

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026



The Indian EXPRESS

JOURNALISM of COURAGE

₹6.00 (₹12 in North East states, ₹20 in Andaman) • www.indianexpress.com

DAILY FROM: AHMEDABAD, CHANDIGARH, DELHI, JAIPUR, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NAGPUR, PATNA, PUNE, VADODARA



A ransacked TMC office in the Golf Green area of Kolkata, Tuesday. EXPRESS

Four killed as post-poll violence flares up in Bengal

Sweetie Kumari
Kolkata, May 5

Two alleged BJP workers were killed in New Town in North 24 Parganas and Udaynarayanpur in Howrah, while the TMC alleged that two of its party members were also killed in Belegghata in Kolkata and Nanoor in Birbhum district as post-poll violence flared up in the state.

A man identified as a TMC worker was found dead in Birbhum district's Nanoor, with party supporters alleging he was hacked to death by BJP workers. In a separate incident, the BJP alleged one of its workers was killed by miscreants associated with the TMC, while he was celebrating the party's poll victory in Howrah's Udaynarayanpur on Tuesday.

The family members of the TMC worker, identified as Abir Sheikh, alleged he was attacked by BJP miscreants while he was on his way back to his house. Upon receiving the information, a large contingent from the Nanur Police Station arrived at the location and cordoned off the area.

The family members of BJP worker Jadhav Bor alleged that while he was returning home after poll victory celebrations on Monday, he was dragged away by a group of individuals and attacked with sharp weapons, police said, adding one person has been arrested in connection with the incident.

In two other separate incidents, a TMC worker identified as Biswajit Pattnaik was killed, while in New Town, BJP worker Madhu Mondal was allegedly killed by TMC workers following an argument, as a victory procession of the BJP was passing by in Bhalliguri area, police said.

The TMC MLA-elect from Nanoor, Bidhan Majhi, claimed that Sheikh was an active member of the party and was killed by BJP goons in the area.

However, BJP leader Shyamapada Mondal said none of their party members was involved in the attack and police

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Happening today

● **VIETNAMESE PRESIDENT** To Lam, who is on a three-day visit to India, is scheduled to hold wide-ranging discussions with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

● **IPL 2026:** Hosts Sunrisers Hyderabad and league leaders Punjab Kings will face off in a key encounter.

TRACK THESE AND MORE ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

SHAH TO BE OBSERVER AT MEETING OF MLAs TO ELECT LEADER

Suvendu frontrunner for Bengal CM, swearing-in likely on May 9

Two workers each from TMC, BJP killed in post-poll violence in state

Tanusrree Bose, Liz Mathew & Jatin Anand
Kolkata, New Delhi, May 5

GIANT-KILLER SUVENDU Adhikari, who spearheaded the BJP's ground offensive in West Bengal that breached the TMC citadel to end Mamata Banerjee's 15-year rule, has emerged as the frontrunner for the post of Chief Minister.

Hailing the party's election victory as "a triumph for every patriotic nationalist and every BJP worker," Adhikari, who defeated Banerjee in Bhabanipur and also won from Nandigram, said Tuesday that the BJP was committed to "a developed, prosperous and secure West Bengal".

His remarks came on the day post-poll violence erupted in different parts of the state and four persons — two workers each of the TMC and BJP — were killed in separate incidents.

Meanwhile, BJPsourcesaid Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who has been named the party's central observer for the election of the leader of the legislature party, is likely to leave for Kolkata Thursday. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will be the co-observer for the election.

In New Delhi, BJP national president Nitin Nabin chaired a meeting of general secretaries

Business as Usual
By EP UNNY



Looks like you'll have to run a single engine Opposition.

DECISION 2026

MAMATA RETURNS RAHUL GESTURE

BJP WIN IN EAST MAY HELP OPEN NEW FOREIGN POLICY DOORS IN REGION PAGES 3, 4, 5, 7

at the party headquarters in which preparations for the swearing-in ceremonies were discussed.

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari distributes sweets at the party office in Kolkata on Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL

Not defeated, won't resign... Will strengthen INDIA bloc: Mamata

Ravik Bhattacharya & Atri Mitra
Kolkata, May 5

A DAY after the BJP swept the West Bengal Assembly elections, Trinamool Congress (TMC) chairperson Mamata Banerjee Tuesday ruled out stepping down as Chief Minister, alleging that the results were "not a people's mandate but a conspiracy". Banerjee vowed to take the battle to the streets and strengthen the Op-



TMC leader Mamata Banerjee in Kolkata on Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL

position INDIA bloc.

"We have not been defeated, I will not resign. There is no question of my going to Raj Bhavan. In this election, the BJP and the Election Commission have played a dirty game. They forcefully grabbed (votes)," the TMC chief, who lost to BJP's Suvendu Adhikari by 15,105 votes, said at a press conference in Kolkata, with her nephew and Diamond Harbour MP

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Free LPG to grants for jobless, TVK's poll sops could see 52% spike in welfare bill

Projected cost about Rs 1 lakh cr/ year; DMK spent Rs 65,000 cr in 2025-26

Deeptiman Tiwary
New Delhi, May 5

FROM RS 2,500 every month to women heads of households to six free LPG cylinders per household every year, a grant of Rs 4,000 per month for 10 lakh unemployed graduates — and much more.

As film star-politician Vijay's TVK prepares to rule Tamil Nadu following its incredible election victory, the focus is now on the expansive promises listed in its manifesto, which builds upon, and even exceeds, commitments made by previous state governments (see chart on page 2).

Given the TVK's manifesto and official state data, the new government's projected annual expenditure on welfare spending alone would be close to Rs 1 lakh crore — an increase of over 52% from the Rs 65,000 crore

spent by the previous DMK government on welfare schemes and subsidies in 2025-26.

To put these numbers in perspective, TVK's projected welfare expenditure equals approximately one-third of Tamil Nadu's total revenue receipts of Rs 3.31 lakh crore, as per the 2025-26 state budget.

That could put a significant burden on the budget, squeezing space for capital expenditure in a state that already carries a debt of 26% of GSDP. If financed entirely through higher expenditure without new revenues, this could push the fiscal deficit from the budgeted 3% of GSDP in 2025-26 to about 3.5-4.0%.

This does not count the projected spending on a cooperative farm loan waiver and legally guaranteed MSP procurement of paddy and sugarcane that have been promised

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay pays tribute to the party's ideological leaders at the party headquarters in Chennai on Tuesday. PTI

For a majority, Vijay starts talks with both Congress, AIADMK

Arun Janardhanan
Chennai, May 5

A DAY after the election results, which saw Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) emerge as the single largest party in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, the state is preparing for something it has not witnessed in decades — a coalition government.

Leaders from both the Congress and the AIADMK said on Tuesday that Vijay reached out to their parties for support in forming a government.

THE BIG PICTURE

A Vijay blockbuster
PAGE 9

Making its Assembly election debut, the Tamil film superstar's TVK won 108 seats, leaving a significant gap to the ruling DMK, which came in sec-

ond with 59 seats. However, with the TVK falling short of the majority mark of 118 in the 234-member Assembly, attention has shifted swiftly from celebration to coalition-building.

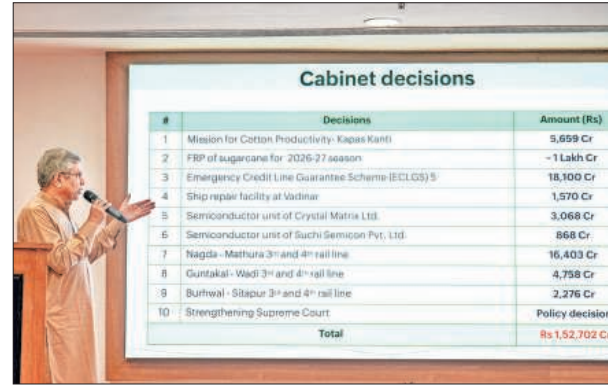
By Tuesday morning, as Vijay visited his party office and convened a meeting with newly elected MLAs, plans for a coalition were already set in motion.

Sources indicated that under one proposed arrangement, the TVK-led government

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CREDIT LINE GUARANTEE SCHEME

Union Cabinet clears Rs 2.55 lakh-cr lifeline for MSMEs, airlines hit by West Asia war



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw at a Cabinet briefing Tuesday. PTI

Aanchal Magazine
New Delhi, May 5

THE UNION Cabinet on Tuesday approved a credit support scheme to meet the needs of industries in distress due to the West Asia conflict, targeting an additional credit flow of Rs 2.55 lakh crore, including Rs 5,000 crore for airlines.

Modelled on similar lifelines for distressed sectors during Covid, the Government's new Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme 5.0 (ECLGS 5.0) has an estimated outlay of Rs 18,000 crore.

According to an official release, additional credit will be available to MSMEs and non-MSMEs, excluding aviation, up to 20% of peak working capital utilised during Q4 FY26, capped at Rs 100 crore. For airlines, the credit will be up to 100%, capped at Rs 1,500 crore

● **BENCH STRENGTH OF SC TO RISE TO 38**

● The Cabinet cleared a proposal for introducing The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, in Parliament to increase the court's strength from the existing 34 Judges to 38, including the Chief Justice of India.

REPORT, PAGE 6

per borrower, subject to certain specific conditions, it said.

Guarantee fees will be waived under the scheme. For MSMEs and non-MSMEs, except aviation, the loan tenure would be five years from the date of first disbursement, including a moratorium of one year. For airlines, the loan tenure would be seven years from

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INSIDE

TWO NEW CHIP PLANTS WORTH RS 3,936 CR GET CABINET NOD
PAGE 14

RS 5,659 CR FOR 5-YEAR MISSION TO INCREASE COTTON YIELD
PAGE 6

CJI: Original PIL on Sabarimala should have been thrown in dustbin

Bench questions locus, intent of original petitioner

Ananthakrishnan G
New Delhi, May 5

HEARING CONSTITUTIONAL questions arising out of petitions seeking a review of its 2018 judgement on the Sabarimala issue, a nine-judge bench of the Supreme Court Tuesday questioned the locus and intent of the original petitioner, with Chief Justice of India Surya Kant saying that the PIL should have been "thrown outright in the dustbin".

On September 28, 2018, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court, in a 4-1 verdict,

ruled that the practice of banning women of menstruating age from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala was unconstitutional. That bench was headed by then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra.

On Tuesday, while questioning Advocate Ravi Gupta's submission that the then CJ had provided police security to him and Naushad Ali, president of the NGO Indian Young Lawyers Association (IYLA) which had filed the Sabarimala PIL in 2006, Justice B V Nagarathna said, "Since you are referring to the learned former Chief Justice, with great respect, rather than ensuring there was security provided to the advocates, he could have ensured that there was no need for a security threat at all by not

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

● THE 58-YEAR-OLD CONGRESS CANDIDATE MADE IT TO VOTER LIST ON EVE OF NOMINATION DEADLINE, AFTER SC RULED IN HIS FAVOUR. HE WON FROM FARAKKA BY 8,000-PLUS VOTES

Deleted by SIR, elected by people: Motab Shaikh is the 'luckiest person'

Ravik Bhattacharya
Kolkata, May 5

UNTIL A month ago, all Motab Shaikh hoped for was to make it to the West Bengal electoral roll. Now, the 58-year-old is one of only two candidates of the Congress to have won in the state, keeping alive hopes of the party, after it had scored a duck in 2021.

His name deleted as a voter after adjudication, following the Special Intensive Revision

(SIR) exercise, Shaikh had approached the Supreme Court to urge the tribunals to hear his case on priority. On April 5, a day to go for the end of deadline to file nominations for the first-phase seats, the apex court ruled in Shaikh's favour.

On April 6, Shaikh filed his papers from the Farakka Assembly seat. On Monday, he got 63,050 votes to win the constituency by a margin of more than 8,000. It was his first Assembly election; with the last

polls that the contractor by profession fought being for panchayats. His son now handles the family business.

The Trinamool Congress, which held the Farakka seat, was relegated to the third position, with the BJP finishing second.

Incredulous at the reversal in his fortunes, Shaikh told *The Indian Express* over the phone: "I am one of the luckiest people in the world. I had lost all hope when I found my name deleted from the electoral list following the SIR. I thought I would never



'I had lost all hope... It is a victory of the people,' says Motab Shaikh

even be able to vote... But the people voted for me... It is a victory of the people."

Of the roughly 27.1 lakh deletions after adjudication in Bengal, 38,222 were in Farakka. The Murshidabad district, where Farakka falls, saw the highest number of deletions in the state, at over 11 lakh.

The other Assembly seat won by the Congress in Bengal, Raninagar, also falls in Murshidabad district. Julfikar Ali won from here by a margin of 2,701 votes, winning 79,423 votes, against sitting MLA Abdul Sou-

mik Hossain of the TMC.

Shaikh points out that he only got 14 days to campaign because of the long uncertainty over whether he would be included as a voter and be allowed to contest. "First the Congress took time to nominate me, and then I found that my name was deleted from the electoral roll. I could campaign only in half of my Assembly constituency," Shaikh says. Had he got more time, he adds, "my margin would have been more".

The Congress, which had

won Farakka in 2016, says Shaikh's victory was proof of "the lack of a level-playing field" due to the EC. "Creating a foolproof electoral roll is the duty of the poll panel. Here, the EC was forced to allow Motab to file his nomination after a Supreme Court order... His victory shows people's faith in the party," says Congress spokesperson Soumya Aich Roy.

Shaikh, who says he has always been with the Congress, like his father and grandfather before him, says: "The Farakka

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Vietnam Prez in India

President of Vietnam To Lam lands in New Delhi on Tuesday afternoon on his first state visit to India. He was accorded a warm welcome and received by MoS Nityanand Rai upon his arrival at the airport. ANI

Who gets to be called ‘Hon’ble’ and ‘Mr’? Allahabad High Court clarifies

Bhupendra Pandey
Lucknow, May 5

A MONTH after taking exception to the Uttar Pradesh Police not inserting honorifics like ‘Hon’ble’ or ‘Mr’ before the name of BJP MP Anurag Thakur in an FIR, the division bench of Allahabad High Court, in an order, has laid down who gets to be addressed this way.

“Ministers of the Central and State Governments; Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts; the Speaker; the Chairman of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, respectively; and likewise of the State Legislative Assemblies; the Members of Parliament and the State Legislative Assemblies are entitled to the use of this honorific,” the division bench of Justices JJ Munir and Tarun Saxena observed while hearing the matter on April 30. The order was uploaded on May 4.

It observed that there could be other functionaries who, as per protocol, are entitled to the usage. “Whosoever is entitled to the use of this honorific has to be addressed likewise.”

The bench further observed, “It is to be noted that the honorific ‘Hon’ble’ is to be appended to the names of constitutional functionaries who exercise sovereign functions of any of the three organs of the Government...” But it said no function-



BJP MP Anurag Thakur

ary, however high, who is a civil servant and “not the holder of a sovereign constitutional office, is entitled to use” it.

“Personal disgruntlement or familiarity with a family, who is entitled to an honorific, cannot permit the author of any communication to refer to a sovereign functionary of the Government... without it. This part of the matter stands closed,” observed the court.

During the earlier hearing, the court had directed the Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department, to file an affidavit explaining the reason behind police not abiding by the protocol in using honorifics.

The court took note of the affidavit, which stated that the complaint — typed in Hindi and on the basis of which the FIR was registered — was produced by the complainant, Khajian Singh.

Bengal violence

should undertake a free and fair investigation to find out the accused.

TMC MP Sagarika Ghosh also shared a video of the body with a caption “horrificing, chilling”.

The TMC wrote on X, “brutal murder of our party worker in Birbhum’s Nanaor. Modi’s idea of poriborton begins. Deceased name Abir SK.”

Meanwhile, tensions flared in parts of the state Tuesday as TMC alleged widespread attacks on its offices and workers following its defeat in the Assembly elections, even as the BJP appealed for calm and denied involvement.

According to TMC sources, party offices in areas including Tollygunge, Kasba, Baruipur, Kamarhati and Baranagar, as well as districts such as Howrah and Berhampore, were vandalised. In Belegkata, a local party office was attacked and block president Patibtra Biswas was allegedly assaulted, while the office of councillor Sushanta Ghosh was also damaged. In the Bijoygarh–Netajinagar area, the election office of former minister Aroop Biswas was ransacked, with visuals showing people kicking broken doorhinges.

At Ruby Crossing, Kasba, the office of TMC councillor Sushanta Ghosh was rampaged by a crowd holding BJP flags.

A former TMC councillor also alleged that he was assaulted by miscreants in Howrah district on Tuesday evening, police said. Shyamal Mitra, a former councillor of Ward No. 26 and a local TMC leader, was reportedly attacked following an altercation, they said.

The TMC also alleged that some structures were reportedly vandalised with a bulldozer in the Hogg market area was vandalised allegedly by BJP supporters, with some TMC workers claiming it was a

local market union office. “In central Kolkata, near New Market, with police permission. As part of victory celebrations a bulldozer was brought in to demolish meat shops. CAPF standing around. THE BJP FOR YOU. Let the world see these pictures,” TMC leader Derek O’Brien wrote on X.

In Jamuria and Siliguri, TMC offices were reportedly set on fire. The party further claimed that its Udaynarayanpur candidate, Samir Panja, was assaulted, and that Barackpore candidate Raj Chakraborty and Noapara candidate Trinankur Bhattacharya were manhandled while leaving counting centres, requiring CAPF escort. Maniktala candidate Shreya Pande also alleged that her election agent was attacked.

The TMC, in a post on social media, accused the BJP of orchestrating the violence. “The BJP has exposed its true face the moment it came to power. In Jalpaiguri Ward 14, BJP-backed miscreants have unleashed vandalism at our Trinamool Congress party office. This destruction and deliberate attempt to create unrest is the real face of the BJP,” it added.

The BJP, however, rejected the allegations, with leader Rahul Sinha suggesting the incidents could be the result of internal rivalries within the TMC. He added that the situation was not comparable to the violence during the 2021 Assembly elections and that the police and central forces are now taking prompt action.

Amid the volatile situation, the BJP directed its workers to avoid provocation, refrain from celebrations near TMC offices, and maintain peace. ECI sought reports from local authorities and warned of strict action against those involved in violence.

—WITH PTI INPUTS

[FROM PAGE 1 | FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM]

Suvendu frontrunner for Bengal CM, swearing-in likely on May 9

While BJP leaders from West Bengal joined the meeting via virtual mode, Sunil Bansal, BJP national general secretary in-charge of West Bengal, flew in from Kolkata to participate in the discussions.

Party sources indicated that the swearing-in ceremony could be held on May 9, which coincides with Pochishe Boishakh, the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. The venue is still to be finalised. Sources said the date for the swearing-in was a suggestion from Prime Minister Narendra Modi after he addressed the party’s victory rally in New Delhi Monday.

Adhikari tops the list of names being discussed for the post of Chief Minister. While the party leadership has, in the recent past, picked surprise names for the post in states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Delhi, the case of

Party sources said swearing-in could coincide with birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore

West Bengal, a party leader said, could be different.

“Adhikari has been the aggressive face of the BJP for the last few years. Our fight to remove the TMC culture from the state will continue. The party needs a strong and combative face as a leader connected to the ground. Adhikari knows the TMC and its culture very well,” the leader said.

BJP chief Nabin, who visited the Kali Bari temple in Chittaranjan Park in New Delhi, later said, “The prayer is that Maa Kali’s blessings remain upon all the citizens of the country and

that we continue to move forward steadfastly with complete devotion towards the creation of a Viksit Bharat.”

In Kolkata, Adhikari held a series of meetings at the party office in Salt Lake. Those present there included Bansal and Bhupender Yadav.

It is learnt that at the meetings, the leaders, including Adhikari, Samik Bhattacharya and Dilip Ghosh, discussed the blueprint for the tasks on hand once the BJP government takes charge. Portfolio allocation, implementation of schemes, including Central schemes, also figured in the discussions, sources said. According to sources, the new government will work from the Writers’ Buildings but given the renovation work, seating arrangements will be worked out. Sources said a plan has been sought from the PWD and also from police regarding security.

Won’t resign: Mamata

Abhishek Banerjee by her side. Her remarks came on a day the EC sent a notification to the Governor constituting the new Assembly in West Bengal.

“Why should I resign? We have not lost. Votes have been looted. Where does the question of resignation arise?” the TMC chief asked. “We were not fighting the BJP; we were fighting the Election Commission which was working for the BJP. I have never seen such an election in my entire political career. A black chapter in history has been created. The Chief Election Commissioner has become the villain,” Banerjee said.

Banerjee alleged that TMC candidates, including her, were roughed up inside counting centres. “I was assaulted inside the counting centre. They hit me in my belly and on my back. I was not allowed to enter. My

agent was also not allowed to enter. If such atrocities happened against me, imagine what happened with other candidates,” she said.

She said the party was planning action against the BJP and the EC, reiterating her allegation that nearly 100 seats were “looted”, CCTVs were switched off at her counting centre, and the process was slowed to break her party’s morale. “We have an action plan which is being prepared. But we can’t share that with you now,” she said.

In response, the state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) released an excerpt from the report of the District Election Officer (DEO) dismissing the allegations. “The CCTV was never switched off and any incident of alleged jostling with the candidate of AITC and Hon’ble CM is baseless and a figment of imagination. The

counting process was halted briefly since she insisted on stopping it, however, it was later on started with an intimation to her under the guidelines.”

Banerjee thanked INDIA bloc leaders for standing by her. “Thankful to all INDIA bloc leaders — Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh (Yadav), Hemant Soren, Uddhav Thackeray, Tejashwi (Yadav) — who called me. Akhilesh wanted to come today. But Akhilesh will come to meet me tomorrow,” she said.

The TMC chief alleged that BJP workers had ransacked party offices and attacked party workers after the results. “We have decided to form a fact-finding committee of 10 members that will be visiting the violence-hit areas. The committee will have five MPs too,” she said. “As long as I was in the chair, I tolerated many things. Now, I am a free bird, an ordinary person. I am a street fighter. I will remain on the streets and fight all atrocities,” she said.

Rs 2.55 lakh-cr lifeline

the date of first disbursement, including a moratorium of two years. The rate of interest by banks will be capped at 9% and by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) at 13% or 0.75% above benchmark rate, whichever is lower, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

Taking to X, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said ECLGS 5.0 “reflects our commitment to supporting India’s businesses, especially the MSME sector in challenging global times”.

“By enabling additional credit flow with strong guarantee coverage, this initiative will help a wide range of sectors. Our focus remains on empowering enterprises, sustaining growth momentum and safeguarding livelihoods,” Modi posted.

According to Vaishnaw, “The scheme has been approved to tackle the stress being faced by MSMEs and the aviation sector as a result of the ongoing West Asia conflict. The credit guarantee scheme was established during Covid and the benefit of this

scheme is that there is no moral hazard. Only those who need (credit) in real, (they) utilise this scheme and there is very less probability of it being misused. It is a very well thought through scheme.”

About 1.1 crore MSMEs have benefitted so far from existing credit guarantee schemes and Rs 3.7 lakh crore has been extended under these schemes, Vaishnaw said.

ECLGS 5.0 aims to provide credit guarantee coverage of 100% for MSMEs and 90% for non-MSMEs, along with the airline sector, to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) for the amount in default under the additional credit facility to the eligible borrowers to tide over any short-term liquidity mismatches, the official release said.

Borrowers eligible for the scheme will include MSMEs and non-MSMEs with existing working capital limits and scheduled passenger airlines having out-

standing credit facilities as of March 31, 2026, provided their accounts are standard, the release stated.

The maximum period of guarantee cover shall be co-terminus with the tenor of the loan, it said. The scheme will apply to all loans sanctioned during the period from the date of issue of these guidelines by NCGTC upto March 31, 2027.

The scheme aims to enable businesses to tide over the challenges arising from the West Asia conflict, the release said.

“Additionally, this is expected to help businesses maintain their operations, protect jobs, and sustain supply chains. The proposed credit guarantee scheme is a major step to help businesses, particularly MSMEs and airline sector, to ensure their additional working capital needs are catered by the Banks & FIs (financial institutions),” it said.

“By providing timely liquidity, the scheme will sustain the businesses and prevent job losses. It will also promote uninterrupted domestic production and maintain the resilience of the ecosystem,” the release said.

CJI on Sabarimala

the organisation was concerned with a question of freedom of conscience. “How does a juristic body have any beliefs? ... How are you concerned with all this? ... We want to know why you filed this PIL at all? What was it that you wanted to achieve? What good has come out of it?” she said.

“Are you the chief priest of the country,” the CJI asked Gupta.

Meanwhile, the bench also questioned the practice of barring a Parsi woman from a fire temple if she marries outside the religion, wondering how freedom of conscience, which accrues upon birth, can be taken away by marriage.

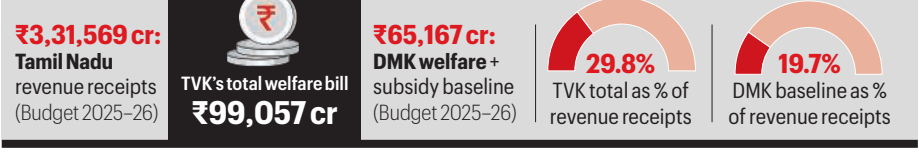
“The right to conscience under Article 25(1) is a right by birth, and it can’t be taken away by marriage... In this case, marriage as a basis for classification is discriminatory against women,” Justice Nagarathna asked Senior Advocate Darius J Khambata, appearing for Goolrokh Gupta, in related petitions concerning a Parsi woman’s religious identity.

Justice Sundresh said, “This practice presupposes once there is inter-marriage, faith is given up.” Justice Nagarathna said, “It’s virtually excommunication.”

TVK poll sops may see 52% spike

• What the TVK’s poll promises may cost

Scheme	Beneficiary base used	Unit benefit	Annual cost (Rs crore)	Data source
Women DBT	1.57 crore	Rs 2,500/month	47,100	Govt beneficiary data
Free LPG	1.85 crore households	“6 cylinders/year - Rs 900 each”	9,990	2011 Census
Mother/guardian school grant	56.25 lakh in govt schools	Rs 15,000/year	8,438	1.25 crore enrolment, 45% in govt schools
Farmer income support	79.4 lakh landholding farmers	Rs 15,000/year	11,910	Agriculture Census 2015–16
Farm labourer support	96 lakh farm labourers	Rs 10,000/year	9,600	2011 Census aligned labour force data
Fisher family support	2.02 lakh families	Rs 27,000/year	545	Marine Fisheries Census 2016
Youth internship stipend	5 lakh youth per year	Graduates: Rs 10,000/month; ITI/diploma: Rs 8,000/month	5,400	TVK manifesto
Health insurance top-up	1.5 crore families	Total premium doubled from Rs 849 to Rs 1,698	1,274	CMCHIS data; assuming premium only doubles at Rs 25 lakh cover
Unemployment grant	10 lakh	Rs 4,000/month	4,800	Govt survey, PLFS data



in the manifesto and for which comparable state data is not available.

Beyond these, there are several other announcements that could push up the state’s revenue spending, such as a rise in police salaries from Rs 18,500 per month to Rs 25,000, a Rs 1,000 monthly hardship allowance and permanent jobs for temporary teachers, nurses and staff who have completed five years in service.

All of this could severely restrict the new government’s room for investments needed to fulfill its biggest promise: job creation for youth.

More so, because the TVK’s manifesto does not lay out an elaborate roadmap to find new avenues for revenue generation. It merely says: “By reducing the growing debt burden, increasing revenue without imposing any additional tax on the people, ensuring efficient and prudent expenditure, and creating new sources of income, Tamil Nadu will be transformed into a financially self-sufficient state.”

The manifesto also speaks of setting up an AI Ministry and an AI city to attract leading companies from around the

world, but does not spell out what investments it will make to realise this.

Building an AI ecosystem could involve setting up data centres, allocating adequate power and offering tax incentives.

What the manifesto does make clear is that TVK has not attempted to disrupt Tamil Nadu’s established policy framework. Instead, it leans heavily into it — offering expansive, targeted welfare especially for women, while addressing every major electoral constituency, from youth to farmers to state employees.

TVK keeps all options open

could include as many as two Cabinet berths for the Congress, which won five seats, if the parties decide on a tie-up. The arrangement would require other smaller parties’ support, too, for the block to have a majority in the Assembly. Later in the day, sources said the “hesitation” of several of the smaller parties has led TVK to consider an arrangement with the AIADMK, which has 47 seats.

On Tuesday evening, AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal said that the state Congress unit has been directed to take a final decision on Vijay’s request for support.

“The president of TVK, Thiru Vijay, has requested the Indian National Congress for support to form a government in Tamil Nadu... INC is clear that the mandate in Tamil Nadu was for a secular government committed to protecting the Constitution in letter and spirit. INC is determined not to have the BJP and its proxies run the government of Tamil Nadu in any manner,” Venugopal said after a meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and attended by Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi as well as AICC in charge of Tamil Nadu Girish Chodanar.

“Thiru Vijay has spoken about drawing inspiration from Perunthalaivar Kamaraj also.

Accordingly, the Congress leadership has directed the TNCC to take a final decision on Thiru Vijay’s request, keeping in view the sentiments of the state reflected in the electoral verdict,” Venugopal said.

Late at night, the state Congress’s Political Affairs Committee unanimously decided to support Vijay, sources said.

At the same time, lottery baron Santiago Martin’s wife, Leema Rose Martin, an AIADMK MLA who recently joined the party, said discussions were in progress between Vijay’s camp and Edappadi K Palaniswami, the general secretary of AIADMK.

“Talks are happening. We hope it leads to a stable government,” she said, adding that her party remained open to options as the numbers settle.

Top sources within the TVK confirmed that exploratory conversations had begun, with Aadhav Arjuna, a key figure in Vijay’s inner circle, playing a central role in initiating contact. Arjuna, who has emerged as one of the party’s most visible coordinators, is also Leema Rose Martin’s son-in-law, adding a layer of familiarity to the otherwise formal engagement.

“Congress has reacted positively, but CPI, CPM, VCK and IUML have been uncertain so far,” a senior TVK leader said.

According to sources, TVK is

expected to allocate four to six ministerial positions to partners, both to secure numbers and to compensate for its own relative inexperience in governance. Apart from former AIADMK veteran K Sengottaiyan, most of Vijay’s winning candidates are first-time legislators.

That lack of administrative depth is already shaping early decisions. Senior bureaucratic and political circles are closely watching reports that former IAS officer U Sagayam, widely known for his anti-corruption stance, may be considered for a legislative role, possibly through a by-election in Tiruchi East, one of the two constituencies Vijay has won and may vacate.

The immediate procedural steps are underway. TVK MLAs are expected to formally elect Vijay as their legislature party leader soon, after which the Governor will invite him to form the government once majority support is demonstrated. According to party sources, Vijay is likely to seek up to a week to prove his numbers on the floor of the House even as he takes charge of the government by the weekend.

Meanwhile, both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi have congratulated TVK on its victory. Vijay thanked both of them.

(WITH INPUTS FROM ENS, NEW DELHI)

Deleted by SIR, elected by people

seat used to be a Congress stronghold like the rest of Murshidabad. Then the TMC came. But this time people have rejected the TMC.”

Shaikh says the anger against the ruling party had been growing due to its MLAs not working for the people. “People have also rejected them for their corruption. I am with the people and that is why they blessed me.”

On whether he expects problems with a BJP government at the helm in the state, and the Congress having only two MLAs in the Assembly, Shaikh says: “I do not believe in unnecessary confrontation. Though the BJP has come to power, I will get work done for my constituency with the new government’s cooperation.”

Among the issues top of the agenda for Shaikh, a resident of Doipur village, is drinking water shortage, and the SIR, which has left “the future of 27 lakh people uncertain”. “I will

raise the plight of lakhs of people in the Assembly.”

In his appeal to the Supreme Court, Shaikh said he was deleted as a voter due to a mismatch in his name’s spelling between the 2002 electoral roll (a benchmark for the EC) and his present documents. He was called for a hearing on January 29, his name was sent for adjudication, and later, deleted.

Shaikh, who has a passport and other documents, says he had submitted the same during the hearing. “But still my name was deleted. Then, after my party nominated me, I approached the Supreme Court.”

After the Court asked that his case be considered on priority, the tribunal hearing it ruled in Shaikh’s favour, saying that Aadhaar card was “one of the documents enumerated for the purpose of establishing the identity of a person”. Accordingly, the tribunal said, “a direction was issued to the Election Commission of India and its

authorities to accept Aadhaar Card as a proof of identity for the purpose of inclusion or exclusion in the revised voter list.”

Apart from Aadhaar, which was “sufficient” to accept Shaikh’s appeal, the tribunal cited the fact that he had a passport issued in November 2018 and a driving licence from 2001 with his name spelled as Motab Shaikh in both.

Roy says Shaikh’s case showed that “many genuine electors may have failed to cast their votes because of their names being deleted”. “This is unfortunate for a democracy.”

