.

The properties were intended to be beneficially used and owned by the Anil Ambani family and not for the distressed public banks whose loans turned non-performing assets, alleged the agency.

It said that under Section 8 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, confiscated property would be restored to legitimate claimants who suffered loss, including the banks. The Ambani family, in a statement, clarified that the Usha Kiran property was a legacy family asset, acquired 41 years ago; the Khandala property was also a legacy family asset, acquired over four decades ago.

"MICA is an AICTE-recognised charitable educational institution that has operated independently since 1991," it said.

## Anti-Terrorism Squad begins probe into Thane knife attack

Snehal Mutha
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has initiated investigation into the alleged stabbing of two security guards in Thane district amid claims that the accused was linked to "anti-national activities", the police said on Tuesday.

The 38-year-old accused, Jubar Ansari, a chemistry instructor, allegedly attacked the two guards with a knife following an altercation on Monday morning.

Ansari, who had lived in the U.S. for some time, had allegedly approached the guards, employed at an under-construction building Nagar area, seeking directions to a mosque.

As per the police, the victims claimed Ansari asked them to recite the *'Kalma'* (Islamic verse) and attacked them with a knife when they were unable to do so. Based on the CCTV footage from the area, the police identified the accused and apprehended him from his house.

During a search of his apartment, the police said they recovered handwritten notes allegedly indicating his desire to join the Islamic State, a banned terrorist organisation.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis called it "a case of self-radi-

## Drug trafficking suspect arrested in India after deportation from Turkiye

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

An alleged drug trafficking kingpin having links with the Dawood Ibrahim syndicate was detained by Turkish agencies in Beylikdüzü and deported to India on Tuesday.

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) took him into custody on his arrival at the airport here.

"Zero tolerance against the narco syndicate. The @narcoticsbureau today made a major breakthrough in securing the return of notorious drug trafficker Mohammad Salim Dola from Türkiye. Under the Modi government's mission to ruthlessly smash drug cartels, our anti-narcotics agencies have extended their reach across borders. Now, no matter where they hide, no



An NCB team takes Mohammad Salim Dola into custody after his arrival at the IGI airport in Delhi on Tuesday. ANI VIDEO GRAB

pins," Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on X.

**'Operation Global Hunt'**

The accused has been brought back from Türkiye under "Operation Global-Hunt".

The NCB produced him before a Delhi court that granted a two-day transit

2024 at India's request.

"Over the years, Dola had established a major transnational drug trafficking syndicate spanning a number of countries in the Middle East (West Asia), Africa, and Europe. His two-decade-long criminal antecedents include direct involvement in cases pertaining to multiple high-value seizures of heroin, charas, mephedrone, mandrax and methamphetamine in Maharashtra and Gujarat," the NCB said, adding that he is also wanted by the Anti-Terrorism Squad of Gujarat.

Born in 1966 in the Byculla area of Mumbai, Dola was first arrested at the Mumbai airport on the charge of trying to smuggle mandrax tablets. In 2017, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence linked him to

## CBI official, ex-ACP get jail in 26-year-old case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Around 26 years after the incident, a Delhi court on Tuesday sentenced CBI Joint Director Rumneesh Geer and retired Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) Vivek Pandey to three months' imprisonment in a case related to a controversial search operation conducted on October 19, 2000, at the house of Indian Revenue Service officer Ashok Kumar Aggarwal. The court later granted bail to the accused.

As per the complaint, officials from the CBI and the Delhi Police forcibly entered the premises of the IRS officer, without lawful justification.The complaint said that the raid was motivated by personal vendetta rather than legitimate investigative grounds.



APPEAL

Thyagarajan is 47 years old suffering from Double Vessels Disease and is advised to undergo surgery at Public Health Centre, Chennai. The total expenditure is Rs.2,00,000/-. He is working in a medical shop with good income. They are not in a position to meet the cost of the treatment. Please help him to undergo the surgery and lead a healthy life. The donations sent through Cheque/DD/Cash may be deposited in Bank, Virugambakkam Branch in A/c. 67020100011 in CHENNAI METRO WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD favouring 'WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE' in exemption order NO. 8. You are entitled to a receipt.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Royal Park, Charitable Trust, Plot No. SP-1, Cordial Apartments, D.No.11, 4-No. 26, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 28142127/28421/ 7358579527.

E-mail ID: womenswelfaresociety@gmail.com

Website: www.womenswelfare.org

# Trinamool accuses EC's police observer of serious misconduct

**IPS officer has appeared in a viral video clip allegedly warning local people of severe consequences if they fail to reveal the whereabouts of a party candidate; BJP hails him on social media as an 'encounter specialist'; poll panel yet to reveal stand**

**Vijaita Singh**
NEW DELHI

Ajay Pal Sharma, a 2010 batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre, who appeared in a viral video clip allegedly warning local people of severe consequences if they failed to reveal the whereabouts of Trinamool Congress candidate Jahangir Khan in Falta in the Diamond Harbour constituency, was not included in the initial list of 84 police observers released by the Election Commission on April 17.

Mr. Sharma, currently posted as Deputy Inspector-General of Police in Prayagraj, was brought in on Sunday as the police observer for four Assembly constituencies in South 24 Parganas, replacing Parmar Smit Purshottamdas, a 2017 batch IPS officer from the Odisha cadre.

The Trinamool Congress has accused Mr. Purshottamdas of serious misconduct and breach of neutrality as he allegedly met Bharatiya Janata Party candidate Gour Sundar Ghosh at a hotel on April 20. The Trinamool has now accused Mr. Sharma of intimidating and threatening locals.

According to reports, Mr. Sharma has faced enquiries in at least two FIRs in Uttar Pradesh related to alleged corruption, criminal breach of trust and criminal conspiracy. On Tuesday, a woman also registered a complaint at the Falta police station accusing him of assault and forced entry into her residence late at night.


Trinamool Congress supporters staging a protest against police observer Ajay Pal Sharma in Falta on Tuesday. PTI

However, the BJP has hailed him on social media as an "encounter specialist". There was no response from the EC on the allegations made by the Trinamool. Polling for the second and final phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections will be held on Wednesday.

According to the Election Commission, a "police observer is an IPS officer to monitor all activities related to force deployment, law and order situation and coordinate between the civil and police administration to ensure a free and fair election in the assigned constituency".

There are two other categories of observers – general and counting. Each observer is assigned responsibilities and has to update their activities on the EC's internal portal.

A retired government official questioned the conduct of Mr. Sharma as a police observer.

Retired IAS officer K.B.S. Sidhu, who was the former Special Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab, and served as an election observer on multiple occasions, said that though Mr. Sharma was entirely within his remit when he inspected the security arrangement at the candidate's residence and put the Superintendent of Police on written notice for the unsanctioned excess of personnel, "he crossed the line".

"The moment he shifted from that written, channelised report to publicly admonishing a candidate's family before cameras, he crossed the line. An observer is the Commission's confidential eyes and ears, not a parallel magistrate empowered to issue warnings in public," said Mr. Sidhu.

He added that the EC's authority, under Article 324 of the Constitution, is a reservoir of power, not an ocean without shores. "The Falta episode is a useful reminder that in a constitutional democracy, even the watchdogs of free and fair elections must themselves act within the law. And even the local police and district administration work under the EC during elections. There was no need to appear in the area as a Rambo with his own crack team," he said.

A police observer, speaking on condition of anonymity, said, "Observers are the eyes and ears of the EC. Any area domination plan or deployment at booths is done in their presence. They can move around for patrolling with Central forces but any complaint has to be acted upon by the local police and report sent to the EC."

# Rahul meets Nicobarese community, promises to fight against infra project

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Tuesday visited the Great Nicobar Island and met with Nicobarese community leaders at Rajiv Nagar in Campbell Bay. They explained their concerns and fears about the Union government's ₹92,000-crore infrastructure project on the island.

Mr. Gandhi's visit to Nicobar comes weeks after a delegation from the island visited him in New Delhi to raise their issues with the way the Union government is proceeding with the "holistic development" project. A draft master plan for the area as a Rambo with his own crack team," he said.

Addressing the attendees at the community hall in Rajiv Nagar, Mr. Gandhi said he had promised to visit the island when he met with the Nicobarese delegation. "I don't want to say much here today. I am here to listen to you and assure you that we will do whatever we can to fight for you," he said.

He added that he had made it to the island despite the local administration first refusing permission and later coming up with "excuses" to prevent him from reaching the island. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands Congress in-charge, Manickam Tagore, said in a statement on Tuesday that Mr. Gandhi's visit to Nicobar had been possible even "after all the hurdles created by the administration under Amit Shah".

"For the first time, tribal communities will have a direct opportunity to express their concerns, struggles, and aspirations to the Leader of Opposition. While Narendra Modi has chosen not to listen to their voices, decisions have been made to hand over precious forests and land to his corporate friend Gautam Adani," Mr. Tagore further said.


**Hearty reception:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi being welcomed by a member of the Nicobarese community during his visit. PTI

**Village maps**

Leaders of the Tribal Council of Little and Great Nicobar told *The Hindu* that they shared their anxieties about the Centre's project, and also explained their demand to return to their ancestral lands and villages along the island's west coast.

"We were also able to show him the maps marking our ancestral villages across the island," one leader said, adding that Mr. Gandhi assured them of raising their issues in Parliament as well.

# BJD seeks 'urgent, decisive' EC intervention on its Rajya Sabha polling complaint

**Satyasundar Barik**
BHUBANESWAR

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Tuesday again demanded "urgent and decisive" intervention by the Election Commission (EC) on the complaint it has raised on the Rajya Sabha polling issue, and the issuance of second ballot papers to Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs Upasana Mohapatra and Purna Chandra Sethy.

In an email addressed to the EC, Sasmit Patra, a BJD Rajya Sabha member, reminded the commission of his party's March 18 complaint on the "illegal" issuance of second ballot papers to two MLAs during the poll.

"The issuance of a second ballot paper, after the first ballot had already been marked, *is ex facie* contrary to the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, which permit issuance of a replacement ballot only upon strict compliance with the 'spoilt ballot' procedure. The deviation from the prescribed statutory procedure is not merely technical but goes to the root of the election, as it directly impacts ballot accounting, voter intent, and the sanctity of the vote," Mr. Patra said.


Sasmit Patra

In a Rajya Sabha election, where the electoral college is limited and each ballot carries determinative value, such illegality has a material and outcome-altering effect, Mr. Patra said.

"The objections and submissions were officially videographed and photographed by the commission's designated personnel, forming part of the official record. Despite this, and despite the prior complaints submitted during polling and escalation by the party president, no response, clarification, or action taken report has been communicated till date," he said.

# Nishant's yatra will decide politics of Bihar: JD(U)

**Amit Bhelari**
PATNA

Former Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's son Nishant Kumar will begin his first outreach programme with Sadbhav Yatra from Bagaha in West Champaran on May 3.

Janata Dal (United) State president Umesh Singh Kushwaha on Tuesday said that the yatra would shape the direction of the State politics for the next three-to-four decades.

"During his journey, he will meet with party workers from the panchayat level to the booth level and will engage in dialogue with them," he said.

Mr. Kushwaha, Leader of the JD(U) Legislature Party Shravan Kumar and other party functionaries will take part in the yatra.

# Hold all-party meet to build consensus on implementing women's quota, says Cong.

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday sharpened its attack on the Centre over the implementation of the women's reservation law, with party general secretary (communications) Jairam Ramesh urging the Prime Minister to convene an all-party meeting to evolve a consensus roadmap.

In a post on the social media platform X, Mr. Ramesh said that with the election campaign now over, the Prime Minister should act on the Opposition's demand – raised consistently since mid-March – for consultations on operationalising the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023.

He alleged that the government's attempt to push through a "diabolical delimitation" exercise had "failed miserably" due to "Opposition unity and solidarity", and said the focus must now shift to ensuring the women's quota is implemented.

"An all-party meeting should be convened to discuss how the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, (that was finally notified in panic only in the late hours of April 16, 2026) can be put into effect with the existing strength of the Lok Sabha from 2029. It is possible. It is desirable. It is essential," the senior Congress leader said.


Jairam Ramesh

**'Centre's objective'**

He further contended that women's reservation "was never the issue" during the Special Session of Parliament, maintaining that the government's primary objective had been delimitation. "It is now time for the Prime Minister to make amends for his sins of using India's women to drive through his personal political agenda and to instead deliver justice to them," Mr. Ramesh said.

# Team stopped from visiting Ghazipur girl's family: Cong.

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP of presiding over a sharp rise in atrocities against Dalits, and OBCs in States under its rule.

The Congress alleged that its leaders had been unlawfully stopped from meeting the family of a 17-year-old girl found dead in Ghazipur of Uttar Pradesh earlier. It demanded that cases be registered against the officials concerned as the fundamental rights of its members were violated.

While the girl's family has alleged sexual assault and murder, the police have registered a case but said the post-mortem suggested drowning, with preliminary findings indicating a possible suicide.

# Sikkim's natural farming is a model for the entire country, says Prime Minister

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said Sikkim out-thought the rest of the country by at least a decade to adopt and create a national template for organic farming.

He also urged people visiting the Himalayan State to set aside 5% of their budget to buy local products, a habit that can go a long way in helping India attain the goal of self-sufficiency.

Addressing people at an event in Gangtok to mark the 50th year of Sikkim's Statehood, Mr. Modi said the tiny State was leading the way for India's organic food mission.

"We have prioritised organic food 10 years after Sikkim went organic. Sikkim's natural farming is a model for the entire country," he said, lauding the State for possessing 25% of


**Lighter moment:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi playing football with youth in Gangtok on Tuesday. PTI

despite covering less than 1% of the country's landmass.

**Impact of tourism**

Sikkim has about 500 bird and 700 butterfly species. It has a rich forest cover, while the majestic Kanchenjunga is a tourist attraction. Nature has blessed Sikkim, which is why people want to visit the State time and again," the Prime Minister said.

He said the government is doing today could have been done earlier," Mr. Modi said. He said that the Sevoke-Rangpo railway project did not progress after its approval in 2008 until the BJP government took it up.

"The ongoing projects will boost tourism in Sikkim, augmenting the income of local people," he said, exuding confidence that the tourist footfall in the State this year would surpass all records.

He underlined the Centre's push to improve healthcare services in Sikkim through 200 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, four district hospitals, tertiary-care hospitals, wellness centres, and other health facilities.

"For us, the Northeast is not just an important part of the country, but also Bharat's Ashtalakshmi. That's why we have resolved to 'Act East' after working on the 'Act East' rism on Sikkim's economy.

He cited a National Highway and the Sevoke-Rangpo railway projects as examples of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre's focus on improving connectivity and infrastructure to boost tourism in Sikkim. At the same time, he slammed the Congress for allegedly ignoring Sikkim and other northeastern States wherever it was in power at the Centre.

# Modi slams Opposition over women's quota, unveils key projects in Varanasi

**Mayank Kumar**
LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused Opposition parties such as the Congress, the Samajwadi Party (SP), and others of allegedly stalling amendments to the women's reservation Bill in Parliament.

Addressing a Jan Aakrosh Mahila Sammelan in his Lok Sabha constituency, Varanasi, Mr. Modi assured women that he will "leave no stone unturned" to ensure that their right to reservation in legislative bodies is implemented.

"These dynastic parties are unwilling to permit the daughters of our nation to reach the Assembly and Parliament. They are aware that if the daughters who are active in the community ascend to leadership positions, they will lose their grip on power. Their authority will be



**Special visit:** Women arriving to attend a meeting addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Varanasi on Tuesday. ANI

son why the dynastic parties have taken the lead in the protests within Parliament. The sisters and daughters of the nation have discerned their malicious intentions," he said.

**New opportunities**

"I once again assure all my sisters that I will leave no stone unturned to ensure that your right to reservation is implemented," he added.

"New opportunities" have been established for women in the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy.

"The gates of defence forces have also been opened for them. The mission of the BJP government is to empower women. Daughters of India are excelling in every domain. Their contributions should be amplified, as the nation requires their services," the PM said.

He also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for multiple projects worth over ₹6,000 crore. Key infrastructure projects include the completion of the Varanasi-Azamgarh Road widening, the opening of critical rail lines over the bridges at Kazizakpura and Kadipur, and a sewage treatment plant with a 55 MLD capacity in Bhagwanpur.

"These infrastructure-related projects will accelerate development in the Purvanchal region. The newly inaugurated and upcoming projects are significant steps toward balanced and holistic regional development, aiming to improve facilities in both rural and urban areas," the Prime Minister said.

