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V D Satheesan takes oath as Kerala's 13th CM

Rahul, Priyanka, Kharge, 3 CMs attend historic ceremony

Thiruvananthapuram, May 18 (UNI) Amid roaring cheers, emotional celebrations, and an unprecedented public turnout at the Central Stadium, V D Satheesan took oath on Monday as the 13th Chief Minister of Kerala, formally marking the return of the United Democratic Front (UDF) to power after a decade.

With thousands of supporters chanting slogans and waving party flags, Satheesan began the oath with the words, "Vadasery Damodara Menon Satheesan alias I..." before Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar at the packed swearing-in venue. Satheesan took the oath in the name of God as the sta-



dium erupted in applause, slogans, and celebrations.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi, and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge were present at the venue and witnessed the swearing-in from the main stage.

The event was also attended by Karnataka Chief

Minister Siddaramaiah, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar was also among the prominent leaders present.

The grand ceremony at the overflowing Central Stadium witnessed scenes rarely seen in Kerala poli-

tics in recent years, with the oath-taking function turning into a massive public gathering.

The event was attended by senior Congress leaders from across the country, Chief Ministers from Congress-ruled states, leaders of allied parties, opposition leaders, cultural figures, and tens of thousands of UDF workers and sup-

porters who thronged the capital city from different districts.

Along with Satheesan, the 20-member Council of Ministers of the new UDF government also assumed office. The ministry was formed from the Team UDF alliance that secured victory in the Assembly election and now commands the support of 102 MLAs in the Kerala Assembly.

Muslim League national general secretary P K Kunhalikutty was the second leader to take the oath. He too took the oath in the name of God. Senior Congress leader and Home Minister Ramesh Chennithala was sworn in immediately afterwards.

Namaz should not be offered on roads: Yogi

Lucknow, May 18 (GNS): Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, on Monday asserted that offering namaz on public roads should not be allowed, saying that roads are meant for smooth traffic movement and daily commuting, and not for activities that obstruct public spaces or inconvenience common citizens. Addressing an event, Chief Minister Yogi said that religious gatherings involving large numbers of people should be conducted in an organised manner at designated places and, if required, in shifts to avoid overcrowding and disruption.

Referring to the issue, CM Yogi said he is frequently questioned about whether people in Uttar Pradesh



continue to offer namaz on roads. He claimed that such practices no longer take place in the state and invited people to verify the situation themselves.

"I am often asked whether people in Uttar Pradesh really do not offer namaz on the roads. I clearly say that this does not happen at all. You can go and see for yourself. Roads are for traffic movement," he said.

The Chief Minister remarked that no individual has the authority to block public roads or intersections for any activity that hampers the movement of people and vehicles. He said roads are public infrastructure meant for transportation and should remain free from obstructions. "Can anyone come and set up a drama at an intersection? What right does he have to stop traffic? They should go and offer it at the designated places," he added.

CM Yogi further stated that if the number of people attending religious gatherings exceeds the available space, then such activities should be organised in multiple shifts instead of spilling onto public roads and open spaces.

Brahmos Advances India's Rise As Major Defence Arms Exporter

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS): As India advances on its path to becoming a major arms exporter, the BrahMos missile stands out as a symbol of its growing defence strength. Expanding expertise in missile manufacture and the increasing outreach, especially in the Global South, are strengthening India's "Defence Atmanirbharta", while elevating its position on the global stage, a report said on Monday.

According to a report in India Narrative, defence exports have emerged as a key foreign policy tool



of India as the country seeks to establish itself as a major global player while strengthening its diplomatic influence and global partnerships.

Defence Minister Rajnath

Singh has voiced confidence that India's defence exports will reach 50,000 crore rupees by 2030. As its defence market expands, India seeks to widen its influence in regions that align

with its geopolitical and strategic interests, with the Global South becoming an increasingly important part of its strategic outlook.

The report noted that BrahMos supersonic cruise missile exports are emerging as a major catalyst in this direction. India's relations with Southeast Asia have transformed over time, and this current engagement reflects a new dimension, with the region seen as the latest defence market for New Delhi.

"Prime focus of this defence trade is the BrahMos missile. This supersonic

cruise missile, jointly produced with Russia, has triggered curiosity because of its speed, precision strike capability and versatility, making it a formidable weapon for land, sea and air as well as submarine-based attacks. With a capacity of reaching speeds between Mach 2.8 and Mach 3, significantly faster than many conventional cruise missiles used by naval forces around the world, the missile can strike targets exceeding 400 kilometres away and can be launched from land, sea, and air platforms," the report detailed.

India's transformation in the health sector through initiatives such as the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs," he wrote on X.

Reaffirmed continuation of India's support to the WHO for strengthening the partnership and advancing global health outcomes for all. Nadda made the comments after meeting Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO, at the sidelines of the 79th session of the World Health Assembly (WHA). "Appreciate DG WHO's warm welcome and recognition of

India's transformation in the health sector through initiatives such as the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs," he wrote on X.

Centre Plans Water Metro in 18 Cities

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS): The Centre has moved ahead with plans to introduce Water Metro services in 18 cities across the country, with Guwahati figuring prominently in the first phase of the ambitious national rollout aimed at transforming inland waterways into sustainable urban transport corridors.

Union Minister for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal on Monday said the Ministry has also circulated the Draft National Water Metro Policy, 2026, for inter-ministerial consultations, signalling



the government's intent to establish a formal national framework for water-based urban mobility systems.

