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Op Sindoor exposed Pak sponsoring terrorism: Shah

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'I WAS FOCUSED ON PRONUNCIATION — NOT REALISING I WAS SINGING FOR KAMAL HAASAN'

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Ace is a Missed Opportunity in Crime-Comedy GENRE

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QUOTE OF THE DAY

The Pioneer

Ever since the Kaleshwaram Commission headed by former Supreme Court judge Justice P.C. Ghose served notices, the BRS has been running a propaganda campaign instead of cooperating. If they have confidence in the project, why don't they appear before the Commission and make their case? KTR should be renamed 'Goebbels Rao' for the way he is spreading misinformation and attacking institutions. Even former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi appeared before a commission. If KCR and Harish Rao are clean, they should not fear a notice



- Uttam Kumar Reddy, Minister

P2

DON'T MISS...

Metro minimum ticket to cost Rs11

L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited on Thursday announced a revised fare chart for the Hyderabad Metro Rail, which will come into effect from May 24. The new fare structure incorporates a 10 percent discount on the revised rates proposed by the Fare Fixation Committee (FFC), offering some relief to daily commuters amid rising operational costs. As per the revised structure, passengers travelling up to 2 km will now pay Rs. 11, while the maximum fare for journeys beyond 24 km will be Rs. 69. Fares for intermediate zones have also...

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'Donated money to National Herald'

Amid reports of his name figuring in the ED charge sheet in the National Herald case, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday said he and his brother D K Suresh have donated money to the Congress-run newspaper. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah backed his deputy, saying there is nothing wrong in donating money.
"Me and D K Suresh donated Rs 25 lakh each to National Herald. What is wrong in that. We have donated to a newspaper run by our party. What's wrong...

-PAGE: 5

RBI to pay govt record dividend

The Reserve Bank on Friday announced a record Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend to be paid to the government for the fiscal ended March this year, 27.4 per cent more than the payout in 2023-24. The Reserve Bank had transferred Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend to the government for the fiscal 2023-24. The payout was Rs 87,416 crore for 2022-23. The decision on the dividend payout was taken at the 616th meeting of the Central Board of Directors of Reserve Bank of India under the Chairmanship of Governor Sanjay...

-PAGE: 8

'Will be tough without Rohit, Virat'

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has admitted that dealing with the absence of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be a significant challenge for the team but their Test retirement has also opened the door for others to step up and take responsibility. Kohli and Rohit bid farewell to Test cricket within a week of each other earlier this month. The announcements came ahead of the marquee five-match series in England next month, the squad for which will be announced on Saturday in Mumbai. "I think, when you start the...

-SPORTS



AP ALLOWS TG TO USE ITS HALF OF CIVIL SUPPLIES BHAVAN

TG, AP decide to speed up handover of assets

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies Minister Nandela Manohar met at the Civil Supplies Bhavan in Hyderabad on Friday to discuss the phased transfer of assets of the United Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies Department and Corporation to Telangana.

At the heart of the discussion was the decision to permit the Telangana Civil Supplies Corporation to use half of the Civil Supplies Bhavan currently allotted to the AP Civil Supplies Corporation, which is lying unused.

Principal Secretaries DS Chauhan (Telangana) and Saurabh Gaur (Andhra Pradesh), along with other senior officials from both the Telugu states, were present at the meeting.

"The Civil Supplies Bhavan has served as the joint headquarters since bifurcation. From June, it will come fully under the control of the Telangana State Civil Supplies Corporation," said Uttam.

He added that other assets belonging to the undivided Civil Supplies Corporation, located within Telangana, would also be transferred gradually.

Addressing the media, Uttam said that detailed discussions were held between

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KAVITHA DEFENDS LETTER

KCR IS GOD surrounded by devils

- There are coverts in the party
- Only under KCR's leadership, party can move forward
- Cong and BJP are celebrating like they got jackpot



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant political development, BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Friday confirmed that she had indeed written a letter to party president K Chandrashekar Rao two weeks ago and expressed dismay over its leak to the public. Speaking to media at the Shamshabad Airport upon returning from her son's graduation ceremony abroad, Kavitha said the timing and manner in which the letter surfaced had caused unnecessary turmoil.

"I wrote the letter to KCR garu two weeks ago. I have done so many times before to share my opinions. But the fact that this letter got leaked after I left the country suggests that something deeper is going on. It's time for all of us within the party to reflect," she said, adding that what she expressed in the letter is what many BRS leaders and even half of Telangana's people have been thinking.

> I wrote the letter to KCR garu two weeks ago. I have done so many times before to share my opinions. But the fact that this letter got leaked after I left the country suggests that something deeper is going on. It's time for all of us within the party to reflect

Kavitha denied having any personal agenda. "I harbour neither hatred nor affection towards any individual. This letter was written with no personal agenda," she said. While maintaining respect for her father and party chief KCR, Kavitha said the fact that even a letter from the party founder's daughter got leaked raises troubling questions. "There are converts in the party. If this is what happens to me, imagine the plight of ordinary workers in the party," she remarked.

She accused certain individuals surrounding KCR of causing damage to the party. "KCR is a God, but there are devils around him. The party must seriously think about who benefits from such leaks," she stated.

Kavitha clarified that her letter contained nothing out of the ordinary. "There's nothing controversial in what I wrote. It's sad that the letter was leaked. Now, Congress and BJP are celebrating as if they've found a jackpot," she said. She reiterated her unwavering belief in KCR's leadership and vision for Telangana, asserting that the party can move forward by addressing internal flaws and removing covert saboteurs.

"Congress and BJP have failed the people. KCR is the only alternative. If we correct small mistakes and move forward with unity, BRS will continue to thrive for decades," she concluded.

300 MAOISTS SURRENDER ACROSS TELANGANA

Hyd terror module busted at formation stage: DGP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Director General of Police Dr Jitender on Friday confirmed that the State police successfully foiled a terror conspiracy in Hyderabad by identifying and dismantling a group in the early stages of its formation. The plot was reportedly being orchestrated by Sameer, who is currently in custody and under interrogation.

Briefing the media, the DGP said sleeper cells were identified within the city, and intelligence agencies acted swiftly to prevent their activation. "A group was being formed to execute a larger conspiracy. We intercepted them before they could become operational and neutralised the threat," he stated. He added that Telangana continues to remain peaceful, with the police maintaining constant vigilance.



On the left-wing extremism front, Dr. Jitender revealed that 300 Maoists have surrendered across Telangana, signalling a significant shift towards peace. "We urge anyone still underground to surrender and join the mainstream," he said, reiterating the government's commitment to rehabilitation

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KTR blasts Revanth over CM's name in ED chargesheet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



BRS Working President KT Rama Rao lashed out at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, demanding an explanation from the Congress high command over the reported mention of the CM in the Enforcement Directorate's chargesheet in the National Herald money laundering case.

Addressing reporters here on Friday, KTR accused Revanth of continuing a "pattern of corruption" and called the silence of Congress leaders "shocking."

"Revanth Reddy is not new to scandals. From the infamous cash-for-vote case to now being named in the ED charge sheet, is a repeat offender," said KTR. He recalled the 2015 sting operation in which Revanth was caught on video allegedly attempting to bribe a nominated MLA with Rs 50 lakh and said, "That was the trailer, this is the film."

Quoting the contents of the ED's chargesheet, KTR said Revanth, then TPCC chief, sought funds from business houses and routed them through Congress office bearers to the Young Indian and AJL entities. "This is not a political charge. This is part of an official complaint filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act by the ED itself," he stressed.

He went on to question the Congress

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I WILL MEET MODI 50 TIMES IF NECESSARY

Indiramma houses for NIMZ evacuees: CM

Lays out roadmap for Medak's industrial growth

PNS ■ ZAHEERABAD

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy on Friday reaffirmed his government's commitment to the development of the erstwhile Medak district by announcing a series of welfare and infrastructure projects during a public meeting in Zaheerabad.

Invoking Indira Gandhi's emotional connection with the region to lay out his roadmap for industrial growth, the CM said the state will work along with the Centre for Medak's development.

"Politics is only during elections. We will seek cooperation from the Centre and will meet Modi not just once but even 50 times. We will bring funds and projects. Only when there is cooperation between the state and Centre will the state progress," he said.



"Whenever we hear the name Medak, we remember Indiramma," Revanth said, recalling how Indira Gandhi served as the MP of Medak until her last breath.

He said it was only fitting that the current government had decided to sanction 5,612 Indiramma houses for families displaced by the National

Continued on Page 2

3 more institutions coming to TG: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has been sanctioned three new institutions. They are the Global Centre for Excellence on Millets, the Railway Kavach Project Centre for Excellence and the National Skill Institute, Union Minister Kishan Reddy said.

He said the Centre is setting up a Global Centre for Excellence on Millets with an outlay of Rs 250 crore to encourage millets cultivation in the state.



"The Railway Kavach Project Centre for Excellence is also coming to Secunderabad. The Centre has already released Rs 41 crore, and Rs 274 crore was sanctioned later," Kishan added.

Addressing the media at the state BJP office here on Friday, he said the 'PM Shri Anna' scheme was launched on March 18, 2023, to promote the use of millets.

"The IIMR is researching millets under ICAR supervision. The newly set up global centre will play a key role in continuing this research effectively. Once this centre becomes operational, research, development and infrastructure creation for millets will be carried out rapidly. This centre, which is to be set up in Hyderabad, will have a Central Instrumentation Lab, International Hostel, Millets Museum, Research Farms, Training Rooms and International Guest House. Modern research facilities like gene editing, greenhouses, speed breeding labs and phenomics labs will also be available. Quality seeds for millets cultivation will be provided, especially to Telangana farmers. Along with IIMR, this new centre will provide training to farmers, support for marketing of

Continued on Page 2

Pulmonologist tests positive for COVID-19 in Kukatpally

DEEPIKA PASHAM
deepikapasham2015@gmail.com
■ HYDERABAD

The Medchal–Malkajgiri district Medical and Health Officer, Dr C. Uma Gowri, has confirmed a fresh COVID-19 positive case in Kukatpally in Hyderabad. The individual, a pulmonologist staying in Vivekananda Nagar, has been isolated for five days.

"Contact tracing has been completed, and no symptoms have been observed among his family members or close contacts," said Dr Uma Gowri. "Currently, the individual remains asymptomatic and is under medical supervision."

Health officials have urged people experiencing fever or COVID-19 symptoms to immediately contact their nearest Primary Health Centres (PHCs), Urban PHCs (UPHCs), or local government hospitals.

Dr B. Ravinder Nayak, the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, told The Pioneer, "We are initiating precautionary measures for Telangana in line with the Ministry of Health's guidelines. The Health Department is fully prepared to handle COVID-19 cases. We will consider setting up a nodal centre if necessary."

Dr Ranga Reddy Burri, the President of the Infection Control Academy of

Continued on Page 2

'Govt to implement 42% BC quota in next polls'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Government in Telangana is trying to implement 42 per cent BC reservations in the forthcoming local body elections, TPCC Chief B. Mahesh Kumar Goud said.

He gave a PowerPoint presentation on the caste census held in Telangana on Friday at the AICC office in Indira Bhavan in New Delhi which was attended by Rahul Gandhi, Jairam Ramesh, Koppula Raju, Madhu Yashki and others. AICC officials and the party's media in-charges also participated. The PowerPoint Presentation lasted two and a half hours.

Mahesh said that Telangana showed direction to the country through the caste census.

"The Congress came to power in Telangana promising a BC caste census. After Rahul promised a caste census during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the BCs turned towards the Congress. When the Congress came to power, we took all necessary steps on the caste census. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, and the Cabinet took special care regarding the caste census and acted quickly. The caste census was done scientifically. A cabinet subcommittee was also set up with Minister Uttam as its chairman," Mahesh said.



TPCC Chief B Mahesh Kumar Goud with LoP in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi at Indira Bhavan in Delhi on Friday

"We approved it in the Cabinet, drafted a Bill in the Assembly and had a comprehensive discussion. Due to the caste census, caste-wise calculations were made in the state. With that, the calculation of how much reservation should be given to which caste was made. A caste census was done for the first time in the country in Telangana, and that was done during Congress rule. We took the caste census in Telangana in line with Rahul's ideas.

This became a 'model' for the country. A resolution was passed in the Assembly to give 42 per cent BC reservations in the state and sent it to Parliament. We are trying to implement the 42 per cent BC reservation in the next elections. This is a historic decision. We are proud that Telangana is the first state to do so," Mahesh said.

Harish slams arrest of farmers ahead of CM's Zaheerabad visit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

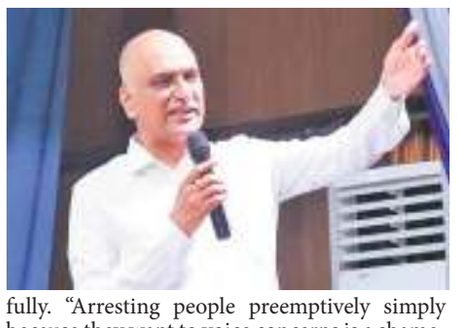
Senior BRS MLA Harish Rao strongly condemned the arrest of farmers and their leaders ahead of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy's visit to Zaheerabad, calling it a gross violation of democratic norms.

In a sharply worded statement released on Friday, Harish said, "Every time the Chief Minister visits a district, arrests and detentions become routine. Is this what the Congress government means by Praja Palana?"

He recalled how tribal leaders from the Chenchu community were similarly detained during the CM's Nagar Kurnool visit and said a pattern is emerging from that.

"Now in Zaheerabad, they surrounded villages near the NIMZ and picked up farmer leaders in advance. This is not governance for the people. This is suppression of the people," he said.

Harish asserted that democracy guarantees every citizen the right to express dissent peacefully. "Arresting people preemptively simply because they want to voice concerns is a shameless attack on democratic rights. A Chief Minister who cannot face citizens without barricades and arrests cannot call his rule people-centric," he said.



He demanded the immediate release of all detained farmers and farmer leaders and urged the DGP and the state government to uphold constitutional rights. "Stop this culture of fear. Let the people speak," he said.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | MAY 24, 2025

Kavitha's deft draft on BRS' enemy within and without

A letter written by Kavitha to her father, Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) supremo and former Chief Minister of Telangana, has set the state's political scene ablaze. At a time when her family party's succession seemed to be a foregone conclusion, the lengthy handwritten note makes a strong pitch for her candidacy to lead the party. Beyond politics, the candid letter reflects KCR and Kavitha's warm father-daughter relationship.

The ability to identify their party's true rival and threat. The flexibility to build bridges with their rivals' rivals. The ability to provide a vision and positioning for their party that differentiates it from their rival party. The ability to convince their party leaders that, when it comes to fulfilling their needs, they would be a better option than their competitors within the party. And finally, the ability to communicate and connect with the masses. These are some indispensable qualities any politician vying for their party's leadership must have. The contents of the letter written by Kavitha leave no doubt that she possesses these essential qualities.

In the letter, Kavitha rightly identifies the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is ascendant in the state, as the primary rival and threat to the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS). Pointing out that the BJP has already eaten the BRS's lunch in the Lok Sabha elections and weakened the BRS to the extent that it could not muster confidence to put up candidates for the Legislative Council elections, the letter advocates targeting the BJP much more severely than what the party and KCR have been doing till now.

If Kavitha eventually succeeds in taking over the reins of BRS, she will have made history. She will have upended the patriarchy which underpins every family party in India and shattered the established and visible concrete ceiling for women in dynastic politics

In a deft move, Kavitha praises KCR for not criticising Revanth in his speech at the party's Silver Jubilee public meeting. The praise aims to send two critical signals to the party's patriarch. Firstly, Revanth Reddy is a friend. A friend who, if treated properly, will continue to safeguard the BRS's first family from numerous corruption charges, as he has done for the past 18 months. In contrast, the letter refers to her imprisonment in the Delhi Liquor Scam to emphasise that the BJP will never compromise on corruption. Secondly, it indirectly positions Kavitha as the most suitable interlocutor for the first family with Revanth Reddy, as their association dates back to the days when they were directors in a now-defunct company.


KISHORE POREDDY

By praising KCR for condemning the BJP central government's Operation Kagar, aimed at eliminating the Maoist menace in India, and suggesting that the party should have strongly opposed the amendments to the WAQF laws, Kavitha outlines a clear ideological vision and positioning for BRS. This positioning has the advantage of pitting the BRS squarely against the BJP while projecting an extreme leftist and appeasement stand. It aims to please the Communist parties and the All-India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) to draw them back into the BRS's friendly fold. It also reminds KCR that only Kavitha, to differentiate BRS from BJP, can go to any length like KCR, including attacking nationalism, which is non-negotiable to the BJP. It is pertinent to note that KCR had earlier trivialised our armed forces' surgical strikes. Similarly, Kavitha claimed India forcibly merged Kashmir.

The letter also addresses the concerns of the party's second-rung leadership and core cadre. It highlights the neglect of party leaders who were critical in the Telangana agitation. It points out that a section has taken control of the party since KCR is not easily approachable. It highlights the cadre's apprehensions that BRS will face the same dismal results if the same section controls ticket distribution for the upcoming local body elections. It is no secret who the target here is - KTR, her brother, controls the party as its executive working president.

No one in the party, including KCR, doubts Kavitha's oratorial and organisational skills. She speaks Telugu, Hindi and English fluently. She proved her organisational skills by setting up and running Jagruthi. The letter also demonstrates her clear strategic thinking and ability to play realpolitik, making her a true successor to KCR.

Yet, the odds do not favour Kavitha. The history of succession in Indian Family Parties points to the herculean odds Kavitha faces. Women in family parties have risen to the top only when there were no male heirs; this holds for the two most powerful women leaders the country has seen, Indira Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi. The only other women leaders who made it to the top, like Mamata, Mayawati and the late Jayalalithaa, were self-made, not successors of their fathers.

If Kavitha eventually succeeds in taking over the reins of BRS, she will have made history. She will have upended the patriarchy which underpins every family party in India and shattered the established and visible concrete ceiling for women in dynastic politics.

(The author is BJP TS spokesperson)

Communicate Rahul's ideology, Congress policies: Sridhar



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a strong call to action, the TG Minister for IT and Industries, Duddilla Sridhar Babu, urged Youth Congress workers to vigorously communicate Rahul Gandhi's ideology and the Congress's principles to the masses to counter the 'authoritarian' rule of the BJP.

He was speaking during his visit on Friday to the 'White T-Shirt' training camp organised under the leadership of Telangana Youth Congress President Jakkidi Shiva Charan Reddy at the Child Development Centre in Keesara in Medchal-Malkajgiri district.

Providing direction to Youth Congress cadres, Sridhar emphasised the significance of the 'White T-Shirt' movement initiated by Rahul, describing it as a profound campaign. He stressed that the White T-Shirt symbolises five guiding values of the Congress: compassion, unity, non-violence, equality, and inclusive progress.

He said that the Youth Congress is the backbone of the Congress, and has emerged as a powerful force capable of shaping the country's political landscape. He called upon YC cadres to work with dedication to bring the Congress back to power at the Centre and Rahul, the Prime Minister of India.

STATES' ROADMAP FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Revanth to present TG Rising vision at NITI Aayog meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy is set to participate in the NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting scheduled to be held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Saturday. This marks the first time since 2018 that a Chief Minister from Telangana will be attending the crucial national policy forum.



Revanth will depart for Delhi from Hyderabad on Friday evening and is expected to join Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other Chief Ministers for a breakfast interaction and group photograph at the meeting venue before deliberations begin.

With the theme "Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat", the NITI Aayog meet is expected to focus on states' roadmaps for national development. Telangana is all set to showcase its long-term development blueprint under the banner 'Telangana Rising 2047'. The Chief Minister will unveil the state's vision and submit a detailed report outlining Telangana's policy direction, governance strategies, and expectations from the Centre to support the state's development trajectory.

The Chief Minister is expected to highlight Telangana's goal to emerge as a one trillion dollar economy. He will present key initiatives taken under his leadership to boost investments and infrastructure, especially in core sectors like IT, pharma, and urban development.

Flagship projects such as RRR (Regional Ring Road), radial roads, dry ports, and the establishment of Young India Sports and Skills Universities will be featured in his speech. He will also detail the government's push to convert existing ITIs into Advanced Technical Resource Centres (ATRs) and create global-standard facilities for youth skill training.

In agriculture, Revanth plans to speak on the state's debt waiver scheme, the bonus announced for paddy, and continued welfare support like subsidised rice under the Anna Bhagya programme. He will also showcase schemes such as free bus travel for women, 200 units of free electricity for households, and subsidised gas cylinders at Rs. 500.

Why are BRS leaders afraid of Kaleshwaram probe: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Irrigation and Civil Supplies Minister Capt. N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday launched a blistering attack on the BRS, asking why its leaders, including former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and former Irrigation Minister T. Harish Rao, were afraid of a judicial probe into the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) if they honestly believed that it was a "marvellous engineering project."

Addressing a media briefing at the secretariat along with Panchayat Raj Minister D. Seethakka and Ramagundam MLA Makkan Singh Raj Thakur, Uttam said, "Ever since the Judicial Commission headed by former Supreme Court Judge, Justice PC Ghose issued notices, the BRS leadership has been running a propaganda campaign instead of cooperating. If they have confidence in the project, why don't they appear before the Commission? KTR should be renamed 'Goebbels Rao' for the way he is spreading misinformation and attacking institutions."

He clarified that the judicial commission is an independent, legally constituted body constituted to investigate the alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram Project's planning, execution, and financial management.

"This is not a political tool. Even former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi appeared before a commission. If KCR and Harish are clean, they should not fear the notice. But the moment the notices arrived, they began issuing derogatory statements against the Congress government and the Commission," he said.

Letter to 'Daddy' looks like an OTT family drama: Sanjay

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, said that the Letter to 'Daddy' might make for an OTT family drama titled 'An Arrow Released by the Congress.'

Sanjay said that the Congress and the BRS failed Telangana, and now they are crying together, blaming the BJP.