Mr. Modi reached Varanasi in the afternoon and was received by Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, several Ministers and senior

## IN BRIEF



### HC grants one-week interim bail to Engineer Rashid

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted one-week interim bail to the jailed Lok Sabha member from Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Abdul Rashid, alias Engineer Rashid, to enable him to visit his ailing father. The court ordered that during this period, Mr. Rashid could either visit the hospital where his father is being treated or remain at home. The court said two police officials would accompany him in plainclothes at all times, and there shall not be any "undue visitors" except immediate family members. The Baramulla MP, who defeated Omar Abdullah in the 2024 Lok Sabha election, is facing trial in a terror funding case, with allegations that he funded separatists and terror groups in Jammu and Kashmir. He has been lodged in Delhi's Tihar jail since 2019 after the NIA arrested him in 2017.

### 'ISI-backed Khalistanis' held for IED explosion on rail line

Four people have been arrested by the Punjab Police for triggering a low-intensity IED blast on a railway track near Shambhu in Patiala district on Monday. The police describe the suspects as "radicalised habitual criminals" who were running a Khalistani terror module that was receiving support from Pakistan's ISI. The Opposition, meanwhile, cornered the Aam Aadmi Party government, blaming it for the deteriorating law and order in the State. The suspects have been identified as Pardeep Singh Khaba and Kulwinder Singh alias Bugga of Mansa, Satnam Singh alias Satta and Gurpreet Singh alias Gopi of Tarn Taran, police said. The accused have been previously booked for heinous crimes.

# 9,400 accounts banned for being linked to digital arrests

**In documents before Supreme Court, WhatsApp says its probe began from the initial input from govt. sources to identify and run down the creators or administrators behind scam operations**

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI

Documents placed on record in the Supreme Court show WhatsApp asserting to the Home Ministry that it detected and banned up to 9,400 accounts linked to "digital arrests" and "law enforcement impersonations" after independent investigations.

The platform said it had focused on bringing down the entire network of scammers, mostly active in Cambodia.

**Not isolated**

Warning signals sent from probe agencies and the Union government are not treated as isolated or one-off reports, but as a "seed" to map and disrupt the entire criminal network, the platform said.

The platform said its probe fanned out from the initial "seed" input from government sources to identify and run down the creators or administrators behind scam operations such as digital arrests or accounts actively promoting scam activity within groups and channels.

The communication between WhatsApp and the Home Ministry was annexed to a status report filed on behalf of the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) by the Ministry. Attorney-General R. Venkataramani appears for the Ministry in the Supreme Court.

The report said several steps were discussed in a meeting convened by the Inter-Departmental Committee under the chairmanship of the Special Secretary (Internal Security) in March. WhatsApp, along with major telecom service providers (TSPs) such as Airtel, Vodafone-Idea, Reliance Jio, and BSNL, were involved.

WhatsApp said its work on SIM binding – linking the account with the physical SIM card – was on and the platform would comply with the provisions of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. These include the provisions related to identification and labelling of 'Synthetically Generated Information' (SGI) commonly used in video calls made for 'digital arrests'.

The Ministry and other stakeholders also agreed on introducing mechanisms for identifying and blocking device IDs used in digital arrest scams. WhatsApp said it would continue to strengthen Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning based systems to detect impersonation of law enforcement agencies, misuse of official logos and synthetic content.

**Detection models**

The report said the online platform has introduced detection models and warning mechanisms to identify impersonation patterns and alert users. It had further agreed to retain data of deleted accounts for a minimum period of 180 days to assist law enforcement investigations.

Recently, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant had flagged digital arrest scams the "most disturbing" and lethal among cybercrimes, which not only result in merely financial loss to victims but also a "blistering sense of violation". The CJI had said that such crimes must not be seen as mere economic offences, but an offence against human dignity.

The Home Ministry had clocked over 2.46 lakh complaints related to digital arrests scams alone, involving losses of approximately ₹3,000 crore.

The CJI's Bench had taken suo motu cognisance of digital arrests scams in January this year, saying that victims were psychologically coerced by fraudsters dressed up convincingly as police officers and judicial officers to cough up huge sums of their savings to avert fictional arrests or punitive action. One of the cases before the Supreme Court was that of a 78-year-old woman lawyer, who was duped by fraudsters in a digital arrest scam.

**Curbing virtual fraud**

The government and industry stakeholders are taking coordinated measures to fight digital scams

- WhatsApp is working on SIM binding — linking the account with physical SIM card — to detect SIM swapping and cloning
- Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning systems being used to detect impersonation of law enforcement agencies, misuse of official logos and synthetic content



Impersonation patterns are systematically tracked to send warnings to users



**Tiringly hot:** Workers sit under the sun at a construction site in New Delhi. FILE PHOTO

# Give rest hours and water to workers, Centre tells States

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Union Labour Ministry has issued advisories to all States, Union Territories and its attached organisations, seeking immediate "preventive and mitigation measures" to safeguard workers and labourers from the adverse effects of the heat wave conditions in the country.

In a communication to the Chief Secretaries and Administrators, the Ministry said there was a need for a coordinated, multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional approach to protect workers, particularly those employed in outdoor and labour-intensive sectors.

The Union government asked the States to issue necessary directions to employers, industries, and construction companies for immediate implementation of worker safety measures, such as re-scheduling of working hours for employees in different sectors, ensuring adequate drinking water facilities and making provision for rest areas and cooling of workplaces.

**Ice packs, check-ups**

The advisory also recommends making provision for emergency ice packs and heat illness prevention material in workplaces such as construction sites, and coordinating with the Health Departments to ensure regular check-up of the workers.

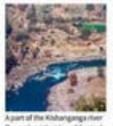
"Factory and mine managements have also been advised to allow greater flexibility to workers, including slowing the pace of work during periods of extreme heat, assigning two-person crew where continuous work is unavoidable, providing rest areas and ensuring sufficient ventilation and cooling arrangements," the Union government said. Special attention must be given to construction workers, brick kiln workers, daily wage earners and casual labourers, it said.

# Funeral held across LoC revives call to reopen crossing points

**Peerzada Ashiq**
SRINAGAR

When Raja Liaquat Ali Khan died of a heart attack on April 26, his divided family gathered on both banks of the 300-foot-wide Kishanganga river to conduct a unique funeral that has renewed the spotlight on the closed crossing-points across the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir.

Khan was a resident of Kupwara's Keran village, which borders the LoC. Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) lies on the other side, where the river is known as the Neelam. Khan's brothers and sisters living on the PoK side were forced to bid him farewell from a distance, watching the funeral from across the waters.



A part of the Kishanganga river flows along the Line of Control.

A video of the funeral, in which Khan's brothers and sisters can be seen waving at the coffin, has gone viral online, with netizens on both sides of the LoC demanding a review of the current policy which has prevented such divided families from meetings at the erstwhile crossing-points.

Ravinder Pandita, president of the All-India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS), said, "The deceased's sisters and other family members crossed into PoK in 1989-90 during the militancy turmoil. The divided families, however, were helped by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on humanitarian grounds. They were allowed to meet each other on LoC on permit, which stands inoperational since 2019 after the Balakote strikes."

In 2009, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) suspended the cross-LoC trade over allegations of "funnelling of illegal weapons, narcotics and fake currency". It also ended the cross-LoC bus service, which had been started between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad on April 7, 2005.

# Webinar to discuss role of managers in AI era as uncertainties mount

**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

A webinar on "The New-Age Manager: Leading in an AI-Driven, Uncertain World" will be held at 11.30 a.m. on May 2 as a part of the "Future Career Conversations" series, jointly organised by SRM Institute of Science and Technology and *The Hindu*.

This series is tailored for undergraduate aspirants, postgraduate students, and professionals looking to deepen their expertise and advance their careers.

The panel features A. Vinay Kumar, Pro Vice-Chancellor, the Faculty of Science and Humanities and the Faculty of Management, SRMIST; Geetha Ramamurthi, global GCC leader and former Managing Director, KPR Inc.; and Roch Ferreira, Global Vice-President and Head of Corporate Marketing, Virtusa Corporation.

M. Soundariya Preetha, Deputy Chief of Bureau, Coimbatore, *The Hindu*, will moderate the session. To register, visit https://newsth.live/THSRMAE or scan the QR code.

# Odisha acts fast after tribal man carries sister's remains to bank

**Satyasundar Barik**
BHUBANESWAR

**Bank had asked for necessary documents for withdrawal from the man's deceased sister's account**

A day after a tribal man in Odisha's Keonjhar district carried his deceased sister's skeletal remains to a bank as proof of death in order to withdraw money from her account, the administration moved with unusual alacrity on Tuesday, completing all formalities and disbursing the payment within a single day.

Disturbing visuals of Jitu Munda of Dhanasuli village under Patna block in Keonjhar district walking through the streets with the skeletal remains slung over his shoulder had gone viral, triggering widespread outrage.

"We issued the death certificate in the morning. The local tahsildar verified family details through the revenue inspector and promptly issued the legal heir certificate. Subsequently, bank officials handed over ₹93,300 to the family members," said Manas Dandapat, Block Development Officer of Patna block.

The Keonjhar district administration initiated a probe into the circumstances that forced Mr. Munda to carry the skeletal remains in full public view.

The incident occurred when Mr. Munda approached Odisha Grameen Bank, a regional rural bank sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank, to withdraw money from the account of his sister, Kalara Munda, who had died two months ago.

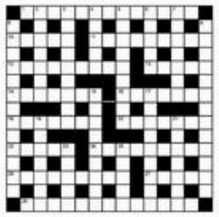
Asked by bank authorities to furnish necessary documents for withdrawal from a deceased person's account, Mr. Munda, unaware of banking procedures, dug up his sister's burial site, exhumed the skeletal remains, and walked about 2.5 km to the bank.

In a statement, Indian Overseas Bank said, "Bank's intention was to protect monies in the account of the poor tribal woman. There is no case of any harassment."

## THE CROSSWORD + 14780

(Set by Ardeo)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at https://thehindu.com/crosswords



**Across**

1 Had returned in disarray - kept gunners hidden, undetected (5,3,5)
10 Imprisoned leader disposed of as he was indisposed (5)
11 Flow rate on board can be solved (9)
12 Find out why active retired men run away (9)
13 Initially some study and leave (5)
14 Moors' short reply to catch a thief in Delhi (7)
16 Fancy marketing mantra adopted by a group (7)
18 A recluse accepts money and distributes it among the poor (7)
20 Operator's tool to climb over parking line (7)
22 Manage to get initial guarantee from bank (5)
24 Close call for new grounding (4,5)
26 Operation was successful initially on family corruption (4,5)
27 Leaders in Masjids are mainly selected to lead the prayers (5)
28 Possibly repairing core of the old airmail system (7,6)

**Down**

2 Belonging to a family of the languages spoken in Egypt, nothing pertains to the ear (7)
3 Deride angrily and admit it keeps you warm (9)
4 Model suit tailored for one in Kigali, perhaps... (5)
5 ...besides eating balanced square meal (9)
6 Wagers earlier in Spain (5)
7 Egg plant - not in French restaurant (7)
8 Help IR car up and down - others get a heart attack (7,6)
9 Worried old-timers got a medical specialist (13)
15 Over time psychiatrist gets depreciation (9)
17 Bird takes time - that's astonishing (9)
19 Admire a bubbly wine (7)
21 Compatriot has no money upfront in India (7)
23 Keen to get inside a German university (5)
25 Misbehave with law, having state support (3,2)

## SUDOKU

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 4 | | | | | | |
| | 8 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 6 | | | |
| | 1 | | 7 | | 2 | | | 4 |
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| | | | | | 4 | 6 | 7 | |
| 8 | | | 9 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | | 2 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 5 | |
| | | | | | | 3 | | |

DIFFICULTY RATING ★★★★★

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

| | | | | | | | | |
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| 2 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| 4 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 9 |
| 6 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| 5 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| 8 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 3 |
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 8 |
| 3 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 5 |
| 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 1 |
| 1 | 9 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 6 |

## FAITH

### Food is ultimate prayer

We are what we eat. The nutrition in the food nourishes our physique and influences our mind (thoughts). Our sastras say eating is a prayer and there is a deep philosophy behind the food we consume, said Tirukkudanthai Dr. Venkatesh.

Our scriptures say moderate diet, moderate physical activity combined with moderate wakefulness will render a man healthy in life. The food one eats influences the mind. Once, Narada approached sage Sanatkumar and sought to be shown the path of knowledge. Sanatkumar asked Narada what he knew, to which the sage replied, "I am very well read, but I know only the words, and not their true meaning." Sanatkumar then says, "speech is greater than words, mind is better than speech, determination (will) is greater than mind, consciousness (presence of mind) is greater than will, meditation is better than that, knowledge is greater than meditation, physical strength is better than knowledge and nutritious food is better than physical strength." and concludes by saying that while everything in this world is subject to change, the Supreme Lord is not, and one should seek Him.

One may ask how food can influence the mind. Lord Krishna explains this in the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter XVII). In keeping with the threefold nature of human beings, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas, the food liked by each is also threefold.

Above all, the food we eat is what we are offering God – *Annayami* – within us. When served with a prayer (*Govinda, Govinda*), the food becomes the ultimate

unacademy



## INBRIEF




### Rupee falls 53 paise to close at 94.68 against U.S. dollar

The rupee depreciated 53 paise to close at 94.68 against the U.S. dollar on Tuesday, as elevated crude oil prices and unabated foreign capital outflows amid rising geopolitical uncertainties dented investor sentiments. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 94.35 against the U.S. dollar, then lost ground and settled for the day at 94.68, registering a fall of 53 paise over its previous close. On Monday, the rupee closed at 94.15 against the U.S. dollar. ■

### No proposal to increase price of petrol after State polls

There is no proposal to increase petrol prices once the State elections conclude, said Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary at the Petroleum Ministry. "After April 1, I must inform that there is no proposal for increase in petrol prices," Ms. Sharma told reporters at an inter-ministerial press conference on the West Asia situation. The government had last increased the price of a certain premium variant of petrol, namely, XP95, Power95 and Speed, on the mentioned date.

### Working group formed to study impact of scrap supplies

A working group has been formed to study the impact on supplies of aluminium scrap amid the escalating tensions in West Asia and to suggest recommendations, Piyush Goyal, Secretary at the Ministry of Mines, told reporters here on Tuesday. Escalating tensions in West Asia have contributed to a spike in prices of imported scrap with secondary aluminium producers seeking a relaxation in import duties. India levies a 2.5% import duty on import of aluminium scrap.

# Crude oil imports slip by 2 MT over Jan.; 50% more costly

**Amid the ongoing West Asia conflict, India paid ₹1.2 lakh crore for the March imports as opposed to ₹86,000 crore in January, representing a 40% increase overall, PPAC data showed**

**M. Kalyanaraman**
CHENNAI

In a reflection of the impact of the West Asia war that started end of February, India's crude oil imports dipped to some 19 million tonnes in March, down by 2 million tonnes from January and 1 million from the shorter month of February. March imports were the lowest since July 2025.

India paid ₹1.2 lakh crore for the March imports as opposed to ₹86,000 crore in January, representing a 40% increase overall, data from the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC) showed. In terms of the price India has paid for unit imports, this is an increase of more than 50%.

Indigenous crude oil production was 2.17 million tonnes, same as January. India is the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer. Compared with March 2025, India's imports fell by almost 17% and imports of crude oil products declined by some 30%.

At nearly 1.4 million tonnes, domestic LPG production was up by 20% compared with January and 30% increase compared with February. The government had ordered a ramping up of LPG production early March to compensate for the fall in imports as a consequence of the West Asia war.



**Quick fix:** The Centre had ordered ramping up of LPG production early March to compensate for the fall in imports, sources come.

First, a 25% increase was claimed. Refineries were directed to maximise LPG output by diverting petrochemical streams. Then a 30% increase was claimed by government by mid-March, then 40% by late March.

In March, LPG imports fell from nearly 2.2 million tonnes in January to some 0.82 million, representing a decrease of more than 62%. The March snapshot, published a few days ago, revealed that there was a pullback of nearly 8% in household LPG supply, nearly 80% reduction in non-household LPG supply, and 75% in bulk LPG supply compared with March 2025.

In March, the Indian government set in motion a process to bring back Indian-flagged LPG carriers stuck in the Persian Gulf region due to U.S.-Israel war on Iran. Four LPG carriers were brought back and reached India in March. They were carrying some 1.8 lakh tonnes of LPG.

