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All 108 TVK MLAs To Resign If DMK, AIADMK Try To Form Government



form government. But earlier today, Governor RV Arlekar refused to allow Vijay to stake claim, saying he does not have the numbers. He also did not accept the plan Vijay had presented to reach the majority mark. Sources said the meet - the second in two days - ended with the Governor insisting that the actor-politician provide letters of support from 118 legislators. A communique from Raj Bhavan said the Governor "explained that the requisite majority support in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, essential for forming the Government, has not been established". The TVK needs 10 more seats to hit the majority mark and already has the support of Congress, which has five MLAs. Talks are on with the Left and a few smaller parties for the balance of seats. The party, sources have said, is planning to go to court. The DMK held a meeting earlier today, where it passed four resolutions, one of them authorising party chief MK Stalin to take "emergency decisions". Regarding the resolution, the DMK said, "Our primary aim is to avert another election, to have a stable government and not give room to communal forces". Calling the lack of majority a "complicated crisis", the DMK has asked all its MLAs to remain in Chennai till May 10. Top DMK sources, however, have confirmed that a plan where E Palaniswami become Chief Minister with the outside support of DMK is being considered.

Chennai: Actor Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam or TVK warned this evening that every MLA of the party will resign if either of the two Dravida parties -- MK Stalin's DMK or E Palaniswami's AIADMK -- try to stake claim to form government in Tamil Nadu, sources have said. The decision came on the heels of

two crucial meetings in the DMK and AIADMK camps. The TVK now suspects that the two parties are colluding to form government in the state, cutting out the party that has got the popular vote. The TVK, which won 108 seats, argues that as the single-largest party, it should be invited by the Governor to

TiE HYD ROLLS OUT WOMEN STARTUP DRIVE ACROSS TELANGANA



Hyderabad, May 7: The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), Hyderabad on Thursday organised the TiE Women Roadshow at T-Works in Raidurgam, bringing together over 100 aspiring

women entrepreneurs from across Telangana. The event was held to promote TiE Women 2026, a global initiative aimed at supporting women-led startups through mentorship, networking, investor access

and incubation support. Applications for the 7th edition of the programme are open till May 10. TiE Hyderabad President Murali Kakarla said the organisation is targeting 200 applications this year and would conduct special Telugu pitching and mentoring sessions to encourage wider participation. He also announced that roadshows would be expanded to Tier-2 cities including Nizamabad, Warangal and Karimnagar. Dr. Murali Bukkapatnam, Past Chairman Global Board of Trustees, stressed the importance of women's participation in entrepreneurship, while Ankit Sanjay Shah, TiE Hyderabad Committee Chair for TiE Women, said the Hyderabad chapter has so far mentored over 600 women entrepreneurs and facilitated more than \$352,000 in equity-free grants. A panel discussion titled "Future is Female" was also held as part of the programme.

KTR, HARISH RAO CONDEMN ATTACK ON MLA GANGULA'S CAMP OFFICE



Hyderabad, May 7: Senior BRS leaders and MLAs K. T. Rama Rao and Harish Rao on Thursday condemned the alleged attack by BJP activists on the camp office of BRS MLA Gangula Kamalakar and on the vehicle of MLA Padi Kaushik Reddy in Karimnagar. In a post on X, KTR alleged that followers of Union Minister Bandi

Sanjay Kumar had entered the MLA's camp office and vandalised vehicles and office property in broad daylight. He criticised the police for allegedly remaining silent spectators during the incident and accused Bandi Sanjay of acting as the "B-team" of Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy. KTR further alleged that the attacks were being carried out because the BJP lacked an-

swers to questions raised by BRS leaders. Stating that it was unacceptable for a Union Minister of State for Home Affairs to behave in a manner that weakens law and order, KTR termed the incident a mockery of democracy. Harish Rao also condemned the attack and questioned the law-and-order situation in the state. It was unfortunate that

such incidents had taken place in the constituency represented by a Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, he remarked. Demanding immediate action against those responsible, Harish Rao urged the State government to maintain law and order and warned that if such attacks continued, people themselves would be forced to come onto the streets to protect democracy.

Revanth travels amidst Hyderabad city traffic



Hyderabad, May 7: Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on Thursday travelled on Hyderabad roads amidst regular traffic. He arrived in the city after wrapping up his trip to Delhi and made his way from Shamshabad Airport to his home amidst the typical flow of vehicles. Recently, the Chief Minister has given explicit instructions to senior police officials regarding the suspension of traffic in the city to accommodate his convoy. He stressed that any actions leading to public inconvenience on the roads should be entirely avoided. In response to these directives, the traffic police permitted vehicles to move in a single lane while the convoy passed, instead of halting all traffic completely.

KAVITHA ALLEGES CONG CONTINUING "LAND GRAB POLITICS" IN PHARMA CITY REGION



Hyderabad, May 7: Telangana Rakshana Sena (TRS) president Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Thursday launched a sharp attack on both the previous BRS regime and the current Congress government over

large-scale land acquisition in the Pharma City region. Addressing an all-party meeting at the Basheerbagh Press Club under the banner of "Anti-Pharma City Struggle Committee and Telangana People's JAC", Kavitha alleged that the

erstwhile BRS government had acquired 13,500 acres from farmers for the Pharma City project, while the present Congress administration was planning to acquire 30,000 acres for the proposed "Future City" project. She questioned the government over the projected employment generation and environmental impact of the Pharma City and data centre projects, claiming pollution levels in the region had become severe. Kavitha alleged that lands belonging to tribal communities were being forcibly acquired while influential landlords were being spared. Declaring support for the affected farmers and tribals, she said she was ready to participate in any agitation in defence of their lands. Retired High Court judge Justice Chandra Kumar expressed concern over the disappearance of agricul-

tural lands due to real estate expansion and industrial projects. He said protecting farmlands was essential to avoid future food insecurity and criticised political leaders for failing to honour promises made to farmers. Professor Haragopal alleged that the governments were creating conflict between farmers and the state machinery in the name of development. Referring to pollution in the Patancheru industrial belt, he questioned the establishment of polluting industries amid fertile agricultural lands and accused successive governments of continuing anti-farmer policies despite changing political power. Several leaders and activists, including representatives from the CPI, AAP, Dharma Samaj Party and Telangana-based organisations, attended the meeting and extended support to the ongoing agitation against the Pharma City project.

CONG GOVT RUINING FARMERS' LIVELIHOODS: HARISH RAO



Hyderabad, May 7: Senior BRS leader T. Harish Rao on Thursday accused the Congress government in Telangana of "destroying the livelihoods of farmers" and failing to fulfil the promises made to various sections of the society. Addressing a large-scale meeting of party workers at Kodad in Suryapet district, the former Minister launched a sharp attack on the ruling Congress government and local Congress leadership, while asserting that the future belongs to the BRS party.

Harish Rao alleged that the Congress had deceived unemployed youth, students, women and retired employees by failing to implement promises such as two lakh jobs, fee reimbursement for students and Rs.2,500 monthly assistance for women. He claimed that promises made to Muslim minorities remained unfulfilled and accused Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy of discontinuing welfare benefits introduced for minorities during the tenure of former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Mocking the Chief Minister's style of governance, Harish Rao remarked that Revanth Reddy's administration could be summed up as "Big talk, little action" (Baat karodo mein, kaam pakodo mein), alleging that the government's words were lofty while its performance remained poor. He further alleged that funds earmarked under the SC/ST Sub-Plan were not reaching beneficiaries and claimed that no benefits had been extended through the

SC and ST Corporations during the Congress government's tenure so far. Praising the previous BRS regime, Harish Rao said large-scale development and irrigation expansion had taken place under KCR's leadership through projects such as Kaleshwaram and Phase-2 of the SRSP project. He questioned whether Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy had managed to bring Godavari waters to Kodad during his earlier tenure as Minister. The BRS leader also compared paddy procurement under the previous and present governments. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, KCR had ensured uninterrupted implementation of the Rythu Bandhu scheme and arranged special trains to bring labourers from Bihar for unloading

MP Eatala Rajender observes arrangements for Modi's public meeting

Hyderabad, May 7: Malkajgiri Member of Parliament Eatala Rajender today inspected the arrangements being made for the public meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi scheduled to be held at the Parade Grounds in the city on the 10th of this month. On this occasion, he held a review meeting with the party leaders regarding the ongoing arrangements at the venue, the amenities being provided for the public and the security measures in place. Union Minister Kishan Reddy, BJP National BC Morcha President and Rajya Sabha Member Laxman, BJP Legislative Party Leader Aletti Maheswar Reddy, Legislative Council Party Leader AVN Reddy, MLCs Malka Komuriah and Anji Reddy, along with other party leaders and workers participated in this event.

New Report Shows How AI Gives Cybersecurity Competitive Advantage

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping cybersecurity and is the biggest driver of change in the field, according to a new World Economic Forum report released on May 4. Some 94% of cyber leaders identify AI as a defining force and 77% of organizations already use it in their cyber operations. The AI and Cyber: Empowering Defenders report, developed in collaboration with KPMG, highlights measurable gains in cost reduction, response speed and resilience. While threat actors increasingly weaponize AI to automate deception, generate malware and scale attacks at machine speed, the report indicates that organizations deploying AI strategically are achieving significant advantages. Organizations that extensively leverage AI in security reduce average breach costs by up to \$1.9 million and shorten breach lifecycles by approximately 80 days. "AI has the potential to shift the balance towards defenders," said Akshay Joshi, Head of the Centre for Cybersecurity, World Economic Forum. "Organizations that treat it as a strategic capability, rather than a standalone tool, will be better placed to turn growing cyber risk into resilience and competitive advantage." Building on the Forum's 2025 publication, Artificial Intelligence and Cybersecurity: Balancing Risks and Rewards, the 2026 edition focuses on how organizations are deploying AI for defence in practice. As enterprise attack surfaces expand to include hundreds of thousands of internet-facing assets, the scale and complexity of cyber risk are increasing significantly. Among the examples featured, KPMG reports a 25% increase in operational efficiency in threat intelligence. Accenture cut security analysis time in more than 100,000 internet-facing sites from 15 minutes to under one minute, and IBM's ATOM platform helps scale global 24x7 threat detection and response, automating more than 850 analyst hours a month and cutting end-to-end investigation time by 37%. "Attackers are moving faster and at greater scale than ever before. This report is a call to action for organizations to match that pace, with AI as a force multiplier for cyber defence," said Laurent Gobbi, Partner, Global Head of Cyber & Tech Risk, KPMG. The report emphasizes that AI's value in cybersecurity lies in augmenting human expertise, accelerating decisions and strengthening resilience, rather than automation alone. The report highlights that its impact depends on clear AI deployment strategy, rigorously tested use cases before scaling, and strong governance and human oversight from the outset. The report draws on 20 real-world case studies and insights from one-on-one interviews and workshops conducted under the World Economic Forum's Cyber Frontiers: AI & Cyber initiative, convening 105 representatives from 84 organizations across 15 industries. As cyber risks become more complex, the report calls on business and government leaders to treat AI as a foundational security capability, investing not only in technology but also in the skills, processes and governance required to defend at machine speed.

According to the report, Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the cybersecurity landscape. Attackers are increasingly using AI to increase the speed, scale and sophistication of threats. To address these evolving risks, cybersecurity must keep pace with the growing speed and sophistication of modern attacks. AI-driven tools are becoming central across the cybersecurity life cycle, from detecting and preventing incidents to response and recovery, enabling organizations to secure their digital assets and sensitive information more effectively. This paper focuses on the use of AI by defenders, thereby providing actionable guidance to organizations on how to deploy AI to enhance defensive capabilities. Real-world applications of AI in cybersecurity, illustrated through case studies submitted by World Economic Forum partners, demonstrate, for example, the use of AI to improve vulnerability detection, curate threat intelligence data and enhance defences against phishing and other attack vectors. This reflects a shift to operational adoption of AI solutions delivering measurable improvements in security performance.

Anga-Banga-Kalinga: How BJP Completed Its Eastern India Arc

"I see a tsunami this time."
Ten days before the counting of votes in West Bengal began, Home Minister Amit Shah, addressing a press conference in Kolkata, confidently declared that 'Anga, Banga and Kalinga' will have BJP governments soon. With Bengal set for a historic mandate that will see the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress relinquish power after ruling for three terms, the three ancient kingdoms are effectively conquered.

For the BJP, what is unfolding is the completion of a political corridor across the eastern flank of the country from Bihar to West Bengal to Odisha.

Bihar, or ancient Anga, had long been a state that produced caste-driven coalition politics. Odisha, or Kalinga, had remained under the unbroken dominance of regional leader Naveen Patnaik for nearly a quarter of a century. Bengal, or Banga, remained perhaps the most ideologically resistant frontier of all, where regional identity had repeatedly held off the BJP advance. If Bengal now falls, as the numbers increasingly suggest, then the BJP will have accomplished something it has spent over a decade building towards - absolute control of eastern India.

The Historical Kingdoms

Anga, the oldest among the three kingdoms, corresponds to the political heartland of modern Bihar. In the Mahabharata, it was the kingdom gifted by Duryodhana to Karna. Historically, Anga became part of the core from which the Mauryan empire rose, contributing to some of the subcontinent's earliest po-



litical structures. Bihar, in that sense, has always been central to India's political imagination.

