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Fuel Prices Surge Again

New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices were increased once again across India on Monday, marking the fourth hike in less than two weeks. Fuel rates have now risen by nearly Rs 7.5 per litre since May 15. Petrol prices went up by Rs 2.61 per litre, while diesel increased by Rs 2.71. In Delhi, petrol now costs Rs 102.12 per litre and diesel Rs 95.20. The hikes are linked to rising global crude oil prices. Oil companies said higher import and refining costs forced the re-

visions. Fuel prices have increased multiple times this month after remaining mostly unchanged since 2022.

Rates in Hyderabad

Petrol: Rs 115.62

Diesel: Rs 103.76

Murmu Confers Padma Awards

New Delhi, May 25: President Droupadi Murmu on Monday conferred the Padma Awards at a Civil Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, honouring 131 recipients from diverse fields including arts, literature, medicine, sports, education, public affairs and social service. The awards included five Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri honours, recognising outstanding contributions to national development and public life. In the first phase of the ceremony, 66 awardees received their medals. Among the Padma Vibhushan recipients was legendary actor Dharmendra Singh Deol (posthumous), celebrated for his six-decade-long career in Indian cinema and iconic roles in films such as Sholay. The award highlighted his enduring impact on Indian popular culture. Renowned violin maestro Dr N. Rajam was honoured for pioneering the "Gayaki Ang" style, which brought vocal-like expression to vi-



olin performance in Hindustani classical music. Scholar and cultural icon Dr R. Ganesh received the Padma Bhushan for reviving the ancient art of Avadhana and contributing extensively to literature and classical traditions. Other notable awardees included banking pioneer Uday Kotak for transforming India's financial sector, veteran politician Bhagat Singh Koshyari for public service, and gastroenterol-

ogist Dr K.R. Palani swamy for advancements in healthcare. The Padma Shri list featured personalities from cinema, sports, science and grassroots social work, including cricketer Harmanpreet Kaur, tabla maestro Kumar Bose, and scientist Dr Muthunayagam, among others. Ceremony highlighted India's diverse talent pool and the government's continued recognition of excellence across disciplines.

Govt Sacrificed 1 Lakh Crore: FM

New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the Centre had foregone more than Rs 1 lakh crore annually through excise duty cuts on petrol and diesel to protect consumers from rising fuel prices triggered by global crude oil volatility. Defending the recent increase in petrol and diesel prices, Sitharaman said the hikes were made by oil marketing companies (OMCs) due to rising international crude oil prices amid the ongoing West Asia conflict. She explained that if the Centre had not reduced excise duties earlier, fuel prices would have risen by nearly Rs 10 per litre. "The government absorbed the burden by reducing taxes,

which caused a major hit to the national budget," she said. Petrol and diesel prices have risen by around Rs 7.5 per litre in four phases since mid-May as OMCs attempted to offset losses caused by higher import costs. The Finance Minister also expressed confidence in the Reserve Bank of India's decision to transfer a dividend of Rs 2.87 lakh crore to the government, stating that the RBI follows a transparent calculation formula recommended by an expert committee. Addressing concerns over rising crude oil prices, Sitharaman said the government was closely monitoring the situation to ensure that citizens do not face excessive financial pressure despite global eco-



nomical challenges. She also highlighted challenges facing exporters, especially in the textile sector, warning that geopolitical tensions, changing trade patterns, sustainability demands and rapid technological advancements such as AI and automation were reshaping global markets. The Minister urged Indian industries to adopt sustainable practices, modern technology and innovation to remain globally competitive in the evolving economic environment.

India Moves For 114 Rafales

New Delhi: India has taken a major step towards acquiring 114 additional Dassault Rafale fighter jets for the Indian Air Force by finalising a Letter of Request to France, according to sources. The LoR is expected to be sent to the French government in the coming weeks, beginning formal negotiations for one of India's largest-ever defence deals. Under the proposal, around 90 fighter jets are expected to be manufactured in India through a partnership between Dassault Aviation and an Indian firm, while the remaining aircraft will be delivered in fly-away condition. The move is seen as a major boost to the Centre's "Make in India" initiative, with India reportedly seeking up to 50 per cent indigenous content in the jets and greater involvement of Indian companies in the Rafale production chain. After France responds with pricing, delivery schedules and logistics details, India is expected to issue a formal Request for Proposal (RFP), followed by commercial and technical negotiations. The proposal has already received clearance from the Defence Acquisition Council, while final approval will come from the Cabinet Committee on Security before the contract is signed. The Indian Air Force currently operates 36 Rafale fighter jets, while the Indian Navy is preparing to induct 26 Rafale-M aircraft for carrier-based operations.