Only one of a handful of people to have escaped that fate due to last-minute relief from the Supreme Court — including another Congress candidate, Alam Mottakin, who lost from Ratua — Shaikh says: “I wish that all the people whose names have been deleted in Farakka and at other places, who are genuine, find their place again in the electoral list.”



A-G Kishore Datta sent his resignation letter to Governor

Day after BJP's win, Advocate General Kishore Datta resigns

Tanusree Bose
Kolkata, May 5

ADVOCATE GENERAL (AG) Kishore Datta tendered his resignation Tuesday, a day after the BJP secured a historic majority in the Assembly polls. Sources said Datta sent his resignation letter to Governor R N Ravi, marking the beginning of an administrative overhaul as part of the change in power in the state.

While there is no requirement for the AG to step down during a regime change, it is customary for a state's top legal officer to resign when a new government is elected. The new administration typically implements its own policies, and the AG is expected to align with these changes.

Datta's departure follows a relatively brief second stint in the role. He was appointed in December 2023, succeeding Soumendranath Mukhopadhyay, who had resigned just a month prior.

Datta first took charge as the Bengal AG in February 2017. In September 2021, following the previous Assembly election, he submitted his resignation to then-Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, citing personal reasons. He was widely recognised for representing the state in high-profile cases, including post-poll violence litigation and the Narada sting operation case. The process of appointing the new AG will begin once the BJP-led Cabinet is sworn in.

Students injured in ABVP-DSO clash near CU

Kolkata: Several students were injured in a clash between ABVP and the Left-wing DSO near the College Street campus of Calcutta University, officials said.

DSO state secretary Biswajit Roy alleged that ABVP activists unleashed violence following the declaration of the assembly election results on Monday. He claimed DSO members were attacked while trying to "protect the democratic atmosphere" of the campus, accusing ABVP supporters of tearing down banners and festoons. The ABVP rejected the allegations, alleging that its members were attacked by DSO activists while they were peacefully celebrating the election results. PTI

● KALITA MAJHI WON AUSGRAM SEAT, DEFEATING TMC'S SHYAMA PRASANNA LOHAR BY 12,535 VOTES

'Women's security is my priority': House help who earns Rs 4,000 a month, now a BJP MLA

In active politics for over 10 years, her life changed when BJP gave her ticket to contest 2021 polls from Ausgram

Tanusree Bose
Kolkata, May 5

KALITA MAJHI'S victory stands out as one of the highlights of the BJP's sweeping win in West Bengal. A domestic help, Kalita, got a second chance when the BJP named her as its candidate in Ausgram in the state's Purba Bardhaman district. The gamble paid off on Monday when the 37-year-old defeated Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidate Shyama Prasanna Lohar by 12,535 votes.

"I am very happy, and I am grateful that Prime Minister Narendra Modi kept faith in me. Today, I can gift him this win," Kalita said, speaking to *The Indian Express* over the phone. "My main focus will be to



Office of former minister and TMC leader Aroop Biswas vandalised in Tollygunge on Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL

Security measures eased outside Mamata residence, Abhishek office

Press Trust of India
Kolkata, May 5

BARRICADES OUTSIDE the residence of outgoing West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee in south Kolkata were partially removed on Tuesday, a day after the TMC lost power in the state and she was defeated from the Bhabanipur seat.

Police personnel were seen dismantling the guardrails near her 30B Harish Chatterjee Street residence in the morning.

Though no official notification was issued, a Kolkata Police official present at the site said they were instructed to remove the smart barricades.

"We have acted on directions from higher authorities," he said, adding that no reason was specified.

While a police kiosk remains, the heavy security presence in the area has visibly reduced.

The locality in the Bhabanipur assembly segment had been a high-security zone, with vehicle movements monitored and residents often required to show identification to access their homes.

The restrictions appeared to ease significantly with the partial removal of the barricades. Security deployment outside the office of TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee on Camac Street was also withdrawn, a senior official said.

The premises have functioned as a key organisational hub for the TMC for years.

Another official said a broader review of security cover for leaders of the outgoing TMC government is underway.

"We are reassessing security



(Clockwise from top) Police personnel deployed outside the lane leading to TMC chief Mamata Banerjee's residence in Kolkata; TMC party office vandalised at Hogg Market in Kolkata; miscreants attack TMC office in Asansol on Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL & ANI

arrangements based on present requirements," he said, naming leaders such as Firhad Hakim, Aroop Biswas and Sujit Bose among those under review.

"Security deployment is periodically evaluated and adjusted in accordance with the prevailing situation," he said.

Meanwhile, Abhishek alleged large-scale irregularities in the assembly polls, question-

ing the counting process as well as the role of election officials and security forces.

Speaking to reporters, he claimed that while votes recorded in EVMs might remain intact, the machines themselves could be replaced, changing the original figures.

"The way rigging has taken place in the election... votes recorded through EVMs may not

be manipulated, but EVMs themselves can be replaced," he alleged.

The Diamond Harbour MP alleged that the election outcome was influenced by "systematic irregularities" that led to the TMC's defeat.

"Multiple complaints were filed during counting and shared with officials, but no action was taken," he alleged.



Kalita Majhi won the Assembly elections with 1,07,692 votes.

tuency and a Scheduled Caste reserved seat.

In 2021, TMC candidate Abhedananda Thander won the Ausgram seat with 1,00,392 votes. Kalita came second with 88,577 votes. This time around, Kalita secured

1,07,692 votes.

Kalita said that after her name was announced in the first list of BJP candidates, she took a month off from work to focus on campaigning.

"The families in the homes where I have worked for so

many years are very happy. They blessed me. They always stood by me whenever I needed them; now, they are very happy for me," she said.

Being a domestic help has helped her understand the basic issues of the common man and the sufferings of the poor in her constituency, Majhi said.

She further added that her focus is to build a hospital to help people in her village, who have to travel to the main Burdwan town to get medical facilities.

From encouraging the use of solar panels to generate electricity and infrastructure development to generating employment opportunities, Kalita listed a slew of priorities.

"I also want central government schemes to be implemented in West Bengal. All of us have the right to have a secure roof over our heads. I will introduce the PM's housing scheme and build homes and toilets," said Majhi.

LAND GRAB PROBE

ED issues lookout notice for Kolkata DCP, says Sinha failed to join probe

DCP Sinha's name surfaced while ED was probing a coal scam case

Tanusree Bose
Kolkata, May 5

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) has issued a Look Out Circular against Kolkata Deputy Commissioner of Police Shantanu Sinha Biswas to stop him from leaving the country after he failed to join the investigation in a money laundering case involving Biswajit Poddar, alias Sona Pappu, a history-sheeter accused of extortion and land grabbing.

According to ED sources, Biswas, DCP, Special Branch, Kolkata, has not responded to summons, and the agency apprehends that he may attempt to flee the country.

Biswas's name surfaced while ED was probing a coal scam case.

The sources said that while going through Sona Pappu's bank transactions, ED officials found several transactions involving the police officer.

In March, ED summoned Biswas for questioning in the coal scam case, asking him to appear in its New Delhi office on April 6.

On April 19, ED raided Biswas's residence on Fern Road in Ballygunge and a nearby building where he has five flats, as well as the house of Joy Kamdar, MD of Sun Enterprise, at Behala.

A few years back, Biswas faced ED officials in New Delhi



DCP, Special Branch (Kolkata Police) Shantanu Sinha Biswas

while serving as the officer-in-charge of the Kalighat police station in the rank of assistant commissioner of police. He had then submitted several documents, which were subsequently examined.

ED had summoned Kamdar twice in the land-grabbing case, but he did not appear for questioning. The agency later arrested him and seized Rs 1.2 crore in cash from his residence. On April 1, ED conducted simultaneous raids at six locations in Kolkata in the land-grabbing case, including Sona Pappu's residence in Ballygunge and offices of construction firms.

The officials also reached the house of Pappu's close associate, Rahul Das.

ED sources said that Pappu had been accused of illegal construction carried out using force.

The money laundering investigation stems from a Kolkata Police FIR against Poddar for his alleged involvement in rioting, attempt to murder,

criminal conspiracy and Arms Act violations.

The ED probe pertains to a housingscam, with allegations of land grabbing, illegal construction, and extortion. It is alleged that Pappu and his associates ran an extortion racket under the guise of real estate business, funneling the collected money to several influential people. Sources said the ED raided Biswas's residence in Ballygunge based on these allegations.

According to the sources, ED found evidence of Sona Pappu being in touch with businessmen who illegally took over disputed land and sold it at higher prices after creating the requisite documents.

The sources said that the ED was trying to trace the money trail and find out how many such companies were operating, how they obtained information regarding disputed land, and which officials were involved in the racket.

Sona Pappu is known to be closely associated with the Trinamool Congress.

His name recently surfaced in connection with a clash between two groups at Kakulia in Kolkata. Although he is stated to be absconding, photographs showing him with several TMC leaders have surfaced.

In February, bombs were thrown, bullets were fired, and stones were hurled as two rival groups clashed on Kankulia Road in the Golpark area, resulting in at least two injuries and the subsequent arrest of ten people. According to residents, over 100 youths, allegedly led by Sona Pappu, stormed and attacked resident Bappi Halder and his supporters, who fought back in retaliation.

Dr. Vishwanath Karad
MIT WORLD PEACE UNIVERSITY | PUNE
TECHNOLOGY, RESEARCH, SOCIAL INNOVATION & PARTNERSHIPS

Since 1983

Ph.D. Admissions Open for 2026-27 Autumn Semester

A University for Life Transformation

MIT-WPU, Pune is looking for bright and dedicated candidates interested in research to join as Full-Time/Part-Time Ph.D. scholars for the academic year 2026-27, Autumn semester. Full time Ph.D. scholars will get Stipend of Rs. 31,000/m for initial two years and Stipend of Rs. 35,000/m for next two years*

- + Civil Engineering
- + Computer Engineering
- + Mechanical Engineering
- + Electronics & Communication Engineering
- + Chemical Engineering
- + Petroleum Engineering
- + Bioengineering
- + Computer Science
- + Management
- + Commerce
- + Economics
- + Mathematics
- + Statistics

- + Biotechnology
- + Physics
- + Environmental Sciences
- + Pharmaceutical Sciences
- + Biochemistry
- + Microbiology
- + Visual Arts
- + English
- + Education
- + Sociology
- + Consciousness Studies
- + Peace Studies
- + Psychology

MIT-WPU also offers the following Ph.D. programmes in association with Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI)

- + Mechanical Engineering
- + Computer Engineering
- + Electronics & Communication Engineering

Candidates with relevant automotive domain experience are encouraged to apply.

Eligibility, Selection criterion, Reservation and Relaxations as per UGC norms
Apply Online on or before **15th May 2026**.

Phone: 020-71177137 | Whats App: 9881492848 | Mail Id: admissions@mitwpu.edu.in
Website: mitwpu.edu.in | Address: MIT-WPU, Paud Road, Kothrud, Pune, Bharat

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT GWALIOR
(An Institute of National Importance under MoE, GoI)
Morena Link Road Gwalior-474015
web : www.iiitm.ac.in

Advertisement No.: ABVIITMG/DoMS/MBA/Ad/2026/02
Date: 05.05.2026

Admission Notice for 2 Years Full-Time MBA Programme (Academic Session 2026-2027)

ABV-IIITM Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh is an autonomous institute set by Ministry of Education, Govt. of India in 1997 with a vision of creating professionals in areas of management and technology. Further the Department of Management Studies (DoMS), ABV-IIITM Gwalior, aims to develop holistic and responsible leaders by creating insightful knowledge and transforming human endeavors through technology-enabled management solutions.

The DoMS is seeking the applications from bright aspirants for its Two Years Flagship Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme with below mentioned eligibility criteria. The programme covers management domains like Marketing, Finance, Operations, IT & Systems and Human Resource Management. It offers a diversified pool of electives in the said areas alongside the research-based internship.

MBA (Master of Business Administration)

Eligibility: The candidates having the following qualifications are eligible to apply for admission to the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Programme at the ABV-IIITM Gwalior.

(i) A First-Class Bachelor's Degree with minimum of 60% marks or 6.50 CGPA on a 10-point scale or equivalent in aggregate (of all the years/semesters) in any discipline awarded by any of the universities incorporated by an act of the central or state legislature in India or other educational institutions established by an act of Parliament or declared deemed-to-be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, or equivalent qualification recognized by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.

(ii) The Bachelor's degree obtained by the candidate must have (a) Mathematics/Statistics as one of the courses, and (b) a minimum of three years of education after completing higher secondary schooling (10+2) or equivalent.

(iii) A Valid CAT/MAT/CMAT/ATMA/GMAT/GRE/CUET Score.

Application Procedure: Candidates who fulfil the above stated eligibility criteria can apply for the MBA programme at the ABV-IIITM, Gwalior, the details of which are available on institute's website. The application fees for General and OBC candidates is Rs. 1000/- and Rs. 500/- for SC/ST/PH/Female candidates, the payment link is provided in the detailed advertisement available at institute website.

The applicants fulfilling the above mentioned eligibility criteria are required to submit the completely filled-in online application form available at institute website along with applicable fee details and relevant enclosures latest by **16th May, 2026**.

The admission process to be carried out on **23rd & 24th May, 2026** at ABV-IIITM Gwalior.

For further details please visit the institute website www.iiitm.ac.in. Mere fulfillment of the eligibility criteria does not entail the admission of any candidate in the management programme.

Joint Registrar (Academics)

DECODING THE MANDATE

TMC hit by cracks in Muslim vote bank, holds out in high SIR deletion seats

With Cong, Left, ISF, AJUP cutting into TMC's Muslim base, and BJP pushing for polarisation, TMC's tally dips

Ravik Bhattacharya, Atri Mitra & Lalmani Verma
Kolkata, Lucknow, May 5



Muslims make up over 27% of West Bengal's population. PTI

ONE OF the reasons for the crushing loss of the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) to the BJP in the recent West Bengal Assembly elections seems to be the fragmentation of the TMC's Muslim support base, which had remained virtually intact in the previous polls clinched by the party.

During its three terms in power since 2011, Muslim voters have been a crucial part of Mamata's core vote base. The community makes up over 27% of Bengal's population, playing a decisive role in a significant chunk of the state's 294 seats.

In the current elections to the 293 Assembly seats, the BJP bagged 207 seats as against the TMC's 80. As the BJP expanded its electoral footprint, the representation of Muslims declined in the new House to 40 from 44 in the outgoing Assembly. Of 40 Muslim MLAs, 34 are from the TMC, two from the Congress, and one each from the CPM and All India Secular Front (ISF).

Suspended TMC leader Humayun Kabir, who formed the Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP), had fielded candidates from 143 seats across the state. Kabir himself contested two seats — Rejinagar and Nowda — in the Muslim-dominated Murshidabad district, and won both. The TMC, which had won both these seats in 2021, slipped to third place there despite fielding Muslim candidates.

In the 2021 elections, when the TMC won 215 seats as against the BJP's 77, 44 Muslim MLAs were elected, of whom 43 were from the TMC and one from the ISF.

In this election, the BJP managed to make inroads in Muslim belts, even winning several seats there. A senior TMC leader said, "This time Bengal has seen not only huge anti-incumbency but also strong Hindu polarisation. Probably, after independence, this is for the first time that such a polarisation of Hindu vote were seen in the state. We were defeated in those seats where either Muslim vote fractured and Hindu vote got polarised."

SIR deletions

The Election Commission (EC)'s months-long Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which resulted in dele-

tion of about 91 lakh voters — including over 27 lakh voters following adjudication — was a key plank of the TMC in the election, which highlighted the disproportionately high deletions of Muslim voters. Mamata has been up in arms against the SIR from the beginning, accusing the EC of doing a hatchet job on behalf of the BJP.

However, in several constituencies that saw high deletions after adjudication in Muslim dominated districts like Murshidabad and Malda, the TMC managed to retain several seats, which include Samserganj (74,775 deletions), Lalgola (55,420), Bhagabangola (47,493), Raghunathganj (46,100), Suti (37,965), Mothabari (37,255), Sujapur (26829), and Malatipur (29489).

Cracks in Muslim base

Since 2011, the TMC dominated major districts, such as Murshidabad, Malda and Uttar Dinajpur, relying on the consolidation of Muslim votes.

Of the 43 seats in these three districts, the TMC won 22 this time, which marked a sharp dip from its 35-seat tally in the previous election. In sharp contrast, the BJP's tally in the three districts surged to 19 from just eight seats in 2021. The remaining seats there were won by Muslim candidates of the Congress (2 seats), CPM (1 seat) and the AJUP (2 seats), which cut into the TMC's Muslim base. Humayun Kabir won both the Nowda and Rejinagar seats.

The Congress and the CPM won from Raninagar and Domkal respectively, where Muslims are in a majority. However, in another Muslim-majority seat, Beldanga, the BJP's candidate won, getting advantage of a split in the community's vote. The TMC similarly lost Khargram, Kandi and some other seats in Murshidabad to the BJP, which also won Malda's Manikchak and Baishnabnagar seats, where the Muslim population is about 47%.

In 64 seats in North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas, the TMC had swept the polls in 2021, with the BJP just picking five. This time, the BJP increased its tally to 34, winning many seats with over 30% Muslim population. ISF chief Nausad Siddiqui retained his

Bhangar seat, too.

The TMC also lost the Hari-pal, Singur and Pandua seats in Hoogly and Monteswar in Purba Bardhaman, where 20-30% voters are Muslims.

Some observers have pointed out that there has also been resentment among a section of Muslims against the TMC government over issues like the OBC list and the Waqf law's rollout, among other factors.

A senior TMC leader from the Muslim community said, "We have lost the confidence of Muslims. It may get more eroded in the coming elections, leading to our shrinking hold in the minority belts. Muslims seem to have realised that only some families became prosperous. The community has been reeling from the problem of migration because of unemployment, which has also made them angry. Mamata Banerjee assured them that she will set up hubs of zari and gold ornaments, but nothing happened in 15 years."

Dip in Muslim MLAs

The 40 Muslim MLAs elected this time account for 13.60% of the House. The share of Muslim MLAs in the outgoing Assembly was 14.96% (44). In 2016, when the BJP had won only three seats, there were 59 Muslim MLAs.

Unlike the previous three elections, the BJP did not field any Muslim candidates this year, marking a shift in its strategy. The party fielded Hindu candidates from the nine seats where it had nominated Muslims in 2021. The BJP however could not win any of these seats.

The TMC, Congress and the Left fielded a significant number of Muslim candidates in this election. A quarter of the Congress's 294 candidates or 75 (25.31%) were from the minority community. In 2021, Muslims made up 36.95% of the Congress's 94 candidates. The party had then contested in alliance with the Left and ISF.

In 2021, the TMC had given tickets to 46 Muslim candidates, or 15.86% of its 290 nominees. This time, the party increased their share marginally to 48 or 16.49% of its 291 candidates. The Left Front together fielded 42 Muslim candidates, even as they contested in alliance with ISF.



TMC flags and posters fill a lane in the Kalighat area of Kolkata on Tuesday, a day after Mamata Banerjee lost from her home turf . PARTHA PAUL

SIR deletions higher than the winning margins in 26 of BJP seats, 21 of TMC's

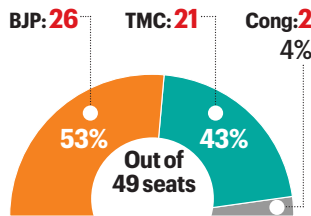
Damini Nath
New Delhi, May 5

• S.I.R. SHADOW

49 Number of seats where the winning margin was less than the SIR deletions

10,000

Where the gap between SIR deletions and winning margin



Seats	Winner	Victory Margin	SIR deletions
Samserganj	TMC	7,587	74,775
Lalgola	TMC	1,8960	55,420
Farakka	Cong	8,193	38,222
Mothabari	TMC	10,496	37,255
Jangipur	BJP	10,542	36,581
Suti	TMC	12,357	37,965
Rajarhat-New Town	BJP	316	24,132
Sitai	TMC	2,721	20,213
Raninagar	Cong	2,701	17,140
Kumarganj	TMC	6,685	20,680
Madhyamgram	TMC	2,399	14,842
Amdanga	TMC	2,995	15,387
Karandighi	BJP	19,869	31,562
Narirampur	TMC	1,986	13,463
Bhatar	BJP	6,528	17,481
Raina	BJP	834	11,284

SOURCE: ECI

in Samserganj to just 119 more in Kamarhati. The TMC won nine seats where the gap between deletions and margins was over 10,000 each.

The Congress and the Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP) won two seats each, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and All-India Secular Front got one each. Both the Congress wins — Farakka and Raninagar — were in seats where the margin was lower than the number of deleted electors.

While over 90 lakh names were deleted from the electoral

rolls in West Bengal during the SIR that started last year, 27.16 lakh of those deletions came during adjudication by judicial officers appointed on the order of the Supreme Court.

The SC, which is hearing a batch of petitions challenging the Election Commission's SIR exercise, appointed 19 appellate tribunals in March this year. Over 34 lakh appeals against exclusions and inclusions during the adjudication are pending with the tribunals even now, with less than 2,000 appeals cleared before polling in the state.

So-called secular parties can't stop BJP: Owaisi pitches Muslim leaders

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 5



AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi

A DAY after the Assembly election results were announced in five states and the BJP won a majority in West Bengal for the first time, AIMIM president and MP Asaduddin Owaisi said Muslims reposing their faith for so many years in these "so-called secular parties" has not ensured eradication of injustice against them.

The Hyderabad MP also hit out at the Opposition parties, including Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress, saying despite West Bengal having a TMC government for 15 years, Muslims continued to live in "abject poverty" in the state. He appealed to Muslims to create their "own leadership".

In a statement on Tuesday, Owaisi said: "I am of the opinion... that these so-called secular parties will not be able to stop the BJP. And we have seen in the past. In Delhi, Mr Kejriwal tried to play footsie with Hindutva, and the same was done in Maharashtra by Mr Uddhav Thackeray's party and also to a certain extent soft Hindutva was also played by the erstwhile NCP. We have seen the same behaviour in West Bengal by Mamata Banerjee and TMC. The net result is that you don't have AAP in power in Delhi despite adopting a real Hindutva."

Attacking the TMC, he said there would have been development in West Bengal had the party treated "Muslims as citizens and not as a vote bank".

He alleged that the "whole creation of Mamata Banerjee as liberal, secular leader is not seen there (Bengal)". "There was huge anti-incumbency over there. I reiterate my point that the Muslims should try to create their own political, independent leadership. Your vote is getting wasted. You're casting your votes in favour of these so-called secular parties. They are not secular and they have failed to stop the BJP," said the AIMIM chief.

The AIMIM had contested 11 seats in Bengal — mostly constituencies with a sizeable Muslim population — but drew a blank on all of them. Out of the 11 seats, the party managed to get more than 5,000 votes on just two seats — Raghunathganj (5,885 votes) and Kandi (22,976 votes).

"The people of West Bengal have given power to the BJP. We have to respect that decision. It is the people's decision," he said.

Appealing to the Muslim community to create their "own leadership", Owaisi said it was "high time" they did it. "At least you will have a voice to raise against marginalisation. You will have leadership to talk about injustice," he said.

END IN SIGHT TO PROLONGED BENGAL GOVT-CENTRE TENSIONS

Winds of change may push power tussles, legal battles out of window

Apurva Vishwanath
New Delhi, May 5

FROM TUSSLES with Governors, frequent face-offs with Central agencies to withdrawal of general consent for investigation by the CBI in the state, the prolonged legal battles between the Trinamool Congress-led West Bengal government and the BJP-led Centre over the last decade have defined federal tensions. Now, with the BJP's decisive victory in the Assembly elections, these issues will be reframed around the benefits of a "double engine".

In 2018, the Bengal government had withdrawn the "general consent" to CBI probes. The consent of a state is mandatory under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946,

for the central agency to begin a probe. The Andhra Pradesh government too had withdrawn general consent for CBI probes when the Telugu Desam Party was at odds with the NDA government. Later, the YSRCP government under Jagan Mohan Reddy restored the consent for CBI probes in 2019.

In 2021, the Bengal government filed an original suit before the Supreme Court arguing that the Centre had "unconstitutionally" deployed the CBI despite the state having withdrawn its consent. Amidst concerns that Opposition leaders are being "targeted in the guise of CBI investigations", several other states — Punjab, Jharkhand, Kerala, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Telangana, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu and



The Mamata Banerjee government had moved the SC against former Governor Ananda Bose for delaying assent to key Bills. FILE

Karnataka — withdrew their consent to the CBI. However, when governments changed, the states too altered their positions on the issue. In 2024, the SC ruled that Bengal's suit was maintainable; a larger bench is

expected to hear the issue.

Apart from the CBI, the Bengal government has had frequent run-ins with other Central agencies, including the ED. The SC is hearing an ED plea against outgoing CM Mamata Banerjee

regarding alleged interference in an investigation at the Kolkata office of political consultancy firm I-PAC. The state police filed FIRs against ED officials in the state, reflecting a pattern of retaliation. The SC stayed the FIRs and ordered that CCTV footage and digital data from the search site be preserved.

Run-ins with Governor

In a swipe against the then Governor, Jagdeep Dhankhar, the Mamata government had passed a series of Bills to replace the Governor with the CM as the Chancellor of state universities. The clashes continued in courts as the state government moved the SC against another former Governor, Ananda Bose, for sitting on key Bills. The ruling TMC termed the delay in granting as-

sent an attempt to "defeat and subvert" the legislative mandate of the state government.

The SC, in the case of Tamil Nadu, had ruled in favour of the state government. This ruling would have been a template for Bengal as well, but a reference by the President effectively watered down the standard set for the Governor.

The latest face-off in court between the state and the Centre was on the issue of the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls. Apart from the procedural aspects, the Bengal government had also challenged the EC's power to conduct such an exercise, which the SC is yet to rule on. In an unprecedented hearing, Mamata, as the sitting CM, made submissions before the

apex court challenging the SIR process. She had filed the case in her personal capacity, separate from the state government's plea, taking the issue head-on.

Policy paralysis

On policy aspects, in 2022, the Centre stopped the release of funds for MGNREGS in Bengal "due to non-compliance of directives of the central government". In October last year, the SC had dismissed the Centre's appeal challenging a June 18 order of the Calcutta High Court, which directed implementation of the MGNREGS in Bengal prospectively from August 1, 2025. Now, with the BJP's victory in the Assembly elections, funding under key central schemes are expected to resume.



RENDEZVOUS IN KOLKATA: Former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly with the BJP MLA from Kushinagar, UP, PN Pathak. The BJP MLA posted the photo on X and wrote: "Today, in Kolkata, a cordial meeting with former Indian team captain Mr Sourav Ganguly ji."

Centre okays Gujarat shipyard, 3 rail projects to ease up congestion

Dheeraj Mishra
New Delhi, May 5

THE CABINET Committee on Economic Affairs on Tuesday approved the construction of a ship repair facility at Vadinar in Gujarat.

The project will be jointly implemented by Deendayal Port Authority (DPA) and Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) at a cost of Rs1,570 crore. Along with this, the Cabinet also approved the multitracking of three key railway sections covering 19 districts in six states at a cost of Rs 23,437 crore. In the ship repair facility, two floating dry docks (FDDs) of 300 metres each will be created for the repair and maintenance of large vessels. The site will have over 14-metre-deep natural draft (depth of water) to accommodate large vessels for maintenance.

Cabinet approves Bill to increase SC judges strength from 34 to 38

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 5

AHEAD OF the Monsoon Session of Parliament, the Union Cabinet on Tuesday approved a Bill to increase the strength of judges in the Supreme Court from the existing 34 to 38.

Highly placed sources said Chief Justice of India Surya Kant had recommended to the government in March this year to increase the strength of judges so that a permanent constitution bench can be put in place.

With a host of constitution bench matters pending hearing, the CJI is learnt to have flagged the shortage of judges to hear regular matters as and when these benches are set up.

A nine-judge bench of the court is currently hearing constitutional questions arising out

of the Sabarimala review petitions. The CJI had earlier indicated that soon after the hearing is completed, he will constitute a constitution bench to hear 7-judge bench matters.

In a statement, the government said the Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026, which seeks to amend the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956, to increase the strength of the court by four. Currently, the Act provides for a maximum of 33 judges of the Supreme Court, excluding the Chief Justice of India (CJI). The amendment increases that to 37 judges, excluding the CJI.

“The increase in the number of Judges will allow the Supreme Court to function more efficiently and effectively, ensuring speedy justice. The ex-

penditure on salary of Judges and supporting staff and other facilities will be met from the Consolidated Fund of India,” the government said.

Welcoming the move, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said it will boost speedy justice, provide relief to poor and remote petitioners, and expedite the resolution of constitutional matters. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said a Bill will be brought in the next session of Parliament to raise the apex court’s strength by four judges.

The Supreme Court currently has a strength of 32 judges, with at least four judges expected to retire in 2026. While Justice Rajesh Binal retired in April, Justices J K Maheshwari and Pankaj Mithal are set to retire in June, Justice Sanjay Karol will retire in August and Justice Satish Sharma will retire

in November. Effectively, the SC Collegium headed by CJI Kant will have to make at least nine recommendations this year, if the Bill is cleared. He has a tenure till February 2027.

The last time the strength of the court was increased was in 2019, when an amendment raised it from 30 to 33, excluding the CJI. Originally, the Act had provided for a maximum of 10 judges, excluding the CJI, which was increased to 13 in 1960 and then 17 in 1977.

“The working strength of the Supreme Court was, however, restricted to 15 Judges by the Cabinet, excluding the Chief Justice of India, till the end of 1979, when the restriction was withdrawn at the request of the Chief Justice of India,” the government said.

The strength was further increased in 1986, 2008 and 2019.

3 Indians in UAE injured in Iran drone strike, PM says it is ‘unacceptable’

Shubhajit Roy
New Delhi, May 5

A DAY after three Indian nationals in UAE were injured in a fire caused by an Iranian drone strike in Fujairah, Prime Minister Narendra Modi “strongly condemned the attacks” and said targeting civilians and infrastructure was “unacceptable”.

In a separate statement, the Ministry of External Affairs called for the “immediate cessation of these hostilities and the targeting of civilian infrastructure and innocent civilians”.

Monday’s incident at the

Fujairah Petroleum Industries Zone (FOIZ) signalled rising tensions in the region along the Strait of Hormuz amid a fragile ceasefire involving the US, Israel and Iran.

On Tuesday, too, UAE authorities said their air defences were intercepting missiles and drones from Iran.

In a post on X, Modi said: “Strongly condemn the attacks on the UAE that resulted in injuries to three Indian nationals. Targeting civilians and infrastructure is unacceptable. India stands in firm solidarity with the UAE and reiterates its support for the peaceful resolution of all issues through dialogue

and diplomacy.” He said, “Ensuring safe and unimpeded navigation through the Strait of Hormuz is vital for enduring regional peace, stability and global energy security.”

Earlier, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said the attack “that resulted in injury to three Indian nationals is unacceptable”. “India continues to stand for dialogue and diplomacy... so that peace and stability may be restored across West Asia. We also call for free and unimpeded navigation and commerce through the Strait of Hormuz in keeping with international law,” he said.

Merger or defection? CM of Punjab, Chadha meet Murmu over legal status

Kanchan Vasdev
Chandigarh, May 5

CHIEF MINISTER Bhagwant Mann Tuesday met President Droupadi Murmu and sought the termination of membership of six Rajya Sabha MPs from Punjab who defected to the BJP, saying their act was a “mockery” and “murder” of the Constitution. Mann’s meeting with Murmu came soon after four of the six MPs, including Raghav Chadha, Rajinder Gupta, Ashok Mittal and Sandeep Pathak, called on the President and submitted a representation alleging harassment and “politically motivated” action against them by the Punjab government following their exit from AAP.

The AAP suffered a major jolt on April 24, when seven of its 10 Rajya Sabha members quit and merged with the BJP. The other three included Harbhajan Singh, Vikramjit Sahney and Swati Maliwal.

Barring Maliwal, all others were from Punjab. Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan later officially accepted their merger with the BJP, reducing the AAP’s strength in the Upper House of Parliament to three.



President Droupadi Murmu being felicitated by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann during a meeting at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday. PTI

Mann, who reached Delhi accompanied by more than 85 of the party’s 94 MLAs, submitted a memorandum to the President carrying 95 signatures. During the meeting, he emphasised the need for an amendment in the Constitution, to allow people to exercise the right to recall their elected representatives. He said the President assured him she would consult Constitutional ex-

perts before responding. Incidentally, it was Chadha who, as an AAP MP, had called for such a measure. Speaking in Parliament in February, Chadha had argued for the introduction of a ‘right to recall’ mechanism, which would empower voters to remove elected representatives before the expiration of their five-year term if they do not perform effectively.