Apart from Guwahati, cities including Srinagar, Pat-

na, Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Prayagraj have been identified for Phase I of the project, while Assam's Tezpur and Dibrugarh are proposed for the second phase.

in addressing global health challenges. The assembly will bring together health ministers, dignitaries and public health experts from more than 165 countries, reaffirming the shared global commitment towards building stronger, more inclusive and resilient healthcare systems."

The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of the Organisation, appoint the Director-General, supervise financial policies, and review and approve the proposed programme budget.

JP Nadda reaffirms continuation of India's support to WHO

Geneva, May 18 (GNS): Health and Family Welfare Minister J P Nadda on Monday reaffirmed the continuation of India's support to the World Health Organisation (WHO) for strengthening the partnership and advancing global health outcomes for all. Nadda made the comments after meeting Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the WHO, at the sidelines of the 79th session of the World Health Assembly (WHA). "Appreciate DG WHO's warm welcome and recognition of



India's transformation in the health sector through initiatives such as the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Ayushman Arogya Mandirs," he wrote on X.

"Reaffirmed continuation of India's support to the WHO for strengthening our partnership and advancing global health outcomes for all," he added.

The Health Minister arrived in Switzerland on Sunday to attend the 79th World Health Assembly, which is being held in Geneva from May 18 to May 23. The World Health Assembly is the decision-making body of WHO. It is attended by delegations from all WHO Member States and focuses on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board. Nadda also noted that "this year's theme, 'Reshaping Global Health: A Shared Responsibility', highlights the importance of collective action

Jitendra Singh: Nuclear Expansion Opening Global Partnerships

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS): A high level US industry delegation met with Union MoS for Science & Technology Dr. Jitendra Singh on Monday to discuss private investment and industry collaboration in India's nuclear sector.

Dr. Singh highlighted "significant scope for India-US collaboration in advanced areas such as micro-reactors, AI-enabled nuclear safety systems, scientific computing, nuclear energy modelling and institutional capacity building." The interaction focused on India's ambitious



Nuclear Energy Mission, recent policy reforms enabling greater private sector participation, and the expanding scope of India-US coopera-

tion in clean energy and critical technologies. The minister informed the delegation that India has recently enacted the SHANTI Act, 2025,

to facilitate greater participation of the private sector, including foreign participation, in the nuclear energy sector. The reform is expected to create a more enabling ecosystem for investment, industrial collaboration, manufacturing partnerships and technology cooperation aligned with India's Nuclear Energy Mission, he said.

India is also moving ahead with plans for development of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), supported by an allocation of nearly Rs 20,000 crore, the minister mentioned.

The discussions also reviewed progress in several ongoing India-US collaborative initiatives including the proposed Westinghouse AP1000 project at Kovvada and cooperation under the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Energy Working Group (CNEWG). Further cooperation in hydrogen production and integrated energy systems, machine learning and AI applications, rare earth collaboration, and high-intensity superconducting proton accelerator technologies through Fermilab partnerships were also discussed.

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'Bail is rule, jail exception': Supreme Court questions verdict denying bail to Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS) More than four months after a two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court denied bail to Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case, another two-judge Bench on Monday questioned it for ignoring a 'binding precedent' laid down by a three-judge Bench in the KA Najeeb case.

While granting bail to Syed Ifthikhar Andrabi, who has been under custody for more than five years in a narco-terrorism case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 probed by the NIA, a Bench of Justice BV Nagarathna and Justice

Ujjal Bhuyan expressed "serious reservations" about the reasoning given by a Bench of Justice Aravind Kumar and Justice NV Anjaria in the January 5 judgment refused bail to Khalid and Imam.

It said a two-judge Bench was bound to follow a judgment of a three-judge Bench. "Judicial discipline and certainty demands that Benches of smaller strength are mindful of the decisions rendered by larger Benches and are bound to follow the same. If the smaller Benches are unable to agree with the ratio laid down by the larger Bench then the proper and the only course of action open is to make a reference



to the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India for placing the matter for consideration by a still larger Bench." Raising a question of judicial discipline, the Bench of Justice Nagarathna and Justice Bhuyan said, "It is plain that a judgment rendered by a Bench of lesser strength is bound by the law de-

clared by a Bench of greater strength. Judicial discipline mandates that such binding precedent must either be followed or, in case of doubt, be referred to a larger Bench. A smaller Bench cannot dilute, circumvent, or disregard the ratio of a larger Bench."

It said the oft-invoked phrase — "bail is the rule

and jail is the exception" — is not merely an empty statutory slogan flowing from the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). "It is a constitutional principle flowing from Articles 21 and 22 of the Constitution and the presumption of innocence, which is the cornerstone of any civilised society governed by the rule of law, the top court said.

"Statutes may undoubtedly calibrate the manner in which that principle is applied, particularly in cases involving national security or terrorist offences for which the UAPA is intended, but they cannot altogether invert the constitutional relationship between liberty and de-

attention," the Bench noted.

Regarding the January 5 order allowing Khalid and Imam to file fresh bail applications after one year on completion of the examination of protected witnesses, the judgment authored by Justice Bhuyan said, "...constitutional courts should not normally fix a time bound schedule for disposal of cases pending in any court. Question of giving out of turn priority to certain cases should be best left to the courts concerned. Only in exceptional circumstances, an order fixing the outer time limit for disposal of cases should be passed to meet extraordinary situations."

CBI raids Latur coaching centre in NEET UG 2026 paper leak probe



New Delhi, May 18 (GNS) The Central Bureau of Investigation has intensified its investigation into the NEET UG 2026 paper leak case by conducting raids at premises linked to Renukai Coaching Centre in Maharashtra's Latur district.

