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## Nine Arrested for Links to Paki's ISI

New Delhi : The Delhi Police Special Cell on Saturday arrested nine individuals allegedly operating at the behest of a Pakistan-based ISI-Mumbai underworld network and has detained several others for questioning. Investigators have identified nearly 600 individuals across the country who were allegedly in contact with Pakistani gangster Shahzad Bhatti through various channels, primarily social media platforms. As part of the operation, Sajid Mehboob Sheikh, alias Arbaz Khan, was arrested from Kurla in Mumbai, while Tauqeer Rizwan Sheikh was apprehended from Mumbra. Both accused have been brought to Delhi for further investigation.

According to officials, the two men had received instructions to travel to Delhi, where they were to be assigned their next targets upon arrival. They were also allegedly provided with funds to facilitate their travel and operational activities. The arrests followed coordinated operations conducted in the Kurla and Mumbra areas of Mumbai.



*A massive dust storm hit Rajasthan's Bikaner on Saturday afternoon, with thick clouds of dust engulfing the skyline and turning daylight into near-darkness. Videos circulating online show a massive wall of yellow dust advancing toward the city, creating striking and almost apocalyptic scenes.*

## SpiceJet slapped with 124.65 crore GST

New Delhi: The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Department has issued a tax demand of Rs 124.65 crore to low-cost carrier SpiceJet for allegedly failing to file GST returns for several months, while the airline also faces proceedings for cancellation of its GST registration. According to officials, the department has issued a show-cause notice proposing cancellation of SpiceJet's GST registration over repeated delays and alleged non-compliance in filing statutory returns. The tax demand was raised following a provisional assessment conducted under Section 62 of the Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) Act and State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) Act, 2017, after the airline allegedly failed to file returns within prescribed timelines. GST authorities said SpiceJet consistently committed irregularities in filing returns. As per the assessment, the department raised a demand of Rs 44.44 crore for November, Rs 43.79 crore for December, Rs 12.19 crore for January, Rs 12.10 crore for February and Rs 12.12 crore for March.

## June 3 is an auspicious day for DK's swearing-in

Bengaluru: June 3, the date for swearing-in of Karnataka Congress President D.K. Shivakumar as the state's chief minister, was finalised on Saturday after Vaastu expert Guruji Aaradhya personally fixed the auspicious day for the ceremony. Speaking to reporters outside Shivakumar's residence, Aaradhya said June 3, which falls on a Wednesday, had been identified as an auspicious day for the swearing-in ceremony. "Shivakumar will take oath on June 3 at 5.15 p.m. The ceremony will be held during the auspicious Vruschika Lagna. The swearing-in ceremony will take place at Lok Bhavan," Aaradhya said. He further claimed that he had personally fixed the auspicious time for the ceremony.

## AI plays pivotal role in taking faster decisions: Army Chief

Pune: Indian Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday emphasised the increasing significance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in contemporary warfare, stating that emerging technologies are becoming indispensable for faster decision-making and effective management of the growing complexity of military operations. Addressing reporters after reviewing the Passing Out Parade of the 150th Course at the National Defence Academy (NDA) in Pune, General Dwivedi said modern battlefields generate enormous volumes of information and involve a wide range of resources, making AI-driven systems an essential component of future military preparedness. The Army Chief explained that the pace of present-day warfare requires commanders and troops to process information rapidly and make timely decisions in highly dynamic situations. "Artificial Intelligence. We look into why it is required. When you have resources which are beyond your con-

trol, you can't manage them all in one go. Secondly, there is an OODA cycle -- Observe, Orient, Decide and Act. When you are superimposed with more than one cycle, how do you act? Therefore, when the velocity of warfare is very high, you need additional support within your resources to make decisions faster. In this particular case, we have the SLMs and LLMs," General Dwivedi said. He noted that AI-based technologies, including Small Language Models (SLMs) and Large Language Models (LLMs), are increasingly helping military organisations process information efficiently, optimise resources and improve operational effectiveness in complex environments. According to him, the ability to make faster and better-informed decisions has become a decisive factor in modern conflicts, where battlefield situations evolve rapidly and often require simultaneous responses across multiple domains. He said that the two languages help make the decision-

making process fast, and said, "Rationalisation of resources and application of resources, all of this becomes much faster in today's world." General Dwivedi further highlighted the growing role of drones in military operations and pointed out that armed forces must develop both offensive and defensive capabilities to deal with emerging aerial threats. "In today's environment, we also have numerous drones coming. Now, you need counter-drone equipment, and you need to apply your own drones. Therefore, the resources present on the battlefield are enormous," he said. He observed that the increasing deployment of drones, surveillance platforms, sensors, other technological assets has significantly expanded the scale of battlefield resources that commanders must manage in real time. He said handling such a complex ecosystem requires a high degree of automation, making AI a critical enabler for future military operations.