The LPG import shortfall is estimated to be narrower in April. Meanwhile, India has contracted with many foreign ships to bring in LPG from the U.S. in May. Some of the Indian-flagged LPG ships that had been lying idle after unloading, may well be leaving for U.S. ports for loading, if surplus LPG was available there.

# 'Airlines at shutdown risk amid fuel price shock'

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, has warned that the sector is under "extreme stress", with some airlines on the "verge of shutting down", and has sought urgent relief on fuel pricing ahead of the next monthly revision on May 1.

The industry body has proposed a "crack band" pricing mechanism similar to the one introduced during COVID-19, under which oil marketing companies (OMCs) would still recover higher crude costs along with reasonable refining margins. The "crack spread", or the margins oil companies earn for refining crude into jet fuel, has surged dramatically from $18-18 per barrel earlier to over $130 per barrel now, driving ATF prices far above crude oil trends that rose from $72 per barrel to $118, the letter stated. While on April 1 the government tried to provide some relief to airlines by ensuring only a 25% increase in ATF price for domestic flights, the FIA says international services have become "impractical" due to which there were "significant losses".

# A.P. eyes second mega data centre in Vizag with Reliance as key partner

**Sambasiva Rao M.**
AMARAVATI

**The proposed Reliance-backed facility is expected to attract investments over ₹1.6 lakh crore**

The Andhra Pradesh government is moving ahead with its plans to position Visakhapatnam as a major data infrastructure hub, with another large-scale data centre project in the pipeline involving Reliance Industries.

On Tuesday, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone for a 1 GW Google hyperscale AI data centre in Visakhapatnam.

The project, estimated at around $15 billion (₹1.38 lakh crore), is being developed as a joint venture involving AdaniConnex, Google Cloud, and Airtel Nxtra.

**Another project**

Parallelly, as per sources in the government, the State government is in the final stages of firming up another major data centre project of 1.5 GW in the same city, with Reliance expected to be the principal partner.

According to sources, discussions for this project began earlier, with the Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board confirming in November 2025 that negotiations were underway with Digital Connexion—a consortium comprising Reliance Industries, Brookfield, and Digital Realty.

The proposed Reliance-backed facility is expected to attract investments exceeding ₹1.6 lakh crore. Highly placed sources in the Secretariat in Amaravati indicated that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) had already been signed with the APEDB, signalling steady progress toward project finalisation. Sources also said that RIL had asked for about 900 acres of land.

**Official announcement**

Sources also said that the government was likely to officially announce the development in the second or third week of May.

Officials said that the upcoming data centre complex would be built to global standards, incorporating high-density AI-ready racks, dedicated power substations, and redundant power supply systems.

It is also expected to feature robust connectivity infrastructure to cater to hyperscalers, enterprise clients, cloud service providers, and emerging artificial intelligence workloads.

With back-to-back mega investments, Andhra Pradesh is aiming to transform Visakhapatnam into a leading destination for next-generation digital infrastructure and AI-driven industries.

# 'Temasek, Canada's fund eye stake sale in NSE IPO'

**Reuters**
MUMBAI

Singapore's State-owned investor Temasek and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board are among 20 investors looking to sell stakes when National Stock Exchange (NSE) goes public this year, sources said.

# Maruti Q4 net slips 7% on metal prices

**Lalatendu Mishra**
MUMBAI

India's biggest car maker Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. reported fourth quarter net profit slid 7% year-on-year to ₹3,590 crore on account of a steep rise in commodity prices [metal costs have risen 2%] and mark-to-market losses on debt instrument investments, chairman R.C. Bhargava said.

Sales income at ₹50,079 crore grew 20%. In Q4, the firm recorded its highest-ever quarterly sales of 6,76,209 units, up 11.8%.

Domestic sales stood at 538,994 units and exports at an all-time high of 137,215 units. The board recommended a dividend of ₹180 per share for the year compared with ₹135 per share in previous year.

For the full year, net profit grew by only 1% to ₹14,445 crore.

Annual sales income grew 20% to ₹1,74,370 crore. "This performance was made possible because of a steep growth in the local market in the second half of the year owing to GST reduction," he said.

Sales were restricted by a limitation in output capacity as evidenced by about 1,90,000 pending orders at year end.

In addition, the dealer inventory was at a low of about 12 days' stock.

For the full year, the firm achieved a record total sales of 2,422,713 units.

He said the war in West Asia has had minimal impact on the car market in India on high demand from Indian customers.

"Nothing much adverse impact is happening here.

This year, the firm is making a capital investment of ₹14,000 crore to add capacity," he said.

# Nayara Energy likely to restart mid-May

**Saptaparno Ghosh**
NEW DELHI

Nayara Energy's Vadinar refinery in Gujarat, which closed for maintenance on April 9, is expected to recommence operations somewhere in the middle of May, Sujata Sharma, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas told reporters here.

Amid the West Asia tensions, India has increased domestic production of the largely imported cooking gas to about 46,000 tons a day.

While Nayara Energy's domestic supply of LPG is marginal, the Vadinar refinery's return to operations after the planned maintenance is expected to relieve strained supplies.

# TMB Q4 net surges 28%, to pay ₹12.50 final dividend

**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (TMB) reported a 28% year on year growth in net profit for the quarter ended March 31 to ₹374 crore. The board recommended the payment of final dividend of ₹12.50 per equity share.

# 'PLI plan warps 2W market, junks innovation-led firms'

**Jagriti Chandra**
NEW DELHI

A new report says the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for two-wheelers has distorted the auto market by driving growth while sidelining innovation-led manufacturers, even as the Centre argues that many such startups lack the capital and market access to scale.

Non-PLI entities' sales growth rate slid from 407% in FY22 to -32% in FY24 and -8% in FY25. This shift coincided with a reordering of market leadership, at the expense of the industry's innovation engine, says the Centre for Digital Economy Policy Research in its report titled "Impact assessment of auto PLI on two-wheeler EV industry".

**Outside PLI framework**

On innovation, the report highlights much of the patent activity and new product development has come from firms outside the PLI framework. Many PLI beneficiaries avoided hard-to-electrify segments



The PLI scheme aimed to boost local manufacturing.

In contrast, non-PLI firms are leading development in high-performance and electric motorcycle platforms, but face funding constraints and lack of production-linked support, limiting their ability to scale, states the report.

However, a senior government official said there was no proposal to unveil a separate PLI scheme for startups in the automotive sector.

"Ministry of MSMEs has many policies [for such startups], but they lack capital, market access and R&D," the official stated.

The report comes amid demands from players like the PLI scheme must include specialised EV manufacturers, arguing the current high revenue thresholds and rigid criteria favour legacy automakers and exclude pure-EV startups.

Launched in 2021, the auto PLI scheme aims to boost local manufacturing, cut imports, and position India as a global hub for future mobility. It focuses on Advanced Automotive Technology products such as electric vehicles, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and key components like advanced batteries and power electronics.

The government has set an overall investment target of about ₹42,500 crore for the auto sector under the PLI scheme.

Eligibility criteria for vehicle makers require a minimum global revenue of ₹30,000 crore and a commitment to invest at least ₹1,000 crore in India.

Sops under the scheme are linked to incremental sales over a defined base year. Firms must also reach at least 50% domestic va-

# Monitoring cell set up by Textile Ministry

**The Hindu Bureau**
COIMBATORE

The Textile Ministry has set up a monitoring cell to examine ways to support the industry, especially man-made fibre sector, impacted by the West Asia crisis.

The Ministry is holding weekly meetings with export promotion councils, domestic industry associations, regional clusters and State government officials, as per a press statement.

GAIL has indicated that both the textiles and handicraft sectors have been prioritised with supplies maintained at 80% of the past six months' average consumption. This follows the Textiles Ministry's request to the Centre seeking assured supply of natural gas to these sectors.

The Ministry took up lifting Customs Duty with the Revenue Department on manmade fibre inputs while batting for removal/deferment of anti-dumping levy on elastomeric filament yarn and viscose

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Online tenders are invited for Supply, EPC of Battery Banks and Installation of existing battery banks at CBJ at 132/33KV Sundiyali. Tender details are available on websites http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in for submission: www.energy.rajasthan.gov.in/rvunl & www.eppo.rajasthan.gov.in.
Project Head (EPPO-SC)

KERALA CLIMATE RESILIENT AGRI VALUE CHAIN MODERNISATION PROJECT (KERA)
SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE
The Project Director, Kerala Climate Resilient Agri Value Chain Modernisation (KCRA) Project (The Work Bank Project ID No.: P178254) invites expression of interest (EoI) for the following Request for Expression of Interest (REoI) from eligible consultants:
1. Consulting services: Hiring of Agri-Finance Specialist
Last date of submission of EoIs: 23rd May 2026, 11:00 AM
The tender Document can be downloaded from KERA website (https://kera.kerala.gov.in/notifications ) starting from 24th April 2026, 10:00 AM
Sd/- Project Director

Petronet LNG Limited
NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)
FOR SELECTION OF CONTRACTOR FOR REPAIRING & TILE WORK OF 2 STG'S AT PHASE-II AIR HEATER (AH) STRUCTURE AT PETRONET LNG LIMITED, DAHEJ
Interested parties are requested to visit our website www.petronet.ng.in for detailed eligibility criteria along with other necessary details for issuance of Tender document.
Note: PLL reserves the right to/to issue the tender document and / or accept or reject any or all the bids at any stage of the process and/or modify the process without assigning any reasons on its sole discretion. No separate notification will be issued in this regard. Bidders are requested to visit this website regularly to keep themselves updated.
Sr. Manager (C&P)
PETRONET LNG LIMITED
GIDC Industrial Estate, Plot No. 7A, Dahej, Taluka Vagra,
Distt. Bharuch 392130, Dahej, Gujarat, Tel No. 02641-671212/2233235/231
E-mail id - dkr_dahej@petronet.ng.in, vumbhumar@petronet.ng.in

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Bangalore - 560012
IISc/CCMD/Tenders/2026-27 Date: 22.04.2026
Tender Notification- IISc/ Tender-AMC-2/2026-27
Indian Institute of Science invites bids in two cover system through e-procurement platform https://eprocure.gov.in. Any specialised firms company registered under KPWD / CPWD/ railways/ MES/ central PSUs/ or any Government department of Class I/Class A Electrical Contractors are eligible to apply for the work of "Comprehensive AMC for HVAC systems in Biological Science, Physics, NeuroScience, Nano Science Buildings, Main Building and NSSC Tata Auditorium in IISc, Bangalore." Estimated Cost of Project is Rs.50,06,547/-. Last date of receipt of application is 12th May 2026 at 15:30 Hrs. Any other details can be obtained from the office of the Centre for Campus Management & Development, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on all working days or e-mail office.ccmd@iisc.ac.in
Sd/- Registrar

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE
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IISc/CCMD/Tenders/2026-27 Date: 22.04.2026
Tender Notification- IISc/ Tender-ELE-01/2026-27
Indian Institute of Science invites bids in two cover system through e-procurement platform https://eprocure.gov.in. Any specialised firms company registered under KPWD / CPWD/ railways/ MES/ central PSUs/ or any Government department of Class I/Class A Electrical Contractors (or) The bidder shall be the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) or its Authorised Agency. Documentary proof of OEM authorisation letter from OEM must be submitted with the application are eligible to apply for the work of "Lightning Protection system for Main Building at IISc." Estimated Cost of Project is Rs.18,84,954/-. Last date of receipt of application is 12th May 2026 at 15:30 Hrs. Any other details can be obtained from the office of the Centre for Campus Management & Development, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on all working days or e-mail office.ccmd@iisc.ac.in
Sd/- Registrar

LONDON

## U.K. PM's former top aide says sorry over appointment of Mandelson



AP

Morgan McSweeney, former Chief of Staff to U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, said on Tuesday that he made a "a serious mistake" by recommending Peter Mandelson, a scandal-tainted friend of Jeffrey Epstein, be made British Ambassador to the U.S., but denied pressuring officials to ignore security concerns. AP

WASHINGTON

## Trump hails British as 'friends' as King Charles begins U.S. state tour



REUTERS

U.S. President Donald Trump said the U.S. has "no closer friends" than the British, as he welcomed King Charles III to the White House on a state visit overshadowed by tensions over the Iran war. King Charles will address the U.S. Congress and is expected to call in his speech for "reconciliation and renewal" amid strains in ties. AFP

MEXICO CITY

## Mexico captures top cartel leader in blow to Jalisco crime syndicate



REUTERS

Mexican authorities announced the capture of two top criminals, one of them a close ally of Nemesis "El Mencho" Oseguera, the slain founder of the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and his potential successor. Audias Flores Silva, nicknamed "The Gardener" (El Jardinero), was seen as one of the possible successors. AFP

DHAKA

## Bangladesh starts fuelling its first nuclear plant in landmark move



AP

Bangladesh has begun loading uranium fuel into its first nuclear power station on Tuesday, a key step towards bringing the 2,400 MW plant online to ease pressure on the overstretched power grid. The Rooppur nuclear plant, built with loans from Russia, could meet 10% of the power demands of the South Asian nation. AFP

# Seven killed, dozens wounded after Pakistani strikes in Afghan province

**Taliban officials say missiles struck civilian facilities which Pakistan dismissed as a 'blatant lie'; the attack was the first violent incident since peace talks earlier this month; Islamabad accuses Taliban regime of sheltering militants which Kabul denies**

Associated Press
KABUL

Mortars and missiles fired from Pakistan on Monday struck a university and civilian homes in northeastern Afghanistan, killing seven people and wounding at least 85, Taliban officials said.

Pakistan denied the accusation of targeting a university.

The strikes were the first violent incident since Chinese-mediated peace talks between the two sides earlier this month.

Both countries had been embroiled in months of deadly fighting that has killed hundreds of people since late February, when Afghanistan launched a cross-border attack on Pakistan in retaliation for airstrikes inside Afghanistan.

Afghan deputy government spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat said Monday's attack took place in Asadabad, the capital of Kunar Province, as well as various areas in another district in the province.



**Toll of truce:** An Afghan boy receives medical treatment after being injured in Pakistani shelling in Asadabad on Tuesday. AFP

**'War crime'**

Authorities said the death toll stood at seven, with 85 people wounded.

Mr. Fitrat said the wounded included women, children and students at the Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University, and described the attacks as "an unforgivable war crime, barbarity, and provocative act."

Afghanistan's Ministry of Higher Education said about 30 students and professors were injured in the strike on the university, which it said had caused extensive damage to the facility.

In a statement, Pakistan's Information Ministry said that "Pakistan's targeting is precise and intelligence based. No strike has been carried out on the said university. The claims are frivolous and fake."

Afghan and Pakistani officials met in Urumqi, China in early April, and had agreed not to escalate their conflict and "explore a comprehensive solution," Beijing had said after mediating the talks.

On Saturday, Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi described the recent negotiations in China as "positive."

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harbouring militants that carry out deadly attacks inside Pakistan, especially the Pakistani Taliban, known as Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan. Kabul denies the charge.

# Israel using water access as a weapon in Gaza: MSF report

Agence France-Presse
GENEVA

Israeli authorities are systematically depriving people in Gaza of the water they need to live, Doctors Without Borders warned on Tuesday, decrying a campaign of "collective punishment" against Palestinians.

The extensive destruction of civilian water infrastructure in Gaza coupled with obstruction of access constitutes "an integral part of Israel's genocide", said the medical charity, which goes by its French acronym MSF.

In a report entitled "Water as a Weapon", MSF said the "engineered scarcity" was occurring alongside "direct killing of civilians, the devastation of health facilities, (and) the destruction of homes".

Together, this amounted to "the deliberate infliction of destructive and inhumane conditions of life on the Palestinian population in Gaza", warned the report, based on testimonies and data MSF collected in 2024 and 2025.

"Israeli authorities know that without water, life ends," MSF emergency manager Claire San Filippo said in a statement.

"Yet they have deliberately and systematically obliterated water infrastructure in Gaza, whilst consistently blocking water-related supplies from entering."

The report, which was slammed by Israel, pointed to data from the UN, EU and World Bank indicating that Israel had destroyed or damaged nearly 90% of water and sanitation infrastructure in Gaza.



**Parched souls:** Displaced Palestinian children wait to refill canisters with water at a refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. AFP

# Explosions rock capital Kyiv, six killed in Russia, Ukraine

Agence France-Presse
KYIV

Explosions echoed over Kyiv on Tuesday during a rare daytime Russian drone attack on the capital, after the two sides launched strikes that left six dead.

