

CM flags off 7 power projects worth ₹450cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 21: With a view to providing quality power supply to consumers, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday virtually inaugurated seven power infrastructure projects worth ₹450 crore.

He inaugurated six high-power grid substations in Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Keonjhar and Khurda districts and a 220 kv transmission line from Bolangir to Kesinga.

Naveen said inauguration of these projects would benefit the farmers, students and women in these districts. **MORE P3**

Australian Prime Minister concedes defeat



Canberra: Australia's Prime Minister conceded defeat after an election Saturday that could deliver a minority government. Scott Morrison acted quickly despite millions of votes yet to be counted because an Australian prime minister must attend a Tokyo summit Tuesday with US, Japanese and Indian leaders. "I believe it's very important that this country has certainty. I think it's very important this country can move forward," Morrison said.

Opposition leader Anthony Albanese will be sworn in as the new Prime Minister after his Labour party clinched its first electoral win since 2007. **MORE P10**

DU Prof held for 'Shivling' remarks gets bail



New Delhi: A court here Saturday granted bail to Delhi University Associate Professor Ratan Lal, who was arrested a day earlier for his alleged objectionable social media post on claims of a 'Shivling' at Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi. The court granted relief to Lal on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 50,000 and one surety of like amount. Lal was arrested under IPC Sections 153A and 295A by the Delhi Police. An FIR was lodged against Lal Tuesday night based on a complaint filed by advocate Vineet Jindal, who alleged that Lal had recently shared a "derogatory, inciting and provoking tweet on the Shivling". **MORE P9**

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Duty on petrol cut by ₹8, diesel by ₹6

Centre to provide ₹200 per cylinder subsidy to Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 21: Under pressure, the government Saturday cut excise duty on petrol by a record ₹8 per litre and that on diesel by ₹6 per litre to give relief to consumers battering under high fuel prices that has also pushed inflation to a multi-year high.

The excise duty cut will translate into a reduction of ₹9.5 a litre on petrol and ₹7 a litre in diesel after taking into account its impact on other levies.

Petrol price in Delhi will from Sunday cost ₹95.91 a litre as against ₹105.41 a litre currently while diesel will cost ₹96.67 a litre as opposed to ₹96.67 a litre now.

Announcing the duty cut through tweets, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said, "We are reducing the Central excise duty on petrol by ₹8 per litre and on diesel by ₹6 per litre. This will re-



duce the price of petrol by ₹9.5 per litre and of diesel by ₹7 per litre. It will have a revenue implication of around ₹1 lakh crore/year for the government."

She also said the government will give ₹200 per cylinder subsidy to Ujjwala Yojana beneficiaries for 12 cylinders in a year to help ease some of the burden arising from cooking gas rates rising to record levels.

A 14.2-kg LPG cylinder costs ₹1,003 in the national capital. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

Petrol at ₹102.25 & diesel ₹94.86 in state

Bhubaneswar: With the Centre slashing excise duty by ₹8 per litre on petrol and ₹6 per litre on diesel and the state reducing taxes by ₹2.23 and ₹1.36 a litre, the new fuel price from 6am of Sunday in Odisha will be ₹102.25 and Rs 94.86 respectively. This was estimated by All India Petroleum Dealers Association here. "Though the Centre cut the excise duty by ₹8 per litre of petrol, the actual price reduction in Odisha will be translated into ₹10.23 per litre," said association secretary Sanjay Lath. Similarly, the price of diesel will be less by ₹7.36 per litre, he said.

beneficiaries, the poor women who got free connections, will get ₹200 subsidy directly in their bank accounts and the effective price for them would be ₹803 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

Army man posted in Raj honey-trapped



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, May 21: In what could be a big catch, Rajasthan Police Saturday arrested Pradeep Kumar, an Indian Army personnel, for spying for Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

According to the police, Kumar, who was recruited three years ago and posted in the highly-sensitive Jodhpur regiment, was honey-trapped by a female agent from the Pak ISI. The police believe that confidential information of military and strategic importance was sent to Pakistan. They came into contact through social media six months ago. The woman introduced herself as Chhadam, a resident of Madhya Pradesh. She sought confidential documents related to the Indian Army on the pretext of marriage. The woman made Pradeep Kumar believe that she worked for a company in Bangalore.

TOMATO FLU SCARE GRIPS CAPITAL CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 21: Premier hospitals here including AIIMS and Capital Hospital have been receiving 4 to 5 children with tomato flu like symptoms daily during the past few days, triggering panic in the Capital city. However, the state is yet to confirm any such cases till now.

"We have been receiving patients with such symptoms for the last two weeks. However, they are being discharged after treatment at OPD," said additional superintendent of AIIMS, Prabhas Tripathy.

The virus starts spreading among children of 5 to 10 years just before the rains, Tripathy said. He urged the parents to keep symptomatic children in isolation.

"Till now, this tomato flu as a separate entity has not been reported from Odisha, and we have also not seen a single case at AIIMS Bhubaneswar," the institute said.

The disease is similar to hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) that occurs when there is an increase in the humidity with temperature fluctuation (prior to monsoon or at the end of monsoon season, as is the scenario now).



Now every state across the country is seeing a surge in HFMD cases with AIIMS Bhubaneswar also seeing a good number of such cases. However, all the children are recovering without complications, and none of the children has been hospitalised so far, they said.

While 5-6 children are reporting at Capital Hospital daily during the last 10 to 15 days with symptoms akin to that of tomato flu, the situation is under control and nothing to be scared of, said Capital Hospital Director Laxmidhar Sahu.

"It's something similar, though it's not exactly like tomato flu. We are getting 5-6 patients who are small children. None of them is getting critical," he said. These patients have lesions in their mouths and suffer from itching all over their body, said Sahu, adding that these patients get well within 2-4 days with normal treatment.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I am making a list of developmental works in the country. Shall I add Pangong bridge to the list?

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP		37.6°C	37.8°C
MAX		37.6°C	37.8°C
MIN		27.2°C	26.2°C
Humidity		75%	76%
Rainfall		Nil	Nil
	Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

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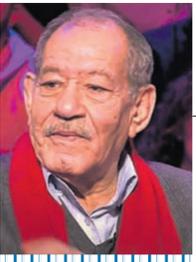


'NANNY MCPHEE' STAR EMMA THOMPSON ON BEING BODY-SHAMED

Emma Thompson has said that she has been body-shamed for years. The actress was told she didn't have "the right kind of body" for sex scenes. The 63-year-old actress revealed she has rarely been asked to do racy scenes because male executives did not think she had the right look for them.

'SONS OF RAMSES' ACTOR DIES HOURS BEFORE MOVIE'S CANNES PREMIERE

Algerian actor Ahmed Benaissa has died at the age of 78. The actor and comedian tragically passed away just hours before Parisian thriller 'Sons of Ramses' was due to be screened at the Cannes Film Festival. He reportedly died from a long illness.



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ARIES
Nourishing high ambitions is a good thing if they can drive you to achieve your potential. You make plans and execute them with utmost care. You may focus all your attention on attracting a member of the other sex. But Ganesha warns you not to get too swayed by it, especially if you are taking crucial decisions.

TAURUS
You may begin the day in a grumpy mood - mostly because you may be suffering from a stomach ailment, feels Ganesha. It would be best to visit a competent doctor at the slightest sign or symptom of an illness or even discomfort. Step back from the rush, and take some rest, if possible. You may also stay depressed or worried, on account of family issues. This is not a day when you can afford to be negligent or take chances with anything, whatsoever. Stay guarded!

GEMINI
There is every possibility that your emotional responses to certain issues will be intense today, foretells Ganesha. You are likely to join some personality development classes. Seductive conversation may culminate into something extraordinary with your partner.

CANCER
Today, you will go on a shopping spree, predicts Ganesha. Sale or no sale, you will have a one-point agenda - buy them all. Your spouse may feel his/her palpitations rising on seeing all the stuff you have bought. You will almost buy a vehicle or a house. Business is doing good, and there should be no problem related to money, but there is a limit to what one can buy - a limit that you will definitely flout.

LEO
When like-minded people come together, a lot of good things happen. And when the group happens to be as trustworthy as it is brilliant, it is sheer magic, says Ganesha. Today, in all probability, you will be at the beneficial end of a luminous meeting of minds. End this fulfilling day on a more personal note by treating your sweetheart to a bit of extravagance. So what if it costs you a small fortune; in love, all is fair!

VIRGO
You shall feel and react strongly to certain issues today, says Ganesha. In all likelihood, you may enrol somewhere to hone your personality. For all you know, says Ganesha, seductive dialogue may just ripen into a carnal joyride.

LIBRA
So, love finally entraps you with the help of the stars, chuckles Ganesha. There is a high probability that you will begin a long-lasting romantic relationship today. This new factor shall keep you elated throughout the day. Avoid any confrontation with those living around you. All in all, fortune is on your side today.

SCORPIO
Let the day unravel itself today, says Ganesha; you may be surprised to know what it has in store for you. In the afternoon, meetings, business deals and professional dos will dominate proceedings. You shall amuse one and all with your wit, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Today, most of your time will go in attending to your sweetheart - either in thoughts or in person. Thrills are on the anvil, with a casual conversation with someone special in the afternoon perhaps. You may go on a shopping spree and add more to that wardrobe of yours, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Everybody has some regrets in life. You will have some too, and today may just be the day for it, says Ganesha. You will put your best efforts at work to make things better for others, and although the purpose may be met, your hard work may not bring you the kind of appreciation you were waiting for. There may also be a noticeable change in your attitude, which will be brought about by your sweetheart.

AQUARIUS
Today, you experience the joy of giving freely, as your benevolent side decides to manifest itself. You also realise that a broad-minded approach is less stressful for you. You find it spiritually uplifting to fight against injustice and discrimination. And this wins you the respect of your subordinates wherever you go, says Ganesha.

PISCES
Your focus today will be on finalising your plans for buying a new house. Purchasing new furniture, or planning on renovating your home will also take up a considerable chunk of your time. Make sure you do not fail to account for the savings you need to make for your future needs in this entire process, says Ganesha.

BACK-TO-BACK 8 FLOPS FOR KANGANA



MUMBAI: Kangana Ranaut's performance in every film is remarkable, however, her films fail to impress at the box office. Despite stellar performance in every film, her films are a big flop at the box office.

The trailer of Dhaakad had grabbed everyone's attention and Kangana Ranaut went all out to promote the film. But, surprisingly, the film has been totally rejected by the audiences. According to early estimates, the film has reportedly collected ₹50 lakh at the box office which means it's a disaster on day one itself.

The movie had received mostly negative reviews, and yesterday, #BoycottDhaakad was also trending on Twitter. Kangana's last few films like Thalaivii, Panga, Judgementall Hai Kya, Manikarnika: The Queen of Jhansi, Simran, Rangoon, Katti Batti and I Love NY failed to make a mark at the box office, and Dhaakad joins the list of her back to back flop movies. PNN

Swankiest gift for PC

LOS ANGELES: Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas just received the swankiest gift from her husband and pop-singer Nick Jonas. Priyanka took to Instagram to flaunt her new customised car gifted to her by Nick. She posted a picture of herself on social media where she is sitting in an ATV, which has 'Mrs Jonas' written on the side.

(heart emoji) always helping me with my cool quotient." She added the hashtags 'best husband ever', 'set life', and 'citadel' at the end of the post.

The hashtags suggest that Nick gifted the car for her commute on the sets of her upcoming Amazon Prime Video series 'Citadel'. The couple welcomed their first child earlier this year. Their daughter Malti Marie was born through surrogacy in January. IANS



'Laal Singh Chaddha' trailer release at IPL finale

MUMBAI: Known for his out-of-the-box ideas, superstar Aamir Khan has chalked out a big, interesting and unique plan for the trailer launch of his eagerly awaited film 'Laal Singh Chaddha'. Cricket and cinema enthusiasts are in for a twin treat as the trailer of 'Laal Singh Chaddha' will be launched May 29 - the day of the IPL finale.

and puts a lot of thoughts into his marketing and promotional strategies of his films.

Aamir is adept at making well-projected moves. Recently, the superstar had a fun and hilarious banter with the former Indian coach Ravi Shastri which opened a new space for memes and conversations on the internet. Unveiling the trailer at the IPL finale can be said as one of the biggest and remarkable moves made by any producer in the history of cinema. IANS

Expecting Aamir to do the unexpected has become the norm over the years. Be it experimenting with distinct characters, interesting subjects and out-of-the-box movie promotional ideas, the marketing genius likes everything to be perfect



UKRAINE ECHO AT CANNES 'Stop raping us'

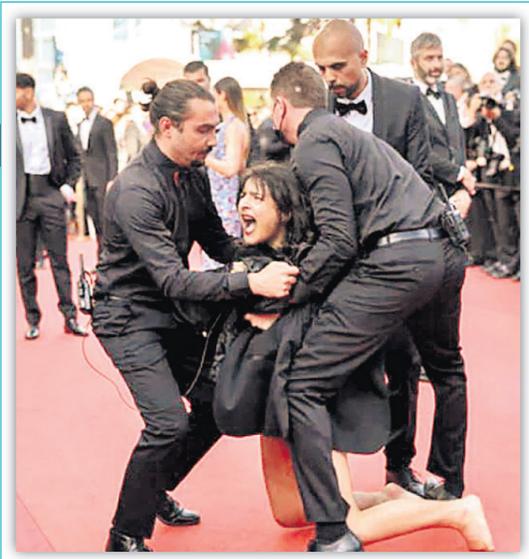
LOS ANGELES: Protesting against sexual violence in Ukraine, a woman tried to crash the Cannes Film Festival red carpet during the world premiere of George Miller's 'Three Thousand Years of Longing' while screaming at the top of her lungs.

organisation Scum posted on Twitter: "This activist exposed the war rapes and sexual torture committed on Ukrainian women by Russian soldiers."

Blood red paint also appeared on her lower back and legs.

She was quickly removed from the carpet by a handful of security guards. The topless woman was wearing only panties and had the word "scum" written on her lower back.

The colors of the Ukrainian flag were spray-painted across the woman's torso, as were the words: "Stop raping us." Security guards quickly covered up the woman and removed her from the red carpet. IANS



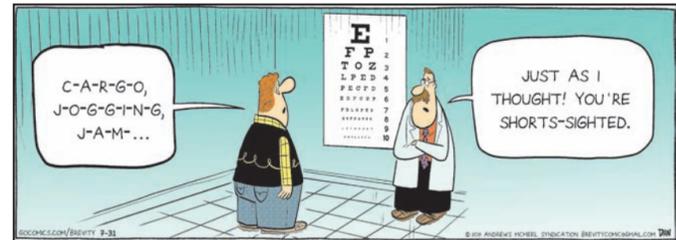
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

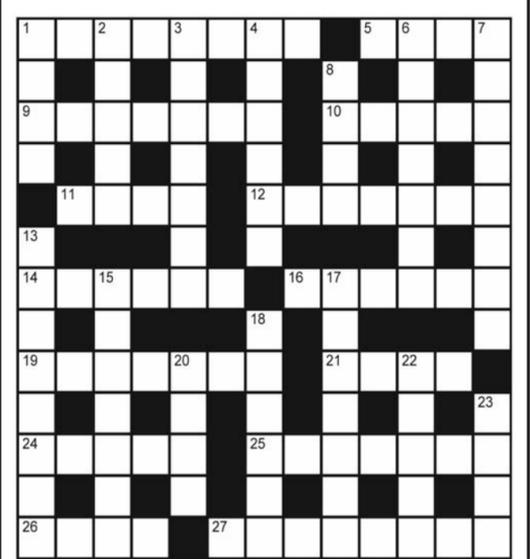


BREVITY



FUN post

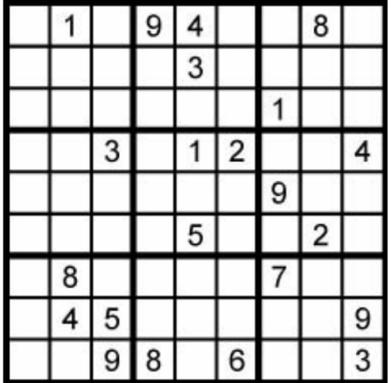
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Sot's future
 - 5 Fringe
 - 9 Melodious
 - 10 Small three-masted vessel
 - 11 Greek salad cheese
 - 12 Boring
 - 14 Illness
 - 16 Horse-drawn cab
 - 19 Songbird
 - 21 Streetcar
 - 24 Undue speed
 - 25 Haggles
 - 26 Anchovy
 - 27 Aardvark
 - Down**
 - 1 Ship part
 - 2 Moxie
 - 3 Apple growing place
 - 4 Plaudits
 - 6 Questionable
 - 7 Attention getter (6,2)
 - 8 Canned
 - 13 Theatre blockbuster (5,3)
 - 15 Go-between
 - 17 Magazine op-ed
 - 18 Stockholm locale
 - 20 Marsh growth
 - 22 Masterful
 - 23 Belgian river

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

CM launches 7 power infra projects worth ₹450 crore



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik virtually inaugurating the power infra projects, Saturday. 5T Secretary VK Pandian is also seen

Bhubaneswar, May 21: With an aim to provide high quality and uninterrupted electricity supply to consumers, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday virtually inaugurated seven power infrastructure projects worth ₹450 crore. Patnaik inaugurated six high-powered grid substations in Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Keonjhar and Khurda districts, and a 220 kv transmission line from Bolangir to Kesinga.