## Phogat fails to qualify for Asian Games

New Delhi: Vinesh Phogat's dramatic return to competitive wrestling ended in disappointment on Saturday as the former World Championships medallist failed to qualify for the Asian Games 2026 after suffering a 4-6 defeat to Meenakshi Goyat in the women's 53kg semifinals at the selection trials here at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. This defeat marks the end of Vinesh's bid for a comeback and her chance to qualify for the Asian Games in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, later this year. The loss concluded an eventful and emotionally intense 48-hour span for the 31-year-old, who had only been allowed to compete after interventions by the Supreme Court and the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). Vinesh entered the trials amid considerable uncertainty over her participation. The WFI had initially restricted her to the 50kg category, a decision she strongly opposed. Following discussions within the federation and intervention from WFI president Sanjay Singh, the decision was revised on Saturday morning, allowing her to compete in her preferred 53kg division. Once on the mat, Vinesh showed glimpses of the quality that has made her one of India's most decorated wrestlers. She began her campaign with a convincing 7-1 victory over Jyoti in the opening round. After a cautious start, Vinesh steadily took control of the contest, scoring through a takedown and a series of counter-attacking moves to build a commanding lead before closing out the bout comfortably. The quarterfinal proved to be a much sterner test. Facing Nishu, Vinesh found herself in a closely fought battle that remained in the balance until the closing moments. Drawing on her experience, she edged out a narrow 7-6 victory to secure a place in the last four and move within two wins of a coveted Asian Games berth. However, the trials became increasingly turbulent as the day progressed. Reports from the venue indicated that Vinesh's quarterfinal was marked by tensions involving WFI coaches and officials, adding further drama to an already high-pressure competition. Awaiting her in the semifinals was Meenakshi Goyat, widely regarded as one of the strongest contenders in the category.

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## Abhishek Banerjee heckled

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress general secretary and the party's Lok Sabha MP Abhishek Banerjee was severely heckled on Saturday after he reached Sonarpur in South 24 Paragans district of West Bengal to meet a party worker who reportedly became a victim of post-poll violence after May 4, when the results of the recently concluded West Bengal Assembly elections were announced. On Saturday afternoon, soon after he received a notice from the Criminal In-

vestigation Department (CID) for interrogation at his residence at Kalighat Road in South Kolkata, Banerjee started for Sonarpur from that residence. His vehicle first faced protests in the midway at Kamal Gazi, when a group of women showed him black flags. But the real protest he faced was as soon as he reached Sonarpur, as hundreds of local people, including women, first shouted slogans describing him as a "thief".

## Brahmos cruise missile deal with Vietnam signed

Singapore: Highlighting India's expanding expertise in missile manufacturing and increasing outreach, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh on Saturday announced that a BrahMos missile deal has already been signed with Vietnam with another similar agreement with Indonesia currently in the final stages. "My understanding is that with both Indonesia and with Vietnam, the deal is in the final stages. In fact, for Vietnam, I understand that it has already been signed, probably not publicly announced, but

it's already been signed. Obviously, you are in the category of friendly foreign countries with whom we would be happy to share this kind of advanced technology," Singh said while responding to a question from a Vietnamese delegate during a media event held on the sidelines of the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore. With the Philippines being the first buyer of super-sonic cruise missiles jointly produced by India and Russia, Defence Secretary Singh asserted that India has a strong

commitment to the ASEAN nations. "We treat you all as friendly foreign countries with whom we can share advanced defence technology," he told the gathering in Singapore. The Philippines received the first batch of the BrahMos missiles in 2024, becoming India's first customer of the missile, while India delivered the second batch of the missiles in April 2025. Earlier this month, Rajnath Singh travelled to Hanoi, holding extensive discussions with his Vietnamese counterpart.