A major oil refinery in southern Russia was set ablaze, triggering a local state of emergency as thick black smoke billowed over the coastal town of Tuapse.

Russia has pummelled Ukrainian cities mainly by launching long-range aerial barrages at night.

Kyiv officials announced that air defence systems were operating against Russian drones flying over the city and that two people were hurt in the attack.

Ukrainian authorities meanwhile said two people were killed in the central Dnipropetrovsk region and in the eastern Kharkiv region.

A Ukrainian drone attack earlier killed three people in the Russian border region of Belgorod and one more in the neighbouring Bryansk region.

Kyiv confirmed its forces had targeted oil facilities in Tuapse. "This production is involved in supplying Russia's Army in Ukraine," it said.

Footage published online by the Krasnodar regional governor showed fire and thick smoke at the site of the Tuapse oil refinery.

Kyiv and Moscow have stepped up their aerial attacks over recent months, with both sides mainly targeting energy infrastructure.

**Ukraine's interceptor systems shot down more than 33,000 Russian drones in March, says Minister**

The Russian Defence Ministry said on Tuesday its air defences overnight intercepted 186 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, the annexed Crimea and the Black and the Azov seas.

Ukraine's Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said the country's interceptor systems shot down more than 33,000 Russian drones of various types in March, a record monthly figure since Moscow invaded the country more than four years ago.

*(With inputs from Associated Press)*

# Iraq appoints newcomer as next PM amid U.S. pressure

Agence France-Presse
BAGHDAD

Iraq's newly-elected President Nizar Amedi nominated businessman and political newcomer Ali al-Zaidi as Prime Minister-designate on Monday, after the country's leaders yielded to U.S. pressure not to support the bid of a former premier close to Iran.

The Coordination Framework, an alliance of Shia factions, had initially backed Nouri al-Maliki but an ultimatum by U.S. President Donald Trump left Iraqi leaders looking elsewhere.

Mr. Zaidi has 30 days to form a government – a daunting task in a country where constitutional deadlines are rarely respected.

# 'Just peace' can't be achieved through organisations seeking 'fees': Baerbock

Kalbol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

"Just peace" cannot be achieved by seeking membership in organisations that charge a joining "fee", said Annalena Baerbock, President of the 80th Session of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday in response to a question on the Board of Peace for Gaza strip established by U.S. President Donald Trump.

Speaking to journalists here, Ms. Baerbock cautioned against "unilateral use of force" while arguing that member states of the UN can mobilise themselves for an institutional




Annalena Baerbock

accused of genocide by bringing the matter to the UN Security Council.

"Because every country, no matter how big or small, how powerful or rich has a seat at the table, because you will not find just peace for anybody in pay the fee to join it. We are witnessing growing geopolitical tensions, increasing fragmentation, and pressure on the three pillars of the UN – peace and security, development, and human rights".

The Board of Peace has 26 countries as the 'founding members' of the group that is tasked with stopping the war in Gaza where Israel has been carrying out a military campaign following the October 7, 2023 attack by Hamas. A draft concept note of the board had mentioned that members would have to pay $1billion to be part of the group.

U.S. targeting and kidnapping President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela, Ms. Baerbock said "use of force is prohibited by the Charter." She said that every person is supposed to enjoy human rights and if those rights are endangered then member states are supposed to follow the process mentioned in the Charter.

"Unilateral action is a violation of the UN Charter. Because the Charter is not optional. It is an obligation for every member state to protect peace and security around the world and protect sovereignty of

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SIIDCUL invites online bids from interested bidders for allotment of 200 Acres (approximately) MIXED Way in 'J' Sector for Industrial/Commercial purpose at Piag Farri, District Udhamsingh Nagar, Uttarakhand. The bidders must furnish complete information as per the procedure laid down in the bid document. Detailed bid document can be downloaded from website of SIIDCUL www.sidcul.com/ or www.utenders.gov.in from 29.04.2026 to 28.05.2026. Further any corrigendum regarding the bid shall only be published in website only. Interested bidders can only submit the complete bid document on e-tendering website www.utenders.gov.in on or before mentioned due date i.e 28.05.2026 and time 14:00 hrs.
Managing Director

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Department of Higher Education
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Applications are invited for filling up of upcoming vacancy to the post of Director, one each, in National Institutes of Technology (NITs) located at Calicut (Kerala) and Delhi in the scale of pay of Rs.2,10,000/- (fixed) plus Special Allowance of Rs.11,250/- p.m. and other admissible allowances as applicable to the Vice-Chancellor of the Central Universities and the Directors of other Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs).
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Eligible / interested persons may apply ONLINE at www.nitcouncil.org.in. Online application window shall be opened from 30.04.2026 to 29.05.2026 up to 12.00 midnight. Both dates are inclusive.
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E-TENDERS
E-Tenders are invited for & on behalf of the President of India for the supply of following items. Only e-offer will be accepted for which vendors must have Class III Digital Signature and registration on IREPS. The details of tenders are in the following sequence - S.No., Tender No., Due Date, PR No., Description and Quantity. ... Tender for RIT GASKET (SUPER SPEED HOLDING), PL No. 1617000/1 ... Tender for RIT GASKET (LUBE OIL SEPARATOR), PL No.1603068/2 ... Tender for RIT GASKET (CYLINDER HEAD) PL No. 1617/1268, 10 Nos. ... Tender for Fly Wheel Assembly, PL No. 1617/1268 ... Tender for Fly Wheel Assembly, PL No. 1617/1268 ... Tender for Fly Wheel Assembly, PL No. 1617/1268 

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SUSPENSE CONTINUES

## Rohit undergoes fitness drills, skips nets session on match eve



PTI

The suspense over Rohit Sharma's participation against SRH continued with the veteran batter undergoing fitness drills at the Wankhede Stadium on Tuesday. The MI star has been sidelined ever since hurting his right hamstring against RCB on April 12. Rohit, who will turn 39 on Thursday, didn't bat in the evening session.

A CUT ABOVE THE REST

## Kohli is the greatest batter the IPL has ever seen: McClenaghan



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Former NZ pacer Mitchell McClenaghan has lavished praise on Virat Kohli, calling him the most consistent performer in the history of the IPL. "He will soon reach 10,000 runs, without a doubt. Kohli is the greatest batter the IPL has ever seen, not just for the runs, but for how he has evolved and dominated across different eras".

BREEZY WIN

## Dominant East Bengal makes short work of Odisha in the ISL



SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

East Bengal FC defeated Odisha FC 3-0 in an Indian Super League fixture at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Goa on Tuesday. After Bipin Singh's 11th-minute strike, Youssef Ezerjari drove home the advantage with his second-half brace (70, 83). EBFC is fourth with 18 points from nine games. OFC is 13th (six points in nine matches).

LATEST UPDATE

## Kothari masters Advani to retain IBSF World billiards crown



FILE PHOTO

Sourav Kothari continued his reign as the IBSF World billiards champion by getting the better of Pankaj Advani 1133-477 in the summit clash that lasted just over 205 minutes at Carlow, Ireland, on Tuesday. Kothari had a highest break of 465 while Advani pulled off a 141 break. Kothari won $1000, while Advani got $2500.

# Ferreira and Shubham combine to end Punjab Kings' unbeaten streak

The two plunder 77 off 32 balls for the unbroken fifth wicket to help Rajasthan Royals chase down the 223-run target; Jaiswal pair sizzles

IPL-03

Sahil Mathur
NEW CHANDIGARH

Dewald Brevis and Shubham Dubey combined to outdo Marcus Stoinis' stunning knock as Rajasthan Royals broke Punjab Kings' winning streak in IPL 2026 at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh Stadium here on Tuesday.

Royals needed 72 runs in the last six overs and finished the 223-run chase with four balls to spare and six wickets in hand to register their sixth win of the season.

The pitch assisted the slower bowlers. But once Yuvvendra Chahal and Harpreet Brar finished their quota by the 14th over, Ferreira and Impact Player Shubham got RR back into the game by making use of the pace.

While Ferreira slammed an unbeaten 52 off 26 deliveries (6x4, 3x6), Shubham remained unbeaten on 31 (12b, 3x4, 2x6). Ferreira finished it off with a six.

Chahal removed Dhruv Jurel (16), Yashasvi Jaiswal (51), and Riyan Parag (29). At the same time, Harpreet conceded only 25 in his four overs to give Punjab control after RR openers Jaiswal once again displayed a fearless approach.

The visiting side amassed 84 for the loss of Vaibhav Suryavanshi in the PowerPlay.

Suryavanshi whipped five sixes and three fours en route a 16-ball 43, showing off his smooth wrists and bat swing. Jaiswal sent the ball eight times to the fence, including one munsters, to put pressure on the bowlers.

A strong start and a finish made sure poor batting in the middle overs didn't hurt Royals.

Earlier, Stoinis' quick-fire half-century late in the innings powered PBKS to 222 for four.

Stoinis made use of the bounce on offer and displayed his back-foot range, hitting six maximums and four fours in his unbeaten 22-ball 62.

The Australian slammed 24 off Brijesh Sharma in the final over after taking on Jofra Archer and Nandre Burger.

Prabhsimran Singh scored a 35-ball half-century, filled with authoritative strokes all over the park, to anchor Punjab's innings in the first half. He found able support in cameos from Priyansh Arya's 11-ball 29 and Cooper Connolly's 30 off 14 balls. Stoinis took over the hitting duties in the 15th over to ensure a stylish finish, but Royals had other plans and spoiled the Kings party.



Stellar show: Impact Player Shubham joined hands with Ferreira to take Royals home in the final over. Loggie Yash Raj's twin strike put the brakes on the Kings innings before Stoinis' late blitz took them to 222 for four. RV. SOORYAN

SCOREBOARD

**PUNJAB KINGS**
Prabhsimran Singh c Parag b Yash Raj 59 (44b, 6x4, 2x6), Priyansh Arya c Burger b Archer 29 (11b, 3x4, 2x6), Cooper Connolly c Ferreira b Yash Raj 30 (14b, 2x4, 3x6), Shreyas Iyer c Jurel b Burger 30 (27b, 2x4, 1x6), Marcus Stoinis (not out) 62 (22b, 4x4, 6x6), Suryansh Shedge (not out) 1 (2b), Extras (lb-4, b-4, w-1) 9, Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs) 222.

**FALL OF WICKETS**
1-37 (Priyansh, 2.5 overs), 2-96 (Connolly, 8.2), 3-144 (Prabhsimran, 13.6), 4-181 (Shreyas, 17.6).

**ROYALS BOWLING**
Archer 4-0-40-1, Burger 4-0-59-1, Brijesh 4-0-42-0, Yash Raj 4-0-41-2, Jadeja 4-0-32-0.

**RAJASTHAN ROYALS**
Yashasvi Jaiswal c Shedge b Chahal 51 (27b, 7x4, 2x6), Vaibhav Suryavanshi c Shreyas b Arshdeep 43 (16b, 6x4, 5x6), Dhruv Jurel c Jansen b Chahal 16 (20b, 1x4), Riyan Parag c Shedge b Chahal 29 (15b, 2x4, 2x6), Donovan Ferreira (not out) 52 (26b, 6x4, 3x6), Shubham Dubey (Impact Player for Yash Raj) (not out) 31 (12b, 3x4, 2x6), Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-4) 6, Total (for four wkts. in 19.2 overs) 228.

**FALL OF WICKETS**
1-51 (Suryavanshi, 3.2), 2-105 (Jurel, 9.4), 3-123 (Jaiswal, 11.2), 4-151 (Parag, 13.6).

**KINGS BOWLING**
Arshdeep 4-0-48-1, Ferguson 4-0-57-0, Jansen 3.2-0-41-0, Harpreet Brar (Impact Player for Priyansh) 4-0-25-0, Chahal 4-0-26-3.

**Toss:** Royals; **Poti:** Ferreira. *Royals won by six wickets with four balls to spare.*

Next assignment

**RR:** May 1 vs. DC Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

**PBKS:** May 1 vs. GT Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.



**J-factor:** Jacks' inclusion will provide a fillip to MI. FILE

# Inconsistent MI takes on a settled SRH

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

Mumbai Indians finds itself staring at an all too familiar mid-season abyss. Two wins in seven games, a churn of combinations and a campaign yet to find rhythm – the five-time champion heads into Wednesday's clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Wankhede Stadium with its back firmly against the wall.

In contrast, SRH has surged into the top four, riding on a settled combination and an imposing batting unit, with the exception of Travis Head. The contrast in trajectories could not be starker.

For MI, it has been a season of nearly there and abrupt collapses. The batting has flattered to deceive, the bowling has oscillated between incisive and erratic, and the constant shuffling – as many as 20 players used – has prevented any sense of continuity. The absence of Rohit Sharma due to injury has only compounded matters, while Suryakumar Yadav and Hardik Pandya are yet to hit their straps.

There is, however, a flicker of hope. The arrival of Will Jacks offers balance, particularly against a lineup stacked with left-handers.

The visitor, on the other hand, has found clarity in roles. Its top-order has been assertive, middle-order effective, and the bowling unit has improved with every passing game. The Hyderabad outfit arrives not just with points on the board, but with momentum and a fit-and-raring captain Pat Cummins, who looked good in his maiden appearance.

At the Wankhede, where run-fests are more the norm than an exception, the contest could well be decided in the Power-Play.

MI's inability to set the tone early – both with bat and ball – has hurt it repeatedly. Against an SRH side that thrives on fast starts, that phase assumes even greater significance. If Head, the sleeping giant, wakes up in tailor-made conditions, the visiting outfit could deal a virtual knockout blow to MI.

As it is, MI is in quest of rediscovering consistency or risk slipping out of contention. For SRH, it is about consolidating a strong position.

# Abhishek plans meticulously: Franklin

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

If there is one constant in Sunrisers Hyderabad's surge in IPL 2026, it has been the uninhibited flair of Abhishek Sharma. With a tally of 280 from eight matches, the left-hander sits atop the run charts as of Monday – a testament to his range and method.

Ahead of Wednesday's clash against Mumbai Indians, SRH assistant coach James Franklin indicated that Abhishek's preparation is as meticulous as his audacious strokeplay.

"Abhishek is very detailed with how he prepares for oppositions. He will know and understand what MI's bowlers will try and present to him, particularly in the PowerPlay," Franklin said.

Abhishek had fallen to a slower-ball ploy from Lucknow Super Giants pacer Mohsin Khan, and Shami, recognising questions about a similar trap. But Franklin suggested that the opener's strength lies in anticipation as much as execution.

"He likes to have conversations around different bowlers. He will be aware of potentially how they might come at him."

Against an MI attack searching for consistency, the contest against Jasprit Bumrah could once again set the tone. And if Abhishek's numbers are any indication, it is a challenge he appears well-equipped to

Today's match

Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: 25
MI 15 | SRH 10

PREVIOUS MEETING
At Hyderabad, SRH won by seven wickets, 2025.

Impact Index



1 Punjab Kings lost its first match of IPL 2026

1 This was the biggest chase in T20s at New Chandigarh, bettering the 219 hunted down by PBKS against SRH earlier this season

2 Arshdeep (2/40) bowled the second-most expensive spell for PBKS after Barbati (2/69 vs. DC, 2016)

3 Royals have won all three games against Kings at New Chandigarh

5 The number of matches Shreyas has lost as captain while defending 200-plus targets

8 Kings' losses while defending 215-plus scores, the most in the league

Compiled by Aniruddh Velamuri

Points table

| | M | W | L | NR | PTS | NRR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Punjab Kings | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 1.843 |
| Royal Challengers | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 1.819 |
| Rajasthan Royals | 7 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 12 | 0.417 |
| Sunrisers Hyderabad | 7 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 0.833 |
| Gujarat Titans | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 8 | -0.475 |
| Chennai Super Kings | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 | -0.521 |
| Delhi Capitals | 6 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 6 | -1.060 |
| Kolkata Knight Riders | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | -0.751 |
| Mumbai Indians | 7 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 4 | -0.726 |
| Lucknow Super Giants | 6 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 2 | -1.843 |

# Indian women lose to China, crash out

Press Trust of India
HORSENS (DENMARK)

Two-time Olympic medallist P.V. Sindhu squandered a strong position as India went down 0-5 to China to end its campaign at the Uber Cup Finals on Monday.

All eyes will now be on the men's team to avenge the loss when it takes on China on Wednesday in Thomas Cup.

India, the 2022 champion, sealed a place in the quarterfinals with a 5-0 victory over Australia in a Group-A tie. The winner will top the group.