Hyd Metro Gets Rs 13,600 Crore

Hyderabad, May 25: The Government of Telangana has secured a refinancing facility of up to Rs 13,600 crore from Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) for the Hyderabad Metro Rail project, providing a major financial boost to the metro network. An agreement was signed in New Delhi between IRFC, Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) and L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) Limited on Monday. Chief Secretary K Ramakrishna Rao said the refinancing support would reduce financial pressure on L&T Metro Rail and improve the project's long-term financial stability. He added that the move would help lower finance costs, improve flexibility and support future metro expansion plans. The Rs 13,600 crore facility will refinance existing debt, including non-convertible debentures, commercial papers and working capital loans. Officials said the arrangement would allow an orderly exit for existing lenders while improving the project's overall sustainability. The refinancing package has been structured for a 20-year period with quarterly repayments and replaces higher-cost loans with lower-cost long-term funding. The project is backed by an unconditional guarantee from the Telangana government along with an RBI-supported direct debit mechanism. Spread across 69.2 km with 57 stations, Hyderabad Metro Rail Phase-I is one of India's largest metro projects developed under the public-private partnership model. The network currently handles over five lakh passenger journeys every day. Officials said the refinancing support would also help accelerate future metro expansion, improve connectivity to developing areas and strengthen last-mile transport facilities across Hyderabad.

Delhi call for Sidda, Shiva

New Delhi, Bengaluru: Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar have been summoned to New Delhi for a closed-door meeting with the Congress leadership, sparking fresh speculation over Karnataka's political leadership. The meeting is expected to take place at the residence of Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and may also be attended by Rahul Gandhi. According to party sources, the discussions are likely to focus on governance, organisational strategy and preparations for the 2028 Karnataka Assembly elections. Following the call from the party high command, both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar left for Delhi from Bengaluru on Monday evening. Home Minister G Parameshwara and MLA NA Harris were also seen at the



airport. The sudden meeting has intensified political speculation over possible leadership adjustments within the Karnataka Congress unit, especially regarding the balance between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, who are considered the party's two main power centres in the state. However, Congress leaders have officially denied any immediate plans for a leadership change or cabinet reshuffle, describing the meeting as part of regular consultations between the central leadership and senior state leaders.

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SPS Holds Massive Protest

Demands ₹26,000 Minimum Wage for Hospital Workers

Koti, Hyderabad - May 25: Hundreds of workers employed in government hospitals and medical colleges across Telangana staged a large protest on Monday in front of the Directorate of Medical Education (DME) office in Hyderabad. The demonstration was organized under the banner of the SPS Association, demanding fair wages and better working conditions. The protesting employees include sanitation workers, patient care staff, security personnel, and supervisors-nearly 17,800 workers across the state who form the backbone of public healthcare services. Despite their long years of service, many said they continue to struggle with low wages and job insecurity. Association leaders alleged that even after nearly two decades of serv-

ice in government hospitals, workers remain deprived of dignity and fair recognition. SPS Association State President Kurri Saidayya stated that although Government Order No. 60 issued in 2022 mandates a monthly wage of ₹15,600, many workers are still being paid only ₹9,000 to ₹10,000 in several regions. He blamed irregularities in the contract outsourcing system for this disparity. The union also raised concerns over what it described as a "bedside contract brokerage system" operating in government hospitals, which they claim is causing serious financial and professional harm to workers. They demanded its complete abolition. State General Secretary Chinnaboska Naresh warned that continued harassment and intimidation of workers would not be tolerated. He added that the movement would be intensified if demands are ignored. State Vice President Mathangi Anil Kumar

said that the association would continue its struggle until all demands are fulfilled. Other leaders including State Treasurer Pattipati Srinivas, Joint Secretary U. Ramana, Vice Presidents Vainala Ravi, Assistant Secretaries Gorre Nagaraju and Nageswara Rao, along with committee members Anjali, Kumar, and Santosh, participated in the protest. Leaders from various districts across Telangana also joined the demonstration. Despite ex-



treme summer heat conditions ranging between 40-45°C, nearly 500-600 workers participated, making the protest a significant show of unity and determination.



EDITORIAL

NEET Exam Integrity Crisis

The NEET controversy has again brought India's medical entrance system under sharp scrutiny. Designed as a single, transparent gateway to medical education, NEET has increasingly become a centre of disputes, allegations, and protests. Claims of question paper leaks, irregularities in conduct, and inconsistencies in evaluation have raised serious doubts about fairness and credibility. For millions of aspirants, NEET is not just an exam but a life-changing milestone. Students from both rural and urban backgrounds spend years preparing, investing money, time, and emotional energy to secure medical seats. However, repeated allegations of malpractice have shaken their confidence in the system. Such incidents affect not only rankings but also the mental well-being of students. The issue is not limited to isolated cases but reflects deeper systemic weaknesses. Large-scale examinations require strong security protocols, advanced monitoring systems, and strict accountability at every stage. Even minor lapses in paper handling or digital security can lead to serious breaches.

Another concern is the intense competition and growing dependence on coaching centres. The rise of an unregulated coaching industry has created inequality, where access to expensive training often influences outcomes.

This widens the gap between privileged and underprivileged aspirants. Calls for independent investigations into irregularities are justified. At the same time, genuine students must not suffer due to administrative failures. Transparent inquiries, timely decisions, and clear communication from authorities are essential to restore trust. Long-term reforms are necessary. Strengthening digital exam infrastructure, introducing better surveillance systems, and ensuring independent oversight can reduce vulnerabilities. Student counselling and mental health support should also be prioritised. The credibility of NEET is vital for India's healthcare future. Any erosion of trust in the examination system directly impacts the quality of future medical professionals. Restoring integrity is therefore a national priority.