"The BJP has always opposed family rule, whether it is the Gandhis or the Kalvakuntlas. Family-based political parties try to turn their personal crises into public ones. The BJP doesn't send people to jail. It is the law which does that. If someone is guilty, nothing can save them. But Telangana is seeing through this drama and is not taking it seriously," he said.

Madigas must be included in Cabinet: Madiga MLAs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Madiga MLAs demanded that the Congress should give genuine Madigas a place in the Cabinet, as they constitute 17 per cent of the population.

Addressing the media at the CLP Media Hall on Friday, along with Government Whip Adluri Laxman, Thungathurthy MLA Mandula Samuel said that they had met Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and had appealed to him to give an opportunity to Madigas in the Cabinet.

He said that they will meet AICC leaders Mallikarjuna Kharge, Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, KC Venugopal and Meenakhi Natarajan and appeal to them to give a chance to the Madigas in the Cabinet. He said that the CM is pro-Madiga and had fulfilled the decades-old demand to categorise SC reservations.

"We respect Malas. However, Madigas voted for the Congress unilaterally. Madigas stood by the CM and the government. In the past, KCR insulted Madigas. We respect Damodara Raja Narasimha, who fought for SC reservations categorisation. However, Raja Narsimha and former Minister Kadiam Srihari belong to Madiga subcastes. We gave a memorandum to the CM appealing to him to give a chance to SCs in the Cabinet. Madigas numbered 33 lakhs as per the 2011 census.

ED named BRS leaders in chargesheet to settle scores: Kiran

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Responding to the ED mentioning the name of Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy in its chargesheet, the Congress's Bhongir MP, Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy, said, "This is purely a case of vendetta. Both Karnataka and Telangana, the two southern states governed by the Congress, are being 'targeted.' The Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka, who also serves as the TPCC President there, and the Chief Minister of Telangana, Revanth Reddy, who is the TPCC President, have both been named. It's common for PCC Presidents to support the party, including in raising donations. This is standard practice in all parties. If you look at the electoral bond records, you will see that parties like the BRS and the BJP have accepted large amounts through electoral bonds, often from corporations. That raises serious concerns. In contrast, in our case, it is our cadres who stepped in to support the party. I see nothing wrong with this. What's more troubling is that the ED, which is expected to function as an independent institution, seems to be acting as per the directions of its political masters rather than the merit of the case," Mahesh said.

"It appears to be settling political scores, particularly with the Congress governments in Telangana and Karnataka. This is a clear attempt to tarnish the image of our leaders and mislead the people of these states by hinting at illegal acts," he added.

3 more institutions ...

Continued from page 1

value-added products, and encouragement for start-ups," he said. Kishan said the Centre is focused on introducing the Kavach project for railway safety.

"A 'Kavach Centre of Excellence' is going to be launched in the Secunderabad parliamentary constituency, which Kishan represents. The Centre has sanctioned Rs 41 crore for this now, and Rs 274 crore for the entire project. The Centre will undertake extensive research on the Kavach technology being developed domestically. Training for railway loco drivers and technicians, and special training programmes will be conducted in partnership with educational institutions. A system will be put in place to monitor approvals, research, design, and specifications of small and medium-sized companies for the development of Kavach technology," he said.

"India has the third-largest railway network in the world after the US and China. The Centre is trying to develop Kavach technology as a model for the world. Special training and certification courses will be provided to engineering students in subjects like railway signalling. The Kavach Centre of Excellence has signed agreements with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Technology (Hyderabad), the Madan Mohan Malviya University (Gorakhpur) and the MBM University (Jodhpur)," he said.

Pulmonologist tests ...

Continued from page 1

India, added, "These are isolated cases. The renewed attention is largely due to rising cases in places like China and Hong Kong. Most reported cases are from areas with better diagnostic access. There is no need for panic, as these Omicron variants present symptoms like common respiratory illnesses. However, the elderly and those undergoing medical treatment should be extra cautious."

The District Medical and Health Officer of Hyderabad, Dr J. Venkati, confirmed that special monitoring teams are being deployed. "The reported cases are incidental and appear along with seasonal influenza and other illnesses," he said.

Pulmonologists in Telangana said that many upper respiratory infections currently test positive for COVID-19.

"People are not getting tested, having moved on mentally from the pandemic. Most symptoms mimic common cold and other respiratory infections," they said.

Hyd terror ...

Continued from page 1

and reintegration. Referring to the Gulzar Houz fire incident in Hyderabad, which claimed 17 lives, the DGP said the tragedy was deeply unfortunate. He informed that a government-appointed committee is currently probing the incident. "The investigation is ongoing. Once the committee submits its report, it will be forwarded to the government, which will then decide on the next steps," he assured.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:	Krishna Paksha
Tithi:	
Dwadashi:	May 23 10:30 PM to May 24 07:20 PM
Trayodashi:	May 24 07:20 PM to May 25 03:51 PM
Nakshatram:	
Revati:	May 23 04:02 PM to May 24 01:48 PM
Ashwini:	May 24 01:48 PM to May 25 11:12 AM
Rahukalam:	8:59 AM to 10:36 AM
Yamagandam:	1:49 PM to 3:26 PM
Varjyam:	07:38 AM to 09:04 AM
Gulika:	5:45 AM to 7:22 AM
Amritakalam:	11:37 AM to 01:04 PM
Abhijit Muhurtham:	11:47 AM to 12:38 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Light rain
Temp: 30°C
Humidity: 76%
Sunrise: 5:42 AM
Sunset: 6:44 PM

Updated: May 23, 2025 5:00 PM

TG, AP decide ...

Continued from page 1

the Civil Supplies Departments and Corporations of both states regarding the asset transfer.

"We requested the transfer of all residual properties of the undivided Andhra Pradesh Civil Supplies setup located in Telangana. Andhra Pradesh has been very positive, and I thank them for their cooperation," he said. The two ministers also discussed strengthening cooperation between the Telugu states on issues like rice exports. Telangana has begun rice exports to the Philippines through the Kakinada Port, with Andhra Pradesh extending critical support in port operations, storage infrastructure, and export procedures. Andhra Pradesh also offered its Visakhapatnam and Krishnapatnam ports for future consignments.

"This is not a matter of jurisdiction, but of mutual growth. Andhra Pradesh is happy to extend support for Telangana's rice exports. Our ports are open to facilitate this," said Nandela Manohar.

The ministers confirmed that all formalities and logistical processes for exports would be jointly streamlined. Another key concern addressed during the discussions was the illegal interstate movement of PDS rice. The two states agreed to initiate joint surveillance, enable real-time data exchange, and align procedures to eliminate diversion and corruption.

The Telangana and Andhra Pradesh governments also agreed to study and adopt each other's best practices in civil supplies operations. Telangana has already implemented PDF-linked ration card systems, Aadhaar integration, and real-time tracking of food grain movement, practices which Andhra Pradesh is now exploring for adoption.

The ministers addressed pricing and quality issues in PDS rice. They acknowledged that the price of fortified rice in both states currently ranges between ?43 and ?47 per quintal and agreed to work with agriculture departments to promote varieties that are more consumer-friendly and can be produced efficiently.

KTR blasts Revanth ...

Continued from page 1

leadership's refusal to act. "Even when their own MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said Revanth bought the TPCC post for Rs 50 crore, Rahul did not respond. What more proof does the Congress need to acknowledge the rot?" KTR asked.

Calling Telangana an "ATM of the Congress," he said that the looting has intensified after the party came to power.

"From the Amrut scam to the RR tax fraud to rampant irregularities in the Civil Supplies Department, we are witnessing a scam every week. It is no longer just rhetoric. The corruption trail is now backed by evidence," he said. KTR demanded a formal response from AICC president Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi. "Will they stand by a Chief Minister who has been named in a money laundering charge sheet, or will they act responsibly?" he asked.

Dismissing any ambiguity in the ED's findings, KTR said it was an "open and shut case" of corruption and misuse of political office. "The charges have been corroborated by the ED. It's not a BRS statement. The Congress should come clean before the public loses the little confidence they have in the party," he said.

Indiramma houses ...

Continued from page 1

Investment and Manufacturing Zone (NIMZ).

"We are giving Jagga Reddy the responsibility of handing over the pattas along with meals to these families," he declared.

Revanth also revealed that Hyundai would soon begin operations in the region, signalling the government's push for industrial expansion. "We have accelerated land acquisition and raised compensation for NIMZ evacuees, correcting the delays caused during the previous regime," he said.

Touching on Narayankhed, he acknowledged the demands for funds and described Suresh Shetkar and Sanjeeva Reddy as the two eyes of the constituency.

"We will allocate funds for Narayankhed too. The government will take forward the development of the entire Medak region with renewed focus," he promised.

On the welfare front, the Chief Minister reiterated the key schemes of his administration. "We have waived farm loans, raised Rythu Bharosa to Rs 12,000, and are extending it even to the landless poor," he said.

He added that the government was providing 200 units of free electricity, subsidised cooking gas cylinders for Rs 500, and free travel for women in TGSRTC buses.

"We are providing buses to self-help groups and training young women to make one crore women lakhpatis in five years," he said.

He also slammed the BRS government for failing to deliver on job promises. "They said one job per household, but gave jobs only to their families. We have started recruitment for vacancies in government services from day one," he said. Revanth asserted that his government is open to constructive criticism and willing to course correct. "I urge the Leader of the Opposition to come to the Assembly. Raise issues, give suggestions. Don't wait to return to power to show up," he said, warning that people will not tolerate arrogance.

Asserting that he continues to remain accessible even after becoming Chief Minister, Revanth said, "There is no pride in this chair for me. I have no rest until I dedicate this state's development to its people."

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CITY EVENTS

Classical Concert

By Debojyoti Bose

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi
May 24, 7 pm.

Ishq Sufiyana

Musical Story Telling By Laksh Maheshwari

Venue

Bhaskara Auditorium
May 24, 8 pm.

Classical Concert

By Sangitanjali Foundation

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi
May 24, 9 am, 1:30 pm, 6 pm

Cultural Programmes

By Sri Radhika Music And Dance Academy

Venue

Ravindra Bharathi
May 24, 6 pm.

City Pioneer

The Pioneer | HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | MAY 24, 2025 | 03

Top 4 winners of Head-to-Head challenge announced

SAMUEL JOSHUA
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HYDERABAD

The 72nd edition of the Miss World Festival in Hyderabad has announced the Final Top four winners of its Head-to-Head Challenge, a segment focused on purpose, intellect, and social advocacy. Out of 107 contestants from across the world, 20 were shortlisted, and now four remarkable women have emerged as continental representatives. They will compete in the Grand Finale on 31 May at Hitex, Hyderabad.

These four finalists were selected for their clarity, compassion, and conviction. Representing Europe is Millie-Mae Adams from Wales.

From the Americas and Caribbean, Anna-Lise Nanton of Trinidad and Tobago was chosen. Asia and Oceania is represented by Idil Bilgen of Turkiye, while Faith Bwalya from Zambia represents Africa.

The Head-to-Head Challenge allowed contestants to share personal stories and talk about issues close to their hearts, connecting with audiences globally.

On this occasion, Anna-Lise Nanton applauded Telangana's support for women's rights, saying, "Telangana shows the world that women can study, work, dress, and live freely. Thank you, Telangana, for not leaving women behind." Faith Bwalya shared her personal battles, stating, "I struggled with anxiety and depression. Faith in God and self-discovery pulled me through. Every woman has something powerful to contribute."

Millie-Mae Adams, a medical student and mentor, emphasised educational equity: "Girls from underprivileged areas should know, yes, you can be a doctor and a beauty queen." Idil Bilgen spoke about her healthcare mission following her mother's 16-year battle with breast cancer: "When we educate women, we protect families and save lives."

The Chairman and CEO of the Miss World Organisation, Julia Morley said, "These four women have shown the strength of purpose-led dialogue. Telangana has offered an inspiring platform celebrating women, progress, and inclusivity."

Now, with the Head-to-Head Challenge complete, attention turns to the Top Model competition on Saturday. Here, elegance and confidence will take center stage as the journey to the Miss World crown continues.

Contestants expressed deep admiration for Telangana's advanced infrastructure, progressive policies, and commitment to women's safety. Many described the state as "a place where dreams are crowned," blending tradition, innovation, and inclusive governance.

The Telangana Police earned appreciation for their tech-driven security systems that created a safe environment during the festival. With its AI-led governance, urban planning, and cultural vibrancy, Telangana was celebrated as a symbol of modern India. Contestants and delegates also enjoyed the hospitality of Trident Hyderabad, the official partner, known for its thoughtful service and curated dining.



Final top 4 winners of Head-to-Head Challenge with the Miss World 2024 Krystyna Pyszková in Hyderabad on Friday.



She Teams counselling session in Hyderabad on Friday

SHE Teams counsels 289 harassment offenders, promotes reform, respect

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a continued effort to ensure women's safety and foster behavioural change among offenders, SHE Teams, Women Safety Wing Hyderabad, held a large-scale counselling session on Friday for individuals apprehended for acts of harassment between January and April 2025. The event, organised in collaboration with Manojagruthi NGO, saw participation from 304 individuals, including 289 accused — 271 adults and 18 minors — as well as 15 parents or guardians.

The session was led by a team of trained psychiatrists and behavioural experts from Manojagruthi. The counselling focused on correcting aggressive behaviour, promoting respect for women in public spaces, and creating awareness about the legal consequences of harassment. Among the psychiatrists present were Dr Geetha Challa, Kairi Thrinath Goud, Swathina Shasi, S. Srilatha, and Syed Abeeda Begum.

Addressing the gathering, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Women Safety Wing, Dr Lavanya NJP, highlighted the harmful influence of substance abuse and peer pressure. "Addiction to alcohol, drugs, and smoking can severely impair judgment and emotional control," she said, urging the participants to be cautious about the company they keep. She narrated a short story about delayed gratification to emphasise the importance of patience and self-control in leading a meaningful life.

Several participants opened up during the session, expressing remorse for their past actions. Many admitted the emotional toll their behaviour had taken on their families and acknowledged the importance of such reformative initiatives. "We thank SHE Teams for giving us a chance to reflect and correct our actions," said one of the respondents.

The initiative reaffirms SHE Teams' broader mission — not only to catch offenders but also to reform them through community engagement and awareness. The counselling session stands as a testimony to the department's belief that lasting safety comes from both enforcement and education.

Metro minimum ticket to cost Rs11 after discount

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited on Thursday announced a revised fare chart for the Hyderabad Metro Rail, which will come into effect from May 24. The new fare structure incorporates a 10 percent discount on the revised rates proposed by the Fare Fixation Committee (FFC), offering some relief to daily commuters amid rising operational costs.

As per the revised structure, passengers travelling up to 2 km will now pay Rs. 11, while the maximum fare for journeys beyond 24 km will be Rs. 69. Fares for intermediate zones have also been updated, ranging from Rs. 17 to Rs. 65 depending on the distance travelled. The discounted fares apply across all ticketing modes including paper QR tokens, digital tickets, and smart cards.

The Metro authorities have urged passengers to opt for smart cards and digital platforms for a smoother and more economical commute. L&TMRHL stated that the revision is aimed at maintaining affordability.

Top teachers to be sent abroad for advanced training

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a significant boost to teacher development in Telangana, Yogita Rana, Secretary of Education, has announced that exceptional teachers from the state will be selected and sent abroad for exposure visits and advanced training programmes.

The announcement was made during her visit to a Teacher Training Centre in Ranga Reddy district.

Highlighting the commitment of the state government under the leadership of the Chief Minister, Dr Rana said that every teacher must become a catalyst for change and deliver quality education that raises learning outcomes across Telangana's schools.

"This training is not just a routine exercise. The difference between a teacher before and after the training must be clearly visible—not only in their teaching methods but also in the learning outcomes of their students," she stressed.

Dr Rana urged teachers to implement the learning from their training directly in classrooms using appropriate teaching-learning materials and ensuring that students grasp concepts effectively.

She also called for renewed efforts under the Badi Bata (School Enrolment Drive) to increase student enrolment.

During her interaction with teachers, Dr Rana inquired about their training experiences. The teachers expressed satisfaction with the programme and shared the new skills and insights they had gained.



Secretary of Education Yogita Rana visiting Teacher Training Centre in Rangareddy on Friday

Niloufer Hospital Superintendent suspended

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Health Department suspended Dr N Ravi Kumar, in-charge Superintendent of Niloufer Hospital, on Thursday for allegedly permitting the construction of a private medical store on the hospital premises without official approval. The suspension order was issued by Health Secretary Dr Christina Z Chongthu.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Dr Ravi Kumar said, "I am waiting to receive the official order so I can review the details. I maintain that I have not done anything either consciously or unconsciously. Let the Health Department complete the pending inquiry." Although Dr Ravi Kumar claims to have obtained permissions from officials for constructing the medical store, a departmental source stated that no such approvals could be found in official records, leading to his suspension.

Need to adopt cleaner, smarter technologies stressed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Department of Industries, Government of Telangana, along with the Central Institute of Petrochemical Engineering and Technology (CIPET), organised a one-day workshop on "Benchmarking Studies to Assess Technology Gaps in Plastic and Polymer Sectors" under the RAMP scheme of the Ministry of MSME, Government of India.

On Friday, The workshop aimed to evaluate the current use of technology in the plastic and polymer sectors and identify areas for improvement to help MSMEs in Telangana grow through innovation and sustainability.

Chief Guest G Malsur, Director of Industries, encouraged MSMEs to adopt cleaner, smarter technologies and highlighted the role of research and collaboration in supporting the sector. Guest of Honour, Additional Director of Industries, Rajkumar Ohatker stressed the need to equip MSMEs with modern tools to compete globally. Joint Director of Industries, Madhukar Babu emphasied the value of data in forming better policies.

The Joint Secretary of Telangana and Andhra Plastics Manufacturers Association (TAAPMA), Arun Lahoti shared their initiatives and appreciated the Telangana government's efforts.

B Ravi from CIPET spoke about CIPET's national presence and its role in supporting MSMEs with training and technology. The workshop included sessions on technology benchmarking, automation, green manufacturing, and government support for modernisation.

A brainstorming session highlighted the need for mold and die-making facilities and common centers to help entrepreneurs access tools at low cost.



Director of Industries G Malsur being greeted by the members of the Telangana Department of Industries on Friday



GHMC'S Food Safety inspectors conducting inspections at hostels in Hyderabad on Friday

GHMC cracks down on hostels, imposes penalties for 'violations'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Good Safety Wing, in a sweeping inspection drive, cracked down on several private hostels operating across Ameerpet, Ashok Nagar, and Dilsukhnagar for gross violations of food safety, sanitation, building use, and fire safety norms.

A total of 58 hostels were inspected in surprise raids conducted by the Special Task Force Squad of GHMC, resulting in the issuance of notices to 30 hostels, closure of five hostel kitchens and imposition of penalties totaling Rs 2,45,500 under the GHMC Act, 1955.

The violations ranged from operating without proper trade or FSSAI licenses, preparing food in unhygienic conditions, to repurposing cellars and parking areas into unauthorized kitchens.

GHMC officials also reported overcrowding, lack of proper toilet facilities, open dustbins, greasy exhausts, and even toilets opening directly into kitchens in some establishments.

Notices issued to all 15 hostels in Ameerpet for not having trade licenses. As much as Rs 1,85,000 penalty imposed. One kitchen was shut for operating without FSSAI license.

In Ashok Nagar, 20 hostels were inspected. Two hostels were shut for lack of FSSAI license and unhygienic maintenance. Notices issued to eight hostels; Rs 37,500 fine collected.

In Dilsukhnagar, a total of 23 hostels were inspected. Two hostels were shut for similar violations. Seven hostels were issued notices. As much as Rs 23,000 fine imposed.

In Ameerpet, Sri Raja Rajeshwari Hostel, Durga Deluxe Ladies Hostel, Sri Venkateshwara Ladies Hostel.

Ashok Nagar: Sai Rakshita Women's Hostel, Rainbow Girls Hostel, Royal Boys Hostel were inspected.

In Dilsukhnagar: Sri Veerabhadra Women's Hostel, Mahee Boys Hostel, Shiva Sai Ladies Hostel were inspected.

GHMC Commissioner RV Karnan said the seriousness of such violations pose significant health risks to residents, especially students and working professionals. He urged hostel managements to immediately comply with hygiene and licensing norms, failing which stricter legal action would follow.

The GHMC plans to continue such surprise checks across all zones to ensure safer and healthier living conditions in the city's hostels.

Police holds dialogue with Goseva groups to ensure peaceful Bakrid

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With Bakrid around the corner, Hyderabad City Police on Friday convened a high-level coordination meeting with Goseva associations to promote communal harmony and prevent any potential tensions during the festival. The meeting, chaired by Police Commissioner CV Anand at the Conference Hall in Basheerbagh, witnessed active participation from several cow protection organizations and senior police officials.

Additional Commissioner of Police (Law & Order) Vikram Singh Mann joined the deliberations, along with DCPs, Additional DCPs, and ACPs from across the city.

Prominent Goseva representatives present included Kolishetti Sivakumar of Yuga Tulsi Foundation, Deepak Singh of Gorakshak Dal, A. Balakrishna of Akhil Bharatiya Gauseva Foundation, Jasraj Srishramal of Bharatiya Prani Mitrasangh, and Jashmit Patel of Love for Cow Foundation.

Members of the Goseva associations reiterated their commitment to animal welfare and the protection of cattle, expressing deep concern over the circulation of graphic videos of cattle killings on social media. They appealed for strict legal action against individuals responsible for uploading such content, calling it an affront to both their sentiments and public decency.

In response, Police Commissioner Anand assured the gathering that firm action would be taken against those misusing social media to spread provocative content. He called for legal adherence from all parties and warned against vigilantism, especially at city check posts. "If anyone receives any information about illegal cattle transport or slaughter, they should immediately inform the police control room.