**The result: Uber Cup: China bt India 5-0:** Sheng Zhuo bt P.V. Sindhu 21-16, 21-21, 21-19; Liu Sheng Shu & Tan Ning bt Priya Konjengbam & Shruti Mishra 21-11, 21-8; Chen Yufei bt Ashwini Ponnappa 22-20, 21-13; Luo Yu Wei and Zhang Shu Xian bt Tanisha Crasto & Rasapriya Selvam 10-21, 21-12, 21-19; Su Wen Jing bt

# I didn't want to quit: Barwal on pushing through till the finish

ATHLETICS

Aniruddh Velamuri

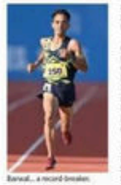
At the Rotterdam Marathon earlier this month, Suwan Barwal timed 2:11:58 on his marathon debut, breaking a 48-year-old National record set by Shivnath Singh. Yet, for a brief, dramatic stretch, it looked as though that long-standing mark might survive.

With the finish line within reach, Barwal stumbled and collapsed.

**Valiant effort**

But he valiantly got back on his feet, with help from a race volunteer, and pushed through in the final phase to etch his name in Indian athletics history.

"Till the 40-kilometre mark, I was on pace. But in the last two kilometres, I struggled a bit. When I crossed the 41.195-km mark, I felt, got up and fell again with only



Barwal... a record-breaker. FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

could see the clock near the finish line and knew that my pace was within the national record," Barwal told *The Hindu*.

"I had 15 to 20 seconds to complete the last 500m and finish around the 11.35-11.40 mark. But I fell, got up and fell again with only about 10 to 12 seconds left, my eyes were only on the timing."

The 28-year-old, who averaged just over three minutes per kilometre, needed nearly a minute and a half to cover the final 100m. "I have sacrificed so much. So it is important to finish, even if I get hospitalised. As an Army person, I didn't want to quit."

Barwal also kept a close watch on the London Marathon, where Sebastian Sawe dipped under the two-hour mark to set a new world record. He felt the runners in London followed a pattern similar to his own in Rotterdam.

"If you see the first half, it is slower than the second. In the interviews, they (the runners) said that their runs were well paced but that they struggled a bit in the last two kilometres. They were feeling a li-

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## IN BRIEF



### Kothari to defend World billiards title against Advani

For the second straight year, the final of the IBSF World billiards championship will be an all-Indian affair with champion Sourav Kothari taking on Pankaj Advani. In the semifinals at Carlow (Ireland) on Tuesday, Advani outclassed England's Robert Hall 1894-420 to make his ninth straight final, while Kothari rallied to score a 633-443 victory over compatriot Dhruj Haria.

**Quarterfinal results:** Advani bt Martin Goodsell (Eng) 710-356; Hall bt Siddharth Parikh 425-408; Haria bt S. Shrikrishna 459-374; Kothari bt David Causier (Eng) 757-408.

### Indian table tennis team gets ₹90 lakh support

Sports Authority of India put in place support worth over ₹90 lakh to ensure the Indian table tennis team put its best foot forward at the centenary ITTF World Team Championships, which got underway in London on Tuesday.

### PM inaugurates six BCCI indoor cricket academies

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday inaugurated six state-of-the-art indoor cricket academies across northeast India, which are part of the BCCI's expansion programme for infrastructure in the region. The academies are located in Ranigpo (Sikkim), Doimukh (Arunachal Pradesh), Imphal (Manipur), Madan Karkalang (Meghalaya), Aizawl (Mizoram), and Dimapur (Nagaland).

### Yash, Lakra and Musaif smash centuries

Centuries from Yash Bhatia, Dev Lakra and Musaif Ajaz powered Bal Bhawan CA to a 263-run victory over Bhawani Youth Cricket Academy in the 41st all-India Laxman Dass Chhabra Memorial tournament at St. Stephen's cricket ground in New Delhi on Tuesday.

**The scores:** Bal Bhawan CA 624/7 in 40 overs (Arpit Rana 62, Yash Bhatia 102, Dev Lakra 103, Yajas Sharma 69, Musaif Ajaz 102, Karan Garg 71 n.o., Neelmani Kumar 4/116) bt Bhawani Youth CA 361 in 38.2 overs (Vansh Mehra 112, Ankit Singh 56, Mayank 63, Neelmani Kumar 4/5, Suryakant Chauhan 4/92).

# Atletico and Arsenal seek redemption in semifinals

Neither team has won the European title yet; Simeone's men have to dust off the Copa del Rey final loss whereas Arteta & Co. need to shift focus from the tight Premier League title race

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

**Agence France-Presse**
MADRID

Atletico Madrid and Diego Simeone have regularly tasted the sting of disappointment, even in what is the club's golden age.

It hosts Arsenal on Wednesday in the Champions League semifinals, chasing redemption after its crushing Copa del Rey final defeat little over a week ago.

Tens of thousands of Atletico fans travelled down to Seville only to go home empty-handed, just as it did in the 2014 and 2016 Champions League finals against bitter rival Real Madrid.

Atletico has never won Europe's premier competition, also beaten in its other final appearance in 1974.

It can take a first step towards a fourth final against Mikel Arteta's side this week.

In its first game back home after the Copa final disappointment, on Saturday against Athletic Bilbao, Atletico's fans gave the team a cold reception.

"The fans don't need messages (from me), what they need is to win," noted Simeone, Atletico's most decorated manager, in Seville.

The Arsenal tie offers a route to immediate atonement, and by Wednesday, the atmosphere will be frenzied, intoxicating, as it was for the quarterfinal elimination of Barcelona.

Atletico is no longer at the Vicente Calderon, but the Metropolitano stadium is just as intense, louder still, with the increased capacity.

The Rojiblancos' support is the loudest in Spain and Simeone called on them to give his team the edge against the Premier League leader.



**Gunners test awaits:** Atletico will have high expectations from Griezmann. REUTERS

"Atletico has struggled to reach the Champions League semifinals and finals," explained the coach. "We've built this success through hard work and the support of our fans. We need them now more than ever, and hopefully, we can give them what they want on the pitch."

What is non-negotiable for Simeone is his team's intensity, work rate and competitiveness, and capacity to suffer when they need to against superior opponents. "We've reached this point by competing the way we have – nothing has stopped us so far," said Simeone.

Atletico's all-time top goalscorer Antoine Griezmann added: "It will be a very important match (against Arsenal), we have to be calm, relaxed, knowing that we can do it. I'm enjoying these last few games here. I hope I can gift something incredible to the fans."

As Simeone observed, for all the sweat and grit his team has offered, the gilt it needs to give is silverware.

# United close in on a Champions League spot

EURO LEAGUES

**Reuters**
MANCHESTER

Manchester United's Casemiro and Benjamin Sesko struck first-half goals to secure a 2-1 Premier League home win over Brentford on Monday and take their side to the brink of Champions League football for the first time since the 2022-24 season.

Third-placed United moved to 61 points, 11 ahead of sixth-placed Brighton & Hove Albion with four games left. The top five qualify for Champions League.

Casemiro headed home the opener for United in the 11th minute and Sesko added a second two minutes before the break, with Mathias Jensen netting a late consolation goal for Brentford.

United is now 12 points behind Arsenal and nine adrift of second-placed Manchester City. Liverpool are three points behind Michael Carrick's side in fourth place, with the two rivals meeting at Old Trafford on Sunday.

Brentford is ninth and among several clubs still in with a chance of making the Europa League.

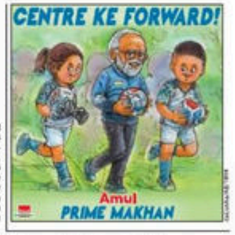


**Take that!** Sesko fires in United's second goal. REUTERS

**The results: Premier League:** Manchester United 2 (Casemiro 11, Sesko 43) bt Brentford 1 (Jensen 87).

**Serie A:** Cagliari 3 (Mondy 1, R. Bonifi 67) bt Atalanta 2 (Scamacca 45, 45+1, Lucio 3 (Pellegrini 90, Pedro 81, Hatebo 90+3); draw with Udinese 3 (Okoli 16, Atta 86, 90+3).

**LaLiga:** Espanyol 0 drew with Levante 0.




# Satyajit, Harschit hog the limelight



**On a roll:** Satyajit clinched the floor exercise and vault titles in the senior section. RITWIKRAJ JAN SOLO

GYMNASTICS

**Sports Bureau**

Satyajit Mondal clinched the floor exercise and vault titles in the senior division men's apparatus finals of the National artistic gymnastics championships in Bhubaneswar on Tuesday.

Harschit Damodaran also shone in junior division by claiming gold medals in floor exercise, rings, vault and horizontal bar.

**The results: Men: Senior: Floor exercise:** 1. Satyajit Mondal (RSPB) 12.700 (higher e-score), 2. Sahil Yadav (Har) 12.700, 3. Nilabi Sarkar (RSPB) 12.267. **Pommel horse:** 1. Siddhanth Verma (RSPB) 13.067, 2. Sahoon Majumder (WB) 12.800 (higher e-score), 3. S. Harikrishnan (TELG) 12.800. **Rings:** 1. Adwit Navin Sai Krishna (CH) 13.067, 2. K.P. Swathish (RSPB) 13.000, 3. Omkar Shinde (Mah) 12.533. **Vault:** 1. Satyajit Mondal (RSPB) 13.458, 2. Uday Nanda (Har) 13.117, 3. Tapanhosenath Das (SSCB) 13.050. **Parallel bars:** 1. Gaurav Kumar (SSCB) 12.833, 2. Abhijeet Kumar (UP) 12.167, 3. Siddhant P. Kerde (RSPB) 12.400. **Horizontal bar:** 1. Shayan Sharma (RSPB) 13.100, 2. Shreyas Choudhari (SSCB) 11.767, 3. Yusuf Rana Mondal (RSPB) 11.367.

**Junior: Floor exercise:** 1. Harschit Damodaran (UP) 12.767, 2. Sk. Nabhigh Ali (WB) 12.333, 3. Nishad Narvane (Mah) 12.033. **Pommel horse:** 1. Swanim Jaiswal (MP) 12.467, 2. Sk. Nabhigh Ali (WB) 12.167, 3. Pritam Amatkarkar (Mah) 11.933. **Rings:** 1. Harschit Damodaran (UP) 13.033, 2. Nishad Narvane (Mah) 11.800, 3. Suman Dutta (WB) 11.633. **Vault:** 1. Harschit Damodaran (UP) 13.617, 2. Akshat Bajaj (Del) 12.867, 3. Soham Sagar Jore (UP) 12.400. **Parallel bars:** 1. Nishad Narvane (Mah) 12.367, 2. Tulin Tewary (Pud) 12.233, 3. Aarish Sharma (Del) 12.200. **Horizontal bar:** 1. Harschit Damodaran (UP) 12.500, 2. Md. Zaid Ansari (UP) 12.367, 3. Ishan (Har) 11.900.

# Szocs is the biggest buy at Season 7 auction

UTT

**Amol Karhadkar**
MUMBAI

Big names commanded bigger bids as franchises zeroed in on proven performers and emerging Indian talent at the Butterfly Ultimate Table Tennis Season 7 player auction on Tuesday, with reigning champion Bernadette Szocs topping the charts.

Szocs, snapped up by Dempo Goa Challengers for 40 lakh tokens, headlined a list of marquee acquisitions that underlined the premium on experience. Close behind was Diya Chitale, who became the highest-valued Indian for the second successive year, joining PBG Pune Jaguars for 37.4 lakh tokens. Her mixed doubles partner Manush Shah wasn't far behind, picked up by U Mumba TT for 37.2 lakh.

UP Prometheans, the league debutant, went big on balance, pairing Manav Thakkar (86 lakh) with two-time league MVP Yangzi Liu (32 lakh) to assemble arguably the most formidable core on paper.

The auction also reflected a growing appetite for youth. Fifteen-year-old Divyanshi Bhowmick became the youngest-ever signing, while Ayushdeva Das added to Goa's blend.



**Most sought after:** Szocs, who played for U Mumba TT last season, was snapped up by Dempo Goa Challengers. FILE PHOTO: U UTT SOHLE

UTT auctions are based on tokens as notional value, with players signing contracts with the league promoters for undisclosed amount. The seventh edition will be played in Panaji, Goa from July 9 to 26.

**The squads:**

**Ahmedabad API Pipers:** Ashish Rauserikhoa (20,00,000 tokens), Sanil Shetty (1,20,000), Payas Jain (14,80,000), Sofia Polcanova (27,20,000), Manika Batra (27,00,000), Kavya Bhatt (12,00,000).

**Bekaeng Delhi TT.C.:** Youssef Abdelaziz (12,80,000), G. Sathiyan (27,00,000), Rangan Alhaqueerqua (3,80,000), Maria Xiao (27,20,000), Divyanshi Bhowmick (10,40,000), Sushmita Mukherjee (8,00,000).

**Dempo Goa Challengers:** Aisaro Robbie (32,80,000), Dipani Mitra Srivastava (3,80,000), Syndhela Das (17,00,000), Ananya Chande (3,00,000).

**Kolkata ThunderBlades:** Eduard Ionescu (24,20,000), Ankur Bhattacharjee (9,40,000), Joel Chandra (7,09,000), Zeng Jian (20,00,000), Taneesha Kotecha (1,80,000), Ayhika Mukherjee (20,20,000).

**PBG Pune Jaguars:** Omar Assar (20,00,000), Snehit SPR (12,00,000), Mudit Dani (3,00,000), Prithika Pavade (24,80,000), Diya Chitale (37,40,000), Tayamba Maji (3,00,000).

**U Mumba TT:** Lilian Bardet (31,40,000), Akash Pal (5,40,000), Manush Shah (37,20,000), Anna Hursey (22,20,000), Nithyashree Vees (3,00,000), Anusha Kutumbale (3,00,000).

**UP Prometheans:** Ricardo Walther (12,80,000), Sudharshu Grover (3,20,000), Manav Thakkar (86,00,000), Yangzi Liu (32,00,000), Sayali Wani (9,20,000), Swastika Ghosh (12,00,000).

## SNAPSHOTS

**Vinesh confirms registration for Open ranking event in U.P.**

NEW DELHI: Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat on Tuesday confirmed that she has successfully registered for the upcoming ranking tournament at Gonda (U.P.) after claiming she was being blocked from competing by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

The clarification comes after confusion over her delayed entry. The WFI maintained that technical issues with the registration portal had initially prevented many wrestlers, not just Vinesh, from completing the process. She was eventually able to submit her entry after the link became accessible.

**Indian grapplers bag four gold medals**

Indian grapplers impressed at the Commonwealth Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships and the Universal Cup (Senior) in Apia, Samoa, securing four gold medals on the second day.

Sunil Singh lifted 271kg (126kg in snatch and 145kg in clean and jerk) to clinch the gold in the 65kg men, while Ananglla Gogoi won the top prize in women's 59kg and Abhinob Gogoi bagged the yellow metal in men's 71kg division. Ananglla lifted 193kg (90kg in snatch and 103kg in clean and jerk) to bag gold, while Abhinob totalled 284kg (129kg in snatch and 155kg in clean and jerk) to secure top finish.

In the Universal Cup, Charu Post bagged gold in men's 65kg with 285kg (127kg in snatch and 158kg in clean and jerk).

**Vismaya slapped with two-year suspension**

Asian Games 4x400m relay gold-winning quartermiler V.K. Vismaya has been handed a two-year suspension by National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)'s Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel (ADDP), nearly two years after she tested positive for a banned substance.

Mauzmchale, sprinter N. Shanmuga Srinivas has been handed a four-year ban by the ADDP from February 6, 2025 for "Evading, Refusing or Failing to Submit to



Vinesh. FILE PHOTO

# Meet Rithika Sri, the first transgender umpire from TN

**S. Dipak Ragav**
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Cricket Association recently called out for applicants to appear for the State Panel Umpire exams. For the first time, the application form allowed a person to select competing by the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). competing by the gender category, in addition to Male and Female. While it may look like a small change, it came thanks to the sheer grit and determination of a 31-year-old umpire from Coimbatore.

K. Rithika Sri is a transwoman from Salem who has been umpiring in the Salem and Coimbatore circuit since 2021 and has been instrumental in forcing this through.

Rithika is the first transgender umpire in Tamil Nadu. Born as R. Muthuraj, she is a diploma holder in Mechanical Engineering. The engineering dropout was working in Mohali at a call centre when she caught the umpiring bug while watching the IPL.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and forced her to return to her hometown, Rithika decided to become an umpire.