## EDITORIAL

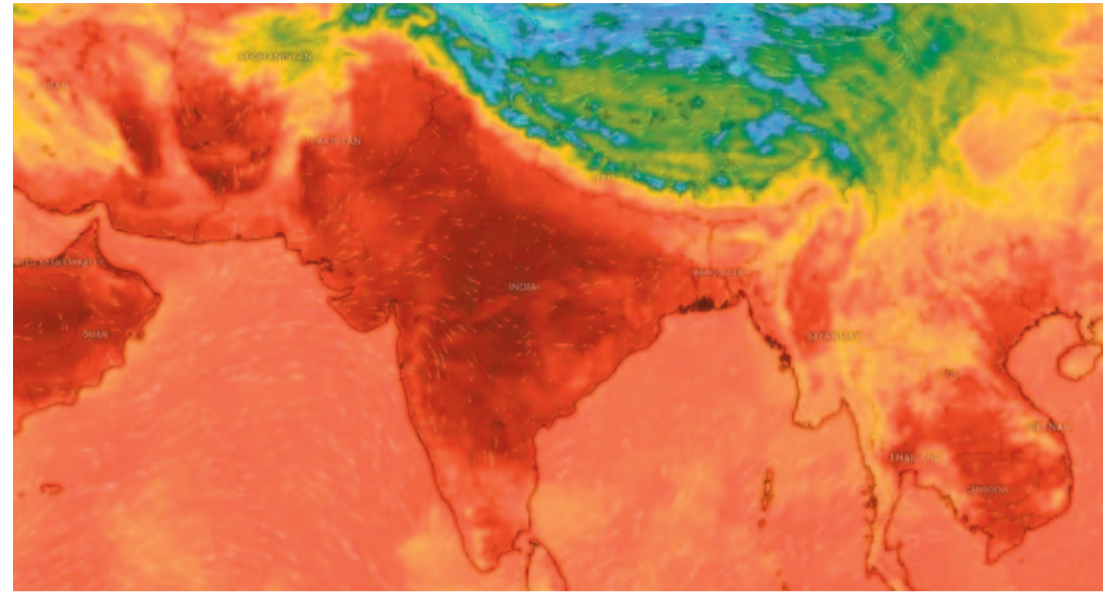
Democracy  
Beyond Votes

Democracy is often celebrated as the power of the people expressed through the ballot box. The right to vote is undoubtedly its most visible symbol. Yet, a deeper question confronts every democratic society: Is democracy fulfilled merely by granting citizens the legal right to vote, or does it also require ensuring that every eligible citizen can exercise that right freely, fairly, and without obstacles? A democracy that guarantees voting rights on paper but allows barriers in practice risks becoming democratic in form rather than in substance. The true measure of a democratic system lies not only in how many people are legally entitled to vote, but also in how effectively it enables them to participate in the electoral process. Access, inclusion, and equal opportunity are as important as the right itself. Across the world, debates over voter registration, electoral rolls, identification requirements, polling accessibility, and constituency representation have brought this issue into sharp focus. Administrative errors, outdated voter lists, lack of awareness, bureaucratic hurdles, and logistical challenges can prevent eligible citizens from participating in elections. When such barriers disproportionately affect certain groups—whether the poor, migrants, the elderly, persons with disabilities, or marginalized communities—the democratic principle of equal citizenship is weakened.

The challenge is particularly significant in large and diverse democracies. Rapid urbanization, internal migration, and changing demographics often make voter registration and electoral management more complex. Millions of citizens may find their names missing from electoral rolls or struggle to access polling stations due to distance, disability, or inadequate infrastructure. While these may appear to be technical issues, they have profound constitutional implications because they directly affect political representation and public trust. Democracy is not merely a periodic event conducted on election day. It is an ongoing commitment to political inclusion. Governments, election authorities, political parties, and civil society share responsibility for ensuring that no eligible citizen is excluded from the democratic process. Technology can help improve voter registration and transparency, but it must be accompanied by safeguards that prevent exclusion and protect privacy. Electoral reforms should focus not only on efficiency but also on accessibility and fairness.

The health of a democracy also depends on public confidence in electoral institutions. Citizens must believe that elections are free, impartial, and accessible to all. When people perceive barriers to participation or unequal treatment, trust in democratic institutions begins to erode. Such erosion can be more damaging than any single electoral dispute because it weakens the legitimacy of governance itself.

Thiruvananthapuram: India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director Neetha K Gopal said on Saturday that 2026 will witness "below normal" rainfall in major parts of India, including Kerala. She attributed El Nino affect as the reason, calling it a "peculiar feature" of the phenomenon. Speaking to IANS, Gopal mentioned that according to the IMD's forecast "it is not a good picture in the sense that monsoon would be below normal for Kerala and major parts of India". She said that the rainfall in June will also be "below normal" for Kerala. "After the onset of the monsoon, around June 10, we might receive some good rainfall. However, after that, we may experience below normal rainfall, so the total rainfall for the month is likely to be below normal," she added. "This being an El Nino year, we have to experience this kind of below normal rainfall, including spatial and temporal distribution of rainfall," Gopal said. However, the IMD Director added that sometimes states can receive good rainfall, in some period of the week or month. "Then there would be drier periods also," she underlined. She highlighted that this is a very "peculiar feature" of El Nino year. Meanwhile, the weather



in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) changed dramatically on Saturday evening when rains accompanied by thunderstorms and strong winds swept across several areas, weather officials said. The rainfall has provided much-needed respite from the intense heat and humidity that had persisted over the past few days. According to IMD's latest forecast, weather across the NCR is expected to remain relatively pleasant until June 4.

Maximum temperatures are likely to fall, offering relief from the heat.

Change in weather was also witnessed in different parts of Rajasthan as sandstorms swept through Churu, Hanumangarh, Sri Ganganagar, Bikaner, Nagaur, Didwana-Kuchaman, Alwar and Sikar, while Jaipur witnessed rain accompanied by strong winds. Hailstones were also reported from some rural areas.

## TN Secretariat begins mandatory biometric from June 1

Chennai: In a move aimed at strengthening workplace discipline and modernising attendance management, the Tamil Nadu government has made biometric and Face ID-based attendance mandatory for officers and staff of the Human Resources Management Department at the State Secretariat from June 1. The initiative marks the first time such a system has been formally introduced in a Secretariat department and is expected to be expanded to other departments in phases. According to official sources, the Human Resources Management Department has issued a circular directing all officers and employees to record their attendance through either biometric authentication or Face ID verification from Monday onwards. The department stated that the new system is intended to improve transparency, accountability, and punctuality among government employees. The circular instructed staff members to report for duty before 10 a.m. and ensure that their attendance is registered through the digital system. Until further orders, employees will also be required to continue maintaining manual attendance records alongside the new electronic mechanism. "The biometric or Face ID attendance system will come into effect from June 1. All officers and staff are requested to attend office before 10 a.m. and ensure their presence through the biometric or Face ID attendance system, in addition to manual attendance," the circular stated. In addition to the attendance mandate, the department has directed all employees to wear their official identity cards while on duty within the Secretariat premises.