Banga was the eastern kingdom, where the Ganga dissolves into a thousand channels before entering the Bay of Bengal. Modern Bengal inherited that tradition and transformed it into intellectual power during colonial rule. It produced the Bengali Renaissance, fuelled anti-colonial politics, and remained the intellectual engine of modern India for much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Kalinga, on the other hand, is remembered through conquest and consequence. The war Ashoka fought against Kalinga remains one of the defining political and moral episodes of Indian history. Its bloodshed transformed an em-

peror and redirected an empire's trajectory. Modern Odisha inherited that instinct as for 24 continuous years, under Naveen Patnaik and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Odisha resisted both the BJP and the Congress.

The Conquest

The NDA swept 202 of Bihar's 243 assembly seats, reducing the opposition Mahagathbandhan to just 35 in the 2025 Assembly elections. Tejashwi Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) had emerged as the single largest party with 75 seats, coming within touching distance of power and creating the impression that Bihar was moving towards a post-Nitish Kumar political era. Instead, that momentum collapsed. The RJD was down to 25 seats, the Congress to six

and the Left parties reduced to fragments.

The BJP won 89 seats, the JDU 85, Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) secured 19, Jitan Ram Manjhi's Hindustani Awam Morcha won five, and Upendra Kushwaha's Rashtriya Lok Morcha four.

Another interesting subplot in Bihar was Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party, projected by many as a disruptive force, which collapsed almost completely.

Bengal was always the ultimate litmus test for the BJP. It was the one frontier where the BJP's rise remained incomplete. The party had expanded sharply here in the last decade, emerging as the principal opposition, but power remained elusive. Monday's counting suggests that the barrier may

have broken. According to Election Commission figures, the BJP is leading in over 200 seats and the Trinamool, in over 80.

Finally, Odisha delivered Kalinga in dramatic fashion. For years, the BJP in Odisha was dismissed as organisationally weak, mocked even as a "sign-board party". In 2024, that perception collapsed as the BJP won 78 of Odisha's 147 assembly seats, ending the 24-year rule of Naveen Patnaik and pushing the BJD down to 51. Congress improved to 14 seats, CPI(M) took one, and independents three. But the deeper shock came in the Lok Sabha contest, where the BJD, once electorally dominant, failed to win a single parliamentary seat. The BJP surged to 20. Congress got one.

Amit Shah And The 5 Architects Of BJP's Historic Bengal Win

Behind the BJP's historic victory in the West Bengal assembly election lies the astute strategy and vast experience of the party's 'Chanakya' - Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is also the architect of numerous historic triumphs. He had camped in Bengal for 14 days, coordinated party operations and issued directions. To translate strategy into action on the ground, he held continuous organisational meetings with party leaders late into the night to provide guidance, and spent his days at rallies and roadshows - at least 50 of them across Bengal. During this period, Shah made significant announcements including implementation of the 7th Pay Commission for government employees if BJP came to power, and a pledge to deal strictly with "goons and infiltrators". Following the first phase of voting, Shah pointed out the BJP had already secured over 110 seats in that phase, paving the way for more success in the second phase. This gave confidence to the public on the BJP's impending victory, particularly during the second phase, which was earlier seen as a difficult challenge for the party.

Consequently, the BJP succeeded in breaching Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee's fortress. The strategic roles played by five central leaders alongside Shah added to the BJP's win in Bengal. From organisational matters to social media management, they worked seamlessly as a cohesive team. They are:

Dharmendra Pradhan

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan served as the chief strategist for the entire election campaign. He worked to make coordination smooth between



communities and across social stratas. His role primarily was to act as a bridge between the central leadership and the state unit, ensuring efficient management of resources and visits by the central leadership.

Bhupender Yadav
A master of organisational skills, Union Minister Bhupender Yadav focused on micro-management and played a big role in mobilising party workers down to the booth level. He navigated the complex legal intricacies of the electoral process. His extensive experience in Bihar and other

states proved invaluable within the challenging electoral landscape of Bengal.
Sunil Bansal
BJP national general secretary Sunil Bansal had previously steered the BJP to unprecedented heights in Uttar Pradesh. In Bengal, he built a formidable army of 'panna pramukhs' (booth-level coordinators) at the grassroots level. His primary focus was on building a strong and disciplined organisational structure for the BJP to counter the Trinamool's cadre-based system.
Biplab Deb

Former Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb has firsthand experience in fighting against and ultimately dislodging the Left in his state. In Bengal, he worked specifically in regions where the culture and language bore a close resemblance to those of Tripura. He played a pivotal role in galvanising local party workers and fostering an aggressive style of campaigning.

Amit Mahviya
BJP IT cell chief Amit Mahviya spearheaded the battle of narratives on the digital front. His role was de-

terminating social media to inform in-depth and with care and sensitivity to the people key incidents ranging from Sandeshkhali to the RG Kar Medical College case. This created an anti-government sentiment against the ruling Trinamool. He launched a strong counter-challenge to the Trinamool's propaganda machinery through digital channels. Overall, it's the collective efforts of these leaders that enabled the BJP to achieve this level of success in the formidable stronghold of Bengal.

“Start-ups & MSMEs are driving force to realise Viksit Bharat goal”



New Delhi: “India’s military might is forged in the factories of our defence industries,” said Raksha Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth as he credited the success of Operation Sindoor to the unmatched courage and determination of the defence forces, further bolstered by the effectiveness of indigenously-developed state-of-the-art weapons & systems. Addressing the North Tech Symposium in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh on May 05, 2026, he described MSMEs as the backbone of the Indian economy and start-ups as the brand ambassadors of the country. “Our start-ups and MSMEs are the driving force for future growth and will play a pivotal role in realising Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047. They are the Vishwakarmas of

our age,” he said. Raksha Mantri commended the defence forces for dismantling the nefarious designs of India’s adversaries by eliminating terror hideouts during Op Sindoor. The effective use of Made-in-India equipment is testimony to the resolve of the entire nation - the Government, DPSUs & the private sector, especially innovators, start-ups & MSMEs - to achieve Aatmanirbharta in defence, he said. Raksha Mantri asserted that record defence production and defence exports figures are proof of the emergence of New India which believes in strengthening its own capabilities to safeguard national interests. “This New India does not cast an evil eye on anyone, nor does it look the other way if someone tries to threaten its sovereignty,” he added.

Emphasising that the technology deployed today may become obsolete tomorrow, Raksha Mantri urged the industry to think outside-the-box and strive to stay ahead of the technology curve amidst the global uncertainties. He highlighted the Government’s initiatives to strengthen the defence ecosystem of the country. Innovation is a continuous process, he said, extending the Government’s full support. He acknowledged the transformative impact of the Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor and exhorted the industry to take the growth to greater heights. Speaking on the occasion, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Central Command Lieutenant General Anindya Sengupta urged the industry to join hands with the defence forces to fulfill the current operational requirements in emerging domains and contribute in making the Indian Army a future-ready force. Self-reliance will lead to strategic autonomy, technological sovereignty and operational tailoring, he said. The three-day North Tech Symposium 2026 has been organised by Indian Army’s Northern & Central Commands and



SIDM on the theme ‘Raksha Triveni Sangam - Where Technology, Industry & Soldiering Converge’. The event, which was inaugurated by Raksha Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth on May 04, 2026, features 284 stalls by private defence manufacturers, showcasing cutting edge defence technology. Demonstrations of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), drones, counter UAVs, (All Terrain Vehicles), surveillance equipment and other defence products are also being held as part of the event. GOC-in-C, Northern Command Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma; GOC, I Corps Lieutenant General V Hariharan; President, Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) Shri Arun T Ramchandani; industry captains; innovators; start-ups and academia representatives attended the session.

Uttar Pradesh: Fire destroys shacks in Ghaziabad's Vasundhara; no casualties

Ghaziabad: A fire broke out in the Vasundhara area of Ghaziabad Sector 9, early Monday morning, destroying several shacks. According to Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Rahul Kumar, “As soon as we got the information around 5:30 am, we dispatched three fire trucks. On reaching the spot, we found 4-5 shacks used for pressing work engulfed; immediately, hoses were used to extinguish the fire from both sides. The fire was brought under control...there were no casualties.” Meanwhile, in a separate incident, A massive fire broke out at Gaur Green Avenue in the Abhay Khand area of Indrapuram in Ghaziabad. Speaking to news agency, the CFO said, “There are no casualties. Some people were trapped. The fire service has safely evacuated them. There



were five to six flats, from the ninth to the eleventh floor; some were closed, some were open. The fire is being extinguished. By now, we have completely contained the fire.” He added, “More than seventeen of our vehicles are present at the scene. Hydraulics are also present. We have completely controlled the fire. Some flats

were empty, and some were partially damaged.” Following the fire at Gaur Green Avenue, Ghaziabad district administration said it will conduct a detailed safety survey of high-rise buildings across the city within a week, after which corrective measures will be taken to strengthen disaster preparedness. District Magistrate Ravinder Kumar

Mandar said the administration has intensified its focus on fire safety compliance and urban disaster management following the incident. “A detailed safety survey report is expected within seven days, after which corrective measures will be implemented,” Mandar said, adding that the objective is to improve disaster response systems in a rapidly expanding urban environment. He said the District Disaster Management Committee reviewed recent incidents and preparedness levels in a meeting attended by representatives of 17 departments, including police, municipal corporation, electricity, fire services, and other safety agencies. Mandar further stated that strict action will be taken against violations of building regulations.

India’s Steel Sector Advances Towards Self-Reliance

Domestic Capabilities Deepen Across the Steel Value Chain

New Delhi: India’s steel sector is a key “sunrise sector” with strong and steady growth. It became the world’s second-largest steel producer in 2018 and has retained this position. At the same time, steel consumption has more than doubled over the past 12 years. As demand increased, exports rose while imports declined, improving self-reliance. To support this growth, the government ensured raw material availability and reduced production costs. It also improved access to global markets for Indian steel producers. Under the PLI scheme, ₹23,022 crore investment supported specialty steel production and job creation. This resulted in 2.4 million tonnes of output and over 13,000 new jobs. India has achieved about 66% of its National Steel Policy production target. Going forward, green steel aims to reduce emissions by avoiding use of fossil fuels to reduce the carbon footprints. India is also committed to decarbonising the sector and achieving net zero emission by 2070.

Steel Sector Momentum
India’s steel sector, the

backbone of India’s growth story, continues to strengthen its march towards domestic reliance. India became the world’s second largest steel producer in 2018 and has retained this position since then. Share of global crude steel production rose from 5.2% in 2014 to 7.9% in 2024. This reinforces India’s position as a competitive and expanding global player. The country is also the 2nd largest consumer of finished steel as per the World Steel Association. India’s finished steel consumption has witnessed a significant rise. It increased from 77 million tonnes (MT) in 2014-15 to 163.7 MT in 2024-25. This growth reflects the rapid pace of infrastructure development, expanding urbanisation. It is also driven by robust growth in manufacturing, and a sustained increase in domestic demand. Collectively, these trends underscore steady evolution of India’s steel sector as a key contributor to industrial growth and economic development.

Aligning with the broader vision of Aatmanirbhara Bharat and greater self-reliance, India is working to

reduce dependence on foreign sources. A strong domestic steel ecosystem will create new business opportunities, boost industrial growth and support the country’s infrastructure push. In this direction, India is working towards achieving 500 MT of steel production capacity by 2047. At the same time, it is pursuing decarbonisation of the steel sector to meet net-zero emission intensity target by 2070.

Robust Steel Sector Performance

As world’s most widely used engineering and construction material, steel has been recognised as one of India’s ‘Sunrise Sectors’. It plays a pivotal role in driving domestic consumption and industrial growth. Steel production in India continues to show strong and sustained momentum. In March 2026, steel output rose by 2.2% over March 2025. Meanwhile, the cumulative index for FY 2025-26 registered a robust 9.1% growth compared to the same period last year. This reflects enhanced production and demand base. Specialty steel, the downstream, value-added product of steel manufacturing

process. It is one of the 14 sectors covered under PLI Scheme, which aims to boost domestic production of high-value steel. It was launched in 2021, with a financial outlay of ₹6,322 crore. It will improve the trade balance, raise export value realisation. It will also help the Indian steel industry upgrade technology and move up the value chain.

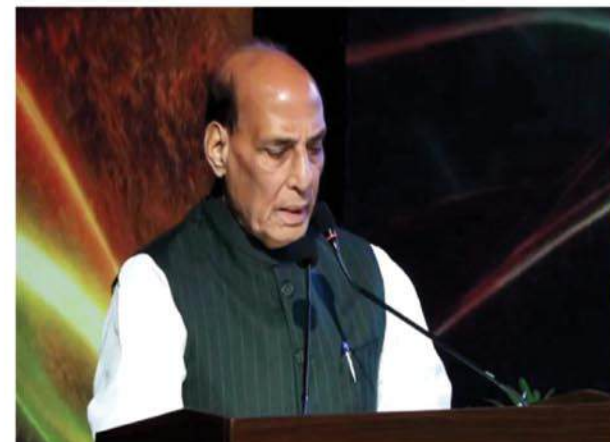
The scheme offers incentives for 5 years (FY 2024-25 - FY 2030-31) to companies that meet specified investment and production targets. Under the scheme, export volumes are projected to rise more than threefold. Meanwhile import volumes are expected to decline by nearly four times from 2023-24 to 2029-30. Domestically Manufactured Iron and Steel Products (DMI&SP) Policy: The policy, revised in May 2025, provides preference for DMI&SP in Government procurement. It covers notified iron and steel products, specifies minimum domestic content requirements. In addition to this, it also lists exempted capital goods for manufacturing iron & steel products which can be imported.