"I contacted the Salem District Cricket Association through social media. U. Jayaraman, the umpire committee chairman, played a key role in guiding me. I also have to credit two senior umpires, R. Purushothaman and Boosham," Rithika told *The Hindu*.



Rithika Sri has been umpiring since 2021.

"She rose through the ranks to become one of the best in our district," said Jayaraman, who is also a psychometric assessor.

It was around this time that Rithika was contemplating a gender transition. "Jayaraman sir and his wife supported me. Then, he advised me to establish myself as an umpire for a few years before transitioning. They were worried I would face discrimination otherwise," she added.

After deciding to undergo transition in Coimbatore in 2024, Rithika shifted to the CDCA league.

"The first time in Coimbatore, I went to watch because they wanted me to get familiar with the new district, but I was denied entry, and there were hurtful comments. I went back home crying after an hour. People often accuse trans people of begging, but then, they don't allow us to pursue a dignified livelihood. Can't a transperson become an umpire?" she asks.

It was then that CDCA secretary R. Chandramouli and joint secretary K. Mahalingam ensured no ground would discriminate against her. "CDCA informed all the grounds about me and ensured my safety. Since then, I've officiated in over 15 matches from the first to ninth division in the CDCA league."

Chandramouli revealed he shifted matches from one ground which would not allow her.

Rithika says she wants to prove to society that a trans person can be successful in a variety of fields. "I don't think society is ever going to change, but still, I want to achieve something and leave a mark. My focus is now to clear the TNCA exams and then eventually clear the BCCI exams as well."

LIVE TELECAST

**Bangladesh vs New Zealand:** 2nd T20I, FanCode, 1.30 p.m.

**IPL:** Sony Sports Ten 2 & FanCode, 6.30 p.m.

**IPL:** Star Sports 1 & Jiohotstar, 7.30 p.m.

**Champions League:** Sony Sports Ten 3 & 1HD, 11.30 p.m. & 4.30 p.m.

# A career engineered to perfection



GETTY IMAGES

**Two Olympic gold medals, as many World titles and sustained dominance defined Axelsen's reign; the Dane's appetite for success shifted badminton's power centre outside Asia; he leaves behind a lasting legacy with one of the most fantastic records the sport has seen**

Devyanshi Bihani

Athletes rarely leave with everything settled. There is usually something unfinished, perhaps a title missed, a conflict unresolved, or the lingering question of whether one more year might have changed the ending.

Viktor Axelsen does not seem to carry that with him. Forced to step away at 32 due to persistent back injuries that made training at the highest level unsustainable, the Dane's exit, announced on April 15, comes not with unfinished business, but with a sense of completion.

"I have accomplished everything I once dreamed of, and more. I've had the privilege of standing on the biggest stages, playing and winning the matches every player dreams of," Axelsen wrote in his retirement post.

Two Olympic gold medals and a bronze, two World championship titles, multiple European crowns, two All England trophies, the only player to complete a career Super 1000 slam, and a stretch between 2020 and 2023 where he reached 11 of 12 Super 1000 finals, winning 10 of them. Axelsen leaves behind a lasting legacy with one of the most fantastic records the sport has seen.

### The making of a control freak

His career can look inevitable in hindsight – tall, powerful, technically precise, stepping into a post-Lin Dan era and taking over. But inevitability was something he engineered and not inherited.

If there is one thread that runs through his journey, it is control. Control over preparation. Over recovery. Over environment. Gill Clark, the voice of badminton, described him as someone who left "no stone unturned" in pursuit of improvement. But even that feels like an understatement. Axelsen didn't just turn over stones but redesigned the ground he was standing on.

He moved to Dubai to manage allergies and travel fatigue. He hired specialists outside badminton. A gymnastics's coach for movement and a former marine for mental conditioning. He micromanaged nutrition, sleep, and training cycles. When he tested positive for COVID months before the Tokyo Olympics, he paid for a private air ambulance just to control how he recovered.

"To many people, I was sometimes 'extreme', but I always feared I would look back and feel like I could have done more. Living this way comes with a price, but this price is something I have been willing to pay in order to reach my fullest potential," he wrote. That instinct for control did not remain confined to how he trained. It shaped how he played and positioned himself within the sport.

### Breaking the stranglehold

Badminton's power structure has rarely shifted far from Asia.

Training methods, tactical evolution, even informal knowledge-sharing flowed largely through China, Indonesia, Malaysia and, later, Japan and India. European players could break through – Peter Gade, Jan O. Jorgensen, Kenneth Jonassen – but rarely for long. Axelsen's rise, and his sustained dominance, altered that geography.

He did not just win; he changed where the sport was being played. His success shifted the centre of gravity outside Asia, forcing players and coaches to adapt to a new benchmark. Training camps in Europe began to look more like Asian ones. Players started to think differently about how to prepare for matches, how to manage workloads, how to recover between tournaments.

Axelsen's game itself was a departure from the norm. He was tall, but he moved with the precision of a smaller player. He was powerful, but he built points patiently rather than relying on brute force. He defended from deep, absorbing pressure before finding the moment to attack. And he did all of this while operating from the outside.

Axelsen didn't accept that distance.

Early in his career, he began learning Mandarin. Initially, he said, "the biggest thing for me has been to be able to speak with a lot of different players, especially the Chinese players, and know how they do stuff." He added, "That makes you think what you do is right. You can learn something from the Chinese players."

It occasionally offered unexpected advantages. During a match in 2014, a Chinese coach shouted "play faster", assuming Axelsen wouldn't understand. He did, and responded by slowing the game down. When he was at his peak, an apparent limitation could be turned into an advantage.

At 6'4", he altered the geometry of the court with steeper angles, longer reach, the ability to take the shuttle earlier and higher than most. Tall players were not new to the sport. Chen Long had won an Olympic gold with a 6'2" frame, and Denmark's Jan O. Jorgensen, similarly built, had reached the top tier.

But in badminton, height has traditionally come with trade-offs. Taller players often struggle with low defensive positions, quick changes of direction, and the constant forward recovery the sport demands. Chen showed what could be done through control and endurance, building his game around retrieval and rally tolerance.

Axelsen pushed in a different direction. He reworked his movements to suit his frame by lowering his base, sharpening his first step, and improving recovery so he could handle longer exchanges when needed. But he didn't build his game around endurance. Instead, he used that foundation to attack earlier, taking the shuttle higher and sooner to create sharper angles and shorten rallies.

That physical template is already being inherited. India's Ayush Shetty, also 6'4", emerged as the runner-up at the Badminton Asia Championships in the very week Axelsen announced his retirement.

The Dane had remarked that Ayush "reminds me of my younger self." A year earlier, in 2025, the Indian had spent time training with the legend.

"Axelsen is really strong and he has a great defence. I think it is really surprising that he can do all those things with that height...I have to be like that if I want to play at my very best," Ayush had said. He studied a version of the game that had already solved many of the problems height once posed.



### The player others had to solve

In the years after Lin and Lee Chong Wei faded, Axelsen, for nearly a decade, remained the reference point in men's singles, the player others had to solve.

He arrived during the 'GOAT' era when the old order was still standing. In Rio in 2016, he lost the semifinal to Chen before beating Lin for bronze, a result that felt less like an upset and more like an announcement by the then 22 year old. A year later, he defeated Lin in the 2017 World championship final.

Even during his most dominant phase – when he was winning the Olympic gold in Tokyo against Chen, defending it in Paris against Kunlavut Vitidsarn, and sweeping through Super 1000 events while beating the likes of Chou Tien Chen and Anders Antonsen in finals – there were brief windows when opponents managed to drag him away from his preferred rhythm.

India's HS Prannoy, for instance, dismantled him at the 2023 World championships in a match that exposed how even Axelsen's power could be blunted by tactical discipline. Lakshya Sen had done it earlier, outmanoeuvring him with speed and variation. Lee Zii Jia beat him in the 2021 All England final by matching him in attack. Antonsen, from Denmark's own system, pushed him in matches where there were no secrets left to uncover.

And then there was the rivalry that never fully played out.

Kento Momota, at his peak, was perhaps the closest thing to a stylistic counter. A player who could stretch rallies, absorb pressure, and force Axelsen into longer, more patient exchanges. For a stretch between 2018 and 2020, Momota built a commanding 14-3 head-to-head lead over the Dane. For a brief period before Momota's career-altering accident, their meetings hinted at a rivalry. If it had played out over time, it could have taken on the shape badminton knows well: Axelsen as the Wei figure to Momota's Lin.

That absence does not diminish what Axelsen achieved – two Olympic titles and a 183-week reign as the world No. 1 (the third-longest in history) demand far more than circumstance. But it did leave behind one of badminton's lingering hypotheticals: how different the balance of power might have looked had both operated at full capacity over time.

### Pushing against the system

For someone so obsessed with control, it was perhaps inevitable that Axelsen would eventually run into the limits of it.

He could control how he trained, where he lived, what he ate, how he recovered. He could redesign his game, his schedule, even his environment. But the structure of the sport, the calendar, the rules, the federation system, sat outside that control.

And Axelsen was not built to accept things he believed could have been done better. His public criticism of the Badminton World Federation was less a break in character than an extension of it.

He spoke about autonomy in a sport structured around federations. In a post in December 2024, he wrote that he was "so tired of the disconnect between players and BWF," arguing that a system where "everything needs to go through the Federation" left little room for athletes to make their own decisions.

He spoke about players being reluctant to raise concerns publicly, given the power federations hold, but he was keen on his own responsibility "for current players and future generations."

He also voiced about recovery in a calendar that rewards constant participation and about mental strain in a system that still struggles to account for it. He pointed to cases like that of Sehwen Zhang to highlight how mental health struggles were often insufficient grounds to step away, asking: "If we as a sport don't take mental health seriously, then where are we heading?"

He joined Malaysians in criticising Badminton Association of Malaysia for the "drastic and unjustified" two-year ban imposed on Jia.

The former world No. 1 did so while being one of the system's biggest beneficiaries – filling arenas, anchoring broadcasts, and winning consistently – and yet one of those most visibly strained by its demands, at times sharing medical scans publicly to explain withdrawals. There was a directness to it that felt familiar. On court, Axelsen carried himself in much the same way: upright, deliberate, unmistakable. The headband, the clenched fist, the controlled aggression in his movement; a presence that filled space and demanded response – from opponents in rallies and from arenas that filled for him.

Off it, that same clarity showed in how he spoke, not always diplomatic, rarely ambiguous, and grounded in a sense of responsibility. The Dane leaves with titles, records, and dominance. And with the rare assurance that, in a career defined by control, there was nothing left he chose not to fight for. "I don't regret anything

### THE GIST

- Clark, the voice of badminton, described Axelsen as someone who left "no stone unturned" in pursuit of improvement
- In the years after Lin and Lee Chong Wei faded, the Dane, for nearly a decade, remained the reference point in men's singles
- The 32-year-old did not shy away from publicly criticising things he believed could have been done better

# Why science and scientists must learn to celebrate failures

Narratives that present scientific experiments as a smooth story of success are counter-effective; to ensure science remains dynamic, innovative, and honest, it is necessary to foster a culture of appreciating and learning from failure rather than hiding it

Bijo Dharmapalan

Failure is part and parcel of research but many scientists consider discussing it in a scientific forum to be taboo.

Laboratories are littered with unfinished experiments and inconclusive facts and theories that failed to stand the test of study. However, when science is being communicated – whether to funding bodies, professional journals, or audiences – it comes across as a smooth story of success. Just narratives are counter-effective.

To ensure science is dynamic, innovative, and honest, we have to foster a culture of appreciating and learning from failure rather than hiding it.

In its essence, science progresses by trial and error. A scientist postulates hypotheses while anticipating that many of them will be discarded. Every unsuccessful experiment sharpens the edges of knowledge and guides further investigation.

However, systems of science such as funding, publication, and career progression are skewed towards successes alone. Grants are generally awarded on the basis of promising results and a large volume of papers, and in favour of those with positive results. Unsuccessful or negative outcomes are often overlooked, leading to a biased ecosystem in which only success is allowed to be seen.



**Knowledge gambit:** Science progresses by trial and error and every unsuccessful experiment guides further investigation. SASIN KUSHWAHA/UNSPLASH

### Not to be stigmatised

In the early 1980s, Australian scientists Barry Marshall and Robin Warren claimed that a bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori* caused peptic ulcers. Papers on the idea were however rejected by journals and dismissed by the gastroenterological establishment; the latter had long held that the stomach was too acidic for microbes. (Of course, there was also reasoned scepticism in pockets of the research community, which did not think that the duo had provided sufficient evidence for their hypothesis.)

They were unable to get their findings published and were also not taken seriously, but they had reasons to believe they were right. Then, in 1984, Mr. Marshall famously drank a broth containing *H. pylori* bacteria, expecting he would develop ulcers in around a year and thus prove to the research community that their idea had merit. Rather than a year, he developed symptoms of gastritis within a few days.

The duo won a Nobel Prize in 2005 for their work on identifying *H. pylori* as a cause of gastritis and peptic ulcers. It was a testament to how publication bias allowed a treatable condition to go untreated for years because the system had no process or culture to deal with what it perceived to be a failure.

To really embrace failure, science may need to draw inspiration from domains beyond academia. The technology sector, particularly in entrepreneurial ecosystems, has long embraced a "fail fast, fail often" philosophy. Here, failure is not to be stigmatised but treated as a stepping stone, an essential part of iterative learning.

### Psychological aspect

While academic science cannot replicate this model entirely, given its different stakes and responsibilities, it can certainly adopt its underlying mindset: that failure is informative rather than shameful. Another valuable analogy is in sports. Athletes incorporate replays and coaching sessions to analyse their failures and convert them into learning opportunities. However, failures in science do not tend to include well-orchestrated reflection.

Some changes are commendable. New publication formats like 'registered reports' – where scientists commit to publishing the results of an experiment even before they begin it, whether they are positive or negative – are shifting the focus from results to research design and thus to methodological rigour. Nonetheless, these efforts are still spreading their wings. The major transformation the enterprise as a whole requires in mainstream practice is pending.

There is always the possibility that experiments do not pay off without a clear explanation, and researchers internalise failure as personal rather than as a natural occurrence in the process of intricate enquiry. This psychological aspect is especially important to novice researchers.

**There is always the possibility that experiments do not pay off without a clear explanation, and researchers internalise failure as personal rather than as a natural occurrence**

In a highly competitive environment where not everyone feels safe at work, the fear of failure may lower the incentive to take risks which can eventually impede the pace of scientific development.

### Communicating science

A culture change is thus much needed. Younger scientists would like to see their senior counterparts and principal investigators set good examples by talking openly about their failures and uncertainties. Mentorship should also not be limited to success: it should also openly deal with setbacks. People can become more resilient and honest in their intellectual practices by acknowledging that doubt and failure are parts of science.

Funding bodies and institutions can also play a role. The criteria of evaluation need to shift from the success of specific research outcomes to the quality of the research questions, research methods, and the lessons learnt. Grant proposals and academic CVs can include sections that document and articulate failures as part of the research experience. Establishing platforms to share negative findings and failed experiments could also contribute to a richer scientific ledger. Through open science projects and online archives, novel possibilities are available to share such knowledge, minimise repetition, and foster collaboration.

Notably, the public communication of science needs to change as well. The representation of science as a succession of discoveries creates unrealistic expectations and diminishes confidence in the face of failure. Scientists can raise a more informed and appreciative population by showing that science is a messy, iterative, and sometimes uncertain process. This is necessary, especially in the case of developing drugs or going to space, where errors are bound to happen, and it could be the most important lesson to go through.

Science in practice is a long journey characterised by perseverance, failure, and slow success. Science should not conceal these features but accept them. That is when every failure can serve as a stepping-stone to significant and hopefully sustainable breakthroughs.

*(Bijo Dharmapalan is Dean (Academic Affairs), Garden City University and an adjunct faculty member at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. bjodharmapalan@gmail.com)*

### THE GIST

- Science in practice is a long journey characterised by perseverance, failure, and slow success.
- In a highly competitive environment where not everyone feels safe at work, the fear of failure may lower the incentive to take risks which can eventually impede the pace of scientific development.
- A culture change is thus much needed where mentorship is not limited to success with criteria of evaluation focused on quality of the research.