Hyderabad Police Commissioner CV Anand and police officers holding a dialogue with Goseva groups in Hyderabad on Friday

BOOST TO ELECTRONICS SECTOR

Six United, Resolute Group ink pact to manufacture tables, PCs and laptops

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a major step to boost electronics manufacturing in India, SixUnited, a global leader in consumer electronics, has partnered with Hyderabad-based Resolute Group to produce tablets, personal computer, and laptops in Telangana. The agreement was announced at COMPUTEX Taipei, a leading global tech trade show.

This partnership is part of a special initiative by the Government of Telangana, led by Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy and supported by IT and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu. A delegation from Telangana attended COMPUTEX to promote the state's growing electronics manufacturing sector.

The deal supports the "Make in Telangana" mission, aimed at increasing local production and boosting exports. The agreement was signed by Michael, CEO of SixUnited, and Sachin Batra, Senior vice president of Resolute Group, in the presence of key government officials, Narsimha Reddy, Additional CEO, Industry and Investment Cell and SPEED (Smart Proactive Efficient and Effective Delivery.

The collaboration is expected to create jobs, bring advanced technology to the region, and strengthen India's position as a global hub for electronics manufacturing.

SixUnited offers end-to-end solutions in R&D, design, manufacturing, and operations, with products like laptops, tablets, servers, and IoT solutions.

It is known for its innovations in smart infrastructure, including cities, healthcare, and education.

Resolute Group has over 25 years of experience in Electronics Manufacturing Services and is known for its high-quality production under the "Made in India" and "Made in Telangana" initiatives.



Michael, CEO of Six United, and Sachin Batra, senior vice president of Resolute Group exchanging partnership in Hyderabad on Friday

Telangana

The Pioneer

HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | MAY 24, 2025

04

Farmers left distraught as unseasonal rains damage paddy

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL/ KUMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD/ ADILABAD

Farmers across Mancherial, Adilabad and Kumaram Bheem Asifabad districts are deeply worried due to unseasonal rains over the past two days. Paddy and grain sacks stored at procurement centres got soaked. Farmers are facing significant difficulties in drying the wet grain.

The sacks, already weighed, were not transported to the mills, resulting in them getting drenched. Farmers fear that the grain may start sprouting due to the moisture.

In Kannepalli, rainwater submerged the crops, making it impossible for harvesting machines to operate. Even manual harvesting is not viable due to high labour costs. As a result, farmers say they may be forced to abandon the crops as fodder for cattle.

In Jaipur mandal, paddy spread out to dry at procurement centres has become soggy. At the DCMS paddy procurement centre set up near Sagar Rao Complex in the mandal headquarters, the absence of security personnel and staff led to a group of pigs entering the site in the morning. They scattered a heap of paddy belonging to Mamidala Rajender Goud from Pegadapalli village. Though farmers tried to drive them away, much of the grain was ruined by mud.

In Tapalpur village of Jannaram mandal, the highest rainfall was recorded at 97.8 mm. Thunderstorms and lightning continued through the night. The grain at procurement centres was soaked. Jannaram Tahsildar Rajamanohar Reddy stated that Tapalpur recorded the highest rainfall in the state.

In Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district, heavy rainfall led to waterlogging and flooding of low-lying areas. In Wankidi mandal headquarters, a heavy downpour for an hour on Thursday night inundated the service roads. Rainwater entered shops in low-lying areas, causing difficulties for two-wheeler riders. With water stagnating in front of shops, the public faced major inconvenience.



Rain-soaked paddy at a procurement centre in Mancherial district after heavy rains lashed the district on Thursday nigtht

Mandal revenue officials have advised people to remain alert given the ongoing heavy rains.

Kumram Bheem district reported an average rainfall of 23.9 mm. Wankidi mandal received the highest at 53.1 mm, followed by Koutala and Bejjur mandals with 46.7 mm and 43 mm, respectively. Jainoor, Sirpur (U), Kerameri, Sirpur (T), and Chintalamanepalli mandals saw rainfall between 20 mm and 30 mm.

Several parts in undivided Adilabad district experienced light to moderate rainfall for the second consecutive night on Thursday, leading to considerable damage to sorghum and paddy stocks stored at procurement centres, thereby affecting the livelihoods of local farmers.

According to a weather report by the Telangana Development Planning Society, the district recorded an average rainfall of 25.8 mm. Narnoor mandal received the highest rainfall at 125.6 mm, followed by Talamadugu mandal with 57.3 mm. Adilabad Rural and Tamsi mandals each saw over 50 mm of rain, while Indervelli, Gudihathnoor, and Adilabad Urban mandals recorded more than 20 mm.

NITW scores impressive placement rate amid challenging market conditions

Sokol Maldhani received highest package of Rs 64.3 lakh per annum

PNS ■ WARANGAL



Prof Bidyadhar Subudhi

The National Institute of Technology, Warangal (NITW) has once again proven its academic and professional excellence by achieving a strong overall placement rate of 79.7 per cent, despite prevailing market challenges. A total of 290+ companies visited the campus this year, underlining the institute's growing reputation among recruiters.

A total of 1,508 students participated in the placement season, including 791 undergraduates and 717 postgraduates. Of these, 1,201 students secured job offers—679 undergraduates and 522 postgraduates—marking a significant improvement over last year's 76 per cent placement rate. Undergraduate students achieved an impressive 85.8 per cent placement rate, while postgraduates saw a 72.8 per cent success rate.

The season's highest offer was a standout package of Rs 64.3 lakh per annum, secured by Somil Maldhani, who has been placed as a software development engineer at a reputed software company. The average cost to company (CTC) across all placements stood at Rs 14.35 lakh per annum, with undergraduates averaging Rs 16.00 lakh per annum and postgraduates Rs 12.20 lakh per annum.

For the first time, NIT Warangal also facilitated placements for PhD scholars, resulting in six successful placements with an average CTC of Rs 9.00 lakh per annum—a pioneering step in extending career support across all academic levels.

Reflecting on this success, Prof Bidyadhar Subudhi, Director of NIT Warangal, said, "This year's achievements go beyond numbers. They represent our strategic vision, resilience, and commitment to equipping students with the skills needed in today's dynamic world.

Despite a tough job market, our students demonstrated exceptional adaptability and professionalism. Initiatives such as enhanced training modules, stronger industry linkages, and educational tours have bridged the gap between theory and practice."

Abortion after sex determination test claims woman's life in Suryapet

PNS ■ SURYAPET



A horrifying incident in Suryapet district has once again brought to light the severe consequences of illegal gender determination tests and unsafe abortions. A 28-year-old woman died tragically young, underlining the dangerous grip of superstitions and unlawful practices that still prevalent in our society.

Anusha, a woman from Raghavapuram village under Mothe mandal, was living with her husband Nagesh. Already parents to two daughters, the couple strongly desired a male child. Despite knowing that it was illegal, they decided to undergo a gender determination test. With the help of an unlicensed RMP (Registered Medical Practitioner) from Ketepalli, the test was conducted in Nakrekal.

When it was confirmed that she was pregnant with girl child, and based on the RMP's suggestion, Anusha decided to undergo abortion at a hospital at a private hospital in Suryapet. After being kept at the hospital for two hours, Anusha fell unconscious. The hospital staff rushed her to Khammam hospital in an ambulance. But doctors at Khammam hospital confirmed she was brought dead.

Deeply distressed by the incident, Nagesh, along with the District Medical and Health Officer Kotachal went to the Suryapet police station on Wednesday and filed a complaint demanding strict action against the fake doctors.

Collector orders magisterial inquiry into woman's death in pvt hospital

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Nalgonda District Collector Ila Tripathi has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the death of a pregnant woman, Adavath Rajeshwari, at Shirisha Hospital in Miryalaguda. This decision follows allegations of medical negligence by doctors in the private hospital, which reportedly failed to refer the patient in time to a government facility despite her deteriorating health condition.

In December last year, Rajeshwari, a resident of Jaitram Thanda in Damaracherla Mandal, was admitted to Shirisha Hospital for childbirth. According to reports, despite conducting medical tests and identifying serious health concerns, the hospital kept her under observation until the last moment. She was later shifted to Nalgonda Government General Hospital, where she passed away post-delivery on December 28.

Collector Ila Tripathi confirmed that in addition to the magisterial inquiry, a departmental investigation has also been initiated against the hospital for alleged negligence that led to the maternal death.

The announcement came during a district-level review meeting on maternal mortality held on Friday at Udayaditya Bhavan, Nalgonda, where the Collector strongly took the Health Department officials to task.

She warned that strict action would be taken if such incidents recur and emphasized the importance of early intervention and proper patient referrals.



Nalgonda Collector Ila Tripathi holding a review meeting in Nalgonda on Friday

Suryapet DMHO transferred

PNS ■ SURYAPET

It is reported that Suryapet Dsitrict Medical and Health Officer Kota Chalam hass been sent out of the district. Orders transferring him to Hyderabad have been issued, according to official sources. There were many allegations against him. Out of approximately 252 hospitals in the district, a verification committee revealed that only 30 hospitals have proper permission. It is also reported that unauthorised hospitals are operating under the patronage of some of officials. Suryapet District Collector Tejas Nandlal Pawar ordered an inquiry and also action against some officials.



Shankar showing the injury to his leg at MGM Hospital in Warangal on Friday

SI 'assault' on farmer sparks outrage

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The conduct of a Sub-Inspector, who allegedly assaulted a farmer, has sparked outrage in Warangal district. A farmer named Shankar from Mudu Thanda under Parvathagiri mandal in Warangal district approached the police regarding a dispute on agricultural land he claimed to have purchased 20 years ago.

During the inquiry, Shankar alleged that the Sub-Inspector behaved rudely and assaulted him. As a result, he sustained an injury to his leg and was taken to Warangal MGM Hospital by his relatives.

Shankar complained that the Sub-Inspector of Parva thagiri Police Station, who interfered in the land dispute and assaulted him, should be held accountable.

Sand-laden lorries cause traffic jam in Mulugu dist

PNS ■ MULUGU



An ambulance too is caught in traffic jam as sand lorries are parked across the road at Venkatapuram in Mulugu district

A traffic jam stretched for five kilometers was witnessed at Venkatapuram in Mulgu district on Friday as sand lorries were indiscriminately parked in two rows across the road. As a result, even a 108 ambulance was stuck for hours, unable to pass as the lorries blocked the road. The people expressed outrage, demanding that cases be filed against the sand contractors for obstructing emergency services.

A continuous traffic snarls, regardless of day or night, has become a daily affair between Alubaka and Abbayigudem due to these sand-laden trucks. Vehicles traveling from Venkatapuram to Bhadrachalam, including TGSRTC buses, were caught in traffic snarls, causing passengers to suffer for more than two hours.

The contractors of the sand quarries have failed to provide parking areas for the lorries, leading drivers to parking the vehicles directly on the roads without any regulation. This has resulted in both loaded and lorries meant for transporting sand occupying the road in two lanes, causing severe inconvenience to commuters.

Previously, Mulugu Superintendent of Police Shabarish P had ordered the police to register cases against lorries that were parked on the road. Now, vehicle owners are appealing to the police department to finally take action and file cases against the contractors responsible for these violations.

Young woman among 26 Maoists killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY/WARANGAL



A young woman from Vemulanarva village under Keshampeta mandal in Shadnagar constituency, who went missing over a decade ago, has been identified as one of the Maoists killed in a recent police encounter in Chhattisgarh. The deceased, Vannada Vijayalakshmi, alias Bhumika, had gone underground 12 years ago after being drawn to leftist ideology during her law studies.

Vijayalakshmi, the youngest daughter of Radhamma and Vannada Sailu Goud, lost her mother to a snakebite within a year of her birth. Raised in Vemulanarva, she completed her schooling in Keshampet and later pursued intermediate education at a private institution. She then enrolled for a degree at Government NTR Women's College in Mahabubnagar, before joining LLB at Nizam College, Hyderabad. It was during this period that she reportedly became involved with the Naxal movement.

After joining the movement, Vijayalakshmi severed all contact with her family. According to relatives, she never visited the village or spoke to any family member again. The villagers fondly remembered her.

News of her death came as a shock to the villagers, who were unaware of her whereabouts for over a decade. They were stunned to learn that she had died in 'Operation Kagar.'

The incident has reignited discussions on the spread of radical ideologies and their influence on young students.

BRS will crumble due to internal rift: MLA

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY



Shadnagar MLA Veerlapalli Shankar visiting Elikatta village in Rangareddy district on Friday

Shadnagar MLA and Chairman of State Government Sector Enterprises Veerlapalli Shankar made sensational comments on Thursday regarding MLC K Kavitha's recent letter, claiming it revealed deep-rooted corruption and internal discord within the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS).

Speaking to the media in an open discussion held at Elikatta village, MLA Shankar alleged that the real reason behind Kavitha's emotional letter was the dispute over the distribution of illegal wealth amassed during the 10-year rule of the previous BRS government. He accused the party of looting public money over the past decade and now hiding it away. "The letter reflects frustration over unequal shares of corruption money between siblings," he said.

According to the MLA, Kavitha's letter unintentionally exposed the very nature of BRS's governance. "Her statements show how party activists were ignored, seniors were sidelined, and how former Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) operated arrogantly, meeting only a select few," Shankar added.

He further stated that Kavitha's mention of BRS's closeness with the BJP and the indirect support extended to the saffron party during the last Lok Sabha elections sheds light on the internal political equations. "She questioned why those responsible for the party's past failures are still being given key roles for the upcoming elections," he said.

Highlighting Kavitha's criticism of KCR's autocratic approach, especially his solo speech at the party's silver jubilee celebrations, Shankar asserted that even she is now openly voicing her discontent.

He demanded that the BRS leadership, particularly KT Rama Rao (KTR), respond to Kavitha's letter. "KTR has no moral right to attack other parties until he answers his sister's allegations.

There are clear differences within the Kalvakuntla family," he said.

Fast-track Sagar canal tunnel works: Ponguleti to officials

PNS ■ KHAMMAM



Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy conducting a surprise inspection of the Sagar Canal works on Friday at Jujjularaopeta in Khammam district on Friday

Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, has directed officials to urgently complete the under-tunnel (UT) repair works of the Nagarjuna Sagar Left Main Canal near Palair, which supplies irrigation water to approximately 4 lakh acres in Khammam district.

He instructed the engineers that the repair works must be completed by July 10 under any circumstances to ensure water for the upcoming Vanakalam (Kharif) season. On Friday, the Minister made a surprise inspection of the ongoing repair works at Palair Sagar Canal near Jujjularaopeta in Kusumanchi Mandal.

During the inspection, the Minister stated that the under-tunnel near the Palair reservoir was damaged due to heavy rains in September last year, at a location close to Jujjularaopeta under Kusumanchi mandal. Temporary arrangements were made at that time to ensure irrigation water supply and avoid disruption to farmers, he said.

Now, permanent repair works of the UT canal were undertaken at a cost of Rs 14.20 crore. The Minister emphasised that this canal is vital for agriculture in Khammam district. Upon completion, it will supply irrigation water to about 4 lakh acres in the district, including 1.33 lakh acres in the Palair constituency alone.

During the inspection, Irrigation Superintending Engineer M Venkateswarlu, Deputy Engineer Ramesh Reddy, and other officials were present.

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ACROSS THE STATES



Ramlila panels to screen Op Sindoor this Navratri

Nearly 850 Ramlila committees across Delhi will hold a special daily screening of Operation Sindoor before their performances this Navratri as a tribute to the valour of the Indian armed forces. The Indian armed forces launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) and hitting nine locations. The operation came in response to the Pahalgam terrorist attack in which 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen lost their lives on April 22. Ramlila performances across Delhi will begin this year with a special 15-20 minutes tribute -- either a play, a short film or a screening titled 'Sainya Shaurya: Operation Sindoor' -- before the main Ramayana enactment begins, Arjun Kumar, president of the Ramlila Mahasangh, said. He said the decision was taken during a coordination meeting attended by representatives of over 200 Ramlila committees. The tribute performances will run from September 22 to October 3, alongside the Vijay Dashmi celebrations.



Delhi Police's ZIPNET with enhanced features

Delhi Police on Friday launched a revamped version of the ZIPNET (Zonal Integrated Police Network) website with an advanced user interface and improved search functionality aimed at enhancing interstate collaboration and citizen services, an official said. Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora inaugurated the updated platform at the Delhi Police Headquarters in the presence of senior officers. The website can now be accessed via the Delhi Police's official portal as well as directly at https://zipnet.delhipolice.gov.in, said Arora. ZIPNET, a vital tool for crime tracking and inter-state coordination, has been technologically upgraded to cater to the requirements of the modern law enforcement landscape, he added. The officer said the platform enables eight member states — Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh — to share and access real-time data on criminals, missing persons, unidentified dead bodies (UIDBs) and stolen vehicles. Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Surender Kumar said the "updated ZIPNET portal is a step forward in using technology for better service delivery to both law enforcement agencies and citizens".



Delhi HC asks blast convict Bhullar to surrender

The Delhi High Court on Friday asked 1993 Delhi bomb blast convict Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar, who was out on parole, to surrender before the jail authorities during the course of the day. Bhullar, whose parole was expiring Friday, sought exemption on the ground that he suffered from acute schizophrenia and was under treatment. Justice Girish Kathpalia said the treatment was available in jail, that too a proper one. "You surrender," the judge told Bhullar's counsel who agreed to withdraw the application seeking exemption from surrender. The court recorded in its order that after part submissions, his counsel sought to withdraw the plea and assured Bhullar would surrender during the course of the day. "The application is dismissed as withdrawn," it held. Bhullar's counsel had submitted that his client did not even enter the barracks and was always in the hospital and even when out on parole, he mark his attendance every week in the hospital attached to the jail. It's been a case of 30 years behind bars and even the law says for heinous offences, he is entitled for the relief, the counsel said.

Op Sindoor exposed Pak sponsoring terrorism: Shah

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



"The terrorists undertook an extreme attack in Pahalgam as they selectively chose innocents, asked their religion and killed them brutally in front of their families, including women and children."

The Operation Sindoor undertaken by the Indian armed forces in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack has "completely exposed" the fact that terrorism in India is sponsored by Pakistan, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday.

Shah also said that the operation showed the "firm" political will of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the "precise" intelligence inputs from agencies, and the "lethal" capabilities of the armed forces.

India hit as deep as '100-km' inside Pakistan after they dared to target a few Indian civilian and military setups following Operation Sindoor (on May 7), when nine terrorist camps were decimated, he said.

Shah made the remarks while delivering the annual Rustamji Memorial Lecture organised by the Border Security Force (BSF) alongside its 22nd investiture ceremony.

Raised in 1965, the BSF guards the over 6,000-km-long Indian borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh. K F Rustamji was the founding chief of the BSF. "The terrorists undertook an extreme attack in Pahalgam as they selectively chose innocents, asked their religion and killed them brutally in front of their families, including women and children," Shah said, adding that this "sin" was committed by Pakistan-sponsored terrorists.

"India's response under Operation Sindoor was different," he said. Nine terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) were "destroyed" within a few minutes, out of which two were the headquarters of terror outfits, Shah said.

"We did not attack their military installations or air bases. We only hit the terrorist bases in Pakistan. Those who committed a criminal act on our land -- the Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba -- their bases, houses, training camps and launchpads used against India were destroyed," Shah said.

The home minister added, "We thought it was enough that we hit the terrorists but Pakistan proved that it was sponsoring terrorism, as they took the Indian strikes as an attack on themselves and targeted civilian locations and military bases in India."

But the Indian air defence displayed "marvellous strength" as Pakistan could not touch any of India's installations, Shah said.



Pak extends closure of airspace for Indian flights till June 24

PNS ■ LAHORE

Pakistan on Friday extended closure of its airspace for Indian flights until June 24, according to a new NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority.

The extension follows the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) rules that restrict such closure for a month at a time.

"The ban on Indian aircraft flying over Pakistan airspace has been extended until 4:59 am June 24, 2025," the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) said in a statement here. All aircraft that are Indian-registered, operated, owned, or leased will remain subject to the ban, the PAA statement said.

"This ban will also apply to Indian military aircraft. No flight operated by Indian airlines or operators will be allowed to use Pakistani airspace," the PAA said. Pakistan had banned its airspace for India last month after steps taken by New Delhi in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attack that killed 26 people.

The ban was imposed for a month until May 23, as under International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) rules that airspace restrictions cannot be imposed for more than one month at a time.

BJP TO RAHUL ON OP SINDOOR

Stop 'undermining' armed forces' valour, 'jeopardising' India's security

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



"It has been the core character of Rahul Gandhi to intentionally ask such questions, taking forward the agenda of nations which are inimical to our country."

The BJP on Friday launched a scathing attack at Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi and asked him to stop "undermining" the Indian Armed Forces' valour and "jeopardising" the country's security by making "irresponsible remarks" about Operation Sindoor.

Calling Gandhi "Nishan-e-Pakistan", BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia accused the Congress leader of carrying forward the "agenda of countries inimical to India" and said his remarks on the India-Pakistan conflict were being used by Islamabad to "defame" India.

"Rahul Gandhi, you decide which side you are on. You have to decide whether you are India's leader of opposition or Pakistan's Nishan-e-Pakistan," Bhatia said at a press conference.

The BJP's charge came a day after Gandhi accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of having "compromised" India's "prestige" and asked him why he sacrificed the nation's interests by agreeing to halt military hostilities against Pakistan.

"Rahul Gandhi, stop undermining the valour and commitment of our brave armed forces, stop asking questions which shouldn't be asked. They jeopardise national security," Bhatia urged the Congress leader.

He said Gandhi's remarks could not be dismissed as "juvenile behaviour".

"It has been the core character of Rahul Gandhi to intentionally ask such questions, taking forward the agenda of nations which are inimical to our country," he alleged.

The BJP spokesperson also lashed out at Gandhi over his remarks that India's foreign policy had "collapsed" and asked him if the joint statement of then prime minister Manmohan Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Syed Yusuf Raza in Sharm el Sheikh after the 2008 Mumbai terror attack that Pakistan was also a victim terror was the Congress' diplomacy.

Terming the Sharm el Sheikh joint statement as "irresponsible behaviour" of the erstwhile Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, Bhatia said it was made against the "established policy" of India and asked Gandhi if he had forgotten it.