बैंक ऑफ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda

CHAKRABERIA BRANCH
45/2, Chakraberia Road (South), Kolkata - 700025
E-mail: chakra@bankofbaroda.bank.in

DEMAND NOTICE
Demand Notice u/s 13 (2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 issued by the Bank of Baroda as Secured Creditor against the following **Borrower**:

Date of Notice / Account Name / NPA Date	Name & Address of Borrower	Nature and type of facility / Limit / Rate of Interest / Amount Outstanding	Security Agreement with brief description of Securities
13(2) Notice Date: 30.04.2026 / Mrs. Chaitali Das / NPA Date: 10.04.2026	Borrower: Mrs. Chaitali Das 49B, Dhakuria Station Road, Dhakuria Kolkata-700031	Baroda Home Loan / Limit: Rs. 30,00,000.00 / Rate of Interest: 7.80 % p.a. / Amount outstanding as on 28.04.2026: Rs. 29,48,162.00 + unapplied interest	Primary Security: Equitable Mortgage of Residential Flat being no. F - 4 on the 3rd Floor measuring super built-up area 839 Sq. ft. more or less, together with undivided proportionate share of land measuring about 06 Cottahs 06 Chittack 02 Sq. ft., be the same a little more or less, lying and situated at Mouza-Baikunthapur. J.L. no. 37, comprised in R.S. Dag no. 313 corresponding to L.R. Dag no. 513 under R.S. Khatian no. 1835 corresponding to L.R. Khatian nos. 4130, 2457, 815, within the local limits of Rajpur. Sonarpur Municipality, being Holding no. 117, Rakhal Ghosh Road, under Ward no. 18, P.S. Sonarpur, District- South 24 Parganas, Pincode - 700149 The Land is Butted and Bounded By:- On the North: Vacant Land, On the South: 18, Rakhal Ghosh Road, On the East: Vacant Land, On the West: Math.

You have committed default in repayment of credit facility mentioned above with further interest at the agreed rate availed from our branch as mentioned in the above. The bank has issued notice under the said Act to you to repay the outstanding amount in the above mentioned table. The Demand Notices sent to borrower's address by registered post has been returned unserved. You are called upon to pay the dues together with interest within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which bank will be constrained to exercise right of Enforcement of Security interest as against the secured assets given in the schedule of Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002. This notice is without prejudice to any other right remedy available to the bank including initiation of legal action.

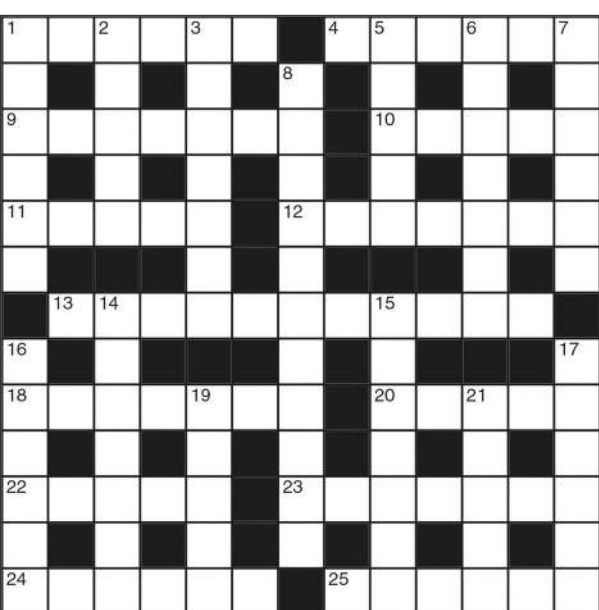
We invite your attention to sub-section 13 of the said Act in terms of which you are barred from transferring any of the secured assets referred to in para 1 above by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of business), without obtaining our prior written consent. We may add that non-compliance with the above provision contained in section 13(13) of the said Act, is an offence punishable under section 29 of the Act.

We further invite your attention to sub section (8) of section 13 of the said Act in terms of which you may redeem the secured assets, if the amount of dues together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank is tendered by you, at any time before the date of publication of notice for public auction/inviting quotations/tender /private treaty. Please note that after publication of the notice as above, your right to redeem the secured assets will not be available.

Date: 06.05.2026, **Place:** Kolkata

Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 1 Address for delivery? (6)
 - 4 It never rains but it pours (6)
 - 9 Frenchman leaving umbrella unfurled gets complaint (7)
 - 10 Possibly the present state of a nervous person (5)
 - 11 The chairman's seat? (5)
 - 12 Strain seen when a row takes a long time (7)
 - 13 Descriptive of a sophisticated geography master? (7-4)
 - 18 Bird in box on line (7)
 - 20 He's no better off for changing roles (5)
 - 22 It's taken for granted at ten to ten in the morning (5)
 - 23 One object in rent is investment (7)
 - 24 Material backing (6)
 - 25 It's accepted as a sin (6)

- DOWN**
- 1 Tension disturbed rest on board (6)
 - 2 Be sent up to bed, having gone into a decline (5)
 - 3 Officer cut off in pass (7)
 - 5 Dispatched to the interior? (5)
 - 6 One addresses one's remarks to them (3,4)
 - 7 Work's for degrees? The ones here have point (6)
 - 8 Laws for well-adjusted non-dancers (11)
 - 14 Eggs turn into cheers (7)
 - 15 Leaving things late? (7)
 - 16 A ship taking trouble in attack (6)
 - 17 Put in a box and carted off (6)
 - 19 Upright type — like Brutus? (5)
 - 21 Kid said to have been influenced (5)

SOLUTIONS CROSSWORD 5980 ACROSS: 1 Facades, 5 Judge, 8 Condescending, 9 Sorts, 10 Netting, 11 Skiers, 12 Ragged, 15 Allowed, 17 Sacks, 19 Finishing post, 20 Elsie, 21 Skilled **DOWN:** 1 Focus, 2 Canary Islands, 3 Dresser, 4 Second, 5 Janet, 6 Driving school, 7 Engaged, 11 Snaffle, 13 Assegai, 14 Admits, 16 Waste, 18 Sited

JUMBLD WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective circles below. Select the letters in the shaded circles and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever _____. — Sherlock Holmes (8)

HLSEE

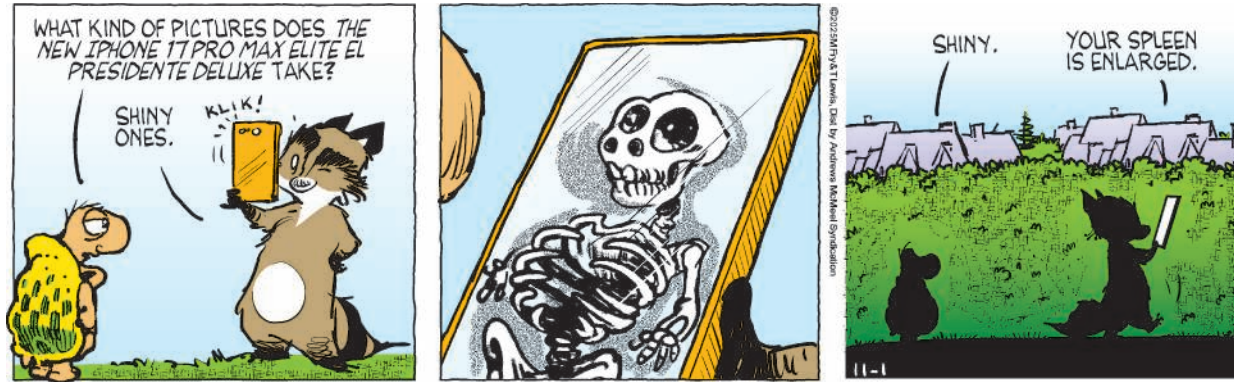
HERON

GLOYSS

EINOVBV

ANSWER: The world is full of obvious things which nobody by any chance ever observes. — Sherlock Holmes

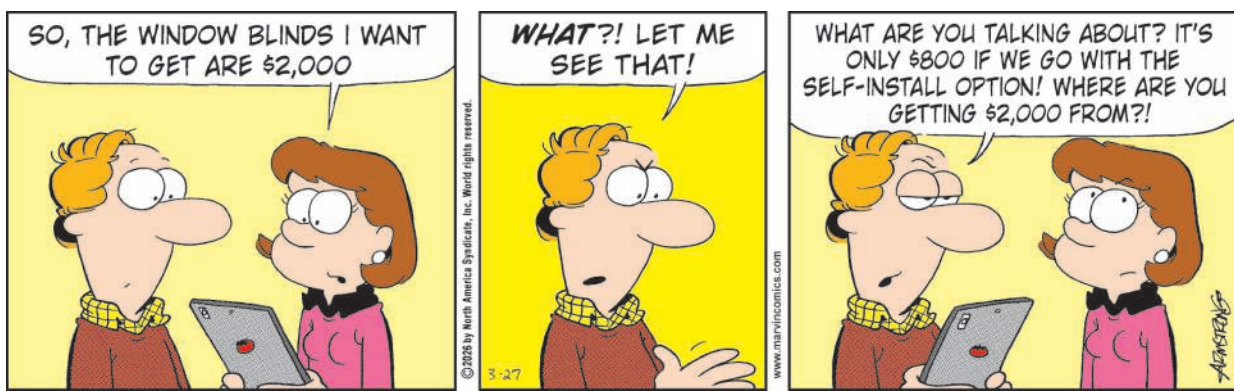
OVER THE HEDGE



CALVIN & HOBBS



MARVIN



DIFFICULTY LEVEL 2s INSTRUCTIONS
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SUBOKU 6310

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

SOLUTION SUBOKU 6309

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

BY MICHAEL FRY & T LEWIS

BY BILL WATTERSON

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

ROYAL STARS

BY GEORGIA NICOLS



ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 20): Be wise and don't challenge authority figures today. You won't win. This is definitely the day to think for yourself, especially about choosing your battles. Tonight: You're obvious.



TAURUS (APR 21 - MAY 21): This is a tense day for discussions about controversial subjects like politics, religion and racial issues. You also might be challenged in situations related to the law or medicine. Go gently. Tonight: Learn something new.



GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21): Financial discussions will definitely present a squeeze play for you today. Someone older, more experienced or in authority will tell you why something can't be done. Do your planning, but play your cards close to your chest. Tonight: Check your finances.



CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23): Relations with spouses, partners and close friends might be strained today because people are critical or cold. This makes you feel out of touch with others. Let this go. This is a fleeting dark cloud on your horizon. Tonight: Cooperate.



LEO (JULY 24 - AUG 23): Health issues, as well as challenges at work, might arise today because someone is critical or uncooperative. Avoid controversial subjects. They will be a bummer. Someone might quit today. Stay busy and positive. Tonight: Get organised; focus on a pet.



VIRGO (AUG 24 - SEP 23): This is a tough day for relating to your kids, as well as for romantic relationships, because the vibes are negative. People feel disconnected or disapproving of each other. Your perspective is distorted today. Tonight: Take it easy.



LIBRA (SEP 24 - OCT 23): You like to get along with others, which is why this might feel like a challenging day for you. People might not be particularly friendly. You might have to say goodbye to someone. Tonight: Listen.



SCORPIO (OCT 24 - NOV 23): Be careful about falling into negative thinking about yourself today. This is not real. Things look worse than they are today. If you work hard, you'll feel better. Tonight: Speak clearly.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV 24 - DEC 22): Financial issues look tight today. You'd rather save your money. In addition to which, your kids might feel like an increased responsibility. The truth is that things are actually better than they look today. Tonight: Check your money and possessions.



CAPRICORN (DEC 23 - JAN 20): Life looks worse than it is today. Keep this in mind and remind yourself to stay positive. Sometimes happiness is a state of mind; it's a choice. You might feel hurt, slighted or separated from a family member today. Tonight: You're strong.



AQUARIUS (JAN 21 - FEB 19): Home and family are your focus, and today you want to socialise. For some reason, you feel cut off from others, which is why you might seek solitude. Don't listen to criticism. It's not real. Things look worse than they are today. Tonight: Solitude.



PISCES (FEB 20 - MAR 20): You might be disappointed in a friend today. They might fail to respond to your needs. You might even feel cut off from someone. Possibly this relates to financial matters or something you own. Let it go, because this is a negative confusion today. Tonight: Friendships.

Cong seems willing as Vijay reaches out; Mamata returns Rahul gesture

Manoj CG
New Delhi, May 5

HAVING SUFFERED morale-sapping defeats in the recent Assembly elections, bickering INDIA bloc allies Congress and Trinamool Congress sent out first signals of rapprochement Tuesday. At the same time, a rupture in ties between the DMK and Congress in Tamil Nadu seems to be on the cards.

After a meeting chaired by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, and attended by Rahul Gandhi and AICC in-charge of Tamil Nadu Girish Chodankar, Congress general secretary (organisation) KCVenugopal indicated Tuesday evening that the party was ready to support TVK president Vijay, the surprise winner of the Tamil Nadu elections, to form a government. Venugopal said the party was "clear that the mandate in Tamil Nadu was for a secular government committed to protecting the Constitution", and that it should keep out "BJP and its proxies".

"Thiru Vijay has spoken about drawing inspiration from perunthalaivar Kamaraj also. Accordingly, the Congress leadership has directed the TNCC to take a final decision... keeping in view the sentiments of the state reflected in the electoral verdict," he said. Soon after, a meeting of the TNCC was called by Chodankar over Zoom



Mamata Banerjee with Abhishek in Kolkata on Tuesday. PARTHA PAUL

on Tuesday night to decide on the matter. Gandhi is known to have been in favour of a pre-poll alliance with the TVK, and is reported to have made his unhappiness with Kharge known for having pushed the party to stay on with the DMK, which lost power to finish a distant second in the state. With 108 seats, the TVK is 10 short of a majority in the 234-member Tamil Nadu Assembly; Congress has 5 MLAs.

Sources said a section of the Congress leadership in Tamil Nadu as well as newly elected MLAs favour extending support to the TVK. While a TVK-Congress deal may prompt an irate DMK to distance itself from the INDIA bloc, those in the pro-Vijay camp say the Congress can't "go against the sentiments of youths" in Tamil Nadu, or ignore the reality of the 2029 Lok

Sabha elections. The party has 9 MPs currently from the state.

One solution being considered to placate the DMK is abstaining from voting when Vijay takes a majority test in the Assembly. In contrast with Tamil Nadu's new strains stood the Congress's striking outreach to the TMC, with Gandhi himself tweeting as soon as the results in Bengal confirmed the Mamata Banerjee-led party's big defeat at the hands of the BJP. The ties between the Congress and TMC have been frayed for a while, and had been further strained by Gandhi's attacks on Mamata personally during the Bengal campaign. However, Monday, Gandhi was one of the first Opposition leaders to endorse Mamata's "vote loot" claims. While thanking the people of Kerala for its mandate to the Congress and

congratulating Vijay, he posted: "Assam and Bengal are clear cases of the poll being stolen by BJP with the support of the EC. We agree with Mamata ji. Over 100 seats were stolen in Bengal."

Linking it to the Congress's previous claims, which incidentally not all INDIA bloc allies have been on board with, Gandhi said: "We have seen this play-book before: Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Lok Sabha 2024 etc." Gandhi, who followed up this post with a phone call to Mamata as well as Vijay, was silent on the DMK's defeat, including the loss personally of MK Stalin, with whom he once shared a close rapport.

On Tuesday, in another post, Gandhi signalled to Congress leaders that the electoral wrangling with the TMC was to be put behind. "Some in the Congress, and others, are gloating about the TMC, with Gandhi himself tweeting as soon as the results in Bengal confirmed the Mamata Banerjee-led party's big defeat at the hands of the BJP. The ties between the Congress and TMC have been frayed for a while, and had been further strained by Gandhi's attacks on Mamata personally during the Bengal campaign. However, Monday, Gandhi was one of the first Opposition leaders to endorse Mamata's "vote loot" claims. While thanking the people of Kerala for its mandate to the Congress and

In Kolkata, Mamata signalled a turn too, saying in her first post-result press conference, held Tuesday, that she had spoken with both Sonia and Rahul, and that several INDIA bloc leaders, including the SP's Akhilesh Yadav, JMM's Hemant Soren,

RJD's Tejashwi Yadav, AAP's Arvind Kejriwal, and Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray, had reached out to her in solidarity. Many of them had campaigned for the TMC during the polls. Akhilesh may travel to Kolkata Wednesday to meet Mamata.

Mamata asserted that she would focus on strengthening the Opposition alliance at the national level — a tie-up she has earlier expressed unhappiness with often. In 2024, the TMC chief had hinted that the Congress should not assume itself as the natural leader of the INDIA bloc. "I formed the INDIA bloc, now it is up to those leading the front to manage it... I would just say that everyone needs to be taken along," she said in a TV interview. Asked if she could take charge of the bloc, she said: "If given the opportunity, I would ensure its smooth functioning."

The quick recalibrations by the INDIA bloc parties since Monday show that they realise the alliance is on the brink after the defeat of Mamata's TMC and Stalin's DMK — two of the strongest regional and foundational pillars of the Opposition bloc. Another INDIA constituent, the Left, has no government anywhere in India in nearly five decades. The Congress can barely take solace from the Kerala win as it coincided with a battering in Assam and all of two seats in West Bengal.

'Congress was divided over alliance with Vijay... party president took final call'

THE CONGRESS'S Lok Sabha whip **Manickam Tagore**, who is an MP from Tamil Nadu, weighs in on the Assembly election results. The outcome, he tells **Manoj CG**, was as much a verdict against the DMK-led government as it was a rejection of "entry of hate into Tamil Nadu". Actor Vijay, whose TVK emerged as the single-largest party, did not align with the BJP, he says, and that the Congress "should do whatever it takes to protect the secular space of Tamil Nadu". Excerpts:

What went wrong with the DMK-led alliance in Tamil Nadu?
The vote was against the government. People voted against the government. And DMK was the ruling party. We were alliance partners. We were not in the government. And people voted us out; collateral damage happened to us. The same alliance that won the Parliament election could not win the Assembly elections. The only difference was the government and the emergence of the TVK.

Could your alliance and party not sense there was a sentiment against the government?

When the BJP changed its state president in 2025 and sealed the alliance with Edappadi K Palaniswami (AIADMK leader), the style with which Mr Amit Shah did it was not acceptable to the people of Tamil Nadu. And that emergence of Mr Vijay was certain by that time. And the surge on the ground started by that time. And he was able to get a lot of support from the youngsters and from all other sections. He has broken barriers of caste and communities. Age was the only barrier. By that time, he was getting the support of people below the age of 45. And that has translated into votes now.

Are you suggesting there was a sentiment against the DMK, but the AIADMK could not reap its benefit due to its alliance with the BJP? And was Vijay the beneficiary?
In Tamil Nadu, there was always an alternative to Kazha-



MANICKAM TAGORE
CONGRESS MP

gam politics, a space of around 40% (of voters). Sixty per cent of the space was occupied by both the Dravida Kazhagams. The Congress tried to occupy that (40%) space in 1989. Mr Vijayakanth tried for that space sometime back in 2006. After that, nobody has tried for that space sincerely. And this time, we had a popular person and he was able to connect with people en masse. And therefore, he was able to bring that change.

There was a talk in the Congress a couple of months ago that the party should ally with the TVK. Would that have changed the situation?

I don't think that we should look at it that way. The Congress is a 140-year-old party. We have a process in place. When we take decisions like this, there is a consultative process. That consultation process was there. I agree there was a divided opinion. When our opinions were taken, we expressed our opinions with data. But when some of our colleagues had different opinions and when the Congress president had to take a final call, the Congress president took a call with the true intention that it would help our party. I don't think that we should go into that part now. We are clear that there were two opinions at that time. But when a decision has to be taken between the two opinions, one opinion has to be taken.

The TVK is short of the halfway mark. Should the Congress support the TVK?

The election has given a clear verdict. There was the NDA where Mr Modi, Mr Amit Shah and Palaniswami were together. People have rejected them and

they have reduced their numbers. The BJP which had four MLAs has now been reduced to 1. The AIADMK tally has also come down. In my view, people have rejected the entry of hate into Tamil Nadu. We fought in progressive alliance with the DMK, Left parties and others. Our alliance has lost now. The TVK has emerged as the single-largest party, which has also not aligned with the BJP. It has also defeated the BJP and the politics of hate in Tamil Nadu. Therefore, we think that the secular space in Tamil Nadu is back. The Congress should do whatever it takes to protect the secular space of Tamil Nadu. Therefore, the MLAs have also been consulted. The Congress chief has spoken to all of us; he and the leadership will take a call.

If the Congress offers support to the TVK, will that mean a rupture in ties with DMK?

We are fighting against the BJP and the RSS, ideologically. Our fight is against them. In Kerala, Communists and the Congress fight each other. In Bengal, the TMC and the Congress fight each other. But we are together in our fight against the BJP at the national level. Here also in Tamil Nadu, we are seeing a new party which has fought against the BJP. Therefore, we are very clear that that kind of secular politics should also be supported by all kinds of forces.

So, at the national level, the DMK and the Congress can still be part of the INDIA bloc and in the state, it can support the TVK?

The Congress president has to take that call. I was giving you instances of Kerala and Bengal. We have political differences in states, but we fight together at the national level. In Bengal, we have different spaces, but we are together in Delhi. These are all places and states where we fight among ourselves. But like that, in Tamil Nadu also, there is a new party which is occupying that space. We don't want to suspect that party. We think that the secular space should be protected and we should not compromise on that ideology.

'Jittery' SP pulls plug on I-PAC deal for UP 2027 after Bengal, Tamil Nadu poll losses

Pushkar Banakar & Lalmani Verma
New Delhi, Lucknow, May 5

THE SAMAJWADI Party's (SP) proposed tie-up with political consultancy firm I-PAC for the 2027 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections has fallen through, amid a mix of legal troubles, electoral setbacks, and internal reservations within the party, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Sources in I-PAC said the agreement, finalised earlier this year, was now "off the table". The developments come in the backdrop of the ED arresting I-PAC director Vinesh Chandel last month in connection with alleged financial irregularities in the alleged Bengal coal smuggling case that has cast a shadow on the firm's operations. "The EC raids on our offices and the arrest of our director (Vinesh Chandel) had left the deal on shaky ground," a source said.

The move triggered uncertainty among political clients and raised questions about the firm's ability to execute large-scale election campaigns.

Another source pointed to the broader political context, suggesting that recent Assembly poll outcomes had also contributed to the SP's rethink. "The loss of the TMC and DMK in the Assembly polls had seemingly left the SP jittery... The credibility was gone, especially after (West Bengal CM) Mamata Banerjee lost from her own seat by a huge margin. That was the final nail in the coffin."

The perception of underperformance in key states appears to have influenced SP's internal assessment of I-PAC's effectiveness. The consultancy had been associated with campaign strategies in both Bengal and Tamil Nadu, where electoral outcomes did not align with expectations of the parties it was advising, sources said. In the weeks following the raids, I-PAC is learnt to have significantly scaled down its operations in Bengal, weeks ahead of the polls.

Sources said several offices in the state were either temporarily shut or reduced to skeletal staff, with non-essential campaign work put on hold. The reduced operations deepened wedges between the TMC and I-PAC. Multiple sources in I-PAC confirmed that their relations with TMC leaders soured after the ED raids. "The leaders expected full-scale help from us, especially in the days ahead of polls. However, our reduced activity on the ground left them fuming," a source said.



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav prefers feedback received from party workers on the ground over inputs from private agencies, says a senior party leader

The fallout had immediate organisational consequences. "We have shut our office in UP and around 30-40 people who were hired have been asked not to report to work," the source added, indicating a complete halt to preparatory work for the SP campaign.

A senior official within I-PAC acknowledged that multiple factors contributed to the breakdown. "Mamata was instrumental in helping I-PAC secure the SP deal, but the arrest of Chandel, who was touted to lead the Uttar Pradesh project, jeopardised the plan," the official said.

"Also, there was pressure from the BJP to back out." Despite the setback, the SP is unlikely to entirely forgo professional campaign support. Sources said another firm led by former I-PAC staff is expected to assist the party in the run-up to the 2027 elections.

Within the SP, however, there appears to have been growing unease over reliance on external consultants. An SP functionary said the decision was expected. "Calling off the tie-up with I-PAC was expected after the ED last month arrested Chandel. That created a sense of uncertainty among SP leaders over the future assignments of I-PAC," the leader said.

Electoral outcomes in states where I-PAC had been active also played a role. "The recent results of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, where I-PAC was working for the ruling parties, led the party to rethink its decision. We are not sure how independently that firm would be able to deliver in future," he said. Another senior SP leader pointed to a more structural preference within the party's leadership. "SP chief Akhilesh Yadav prefers feedback received from the party's own workers on the ground over inputs from private agencies," he said.



The Day After

BJP supporters remove TMC flags in the Tollyganj constituency following the party's win in the West Bengal Assembly elections, in Kolkata on Tuesday. PTI

BJP's Eastern mandate could help Delhi open new foreign policy doors in region

C Raja Mohan
New Delhi, May 5

THE BJP's rise in West Bengal and consolidation in Assam presents a rare political opportunity to revitalise India's engagement with its eastern neighbourhood.

At the same time, leadership transitions in Dhaka and Kathmandu offer Prime Minister Narendra Modi a chance to revisit India's regional policy. For the first time in years, the political geography within India and across its eastern periphery are in alignment with an ambitious regional agenda.

Elections have political consequences; when they occur in border states, they also have foreign policy implications. Divergences between the Centre and border states have long complicated India's neighbourhood policy.

Nowhere has this been more evident than in West Bengal, Assam, and Tamil Nadu, where local political calculations have often clashed with national foreign policy priorities. Over time, regional leaders in bordering states have often become diplomatic spoilers, with an effective veto over Delhi's external engagement with neighbouring countries.

On the face of it, the alignment of political power between the Centre and key states creates the means for better coordination of local and national interests. Yet the problem is not merely political; it is rooted in geography. Unlike relations with distant powers, diplomacy with neighbours directly affects people in the borderlands. That



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with his Bangladesh counterpart Khalilur Rahman in New Delhi last month. PTI FILE

local and national perceptions diverge is not unnatural. Managing this tension requires sustained political tending of borderlands on Delhi's part and a deeper accommodation of state-level concerns within national strategy.

The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government struggled with serious internal contradictions. Between 2004 and 2014, a divided Congress found it difficult to seize international opportunities. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, for instance, faced intense domestic opposition, including in his own party and coalition, over the civil nuclear agreement with the United States. So much so that he was forced to win an unprecedented confidence vote in Parliament on a foreign policy issue.

Neighbourhood diplomacy was no less contested. In Tamil Nadu, state Congress leaders constrained Delhi's engagement with Sri Lanka over electoral considerations. In West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee emerged as a decisive constraint on India's eastern diplomacy. Politics in Assam has long complicated ties with Bangladesh.

During his second term, Manmohan Singh attempted an ambitious reset with Bangladesh relations. The extraordinary momentum in bilateral relations after 2014 was disrupted by Sheikh Hasina's ouster in 2024. The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus signalled significant departure from the direction of travel in the previous decade. However, the new leadership under Tarique Rahman has signalled a clear desire to restore positive engagement with India.

Parallel to bilateral efforts, Modi sought to advance sub-regional cooperation with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal after the failure of the SAARC summit in 2014. Today, the BJP's surge in the north east and the emergence of new leaders in Dhaka and Kathmandu provides the basis for a fresh effort at sub-regionalism.

Yet the burden of rebuilding regional cooperation cannot rest on Delhi alone. The new governments in Dhaka and Kathmandu must also be prepared to rethink regionalism in the eastern sub-continent. Even before the recent electoral outcomes, Delhi had begun signalling its intent to reinvigorate neighbourhood policy. At a recent conclave of Indian envoys, Modi reaffirmed the importance of the "Neighbourhood First" policy, with a sharper emphasis on trade and connectivity. The challenges, however, remain formidable. But the broader regional vision that Modi articulated over the past decade remains relevant.

(C. Raja Mohan is contributing editor on international affairs for *The Indian Express*. He is also associated with the Motwani Jadeja Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University, Delhi)

ate what Modi himself described as a "golden chapter" in India-Bangladesh relations. The extraordinary momentum in bilateral relations after 2014 was disrupted by Sheikh Hasina's ouster in 2024. The interim government led by Muhammad Yunus signalled significant departure from the direction of travel in the previous decade. However, the new leadership under Tarique Rahman has signalled a clear desire to restore positive engagement with India.

Parallel to bilateral efforts, Modi sought to advance sub-regional cooperation with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal after the failure of the SAARC summit in 2014. Today, the BJP's surge in the north east and the emergence of new leaders in Dhaka and Kathmandu provides the basis for a fresh effort at sub-regionalism.

Yet the burden of rebuilding regional cooperation cannot rest on Delhi alone. The new governments in Dhaka and Kathmandu must also be prepared to rethink regionalism in the eastern sub-continent. Even before the recent electoral outcomes, Delhi had begun signalling its intent to reinvigorate neighbourhood policy. At a recent conclave of Indian envoys, Modi reaffirmed the importance of the "Neighbourhood First" policy, with a sharper emphasis on trade and connectivity. The challenges, however, remain formidable. But the broader regional vision that Modi articulated over the past decade remains relevant.

(C. Raja Mohan is contributing editor on international affairs for *The Indian Express*. He is also associated with the Motwani Jadeja Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University, Delhi)

Kerala verdict protest against 'style', correction needed: CPM veteran

Nidheesh MK
Thiruvananthapuram, May 5

THOMAS ISAAC, CPM veteran and Kerala's former Finance Minister, had agreed to speak on the day the Assembly election results came in, and that turned out to be quite a day. "Even giving you this interview is going out, don't embarrass me further," he said with a smile, asking not to be pushed hard on difficult questions.

The results had shocked the Left. The LDF had been reduced to 35 seats. The UDF score had crossed a hundred. Thirteen sitting ministers lost their seats. The scale of it was, as Isaac put it, without a parallel. "This is the heaviest defeat the Left Democratic Front has ever suffered. There are no comparisons anywhere in Kerala's history," the 73-year-old said. Isaac did not try the usual escape hatches such as blaming a political conspiracy. What he kept returning to was a more uncomfortable argument: that the Pinarayi Vijayan government had performed exceptionally and that the ruling party failed to make that performance count electorally.

"The assumption was that people would vote on the basis of this progress. But whether the politics of this progress was taught adequately, I don't know." The problem, as he saw it, was that by the 10th year in power, the "extraordinary had become ordinary". Monthly pensions, welfare schemes — all of it had settled into the furniture of daily life. "People were taking it for granted. This pension, isn't it something that comes every

month? It had become a routine thing. Very few people remembered it wasn't like this before."

A 'style' problem

The word that kept appearing in Isaac's answers was "style". In many constituencies, he said, a significant portion of the LDF's confirmed voter base either voted against them or simply did not go out to vote. "This is not about them going over to the UDF or joining them. This is a disagreement about style. That is what they were saying. And it needs to be corrected. Without correcting this, we cannot move forward." Isaac would not comment on Pinarayi Vijayan trailing in Dharmadam in the early rounds, though he won later. Isaac said that the ten years of governance under the LDF are something Kerala won't easily get back. "This kind of era will be very difficult for Kerala to recreate. There will be a great loss."

Isaac had no answer to why the LDF lost Alappuzha, a constituency he represented for twenty years. He had visited the constituency during the campaign. "The feeling I got was that we would win. Because people were responding the same way they always did. But the result was different." He paused and then said, "So that is nostalgia. We were only seeing what was in our echo chamber."

On the BJP winning three seats in Kerala and state party chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar defeating sitting minister Sivan Kutty in Nedom, Isaac said the party's vote share had not increased. The BJP recorded an 11.4 per cent vote share in Kerala. "They have been contained throughout this period."



New Recipe for Success

CABINET BRIEFINGS by Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw are often loaded with regional flavours, including street food, from different states. Tuesday was no surprise after the BJP's thumping victory in the West Bengal Assembly polls a day before. Reporters who attended the briefing were served traditional Bengali sandesh and jhalmuri, the snack which grabbed the nation's attention after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to a jhalmuri stall in Jhargram during his election campaign in the state. As poll results from West Bengal rolled in on Monday, several BJP leaders were seen celebrating the historic mandate with jhalmuri.

Guests from Himalayas

DAYS AFTER the Capital hosted a group of journalists from Nepal, a team of diplomats from the neighbouring country arrived in Delhi for a 10-day programme being conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs. As many as 35 diplomats from Nepal are participating in the event which kicked off on Tuesday.

Delhi HC quashes LOCs against former MP, businessman Ratul Puri, others

Sohini Ghosh
Delhi, May 5

DISPOSING OF a batch of 33 petitions, some pending since 2022, moved by individuals challenging lookout circulars (LOCs) issued by various authorities against them, the Delhi High Court quashed 13 LOCs issued by financial institutions and 16 others issued by ministries and investigating agencies, permitting the petitioners to travel without court permission. Reiterating earlier judicial precedents, the court in its April 17 order underlined that LOCs are not "a routine tool for law enforcement or debt recovery" and cannot be issued mechanically without providing reasons.