With the inauguration of these projects, farmers, students and women in these districts will be benefited. Small-scale industries and irrigation projects would also get benefit from these projects, Patnaik said. "Electricity is the lifeline of development. Like water, electricity is also highly necessary for everybody," he said while appealing to the people for proper use of the electricity. Patnaik further said that the state government has launched a scheme called 'Odisha Distribution System Strengthening Project' at an estimated cost of ₹3,800 crore to provide high quality electricity to the people. So far, 430/33/11 kv substations have been installed in the state under this scheme, he claimed.

STA announces jury of its short film fest

Bhubaneswar, May 21: The State Transport Authority (STA) Saturday announced the names of the jury members for the National Road Safety Short Film Festival scheduled to be held in June this year. The STA announced 11 jury members including Manish Munda, National Award winning film producer and philanthropist; Kuna Tripathy, Chairman, Odisha Film Development Corporation; Onir, National Award winning filmmaker & LGBTQIA Activist; Rajesh Touchriver, National Award winning filmmaker; and popular Odia movie actors Sabyasachi Mishra and Siddhanta Mahapatra. Principal Secretary for Commerce & Transport Department Bishnupada Sethi, while speaking at the launching ceremony at Police Bhawan here, announced the decision to increase cash rewards for the winners. "Seeing the enthusiasm, to encourage more people to send entries we have increased the prize money for film section for both Odia & Non-Odia languages categories. Cash awards for individual section remain as before," said Sethi. The STA has raised the prize money for Best Film from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh while the first runner up prize will now get ₹80,000 in place of ₹40,000. Similarly, the prize money for second runner up cash award has been increased to ₹60,000. The last date for the submission of entries for the National Road Safety Short Film Festival is June 3, 2022. The festival will be held in Rourkela (18 & 19 June) and Puri (24 & 25 June).

'Kids who play adventurously may have better mental health'

Children who spend more time playing adventurously may have lower symptoms of anxiety and depression, finds a new study. The study, published in Child Psychiatry and Human Development, indicates that children, aged 5-11, who spent more time playing outside, had fewer 'internalising problems', characterised as anxiety and depression. Those children were also more positive during the first lockdown. "We are more concerned than ever about children's mental health, and our findings highlight that we might be able to help protect children's mental health by ensuring they have plentiful opportunities for adventurous play," said researcher Helen Dodd from the University of Exeter, who led the study. "This is really positive because play is free, instinctive and rewarding for



The study indicates that children, aged 5-11, who spent more time playing outside, had fewer 'internalising problems', characterised as anxiety and depression

children, available to everyone, and does not require special skills. We now urgently need to invest in and protect natural spaces, well-designed parks and adventure playgrounds, to support the mental health of our children," Dodd added. The researchers said that the study sought to test theories that adventurous play offers learning opportunities that help build resilience in children, thereby helping to prevent mental health problems. For the study, the research team surveyed nearly 2,500 parents of children aged 5-11 years. Parents completed questions about their child's play, their general mental health (pre-Covid) and their mood during the first Covid-19 lockdown. The research was carried out with two groups of parents, a group of 427 parents living in Northern Ireland and a nationally representative group of 1,919 parents living in the UK.



FELICITATION CEREMONY

JC Swayamshree Mohanty of DAV Public School, Pokhaript, felicitated with Rajiv Gandhi Prativa Puraskar-2022 at Soochana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

BCJD plea to keep Ravenshaw main gate open till 9 pm

Cuttack, May 21: The Cuttack district unit of Biju Chhatra Janata Dal (BCJD), the student wing of ruling BJD in state, Saturday sought an early solution to various issues of students of Ravenshaw University (RU) here. Office-bearers of Cuttack district BCJD met Ravenshaw University Vice Chancellor Sanjay Nayak and raised their demands. They also submitted a memorandum to Registrar Bhakta Charan Pradhan.



BCJD activists at the Vice Chancellor's office

In their memorandum, the BCJD activists claimed that the main gate of the university is being closed at 6 pm. As a result, the students, particularly the hostel boarders, are being forced to enter into the campus through the back gate, located close to the Malgoddow area of the city. "There is a liquor shop close to the back gate of the university. The presence of drunkards and antisocial elements in the locality is posing a threat to the safety and security of the students. Moreover, the plying of heavy vehicles on the Malgoddow road is causing trouble for the students. That is why we urge the varsity authorities to keep open the main gate till 9 pm," read the memorandum. The BCJD activists also urged the authorities to provide wi-fi facility at all hostels of Ravenshaw University.

COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	52,68,51,316	49,66,46,831	62,99,223
India	4,31,34,145	4,25,94,801	5,24,348
Odisha	12,88,357	12,79,083	9,126

RAINFALL LIKELY FOR NEXT 5 DAYS

Bhubaneswar, May 21: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday forecast light to moderate rainfall for the next five days across several districts of Odisha. The met body said in a bulletin, "During the next 24 hours, light to moderate rain or thunderstorm is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Angul, Dhenkanal, Nawarangpur, Kalahandi, Koraput, Rayagada, and Kandhamal." "Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur in a few districts from 0830 hrs IST of May 23 up to 0830 hrs IST of May 26," it added.

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3 more held over seizure of pre-activated SIM cards

Bhubaneswar, May 21: The Crime Branch Saturday claimed to have arrested three more persons in connection with the seizure of 19,641 pre-activated SIM cards in Dhenkanal district recently. The accused have been identified as Prakash Chandra Sahoo, 34, of Takeru under Daspalla police limits in Nayagarh, Santanu Kumar Sahoo, 27, of Adhanga Malikesharpur under Derabis police limits in Kendrapara and Umakanta Mohanty, 29, of Dubagadia under Dharmasala police limits in Jajpur, sources said. The CB had earlier arrested six persons in connection with the case. Prakash is the territorial sales manager of Vodafone-Idea and he was residing in Tamando area of the capital city here. Santanu works as the territorial sales executive in the same company and he was staying in Tangi area of Khurda, said a source in the CB. Umakanta was also working as a territorial sales manager of Vodafone-Idea. But, he has left the job recently, sources added. "The trio was activating SIM cards with most of the D-KYC gen-

The trio was activating SIM cards with most of the D-KYC genuine activations. They used to supply pre-activated SIM cards to prime accused Dushmantha Sahu through another accused Gyanaranjan Sahoo

uine activations. They used to supply pre-activated SIM cards to prime accused Dushmantha Sahu through another accused Gyanaranjan Sahoo," said a CB official. The Cyber Cell of Crime Branch had earlier arrested three persons, including prime accused Dushmantha, May 1 this year after the seizure of 19,641 pre-activated SIM cards, ₹14, 32,892, 247 recharge vouchers, 48 mobile handsets with accessories, 394 voter ID cards and other incriminating articles. Later, the team had arrested three other accused involved in the case. The team has already frozen several bank accounts of the prime accused.

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Two arrested for duping medical aspirant of ₹32L



While one of the accused was arrested from Kolkata, another was nabbed from Patna railway station. Besides, ₹10,29,500 cash, two laptops, four mobile phones and a fake Aadhaar card were seized

PRATEEK SINGH | BHUBANESWAR DCP

nabbed from Danpur railway station in Bihar. Besides, ₹10,29,500 cash, two laptops, four mobile phones and a fake Aadhaar card were seized.

"The accused used to collect the list of the students passed in various entrance examinations like the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) after the declaration of results on the websites. They used to send messages in bulk to the mobile numbers of the students offering them admission in reputed educational institutions. The individuals would subsequently target the ones who would contact them for admission," revealed Singh.

The Infocity police brought Abhimanyu in a 2-day transit remand and produced them before a court here Saturday. Sugata was forwarded to a court May 17. Both Sugata and Abhimanyu have confessed to their deeds while questioning, said police. Further investigation into the extent of the racket is going on, said police sources.

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 21: City cops Saturday revealed to have arrested two individuals on the charge of duping ₹32 lakh from a student in City on the pretext of providing an MBBS seat in a medical college.

The Infocity police station here had registered a case in this connection after the girl student had lodged an FIR May 5, a department official said.

The police seized ₹10 lakh cash from the possession of two accused persons. While one was identified as Abhimanyu Kumar

Singh of Patna in Bihar, the other was Sugata Choudhury of Kolkata in West Bengal.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused were involved in similar frauds in Karnataka, Bihar, Kolkata and Chhattisgarh too. They were cheating medical aspirants by impersonating themselves as doctors of medical colleges in different states. They frequently changed names and created fake IDs, police said.

Bhubaneswar DCP Prateek Singh said, "While one of the accused Sugata Choudhury was arrested from his home in Kolkata May 16, another accused Abhimanyu was



Ropes meant for pulling the chariots in this year's Rath Yatra reached Puri, Saturday

OP PHOTO

95 active Cov cases

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Saturday reported eight new Covid-19 infections where as 21 individuals recovered from the highly infectious disease. The coastal state did not report any death caused by the virus. The state's active caseload stands at 95. Odisha contributes 2.99 per cent, 3.01 per cent and 1.75 per cent to the national figures of infection, recovery and fatality respectively. A total of 6,68,57,368 doses of vaccines have been administered in the state so far, of which 3,46,40,128 are 1st dose, 3,09,65,053 2nd dose and 12,52,187 people have taken the precaution dose.

NAVEEN IN FRESH ISC STANDING COMMITTEE

The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State Relations under the Chairmanship of Justice RS Sarkaria had recommended a permanent Inter-State Council called the Inter-Governmental Council (IGC) should be set up under Article 263, pursuant to which the ISC, a permanent constitutional body, was established May 28, 1990, by a Presidential order

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 21: Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik will be a member of the reconstituted Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council (ISC). The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has re-constituted the committee including its 13 members.

According to the Gazette notification issued Friday, the MHA took the step in supersession of the Inter-State Council Secretariat's notification dated August 9, 2019, and with the approval of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Apart from Union Home Minister Amit Shah as the Chairman of the Standing Committee, the four additional members - Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

Virendra Kumar and Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat are among the Union Cabinet Ministers on the Council.

Along with Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik, Andhra Pradesh CMYS Jagan Mohan Reddy, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, Gujarat CM Bhupendra Patel, Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann and Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath will be the other seven members of the committee.

The Standing Committee will have continuous consultation on the matters for consideration of the Council. It will process all matters pertaining to Centre-State Relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council

The committee will also monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council and will consider any other matter referred to it by the Chairman or Council.

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ARTISTES' ARSENAL



Members of the SCB Medical College & Hospital Dramatic Society performed a street play in front of the old outdoor of the hospital in Cuttack to mark the Anti Terrorism Day, Saturday

OP PHOTO

ICAR-CIFA inks pact with KISS-DU for mutual improvement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 21: A MoU was signed between the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) and the Kalinga Institute of Social Science, Deemed to be University (KISS-DU) Saturday.

The pact aimed at improving social science research, technology transfer and dissemination of scientific knowledge.

The signing saw presence of ICAR-CIFA delegation headed by its Director Saroj Kumar Swain and KISS-DU VC Deepak Kumar Behera.

While addressing the gathering, Behera expressed his happiness in signing the MoU, and mentioned that this collaboration will mark a new beginning in empowering the needy people by training them with the modern scientific fish culture methods. Formation of a joint expert group with representatives from both the institutes was emphasised.

As many as 139 developing countries will benefit from the new funding totaling \$43 million from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The funding is meant to help them implement projects that reverse species loss, UN agencies said in a statement released in Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

The funding, which was announced Friday ahead of the International Day for Biological Diversity to be marked Sunday, will benefit 139 developing countries which are already grappling with mounting threats to natural habitats, Xinhua news agency reported.

Each beneficiary country will be eligible for grants totaling 3,00,000 dollars which would enable them to analyse and align their policies, targets, finance and monitoring system as a means of revitalising actions on threats to biodiversity.

The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Development Programme (UNDP) will provide technical expertise to these developing countries in order to step them up for the optimal utilisation of the funds and advancement in species protection.

UNEP's Executive Director Inger Andersen said that the new funding will enable developing countries to seize benefits linked to the establishment of a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Action plans that will be implemented using the new GEF funding will make developing countries place species conservation at the heart of national development plans.

Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, the Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson of GEF, said the new funding will change the trajectory of biodiversity conservation in developing countries which

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

\$43mn to 139 developing countries for species conservation

Each beneficiary country will be eligible for grants totaling 3,00,000 dollars which would help them analyse and align their policies, targets, finance and monitoring system as means of revitalising actions on threats to biodiversity

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The new funding will enable developing countries to seize benefits linked to the establishment of a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Action plans that will be implemented using the new GEF funding will make developing countries place species conservation at the heart of national development plans

are already grappling with massive loss of rare species. "We

stand ready to help the stewards of the globally-important biodi-

versity elevate nature in their planning and quickly scale up ef-

forts that can turn international goals into reality"

UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said investing in nature protection will benefit national economies apart from enhancing climate resilience in the global south.

Steiner added that nature underpins half the world's jobs and livelihoods, adding that it remained the bedrock for sustaining food, water and energy security across the globe.

Elizabeth Mrema, the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, hailed the new funding for species conservation in developing countries, adding that all sectors of the society will benefit profoundly.

Mrema added that as the international community prepared to come up with a 10-year plan to halt the extinction of species, adequate funding was critical.



IANS

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Cattle traders shoot at 2 cow vigilantes; 12 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, May 21: Cattle traders shot at members of Debsena Go Surakhya, a local outfit working against cattle smuggling, on NH-49 under Jashipur police limits in Mayurbhanj district, Saturday. Two of them - Deepak Sahu and Sashikant Behera, hailing from Cuttack, received bullet injuries, one in a leg and another in his hand.

As their condition was critical, they were first admitted to PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada and later shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

Meanwhile, police have arrested 12 people in this connection and seized three vehicles and firearms.

Reports said, members of this outfit got information about cattle smuggling to Kolkata, Saturday morning. They were waiting near a toll gate. Some container vehicles were carrying cattle. When members of this outfit tried to intercept the vehicles, the traders fired at two Go Surakhya activists and managed to flee the spot.

Alerted, police rushed to the spot and seized a container. Later, police arrested 12 people, and seized three SUVs. Police have registered a case and started an investigation, said Karanjia SDPO Sudarshan Gangoi.

Man, son shot at over parking

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, May 21: Miscreants allegedly shot at a man and his son following a heated argument over parking of vehicles at Rabana Square at Sinapali town of Nuapada district, Saturday.

The victims were identified as Saroj Meher, 55, and son Naba Ranjan Meher, 30. The father-son duo sustained critical injuries after the bullets pierced their thighs, said Khariar SDPO Santak Jena, Saturday.

Police said, Saroj and Naba were trying to park their bike when they had a heated argument with the occupants of a car. It later took a violent turn after an occupant of the car opened fire at them and fled.

The injured were hospitalised. Police later, arrested the accused Raja Panigrahi from Chhattisgarh border and seized a mauter, four live bullets, two magazines, two empty cartridges and a car from his possession.

Jumbo tramples youth to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, May 21: An elephant trampled a youth to death in Tinikosa reserve forest under Nilagiri block of Balasore district Friday night. The deceased was identified as Shyamsundar Singh (25) of Baragadia village. Shyamsundar had gone to a local market Friday afternoon, but he did not return home. His family members searched for him and could not trace him. Saturday morning, his kin were informed about a body lying in the forest. They rushed to the spot and recognised it. Meanwhile, forest officials have started an investigation into the matter.



Tourists click photographs as Olive Ridley hatchlings start their seaward journey at Rushikulya river mouth in Ganjam district

OP PHOTO

NATURE'S SPECTACLE

KEONJHAR JUMBO DEATHS

DRM, ranger show-caused

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 21: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Shashi Paul has issued show-cause notices to Chakradharpur divisional railway manager (DRM) and Champua ranger Saturday in connection with the deaths of three elephants on the track after a train hit them in Basapani area of Keonjhar district.

The PCCF also said that though the forest department had alerted the railways about the presence of elephants in the area, investigation will be done to ascertain if the train driver had reduced the speed and blown long whistle to scare away the animals.

"We will definitely take action as the location where the incident took place is beyond the forest limits and there is a road on the other side of the railway track. The lo-

cation is not a passage for elephants and the road is at a higher altitude," said the PCCF.

Notably, three elephants of a 20-member herd were mowed down by a train near Bansapani Behera hutting under the Joda police limits while they were crossing the railway tracks.

While a calf succumbed to the injuries on the spot, two more elephants including a calf and a female jumbo died later.

Keonjhar divisional forest officer (DFO) Saturday informed that the department has served the show-cause notices on the DRM of Chakradharpur division and the ranger of Champua.

The PCCF added, "We are closing the paths with solar fencing excluding the areas where the movement of elephants is frequently noticed. Guards will be appointed in these areas."

Tiger hide seizure: 2 more arrested



Keonjhar: Two days after the arrest of a youth in connection with seizure of a Royal Bengal Tiger hide from Budhipada village under Daitari forest range of Anandapur wildlife division of Keonjhar district, forest officials arrested two persons including his father and brother, Saturday.

The prime accused Butu Mahakur, 30, was arrested, Friday while his father Duryodhan Mahakur, 60, and brother Panchu Mahakur, 32, were arrested, Saturday. Later, they were produced in the court.

Forest officials continued raiding various places to nab the rest of the persons involved in the illegal trade. A minor was picked up for questioning but later released from detention later.

The forest officials had seized the hide, Thursday night. However, during seizure the villagers attacked the forest officials and damaged their vehicle. The injured forest officials were rescued and admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack for treatment. Forest officials are trying to ascertain where the animal came from and where it was killed.



FILE PHOTO

Govt funds for 'pvt road' sparks row

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sunabeda/Semiliguda, May 21: A controversy has erupted over alleged use of government funds for construction of a road to a private educational institution in Sunabeda municipality area of Koraput district.