Op Sindoor showed India's technological warfare capability; forces must remain proactive: Rajnath Singh

Prayagraj: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said Operation Sindoor was a “specimen of technological warfare,” pointing out the use of advanced systems and the armed forces’ readiness to adapt to evolving battle conditions. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the North Tech Symposium in Prayagraj, Singh said the operation showcased the integration of cutting-edge platforms such as the Akash missile system and BrahMos, along with other modern equipment. “Operation Sindoor was itself a specimen of technological warfare.

In this operation, along with advanced missile systems like AkashTeer, Akash missile system, and BrahMos, numerous latest equipment were also utilized. It proved that our armed forces are not only understanding the changes but are also employing them with confidence,” Singh said. He stressed the need for constant preparedness in an unpredictable security environment. “I have always told one thing to my armed forces and Defence experts, and I want to reiterate it again today that we must not only remain active, but also proactive. We must also remain prepared for every kind of situation,” he said.

Highlighting the armed forces’ capability, Singh said Operation Sindoor reflected their preparedness and adaptability. “Our forces and our industries have analyzed the changing circumstances very well. Your people’s preparation always remains up to date, up to mark, and up to standard. And as the biggest example of this, Operation Sindoor is right before us,” he said. Recalling the operation a year later, the Defence Minister praised the forces’ response to terrorism. “One



year has passed since this Operation. Whenever Operation Sindoor is mentioned, I am reminded of the valor of my armed forces. The terrorists and their patrons received such a resounding response from our soldiers that the entire nation’s head is held high with pride. It was still good that, by showing restraint, we only neutralized the terrorists--otherwise, the world already knows what our armed forces are capable of,” Singh said.

He also underlined the changing nature of warfare, noting the rise of unconventional threats. “If we look at the unpredictability of the war system, then in earlier times, at least we had a rough idea of what the opposing side could do. Its military capability, its platforms, its doctrine—we had an estimate of all these. But now, a surprise element keeps emerging continuously, one that could never have been imagined before. Things that we considered part of ordinary civilian life are now turning into lethal weapons,” he said. The Defence Minister also linked infrastructure development to national security, citing projects such as the Ganga Expressway. “The infra projects that we are starting will also prove to be assets for us in the future. Like, right now, Uttar Pradesh’s longest expressway, the Ganga Expressway,

has been launched. All these infrastructure projects are equally important for our Defence sector,” he said.

He highlighted government initiatives to strengthen the defence ecosystem, including iDEX, ADITI, and Technology Development Fund. “Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, our government has taken numerous steps to strengthen our defence ecosystem. You all are well familiar with those initiatives. Be it iDEX, ADITI, or TDF, through all these efforts, we have sought to boost innovation in the Defence sector and increase participation from the private sector to the maximum extent possible,” Singh said. He added that infrastructure projects such as the Defence Corridor and the BrahMos assembly facility are enhancing India’s capabilities. Singh also noted growing global recognition of Indian defence industries. “I feel great pleasure in saying that discussions about our industries now take place across the world. Whenever I travel anywhere abroad, I get to see a positive approach towards our industries in the world. Our industries have undertaken a long journey for this, have gained credibility, and are continuously working hard in this direction,” he said. On defence research, he said, “25 per

cent of the Defence R&D budget has been allocated for industry, academia, and start-ups; and so far, more than approximately ₹4,500 crore has also been utilized by all of them.” He added that the Defence Research and Development Organisation has opened access to its patents and testing facilities to support industry. “DRDO has also launched a policy to provide free access even to its patents for Indian industries, which will strengthen both their technological capability and global competitiveness. DRDO’s test facilities have now also been opened to industries on a payment basis. Hundreds of industries use these every year and receive R&D support,” Singh said. Future wars would be won in laboratories, he said, stressing the importance of research. “In today’s time, there is no alternative to Research. The way wars will be fought in the future is being decided in today’s labs. I am pleased to say that the government has placed defence research at the center of its priorities. Through DRDO, we have made efforts to take research to the next level. And importantly, DRDO is no longer walking this journey alone. With the mantra ‘If you want to go far, go together’, DRDO is now moving forward with a large number of industries alongside,” he said. The Defence Minister inaugurated the North Tech Symposium themed “Raksha Triveni Sangam - Where Technology, Industry & Soldiering Converge”. The three-day event, jointly organised by the Indian Army’s Northern and Central Commands and the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, will see participation from 284 companies showcasing indigenous defence technologies.

Whom did Vijay’s TVK hurt more? DMK or AIADMK?

The big surprise in Tamil Nadu’s 2026 verdict may not be who is winning, anymore, but who Vijay’s Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK) is taking votes away from.

Trends from the Tamil Nadu Assembly results suggest that the TVK has not just entered the fray, but disrupted the state’s electoral math in ways that defy pre-poll assumptions.

Before the state headed to the election on April 23, the dominant theory was clear: The TVK would eat into the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) vote base, weakening the principal Opposition party. But the actual story on D-Day told a more nuanced story.

ECI data

Across several tightly contested constituencies, particularly those with margins under 2,500 votes from Election Commission (EC) data, where the TVK is in the lead, it is the AIADMK that is trailing in second place, not the incumbent DMK



(Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam). This suggests that while AIADMK votes have seen some erosion, the decisive shift may not have come from its core base. Instead, the TVK appears to have drawn significantly from the DMK’s vote bank, turning comfortable leads into tight contests. The broader context reinforces this. Tamil Nadu, long dominated by a DMK-AIADMK binary, is now witnessing a three-cornered fight with the TVK emerging as a serious disruptor. In regions such as Coimbatore, where the AIADMK once swept seats, current trends show a fragmented contest with the TVK

cutting into both sides, but without decisively collapsing the AIADMK’s base.

Vote bank

Urban dynamics offer a key clue. The DMK’s traditional strength in cities appears to have weakened, with younger voters, especially Gen Z, shifting towards the TVK’s appeal. This is critical because these voters were never firmly in the AIADMK camp to begin with. Minority voting patterns may have further complicated the picture. In a scenario where a BJP-AIADMK alignment struggles to attract minority voters, the DMK has historically benefited. But the TVK’s entry

seems to have split this support in select constituencies, particularly in socially mixed urban seats.

Political shift

This shift is visible in the DMK strongholds across northern Tamil Nadu as well as in constituencies such as Perambur and Tiruchirappalli East, both where Vijay contested. Both seats, with diverse and minority-heavy electorates, have traditionally leaned towards the DMK but are now witnessing a tighter contest, with the TVK making a notable entry. In effect, the TVK has impacted both major Dravidian parties. The AIADMK’s margins have certainly tightened in several seats. But the larger electoral dent appears to be on the DMK, particularly in urban and northern belts where its dominance once seemed secure. The vote has split, as many predicted. But the direction of that split tells a different story: not just a dent in the opposition ranks, but a deeper disruption of the ruling party’s core base.

Industrial Credit Expands to 15% in FY 2025-26 as compared to 8.2% in the previous year, driven by Strong Momentum in MSME Lending

New Delhi: The Financial year 2025-26 ended with robust year-on-year (y-o-y) non-food credit growth of 15.9%, marking a significant 497 basis points (bps) increase in growth from the corresponding period in 2025 (10.9%). The aggregate credit outstanding in Mar-2026 reached ₹212.9 lakh crore, ₹29.2 lakh crore higher than the previous year. Amidst a low-interest rate environment, Government aided Capex cycle supported by timely structural re-

forms, private investments are crowding-in and boosting domestic credit demand, reinstating confidence among corporate as well as individual borrowers on Indian economy. Credit growth in FY 2025-26 has been broad-based led by services sector, followed by personal loan segment, agriculture and allied activities, and industry.

Sectoral Credit Deployment - Highlights:

Sectoral Credit Deployment (y-o-y growth in %)

Agriculture and Allied Activities: Credit growth in this sector accelerated to 15.7%, 528 bps higher than 10.4% growth registered previous year, reflecting reinforced support for the farm sector. Sustained rural demand and formalization of rural credit has been attributing to the positive momentum in primary sector credit offtake in FY 2025-26. Industrial Sector: Credit deployment to the industrial sector expanded at almost double rate to 15.0%,

vis-à-vis 8.2% growth registered last year. With a 33.1% y-o-y growth, ‘Micro and Small’ industries registered a 3.7 times higher credit growth in FY 2025-26. Similar positive trends are witnessed for medium-scale industries where credit expanded by 21.7% y-o-y. Key drivers of industrial credit are: Infrastructure, Basic Metal and Metal Products, Chemicals and Chemical Products, Petroleum, Coal Products, and Nuclear Fuels etc.

Editor's TAKE

GAINS OF SINDOOR

A year has passed since the Operation Sindoor - a high-end military action that India unleashed on May 7 against Pakistan in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terrorist attack on a set of hapless tourists on April 22, 2025. Nine major locations of three terrorist outfits were targeted shortly after midnight in coordinated strikes, which were "focused, measured and non-escalatory" in nature. By way of an abundant precaution, no military installation was targeted. The engagement carried on for three nights before a ceasefire was announced abruptly, with obvious mediation from US president Donald Trump. While the original aim was to hit only terrorists, the scenario changed after Pakistan targeted Indian military sites in Punjab and elsewhere with hundreds of drones and other means. Pakistan's air defence systems were majorly destroyed by Indian missiles. At that time, Pakistan had only two options left: either to opt for the N-response or throw its hands up. For India, to end the military engagement at a time when it gained the upper hand was a nightmare. But, apparently, better sense prevailed and New Delhi agreed to Trump's call for a ceasefire.

There, however, is no clarity as to what Pakistan did to India in the course of the three-day war. Both the defence and political establishments here maintained a studied silence. Pakistan claimed it had downed several highly prized IAF fighter jets. India was in a mood to admit that at least one aircraft was lost, with senior military brass choosing to go round and round when questions were raised during their visits abroad. Trump claimed at later stages that India lost as many as 11 military aircraft. There yet is no clarity about this. What also raised eyebrows was the elevation of Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir to the rank of being the first Chief of Defence Forces, commanding all the three military branches, and the bestowal of the Field Marshal title on him shortly after the Operation Sindoor. Be that as it may, Operation Sindoor decimated the entire family of terror-mastermind Masood Azhar's sister, and exterminated many more in coordinated aerial strikes in the course of the three days and nights. Masood himself was a target, but he managed escape apparently with military help.

Admittedly, Operation Sindoor was a big step forward from the Surgical Strikes of 2019, after the deadly Pulwama terrorist attack on a CRPF convoy. At that time too, IAF jets had reached up close to the military headquarters in Rawalpindi, spreading scare down the spines of the Pakistani military generals, the fulcrum around which terrorist outfits operated there. Then too, a saving grace for them was the downing of an Indian military jet, or two. Both the surgical strikes and the Operation Sindoor targeted the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, an epi-centre of the anti-India terrorism training. Despite these strong actions from the Narendra Modi government - unlike the gloom that marked the Mumbai terrorist attacks during the Manmohan Singh period - terrorist outfits based in Pakistan are still targeting India, as was evident in the recent attempts in the national capital as also in stray cases in Kashmir Valley. But, by all indications, terror masterminds Azhar and Dawood Ibrahim have largely lost their lethality as the Pakistani establishment is now hugely worried over the consequences from India. Operation Sindoor was, in this sense too, a big success.

Governor's Constitutional Dilemma Vijay's Political Arithmetic, in Tamil Nadu



PROF
MADABHUSHI
SRIDHAR
DEAN, MAHINDRA
UNIVERSITY

The emergence of a fractured mandate in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly election has therefore created one of the most constitutionally delicate and politically sensitive situations in the history of the State. Tamil Nadu, known for stable majority governments under the dominance of Dravidian parties for decades, now faces an uncertain mandate in which no single party or alliance has crossed the magic numbers. At the centre of this unfolding constitutional drama stand three crucial actors: the Governor, the political parties attempting to form a government, and the constitutional conventions evolved through Supreme Court judgments and commission recommendations. The situation becomes even more complicated because actor-politician Vijay and his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) have emerged as the single largest political force, which opens the door to negotiations, coalition-building, independents becoming "kingmakers," and fears of defections and horse-trading.

The Arithmetic of Power

The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly consists of 234 seats. To form the government, a party or coalition requires the support of at least 118 MLAs. According to the present scenario:

- TVK won 107 seats. ● Vijay occupies two seats but counts only as one MLA.
- The effective strength of TVK, therefore, becomes 106. ● One among them is likely to become Speaker. ● The Speaker ordinarily votes only in the event of a tie. TVK would therefore require the support of at least 11 additional MLAs to survive a floor test.