Justice Purushendra Kaurav, in the order made public on May 5, disposed of four other petitions relegating the petitioners to approach the competent authority, the court before which the chargesheet/complaint is pending, seeking modification or cancellation of LOCs, without quashing the existing LOCs against them.

Among those relegated to the LOC-issuing authority are former promoter of Bhushan Steel Neeraj Singhal and his wife Ritu Singhal.

Justice Kaurav made it clear that for the 29 petitions where the court has quashed the LOCs, the individuals shall have to provide their itinerary to the concerned authority, that is the authority at whose behest the LOCs were issued — be it financial institutions, ministries or investigating agencies — prior to their departure abroad.

Among those who had challenged the LOCs were former directors of Moser Baer India Ltd Ratul Puri and his mother Nita Puri, directors of M/s Wave Megacity Centre Pvt. Ltd. Manpreet Singh Chadha and Charanjit Singh, several position holders in real estate firm Asso-tech Limited.

Those who challenged LOCs issued at the request of financial institutions included Raghu Rama Krishna, former YSRC MP and now Deputy Speaker of Andhra Pradesh Assembly.

STRANDED IN ARABIAN SEA SINCE FEBRUARY 9

Bombay HC orders release of 50 seafarers: 'Life comes only once'

Omkar Gokhale
Mumbai, May 5

THE BOMBAY High Court on Tuesday ordered the immediate release of 50 crew members, all Indians, stranded on three vessels in the Arabian Sea since February, observing that "for them life comes only once".

Calling themselves "victims of a high-seas humanitarian crisis", the seafarers had claimed that they had been stranded inside the vessels since February 9, and the owners had "practically abandoned" the ships and deserted the crew.

The three motor tankers, MT Asphalt Star, MT Stellar Ruby and MT Al Jafzia, had been intercepted by the Indian Coast Guard in February, about 11 nautical miles from Mumbai, for alleged illegal transfers of fuel oil and bitumen. While the ships were placed under arrest, only one of the 50 crew members was named as an accused in the case.

Some of the crew members, represented through the Maha-



Rescued crew members arrive at the Yellow Gate Police Station after their release, in Mumbai on Tuesday. AKASH PATIL

ashtra Navnirman Navik Sena Union, had filed a habeas corpus plea in the High Court. Alleging that they were held in wrongful confinement for nearly three months, they sought directions from the court to allow them to "sign-off, disembark" and be repatriated.

On Monday, a bench of Justices Ravindra V Ghuge and Hiten S Venegavkar had expressed concern over their safety and sought the presence of all the crew members in court,

observing that they cared for humans, not the dead vessels.

As the crew members appeared before the court on Tuesday, the lawyers representing the owners of the vessels raised apprehensions about the ships being unmanned if all of them were released without any replacement.

"We will release all of them today itself. You take care of your vessels and commercial activities. We will take care of human life. You can read their

faces. The happiness of breathing free air and being on Mother Earth. And they must be feeling so relieved to be on land. We will allow them to be happy for some time. And we are sure that when you replace them with another complement of staff, you will stop the petitioners' salaries and you will start paying them (the replaced crew) the salaries," Justice Ghuge said in oral remarks.

"For them, life comes only once, and they have to feed their family members. There must be at least four other mouths who are dependent on them, including wife, children and old parents. You will not think of that. It is only the court of law that will think of that. For you, the monies are very important, not the human lives..."

"Now we cannot hold them back. Now the owners have to decide how the ships have to be taken care of, whether temporarily you will bring them closer to the inner anchorage or move the vessels to the Alang ship breaking yard," Justice Ghuge

further added.

The Coast Guard officer present in the court said that the three vessels cannot remain in the Arabian Sea as they would cause "national security concern" and maritime and navigational hazards; therefore, they should be towed to Alang yard in Gujarat.

The petitioners, represented by advocate Padmavati Vaishya, claimed they were supplied only 300 millilitres of drinking water per person daily, and were making rotis by burning wood.

The judges asked if anyone wanted to return to the vessels. "Kisi ko nahi jaana hai (nobody wants to go)," they responded.

"Since all these 50 are adults, we have no reason to detain any of them under any compulsion as may be voiced by the owners of the vessels, keeping in view that they claim to have suffered starvation and thirst while on the vessels," the court held, directing the authorities to complete the formalities to set them free.

DETAINED FOR 'ANTI-BJP POST'

HC clears path for UK doctor to rejoin family, patients in England

Omkar Gokhale
Mumbai, May 5

NEARLY FOUR months after he was detained for allegedly posting objectionable content against a BJP leader, the Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the Maharashtra government to modify the Look Out Circular (LOC) against UK-based doctor and YouTuber Sangram Patil (49) in the case, so that he can fly back to England by or after May 11.

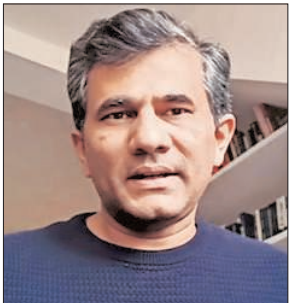
A single-judge bench of Justice Ashwin D Bhobe took on record undertakings filed by Patil and his parents, assuring his appearance as and when required during the probe and his cooperation with the investigation agency.

He was booked for allegedly posting objectionable content against a BJP leader and was detained on January 10 upon his arrival at the Mumbai airport. On April 15, Advocate General (AG) Milind Sathe for the state government had said that it had no objection to lifting the LOC against Patil if the investigation reports pertaining to the case against him were not made available within three weeks.

The HC had then admitted Patil's plea challenging the FIR and LOC. He had denied the allegations of posting the objectionable content.

Patil's lawyers had claimed he was virtually "in an open-air jail" and his detention "resulted in there being a possibility of him being removed from his job" in the UK and he has a family including wife and a child in the UK and patients to look after.

Justice Bhobe had then told the government that it cannot hold a person for a longer time



Sangram Patil

and sought completion of the investigation at the earliest.

On Tuesday, senior advocate Rajiv Shakhder and advocates Ujjwalkumar Chavhan and Aditya Hire for Patil told the bench that he had filed an undertaking stating that he will "not evade or avoid the process of law and shall participate in the investigation proceedings in good faith and as required."

Patil, a UK citizen employed in the National Health Service (NHS) UK as a consultant doctor, had added that "travelling back to India requires reasonable prior intimation to enable compliance without compromising his professional duties and obligations." However, he said that 15-day notice was "sufficient for him to travel back to India again to join the probe."

The court accepted Patil's statement on undertaking, after AG Sathe said that the authority was satisfied with it and will modify the LOC to enable his UK travel, as the probe is still on.

"By virtue of this, he would be able to travel outside India and instructions will be issued to competent authorities on or before May 11," Sathe stated.

The court then ordered modification of LOC and is likely to hear Patil's main plea next in June 2026.



Officials inspect the remains of the vehicle that caught fire after an explosion, outside BSF headquarters, in Jalandhar on Tuesday. EXPRESS

Blast outside Jalandhar BSF HQ sparks panic, two detained

Express News Service
Jalandhar, May 5

A DELIVERY package kept in scooter parked outside the Border Security Force (BSF) headquarters in Jalandhar "blew up" leading the vehicle to burst into flames late on Tuesday, prompting an immediate response from authorities who cordoned off the area and detained two persons for questioning.

Police Commissioner Dhanpreet Kaur said that the incident took place around 8 pm. The two wheeler — a Honda Activa — belonged to delivery boy, identified Gurpreet Singh, a resident of Garha in Jalandhar.

"Gurpreet and one more persons has been taken into custody for preliminary investigation," she said.

According to the police Gurpreet had come to deliver a parcel at the BSF headquarters complex. As he was reportedly

not allowed entry into the premises for not wearing a helmet, he parked his scooter outside and proceeded on foot. The blast took place while he was returning and was around 50 to 60 metres away from the parked scooter. The explosion was so powerful that it was heard about a kilometre away.

Gurpreet's father Kashmiri Singh, a retired BSF personnel, said his son had been working as a delivery boy with an e-commerce giant for the past 2-3 months. He told the media that his son called him shortly after the incident, informing him that his scooter had caught fire following an explosion and that the police had taken him into custody. "He is my only son and regularly goes to the BSF headquarters to deliver parcels. I do not know what exactly happened or how the explosion took place," he said.

Kashmiri Singh added that he has been trying to contact police officers to speak to his

son, but has not been allowed to do so far. "I am completely in the dark about the situation," he said.

Meanwhile, police cordoned off the area and collected samples for forensic examination. Officials said it was too early to draw conclusions and the exact cause and nature of the blast would become clear only after a detailed investigation.

Reacting to the incident, senior Congress leader Sukhinder Singh Randhawa said that the ongoing tussle between the Centre and the state government was affecting peace in Punjab. He said an explosion near a highly sensitive installation raised serious questions over intelligence gathering and security arrangements.

Leader of Opposition, Partap Singh Bajwa, said "The explosion... points to serious lapses in safety and vigilance. The government must stop reacting after the fact and start taking proactive, visible steps..."

• BRIEFLY



At the crash site in Thane district on Tuesday. EXPRESS

MAHARASHTRA

Four killed as SUV collides with state transport bus in Thane

FOUR PEOPLE were killed after a sport utility vehicle (SUV) collided with a state transport bus in Maharashtra's Thane district on Tuesday, officials said. The crash occurred around 11.30 am at Tokawde in Murbad taluka on the Murbad-Ahilyanagar Road, said Sagar Palsule, Divisional Commissioner of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) Thane division. Deputy Superintendent of Police (Murbad) Anil Lad informed that four people died in the accident though they were yet to be identified. The bodies were sent to a government hospital for post-mortem examination, said the police officer. PTI

Ex-GST official gets 10-yr RI for wife's death

A COURT in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district on Monday sentenced a Goods and Services Tax (GST) assistant commissioner to 10 years rigorous imprisonment after holding him guilty of "culpable homicide not amounting to murder" and "cruelty" in connection with the death of his wife who purportedly fell from the terrace of their residence in November 2014. The convict, Ashwani Singh (35), who was posted in Saharanpur at the time, had been attached with the Central GST Commissionerate in Meerut. He was convicted under Sections 304, 498A and 201 of the IPC. ENS

Tiger rescued a week ago found dead in Panna

A TWO-YEAR-OLD male tiger, rescued barely a week ago and declared fit, was found dead inside the Panna Tiger Reserve on Tuesday, raising the tiger death toll in Madhya Pradesh this year to 28. The animal had been captured on April 26 from Tara village in the Amanganj buffer range after it strayed close to human habitation. According to forest officials, veterinarians had assessed the tiger as healthy before releasing it back into the reserve with a radio collar to track it. Despite this, the carcass was discovered near a nullah in the Rampura beat. ENS



Passengers being evacuated from the IndiGo flight. RHYTHM ACHARYA/X

Power bank catches fire inside IndiGo plane, five injured

Jasbir Malhi
Mohali, May 5

AN EMERGENCY evacuation carried out on an IndiGo flight on Tuesday afternoon after a passenger's power bank caught fire. The Ahmedabad-Chandigarh flight, operating as IndiGo 6E-108, had landed safely at 3.29 pm when the incident occurred during taxiing at Shaheed Bhagat Singh International Airport. "After landing during taxi into the bay at Chandigarh, a power bank kept in a pouch in the seat pocket by a passenger seated on 39C caught fire. Aircraft was stopped in the bay," aviation watchdog DGCA said in a statement.

IndiGo confirmed that the aircraft was stationary after landing when the passenger's personal electronic device caught fire.

"On 5 May 2026, while IndiGo flight 6E 108 from Hyderabad to Chandigarh was stationary after landing, an incident involving a customer's personal electronic equipment catching fire was reported. In the interest

of safety, an immediate evacuation was carried out, and all the relevant authorities were immediately informed," an official statement read.

"In the interest of safety, an immediate evacuation was carried out and all relevant authorities were informed. All customers were safely escorted to the terminal and are being attended to."

According to an airport official, a passenger seated on 39C, identified as Devansh, alerted the crew after noticing fire in his power bank. Sensing the gravity of the situation, the cabin crew promptly used onboard fire extinguishers to douse the flames.

However, smoke had already spread inside the cabin, the official said. After the aircraft reached Bay No. 1, the crew declared an emergency around 3.35 pm and opened the emergency exits. Passengers were evacuated using inflatable slides. The situation briefly turned chaotic during the evacuation. Five people, including two children, sustained minor injuries.

The Big Picture

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026

9

LONG BEFORE C. Joseph Vijay asked Tamil Nadu for political power, he had already asked, and got, something more intimate: recognition.

For three decades, he had found a space in homes across Tamil Nadu, arriving through first-day-first-show whistles, television reruns, college dance floors, festival releases and YouTube clips.

So by the time he launched Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) in February 2024, Vijay could make a political claim that other new entrants would have found impossible to match: “I did not enter homes after launching TVK,” he would tell supporters. “I launched TVK only after entering every home through cinema.”

In a state where cinema has been a key medium to represent and reinforce Tamil/Dravidian culture and identity politics, Vijay fits into a familiar pattern — from C N Annadurai and M Karunanidhi, who used theatre and film dialogues to carry Dravidian ideas into popular imagination, to M G Ramachandran and later, Jayalalithaa, who commanded both cinematic and political loyalty.

Yet, Vijay also breaks that tradition. While his astonishing electoral success within two years of his political launch has invited the inevitable comparison with MGR, the other superstar who went on to be Chief Minister, there are crucial differences.

While MGR came from inside the Dravidian movement before founding the AIADMK, Vijay’s politics did not grow out of party apprenticeship or public agitation. It grew from fandom first, then welfare activity, then carefully rationed political speech. That makes him both less prepared than MGR and, in another sense, more mysterious.

So when his TVK ended up as the single biggest party in the Tamil Nadu elections, Vijay left almost everyone stunned, except perhaps those in whose homes he had existed since much before, as a poster, as a song, as dialogues or as dance moves.

Romantic hero to Thalapathy

To understand Vijay’s politics, one must first understand Vijay the screen figure.

He was not always the swaggering “Thalapathy” or commander, the honorary title bestowed on him by his fans. The early Vijay was softer, leaner, more boyish. In the 1990s, he became a romantic hero with a particular middle-class accessibility. In films such as *Poove Unakkaga*, *Kadhakukku Mariyadhai*, *Love Today* and *Thuladha Manamum Thullum*, he was the young man who suffered politely, loved

Tamil cinema has produced many macho heroes. But here was a hero who was not merely beating villains; he was convincing mothers, sisters and college girls that he could be trusted

earnestly and waited long enough for the audience to bless him.

Tamil cinema has produced many macho heroes. But here was a hero who was not merely beating villains; he was convincing mothers, sisters and college girls that he could be trusted.

Then came the transformation. The lover slowly became the mass hero. *Ghilli* gave him speed, comic timing, physical assurance and the velocity of a star who had learned how to move a crowd. *Thirupaachi*, *Sivakasi*, *Pokkiri* and later *Thupakki*, *Kaththi*, *Mersal*, *Sarkar*, *Master*, *Beast*, *Varisu* and *Leo* built different versions of the same promise: here was a man who could dance, joke, love, suffer insult, explode into violence and then return to the centre of the frame.

But it was his dance moves — fast and uninhibited — that travelled before his speeches did. In Tamil Nadu, dance is more than just an accessory to stardom. If Rajinikanth had style and Kamal had craft, Vijay had a certain rhythm that young men could imitate and children could attempt at school functions.

In his movies, Vijay is often wronged but not broken. He may mock power, but he does not look powerless. He carries on his shoulders a certain Tamil commercial-film ethic: protect the weak, punish the corrupt, respect mothers, distrust arrogant elites, and deliver justice with enough style to make morality entertaining. In Tamil Nadu, this can almost read like a political manifesto.

Quietly, Vijay

Off-screen, Vijay was almost the opposite of the man who exploded out of screens. He was shy, private, sparing with words and visibly uncomfortable with public life. For years, even when rumours of political ambition followed him, it was his father, director S A Chandrasekhar, who often did the talking.

That father-son relationship is central to Vijay’s evolution. In 2009, Chandrasekhar helped shape the All India Thalapathy Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, the fan organisation that would later become the basis for Vijay’s social and political activity. For long, Vijay seemed like the hesitant son of an ambitious father, a star with political potential but without the appetite to fully claim it.

The rupture came slowly. In 2020, when Chandrasekhar attempted to form a political outfit using Vijay’s name without his approval, he publicly distanced himself and later moved legally against several people, including his parents. The son who had long been described as shy had drawn a hard boundary. If politics was to happen, it would happen on his terms.

A VIJAY BLOCKBUSTER

First came Vijay the actor — the shy, romantic hero of the 1990s who transformed into a mass entertainer who could dance, joke, love and explode into violence. Then came Vijay the politician, but this time, he didn’t need to do much. ARUN JANARDHANAN on the man who walked into people’s hearts, and came out with a stupendous mandate



● Vijay’s Screen Presence

POOVE UNAK-KAGA (1996) was his first major blockbuster, establishing him as a romantic hero alongside hits such as *Kadhalukku Mariyadhai* (1997), which earned a state award. Films such as *Kushi* (2000) solidified his appeal with youthful romance and music

GHILLI (2004), a kabaddi action remake, is his biggest hit yet, running 250 days and shifting his image to action star. *Thirumalai* (2003) initiated this change. Vijay’s energetic portrayal in *Ghilli* featured iconic songs and stunts, making it a festival staple even today

That decision explains much of Vijay’s later political style: controlled access, few public improvisations and a tight inner circle. “He is not a man who enjoys being handled. He may tolerate advisers, but he does not enjoy being owned by them,” said a source who has worked closely with Vijay before and after the launch of TVK.

Vijay has long kept his personal life tightly private. His mother, Shoba Chandrasekhar, is a playback singer and has also worked as a writer and director in Tamil cinema. His wife, Sangeetha Sornalingam, and their two children have largely stayed away from the public glare. The couple’s divorce petition is currently being heard by a court in Chennai.

Vijay’s private circle is small, mostly from the film industry. He is known to take quiet cycling rides along Chennai’s East Coast Road, often masked and unrecognisable. He moves between his East Coast Road bungalow and a seafront residence near Marina Beach, a life both extraordinarily privileged and deliberately sealed.

That privacy has helped his aura. He was available on screen, unavailable in life.

‘A dangerous boy’ in politics

The political confrontation that first sharpened his public image came through cinema. In 2017, his *Mersal*, an action-thriller directed by Atlee, triggered the BJP’s anger over dialogues criticising GST, Digital India and the absence of free medical care. H Raja, a senior BJP leader, called it “Joseph Vijay’s hate campaign against Modi”, deliberately foregrounding Vijay’s Christian identity. BJP leaders accused the film of



A still from Vijay’s *Mersal*, released in 2017; (above) arriving at the TVK headquarters in Chennai on May 4, after his party’s big win. ANI VIDEO GRAB

misinformation and attributed political motives. Vijay himself remained largely silent. His father defended him fiercely, asking why his son’s religion mattered. The episode did two things. It made Vijay appear, even without speaking, like a star willing to stand inside an anti-establishment storm. And it gave him an early adversary in the BJP, whose attacks elevated his political profile far beyond the film’s box office. *Mersal* became more than a film controversy. It was a rehearsal for what was to come.

In 2023, at the Thalapathy Vijay Education Award Ceremony in Chennai, Vijay addressed high-scoring students. He told them to read beyond textbooks, to learn about Ambedkar, Periyar and Kamaraj, to take the good and leave the rest. He spoke

against cash for votes, asking students to tell their parents not to sell their votes. Rs 1,000 per vote, he calculated, meant crores spent in a constituency, and if a candidate could spend that much to win, how much must he expect to make after winning? It was politics without announcing politics.

By February 2024, Vijay announced the TVK. By October that year, at Vikravandi in Villupuram, he marked his formal arrival with flags, songs, Dravidian icons, Tamil symbols, lakhs of supporters, and a line borrowed from Sangam memory — “*Thalalayalanganathu Seruvendra Nedunchezhiyan*”, the young king dismissed as inexperienced who won a great battle.

“*Romba ketta paiyan saar antha chinna paiyan*,” Vijay thundered in filmy

POKKIRI (2007) redefined him as a stylish anti-hero with punchy dialogues. *Thirupaachi* (2005) and *Sivakasi* (2005) added family-action layers, boosting box office dominance

JANA NAYAGAN, his much-anticipated movie that was to be his final release before he turned to full-time politics, remains stalled before the Censor Board amid a legal battle in the Madras High Court

style — “that young boy was a dangerous boy”.

At the time, it sounded theatrical. Now, it reads like a warning the older parties heard but did not believe.

The night of the big win

His party, the TVK, had no inherited cadre, no decades-old ideology, no ready bench of seasoned politicians waiting to take positions. What he had instead was something more volatile and, in this election, more effective: a dispersed, emotionally charged, semi-organised network of fans who had been doing small acts of public work for years without calling it politics.

His fan organisation, the All India Thalapathy Vijay Makkal Iyakkam, conducted welfare activities, organised local events, mobilised crowds, and, crucially, gathered data — on voters and their grievances. It was not a party. But it was not merely a fan club either.

When TVK was finally launched, it did not need to build its presence from scratch. What Vijay did next surprised even those who had invested in him. He did very little.

In an election where rivals travelled relentlessly, spoke endlessly and spent massively, Vijay campaigned sparingly — barely a dozen or so major outings across districts. He did not attempt to visit every constituency, did not chase every vote physically, did not behave like a man desperate to prove himself.

To critics, this looked like indifference or inexperience. To supporters, it looked like confidence. Every appearance of his became an event. Every speech, a clip, and every movement, a rumour. He allowed others — especially the young, and their phones — to do the talking for him.

YouTube channels tracked his traction obsessively, influencers analysed his speeches frame by frame, and online betting communities began to treat his rise as a probability. For weeks, they were among the few spaces where a TVK surge was not mocked.

A peculiar narrative took hold: Vijay might not be everywhere physically, yet, he was everywhere. His supporters amplified a simple message: give him one chance. It was not a particularly new promise. But in a state where political choices had, for decades, been variations within the same system, Vijay stood out.

His speeches returned repeatedly to corruption, to dignity, to the idea that he did not need public money because he had already earned enough. It was a risky line, but it resonated with a section of voters.

In an election where rivals travelled relentlessly, Vijay campaigned sparingly. He did not chase every vote physically, did not behave like a man desperate to prove himself

He also positioned himself carefully in relation to other parties. He attacked both the BJP at the Centre and the DMK in the state, while largely avoiding a direct, sustained confrontation with the AIADMK. This had a tactical effect: it allowed him to absorb anti-DMK sentiment without immediately alienating anti-BJP voters, while also drawing from spaces where the AIADMK had historically thrived.

The result, when it came, surprised even him. Senior figures within the TVK would later admit that even on the night before counting, the expectation was modest — perhaps 60 seats, perhaps the role of Opposition leader. What unfolded instead was something closer to a rupture.

Yet, Vijay’s rise in this election carried its own contradiction. In many constituencies, the TVK finished second, close enough to matter; not always enough to win. As the results settled, the arithmetic pointed to a possibility Tamil Nadu had not seriously entertained in decades: a coalition.

In Panayur, outside Vijay’s residence, police officials established contact points and senior bureaucrats prepared for transition. Inside, Vijay’s circle remained small — Bussy Anand, Aadhav Arjuna, CTR Nirmal Kumar, K Sengottaiyan, among the few TVK leaders with administrative experience, and a handful of newer figures who have risen with the campaign. It didn’t resemble a war room that had pulled off a victory. Instead, it was closer to a film set after an unexpected box-office success — a team suddenly aware that the next project would be judged differently.

In the moments after the victory, there were surreal events. An astrologer visited Vijay’s residence. An actress friend was among the few who were allowed through his gates. Vijay met his parents late at night after a day that had redrawn his life.

But beneath the first flush of victory lay a harder question: What kind of Chief Minister would Vijay be?

His supporters argue that he has already managed something larger than a state: a vast film industry ecosystem, with budgets, labour networks, distribution chains and global markets. That experience, they say, is not trivial. It is governance of a different kind.

His critics counter that cinema is not governance. That a state like Tamil Nadu, with its complex bureaucracy and layered social contracts, cannot be run on instinct and image. Both arguments hold some truth.

Tamil Nadu did not vote only for Vijay the actor, or Vijay the outsider, or Vijay the promise. It voted for a possibility that something new, however uncertain, might still be allowed to enter a system that had long seemed closed. Joseph Vijay — shy and elusive — walked in through that door.



The Ideas Page

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026

● **WHAT THE OTHERS SAY**
The announcement of the withdrawal of US troops from Germany underlines the urgency of a pan-European defence strategy.— *The Guardian*

Our AI question: How to become producer of intelligence rather than its tenant?



ROHIT LAMBA
AND RAGHURAM RAJAN

LAST WEEK, on a 600-acre site near Visakhapatnam, Google broke ground on what is being dubbed as India's largest AI hub. The infrastructure partners are AdaniConneX and Airtel's Nxtra. The silicon will be designed in California and fabricated in Taiwan. The model weights, when the data centre lights up, will be Google's. India's contribution is the land, the power, the construction, and the operations. It is a triumph of sorts. Alas, we have done something like this before.

Thirty years ago, the IT-services boom began with a related bargain. India offered low-cost engineering labour, fluent in English, to American firms that needed someone to write and maintain the systems they had designed. The arrangement worked. Infosys, Wipro and TCS came of age. A middle class emerged. A reputation was earned. Indian services climbed the value chain, and the global capability centres in Bengaluru and Hyderabad now do genuine research and product work for the world's largest firms. We were not wrong to celebrate this. But the task was incomplete.

What we did not do was use the proceeds to build the next layer. We did not fund research universities of global rank. We did not raise national R&D intensity from below 1 per cent of GDP, where it has remained for decades. We did not develop deep-tech venture capital, manufacturing depth, or patient state-aligned industrial finance. Korea built Samsung, Taiwan, smaller than Karnataka, built TSMC, which now sits at the chokepoint of the global AI economy. India built outsourcing. We

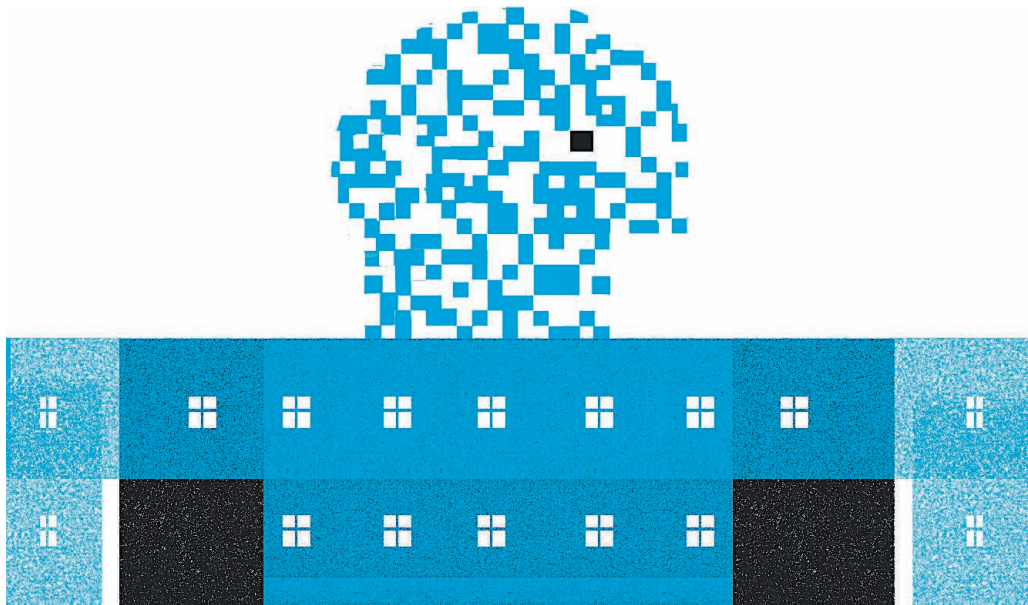


ILLUSTRATION: C.R SASIKUMAR

learned magnificently to deploy systems that other people had designed. We postponed the work of designing them.

The bill on that postponement is now arriving, in the form of artificial intelligence. The leading edge of AI demands capital, research depth, and concentrated talent at a scale India has not built. A frontier model costs hundreds of millions of dollars to train, draws on decades of accumulated research, and depends on a talent pipeline that runs through a few dozen universities in the United States, China, the United Kingdom, and Canada. India has none of this.

In the past fortnight, two voices have read this moment differently. Ruchir Sharma, at the Express Adda, warned that global investors now see India as the "anti-AI play". Nandan Nilekani, in a recent essay with Ravi Venkatesan, argued that India's edge lies in diffusing AI across its small firms and informal economy. Sharma is reading the

high-rent layers and seeing India's absence. Nilekani is reading the diffusion layer and treating it as India's destination. Both stop short of the harder question. Neither asks how a country with talent and ambition becomes a producer of intelligence rather than a tenant of it.

What we are doing in Vizag, and in Hyderabad and Mumbai and Pune, risks making the same trade we made in the nineties, with stronger lock-in this time. The data centres are real and useful. They will be optimised, for the next decade, to serve foreign models efficiently rather than to train Indian ones at scale. Every Indian-language inference running on a foreign model from a server in Vizag is a small recurring rent paid to Mountain View, on infrastructure built by Adani. The arrangement is not new. The technology is.

The stakes go beyond productivity. As AI diffuses into military systems and strategic decision-making, this gap will bear on India's

strategic autonomy in a world where security partnerships cannot be assumed. India does not need to beat OpenAI at frontier reasoning today, but it needs to learn to compete: Alternative model architectures and approaches at meaningful scale, sovereign compute, and foreign deals structured around expanding Indian capability rather than only power and land. The Indian state knows how to create a gigawatt of power for a foreign data centre. It needs to learn how to create a research department, a laboratory, a generation of scientists. Concrete it understands. Cognition it does not.

The Economic Survey of 2025-26 noted that only 2 per cent of the world's AI training-data startups are based in India, against 40 per cent in the United States and 21 per cent in the European Union. The state knows the gap. The announcements still say far more about infrastructure than about capability.

The deeper danger is that India's public conversation is too quick to convert constraint into strategy. Because we cannot yet win at the frontier, we tell ourselves the frontier does not matter. Because we are good at diffusion, we tell ourselves diffusion is enough. Some of this is an honest assessment of what India can do. Some of it is an alibi for what we will not do.

We must not forget, however, that even diffusion rests on uneven foundations. UPI worked because Indian banking had spent 30 years digitising, Aadhaar because the state had been identifying citizens for 60. Where those rails were missing, in health, in school education, in agricultural extension, the same stack thinking has produced architecture without adoption. AI diffusion may run into the same problem.

This past week in Visakhapatnam, we poured the foundations of buildings that will host someone else's intelligence. The buildings will be ours. The intelligence will not. Whether that is enough this time is the question we should ask before the concrete sets.

Lamba is assistant professor, Cornell University and Rajan is professor, University of Chicago and former governor, Reserve Bank of India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What the verdicts say

THE EDITORIAL rightly notes that voters in states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Assam are signalling a demand for better governance rather than simple revenge against ruling parties ("Verdicts frame people's push for change – BJP seized that impulse, rivals paid for their standstill", *IE*, May 5). Yet the gap between electoral verdicts and delivery remains wide. Parties on all sides would do well to invest in steady local work instead of constant national posturing. Clear accountability mechanisms, regular public reporting on promises, and greater space for state-level innovation could turn these mandates into real progress. Indian democracy has shown maturity; it now needs adequate political will.

Abbharna Barathi

THE ASSEMBLY outcomes across four states and one UT underscore how decisively voters can reshape political narratives ("Verdicts frame people's push for change – BJP seized that impulse, rivals paid for their standstill", *IE*, May 5). Actor Vijay's victory signals that many voters were seeking a change and responded to a new option. Mamata Banerjee's defeat reflects public fatigue with corruption and violence. The lesson is evident: Sustained credibility, grassroots connection and responsiveness matter more than broad slogans.

SS Paul, Nadia

Maintain unity

THE INCREASING use of regional identity, polarisation, and aggressive political strategies may strengthen electoral gains for parties, but it also risks weakening democratic harmony and national unity (Assam-Bengal template will go national. It fuels support for BJP, not resistance, *IE*, May 5'). While political success is important, governance should prioritise inclusive development over divisive tactics. India's diversity is its greatest strength, and political parties must ensure that electoral ambitions do not overshadow constitutional values and social cohesion. Constructive leadership, rather than confrontation, is essential for a healthy democracy.

Krish Bareja, Haryana



AVANI BANSAL

"KHELA HOBE" — the game will be played — once rang out as a slogan of defiance. In the quiet after an electoral defeat, it begins to sound like something else: A reminder that for women, the game has never been played on equal terms.