In conclusion, the NEET row is a wake-up call for reform. It demands accountability, transparency, and a student-focused approach to examination governance to rebuild confidence and protect the sanctity of competitive exams. The debate also highlights the need for cooperative action between the central and state authorities, examination bodies, and educational institutions. Without coordinated reform, fragmented responses will continue to weaken trust. Above all, the system must prioritise fairness over speed, and transparency over convenience, ensuring that every aspirant competes on equal footing regardless of background or financial capacity. Strong accountability is essential to restore public confidence now.

The Declining Culture of Namaskaram

- A Warning to Modern Society

In Indian culture, "Namaskaram" is far more than a simple greeting. It represents humility, respect, discipline, affection, gratitude, and human connection. For generations, greeting elders with folded hands was considered an essential part of daily life. Children were taught from a young age to bow before parents, teachers, grandparents, and guests. Behind this gesture existed a powerful message: "I respect the goodness and wisdom within you." However, with the rapid changes in modern society, this valuable tradition is gradually fading away. Earlier, Indian families functioned as schools of culture and morality. Joint families allowed children to grow up in the presence of grandparents and elders. Every morning began with respectful greetings, blessings from parents, and disciplined family interactions. Festivals, family functions, and spiritual occasions strengthened emotional bonds between generations. Today, nuclear families have become common, and opportunities for children to interact with elders are decreasing. As a result, values that were once practiced naturally are now largely confined to textbooks and speeches.

Technology has become one of the major reasons behind this cultural transformation. Mobile phones, social media, and digital lifestyles have reduced direct human interaction. Earlier, people personally visited relatives and elders to offer greetings and seek blessings. Today, greetings are often limited to emojis, short messages, or social media posts. Human relationships are becoming more virtual than emotional. Children spend more time with screens than with family members, causing emotional distance within households. The habit of respectfully standing before elders or greeting them with folded hands is slowly disappearing.

Western influence has also significantly affected Indian traditions. In many Western societies, individual freedom is given greater importance than traditional hierarchical relationships. While equality and freedom are important, blindly imitating foreign lifestyles without understanding Indian cultural values has weakened respect toward elders. Some youngsters now consider "Namaskaram" an outdated custom. Modern communication styles increasingly reflect impatience, casual attitudes, and emotional detachment. Respect is often replaced by mere formality. The decline of value-based education in schools is another serious concern. Earlier, teachers emphasized discipline, morality, courtesy, and respect along with academic learning. Students greeted teachers respectfully during assemblies and in classrooms. The teacher-student relationship was considered sacred. Today, education mainly revolves around marks, ranks, jobs, and competitive success. Character building receives far less importance. As a result, society is producing technologically skilled individuals but emotionally immature citizens lacking cultural discipline. The weakening of values is visible in family relationships as well. Earlier, parents were regarded as equal to gods. Traditions such as seeking elders' blessings, listening to their advice, and caring for them in old age formed the backbone of Indian society. Today, many elderly people experience neglect, loneliness, and emotional abandonment. The increasing number of old-age homes reflects this painful reality. Children who receive endless love and sacrifice from parents sometimes fail to provide emotional support in return. This is not merely a family



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self-control are all products of cultural values. When these weaken, selfishness, intolerance, anger, and violence increase. Minor disputes quickly escalate into conflicts. Social media platforms are often filled with insults, hatred, and aggressive behavior instead of respectful discussion. Public behavior, road discipline, and social responsibility are also suffering due to declining cultural ethics. Media influence is further shaping the mindset of younger generations. Many films, web series, and online platforms portray disrespect toward elders, aggressive independence, and careless behavior as fashionable or modern. Young people naturally imitate what they frequently watch. Family values, discipline, and moral responsibility are receiving less importance in entertainment content. Under such circumstances, parents and teachers carry an even greater responsibility in guiding children toward ethical living. However, it would be unfair to say that Indian culture has completely disappeared. Many families still preserve traditions of greeting elders respectfully and maintaining family discipline. Rural communities, in particular, continue to value relationships and cultural practices. During festivals and spiritual events, elders are still given importance. Encouragingly, many

issue but a moral crisis affecting society itself.

The decline of culture affects not only families but society as a whole. Respectful communication, patience, gratitude, responsibility, and

young people are also rediscovering Indian philosophy, yoga, meditation, and spiritual traditions. These developments show that cultural values can still be revived if society makes conscious efforts. The psychological importance of "Namaskaram" is deeply meaningful. When a person folds hands respectfully before another, humility naturally develops within the mind. The other person feels valued, respected, and emotionally connected. Such simple gestures strengthen relationships and create harmony within families and society. Ancient Indian sages therefore viewed "Namaste" not merely as etiquette but as a spiritual practice. The phrase itself means, "I bow to the divine within you." Losing such a tradition would mean losing an important part of Indian identity.

No matter how advanced the world becomes, progress loses meaning if humanity disappears. Wealth, technology, education, and status become meaningless when relationships weaken and respect declines. A civilized society is not measured only by economic growth but by how it treats elders, teachers, parents, and fellow human beings. The greatness of Indian culture lies hidden within simple traditions like "Namaskaram." It is not merely a greeting; it is a value system that protects humanity itself.