As per reports, the municipality has a multi-function hall near National Highway-26. Maa Dhanarani Tarini temple is nearby and from there a road leads to the



hill. After some distance, a 200/250 metre long road has been laid to a private education institution. Locals alleged that this road is not meant for public communication. As per the information plaque for the project, ₹10 lakh has been spent for the road between September 28, 2021 and

December 25, 2021.

However, there was no mention about the name of the construction agency/contractor and the ward under which it is located. Locals have sought to know why the civic body has laid this road by spending the government fund for the utility of a private institution. Executive officer of the municipality Gobinda Dandasa said he has recently joined the civic body. "I will look into the matter and take necessary steps," he added.

863 Class-IX students skip exams in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, May 21: The results of Class-IX for academic session 2021-22 were declared recently. The education department in Ganjam district was shocked to know the fact that as many as 863 Class-IX students had not filled up their forms, indicating possible dropout of students.

On the other hand, this problem has cropped up while thousands of Class-X students have not appeared for the annual HSC examinations this year in the district. The reason why so many students are dropping out from HSC examinations has remained a mystery. The number of such students is said to be the highest in the district.

SME department has flagged concern over the issue and sought reports from all block education officers and headmasters in Ganjam

Besides, 23 students in the district have not sat for their Madhyama examinations this year. Meanwhile, the education department has started delving into the factors responsible for the students dropping their HSC examinations despite having filled up their forms.

School and Mass Education Secretary Bishnupada Sethi had recently directed the district education officer of Ganjam to carry out a school-wise survey and find out the reasons for absenteeism of such huge number of students in examinations and to submit a report within 10 days.

Ahead of the upcoming annual examinations, the DEO has asked all the block education officers (BEOs) and headmasters (HMs) of these high schools to submit reports over the issue.

It may be noted here that many students have not appeared for the HSC summative-2 examinations this year.

AP interference in Kotia will not be tolerated: DM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, May 21: The implementation of the drinking water project underway in Kotia panchayat under Pottangi block of this district will get completed within the deadline, said Collector & District Magistrate Abdaal M Akhtar, Friday.

Moreover, no interference will be tolerated in the implementation of the drinking water project, the Collector said.

The response of the Collector came after the drinking water project at Neredibalsa village under Kotia panchayat was abruptly shut down by the Andhra Pradesh government officials, Thursday. The officials were found disrupting the construction work of the project.

Akhtar said that the project work has started in Kotia panchayat and the state government is committed to complete the project on time. No interference will be tolerated and drinking water will be provided to each and every household under Kotia panchayat, he said adding that such disputes



are not new and occur often in the area.

Notably, the project is being implemented in the panchayat under Centre sponsored Jal Jeevan Mission to provide drinking water facilities to every household. The pipe laying work was going on when a team of Andhra Pradesh officials led by Salur tehsildar A Sarojini, village revenue officer and other officials arrived at the work site and stopped the works. Moreover, Salur rural police station officials registered cases against the contractor Rajkumar and four other workers.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
PUBLIC HEALTH DIVISION, KEONJHAR - 758001
Ph. No. 06766-254096, e-Mail: eephkjr@gmail.com
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Invitation For Bids (IFB) No. SEPHKJR-10/2022-23 Dt.17.05.2022

- Name of the Work : Provision of Water supply in Government College of Engineering at Keonjhar
- Estimated Cost : Rs.73.72 lakh
- Period of Completion : 90 Days
- Date & time of availability of Bid document in the portal : 10 hours of Dt.19.05.2022 to 17 hours of Dt.31.05.2022
- Last date/time of receipt of bids in the portal : Dt.31.05.2022 at 17 hours
- Date and time of opening of bids : Dt.01.06.2022 at 11 hours
- Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : The Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Keonjhar - 758001 Odisha, Ph.: 06766-254096 e-Mail: eephkjr@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer
Public Health Division, Keonjhar
OIPR-13054/11/0009/2223

NOTICE INVITING TENDER No. C-318
OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AERA COUNCIL, ODAGAON
At/P.O.: Odagaon, Dist.- Nayagarh, PIN - 752081
Phone: 06753-260062, Email: nacodagaon@gmail.com
Tender Call Notice No. 944, Dt.18.05.2022
IDENTIFICATION NO.: NAC-ODG-06-2022-23

1	Name of the work	Shifting & Relocation of existing 11 K.V. Line in the area allotted for proposed Hygienic Fish Market building site as Ward No. 06 of NAC, Odagaon.
2	No. of works	01 No.
3	Value of work	Rs.3,44,567/-
4	Class of Contractor	As per DTCN
5	Period of Completion	30 days
6	Date of Publication	Dt.20.05.2022
7	Date and time of availability of document in the portal	From Dt.20.05.2022 at 11.00 A.M. to Dt.27.05.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.
8	Last date/time for receipt of bids in portal	Dt.27.05.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.
9	Last date of Submission of original documents in this office	27.05.2022 upto 01.00 P.M. by Registered Post/Speed Post/Drop Box available at NAC Office
10	Date and time of opening the BID	On Dt.31.05.2022 at 9.00 A.M.
11	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Executive Officer, NAC, Odagaon

Further details can be seen from e-Procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.
Sd./- Executive Officer, NAC, Odagaon
OIPR-13142/11/0004/2223

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, R.W. DIVISION, ANANDAPUR
e-Procurement Notice for Road Works Identification No. Online-01/SERW/AND/2022-23
No. 4158 No. O-274 E-mail address: eerw_anandapur@yahoo.co.in Dt. 17.05.2022

- Name of the work : Repair of Road work under Annual Maintenance Plan (AMP) for 2022-23
- Total No. of works : 23 Nos. of work
- Estimated Cost : Approx. Estimate Cost 5,357 lakhs to 68,938 lakhs.
- Class of Contractor : 'A' Class, 'B' Class, 'C' Class & 'D' Class
- Other Details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender of the Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Anandapur	Date & Place of receipt of bid cost & bid security
		From	To			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Anandapur	Online 01/ SERW/ AND/2022-23	24.05.2022 at 10.00 A.M.	01.06.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.	31.05.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.	06.06.2022 at 11.00 A.M.	The bidder shall transfer online the cost of bid and EMD in column No. - 4 & 6 in Annexure-I, respectively through a process as mentioned in DTCN.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in & www.tenders.ori.nic.in.
OIPR-25055/11/0001/2223
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, R.W. Division, Anandapur

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA Mail ID: ee_nimapara@yahoo.co.in
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, NIMAPARA
No.- Tender Online-Divn.NPR-01/2022-23 Date: 19.05.2022
e-Procurement NOTICE

- Name of the work : Road/Building Works for the year 2022-23
- Total No. of Projects : 25 (Twenty five) Nos. of project.
- Estimated cost of projects : Varies from Rs.4.42 lakh to Rs. 44.20 lakh
- Class of contractor : 'B' Class & 'A' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
: 'C' Class & 'B' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
: 'D' Class & 'C' Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
- Mode of Submission of tender : Tender should be submitted online only in website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
- Period of Completion : As per TCN
- Other details.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date, time & venue of opening of tender
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nimapara	Tender Online - Divn. NPR- 01/2022-23	26.05.2022 at 11.00 A.M.	08.06.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.	07.06.2022 upto 5.00 P.M.	at 11.00 A.M. Office of the E.E., R.W. Division, Nimapara

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nimapara
OIPR-25099/11/0002/2223

A two-decade long bonding knows no bounds

FOREST DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TWICE TO RELEASE THE ANIMAL IN THE FOREST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, May 21: At a time when man-animal conflicts frequently make headlines and people are unable to count on their family and friends even, stories of man-animal friendship make hearts melt. Such an awe-inspiring friendship has blossomed between a man and a wild boar in Malkangiri and they have been sharing this bonhomie for 20 years.

A wild boar 'Raju' has been tied up in an inseparable bond with Mahendra Patra, a resident of this town. The relationship between the two is like that of a father and son.

Mahendra's selfless love and affection for the wild animal has rid

MAN-BOAR BONHOMIE



the wild animal of its ferocity and wild instinct. Reports said that,

Mahendra had rescued a baby boar when the animal came running near

Mahendra's house to shelter itself during a storm 20 years back. Mahendra took the animal with him. Since then, the wild boar has become very much a part of Mahendra's family.

Mahendra left the animal in the jungle after it grew up. However, the boar would come back to Mahendra after some time. The animal obeys every word of Mahendra like a son and eats whatever he feeds him.

The relationship between the two has become so strong that the animal would return to Mahendra from the forest when it is time to eat. The animal eats coconut, banana, biscuits, rice and dalma like a human being.

The animal has become a friend of the children in the locality and never harms them while roaming in the area. Children also find spending time with the animal equally a pleasure.

The Forest department officials have left the animal twice in the forest so that it could live in its habitat, but the animal has always made his way back to Mahendra's home.

FOCUS ASIA

THE CLASH OF TITANS



President Xi Jinping has picked a border fight that he cannot win, and transformed a previously conciliatory India into a long-term foe. This amounts to an even bigger miscalculation than Prime Minister Narendra Modi's failure to see it coming

With global attention focused on Russia's war in Ukraine, China's territorial expansionism in Asia – especially its expanding border conflict with India – has largely fallen off the international community's radar. Yet, in the vast glaciated heights of the Himalayas, the world's demographic titans have been on a war footing for over two years, and the chances of violent clashes rise almost by the day.

The confrontation began in May 2020. When thawing ice reopened access routes after a brutal winter, India was shocked to discover that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had stealthily occupied hundreds of square miles of the borderlands in its Ladakh region. This triggered a series of military clashes, which resulted in China's first combat deaths in over four decades, and triggered the fastest-ever rival troop buildup in the Himalayan region.

India's counterattacks eventually drove the PLA back from some areas, and the two sides agreed to transform two battlegrounds into buffer zones. But, over the last 15 months, little progress has been made to defuse tensions in other areas. With tens of thousands of Chinese and Indian troops standing virtually at attention along the long-disputed border, a military stalemate has emerged.

But stalemate is not stagnation. China has continued to alter the Himalayan landscape rapidly and profoundly in its favour, including by establishing 624 militarised border villages – mirroring its strategy of creating artificial militarised islands in the South China Sea – and constructing new warfare infrastructure near the frontier.

As part of this effort, China recently completed a bridge over Pangong Lake – the site of past military clashes – that promises to strengthen its position in a disputed area of India's Ladakh region. It has also built roads and security installations on territory that belongs to Bhutan, in order to gain access to a particularly vulnerable section of India's border overlooking a narrow corridor

known as the "Chicken Neck," which connects its far northeast to the heartland.

All of this, China hopes, will enable it to dictate terms to India: accept the new status quo, with China keeping the territory it has grabbed, or risk a full-scale war in which China has maximised its advantage. China's expansionism relies on deception, stealth, and surprise, and on apparent indifference to the risks of military escalation. The aim of its brinkmanship is to confound the other side's deterrence strategy and leave it with no real options.

China learned from its strategic folly of invading Vietnam in 1979 and has become adept at waging asymmetric or hybrid warfare, usually below the threshold of overt armed conflict. This enables it to advance its strategic objectives, including land grabs, incrementally. Coercive bargaining and overt intimidation also help to overcome resistance.

This salami-slicing strategy has already enabled Chinese President Xi Jinping to redraw the geopolitical map in the South China

Sea. And the terrestrial application of this approach being deployed against India, Bhutan, and Nepal is proving just as difficult to counter. As India is learning firsthand, countries have virtually no options other than the use of force.

One thing is certain: simply hoping that China will stop encroaching on Indian territory will do India little good. After all, India got into this situation precisely because its political and military leadership failed to take heed of China's military activities near the frontier. On the contrary, while China was laying the groundwork for its territorial grabs, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was bending over backwards to befriend Xi. In the five years before the first clashes flared in May 2020, Modi met with his Chinese counterpart 18 times. Even a 2017 stand-off on a remote Himalayan plateau did not dissuade Modi from pursuing his appeasement policy.

Seeking to protect his image as a strong leader, Modi has not acknowledged the loss of Indian territories. India's media enables this evasion by amplifying govern-

ment-coined euphemisms: China's aggression is a "unilateral change of status quo," and the PLA-seized areas are "friction points." Meanwhile, Modi has allowed China's trade surplus with India to rise so rapidly – it now exceeds India's total defence budget (the world's third largest) – that his government is, in a sense, underwriting China's aggression.

But none of this should be mistaken for unwillingness to fight. India is committed to restoring the status quo ante and is at its "highest level" of military readiness. This is no empty declaration. If Xi seeks to break the current stalemate by waging war, both sides will suffer heavy losses, with no victor emerging.

In other words, Xi has picked a border fight that he cannot win, and transformed a conciliatory India into a long-term foe. This amounts to an even bigger miscalculation than Modi's policy incoherence. The price China will pay for Xi's mistake will far outweigh the perceived benefits of some stealthy land grabs.

In a sense, China's territorial expansionism represents a shrewder, broader, and slower version of Russia's conventional war on Ukraine – and could provoke a similar international backlash against Xi's neo-imperial agenda. Already, China's aggression has prompted Indo-Pacific powers to strengthen their military capabilities and cooperation, including with the United States. All of this will undercut Xi's effort to fashion a Sino-centric Asia and, ultimately, achieve China's goal of global pre-eminence.

Xi might recognise that he has made a strategic blunder in the Himalayas. But, at a time when he is preparing to secure a precedent-defying third term as leader of the Communist Party of China, he has little room to change course, and the costs will continue to mount.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and a Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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There is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Master.

SRI AUROBINDO



What Next?

The issue of the Gyanvapi mosque has now become live and will likely remain with us for years if not decades, just as Ayodhya did. What should we anticipate? In an interview with the journalist Barkha Dutt, the vice chancellor of Hyderabad's National University of Law Faizan Mustafa spoke about the legal issues at hand.

The core belief is that the Places of Worship Act, passed by the Parliament during the heat of the Babri campaign, will protect the mosque in Kashi. Mustafa said that this was not necessarily so. First, the Supreme Court could strike down the Act because it does not permit judicial review. Meaning judges were barred from adjudicating on any dispute on whether a place of worship was really a mosque or temple or gurudwara or church instead of what it was currently. This barring of judicial review went against what is called the 'basic structure' doctrine, and on those grounds the Places of Worship Act could be struck down. And from there, the Kashi dispute would go into the same as the Ayodhya one did.

Secondly, the Parliament had the right to repeal the Places of Worship law, and indeed some in the BJP have been asking for this to happen. Given the current numbers in Parliament, this is entirely possible. Mustafa then said that there was no real legal cover for Muslims and they should instead try reconciliation with Hindus. Meaning that they should voluntarily give up some mosques so as to end the issue once and for all.

Something similar, though on a different subject, was suggested by the journalist Saeed Naqvi, with whom I had a discussion a few days ago at the Bangalore International Centre. Naqvi felt that Hindus were upset that while Pakistan got an Islamic state, India remained secular. If India were to be made a Hindu Rashtra formally, then that sense of grievance in Hindus would vanish. He said that it might even be better for India, and pointed to the United Kingdom which officially is a kingdom with an Anglican ruler, but where figures like Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid could aspire to high office, unlike India.

Both Mustafa and Naqvi are well-meaning, knowledgeable and experienced. It would not be appropriate to dismiss what they are saying and we would do well to contemplate the meaning of their words. I wanted to look at the other aspect here. Is the assumption that Hindus feel grievance against their own Constitution? And secondly, is the historical sense of grievance behind what is happening in Kashi and what happened in Ayodhya?

Perhaps it is, and for the purpose of trying to understand events, let us assume that this is the case. What follows from here is that we have to see what else has been going around us and connect it to this fresh dispute in the court. Since 2014 but especially since 2019 we have seen a slew of State actions from the BJP that address Muslims. The criminalisation of Muslim divorce, the gutting of Kashmir's democracy and autonomy, the criminalisation of the possession of beef, the ban on hijab, the ban on namaz in designated spaces, the ban on Muslims vending near temples, the blaming of Muslims for the spread of COVID-19, the use of bulldozers against mostly Muslim homes and shops. These are the things that have kept this nation busy and are what have made the news headlines in the last 36 months.

For us to engage with what Mustafa and Naqvi are saying, we have to assume that all of the above are also the product of Hindu resentment that they have been stuck with a secular State, and the product of their historical grievance against the Mughals.

Is this the case? I do not want to answer this here but it would be interesting for us to each ask ourselves what the core issue is, if there is a core issue.

The other thing to ask ourselves is whether, if we were to change the name of our country officially and become the Hindu Rashtra, if the treatment of Muslims and their inclusion in political power change. We accept that at the moment no Muslim in India can aspire to be prime minister of India as Sunak or Javid can in the UK. Does changing the name of the country also change the reality of this exclusion? Again, something for us to think about.

Of course, there is also the problem of reducing everyone to their religious identity and seeing society as Hindus and Muslims. Collective identity is the sign of primitive societies. In democracy, the most important unit is the individual, who has rights that the State must respect. An individual is defined as a single human being distinct from a group. Fundamental rights are addressed to the individual. In our Constitution equality cannot be denied to "any person" (Article 14), the State cannot discriminate against "any citizen" (Article 15).

These are the issues that are on the table. We have two well-meaning men put forward what they think should be done in conciliatory terms. It would be good for the BJP, since it is in government and has been at the forefront of all the campaigns and laws and policies described here, to articulate what it wants. What is it that will put an end to the hostility and resentment and violence? It would be good to know.