Hung Assembly: Constitutional Silence and Political Conventions

The Constitution of India does not expressly define the precise procedure a Governor must follow in the event of a hung assembly. Article 164 merely states that the Chief Minister shall be appointed by the Governor. When no party secures a clear majority, the Governor must rely upon: Constitutional conventions, Supreme Court judgments, Commission recommendations, and Principles of constitutional morality.



Earlier Governors were accused of enabling defections, delaying floor tests, or favouring politically preferred parties. This discretionary sphere has historically produced intense controversies across India. Governors appointed under both Congress and BJP governments have repeatedly faced allegations of partisan conduct, selective invitations, manipulation of timing, and misuse of constitutional discretion. The Tamil Nadu situation, therefore, becomes not merely political, but deeply constitutional.

The Governor's Constitutional Responsibility

Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar now faces a difficult constitutional task.

- First, the Governor cannot arbitrarily choose a Chief Minister based on political preference. His office is expected to function with neutrality, constitutional restraint, and institutional detachment.
- Second, the central constitutional principle established through judicial precedents is simple: The majority of a government must be tested only on the floor of the House.
- Third, the Governor's personal satisfaction is secondary to legislative confidence.

Sarkaria Commission: Order of Preference

The Sarkaria Commission (1983) attempted to reduce ambiguity by recommending an "order of preference" for inviting parties to form governments in hung assemblies.

- The recommended sequence is:
1. A pre-poll alliance commanding a majority.
 2. The single largest party with support from others.
 3. A post-poll coalition where all partners participate in government.
 4. A post-poll arrangement supported from outside. The constitutional focus, therefore, shifts either to:

- TVK as the single largest party seeking support, or
- a post-poll coalition attempting to demonstrate superior numbers.

Punchhi Commission: Neutrality and Early Floor Test

The Punchhi Commission (2010) broadly endorsed the Sarkaria framework but emphasised two additional principles:

- Governors must act with constitutional neutrality.
- Floor tests should be conducted at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Commission specifically warned against Governors acting as political agents of the Union government.

Lessons from Manipur, Karnataka, and Maharashtra

In the 2017 Manipur Government Formation, the Congress emerged as the single largest party. Yet the Governor invited a BJP-led post-poll coalition to form the government. Critics argued that this bypassed democratic convention and encouraged opportunistic alliances.

Karnataka (2018): Excessive Time and Horse-Trading

The 2018 Karnataka Government Formation Crisis produced another important constitutional lesson. The Governor invited the BJP, the single largest party, and granted 15 days to prove its majority. The Supreme Court intervened and reduced the period to 24 hours, fearing horse-trading and inducements. Eventually, the government collapsed during the confidence vote itself.

The Karnataka episode established a crucial principle: Governors should not grant unusually long periods for proving a majority. Unnecessary delay creates opportunities for defections, coercion, inducements, and political instability.

Maharashtra (2019): Dawn Swearing-in and Constitutional Shock

The 2019 Maharashtra Government Formation Crisis witnessed one of the most controversial gubernatorial actions in recent political history. President's Rule was abruptly revoked early in the morning, and a government was sworn in based on claimed support that had not yet been tested on the Assembly floor. The Supreme Court quickly ordered a floor test. The constitutional lesson was unmistakable: Majority must be tested openly in the Assembly, not privately inside Raj Bhavan. Tamil Nadu's Governor must therefore avoid secretive or hurried constitutional manoeuvres.

S.R. Bommai: The Cornerstone Judgment

The landmark Supreme Court judgment in S.R. Bommai v. Union of India judgment

remains the foundational precedent governing hung assemblies. The Court held that: ● Legislative majority must be tested on the floor of the Assembly. ● Governors cannot subjectively determine the majority. ● Article 356 cannot be misused for partisan purposes.

Rameshwar Prasad Case: No Premature Dissolution

In Rameshwar Prasad v. Union of India, involving the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly, the Supreme Court warned against premature dissolution before political parties receive a fair opportunity to form a government. The Court emphasised that democracy requires allowing political processes to function naturally unless government formation becomes impossible. Therefore, President's Rule in Tamil Nadu should remain only a last constitutional resort.

Anti-Defection Law and Coalition Arithmetic

The anti-defection law under the Tenth Schedule also plays a crucial role in the Tamil Nadu scenario. An important exception exists: If at least two-thirds of a legislative party merges with another party, disqualification may not apply. For example, if AIADMK has 47 MLAs, at least 32 MLAs would need to support a merger to avoid disqualification. This threshold is politically difficult to achieve. Consequently, smaller parties, independents, and issue-based support may become more important than outright defections or mergers.

Constitutional Morality versus Political Opportunism

The larger question before Tamil Nadu is not merely who becomes Chief Minister. The real constitutional issue is whether democratic morality will prevail over opportunistic politics. A hung assembly tests the neutrality of Governors, the integrity of legislators, the strength of anti-defection safeguards, the maturity of coalition politics, and the resilience of constitutional conventions. The governor has to operate within democratic legitimacy.

Broadly, the Governor has four options:

- Invite TVK as the single largest party if it demonstrates support sufficient to cross the majority mark.
- Request written letters of support from alliance partners or independents.
- Permit swearing-in but insist upon a floor test within 24 to 48 hours.
- Examine whether another coalition possesses a demonstrably more stable majority.

Only if no viable government can emerge should Article 356 be considered through a recommendation for President's Rule. Constitutionally, all democratic alternatives must ordinarily be exhausted before invoking President's Rule.

Study describes blood test that might reveal one's illness trajectory, response to treatment

A blood test might help predict how one's illness trajectory will proceed and how well they might respond to treatment, according to a study.

The testing method, called 'VeloCD', could predict whether children with acute fever were likely to recover or deteriorate, and whether healthy adults were likely to go on to develop flu or COVID-19 after exposure to the viruses, among other disease trajectories, researchers, led by those from the UK's Imperial College London, said.

Described in a proof-of-concept study and published in the journal Nature Communications, the test measures key markers in the blood - revealing the levels of gene expression in response to an illness - to predict the likely trajectory of disease.

Senior author Aubrey Cunnington, head of the department of infectious disease at Imperial College London, said, "We think this type of test could be hugely beneficial for patients and healthcare staff. By offering medics a test which can predict the course of illness it could help them to triage patients much faster, getting the right treatment to the right patient at the right time."

The researchers explained that when one becomes ill, combinations of genes are switched 'on' and 'off' in response, producing RNA markers which can be detected in blood. Studies have shown that patterns of RNA markers can help identify the cause of one's illness, such as whether a fever is caused by a bacterial or viral infection.

The team used a method called 'RNA velocity', originally developed for studying single cells, but adapted and enhanced to test whole blood samples to find out whether the markers could also indicate prognosis - whether a patient was likely to get better or worse, and how they would respond to treatment.

The method helped the



DESCRIBED IN A PROOF-OF-CONCEPT STUDY AND PUBLISHED IN THE JOURNAL NATURE COMMUNICATIONS, THE TEST MEASURES KEY MARKERS IN THE BLOOD -- REVEALING THE LEVELS OF GENE EXPRESSION IN RESPONSE TO AN ILLNESS -- TO PREDICT THE LIKELY TRAJECTORY OF DISEASE. SENIOR AUTHOR AUBREY CUNNINGTON, HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE AT IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON, SAID, "WE THINK THIS TYPE OF TEST COULD BE HUGE BENEFICIAL FOR PATIENTS AND HEALTHCARE STAFF

researchers see which genes were being activated and if their activity was "ramping up or winding down", without having to make repeated

measurements over time.

For example, the team could predict whether the changes in the patterns of gene expression in one's

blood were becoming more or less like those of individuals with outcomes of interest - for example, severe illness or mild, self-resolving illness. The results could convey information about a person's future clinical state and the course of their illness, they said.

"We developed VeloCD, a method for quantitative prediction of transitions in clinical state from a single time-point RNA sample," the authors wrote.

"This predicts transcriptomic trajectories and future infection status in influenza A and SARS-CoV-2 controlled human infection studies, which are consistent with trajectories in naturally acquired infections," they said.

Newer weight loss drugs may alter brain's reward circuit, impact how one experiences pleasure: Study

Newer oral weight loss drugs could be doing more than only suppressing appetite - they may also be directly altering brain circuits and reward, according to a new study, findings from which may have implications beyond weight loss and impact how one experiences pleasure.

GLP-1 receptor agonists were originally developed to treat type 2 diabetes by improving insulin response, with weight loss emerging as a secondary benefit. The drugs are known to act on cells or neurons in the hindbrain, located at the base of the skull, contributing to feelings of satiety and nausea.

Researchers from the University of Virginia, US, have found in a genetically engineered mouse model that in addition to the known effects, the newer GLP-1 drugs, including recently approved oral medications such as danuglipron and orforglipron, can reach deep brain regions.

The drugs were found to engage a separate circuit linking the hindbrain to the central amygdala (emotions processing centre) and ultimately to dopamine-producing neurons - the pathway is critical to how the brain assigns value to rewarding experiences, including high-calorie foods, the researchers said.

"What we show is that these drugs can reduce not just hunger, but the desire to pursue rewarding food. They're acting on the system that makes you want the cake, not just the system that makes you feel full," lead

researcher Ali D Güler, a neuroscientist at the University of Virginia, said.

The findings, published in the journal Nature, also help explain differences among drugs in this rapidly growing class, with certain producing more nausea-like effects and others creating a brain state that reduces food motivation without the same level of discomfort, the researchers said.

They added that the discovery comes at a time pharmaceutical companies are racing to develop more accessible alternatives to injectable GLP-1 therapies.

While oral versions of the treatments are easier to produce, more stable and significantly less expensive - potentially expanding access to millions of patients worldwide - the team said that the findings raise broader questions about how the drugs may affect one's behaviour.

"If these drugs are affecting reward pathways in the brain, that has implications beyond weight loss. It could influence things like addiction, impulse control or even how people experience pleasure," Güler said. Early evidence suggests some patients may find it easier to reduce compulsive behaviours, such as smoking, while others could report a diminished sense of enjoyment - Güler said both outcomes underscore the need for deeper study.

He added that as these medications become more widely used, careful oversight will be essential.

"These are powerful compounds. We need to understand them fully as they move into everyday use," Güler said.



Cong, BJP argue over Governor's 'delay' to invite TVK to form govt

Chennai

With the TVK party falling short of a majority, a war of words erupted between Congress and BJP leaders over the governor's alleged delay in calling Vijay to form the government in Tamil Nadu.

TVK has won 108 seats in the April 23 polls. Of which, Vijay will have to resign from one of the two seats he has won. Congress, which faced the election as part of the DMK-led alliance, switched sides post polls and extended the support of its five MLAs to TVK, taking the number of MLAs supporting Vijay to 112, which still falls short of 118, which marks a majority in the 234-member Tamil Nadu assembly.

Neither of the Dravidian majors, DMK and AIADMK, is close to the majority, and it ended up as a hung Assembly. Parties with smaller numbers in both the camps, VCK, PMK, CPI, CPI(M), IUML, DMKD and AMMK, have



game-changer potential. Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar was asking TVK to submit letters of support from allied MLAs and other partners, effectively establishing a working majority before an invitation to form the government was issued.

This has triggered a broader political debate, especially between Congress and the BJP, over whether the governor should insist on establishing a majority before inviting TVK to form a government.

Congress leaders have portrayed the delay in calling Vijay to form the government as a deliberate attempt from the BJP in the Centre, calling it an "undemocratic" tactic against the verdict of the people.

BJP leaders, on the other hand, have justified the governor's act and stressed "constitutional prudence". Congress MP Manickam Tagore alleged, "A former BJP leader as governor is now being used by the BJP to deny power to the single largest party."

Population control policies, UCC require public cooperation: RSS chief

Mysuru (Karnataka)

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said population control policies and the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code required public cooperation and long-term thinking, and asserted that caste-based politics would disappear only when society stopped identifying with caste divisions.

Addressing an interaction session after delivering a lecture on "Social Harmony as a Catalyst for National Development" at JSS Mahavidyapeetha here, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief also called for harmony among religions and communities. He urged people to practise equality in social life through conduct rather than slogans.

"Because society remembers caste, politicians take advantage of it. Their legitimate aim is to get votes. If they cannot get votes through work, they will get votes through caste," he said.

Replying to a question on the Population Control Bill and Uniform Civil Code (UCC), Bhagwat said the RSS was not the government but a social organisation and emphasised that laws could succeed only with public participation.

"People must first be educated. Policy is necessary, but policy can only succeed with public cooperation," he said.

Referring to population control measures during the Emergency period, Bhagwat said aggressive enforcement had led to public resentment and political backlash.

Regarding population control, there was once a



government that aggressively tried to control population during the Emergency, especially in north India. People were forcibly dragged for sterilisation operations. That government was completely defeated afterwards, he said.

Demographic imbalance, women's education, empowerment and health should all be considered before formulating future population policies.

"Once a policy is decided and people are educated about it, it should apply equally to everyone without exception," he said.

On the UCC, Bhagwat said some states had already moved ahead with it. Uttarakhand has already brought such a law and a few other states have introduced similar measures.

"So state by state it is progressing. Perhaps one day it may come across India. Be patient. In democracy, everything happens slowly because no one person decides—142 crore people decide," he added.

Speaking on caste divisions, Bhagwat said society itself had to change before politics could change.