In this election cycle, across four major states, leadership contests were largely defined by men. In Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, the faces of power remained overwhelmingly male. West Bengal stood apart because it placed a woman, Mamata Banerjee, at the centre. That difference matters because when a woman is central to power, the terms of evaluation shift.

A day after a political loss, the instinct is to reduce a leader to numbers. Seats won, seats lost, margins that shifted. The harder task is to ask what a political life reveals about the system it inhabits — not the individual alone, but the conditions under which women are allowed to lead.

Across the world, the relationship between women and power remains uneasy. In Iran, women have risked imprisonment and violence to assert control over their bodies and identities. In democracies elsewhere, women in politics navigate a narrower band of acceptable behaviour, where strength is recast as excess and ambition as over-reach. The question persists: How much space is a woman allowed to occupy before she is seen as too much?

When a woman insists on occupying space, she is not merely participating in politics; she is altering its terms. The test is not how women win or lose elections, but how we choose to read them when they do

Didi has paid the price of staying in the game

India reflects this tension in its own way. From Indira Gandhi to President Droupadi Murmu, women have exercised power in different registers. Sonia Gandhi shaped a national party through restraint and institutional endurance. Sushma Swaraj commanded admiration through a style that made authority feel accessible and humane.

Within this spectrum, Banerjee's political life is a case study in what it takes for a woman to enter and survive a space that does not easily accommodate her. Her confrontational, highly visible methods reflect a structural reality: Entry without inherited networks demands a different political language. She has often been described as volatile, shrill, and difficult — traits that are more readily read as conviction or strength in male readers. That difference shapes how authority is perceived.

Banerjee's party, the Trinamool Congress, has been accused of political violence and misgovernance in West Bengal. The electorate has spoken. In the aftermath of defeat, however, it is worth noticing whether the critique remains focused on systems and accountability, on performance and failure or whether it collapses into a personalised reading of her flaws. The distinction matters because for many women watching, especially young girls, such moments carry

an unspoken lesson. They are not only watching a result, but how quickly authority becomes failure, confidence excess, and persistence defiance.

In that sense, "khela hobe" offers a metaphor beyond politics. It asks: Who gets to play at the centre? What leaders like Banerjee signal is that entry is possible, but it comes at a cost — part of a broader moment in which women are renegotiating their relationship with power.

It is also a moment to reflect on how easily women are positioned against other women. Competing claims are inevitable in a democracy. But when one woman's legitimacy rests on diminishing another's, something more limiting is at work. Women in politics will differ in ideology, temperament and method. They need not be reduced to opposites.

Elections will come and go. Parties will win and lose. That churn is essential to democracy. But something else must endure: When a woman insists on occupying space fully, she is not merely participating in politics; she is altering its terms.

Banerjee's defeat belongs to electoral arithmetic, and there will be analyses on that. But the questions her career raises belong to a wider landscape. The real test is not how women win or lose elections, but how we choose to read them when they do.

Bansal is a Supreme Court advocate and national spokesperson, Congress

In Tamil Nadu, mandate against party that lost touch with people



A KALAIYARAN

THE SURPRISE victory of the Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) under the leadership of Joseph Vijay in the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections has, for the first time since the DMK's rise to power in 1967 and the launch of the AIADMK in 1977, broken the duopoly of Dravidian parties. It also appears to have upended electoral arithmetic, moving beyond tactical alliances, money, and caste. In that sense, the verdict is a break from the past.

It signals an anti-incumbency sentiment against the DMK-led government. The scale of the upset is reminiscent of the historic 1967 election, when K Kamaraj — once hailed by Periyar as a "trueborn Tamilian" — was defeated by a relatively unknown student leader in Virudhunagar. TVK may not have a long history of grassroots mobilisation that characterised the DMK's rise. But, MK Stalin's defeat is no less significant than that of Kamaraj.

The DMK often highlighted Tamil Nadu's relative success compared to BJP-ruled states, but did not do enough to address concerns such as job creation, wage stagnation, and governance deficits. Disillusionment with the DMK also stemmed from what many, particularly the youth, perceived as an alienating style of governance.

Historically, the DMK rose by mobilising ordinary people. In the 1960s, amid allegations of vote-buying by Congress, C N Annadurai urged voters to accept whatever was offered but vote for DMK. Something similar seems to have happened this time.

Vijay's rise is often compared to that of M G Ramachandran (MGR). This comparison has its limits. MGR's stardom in politics and cinema was organic. His association with the Dravidian movement gave MGR a strong ideological foundation. Vijay's political journey is relatively shorter. His appeal seems to derive less from ideology and more from the dissatisfaction of a younger electorate frustrated by unfulfilled promises.

Vijay operates within the broad contours of Dravidian sensibilities — Tamil identity, secularism, state autonomy, and social justice. He talks of drawing inspiration from Kamaraj, Periyar, Ambedkar, and Anjalai Ammaiya. However, unlike the DMK,



which built a sustained political movement over nearly two decades before coming to power, TVK lacks a comparable foundation. In that sense, it is wrong to think of the TVK as an ideological alternative to the Dravidian parties. The verdict still calls for serious introspection. It appears the DMK has used ideological tropes at the expense of probity in political life.

Respective of its political regime, Tamil Nadu's industrial policy has been consistent since the 1990s. The state's recent double-digit (11.2 per cent) economic growth was celebrated by the government. However, the earlier phase of industrialisation was more closely linked to small-scale industries, generating broader employment opportunities. In contrast, new investments have created fewer jobs. The shift is reflected in labour market trends. Contract-based employment, which once accounted for around 10 per cent of formal jobs, has risen to approximately 25 per cent, approaching levels seen in states like Gujarat.

The DMK's emphasis on national politics, secularism and federalism might be important in itself, but it's irrelevant when it does not resonate with people's lives. The party's narratives and carefully curated (some say controlled) rhetoric didn't resonate with the people, especially the youth, Dalits and women.

The verdict should, however, not be seen as a rejection of the DMK's social schemes or the Dravidian model of development. Vijay is yet to articulate a new vision. The mandate reflects dissatisfaction with the way DMK exercised power. By focusing heavily on intellectual and ideological narratives, it appears to have neglected the everyday concerns of people. The party seems to have fallen into the trap of intellectualism. In some cases, supporters of the ruling party dismissed Vijay's voters as "ignorant," further deepening the disconnect and alienating younger voters. The party also seemed to have ignored the anxieties of Dalit communities, who have been victims of violence of late.

Every achievement contains the seeds of its destruction. The Dravidian model is no exception. Despite notable success, it must be sensitive to the concerns of those who have been excluded from its benefits. State autonomy, secularism and Tamil identity are important ideals. But they must be grounded in the lived experiences of people and their needs.

The writer is associate professor, Madras Institute of Development Studies

Bengal has spoken with remarkable clarity: Enough

suraj niklega, kamal khilega." The promise made at the BJP's founding has found one of its most symbolic fulfilments in Bengal. A land that gave India Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, and Sri Aurobindo had, for decades, remained trapped in a political culture where violence too often overshadowed vision, and power was preserved through division rather than delivery.

The Left institutionalised a long culture of cadre-based coercion. What followed was not renewal, but its mutation, a politics packaged as welfare but sustained through intimidation, selective inclusion, and systematic erosion of democratic confidence. The Marichjhapi massacre, where Dalits became victims of state-sponsored violence, is an example of Left violence against the socially marginalised.

Syama Prasad Mookerjee, founder of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and one of Ben-

gal's most distinguished sons, dedicated his life to the cause of national unity and constitutional integrity. A BJP government in Bengal carries with it the symbolism of ideological homecoming, an overdue tribute. Bengal is the land of renaissance, reform, and resistance. From the Brahmo Samaj to the Swadeshi movement, from Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay to Tagore, Bengal has shaped India's intellectual and national consciousness.

What made this victory possible is the BJP *karyakarta*. No political organisation in India matches the scale, discipline, and

The TMC once appeared electorally invincible. It now finds itself humbled by the democratic will of a people determined to reclaim their future

year-round commitment of the BJP's cadre. Much of the organisational credit belongs to Amit Shah, whose political clarity, booth-level precision, and ability to energise the cadre transformed aspiration into execution. This victory also strengthens the expanding arc of governance and development under the BJP-NDA framework.

The transformation of Assam and the wider Northeast under PM Narendra Modi has already demonstrated what political stability, infrastructure expansion, connectivity, and developmental focus can achieve in regions long neglected by Delhi's political establishment. This momentum is no longer geographically confined. In Tamil Nadu too, the politics of cynical division, cultural hostility, and selective antagonism towards Hindu identity has begun facing serious democratic resistance. Simultaneously, the BJP's steady organisational rise in Kerala reflects an unmistakable truth: Politics rooted

in development, governance, and national integration is finding resonance even in states once considered electorally impermeable. At the centre of this expanding mandate remains PM Modi, whose politics has fundamentally reoriented governance toward direct delivery, welfare inclusion, and aspirational citizenship.

For Bengal's women, youth, Scheduled Castes, backward communities, and economically marginalised populations, this mandate reflects a desire to be seen not as fragmented vote banks but as equal stakeholders in India's growth story. The people of Bengal have endured decades of political violence, broken promises, and stalled aspirations. This election was not merely a transfer of power; it was a democratic correction. Bengal has spoken with remarkable clarity: Enough.

The writer is national spokesperson, BJP

UAE SAYS STRIKES THREATEN NATIONAL SECURITY, RESERVES FULL ‘RIGHT TO RETALIATE’

US says Iran ceasefire holds despite exchange of fire; UAE faces attacks

IRGC warns ships to follow routes or face ‘response’

Reuters
Dubai, Washington, May 5

THE UNITED Arab Emirates said it was under attack from Iranian missiles and drones on Tuesday, even as Washington said a shaky ceasefire was intact despite an exchange of fire the previous day as US forces attempted to force open the Strait.

The US military said it had destroyed six Iranian small boats, as well as cruise missiles and drones, after President Donald Trump sent the navy to escort stranded tankers through the strait in a campaign he called “Project Freedom”.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said the operation to protect commercial ships was temporary and the four-week-old truce was not over. “We’re not looking for a fight,” he told a press conference. “Right now the ceasefire certainly holds, but we’re going to be watching very, very closely.”

Iran had fired missiles at US ships on Monday and also attacked the UAE, a key regional ally of Washington, with missiles and drones.

After issuing a new map of the Strait of Hormuz with an expanded Iranian area of control, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards warned vessels on Tuesday to stick to the corridors it had set

or face a “decisive response”.

Trump said Iran’s military had been reduced to firing “pea-shooters” and Tehran wanted peace, despite public sabre-rattling. “They play games, but let me just tell you, they want to make a deal,” he said.

Shortly after Hegseth spoke on Tuesday, UAE’s defence ministry said its air defences were again dealing with missile and drone attacks coming from Iran.

The Gulf Arab state’s foreign ministry said in a statement that the attacks were a serious escalation and posed a direct threat to the country’s security, adding that the UAE reserved its “full and legitimate right” to respond.

There was no immediate comment on that from Iran, though earlier its parliament speaker, Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf, had said breaches of the ceasefire by the US and its allies endangered shipping through the strait, which carries a large share of the world’s oil and fertilizer supplies.

“We know well that the continuation of the current situation is unbearable for the United States, while we have not even begun yet,” he said in a social media post.

The Strait of Hormuz has been virtually shut since the United States and Israel began attacks on Iran on February 28, triggering disruptions that have pushed up commodity prices around the world.

Iran has effectively sealed off the strait by threatening to deploy mines, drones, missiles and fast-attack craft.



An Iranian demonstrator waves a Hezbollah flag beneath an anti-US billboard depicting the Strait of Hormuz during a pro-government rally in downtown Tehran on Tuesday. REUTERS

At UN, Bahrain and US seek Hormuz action as Washington seeks coalition

Reuters
Paris, May 5

UN SECURITY Council members will begin talks on Tuesday on a US- and Bahrain-backed draft resolution that could lead to sanctions against Iran, and potentially authorise force, if Tehran fails to halt attacks and threats to commercial shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, three Western diplomats said.

Fresh exchanges of fire on Monday underscored the stakes as the US and Iran struggle for control of the nar-

row waterway, a vital artery for global energy and trade, shaking a fragile four-week-old truce and reinforcing rival maritime blockades.

The US diplomatic push at the United Nations is in stark contrast to recent months during which it has largely acted outside the UN framework, launching military strikes against Iran without seeking council authorisation and pressing allies to join ad hoc naval patrols to enforce freedom of navigation.

That approach drew resistance from partners wary of

open-ended conflict and legal exposure, prompting sharp criticism from US President Donald Trump against countries he accused of failing to align with US-led efforts.

An earlier Bahraini resolution that was backed by the United States and appeared to open a path to legitimise its military action against Iran failed after Russia and China blocked it. The new draft takes a more cautious approach, avoiding explicit language authorising force while still operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

China fireworks factory blast kills 26, Xi orders probe

Associated Press
Hong Kong, May 5

AN EXPLOSION at a fireworks plant in a central Chinese province killed at least 26 people and injured 61 others, state media reported Tuesday, prompting the halting of all fireworks manufacturing near the site.

The blast occurred at a fireworks plant in the city of Changsha in Hunan province on Monday afternoon, China’s official news agency Xinhua said.

State media China Daily said that the plant was operated by the Huasheng Fireworks Manufacturing and Display Co. in the Changsha-administered, county-level city of Liuyang, a prominent fireworks powerhouse in the country.

Changsha mayor Chen Bozhang said at a media briefing that a search and rescue operation at the scene had largely

been completed, but verification of the casualties and identification of the victims was still underway.

Chen said that the local government expressed condolences for the victims and apologized to society, including the families and injured people. “We feel extremely pained and deeply remorseful,” he said.

All fireworks and firecracker manufacturers in Liuyang have been ordered to halt production, local media reports said.

Chinese President Xi Jinping urged “all-out efforts” to search for people who are still unaccounted for and to save the injured. He called on authorities to investigate the cause swiftly and pursue serious accountability, the report said. Xi also ordered effective risk screening and hazard control in key industries and the strengthening of public safety management.



Firefighters work to extinguish a fire following a blast at a fireworks manufacturing factory in Liuyang, China, on Tuesday. REUTERS

US intel says Iran nuclear program saw little damage

Reuters
Washington, May 5

US INTELLIGENCE assessments indicate that the time Iran would need to build a nuclear weapon has not changed since last summer, when analysts estimated that a US-Israeli attack had pushed back the timeline to up to a year, according to three sources familiar with the matter.

The assessments of Tehran’s nuclear program remain broadly unchanged even after two months of a war that US President Donald Trump

launched in part to stop the Islamic Republic from developing a nuclear bomb.

The unchanged timeline suggests that significantly impeding Tehran’s nuclear program may require destroying or removing Iran’s remaining stockpile of highly enriched uranium, or HEU.

The war has stalled since the US and Iran agreed an April 7 truce to pursue peace. Tensions remain high as both sides appear deeply divided, and as Iran has choked traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, blocking some

20% of world oil supplies and igniting a global energy crisis.

Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth has said publicly that the US aims to ensure Iran does not obtain a nuclear weapon via ongoing negotiations with Tehran.

US intelligence agencies had concluded prior to June’s 12-day war that Iran likely could produce enough bomb-grade uranium for a weapon and build a bomb in around three to six months, said two of the sources, all of whom requested anonymity to discuss US intelligence.

Following the June strikes by

the US that hit the Natanz, Fordow and Isfahan nuclear complexes, US intelligence estimates pushed that timeline back to about nine months to a year, said the two sources and a person familiar with the assessments.

The attacks destroyed or badly damaged the three enrichment plants known to have been operating at the time. But the UN nuclear watchdog has been unable to verify the whereabouts of some 440 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60%.

It believes that about half was stored in an underground tunnel

complex at the Isfahan Nuclear Research Center, but it has been unable to confirm that since inspections were suspended.

The International Atomic Energy Agency assesses the total HEU stockpile would be enough for 10 bombs if further enriched.

“While Operation Midnight Hammer obliterated Iran’s nuclear facilities, Operation Epic Fury decimated Iran’s defence industrial base that they once leveraged as a protective shield around their pursuit of a nuclear weapon,” said White House spokeswoman Olivia Wales.

WHO: Human to human hantavirus spread on ship pose low public risk

Reuters
London, Amsterdam, May 5

THE WORLD Health Organization said on Tuesday that it suspects some rare human to human transmission of the deadly hantavirus took place between very close contacts on board a cruise ship hit by seven confirmed or suspected cases.

Human to human transmission is not common, and the UN health agency reiterated that the risk to the wider public was low from a disease typically spread from contact with infected rodents.

A Dutch couple and a German national have died, while a British national was evacuated from ship and is in intensive care

in South Africa, officials said.

Two crew members require urgent medical care, the Dutch-flagged MV *Hondius* ship’s operator, Oceanwide Expeditions, said. Another person on board with a suspected case has only reported a mild fever.

The Dutch foreign ministry said it was preparing the medical evacuation of three people to the Netherlands. It was not yet clear when or where the nearly 150 other people still on-board would disembark.

The cruise ship hit by the deadly outbreak is moored off Cape Verde. The island nation off West Africa was meant to be its final destination but it has not allowed the vessel to put passengers ashore because of outbreak.

Nepal govt calls House session after President clears ordinance

Kathmandu: The Nepal cabinet on Tuesday recommended to President Ram Chandra Poudel that the budget session of Parliament be convened from May 11, shortly after he promulgated the last of eight ordinances that give the government sweeping powers on multiple fronts.

Government spokesperson Sasmit Pokharel said the cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Balendra Shah, took the decision after the president approved the final ordinance on Monday.

The House session had originally been scheduled to begin on April 30 but was cancelled after the government opted to go ahead with ordinance rule.

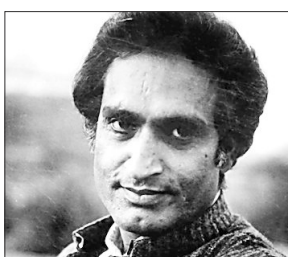
YUBARAJ GHIMIRE

Pirelli Calendar 2027 to be dedicated to India, feature Raghu Rai works

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, May 5

THE PIRELLI Calendar 2027 will feature India as the protagonist, showcasing original works by renowned Indian master Raghu Rai along with Norwegian photographer Solve Sundsbo, Pirelli has announced. The company said Rai had dedicated himself to developing the project over the last three months, “through an original series of photographs that reflect his heritage and his vision of India for the Calendar”.

The calendar, known and trademarked as “The Cal”, will be brought to completion with the help of Rai’s daughter and acclaimed photographer Avani Rai, whose works will also fea-



Raghu Rai. EXPRESS

ture in the upcoming edition to “realise her father’s intentions for the series”. “The work my father created for Pirelli was a tribute to India -- bringing together his lifelong vision with a more contemporary expression of its people.... something he was deeply drawn to...,” Avani said.



Ananya Birla

MET GALA 2026



Rami Malek



Isha Ambani

Heidi Klum



Karan Johar

Stars make sartorial statements at Met Gala, protesters target Bezos

Reuters
New York, May 5

PROTESTS TOOK centre stage outside the Met Gala on Monday as demonstrators targeted Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, a first-time sponsor of the annual fundraiser for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute. Bezos and his wife, Lauren Sanchez Bezos, reportedly donated \$10 million and were named honorary chairs, prompting boycott calls over wealth inequality, workers’ rights and Amazon’s labour practices.

Protesters held giant “TAX THE RICH” letters and signs reading

“Resistance Red Carpet,” while one demonstrator was detained trying to enter the event.

Actor Sarah Paulson also made a statement, wearing a dollar bill over her eyes and saying her look represented the “1 percent.”

Inside, the gala leaned heavily into this year’s “Costume Art” theme, with many guests arriving in elaborate, unrecognisable looks. Bad Bunny came dressed as an elderly man, Heidi Klum as the Statue of Liberty and Katy Perry in a silver mask.

Indian attendees also stood out, with Isha Ambani in a sari-inspired ensemble, Sudha Reddy in a USD 15 million necklace and Ananya Birla in a glittering steel mask. Karan Johar, Natasha Poonawalla and others drew on Indian art, heritage and traditional craft for their outfits.

THE COMPLAINT ACCUSES META & ZUCKERBERG OF ILLEGALLY USING MILLIONS OF COPYRIGHTED WORKS TO TRAIN THEIR A.I. PROGRAM LLAMA

Five publishers and top author sue Meta and Mark Zuckerberg

Alexandra Alter
May 5

FIVE MAJOR publishers — Hachette, Macmillan, McGraw Hill, Elsevier and Cengage — and bestselling novelist Scott Turow have filed a class-action copyright infringement lawsuit against Meta and its founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg.

The complaint, which was filed Tuesday in US District Court for the Southern District of New York, accuses Meta and Zuckerberg of illegally using millions of copyrighted works to train their artificial intelligence program Llama, and of removing copyright notices and other copyright management in-

formation from those works.

The lawsuit asserts that Meta’s engineers relied on pirated books and journal articles to train the program by downloading unlicensed copies through websites like Anna’s Archive, an open source search engine for piracy sites including LibGen and Sci-Hub.

The suit also claims that “Zuckerberg himself personally authorized and actively encouraged the infringement.”

Representatives for Meta did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The plaintiffs argue that Meta’s AI program poses a threat to the livelihoods of writers and publishers because the technol-



Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg delivers a keynote speech during an event, at company’s headquarters in California on September 25, 2024. FILE

ogy can be used to quickly produce AI-generated copycat books and to summarize the plot and themes of copyrighted

books in such great detail that readers don’t have to buy them.

“These AI-generated books are already flooding the world’s

largest book marketplace, Amazon, in volumes that materially displace human-authored works,” the complaint states. The filing cites several authors whose works the plaintiffs claim were used to train Llama, including V.E. Schwab, N.K. Jemisin, Lemny Snicket and Turow.

Some of the evidence cited in the complaint purportedly comes directly from Llama. When asked to produce a travel guide in the style of the writer Becky Lomax, Llama rapidly produced “a convincing rendition of Lomax’s local insider voice,” the complaint says.

Then, when asked how it was able to reproduce Lomax’s

style so accurately, Llama allegedly replied, “While I don’t have personal interactions with Becky Lomax, I’ve been trained on a vast amount of text data, including her published works.” Llama is also able to summarize books in detail. When asked to give a synopsis of Turow’s “Presumed Innocent,” Llama confirmed that it had “been trained on a digital version of the book, which allows me to access and analyze its content,” according to the complaint.

In an email to *The New York Times*, Turow said Meta’s use of pirated works amounted to “shameless, damaging and unjust behavior.” NYT

BRIEFLY

SRI LANKA

Leaders hail Vijay’s TN election victory

SRI LANKAN leaders on Tuesday congratulated actor-turned-politician Vijay, who led Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam party to a historic victory in Tamil Nadu’s assembly elections. Vijay-led TVK on Monday created a record of sorts in the electoral history of TN by securing an impressive 108 seats in assembly elections. Celebrations were reported in Sri Lanka’s Tamil-dominated Northern Province, where youths hailed his victory. PTI

COLOMBIA

Explosion at coal mine kills nine labourers, hurts 6

AN EXPLOSION in a coal mine in central Colombia killed nine miners and injured six others who were recovering in a hospital Tuesday, officials said. There were 15 miners inside the Carbonera Los Pinos mine in Sutatausa, about 80 kilometers north of Bogota, when the blast occurred, Cundinamarca provincial Gov. Jorge Emilio Rey said. Three escaped on their own, and the remaining three survivors were rescued. AP

‘STRONG INTER-AGENCY SCRUTINY & SECURITY CHECKS MEAN COMPLIANCE WILL REMAIN DEMANDING’

New SOP for FDI nod: 12-week deadline & fully digital process

Each ministry to have a dedicated FDI Cell with a nodal officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary

Ravi Dutta Mishra
New Delhi, May 5

MONTHS AFTER easing investment curbs on land-bordering countries, the Centre has issued a new standard operating procedure (SOP) for foreign direct investment (FDI) proposals aimed at accelerating inflow into priority sectors by capping processing time at 12 weeks.

As per the new SOP, the Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) is expected to disseminate the proposal to ministries concerned, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) within 2 days.

The ministries concerned, along with MEA, RBI and MHA, are expected to submit comments within 8 weeks after internal scrutiny of the application is disposed of within 12 weeks, as per the new SOP.

Delays in inter-ministerial responses will be treated as no objection as per the SOP.

However, an additional two weeks “shall be given to DPIIT” for consideration of those proposals which are proposed for rejection or where additional conditions are proposed, the guidelines said. Experts said that the new process aims to eliminate duplication and ensure time-

bound decisions, with timelines ranging from initial scrutiny within two weeks to final approvals in about 12 weeks.

“The SOP will improve ease of doing business by making FDI approvals faster, transparent, and fully digital, with clear timelines boosting investor confidence. However, strong inter-agency scrutiny and security checks mean compliance will remain demanding. While a welcome step, India must go further—simplifying regulations, cutting compliance costs, and reducing the cost of doing business—to attract high-quality, long-term investment into manufacturing and advanced sectors,” Global Trade Research Initiative said.

Monitoring & fast-tracking

The guidelines further said that “no prior approval of the competent authority shall be required for an increase in the amount of foreign equity, provided that there is no change in the percentage of foreign/NRI equity already approved and total foreign equity is up to Rs 5000 crores”.

“The Investee shall only be required to notify such increase to the Competent Authority within thirty days of receipt of funds, as also allotment of



India saw net FDI inflows in February after a gap of 6 months. REUTERS

shares to the non-resident shareholders,” DPIIT said.

The guidelines said that each ministry “should have a dedicated FDI Cell with a nodal officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary” and that regular review meetings with the concerned administrative ministries “on the pendency of FDI proposals” shall be convened by the DPIIT Secretary every “four to six weeks”.

Under the new SOP, investments in broadcasting, telecommunications, space, private security agencies, defence, civil aviation, and mining & mineral separation of titanium-bearing minerals and ores, its value addition, and integrated activities shall require security clearance from MHA.

Investment climate

While India saw a net FDI inflow of \$4.62 billion in February – the most in nearly four years – it was the first time in seven months that it was in positive territory, with investor sentiment reversing after India and the US signed an interim deal early that month, eliminating the penal 25% tariff and cutting the reciprocal tariff to 18%.

The sharp reversal in fortunes in February took the total for the first 11 months of 2025-26 to \$6.27 billion as against \$1.46 billion in the same period of 2024-25. In 2024-25 as a whole, India saw net FDI inflows of just \$959 million. Weakness in FDI flows, seen as a more stable form of foreign

• INVESTMENT PUSH

• **THE DEPARTMENT** for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade will now disseminate the proposal to ministries concerned, RBI, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of External Affairs in 2 days

• **THE MINISTRIES**, along with MEA, RBI and MHA, are expected to submit comments within eight weeks after internal scrutiny of the application is disposed of in 12 weeks, as per the new SOP

• **AN ADDITIONAL** two weeks “shall be given to DPIIT” for consideration of proposals which are proposed for rejection or where additional conditions are proposed

investment, has contributed to the sharp depreciation in the Indian rupee over the last year or so. After falling past the 90- and 91-per-dollar levels in December amid a delay in the finalisation of a trade agreement with the US, the war in West Asia has led to a global aversion to risky assets such as those of emerging markets like India. The new SOP comes against the backdrop of a scramble for FDI globally, amid heightened global uncertainties due to the ongoing energy crisis, disruption due to tariffs that have slowed down global trade and global trade growth. Developing nations are the worst hit.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Tata Sons listing, board seats on menu of key May 8 meet

George Mathew
Mumbai, May 5

THE STAGE is set for a crucial Tata Trusts board meeting on May 8, where key issues on the agenda include its representation on the board of Tata Sons, differing views among trustees regarding the potential listing of Tata Sons and the issue of perpetual trustees.

Ahead of this highly anticipated meeting, Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh have been voted out of the Tata Education and Development Trust (TEDT) — a relatively smaller entity within the Tata Trusts group — after fellow trustee Mehli Mistry opposed their reappointment during the voting process.

Singh voted for reappointment of Srinivasan and the latter voted in favour of Singh, according to Tata group sources. However, as the reappointment needs unanimous voting in favour of the candidates, the tenures of Singh and Srinivasan will not be extended as per the rules of the trust.

Noel Tata, Chairman of Tata Trusts, and JN Mistry are the other trustees of TEDT and they will be the only three trustees of this trust after the voting. Tata Trusts CEO Siddharth Sharma and Chairman Noel Tata did not respond to mails from *The Indian Express* about the changes in Tata Education and Development Trust and the May 8 board meeting



Ahead of the meeting, Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh have been voted out of the Tata Education and Development Trust. REUTERS

of Tata Trusts. Tata Trusts board meeting will review the Tata Trusts’ board representation in Tata Sons as per the agenda of the meeting. As of now, Noel Tata and Venu Srinivasan are on the board of Tata Sons as representatives of Tata Trusts. Sources indicated Noel Tata’s directorship in Tata Sons is unlikely to be reviewed.

Tata Trusts board will also discuss the position of two trustees and the listing of Tata Sons on the exchanges. Two of the trustees — Venu Srinivasan and Vijay Singh — had recommended the listing of Tata Sons. Their argument is contrary to the resolution passed by Tata Trusts to retain the company as an unlisted entity a year ago. Following a RBI directive that requires upper-layer NBFCs to list, Tata Sons repaid its debt and sought de-registration from that category;

a decision from the regulator is awaited. Noel Tata is opposed to a listing as it could dilute the trusts’ veto powers.

The meeting will also discuss a complaint filed in the Maharashtra Charity Commissioner’s office about the perpetual/ life-term trustees. The petition, filed by lawyer Katiyayani Agrawal of law firm SV & Co, has sought urgent intervention, alleging that Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT), which has three lifetime trustees in a board of six members, violated the provisions of Section 30A of the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act, 1950. This section, introduced through an amendment in September 2025, says perpetual or lifetime trustees can make up only 25% of a public trust’s board. The ratio is now 50% in SRTT.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Two new chip plants get Cabinet approval

ENS Economic Bureau
New Delhi, May 5

THE UNION Cabinet Tuesday approved two new semiconductor plants in India, including one that could be the country’s first commercial display facility, in a fresh boost to New Delhi’s chip ambitions.

These plants are likely to be the last ones to receive clearance under the first iterations of the Rs 76,000 crore India Semiconductor Mission (ISM), with ten other plants having previously received approvals.

Crystal Matrix Ltd (CML) will establish an integrated facility for compound semiconductor fabrication and assembly based on GaN (Gallium Nitride) technology for manufacturing Mini/Micro-LED display modules.

The integrated facility, which will come up in Dholera, Gujarat, will also provide GaN foundry services.

The proposed products will have applications in large displays for TVs and signage/commercial displays, medium-sized displays for tablets, smartphones, and in-car displays, and micro-displays for extended reality (XR) glasses and smart watches.

The project will cost Rs 3,068 crore, with approximately 50% of capex costs covered by the government under the incentive scheme.

Suchi Semicon Pvt Ltd (SSPL) will set up an Out-

sourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test (OSAT) facility in Surat, Gujarat worth Rs 868 crore for manufacturing discrete semiconductors.

The proposed production capacity of this plant is 1 billion chips per annum.

Its target applications include power electronics, analog ICs, and industrial systems, serving end markets such as automotive, industrial automation, and consumer electronics. With these two approvals, the total number of approved projects under the USM reaches 12, with cumulative investments of around Rs 1.64 lakh crore.

Launched in 2021 with a Rs76,000-crore outlay, ISM 1.0 was conceived as a state-backed push to build a full-stack chip ecosystem, from fabrication and packaging to design and display manufacturing. The government is understood to be working on the next iteration of the plan, and could approve a scheme with an outlay of around \$11 billion, *The Indian Express* had earlier reported.

However, under the revised scheme, the priorities of the government might change.

While ISM 1.0 focused on attracting chipmaking infrastructure to India, ISM 2.0 is likely to offer greater support to ancillary industries such as gases, chemicals and capital goods, among others.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Expect some fuel price hike: MPC’s Ram Singh

Siddharth Upasani & George Mathew
New Delhi/ Mumbai, May 5

WHILE SOME pass-through of higher global energy prices due to the West Asia war has happened through a weaker rupee, the conclusion of state elections should lead to retail fuel prices being raised, according to Ram Singh, one of the three external members on the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee.

Speaking on Tuesday at the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), Singh said that not raising fuel prices so far had been a “prudent” move.

“Now that state elections are over, I expect some pass-through happening at the retail price level. Therefore, to that extent, we are moving in the direction where the right price signals will be sent out to households, commercial sector to optimise the energy mix,” Singh said, adding that there were already signs of a shift in the energy mix towards electricity through reports of higher use of inductions.

“With the retail price pass-through happening, we will see more of this nudge materialising and taking concrete form.”