Aakar Patel

Collective identity is the sign of primitive societies. In democracy, the most important unit is the individual, who has rights that the State must respect



Brahma Chellaney

CHINA'S EXPANSIONISM RELIES ON DECEPTION, STEALTH, AND SURPRISE, AND ON APPARENT INDIFFERENCE TO THE RISKS OF MILITARY ESCALATION

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

Torchbearers of India's renaissance



SN Misra

IN THESE TURBULENT TIMES, THE VOICES OF THESE RENAISSANCE MEN WOULD TAKE US OUT FROM THE TUNNEL OF HATRED, BIGOTRY AND DIVISIVE POLITICS

As we celebrate Raja Ram Mohan Ray's 250th birthday 22 May, the memories of his pioneering contribution towards socio-religious movement trickle in. Ram Mohan Ray was a polyglot who studied ancient texts like the Vedas and Upanishads and also Koran and Bible. It was he who pleaded before the Viceroy for abolition of pernicious practices of Sati, child marriage and polygamy. He also pleaded for inheritance rights of women. The Brahma Sabha which he created in 1828 segued into the Brahma Samaj movement with prominent adherents like Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray, who can be considered as the torchbearers of India's renaissance.

The genesis of renaissance could be traced to the Republic of Florence which took decisive steps to transit from the middle age to modernity, by adopting new thinking in art, architecture, politics, science and literature. It has always been an enigma why renaissance happened in the city of Florence and not elsewhere. Eric Weiner in his fascinating book "Geography of the Genius" writes how Florence was swampy, malarial and prone to bubonic plague. It was also sur-

rounded by spiteful bellicose neighbours. He quotes Plato who wrote: "What is honoured in a country will be cultivated there." Athens honoured wisdom, it got Socrates; Rome honoured power, it got the Roman empire; Florence honoured art, it got Leonardo da Vinci. Weiner writes that 25 January 1504, a group of famous artists like Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Botticelli congregated in Florence to choose a suitable location to display the city's latest masterpiece created by Michelangelo "David." Though these artists had intense rivalry, it did not stop them to celebrate the genius of an individual. Florence had the unique distinction of having a workshop which was mentored by Verrocchio which trained the greatest artists of their time including Leonardo. Interestingly, Verrocchio believed that creativity is not a free floating skill that can be taught. Verrocchio mentored his students to develop thinking styles and encourage them to find problems. Leonardo was a problem finder and hence he excelled. Pablo Picasso, the great artist used to say "computers are stupid because they give only answers."

While the genius of Rabindranath Tagore and the orig-

inality of Satyajit Ray are well known, it would be interesting to study the contribution of Girish Karnad, the last renaissance man who died three years back. Girish Karnad was born to a father who married a widow which was opposed by the community, by following the rites of Arya Samaj. He did his graduation from Dharwad and subsequently MA in Oxford as a Rhodes scholar. Just as Florence was the epicentre of art, Dharwad was the confluence of music where musicians with Hindustani tradition used to sing along with Carnatic style. No wonder it produced exceptional musical maestros like Gangubai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansoor, Bhimsen Joshi and Kumar Gandharva. It also created a cultural glue when Bhimsen Joshi anoints Rashid Khan as his successor. Religion never mattered to these masters of music.

Girish Karnad's contribution as a renaissance man can be seen as a great script writer, actor, director, and activist. The 50s saw the emergence of a rare film director Satyajit Ray, with his Apu Trilogy (1955-1959). The 1960s saw the rise of great script writers in India; with Badal Sarkar, writing

in Bengali, Mohan Rakesh in Hindi, Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi and Girish Karnad in Kannada. Karnad shot to fame with his second play, Tughlaq, written in 1964 about an idealistic 14th century ruler who shifted the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. He wanted to foster Hindu-Muslim unity and secularism. However, his decision became catastrophic as he was not realistic about the ground level difficulty. Tughlaq was an allegory of the Nehru era which started with enormous hope for the Indian masses, petering out to disillusionment with his obsession for socialism and the Chinese debacle of 1962. Karnad was raised in a world without electricity. However, he electrified India culturally.

Tagore, the great renaissance son of India wrote that "the mind should be without fear and the clear stream of reason must not lose its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habits." In these turbulent times when religion is being used to divide the country, the voices of these renaissance men would hopefully resonate and take us out from the tunnel of hatred, bigotry and divisive politics.

The writer teaches constitutional law.

WISDOM CORNER

In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit.
ANNE FRANK

It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple: one must be a woman manly, or a man womanly.
VIRGINIA WOOLF

The smallest minority on earth is the individual. Those who deny individual rights cannot claim to be defenders of minorities.
AVN RAND

WORDSWORTH

Sycophant

That's the English translation of the original classical Greek word sukophantes, which comes from sukon, a fig, and phainein, to show. The Greek word meant an informer, or a false accuser, but the association with figs is less than obvious. One theory has it that it relates to a period when the exportation of figs from ancient Athens was prohibited by law, something we know about from the writings of Plutarch. So the word could refer to somebody who informed on those who broke the law in this way. But there's no evidence and modern scholars dismiss it. A better explanation is that giving someone the fig is an ancient expression for the obscene gesture of putting the thumb between two fingers. (The word for fig in Greek, Italian, English and other languages has long been a low slang term for the female genitals, from a supposed resemblance.) It could be that the Greek word referred to the action of an informer figuratively (so to speak) giving the fig to the criminals he informed against. When sycophant first appeared in English in the sixteenth century it had this original meaning of an informer, but quickly moved through a sense of someone who bears tales to a person of higher status to its modern sense. This the big Oxford English Dictionary explains in one of its better definitions as "A mean, servile, cringing, or abject flatterer; a parasite, toady, lickspittle."

Pollution in India

Sir, According to a study published in The Lancet Planetary Health, pollution was responsible for 2.4 million deaths in India and of these deaths in 2019, air pollution accounted for 16.7 lakh deaths – the highest by any country. Further, more than 5 lakh lives were lost in the country due to water pollution, followed by occupational pollution (more than one lakh) and lead exposure (over two lakh). The report states that although the number of deaths from pollution sources associated with extreme poverty (such as indoor air pollution and water pollution) have decreased, these reduction are offset by increased deaths attributable to industrial population (such as ambient air pollution and chemical pollution). It is also reported that between 2000 and 2019, economic losses caused by modern forms of pollution – ambient, chemical and lead – have increased and are now conservatively estimated to amount to approximately 1% of GDP in India. The report says that India has made efforts to control air pollution especially with the ambitious PM Ujjwala Yojana, a scheme launched in 2016 to help poor rural women shift to cooking gas, but gaps remain. India has developed instruments and regulatory powers to mitigate pollution sources but there is no centralised system to drive pollution control efforts and achieve substantial improvements. It is unfortunate to know that Indian cities have been routinely dominating global pollution rankings.

Hitesh Kumar Parida, PANIKOILI

Undemocratic policy

Sir, The statement made by the Union Home Minister during the 37th meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee in New Delhi pitching for Hindi as the only official language of India, and also a lingua franca is in contravention of the policy statement made by then PM Jawaharlal Nehru in 1963 in Parliament that along with Hindi English also will remain the official language of India. The same standpoint was also reiterated by then PM Lal Bahadur Shastri. Now the HM is attempting to reverse it by abandoning English and imposing Hindi. In a multilingual country like India imposition of Hindi on non-Hindi speaking people is highly undemocratic and unacceptable. Also as English is a window for Indians to acquire the latest advanced knowledge in all fields, common masses in India have realised the necessity of learning English. Since BJP came to power it has been attempting to implement its slogan 'Hindi Hindu Hindustan' and divide the people of the country on communal, lingual and regional lines.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

of the day quote

Universities should not become wrestling grounds for ideological battles

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER



Solar energy, industry transition, infrastructure and climate resilience are areas where BRICS countries may explore cooperation

BHUPENDER YADAV | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER



The issues faced by Kashmiri Pandits working in the valley, including their safety concerns, will be addressed

MANOJ SINHA | J&K LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



SHORT TAKES

Akali leader dead

Chandigarh: Veteran Akali leader and former Punjab Agriculture Minister Tota Singh passed away in Chandigarh Saturday after a prolonged illness, the family said. He was 80. Singh was a sitting member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC). He suffered from pneumonia last year that infected his lungs. Tota Singh was a trusted person of former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal and is credited with making English a compulsory subject from Class 1 in government schools.

1 dead, 2 injured

New Delhi: A 35-year-old man was killed while two others suffered injuries after a roof collapsed in the national capital's Dwarka area Saturday, a Fire Department official said. The official informed that they received a call at 2.18 p.m. about the incident from the DDA flats in Sector 23, Dwarka following which three rescue units were immediately pressed into service. The incident took place while digging the foundation for a house.

10 hurt in accident

Jammu: Ten people were injured Saturday when a passenger bus met with an accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district. The police said, "A passenger vehicle met with an accident near Parnote in which 10 persons were injured. They have been shifted to the district hospital in Ramban. The vehicle was on its way from Ramban to Sangaldan."

One arrested

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Police Saturday claimed to have arrested one more person in connection with the incident of killing three cops by a group of alleged poachers in Guna district, taking the count of those arrested in the case so far to five. Three accused have so far been killed and five others have been arrested.

CBI files fresh FIR

Kolkata: The CBI has filed a fresh FIR in connection with the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) recruitment scam against five erstwhile top officials of WBSSC, all of whom were members of then education minister Partha Chatterjee appointed screening committee. Highly-placed CBI sources said that since a Calcutta High Court appointed judicial committee has already termed the formation of the screening committee as illegal and also said there are enough reasons to believe that the members of the said committee were responsible for the paperwork done for merit list fudging, the central agency felt it necessary to file a fresh FIR against these five individuals.



Fights and tourism are not (signs of) normalcy. Normalcy is that there should be no fear and terror. Kashmiri Pandits should not run away. They are ready to leave their jobs. Is this normalcy?

OMAR ABDULLAH | FORMER J&K CM

NGT DIRECTIVE

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed a joint panel to ascertain facts and take remedial action on a plea alleging unregulated drawing of water from Mussoorie lake, and causing it potential damage



BJP's 'deep state' chewing India: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 21: The "deep state" in India is "chewing" the Indian state much like in Pakistan, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said in a frontal attack on the Modi government, provoking a predictable backlash Saturday from the ruling party which branded him a "part-time, immature, unsuccessful leader" who betrayed the country with his remarks made on foreign soil.

During an interactive session at the 'Ideas for India' conference in London Friday, Rahul Gandhi not only mounted a scathing attack on the BJP government but also extended an olive branch to regional parties who he had angered with his comment that they were not capable of taking on the saffron party for want of ideology.

In a blistering assault, Rahul said the soul of India is under attack from the BJP and "a soul without a voice means nothing and



In a blistering assault, Rahul said the soul of India is under attack from the BJP and "a soul without a voice means nothing and what has happened is that India's voice has been crushed"

An angry BJP shot back Saturday, accusing Rahul Gandhi of harming India in his "hate" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi

what has happened is that India's voice has been crushed".

He alleged India's voice has been crushed by the institutional framework of the country itself which is becoming parasitical. "So, the deep state, the CBI, the ED, is now chewing the Indian state and eating it, much like in Pakistan," he asserted.

An angry BJP shot back Saturday

It is the Congress which has been carrying kerosene to incite riots since the 1984 anti-Sikh riots

GAURAV BHATIA | BJP SPOKESPERSON

accusing Rahul Gandhi of harming India in his "hate" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and alleged his frequent critical

remarks about the country from foreign soil amounted to "betrayal".

BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia launched a sharp attack on the Congress leader for his remarks at the London event where Rahul accused the ruling party of spreading "kerosene all over the country, you need one spark and we will be in big trouble".

"It is the Congress which has been carrying kerosene to incite riots since the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, he alleged, dubbing Rahul Gandhi a "part-time, immature, unsuccessful leader of a hopeless Congress" who has often spoken negatively about the country in foreign places like the US, the UK and Singapore.

"He keeps making such comments frequently and it will not be wrong to say that this amounts to betraying the country," Bhatia said. At the 'Ideas for India' conference organised by non-profit think-tank Bridge India, Gandhi was at pains to explain away his

remarks targeting the regional parties, saying the Congress respects them and does not want to play "the Big Daddy".

The former Congress chief asserted his party will coordinate with regional outfits to launch a nationwide movement against the ruling dispensation and reach out to people in a big way. "We have to coordinate with our friends in the opposition. I don't view the Congress as the 'Big Daddy'. It is a group effort with the opposition. But it is a fight to regain India," he said at the conclave. A video of the event was released by the Congress Saturday.

"The point I made in Udaipur, which was misconstrued, is that this is an ideological battle now. It is a national ideological battle, which means that of course we respect the DMK as a Tamil political organisation, but the Congress is the party that has the ideology at the national level," Rahul Gandhi said.

Hectic schedule ahead for Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 21: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have 23 engagements, including meetings with three world leaders, in around 40 hours of stay in Japan where he will join US President Joe Biden and



Prime Ministers of Australia and Japan at the Quad summit in Tokyo on May 24, official sources said.

They said Modi during his visit will have business, diplomatic and community interactions. He will interact with at least 36 Japanese CEOs and also with hundreds of Indian diaspora members.

The prime minister will spend one night in Tokyo and two nights in the plane travelling, the sources said. Modi will have bilateral talks with Biden and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida during the summit which is taking place amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He will also hold a bilateral meeting with his Australian counterpart.

While announcing the prime minister's participation in the summit, the External Affairs Ministry had said, "At the invitation of Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the third Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo on 24 May 2022 along with President Joseph R Biden Jr. Of the US and the Prime Minister of Australia."

The forthcoming Quad summit provides an opportunity for the leaders to exchange views about developments in the Indo-Pacific region and contemporary global issues of mutual interest, the MEA had said.

FOETUS FOUND IN DUSTBIN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Noida, May 21: Noida Police have found a four-month old foetus at a hotel in the city, a police official said on Saturday, adding that a probe is underway. According to the official, the foetus was found on May 18 inside the dustbin at hotel Town Oyo in Sector 71, Noida.

During preliminary medical examination, the foetus was found to be female. "We got the intimation about it from the hotel staff about a fetus lying inside one of their rooms. The sanitation staff found it while cleaning the room," the official said.



It was learnt that a man and a woman were staying there, however, they had checked out from the room before the discovery of the foetus. "We have examined CCTV footage in which the duo is seen inside the hotel. However, their identity is yet to be revealed as they had given fake Aadhaar Cards to the hotel staff," the official said.

The police have not registered any FIR in this connection as the medical report of the foetus is still awaited. The report is of vital importance as it would further decide whether the following act of removal of the foetus is any cognizable offence or not.

The medical report by the Chief Medical Officer is expected to arrive by Saturday. According to the Indian law, a woman can decide to go for abortion till the 20th week of her pregnancy, subject to the opinion of a registered medical practitioner.

India decriminalised abortion in 1971 and in 2021, there was a further amendment to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy, making safe abortion accessible to all women (in case contraceptives fail) and to women with gestation period of foetus up to 20 weeks.

RESCUE OPERATION ENDS

J&K tunnel collapse: Death toll rises to ten

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Banihal/Jammu, May 21: Nine bodies were pulled out from the rubble of a landslide which hit one end of an under-construction tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway two days ago, taking the death toll in the incident to 10 Saturday, officials said.

With the bodies of all the missing workers recovered, the two-day rescue operation ended late Saturday evening. Three persons who survived were taken to hospital by the rescuers shortly after the incident on the intervening of Thursday and Friday. Earlier, the officials had said that a portion of the under-construction tunnel at Khooni Nallah in Ramban district collapsed soon after the work on the project started.

But on Saturday, the deputy commissioner of Ramban Musarrat Islam quoted the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) to say that a landslide had hit the mouth of the adit tunnel to T4. "As clarified by NHAI, it is informed that there is no tunnel collapse near Khooni Nallah. A slide occurred on the mouth of the adit tunnel to T4 on Thursday night under which a labourer component of Concessionaire Company was working. Operation continues," Islam



THREE PERSONS WHO SURVIVED WERE TAKEN TO HOSPITAL BY THE RESCUERS SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT ON THE INTERVENING OF THURSDAY AND FRIDAY

OFFICIALS SAID THAT ON SATURDAY, ANOTHER BODY WAS PULLED OUT AFTER SEVERAL HOURS OF INTENSE SEARCH

tweeted.

The body of one person was recovered on Friday, while three others, including two locals, were rescued and are stable. Officials said that on Saturday, another body was pulled out after several hours of intense search. It took the rescuers over two hours to pull out the body from under the rocks.

Eight more bodies were later pulled out and shifted to hospital, the officials said, adding the labourers were crushed to death by the falling boulders. "Bodies of all the missing workers were recovered from the scene of the landslide outside the mouth of adit tunnel during the day-long hectic search by the rescuers. While one body was recovered on Friday and three rescued, nine more bodies were found on Saturday," the deputy commissioner said.

SURVIVING HOMELESSNESS



Homeless people rest under a bridge on a hot day in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

Complaint against former NRC head

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, May 21: The Assam National Registrar of Citizens (NRC) authority has filed an FIR against former NRC coordinator in the state Prateek Hajela, an official said.

The FIR also names some other officials and staff who were involved in the NRC updating exercise in Assam. Hitesh Dev Sarma, the current NRC state coordinator has accused Hajela and others of criminal and anti-national activities. A case was registered in the CID department of the state.

Dev Sarma has narrated the details in his complaint letter to the Superintendent of Police, CID, to support his claim. The letter states that in the NRC updating exercise, the "Family Tree Matching" procedure was adopted to check fraudulent practices used to make false linkage claims with persons residing in Assam in the pre-1971 era.

Since the NRC updating exercise involved large manpower, there was a provision for the quality checks to avoid erroneous entries in the NRC before the 'Family Tree Matching' was introduced. But, the procedure did not have any

quality check system.