Army Chief presents mementos to next of kin of fallen heroes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Army Chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi on Friday presented the Badge of Sacrifice and the Certificate of Honour to the next of kin of several army personnel, who have laid down their lives in the line of duty.

The awards -- a deeply symbolic tribute to valour and supreme sacrifice -- were conferred to honour officers, junior commissioned officers and other ranks who were killed in enemy and terrorist action while serving the nation, a senior official said.

Instituted in July 1999, the Badge of Sacrifice and Certificate of Honour have since been bestowed upon the families of bravehearts from conflicts dating back to 1947. The first official presentation was held on Vijay Diwas on December 16, 1999, marking a significant milestone in the army's continued commitment to remembering its bravehearts, he added.

The presentation ceremony at the Manekshaw Centre took place a day after the formal Defence Investiture Ceremony, which was conducted at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Gen Dwivedi presented the Badge of Sacrifice and Certificate of Honour to the next of kin of Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Aashish Dhonchak, Captain Deepak Singh, Havildar Rohit Kumar, Naik Dilwar Khan, Rifleman Ravi Kumar, Sepoy Pradeep Singh and also to the next of kin of Deputy Superintendent of Police Himayun Muzzammil Bhat (Jammu and Kashmir Police) and Vijayan Kutty G (Border Road Organisation).

The Badge of Sacrifice, a 24-carat gold-plated insignia, is individually engraved with the army number, rank and name of the soldier. On the reverse, the Indian Army insignia is inscribed, symbolising eternal remembrance, the official said.

British Airways flight returns to Bengaluru from Abu Dhabi due to technical glitch

PNS ■ BENGALURU



British Airways flight BA118, which departed Bengaluru at 7.40 am on Friday, returned after reaching Abu Dhabi due to a technical issue, Bengaluru airport sources said.

The flight later departed for London at 2.30 pm, according to the sources. In response to a PTI email, a British Airways spokesperson said, "The aircraft landed safely back in Bengaluru as a precaution due to a technical issue. The aircraft was checked over and has since departed on its scheduled journey to London Heathrow."

A passenger, Satish Medapati (@Smedapati), posted on 'X': "BA118 BLR-LON this morning returned to BLR after a few hours. We are still in the plane, but no valid information other than saying they have no info. Hope to get onto the skies soon (sic)." Satish did not respond to PTI's queries and has posted no further updates.

Incidentally, London Heathrow Airport-one of the world's busiest-faced a major disruption on May 21 following a power outage caused by a fire at a nearby electrical substation. It was initially reported that the airport would remain closed through Friday. British Airways, in a statement posted early Friday on its official 'X' handle (@British_Airways), said it had operated around 90 per cent of its Saturday flying schedule.

Stalin in Delhi for NITI Aayog meet

PNS ■ CHENNAI/NEW DELHI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Friday called on top Congress party leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi after arriving in Delhi to take part in the NITI Aayog governing council meeting on May 24.

Stalin was accorded a warm reception in the national capital by DMK leaders led by veteran TR Baalu.

Later, the chief minister from the southern state met the top Congress leaders and said in a social media post: "There's a special warmth in every meeting with Madam Tmt (Mrs). Sonia Gandhi and dear brother @RahulGandhi at their Delhi residence.

Internal audit flags Rs 709 cr anomalies in Jal Shakti ministry schemes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An internal audit review of the Jal Shakti ministry for 2023-24 has flagged financial irregularities amounting to over Rs 709 crore across key water and sanitation schemes. The report highlighted blocked funds, unauthorised spending, idle machinery, and violations in procurement procedures.

According to the Annual Internal Audit Review, Rs 525.96 crore worth of government funds remain blocked.

These include unspent balances under the Atal Bhujal Yojana in Maharashtra and Haryana, as well as issues like excess expenditure, irregular expenditure in states such as Kerala and Bihar.

The audit also revealed Rs 23.56 crore in irregular expenditure, largely due to overspending beyond approved limits for administrative and IEC (Information, Education, Communication) activities under SBM-G.

In multiple instances, funds were diverted for ineligible expenses, and several purchases were made without following government e-marketplace (GeM) or tender procedures, leading to further unauthorised purchases worth Rs 10.82 crore. The audit report said the non-recovery of government dues from central government department/state government/government bodies and private parties stood at Rs 19.05 crore.

49 killed in rain-related incidents in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW (UP)

At least 49 people died across Uttar Pradesh due to various rain and storm-related incidents between 8 pm on May 21 to 4 pm on May 22, according to a report of the Integrated Disaster Control Centre, Relief Commissioner's Office, Lucknow.

The state experienced strong winds accompanied by heavy rainfall in most parts of the districts on the night of May 21-22.

The fatalities, primarily caused by falling of trees, collapsing of walls and roofs, and lightning strikes, have been reported from numerous districts across the state.

Delhi govt's SOP on balancing infrastructure with ecology

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a move directed towards balancing Delhi's infrastructure needs with ecological responsibility, the Delhi government has rolled out an SOP ensuring a stricter vetting process to prevent the arbitrary cutting of tree branches, an official said on Friday.

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), dated May 2, outlines when and how trees can be pruned, particularly in high-footfall areas such as roads, parks, and residential colonies.

The guidelines were issued to ensure public safety and the scientific management of trees, for which online applications and photographic evidence were mandated.

Any individual, government agency, civic body, RWA, or organisation seeking to prune tree branches with a girth of 15.7 cm or more must now apply through the e-Forest portal. For light pruning, where the branch girth is less than 15.7 cm, no prior permission is required. However, the pruning agency must upload before-and-after photographs on the portal for documentation, the SOP states.

In the case of public land, agencies such as MCD, NDMC, DDA, PWD, CPWD, ASI, or the Delhi Cantonment Board may carry out urgent pruning on roads, footpaths, or parks without prior approval, regardless of branch girth, if the trees pose a danger to life, property, or traffic.



This must be done under the supervision of a senior horticulture officer with before-and-after visual evidence being submitted to the tree officer.

"The city's green cover has grown due to sustained efforts, but with it comes the need for better tree management," a forest department official said, adding that the SOP ensures safety, scientific handling, and strict documentation.

In another SOP, notified on April 24 and recently submitted to the Delhi High Court, the Delhi government has made it mandatory for all projects involving the felling of 50 or more trees to obtain clearance from the Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC).

The move overhauls the earlier process, where tree officers from the forest and wildlife department had the sole authority to grant permissions.

Now, such high-impact proposals must undergo scrutiny by the CEC to ensure stricter compliance with environmental norms and judicial directives. "This SOP brings much-needed clarity and structure to how we manage tree felling in the city," a senior forest official told PTI, adding that it aligns with the "Supreme Court and the Delhi High Court's observations about indiscriminate tree cutting and poor enforcement of the Trees Act."

Under the new rules, tree officers can continue granting permission for the felling or transplantation of up to 49 trees.

Have donated money to National Herald: K'taka DCM Shivakumar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Amid reports of his name figuring in the ED charge sheet in the National Herald case, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday said he and his brother D K Suresh have donated money to the Congress-run newspaper.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah backed his deputy, saying there is nothing wrong in donating money.

"Me and D K Suresh donated Rs 25 lakh each to National Herald. What is wrong in that. We have donated to a newspaper run by our party. What's wrong in that," Shivakumar told reporters in Kolhar village in Vijayapura district.

He was responding a question by a journalist that his as well as his brother D K Suresh's name figures in Enforcement Directorate charge sheet in the National Herald case.

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Editor's TAKE

India's stern message to Turkey

In a sharp message, India asks Turkey to press Pakistan to dismantle its cross-border terror infrastructure

In a significant diplomatic signal, India has asked Turkey to "strongly urge" Pakistan to dismantle its decades-long support to cross-border terrorism. This comes amid escalating tensions between New Delhi and Ankara, particularly in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, India's recent military response to terror threats emanating from Pakistan.

The statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was unequivocal. "We expect Turkey to strongly urge Pakistan to end its support to cross-border terrorism and take credible and verifiable actions against the terror ecosystem it has harboured for decades," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. The latest diplomatic chill traces back to Turkey's public condemnation of India's precision strikes against terror camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir under Operation Sindoor. While India maintained that the strikes were defensive and targeted infrastructure linked to terrorism, Turkey chose to align itself with Pakistan, issuing statements that echoed Islamabad's narrative and reportedly offering diplomatic and material support.

Further complicating matters, Turkey supplied drones were reportedly used by Pakistan during recent escalations, raising strategic and security concerns in New Delhi. This alignment has only deepened India's perception of Ankara's growing closeness with Islamabad, especially on issues directly affecting India's sovereignty and internal security. India's response has been both diplomatic and administrative. India's expectations from bilateral partnerships include respect for its core security concerns, especially those related to terrorism. This direct message to Turkey now one of the closest ally of Pakistan, comes not only as a warning but also as a recalibration of India's diplomatic engagement with Turkey, which has in recent years sought a broader role in South Asia's geopolitics under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Apart from diplomatic initiatives India has also taken some action to show its displeasure with Ankara. India recently revoked the security clearance of Çelebi Aviation Pvt Ltd, a Turkish-origin company that manages ground services at nine Indian airports. India's firm stance reflects its evolving foreign policy approach, especially toward countries that attempt to take positions on South Asian conflicts without acknowledging India's security imperatives.

As India asserts itself as a leading voice in the Global South and a major global economy, its message to Turkey may also be aimed at a broader international audience: partnerships cannot be one-sided or blind to terrorism. For now, India's message is clear, international partnerships must be grounded in mutual respect, and there can be no ambiguity when it comes to terrorism. As regional alliances shift and global fault lines emerge, How Turkey responds to India's call to action may well define the trajectory of its bilateral relationship with the world's largest democracy.

PIC TALK



Participants fly giant kites in various shapes including a dragon, lily pad and Jallikattu bull at a kite festival held for the first time in, Mannavanur Lake meadows near Kodaikanal. PTI

The rebel poet who roared against Empire

Through defiant poetry, soul-stirring songs and justice-driven prose, Nazrul emerged as a symbol of resistance and unity. As we mark his 126th birth anniversary, his legacy still echoes — challenging injustice and stirring conscience



In the grand arena of India's fight for freedom, Kazi Nazrul Islam's voice roared like a tempest, shattering the stillness of colonial oppression. Known affectionately as the Bidrohi Kobi (the Rebel Poet), Kazi Nazrul's verses, prose and melodies pulsed with an unyielding spirit of defiance, fervent nationalism, and profound humanism.

He transcended the role of a mere poet. He was a cultural luminary, a visionary who wielded his pen as a sword, igniting revolutionary fervour with every drop of ink. As Pulak Kumar Das of Kalinagar Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal, perfectly encapsulates, "Nazrul strives boldly to decolonise the territory of the Indian subcontinent through the voice in his rebellious poetry."

Born into a humble Muslim family on May 24, 1899, in Churulia village, Asansol subdivision, Burdwan district of undivided Bengal, Kazi Nazrul Islam was the son of Kazi Fakir Ahmad and Zaheda Khatun. He fearlessly employed his powerful poetry as a tool for decolonisation across the Indian Subcontinent against the British Raj, through his literary works like 'Jugobani' (The Message of the Age), 'Rudra Mangal' (The Violent God), 'Anandamoyir Agamone' (The Advent of Coming of Joy,1922), and his publication 'Dhumketu' (The Comet).

Kazi Nazrul Islam's literary power goes beyond mere words; it awakens the Bengali consciousness in general and societal consciousness per se — through time. His poetry, prose and music combine to form a rich expression of revolutionary thought and deep emotion, weaving together themes of social justice, equality, and nationalism with remarkable skill. His poetry resonates with a visceral intensity, channelling the collective pain and hopes of the oppressed.

His involvement in the Indian Independence movement drew the ire of the British authorities, leading to his imprisonment. But Nazrul's revolutionary spirit remained unbroken, evidenced by his writing. 'Rajbandir Jabanbandi' (Deposition of a Political Prisoner) — is one such masterpiece that documents Nazrul's experience and perspective. Further, his literary works delved into the lives and struggles of the marginalised masses in the undivided Bengal, championing their emancipation and thereby igniting a fire in millions of Indians, urging them to rise against all forms of socio-political and economic oppression.

One of Nazrul's poems, Bidrohi (The Rebel), published in 1922, running into almost seventeen stanzas, marked a literary earthquake in Bengali poetry. It was unapologetically fierce, infused with mythic allusions, and defied the passive tone prevalent among poets of the time.

Nazrul did not merely write — he roared with defiance. Through poems like *Bhangar Gaan* (The Song of Destruction) and *fiery* writings in Dhumketu (The Comet), he scathingly attacked British colonial rule. His mission was India's liberation. Pulak Kumar Das, in his June 2024 paper "Kazi Nazrul Islam — The Voice of Protest Against British Rule" (JETIR, Vol. 11, Issue 6), notes Nazrul's arrest in 1923 for his fearless critiques. As Nazrul declared, "I am a poet, sent by God to speak the unspoken Truth... I have not rebelled against a mere King; I have rebelled against injustice." Even books like Jugbani and Bisher Banshi were also banned.



RAJDEEP PATHAK

In the area of songwriting, Kazi Nazrul composed nearly 4,000 songs, now collectively known as Nazrul Geeti. These compositions were (read are) far more than just melodies, they're powerful expressions of justice and spirituality. Even today, they continue to be performed on various platforms around the world by artists dedicated to this unique musical genre. The rebel poet and writer masterfully fused folk, classical, and Sufi traditions, channelling, both divine yearning and revolutionary fervour. His songs, such as "Amar Shonar Bangla" (My Golden Bengal) and "Dolonchapa," (swinging or undulating Jasmine), radiated lyrical grace and patriotic pride. As Abu Rayhan observes in his paper "Kazi Nazrul Islam and His Impact on Bengali Culture and Society," "Nazrul's music transcended barriers of class, caste, and creed," becoming a unifying force in Bengal's cultural identity. "His songs, imbued with themes of love, longing, patriotism, and spiritual devotion," Rayhan writes, "resonated deeply with the masses," weaving a timeless musical legacy that still stirs hearts across generations.

A similar sentiment echoes in Bidrohi Kobi's essays and articles, where the author-poet critiques the unjust social order with a passionate call for equality. In his powerful piece 'Samyabadi' (The Communist), Nazrul envisions a classless society grounded in 'socialism and human solidarity.' With compelling rhetoric, he champions the cause of the working class and denounces capitalist exploitation. His prose becomes "a clarion call for revolutionary change," urging readers to confront injustice and work towards a just future, embodying his lifelong commitment to social justice, dignity, and collective emancipation.

Kazi Nazrul Islam also transcended the conventional boundaries of his Muslim faith to compose a mesmerising collection of devotional songs, particularly those dedicated to Goddess Kali, popularly called 'Shyama Sangeet', that are not merely hymns, but profound expressions of a soul deeply immersed in the divine mother's fierce yet compassionate embrace.

Rachel Fell McDermott, (Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures, specializing in South Asia, especially India and Bangladesh) observes in her work on "Encountering Kali" that, "Nazrul's Kali songs are a remarkable example of how a poet from an ostensibly different religious background could not only understand but also profoundly articulate the devotee's intimate relationship with the Goddess, imbuing his verses with a unique blend of passion, surrender, and a revolutionary spirit that saw in Kali the embodiment of liberation." This fusion of fervent devotion with an inherent rebellious streak made Nazrul's Kali songs resonate deeply with a diverse audience, solidifying his unique position in the pantheon of Bengali devotional literature.

These songs, suffused with intense emotion and raw surrender, reflect a unique confluence of bhakti (devotion) and rebellion, where Nazrul sees Kali not only as a divine Mother but also as a symbol of cosmic energy, justice, and transcendence.

The legacy of Kazi Nazrul Islam is multifaceted and enduring, continuing to inspire and influence Bengali culture, literature, music, and social discourse even after 126 years, as we celebrate his 126th birth anniversary on May 24. His designation as the 'National Poet of Bangladesh' underscores his monumental importance. As societies grapple with divisiveness and extremism, Nazrul's call for humanism and interfaith harmony provides a powerful counter-narrative. Let we cleanse our hearts!

(The writer is Programme Executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti. Views are personal)

Fi- di- g shelter i- God amid spiritual co- fusio-

SECOND Opinion

In verses 15.1 to 3 of the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna states that this material world is upside down. Its meaning is, "What appears good doesn't turn out to be so good, and what appears not so good maybe really good." A couple of examples will illustrate the message of the Lord. Video games with lots of violence attract children. They love to spend a lot of time in it. What is its effect on them? It contributes to aggressive behaviour and negatively affects their sleep, mental health, attention and academic performance. Contrarily, healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, etc. are not preferred as they should; one loves what is tasty, but does not have much nutritional value like fast foods.

In another verse, Lord Krishna states that spiritual practices are avoided by a common man, while a realised soul shuns lustful activities. (2.69) What do we see? The answer is given by the Lord Himself, "Out of thousands of men hardly anyone strives for perfection." (7.3) This perfection refers to taking active shelter from God and gaining unimaginable benefits both material and spiritual. I am a real beneficiary. Because I am mortally afraid of my past bad karmaphalas, which can manifest over time. If I remain in the shelter of God, He is sure to extricate me from any bad situation. (18.58) Similarly, I am not at all prepared to be relocated helplessly life after life in different places and species. I would rather remain in the shelter of my Lord and be assured of a nice next birth, leading to liberation from this painful birth and death cycle in a few births.

The question to be answered is: "Why it is so rare to become a devotee of God?" The reasons are many. The first one, as stated earlier, is everything is upside down. And with our material knowledge, of which we are so proud, we cannot see. Then, harmful sense objects are proliferating. They are actively being promoted for commercial interests. One has to be very disciplined to avoid them. Believe me, I have to practically isolate myself. Even then, my so-called smartphone tries to trap me. Fortunately, my determination to stay on the right path helps me be guided and protected by my Lord as I am. I cannot imagine staying away from God's shelter for long.



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

If harmful sense objects are so dangerous, the three gunas (modes) are not any less. Let me explain. Everything we see has been made up of the three gunas. They are the basic ingredients of the Creation. Even our bodies and natures are made up of them. These guns are present in our natures in some proportions. For example, a good man will have say 60 per cent goodness, 30 per cent passion and 10 per cent darkness. Contrarily, a bad man will have 60 per cent darkness, 30 per cent passion and 10 per cent goodness. All of us will have some percentage of the three gunas. (18.40) And these three guns always compete against one another. That is why even a good person becomes lusty, greedy, angry, hateful or fearful sometimes. One does not realise this fact and gets in trouble helplessly. He or she feels that whatever is being done by him or her is alright when he is being driven by the mode of darkness. Lord Krishna has stated this fact quite clearly, "This material nature of Mine, consisting of the three modes, is divine and very difficult to overcome. Only those, who take shelter in Me, they are able to transcend this maya." (7.14) The same is true about our minds. Arjuna has voiced his fear of being unable to control the mind. I have the same apprehension. That is the reason I try to stay in the shelter of God; He protects me from my mind. The list of challenges is long.

Whatever has been stated earlier is not all. We get attached to material objects, our bodies, families, etc. It is so natural, and it causes lots of suffering. We don't realise that everything we possess will be taken away sometime even before death. What has Lord Ramachandra counselled in the Ramacharitamanas, "Get attached with Me, then, your other attachments will be easily controlled." (Sundarkanda 47.2-3) One will be able to do duties about whatever we are attached to. That is all one can do. Do we own anything in the actual sense? Our bodies? They are taken away without us wanting to. What should we do then? The answer is: Do what great devotees of the past have done. They actively remained in the shelter of God. They had realised that material knowledge gives no protection whatsoever; one needs spiritual intelligence.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher.
Views are personal)

Letters to the Editor

Pak must dismantle terror dens

Weeks after Operation Sindoor, India has called on Turkey to "strongly urge" Pakistan to dismantle its decades, old terror infrastructure and end its support for cross-border terrorism." We expect Turkey to strongly urge Pakistan to end its support to cross-border terrorism," said Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs.

The remarks come amid escalating diplomatic tensions between India and Turkey, especially after Ankara voiced support for Pakistan during Operation Sindoor. India had earlier revealed that on the night of May 8, shortly after the launch of the operation, Pakistan deployed 300–400 Turkish drones to infiltrate Indian airspace at 36 locations. In a consequential move, India's Bureau of Civil Aviation Security has revoked the security clearance of Çelebi Aviation Pvt Ltd, a Turkish ground-handling firm operating at nine Indian airports. The diplomatic fallout also reflects a broader regional shift. In the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, Turkey, along with China and Azerbaijan, expressed open solidarity with Pakistan — pointing to a tightening axis in South Asia.

Of these nations, Turkey has become Pakistan's closest strategic ally, with deepening defense cooperation across air, naval, and cyber domains. Joint ventures between the two include advanced projects involving fighter jets, submarines and drone technology.

BHAGWAN THADAANI | MUMBAI

A Cry for Justice

The recent actions of Israeli forces reflect a harrowing truth — for them, humanity seems to hold no meaning. In Palestine, children are born into a world of bombings, shattered homes, and unending fear. They grow up amid rubble, their childhoods stolen, their schools turned to dust, their parents lost to violence, and their dreams broken before they could begin. How can a child dare to imagine a future when even surviving the present feels uncertain?

Gaza continues to function as an open-air prison. Each new wave of violence deepens the wounds, pushing Palestinians further into hopelessness. The prospect of a peaceful, stable future fades into a distant, unattainable illusion. Meanwhile, the world's powerful voices preach human rights and justice — but their actions betray their words. Their selective solidarity exposes a painful hypocrisy. In place of justice, Palestinians receive only empty condemnations and the deafening silence of inaction.

The time for empty words is over. The world must act — with decisive, sustained pressure — to end Israel's aggression and occupation. Peace cannot grow where oppression thrives. The lives of innocent people, especially children, must no longer be sacrificed on the altar of political expediency.