## China's state broadcaster starts selling skincare products to survive: Report

New Delhi: The Chinese Communist Party's flagship broadcaster, China Central Television (CCTV), has pivoted from journalism to livestream e-commerce as the media house struggles to create revenue, a new report has said. The report from Eurasia Review described the shift as a "survival tactic that exposes the depth of China's economic malaise" and a symptom of "perilous" phase its economy has entered. "For decades, CCTV served as the Party's mouthpiece, shaping narratives and reinforcing state authority. Today, it is selling skincare products, AR devices, tea, books, and weight loss kits on Douyin, China's version of TikTok," the report said. Some livestream sessions through verified accounts with millions of followers generate staggering revenue. Initially, users assumed these were fake accounts but in reality "state media has become a shopping mall." China's "golden age" of journalism is over and "economic woes" are hitting Chinese media and journalists and affecting the credibility that state outlets once claimed to uphold, the report said. Livestream e-commerce is projected to hit 8.18 trillion yuan by 2026, but the benefits are disproportionately tilted in favour of state-backed giants, while ordinary merchants, lacking traffic and resources, get routed. AI-driven "digital human" livestreaming was deployed by over 1.14 million enterprises, which further tilted the playing field against small businesses. "Instead of fostering competition, the government has allowed state monopolies to cannibalise private enterprise. Xinhua News Agency, China Post, and China Railway have joined the livestream frenzy, flooding the sector with state-owned institutions," the report noted. The report warned that the Chinese government eroded public trust, distorted markets, and undermined journalism by allowing state monopolies to dominate commerce. "By placing national credibility on the success of e-commerce, the Chinese leadership risks significant consequences should scandals or product failures arise," it said. Highlighting broader economic stress, the report said downsizing was implemented across 400 counties, cutting staff and benefits. "Factories are closing en masse, and advertising revenues for state media have collapsed, forcing outlets like CCTV to monetise their influence through sales," it said.

## CUET-UG exam: TCS regrets inconvenience

New Delhi: IT major TCS said that a brief technical issue caused a delay of around two hours in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG examination in the morning shift on Saturday. K. Krithivasan, CEO and MD, TCS, said in a statement that the issue was promptly identified and resolved by "our technical teams and the examination has since resumed without any impact to the sanctity of the exam". "We regret the inconvenience. Our teams are actively monitoring all systems. We remain committed to working closely with NTA to ensure seamless conduct of the computer-based tests," said Krithivasan. Earlier, the National Testing Agency (NTA) announced revised timings for the Common University Entrance Test for admission to undergraduate courses (CUET-UG) in 2026, after a "technical glitch" delayed the examination at some centres on May 30. In a post on X, the NTA blamed its service provider, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), for the glitch. "M/s TCS has reported that a technical glitch at their end delayed the commencement of CUET (UG) 2026 at some centres on 30.05.2026," it said. However, the NTA stated that the issue has now been resolved. "The issue has since been resolved, and the exam is being conducted with full compensatory time so that no candidate is disadvantaged."

## 'Carry forward Congress ideology': Sidda to DK

Bengaluru: Outgoing Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday congratulated CM-designate D.K. Shivakumar on his unanimous election as the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader and expressed confidence in his ability to lead both the state and the party through challenging times. In a message addressed to Shivakumar, Siddaramaiah said he had closely observed his colleague's "indomitable energy, organisational skills, and unquestionable loyalty" to the Congress party and hoped these qualities would be utilised for the welfare of the people of Karnataka. He said Karnataka was not only the leading state in the country in terms of per capita income but had also emerged as a model for equitable distribution of wealth, power, and opportunities. Siddaramaiah added that every scheme launched in the state was being adopted and implemented by other states, which was a matter of pride. Reflecting on his tenure, Siddaramaiah said he was proud to have served Kannadigas as Chief Minister for a total of eight years and to have contributed towards making Karnataka a prosperous, self-reliant, and self-respecting state. "The responsibility of carrying this development journey forward now rests on your shoulders. I am confident that you possess the commitment, capability, and vision required to fulfil this task," he told Shivakumar. Siddaramaiah noted that people across the country were facing economic insecurity and uncertainty about the future, and said it was now Shivakumar's responsibility to instil confidence among the people through effective governance while keeping the state on the path of development. Turning to the Congress party's political challenges, Siddaramaiah acknowledged that the party had suffered setbacks at the national level in recent years. He said while elections may be won or lost, the party must never suffer ideological defeat, stressing that ideological failure eventually leads to electoral failure and decline. He emphasised that alongside Karnataka's development, restoring the Congress party's past glory rested on all party members, expressing hope that Shivakumar's leadership would help overcome challenges and strengthen the party's position. Siddaramaiah also voiced concern over what he described as attempts to divide the country along caste and religious lines, questioning of the Constitution, and suppression of dissent.