## BIG SHOT



The Sombrero galaxy is a popular target for amateur observing and astronomical research. Its recognisable extended halo and dust-filled disk are captured in this image from the Hubble Space Telescope. NASA, ESA, HUBBLE HERITAGE TEAM (STSCI/AURA)

## WHAT IS IT?

# A face of Pompeii

Reuters

Archaeologists in Italy's Pompeii have for the first time used artificial intelligence (AI) to reconstruct the appearance of one of the victims of the volcanic eruption that destroyed the ancient Roman city nearly 2,000 years ago.

The AI-generated image, released by the Pompeii Archaeological Park on Monday, shows a man ducking for cover while holding a large bowl over his head, with a flaming Mt Vesuvius in the background. It is based on the recent discovery of the remains of a male adult, just outside one of the southern gates of the city, which were lying next to a terracotta mortar that he presumably used as protection.

Archaeologists believe the man was killed by a shower of volcanic rocks, in the early hours of the second day of the eruption, while trying to escape towards the sea. He was also carrying a lamp and 10 bronze coins, the park said.

"If used well, AI can contribute to a renewal of classical studies, illustrating the classical world in a more immersive way," the head of the archaeological park, Gabriel Zuchtriegel, said in a statement.

The once-thriving city of Pompeii, about 25 km southeast of Naples, was buried in the eruption of Mt Vesuvius in AD 79, preserving buildings, objects and graffiti under metres of ash.



A view of the Pompeii Archeological Park, near Naples, Italy, December 14, 2022. AP

now one of the world's most significant archaeological sites, and one of the most popular tourist sites in Italy, with 4.3 million visitors in 2024, according to the latest statistics.

**For feedback and suggestions** for 'Science', please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Science'

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# Current Affairs

## 29 / 04 / 2026

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# About the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** is a **key statistical tool** used to measure the **short-term changes in the volume of production** in Indian industries.
- It provides insight into the **growth or contraction of industrial activity** over a given period, making it a crucial **economic performance indicator**.
- The **IIP is published by the Central Statistics Office(CSO)**, which is part of the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.
- The **current base year** for the index is **2011–12**. This base year was adopted to reflect **modern industrial structure and production patterns**, following periodic revisions from earlier base years such as **1937, 1946, 1951, 1956**, and so on.
- **Sectoral Composition of IIP (Weight-wise):**
  - **Manufacturing**: **77.63%** of total weight (809 items)
  - **Mining**: **14.37%** (29 items)
  - **Electricity**: **7.99%** (1 item)

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# Eight Core Industries (Weight in IIP: 40.27%)

- **Listed in decreasing order of weightage:**
  - Refinery Products
  - Electricity
  - Steel
  - Coal
  - Crude Oil
  - Natural Gas
  - Cement
  - Fertilisers

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- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is the primary measure of retail inflation in India.
- It tracks changes in the prices of goods and services consumed by households and is used by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to frame monetary policy under the inflation-targeting framework.
- CPI reflects the cost of living and directly affects interest rates, wages, pensions, and government welfare schemes.
- It is based on a "basket" of goods and services that represents typical household consumption patterns.
- Since consumption habits change over time due to income growth, technological shifts, and urbanisation, the CPI basket must be periodically revised.
- Without such revisions, the index may misrepresent actual inflation trends.

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## About Consumer Price Index (CPI) Base 2024=100:

### What it is?

- Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the change in retail prices of a fixed basket of goods and services consumed by households, and is India's headline retail inflation indicator (YoY % change in CPI).

**Published by:** Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) through NSO (National Statistical Office). Price collection is done by the Field Operations Division (NSO).

### Base year:

- **New base:** 2024 = 100
- **Earlier base:** 2012 = 100
- **Weights source:** Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (HCES) 2023–24.

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## Key features of CPI 2024 series:

- **New international system (12 categories instead of 6):** Earlier, prices were grouped into 6 big categories. Now they are divided into **12 clearer categories**, like health, transport, education, communication, etc.
- **More items included (358 instead of 299):** The price basket now covers **more products and services people actually use today**, so inflation reflects real life better.
- **More focus on services:** Earlier, services (like education, transport, OTT, healthcare) were fewer. Now **more services are included**, because people spend more on services today than before.
- **Detailed data every month:** Now inflation data is available not just for India overall, but also **for each state**, and separately for **rural and urban areas**, every month.
- **Modern price collection (using tablets):** Earlier, data was written on paper. Now officers use **tablets (digital devices)** to collect prices.
- **Online prices included:** Since many people shop online now, prices from **online platforms (like OTT subscriptions or flight tickets)** are also included.
- **Official government data used for some services:** For things like **rail fares, postal charges, petrol, diesel, LPG**, official government price data is used directly to ensure accuracy.
- The new series introduces **rural house rent** for the first time, significantly improving the coverage of rural housing consumption.

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# What is Wholesale Price Index?

- Wholesale Price Index, or WPI, measures the **changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk** by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- **Wholesale market is only for goods**, one cannot buy services on a wholesale basis.
    - It is used to track the supply and demand dynamics in industry, manufacturing and construction.
    - The index is released by the **Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry** every month.
    - The quantum of rise in the WPI month-after-month is used to measure the level of wholesale inflation in the economy.

# How is WPI calculated?

- The index is based on the **wholesale prices of number of relevant commodities** available.
- The commodities are chosen based on their significance in the region.
    - These represent different strata of the economy and are expected to provide a comprehensive WPI value.
- **Number of commodities:** 697 items
- **Base year:** 2011-12

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# Major Components of WPI

- **'Primary articles'** (22.62%) is a major component of WPI, further subdivided into Food Articles and Non-Food Articles:
  - **Food Articles:** Cereals, Paddy, Wheat, Pulses, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk, Eggs, Meat & Fish, etc.
  - **Non-Food Articles:** Oil Seeds, Minerals and Crude Petroleum.
- The next major basket in WPI is **Fuel & Power** (13.15%), which tracks price movements in Petrol, Diesel and LPG.
- The biggest basket is **Manufactured Goods** (64.23%). It spans across a variety of manufactured products such as Textiles, Apparels, Paper, Chemicals, Plastic, Cement, Metals, and more.
- Manufactured Goods basket also includes manufactured food products such as Sugar, Tobacco Products, Vegetable and Animal Oils, and Fats.

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# What are Headline and Core Inflation?

- Headline inflation refers to the change in value of all goods in the basket.
- **Core inflation excludes food and fuel items** from headline inflation.
- Since the prices of fuel and food items tend to fluctuate and create 'noise' in inflation computation, core inflation is less volatile than headline inflation.
- Headline inflation is more relevant for developing countries like India where fuel and food items account for 30-40% of the basket.

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•The Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is a **permanent**, **intergovernmental organization** established at the **Baghdad Conference** in 1960.

•**Founding members:** Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.

•**Member countries:** Algeria, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Venezuela. Gabon rejoined the group in 2016.

•**Secretariat:** **Vienna**, **Austria**.

•**Objective:** To secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers; an efficient, economic, and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and a fair return on capital to those investing in the industry.

•It operates on the **principle of unanimity**, and **one member**, **one vote**.

•**Significance:** **80%** of the world's proven **crude oil reserves** are located in the grouping Member Countries.

- **India** sources about 70% of crude oil, 60% of its Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), and 30% of its liquefied natural gas (LNG), and 45% of petroleum products demand from OPEC.

- As of April 2026, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has **12 member countries**. Following Angola's withdrawal, the members are Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Venezuela.

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# Andaman & Nicobar

## Great Nicobar Island (GNI) Project?

**•About: The GNI Project, conceived by NITI Aayog and launched in 2021, aims to build an International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT), a greenfield international airport, a township, and a gas–solar power plant.**

- **It is implemented by Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO).**
- **The Andaman & Nicobar Islands serve as India's first line of maritime defence and share sea boundaries with Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, giving India a vast exclusive economic zone and continental shelf under United Nations Conference on the Laws of the Sea, 1982 (UNCLOS).**

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## Great Nicobar Island

•The Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprise 836 islands, divided by the Ten Degree Channel into the Andamans (north) and Nicobars (south).

•Great Nicobar, the largest Nicobar island (910 sq km of rainforest). It hosts Indira Point, India's southernmost tip, just 90 nautical miles from Sumatra (Indonesia).

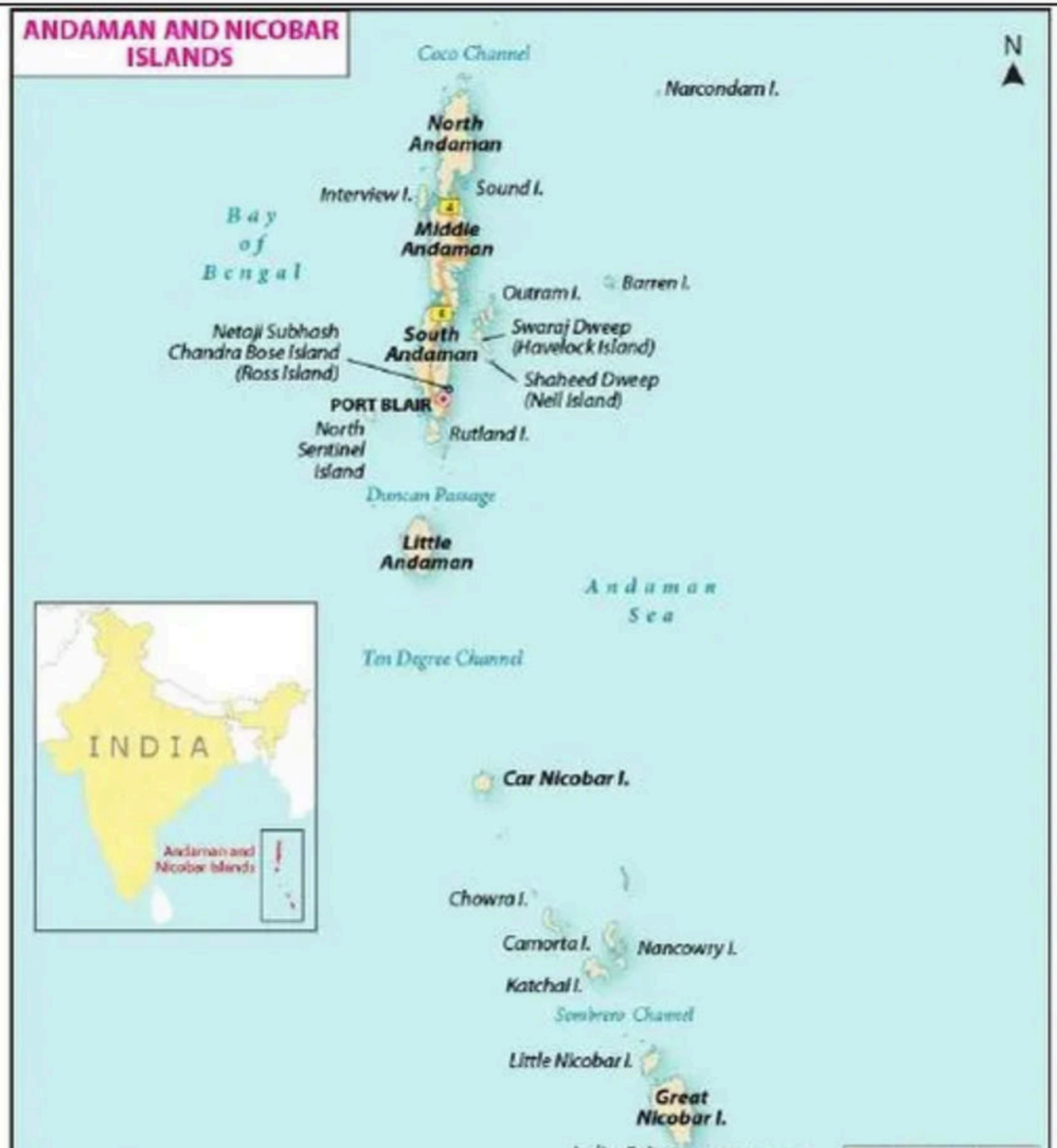
•Great Nicobar has two national parks, a biosphere reserve, small populations of the Shompen and Nicobarese tribal peoples, and a few thousand non-tribal settlers.

•Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve was included in the list of Man and Biosphere (MAB) Program of UNESCO in 2013.

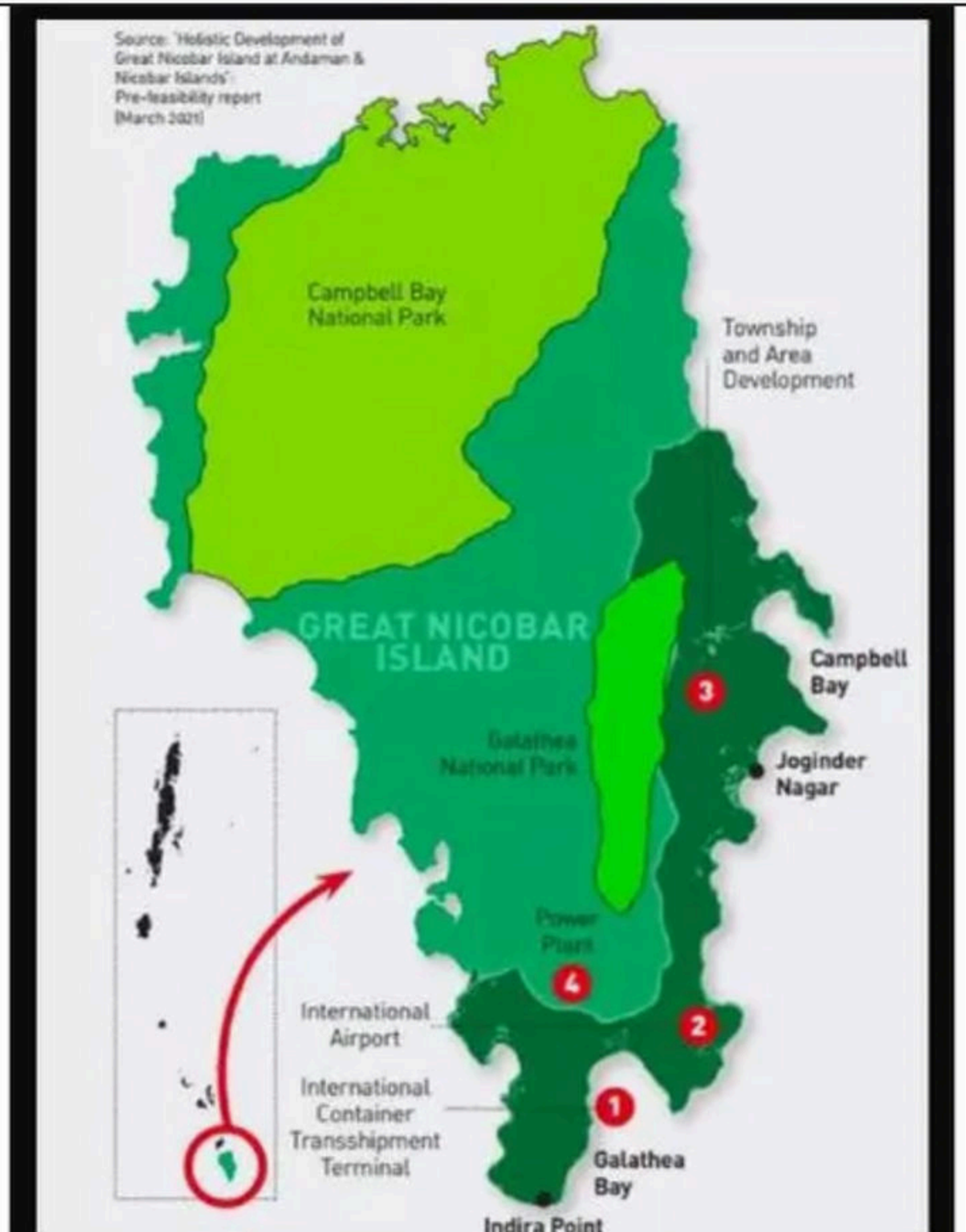
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worldatlas
72° E
ISLANDS
LOW - HILLS
Saddle Peak
North Andaman
Andaman Islands
Middle Andaman
Andaman Sea
Lower Andaman
Sentinel Island
Port Blair
11° N
Bay of Bengal
Little Andaman
Andaman and Nicobar Islands
100 mi
100 km
Car Nicobar
Indian Ocean
Nicobar Islands
Bompoka
Tarasa
Nancowry
Katchall
Little Nicobar
Great Nicobar
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ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS
Coco Channel
N
Narcondam I.
North Andaman
Interview I.
Sound I.
Bay of Bengal
Middle Andaman
Barren I.
Outram I.
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island (Ross Island)
South Andaman
Swaraj Dweep (Havelock Island)
Shaheed Dweep (Neil Island)
PORT BLAIR
North Sentinel Island
Rutland I.
Duncan Passage
Little Andaman
Andaman Sea
Ten Degree Channel
INDIA
Andaman and Nicobar Islands
Car Nicobar I.
Chowra I.
Camorta I.
Nancowry I.
Katchal I.
Sombrero Channel
Little Nicobar I.
Great Nicobar I.