The decline of "Namaskaram" is therefore not just the disappearance of a cultural habit. It is a warning sign that values, relationships, and moral foundations are weakening. If this trend continues unchecked, future generations may become materially successful but emotionally disconnected and morally fragile. To prevent this, families, schools, society, and media must work together to revive respect, discipline, gratitude, and human connection.

Modi Inflation Man: Rahul Gandhi

New Delhi, May 25: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday launched a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the continuous increase in petrol and diesel prices, accusing the Centre of burdening common people while inflation continues to rise across the country. Taking to social media platform X, Rahul Gandhi referred to the Prime Minister as "Inflation Man" and alleged that the government was quietly increasing fuel prices in phases so that the financial burden on people would go unnoticed initially. Rahul claimed that the Congress had been warning for months about an approaching economic crisis, but the government remained focused on elections instead of addressing economic challenges. According to him, fuel prices were increased immediately after elections, putting additional pressure on household budgets already affected by rising prices of essential commodities. "Promises

during elections and price hikes after elections have become the government's pattern," Rahul Gandhi alleged, accusing the BJP-led government of ignoring the struggles of ordinary citizens. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge also criticised the Centre and termed the repeated hikes in fuel prices as "Fuel Loot." He alleged that petrol and diesel prices had been increased four times within just ten days, severely affecting middle-class families, farmers and small businesses. Kharge claimed that despite fluctuations in global crude oil prices over the years, fuel prices in India continued to rise steadily. He accused the Centre of collecting massive revenues through taxes on petroleum products while people struggled with inflation and increasing living costs. The Congress chief also linked the latest fuel hikes to gains in shares of public sec-



tor oil companies, alleging that profits were being prioritised over public welfare. He said rising fuel prices would eventually impact transportation costs, food prices and agricultural expenses, creating a chain reaction across the economy. Congress leaders warned that repeated increases in petrol and diesel prices could worsen inflation further and reduce the purchasing power of ordinary citizens. The party demanded that the Centre reduce fuel taxes and provide relief to people facing financial stress. The BJP, however, has maintained that global crude oil volatility and international geopolitical tensions have contributed to fuel price fluctuations. The Centre has also argued that excise duty reductions and subsidies introduced earlier had helped cushion consumers from even steeper increases.

TN Announces Farm Loan Waiver

Chennai, May 25: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Vijay on Monday announced a major farm loan waiver benefiting small and marginal farmers across the state. The waiver covers cooperative bank loans taken between May 1, 2025 and February 28, 2026. Around 14.2 lakh farmers are expected to benefit, with an estimated annual government cost of about Rs 2,044 crore. Under the scheme, full waiver applies for loans up to Rs 50,000 for marginal farmers and 50% relief for small farmers. Partial waivers ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 40,000 will be provided for higher loan brackets up to Rs 1 lakh and above. The government said the move fulfills a key election promise despite financial constraints.

Centre On Ebola Alert

New Delhi, May 25: The Central government has intensified surveillance and preparedness measures across the country following fresh Ebola outbreaks reported in parts of Africa. Union Health Minister JP Nadda on Monday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess India's readiness to prevent any possible spread of the deadly virus. During the meeting, Nadda reviewed screening and monitoring arrangements at airports, seaports and land border checkpoints. Senior officials from the Health Ministry, along with representatives from various departments and agencies, participated in the review discussions. The Health Minister directed authorities to maintain strict vigilance at all Points of Entry across the country and ensure that screening systems remain fully operational and alert. He instructed officials to strengthen coordination among health agencies and emergency response teams as a precautionary measure. Nadda also directed the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to keep testing, tracking and surveillance systems in a state of constant readiness. The government is closely monitoring the global situation and reviewing developments on a regular basis. Officials clarified that no Ebola case has been reported in India so far. However, the Centre is taking preventive measures in view of the international health emergency declared following the outbreaks in Africa.

Pradhan Urges States for NEET Exam Support

New Delhi: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has written to all Chief Ministers, Lt Governors and Administrators, seeking their full cooperation for the smooth and fair conduct of the NEET (UG) re-examination scheduled for June 21. In his communication, the Minister stressed the need for strict arrangements to ensure a safe examination environment, especially in view of the ongoing severe heatwave conditions across several parts of the country. He directed authorities to ensure basic facilities at all exam centres, including safe drinking water, adequate seating, functioning fans or coolers, clean wash-

rooms, shaded waiting areas, uninterrupted power supply, and portable toilets wherever required. Pradhan also asked State governments to make proper transport arrangements for students on the exam day so that candidates do not face inconvenience in reaching centres. Emphasising student welfare, he said the conduct of the exam must remain smooth, transparent, and fair, and expressed confidence that all States and Union Territories would extend full cooperation. The re-examination is part of the NEET (UG) 2026 process, which is being closely monitored amid concerns over exam fairness and logistics.