The NRC authority has also done some sample surveys in three places in the state to gauge the effect of an absence of quality checks. They found a good number of erroneous entries in the NRC list.

Dev Sarma says the software was deliberately designed to avoid quality checks. He accused Hajela of intentionally doing this which in turn gave free hands to some officials for including doubtful citizens in the NRC list. According to Dev Sarma, this can be seen as an anti-national act affecting national security.

Shiv Sena concerned over fate of Congress

SENA'S ANXIETY FOR THE CONGRESS - A RULING MAHA VIKAS AGHADI (MVA) ALLY IN MAHARASHTRA - CAME ON A CRUCIAL DAY WHEN THE GRAND OLD PARTY WAS OBSERVING THE DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LATE FORMER PRIME MINISTER RAJIV GANDHI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 21: In a strong critique, the Shiv Sena Saturday expressed deep concern over the fate of the Congress which it said is 'leaking' badly with so many leaders deserting the party.

"The Congress' condition is like a cloudburst. The problem is where to put the patch and seal it. The leaks started on the concluding day of the party's recent Chintan Shivir in Rajasthan," the Sena said.

Sena's anxiety for the Congress - a ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) ally in Maharashtra - came on a crucial day when the grand old party was observing the death anniversary of the late former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

It pointed out how the party lost leaders like Sunil Jakhar, Hardik Patel and in the past Jyotiraditya Scindia and Jitin Prasada, yet - de-

spite the outflow - everyone in Congress talks of 'reviving' the party.

Sunil Jakhar - the son of a veteran Congress leader from Punjab, the late Balram Jakhar - led the Punjab Congress for years, but recently he was sidelined and needless importance was given to a new entrant Navjot Singh Sidhu, the Sena said.

Before deserting the Congress for Bharatiya Janata Party, a hurt Sunil Jakhar asked: "I was only speaking in the interest of Punjab and the nation. The Congress tried to suppress my voice and gave me a notice. What did they achieve?" said the edits in the Sena newspapers 'Saamana' and 'Dopahar Ka Saamana'.

"The Congress nurtured the leaders like Jakhar, Madhavrao Scindia and Jitendra Prasada, and even did a lot for their children Sunil,



Jyotiraditya and Jitin, but their political ambitions were bigger than their fathers, and the Congress proved too small in comparison. They quit the Congress though it needed them in the crisis," said the Sena.

This, the Sena avers, points to a failure of the Congress leadership itself and expressed apprehension "what if the youth of the country

do not see their future in the Congress", especially when it does not even have a full time president since some time now and ditto is the scene in states like Uttar Pradesh. Though certain positive decisions were taken at the Chintan Shivir, the issue of Congress leadership remains in the dark, noted the Sena edits.

In states where elections are

due, leaders with a good public image should have been handled well by the Congress. However, due to Sidhu, the Congress lost Punjab and Jakhar also left, Patel was not allowed to work as the Working President of Gujarat Congress, and he says his hands and feet tied in the race by the directionless party, and he also quit.

While leaving, Patel gave his piece of mind saying whenever the country needs them most the Congress 'leadership' is abroad, nothing will be achieved by abusing Ambani-Adani as every youth in Gujarat wants to emulate them, etc, said the Sena on the exit.

With Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP fully geared for 2024 elections, the 'leaking emergency' continues in the Congress, which doesn't augur well for parliamentary democracy, warned the Sena.

J&K Cong to hold its own 'chintan shivar' in Patnitop June 1, 2



Jammu, May 21: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president GA Mir Saturday said a two-day meet will be held next month to discuss the strategy to strengthen the party in the Union Territory.

Mir made the announcement at a meeting held at the party headquarters here to pay tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 31st death anniversary, a party spokesperson said.

Senior AICC leader and former Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad also attended the meeting amid reports that he would get a key role ahead of the next assembly polls likely to be held later this year.

Azad's supporters including many former ministers and legislators have, in the past, voiced re-

sentments against Mir, seeking his removal besides making Azad the party chief ministerial candidate in J&K.

"It is time to pay back to the party and strengthen it, which is the need of the nation. The party leaders should rise above their self-interest and work for strengthening the party as resolved in the Udaipur Chintan Shivar," Mir said, addressing the condolence meeting.

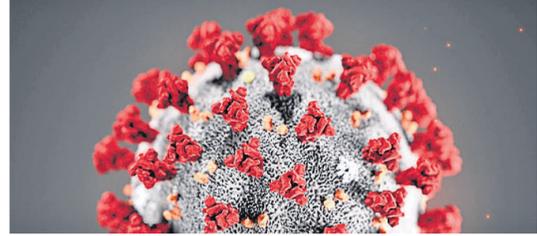
He announced that a similar 'Shivar' of J&K Congress leaders would be held at Patni top in Udhampur district June 1 and 2 to discuss the strategy for strengthening the party.

Azad, in his address, asked the party cadres to work for peace and harmony and to strengthen the party to fight "communal and divisive forces" and defeat the "politics of hate".

"The strength of the nation lies in its unity in diversity and the spread of hate in society is weakening the nation," Azad said, adding the Congress and its leadership always promoted religious brotherhood and harmony in the society as "Hindu-Muslim-Sikh unity is very vital for the strength of our pluralistic nation".

Azad recalled the contributions of Rajiv Gandhi as prime minister on various fronts, especially in the field of science and technology and the Panchayati Raj system in the country.

TN reports 1st case of Omicron BA.4 variant



Chennai, May 21: Tamil Nadu has reported its first case of Omicron BA.4 variant after a teenager was tested Covid-19 positive recently and the health department Saturday appealed members of the public 'not to panic' following the identification of the new variant.

Tamil Nadu Minister for Health and Family Welfare Ma Subramanian said the 19-year-old woman detected with the new variant was visited by top health officials Friday. She has recovered and was doing fine, he said.

Those who came in contact with her were not affected. Health Secretary J Radhakrishnan and senior department officials visited her Friday night and she was fine. She was fully vaccinated.

"That is why, to protect oneself from any kind of coronavirus variant, we appeal members of the public to make use of the vaccination camp scheduled to be held June 12," Subramanian told reporters.

A release by the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine said a total of 3,328 samples were subjected to 'Whole Genome Sequencing' between January and May 2022 and 96 per cent of the variant was detected to be of Omicron.

While BA.2 variant was widely reported, BA.1 variant of Omicron was also reported in some samples collected, the release said.

It also pointed out that the majority of Covid-19 cases reported at Indian Institute of Technology, Madras and Sri Sathya Medical College near here were a cluster of Covid-19 cases comprising BA.2 variant.

The teenager's family was living in a gated residential community at Navalur on the famous Old Mahabalipuram Road, Chennai. The mother and daughter developed mild flu-like illness May 4 and turned out to be Covid-19 positive after undergoing an RT-PCR

test. The mother was detected with the BA.2 sub-lineage of the coronavirus variant while the daughter had BA.4 variant when the results of the samples collected from them were released May 19, the release said.

They were self-isolated in their house and became alright within three days of their illness. Full vaccination has helped them to recover quickly and resume routine work after seven days of their illness, it said.

The patients did not undertake any travelling and no new Covid-19 cases were reported in the residential community, it said.

While the identification of the BA.4 Omicron sub-variant is not a cause of any immediate panic, it is more a reminder to continue the focus on eligible persons getting completely vaccinated and the need to continue to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour in crowded areas, the release said.

Subramanian after inspecting a block which was earlier planned to be converted into a geriatric ward at the King Institute of Preventive Medicine and Research said the ward would be put in for service, after the officials of the public works department inspect the quality of the building.

He also warned that the government would take action against those officials, if there was any discrepancy found in the construction.

River cleaning scheme in TN non-starter for want of Central funds



Chennai, May 21: The prestigious river cleaning programme Nandanthaai Vaazhi Cauvery scheme of the Tamil Nadu government has turned out to be a non-starter for want of funds from the Jal Shakti Ministry.

The state water resources department had planned to rejuvenate the Cauvery and its tributaries in Tamil Nadu and also curb sewage pollution bringing it under the Nandanthaai Vaazhi Cauvery scheme.

The state government, according to a senior official with the Water resources department, had submitted a report to the ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019 with an estimated project cost of Rs 11,250 crore to be included under the Namami Gange Scheme of the Union government.

However, sources in the state water resources department told IANS that even though the Detailed Project Report (DPR) was submitted in 2019, officials from the central ministry visited for inspection only in March 2022. The officials also directed the state water resources department to alter the DPR.

RK Ravidurai, a social activist and river protection crusader from Coimbatore while speaking to IANS said, "The project has to be completed as early as possible. The waste that is being dumped into the Cauvery from textile industries in Western Tamil Nadu is bringing a slow death to the river. Farmers who are at the tail end are not able to use the water for farming purposes due to high pollution in the river. The state government must coordinate with the Central Jal Shakti Ministry and sort out the technical issues and clear the project."

Sources in the state water resources department told IANS that the state government was planning to implement the project in two phases once the funds are allocated from the Jal Shakti ministry.



Kashmiri Pandit employees shout slogans during a protest march over the killing of Rahul Bhat and other demands, at Lal Chowk in Srinagar

Rahul Bhat's killing: Kashmiri Pandits take out protest march

Srinagar, May 21: The busy Lal Chowk city centre Saturday reverberated with slogans like 'We want justice' and 'Administration haye haye' (down with administration) as scores of Kashmiri Pandits took out a protest march against the killing of Rahul Bhat, officials said.

The members of the community assembled near Bund in Lal Mandi area of the city and held a puja in the Jhelum river for Bhat, who was shot dead by terrorists inside the Tehsil office in Budgam district's Chadoora town May 12.

Soon after the puja culminated, the protesters began a march towards Lal Chowk.

After reaching Lal Chowk, the protesters held a sit-in near the famous clock tower.

The protesters demanded justice for Bhat and raised slogans against the administration. They also demanded strict action against the killers of Bhat and the authorities in Budgam.

The protesters also demanded that Kashmiri Pandits employees who got jobs under the prime minister's package be relocated.

Protests have been held at several places in Jammu and Kashmir over the killing of Bhat as well as the failure of the administration to provide security to Kashmiri Pandit employees.

'NO ROLE OF STATE'

Tourism boom in J&K due to scorching heat, says Azad

Jammu, May 21: Veteran Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad Saturday said the current tourism boom in Jammu and Kashmir is due to the rising temperature in the rest of the country and not because of any improved situation in the Union territory.

Azad made the assertion, reiterating his stand on the Delimitation Commission report, saying that "the tailor-made report is in contradiction with the ground realities".

Azad, the former J&K chief minister, called for united efforts to finish militancy and also urged the government to accept the genuine demands of vulnerable sections of the society to ensure that they are not put in harm's way.

"The government should not be happy over the increase in tourist arrivals (in Kashmir) and link it with the (improved) situation," he said.

"I give full credit for the tourism boom to the almighty as the rising temperatures in Delhi and the rest of the country prompted people to look for cooler environs in Kashmir, Shimla and elsewhere," Azad told reporters here.

Azad reached Jammu on a two-day visit and presided over a function at the party headquarters to pay tributes to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his death anniversary. He is scheduled to return to Srinagar Sunday.

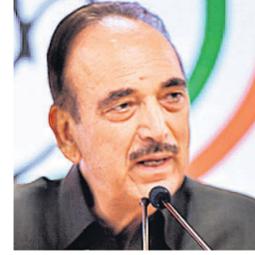
Commission report which took effect in Jammu and Kashmir with the issuance of a notification by the Union law ministry Friday, Azad said he and other Congress leaders have made it clear that they are not satisfied with the report which contradicts the ground realities.

"It is a tailor-made report and prepared in such a way to benefit some and cause loss to whom they intend to," the Congress leader said.

The panel's two orders - one of March 14 dealing with the number of constituencies reserved for various categories and the second one of May 5 dealing with the size of each constituency - came into effect together from May 20.

The Commission's report will form the basis for future assembly polls in the Union territory. The delimitation panel had given six additional assembly seats to the Jammu region and one to Kashmir Valley and brought areas of Rajouri and Poonch under the Anantnag parliamentary seat. Jammu division will now have 43 assembly seats and Kashmir 47 in the 90-member house.

In response to a question on the row over the use of speakers at religious places, Azad said the aim behind the campaign was to weaken the "ideology of tolerance" to create a rift in society. "The controversy was meant to weaken this ideology of tolerance. All of us - Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others - accept each other and that is what India is," Azad said.



TN to start Climate Smart Villages as part of Climate Change mission

Chennai, May 21: The state of Tamil Nadu will focus on creating Climate Smart Villages in 2022-23 financial year as part of its Climate Change Mission.

The idea of the mission is to understand the challenges and vulnerability faced by the village communities during climate change.

The state will develop future solutions to build climate resilience and increase adaptation and mitigation measures based on how the local community is adapting to challenges and their vulnerabilities.

It is to be noted that the state has earmarked Rs 77 crore for the Climate Change Mission and a portion of this budget amount will be used for creating Climate Smart Villages and to do a focused study on these villages.

Sources in the Tamil Nadu Forest and Environment Department told IANS that around Rs 50 crores will be spent for the rehabilitation of coastal habitats for climate change adaptations. The department is planning to create bio shields by planting cashew, palmyrah and casuarina trees as also mangrove plantations in coastal districts of the state. This is for reduction of soil erosion, salinity control and improvement of biodiversity. The forest and environment department will also focus on enhancing the growth of seagrass and coral reefs as they support marine biodiversity.

In another interesting development, the environment department will take up two temples for climate proofing, one at Chennai and the other at Madurai.

Gujjars, Bakerwals recognised for political rights

Srinagar, May 21: The criterion for a people's government is inclusive governance. It minimises the alienation of minorities and strengthens the faith of citizens.

In J&K, the Delimitation Commission has proposed nine seats to be reserved for Scheduled Tribes of Jammu and Kashmir from the next election aimed at their equal representation and empowerment, ending a saga of discrimination against the least privileged sect of the Union Territory.

Under the Reorganisation Act 2019, the Centre has granted Political Reservation to J&K tribes particularly the Gujjars and Bakerwals in Panchayat level bodies.

A total of 1,532 Panchs and 102 Sarpanchs have been elected under the ST category across the UT. Under Block Development Councils, 66 BDC Chairmen have been nominated under ST reservation.

In the district-level election of District Development Council members, 43 tribal members have been selected as DDC members.

In line with the Panchayati Raj Act, the District Development Council will be headed by a Chairman and currently, Poonch, Rajouri, and Anantnag are commanded by three Gujjar chairpersons. Further for STs, seats have been reserved in Municipal Councils and other bodies.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has recently launched the 'Smart Schools' Project in Jammu and Kashmir to benefit tribal communities.

It aims to modernise 200 schools in tribal areas by the end of 2022. Since last year the number of mobile schools for the children of Gujjar and Bakarwal communities living in the higher peaks of J&K's Rajouri and Reasi were increased. The Indian Army also volunteered to provide tuition classes in remote villages.

The regime has launched schemes such as Tribal Tourist Villages, Tribal Self Help Groups, Tribal model villages, and TRIFED initiatives for JKUT tribes, promoting forest products, formation of 1500 mini sheep farms for sustenance, and creating 16 new milk villages to engage at least 2,000 youngsters in the dairy sector, among others.

The Governor has floated an important project for the transhumant support system incorporating accommodation and transport facilities for the migratory tribes.

On May 9, a fleet of 40 trucks procured by the Tribal Affairs department through JKSRCTC was flagged off in Jammu to carry Gujjars, Bakerwals, and their livestock for summer migration from the plains to different highland pastures.

It will reduce their 20-30 days' journey to 1-2 days. By the year's end, the department is targeting to cover 100 per cent of families for which Rs 6.80 crore has been set aside to fund JKSRCTC.

The administration is also working to honour the demand for establishing the Gujjar Division in the Indian Army consistent with Ladakh Scout in UT of Ladakh. The tribes have immense knowledge of the mountains including skill and agility.





Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advice to BJP leaders that they should fix goals for next 25 years shows his "arrogance" and people will reply to it in the times to come
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

RESEARCH FINDING

Consuming blueberries can lower the risk of cardiovascular disease in post-menopausal women with high blood pressure, according to new research



of the day quote

Democracy in India is a global public good. We're the only people who have managed democracy at our unparalleled scale



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

India is changing under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has become an exporter from importer but the Congress cannot see this



JP NADRA | BJP PRESIDENT

Instead of doing petty politics on the water issue, the Delhi government should convince the Punjab government to release Haryana's legitimate share of water at the earliest. I promise that the day Punjab will give our share, Haryana will increase Delhi's current water share



MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR | HARYANA CM

SHORT TAKES

Jawan injured

Bijapur: A jawan from the Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) sustained injuries when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED) planted by Naxals exploded in Bijapur district on Saturday, police said. This was a second such blast in the area in the last one week. The blast took place around 2.40 pm between Pandemurga and Bangoli villages under Nelasnar police station limits, where a team of the CAF's 8th battalion was out for an area domination operation, a senior officer said.

Four killed

Bilaspur: Four persons were killed after a mini goods vehicle they were travelling in collided with a truck in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur district, police said Saturday. The accident took place late night Friday on Bilaspur-Mungeli road under Takhatpur police station's jurisdiction when the deceased were heading to Jarhagaon village from Takhatpur, an official said. While three occupants of the goods vehicle died on the spot in the collision, another succumbed to his injuries in a local hospital, he said.

Tiger kills man

Chandrapur: A 65-year-old man was mauled to death by a tiger in a forested area near Chandrapur town in Maharashtra, an official said Saturday. The incident took place Friday, when Dashrath Pendor, a resident of Sinhala village, ventured into the forested area to graze goats and did not return, a senior official from Chandrapur forest division said. Villagers and forest personnel conducted a search and the victim's body was found in the area on Saturday morning, he said.