The action followed the emergence of a viral video in which the institute's owner, Shivraj Maotegaonkar, allegedly asked students how many questions from the centre's chemistry mock papers had appeared in the NEET UG examination. Officials said the probe is examining whether the chemistry "guess papers" circulated by the coaching institute matched the leaked question paper allegedly linked to accused PV Kulkarni. Investigators are currently reviewing 42 chemistry mock papers distributed before the exam.

The CBI is also investigating possible links between Maotegaonkar, Kulkarni and other accused persons connected to the alleged paper leak network. According to officials, the conspiracy may have been planned sev-

eral months before the examination. The agency suspects the operation involved coordination between coaching institutes, officials associated with the National Testing Agency and individuals linked to the examination panel process.

So far, the CBI has arrested nine accused, including two professors allegedly associated with the NTA examination panel.

During a court hearing on Saturday, the CBI informed the court that an organised network was behind the NEET UG 2026 paper leak. Investigators are now examining financial transactions and bank records to trace money trails and identify wider links among the accused.

The investigation was launched after a teacher from Rajasthan's Sikar district wrote to the NTA, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the CBI on May 7, alleging a possible leak of the examination paper.

On May 15, the CBI arrested retired Pune lecturer P.V. Kulkarni and identified him as a key accused in the case.

India's Exports To Scale \$1 Trillion Mark In FY27: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS) Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday that India is targeting exports worth \$2 trillion over the next five years, while pegging the overall exports target for FY27 at \$1 trillion.

India's total exports of goods and services increased to an all-time high of \$863 billion in FY26 despite the uncertainties in global markets triggered by the US tariff turmoil and geopolitical tensions. The minister said India continues to remain a bright spot amid global geopolitical and economic uncertainty caused by the war in Ukraine and tensions in West Asia due to the Iran war.

Neet leak: Congress raises breach of privilege issue over Dharmendra Pradhan's remarks

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS) Former Union Minister and Congress MP Jairam Ramesh on Monday submitted a notice seeking initiation of privilege proceedings against Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over alleged "derogatory references" to parliamentary committees while speaking on the NEET-UG 2026 controversy and measures to prevent paper leaks.

"I have given notice of question of privilege under Rule 187 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States against the Union Minister of Education for having lowered the dignity of Parliament and Parliamentary



Committees," Ramesh said on social media. Ramesh also alleged that the minister made these "outrageous" remarks while presiding over what he described as "rot" in the Education Ministry that was destroying the future

of lakhs of students across the country. In his letter addressed to Rajya Sabha Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan, the Congress MP referred to remarks allegedly made by Pradhan last week while discussing reforms in

the National Testing Agency (NTA). According to Ramesh, the Union Education Minister had made comments about Opposition members, Parliament, parliamentary committees and the manner in which reports are drafted.

Ramesh wrote in his letter, dated May 18, that the conduct of the Education Minister amounted to a grave breach of privilege and contempt of the House.

"In fact, it is a perfect case of such breach of privilege and contempt and a fit case for action by you since the Standing Committee on Education is one of the eight standing committees of the Rajya Sabha," Ramesh said.

The Congress MP further

alleged that Pradhan had deliberately lowered the stature and prestige of the Standing Committee because of its bipartisan character.

"The Minister's comments also tantamount to imputing dishonourable motives to members of parliamentary committees themselves," Ramesh wrote.

"These remarks of the Union Education Minister are outrageous. They are highly derogatory and seek to malign parliamentarians, parliamentary committees and the Parliament of India," he said. "The Parliamentary Committees are an extension of the Parliament of India, and rightly so referred to as mini-Parliament.

SC refuses to hear pil on temple priests' wages

New Delhi, May 18 (UNI): The Supreme Court on Monday declined to entertain a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking directions for framing a uniform wage and welfare framework for priests, sevadars, and temple staff working in state-controlled temples across the country.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta expressed disinclination to interfere in the matter and refused to entertain the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay, who appeared in person. After the apex court indicated its unwillingness to examine the issue, Upadhyay sought permission to

withdraw the petition with liberty to approach the appropriate authorities.

The Justice Vikram Nath-led Bench thereafter dismissed the matter as withdrawn. "The petitioner seeks permission to withdraw the plea with liberty to approach the appropriate authorities. The petition is dismissed as withdrawn," the top court recorded in its order. The plea had sought directions to the Centre and state governments to constitute a judicial commission or expert committee to review the wages and service conditions of priests, sevadars, and temple staff in temples under government control.

Calcutta HC grants Jahangir Khan protection from coercive action till falta repoll results

Kolkata, May 18 (GNS): A single-judge bench of the Calcutta High Court on Monday granted interim protection to Jahangir Khan, the Trinamool Congress candidate from the Falta Assembly constituency in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal, from any coercive police action, including arrest, till the repoll process is completed and the results are announced.

Repolling in the constituency is scheduled for May 21, while the results will be declared on May 24. Earlier in the day, Khan approached the single-judge bench of Justice Saugata Bhattacharya



with an anticipatory bail plea apprehending arrest ahead of the repoll.

The matter was heard on an urgent basis during the second half of the day, following which Justice Bhattacharya granted interim protection from coercive police action, including arrest, till May 24. Justice Bhattacharya observed

that Khan should be given a fair opportunity to contest the election. The court also clarified that the interim protection would apply in connection with all FIRs registered against him. At present, five FIRs have been registered against Khan one on May 5, three on May 10 and another on May 15.