He stressed that society must forget caste and then only politics will correct itself.

Governors are agents of BJP, maul Constitution to serve party's interests: Sibal

New Delhi

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Tamil Nadu Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar for not inviting Vijay-led TVK to form the government, alleging that governors are "agents" of the BJP who "maul" the Constitution to serve that party's interests.

Sibal's remarks come amid Vijay's efforts to cobble up support to form his maiden government after his TVK emerged as the single largest party in the April 23 assembly polls.

Vijay went to the Lok Bhavan on Thursday for a second time in 24 hours to meet Arlekar in connection with his request to be invited to form the government with the Congress' support, even as the BJP asserted that the governor will go by the rule book on the matter.

Tamil Nadu Lok Bhavan said Governor Arlekar explained to TVK chief Vijay that his party does not have requisite support to form the government.

In a post on X, Sibal said, "Tamil Nadu... Governors are agents of BJP. They maul the Constitution to serve BJP's interests." "Call Vijay (leader of single largest party). Swear him in as CM," the Independent Rajya Sabha MP said. "Let him prove his majority on the floor of the House. No post poll alliance in majority. Sarkaria Commission. Settled law. But who listens!" Sibal said.

The TVK won 108 seats in the 234-member Assembly in the April 23 polls and emerged as the single largest party.

India has every right to defend itself against cross-border terrorism : MEA

New Delhi

On the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor, India on Thursday reaffirmed its right to defend itself against Pakistan-backed cross-border terrorism while vowing to further strengthen the global fight against the menace.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, referring to the operation, asserted that India gave a befitting reply to Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism.

"We are marking the first anniversary of Op Sindoor today. The entire world saw the Pahalgam terrorist attack for what it was. We gave a befitting reply to Pakistan for its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism," he said.

"The world knows that



cross-border terrorism has long been an instrument of state policy for Pakistan. We in India have every right to defend ourselves against terrorism," he said at his weekly media briefing.

Jaiswal said India will continue to work to strengthen the global fight against terrorism.

In response to the Pahalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 last year carrying out airstrikes on nine terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir eliminating at least 100 terrorists.

The strikes triggered a rapid escalation in tensions

with Pakistan launching retaliatory strikes though most of them were thwarted by the Indian military.

The hostilities ended with an understanding on halting the military actions on May 10 following talks over the hotline between army officials of the two sides.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Operation Sindoor demonstrated India's resolve to defend itself against cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.

"With its decisive actions, India ensured accountability for terrorist actions. And underlined that such a serious threat to peace and security will be effectively countered," he said on social media.

Jaishankar said India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stands "strong and

determined" to convey a message of "zero tolerance" for terrorism.

In responding to a question on the Indus Water Treaty, Jaiswal said India's position on it is consistent.

"Indus Water Treaty (IWT) stands in abeyance in response to Pakistan's continued sponsorship of cross-border terrorism. Pakistan must credibly and irrevocably abjure its support for cross-border terrorism," he said.

As part of a series of punitive measures against Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack, India had put the treaty in abeyance.

India and Pakistan signed the IWT on September 19, 1960 after nine years of negotiations with a sole aim to manage issues relating to cross-border rivers.

Inducements worth Rs1,445 cr seized during polls

Tamil Nadu tops in cash, Bengal in liquor

New Delhi

Inducements worth Rs1,445 crore have been seized during the recent elections to five assemblies, with Tamil Nadu topping in cash seizures and West Bengal in liquor and drugs, the Election Commission said on Thursday.

The figures represent a 40.14 per cent increase in seizures as compared to the 2021 assembly polls in the states of West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and the Union Territory (UT) of



Puducherry when the seizures amounted to Rs 1,029.93 crore.

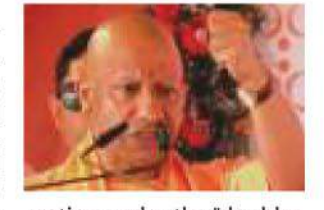
West Bengal saw the highest increase in the seizures of 68.92 per cent, and Tamil Nadu saw an increase in seizures of 48.40 per cent in 2026 compared to the corresponding

figures during the 2021 elections. According to the data shared by the poll authority, while nearly 155 crore illicit cash was recovered in the four states and Puducherry, liquor worth Rs 183.33 crore (around 70 lakh litres) was also seized.

Cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals and other inducements such as sarees, clothes, pressure cookers, utensils and even television sets are doled out to electors to induce them to vote for a particular party.

'Fatwa' politics replaced by 'Vikas' in UP: Yogi

Saharanpur



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday said the state had moved away from the politics of "appeasement" and "fatwas" to a model focused on development and public welfare, while attacking previous governments for allegedly encouraging communal and caste-based politics.

Addressing a programme in Saharanpur after inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of 325 development projects worth Rs 2,131 crore, Adityanath said western Uttar Pradesh had undergone a major transfor-

mation under the "double-engine government".

"Earlier, government funds were spent on cemetery boundary walls, illegal encroachments and caste-communal appeasement. Today, the same money is being used for roads, universities, sports colleges, RCC drains, expressways and the development of religious and tourism sites," the chief minister said.

ED raids 'aide' of Punjab CM's OSD, others in land 'fraud' case

Mann says operation has 'nothing to do with us'

Chandigarh

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday conducted searches at multiple locations in Punjab and Chandigarh, including the premises of an alleged close associate of an OSD in the CMO, as part of a money laundering probe into a land fraud case, officials said.

They said about a dozen locations in Mohali and Chandigarh linked to Suntek City project, Ajay Sehgal, ABS Townships, Altus Builders, Dhir Constructions and associates are being searched under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

A person named Nitin Goyal is also being searched by the agency and he is alleged to have "helped" builders who "defaulted" in payment of GMADA and subsequently cheating public. They are alleged to have collected funds worth crores of rupees from the investors, the officials said.

Mann, however, asserted that the central agency's operation has "nothing to do with us". Responding to



Officials claimed Goyal, an IT professional, was linked to Rajbir Ghuman, Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

The accused have been charged with fraud in obtaining CLU (change of land use) licences from GMADA and subsequently cheating public. They are alleged to have collected funds worth crores of rupees from the investors, the officials said.

Mann, however, asserted that the central agency's operation has "nothing to do with us". Responding to

stuffed with Rs 500 denomination cash were seen lying on the ground, indicating that they were thrown from a flat in a residential society following the ED raid.

A few bundles of cash could also be seen scattered on the ground of the residential society, the sources said.

A video of bags containing cash lying on the ground went viral on social media.

The sources added that a raid operation was carried out at the flat located in Western Towers in Kharar by ED sleuths.

SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia posted on X about the two cash bags.

"Crores of Money, 500 notes flying in Air. Money Belongs to whom--- OSD CM Mann Rajbir" Singh. "Kattar Fraudsters" in ED trap. ED raids on CM Bhagwant Mann's close aide OSD Rajbir" Ghuman's close aides and relatives Nitin, Veer davin-der," Majithia said in Punjab.

Suvendu aide murder deepens Bengal post-poll tensions

Probe hints at planned hit

Kolkata

Investigators probing the murder of BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari's aide Chandranath Rath suspect the involvement of professional shooters, with police recovering vehicles carrying fake number plates, even as the killing deepened West Bengal's volatile post-poll political fault lines and triggered a fresh war of words between the BJP and the TMC.

Speaking before Rath's body was taken to his native place Chandipur in Purba Medinipur district, Adhikari asserted that the former Indian Air Force personnel was killed because of his association with him and his victory in Bhabanipur, where he defeated TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

EVICION NOTICES TO YAMUNA BAZAR RESIDENTS

Carriers of Mahabharata tales face uncertain future

New Delhi

As smoke from funeral pyres rises above Nigambodh Ghat and priests perform the Yamuna 'aarti', families living along the Yamuna said they have spent generations carrying forward traditions tied to the river, from cremation rituals to preserving stories they say date back to the Mahabharata era.

Now, with eviction notices threatening to clear the settlement within days, residents say the fear is not only of losing their homes but also of watching an entire riverbank culture, inherited across centuries, disappear with them. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has issued eviction

notices to residents of Yamuna Bazar in the Kashmere Gate area, granting them 15 days to remove their belongings and vacate the settlement voluntarily, failing which demolition action would be undertaken to clear the "encroachment".

Authorities said nearly 310 dwellings exist along the Yamuna floodplains in the O-Zone area designated as protected no-construction land under the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), citing recurring flooding as a threat to human life and property.

"My family has been living here for nearly 200 years now, and we even have maps and records proving our presence here for over a

century. What we heard from our ancestors is that these ghats were once divided caste-wise and families had their traditional roles connected to the Yamuna," said Sunil Sharma, a priest at Nigambodh Ghat near Yamuna Bazar.

Sharma said his family stayed near the ghats as priests, performing Yamuna 'aarti', conducting cremations at Nigambodh Ghat and carrying out rituals connected to the river.

"This is not just a place for us, it is our and the city's heritage," he said.

Sharma, who is also associated with the Yamuna Ghat Panda Association, said nearly 60 families with histories stretching back over 100



years remain connected to this place. We learned priesthood here and now we are passing the same traditions to our children.

"Our fathers and grandfathers taught us the religious and cultural importance of this place. We learned priesthood here and now we are passing the same traditions to our children.

"This is how most families here earn their livelihoods. The river is not separate from our lives, it is at the centre of our existence," he said. Surrender, a 47-year-old resident and lifeguard in the area, said his family's connection to the Yamuna stretched back generations.

"Our ancestors used to tell us that our family had been staying here since the time of Raja Akbar and we have proof showing our presence here for at least 150 years. My father became known across the country because he swam from Delhi to Mathura, something no one else could do at the time," he said.

Residents said generations of priests, workers, boatmen and caretakers gradually settled around the river

while serving pilgrims, cremation grounds and temple activities. "About 200 years ago, our ancestors came as priests and settled in the area, and since then, we have been residing here. Even today, people are doing the same jobs, though some have gone into the corporate world to earn more money," another resident said. Speaking about the history of the area, historian Swapna Liddle said the Neeli Chhatri temple near Nigambodh Ghat carried significant historical importance and evidence of long human activity around the site. "The Neeli Chhatri temple near Nigambodh Ghat is a very old site. The earliest concrete historical evidence linked to the area

dates back to the Mughal period, in the 16th century. "There are also longstanding legends associated with the site, including stories connected to Yudhishtira and Yaksha Puja along the Yamuna," she said. Liddle noted that the structure presently known as the Neeli Chhatri temple was originally a pavilion before evolving into a temple during the 19th century. "In 1852, records mention a dispute after a man came and began residing in the area, indicating that people were already living or camping around the site during that period. Wherever there were pavilions, ghats, pilgrimage points or resting areas, communities often developed around them over time," she added.

What to know about hantavirus, the illness linked to a cruise ship outbreak



THE VIRUS USUALLY SPREADS WHEN PEOPLE INHALE CONTAMINATED RESIDUE OF RODENT DROPPINGS. HANTAVIRUSES HAVE BEEN AROUND FOR CENTURIES AND ARE THOUGHT TO EXIST AROUND THE WORLD. THE DISEASE GAINED RENEWED ATTENTION LAST YEAR AFTER THE LATE ACTOR GENE HACKMAN'S WIFE, BETSY ARAKAWA, DIED FROM A HANTAVIRUS INFECTION IN NEW MEXICO

An outbreak aboard a cruise ship of a rare rodent-borne illness called hantavirus has left three passengers dead and sickened others, but global health officials say the risk to the general public remains low because the germ does not easily spread between people.

"This is not the next COVID, but it is a serious infectious disease," said Maria Van Kerkhove, director of epidemic and pandemic preparedness at the World Health Organisation. "Most people will never be exposed to this."

The virus usually spreads when people inhale contaminated residue of rodent droppings. Hantaviruses have been around for centuries and are thought to exist around the world.

The disease gained renewed attention last year after the late actor Gene Hackman's wife, Betsy Arakawa, died from a hantavirus infection in New Mexico.

This outbreak may have come from Argentina

Detailed investigations of the cruise ship outbreak are ongoing, notably to determine its source.

Investigators in Argentina suspect that the cases were initially contracted during a bird-watching trip in Ushuaia, at the country's southern tip, two officials told AP.

Argentina has seen a surge of hantavirus cases that many local public health researchers attribute to climate change.

Officials have found evidence of Andes virus, a version of hantavirus found in South America.

The virus is spread by rodents and, more rarely, people

Hantavirus is mainly spread by contact with rodents or their urine, saliva or droppings, particularly when the material is disturbed and becomes airborne, posing a risk of inhalation.

People are typically exposed to hantavirus around their homes, cabins or sheds, especially when cleaning enclosed spaces with little ventilation or exploring areas with mouse droppings.

The illness starts with flu-like symptoms

An infection can rapidly progress and become life-threatening. Experts say it can start with symptoms including fever, chills, muscle aches and maybe a headache — much like the flu.

Symptoms of hantavirus pulmonary syn-

drome usually show between one and eight weeks after contact with an infected rodent. As the infection progresses, patients might experience tightness in the chest, as the lungs fill with fluid.

The other syndrome caused by hantavirus — known as hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome, which can cause bleeding, high fever, and kidney failure — usually develops within a week or two after exposure.