MD SABIR HUSSAIN | ARA

Pre-Monsoon Showers expose preparedness

The arrival of pre-monsoon showers has once again highlighted the unpreparedness of many southern cities in India. Torrential rains have hit coastal regions like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, throwing life out of gear. Bengaluru, for instance, witnessed a few hours of intense rain that submerged roads and crippled traffic, stalling the city's rhythm for hours. Similar scenes unfolded in towns across coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Goa and Maharashtra.

Every year, the same blame game ensues — civic bodies, politicians, and corporations pointing fingers while the public suffers. The real culprits, however, remain ignored: poor planning, outdated drainage systems, unchecked plastic waste, and a lack of accountability.

Drains choke within minutes of rainfall, overflowing with silt and garbage that should have been cleared well before the season. While leaders make lofty promises, implementation remains a distant dream. Citizens too must introspect. Indiscriminate waste disposal into sewers worsens the situation.

Unless local authorities invest in planned drainage infrastructure, enforce regular maintenance, and educate the public on waste management, this cycle of chaos will continue. Until then, each downpour will be a dreaded event rather than a welcomed relief.

M PRADYU | KANNUR

BIODIVERSITY ON THE BRINK: A WAKE-UP CALL

The editorial on Biodiversity (23-5-25) should sensitise all the concerned. Destruction and threat to biodiversity is growing at an alarming rate and the Governments remain so callous.

Experts and organisations committed to preserve biodiversity are cautioning repeatedly and crying foul so loudly over the damage being done to nature and its gifts which are so essential to sustain our life. Avaricious attitude of the capital and reckless posture of the rulers hasten the process of destruction of the very eco system.

Biodiversity is primarily threatened by habitate loss, over exploitation of resources, pollution, climate change and invasive species. Population growth, consumption of resources and technological advancements are the direct human contribution to the damages that are not addressed with the amount of seriousness it requires. Pecuniary benefits are dominating over all the other aspects that are related to the very existence of the human race. It is said if bees are totally annihilated, in another twenty years the human race will be extinct.

The list of species extinct and in the brim of extinct are increasing without any concern shown from any quarter. Many hotspots of biodiversity are facing threat due to adverse human activities. In India the Himalayas, Western ghats and Andaman islands are a few of the identified hotspots.

All the three areas are becoming more vulnerable due to various contributing factors. Disappearing glaciers in the Himalayas, destruction of forests for various projects in Western ghats and urbanisation projects taken up in the Andaman islands are a few to quote here. It is time to open our eyes and ensure a safe globe for our future generations. Promoting and glorifying God and destructing his most valuable gifts cannot go together.

A G RAJMOHAN | ANANTAPUR

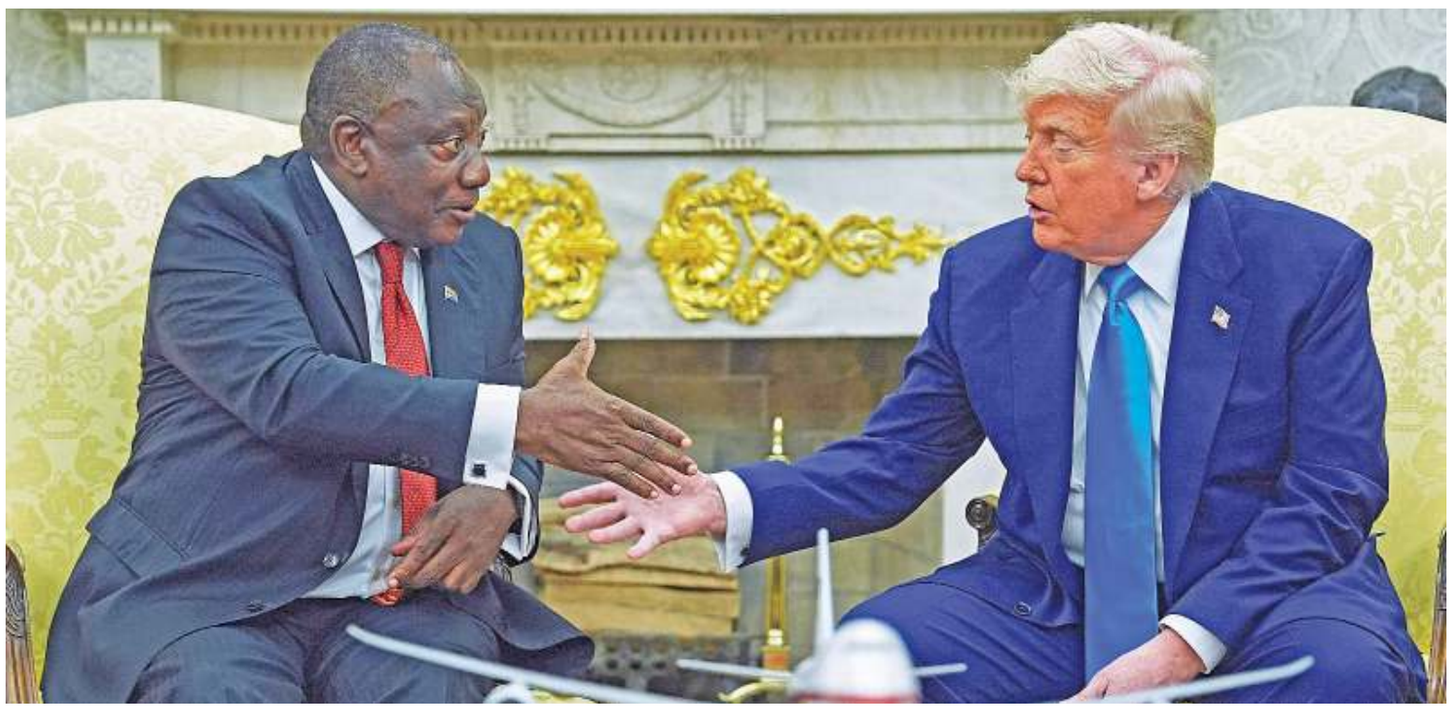
Please send your letter to the letterstopioneer@gmail.com. In not more than 400 words.
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The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | MAY 24, 2025

Ramaphosa in the US: Diplomatic poise, domestic paradox

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's US tour was diplomatically successful, but beneath the polished optics lie stark contradictions: A post-apartheid nation still burdened by deep economic inequality and a liberation movement entangled in neoliberal compromises

FIRST Column



South Africa's President and his team-including a considerable cohort of white South Africans, notably Afrikaners — were hosted at the Oval Office by President Trump, immediately following what was hailed as a remarkably successful diplomatic mission to Arab countries, where even Trump himself was bestowed the gift of one Air Force One flight by Qatar-an unprecedented endowment, the largest of its kind ever received by the United States.

In addition to Ramaphosa's delegation, there was an intriguing presence of an Afrikaner on Trump's side, Elon Musk. During the meeting, Ramaphosa exhibited enviable political maturity and dexterity, manoeuvring through the maze of Trump's diplomatic traps with subtlety while carefully avoiding incendiary pitfalls that could have compromised his nation's delicate balancing act.

During the meeting, Ramaphosa notably sidestepped fraught questions about the so-called "persecuted white Afrikaners," a narrative amplified by the likes of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who has recently sought to expand refugee programmes ostensibly designed to shield white South Africans. Trump, for his part, acknowledged South Africa's pivotal role in geopolitics. However, earlier this year he had dismissively branded BRICS as 'dead'-a miscalculation that belies the intricate global recalibrations currently underway.

This Oval Office episode unfolded as Israel prepares for a possible series of pre-emptive strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, an ominous prospect with potential ramifications extending well beyond West Asia. Meanwhile, South Africa continues to spearhead a genocide case against Israel at the ICC — a legal crusade emblematic of its self-appointed role as a global moral arbiter, a paradox that exposes its own unresolved historical and domestic contradictions.



NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA

To unpack the import of these events and declarations demands a journey through the turbulent and often tragic arc of South African history, the vicissitudes of its liberation movements, and the dissonant realities that confront the post-apartheid state. It compels one to confront the stark incongruities between high-flown rhetoric and tangible outcomes, between aspirational promises of freedom and the sobering arithmetic of socioeconomic decay.

The African National Congress (ANC), led for decades by icons such as Nelson Mandela, is frequently lionised for dismantling apartheid's edifice. Yet, as Ramaphosa himself implicitly acknowledged during the Oval Office encounter, the real challenge lies not in achieving political emancipation but in the herculean task of economic liberation — a task that has stubbornly eluded successive administrations. "What we want," Ramaphosa asserted with diplomatic prudence, "is to create an environment for investments to take place," signalling a continued reliance on foreign direct investment (FDI), predominantly controlled by white-owned corporations, particularly Afrikaner-dominated economic entities.

This reality is hardly surprising given South Africa's historical trajectory. The economic structures of apartheid were deliberately engineered to concentrate wealth and power within a narrow white minority, primarily Afrikaners and English-speaking elites. Post-1994, despite the political turnover, these economic bastions remained largely intact. As Patrick Bond, a political economist, noted, "the struggle against apartheid was fundamentally a struggle against the apartheid state, but the economic apparatus that undergirded it survived largely unscathed."

Mandela's magisterial legacy — his embrace of reconciliation and nation-building — undoubtedly a triumph in moral and political terms, has also been subject to trenchant criticism. His famous injunction that "we must build a society in which all South Africans, black and white, will be able to walk tall without any fear in their hearts" embodies a noble ideal.

Yet critics contend that this emphasis on social harmony, while indispensable in the post-conflict milieu, has ossified economic inequalities. It arguably deflected urgent demands for structural redistribution, land reform, and radical economic transformation that might have addressed the stark disparities entrenched by centuries of colonial and apartheid-era dispossession.

> MANDELA'S MAGISTERIAL LEGACY — HIS EMBRACE OF RECONCILIATION AND NATION-BUILDING — UNDOUBTEDLY A TRIUMPH IN MORAL AND POLITICAL TERMS, HAS ALSO BEEN SUBJECT TO TRENCHANT CRITICISM. HIS FAMOUS INJUNCTION THAT "WE MUST BUILD A SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL SOUTH AFRICANS, BLACK AND WHITE, WILL BE ABLE TO WALK TALL WITHOUT ANY FEAR IN THEIR HEARTS" EMBODIES A NOBLE IDEAL

The ANC's post-apartheid governance reveals a tragic ambivalence, caught between the demands of social justice and the pressures of neoliberal global capitalism.

This tension is evident in the contentious Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies, which, despite good intentions, have been criticised for creating a nouveau riche black elite often complicit with the very privilege and corruption the liberation struggle sought to dismantle, while the majority remain trapped in poverty, with unemployment near 30% and widespread informal settlements.

The ANC's political failures highlight a core post-colonial African dilemma: the gap between liberation as rhetoric and governance as reality. As Steve Biko of the Black Consciousness Movement warned, "The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed," yet after decades of freedom, we must question whose minds are truly free and what liberation millions of marginalised South Africans experience.

Ramaphosa's Oval Office discourse highlighted these tensions. When queried about South Africa's regulatory environment and the willingness of US companies like Tesla and Amazon to invest, he noted the necessity of creating a "conducive environment" for investment — implying a tacit acceptance of existing economic realities.

The example of Tesla's negotiation with China to build a gigafactory, circumventing local partnership mandates, was evoked as a model of pragmatic economic diplomacy. Yet, this pragmatism stands in stark contrast with South Africa's fraught attempts at regulatory reform, particularly in the communications sector, where an "equity equivalent programme" is under consideration — echoing the very legacies of racialised economic control the nation ostensibly seeks to dismantle.

Moreover, the discourse around the so-called "Afrikaner genocide" — a deeply controversial and polarising claim — reflects broader social fractures in post-apartheid South Africa. While violent crime, including attacks on white farmers, is undeniably high, scholars and international observers largely reject framing these events as genocide. Yet this narrative resonates politically in some domestic and international circles, stoking racial fears and complicating nation-building.

Crime affects all communities, but incarceration rates reveal persistent racial and economic inequalities disproportionately impacting Black South Africans. The "white genocide" claim, especially against farmers, collapses under scrutiny: in 2024, eight farmers died amid 26,232 homicides, and no mass land confiscations have occurred since apartheid, exposing societal fracture rather than ethnic cleansing. Allegations of "crimes against whites" expose enduring tensions between diasporic Afrikaners and the post-apartheid state, with such narratives serving as soft power tools that influence global perceptions and complicate South Africa's political development.

The juxtaposition of South Africa's efforts at international moral leadership, such as the genocide case against Israel at the ICC, with its unfinished reckoning with inequality and social justice, reveals a profound dissonance.

The post-apartheid state's self-image as a defender of human rights and international law is undermined by its inability to resolve fundamental domestic contradictions — a disjunction aptly captured by W.E.B. Du Bois's prescient observation that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line," a problem that remains obstinately alive and unresolved in South Africa.

The tragic irony is that the very movements that liberated South Africa remain, in many respects, prisoners of their rhetorical legacy — a legacy of hope and liberation that too often masks a reality of governance marked by factionalism, corruption, and unfulfilled promises. Ramaphosa's skilful diplomacy in Washington, while commendable, is but one chapter in a longer, more fraught story.

The challenge ahead lies not only in maintaining political alliances or courting foreign investment but in confronting the ineradicable legacies of colonialism and apartheid with boldness and honesty.

(The writer is a Colombo based columnist. Views expressed are personal)

Gree- revolutio- rooted i- cooperatio- , co- scious- ess a- d climate justice



Imagine a future where every Indian village isn't just an agricultural base, but a living, breathing factory of green energy — where cow dung becomes currency, where climate action is as common as sowing seeds, and where our farmers are not just cultivators, but guardians of the Earth. With the visionary announcement by Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah to institutionalise three new Multistate Cooperative Societies for cow dung management, carbon credit valuation and compressed biogas (CBG) production within the cooperative framework, India has moved beyond mere climate rhetoric. We are entering an era of grassroots-led green revolution, and this time, it is not about food alone, it is about energy, ecology, and equity.

This bold shift isn't just administrative, it is civilisational. It marks a new model for climate governance rooted in the soil of Bharat, powered by its villages, and held together by the time-tested values of Sahuarita (cooperation). For decades, the climate debate was dominated by distant capitals, high-level negotiations, and top-down frameworks. But India has flipped the script. Through the Cooperative Economic Framework, we are building a decentralised climate economy from the ground up, starting from Primary Agricultural Co-op Societies (PACS) and scaling to national-level apex cooperative institutions. This isn't just a new economic model, it is a new democratic environmentalism, where the farmer becomes the financier of a greener future, and the village becomes the vanguard of net-zero ambition.



BINOD ANAND

Every PACS has a potential climate command centre. These grassroots institutions, long associated, are now being repositioned as gateways to carbon markets and bio-energy hubs.

Imagine decentralised biogas sprouting in every block, feeding clean energy into the rural economy, generating carbon credits that can be monetised globally, and creating a new stream of income for farmers, especially in rain-fed, tribal, and hilly regions. From the cow shed to the carbon exchange, the entire value chain can now be organised, monitored, and scaled through the cooperative economic framework.

Integral to this transformation is the restructuring of rural resource cycles, especially around fodder management, water governance, and dead cattle economics. Millions of farmers struggle due to erratic fodder availability and mismanaged water resources, which in turn affect livestock productivity and rural resilience. Simultaneously, dead cattle markets, often a source of environmental decay and social tension, remain underutilised economic zones. By creating a multistate cooperative dedicated to integrated livestock resource management, India can formalise and monetise these neglected rural streams. Fodder banks, decentralised water recharge systems, and organised carcass processing units can provide dignified employment, biofertilizers, organic leather, and feedstock for CBG plants. Such a cooperative would not only uplift rural livelihoods but create a closed-loop bio-economy — fueling agriculture, improving nutrition, restoring ecology, and generating revenue across multiple layers of rural society. It is not merely a reform — it is a rural renaissance waiting to be unlocked.

And the beauty of this approach lies in its inclusivity. The PACS-to-Apex structure ensures that no region is left behind — not the snowbound villages of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, not the fragile communities of the Northeast, and certainly not the border settlements of Ladakh or Arunachal. In these places, traditional economic activities are constrained by geography, but the bioeconomy of cow dung and carbon offers a rare opportunity — one that aligns with the region's cultural values, ecological needs, and national priorities. When farmers in these areas gain the ability to generate income from climate stewardship, they are not just contributing to GDP — they are also strengthening national security. A prosperous border village is a stable border village. When livelihoods are secure, migration is reduced, local pride is restored, and external threats are diminished. The World Cooperation Economic Framework offers the architecture to take this model to scale. It ensures that financing, training, policy guidance, and market access do not remain siloed. It connects the micro to the macro. It allows the smallest PACS in a tribal hamlet to link with global climate finance and ESG funds. It transforms cow dung — a symbol of rural India's ignored potential — into a goldmine for clean energy, carbon credits, organic farming, and rural employment. Through this, India isn't just creating a circular economy — it is building a circular civilisation.

This is more than a Government scheme — it is a spiritual call to action. A call to revive our ancient ethos of living in harmony with nature now rearmed with modern science, blockchain traceability, and global carbon accounting. It is a call to stand tall on the world stage — not as climate victims begging for compensation, but as climate victors offering solutions. This is our surgical strike — not through bullets, but through biogas, not with missiles, but with methane management, not by harming — but by healing the Earth through cooperation.

We are witnessing a new economic independence movement — this time against carbon dependency and global climate injustice. As the world watches, India rises. And it rises not from the skyscrapers, but from its soil, its villages, and its unyielding cooperative spirit.From *Sahkarita se Samriddhi to Sahkarita se Sanrakshan,* the cooperative model is no longer just about managing credit — it is now India's frontline defence in the fight for global climate equity and national unity.

Let the world take note "When Bharat's villages rise, the Earth heals — and the Nation stands stronger". Let us remember that this journey is not just economic or environmental; it is deeply spiritual. This is the Vedic economics meeting of 21st-century governance. This is Yajna — a collective sacrifice and contribution, where every farmer, every cow, every drop of water, and every seed of cooperation becomes part of a sacred offering to protect the Earth and uplift the Nation.

Let the world understand this clearly, India's climate action is not born of compulsion, but of conviction rooted in consciousness. And as Bharat's villages rise once again in the light of Sahkarita, the prayers of our ancestor's echo in unison,May all be happy, may all be healthy, may all see auspiciousness, and may none suffer." This is the dharma of cooperation. This is the soul of India rising.

(The writer is the Secretary General, Confederation of NGOs of Rural India. Views expressed are personal)

How Uttar Pradesh is quietly rewriting the climate story

In a country where urban growth often erases green landscapes and worsens pollution, Uttar Pradesh is carving out a different path — one rooted in sustainability, innovation, and local solutions. The state is quietly transforming its cities through a range of initiatives that seek to restore balance between development and the environment. From forests growing in dense city pockets to roads built with plastic waste and rooftops lined with solar panels, Uttar Pradesh is proving that climate resilience can be built one tree, one street, and one rooftop at a time.

This transformation is not the result of a single grand plan, but rather a series of focused, interconnected efforts. Each addresses a key area — air quality, heat mitigation, carbon capture, or waste management. Together, they reflect a growing realisation: to fight climate change effectively, action must be both local and layered.

One of the standout strategies is the use of the Miyawaki method of afforestation — a technique developed by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki that creates dense, fast-growing forests using native species. In Uttar Pradesh, over 310 acres have been converted into such forests. These patches, often planted in highly polluted urban zones, grow rapidly into green oases that regulate microclimates, absorb carbon, reduce noise, and improve biodiversity. A striking example is found near Lucknow's Kukrail forest reserve, where a once-vacant plot now supports over 60 native species in less than two years. Local residents now use the forest patch for walking, birdwatching, and quiet reflection. Similar projects are thriving in Kanpur, Varanasi, and Meerut, highlighting that even small spaces can have a big ecological impact.



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

This afforestation push is supported by the Upvan Policy, which focuses on greening larger, often degraded urban lands. Under this initiative, an additional 32 acres of green space have been added across cities. These areas are designed not just as parks but as ecosystems — spaces that can absorb up to 30 times more carbon dioxide than standard tree-planting efforts. While planting trees pulls carbon from the air, the state is also addressing another major challenge: plastic pollution. Under a bold new initiative, Uttar Pradesh is using shredded single-use plastic to build roads. Mixed with bitumen, this plastic-asphalt blend is being used to construct nearly 1,500 kilometers of roads. The project has repurposed around 2,000 tonnes of waste plastic so far, reducing landfill loads and offering a durable, water-resistant road surface. In Ghaziabad, a three-kilometer stretch built using this method has withstood two monsoons with minimal damage. The success of such roads is inspiring other districts to follow suit. Importantly, this strategy also encourages better waste segregation and gives economic value to plastic waste, creating opportunities for waste collectors and recyclers.

Solar Rooftops: Clean Energy at the Top

Another pillar of Uttar Pradesh's green revolution is solar energy. Under the PM Surya Ghar Yojana, the state is promoting solar rooftop installations across urban centers. Cities like Noida, Lucknow, and Gorakhpur are seeing a surge in installations — over one lakh rooftops already host solar panels, with more than 11,500 new systems being added each month.

These solar panels are not only reducing dependence on fossil fuels but are also helping to cool homes, mitigating the urban heat island effect. By insulating rooftops, they reduce the need for air conditioning, indirectly lowering electricity consumption. The state's target of eight lakh installations by 2027 makes it one of India's most ambitious decentralised solar programs. Renuka Sharma, a homemaker in Rae Bareli, is among the many who have benefited. Her power bill has dropped by more than 60%, and she now advocates solar energy to her neighbors. "It's just there — on the roof-saving money and helping the environment," she says. The impact of these green initiatives is already visible.

Under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), cities like Agra, Jhansi, and Rae Bareli have reported consistent reductions in particulate matter levels. Agra, once infamous for the smog clouding the Taj Mahal, now sees clearer skies thanks to a combination of road sweeping, dust suppression, and increased green cover. Urban planners emphasise that these results are not due to one policy, but a synergy of efforts: more trees, better waste management, solar energy, and innovative infrastructure all working together.