Girl raped

Jaipur: A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by five people, including four juveniles, in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, police said Saturday. The incident happened on April 6 in the Chitawa police station area when the girl had gone to attend a family function. The accused threatened her and raped her in the fields. One of the juveniles is the victim's relative, police said.

Fisherman rescued

Ahmedabad: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) Saturday rescued an injured fisherman who was on board a boat in the Porbandar Sea. The rescue operation was carried out by the ICG Station in Pipavav which received information about the injured fisherman Dhan Prasad from the Fisheries Association, Jafrabad.

Man thrashed for not showing Aadhaar card, found dead

Police said Bhanwarlal Jain had gone to Chittorgarh May 18 with his family. He later went missing. Friday, he was found dead in Manasa of Neemuch district

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, May 21: A 65-year-old differently-abled man was beaten to death on alleged suspicion of belonging to another community in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district. A video of the incident doing rounds on the social media shows a young man mercilessly thrashing an old man. He was assaulted brutally for not showing his Aadhaar card. The deceased, who was identified as Bhanwarlal Jain of Sarsi village of Ratlam, was found dead in Manasa on Thursday, police said. Police said Bhanwarlal Jain had gone to Chittorgarh May 18 with his family. He later went missing. On Friday, he was found dead in Manasa of Neemuch district. Later, the video went viral on social media. "We found the body of the victim on Thursday. After his pictures were released on social media, his family members from Ratlam identified him as Bhanwarlal Jain," said Mansa Police Station House



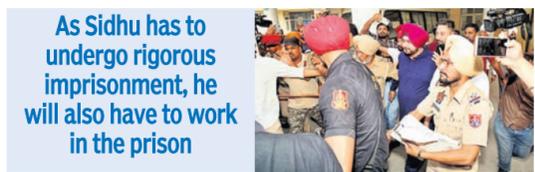
Officer K.L. Dangi. In the video, Dinesh Kushwaha, the husband of Manasa's BJP corporator is allegedly seen beating Jain demanding his Aadhaar card and asking whether he is a Muslim. An FIR was lodged on Saturday under sections 304 (causing death by negligence) and 302 (murder)

of IPC. "Taking immediate cognizance of the matter, an FIR has been registered against the accused Dinesh Kushwaha under Section 302 of IPC, Neemuch SP Suraj Verma said. Notably, a communal violence had erupted in Neemuch after a group of Hindu activists attempted to install an idol of Lord Hanuman near a Muslim shrine in Purani Kacheri area on last Sunday. The district administration had seized the idol on Tuesday. Reacting on one after another incidents in the district, former chief minister and the state Congress president Kamal Nath accused the BJP led state government of failure to maintain law and order situation in the state. "What is happening in Madhya Pradesh after all? Tribals were lynched in Seoni, incidents of Guna, Mhow, Mandla and now an elderly person whose name is being told as Bhanwarlal Jain in Manasa of Neemuch district of the state," Nath tweeted.

Sidhu skips dinner on first night

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patiala, May 21: Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has been sentenced to one-year jail term in a road-rage case, has been lodged in Barrack No.10 at the central jail here and didn't have dinner on the first night, sources said Saturday. Sidhu has been lodged in the barrack with four other prisoners, said the sources. He didn't have dinner as he had already taken his meal, they said, adding that the former state Congress chief is prisoner number 1,37,683. The 58-year-old former cricketer on Friday had surrendered before a court here and later sent to the Patiala Central Jail. He was sentenced to one-year rigorous imprisonment by the Supreme Court in the 1988 road-rage case. As Sidhu has to undergo rigorous imprisonment, he will also



As Sidhu has to undergo rigorous imprisonment, he will also have to work in the prison. Another high-profile prisoner lodged in jail here in connection with a drug case is Shiromani Akali Dal leader Bikram Singh Majithia, who had contested against Sidhu from Amritsar East. Sidhu and Majithia had both lost the elections to AAP's Jeevan Jyot Kaur. The SC had Thursday sentenced Sidhu to one-year rigorous imprisonment in the 34-year-old case, saying any undue sympathy in imposing an inadequate sentence would do more harm to the justice system and undermine the public confidence in the efficacy of law. A 65-year-old man, Gurnam Singh, had died in the incident. When reporters sought Sidhu's reaction to the verdict on Thursday, he had declined to comment. However, he had later tweeted to say he "will submit to the majesty of the law". Though the apex court had in May 2018 held Sidhu guilty of the offence of "voluntarily causing hurt" to the man, it had spared him a jail term and imposed a fine of ₹1,000.

NSE CO-LOCATION SCAM CBI raids at multiple locations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 21: The CBI Saturday launched a search operation at over ten locations in connection with the National Stock Exchange (NSE) co-location scam involving the financial institution's former MD and CEO Chitra Ramkrishna and the ex-Group Operating Officer Anand Subramanian. According to a source, the raids, which started this morning, were underway in Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Gurugram, Gandhi Nagar besides other parts of the country. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had filed a charge sheet in the matter in April. Though the probe agency has been probing the matter since May 2018, it could not gather any con-

crete evidence to identify mysterious Himalaya Yogi with whom the classified informations were shared by Ramkrishna. Recently, the SEBI had imposed a fine of ₹3 crore on her, following the market regulator's finding that she allegedly shared vital inputs about the NSE with the Yogi. "Information regarding organisational structure, dividend scenario, financial results, human resource policies and related issues, response to regulator; etc., were shared by her with the yogi," said the source. Between 2014 and 2016, she sent emails at rigyajur-sama@outlook.com. On April 1, 2013, Ramkrishna became the CEO and MD of NSE. She brought Subramanian to NSE as her advisor in 2013. Subramanian was made the Chief Strategic Advisor of NSE.



A damaged road in a flood-hit village of Nagaon district, Saturday

NATURE'S FURY

PTI PHOTO

DU Prof arrested for 'Shivling' remarks gets bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 21: A city court Saturday granted bail to Delhi University Associate Professor Ratan Lal, arrested for alleged objectionable remarks on social media related to claims of a 'Shivling' at Varanasi's Gyanvapi mosque, saying his post, though reprehensible, does not indicate an attempt to promote hatred between communities. The court directed Lal to "strictly refrain from posting any social media posts or interviews regarding the controversy which resulted in the present FIR", while allowing his release on furnishing a personal bond of ₹50,000 and one surety of the like amount. The court said that the Indian

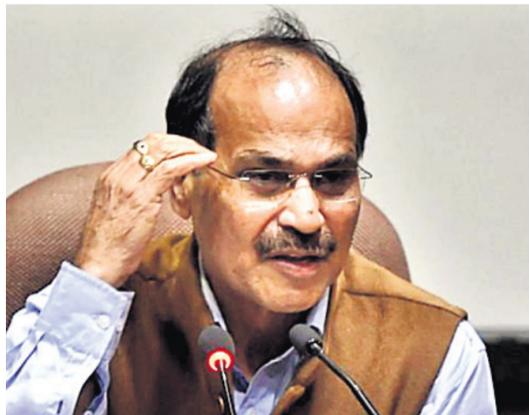
civilisation is one of the oldest in the world and is known to be tolerant and accepting of all religions, adding that the presence or absence of intention to create animosity by words was subjective in nature as was the perception of the recipient who reads or hears a statement. "India is a country of more than 130 crore people and any subject can have 130 crore different views and perceptions," it said. The court noted that the social media post of Lal, who teaches History at the Hindu College, may appear to be a failed attempt at satire regarding a controversial subject that has backfired, resulting in the FIR. It further noted that the accused, in personal life, was a proud follower

of the Hindu religion. "For another person, the same post can appear to be shameful but may not incite the feeling of hatred towards another community. Similarly different persons may consider the post differently without being enraged and may in fact feel sorry for the accused to have made an unwanted comment without considering the



repercussions," the court said. It noted that it was true that the accused did an act that was avoidable considering the sensibilities of persons around him, and the public at large. "However, the post, though reprehensible, does not indicate an attempt to promote hatred between communities," the court said. The judge, meanwhile, said that the anxiety of police could be understood as the police are tasked to maintain peace and order and at the slightest hint of unrest would come into action to prevent the situation from going out of hand. However, the court has to employ higher standards while considering the need to send a person to custody, it said.

Adhir denies tweet, says account hacked



Chowdhury, the leader of the Congress party in the Lok Sabha, claimed that his account was hacked as he was delivering a speech at a party office in West Bengal's Murshidabad district when the social media post was made

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 21: Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury Saturday denied that he used the phrase "when a big tree falls, ground shakes" along a photograph of Rajiv Gandhi on his Twitter handle while paying tribute to the former prime minister on his death anniversary. Chowdhury, the leader of the Congress party in the Lok Sabha, claimed that his account was hacked as he was delivering a speech at a party office in West Bengal's Murshidabad district when the social media post was made. The post, which was seen on Chowdhury's Twitter handle on Saturday morning, was removed soon after controversy sparked. "The tweet against my name in the twitter account has nothing to do with my own observation. A malicious campaign is propagated by those forces inimical to me," he said on the microblogging site. An FIR has been lodged at the

South Avenue Police Station in New Delhi, he said. "Today, an unscrupulous, biased and a content tainted with absolute malafide was posted on my Twitter account when I was busy with the party programme on the dais and did not carry my mobile phone." The content posted smacks of malice and I believe that my Twitter account had been hacked by some wrongdoers for the reasons best known to them. I, hereby urge your goodness to take immediate cognizance of this instant complaint and please enquire and seal the IP address and take appropriate action of cybercrime at the earliest in occurrence with law and oblige," he said in the police complaint. Chowdhury, the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee president, said it was a cybercrime. When contacted he said that "it was nothing, but a cybercrime. I was delivering a speech at my party office in Baharampur when the tweet was posted. The media was there. This is nothing but an attempt to malign me and my party." Rajiv Gandhi had said "earth shakes when a big tree falls", which was seen by critics to be justifying the anti-Sikh violence following the assassination of his mother and the then prime minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. He was also assassinated in 1991 by terrorist organisation Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Tamil Nadu where he was on an election campaign.

Disproportionate assets case: Chautala convicted

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 21: A court here Saturday convicted former Haryana Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala in connection with a disproportionate assets case. The Rouse Avenue Court of Delhi will hear the arguments on the quantum of punishment to Chautala on May 26. May 19, the court had reserved its verdict in the case of possessing disproportionate assets. As per the chargesheet filed by the CBI, Chautala is responsible for amassing assets worth ₹6.09 crore, allegedly disproportionate to his legitimate income, between 1993 and 2006. In May 2019, the Enforcement Directorate had attached over ₹3.6 crore worth of properties of the former Chief Minister located in New Delhi, Panchkula, and Sirsa. He was also convicted in the JBT scam in January 2013. In 2008, Chautala and 53 others were charged in connection with the appointment of 3,206 junior basic trained teachers in Haryana during 1999-2000. In January 2013, a court sentenced Om Prakash Chautala and his son Ajay Singh Chautala to ten years' imprisonment under various provisions of the IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act. Chautala was found guilty of illegally recruiting over 3,000 unqualified teachers. Though out on parole, Chautala was released from the Tihar Jail on July 2, 2021 from a 10-year prison sentence after completing the due formalities. He was the Chief Minister of Haryana four times between 1989 and 2005. His grandson Dushyant Chautala is the Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana.

Assam police station set on fire over 'custodial death'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagaon (Assam), May 21: A police station in Assam's Nagaon district was set afire by a mob Saturday following an alleged case of custodial death of a local resident, a top police official said. Three of those involved in the arson were arrested and operations are on to nab the others, the official said. The mob had set ablaze the Bataadrava Police Station and several two-wheelers in the afternoon following the death of a fish trader who was allegedly detained by the police late on Friday evening when he was going to take a bus for Sivsagar. It was not clear why he was detained. Nagaon Superintendent of Police Leena Doley said, "Some miscreants had attacked the Bataadrava Police Station in the afternoon and set it ablaze." The family members of the fish trader of Salonabori village claimed that the police had demanded ₹10,000 and a duck as a bribe for his release, and his wife visited the police station with a duck in the morning. When she returned with the money later, she learnt that her husband had been taken to Nagaon Civil Hospital. After reaching there, she found him dead, they claimed. Alleging that the man died because of torture, villagers gheraoed the police station, allegedly assaulted on-duty police personnel and then torched the police station. Videos of the incident showed a woman sprinkling some inflammable liquid on two-wheelers parked in front of the police station and setting them on fire.

international

of the day quote

China and Pakistan are the names of two brothers. The leadership and peoples of the two countries have nurtured this evergreen tree of friendship over the past 71 years
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PRIME MINISTER, PAKISTAN

Russia needs to radically reduce the risks associated with the use of foreign programmes, computer technology and telecommunications equipment
VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

We are going to continue to insist that the commitment to legalise our countrymen be fulfilled
LOPEZ OBRADOR | PRESIDENT, MEXICO

SHORT TAKES

Palestinian teen shot in Israeli raid

Jerusalem: Israeli troops shot and killed a teenage Palestinian boy as fighting erupted when soldiers entered a volatile town in the occupied West Bank early Saturday, the Palestinian health ministry and local media said. The shooting, which Israel said came during a gunbattle with local militants, came at a time of intensified Israeli military activity in the northern West Bank town. The ministry identified the dead teen as Amjad al-Fayed, 17. It said an 18-year-old Palestinian was in critical condition after being wounded by Israeli gunfire.

Ex-Pak min beaten, in police custody

Islamabad: Former Pakistani human rights minister Shireen Mazari was "beaten" and taken away by the police, her daughter said Saturday. Mazari, a former cabinet colleague of Imran Khan, has been criticising the Army after the former premier was removed from office through a no-confidence motion last month. The charges against Mazari are yet to be announced officially. However, local media reported it could be related to a land dispute on which a police case was filed in March this year.

NK reports over 2L fever cases

Seoul: North Korea said Saturday it found nearly 220,000 more people with feverish symptoms even as leader Kim Jong Un claimed progress in slowing a largely undiagnosed spread of Covid-19 across an unvaccinated population of 26 million. The outbreak has caused concern about serious tragedies in the poor, isolated country with one of the world's worst health care systems and a high tolerance for civilian suffering. Experts say North Korea is almost certainly downplaying the true scale of the viral spread, including a strangely small death toll, to soften the political blow on Kim as he navigates the toughest moment in his decade of rule.

Beijing on alert for high temperature

Beijing: The Beijing Meteorological Observatory Saturday issued an alert for high temperatures over the weekend. According to the forecast, the temperature could hit 35 degrees Celsius in most parts of the plain areas in Beijing during the two days, reports Xinhua news agency. Residents have been advised to take precautions against the heat wave, especially while undergoing nucleic acid testing outdoors.



We've offered vaccines, not only to North Korea but to China as well, and we're prepared to do that immediately. We've got no response
JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

1st DRONE CARRIER WITH AI

China has launched a drone carrier with a one-of-a-kind artificial intelligence (AI) system which includes dozens of autonomous drones, ships, and submersibles for marine research and observation, according to The South China Morning Post



A DECADE OF CONSERVATIVE RULE COMES TO AN END

Australia ousts PM Morrison

The capitulation came after three years marked by a pandemic and climate-worsened bushfires, drought and floods that upended life for millions of Australians



I believe it's very important that this country has certainty. I think it's very important this country can move forward. And particularly over the course of this week with the important meetings that are being held, I think it's vitally important there's a very clear understanding about the government of this country
SCOTT MORRISON | OUTGOING PM, AUSTRALIA



I say to my fellow Australians, thank you for this extraordinary honour. Tonight the Australian people have voted for change. I am humbled by this victory and I'm honoured to be given the opportunity to serve as the 31st prime minister of Australia
ANTHONY ALBANESE | INCOMING PM, AUSTRALIA

OPPOSITION LEADER ANTHONY ALBANESE WILL BE SWORN IN AS PM
MORRISON SAID THAT HE WOULD STAND DOWN AS LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY

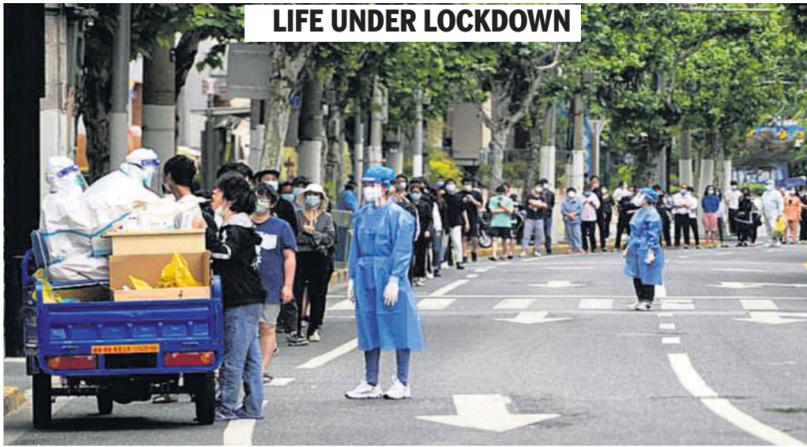
At least four Liberal lawmakers appeared to have lost their seats to teal independents including Liberal Party deputy leader Josh Frydenberg, who had been considered Morrison's most likely successor. "What we have achieved here is extraordinary," teal candidate and former foreign correspondent Zoe Daniels said in her victory speech. "Safe Liberal seat. Two-term incumbent. Independent," she added. Due to the pandemic, around half of Australia's 17 million electors have voted early or applied for postal votes, which will likely slow the count. Voting is compulsory for adult citizens and 92 per cent of registered voters cast ballots at the last election. Electoral Commissioner Tom Rogers said more than 7,000 polling stations opened as planned and on time across Australia despite 15 per cent of polling staff falling sick this week with Covid-19 and flu.

lish a Pacific defence school to train neighbouring armies in response to China's potential military presence on the Solomon Islands on Australia's doorstep. It also wants to tackle climate change with a more ambitious 43 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Morrison's Liberal party-led coalition was seeking a fourth

three-year term. It holds the narrowest of majorities — 76 seats in the 151-member House of Representatives, where parties need a majority to form a government. In early counting Saturday, the coalition was on track to win 38 seats, Labour 71, seven were unaligned lawmakers and 23 were too close to call.