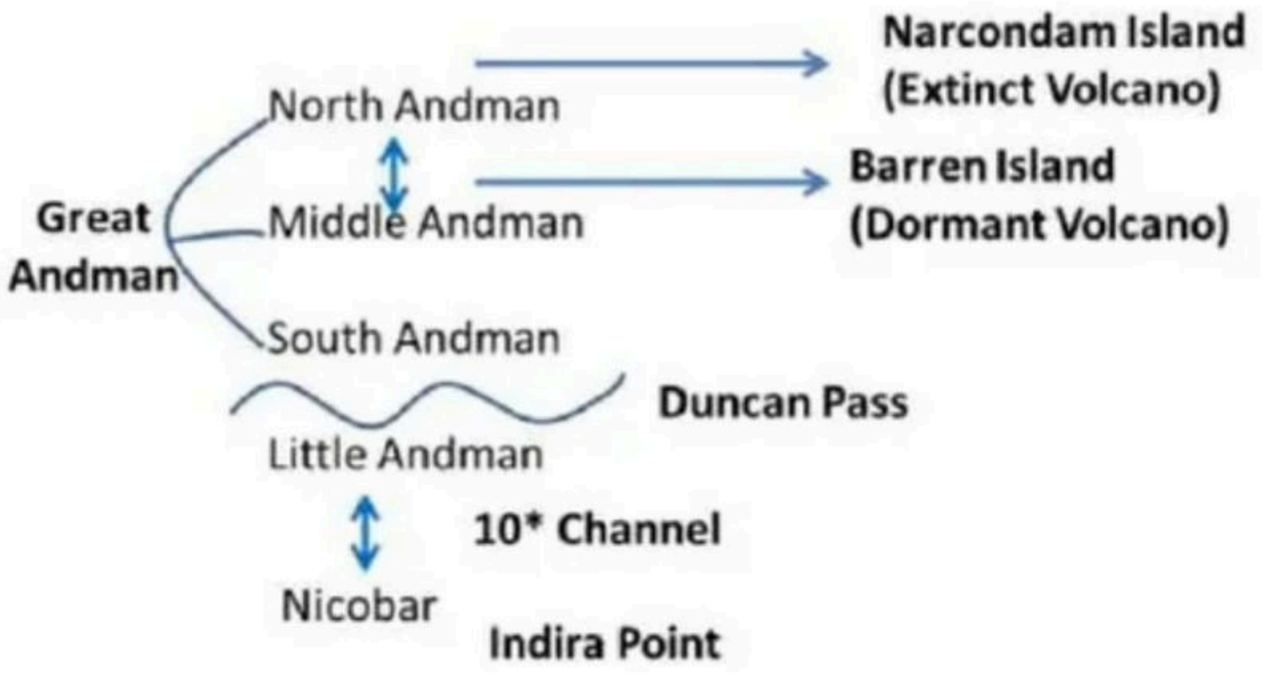
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Source: 'Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island at Andaman & Nicobar Islands': Pre-feasibility report (March 2021)
Campbell Bay National Park
Township and Area Development
GREAT NICOBAR ISLAND
Galathea National Park
Campbell Bay
Joginder Nagar
Power Plant
International Airport
International Container Transshipment Terminal
Galathea Bay
Indira Point
1
2
3
4

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# ISLANDS



Andaman and Nicobar Islands were formed due to a **collision between the Indian Plate and Burma Minor Plate**

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are a southward extension of the **Arakan Yoma range [Myanmar][Arakan Yoma in itself is an extension of Purvanchal Hills**].

The Andaman islands are divided into three main islands i.e. **North, Middle,** and **South.**

**Duncan passage** separates Little Andaman from South Andaman.

The **Great Andaman group of islands in the north is separated by the Ten Degree Channel from the Nicobar group** in the south.

The **Grand Channel** is between the **Great Nicobar islands and the Sumatra islands of Indonesia.**

The **Coco Strait** is between the **North Andaman islands and the Coco Islands of Myanmar.**

**Port Blair**, the capital of Andaman Nicobar Islands lies in the South Andaman.

Among the Nicobar islands, the **Great Nicobar** is the largest. It is the southernmost island and is very close to Sumatra island of Indonesia. The **Car Nicobar** is the northernmost.

**The BARREN(Active) and NARCONDAM Islands**, north of Port Blair, are **volcanic islands.**

**Saddle peak (737 m)** in **North Andaman** is the highest peak.

The **entire region is vulnerable to earthquakes** as it is in the major earthquake zone.

**Andaman islands are home to the only known paleolithic people the Sentinelese. The Sentinelese are one of the last humans on earth who remain untouched by modern civilization.**

**State Animal of Andaman is the dugong (sea mammal)** really endemic to Indo-Pacific seacoast areas, especially to the Andaman Islands. [Sea-cow is a **herbivorous** marine mammal].

## Ritchie's Archipelago

**Ritchie's Archipelago is a cluster of smaller islands** which lie 20 km **east of Great Andaman**, the main island group of the Andaman Islands.
**Neil Island and Havelock Island is in Ritchie's Archipelago.**

**Ross Island was renamed Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, Neil Island as Shaheed Dweep**, and the **Havelock Island as Swaraj Dweep.**

**Ross Island is in the South Andaman region** and 3km east of Port Blair.

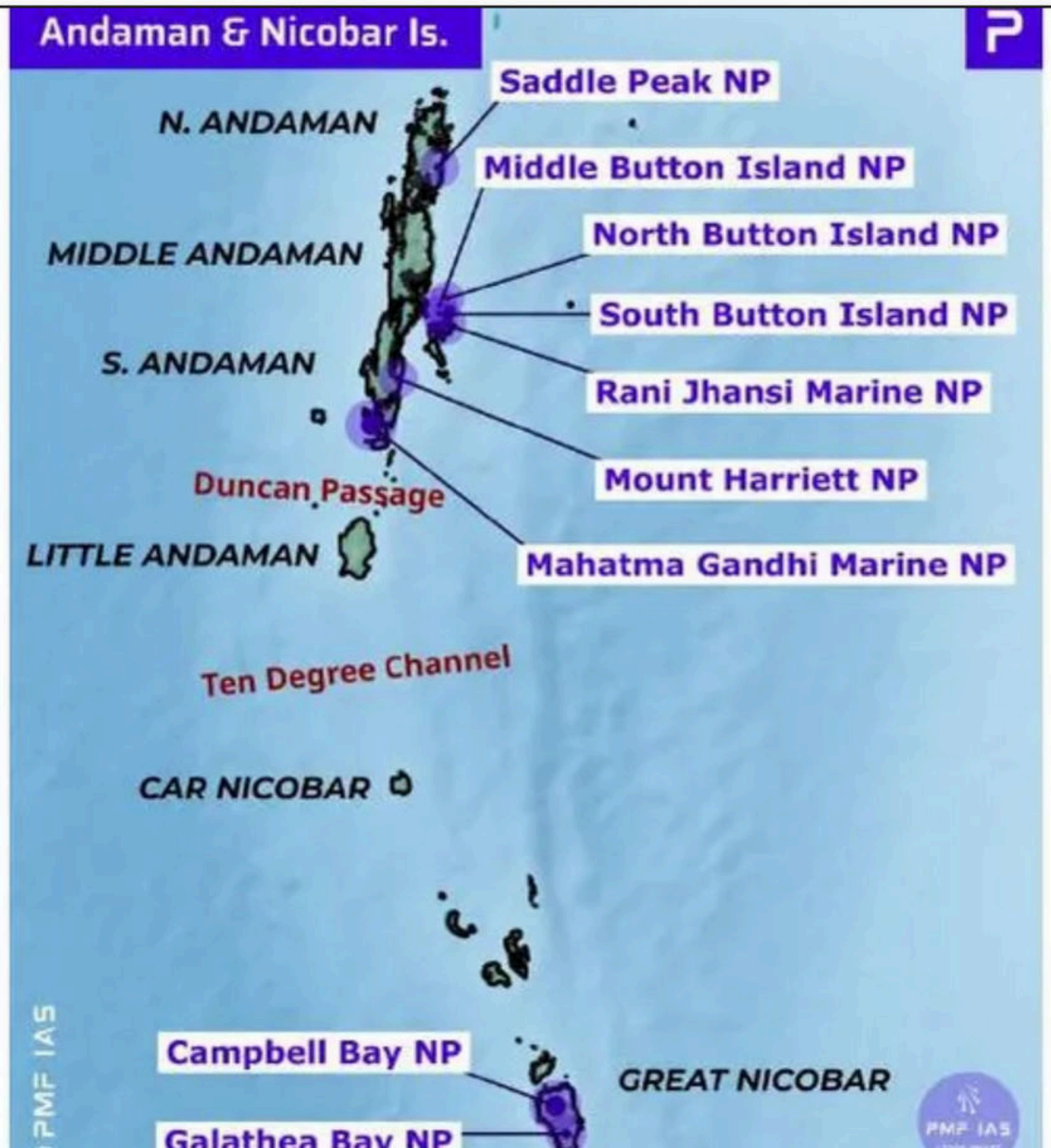
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- **Negrito Tribes (Andaman Islands):** Generally hunter-gatherers with distinct, isolated cultures.
  - **Sentinelese:** Extremely isolated on North Sentinel Island, rejecting outside contact.
  - **Jarawa:** Inhabit South and Middle Andaman; maintain a, largely, traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle.
  - **Onge:** Reside in Little Andaman; one of India's oldest tribes, known for, recently, canoe-making.
  - **Great Andamanese:** Once numerous, now settled on Strait Island with significantly reduced numbers.

- **Mongoloid Tribes (Nicobar Islands):**
  - **Shompen:** Inhabit the interior of Great Nicobar, hunter-gatherers, and are classified as a PVTG.
  - **Nicobarese:** The most populous tribe; they are not a PVTG, largely settled and engaged in horticulture and fishing.

- **PVTGs:** The Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, Sentinelese, and Shompen are designated as PVTGs.
- **NOTE - The Great Andamanese fought the British in the "Battle of Aberdeen" (1859).**

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Andaman & Nicobar Is.
N. ANDAMAN
MIDDLE ANDAMAN
S. ANDAMAN
LITTLE ANDAMAN
Duncan Passage
Ten Degree Channel
CAR NICOBAR
GREAT NICOBAR
Saddle Peak NP
Middle Button Island NP
North Button Island NP
South Button Island NP
Rani Jhansi Marine NP
Mount Harriett NP
Mahatma Gandhi Marine NP
Campbell Bay NP
Galathea Bay NP
PMF IAS

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21 April
International Day of Women in Industry
21 April 2026 – Celebrating Women's Leadership in Industrial Development

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first-ever International Day of Women in Industry (IDWI) was celebrated globally on **21 April 2026**.

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# United Nations

# What is the United Nations (UN )?

**The United Nations (UN) is the global intergovernmental organization established by the signing of the UN Charter on 26 June 1945 with the stated purpose of maintaining international peace and security, to develop friendly relations among states , to promote international cooperation.**

**The United Nations headquarters is located in New York City**

**Its activities include maintaining international peace and security, protecting human rights, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting sustainable development and upholding international law.**

**It is currently made up of 193 Member States.**

**The name "United Nations", coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt.**

## Objectives of the UN:

1.To develop friendly relations among nations

2.To promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

3.To achieve international cooperation in solving economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian problems.

4.To serve as a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations.

## What are the events and factors that culminated in the creation of the UN and its evolution ?

**1920: The League of Nations was an international organisation founded on January 10, 1920, as a result of the Paris Peace Conference that ended World War I.**

**1941: during World War II, representatives from 26 countries signed the Atlantic Charter, which called for the establishment of a post-war organization to promote international cooperation and prevent future wars.**

**1945: the UN was founded after the signing of the UN Charter by 51 countries on June 26th. The headquarters of the UN is located in New York City.**

**The UN officially came into existence on October 24, 1945, after the ratification of the UN Charter by the majority of its founding members.**

**1946: The first meeting of the UN General Assembly was held in London in January 1946. The Assembly is the main policymaking and representative body of the UN.**

**1948: the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which outlines fundamental human rights that should be protected around the world.**

**Till present: Over the years, the UN has grown to include 193 member states and has played a key role in many global issues, including peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and human rights.**

## Organs of United Nations (UN) –

**The United Nations (UN) has six principal organs. Five of them —**
**1.General Assembly,**

**2.Security Council,**

**3.Economic and Social Council,**

**4.Trusteeship Council**

**5.Secretariat — are based at UN Headquarters in New York.**

**6.The sixth, the International Court of Justice, is located at The Hague in the Netherlands/**

**All the 6 were established in 1945 when the UN was founded.**

## General Assembly: -

**The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN.**

**All 193 Member States of the UN are represented in the General Assembly, making it the only UN body with universal representation.**

**Each year, in September, the full UN membership meets in the General Assembly Hall in New York for the annual General Assembly session, and general debate, which many heads of state attend and address.**

**Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly.**

**Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.**

**The President of the General Assembly is elected each year by assembly to serve a one-year term of office.**

**Current President - Philémon Yang**

## Security Council –

**It has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security.**

**The Security Council is made up of fifteen member states , consisting of five permanent members – China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and ten non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly on a regional basis.**

**"Veto power"refers to the power of the permanent member to veto (Reject) any resolution of the Security Council.**

**The unconditional veto possessed by the five governments has been seen as the most undemocratic character of the UN.**

**Critics also claim that veto power is the main cause for international inaction on war crimes and crimes against humanity.**

**Supporters of the veto power regard it as a promoter of international stability.**

## Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) – President – Bob Rae

**It is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as implementation of internationally agreed development goals.**

**It has 54 Members, elected by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.**

**It is the United Nations' central platform for reflection, debate, and innovative thinking on sustainable development.**

**It coordinates the work of the 14 UN specialized agencies .**

**Specialized agencies**

- **International labour Organization (ILO),Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)**
- **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**
- **World Health Organization (WHO)**
- **World Bank Group**
- **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**
- **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**
- **World Tourism Organization (WTO)**

## Trusteeship Council –

**It was established in 1945 by the UN Charter, under Chapter XIII.**

**Trust territory is a non-self-governing territory placed under an administrative authority by the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations.**

**A League of Nations mandate was a legal status for certain territories transferred from the control of one country to another following World War I, or the legal instruments that contained the internationally agreed-upon terms for administering the territory on behalf of the League of Nations.**

**United Nations trust territories were the successors of the remaining League of Nations mandates, and came into being when the League of Nations ceased to exist in 1946.**

**It had to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States, and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence.**

**By 1994, all Trust Territories had attained self-government or independence. The Trusteeship Council suspended operation on 1 November 1994.**

# International Court of Justice ( ICJ) –

**The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nationsand began work in April 1946.**

**The ICJ is the successor of the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ), which was established by the League of Nations in 1920.**

**The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (United States of America).**

**The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council.**

**Current President - Yuji Iwasawa**

# Secretariat

•The Secretariat comprises the **Secretary-General** and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out **the day-to-day work of the UN** as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal organs.

•The **Secretary-General is chief administrative officer of the Organization**, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term.

•Secretary General – **Antonio Guterres**

## UN's Contribution –

1. **Maintaining Peace and Security:** By sending peacekeeping
2. **Promoting Development:** UN Development Programme **(UNDP)** supports more than 4,800 projects to reduce poverty, **World Bank** provides developing countries with loans and grants.
3. **Fighting Hunger:** The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN **(FAO)** leads global efforts to defeat hunger.
4. **Tourism:** The World Tourism Organization is the UN agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
5. **Preserving Historic, Cultural, Architectural and Natural Sites:** The **UNESCO** has helped 137 countries to protect ancient monuments and historic, cultural and natural sites.
6. **Human Rights -** UN General Assembly adopted the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948**.It has helped to enact dozens of legally binding agreements on political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

## challenges and limitations of the UN –

1. **Limited effectiveness: The UN has been criticized for its ineffectiveness in addressing global issues such as climate change, poverty, and inequality.**

2. **Security Council Reforms.**

3. **Funding Challenges - It relies on funding from member states.**

4. **Inability to prevent some conflicts.**

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