Death rates vary by which hantavirus causes

the illness. Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome is fatal in about 35% of people infected, while the death rate for hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome varies from 1% to 15% of patients, according to the CDC.

Infections have been relatively uncommon

Hantavirus infections are relatively uncommon globally. The WHO reported that in 2025, eight countries within the Americas had document-

ed 229 cases and 59 deaths.

Argentina's health ministry said hantavirus led to 28 deaths nationwide last year. The ministry on Tuesday reported 101 hantavirus infections since June 2025, roughly double the caseload recorded over the same period the previous year.

In the US, federal health officials began tracking the virus after a 1993 outbreak in the Four Corners region — the area where Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah meet. It was an astute physician with the Indian Health Service

who first noticed a pattern of deaths among young patients.

Most US cases are in Western states. New Mexico and Arizona are hot spots, likely because the odds are greater for mouse-human encounters in rural areas.

The Andes virus is a concerning member of the hantavirus family

The word hantavirus refers to a broad family of viruses, with different versions in different countries. Almost none of them have been found to spread from person to person — with the possible exception of the Andes virus, which has been confirmed in the current outbreak.

Still, transmission between people does not happen easily, and would require "close and prolonged" contact, according to the WHO.

"We haven't had huge person-to-person spreads of hantavirus infection ever before, and there's no reason to suspect a huge outbreak from this case at this point," said Steven Bradfute, an associate professor and associate director of the Center for Global Health at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center, which specialises in hantavirus research.

A lot of unknowns about the illness and treatment

There is no specific treatment or cure, but early medical attention can increase the chance of survival.

Despite years of research, many questions have yet to be answered, including why it can be mild for some people and severe for others and how antibodies are developed. Some researchers have been following patients over long periods of time in hopes of finding a treatment. "In the Americas, hantavirus infection is very serious, but it's also quite rare," Bradfute said. "And so for a time that probably led to less research into it because of funding priorities, but I know there's been a lot of interest in funding hantavirus work of late."

What researchers do know is that rodent exposure is key.

The best way to avoid the germ is to minimize contact with rodents and their droppings. Use protective gloves and a bleach solution for cleaning up rodent droppings. Public health experts caution against sweeping or vacuuming, which can cause virus particles to get into the air.

JET FUEL, JET TEARS, AND JET BANKRUPTCY

Airlines are bleeding to death while governments pretend it's 'Just Business'!



ARJA SRIKANTH
SENIOR BUREAUCRAT



THE EARLY CASUALTIES REVEAL THE ANATOMY OF THIS BREAKDOWN. SPIRIT AIRLINES IN THE UNITED STATES, ONCE THE POSTER CHILD OF ULTRA-LOW-COST DEMOCRATIZED FLYING, MOVED INTO LIQUIDATION AFTER ITS RESCUE ATTEMPT COLLAPSED UNDER POLITICAL RESISTANCE AND A BRUTAL FUEL SPIRAL

The global airline industry is not merely facing turbulence; it is flying through a perfect storm with half its engines on fire. What was marketed as a triumphant post-pandemic recovery has mutated into a systemic crisis where airlines are collapsing not because people stopped flying, but because the economics of flying has become structurally irrational. The crisis is no longer cyclical. It is institutional. Airlines are not crashing due to lack of demand—they are collapsing because demand has become irrelevant when cost structures behave like geopolitical landmines. In the first five months of 2026 alone, multiple carriers entered administration, shutdown, or liquidation, signalling that the aviation industry is undergoing a deep structural breakdown. Airline failure is no longer an unexpected event. It is becoming a predictable outcome—almost like a scheduled departure.

The early casualties reveal the anatomy of this breakdown. Spirit Airlines in the United States, once the poster child of ultra-low-cost democratized flying, moved into liquidation after its rescue attempt collapsed under political resistance and a brutal fuel spiral. Spirit Airlines shut down after bankruptcy when the Iran conflict pushed fuel costs into a price spike that erased operational viability. In the United Kingdom, Ecojet—a hydrogen-electric dream dressed in futuristic optimism—entered administration, proving that green innovation without financial realism is simply a well-branded collapse. In Asia, Royal Air Philippines saw administrative breakdown after thousands of cancellations, while India's Dove Airlines went into voluntary liquidation as insolvency escalated into fleet seizure. These are not isolated failures. They are symptoms of a global disease.

even the survivors are bleeding. JetBlue reported a Q1 2026 net loss of \$319 million, deeper than the previous year's \$208 million loss. Indian aviation is projected to lose ₹170-180 billion in FY2026, a staggering hole in a sector that is supposedly "booming." American Airlines has warned that a \$4 billion increase in fuel expenditure could push it into a full-year loss. Across the world's 20 largest publicly listed airlines, nearly \$53 billion in market capitalization has evaporated. The markets are sending a blunt message: investors are no longer convinced airlines are businesses. They are starting to look like liabilities with wings. At the centre of this crisis lies the most ruthless input cost in aviation: jet fuel. Fuel typically accounts for 30-40% of an airline's operating expenses, which already means airlines operate

with the financial resilience of a plastic bottle in a furnace. But in 2026, fuel stopped behaving like a commodity and began behaving like a weapon.

The U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict triggered a seismic energy shock. Jet fuel in the United States surged toward \$5 per gallon by late April, and in some markets prices crossed \$200 per barrel. JetBlue, which paid an average of \$2.96 per gallon in Q1, projects Q2 costs exploding into the \$4.13-\$4.28 range. This is not inflation. This is suffocation. The brutal arithmetic of aviation explains why the industry is structurally fragile. Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr's remark that airlines earn only about €10 profit per passenger is not an exaggeration—it is the core tragedy of modern aviation. When your profit per passenger is the price of a sandwich, but your cost volatility is driven by global wars, you are not running a business. You are gambling against geopolitics.

Airlines tried to respond with fare hikes—six rounds of increases since the conflict began. But the market has limits. You cannot endlessly raise ticket prices without eventually shrinking demand, especially in price-sensitive economies like India and Southeast Asia. The airline industry has discovered a cruel paradox: planes can be full and still bankrupt. Fuel, however, is only the first engine of destruction. The second is operational chaos, which has turned airlines into inefficient fuel-burning machines. Airspace closures and rerouting have become a silent cost explosion. With Middle Eastern air corridors restricted and strategic chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz under threat, airlines have been forced into longer, circuitous routes. Every additional hour in the air is not just time—it is tonnes of fuel burned, crew costs multiplied, maintenance cycles shortened, and aircraft pro-

ductivity reduced. A plane that flies longer routes completes fewer rotations. That destroys the economics of fleet utilization.

Then comes the supply chain crisis, an industrial failure that has become aviation's invisible enemy. The Pratt & Whitney engine crisis has grounded aircraft across markets, with India alone reportedly seeing 117 aircraft grounded—around 13-15% of its fleet. This is catastrophic because airlines survive only if utilization stays high. When aircraft are grounded, airlines are forced to lease replacement planes, often older and less fuel-efficient, worsening the fuel problem further. The industry is trapped in a vicious loop: fuel rises, efficiency collapses, leasing costs surge, and losses accelerate. Currency depreciation adds another layer of pain, particularly in emerging markets. Aviation is globally dollar-denominated: aircraft leases, spare parts, engines, insurance, and maintenance contracts are priced in USD. When currencies like the Indian rupee weaken, airlines bleed even if domestic demand is booming. This is why airlines often collapse not in recession, but during growth phases—because growth exposes their cost base to global pricing.

And then comes the most dangerous contradiction of all: the government paradox. Airlines exist to sell one product more valuable than comfort: time. Aviation compresses geography and converts days into hours. It is productivity infrastructure, not luxury consumption. Yet governments treat aviation like an optional private service rather than a strategic public utility. Roads and railways receive massive public subsidies globally because they are viewed as national arteries. Aviation, despite enabling trade, tourism, emergency medical movement, national integration, and supply chain speed, is still forced to operate under

More than media mogul, Ted Turner leaves behind conservation legacy

Ted Turner loved the land, and lots of it: As one of the largest private landowners in the United States, he fuelled conservation work across some 8,094 square kilometers of ranchland in several states, aiming to leave it in better shape for future generations.

Framing conservation as essential for human survival, Turner saw habitat restoration, stewardship and endangered species work as ways to address climate change, the loss of biodiversity and resource depletion.

"I want to inspire people to care about the environment," Turner said in a 2016 interview with a travel publication. "When we connect with nature, we heal ourselves. When we protect nature, we heal the planet."

The media mogul's death Wednesday leaves a legacy of conservation work that spanned decades — from when Turner bought his first bison a half-century ago to the large-scale restoration work and species re-introductions ongoing today. His ranches in New Mexico, Montana, Nebraska and elsewhere have become living laboratories. His "estancias" in Patagonia are models of ecotourism.

And according to Turner Enterprises, which manages his land along with his other business interests and investments, Turner ensured that his holdings would continue to be protected from development.

From recreation to restoration

Turner purchased his first bison in 1976, fulfilling a childhood dream.

"When I was a little boy, about 10 years old, I read National Geographic magazine and it had an article about bison, and it said how close they came to extinction. I decided then that, if I could, I would do what I could to help bring the bison back," he said in a 2019 CNN programme, "Ted Turner: Captain Planet."

But he said "I had to make a lot of money first. Because ranches are not cheap."

Turner bought his first ranch in 1987. Not long after, he acquired the Flying D Ranch near Bozeman, Montana, which is now one of the largest, most prominent examples of "rewilding."

He initially used his properties for hunting and fishing before working on habitat restoration and the reintroduction of native species. The Flying D, for example, had been overgrazed so he replaced traditional cattle operations with a bison herd to restore the native ecosystem.

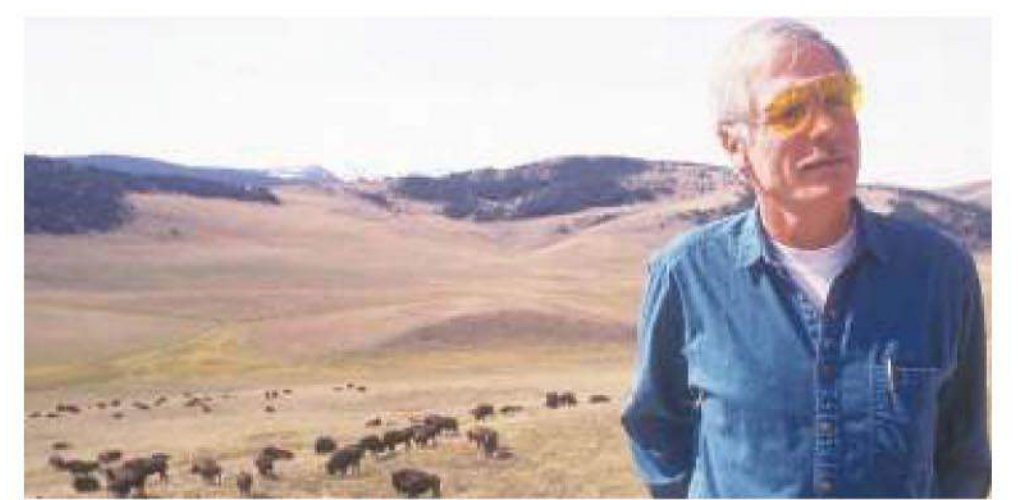
At Vermejo Park Ranch, purchased in the mid-1990s from Pennzoil and spanning more than 2,253 square kilometres near the New Mexico-Colorado border, Turner's team has worked to restore mountainsides and valleys degraded by overgrazing, mining and clear-cutting. It's also home to a herd of what ranch managers describe as genetically pure wild bison.

In all, Turner owned 13 ranches in six states. At some of the ranches, Ted Turner Reserves and Turner Enterprises have woven revenue-generating programmes like bison ranching, recreation and tourism with ecology.

"He wanted part of America to still be preserved and in some way protected as it was at the time that the American Indians roamed those lands," former CNN President Tom Johnson said Wednesday. "In this era of development and commercialisation and bad zoning, he cleaned up the streams and brought back the gray wolves and the prairie dog. I mean, he really cared about nature and was seeing what was happening."

Jennifer Morris, CEO of The Nature Conservancy, said Wednesday that Turner just didn't believe in protecting nature, he acted on it and did so at a large scale.

"He invested in land, restored ecosystems, and showed what's possible when you pair vision with real commitment," she said in a statement. "His work helped redefine conservation, proving that private lands and private capital can be powerful forces for public good."



Two former Chinese defence ministers sentenced to death for corruption



Two former Chinese defence ministers Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu (file photos)

Two former Chinese defence ministers, Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu, were sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve over graft charges on Thursday, official media reported.

Their sentences were separately handed down by China's military court, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Wei was convicted of accepting bribes, while Li was convicted of both accepting and offering bribes, the agency reported, citing the court rulings.