320 Rescued After Gulmarg Gondola Glitch

Gulmarg: More than 320 tourists were safely rescued after the Gulmarg Gondola developed a technical snag on Monday, leaving passengers stranded mid-air for several hours. Around 65 cable car cabins got stuck following the malfunction amid bad weather conditions in Gulmarg. Rescue teams from the Army, police, SDRF and NDRF carried out a massive six-hour operation to evacuate all passengers safely. Amit Shah praised the rescue personnel for their quick response and successful operation, while Jammu and Kashmir CM Omar Abdullah said the issue was caused by a technical glitch and confirmed that all cabins remained intact. The Gulmarg Gondola is one of Kashmir's most popular tourist attractions.

CBSE Probes Answer Sheet Mismatch Claims

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education is examining complaints from Class 12 students who alleged that scanned answer sheets shared during the re-evaluation process did not match their handwriting. The controversy began after Delhi student Vedant claimed the Physics answer sheet uploaded by CBSE was not his. Following the complaint, CBSE said it reviewed the matter, shared the correct answer sheet with the student, and initiated steps to update his marks. Several other students also raised similar concerns, including allegations of mismatched handwriting, blurry scans and missing pages in the On Screen Marking (OSM) system. Another student, Sanjana, claimed her Chemistry answer booklet contained internal pages that did not match her handwriting. CBSE said all complaints are being treated as a top priority and senior officials are actively assisting affected students and parents. Meanwhile, Dharmendra Pradhan announced that experts from Indian Institute of Technology Madras and Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur will examine technical issues linked to the OSM system to ensure a smoother and error-free evaluation process.

Putin Signs Law To Protect Russians Abroad

Cremlin: Vladimir Putin has signed a new law allowing Russia to use its armed forces to protect Russian citizens facing arrest or legal action in foreign countries. According to Russian media, the law permits military involvement if Russian citizens are detained or prosecuted by foreign or international courts without Russia's participation. The measure was approved by both the State Duma and the Federation Council before receiving Putin's approval. The development comes after the arrest of Hilarion Alfeyev in the Czech Republic. Czech police reportedly detained the retired bishop after finding suspicious containers in his car, though Russian authorities said drug tests on him and his driver were negative. Russia's Foreign Ministry called the arrest a "deliberate provocation" against the Russian Orthodox Church and demanded Hilarion's immediate release. Moscow is also expected to summon the Czech diplomatic representative over the incident.

SC Questions NTA Over NEET Leak

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday came down heavily on the National Testing Agency (NTA) over repeated allegations of paper leaks in the NEET-UG examination, observing that the agency appeared to have learnt "no lessons" from previous controversies. The apex court sought detailed responses from the Centre, the NTA, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), and a high-powered monitoring committee on steps taken to prevent exam-related irregularities. A bench comprising Justices P.S. Narasimha and Alok Aradhe expressed concern over the recurring credibility crisis surrounding one of India's biggest entrance examinations. The court noted that despite earlier interventions, recommendations, and monitoring mechanisms put in place after the 2024 NEET controversy, fresh allegations of leaks had once again surfaced in the 2026 examination. "It is sad that they have not learnt their lessons. The matter travelled to this court earlier also. A committee was formed, recommendations were made and accepted. We want the NTA to explain what steps have actually been taken," the bench observed during the hearing. The court directed the NTA to file an affidavit by Thursday detailing compliance with earlier Supreme Court directions issued after the 2024 NEET paper leak controversy. It also asked the agency to explain the present status of the moni-



toring committee constituted in November 2024 to oversee reforms in examination systems. The hearing came in response to multiple petitions seeking major structural reforms in the conduct of national-level entrance exams. One of the petitions, filed by the Federation of All India Medical Associations (FAIMA), demanded either a complete restructuring of the NTA or its replacement with a more autonomous and technologically secure examination body. Petitioners argued that repeated leaks and irregularities had severely damaged the credibility of NEET and unfairly impacted lakhs of students who spend years preparing for the highly competitive medical entrance examination. According to the petition, the NEET-UG 2026 examination, conducted on May 3, had to be cancelled on May 12 following allegations that question papers were leaked through encrypted messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram. Reports claimed that several so-called "guess papers" circulating online report-

edly matched over 100 questions from the actual examination. The CBI is currently investigating the alleged leak network and examining possible involvement of organised rackets and intermediaries operating across states. The Supreme Court also sought responses from the High-Powered Committee headed by former ISRO chief Dr K. Radhakrishnan, directing it to submit details regarding implementation of its earlier recommendations aimed at strengthening examination security. During the proceedings, advocates appearing for the petitioners stressed that repeated paper leaks represented not just administrative failures but also a direct assault on students' constitutional rights. They argued that millions of aspirants were being forced into uncertainty because of poor exam governance. Another petition filed by the United Doctors Front called for the dissolution of the NTA altogether, alleging "systemic failure" in conducting fair and transparent examinations. The Supreme Court's strong observations have once again placed the spotlight on the integrity of India's competitive examination system, especially at a time when concerns over paper leaks, digital fraud, impersonation, and organised cheating networks continue to rise across the country. The matter is expected to come up for further hearing later this week after responses are filed by the concerned agencies.