Singh’s comments come amid speculation that pump prices of petrol and diesel may be raised, although the petroleum ministry has been assuring over the last two months that there was no proposal to hike prices in the wake of international oil and fuel prices persisting at supernormal levels.

In April, the average price of India’s crude oil basket was \$114.48 per barrel, little changed from March’s \$113.49/bbl, but sharply higher than February’s \$69.01/bbl. State-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) are incurring heavy losses on the sale of petrol and diesel, whose prices have been frozen for over four years now.

According to Singh — who is the Director of the Delhi

School of Economics — had there been a full or substantial pass-through to pump prices, it could have led to second-round inflationary effects and unanchored inflation expectations. “But the pass-through has to happen; the effect of a staggered pass-through will be that the second-round effects will be more manageable.”

Inflation framework

Speaking at the same event, RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta said India could perhaps consider tweaking its flexible inflation targeting framework if the economy’s growth-inflation mix evolves as it has in the past ten years, with growth robust and inflation lower and stable.

“But if the global environment remains as challenging as it has been during the past six years, it would warrant both predictability and flexibility inherent in the existing framework,” she said.

In late March, the government — after consultation with the RBI — retained the framework for the next five years through March 2031.

As per the framework — which was adopted in 2016 and is reviewed every five years — the central bank has to keep Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation at 4% in a band of 2-6%.

Gupta said renewal of the inflation targeting framework has come at a moment of considerable global uncertainty, with geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, energy price volatility, and an uneven global growth outlook having made the macroeconomic environment “more complex and less predictable.”

As such, the renewal “strengthens the framework precisely when it is most needed”, the central banker added.

The retention of the flexible inflation targeting framework has received the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) backing, with Krishna Srinivasan, Director of the agency’s Asia

• BRIEFLY

India well placed to manage shocks: Moody’s

ENS Economic Bureau
New Delhi, May 5

CHICAGO-BASED nuclear fuel company Clean Core Thorium Energy (CCTE) announced that its patented ‘ANEEL’ fuel has completed its high burnup irradiation test in an Advanced Test Reactor (ATR) at Idaho National Laboratory (INL).

The company said the final set of irradiation capsules have achieved more than 60 GwD/MTU of ‘burnup’ — a measure of how much energy is extracted from nuclear fuel that is typically expressed in gigawatt-days per metric tonne of heavy metal or GwD/MTU.

This burnup rate represents more than eight times the typical discharge burnup of traditional pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs) and Canada Deuterium Uranium (CANDU) reactors, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

This testing, the company said, highlights the potential of ANEEL nuclear fuel (Clean Core’s patented thorium-based fuel that blends thorium with a more concentrated type of uranium — HALEU—for PHWRs).

The significance of higher burnups derived from ANEEL fuel, the company said, translates to “several operational benefits when integrated with the existing reactor design: reduced nuclear spent fuel volumes, improved reactor economics, enhanced safety performance and improved proliferation resistance”.

Clean Core, whose founder and CEO Mehul Shah is of Indian origin, is only the second American company to have secured an export license from the US Department of Energy (DAE) to sell nuclear technology to India in nearly two decades. “Surpassing 60 GwD/MTU of burnup in the Advanced Test Reactor marks an important milestone,” said Shah.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

RBI sees errors in IMF forecasts; IMF says no systematic bias

New Delhi: Commenting on the IMF’s economic forecasts, RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta noted that over the last three years, the multilateral agency’s projection for India’s growth “have always been lower” than the outcomes.

“So, the point I am trying to make is that Indian growth has been robust and resilient in the past few years... I am also trying to make a polite remark on the forecasting (accuracy) of the IMF. I also compared it with what the RBI does around the same time... Yes, RBI also has projection errors, but they seem narrower. So, it’s an apple-to-apple comparison and perhaps it will make sense for us to exchange notes more,” Gupta said, seemingly tongue-in-cheek.

IMF’s Srinivasan responded that studies have shown the Fund’s forecasts have no systematic bias. “We make projections every three months. Yes, we can get our projections wrong. It’s never intended badly. We work very closely with country authorities... And we will continue to try and see how our numbers can match with that of the RBI going forward,” Srinivasan said to laughter. The RBI currently expects India’s GDP to grow 6.9% in FY27, while the IMF is forecasting 6.5% growth. ENS

and Pacific Department, saying on Tuesday at the same event that the framework had served India very well and a 4% target in a band of 2-6% is “appropriate” and any change to the target should meet a very high bar given the credibility risks such a revision would entail.

Rupee hits record low on renewed US-Iran tensions

Mumbai: The rupee slid to a record low on Tuesday as a fragile truce in West Asia came under strain after the US and Iran launched new attacks to wrestle for control of the Strait of Hormuz, a key artery for global energy supplies. The currency weakened to 95.4325 per dollar, down as much as 0.4% and eclipsing its previous all-time low of 95.33 hit Thursday. REUTERS

Biocon chair names niece as successor

Bengaluru: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, founder and chairperson of Biocon, said on Tuesday that she plans a phased leadership transition over the next five years, with her niece Claire Mazumdar expected to eventually take over as chair. Claire is the founding chief executive of Bicara Therapeutics, an oncology-focused biotech firm incubated with early backing from Mazumdar-Shaw and listed in 2024. “I am not hanging up my boots anytime soon, but I want Claire to succeed me in a very phased manner,” Mazumdar-Shaw said *Reuters* in a phone interview, adding that the transition would move step by step. REUTERS

• MARKETS

 Sensex 77,01,779 -251.61 -0.33%	 NIFTY 24,032.80 -86.50 -0.36%	 Gold ▼ ₹1,47,636	 US Dollar ▲ ₹95.29
		 Silver ▼ ₹2,40,465	 Oil ■ \$118.70

NOTE: GOLD, SILVER RATES AS PER INDIA BULLION AND JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION DATA
GOLD PER 10G, SILVER PER 1 KG; CRUDE OIL (INDIAN BASKET) AS OF APRIL 30, 2026

@ieExplained

#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

GOVERNANCE

Rs 50 crore and counting: Inside Jharkhand's 'treasury scam'

Shubham Tigga
Ranchi, May 5

A DIGITAL system meant to bring transparency in government spending has come under the scanner in Jharkhand, with investigators suspecting a treasury-linked fraud that runs into tens of crores. Officials say the figure may rise as more transactions are scrutinised. What has raised concerns is not just the scale but the manner in which alleged fraudulent withdrawals were routed through a computerised financial management system meant to prevent exactly such manipulation, prompting comparisons to the infamous Fodder Scam of the 1990s.

The alleged scam

The alleged fraud involves government officials and staff handling accounts and treasury-related work across departments in Jharkhand, who are suspected to have siphoned crores of rupees by misusing the state's Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS). IFMS is a computerised platform implemented by the state government for budgeting, bill processing, treasury operations, re-disbursement of public funds, including salaries through the Kuber portal (treasury payment) module.

The alleged treasury scam, however, did not involve external hacking or system breach. It involved internal manipulation wherein the authorised employee "illegally withdrew" the amounts in the name of salaries, taxes, arrears, etc., of those employees who had either retired or died. For many years, in some cases for around a decade, the diversion of funds went undetected into various associates' accounts of the accused, also called "ghost" accounts.

Last month, during the state Finance Department's routine analysis and audit of the treasury accounts, attention was drawn to the financial irregularities. The first case emerged from Bokaro SP's office, with the alleged initial fraud of around Rs 3.15 crore. This gradually increased to other districts after the probe began.

Owing to the ongoing investigation, investigators from the Crime Investigation Department (CID) and the Finance Department's Principal Accountant General refused to share any details. Despite no official statement, the amount stands at nearly Rs 50 crore. After the Bokaro case, Chief Minister Hemant Soren and Finance Minister Radha Krishna Kishore initiated a probe across 24 districts.

Sources indicated that suspected irregularities may span 14 district treasuries, with over a dozen arrests reported so far. While officials have pegged the detected amount at about Rs 50 crore across five districts, some senior officials and political leaders have suggested that it could rise to Rs 100-150 crore or more.

Why it went undetected

While investigators have not yet publicly detailed how the alleged fraud continued undetected for years, an officer posted in one of the 14 affected treasuries, requesting anonymity, outlined the system and its vulnerabilities.

According to the officer, bills — particularly salary bills — originate at the department level, where a billing clerk prepares them, an accountant or head clerk checks them, and the drawing and disbursing officer (DDO) certifies details such as employees' names, bank accounts, and IFS codes. Once signed, the bills move to the treasury, where they pass through clerical staff and a head assistant before reaching the Treasury Officer for final approval and payment through the Kuber portal.

The officer, however, admitted that in practice, scrutiny is largely limited to the summary sheet like gross and net amounts, deductions, bill number, month, and the DDO's certification — especially in bulk submissions that can run into hundreds of bills a day. "No one checks each individual account or amount in such volumes; we rely on the DDO's certification," the officer said.

This reliance, coupled with high volumes and multiple DDOs across departments, creates a systemic blind spot where manipulated entries can pass through layered approvals without detailed verification.

Interestingly, a 2025 report by the Comptroller and Auditor General detailed information technology control failures in the IFMS that have facilitated financial irregularities and unauthorised payments.

While the report covered the period from 2007 to November 2022, it noted that its findings remain relevant for subsequent periods.

HISTORY

Bengal to J&K: The life & politics of S P Mookerjee



VIKAS PATHAK

IN HIS victory speech at the BJP headquarters on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "the soul" of Syama Prasad Mookerjee "must be at peace today". As the party won West Bengal for the first time ever, the PM recalled Mookerjee, the Bengali leader who founded the BJP's predecessor, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, in 1951.

A year after its formation, the Jana Sangh made a modest electoral debut, winning just three Lok Sabha seats (two of them from Bengal). The party merged with the Janata Party in the 1977 election to defeat Indira Gandhi, but the Janata experiment soon collapsed. It was in 1980 that the Jana Sangh's successor, the BJP, was founded, with Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who had once been associated with Mookerjee, as its first president.

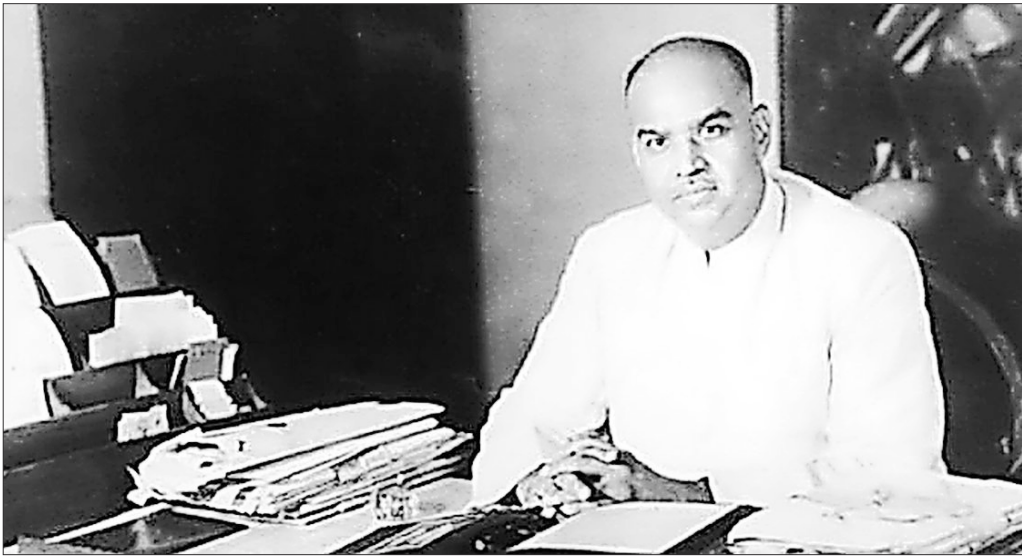
Early life and career

Born on July 6, 1901, Mookerjee — son of Ashutosh Mookerjee, Calcutta High Court judge and vice-chancellor of Calcutta University — studied at Presidency College, Calcutta, and Lincoln's Inn. He became the youngest vice-chancellor of Calcutta University at just 33.

He was elected to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1929 and 1930, first as a Congressman and then as an independent. From 1941 to 1942, he joined the Progressive Coalition government of Fazlul Haque as Finance Minister. The government was formed in opposition to the Muslim League. Mookerjee justified his decision by saying that the need of the hour was to organise Hindus and cooperate with Muslims who believed in working together.

A controversial letter decrying the Quit India Movement, purportedly written by Mookerjee to the British, has often been a topic of discussion.

From 1943 to 1946, Mookerjee was the Hindu Mahasabha president. He took up the cause of Bengal's Hindus in the run-up to Partition, opposing Muslim League leader and Bengal Prime Minister H S Suhrawardy's "United Bengal" plan — which called for an independent state separate from India and Pakistan. Mookerjee



saw this as an attempt to ensure domination of Hindus by a Muslim majority. He called for the partition of Bengal, with Hindu-majority West Bengal staying with India.

His brand of Hindutva

After the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, Mookerjee made the Hindu Mahasabha's Working Committee adopt resolutions that "expressed shame that Gandhi's assassin had been connected with the organisation, and declared support for the government in its efforts to suppress terrorism or subversive activities in any shape or form", writes BD Graham in *Hindu Nationalism and Indian Politics* (2007).

In November 1948, Mookerjee resigned from the Hindu Mahasabha after it rejected his suggestion to broaden its membership if it wanted to be a modern political party.

Bengal's Hindus

When riots broke out in East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, in 1949-50, large numbers of Hindu refugees came to India. Mookerjee, the minister of industry and supply in the Jawaharlal Nehru government at this time, spoke out for them.

In April 1950, Nehru and Pakistan Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan signed a pact calling upon both countries to provide equality, freedom and justice to their minorities.

Mookerjee resigned from the cabinet as the pact did not include a clause sought by him — sanctions against any side that failed to honour the agreement. It was after this that Mookerjee formed the Bharatiya Jana

Mookerjee backed partition of Bengal and 'complete integration' of Jammu & Kashmir with India.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Jana Sangh to BJP

In its electoral debut in 1952, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh won three Lok Sabha seats (two of them in Bengal).

It merged with the Janata Party in the 1977 election. But this experiment soon collapsed.

In 1980, the Jana Sangh's successor, the BJP, was founded.

Sangh with the help of RSS volunteers.

The Kashmir issue

The princely state of Kashmir acceded to India in 1947. Article 370 of the Constitution gave Parliament powers in the fields of defence, foreign affairs and communication in the case of Kashmir. People from outside required a permit to visit the state and were barred from buying land there.

The state's Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdullah, abolished big land holdings in Jammu and Kashmir in 1951 under the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act without compensation. He also adopted Urdu as the official language. Dogra Hindu landlords resented these steps. Prem Nath Dogra, a former Swayamsevak and civil servant from Jammu, launched an agitation against the Sheikh Abdullah government through his Praja Parishad, seeking the complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with India. Mookerjee joined the movement in 1952.

Mookerjee and Kashmir

The Jana Sangh took up in Parliament the arrest of Dogra and his followers after a clash with the police in the state.

Both parties also opposed its adoption of a state flag, adopting a slogan: "*Ek desh mein dovidhan, do pradhan aur do nishan nahin hosakte* (one nation cannot have two constitutions, two Prime Ministers and two flags)."

In July 1952, the Nehru government and the Jammu and Kashmir government signed the Delhi Agreement, under which the state accepted the jurisdiction of the Su-

preme Court. It also accepted the supremacy of the Indian flag, though the state's flag would also remain in use. It accepted the President of India's power to declare a state of Emergency, subject to its concurrence, in the event of internal disturbances.

The Praja Parishad, however, rejected the Delhi Agreement. In November 1952, Dogra and other leaders were again arrested amid protests.

Mookerjee calls for agitation

At its first annual session at Kanpur in December 1952, Mookerjee's Jana Sangh passed a formal resolution supporting the Praja Parishad's Jammu Satyagraha for the complete integration of the state with India.

Nehru saw the Jana Sangh's orientation as 'communal' on this question. His condition for talks was that the Praja Parishad should stop its agitation.

The Jana Sangh then decided to launch its agitation. Vajpayee, who became private secretary to Mookerjee in early 1953, was sent across Hindi-speaking states, including Uttar Pradesh, to popularise the movement. Of the 1,200-odd agitators who came to the capital, 500 were from UP. Mookerjee then travelled to Madhya Bharat — the Gwalior-Indore region of erstwhile princely states — and Rajasthan, along with Vajpayee.

Mookerjee's Jammu visit

In May 1953, Mookerjee decided to go to Jammu without a permit — a symbolic rejection of the state's special status — with Vajpayee. They went by train to Pathankot in Punjab, and addressed multiple public meetings across the state for three days. Mookerjee was informed at Pathankot that he would be allowed to enter Jammu and Kashmir without a permit.

On May 11, 1953, Mookerjee crossed into Jammu and Kashmir over the Ravi. However, the state police had put up barricades for his arrest. Mentally prepared for this, Mookerjee did not turn back and was arrested. He told Vajpayee to return to Delhi and tell everyone that he had entered Jammu and Kashmir without a permit, if only as a prisoner, writes Abhishek Choudhary in his biography of Vajpayee.

Mookerjee was kept in a cottage about 12 km from Srinagar. However, the heart patient who had a blood pressure problem could not cope well in the conditions of his detention. On June 23, he suddenly fell ill and died. The RSS family of organisations views his death as "*balidaan*" or sacrifice for the cause of Kashmir's integration.

POLICY

Why UP stepped back from mandatory prepaid smart meters

Maulshree Seth
Lucknow, May 5

FACING protests, the Uttar Pradesh government on Monday stepped back from its push for mandatory prepaid smart electricity meters. The decision is seen as the result of several factors: protests, regulatory push-back, shifting policy signals from the Centre, and political calculations ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

Why the policy was brought

The policy was initially aimed at improving billing efficiency and reducing losses. Sources said that the state's aggressive rollout of prepaid smart meters over the past year-and-a-half was rooted in its interpretation of the Central Electricity Authority's (CEA) 2022 regulation notification.

According to Avadhesh Verma, Chairman of Uttar Pradesh Electricity Consumers Forum and a member of the Central Electricity Advisory Committee, the move can be traced to clause 3(b) of the notification. It said consumers in areas with communication networks "shall" be supplied electricity through smart meters op-

erating in prepayment mode.

Verma said the government interpreted this as a mandate, and began rolling out prepaid smart meters as the default for new connections and converting existing consumers. About 85 lakh smart meters have been installed so far, but implementation quickly ran into friction.

Why it ran into trouble

The rollout triggered protests across districts. Consumer complaints ranged from higher or inconsistent billing to automatic disconnections and a lack of transparency in prepaid deductions. The state initially dismissed the concerns as being fuelled by misinformation and political motives.

As protests continued, the government held review meetings and issued directions to resolve issues. The Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC) also took suo motu cognizance. In some instances, consumers removed or damaged the installed meters.

"At the heart of the controversy was the issue of consumer choice. Under the Electricity Act framework, consumers are generally entitled to opt between prepaid and

Shock to consumers

The policy was initially aimed at improving billing efficiency and reducing losses.

But the rollout led to complaints ranging from higher billing to automatic disconnections.

Prepaid smart meters also led to protests in Gujarat and Rajasthan in 2024 and 2025, respectively. The issues were similar: implementation, consent and fears of power cuts once the balance ran out.

postpaid systems. The state's attempt to enforce prepaid meters — especially for new connections — without explicit consent became a central point of contention, strengthening both protests and regulatory objections," said Verma.

The government first announced a temporary halt to the conversion of existing postpaid meters into prepaid smart meters, but protests continued. Meanwhile, Union Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar clarified in Parliament last month that prepaid smart meters are not mandatory, undercutting the interpretation that had driven Uttar Pradesh's policy.

Subsequently, the CEA issued a fresh amendment in its 2026 gazette notification, revising the earlier provision. The amended clause removed the explicit requirement of "prepayment mode", while allowing flexibility in implementation.

Adding to the pressure, the UPERC also intervened by flagging concerns and seeking explanations from the state power utility. In a separate notice, UPERC pointed out non-compliance with standards related to the timely reconnection of supply in prepaid systems, even raising the possibility of penalties.

In its April 23 order, it noted that recon-nections within the mandated two-hour window were achieved in only 77% of cases, far below the 95% benchmark, and questioned why a Rs 1 lakh per day penalty should not be imposed on the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd.

According to government sources, these developments prompted a course correction before any adverse direction from regulatory authorities or courts could come. The government began recalibrating its approach in two phases, on April 19 and 24. It first introduced immediate relief measures, including a limited pause in disconnections. SMS alerts were made mandatory, giving consumers time to respond.

Politics in an election year

The timing of the rollback is also significant. With state elections due next year, the issue had begun to gain political traction.

Ultimately, the decision does not end the smart metering programme, but removes the mandatory prepaid billing aspect. The broader challenge for the government now lies in ensuring accurate billing, reliable systems and responsive grievance redressal.

LAW

'Ecocide': Where international law stands in tackling war toll on environment

Bhaskar Sarma
New Delhi, May 5

A RECENT report by Lebanon accused Israel's military of committing "ecocide" during its 2023-24 invasion of southern Lebanon and reshaping both its "physical and ecological landscape".

Earlier, Iran's foreign minister said Israel's bombings of fuel depots in Tehran, which led to "black rain", violated international law and constituted "ecocide".

Researchers and environmental organisations have invoked the same term to describe the effects of Israel's war on Gaza.

Environmental groups have called for the inclusion of 'ecocide' as an international crime under the Rome Statute that governs the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Prof Arthur W Galston, a Yale plant biologist whose early research contributed to the development of the herbicide Agent Orange, which the US Army used to devastating effect in the Vietnam War. Galston used 'ecocide' to describe the massive, long-term environmental devastation particularly caused by the herbicide's use.

Two years later, at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme used the term in context of the Vietnam War.

Indeed, Vietnam became the world's first country to codify ecocide in its domestic law in 1990. Since then, the use of the term has become more widespread, with many countries — such as Russia, Ukraine, Chile, France and Belgium — incorporating ecocide (or its equivalent) into their laws.

How does 'ecocide' differ from provisions in international law?

Many international conventions and statutes deal with widespread environmental damage, even if they don't ex-

plicitly mention 'ecocide'.

For instance, under the Rome Statute, it is a war crime to intentionally launch a disproportionate attack knowing that it will cause "widespread, long-term and severe" damage to the natural environment that directly impacts humans, such as causing displacement, inflicting great suffering or injury on victims, or causing death.

The Geneva Conventions, which establish standards for treatment of non-combatants, require that warring parties not use methods of warfare that cause "widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment".

The widely adopted Environment Modification Convention (ENMOD), in force since 1978, prohibits the deliberate manipulation of natural processes when it causes "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects".

So how does 'ecocide' differ from the present international law framework? Delhi-based senior advocate Avi Singh, who has extensive experience in international criminal law, told *The Indian Express*

that the difference is in the focus. "The laws we have are anthropocentric. They put human beings at the centre of harm, while ecocide puts the environment as a separate entity that is being damaged."

Where do current laws stand?

The Rome Statute recognises four serious crimes — the crime of genocide; crimes against humanity; war crimes; and the crime of aggression. It classifies serious damage to the environment under "war crimes" — meaning it would be considered only during war.

Another hurdle is jurisdiction. Iran and Lebanon, for instance, are not State Parties to the ICC, which could complicate the prosecution pathway, pointed out Mrinalini Shinde, Visiting Lecturer of International Environmental Law at the University of Cologne, Germany. ICC jurisdiction, however, could still arise through a UN Security Council referral or ad hoc acceptance.

One more issue is criminalisation. Most existing international instruments do not

establish enforceable international criminal liability for environmental destruction.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a global body on environmental policy, limited itself to "recognising the crime of ecocide" in October 2025. "It will hopefully encourage more States Parties to push for inclusion of the crime domestically and within international law," said Shinde.

This is what is behind the advocacy to include 'ecocide' as an international crime in the Rome Statute.

Inclusion, however, is easier said than done. "For inclusion into the Rome Statute, a State Party to the Rome Statute would introduce the amendment of the Statute at the Assembly of States Parties, and would require 2/3rds majority of States Parties to be successful. There will be further conditions for such an amendment to come into effect," said Shinde.

What's the enforcement challenge?

The Council of Europe adopted the

Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law in 2025. This is the first legally binding international treaty to criminalise severe and large-scale environmental destruction — "conduct that many term ecocide", it says.

Under this convention, even acts committed abroad can be prosecuted in European domestic courts.

"There is universal criminal jurisdiction for crimes against humanity. With this, there is a potential to bring actions in domestic criminal law irrespective of where the event happens," said Singh. "For instance, if whoever is committing an environmental crime travels to Europe, then somebody can bring a criminal action against them, saying that they have committed ecocide, and they should now be criminally charged and tried."

According to both Singh and Shinde, however, no direct prosecution has ever been launched over environmental destruction caused by war.

FULL REPORT ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

NAVI MUMBAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT PVT. LTD.

Expression of Interest (EOI) for Construction of proposed GA Hangar – No 3 at NMIA at Navi Mumbai

CORRIGENDUM NO.2

Dated 5th May, 2026

Applicants are requested to note the following changes / modifications in the EOI document:

Sr. No.	Reference	Original Clause	Modified Clause
1	Refer Section 6: Response to EOI: Submissions and Communication Sr. No. 6.4 on page 8 of 15	Response to this EOI shall be submitted on or before 5 th May, 2026, IST 17:00 hours ("Submission Date") through e-Portal.	Response to this EOI shall be submitted on or before 12 th May, 2026, IST 17:00 hours ("Submission Date") through e-Portal.

All other terms and conditions remain unchanged. This Corrigendum No.2 shall form part of the EOI Documents.

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY

YELAHANKA, BENGALURU – 560 064.

Website: www.rwf.indianrailways.gov.in

TENDER NOTICE NO.RWF/S/P/002/2026-27 dt.04.05.2026

On behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Materials Manager invites electronic Tenders from Interested Vendors for supply of the following items on the Indian Railways E-Portal – www.ireps.gov.in. The Tender documents and the Corrigenda to the Tenders, if any, will be available on the Portal only.

Sl	Tender No	Due date	Short Description	Qty
1	P1261946	21.05.2026	Steel blooms 300 mm square R-43 as per RWF specification.	2140 MT
2	P1261984	25.05.2026	Water Cooled Roof as per RWF Drawing.	07 Nos.
3	P1261944	02.06.2026	H.A.70% bricks of size 230X115X76MM as per RWF Specification	23851 Nos.
4	P1261852	05.06.2026	Steel Blooms 300 mm square [Train 18] as per RWF Specification	9438 MT
5	P1261667	17.06.2026	Steel Blooms 300 mm Square R16 [LHB] as per RWF Specification	22843 MT
6	P1261952	10.07.2026	SE Drill Modular Body of (3L/D) dia 22.5mm	65 Set
7	P1261821	13.07.2026	Magnesia Carbon Bricks as per RWF Specification	150000 Nos.
8	P1261948	15.07.2026	Steel blooms 340 mm square R-43 as per RWF specification	14496 MT
9	P1261795	29.07.2026	Bricks Arch High Alumina 70% for Ladle Lining as per RWF Specification	638 Set
10	P1261947	13.08.2026	Steel Blooms 287mm square as per RWF Specification	1608 MT

Principal Chief Materials Manager

NOTICE

I, the undersigned inform to all that my father Rajani Kanta Mondal along with his two brothers namely Bhola Nath Mondal since deceased and Panchu Gopal Mondal since deceased-all of Village: Kustia, P.S. Tollygunge at present Anandapur, District South 24-Parganas by virtue of a Deed of Patta dated 21.10.1938 registered in the office of DR, Alipore and recorded in Book No.1, Volume No. 95, pages from 278 to 285 being Deed No. 4241 for the year 1938 till his death was the owner of All that Piece and Parcel of Shali Land measuring about 5.20 acres situate and lying in Mouza: Natanadanga, being Part of J.L. 10, C.S. Khatian No. 339 and C.S. Dag No. 582 under Police Station Tollygunge at present Anandapur, District South 24 Parganas and on 01.05.2026 the said original Deed of Patta dated 21.10.1938 is found missing from my residence and lodged a missing diary at Baruijpur Police Station vide G.D.E. No. 146, dated 02.05.2026, and I also by an affidavit No.15410, dated 05.05.2026 before the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore declared the missing of the said original Deed of Patta. And I shall be highly obliged to the person/persons who will give the information of my said Deed of Patta within 7 (seven) days.

Smt. Tagarbala Mondal
Paschim Ghoshpur, South Garia,
P.S. Baruijpur, Dist. South 24 Parganas,
Pin-743613, Mob: 6289903667

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

HEAD
CONSTABLE/
DRIVER SARAT
GOGOI
11.05.1979 –
06.05.2023

Director General and all Ranks of Border Security Force remember its gallant Jawan Head Constable/Driver Sarat Gogoi on his Balidan Diwas. On this day, he made ultimate sacrifice while on operational duty in Satakha, Nagaland.

Veer Balidani
Sub Inspector
Rajender Singh
4BN
06-07-1915 To
06-05-1963

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Sub Inspector Rajender Singh of 4 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while performing law and order duties in Manipur on 6 May 1963. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.

Veer Balidani
Constable/Driver
Mohan Singh
Group Centre,
Bantalab
27-09-1952 To
06-05-1989

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Constable/Driver Mohan Singh of GC Bantalab, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely thwarting an attempted bank robbery by armed militants in Central Bank of India, Gandhinagar, Jammu & Kashmir on 6 May 1989. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.

Veer Balidani
Shadhu Yadav
119 BN
20-08-1969 To
06-05-2006

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Sub Inspector Shadhu Yadav of 119 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating Maoists during an operation near Gaganpalli, PS Errabore, District Sukma, Chhattisgarh on 6 May 2006. #CRPF salutes the braveheart and pledges never to let his sacrifice go in vain.

Veer Balidani
Sub Inspector
Omnath
2 BN
06-01-1975 To
06-05-2009

DG and all Ranks of #CRPF pay solemn tribute to Sub Inspector Omnath and Constable/Water Carrier Atma Prasad of 2 Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice while bravely combating Maoists during a Road Opening Patrol along Injiram– Gorkha road, PS Konta, district Sukma, Chhattisgarh on 6 May 2009. #CRPF salutes the bravehearts and pledges never to let their sacrifice go in vain.

CT/GD
S. GOPAL
DHPE
DULHASTI
06-05-1993

CISF proudly remembers the supreme sacrifice of this brave-heart. On this day, he laid down his life at the altar of duty. His courage and bravery would remain an abiding source of inspiration for the force. The force will remain eternally indebted to him for his noblest deed.

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE DEPARTMENT

NOTICE FOR ROLLING ADVERTISEMENT FOR TEACHING FACULTY POSTS AT TURA MEDICAL COLLEGE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27

No. Health. 145/2026/4 Date: Shillong the 04th May 2026.

The Health & Family Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya, invites applications from eligible personnel for the posts of 14 Professor, 20 Associate Professor and 25 Assistant Professors on a contract basis in these various disciplines for the proposed Tura Medical College targeted to be operational during 2026-27 Academic Year.

For detailed advertisement, including eligibility criteria, application form and other instructions, please visit the official website of the Health & Family Welfare Department. Government of Meghalaya: <https://meghealth.gov.in>

Sd/-
MIPR No. 0328 Joint Secretary to the Govt. of Meghalaya,
Health & Family Welfare Department.
Dated: 4/5/2026

LOST & FOUND

This is to inform you that my client, Malati Saha, has purchased a flat from Chittaranjan Bag and Associate Construction on 22-08-2002 through Deed No: 150406626, at A.D.S.R Bidhanagar. The flat known as Flat No: 2 On the First Floor of DINANTE APARTMENT. The aforementioned original deed has been lost. My client has filed a G.D.E. regarding this matter at Amherst Street police station bearing No: 2407 on 29-01-2026. If anyone find the said deed, my client would be obliged if they would return the same by contacting the undersigned at the address or phone number mentioned below.

Sambit Ray (Advocate)
District Judge's Court, Barasat
M. 9830164575
ERN No: F/1821/1680 of 2008

"IMPORTANT"

Whilst care is taken prior to acceptance of advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contents. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations or individuals advertising in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

SOUTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Follow us on www.scrindia.org

Details of the Tender Notices of S.C. Railway can be seen on our website: www.scrindia.org

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER (through <https://ireps.gov.in>)

C/E/C/II/SC Construction Organisation, S.C. Railway, Secunderabad, respectively, invites e-tender on behalf of the President of India for the following works:

SNo 1 NIT No 23 - CAO- C-SC- 2026 Date: 27/04/2026 Name of work SCR Construction Organization: Secunderabad Division - Kazipet - Balharshah section - Bellampalli - Augmentation / Upgradation of Freight Wagon Maintenance Infrastructure Facilities - Extension of ROH Shed, Construction of Cross Pathway, HLPF Surface Works, Construction of Garage Shed, New Electrical Room and Boundary Wall in Bellampalli Station Yard Details- Estimated Cost: Rs. 12,90,44,623.14 EMD: Rs. 25,80,900.00 Completion Period: 180(One eighty days) Date of Opening: 25/05/2026 15:00hrs.