Wei and his successor Li, who worked under President

Xi Jinping's watch, were expelled from the ruling Communist Party in 2024. They were also former members of the Central Military Commission headed

by Xi. Wei served as Defence Minister from 2018 to 2023, and Li barely served a few months as his successor. Both Wei and Li headed the People's Liberation Army's

all-important Rocket (Missile) Force, established in 2015 as part of Xi's military overhaul. Wei, who headed the rocket force from its inception until 2017 and later served as the defence minister, was detained and expelled from the ruling Communist Party over corruption charges. Li was personally picked up for the top defence post by Xi himself. After Li's sacking, several of its top officials were removed and charged with corruption. Since he came to power in 2012, President Xi has carried out a massive anti-corruption campaign in which over a million officials, including several generals, have been punished.

Hundreds of homes damaged in Mississippi storms as multiple tornadoes tare through

Jackson (US)

Powerful storms that included at least one confirmed tornado tore through parts of Mississippi, collapsing hundreds of homes, tearing up trees and downing power lines, authorities said Thursday.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or severe injuries from the storms that struck several counties Wednesday night.

A mobile home park in the small community of Bogue Chitto in Lincoln County was severely damaged. "I was just watching TikTok on my bed and thought it was thunder. I went to my living room. I went back to my room, and the room's gone," resident Max Mahaffey told WAPT-TV.

He said he wasn't injured, but his grandmother hurt her ankle and some of his neighbours suffered cuts and bruises.

The National Weather Service said "a very large and dangerous tornado" moved from eastern Lincoln County into Lawrence County. Gov Tate Reeves said multiple tornadoes were reported throughout the central and western parts of the state and that the state Emergency Management Agency was coordinating response efforts. "Pray for Mississippi," he posted online.

Emergency officials in Lincoln County said the severe weather caused major damage and several injuries, but no deaths.

Ukraine launches a major drone attack after Moscow shuns ceasefire offer

Kyiv



Russian air defences shot down 347 Ukrainian drones overnight, Russia's Defence Ministry said Thursday, in what appeared to be a major attack after Moscow spurned Kyiv's ceasefire offer earlier in the week and tension mounted over safety at Russia's upcoming Victory Day celebrations.

Incoming drones were destroyed over 20 Russian regions, including Moscow, according to the Defence Ministry, in Ukraine's second-biggest aerial attack since Russia's all-out invasion more than four years ago. The largest was last March when it launched 389 drones.

The attack came ahead of Russia's most important secular holiday, Victory Day, which marks the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. Russian authorities have declared a unilateral ceasefire in Ukraine for Friday and Saturday.

Ukraine had responded to that with its own suspension of hostilities from midnight Tuesday. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Moscow disregarded the goodwill gesture and launched fresh attacks.

"Russia has not stopped any type of its military activity. Unfortunately, it has not stopped. Ukraine will act symmetrically," Zelenskyy said in his regular evening video address Wednesday.

He said Thursday on X that Russia's attacks have

been ceaseless, with drones, missiles, artillery shelling and glide bombs hitting civilian areas of Ukraine, including the power grid and rail network. In the northeastern city of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest, a drone strike wounded nine people, including three children, local officials said.

Tension has grown as Russia's Victory Day celebrations approach and US-led peace efforts gain no traction. All mobile internet access and text messaging services will be shut down in the Russian capital on May 9, state media reported Thursday, citing the country's Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media.

Also, a traditional parade in Moscow won't feature the usual tanks, missiles and other military equipment for the first time in nearly two decades.

Russian authorities say they are concerned about possible Ukrainian attacks, as Kyiv has expanded its long-range drone and missile capabilities.

The Russian Defense

Ministry cited the "current operational situation" as a reason for excluding military equipment.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that additional security measures were being taken due to the "rather complex operational situation".

The measures being taken "are necessary to ensure the safety of citizens, which is an absolute priority," Peskov told reporters.

The restrictions will include websites on the Russian government's so-called "white list," a group of state-approved online services that are kept available during the country's increasingly common connectivity blackouts.

Home internet and Wi-Fi will be unaffected, officials said. Ukraine's air defence shot down 92 of the 102 drones Russia launched overnight, the military said.

Russia maintains a significant advantage in drone numbers, regularly deploying hundreds in a single attack.

Nigerian army rescues some children abducted from an orphanage last month

Abuja (Nigeria)

Seven children and two women abducted by gunmen at an orphanage last month in the north-central region of Nigeria have been rescued by troops, the country's army said on Wednesday.

Authorities in Kogi state said gunmen attacked an Islamic orphanage that was operating illegally and abducted 23 pupils in an "isolated area" of Lokoja, capital of Kogi State, on April 26. Fifteen of those abducted were immediately rescued.



The troops intercepted and recovered the victims within a forest area in the state, army spokesman Hassan Abdullahi said in a statement.

"The rescued victims comprised five boys, two girls, and two adult females, believed to be the wives of the proprietor of the orphanage," Abdullahi said.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack.

Armed groups attack schools and abduct students because they are seen as strategic in drawing attention and exacting huge ransoms, according to analysts.

Several hundred students have been kidnapped across Nigeria.

Hungary returns seized cash, gold shipment worth US \$82 million to Ukraine

Budapest

A shipment of Ukrainian cash and gold worth around US \$82 million that Hungary seized earlier this year has been returned to Ukraine's state Oschadbank, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Wednesday.

The seizure of the valuables, which were being transported through Hungary by two armoured cars when Hungarian counter-terrorism authorities detained them on March 5, caused outrage in Ukraine, where officials accused Hungary's pro-Russian government of acting illegally, and of using the seizure as a



tool in Prime Minister Viktor Orban's anti-Ukraine election campaign.

The neighbouring countries had already been in a bitter feud over Hungary's access to Russian oil through a pipeline that crosses

Ukrainian territory. But on Wednesday, Zelenskyy wrote on social media that the return of the valuables represented "an important step in relations with Hungary" after Orban was defeated in a landslide election last month that has raised hopes the incoming government will pursue a less antagonistic policy toward Kyiv.

"I am grateful to Hungary for its constructive approach and civilised step," Zelenskyy wrote. "I thank everyone on Ukraine's team who fought for a fair decision and defended the interests of our state and our people."

Judge releases Epstein's 'suicide note' in case tied to ex-cellmate

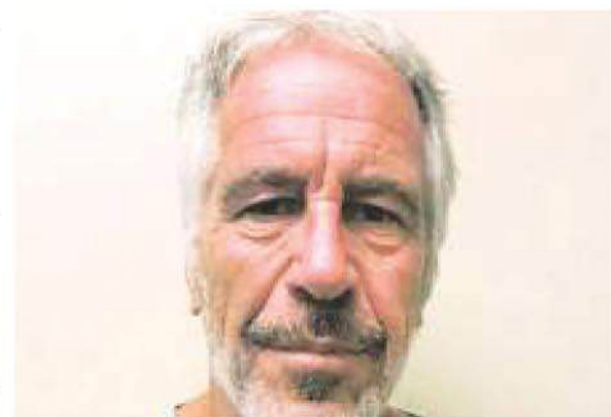
New York

A note Jeffrey Epstein's former cellmate claimed he found after the millionaire sex offender's first suspected jail suicide attempt was made public Wednesday, years after being sealed and locked in a courthouse vault as part of an unrelated legal dispute.

US District Judge Kenneth Karas in White Plains, New York, ordered the release of the note after The New York Times asked him last week to unseal it and other documents in a case involving the former cellmate, Nicholas Tartaglione. Federal prosecutors did not oppose the request.

Few people had known about the note until Tartaglione, a former police officer serving a life sentence for killing four people, mentioned it last year on writer Jessica Reed Kraus' podcast.

Tartaglione claimed he discovered the note in a book after Epstein was



found on the floor of their cell at a Manhattan federal jail on July 23, 2019, with a strip of bedsheet around the financier's neck. That was about three weeks before Epstein was found dead in his cell in what authorities concluded was a suicide.

"They investigated me for month -- found nothing!!!" said the short note, which is hard to decipher in some places. "It is a treat to be able to choose" the "time to say goodbye," the note con-

tinues. "Watcha want me to do -- Bust out cryin!!!"

"NO FUN," the note concludes, with those words underlined. "NOT WORTH IT!!!"

It is unclear who wrote the note Tartaglione claimed to have found. It wasn't mentioned in the lengthy government reports examining the circumstances of Epstein's death, nor did it surface in the Justice Department's recent release of files on the late financier.

In a written ruling, Karas

said he weighed the privacy interests of third parties, including Epstein, before ruling to release the note. He said existing case law suggests that privacy interests of a deceased person, such as Epstein, "are vastly reduced and disclosure of the deceased's information is unlikely to work a concrete harm."

According to jail records, Epstein had friction marks and skin irritation on his neck from the suspected July 23 attempt. Jail officers said he was breathing heavily but responsive. One officer reported at the time that Epstein said he believed Tartaglione had tried to kill him, according to a memo included in the Justice Department's files.

Jail officials placed Epstein on suicide watch for 31 hours after the incident before downgrading him to psychiatric observation - his status when he killed himself. According to jail records, he denied trying to harm himself, telling a jail psychologist

that suicide was against his Jewish religion and that he was a "coward" who didn't like pain.

A chronology included in the files states that Tartaglione told his lawyer about the note four days after the suspected July 23 attempt. The note was later submitted as evidence in Tartaglione's criminal case and was placed under seal amid a dispute over his legal representation.

Both men were interviewed by jail personnel on July 31, 2019, according to jail records.

Epstein said he had never had any issues with Tartaglione, wasn't threatened by him and didn't "want to make up something that isn't there." Tartaglione said he didn't have any issues being Epstein's cellmate, though he said they kept their conversations to a minimum. On July 23, he said, he thought Epstein was having a heart attack because his eyes were open and he appeared to be snoring.

Flights carrying women and children linked to IS group land in Australia



Melbourne

Airliners carrying Australian women and children with alleged ties to the Islamic State group landed in Australia on Thursday.

An airliner reportedly carrying three Australian women and eight children landed in Melbourne, while a separate plane carrying a woman and her son arrived in Sydney soon after.

The Australian government announced on Wednesday that the 13 - who have spent years in a

Syrian desert camp - planned to return to Australia.

Police said the women face potential criminal charges relating to their alleged time in the Islamic State group's so-called caliphate that spanned Syria and Iraq.

Both Qatar Airways flights took off minutes apart from Doha, bound for Australia's two largest cities. QR904, which landed in Melbourne first, was followed by QR908 in Sydney.

Bangladesh seeks China's support in Teesta river restoration project

Beijing

Bangladesh's new government, headed by Tarique Rahman, has formally sought China's involvement and support for the Teesta River restoration project, a move that may cast shadow on New Delhi-Dhaka ties.

The issues concerning the Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project (TRCMRP) were discussed in a meeting between Bangladesh's Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Beijing on Wednesday, according to state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) news agency.

The Teesta River flows from the eastern Himalayas through Sikkim and West Bengal before entering Bangladesh, where it is a key source of irrigation and livelihoods of millions of people.

Expressing support for the new Bangladesh government, Wang was quoted saying by BSS news agency



that China is ready to promote the alignment of the high-quality Belt and Road cooperation with Bangladesh's national development strategies and deepen cooperation in traditional areas like economy, infrastructure, and people-to-people exchanges, among others.

The government will also encourage Chinese enterprises to invest in Bangladesh, he said.

According to the Chinese official readout, Wang stressed that China's development of relations with Bangladesh and other South Asian countries does not

target any third party, nor should it be affected by any third party.

This is Rahman's first visit to China after the new government headed by Tarique Rahman took over power in February this year. He arrived here on May 5 and is scheduled to leave on Thursday.

Last month, Rahman was in India. His talks with Indian leaders were closely watched in Beijing as the interim administration led by Muhammad Yunus had moved closer to China and Pakistan after the fall of Sheikh Hasina, straining ties between Dhaka and New Delhi.

2 British nationals isolate themselves after hantavirus exposure on cruise

London

Two British nationals who were exposed to the dangerous hantavirus while on a cruise ship before flying back home recently are self-isolating as a precautionary measure, UK health authorities have said.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said on Wednesday that it is working with the World Health Organisation (WHO) to coordinate the arrival of British nationals to the UK from MV Hondius, which was docked off the coast of West Africa when an outbreak of the virus was reported.

Dr Meera Chand, Deputy Director for Epidemic and Emerging Infections at UKHSA, sought to reassure the public that risk from the virus, which is spread through rodent droppings, remains "very low."

"Our thoughts are with all those affected by the hantavirus outbreak onboard

the MV Hondius," the Indian-origin medic said.

"It's important to reassure people that the risk to the general public remains very low. We are standing up arrangements to support, isolate and monitor British nationals from the ship on their return to the UK and we are contact tracing anyone who may have been in contact with the ship or the hantavirus cases to limit the risk of onward transmission.

"UKHSA will continue to work closely with government partners to offer all necessary support," she said. The Andes strain of hantavirus has been identified in a number of people on the Dutch cruise ship, which causes fever, extreme fatigue, muscle aches, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, or shortness of breath.

In extreme cases, people develop severe breathing difficulties or low blood pressure and kidney failure,



requiring hospital care. According to experts, transmission between humans is rare and occurs only through very close contact.

"UKHSA is aware of two people who have returned to the UK independently having been on board the MV Hondius. Neither of these individuals is currently reporting symptoms. They are receiving advice and support from UKHSA and have been advised to self-isolate," the UK's health

Wednesday.