The charges mentioned in the FIRs relate to alleged voter intimidation and other electoral irregularities during polling in Falta on April 29, when voting for the constituency was held in the second phase of the two-phase West Bengal Assembly elections last month.

Kerala HC gives sit two more weeks in Sabarimala gold scam

Kochi, May 18 (UND): The Kerala High Court on Monday granted the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the alleged misappropriation of gold from the Sabarimala temple two more weeks to complete its investigation, after taking note of the extensive scientific examination still underway in the case.

The decision came hours after the new Congress-led UDF government assumed office, and they had used this scam as one of the biggest points during the Assembly poll campaign.

The extension was granted by a division bench of Justices Raja Vijayaraghavan V. and K.V. Jayakumar after the SIT, represented by investigating



officer S. Sasidharan, submitted a detailed status report before the court. According to the SIT, one of the primary reasons for the delay is the pending scientific analysis report from the National Metallurgical Laboratory (CSIR-NML), Jamshedpur, where around 36 samples have been sent for examination.

The laboratory is conduct-

ing highly specialised tests, including X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy (XRF) to determine surface elemental composition, Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS) for ultra-trace impurity and elemental profiling, and Optical Emission Spectroscopy (OES) to study alloy composition and metallurgical uniformity.

Six killed in multi-vehicle collision in Bihar's Khagaria district

Patna, May 18 (GNS): At least six people, including three women and a child, were killed in a tragic road accident following a collision involving multiple vehicles in Bihar's Khagaria district on Monday. The accident took place on National Highway-31 under the jurisdiction of Mansi Police Station at around 3.30 p.m. According to the Station House Officer (SHO) of Mansi Police Station, the collision involved a truck, a Scorpio SUV and an auto-rickshaw.

The SHO said efforts were underway to identify the deceased. Several other persons sustained injuries in the accident and were admitted to Sadar Hospital



for treatment. Eyewitnesses described the collision as extremely severe. The auto-rickshaw was completely mangled, while the front portion of the Scorpio suffered extensive damage. The impact was so intense that passengers travelling in the auto-rickshaw were thrown onto the road. Several vic-

tims died on the spot, while others were left critically injured. Hearing the loud crash, local residents and passersby rushed to the scene and immediately began rescue efforts. Police personnel soon arrived and, with the assistance of local residents, shifted the injured to hospital.

Container truck rams wedding party vehicle on Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway, 12 killed

Palghar (Maharashtra), May 18 (GNS): At least 12 people were killed and more than 35 others injured after a container truck collided with a vehicle carrying wedding guests on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad National Highway in Maharashtra's Palghar district on Monday, police said. The accident occurred near Dhanivari village in the Kasa area when an Eicher truck carrying people to a wedding ceremony was hit by a speeding container truck travelling from Gujarat towards Mumbai.

The impact of the collision was so severe that both vehicles overturned on the highway, trapping several passengers inside the mangled vehicle. According to



police, the wedding party had left Bapu village in Dahanu and was travelling to Dhanivari for the ceremony.

Initial reports said more than 40 people were travelling in the vehicle, although some local accounts sug-

gested that over 100 passengers might have been on board, raising concerns over overcrowding. The crash triggered panic in the area, with local residents rushing to the spot to assist before emergency services arrived.

Villagers, police personnel and rescue teams carried out rescue operations and pulled injured passengers from underneath and inside the overturned vehicle. Officials said at least 12 people died in the accident, while more than 35 others sustained injuries, many of them serious. The injured were admitted to Kasa Sub-District Hospital and other nearby medical facilities, including Vedant Hospital.

Hospital sources said some patients remained in critical condition and could be shifted to higher medical centres for advanced treatment if required. Police have initiated a panchnama and spot inspection as part of the

investigation. Preliminary findings suggest that speeding and negligence may have led to the accident. Investigators are also examining whether the vehicle carrying the wedding guests was overloaded beyond its permitted capacity. The bodies of those killed have been sent for post-mortem examination, officials said.

Traffic movement on the busy Mumbai-Ahmedabad Highway remained disrupted for several hours after the accident as rescue operations and removal of the damaged vehicles continued. Authorities said a detailed investigation was underway to ascertain the exact sequence of events leading to the crash.

IPL 2026: Ishan Kishan shines as SRH secure playoff berth with 5-wicket win over CSK

Chennai, May 18 (GNS) Chennai Super Kings: Wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan played a brilliant knock of 70 while Heinrich Klaasen scored 47 as Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Chennai Super Kings (CSK) by five wickets and qualified for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 playoffs at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Monday.

Chasing a target of 181, SRH completed the chase in 19 overs to register an important victory. With this win, Sunrisers Hyderabad joined Gujarat Titans and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in securing a place in the IPL 2026 playoffs with 16 points from 13 matches.

SRH started their chase positively with Abhishek Sharma attacking Mukesh Choudhary early in the innings. However, Chennai Super Kings struck back in the third over when Mukesh dismissed Travis Head with a slower delivery. Head managed just six runs from six balls.

After the early wicket, CSK bowlers maintained tight lines and did not allow SRH batters to score freely. Abhishek Sharma and Ishan Kishan took time to settle but kept the scoreboard moving with regular boundaries. SRH reached 45/1 at the end of the Power-play.