## Gulveer Singh becomes first Indian to clock a sub-four-minute mile

Cleveland: Gulveer Singh, the 27-year-old Asian Games bronze medallist in the men's 10,000m, became the first Indian runner to clock a sub-four-minute mile on Saturday at the 24th Annual Music City Track Carnival. The World Continental Tour event was organised at Lee University, Cleveland Campus, in the USA. Gulveer Singh posted a creditable time of 3:55.63 seconds to finish first in the Men's 1 Mile Pro event on Saturday. Christopher Knight, 20, representing the USA, was second with a time of 3:59.72, and Tristan Trevino, 21, also from the USA, was third with a time of 4:00.27. The Indian star distance runner based in the USA is preparing for the upcoming Glasgow Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games in Japan. The army runner is also the first Indian to break the 13-minute barrier for the 5,000m track race. His national men's 5,000m indoor record is 12:59.77 seconds, set last year in the USA. The versatile distance runner also holds the men's 10,000m national track record of 27:00.22. Gulveer's superb effort continues a record-breaking week by Indian athletes in various events at home and abroad. India's talented high jumper Pooja improved the national and meet record on the second day of the 22nd Asian U20 Athletics Championships being held in Hong Kong, on Friday. On her way to winning the gold medal with a jump of 1.93m, Pooja improved the decade-old national record of 1.92m set by Sahana Kumari in 2012. Pooja's performance on Friday was also better than the previous Asian U20 meet record of 1.90m set by Svetlana Radzivil of Uzbekistan in 2006. At the Federation Cup in Ranchi a few days back, Gurindervir Singh clocked 10.09s in the 100m, becoming the first Indian to do under 10.10s and securing Commonwealth and Asian Games qualification. Barriers broken: Vishal TK ran 44.98s in the 400m, the first Indian to go sub-45, while Tejaswin Shankar crossed 8000 decathlon points for the first time in India.



## From strong start to final showdown RCB's road to IPL 2026 title clash

New Delhi: Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) will take inspiration from their amazing journey in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 league stage and the Qualifier 1 when they take on 2022 winners Gujarat Titans in the final at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday. After lifting their maiden IPL trophy last year, RCB are set to face the challenge of defending the crown for the first time in franchise history. The Rajat Patidar-led side responded in impressive fashion, finishing at the top of the points table with nine wins from 14 league matches before sealing a place in the final with a convincing victory over the Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 1. RCB made an immediate statement at the start of the season. They opened their campaign with a successful chase against Sunrisers Hyderabad before registering a comfortable win over Chennai Super Kings in Bengaluru. Their first defeat came against Rajasthan Royals, who chased down a 200-plus target in Guwahati. However, RCB quickly returned to winning ways with victories over Mumbai Indians and Lucknow Super Giants. A narrow defeat against Delhi Capitals at home briefly halted their progress, but RCB answered with a strong run of performances. They defeated the Gujarat Titans in Bengaluru and then produced one of their most dominant displays of the season against the Delhi Capitals, bowling them out for just 75 before completing the chase in rapid fashion. The middle phase of the season brought another challenge. Consecutive losses against Gujarat Titans and Lucknow Super Giants left RCB needing a strong finish to secure a playoff berth. Rather than faltering, the defending champions responded with three successive victories. They edged past Mumbai Indians in a thrilling contest, defeated Kolkata Knight Riders to confirm their playoff qualification, and followed it up with a win over Punjab Kings. Although Sunrisers Hyderabad handed them a heavy defeat of 55 runs in their final league game, RCB still finished at the top of the standings thanks to a superior net run rate. Their best performance arrived at the perfect time in Qualifier 1. Facing the Gujarat Titans, captain Rajat Patidar led from the front with a breathtaking 93 off 33 deliveries as RCB posted a massive total of 254 runs. The bowlers then backed up the effort by dismissing Gujarat for 162, securing a 92-run victory and direct entry into the final. RCB's winning momentum is a result of collective performance from both batters and bowlers. Former captain Virat Kohli again topped the list of most runs for the franchise with 600 runs in 15 matches. While Skipper Patidar has also accumulated 486 runs in 14 matches. Meanwhile, experienced pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar is leading the charge in the bowling as he has taken 26 wickets in 15 matches, while youngster Rasikh Salam is also shining with 16 wickets in 11 matches. As they play their second consecutive IPL final, RCB would look to continue the winning momentum and clinch their second title in a row.



## Indian diaspora pushes for landmark museum in Washington

Washington: After nearly eight years of research and planning, the team behind the proposed India Heritage Center is preparing to launch an ambitious effort to create a permanent museum in the American Capital, dedicated to telling India's story from ancient civilisation to modern nationhood. The project, led by Indian-American educationist and community leader Dr Amitabh Sharma, aims to establish what organisers describe as the first dedicated museum in the US focused on India's civilisational, cultural and historical journey spanning more than 11,000 years. The proposed institution would use immersive technology, virtual reality, interactive exhibits and multimedia displays to present India's contributions, challenges and evolution to a global audience. "Indian history and Indian civilization has never been portrayed in the strength that it deserves," Sharma told. "It is important in today's perspective, more importantly, to be able to tell the world that this is the rich civilization, rich heritage that we have in terms of culture, history, our contributions, and so on and so forth." Sharma said the idea emerged from a long-held belief that India's civilisational story has often been viewed through external lenses, presented in fragmented ways. He said, is to create a permanent institution that can present a comprehensive and enduring narrative of India's past, present and future.