80 monkeypox cases in 12 countries: WHO

London, May 21: More than 80 cases of monkeypox have been confirmed in at least 12 countries, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced. The WHO said another 50 suspected cases are being investigated, without naming any countries, and warned that more cases are likely to be reported. Infections have been confirmed in nine European countries, as well as the US, Canada and Australia, the BBC reported citing the global health body as saying. Monkeypox is most common in remote parts of Central and West Africa. It is a rare viral infection which is usually mild and from which most people recover in a few weeks, according to the UK's National Health Service. There is no specific vaccine for monkeypox, but a smallpox jab offers 85 per cent protection since the two viruses are quite similar, BBC reported. So far, public health agencies in Europe have confirmed cases in the UK, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Sweden. The WHO said Friday that the recent outbreaks "are atypical, as they are occurring in non-endemic countries". It said it was "working with the affected countries and others to expand disease surveillance to find and support people who may be affected". The WHO also warned against stigmatising groups because of the disease, the BBC reported. It can be a barrier to ending an outbreak as it may prevent people from seeking care, and lead to undetected spread," it said.



Residents line up for nucleic acid tests on a street during the Covid-19 lockdown in Shanghai

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Russia claimed to have captured Mariupol Friday in what would be its biggest victory yet in its war with Ukraine, after a nearly three-month siege that reduced much of the strategic port city to a smoking ruin, with over 20,000 civilians feared dead

Kyiv, May 21: The Ukraine war can only be resolved through "diplomacy", Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday

'The end will be through diplomacy'

amid a deadlock in negotiations between Kyiv and Moscow. "The end will be through diplomacy," he told a Ukrainian television channel. The war "will be bloody, there will be fighting but will only definitively end through diplomacy".



"Discussions between Ukraine and Russia will decidedly take place. Under what format I don't know -- with intermediaries, without them, in a broader group, at presidential level," he said. The results of negotiations, which could have a variety of subjects "according to the timing of the meeting", would have to be "fair" for Ukraine, Zelensky stressed. The president spoke of a document about

SRI LANKA CRISIS

India, Japan vow relief supplies worth millions



THREAT OF SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGE LOOMS

Indian ship laden with urgent relief supplies like rice, medicines and milk powder is scheduled to reach Colombo Sunday. The country Saturday provided another 40,000MT of diesel

■ Sri Lankan government lifted the state of emergency from Saturday, nearly two weeks after it was imposed to curb anti-government protests

Colombo, May 21: India and Japan will provide food relief supplies worth millions of dollars to Sri Lanka which is grappling with its worst economic crisis, leading to nationwide protests over the government's mismanagement. The Indian High Commission said here Friday that an Indian ship laden with urgent relief supplies like rice, medicines and milk powder for the people of crisis-hit Sri Lanka is scheduled to reach Colombo Sunday.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin flagged off the ship laden with relief supplies, the first to be dispatched to Sri Lanka, from Chennai Wednesday. The first consignment comprises 9,000 metric tonne (MT) of rice, 200 MT milk powder and 24 MT life-saving medicines with a combined value of Rs 45 crore. "People of #India, standing by their brethren in #SriLanka. Rice, milk powder and medicines worth more than SLR 2 billion (\$5.6 million) is scheduled to reach #Colombo on Sunday," the Indian mission tweeted. Chief Minister Stalin flagged off the cargo carrying the relief, from the Chennai Port, in the presence of his cabinet colleagues and senior officials. Japan has also announced to provide \$1.5 million through a

World Food Programme (WFP) programme for essential food rations and school meal programme. "We are pleased to announce that the Government of Japan will grant 1.5 million dollars emergency assistance through WFP to provide three months' essential food supplies, including fortified rice, dhal and oil, for approximately 15,000 urban and rural people and 380,000 school children across the island," Charge d' Affaires ad interim of Japan to Sri Lanka Katsuki Kotaro said. "We hope that this humanitarian assistance will help improve food access and nutrition for the people of Sri Lanka amidst the economic crisis," Kotaro added. Using the contribution, the WFP will procure rice for the daily free school meals and also distribute ration packs comprising essential commodities to vulnerable households. "Getting the right nutrition to those who need it the most will help mitigate the long-term effects of today's economic downturn," said Abdur Rahim Siddiqui, WFP Representative and Country Director in Sri Lanka.

TO DETER NORTH KOREA

US, South Korea open to expanding military drills

The move may draw an angry response from North Korea, which had defended its nuclear weapons and missile development on what it perceives as US threats and long described the US-South Korea military exercises as invasion rehearsals, although the allies have described the drills as defensive



ances that the United States would boost its deterrence against North Korean threats. In a joint statement, Biden reaffirmed the US commitment to defend South Korea with nuclear weapons if necessary. The United States also promised to deploy "strategic assets" - which typically include long-range

bomber aircraft, missile submarines, or aircraft carriers - if necessary to deter North Korea, according to the statement. "With regard to whether I would meet with the leader of North Korea, it would depend on whether he was sincere and whether he was serious," Biden

Both leaders said they were committed to denuclearising North Korea and were open to diplomacy with Pyongyang

told a joint news conference.

EXPANDING ALLIANCE

The US-South Korea alliance, which dates to the 1950-1953 Korean War, must further develop to keep the Indo-Pacific "free and open", Biden said. He said the alliance was built on opposition to changing borders by force - an apparent reference to Russia's war in Ukraine and China's claims over Taiwan.

The joint statement called for preserving peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. When asked by reporters about possible reactions from Beijing, Yoon's national security advisor Kim Sung-han said those issues were directly linked with South Korea's national interests, as its ships use the routes. "So I think there would be little room for Chinese retaliation or misunderstandings about this," he said. Biden used the visit to tout investments in the United States by Korean companies, including a move by South Korea's Hyundai Motor Group to invest about \$5.5 billion to build its first dedicated fully electric vehicle and battery manufacturing facilities in the United States.



There is a squeeze in the wallet of the rural consumer ... there is a compression in consumption. I think it's a wait-and-watch situation, which is very volatile as food prices and inflation are not abating

MOHIT MALHOTRA | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DABUR INDIA

BHEL RETURNS TO BLACK

State-owned engineering firm BHEL Saturday returned to black posting ₹912.47 crore consolidated net profit in the March quarter, backed by higher income. In the year-ago quarter, the company had reported a consolidated net loss of ₹1,036.32 crore, according to a regulatory filing. Total income during January-March 2022, rose to ₹8,181.72 crore, from ₹7,245.16 crore in the year-ago period



of the day quote

India Inc is planning the overall business outlook and its continuity understanding the demand of the market and accordingly ramping up the employee strength, compensation package etc., considering the complete sustainability

RP YADAV | CHAIRMAN & MD, GENIUS CONSULTANTS

From May we started seeing a drop in demand. These are early signs of inflationary impact on discretionary spends

KAMAL NANDI | VP, GOOREE APPLIANCES

Revenue growth was driven by successive quarters of export growth where we crossed a significant milestone of ₹1,000 crore for the year. We expect the positive trend in the commercial vehicle segment seen in Q4 of FY2022 to continue this year

SRIVATS RAM | MD, WHEELS INDIA

Forex kitty slips below \$600bn mark

This was the ninth consecutive shrinkage of forex reserves which the central bank is aiming to protect. However, the pace of the fall has been showing signs of reduction in the past two weeks

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 21: India's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$2.676 billion to stand at \$583.279 billion in the week ended May 13 with a sizable contraction of gold reserves aiding the fall, Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) data showed Friday. In the previous week, the reserves had declined by \$1.774 billion to \$595.954 billion.

According to an article 'State of the Economy', published in the RBI's Bulletin for May, foreign exchange reserves at \$596 billion as May 6 were equivalent to about 10



months of imports projected for 2022-23. During the reporting week, the fall in the reserves was mainly on account of a drop in foreign

currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves, and gold reserves, as per weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

FCAs declined by \$1.302 billion to \$529.554 billion in the week.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Gold reserves decreased by \$1.169 billion to \$40.57 billion.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dipped by \$165 million to \$18.204 billion, RBI said. The country's reserve position with the IMF decreased by \$39 million to \$4.951 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

FPIs dump equities worth over ₹35K cr in May so far

After six months of selling spree, FPIs turned net investors in the first week of April due to correction in the markets and invested ₹7,707 cr in equities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 22: Exodus of foreign money from the Indian equity markets continues unabated with Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) pulling out over ₹35,000 crore so far this month on concerns over the prospects of more aggressive rate hike by US Fed and appreciation of the dollar. "Going ahead, FPIs flow in India is to remain volatile in the near term, given the headwinds in terms of elevated crude prices, inflation, tight monetary policy, among others," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head - Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities.

"Since the mother market, US, is weak and dollar is strengthening, FPIs are likely to continue selling in the near term," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said. FPI flows continue to remain negative in the month of May till date and have dumped equities worth ₹35,137 crore during May 2-20.

Foreign investors remained net sellers for seven months to April 2022, withdrawing a massive net amount of over ₹1.65 lakh crore from the equity markets.

However, after a short breather, once again they turned net sellers during the holiday-shortened April

11-13 week, and the sell-off continued in the succeeding weeks as well.

"The major factor behind the relentless FPI selling is the appreciation of the dollar which has taken the dollar index above 103. Also, India is the major emerging market where FPIs are sitting on big profits and the market is very liquid to absorb FPI selling," Vijayakumar said.

Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar India, said that foreign investors continue to have concerns over the prospects of more aggressive rate hike by US Fed going ahead.

US Fed has hiked rates twice this year to battle surging inflation caused by the disruption in supply chain due to the war between Russia and Ukraine.

"Because of the war, the geopolitical tension has also enhanced, which has prompted investors to turn risk-averse and stay away from emerging markets like India which are perceived to be relatively riskier. And in the current risk-averse environment, foreign investors would have found profit booking a better option," Srivastava said.

On the domestic front too, concerns over surging inflation as well as further rate hikes by the RBI and its impact on the economic growth loomed large.

"What spooked investors was the impact of inflation on the sharp and sudden drop in retail sales," Vijay Singhania, Chairman, TradeSmart, said.

Apart from equities, FPIs withdrew a net amount of ₹6,133 crore from the debt market during the period under review.

Net outflow by FPIs from equities reached ₹1.63 lakh crore so far in 2022

CHEAP RUSSIAN SUPPLY

April crude oil buy at over 3-year high

India, Asia's third-biggest economy, holds surplus refining capacity and exports refined fuels as well. The country's wholesale prices last month accelerated at the fastest pace in at least 17 years as the Ukraine war and a weak rupee pushed up energy and raw material costs

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 21: India's April crude oil imports were the highest in three and a half years as the world's third biggest oil importer and consumer ramped up discounted Russian oil purchases to fuel a recovery in demand and fight high prices.

Crude oil imports increased by about 9.7 per cent from March and were up about 14.3 per cent from a year earlier at 20.87 million tonnes, the highest since October 2018, according to Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell data.

India's imports of Russian oil



Indian refiners continued to take extremely discounted Russian barrels, especially medium sour Urals grade, to capitalise on strong diesel cracks for domestic consumption and exports. Refiners delayed planned maintenance to take advantage of current market conditions as refinery runs exceeded beyond nameplate capacities

JANIV SHAH | ANALYST, RYSTAD

have soared since the invasion of Ukraine, at a time when Western sanctions have prompted many oil importers to shun trade with Moscow.

Imports of oil products jumped 23.7 per cent to 3.79 million tonne from a year earlier, while exports climbed 36.9 per cent. Of the 5.36 million tonne of exports in April, diesel accounted for 2.69 million tonne, government data showed.

UBS analyst Giovanni Staunovo attributed the rise in imports to Indian demand, which has recov-

ered, and the country making use of discounted Russian crude for domestic and strategic storage purposes to eventually refine that Russian crude and export it as oil product.

India, Asia's third-biggest economy, holds surplus refining capacity and exports refined fuels as well. The country's wholesale prices last month accelerated at the fastest pace in at least 17 years as the Ukraine war and a weak rupee pushed up energy and raw material costs.

SHORT TAKES

Power generation doubles in May

New Delhi: Power generation by domestic coal-based plants that blended imported dry fuel has more than doubled to 143 million units (MU) per day in May compared to 66 MU in the same month a year ago, according to official data. The data showed that power generation per day during May 2022 increased as compared to May 2021. Power generation per day from coal blending in DCB plants more than doubled from 66 MU to 143 MU while generation from imported coal-based plants rose from 145 MU to 160 MU. Total power generation per day through imported coal during May 2022 increased to 303 MU as compared to 211 MU in May 2021. Power generated per day from domestic coal has risen from 2,465 MU to 3,244 MU.

Ramaswamy new JSPL CFO

New Delhi: Steel maker JSPL on Saturday announced the appointment of Ramkumar Ramaswamy as its chief financial officer (CFO) with immediate effect. Prior to joining the company, he was with Vedanta Limited as CFO - Group Commercial & Marketing, Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) said in a BSE filing. "Ramkumar Ramaswamy, has been appointed as the CFO and Key Managerial Person (KMP) of the company...With effect from May 21, 2022," it said. Ramaswamy comes with 25 years of functional experience across sales and marketing, supply chain, controllership, financial planning and analysis, treasury, investments, tax, shared services and digital transformation, the filing said.

Additional fertiliser subsidy of ₹1.10L cr

New Delhi: Amid a sharp increase in global prices of fertilisers, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday said the government will provide an additional fertiliser subsidy of ₹1.10 lakh crore to further cushion farmers from the price rise. With this, the government's total fertiliser subsidy is likely to touch a record ₹2.15 lakh crore in the current 2022-23 fiscal. "Despite rising fertiliser prices globally, we have protected our farmers from such price hikes. In addition to the fertiliser subsidy of ₹1.05 lakh crore in the budget, an additional amount of ₹1.10 lakh crore is being provided to further cushion our farmers," Sitharaman tweeted.

Tata Motors unveils new Nexon EV MAX

Bhubaneswar: Committed to the rapid electrification of mobility in India, Tata Motors Saturday launched the all-new Nexon EV MAX at its showroom here at Samantarapur. Available across dealerships in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri and Berhampur (Dion Automotives) the Nexon EV Max has been launched at an attractive starting price of ₹17.74 lakh. With this launch, Tata Motors is taking the lead to enhance the appeal of electric vehicles and expand the market with a new offering for customers who are looking for longer intercity travel. The new Nexon EV MAX is powered by high voltage state-of-the-art Ziptron technology and will be available in two trim options - the Nexon EV Max XZ+ and Nexon EV Max XZ+ Lux. It will come in three exciting colours - Intensi-Teal (exclusive to the Nexon EV MAX), Daytona Grey and Pristine White. Dual tone body colour will be offered as a standard.



Mayor Sulochana Das and other officials at the launching ceremony

Import duty on key steel sector inputs cut

Finance Minister said the customs duty changes in raw materials and intermediaries for iron and steel will "reduce their prices"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 21: The government has waived customs duty on the import of some raw materials, including coking coal and ferromanganese, used by the steel industry, a move which will lower the cost for the domestic industry and reduce the prices.

Also, to increase domestic availability, the duty on exports of iron



Export duty on iron ore hiked up to 50%

ore has been hiked up to 50 per cent, and a few steel intermediaries to 15 per cent, according to a notification. The duty changes will be effective from Sunday.

The import duty on ferromanganese, coking coal, PCI coal has been cut from 2.5 per cent, while the duty on coke and semi-coke has been slashed from 5 per cent to 'nil'.

The tax on the export of iron ores and concentrates has been hiked to 50 per cent, from 30 per cent, while that on iron pellets a 45 per cent duty has been imposed.

Duty on pig iron and spiegeleisen in pigs, blocks, or other primary forms; flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, of a width of 600 mm or more, hot-rolled, not clad, plated or coated; Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, of a width of 600 mm or more, cold-rolled (cold-reduced), not clad, plated or coated. Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel, of a width of 600 mm or more, clad, plated or coated have been hiked to 15 per cent from 'nil' currently.

Also, 15 per cent duty has been imposed on flat-rolled products of stainless steel of width >=600mm,

other bars and rods of stainless steel; angles, shapes and sections of stainless-steel; bars and rods, hot-rolled, in irregularly wound coils, of other alloy steel.

Besides, the duty on import of raw materials used in the plastic industry has also been reduced to lower the cost of domestic manufacturing.

While import duty on naphtha has been cut to 1 per cent, from 2.5 per cent, the duty on propylene Oxide has been halved to 2.5 per cent. The import duty on Polymers of Vinyl Chloride (PVC) has been cut to 7.5 per cent, from 10 per cent, currently.

Announcing the customs duty cut on plastic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the levies are being cut on raw materials and intermediaries where the import dependence is high.