CSK finally broke the partnership in the eighth over



when Akeal Hosein dismissed Abhishek Sharma for 26 runs off 21 balls. His innings included three fours and a six. Following the wicket, Ishan Kishan shifted gears and anchored the innings, while Heinrich Klaasen played aggressively from the other end. Klaasen attacked both Akeal Hosein and Noor Ahmad, hitting boundaries and sixes regularly as SRH reached 75/2 in 10 overs. Klaasen survived a dropped catch and continued his attacking approach before eventually getting dismissed for 47 runs in the 15th over. The South African batter struck six fours and two sixes during his innings.

Meanwhile, Kishan completed his half-century in

37 balls and continued to rotate strike smartly along with Nitish Kumar Reddy. The pair kept SRH firmly in control of the chase.

Mukesh Choudhary dismissed Nitish Kumar Reddy in the 18th over, but Kishan remained calm and guided the side closer to victory. He scored 70 runs off 47 balls, hitting four boundaries and three sixes. Smaran Ravichandran finished the chase with a boundary as Sunrisers Hyderabad reached the target with six balls to spare and officially sealed their place in the IPL 2026 playoffs. Earlier, Dewald Brevis top-scored with 44 as Chennai Super Kings posted 180/7 in their 20 overs. Com-

ing to bat after winning the toss, CSK made a flying start with Sanju Samson attacking from the very first ball. He smashed Nitish Kumar Reddy for a six and added two boundaries in the opening over. Samson continued his aggressive batting in the next over by hitting Praful Hinge for three consecutive fours as CSK raced ahead during the powerplay.

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain Pat Cummins gave his team the first breakthrough by dismissing Samson for a quick 27 off 13 balls. Young batter Urvil Patel kept the momentum going with two sixes off Cummins, but Sakib Husain clean bowled him for 13 runs.

Hockey: India U18 Men Defeat Australia 6-3 To Level Series; Women Lose 2-1

Bhopal, May 18 (GNS): The Indian U18 men's team beat Australia 6-3 to level their series, while the India U18 women's team lost 2-1 against the visitors at the Udhav Das Mehta (Bhai Ji) Central SAI Centre in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, on Monday. The big win for the U18 men means their four-match series is now level at 1-1. India started the match well and took control in the first half. Akash Deep (10') opened the scoring in the first quarter, and Shahrukh Ali (14') added a second goal soon after. In the second quarter, Ketan Kushwaha (25') and Romit Pal (26') scored quick goals to give India a strong lead.



Kushwaha (40') scored his second goal of the match in the third quarter, and Ansh Bahutra (45') added the sixth goal for India. Australia scored through Owen Taylor (23'), Oscar Freeman (29'), and Jack Weller (32'), but the Indian defence stood firm in the final quarter to protect

the lead and secure the win. In the women's match, the India U18 team fought hard but lost the third match of their series. Australia took an early lead in the first quarter when Anneliese Cullen (5') scored. India responded well just before the end of the quarter, with Sandeepa Kumari (15') scor-

ing a fine equaliser to make it 1-1. However, the visitors regained the lead early in the second quarter through a goal from Stella Bartholomeusz (17'). The Indian defence kept the Australian attackers from scoring further in the second half, but the hosts could not find a second goal to equalise.

Messi stars with goal and assist in inter miami victory

Miami, May 18 (GNS): Lionel Messi continued his excellent form in Major League Soccer, scoring once and providing an assist to lead Inter Miami CF to a 2-0 victory over the Portland Timbers on Sunday. This win marked the club's first at its new home stadium. Messi netted his 12th goal of the season and recorded his sixth assist, while German Berterame scored Miami's second goal during a dominant performance at Nu Stadium. This victory ended Miami's frustrating 0-3-1 start at the venue, which officially opened in April.

Dayne St. Clair made four saves to help Miami achieve their third clean sheet of the season, the



first since a 2-0 win over Real Salt Lake in April.

For Portland, the away game was tough again as they suffered their fourth 2-0 road defeat this season and their third loss in their last five away matches. Despite taking 16 shots, the Timbers were outshot 22-16 and trailed 9-4 in shots

on target. Messi continues to get closer to the league's scoring lead. The 38-year-old is now tied with Petar Musa and just one goal behind Hugo Cuypers in the MLS Golden Boot race. The Argentine superstar has also contributed five goals and all six of his assists in his last four games as he

builds momentum ahead of what is expected to be his final FIFA World Cup campaign later this year. The eight-time Ballon d'Or winner looked dangerous from the start, forcing James Pantemis into an early save in the fourth minute before scoring in the 31st minute.

CSR Conclave Focuses on Sustainable Rural Development in India

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS) The CSC CSR Conclave 2025 marked a pivotal moment in India's journey toward inclusive growth and rural empowerment, placing technology at the heart of social transformation. Inaugurated by Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the event spotlighted the powerful role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in bridging the urban-rural divide through Common Services Centres (CSCs).



"CSC represents a radical idea bridging the urban-rural divide through technology," said Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), during the inauguration of the CSC CSR Conclave 2025. His remarks highlighted the central theme of the event leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for a sustainable tomorrow through rural empowerment and inclusive growth. Tiwari also cited the visionary role of Common Services Centres (CSCs) in strengthening India's social capital, aligning with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision for rural digital empowerment. He acknowl-

edged the vital role of CSC Academy in advancing CSR initiatives, especially in vocational training and digital empowerment for rural populations, and praised CSC's alignment with national goals, particularly through programs like the PM Vishwakarma Yojana. The Conclave, organized by CSC Academy and the Indian ESG Network, brought together leaders from government, corporate, and development sectors to discuss how CSR

can drive environmental sustainability, community development, and transformative change in rural India. In his keynote address, Shri Sanjay Kumar Rakesh, Chairman and Secretary of CSC Academy, expanded on the transformative impact of the Common Services Centres (CSCs) across the country. He described CSCs not just as digital access points but as catalysts for change, operated by Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) who

empower their communities. "CSR is not just a statutory requirement but a strategic driver for inclusive progress," said Rakesh, emphasizing the Academy's focus on scalable and measurable CSR programs aimed at reaching underserved rural populations.