## China's state broadcaster starts selling skincare products to survive: Report

New Delhi: The Chinese Communist Party's flagship broadcaster, China Central Television (CCTV), has pivoted from journalism to livestream e-commerce as the media house struggles to create revenue, a new report has said. The report from Eurasia Review described the shift as a "survival tactic that exposes the depth of China's economic malaise" and a symptom of "perilous" phase its economy has entered. "For decades, CCTV served as the Party's mouthpiece, shaping narratives and reinforcing state authority. Today, it is selling skincare products, AR devices, tea, books, and weight loss kits on Douyin, China's version of TikTok," the report said. Some livestream sessions through verified accounts with millions of followers generate staggering revenue.

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News Agency, China Post, and China Railway have joined the livestream frenzy, flooding the sector with state-owned institutions," the report noted. The report warned that the Chinese government eroded public trust, distorted markets, and undermined journalism by allowing state monopolies to dominate commerce. "By placing national credibility on the success of e-commerce, the Chinese leadership risks significant consequences should scandals or product failures arise," it said. Highlighting broader economic stress, the report said downsizing was implemented across 400 counties, cutting staff and benefits. "Factories are closing en masse, and advertising revenues for state media have collapsed, forcing outlets like CCTV to monetise their influence through sales," it said.

## Tiffany Trump to visit Jaisalmer Today

Jaipur: Tiffany Trump, the younger daughter of US President Donald Trump, is scheduled to arrive in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer on Sunday along with her husband Michael Boulos, aboard a chartered flight. The high-profile private visit has prompted extensive security arrangements across the desert city, with authorities maintaining heightened vigilance given Jaisalmer's proximity to the India-Pakistan border. The couple is expected to stay at the luxury Suryagarh Hotel during their visit.

## 2nd Women's T20I: series tied 1-1

Bristol: The Indian women's cricket team lost six wickets for 33 runs against a mounting asking rate and went down to England women by 28 runs in the second T20I at the County Ground, Bristol, as the hosts levelled the three-match series 1-1. India had won the first T20I of the series and were looking to seal a 2-0 lead by winning the second match. However, their fine effort with the ball went in vain as they could not back it up with the bat. With spinner Sree Charani picking 3-25, India restricted England women to a modest total of 168/5 in 20 overs, with Freya Kemp blasting an unbeaten 39 towards the end to shore up the score. Chasing 169 to win, the Indians lost regular wickets despite their top-order batters making starts. Shafali Verma (22), Smriti Mandhana (32), Yastika Bhatia (33), and Harmanpreet Kaur (28) made vital contributions as the visitors reached 109/3 at the end of the 15th over. But under pressure to score 60 runs in the last five overs, they succumbed to the mounting asking rate and lost their last six wickets for 33 runs, and were restricted to 142/9 in 20 overs, and fell short by 26 runs. With this win, the series now goes into a deciding third and final T20I with the winner getting a big boost ahead of the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup. Jemimah Rodrigues, the star of India's batting effort alongside Yastika Bhatia in the first match, fell for one, Richa Ghosh contributed eight, Deepti Sharma could manage to score only two runs, while Shreyanka Patil scored six runs off four balls. For England, Lauren Bell (2-33), Charlie Dean (2-20), and Freya Kemp (2-15) grabbed a couple of wickets each while Sophie Ecclestone claimed 1-24 as the host bowlers strangled the Indian batters to make a grand comeback in the series. Earlier, all-rounder Freya Kemp's blistering unbeaten 39 off just 13 balls powered England to 168/5 in their 20 overs. After the hosts had an iffy time with the bat on a slow pitch, Freya smashed four boundaries and two sixes in a stunning finishing blitz as 39 runs came off the last two overs to dramatically alter the complexion of England's innings. For India, left-arm spinner Sree Charani was the standout bowler with 3-25, as she and Shreyanka Patil were superb in never allowing the momentum to slip away, and kept a tight lid on the scoring rate in the middle overs. But India must chase down 169 to clinch a series win and get a big boost in their preparations for the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup. Electing to bat first, England endured a shaky start in the powerplay, managing only 35 runs for the loss of Sophia Dunkley, who was dropped early by Jemimah Rodrigues but later fell to Nandni Sharma for 10. Danni Wyatt-Hodge, back from maternity leave, looked fluent with three boundaries but was dismissed for 29 by Charani, who later removed the in-form Amy Jones for 28 and accounted for Heather Knight with a sharp return catch. Shreyanka added to India's tally by castling Alice Capsey for 28.