Hormuz Reopening Faces Challenges

Tehran: Even as the Strait of Hormuz moves closer to reopening after months of disruption, experts warn that restoring normal shipping operations will remain a massive challenge. Around 1,500 ships have remained stranded in the Persian Gulf for nearly three months due to tensions linked to the Iran conflict. Although reports suggest the United States and Iran are nearing a deal to reopen the strategic waterway, shipping companies say traffic cannot return to normal immediately. Before movement resumes, authorities must decide which vessels will move first, what routes ships should follow and how maritime coordination will be handled. The narrow strait, which once handled nearly one-fifth of global oil and gas trade, is also feared to contain sea mines allegedly planted during the conflict. Shipping experts say navies from countries including the US, Britain, France and Germany may require several weeks to deploy minesweepers and secure the passage. Concerns over mines and regional instability are also expected to keep maritime insurance costs high. Several stranded ships have also developed operational issues after remaining idle in warm Gulf waters for months. Marine growth such as algae and barnacles has reportedly reduced vessel speeds and increased maintenance concerns. Industry leaders believe shipping activity may initially recover only partially, with restricted routes, escorted transit systems, higher operational costs and longer waiting times likely in the early stages of reopening. Shipping firms also remain cautious due to fears of renewed attacks by Iran-backed Houthi groups in the Red Sea region, which had previously targeted commercial vessels. Experts say even after a formal agreement, it could take several weeks or months before the Strait of Hormuz returns to normal commercial operations.

Anna Hazare Backs Youth



Mumbai: Anna Hazare has backed the youth-driven "Cockroach Janta Party" movement, saying the voice of young people should not be ignored by the government. Speaking about the viral social media campaign, Hazare said that while the party's name may not be appropriate, the larger message behind it reflects the concerns and frustrations of the country's youth. "Youth power is national power. The government should not ignore them but encourage them," Hazare said while addressing reporters. The "Cockroach Janta Party" campaign gained massive attention online through memes, satire and digital protests focusing on issues such as unemployment, education, exam paper leaks and governance failures. The movement reportedly emerged after controversy surrounding remarks allegedly made by Surya Kant during a court hearing. The Chief Justice later clarified that his comments were directed at people entering professions through fake degrees and not at the youth of the country. Despite the controversy, the campaign evolved into a wider online movement attracting strong engagement from young social media users across the country. Hazare described this growing participation in public discussions as a positive sign for democracy and civic awareness.

Massive Pile-Up On NH-44



Nizamabad: A major road accident involving seven cars and two trucks occurred on NH-44 at Chandrayanpally in Indalvai mandal of Nizamabad on Monday evening, leaving six people injured. According to officials, the accident began after a truck reportedly suffered a tyre burst and brake failure, causing the driver to lose control. The truck rammed into two cars ahead of it, forcing vehicles behind to stop suddenly on the highway. Soon after, five more cars crashed into the stationary vehicles, triggering a massive pile-up on the busy national highway. Another truck carrying coconuts reportedly lost control while trying to avoid the collision and overturned into nearby fields. Police said no fatalities were reported in the accident, though six injured persons were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. The incident caused major traffic disruption on NH-44 for several hours as rescue teams and police worked to remove the damaged vehicles and restore traffic movement. Videos and images from the accident site later went viral on social media platforms.

Harish Targets Cong Over Paddy

Siddipet, May 25: T Harish Rao has accused the Indian National Congress government in Telangana of forcing farmers into distress sales by reducing paddy procurement targets and delaying payments. Speaking after visiting a procurement centre in Ensanpally of Siddipet, Harish Rao criticised Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy over the government's decision to reportedly reduce the paddy procurement target from 90 lakh metric tonnes to 70 lakh metric tonnes during the Yasangi season. He said Telangana expected around



1.40 crore metric tonnes of paddy production and alleged that the reduced procurement target was forcing farmers to sell their produce to private traders at prices below the MSP. The former minister also alleged that procurement centres were witnessing severe delays and underweighing practices, causing financial losses to farm-

ers. According to him, farmers were losing nearly 150 kilograms per acre due to irregular weighing methods. Harish Rao further claimed that several farmers had fallen ill due to heat conditions while waiting at procurement centres, and some deaths were also reported amid the delays. The BRS leader demanded immediate release of pending payments for crops including maize, sunflower, jowar and paddy. He warned that the party would organise large-scale protests if the issues were not resolved quickly.

BSNL Revenue Sees Jump

New Delhi: Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited has recorded a major rise in revenue over the past two years, with earnings increasing to nearly Rs 25,000 crore following infrastructure upgrades and operational reforms. According to the government, BSNL's revenue grew by around 19 to 25 percent from nearly Rs 21,000 crore in two years. Minister of State for Communications Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani said the company's financial performance improved due to a systematic transformation strategy led by the telecom ministry. The minister stated that BSNL's EBITDA witnessed a sharp rise from just Rs 50 crore to nearly Rs 7,000 crore, reflecting better operational efficiency and a gradual return towards profitability. He said major infrastructure issues were identified and addressed across several states. In Andhra Pradesh, for instance, tower uptime reportedly improved after replacement of batteries, power systems and ageing cables. Pemmasani also highlighted BSNL's affordable tariffs, saying the



company is offering one-rupee SIM cards through India Post offices to encourage more users to test its services, especially in rural areas where BSNL remains a key telecom provider. The minister further said BSNL achieved a major milestone by rolling out indigenous 4G technology across one lakh towers within a year. He noted that India has now become one of the few countries globally to develop advanced indigenous 4G technology.