Dr. Biswajit Saha, Director (Training & Skill Education) at CBSE, also highlighted the role of CSC Academy in preparing the next generation for future challenges, particularly in fields like Artificial

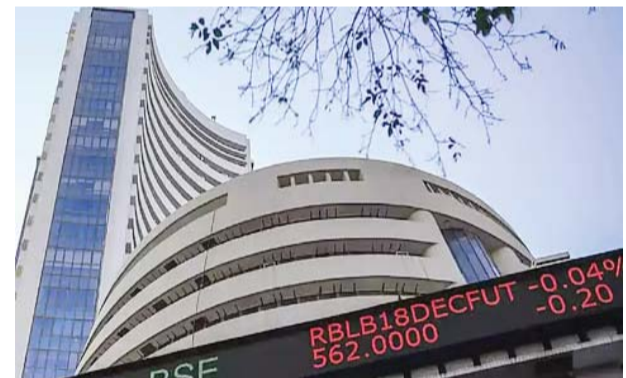
Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, and Healthcare. The event featured a series of expert-led discussions that explored the intersection of CSR, environmental sustainability, and community development.

Nifty 50 stays range-bound amid weak momentum and sectoral mixed Trends

Mumbai, May 18 (GNS) Benchmark indices ended with marginal gains in a highly volatile session on May 2 and volatility is expected to stay elevated due to ongoing geopolitical tensions, developments related to tariffs, and the unfolding Q4 earnings season and major US economic data points, analysts said on Saturday. The Nifty on Friday opened strong and surged to an intraday high of 24,589 in the first half of the session. However, profit booking at higher levels erased those gains, leaving the index to close nearly flat.

The Nifty finished the day up 12.50 points, or 0.05 per cent, at 24,346.70.

"For the week, the BSE Sensex gained 1.6 per cent,



while the Nifty50 rose 1.2 per cent. The BSE Midcap index declined 0.4 per cent and the Smallcap index ended flat," said a note from Bajaj Broking Research.

Among sectoral performers, media, energy, IT, and oil & gas posted gains of 0.3-0.7 per cent. On the other hand, power, metal, telecom, pharma, realty, and consumer durables sectors saw

losses ranging from 0.5 to 2 per cent. According to Dhruv Dhameja, Derivatives Research Analyst, SAMCO Securities, Nifty continues to display signs of hesitation at elevated levels, repeatedly getting knocked back from crucial resistance zones and producing intraday fake-outs, indicating a period of consolidation amid fading momentum.

Window-II allows power plants flexible coal purchase via auction

New Delhi, May 18 (GNS) The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the grant of fresh coal linkages to thermal power plants of the Central Sector, State Sector and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) under the revised 'SHAKTI' policy. The approval includes Coal linkage to Central Gencos and states at notified price in 'Window-I' and coal linkage to all Gencos at a Premium above notified price in 'Window-II', according to an official statement.



For Window-I, the existing mechanism for grant of coal linkage to Central Sector Thermal Power Projects (TPPs) including Joint Ventures (JVs) and their subsid-

ary will continue, the statement said. The coal linkages will be earmarked to states and to an agency authorised by group of states as per existing mechanism, on the recommendation of Ministry of Power. Coal linkage earmarked to states may be utilised by states in their own Genco, Independent

Power Producers (IPPs) to be identified through Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) or existing IPPs having Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) under Section 62 of the Electricity Act, 2003 for setting up of a new expansion unit having PPA under Section 62, the statement explained.

Under 'Window-II' for premium above notified price, any domestic coal-based power producer having PPA or untied and also imported coal-based power plants (if they so require) can secure coal on auction basis for a period up to 12 months or for the period of more than 12 months up to 25 years by paying premium above the notified price and providing the power plants the flexibility to sell the electricity as per their choice. Directions would be issued to Coal India Limited (CIL)/Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) for implementation of the aforesaid decisions. Besides, the concerned Ministries and all the states will also be apprised of the revised 'SHAKTI' policy for further dissemination.

Deposits dip, rating agency flags stability concerns

Mumbai, May 18 (GNS) Global credit rating agency Crisil has placed IndusInd Bank's long-term debt instruments on 'Rating Watch with Negative Implications.' This includes Rs 4,000 crore worth of tier II bonds and Rs 1,500 crore of infrastructure bonds. The move comes after a series of recent developments at the bank that have raised concerns about its internal controls and management stability. According to Crisil, the rating action follows the resignation of two senior executives at the bank, along with the bank's disclosure that its internal audit department is reviewing the microfinance business. This review was prompted by certain concerns that came up during the finalisa-



tion of the bank's accounts. Earlier in March, the bank had also revealed an issue with how it had accounted for some derivatives, which further deepened the worries. While Crisil noted that the bank has not seen any major outflow in total deposits in the past two months, there has been some decline in deposits from retail and small business customers. As of March 31, the bank had total deposits of Rs 4.11 tril-