## India's macro indicators show cautious resilience: FM

New Delhi: India's macro-economic position in the month of May reflects cautious resilience over strong services exports, adequate foreign exchange reserves and a stable labour market, Finance Ministry said in its 'Monthly Economic Review' on Saturday. However, the confluence of elevated global energy prices, a depreciating rupee, rising upstream cost pressures and the prospect of a below-normal monsoon calls for sustained policy vigilance, the Economic Review said. "Navigating FY27 will require agility across monetary, fiscal and structural dimensions to safeguard growth momentum and keep inflation durably anchored, even as the global environment remains uncertain," it added. The West Asia conflict has emerged as a major shock to the already fragile global recovery, with its effects increasingly visible across energy markets, supply chains, trade routes and

global financial conditions. Elevated energy, transportation and logistics costs have revived inflationary pressures and renewed stagflation concerns across major economies. Prolonged disruptions to Gulf energy supplies could further weaken global growth and intensify macroeconomic vulnerabilities across economies, according to the monthly review. For India, these external pressures are beginning to transmit, selectively but perceptibly, into domestic economic conditions. "The Indian economy maintained its growth momentum in April 2026, with E-way bill generation, PMI indices and electricity consumption remaining in expansionary territory. However, the moderation in the Eight Core Industries Index and fuel consumption signals that global headwinds are gradually finding their way into select segments of domestic activity," it noted.



Debasmitta Basu

## Babu Condemns TG TDP Chief's Remarks

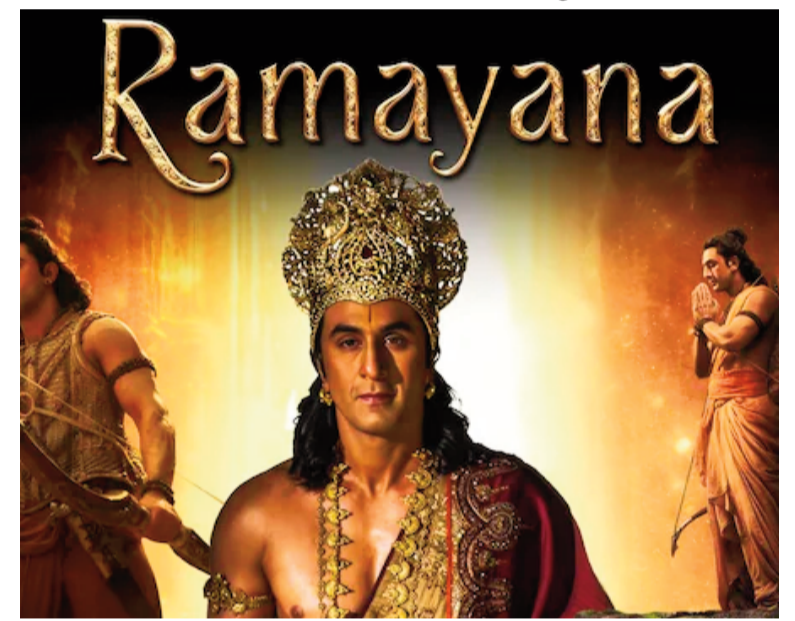
Vijayawada: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) National President N. Chandrababu Naidu has strongly objected to the recent statements made by Telangana TDP President Bakkani Narasimhulu. Speaking during an informal chat (chit-chat) with media representatives at the NTR Bhavan in Amaravati, Naidu emphasized that political leaders must exercise restraint and ensure they do not hurt public sentiments when speaking about regions with historical significance. This reaction follows a controversial remark by Bakkani Narasimhulu, who reportedly claimed that "the word 'Telangana' does not even exist in the dictionary." Rectifying this

stance, Chandrababu Naidu reminded everyone that the TDP itself was born on Telangana soil. He stated that the Telugu people are one and reaffirmed that the TDP commands a strong and dedicated cadre base in Telangana. Shifting his focus to Andhra Pradesh politics, Naidu launched a scathing attack on the opposition YSRCP. He claimed that frustration is growing within the YSRCP as the label of 'God-dali Party' has become deeply ingrained in the public mind. He further remarked that the full extent of the "YSR family's atrocities" was not entirely known even to them, adding that such elements are unfit for a democracy. The Chief Minister extended his full solidarity to YS

Sunitha Narreddy, the daughter of late YS Vivekananda Reddy, in her ongoing legal battle. Naidu asserted that Sunitha has every right to know who murdered her father. He credited her relentless persistence for keeping the high-profile murder case alive to this day. Commenting on national political developments, Naidu noted that the Central Government is determined to implement the Women's Reservation Bill and the delimitation of constituencies, which he believes will bring major transformations to Indian politics. He suggested that increasing number of assembly seats by 50% during delimitation process would be highly beneficial and would ensure no loss to the state.

## Hollywood Touch to Ramayana

The makers of Ramayana have brought in top Hollywood action experts to elevate the scale and visual grandeur of the much-awaited mythological epic starring Ranbir Kapoor. Renowned stunt specialists Terry Notary and Guy Norris have joined the project. Notary is known for his work in Planet of the Apes and The Avengers, while Norris has been associated with blockbuster action films such as Mad Max: Fury Road, Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga and The Suicide Squad. Directed by Nitesh Tiwari, the ambitious two-part saga also features Yash, Sai Pallavi and Sunny Deol in key roles. Produced by Namit Malhotra's Prime Focus Studios in association with DNEG and Monster Mind Creations, the film is planned as a global IMAX release. The first installment is slated for Diwali 2026, while the second part is expected to hit theatres during Diwali 2027.