NIT No EPC-09-CAO-C-SC-2026 Date: 30/04/2026 Name of work South Central Railway (Construction Organization)-Secunderabad Division Engineering. Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract for the Construction of "Important Bridges (2 Nos), i.e., (a) D/S bridges (15 x 20 m) including substructure and superstructure for doubling line and Ramco Cement siding, (b) U/S bridge (15 x 20 m) including substructure and superstructure for Vizag Steel Plant siding, and Earthwork, Blanketing, Track works including Minor and Major Bridges from Ch.-27300.00m to Ch. : 2 8 6 5 0 . 0 0 m between Jaggayyapeta Town (excl.) to Revuru Ramapuram Stations (excl.) in connection with Motumari-Vishnupuram doubling project in Secunderabad Division of South Central Railway in the State of Andhra Pradesh Details - Estimated Cost: Rs. 110,49,21,078.68 EMD: Rs. 2,20,98,400.00 Completion Period: 24 (Twenty four) Months Date of Opening: 03/07/2026 15:00hrs.

i) For bid document and other details, please login to website <https://ireps.gov.in>. ii) Tenderers can submit their offers online during tender submission period which is the Fifteen days period prior to closing of tender. iii) Tenderers should watch for any corrigenda (issued online only) up to the date of commencement of the tender submission period.

Chief Admn. Officer/Const./ Secunderabad
A198

For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at <https://www.ireps.gov.in> or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक punjab national bank

...भरोसे का यूनीक ! ...the name you can BANK upon !

Circle Office, Stress Asset Management Division, Durgapur, (CO SAMD Durgapur)
Nachan Road, Benachity, Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman, W.B. / e-mail: codgprec@pnb.bank.in

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

LAST DATE & TIME OF TIME OF SUBMISSION OF EMD (Earnest Money Deposit) AND DOCUMENTS: UPTO 2.00 PM respective E Auction date 26.05.2026

Sale of immovable property mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002 (No.54 of 2002)

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [The Said Properties are under Constructive Possession/ Physical possession of the Secured Creditor]

Sl. No.	BRANCH NAME /Account Name & Address of the Borrowers / Guarantors	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged, Owner's Name (Mortgagors of property(ies) & Possession	A) Date of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) B) Date of Possession C) Outstanding as on the date of 13(2)	A) Reserve Price B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount (In Rs.)	Date & Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1.	B/O- 003200-ASANSOL, BASTINBAZAR Account: MD SHAHID PERWEZ Borrower/Guarantor: Md Shahid Parwez S/o Late Mohammad Ibrahim, Railpar, Charbi Mohalla, K T Road, Asansol-713301 Jahida Khatoun W/o Late Mohammad Ibrahim, Railpar, Charbi Mohalla, K T Road, Asansol-713301 Md Arif Raza Bedil S/o Late Mohammad Ibrahim, Railpar, Charbi Mohalla, K T Road, Asansol-713301 Md Arshad Parwz S/o Late Mohammad Ibrahim, Railpar, Charbi Mohalla, K T Road, Asansol-713301 Md Reyaz Ahmed S/o Late Mohammad Ibrahim, Railpar, Charbi Mohalla, K T Road, Asansol-713301	All that piece and parcel of land and two storied building situated at Mouza- Asansol, Distt-Paschim Bardhaman, JL No 20, Kh No. 4032, CS Plot No. 4746, Railpar, Charbi Mohalla, Asansol, Area- 3.50 decimal in the name of Jahida Khatoun, Md. Sahid Parwez, Rayaz Ahmed, Arif Raja Bedil & Arshad Parwez covered by Deed No 3216 of 1962. Possession Constructive	A) 19.07.2018 B) 06.10.2018 C) Rs.13,13,667.00 (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Thirteen Thousand Six Hundred Sixty-Seven Only) as mentioned in the above notices with up-to-date interest.	A) Rs.22,19,000.00 B) Rs.2,22,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
2.	BO: 020420-COKE OVEN Account: NILKANTHO HALDER Borrower/Proprietor/Partner: Mr. Nilkanth Halder Mrs. Shukla Halder, Address: Gopalpur, Uttar para, Sukanta Pally, Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman, Pin- 713212	All the piece and parcel of residential Land & building situated on Plot No.6135/6908, Kh No.1767 & 3789, LR Kh No.3833, JL No-65, area of land more or less 5 cottah, Mouza-Gopalpur, PO- Panagarh, PS- Kanksa, Dist Paschim Bardhaman, in the name of Nilkanth Halder S/o Khudiram Halder covered Deed No.I-2039 of 2000. Possession Constructive	A) 09.07.2021 B) 19.10.2021 C) Rs.17,83,165.20 (Rupees Seventeen lac eighty-three thousand one hundred sixty-five and paise twenty only) as mentioned in the above notices with up-to-date interest.	A) Rs.34,06,000.00 B) Rs.3,41,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
3.	B/O: 206820-RUPNARAYANPUR Account: DIPANKAR SAHA & CHANDRABALI SAHA Borrower/Guarantor: Mr. Dipankar Saha, S/o Dipak Kumar Saha, Netaji Colony, Mouza-Kalisanko, Salanpur, Kalisanko, Burdwan, Rupnarayan, West Bengal- 713335 Mrs. Chandrabali Saha, W/o Dipankar Saha, Vill: Netaji Colony, PO-Siakulberia, Dist Burdwan, West Bengal- 713335	All that piece and parcel of property situated at District Bardhaman, Thana Salanpur, Sub-Division Asansol, A.D.S.R. Office Kult, Mouza Kalisanko, J L No. 48, R.S.Khatian No. 64, L.R.Khatian No 262, R.S. and L.R. Dag No 131, LOP No: 165, Bastu Land measuring 4.14 Kathas in the name of Dipankar Saha, S/o Dipak Kumar Saha being deed no I-3439 for the year 2014. Possession Constructive	A) 13.01.2025 B) 08.04.2025 C) Rs.7,77,072.00 (Rupees Seven Lakh Seventy-Seven Thousand Seventy-Two Only) as mentioned in the above notices.	A) Rs.13,89,000.00 B) Rs.1,39,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
4.	BO: 020220-ASANSOL Account: HODAFOOT WEAR Borrower/Proprietor/Guarantor: HODAFOOT WEAR Borrower/ Guarantor: Hoda Foot Wear, C/o – Sahid Hoda Ansari, 71 N, Bastin Bazar Bye Lane, Asansol, West Bengal- 713301 Sahid Hoda Ansari, 71 N Bastin Bazar Bye Lane, Asansol West Bengal, Asansol- 713301 Rustam Javed Ansari, 71 N Bastin Bazar Bye Lane, Asansol West Bengal, Asansol- 713301	All the piece and parcel of one Commercial Godown Room on the first floor of G+2 multistoried building named as "Yousuf Manji" being holding no 26/26, B B Road ward no 11 (old) & 46(new), PS-Asansol under Asansol Municipal Corporation measuring 142.22 Sq.Ft. along with undivided proportionate share of land, common passage including staircase, lobby in the super build area located and situated at Bastin Bazar Road, Mouza-Asansol, JL No 20, RS Khatian NO 930, RS Plot No 9120,9124, registered in the name of Mr. Sahid Hoda Ansari & Mr. Rustam Javed Ansari both are the son of Late Samsul Hoda Ansari being Deed No I-4545 of 2012. Possession Constructive	A) 19.06.2024 B) 19.12.2024 C) Rs.14,34,575.94 (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Thirty-Four Thousand Five Hundred Seventy-Five and Paise Ninety-Four Only) as mentioned in the above notices.	A) Rs.11,35,000.00 B) Rs.1,14,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
5.	BO: 206820-RUPNARAYANPUR Account: CHANDRABALI SAHA Borrower/ Proprietor/ Guarantor: Mrs. Chandrabali Saha, W/o Dipankar Saha, Netaji Colony, PO, Saikulberia, PS Salanpur, Asansol-713335 Dipankar Saha, Netaji Colony, PO, Saikulberia, PS Salanpur, Asansol-713335	All the piece and parcel of land and building measuring 7.6 decimal situated at Mouza-Kalisanko, JL No.48, RS Plot No.131, Corresponding to LR Plot No. 131, LR Khatian No.262 as deed & LR Khatian No.629 as per Parcha, PS- Salanpur within the ambit of Kaliya Gram Panchayat, LOP No.165, situated at Kalisanko Asansol, Dist- Paschim Bardhaman registered in the name of Chandrabali Saha bearing gift Deed No 4732 dated 10.12.2021 at ADSR Kult.	A) 20.07.2024 B) 21.12.2024 C) Rs.19,32,206.31 (Rupees Nineteen Lakh Thirty-Two Thousand Two Hundred Six and Paise Thirty-One Only) as mentioned in the above notices.	A) Rs.5,82,000.00 B) Rs.58,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
6.	BO: 030510-ASANSOL Account: SHAIKH IMTIAZ ALAM Borrower/ Guarantor/ Partner: Shaikh Imtiaz Alam BF Mazhar Court Upper Chelidanga, UC Danga, Asansol, Pin-713304	All the piece and parcel of the land and a covered garage on Sunita Apartment, measuring area 195 Sqft, situated at JL No.20, RS Khatian No.9284 to 9297, Plot No.RS 3985, CS 2019 & 2020, Holding No889(N), Hill view north (near Hill View Church), Asansol-713304, Dist-Paschim Bardhaman, Ward No. 06/49, Deed No.491 of 2018 in the name of Shaikh Imtiaz Alam. Possession Constructive	A) 08.09.2021 B) 09.12.2021 C) Rs.9,51,966.15 (Rupees Nine Lac Fifty-One Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty-Six and paise Fifteen only) as mentioned in the above notices.	A) Rs.3,78,000.00 B) Rs.38,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
7.	B/O: 213310-SHILAMPUR Account: DIPAGHOSH Borrower/ Guarantor: Dipa Ghosh, D/o Ram Narayan Mitra, Nayek Para, Mankar, Purba Bardhaman, West Bengal- 713144	All that piece and parcel of land and building situated at Mouza Mankar, JL No 134, Khatian No 6726 LR Khatian No 8077 presently LR Khatian 8437, RS & LR Dag No 1290 admeasuring 2.5 decimal within the jurisdiction of ADSR Mankar PS Budbud District Purba Bardwan vide deed no I-235/2024 in the name of Dipa Ghosh. Possession Constructive	A) 23.07.2025 B) 18.10.2025 C) Rs.13,77,654.00 (Rupees Thirteen Lakh Seventy-Seven Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Four Only) as mentioned in the above notices.	A) Rs.3,78,000.00 B) Rs.38,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.
8.	BO: 473600-PANDABESWAR Account: SUBRATA NEOGI Borrower/ Guarantor/ Partner: Sri Subrata Neogi, S/o Late Sanjib Neogi Mrs Bandana Neogi, Address: Ramnagar, Vill+PO- Pandabeswar, Pin-713346	All the piece and parcel of the land and building situated at Mouza-Baidyanathpur, JL No 5, Kh No 1407,367 & 2609, RS & LR Dag No 630/1877, Area of land 3.50 cottah, ADSR Raniganj, Pandaveswar, under Baidyanathpur Gram Panchayet, Dist Paschim Bardhaman, Pin 713346, registered in the name of Sri Subrata Neogi, S/o Late Sanjib Neogi, deed no I-63 dated 06.01.2015. Possession Constructive	A) 04.02.2022 B) 06.09.2023 C) Rs.10,28,896.59 (Rupees Ten Lakh Twenty-Eight Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety-Six and Paise Fifty-Nine Only) as mentioned in the above notices with up-to-date interest.	A) Rs.31,37,000.00 B) Rs.3,14,000.00 C) Rs.10,000/-	26.05.2026 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM	Not known to Bank at present.

National Forensic Sciences University

Goa Campus

(An Institution of National Importance under Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India)

ADMISSION OPEN

COURSES OFFERED

- M. Sc. Forensic Science (2 Years)
- Integrated B. Sc. - M. Sc. Forensic Science (5 Years)
- M. Tech. Artificial Intelligence & Data Science (Specialization in Cyber Security) (2 Years)
- M. Sc. Digital Forensics & Information Security (2 Years)
- M. Sc. Cyber Security (2 Years)
- Professional Diploma in Crime Scene Management (6 Months)

LAST DATE 10 JUNE 2026 TO APPLY

For eligibility criteria, application and other information please visit <https://nfsu.ac.in/admission>

Contact Us 083223 13032, 96420 33941 info.goa@nfsu.ac.in

CBC-19119/11/0001/2627

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. : EL/HWH/25/21 (Notice)/753 Dated: 04.05.2026. Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah, New Divisional Railway Manager Office, New Railway Museum, Howrah Railway Station, Howrah-711001 invites Open e-Tenders for the under mentioned electrical works: **Sl. No.:** (1); **Name of work:** EL-HWH-25-21-3433-R; **Name of work:** Electrical (General) work in connection with "Replacement of Steel O.H. Tank by RCC O.H. Tank of capacity 50000 gallon with pipeline & other ancillary works at Rampurhat (4 nos.) & Naihati (1 no.) under AEN/Rampurhat"; **Tender Value (Rs.) :** ₹ 41,85,433.00; **Bid security (Earnest Money Deposit) (Rs.) :** ₹ 83,700.00; **Sl. No. :** (2); **Tender No.:** EL-HWH-25-21-3280-R1; **Name of work:** Replacement of Metal Halide / Sodium Vapor light fittings by LED Flood light / Street light with necessary cabling work at Tikiapara Coaching Yard and Sorting Yard Coaching complex; **Tender Value (Rs.) :** ₹ 25,94,820.00; **Bid security (Earnest Money Deposit) (Rs.) :** ₹ 51,900.00; **Sl. No. :** (3); **Tender No.:** EL-HWH-25-21-3569-R; **Name of work:** Electrical (General) work in connection with "Construction of new LHS in lieu of LC Gate No. 8/1 by Railway's relieving girder under AEN/Nabadwip Dham"; **Tender Value (Rs.) :** ₹ 9,25,614.00; **Bid security (Earnest Money Deposit) (Rs.) :** ₹ 18,500.00; **Sl. No. :** (4); **Tender No.:** EL-HWH-25-21-3545-R; **Name of work:** Electrical (General) work in connection with "Construction of Gang huts at Seoraphuli, Baidyabati, BHR, Hooghly, Singur, Bahir Khandia, Talpur Hall, Takipur Hall, Tarakeswar, Harpal, Bishnupur, GNJP, Maynapur Mayapur, Arambagh, Goghat station including ladies dress changing room at Seoraphuli, BHR and Tarakeswar under Sr.DEN/1/HWH"; **Tender Value (Rs.) :** ₹ 29,61,786.00; **Bid security (Earnest Money Deposit) (Rs.) :** ₹ 59,200.00; **Sl. No. :** (5); **Tender No.:** EL-HWH-25-21-3314-R4; **Name of work:** (1) Electrical (General) work in connection with "Installation of Hot Axle Box Detector (HBD) (09 locations) over Howrah Division." (2) Electrical (General) work in connection with "Installation of Hot Axle Box Detector (HABD) Gate in UP HBC line at KM 10/18-20 near LC Gate No. 5/B/T/SPL at Belanagar Station limit"; **Tender Value (Rs.) :** ₹ 13,11,470.00; **Bid security (Earnest Money Deposit) (Rs.) :** ₹ 26,200.00; **Sl. No. :** (6); **Tender No.:** EL-HWH-25-21-3467; **Name of work:** Electrical (General) work in connection with "Improvement with up-gradation of existing LHS by provide roof covering of both approaches, sump with water storage reservoir, drainage arrangement at both end in LHS 36, 40, 38 etc. under jurisdiction of ADEN/Rampurhat"; **Tender Value (Rs.) :** ₹ 26,32,028.00; **Bid security (Earnest Money Deposit) (Rs.) :** ₹ 52,700.00; **Completion Period :** 180 Days for Sl. No. 1 to 6 each; **Closing Date & Time:** 22.05.2026 at 15:00 hrs. for Sl. No. 1, 2, 4 & 5 each and 26.05.2026 at 15:00 hrs. for Sl. No. 3 & 6 each; In case the date of closing mentioned in the notice inviting tender is declared a holiday/ bandh/strike on any account, the date of closing tender online will not be changed as the application in the website of IREPS does not permit submission of any offer after closing date and time of the tender. However, opening of tenders online will be on any convenient day after closing date and time of the tender. The details of tender are available at website: www.ireps.gov.in Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website.

HWH-47/2026-27
Tender Notice is also available at websites:
www.eelrindianrailways.gov.in / www.ireps.gov.in

Follow us at :  @EasternRailway
 Eastern Railway Headquarter

THE BHOGPUR CO-OP SUGAR MILLS LTD. BHOGPUR

Website: www.eproc.punjab.gov.in E-mail: bhogpurcsm@gmail.com

E-TENDER
COMPETITIVE e-BIDDING
Online e-Bids are invited for Physical Export 9072 MT of sugar as per Govt. of India, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Director of Sugar, Delhi order and notification no. No.1 (1)/2025-SP dated 14th November, 2025 **Point no. 4-A** on ex-factory basis of all the Nine cooperative sugar mills of Punjab from experienced overseas buyers or their authorized representatives in India, Export Houses/Merchandisers, Govt./Cooperative Institutions (In which State Govt./Central Govt. has/have invested share capital) having valid Importer/Exporter License code and experience of exporting sugar

Pre-bid conference	13.05.2026 at 11:00 AM, in the O/o Sugarfed, Punjab, Plot No. 53, Phase-2, Opp. Bassi Cinema, Mohali-160055.
Last date and time of submission of e-tender	26.05.2026 Upto 05:00 PM on Govt. Website: www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Date and time of technical E-bid opening	27.05.2026 at 11:00 AM Address mentioned as above.
Address for communication	The General Manager, The Bhogpur Coop Sugar Mills Ltd., Bullowal Road, Near Railway Station, Bhogpur, District Jalandhar, Punjab-144201
Minimum quantity to be quoted	100% of the total tendered quantity.

For participation in e-tender the bidder shall have to register themselves with www.eproc.punjab.gov.in. For User ID, Password, Class-2 or Class-3 Digital Signature is Mandatory. For any assistance please contact on Mobile No. 81465-24824, 79735-16225, and 80546-03800.

Any Corrigendum/Addendum/Corrections/ Cancellation will be published on the above website.

GENERAL MANAGER

Indian Bank

ZONAL OFFICE : MIDNAPORE
Station Road, Opposite Old Water Tank
Paschim Midnapore, Pin - 721 101

POSSESSION NOTICE
(For Immovable Property)

[Under Rule 8(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002]
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Indian Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with rule 8 and 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice Dated 06.02.2026 calling upon :

M/s. Mansur Ali Khan and Others, Proprietor : Mansur Ali Khan (Borrower), Village - Paikpari, P. O. - Antila, P. S. - Bagnan, District - Howrah, Pin - 711312
Mansur Ali Khan, Proprietor of M/s. Mansur Ali Khan and Others, (Borrower / Guarantor / Mortgagor), S/o. Umar Khan, Village - Paikpari, P. O. - Antila, P. S. - Bagnan, District - Howrah, Pin - 711312.

Rupnihar Khatun, (Guarantor / Mortgagor), W/o. Mansur Ali Khan, Village - Paikpari, P. O. - Antila, P. S. - Bagnan, District - Howrah, Pin - 711312 with our Kolaghat Branch to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice being to Rs. 2,47,32,451.00 (Rupees Two Crores Forty Seven Lakhs Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred Fifty One Only) as on 06.02.2026 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act with rule 8 and 9 of the said rules, on this 05th Day of May of the year 2026.

The Borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Indian Bank for an amount of Rs. 2,47,32,451.00 (Rupees Two Crores Forty Seven Lakhs Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred Fifty One Only) as on 06.02.2026 and interest thereon.

"We draw attention to the provisions of Section 13(8) of the SARFAESI Act and the Rules framed there under which deals with your rights of redemption over the securities."

Description of the Immovable Property

Mortgaged Assets : Land & Building property at Mouza - Khandinan, J. L. No. 59, R. S. and L. R. Plot No. 1372, Hal Khatiyani Nos. 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442 and 2443, Area 9.92 Decimal, Registered in Book - I, Volume No. 0506-2018, Page from 85419 to 85451, Being No. 050604195 for the year 2018, ADSR Bagnan, standing in the name of Mansur Ali Khan, S/o. Umar Khan. **Boundaries of the Property - North :** Plot No. 1362, South : Mecheda to Kolkata NH - 6. East : Property of Rupnihar Khatun, West : Property of Sir. Sajid Ahmed Ding.

Land & Building property at Mouza - Khandinan, J. L. No. 59, R. S. and L. R. Plot No. 1372, Hal Khatiyani Nos. 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442 and 2443, Area 8.10 Decimal, Registered in Book - I, Volume No. 0506-2018, Page from 87519 to 87553, Being No. 050604301 for the year 2018, ADSR Bagnan, standing in the name of Rupnihar Khatun, W/o. Mansur Ali Khan. **Boundaries of the Property - North :** Plot Nos. 1362 and 1360, South : Mecheda to Kolkata NH-6, East : Plot No. 1374, West : Rest part of Plot No. 1372 of Mansur Ali Khan.

Land & Building property at Mouza - Khandinan, J. L. No. 59, R. S. and L. R. Plot No. 1372, Hal Khatiyani Nos. 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441 and 2442, Area 0.60 Decimal, Registered in Book - I, Volume No. 0506-2021, Page from 18627 to 18651, Being No. 050600848 for the year 2021, ADSR - Bagnan, standing in the name of Mansur Ali Khan, S/o. Umar Khan and Rupnihar Khatun, W/o. Mansur Ali Khan. **Boundaries of the Property - North :** Plot No. 1362, South : Plot No. 1374, East : Plot No. 1372, West : Plot No. 1372.

Date : 05.05.2026
Place : Kolaghat
Authorised Officer (Chief Manager)
Indian Bank

District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, Patna
R-Block, Road No.-2, Daroga Rai Path, Patna-800001
Email ld-confo-pa-br@nic.in
Consumer Complaint No. 292/2024
Ms Geeta SinghComplainant
Vs
Liv Space & OthersOpposite Parties
1. Elemento India Address F-102, 1st Floor, Nayabah Avenue, Near Netaji Subhash Cancer Hospital, Rangapara, Pancha Sayar, New Garia Metro, Kolkata, West Bengal, Pin Code-700094 (Opposite Party No.-4)
Whereas, a case has been filed against you in this commission, and despite service of summons, you have not yet appeared nor filed your reply before the commission.
Therefore, you are hereby directed to appear in person or through your authorized advocate before this Consumer Commission on 02/07/26 at 11AM and give your presence in this case. Failing which, the matter shall be heard and decided Ex-parte in your absence. Issued under my signature and the seal of the Commission on this 02 day of May 2026.
By order
District Commission Registrar
District Consumer Commission, Patna

NIQ
O/o the Exe. Engineer
Jhargram Electrical Division,
PWDte.
WBPWD/EE/JED/NIQ13/2026-27
Bid submission last date:
06/05/2026 upto 12:00 PM
For details follow
www.pwdwb.in or visit the office.



AMARAVATI DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED (ADCL)
(CIN Number : U93000AP2015SGC105535), Email : cdmc.amaravati@gmail.com
Block 4, APCRODA Project office, Rayapudi Post, Tulluru (M), Amaravati, Guntur (Dist.), A.P. - 522237
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE
1) **NIT No. 337(1)/PD/ADCL/2025-26.** Dated: 06.05.2026
Name of Work: Package XXXVII: World Bank and Asian Development Bank funded Amaravati Capital City Development Program related "Construction of Flood Protection and Strengthening of Inspection of Right Bank of River Krishna E1 Road (Chainage 0+300 To Chainage 2+480) On Lump Sum Basis (% Contract) including DLP of 2 Years in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh". ECV: Rs. 105.78 Crores
2) **NIT No. 338(1)/PD/ADCL/2025-26.** Dated: 06.05.2026
Name of Work: Package XXXVIII: World Bank and Asian Development Bank funded Amaravati Capital City Development Program related Construction of Flood Protection and Strengthening of Inspection of Right Bank of River Krishna E1 Road (Chainage 2+480 To Chainage 4+990) On Lump Sum Basis (% Contract) including DLP of 2 Years in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. ECV: Rs. 103.50 Crores
3) **NIT No. 339(1)/PD/ADCL/2025-26.** Dated: 06.05.2026
Name of Work: Package XXXIX: Construction of Flood Protection and Strengthening of Inspection of Right Bank of River Krishna E1 Road (Chainage 4+990 To Chainage 7+200) On Lump Sum Basis (% Contract) including DLP of 2 Years in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. ECV: Rs. 104.09 Crores
4) **NIT No. 358/ADCL/LPS/2026.** Dated: 06.05.2026
Name of Work: Package XXXXVIII: Construction of Roads, Drains, Water Supply, Sewerage, Utility Ducts for Power & ICT, Reuse Waterline, STP & Avenue Plantation compatible with Trunk Infrastructure Layouts for Land Pooling Schemes for Undavalli Village in LPS Zone-11 area on Lump Sum Contract (%Tender) including DLP of 2 Years in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. ECV: Rs. 409.79 Crores
The above bids can be downloaded on AP e-procurement portal from Dt. 06.05.2026 @18:00 Hrs to Dt. 28.05.2026 @15:00 Hrs. Due date for submission of Bid is Dt. 28.05.2026 @16:00 Hrs. Technical Bid opening is on Dt. 28.05.2026 @16:00 Hrs. For further details please refer to "Tender" section of www.approcurement.gov.in and www.adcl.in
Sd/- Chairperson and Managing Director



N S ROAD BRANCH
GILLANDER HOUSE, BUILDING NO.8,
GROUND FLOOR, N S ROAD, KOLKATA -700001
INDIA, e-mail: vjsnro@bankofbaroda.com

VEHICLE E-AUCTION NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s), and Guarantor (s) that Bank has repossessed/seized the Hypothecated Motor Vehicle mentioned below in exercise of the powers conferred under Hypothecation/Loan Agreement executed by the parties and Vehicle will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of dues in below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower/s/Guarantor/s/Vehicle/Total Dues/Reserve Price/e-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below –

Sr No.	Name & address of Borrower/s / Guarantor	Total Dues.	Vehicle Make & Model RTO Regd No.	1.Date of e-Auction Time of E-auction - Start Time to End Time 2. Last date and time of submission of Bid.	1.Reserve Price 2.Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) 3.Bid Increase Amount	EMD deposit account No, IFSC Code, Bank of Baroda Branch	Vehicle / Movable Asset Inspection date & Time
1	M/s Tastytango Foods Private Limited (Ac No- 89890600001173) Address: Plot No. A1, Sudharas Food Park, ADSRO Ranihati, J.L. no. 02, Mouza Jaladulagori LR Dag no. 952, LR Khatian no. 8 II, Howrah, PS Sankrail-711302 To, Mr. Nitesh Rateria Director of M/s Tastytango Foods Private Limited Silver Spring Apartment, BL-4, 17th Floor, Flat-17A, 5, JBS Haldane Avenue Kolkata, West Bengal-700105	Rs. 49,21,806.00 plus Interest and Other Charges incurred up to 31.08.2025.	Vehicle Make & Model – BMW X1S Drive 18i M Sport (Petrol) Color- Portima Blue Vehicle Registration No. (RTO Registration No.) WB11H5544 Engine No-0217Y509 Chassis No- WBA17EE06SY442434	1.Date of e-Auction: 11-06-2026 Time of e-Auction start Time: 14:00 PM To End Time: 18:00 PM . 2. Last date and time of submission of Bid: 11-06-2026 & 18:00 PM.	1. Reserve Price- Rs. 28,80,000.00 2. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)- Rs. 2,88,000.00/- 3. Bid Increase Amount- Rs.10,000.00/-	EMD deposit account No: 89890015181219. IFSC Code: BARBOVJNSRO Bank of Baroda Branch: N S ROAD BRANCH	Any working Day (with Prior Approval) Time: 10:00 A.M. to 16:00 P.M.
2	Mr. Nitesh Rateria (Ac No- 898906000000841) Address: Silver Spring Apartment, BL-4, 17th Floor, Flat-17A, 5, JBS Haldane Avenue Kolkata, West Bengal-700105	Rs. 7,16,060.31/- plus Unapplied Interest incurred up to 08.03.2026.	Vehicle Make & Model – Kta Seftos G1.5 IMT HTK Plus Color- Sparkling Silver Vehicle Registration No. (RTO Registration No.) WB02AS8883 Engine No. G4FLNV319656 Chassis No. MZBEP812LNN398958	1.Date of e-Auction: 11-06-2026 Time of e-Auction start Time: 14:00 PM To End Time: 18:00 PM . 2. Last date and time of submission of Bid: 11-06-2026 & 18:00 PM.	1. Reserve Price- Rs. 5,40,000.00 2. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)- Rs. 54,000.00/- 3. Bid Increase Amount- Rs.10,000.00/-	EMD deposit account No: 89890015181219. IFSC Code: BARBOVJNSRO Bank of Baroda Branch: N S ROAD BRANCH	Any working Day (with Prior Approval) Time: 10:00 A.M. to 16:00 P.M.

For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer/visit to the website link <https://www.baanknet.com> Prospective bidders may contact to Mr. Samrat Mallick on Tel No. 033-22628455 Mobile No- 8335865900.
Place: Kolkata
Date: 05.05.2026
Name: Samrat Mallick Branch Head, Bank of Baroda
N S Road Branch, Kolkata, West Bengal

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank
(भारत सरकार का उपक्रम) (Govt. Of India Undertaking)

Stressed Asset Management (SAM) Branch, Kolkata United Tower, 3rd Floor, 11 Hemanta Basu Sarani, Kolkata-700001
E-mail: zs8350@pnb.bank.in, Mob : 9433043490

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

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

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the secured creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the authorised officer of the bank/ secured creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the bank/ secured creditor from the respective Borrower (s) And Guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

Sl. No.	A) Name of the Branch B) Name of the Account C) Name & addresses of the Borrower/Guarantors Account	Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's Name (mortgagors of property(ies))	A) Dt. Of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 B) Outstanding Amount as on date of sale C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI ACT 2002 D) Nature of Possession Symbolic/Physical Constructive	A) Reserve Price (In ₹) B) EMD C) Bid Increase Amount	Date/ Time of E-Auction Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1.	PNB- SAMB Kolkata, United Tower, 3rd floor, 11 Hemanta Basu Sarani, Kolkata-700 001 M/s Ambootia Tea Exports Pvt. Ltd., 34-A, Metcalfe Street, Kolkata – 700013 & 20, Coalberth Hoboken Road, Kolkata – 700088 Proprietor & Guarantors 1. Sh. Sanjay Prakash Bansal , Flat No.102, 1st Floor, Vandana Apartment, Premises No.22/1, Alipore Road, Ward No.74, P.S. Alipore, Kolkata – 700 027 2. Sm. Reena Bansal , Flat No.102, 1st Floor, Vandana Apartment, Premises No.22/1, Alipore Road, Ward No.74, P.S. Alipore, Kolkata – 700 027 3. Sm. Shreya Bansal , Flat No.102, 1st Floor, Vandana Apartment, Premises No.22/1, Alipore Road, Ward No.74, P.S. Alipore, Kolkata – 700 027 4. Sh. Hritik Bansal , Flat No.102, 1st Floor, Vandana Apartment, Premises No.22/1, Alipore Road, Ward No.74, P.S. Alipore, Kolkata – 700 027 5. M/s Sampad Vikas Ltd. , 34A Metcalfe Street Jain Centre, 7th Floor, Kolkata, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, 700013 Or 20, Coalberth Hoboken Road, Kolkata – 700088 6. M/s Bhumya Tea Company Pvt. Ltd., 34A Metcalfe Street Jain Centre 7th Floor, Kolkata, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, 700013 Or 20, Coalberth, Hoboken Road, Kolkata, West Bengal, India – 700088 Or Jamguri Tea Estate' Oating Dist. Golaghat, Assam 785603 7. M/s Moondakootee Tea Co. Pvt. Ltd., 49/1, Sahid Mahal Belghoria LP 97/29, Kolkata 700056 Or 20, Coalberth Hoboken Road, Kolkata – 700088 8. M/s Wexford Marketing Pvt. Ltd., 1st Floor, Flat No. 102 22/1, Alipore Road, Kolkata, West Bengal, India, 700027 Or Project House, Gopalpur, Budge Budge Road, Kolkata - 700143	Residential flat along with car parking space comprising of 1950 sq.ft. of super built up area, situated at Flat No 102 1st floor Vandana Apartment premises no 22/1 Alipore Road Ward no-74 P.S Alipore under KMC Kolkata-700027 in the name of Wexford Marketing Pvt Ltd.	For Punjab National Bank A) 26.03.2021 B) ₹ 138,30,02,787.20 as on 31.01.2020. (Plus further interest and expenses and other charges. The amount is as per demand Notice issued u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT) C) 22.12.2021 d) Under Symbolic Possession For Union Bank of India A) 19.03.2020 B) ₹ 20,61,94,637.14 as on 29.02.2020. (Plus further interest and expenses and other charges. The amount is as per demand Notice issued u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT) C) 22.12.2021 d) Under Symbolic Possession For Bank of Baroda A) 06.12.2019 B) ₹ 17,60,35,551.78 as on 30.11.2019. (Plus further interest and expenses and other charges. The amount is as per demand Notice issued u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT) C) 22.12.2021 d) Under Symbolic Possession For State Bank of India A) 02.06.2021 B) ₹ 18,66,23,392.70 as on 01.06.2021. (Plus further interest and expenses and other charges. The amount is as per demand Notice issued u/s 13(2) of SARFAESI ACT) C) 22.12.2021 d) Under Symbolic Possession	A) ₹214.00 Lacs B) ₹21.40 Lacs C) ₹5.00 Lac	08.06.2026 between 11.00 AM to 02.00 PM Not known to bank

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E-AUCTION SALE

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions:

- The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS".
- The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule herein above have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.
- The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://baanknet.com> on 08.06.2026 between 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
- For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://baanknet.com> & www.pnbindia.in.