Things to follow if you missed renewing your motor insurance

If you own a motor vehicle, then you might already be aware that as per section 146 of the Motor Vehicle Act, 1988 it is compulsory to have third-party insurance to keep your vehicle on the road. This means that your vehicle should be insured at all times and you should keep close track of the renewal date. To keep the policy effective and enjoy the covers offered by the contract you have to pay an annual premium. You must renew your contract well in time to ensure that your protection is intact, and there is no break in the policy.

What happens if you missed your motor insurance renewal, and what it really implies?

It means that your cover is no more effective, if you meet an accident or face any other damage

now, you will have to bear the cost as your insurer is no more liable to pay you for any loss. Also, as per the section 146 of the Motor Vehicle Act, if you are found driving an uninsured vehicle you will invite a fine of ₹2,000/- and/or imprisonment of up to 3 months during the first time, if you repeat the offense you shall invite a fine of ₹4,000/- and/or imprisonment of up to 3 months. Hence it is advised that you avoid driving your vehicle after your insurance cover has lapsed.

What steps you should follow if you have missed the renewal?

You must reach out to your insurer immediately, to renew your policy at the earliest. If you have brought the policy through an insurance agent, then you can reach

out to him/her for further procedure. If you have brought your policy online, then you can simply visit the website of your insurer, fill in the details, select the plan and get the quote. If you were not satisfied with your previous insurer and wish to move to a different insurer, you can explore the market for a different insurance plan and insurer.

Renew within 90 days to protect your No Claim Bonus

NCB is a crucial element of your comprehensive motor insurance policy, that helps reduce your premium substantially. The NCB discount starts from 20% for the first claim-free year, increases gradually over the years, and goes up to 50%. Insurers offer a 90-day window after the expiry of the policy before

your accumulated benefits lapse. If you renew your policy during the said period, you will manage to keep your NCB intact. Since NCB can help you bring down the insurance premium by as much as 50%, it is of utmost importance that you renew your policy within this period and enjoy the discount.

How to ensure you don't miss the renewal?

It is slightly difficult to keep track of the renewal dates and is one of the biggest reasons why many policies lapse. Today, the insurance industry has an easy solution to this problem, almost all leading insurers have their apps. These apps have dashboards containing an overview of your policies. Apart from helping keep a track of renewal dates, the apps offer

DOCUMENTS TO KEEP HANDY FOR SMOOTH RENEWAL

- ▶ The expired policy copy
- ▶ Registration Certificate
- ▶ Driving license
- ▶ Specifics of the vehicle like model, age, date of registration
- ▶ RTO address where the car is registered

the facility of entire end-to-end policy management. You are now just a few clicks away from a timely and smooth insurance renewal.

ADITYA SHARMA | CHIEF DISTRIBUTION OFFICER - RETAIL SALES, BAJAJ ALLIANZ GENERAL INSURANCE



VERMA & CO WIN SUCCESSIVE WORLD CUP GOLD, BHARDWAJ CLINCHES SILVER, WHILE MIXED TEAM SETTLE FOR BRONZE

Archers reign supreme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gwangju (South Korea), May 21: The Indian men's compound archery team Saturday came from behind to prevail over France by two points in an intense finish to win the gold medal in successive World Cup stages.

Unheralded Mohan Bhardwaj also shared the limelight as he stunned reigning world champion Nico Wiener en route to winning a dream World Cup individual silver medal as Indian compound archers outshone their much-fancied recurve teammates.

A day after the Olympic discipline recurve archers ended their campaign with a solitary bronze (in women's team event), India bagged one gold, one silver and one bronze in the compound section Saturday to end their World Cup Stage 2 campaign with five medals.

That the compound archers bagged one gold, one silver and two bronze from India's total medal count of five summed up their dominance compared to the TOPS-supported Olympic discipline recurve archers.

India began the day with the men's compound team dishing out a superb fightback to prevail over France 232-230 to win the gold medal.

In a repeat of the Stage 1 final, the fourth-seeded men's team, comprising Abhishek Verma, Aman Saini and Rajat Chauhan, found itself trailing against its sixth-seed rivals in the first two ends.

But riding on an immaculate finish in the third end the trio sealed a 232-230 win over its French counterparts Adrien Gontier, Jean Philippe Bouch and Quentin Baraer to win the World Cup Stage 2 gold.

In the last World Cup final at Antalya in April, the same Indian trio had defeated France by one-point.

Verma went on to win a second medal when he along with Avneet Kaur pipped higher-seeded Turkey's Amircan Haney and Ayse Bera Suzer 156-155 to win the bronze in the mixed team event.

For Kaur, this was her second bronze having won a team bronze in the women's event earlier. Starting off with 39-all, the sixth-



JOB DONE: (From R) Abhishek Verma, Aman Saini and Rajat Chauhan imitate the trademark style from the movie 'Pushpa' while celebrating their triumph



Mohan Bhardwaj



Avneet Kaur and Abhishek pose with their bronze medals

seeded Indian duo trailed by two points in the second end (77-79) with its fourth-seeded rivals shooting four 10s including three Xs (closer to the centre).

Verma and Kaur narrowed the deficit to one point in the third end shooting 39/40 and finished off in style with a perfect fourth end - four 10s, including one X.

Later in the day, Bhardwaj, who made his World Cup debut only last month, conjured up the biggest win of his career when he shocked his World No.7 Austrian opponent 143-141 in the semifinal en route to claim a silver.

Trailing by two points after first two ends, the 32-year-old, who won a silver at this year Senior Nationals, produced a remarkable comeback by winning the third with two 10s to level it 85-all.

Having fallen behind by one-point in the fourth end, Bhardwaj finished it off in style with three 10s. The Uttarakhand archer's dream run finally ended in the final by none other than Dutch world number one Mike Schloesser (141-149). This was his first individual medal at the international stage. Bhardwaj had won his maiden international medal, a

team silver, at the Bangkok Asian Championships in 2019.

In the men's compound team final, France started off with a 57 in the first end. Verma shot in the red ring (8) with his second arrow but Saini and Chauhan showed perfect team bonding to finish with two 10s to make sure the deficit was just one point.

Both teams shot identical scores of 58/60 in the second end. India stepped it up with three 10s in their second set of arrows as France also matched them to retain their overall one-point lead.

Shooting first as they trailed in the third end, India showed tremendous resilience to turn it around with three 10s as their under-pressure French rivals shot a couple of 9s to fall behind.

Showing calm nerves, the Indian trio sealed it with another round of three 10s to make it 60 out of 60, while their opponents managed just 56 as India turned the tables from a one-point deficit to a three-point cushion (174-171) going into the decisive fourth end.

It was all about not doing anything silly as the Indian team capped it with four 10s to make it 53, against the French trio's 59 but that was not enough as the Indian compound men's team won their second gold of the season.

ERROR-PRONE SINDHU GOES DOWN IN SEMIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, May 21: A profligate PV Sindhu faltered in the semifinals of the Thailand Open, going down in straight games to Olympic champion and World No.4 Chen Yu Fei of China here Saturday.

Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medallist, lost 17-21, 16-21 to third seeded Chen in 43 minutes to end an impressive run in the Super 500 tournament.

Sindhu, seeded sixth, enjoyed a 6-4 head-to-head count coming into the match but she was not her usual best and committed too many unforced errors against the Chinese, who played aggressive badminton to come up trumps against the Indian. The 26-year-old from Hyderabad had also lost to Chen the last time the two faced off at the 2019 BWF World Tour Finals.

Sindhu was the first to log points but Chen strengthened her defence and kept the rallies alive with her overall game to push the Indian to commit errors. Chen was dominant throughout the first set and led 11-7 at interval before eventually sealing the game.

The World No.7 Indian produced a better show in the second game, leading 6-3 before making it 10-5. But Chen soon found her bearings as she mixed her shots well to gather three successive points.

Sindhu, however, managed to go into the break with a narrow two-point cushion after winning a 25-



shot rally. But the World No.4 soon tightened her game and turned the tables as Sindhu continued her erroneous run, allowing Chen to move to a 15-12 advantage.

Sindhu managed to narrow it to 15-17 with a precise return that just kissed the lines but she again

went wide with a cross court return.

Chen then produced a winner on Sindhu's forehand before sending another one at the forecourt to grab five match points. The Chinese squandered one with a long shot before sealing the contest with a body smash.

TEAM ANNOUNCED FOR FIH WOMEN'S PRO LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THE TEAM

(Goalkeepers) Savita (C), Bichu Devi Kharibam; (Defenders) Deep Grace Ekka (vc), Gurjit Kaur, Nikki Pradhan, Udita, Ishika Chaudhary, Akshata Abaso Dhekale; (Midfielders) Nisha, Sushila Chanu Pukhrabam, Monika, Neha, Jyoti, Navjot Kaur, Sonika, Salima Tete, Baljeet Kaur; (Forwards) Vandana Katariya, Lalremsiami, Navneet Kaur, Sharmila Devi, Sangita Kumari, Deepika, Rani.

New Delhi, May 21: India Saturday named a 24-member women's hockey team, to be led by Savita Punia, for the European leg of the FIH Pro League matches in Belgium and Netherlands from June.

The team will play six matches from June 11 to 22 ahead of the FIH Hockey Women's World Cup to be held in Spain and the Netherlands from July 1-17.

India plays hosts Belgium June 11 and 12 in Antwerp before shifting base to Rotterdam, the Netherlands, to face Argentina (June 18 and 19) and USA (June 21 and 22). Savita will continue to lead the team though star striker Rani Rampal is likely

to return to action after she made her last appearance at last year's Tokyo Olympics.

Rani was under rehabilitation after recovering from a prolonged hamstring injury. She was named in the Indian squad for the last two matches of the FIH Pro League

in Bhubaneswar against the Netherlands last month but did not play. Experienced defender Deep Grace Ekka will be the vice captain of the team which also has junior World Cup stars like Bichu Devi Kharibam, Ishika Chaudhary, Akshata Abaso Dhekale, Baljeet Kaur, Sangita Kumari and Deepika.

Rajini Etimarpu and Mahima Chaudhary - who will be the captain and vice captain respectively of the Indian team for the June 4-5 FIH Women's Hockey 5s in Switzerland - as well as Rajwinder Kaur have been named as standbys. The Indian team is currently placed second in the standings after Argentina with 22 points from eight matches with four wins, three draws and one loss.

ARYAN, AMIYA SETTLE FOR SILVER, BRONZE RESPECTIVELY

Srabani secures gold at Indian Grand Prix 3



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 21: It was day of mixed fortunes for Odisha athletes as they bagged a gold, courtesy Srabani Nanda, and a silver as well as a bronze medal in the Indian Grand Prix 3 at the Kalinga Stadium here Saturday.

The 31-year-old Srabani finished on top of the podium in the women's 200m race, with a time of 24.04 seconds. Nanda, running her first national-level race on home soil since June 2018, had run a season's best of 23.68s in Kingston, Jamaica in March.

Rajashree Prasad of West Bengal (25.00s) looked like she would keep pace with Nanda initially but slowed down later and finished third behind Sonia (24.82s) of Haryana.

Akshay Annapa Shetty (Maharashtra) claimed his first major national-level title when he won the men's 200m in 21.86 seconds. Having eased past home favourite

Amiya Mallick in Race A, he had to wait to confirm his victory.

Aryan Ekka, an Odisha teenager, dipped under 22 seconds for the first time in winning Race B but was one-hundredth of a second behind Akshay.

Another 31-year-old athlete Sarita Romit Singh of Uttar Pradesh comfortably won the women's hammer throw event. Sarita showed consistency, winning her third event this year with a best throw over 61.41m.

Though she was short of her season's best of 64.16m recorded in the Federation Cup in Kozhikode last month, she had reasons to be happy that each of her four legal efforts on Saturday went past the 60m mark.

Tamil Nadu's G Deenadayalan took the men's pole vault gold by clearing 4.60m. Bineesh Jacob (Kerala) and Manish Singh (Haryana) won silver medals with best efforts of 4.40m.

MI help RCB seal last playoff spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 21: Royal Challengers Bangalore sneaked into the playoffs after Mumbai Indians broke Delhi Capitals' heart with a five-wicket win in their last IPL match here Saturday.

Already out of contention, MI played partypoopers as they first restricted DC to 159/7 with Jasprit Bumrah snapping three wickets (3/25) and then returned to overhaul the target in 19.1 overs to knock the 2020 finalists out of the tournament.

While Ishan Kishan (43, 35b, 3x4, 4x6) and Dewald Brevis (37, 33b, 1x4, 3x6) kept MI in the hunt, it was Tim David's 11-ball 34-run (2x4, 4x6) cameo that brought the five-time champions back into the chase. Tilak Varma also chipped in with a crucial 17-ball 21.

With MI at 95/3 in 14.3 overs, DC skipper Rishabh Pant made a strategic blunder as he refused to go for DRS after David nicked the first ball of his innings but the on-field umpire didn't give him out.

It came back to haunt DC as David brought down the equation to 15 off 14 balls. Ramandeep then provided the finishing touch with a six-ball 13.

DC finished with 14 points to re-



main in the fifth spot, while RCB joined Gujarat Titans, Rajasthan Royals and Lucknow Super Giants into the playoffs with 16 points.

Earlier, opting to field, MI bowlers, led by Bumrah left DC tottering at 50/4 in 8.4 overs but Rovman Powell (43, 34b, 1x4, 4x6) and skipper Pant (39, 33b, 4x4, 1x6) shared 75 off 44 balls to resurrect the innings and take them to a decent total.

Daniel Sams (1/30) and Riley Meredith (0/9) bowled well as did the spin duo of Mayank Markande (1/26) and Hrithik Shokeen (0/34). Ramandeep (2/29) also managed to scalp two wickets.

Nor'wester damages Eden Gardens press box

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA: Rain and thunderstorm Saturday evening caused some damage at Eden Gardens ahead of two IPL playoffs and also delayed the arrival of table-toppers Gujarat Titans here. The Nor'wester, which is locally called Kalbaisakhi, lashed parts of the state including the metropolis, causing damage to the stadium which is slated to host back-to-back IPL matches Tuesday and Wednesday. The squall shattered the glass covers of the press box, while few hoardings and the cover were also blown away by the thunderstorm which was accompanied by wind speed of 90 kmph according to the Met department. A CAB official said the 'damages were minor' and will not affect their preparation for the matches. "We still have two days in between. Everything will be ready and the press box glass will be fixed in time," said an official. BCCI president Sourav Ganguly also visited the venue after the thunderstorm to take stock of the situation.

39; Jasprit Bumrah 3/25, Ramandeep Singh 2/29) lost to MI 160/5 (Ishan Kishan 48, Dewald Brevis 37, Tim David 34; Shardul Thakur 2/32) by 5 wickets.

Praggnanandhaa clinches another win over Carlsen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 21: Indian Grandmaster Praggnanandhaa Rameshbabu notched up his second win of the season over Magnus Carlsen in the fifth round of the Chessable Masters online rapid chess tournament, exactly three months after stunning the World Champion for the first time.

The 16-year-old from Chennai capitalised on a late blunder from Carlsen on Friday to pocket three crucial points to keep himself in the hunt for a knockout berth.

The match was headed for a draw before the Norwegian committed a blunder in the 40th move when he misplaced a black knight during the final seconds and resigned immediately in the next move as Praggnanandhaa emerged winner.

The victory took the teenager to 12 points, while Carlsen was at the second spot behind China's Wei Yi. Praggnanandhaa is currently sharing the fifth place with Ding Liren. In February, Praggnanandhaa had stunned Carlsen in the Airings Masters online rapid chess tournament, becoming only the third Indian to clinch a victory over the World Champion.

Bhagat, Dhillon bag golds at Bahrain Int'l

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 21: Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat secured two golds to lead the Indian badminton team's medal rush at the Bahrain Para Badminton International in Manama Saturday.

Bhagat received a walkover from arch-rival Daniel Bethell of England in the men's singles SL3 final, while he paired up with Manisha Ramdass to outfit Thailand's Siripong Teamarrom and Saensupa Nipada 21-14, 21-11 in the summit clash of mixed doubles SL3-SU5 class.

World No.1 Bhagat, who had settled for two bronze medals in the Brazil Para Badminton



International recently, registered a convincing 21-16, 21-14 win over compatriot and Paralympic bronze medallist Manoj Sarkar in the SL3 semifinals.



Tarun Dhillon also secured a gold after beating Korea's Shin Kyung Hwan 21-9, 21-9 in the men's singles SL4 final. The Indian had notched up a 21-14, 21-15 win over Thailand's Siripong Teamarrom in the semifinals.

In women's singles, Mandeep Kaur (SL3) lost 5-21, 17-21 to Halime Yildiz to sign off with a silver medal. She had pulled off a shocking 21-18, 21-14 win over top seed and compatriot Manasi Joshi in the semifinals.

Among others, Dhillon and Nitesh Kumar also registered a win in the men's doubles SL3-SH4 semifinals, defeating Korean Hwan and Joo Dongjae in straight games 21-18, 21-18 and will take on Thailand's Mongion Bunsun and Siripong Teamarrom in final.

In women's events, Ramdass (SU5) and Mandeep Kaur (SL3) reached the final of women's doubles SL3-SU5 class. The second

seeded pair of Kaur and Ramdass, who has a gold together from the Brazil Para Badminton International, will face the Paralympic duo of Palak Kohli and Parmar in the final. Parmar, however, lost to Turkey's Halime Yildiz 21-5, 21-18 in her women's singles SL3 semifinals.

Among other Indian finalists are Nithya Sre Sumathy Sivan, who defeated Thailand's Chai Saeyang 21-13, 21-18 in the women's singles SH6 last-four round. Chirag Baretha and Raj Kumar also made it to the final of men's doubles SU5 event, as did Dhinakaran Pandurangan and Sivarajan Solaimalai in doubles SH6.