The UKHSA said the remaining British nationals will be repatriated once the ship docks at its next destination, if they do not develop symptoms. None of the British citizens onboard are currently reporting symptoms but they are being closely monitored.

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) said it is making arrangements for these individuals to return to the UK, where UKHSA is working with the government to support them to isolate with regular testing and contact with healthcare professionals.

"The Foreign Office is working urgently to support the UKHSA's work overseas and to make sure British nationals on the MV Hondius can all get safely home with proper protection for public health," said Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.

Niharika Konidela's smile does all the talking

Niharika Konidela is not just a face on screen anymore. The actress-turned-producer recently produced her second movie. The fantasy comedy film Raakasa, proves that she has a sharp eye for storytelling beyond just acting. Tollywood is clearly seeing a new side of her.

And while she is busy building her name behind the camera, in front of it she looks absolutely lovely. Her latest pictures have been making rounds and it is easy to see

why. Shot outdoors under a canopy of green trees with white flowers scattered on the ground, the setting feels like something out of a fairy tale.

Niharika is dressed in a soft peach lehenga with a lace crop top, ruffled dupatta flowing in her hands and a big smile that does all the talking. Simple, fresh and effort-

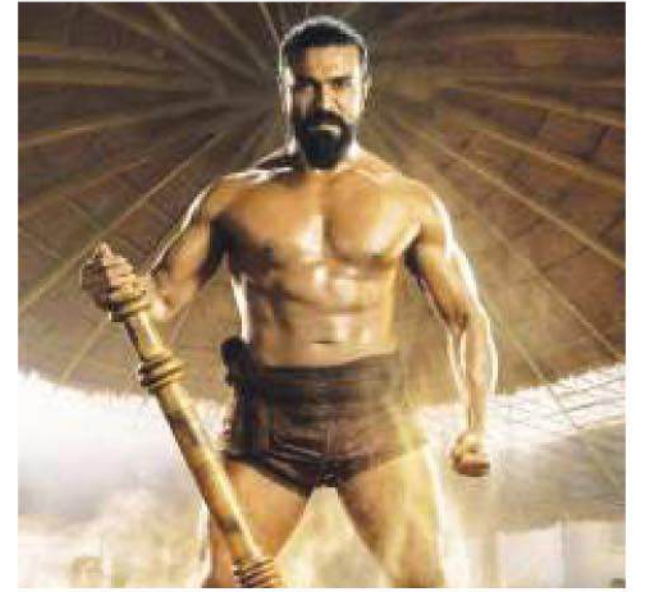
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Ram Charan's Peddi creates a strong buzz

Mega Power Star Ram Charan is returning with the rural action drama Peddi, directed by Buchi Babu Sana and produced by Venkata Satish Kilaru on a grand scale under Vriddhi Cinemas. The film has already created strong buzz with its chartbuster songs and striking glimpses. Ahead of the release, Production Designer Avinash Kolla shared some insightful details.

Avinash Kolla says he was overwhelmed when he first heard the story. "No story



excited me like Peddi in the last 10 years. After Buchi Babu finished narrating it, I couldn't speak or react for nearly 20 minutes. It moved me that deeply. The story carries immense emotional weight. That very moment, I knew we had to give uncompromising attention to every aspect of the production design."

He reveals that the story is set in the 70s and 80s. "I've worked on many period films, so that experience helped. Peddi is set in the Vizianagaram region. We recreated its streets, the clock tower, and surrounding areas.

We focused carefully on the wrestling and cricket segments as well. We created a wrestling setup unlike anything Indian audiences have seen before. For that, we shot in an underground structure- the shot where Charan appears in the pit was filmed there."

The production designer adds that Ram Charan appreciated every set created for the film. "Charan admired each set- from the train setup to the special song set, the wrestling pit, and all others. Many who visited him during the shoot were surprised by how natural and real the sets looked."

Nora Fatehi apologises before NCW over 'Sarke Chunar' row Vows support for orphan girls



Actor Nora Fatehi on Thursday appeared before the National Commission for Women (NCW) in connection with a controversy surrounding the song 'Sarke Chunar' and apologised, saying there was 'no intention to offend anybody.'

Speaking to reporters after the hearing, Fatehi said she had been put in a situation unintentionally but acknowledged her responsibility as an artist.

"It was just a situation that I was put in, and there was no intention to offend anybody. But of course, I have to be responsible as an artiste. I definitely apologise, we have done everything in writing. They have been so kind and helpful," she said.

The actor also said she has decided to sponsor the education of orphan girls.

"It's really important for us to give back to society. So, I decided that we should sponsor a few orphan girls, their education, so that is the goal after this matter," she said. In a statement, the commission said that Fatehi submitted a written unconditional apology.

According to the commission, Fatehi said she was not well-versed in Kannada and was unaware of the objectionable message conveyed in the Hindi-dubbed version of the song.

She expressed regret over the impact caused by the song and assured the commission that she would exercise greater caution while associating with future projects. During the hearing,

NCW chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar expressed concern over the vulgarity and societal impact of such content and said artistes and public figures cannot evade social responsibility by citing contractual limitations or lack of awareness.

Rahatkar said celebrities wield significant influence over society, particularly the youth, and must remain conscious of the messages they convey.

"As a gesture of social responsibility and atonement, Fatehi also committed to sponsoring the education of 100 orphan girls and requested the Commission to consider her apology sympathetically," the statement read.

"The Commission took the apology on record while firmly reaffirming that entertainment content must uphold the dignity of women, preserve cultural and societal sensitivities, and refrain from promoting obscenity or the derogatory representation of women in any form," it added.

Earlier, Fatehi distanced herself from the Hindi version of the song, saying she had shot the Kannada version and that her permission was not taken for its use in Hindi.

The Hindi version of the song, released on March 15 on YouTube, triggered outrage among a section of the public over its allegedly explicit lyrics.

Following the backlash, the makers removed the Hindi version from YouTube, though it continued to circulate across platforms.

Priyanka Chopra teams up with Orlando Bloom for survival thriller 'Reset'

Priyanka Chopra Jonas has found her next Hollywood film in 'Reset', a survival thriller which will feature her alongside 'Pirates of the Caribbean' star Orlando Bloom.

The movie, which will go into production in August, will be directed by Matt Smukler, best known for the 2020 drama film 'Wildflower'.

'Reset' will feature Priyanka as a woman who wakes up in the middle of the wilderness, days from civilisation, with no memory of how she got there. Her only chance at survival is to trust a charming stranger -- who may not be who he claims to be.

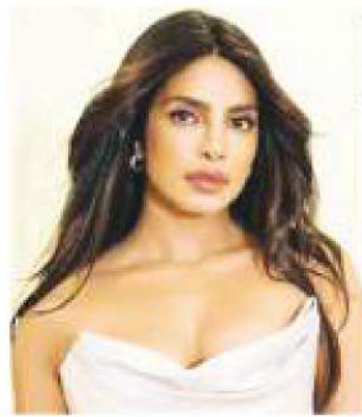
Smukler told Deadline that the

pairing was driven by the actors' rare ability to project attraction and mistrust simultaneously.

"I was looking for a pairing where attraction and mistrust could effortlessly coexist. Priyanka and Orlando have this uncanny ability to make you believe both at once. Their chemistry is undeniable," he said.

The film will be produced by Jon Hoeber and Erich Hoeber under their Fratricidal Films banner, Michael Lazarovitch for Chemically Altered, and Matthew Rhodes of Rhodes Entertainment.

Chopra Jonas' Purple Pebble Pictures and Bloom's Amazing Owl are also on board with



Nadine de Barros serving as executive producer.



Chopra Jonas was last seen in 'The Bluff', an action-adventure

film which also starred 'The Boys' actor Karl Urban. She previously starred alongside Idris Elba and John Cena in 'Heads of State'.

Through Purple Pebble Pictures, she has executive produced several acclaimed projects, including the Oscar-nominated Netflix film 'The White Tiger', in which she also starred, the Oscar-nominated short 'Anuja', and the Oscar-nominated documentary 'To Kill a Tiger'.

She currently stars in season two of her action series 'Citadel' and will be next seen in 'Varanasi', an action-adventure film directed by S S Rajamouli.

Dhanush may emerge in a new avatar

Dhanush is currently at a crucial phase in his career, with discussions growing around the need for a shift in his film choices. While the actor continues to earn praise for his intense and natural performances, recent box office trends suggest that repeated survival drama or intense emotional subjects are not consistently connecting with wider audiences.

His latest release, Kara, reportedly underperformed at the box office despite strong appreciation for Dhanush's trademark acting style and screen presence. This has sparked conversations in the industry that it may be time for the actor to change gears and explore



different genres beyond gritty survival-based storytelling.

Trade analysts and fans alike feel that while Dhanush's acting distinction remains unquestionable, audience expectations are evolving, and variety in content could help him

Currently, Dhanush is preparing for his next big project with director Rajkumar Periasamy, which is already generating curiosity.

Industry watchers are hopeful that this collaboration will present him in a new avatar and possibly mark a turning point in his recent box office trajectory. The film is expected to offer a fresh creative direction for the actor moving forward.

Trade analysts and fans alike feel that while Dhanush's acting distinction remains unquestionable, audience expectations are evolving, and variety in content could help him regain stronger commercial momentum.

Many believe that experimenting with lighter entertainers, commercial action dramas, or fresh narrative styles could bring a new wave of success.

He gave us room to make 'Kartavya' on our own

Saif Ali Khan on Shah Rukh Khan

Actor Saif Ali Khan says producer Shah Rukh Khan gave the team of 'Kartavya' a free hand to make the film the way they wanted. In fact, Shah Rukh was the one who called Saif to inform about the script that they were developing at Red Chillies.

"He said, 'There's a lovely script, and I would like you to hear it, and do it.' Then I listened to it and met the director. Once the film was complete, he said, 'It has come out as a lovely movie'. He was very happy," Saif said.

"Sometimes the presence (of Shah Rukh) can be overwhelming on sets and I think he understands that. He gave us room to make the film on

our own. I felt I was working for his production with his kind of sensibility," the actor added. Directed by Pulkit of 'Bhakhshak' fame, the film stars Rasika Dugal opposite Saif and the actor said he is a huge fan of the 'Mirzapur' star.

"It was elevating (to work with Dugal). When you work with an artist of this calibre, and she (Rasika) is such a wonderful actor, I was challenged and tried my best and it brought out the good work in me also... I'm a big fan of hers and it was nice working with her," the actor said at the trailer preview of the movie here.

Dugal said she has long admired Saif and had a fun experience working with him.

"I've been an admirer of his work for many years. I had heard that Saif is the most fun co-actor to work with and that was true and more. He has a fantastic sense of humour and he brought in a certain energy to the set, which was beautiful. I wish we had more days to shoot. We unambiguously agree (that he is handsome)," she said.

Produced by Gauri Khan under Red Chillies Entertainment, 'Kartavya' follows a police officer (Saif), as he navigates rising threats while grappling with the weight of his duty and the safety of his family.

As the lines between right and wrong begin to blur, the



film unfolds as a layered exploration of power, guilt, and the consequences of silence, inviting audiences to question morality and the true cost of justice.

Saif said that what drew him to 'Kartavya' was its layered narrative and his

character of a police man, named Pawan.

"We did the film because it's a good story. If you put pressure on any person then you are revealing your true identity and this character goes through different kind of pressure, be it work

related, family. I found that very interesting and I was like, 'How will he get out of it, what decisions will he make?' I thought it was lovely and it all builds up slowly. Pulkit is fantastic director and I thank the producer for making the film and releasing it," the actor said.

On portraying a cop on the screen, Saif said, "I play people who happen to be police officers. It's more about the person than the cop." Dugal, who has garnered acclaim for playing the role of a cop in the popular series 'Delhi Crime', said "Kartavya" continues her interest in exploring the human side of law enforcement.

Cannes to host a special screening of first 'The Fast and the Furious' movie

The 79th Festival de Cannes is celebrating the 25th anniversary of 'The Fast and the Furious' by hosting a special Midnight Screening of the movie that became a cultural phenomenon worldwide when it released in 2001.

The screening on May 13 at the Grand Lumiere Theatre of the Palais des Festivals, the Festival de Cannes, will be attended by stars Vin Diesel, Jordana Brewster, producer Neal H. Mortiz, and Meadow Walker, the daughter of the film's late star Paul Walker. A high-octane thriller set amid the street-racing culture of Los Angeles, the Universal Picture film was produced by Neal H. Mortiz, directed by Rob Cohen, and featured Diesel as Dominic Toretto, Walker as Brian O'Conner, Brewster as Mia and Michelle Rodriguez as Letty.

Since its release in

THIS YEAR, UNIVERSAL ANNOUNCED A NEW CHAPTER--"FAST FOREVER", WHICH IS SLATED TO RELEASE IN THEATRES ON MARCH 17, 2028

2001, the franchise has gone on to spawn eleven films that have earned more than USD 7 billion at the worldwide box office to become Universal's most profitable and longest-running franchise.

This year, Universal announced a new chapter--"Fast Forever", which is slated to release in theatres on March 17, 2028.

Over the year, the "Fast and Furious" franchise has attracted stars such as Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham, Eva Mendes, John Cena, Kurt Russell, Jason Momoa, Helen Mirren, Brie Larson and Charlize Theron.