## Ajith's mother Mohini passes away

Mumbai: Tamil actor Ajith Kumar's mother, Mohini Mani, passed away on Saturday at the age of 89. She was believed to have been suffering from declining health for some time now. As per reports, Ajith was in Dubai when he learned about his mother's demise and reportedly immediately travelled back to Chennai to be with his loved ones during this difficult time. Sharing the unfortunate news with the netizens, Ajith's brother, Anil Kumar, wrote on social media, "Our mother, Mohini Mani, passed away early this morning, in her sleep, after a period of declining health. She was 89. We are grateful for the care and support provided to her and our family by a number of medical professionals these last few years (sic)." "We are comforted, even in this time of grief, that she lived a long life and could be counted among the lucky ones – to have known the undying love and care of dear ones and the genuine respect of just about everyone who came to know her kind nature, selfless spirit, and quiet grace", he went on to add. Offering his condolences, Kamal Haasan penned on the micro-blogging site, "I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Mr Ajith Kumar's mother, Mrs Mohini Mani. I extend my heartfelt condolences to Ajith Kumar and his family, who are grieving the loss of their beloved mother."

## Varsha, Anand Elected Unopposed

The elections for the Director Board of the All India Marathi Film Corporation (AIMFC) have gained momentum, with actress Varsha Usgaonkar, singer Anand Shinde, and film editor Vijay Khochikar being elected unopposed. After the withdrawal of 13 candidates, 44 contenders remain in the fray for 14 seats. The contest is expected to be dominated by two major panels led by Meghraj Rajee Bhosale and Milind Ashtekar, while several independent candidates are also in the race. The election is being held to constitute a new 17-member executive body of the AIMFC after a gap of nearly 10 years. Campaigning has intensified across Mumbai, Pune and Kolhapur, with candidates reaching out directly to voters. Polling is scheduled for June 7, while counting and declaration of results will take place on June 8. The election will determine the leadership of one of the most influential bodies representing the Marathi film industry.



## Ravi Kishan on Janhvi

Mumbai: Actor Ravi Kishan, who is gearing up for the release of his upcoming film 'Peddi' alongside Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor, recalled his experience of working with late actress Sridevi and reflected on sharing screen space with her daughter decades later. Speaking about the unique coincidence, Ravi Kishan said it felt special to have worked with Sridevi in the 1990s and now collaborate with Janhvi Kapoor in 'Peddi'. Ravi Kishan shared, "Having worked with Sridevi (ji) in 'Army', it feels special to now work with Janhvi Kapoor in 'Peddi'." He added, "Janhvi is a very talented actress, and at times she reminds me of Sridevi (ji) with her dedication, grace, and sincerity towards her craft. She is carrying forward a beautiful legacy while creating her own path." For the uninitiated, the actor had worked with Sridevi in the 1996 action drama 'Army', which also starred Shah Rukh Khan, Mohnish Bahl and Danny Denzongpa. Nearly three decades later, Ravi Kishan is set to appear alongside Janhvi Kapoor in



'Peddi', marking a full-circle moment in his career. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, 'Peddi' stars Ram Charan in the lead role, while Janhvi Kapoor plays the female lead. The movie also stars Boman Irani, Shiva Rajkumar, Divyendu Sharma, and Jagapathi Babu. Produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru, the movie is set to release on June 4, 2026. Talking about Sridevi, the actress passed away in a tragic incident in Dubai, in February 2018, a few weeks before Janhvi made her Bollywood debut with Dhadak.

Talking about Ravi Kishan the actor has carved a successful career across Hindi, Bhojpuri and South Indian cinema, further slowly earning recognition for his versatile performances in films and web series alike. In recent years, he received widespread praise for projects like 'Laapataa Ladies' and a courtroom comedy-drama 'Maamla Legal Hai', where his portrayal of V.D. Tyagi became a fan favourite. The actor has also remained active on the OTT front with 'Maamla Legal Hai Season 2' and many upcoming streaming projects.

## Alia in 'Alpha'

Mumbai, May 30 : Bollywood star Alia Bhatt will be seen playing a killer in 'Alpha', raised and trained to kill. News about her character in the upcoming Yash Raj Films' entertainer Alpha was doing the rounds on social media. However, a source close working with the production confirmed to IANS: "Alia Bhatt is definitely playing a killer in Alpha." "She isn't like the goody good heroes that the YRF Spy Universe has introduced so far and is, in fact, as assassin who has been raised and trained to kill. She isn't a spy. She is an alpha killer," said the source. As per the source, YRF head honcho Aditya Chopra wanted to give a new, cool hero "who shouldn't be judged for her actions but should be seen as someone who will do as she pleases." The source added: This is a very today's way of looking at protagonists because people want to see exciting, entertaining protagonists on screen. Alia's character in Alpha will do just that! "With Alpha, Aditya Chopra is taking a very unconventional approach to build a hero. This is clearly a creative pivot for the YRF Spyverse and a much-needed one for the universe that wants to score big with Alpha as it puts a leading lady doing hardcore action in an action entertainer entirely mounted on her," added the source. When contacted, YRF spokesperson did not deny the news. "All we can say is that everyone should wait for the first asset of Alpha. We can neither confirm or deny this chatter at this stage," the person said. Alpha also stars Sharvari alongside Alia. It has Bobby Deol essaying the role of a villain and Anil Kapoor in a pivotal role. Directed by Shiv Rawail, known for helming The Railway Men, the film is set to release on July 3.