Despite the progress, Uttar Pradesh still faces serious environmental challenges, from seasonal pollution spikes to groundwater depletion and the pressures of fast-paced urbanisation. The state's per capita green cover remains below the national average, and solar adoption in rural areas is still limited. However, what's encouraging is the shift in mindset. Environmental stewardship is no longer limited to token tree-planting drives or political speeches. It's becoming embedded in urban planning and civic development. Climate action is now part of housing schemes and infrastructure planning. As India confronts the reality of a warming planet, its largest states will shape the country's response. UP, with its scale and diversity, has the potential to lead by example. If it can continue to transform challenges into opportunities for green innovation, the impact could ripple far beyond its borders. The journey is ongoing, but the direction is clear. The seeds of a sustainable future have been planted, and they're beginning to take root.

(The writer is the Associate Editor, The Pioneer, Lucknow. Views expressed are personal)

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IN BRIEF

VIBGYOR Group celebrates stellar Cambridge results

VIBGYOR Group of Schools, a leading network of K-12 institutions in India, proudly announces the outstanding performance of its students in the Cambridge (CIE) IGCSE (Grade 10), AS (Grade 11), and A Level I (Grade 12) examinations for the academic year 2024–25. These stellar results reflect VIBGYOR's progressive educational vision, international benchmarks, and steadfast commitment to nurturing globally competent learners. The achievement is particularly meaningful as Indian families increasingly seek globally aligned academic pathways. With the international education sector growing steadily, marked by a 14% rise in international schools, a 40% surge in student enrollment, and a 36% increase in staff recruitment over the past five years, according to the ISC research. There is a clear shift toward education that goes beyond rote learning. In this context, the newly launched VIBGYOR World Academy in Bhopal and Nagpur, offering the Cambridge curriculum, stands out as a preferred choice for parents focused on nurturing 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and digital fluency.



Mussel farming boosts livelihoods in Kerala

A mussel farming project led by the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has brought new hope to low-income families in Kodungallur in Thrissur district, as two self-help groups celebrated a successful harvest of 1.7 tonnes of mussels on Friday. The initiative, carried out over six months in the backwaters of Kodungallur, was part of CMFRI's Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP), a scheme focused on improving the quality of life for families from Scheduled Caste communities. Fifteen families took part in the project, working together under the guidance of CMFRI scientists. Their hard work culminated in a "harvest mela", or festival, where the sizeable mussel yield was showcased. "CMFRI's efforts to popularise this less expensive farming method among the community yielded a good result, with the farmers achieving a bumper harvest with a good growth rate.



Suzuki starts production of first electric scooter

Two-wheeler maker Suzuki Motorcycle India on Friday said it has commenced the production of its first electric scooter e-ACCESS at its Gurugram manufacturing facility. First showcased at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, the everyday urban commuting electric scooter e-ACCESS marks the brand's entry into the e-two-wheeler segment in the domestic market. The e-scooter is powered by Suzuki's e-technology, which includes a Lithium-iron-phosphate (LFP) battery known for longer life and better thermal stability, the company said. The scooter also features regenerative braking, a maintenance-free belt drive system, and the Suzuki Drive Mode Selector-e (SDMS-e) for different riding modes (eco and ride A and B modes), along with reverse mode, according to the company. Additionally, to ensure reliability, the battery and components undergo rigorous testing, including submersion, temperature extremes, drops, vibrations, motor bench, puncture and crush tests, it said. To further support its electric mobility initiative, Suzuki Motorcycle India is actively engaging with its existing dealership network to be fully EV-ready across the country.

RBI to pay govt record dividend of Rs 2.69 lakh crore for FY25

PNS ■ MUMBAI



The Reserve Bank on Friday announced a record Rs 2.69 lakh crore dividend to be paid to the government for the fiscal ended March this year, 27.4 per cent more than the payout in 2023-24.

The Reserve Bank had transferred Rs 2.1 lakh crore dividend to the government for the fiscal 2023-24. The payout was Rs 87,416 crore for 2022-23.

The decision on the dividend payout was taken at the 616th meeting of the Central Board of Directors of Reserve Bank of India under the Chairmanship of Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

The board reviewed the global and domestic economic scenario, including risks to the outlook, RBI said in a statement.

The board also discussed the working of the Reserve Bank during the year April 2024 - March 2025 and approved the Reserve Bank's Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year 2024-25.

The transferable surplus for the year (2024-25) has been arrived at on the basis of the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF) as approved by the Central Board in its meeting held on May 15, 2025, RBI said.

"The Board...approved the transfer of Rs 2,68,590.07 crore as surplus to the Central Government for the accounting year 2024-25," it said.

The revised framework stipulates that the risk provisioning under the Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) be maintained within a range of 7.50 to 4.50 per cent of the RBI's balance sheet.

Based on the revised ECF, and taking into consideration the macroeconomic assessment, the Central Board decided to further increase the CRB to 7.50 per cent, RBI said.



Trump threatens 25% import tax on Apple unless iPhones are made in US

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Friday threatened to put a 25% tariff on Apple products unless iPhones are manufactured in the United States.

The threat delivered over social media could dramatically increase the price of iPhones, potentially hurting sales and the profits of one of America's leading technology companies. The company now joins Amazon, Walmart and other major companies as being in the White House's crosshairs as they try to respond to the uncertainty and inflationary pressures unleashed by the import taxes being imposed by Trump.

"I have long ago informed Tim Cook of Apple that I expect their iPhone's that will be sold in the United States of America will be manufactured and built in the United States, not India, or anyplace else," Trump posted on Truth Social. "If that is not the case, a Tariff of at least 25% must be paid by Apple to the US."

Apple, led by CEO Tim Cook, in response to Trump's tariffs on China was looking to shift iPhone manufacturing to India as it adjusts supply chains. That plan has become a festering source of frustration for the US president, who also brought it up last week during his Middle East trip.

Aerolase enters India, seeks to tap aesthetic & derma mkt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



US-based aesthetic laser technology player Aerolase on Friday announced its foray into India seeking to tap opportunity in the fast-growing aesthetic and dermatology market in the country.

The company is introducing its flagship products, Neo Elite and Era Elite optimised to address key Indian skin concerns such as pigmentation, acne, and rejuvenation, focussing on metros such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru in the initial phase, Aerolase India Country Head Madhusudan HK said.

"India's vibrant demographics, escalating awareness and investment in skin health, and thriving medical tourism landscape make it a pivotal hub for cutting-edge aesthetic care," Aerolase CEO Pavel Efremkin said in a statement.

He further said, "With an accelerating demand for safer, precise, and downtime-free procedures, Aerolase's (US) FDA-approved technologies are uniquely positioned to empower Indian clinics and dermatologists to deliver world-class treatments tailored specifically for Indian skin."

Commenting on the potential of the Indian market, Madhusudan HK said, "The Indian market is one of the fastest-growing aesthetic and dermatology markets globally. This market is growing in very strong double digits, almost 12 to 15 per cent on a year-on-year basis. That gives us a huge opportunity to enter the Indian market."

As per industry estimates, the aesthetic dermatology market in India is expected to touch nearly USD 385 million by 2032, up from nearly USD 170 million in 2024.

On the company's targets in India, Madhusudan said it is a little early to set definite markers but the aim is to emulate what the company has been able to achieve in the US, where it is a leading player.

"We want to make Aerolase technology the standard for skin wellness in India," he said, adding that the focus is to partner with dermatologists and make effective treatment available to patients.

The company will import its products from the US, where these are manufactured.

ITC shares climb over 2 pc post earnings announcement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of consumer goods giant ITC Ltd on Friday climbed over 2 per cent after the firm reported 2 per cent rise in March quarter net profit.

The stock went up by 2.39 per cent to settle at Rs 436.30 on the BSE.

During the day, it jumped 3 per cent to Rs 439.

At the NSE, it climbed 2.32 per cent to Rs 436.

In volume terms, 12.20 lakh shares of the firm were traded at the BSE and 185.37 lakh shares on the NSE during the day.

ITC Ltd on Thursday reported 2 per cent rise in its March quarter net profit on the back of a surge in rural demand and steady growth in the mainstay cigarettes business.

RBI should roll back curbs on gold loans: AIADMK

PNS ■ CHENNAI

AIADMK general secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami on Friday urged the Reserve Bank of India to immediately roll back the new conditions imposed on jewellery mortgage loans as they would severely affect the poor and middle-class families dependent on such loans during emergencies. He said over 80 per cent of the Indian population who hailed from the poor and middle-class sections, and even farmers and traders, mortgaged their jewels with the nearest cooperative or nationalised banks to raise money to meet emergencies. "These sections would be severely affected due to the RBI's draft guidelines on prudential norms," Palaniswami said in a statement here. Further, reducing the loan-to-value ratio to 75 per cent from the present 80 per cent and burdening borrowers with excessive documentation, among other things, would impact the borrower's ability to raise loans, he said. "Hence, in the interest of the people, I urge the Reserve Bank of India to immediately withdraw these new conditions and also request it to check the quality of gold coins purchased from private jewellery shops before providing gold loans," Palaniswami added.

Intermediaries told to extend services to persons with disabilities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday directed intermediaries to extend their services enabling digital accessibility to persons with disabilities and also issued frequently asked questions (FAQs) explaining account opening by such persons.

Sebi said that intermediaries will be guided by FAQs on account opening by persons with disabilities.

In a circular, the regulator said it is "committed to the cause of enabling equal access of services of its registered intermediaries to persons with disabilities, including persons with visual impairments and in order to make the digital KYC process inclusive and accessible, FAQ on Account opening by persons with disabilities has been revised".

This FAQs are applicable to intermediaries establishing account-based relationships including mutual funds.

Under the FAQs, Sebi said the facility of online or digital KYC can be extended to persons with disability by adopting accessibility standards. On request of the client, the intermediary should extend their

India to oppose WB's funding to Pakistan next month

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



India will next month oppose the World Bank funding to Pakistan, just as it had done in case of IMF, arguing that Islamabad had used such funds in the past to procure arms and ammunitions, a government source said.

Multilateral agencies' funding to developing countries are meant for poverty alleviation and development goals, but Pakistan's track record has been to misuse them for military purposes, the source said.

World Bank is likely to review next month its USD 20 billion lending to Pakistan under the Country Partnership Framework agreed in January this year.

The funds to cash-starved Pakistan were for areas, including clean energy and climate resilience for a period of the ten years beginning 2026.

"We will oppose the upcoming World Bank funding to Pakistan," the source said.

India had lobbied with IMF Chief Kristalina Georgiev and ministers of IMF board member nations against the agency extending a USD 2.3 billion assistance to cash-strapped Pakistan earlier this month.

New Delhi presented proofs ranging from presence of senior Pakistani military officials at the funeral of designated terrorists to data that showed that Islamabad had misused funds in last two decades with arm procurements rising exponentially.

Sources said Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman spoke to IMF chief, and some ministers on IMF board, while the Indian Embassy officials also presented the case before powerful nations like the US.

The funding could, however, not be blocked as the agenda had previously been circulated to all memebers and it was left to them to vote on extending assistance to Pakistan.

'Six-member board to regulate payment systems'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



RBI governor headed a six-member Payments Regulatory Board, including three central government nominees, will regulate and supervise payment systems in the country, according to a central bank notification.

The Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) will replace the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement System (BPSS).

The five-member BPSS is also headed by the RBI Governor but does not include any government nominee. The other members are a deputy government concerned and three directors from the Central Board of the Reserve Bank of India.

The Reserve Bank has now notified 'Payments Regulatory Board Regulations, 2025'.

According to the notification, other members of the governor-headed Payments Regulatory Board (PRB) will be the Deputy Governor in charge of the Payment and Settlement Systems, one officer of the RBI to be nominated by the Central Board, and three persons nominated by the central government.

RBI Governor, Deputy Governor and the central bank official will function as "ex officio" members of the Board.

It further said the PRB may invite persons with experience in the fields of payment and settlement systems, information technology, and law to attend its meeting either as permanent or ad hoc invitees and the Principal Legal Adviser of the RBI shall be a permanent invitee to the meetings.

Wellington gets CCI nod to acquire stake in Porter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fair trade regulator CCI has cleared US-based Wellington Management's proposal to acquire a stake in SmartShift Logistics Solution, the parent company of on-demand logistics-turned-unicorn Porter. "The combination is being notified under the green channel route in consonance with Section 6(4) of the Competition Act, 2002 (as amended) read with Rule 3 of the Competition (Criteria of Combination) Rules, 2024," the Competition Commission of India (CCI) said in a notice on Tuesday. Under the green channel route, a transaction which does not pose any risk of an appreciable adverse effect on competition is deemed to be approved on being intimated to the competition watchdog. Investment management firm Wellington Management through its affiliate Wellington Hadley Harbor AIV II Master Investors (Cayman) III (Acquirer) is acquiring a stake in SmartShift Logistics Solution.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
IRRIGATION AND CAD DEPARTMENT
TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No. 11SE/2025-26 Date: 22.05.2025
Name of the work: AMRSLBC Project - LLC Pump House - Operation & Maintenance of Low Level Canal Pump House ((2+1) No*4MW-320Cuses each) located on foreshore of Nagarjuna Sagar Reservoir near Pullathanda(V), Peddavoora(M), Nalgonda District for a period of 3 Years from 2025-26 to 2027-28 i.e from 01.06.2025 to 31.05.2028. Estimate Cost Value: Rs. 528.94 Lakhs, Submission of Tender Documents last date: 31.05.2025 up to 5.00 PM. Further information visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, G.V.Gudem, Nalgonda
DIPR R.O.No: 2367-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26, Date: 23-05-2025

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. E/5826/5/2024-25/ Date: 22-05-2025
Name of the work: (6 Weeks) "Removing water stagnation by a) Laying RCC pipe line 600mm dia, Repair to the Catch Pits, Engaging of Monsoon emergency team, equipments, Installation of Open Gym Equipment to Park, Construction of Rajaka Sangham Community Hall & Supply and Spreading of Gravel etc., at various locations in Ward No 11-Nagole , 12, Mansoorabad, 13-Hayathnagar & 14-BN Reddy Nagar of Hayath Nagar Circle-3, GHMC. Estimate Amount: Rs. 101.73 Lakhs. Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 28-05-2025 @ 03:00 PM., Name & Address Officer Cell No.: S/o. K.Ramesh Babu Executive Engineer, Hayath Nagar Circle-3, GHMC (M): 8790374055 & 7331189513. For further details can be seen at e-procurement@http://www.eprocurement.telangana.gov.in/
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Hayath Nagar Circle-3, GHMC
DIPR R.O.No: 2373-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2025-26, Dt. 23-05-2025

'MYSORE PAK' TO 'MYSORE SHREE'

Jaipur confectioners drop 'Pak' from sweet names

PNS ■ JAIPUR



Shakespeare may not have found much in a name but some in this Rajasthan capital could disagree as they tuck into 'Moti Shree' instead of 'Moti Pak' and 'Mysore Shree' not 'Mysore Pak' -- the sweets the same, the moniker changed in keeping with the anti-Pakistan mood of the times.

The name change is complete in at least three famous confectionaries, which have dropped 'Pak' from the entire range of their traditional sweets and replaced it with 'Shree' instead.

So, 'Aam Pak' is 'Aam Shree', 'Gond Pak' is 'Gond Shree' and so on. Luxury offerings '"Swarn Bhasm Pak' and 'Chandi Bhasm Pak'" have also been rechristened 'Swarn Shree' and 'Chandi Shree', a move intended as giving expression to the patriotic spirit in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack and Operation Sindoor that struck terror targets in Pakistan.

Anjali Jain, the owner of Tyohaar Sweets, a premium shop known for its elaborate and festive sweet offerings in the city's Vaishali Nagar area, said their delicacies must also reflect national pride.

"The spirit of patriotism shouldn't just reside at the border but in every Indian home and heart," Jain said.

The decision, she said, is not about linguistics but sentiment.

"Customers are also appreciating the decision and are happy to see the changed names. We were also not happy after Pahalgam and Operation Sindoor," she added.

Joining the culinary rebranding movement is Bombay Misthan Bhandar, a decades-old chain of sweet shops in the city, and Agarwal Caterers. All the sweets with the 'Pak' suffix have been renamed.

"We wanted to send a clear message -- those who dare raise their eyes against India will have their names erased, and every Indian will respond in their own way. This is our sweet, symbolic retaliation," said Bombay Misthan Bhandar general manager Vineet Trikha.

The name changes have struck an appreciative chord with customers.

In businessman Ramesh Bhatia's view, the move to change the name of the sweets, every patriotic gesture after the Pahalgam attack now feels personal.

"Changing the names of sweets may seem small, but it's a powerful cultural response. It shows that even civilians stand united with our forces — from battlefield to sweet shop, the message is clear that India will not forget or forgive," he said.

The Pioneer
Hyderabad

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SATURDAY MAY 24, 2025

'I was focused on pronunciation—not realising

I was singing for Kamal Haasan'

In an exclusive chat with *The Pioneer,* singer Vaishali Samant opens up about her latest track *Jinguchaa* from Kamal Haasan's *Thug Life*, marking a special reunion with director Mani Ratnam and music maestro A.R. Rahman 25 years after her breakthrough with *Yaro Yarodi* in *Alai Payuthey*. From reliving nostalgia to redefining success in the digital era, Vaishali reflects on her musical journey, her approach to vibrant compositions and why working with Rahman remains a creatively fulfilling experience



TEJAL SINHA
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Singer Vaishali Samant is back in the spotlight with her latest energetic track *Jinguchaa* from the Kamal Haasan-starrer *Thug Life*, also featuring Silambarasan TR and Sanya Malhotra. With lyrics penned by Kamal Haasan and music composed by the maestro A.R. Rahman, the song is being received very well by listeners.

But what makes this release particularly special for Vaishali is the sense of coming full circle — *Jinguchaa* reunites her with filmmaker Mani Ratnam and composer A.R. Rahman 25 years after she first lent her voice to *Yaro Yarodi* in the 2000 cult film *Alai Payuthey*.

"When I sang this song, I didn't know I was singing for Mani Ratnam sir," the *Aika Dajiba* singer reveals adding, "Whenever I go to any recording, I don't ask for the details about who I'm singing for. For me, what matters initially is that my voice should suit the song well. I was simply happy that I was going to sing a Tamil song."

She recalls that Mani Ratnam had once encouraged her to sing in Tamil.

"Mani sir had told me once, 'You should try singing a Tamil song.' I'm so glad he gave me the opportunity. My focus was on getting the pronunciation correct and making sure all aspects were intact." It was only during her second recording session that she realised who the song was for.

"During the first recording, I didn't ask much. But when I went in for all the improvisations the second time, I saw the name *Thug Life*. And I thought, 'This is Mani sir's film!' I was so excited — it took me right back to 2000 when *Yaro Yarodi* released. I felt so blessed. I initially didn't even know Kamal Haasan sir had written the lyrics. That was like a cherry on the cake. God has given me this beautiful moment." She reflects on how her artistic journey has evolved since *Alai Payuthey.*

"*Alai Payuthey* happened in 2000. At that time, there was no social media, so I didn't even know Yaro Yarodi still holds such a special place in people's hearts. But now, people are posting and saying, 'Yaro Yarodi singer Vaishali Samant is back with Jinguchaa.' It's surreal."

At the time, she was equally invested in her independent music. "In 2000, I was really focused on my independent album Aika Dajiba, and that same year Alaipayuthey happened. So in bits and pieces, people would call me for recordings. Then Chhalka Chhalka Re happened. Things just kept happening gradually, and I was still concentrating on my albums."

Her career trajectory changed further post-2003. "*Aika Dajiba* became a big thing in 2003, and that's when I began doing events. That continued until 2008 — so my journey has been quite a mix of playback and independent work." Talking about the recording experience for *Jinguchaa,* she describes the energy of the track as truly infectious.

"For *Jinguchaa*, sir communicated with me over the phone and told me, 'This is a marriage song — you know how it is.' It's all about joy and celebration. Trust me, I was dancing throughout the recording — that's the vibe!"

She elaborates on the song's dynamic structure and musical layering.

"Musically, if you dissect Jinguchaa, there's the blend of us three singers, then a shift from a traditional dance groove to rock guitar. There are a lot of ups and downs, but the moment the song starts, you just start dancing. We recorded a lot of variations and really enjoyed that *Jinguchaa* moment."

Her previous release, *Aaya Re Toofan*, from the Vicky Kaushal-starrer *Chhaava*, also composed by Rahman, became a massive success. The song has crossed 58 million views on YouTube and struck a chord with listeners. "I belong to an era when there was no social media. Even audiences are finding it hard to keep up with the pace now," she reflects. "The parameters have changed slightly. But I make sure I want to do good songs — not just ones that are made for reels."

She is grateful for the creative freedom Rahman offers her.

"When songs like Aaya Re Toofan bring a different vibe, it feels special. I'm so happy that A.R. Rahman sir decided that 'this part only Vaishali will sing.' It's only after the final output that you realize how amazing it has turned out."

Vaishali adds that she has learned to adapt to Rahman's distinctive style of direction.

"With AR Rahman sir, I have learned to sing exactly like what he wants. Every artist places a different kind of faith in him, and I'm grateful for mine."

With a diverse discography that spans languages and genres — from *Aika Dajiba* to *Chhalka Chhalka Re, Kombdi Palali, Ay Sakhi* and *Ranga Ranga* — Vaishali Samant continues to resonate with listeners of all ages.

And with *Jinguchaa*, she has not only delivered another hit but also relieved a moment that takes her back to where it all began — a journey rooted in melody, tradition and pure joy.

For *Jinguchaa*, sir communicated with me over the phone and told me, 'This is a marriage song — you know how it is.' It's all about joy and celebration. Trust me, I was dancing throughout the recording — that's the vibe!

Arushi Nishank champions circular fashion at Cannes

Arushi Nishank made a powerful statement on the red carpet at the Cannes Film Festival by donning a circular fashion dress from the fall collection. Celebrating her first red carpet Cannes walk Arushi stepped into history-making by promoting circular fashion and sent a global eco-conscious and social justice message through her custom dress.