Rajgopal Reddy Apologises To Farmers

Munugodu, May 25: Komatireddy Rajgopal Reddy on Monday apologised to farmers over delays in crop procurement in Telangana, admitting that many farmers were forced to wait at procurement centres for nearly 15 days. The Munugode MLA said the delays caused serious hardships and assured that the procurement process would be completed within the next 10 days. He stated that the Congress government remained committed to farmers' welfare. Rajgopal Reddy blamed the delay on an unexpectedly high crop yield this season, saying production was almost three times more than anticipated. He also inspected storage facilities in Choutuppal following complaints about shortage of warehouse space. The MLA said the government was expanding storage arrangements and identifying private warehouses to safely store procured grain if required. He appealed to farmers to cooperate with the government and said opposition parties had also supported farmers on the issue.



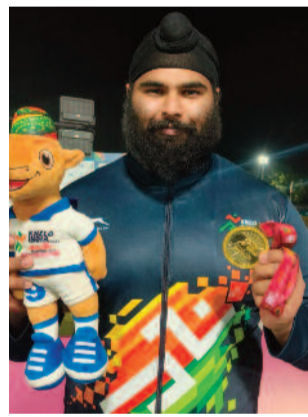
Seerat Kapoor

Hema Receives Dharmendra Honour

Hema Malini became emotional while receiving the posthumous Padma Vibhushan on behalf of her late husband Dharmendra from President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. Dharmendra, one of Hindi cinema's most iconic actors, was honoured with the country's second-highest civilian award for his immense contribution to Indian cinema. The veteran star passed away in November last year at the age of 89 after reportedly suffering from breathing complications. During the Padma Awards ceremony, Hema Malini was seen holding back tears as she accepted the honour in memory of her husband. The emotional moment touched many present at the event. Dharmendra began his film journey after winning a nationwide talent hunt organised by Filmfare magazine and Bimal Roy Productions in 1958. He went on to become one of Bollywood's most celebrated stars with a career spanning over six decades. Meanwhile, Prosenjit Chatterjee was also honoured with the Padma Shri for his contribution to Indian cinema during the ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Samardeep Breaks 20m Barrier

Samardeep Singh Gill produced a breakthrough performance at the National Inter-State Athletics Championships in Ranchi by winning gold with a personal best throw of 20.46m. After struggling in his first three attempts, a small technical correction from coach Sandeep Singh helped Samardeep finally cross the 20m mark for the first time in his career. He later threw beyond 20m twice more, defeating national record holder Tajinderpal Singh Toor, who finished second with 20.07m. Samardeep said breaking the 20m barrier was more about mindset than physical ability. The athlete, who once played cricket as a medium pacer, switched to shot put during his childhood after picking up the sport at a Railways ground. An ankle injury earlier in his career slowed his progress, but under coach Sandeep Singh, he steadily improved and emerged as one of India's top shot put talents. With Toor missing out on the Commonwealth Games squad, Samardeep will now carry India's medal hopes in shot put at the upcoming CWG.



Adivi Sesh Takes Break

Actor Adivi Sesh has decided to take a short break after months of continuous shooting for Dacoit – Ek Prem Katha and G2. The actor said the past few months had been extremely intense with back-to-back schedules, making the break necessary for both physical and mental recovery. Sesh is now heading to the US for a holiday to spend time with family and close friends. He shared that the response to Dacoit has been very encouraging, especially as the film connected with audiences in both Telugu and Hindi markets. According to Sesh, the trip is also an opportunity to relax, reflect, and recharge before beginning the demanding post-production work for G2. Adivi Sesh is known for films like Goodachari, Major, Evaru and HIT: The Second Case.

Ravi Kishan Praises Peddi



Actor Ravi Kishan showered praise on Ram Charan's upcoming film Peddi, comparing it to inspirational classics like 3 Idiots and Dangaal. Speaking at the film's promotional event in Bhopal, Ravi Kishan said Peddi would inspire India's youth and give hope to those struggling in life. He described the movie as a story that every young person in the country would connect with emotionally. The actor also praised Ram Charan's performance, predicting that the film could earn major honours, including National Awards. Ravi Kishan said the actor delivered a powerful performance unlike anything he had seen before. Peddi has generated strong buzz ahead of its release, with fans eagerly awaiting Ram Charan's role in the film.

Indian Javelin Throwers Miss CWG Mark

The javelin throw finale at the Federation Cup in Ranchi ended on a disappointing note as no Indian athlete managed to cross the Commonwealth Games qualification mark of 82.61m. Youngster Shivam Lohakare won gold with a personal best throw of 81.71m, the best effort of the competition. However, favourites Sachin Yadav and Kishore Kumar Jena failed to deliver strong performances. Sachin Yadav could only manage 79.4m and struggled with windy conditions during the event. Shivam later admitted that despite throwing four 80m-plus attempts, he could not execute his plans perfectly. With Neeraj Chopra yet to begin his season and no athlete meeting the CWG benchmark, the Athletics Federation of India now faces a tough selection decision for the upcoming Commonwealth Games.