lion, with a current and savings account (CASA) ratio of 32.8 per cent. This compares to Rs 4.09 trillion in deposits and a CASA ratio of nearly 34.9 per cent as of 31 December 2024. Retail and small business deposits dropped from Rs 1.89 trillion to Rs 1.85 trillion in the same period. The rating agency stated that it will continue to monitor the situation closely, especially the steps taken by the bank

to strengthen its financial controls and maintain operational stability. It will also watch how these issues impact the bank's profitability and deposit patterns. The situation began in March when IndusInd Bank disclosed that an internal review had uncovered discrepancies in its derivatives portfolio. The bank estimated this would reduce its net worth by 2.35 per cent as of December 2024. PwC was then hired to validate these findings and estimated a loss of Rs 1,979 crore in the derivatives portfolio as of 30 June 2024, with a post-tax impact of 2.27 per cent on net worth. Later, the bank brought in independent firm Grant Thornton to investigate the root cause.

BRSV Demands Immediate Postponement of OU Exams Scheduled on Eid-ul-Adha

Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Strong opposition is mounting against Osmania University's decision to conduct multiple degree examinations on 28 May, the day of Eid-ul-Adha (Bakrid), one of the most significant festivals celebrated by Muslims across the country.

Adv. Mir Qurram Ali, BRSV GHMC Coordinator and youth opposition leader, has strongly condemned the scheduling of examinations on the festival day and demanded immediate intervention from the Telangana Gov-



The examinations currently scheduled on 28 May include:

- BCom 4th Semester – Business Statistics
- BCom 6th Semester – Accounting Standards & Corporate Governance
- BSc Honours 4th Semester – Computer Science (Big Data)
- BSc Honours 6th Semester – Optimization Techniques
- BSc Biomedical Science 4th Semester
- BA (CBCS) 6th Semester – Mathematics
- BSW (CBCS) 4th Semester – Social Work Methodology III

ernment and university authorities. Addressing the media, Mir Qurram Ali said that conducting exams on Eid is "completely insensitive towards the religious sentiments

and mental well-being of thousands of students." He questioned how students could be expected to balance important examinations with religious obligations, family gather-

ings, prayers, and festival observances. "The Government and university administration must understand that Eid-ul-Adha is not an ordinary day. Students should not be forced

to choose between their education and their faith," he stated. Mir Qurram Ali appealed directly to Telangana Chief Minister Anumula Revanth Reddy and the Telangana Chief Secretary to intervene immediately and direct Osmania University to reschedule the examinations to a suitable alternative date.

He further warned that if the concerns of students continue to be ignored, widespread protests and student demonstrations could take place across Hyderabad and Telangana. "This is not just about

one community. This is about student justice, equal respect, and responsible governance. Universities must act with sensitivity and fairness," he said. Student groups and youth organizations have also begun voicing support for the demand, calling the scheduling decision "avoidable and unfair."

BRSV leaders expressed hope that the Telangana Government would take a positive decision soon and prevent unnecessary hardship for thousands of students appearing for the examinations.

HM Amit Shah felicitates police officers for role in making telangana LWE-free



Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday felicitated police officers who played a key role in making Telangana a Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)-free state. At a special event held in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh, he honoured police officers who played a pivotal role in combating Maoist activities in insurgency-affected regions

Senior Telangana Police officers who contributed significantly to suppressing Left-Wing Extremism and making Telangana an LWE-free state were among those honoured for their exemplary service and contribution. Telangana Director General of Police C.V. Anand, State Security Advisor B. Shivad-

har Reddy, DGP Operations (OCTOPUS & Greyhounds) Dr Anil Kumar, and Malkajgiri Commissioner and former SIB IGP Sumati, along with the SIB team led by her, were felicitated during the event.

According to a statement issued by the DGP's office, Amit Shah congratulated the officers for their outstanding efforts and dedicated service in the fight against Left-Wing Extremism. Addressing the gathering, the Union Home Minister reaffirmed the Central government's commitment to eliminating Left-Wing Extremism from the country and building an LWE-free society. He revealed that during an internal review

meeting held in January 2024, a target date of March 31, 2026, had been set for the complete eradication of LWE from the country.

"When we took this decision, many privately expressed doubts about whether such a goal could be achieved. However, we moved forward with a clear vision and a well-defined strategy. Today, with the blessings of Goddess Danteshwari, I am delighted to announce that the Bastar region has been declared Naxal-free," the statement quoted him as saying. He described Chhattisgarh becoming free from the menace of Naxalism as a historic milestone in India's prolonged battle against Left-Wing Extremism.

Telangana strengthening disaster response system with advanced technology: Ponguleti

Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Telangana Revenue, Housing and Information & Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Monday said the state government is strengthening the disaster response system with world-class technology to minimise loss of life and property during emergencies.

The Minister inaugurated a mega disaster management mock drill at the HMDA Grounds on Necklace Road as part of statewide mock exercises and later reviewed preparedness measures with senior officials at the Command and Control Centre. Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy said the first hour after a disaster, referred to as the "Golden Hour," is extremely critical and stressed the need for rapid response, inter-departmental coor-



dination and advance preparedness during floods, fire accidents and industrial disasters. He directed officials to study advanced global technologies and equipment used in disaster management and submit proposals to strengthen Telangana's emergency response system. He said the mock drills conducted with the support of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would help officials improve rescue and

relief operations. Specialised teams demonstrated rescue operations using inflatable boats, evacuation techniques and coordinated flood rescue measures during the exercise.