Arushi's look was a testament to the fact that circular fashion and style can go hand in hand. Her dress featured intricate hand-embroidery, lending it a timeless charm while embracing sustainable design principles. The green color symbolises vitality and harmony with nature – a subtle nod to environmental advocacy. The materials used were ethically sourced and sustainably produced.

And most importantly, it was made with zero-waste cutting techniques that reduce environmental impact. She set a positive example for her fans for the broader fashion industry. Her look showcased that ethical fashion can be incredibly glamorous and sophisticated. She underscored the importance of sustainability in fashion. Speaking from the panel in Cannes as an invitee guest on "Making India a Global Film Power House" she said that the use of circular fashion sourced materials in films always emphasise the growing trend of incorporating eco-friendly elements and circular economy into high fashion. With her lines 'Threads with zero regret' she said this shift not only highlighted the growing importance of sustainability in the fashion and film industry but also showcased that elegance and environmental consciousness can coexist. Arushi who is also very vocal about environmental & global water issues recently appeared at the United Nations Geneva podium giving a powerful message to the world by stating how a circular economy can promote a more sustainable and resilient economy for any country". Her presence at the UN was applauded by many.



CRACKING THE CODE OF REAL ESTATE

PNS|HYDERABAD

And with PropChk, you can say goodbye to hidden defects and costly surprises. The experts are like detectives for your property, sniffing out potential issues and providing you with a clear picture of its condition. They're not just about identifying problems, though - they're also about finding solutions. Their reports are designed to be actionable, so you can prioritise repairs and maintenance with confidence. Whether you're a homebuyer, developer, or investor, they're here to help you make informed decisions about your property. Here's how Saurabh Tyagi, Co-founder and CEO of PropChk, does it!



How is PropChk using its inspection services to bridge the trust gap that exists between developers and homebuyers in the Indian real estate market?

By providing transparent, technologically advanced property inspections that provide buyers with objective, factual evaluations, it helps close the trust gap. The thorough inspection reports, which are supported by photographic proof and completed by certified mechanical, electrical and civil engineers, provide clients the assurance they need to make wise choices. We guarantee that buyers receive exactly what they are promised by exposing hidden flaws and providing useful insights, fostering responsibility in the real estate industry.

When establishing a tech-enabled home inspection startup in India, what particular difficulties did you encounter and how did you resolve them?

One of our main challenges was educating the market about the importance of home inspections. In India, this idea is still relatively fresh, in contrast to some Western markets. By illustrating the actual dangers of missing inspections, we aimed to raise awareness among developers and homebuyers. Maintaining uniformity in quality across cities was another difficulty. In order to solve this, we created exclusive inspection checklists, made training investments and provided our workers with standardised equipment and software so that everything was consistent throughout all sites.

How does it make sure that all of its inspection reports are high-quality and consistent, particularly while expanding operations across several cities?

Our activities are based on consistency. Every inspection adheres to a defined, industry-standard checklist that is customised for the kind and stage of the property. Our engineers ensure consistent data collection and analysis by using calibrated instruments and sophisticated software. In order to double-check reports prior to distribution, we also have internal quality assessment mechanisms in place. As we continue to grow, these procedures enable us to scale without sacrificing quality and this discipline enables us to uphold high standards throughout the more than 12 locations in which we operate.

How can data analytics and technology improve the customer experience?

Our inspection model is heavily reliant on technology. Every step of the process is tech-driven, from the proprietary software that gathers and analyzes data to the high-precision instruments utilised on-site. By using data analytics, we can find trends in flaws across projects and geographies, which helps us make better recommendations and enhance subsequent inspections. Customers will benefit from quicker turnaround times and clearer, more accurate reports, which will increase their happiness and trust.

What are your goals for growth as it keeps expanding, and how do you see yourself further upending the real estate industry?

Through the onboarding of qualified people and the improvement of our tech stack, we are quickly growing our reach beyond the present 12+ cities. Our goal is to standardise home inspections in all Indian real estate transactions. Our goal is to establish a more transparent and reliable environment where quality assurance is the standard rather than the exception by further integrating our services into the purchasing process, whether directly with homeowners, developers, or channel partners.

PARTY


Prathibha




Firoz sait

Global Education (GEDU) hosted a landmark Partners Event at the iconic Taj Krishna in Hyderabad, where it shared exclusive insights into Schiller International University's globally-recognised STEM programs. The event brought together distinguished partners and education leaders to celebrate collaborative successes and highlight significant developments in the realm of global education.


Jyothi






Arpita



Photos by- SV Chary


Aptronix has inaugurated Telangana's first Apple Premium Partner store at Inorbit Mall, Hyderabad. Marking a major milestone for both Aptronix and the Apple retail ecosystem in the state, the newly launched store has undergone a significant transformation to reflect Apple's global retail standards.

Cricket Star Shubman Gill Joins Team Oakley



Oakley announced Star Indian cricketer Shubman Gill as its next brand ambassador and face of the "Artifacts from the future" campaign in India. Shubman Gill has rapidly made a name for himself as one of the most promising young talents in world cricket. With his impressive consistency, elegant stroke play, and exceptional composure under pressure, Gill has captivated fans across the globe and established himself as a rising star in all formats of the game. His remarkable journey and achievements have made him a source of inspiration for India's youth, showcasing the power of determination and excellence.

Kotak811 Backs India's Digital Banking Wave

Kotak Mahindra Bank ("KMBL"/"Kotak") introduced a bold new chapter for Kotak811, its flagship digital banking platform, with a campaign that celebrates the seamless, intuitive, and full-service experience it now offers. Designed for India's digital-first generation, the new Kotak811 is more than just an app—it's a complete bank in your pocket. India is undergoing a remarkable transformation in consumer behavior, fueled by widespread smartphone usage, affordable internet access, and increasing confidence in digital ecosystems. With over a billion mobile connections and a youthful, tech-savvy population, the stage is set for a digital banking revolution. Today's consumers demand more than traditional banking—they want speed, simplicity, and security, all seamlessly integrated into a mobile-first experience. This is precisely the space Kotak811 is designed to lead

LISTINGS

Oral Semaglutide Cuts CV Events in SOUL Trial

Novo Nordisk presented the full results from the SOUL cardiovascular outcomes trial, demonstrating that oral semaglutide significantly reduced the risk of major adverse cardiovascular events in adults with type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD) and/or chronic kidney disease (CKD)1. These new data from the phase 3b trial were featured during a late-breaking clinical trial session at the American College of Cardiology's (ACC) Annual Scientific Session and Expo in Chicago, US and simultaneously published in New England Journal of Medicine2. The SOUL trial achieved its primary endpoint, demonstrating a 14% reduction in risk of major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE) in adults with type 2 diabetes and CVD and/or CKD when treated with oral semaglutide compared to placebo. Each component of MACE, being nonfatal myocardial infarction (26%) and nonfatal stroke (12%), CV death (7%) contributed to the risk reduction1. Notably, among trial participants from the Asian region, the risk of major adverse cardiovascular events (MACE) reduction was even more pronounced at 27%.



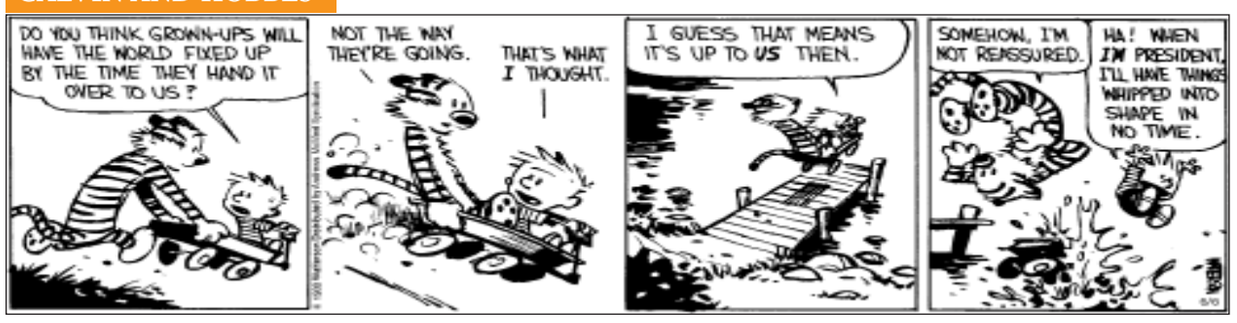
The 6th Anniversary & Culinary Conclave 2025, hosted by the Telangana Chefs Association (TCA), was inaugurated by Chef Manjit Singh Gill, President, Indian Federation of Culinary Associations (IFCA) at The Park, Hyderabad. The event, themed "Roots to Robots – The Evolution of Culinary Craft," brought together a vibrant confluence of India's top chefs, global dignitaries, academicians, industry partners, and passionate culinary students. Chef Vijayabaskaran, General Secretary, IFCA; Chef MS Gupta, Treasurer, IFCA Presidium; Chef Sudhir Sibal, Board Member, IFCA Presidium; Chef Dharmendra Lamba, President, Telangana Chefs Association (TCA) and Chef Vimal Dhar, President, Royal Rajasthan Chefs Association, were among the dignitaries

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



GARFIELD



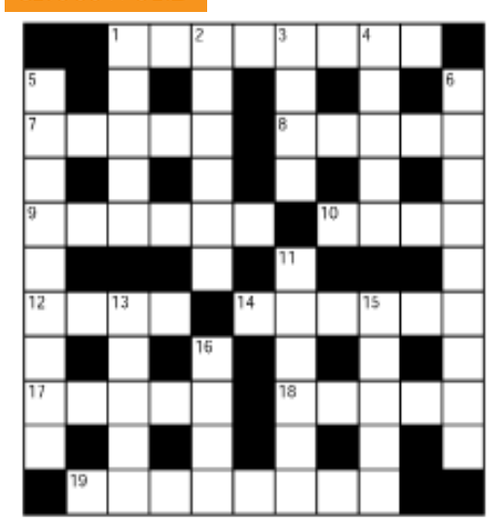
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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6		7				1		9
4				1		7		
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3			7				6	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

GINGER MEGGS



ACROSS

1 Large stone buildings built in ancient Egypt as tombs
7 Steel pins knocked into wood
8 Call in on
9 Get
10 A song sung by one person
12 Have a lie down
14 Thin cord for tying parcels
17 Fabric
18 Defrosts
19 So smooth it is difficult to get hold of

DOWN

1 Indicate direction with your finger
2 Moscow is in this country
3 Shift
4 A type of dance club
5 Wrong
6 Most powerful
11 A sculpted figure
13 Ruin
15 Rome is the capital city of this country
16 Large boat

SOLUTION

S	T	A	T	I	O	N	S		L					
T		L			U		I		I					
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The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | MAY 24, 2025

Is *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* being sabotaged by TFI bigwigs?

Fondly called 'Aa Naluguru', the Telugu Film Industry is said to be running under their dictatorship. These four individuals have a stronghold over cinema theatres, distribution, and also produce films. They are now calling the shots and the present issue of revenue sharing between exhibitors and producers is reportedly emerging because of them.



A few days ago, exhibitors from the Telugu states announced their decision to close theatres starting June 1. Later, the Telugu Film Chamber of Commerce held meetings with exhibitors and distributors, requesting them not to shut down theatres and inviting them for talks. However, cinema lovers were surprised to hear this sudden announcement from the exhibitors. Until now, cinema theatres were operating on a rental basis, but now the exhibitors are demanding a percentage-based revenue model. Single-screen theatre owners are particularly keen on shutting down operations. Interestingly, in the Telugu Film Industry, the four people—commonly referred to as 'Aa Naluguru'—who control many theatres are also the distributors and producers. A source claims that these four are trying to halt Pawan Kalyan's film *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* by raising the theatre rental issue. "That's the reason these four didn't attend the exhibitors and distributors meeting held a few days ago at the Film Chamber Office," the source added.

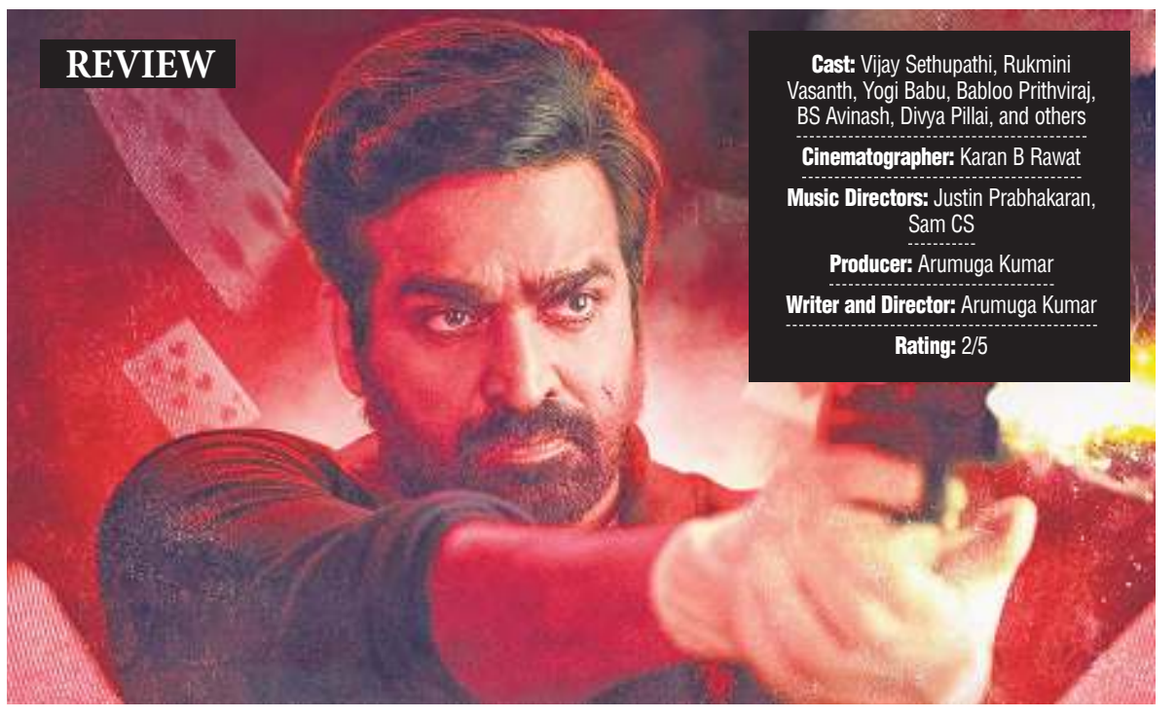
Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan has repeatedly expressed his desire to support the Telugu Film Industry's growth in the state. He reiterated at the *Game Changer* pre-release event that he respects the industry, which is why he approved a ticket price hike to help generate government revenue. However, these four appear to have decided to oppose Pawan Kalyan and suddenly brought up the revenue-sharing issue just before the release of his film.

Most theatres in both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are controlled by these four individuals. "When their films release, they act as if there are no issues in the industry. But when a producer they don't like releases a film, they create obstacles," says an industry insider who wished to remain anonymous.

Since Pawan Kalyan assumed the Deputy CM role, several industry figures including Suresh Babu, Dil Raju, Allu Aravind, Ashwini Dutt, and Supriya have met him. Pawan clearly stated that producers can meet him with any problems—actors need not. He assured them that the government is willing to help with any issues. However, industry representatives have still not approached Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

The AP Government is closely observing these developments. Most single-screen theatres are on lease to these four individuals. What happens once those leases end? After nearly five years, Pawan Kalyan's *Hari Hara Veera Mallu* is set to release on June 12, produced by A.M. Rathnam. "These four are targeting Pawan Kalyan's film, hence this sudden percentage issue," adds the source.

Ace is a missed opportunity in crime-comedy genre



SURESH KAVIRAYANI
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Vijay Sethupathi is known for his versatility and powerful performances. His previous film, Maharaja, performed well in both Tamil and Telugu, reinforcing his appeal across language barriers. With his latest outing *Ace*, directed by Arumuga Kumar, expectations were understandably high. Rukmini Vasanth stars as the female lead. Here's how the film unfolds.

STORY

Bolt Kasi (Vijay Sethupathi) is released from jail after serving time for a petty crime. He heads to Malaysia for a job facilitated by Jnananandam (Yogi Babu) and ends up working at a restaurant run by Kalpana (Divya Pillai). There, he meets and falls in love with Rukmini, aka Rukku (Rukmini Vasanth), a waitress dealing with problems at home due to her stepfather, Raja Dorai (Babloo Prithviraj).

Determined to help her, Kasi enters a poker game to earn quick money. While he initially wins, he ultimately loses to goon Dharma (BS Avinash) and falls into heavy debt. To repay it, Kasi plans to rob a bank. What is Raja Dorai's connection to Kasi and Rukmini? What are Dharma's next moves? The rest of the film explores how these threads unravel, leading to a dramatic climax.

ANALYSIS

When a Vijay Sethupathi film hits the screens, audiences expect something fresh or compelling. Unfortunately, *Ace* turns out to be a major disappointment. Marketed as a crime comedy, the film falters on all fronts — lacking effective comedy, thrilling crime elements, or compelling romance.

The narrative is slow, predictable and lacks surprise. The direction by Arumuga Kumar fails to utilise Sethupathi's immense acting talent, offering a flat and unengaging protagonist. The chemistry between Vijay Sethupathi and Rukmini Vasanth feels forced and underwhelming.

Although the film was shot in Malaysia and features a few heist sequences, even those moments fail to impress due to poor execution. The poker scenes drag unnecessarily and disrupt the pace. Yogi Babu's comedy is uncharacteristically ineffective, and the film lacks any real emotional depth.

Despite having strong lead actors, the characters lack development. The story remains stagnant until the climax, which shows some promise but arrives far too late to salvage the experience. Overall, Ace ends up being a missed opportunity.

PERFORMANCES

Vijay Sethupathi brings a sense of calm sincerity to his role, but the weak characterisation holds him back. Rukmini Vasanth looks elegant on screen but isn't given much scope. Divya Pillai is convincing in her part. Yogi Babu delivers occasional laughs, though his humour mostly misses the mark. Babloo Prithviraj and BS Avinash are adequate but not memorable.

TECHNICAL ASPECTS

The music by Justin Prabhakaran and Sam CS is forgettable, with uninspired songs and an average background score. The action scenes offer some relief and the visuals of Malaysia, captured well by Karan B Rawat, are technically the film's only high point.

VERDICT

Ace fails to deliver on all fronts. Despite the presence of Vijay Sethupathi, the film suffers from outdated storytelling, weak writing, and poor direction. It's a letdown for fans and will likely make an early OTT appearance. You can skip this one.

I am a student of cinema: Kamal Haasan

Kamal Haasan is in the city to promote his upcoming film *Thug Life*, which releases on June 5. Directed by Mani Ratnam, this film marks the reunion of the iconic duo after many years. At the pre-release event, Kamal Haasan spoke about the film and his passion for cinema. While others referred to Kamal as a "Guru" and "Dronacharya," he humbly disagreed.

"Don't call me Dronacharya or Guru, because I can't teach you anything. I am still learning from everyone; I am a student of cinema. You can learn along with me from them. We are fanatics about cinema—we carry our cinema on our shoulders, and that's what we are doing," Kamal said at the event.

He stated that *Thug Life* would be a bigger success than their earlier collaboration, *Nayakudu*. "I don't have to act in Mani Ratnam's film, I just behave. But with others, I misbehave—on request," Kamal joked. He reflected on how cinema has been his lifelong teacher. "I didn't go to any school. I started as a child artiste and learned everything from cinema. Whenever I do a film with heart, it's always successful. I believe *Thug Life* will surpass Nayakudu," he said.

Kamal also praised actor Nasser, highlighting their long association, and spoke warmly about *Simbhu,* whom he has known since childhood. He encouraged Thanikella Bharani to write more scripts. "Thanikella Bharani was supposed to write dialogues for my film Indrudu Chandrudu, but it didn't happen. Now he's an actor too, but you should still write more. You'll get paid for writing too!" he quipped. Kamal ended his speech with heartfelt remarks on cinema and his fellow artists.



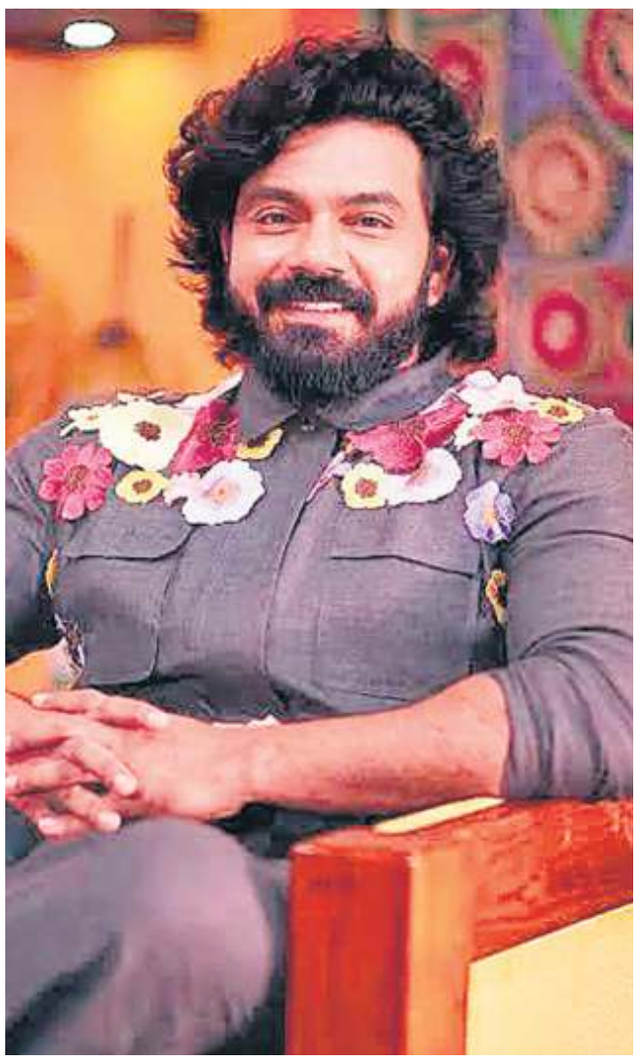
Arjun Ambati's *Paramapada Sopanam* gears up for release

Arjun Ambati, known for his appearance on *Bigg Boss* and acclaimed roles in films like *Ardhanari, Theppasamudram* and *Wedding Diaries*, is all set to headline his next project titled *Paramapada Sopanam.* The upcoming thriller draws inspiration from Telugu tradition, and its meaningful title hints at a compelling narrative. The film is slated for a grand worldwide release on July 11.