Place: Kolkata
Date: 04.05.2026
Sd/- Authorized Officer,
Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

Price tag has nothing to do with Pant's form: Langer



Rishabh Pant has only scored 204 runs this season. PTI

Express News Service
New Delhi, May 5

RISHABH PANT'S returns with the bat continued to lag on Monday even as some of his big-ticket teammates at Lucknow Super Giants finally managed to find some form. The LSG captain fell after scoring 15 in 10 balls as LSG lost by six wickets to Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium, thus sinking to their sixth consecutive defeat.

The innings took Pant's tally for the season to 204 runs at a strike rate of 128.30 and average of 25.50. While this is woefully below par by any standard, it is a continuation of a pattern that was set last season, in which Pant scored 269 runs in 14 matches at a strike rate of 133.17 and average of 24.45. Nearly half of those runs came from his last innings of the season alone, in which he scored an unbeaten 118 in 61 balls.

That innings remains an outlier, with Pant scoring just three 50+ scores in the 24 innings he has played as captain of LSG, having been bought by the side at the 2025 auction for Rs 27 crore, making him the most expensive IPL player of all time. LSG head coach Justin Langer was asked if Pant is still feeling the pressure of being the big-ticket buy for LSG. "Honestly, I don't think the money has anything to do with it; I don't think that has anything to do with it at all. What I do think is that leadership is a tough position, you're carrying lots of pressure, and he knows that," Langer told the media.

"He's carrying a lot of pressure for the team, and he does it, like all of us, with a smile on his face 98% of the time. The other 2% of the time, it's tough. But he's chipping away, he's working hard and, as I say, he's had a match-winning game earlier in the season. We love it when we see him smiling and playing that swashbuckling style of play, and he's not far off," Langer explained.

Despite the loss, Langer backed captain Pant, insisting the wicketkeeper-batter was close to rediscovering his best form. "You know, he's a very good player; we know that. We've seen him in Test cricket destroy teams at number five."

"So yeah, I mean, Rishabh's not far off," the Australian said.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Sanju is Chennai's Super King as DC slide further after poor show

Samson's 52-ball 87 gives CSK crucial win in playoff quest after Akeal pushes DC back with a probing spell

SYNOPSIS: Sanju is the man for the job once again as CSK outclass shoddy DC in mid-table battle for play-off spot.

Tushar Bhaduri
New Delhi, May 5

AFTER A promising start, Delhi Capitals are meandering towards the familiar territory of irrelevance as the IPL season enters its business end. After a win over Rajasthan Royals, the home game against Chennai Super Kings was a must-win encounter. But the timid manner of their eight-wicket defeat, combined with their poor net run rate, means that a playoff spot is now a long shot.

CSK, on the other hand, kept the feel-good vibes going with a third successive win and they had their 'Chetta' to thank again to guide them to what was a comfortable win in the end. There's still little room for error but the five-time champions are trending the right way.

Sanju is the man

Getting a 100 in around 40 balls is good for a batter's highlight reel. But once in a while, when the pitch is not an ally, one has to find different ways to skin a cat. Sanju Samson, has got two hundred in the first season for his new franchise, but his unbeaten innings of 87 off

●IPL table

Teams	M	W	L	PTS
PBKS	9	6	2	13
RCB	9	6	3	12
SRH	10	6	4	12
RR	10	6	4	12
GT	10	6	4	12
CSK	10	5	5	10
DC	10	4	6	8
KKR	9	3	5	7
MI	10	3	7	6
LSG	9	2	7	4

M: MATCH; W: WIN; L: LOSS; PTS: POINTS;

52 balls on Tuesday showed that he has become a changed player since his heroics in the T20 World Cup.

At Delhi, Samson couldn't go for every ball and had to pick his moments. He had lost his captain early and Urvil Patel, who was threatening to break loose, was gone with 45 on the board in the seventh over. The surface needed some circumspection and Samson played his role to perfection. Rotating strike wasn't easy so the CSK opener focused on hitting every ball in his hitting arc to the boundary and beyond.

His first maximum proved that six-hitting needn't involve violence. Axar Patel had given him just a hint of room in the second over and Samson gave himself some more before lofting the ball, almost apologeti-



Sanju Samson scored 87 runs off 52 balls to single-handedly construct the run chase. PRAVEEN KHANNA

cally, over wide mid-off for a six.

That set the template for the match-winning innings, where Samson didn't fight the pitch but focused on timing to target the short boundaries. And he knew when to put his foot on the gas. When Lungi Ngidi, returning after his scary injury in the game against Punjab Kings, bowled a tight 14th over giving away only a single, the equation read 50 needed off 36 balls. That's when Samson took matters into his own hands. The next over, bowled by T Natarajan, went for 20, including two sixes and a four, and the match was over as a contest. So much so, that the game was done and dusted with two and a half overs to spare. But Samson couldn't have done it all by himself. Young Kartik Sharma played a crucial role in match-winning stand of 114 off 66 balls.

Spin to win

Sometimes the biggest

quality a captain needs is courage. But then perhaps, if you have a Powerplay bowling expert such as Akeal Hosein, getting him to bowl three overs out of the first six isn't quite that big a risk. But having a spinner to bowl the last over of the Powerplay comes with an inherent risk, when the batters at the crease are proficient against spin and looking to accelerate after a quiet start to the innings.

Delhi Capitals had already lost Pathum Nissanka and were struggling to get away. KL Rahul, the leading run-scorer in the tournament, was at the crease trying to come to terms with a surface that was slow and low, and assisting the spinners.

In short, the typical pitch one would expect at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium.

The home team had managed to reach only 36/1 in five overs and needed to optimise the last six deliveries before the

field spread when Chennai Super Kings skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad took the call. Akeal foxed one of the best players of spin with some traditional skill. The ball was flighted and DC's best batter was foxed in the air as the delivery dipped and turned enough to miss the middle of the bat. The miscue didn't even cross the circle.

The three overs that the left-arm spinner from the Caribbean bowled inside the Powerplay brought returns of 1/15, part of a spell of 1/19 with as many as 14 dot balls.

But the fact that this seemed almost expected and CSK got some stick for leaving him out for a crucial game that really speaks of his importance for his franchise.

BRIEF SCORES: DC 155/7 in 20 overs (Rizvi 40 not out; Noor 2/22, Hosein 1/19) lost to CSK 159/2 in 17.3 overs (Samson 87 not out, Kartik 41 not out) by 8 wkts

Klaassen, Iyer become IPL's most valuable batters

Tanishq Vaddi
Hyderabad, May 5

NUMBER FOUR is the position nobody wants until the game needs saving. Too early and you're wasting resources; too late and the target is already out of reach. This season, two batters have made it look straightforward: Heinrich Klaassen for Sunrisers Hyderabad, Shreyas Iyer for Punjab Kings.

They are the only two middle-order batters among the top 15 run-getters in IPL 2025. The other thirteen are top-order batsmen — openers, mostly, with Jos Buttler and Ishan Kishan coming in as the odd number threes. The position demands something different: the ability to walk in against fiery pacers when two wickets have fallen early, read the situation in three deliveries, and bat accordingly. Or walk in when 90 have already come in ten overs, and not slow that rate down.



Heinrich Klaassen (L) and Shreyas Iyer. FILE/CREIMAS FOR BCCI

Very few have done it consistently. Suryakumar Yadav was one. Glenn Phillips another.

Klaassen was not the designated number four for Sunrisers last year. Nitish Kumar Reddy was, and the biggest issue he faced was timing — either taking too long to get going or starting before he'd read the pitch. Klaassen, with his experience, fitted into the position right away. Against Kolkata Knight Riders, with the team in trouble, he made 52 off 35. Against Lucknow, 62 off 41 — each time build-



ing from nothing, calm head down, laying foundation for the overs that followed.

Some questioned his strike rate during those innings. Klaassen's answer was clean: "I've been in difficult situations, and then you have to take responsibility and be mature about it. You can't just deal with it, and that's not how the game works. I don't care about strike rate. You just have to find different ways to score ten runs, ensuring you still post a good score."

Then, when Sunrisers needed him aggressive from ball one, against Mumbai Indians he made 65 off 30. Against Delhi Capitals, 37 off 13. He had turned a dial rather than changed a philosophy.

While Klaassen had to move from low gear to high, Iyer had to move the other way — from number three down to four — and recalibrate entirely. Unlike Klaassen, who already had the power and needed to work on strike rotation, Iyer had to add power, to match the youngsters around him getting blistering starts. "The way they hit the ball, they clear the boundary so easily — it rubs into me as well," he said early in the tournament. He also wanted to dominate immediately. "I just like to dig into the bowlers when the chips are down. I don't want to get into that mindset where the bowler gets onto me." His three innings — 69 off 33 against Sunrisers, 66 off 35 against Mumbai, 71 off 36 against Delhi

— all came in chases, when Punjab were hunting large totals and the required rate was already climbing. He didn't wait for the game to slow down. He ran at it.

The two share one visible similarity despite their contrasting routes to the position: a strike rate of 139 for Klaassen and 136 for Iyer in their first ten deliveries. Neither charges out immediately. They take a few balls, read the pitch, read the situation — then shift. Once they do, Klaassen maintains a similar tempo against both pace and spin: 155 and 159 respectively. Iyer, who usually goes hard at spinners, has been harder on pace this season — 174 against pacers, dropping to 156 against spin.

Different instincts, different routes. The outcomes have been similar enough to keep both teams in contention for the playoffs.

(With inputs from Lalith Kalidas)

Rickelton: The weightlifter from Johannesburg



Ryan Rickelton has been a shining light for Mumbai Indians. CREIMAS

Shankar Narayan
Mumbai, May 5

NEIL MCKENZIE has known Ryan Rickelton since before either of them had heard of the IPL. What he remembers first is not a cricket shot but a weight rack. "He was a weightlifter at around 14, but like many South African kids, he was multi-skilled," McKenzie, former South Africa batter and mentor, tells The Indian Express.

"He played squash, a lot of other sports, and that helped him massively. That base of strength and core stability from weight training has helped his power and balance. He's always been very disciplined about his training. Probably one of the fittest and strongest guys you'll find. It all accumulates into a well-balanced athlete, and that shows in how robust he is in the middle."

That robustness has been Mumbai Indians' one fixed point in an otherwise dissolving season. Rohit Sharma has played three matches, a hamstring keeping him out. Suryakumar Yadav has not found form. Hardik Pandya has not consistently delivered. Three wins in ten matches, playoff qualification hanging by a thread. Rickelton, the wicketkeeper-batsman from Johannesburg, has scored 380 runs in eight matches at a strike rate of 190.95 — and done it without a wobble.

Part of it is a ground that suits him. After his 83 against Lucknow Super Giants, Rickelton explained why the Wankhede feels like home. "Coming from Johannesburg, the Wanderers, where you get a lot of similar pace and bounce. I didn't believe it at first, but I really enjoy it. There's nice pace in it, you get great value for shots, and the ball really flies here. I've adapted my game around this venue. If I can have a good firm base here, I'm quite happy."

The comfort has been most visible on the leg side. Against KKR, 62 percent of his runs came through mid-wicket and long-on — the pick-up shot, the whip, good-length deliveries redirected before bowlers could adjust. Against SRH, where he made 123, it was 76 percent. Anything on his pads was punished; when they tried to move the ball away, he found the same zone



“He was a weightlifter at around 14, but like many South African kids, he was multi-skilled. He played squash, a lot of other sports, and that helped him.”

NEIL MCKENZIE, FORMER SOUTH AFRICA CRICKETER

anyway. Even against LSG, 61 percent came from that area. Three innings, same answer.

McKenzie points to one shot Rickelton has quietly made his own. "The flick over fine leg. He's using the bowler's pace, getting inside the line, and picking up that back-of-a-length ball. Or if it's slightly fuller, he's strong enough to just flick it over fine or square leg." Deliberate work, now looking like instinct.

The adaptation runs deeper than one ground or one shot. "Ryan has adapted really well. He's worked hard on his spin play and adapting to different conditions. If you want to play international cricket, you have to adjust everywhere, and he's done that." The mental side has been worked on too. "In T20 cricket, you sometimes value your wicket too much when you've got a strong first-class record. He's learned to back his attacking instincts and adapt that mindset really well."

What McKenzie keeps coming back to is simpler. "He's a run-getter. He loves scoring runs and finds a way. He's not scared to ask questions. He knows his game really well and is always looking to improve. You won't find a harder working cricketer in too many places. That's what good players do."

In a season where MI have searched for steadiness at the top, Rickelton has not needed to search for anything. He has simply batted.

Players should boycott French Open over prize money dispute: Sabalenka

Reuters
Rome, May 5

PLAYERS WOULD boycott the French Open if their prize money at the claycourt Grand Slam is not increased, women's world number one Aryna Sabalenka said. The Belarusian's threat came amid a heated disagreement between players and Roland Garros organisers over prize money distribution, despite this year's tournament offering a 9.5% increase to 61.7 million euros (\$72.19 million). Several top players released a statement on Monday saying they were set to receive prize money that would likely still be less than 15% of tournament revenue, well short of the 22% they demanded to match ATP and WTA combined 1000 events.

When asked how far players might push their demands, Sabalenka told reporters at the Italian Open: "I think at some point we will boycott it (the tournament), yeah. I feel like that's going to be the only way to fight for our rights."

"Let's see how far we can get, if it's going to take players for

boycott... Some of the things, I feel like it's really unfair to the players. I think at some point it's going to get to this."

However, the world number one struck a hopeful note about ongoing negotiations.

"I just really hope that all of the negotiation that we are having, we at some point are going to get to the right decision, to the conclusion that everyone will be happy with," she added.

Reuters has contacted the French Tennis Federation for comment. The prize money boost of 5.4 million euros compared to 2025 still leaves Roland Garros trailing its Grand Slam rivals. The U.S. Open offered \$90 million last year while Wimbledon paid out 53.5 million pounds (\$72.51 million) and the Australian Open a record A\$111.5 million (\$80.06 million) this year.

Sabalenka said the players deserved more prize money.

"When you see the number and you see the amount the players are receiving... I feel like the show is on us. I feel like without us there wouldn't be a tournament," Sabalenka added.

●KVARATSKHELIA: PSG'S X-FACTOR

Sandip G
New Delhi, May 5

APPLES AND geniuses share an eternal bond. Issac Newton is said to have discovered the phenomenon of gravity by watching apples fall in an orchard. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia found the solution to an age-old inconvenience with the help of apples in his orchard. The ground, a converted farmland, he played during summers in his ancestral home in Tslenjikhia, Georgia, had an iron gate with sharp edges, resembling the head of a spear, on one side. His father, competent enough to play in Azerbaijan's top league, warned him of the edges that had torn numerous footballs in his childhood. His son glanced around the ground, plucked a few apples and stuck those into the protruding spikes.

The father marvelled at his son's ingenuity. The solution was in plain sight for several generations. But it took a child's observation to find it. Years later, fans, managers, colleagues and defenders marvelled at Kvaratskhelia's wisdom to find simple solutions to

complex problems. He sees the path that no one sees, he charts the route that no one visualises. He zips the balls through channels that exist only in his vision. The PSG man's opponents in the Champions League semifinal, Bayern Munich, knows the key to reaching the final lies in locking the man who flows through the turf like a smooth but unstoppable stream.

He flooded them twice, with two beautiful goals in the first leg. The first would haunt them as the worst nightmare. He ambled down the left-flank — he never runs — slid infield, dribbled past the left-back Josip Stanišić, as if he didn't exist, then spread his body and curled a low shot into the bottom right past two pairs of outstretched legs cannoning onto him and a third just standing hypnotised at an artiste from a different era. Kvaratskhelia belongs to time when football was less processed and mechanical, but more flair and free-spirited, the milieu of short shorts, skinny legs and low-hung socks. The hair is unruffled, the movements are without extreme athletic violence, the demeanour is un-hubristic.



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia will play a crucial role in the away leg. REUTERS

He leaves his markers with hollow eyes and scared hearts. Like Aston Villa's Axel Disasi last year. With the fresh legs and enthusiasm, he hurtled into the Georgian, who merely rolled his right foot over the ball and swivelled his snake hips to the right. Disasi's attempted tackle met the Parisian air and he slumped backwards. When Disasi turned his head back, Kvaratskhelia had slithered beyond his reach and launched a missile into the near top corner of the near post.

In moments as these, the

moniker Napoli fans struck on him, Kvaradona, after their most famous player Diego Maradona, doesn't sound hyperbolic. His arrival in Napoli was no accident either. His father, Badri, idolised the Argentine. "From the time I was little, my father always has been always talking about Maradona like a God," he wrote in Players' Tribune. "So when my agent told me Napoli wanted me to come, I was so happy. But my father? Unbelievable. My father says, 'You cannot say no to Napoli! You cannot say no to Mara-

dona's club!'" So we didn't think too much. No debate."

His own idol, though, was his father. Some of his goals were videographed in VHS tape he re-watches frequently. "If somebody was speaking about Messi or Ronaldo, I'd say, 'No, no, no... My father is better. I will show you the videos,'" he wrote.

But unlike his father's idol, he keeps himself at an arm's distance from scandals. It's perhaps because he can't be taken off the field. In Dinamo Tbilisi's academy, he snuck out of his bed to train alone in the night. The guards would oblige, and soon they would be his friends and nocturnal spectators. He once overheard seniors ridiculing his frail physique. He felt like crying.

But he held his tears back and told himself: "I have to show them that I can play good (football)." "My mentality goes hard then. It was motivation. And it made me good," he penned.

He took this mentality to Naples and Paris. Luis Enrique calls him a warrior. His backline colleagues praise his contributions in defending. In the first leg against Bayern Munich, he made three significant defensive contributions and won five

of the 10 duels on the ground. He defends like he is "crazy hungry" as manager Enrique had instructed him. He is his own man, but operating within the collective identity of his team. He is grounded, doesn't strut with the aura of a superstar when he is with the national team. "I consider myself a simple person," Kvaratskhelia once told BBC Sport. "I try to stay grounded, listen to my family, and always remember who I am and where I come from."

He embodies the freshness of the Caucasus ranges, where his hometown is; his close control and dribbling in tight spaces owes to the congested lanes and alleys of urban Tbilisi, where he lived in a non-descript house in a Soviet-era apartment block. "It was like four buildings. In the centre of these buildings was our 'stadium.' But only hard concrete." Heavy falls broke his knees. So he learned not to fall even under the heaviest challenges.

"You learn to escape the defender's slightest touch," he wrote. It was ingenuity again. As it is now; and as it was that day the idea of the apple struck him.

INTERVIEW: SATWIKSAIRAJ RANKIREDDY & CHIRAG SHETTY

‘Wouldn’t want kids to play badminton... sad to see we are not a sporting nation yet’

Top doubles pair opens up about the frustration of going unnoticed despite world-topping feats

Shivani Naik
Mumbai, May 5

HS PRANNOY rues that the Thomas Cup isn't called the 'World Cup'. Chirag Shetty says they don't expect airport receptions, just basic appreciation by Indians for a tough medal won. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy is determined he won't let his kids play badminton – the apathy he witnessed after India returned with a bronze medal, as well as gold in 2022, has broken his heart.

Through a media interaction facilitated by SAI, and another later that included Chirag-Satwik together, India's finest doubles pairing, spoke of what is rankling them so intensely.

Excerpts:

Satwik, what prompted your post that 'nobody cares' about India winning a Thomas Cup bronze medal this time?

Satwik: I never share anything usually. I let go of things. But this time, I exploded. Someone has to speak up. It's okay if I'm seen as the villain. In the last six months, I've been thinking that do only people who do bad things become

popular. (When we crave appreciation), as players, we don't want big things. No, we don't want prize money. Even if a kid walks up to us and says, 'Bhaiyya you played well or we want a picture with you', we are happy.

What triggered this?

Satwik: We were at the airport, taking a seven-hour flight back from Germany to Hyderabad. Nobody even asked us who we are, what medals we have won. There were so many Indians, many Telugus. We were wearing Thomas Cup jerseys. But everyone was busy with IPL, politics, whatever. Same thing when we won gold in 2022. We should have celebrated much more. People don't realise these chances might not come again. It is very tough to win the Thomas Cup, even medalling is tough. When we landed at the airport, all the players were just booking cabs, Prannoy, Srikanth, Dhruv. Nobody around seemed to notice. My friends came to pick me up, but I felt really sad looking around at that airport scene – top athletes trying to book cabs.

Chirag, your thoughts?

Chirag: It was that feeling that 'still nobody cares.' See, we



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy (L) and Chirag Shetty were part of India's Thomas Cup triumph in 2022. FILE

never expected people would come to the airport to receive us. Last time when we won, we were well received, we met the PM, and we were felicitated. But the way it should be celebrated, it wasn't. Those who watch badminton appreciate it, but the general public just doesn't know the magnitude of the 2022 win. Makes me sad that we are not yet a sporting nation. There's only a little that the government and the federation can do. Their schemes are terrific. But the sporting ecosystem doesn't celebrate achievements.

Satwik, what does this do to your morale?

Satwik: When Chirag's dancing celebration reel went viral, I was happy. But I remembered how somebody plays some random thing, and it gets 1 million followers. And I ask myself, 'Why?' Here we are fighting to win, and if we get injured, there's no replacement for us. We play without support and under immense pressure in team events. But even a title was not enough last time. Again this time. I told Prannoy I'll not let my kid play badminton. If you are strong mentally, you'll manage, but otherwise it's really tough to keep going on like this (with a large part of the

country oblivious to our performance). Frankly, at the Hyderabad academy, we were felicitated, and that small bouquet and cake cutting was enough. We don't expect anything grand.

Do you think pre-tie selection discussions or even criticism is actually a good thing – that people care enough to talk about badminton?

Satwik: Those who watch and are really genuine do put out good tweets. I even kept screenshots because I would feel good. But in February, at the Asian Team Champion-

ships in China, I needed to leave after three matches, because there was a puja at home for my father's death anniversary. There were social media comments about, "how could he just leave the team?" These things stay in your head and really affect badly. Not all youngsters are going to be strong, and will struggle badly. I left Twitter (now X), might leave Insta too. And I'm happy that way. Even this time, they said, 'Why can't you beat France and why are you shooting reels after bronze?' I wanted to say, even we wanted gold. We are more disappointed than any of you. But I decided not to get into it.

Satwik, why were you not in the dancing reel of Chirag that became popular? You didn't like the steps?

Satwik: That was the only argument I had with Chirag this time. We had been in the stadium for 4-5 hours, and were to take a bus to the hotel at 7pm and the flight at 3am. I was tired, so I told them let's shoot it later. The thing is, I wanted to finish packing and have a free mind.

Chirag: Prannoy sent the trend to me, and we decided to go ahead with it. We dragged Ayush (Shetty) when he was returning from laundry and made him dance. Now, some people (Satwik) are angry, and sitting in the corner sulking about missing out.

City blink first, title now in Arsenal's hands

Reuters
Liverpool, May 5

MANCHESTER CITY'S Premier League title hopes were dealt a crushing blow on Monday as they dropped precious points at Everton, relying on Jeremy Doku's strike deep in injury time to salvage a 3-3 draw.

City, with 71 points from 34 games, trail leaders Arsenal by five points but with a game in hand after a chaotic contest that saw Everton fight back after punishing a costly defensive error from City's Marc Guehi.

City now need Arsenal -- who have 76 points after 35 games -- to stumble in one of their final three games to keep

their chances of lifting the trophy alive.

"It's better than losing. (But) it's not in our hands," Guardiola told Sky Sports about the title race. "Before it was, now it's not. We have games left. We will see what happens."

Guardiola's men looked to be heading towards defeat, and City's travelling fans had already streamed toward the exits with their title dreams in tatters when Doku, who also scored City's opener in the 43rd minute, fired into the top corner from the edge of the box in the 97th minute.

The equaliser capped a wild second half that featured a Thierno Barry double and a goal from Jake O'Brien. City had gone into the break



Erling Haaland looks on in disbelief after Everton score. AP

in control after Doku bent a beautiful strike into the top corner that keeper Jordan Pickford had little chance of saving.

But Guardiola's men unravelled in the second half. It started when Barry intercepted Guehi's horrific pass back to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma to level in the 68th minute.

The offside flag originally went up, but since the ball was not passed to Barry by a teammate, the goal was given. O'Brien headed home a corner to give Everton the lead in the 73rd minute and Barry completed his double in the 81st after another defensive mistake.

"It's always a pleasure to play against a big team like Manchester City," Barry said. "We had to settle for a draw so we need to keep pushing because there are three games left."

3 blunders, 1 win mark Gukesh's start



Hans Niemann reacts to Gukesh pressing his clock while two pieces were still rolling on the board. SCREENGRAB VIA SAINT LOUIS CHESS CLUB YOUTUBE

Amit Kamath
Mumbai, May 5

ON A wild opening day at the Super Rapid and Blitz Poland tournament on Tuesday in Warsaw, world champion D Gukesh drew a game against Alireza Firouzja, who he was winning, then lost a game to Hans Niemann, which was heading towards a draw and finally ended his day by winning a game against Jan-Krzysztof Duda, where he was under significant pressure.

Three blunders - not all by Gukesh - decided the fortunes of the world champion on the first day of the rapid and blitz tournament in Warsaw. But the big talking point of the day came when the 19-year-old was locked in battle against Niemann in round 2. When making his knight hop on the e7 square on his 27th move, Gukesh, already under severe time trouble at that point, knocked over Niemann's queen. When he tried to pick up the queen, he accidentally knocked over a pawn as well. With his time running down to just two seconds, Gukesh hit the clock to prevent himself from getting flagged. At that point, two of Niemann's pieces were still down on the board.

The American grandmaster hauled over the arbiter who gave him an extra minute, but did not forfeit Gukesh.

"I personally think it should be a forfeit. But it's not my job to decide," Niemann told Saint Louis Chess Club in an interview after the day's games were over.

Niemann pointed out that at the World Rapid and Blitz Championship in Doha, there were instances of players getting handed forfeits because they had knocked over the pieces and then reset the clock before they had arranged the pieces in the right squares. Not that it mattered. With Niemann already up on the clock and then receiving one additional minute as per tournament rules, Gukesh con-

tinued to duel both the American and his clock before making the game-deciding blunder on move 51 (51. Ke4) where he moved his king to e4, thus allowing Niemann's h file pawn to advance down the board and his knight on g4 on a perfect square to offer protection. Gukesh resigned on move 53.

This was his second blunder of the day from Gukesh. In the first game against Firouzja, Gukesh had squandered a winning position in a single move, too.

Since becoming the world champion in December 2024, Gukesh has shown remarkable improvement in the rapid format. And it seemed like he was destined to beat Firouzja. By the 29th move, Gukesh had seized control of the game with black pieces. By move 32, he had three additional pawns on the board. By move 40, Alireza would have started entertaining thoughts of waving the white flag of surrender.

Both players made inaccuracies, but Gukesh maintained a two-pawn advantage and his edge on the eval bar. But on the 68th move, when Firouzja captured Gukesh's rook and offered up his own, Gukesh took the rook with the wrong piece: he opted to take with a pawn instead of with his bishop, which turned out to be a game-changing error. After 20 more moves, the game ended in a draw.

Duda held an edge from the 26th move, and despite inaccuracies, his edge never slipped. But a blunder on move 40 allowed Gukesh to put his king under duress. The Polish GM ultimately resigned on move 45.

The day saw only two players, Gukesh's world championship challenger Javokhir Sindarov and Niemann, stay unbeaten after three rounds. Wednesday will see Gukesh and Javokhir Sindarov square off for the first time since the Uzbek GM confirmed his spot in the world championship as the challenger.

Van Foreest downs Carlsen in Classical chess

Mayank Chaudhary
New Delhi, May 5

IT WAS pitch black. Jorden van Foreest woke up in total panic, unaware of his whereabouts. The alarm was deafening and he had no idea what was going on. A fire alarm and just 45 minutes of sleep. That was the chaotic beginning to the Dutch Grandmaster's day in the Swedish town of Malmö, the venue of the TePe Sigeman Chess tournament. van Foreest, along with the rest, was evacuated from the hotel, only to learn later that it was a false alarm. "I had no idea where the hell I am and it was completely pitch black in my room and the sound was so incredibly loud," he told *chess.com*.

The man who woke up in complete "panic and disorientation" wasn't aware then, but the day was about to deliver the biggest win of his career as he took down Norwegian World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen just a few hours later. A wild fourth round tie between van Foreest and Carlsen carried the same sense of panic, with the evaluation bar forced to dance with each move in the endgame. Beating Carlsen is one thing. Outplaying him in classical chess, that too in the endgame, remains the ultimate goal for most. Wielding the white pieces, van Foreest and Carlsen ventured into the Sicilian Najdorf. Carlsen took an early eight-minute think on just the sixth move. By the eighth move, he allowed an exchange of queens. Then burnt 25 minutes on a move. Half his clock was already gone.

The white pieces began enjoying more space on the board. Carlsen's black pieces, suddenly lacked the right squares. Then came Van Foreest's 21st move, knight to c6, brought his piece dangerously close to Carlsen's king. Carlsen faced a brutal choice. He could capture the knight, but that would mean losing his cornered rook. He was forced to take the knight anyway. Van Foreest was now a pawn up. The game had entered rare territory. Carlsen sat in an inferior position with less than two minutes left on his clock. Van Foreest still had over 13 minutes. What followed was Carlsen's signature long grind, the kind where he usually chums water into wine. But this time, the Dutch kept grinding too.

The game ebbed and flowed for the next 60 moves, seemingly heading toward another shared spoil. But then came a final mistake on the 86th move from Carlsen.



STATEMENT OF STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2026

The Board of Directors of Hero MotoCorp Limited ('the Company') at its meeting held on May 05, 2026, approved the audited (standalone and consolidated) Financial Results of the Company for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2026.

The Financial Results are available on the website of Stock Exchange at www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com and also on the Company's website at <https://www.heromotocorp.com/en-in/company/investors/annual-report.html?key1=quarterly-results> and can be accessed by scanning the QR Code.



For and on behalf of Board of Directors
Dr. PAWAN MUNJAL
Executive Chairman
DIN: 00004223

Note: The above information is in accordance with Regulation 33 & 47 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015

Financial Highlights	Key Parameters		Quarter ended March 31, 2026	Year ended March 31, 2026
	Revenue from operations	Standalone	Rs. 12,797 Crores ▲ 29%	Rs. 46,830 Crores ▲ 15%
		Consolidated	Rs. 12,978 Crores ▲ 30%	Rs. 47,411 Crores ▲ 16%
	Profit after Tax (PAT)	Standalone	Rs. 1,401 Crores ▲ 30%	Rs. 5,268 Crores ▲ 14%
		Consolidated	Rs. 1,474 Crores ▲ 26%	Rs. 5,776 Crores ▲ 32%

Dividend: The Company has declared a final dividend of Rs.75 per equity share. Previously, the Company paid an interim dividend of Rs.110 per equity share during the year. This aggregates to a total dividend of Rs.185 per equity share for the FY 2025-26.

Hero MotoCorp Ltd. - Regd. Office: The Grand Plaza, Plot No.2, Nelson Mandela Road, Vasant Kunj- Phase-II, New Delhi- 110070. | CIN No. L35911DL1984PLC017354 • Visit www.heromotocorp.com

SAATCHI & SAATCHI