The Minister later inspected rescue activities at the Necklace Road Boating Club. He clarified that the exercises were only mock drills conducted as part of preparedness measures and urged the public not to panic or spread rumours through social media. Disaster Management Secretary Dasari Harichandana, Fire Services DG Vikram Singh Mann, HYDRAA Commissioner A.V. Ranganath and NDMA Lead Consultant Major General (Retd.) Sudhir Bell participated in the programme along with personnel from multiple departments.

TG DGP reviews maoist situation, praises SIB operations

Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Telangana Director General of Police C V Anand on Monday visited the Special Intelligence Branch (SIB) and reviewed the present Maoist situation in the state along with ongoing anti-extremist operations and intelligence initiatives.

Additional DGP Intelligence Vijay Kumar and IGP Intelligence & SIB Kartikeya were also present during the review meeting.

The DGP appreciated the efforts of SIB officers and staff in countering Left Wing Extremism and facilitating the surrender of underground CPI (Maoist) cadres. According to officials, between 2024 and 2026, around 820 Maoist cadres surrendered before Telangana Police, including four Central Commit-

tee Members, 22 State Committee Members, one Regional Committee Member, 45 Divisional Committee Members and 173 Area Committee Members.

Police said a total of 334 firearms were surrendered during the period, including 58 AK-47 rifles, 48 INSAS rifles, 50 SLRs and six LMGs, besides other sophisticated weapons.

The DGP praised SIB for its intelligence-based operations, rehabilitation initiatives and efforts to encourage Maoist cadres to return to the mainstream.

He also reviewed rehabilitation and reintegration measures for surrendered cadres and stressed the need for continued monitoring, reskilling, employment-oriented training and social integration.

Ramchander Rao alleges BRS running false campaign against BJP

Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Telangana BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Monday accused the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and its working president K T. Rama Rao of spreading false propaganda against the BJP and targeting the family members of union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar for political gain.

Speaking at a preparatory meeting held at the BJP state office in Hyderabad for upcoming programmes, including the Jubilee Hills World Yoga Day, Environment Day and celebrations marking 12 years of the Government of India, Ramchander Rao alleged that the BRS was attempting to divert public attention from issues such as the Kaleshwaram project controversy, Formula E-Race issue and the liquor

scam by launching a malicious campaign against the BJP. He said seeking anticipatory bail is a statutory right and questioned the BRS over its criticism, alleging that several leaders from the previous BRS government had also sought similar legal protection in different cases.

The BJP leader further accused the previous BRS regime of failing to address crimes against women and cited several incidents, including the Jubilee Hills minor rape case, the Samatha gang rape case and the harassment case involving Dr Preethi. He also referred to the Intermediate examination controversy and student suicides during the BRS tenure, questioning why the ministers had not resigned on moral grounds.

Fuel, LPG supply remains stable across Telangana: Oil marketing companies

Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) on Monday said the supply of petrol, diesel, and domestic LPG in Telangana remains stable and sufficient to meet current demand across the state. In a press note, the state-level coordinator for OMCs said there is no shortage of fuel or LPG anywhere in Telangana and that public sector oil companies are closely monitoring the supply situation while taking steps to streamline logistics and speed up deliveries.

According to the OMCs, petrol supplies registered a growth of 14.2 per cent and diesel supplies increased by 15.7 per cent during the first fortnight of May. The companies also stated that domestic LPG bookings have reduced due to the



summer season and there have been no panic bookings by consumers. Around 20.06 lakh domestic LPG cylinders have been delivered in Telangana so far this month, which officials described as normal for the season.

Consumers were encouraged to book LPG cylinders through SMS, missed call, IVRS and online platforms. OMCs also appealed to customers to support the Delivery Authentication

Code (DAC) system, an OTP-based mechanism aimed at preventing diversion of LPG cylinders and ensuring delivery to genuine beneficiaries. Officials said DAC implementation in Telangana has crossed 95 per cent and efforts are underway to achieve 100 per cent compliance across the state. They also urged the public not to believe rumours or fake news regarding fuel and LPG supply.

3 TG Collectors selected in Fame India's Best District Magistrate list

Hyderabad, May 18 (GNS) Three Telangana District Collectors, including Hyderabad Collector Harichandana Dasari, have figured in Fame India magazine's list of 100 "outstanding and best-performing" District Magistrates across the country for 2026.

Along with Harichandana Dasari (Hyderabad), C Narayana Reddy (Rangareddy) and Mikkilineni Manu Chowdhary (Medchal-Malkajgiri) were selected in the preliminary findings of the nationwide



survey conducted by Fame India in collaboration with Asia Post. Fame India, an acclaimed rating magazine listed 100 District Magistrates (DMs) in its survey findings, as the "outstanding and best-performing" administrative heads of the state and is set to feature

the twenty-five most distinguished of them, in its upcoming 2026 edition.

The extensive pan-India survey of District Magistrates, across 800 districts in the country, seeks to encourage outstanding leadership in public service, amidst challenging

circumstances. The survey, which started in 2011, has become a yearly tradition at the noted media organisation, and its categorisation of DMs on the basis of 'performance and delivery' over the years has gone to set moral high ground, not just for the selected ones but also for fellow officers.

The survey assessed District Magistrates and Collectors from nearly 800 districts across India on parameters such as administrative capability, governance, innovation, crisis

management, accountability, public relations, and development-oriented thinking. Fame India said the survey aims to recognise officers who have demonstrated excellence in administration and public service while implementing government schemes at the grassroots level. It also informed that around 100 officers have been selected in the preliminary results, and out of this, a few distinguished District Magistrates will be featured in its upcoming magazine.

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