Starring Jennifer Emmanuel as the female lead, *Paramapada Sopanam* is being produced by Gudimitla Siva Prasad. At the creative helm is Naga Siva, who takes charge of the story, screenplay, dialogues and direction. Naga Siva previously worked under renowned filmmaker Puri Jagannadh and now marks a new milestone in his career with this venture.

With production activities completed, the team has kickstarted the promotional campaign by releasing the film's first lyrical track – *Chinni Chinni Thappulevo*.

The music for *Paramapada Sopanam* is composed by Davzand, who recently earned praise for his work in Ravi Teja's Eagle. His latest composition delivers a youthful and contemporary soundscape. Sung by Prudhvi Chandra and Aditi Bhavaraju, with lyrics penned by Rambabu Gosala, the song's catchy rhythm and relatable lines are already resonating with younger listeners.



Bhairavam director faces backlash, issues apology to Mega fans



Vijay Kanakamedala is the director of *Bhairavam*, releasing on May 30. The film stars Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas, Manchu Manoj, and Nara Rohit and is a remake of the Tamil hit *Garudan*. Until Thursday afternoon, everything was going well, but by evening, the hashtag "Boycott *Bhairavam*" began trending on social media. Mega fans started trolling the director and promoting the hashtag.

The controversy stems from a post made in 2011 on director Vijay's Facebook account. The post featured a meme spoofing the Hindi film *Paa* as *Cha*, a derogatory reference to Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan. Vijay had allegedly liked or reposted the meme at the time. Now, Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan fans are calling for a boycott of *Bhairavam.* The director quickly responded and apologised to Mega fans.

He stated on social media that either his account was hacked or someone else had created it under his name. "I worked with Pawan Kalyan for *Gabbar Singh* and he encouraged me a lot. He even asked me to direct a film with Sai Dharam Tej, who has always been good to me. I entered the industry inspired by Chiranjeevi and Pawan Kalyan and have worked mostly with Mega heroes. So how can I ever distance myself from Mega fans or make such a mistake?" the director said.

He added that while the post came from his account, he never intended to make such comments. "Even if my Facebook account was hacked, I sincerely apologize to all Mega fans. I will ensure that such posts are not repeated and will be more cautious going forward," he concluded.

The Pioneer
HYDERABAD | SATURDAY | MAY 24, 2025

Will be tough without Rohit, Virat, says Gambhir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ New Delhi

India head coach Gautam Gambhir has admitted that dealing with the absence of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will be a significant challenge for the team but their Test retirement has also opened the door for others to step up and take responsibility.

Kohli and Rohit bid farewell to Test cricket within a week of each other earlier this month. The announcements came ahead of the marquee five-match series in England next month, the squad for which will be announced on Saturday in Mumbai.

"I think, when you start the game and when you want to finish, it's a very individual decision. No one has the right. Be it the coach, the selector, be it anyone in this country has any right to tell someone when to retire and when not to retire. So it comes from within," Gautam Gambhir told CNN-News18.

With their exit, India will not only need a new Test captain but will also be without two of their most seasoned players, a leadership and experience void, Gambhir admits, won't be easy to fill.

"And yes, we've got to be without two senior players to really experience players. And sometimes I believe that it's the opportunity for some other people to put their



hand up and say, 'Okay, I am ready for it'." He drew a parallel with India's Champions Trophy triumph, which came despite the absence of pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah.

"So yes, it will be tough, but then there'll be people putting their hand up for sure because this question was asked to me before. Champions Trophy as well.

"When Jasprit Bumrah wasn't there and I said exactly the same thing, someone missing out might give another person an opportunity to do something special for the country, hopefully, there'll be other guys waiting for that opportunity," he said.

While Kohli and Rohit have bid adieu to the Test and T20 format, they will still be available for India in the 50-over game.

Asked if the two can make the team for the 2027 ODI World Cup, Gambhir said "Look, it's still a long way away. We still have a T20 World Cup before that, and that is again a huge tournament that is going to happen in India, which is in February-March," he pointed out.

"So the entire focus at the moment, after England, will be on the T20 World Cup, and November-December 2027 is still two-and-a-half years away. And I've always said one thing - if you keep performing, age is just a number," he added.

Gill front-runner as India decides on new Test captain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Mumbai



India's cricket selectors will set the ball rolling for the team's long transition journey in the longest format when they pick a new Test captain and finalise the squad for what is expected to be a challenging five-match series in England, here on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Shubman Gill is a clear favourite to land the high-profile job as Indian embarks on a new World Test Championship cycle following the retirement of stalwarts Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in a span of one week.

By simple logic, Jasprit Bumrah was the vice-captain on the previous tour of Australia and he should be elevated to the leadership role but question marks over his long-term fitness and workload management are likely to go against him on the discussion table.

Rishabh Pant has had a forgettable IPL but he remains a vital part of India's transition phase in the Test format. The selectors are likely to make him vice-captain.

Barring the leadership conundrum, no major shake-up is expected.

Though Rohit and Kohli's exit leaves a massive void, the likes of K L Rahul can provide much-needed experience in the batting department.

Rahul and Yashasvi Jaiswal are expected to open in the first Test beginning in Leeds on June 20 but hot on their heels will be Sai Sudharsan, who is likely to be picked as a reserve opener.

It remains to be seen if one among Karun Nair, Sarfaraz Khan or Shreyas Iyer make it as an additional specialist batter. Following the retirement of another stalwart, R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja will be lead spinner in the squad and it would be interesting to see if the selectors go with two or three spinners in English conditions.

If the number is two, then Washington Sundar may get the nod ahead of Kuldeep Yadav, who is a proven match-winner across formats. Pant is the leading wicket-keeper batter and the choice for a reserve too his rather straight forward with Dhruv Jurel set to be retained.

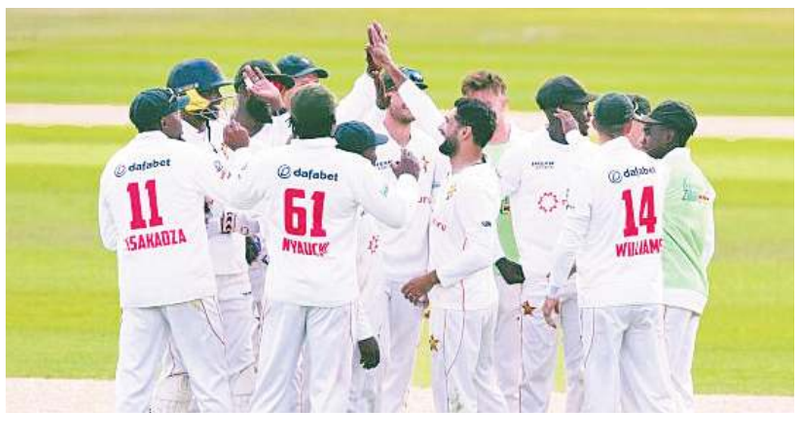
Chief selector Ajit Agarkar is expected to address the media after squad announcement and talk about the road ahead for the team undergoing a rebuilding process. There is enough experience in the pace department led by Bumrah but will he last the rigours of a five-match series? There are also concerns over Mohammed Shami's fitness.

Can his ageing body recover fast enough in between a long series? Mohammed Siraj is set to be the third pacer in the squad. If the selectors decide to pick five fast bowlers then Prasidh Krishna, Akash Deep and Arshdeep Singh, who is yet to play Test cricket, will also be in the mix.

If the five wise men go for a left-arm pacer, Arshdeep will have competition from Khaleel Ahmed. The squad will be made public a week before India A begin their tour of England. Any last minute replacement to the Test squad is likely to come from that shadow tour comprising two four-day games.

Three English batters hit centuries against Zimbabwe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Nottingham



The top three batters hit centuries as England posted a mammoth score of 498-3 on the first day of a one-off test against Zimbabwe on Thursday.

Openers Ben Duckett and Zak Crawley got their fifth test centuries while No. 3 batter Ollie Pope claimed his eighth ton and ended the day unbeaten on 169. Harry Brook was with him on nine.

The sides met for the first time at test level in 22 years and it was a one-sided start to England's summer of cricket.

Duckett scored 140 and Crawley struck 124. Not to be left out, Joe Root became the fifth batter and first from England to reach 13,000 test runs, joining Sachin Tendulkar (India), Ricky Ponting (Australia), Jacques Kallis (South Africa) and Rahul Dravid (India). But he was out for 34 when, in a rare misjudgment, he top-edged a pull to fine leg to give tall seamer Blessing Muzarabani a wicket. Last month, Muzarabani claimed 6-72 as Zimbabwe beat Bangladesh to earn its first test victory since 2021. Zimbabwe won the toss and bowled first in overcast conditions, but the home side reached 130-0 at lunch.

Duckett and Crawley's opening stand of 231 came off just 41.3 overs and ended when Duckett holed out to cover off Wes Madhevere. Duckett's knock came off just 134 balls and featured 20 fours and two sixes. Crawley emerged from a poor stretch, including a dismal average of 8.66 on the tour of New Zealand, to pass 3,000 test runs. Pope blazed six fours off the first 18 balls he faced and reached 50 just after the tea break from 48 deliveries.

Pope was in fine touch and on 61 by the time Crawley reached a patient-looking century off 145 balls. Crawley was out when he swept off spinner Sikandar Raza and fell leg before wicket. Fit-again captain Ben Stokes returned for England after lengthy rehabilitation from a hamstring tear.

England seamer Sam Cook, following several successful seasons in county cricket with Essex and more than 300 wickets, made his test debut at 27 in an inexperienced attack, with Josh Tongue returning after two years for his third test. Zimbabwe brought in batting allrounder Raza, after he was on duty for Lahore Qalandars in the Pakistan Super League. England plays India in a five-test series this summer before trying to win back the Ashes in Australia.

Eyei- g top-two Pu- jab Ki- gs face ousted Delhi Capitals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Jaipur

Riding a wave of success after a decade of pain, a full-strength Punjab Kings will fancy their chances of securing their first top-two finish in 11 years, when they face Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League here on Saturday. Apart from the 2014 season when they topped the league table and finished runners-up, PBKS have only made one other playoff appearance in a competition that has been in existence for the past 18 years. Having ended an 11-year drought, PBKS are now relishing the prospect of not just finishing in the top two, but also enter the summit clash and then make a dash for a maiden title.

A squad that is already brimming with confidence was shored up further when their overseas quartet of Marcus Stoinis, Josh Inglis, Aaron Hardie and Kyle Jamieson joined their extremely talented Indian teammates in the Pink City three days ago. All four will be available for selection as PBKS look to book a top-two finish with a win over their beleaguered opponents who were knocked out of the playoffs reckoning after a big defeat to Mumbai Indians on Wednesday.

These foreign players left the team after the BCCI had to suspend the tournament for a week due to the military conflict between India and Pakistan that led to the abandonment of the match between these two teams midway through the first innings in Dharamsala on May 8.

The match was called off after 10.1 overs of play after a blackout in the picturesque hill town.

The PBKS think tank did well to promptly bring back their overseas contingent after the tournament's resumption, and the squad now resembles a band of men determined to make up for the years of disappointment the franchise faced in the widely watched event. PBKS skipper Shreyas Iyer, who has recently made history by becoming the first captain to lead three franchises to IPL playoffs, has been the key to their success and for the side to go all the way, the stylish batter will need to continue in similar vein in the remaining matches.

Prior to his triumphant campaign with Kolkata Knight Riders last year, Iyer had led Delhi Capitals to the playoffs in 2019 and 2020, including their only IPL final appearance in 2020.

He is also the second highest run scorer this season with 435 runs in 12 matches, and he is gunning for more.

Thanks to the performance of players such as Prabhsimran Singh (458 runs), Priyansh Arya (356 runs), Arshdeep Singh (11 wickets) and Yuzvendra Chahal (13 wickets), PBKS have emerged as the most consistent side this season, accumulating 17 points from 12 matches to secure a playoff berth with two games to spare.

As far as Delhi Capitals are concerned, they have had their chances this season but the lack of big runs in the powerplay consistently and the absence of lead pacer Mitchell Starc towards the end has had an adverse impact on their prospects.

They will look to end to end their disappointing campaign on a high note, but up against an in-form opponents like PBKS, it is easier said than done.

Angelo Mathews to retire from Test next month

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Colombo

Veteran Sri Lankan all-rounder Angelo Mathews on Friday announced that the first Test against Bangladesh next month will be his last five-day game as he makes way for younger talent in the traditional format with a "grateful heart and unforgettable memories." The 37-year-old will, however, continue to play white-ball cricket for his country. His final Test appearance will be in Galle from June 17 to 21.

"With a grateful heart and unforgettable memories. It is time for me to say goodbye to the most cherished format of the game, International Test Cricket!...The first Test match against Bangladesh in June will be my last red-ball appearance for my country," he posted on 'X'. "Whilst I bid adieu to the Test format, as discussed with selectors I will remain available for selection for the white ball format, if and when my country needs me. "I believe this Test team is a talented side with many future and present greats playing the game. Now seems like the best time to make way for a younger player to take the mantle to shine for our nation," he added.

Since making debut in 2009, Mathews has turned up in 118 Tests, scoring 8167 runs — the third-highest tally in Sri Lanka's history, behind Kumar Sangakkara (12,400) and Mahela Jayawardene (11,814).

He has a fairly good average of 44.62 and has so far smashed 16 hundreds and 45 centuries with a 200 not out being the best of his lengthy career. He also has 34 wickets to his credit.

"A true servant of Sri Lanka Test Cricket. Thank you...For 17 years of unwavering dedication, leadership, and unforgettable moments in the red-ball format. Your commitment and passion have inspired a generation," Sri Lanka Cricket stated in its tribute. "We wish you all the very best as you step away from Test cricket and look forward to seeing your continued contributions in white-ball cricket," it added. Mathews, who was Sri Lanka's all-format captain from 2013 to 2017, said he has considered playing the format the highest honour.

"Nothing can match that feeling of patriotism and servitude when one dons the National Jersey. I have given my everything to cricket and Cricket has given me everything in return and made me the person that I am today," he said.

Javagal Sri- ath - amed match referee for WTC fi- al

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Dubai

The Indian team may not have reached the World Test Championship final but former pacer Javagal Srinath will ensure the country's presence in the upcoming marquee clash by serving as its match referee with WTC debutant Nitin Menon doing duty as the fourth umpire.

England's Richard Illingworth and Chris Gaffaney of New Zealand will be the on-field umpires in the WTC final at Lord's. Defending champions Australia will take on first-time finalists South Africa for the mace from June 11-15 at the hallowed venue.

Richard Kettleborough, also from England, who has officiated in the finals of several marquee ICC events, including the Men's World Cup and the Champions Trophy has been appointed as the TV umpire, after having played the same role in the inaugural WTC 2021 final between India and New Zealand. Menon has been named as the fourth umpire for the contest, after having served as the TV umpire for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup final in 2021. Illingworth will be making history in the ultimate Test, having stood as an on-field umpire for all the three WTC finals.

India reached the finals of the first two WTC cycles but both times stumbled at the last hurdle against New Zealand and Australia respectively. ICC chairman Jay Shah commended the experience and merit of the appointed officials and expressed confidence in their performance. "We are pleased to announce an experienced team of match officials for the ICC World Test Championship Final at Lord's, marking the culmination of a highly competitive two-year cycle of Test matches played around the world," Shah said in an ICC release.

Scheffler opens Colonial with an eagle and trails tour rookie John Pak by 5 shots

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Fort Worth



Scottie Scheffler and John Pak enjoyed the same start to the Charles Schwab Challenge at Colonial with eagles on their respective first holes. The world No. 1 couldn't keep up with the PGA Tour rookie from there. Four days after winning his third major at the PGA Championship, Scheffler opened his attempt at three consecutive victories with a 2-under 68 Thursday. Pak shot 63 for a three-shot lead over nine players, J.J. Spaun the highest-ranked among them at 27th. Tommy Fleetwood and 2023 British Open champion Brian Harman were among a group of nine players four back of Pak, and Scheffler headlined the 15 players who were five strokes behind.

Defending champion Davis Riley, who is playing the first two rounds with Scheffler, had two double bogeys on the front nine and shot 3-over 73 on the cozy course made famous by Ben Hogan, the only player to win Colonial in consecutive years (1946-47 and 1952-53). Riley is coming off a runner-up finish to Scheffler at the PGA.

The others at 4 under with Spaun were Patrick Rodgers, Ryo Hisatsune, Matti Schmid, Beau Hossler, Bud Cauley, J.T. Poston and Ben Griffin. Jordan Spieth, Scheffler's fellow hometown favorite and former Texas Longhorn, shot 69 with birdies on two of his final four holes.

Scheffler opened the second of what he considers his hometown events by holing a putt for eagle from off the green on the par-5 first hole and a 23-footer for birdie on No. 2. The Dallas resident played the final 16 holes in 1 over, missing enough fairways and greens to prevent a run at Pak, who finished several hours earlier.

The first of Scheffler's consecutive wins came three weeks ago at his hometown CJ Cup Byron Nelson, which he led wire-to-wire for an eight-shot victory while tying the tour scoring record of 253.

Scheffler will have to come from behind this time, just as he did in the PGA Championship at Quail Hollow, where he faced the same first-round deficit before surging into the lead in the third round and repelling a Sunday charge from Jon Rahm.

Barcelona seeks three-peat of Women's Champions League titles in Lisbon final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Lisbon



Barcelona is aiming to complete a three-peat of Women's Champions League titles and win its fourth European crown in five years when it faces Arsenal in Lisbon on Saturday. Barcelona is out to reaffirm its status as the dominant force in European women's soccer after it finally beat Lyon and successfully defended its title in last year's final. Its possession-hungry and high-scoring attack is led from the midfield by Ballon d'Or winners Aitana Bonmatí and Alexia Putellas and several other members of Spain's World Cup-winning team that beat England in the 2023 final.

Barcelona will be play its sixth Champions League final in seven seasons and a record-equaling fifth in a row at Lisbon's 50,000-capacity Estádio José Alvalade. The Catalan club has the chance to become the only team other than Lyon to lift the European Cup in three consecutive years. Standing in its way is an Arsenal team that has excelled as a spoiler this campaign and hopes it can pull off another upset and win its second European title. "They're a fantastic team and they've obviously got the recent history to prove it," Arsenal defender Leah Williamson said about Barcelona in the buildup to the final. "We respect them a lot, but it's a final, so everybody turns up and everybody gives their best."

First-year Barcelona coach Pere Romeu has a side that can hit from all angles with multiple scoring options.

It leads all the major team statistics in attack: most goals scored with 44 — to Arsenals' 25 — the highest possession, best pass accuracy and most shot attempts.

Barcelona forward Claudia Pina leads the competition in scoring with 10 goals, ahead of Arsenal pair Mariona Caldentey, who joined from the Spanish club last summer, and Alessia Russo with seven each. Bonmatí and teammate Patri Guijarro lead the competition with five assists each.

Barcelona added to its winning squad in the offseason by signing Poland striker Ewa Pajor, who went on to lead the Spanish league with 23 goals. Pajor, 28, is seeking her first European title after losing four finals with former club Wolfsburg, including the 2023 final to Barcelona after leading 2-0.

"The final is played in the details and we can prepare the details before the game," Pajor said. "What I have also learned - because I've played in four finals - you have to be there in the first minute until the end." Barcelona has rolled to a sixth consecutive Liga F title and has reached another Copa de la Reina final, but at the same time it has proven beatable.

Barcelona's home unbeaten run in Liga F came to an end after a record 64 games this season, and it lost to Real Madrid for the first time in 19 clasicos since its top rival founded a women's team. It also started the Champions League with a rare group stage loss to Manchester City.

Sudharsa- curre- tly focussed o- IPL, - ot o- E- gla- d tour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Ahmedabad

Gujarat Titans opener Sai Sudharsan is thrilled about his selection for the upcoming India A tour of England but for now his sights are firmly set on guiding the former champions to Qualifier 1 and final of IPL 2025. The 23-year-old, who has the experience of representing Surrey and scoring a century for the English county side, has been named in the India A squad and is also set to become the rookie face in the Test squad.

"Mentally, we will have to be switched on for the IPL first. Once that story is over, then we can probably think about the India 'A' story. But definitely happy for that opportunity, and I think I would have a great time there," Sudharsan told reporters on Thursday.

The Tamil Nadu opener, currently leading the Orange Cap race with 638 runs in 13 matches, has been one of the standout performers of the season.

"Right now, the most important thing is to finish in the top two so that we get an extra opportunity (of playing in Qualifier 2), if at all we need.

"The focus is more on that. Obviously, there are a lot of experiences and learnings in these 13 games (that we have played). So, we keep on filling the gaps wherever we feel like, and we will be ready for the playoffs." Sudharsan said.

Sudharsan has been a vital cog in Gujarat's top order alongside skipper Shubman Gill and wicketkeeper-batter Jos Buttler, forming one of the most formidable top-three combinations of the season. However, all three fell after getting starts in the game against Lucknow Super Giants, leaving the daunting 236-run chase to the largely untested middle order. "I think the IPL is that kind of league where you can't experiment, even if you qualify early in the tournament. So, I don't think you can try a lot of different things in the middle order."

Despite a spirited effort from Shahrukh Khan (57 off 29) and Sherfane Rutherford, who shared an 89-run stand, GT fell short by 33 runs.

"But I feel the middle order has done pretty well because even in the first 6-7 games, Sherfane stepped up and scored many runs in the middle order, changing games for us. Even in Mumbai, he changed the course of the game.