Vaibhav Targets 200

Young cricketer Vaibhav Sooryavanshi has revealed an ambitious goal - scoring 200 runs in a T20 innings and breaking Chris Gayle's record of 175. During a chat with former England captain Kevin Pietersen on The Switch, Vaibhav confidently said he wants to become the first batter to reach a T20 double century. When asked about celebrating half-centuries, the youngster said fifties do not excite him much, showing his aggressive mindset and bigger ambitions. Pietersen reminded him about Gayle's long-standing T20 record, but Vaibhav quickly responded that he wants to surpass it by scoring 200. Meanwhile, Vaibhav's IPL franchise strengthened its playoff hopes with a 30-run victory over MI in IPL 2026.

Ranveer Faces Industry Ban

Ranveer Singh has reportedly been banned by the Federation of Western India Cine Employees after a complaint from Farhan Akhtar and Excel Entertainment over his alleged exit from Don 3. According to reports, FWICE issued a non-cooperation directive against Ranveer Singh, asking production houses, studios and industry workers to avoid professional collaborations with the actor until further notice. The action reportedly came after allegations that the actor walked out of the film after extensive pre-production work had already been completed. Ranveer Singh was officially announced as the new face of the Don franchise in 2023, replacing Shah Rukh Khan. However, the announcement triggered strong reactions on social media, with many fans opposing the change. Over time, reports of delays, creative differences and scheduling issues surrounding the project began surfacing. Media reports claimed Ranveer sought changes in the script, including reducing violent and intense scenes. Rumours also suggested the success of his action film "Dhurandhar" may have influenced his decision to leave the project. The production house is also reportedly seeking compensation for losses linked to pre-production, international location scouting and delayed



schedules. Some reports claim Ranveer may return his signing amount to resolve the dispute. FWICE has previously issued similar bans against celebrities including Diljit Dosanjh, Mika Singh and Gauahar Khan in separate controversies.

Maa inti Bangaaram Trailer Released

The trailer of Maa Inti Bangaaram starring Samantha Ruth Prabhu was released on Monday, showcasing the actress in a powerful action-packed role. Directed by Nandini Reddy, the film features Samantha as a seemingly simple daughter-in-law who secretly fights dangerous criminals to protect her family. Trailer shows her performing intense action scenes while dressed in sarees. In one emotional dialogue, Samantha's character says she may not possess the qualities of an ideal daughter-in-law, but she is willing to risk her life for her family's safety. Actor Gulshan Devaiah appears to play the antagonist in film. The movie is scheduled for a theatrical release on June 19.



Messi Injury Scare Ahead of WC

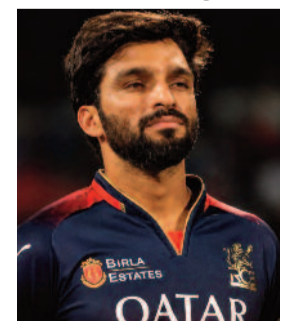


Lionel Messi sparked injury concerns ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup after leaving the field during Inter Miami CF's match against Philadelphia. The Argentine star appeared to feel discomfort in his thigh around the 70th minute and asked to be substituted shortly after taking a free kick. The incident raised fears over his fitness just days before Argentina begin their World Cup title defence. However, Inter Miami coach Guillermo Hoyos later clarified that Messi was not injured and was only dealing with muscle fatigue. He said the substitution was precautionary to avoid any risk before the tournament. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni is expected to include Messi in the final World Cup squad. The tournament could also mark the final World Cup appearances of Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar. Meanwhile, several players including Kylian Mbappé and Mohamed Salah have recovered from injuries in time for the tournament, while others such as Serge Gnabry and Hugo Ekitike are set to miss out.

RCB Ready To Attack: Rajat Patidar

Ahead of the IPL 2026 Qualifier 1 clash against Gujarat Titans, Rajat Patidar made it clear that Royal Challengers Bengaluru will stick to their aggressive approach rather than playing defensive cricket. "We are not here to defend, we are here to attack," Patidar said while speaking before the high-voltage encounter scheduled for Tuesday night in Dharamshala. RCB and Gujarat Titans won one game each during the league stage this season, making the Qualifier 1 clash an evenly balanced contest. Patidar said the team that handles pressure better and executes plans calmly on the big stage will

have the advantage. The RCB skipper highlighted bowling as the side's biggest strength this season, especially their aggressive powerplay approach. He praised experienced bowlers like Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Josh Hazlewood for constantly looking for early wickets and setting the tone for the team. Patidar also lauded Venkatesh Iyer for his recent performances and positive attitude despite limited opportunities earlier in the season. He said the all-rounder remained prepared throughout and made



full use of his chances when they arrived. Speaking about his captaincy journey, Patidar credited senior players and the coaching staff for helping him grow as a leader. He specifically mentioned the guidance of Virat Kohli, Devdutt Padikkal, Jitesh Sharma, Hazlewood and Tim David. Patidar also underlined the importance of Bhuvneshwar Kumar's experience in mentoring young bowlers and maintaining confidence in pressure situations during the IPL season.