



DUAL ROLE

Actor Sushmita Sen claims she has not only raised her kids single-handedly, but also entertained the viewers for decades

LEISURE P2



SCALING NEW SUMMITS

A Nepali sherpa scales Mount Everest for a record 26th time, beating his own previous record set last year

INTERNATIONAL P10



ON RIGHT TRACK

Preparations are on in a proper manner and on the right track for the Men's Hockey WC says Rohidas

SPORTS P12



Raj cops in Noida to nab TV journo

JAIPUR/NOIDA: A team of Rajasthan Police is in Noida in Uttar Pradesh to arrest TV journalist Aman Chopra for allegedly promoting enmity between different groups and hurting religious sentiments, an official said Sunday. According to Dungarpur Kotwali police station, an FIR was registered against Chopra by a man alleging that the journalist gave false and fictitious details by showing that the demolition of a temple in Rajgarh of Alwar district was done by the Rajasthan government as an act of revenge following the demolition drive in Delhi's Jahangirpuri.

Khalistan flags hung at HP Assembly gate

DHARAMSHALA: Khalistan flags were found tied on the main gate and slogans scrawled on the walls of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly complex, police said Sunday. The flags were put up on the outer side of the main gate number one of the assembly complex. They were removed by the administration. The winter session of the HP assembly usually held in Dharamshala. "It might have happened in the late night or early morning today. We have removed the Khalistani flags from Vidhan Sabha gate. We are investigating and going to register a case," SP Kangra Khushal Sharma said. P8



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Sand mafia attack officials, brandish pistols during raid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 8: An additional tehsildar and three revenue inspectors (RIs) sustained critical injuries after being allegedly assaulted by sand smugglers during a raid at an illegal sand quarry on Rushikulya river near Mali Jagannathpur village under Ganjam tehsil and district in the wee hours of Sunday.

The attackers even threatened the revenue officials by brandishing pistols before them and snatched away their gold chain, gold rings, mobile phones and wallets.

Additional tehsildar Suwendu Kumar Jena, RIs Bhaskar Sahoo, Sitaram Sahoo and Sushant Kumar Behera sustained critical injuries in the attack and were admitted to the Chhatrapur Hospital for treatment. The three RIs belong to Huma, Bada



One of the injured officials

Ramachandrapur and Burudi revenue circles in the district.

The incident occurred when the revenue officials over a tip-off raided the place at around 3am before dawn. Meanwhile, four miscreants took them by surprise and suddenly attacked them. The assailants ran after the additional tehsildar and three RIs and as-

saulted them with broken tree branches. The additional tehsildar and the three RIs fled the scene to save their lives.

They immediately informed the tehsildar Arun Kumar Nayak and Ganjam IIC Swaroop Kishan who rescued and admitted them to the Chhatrapur hospital. Ganjam police registered a case and started an investigation over a complaint filed by the tehsil office. SDPO Goutam Kishan also rushed to the spot and took stock of the situation.

Police have started an investigation into the incident and detained three persons for questioning in this connection. When contacted, the Ganjam RI Rabindra Kumar Pradhan said that all the accused will be arrested soon and action will be taken against them. Meanwhile, one of the accused R Sunil Reddy of Kalyanpur village has been identified and will be arrested soon.

FISHING FEST



Villagers fish with wicker baskets in Panzath Nag spring during an annual festival that coincides with Rohan Posh festival, at Qazigund in J&K's Kulgam district, Sunday. Hundreds of men and children from different villages collectively go fishing in order to rid the spring of weeds and silt and thereby restore it

ASANI RAGES IN BAY OF BENGAL

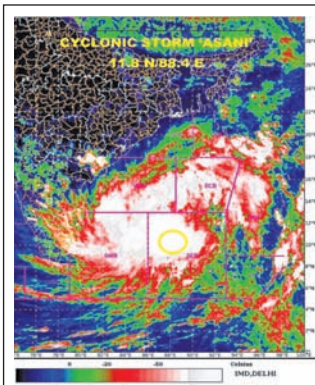
The weather system is expected to be at its strongest today, packing wind speed of 111 kmph, with its fury on full display in Bay of Bengal

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Cyclone Asani, formed over the southeast Bay of Bengal, further intensified into a severe cyclonic storm Sunday evening as it moved north-westwards in the direction of north Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coasts, the Met department said.

The severe cyclone, on reaching west-central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coasts Tuesday, is very likely to recurve north-northeast wards and move towards northwest Bay of Bengal off Odisha coast, it said.

The severe cyclonic storm is very likely to lose some steam thereafter and turn into a cyclonic storm Wednesday and further into a deep depression Thursday, the Met de-



Coastal districts of Odisha and the southern part of West Bengal are likely to experience light to moderate rain from Tuesday

The sea conditions near the coast will become rough May 9 and rougher May 10. The wind speed in the sea will increase to 80-90 kmph May 10

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea along and off West Bengal and Odisha coasts from May 10 till further notice



Fishermen park their boats after reports of cyclone in Puri district

partment said in its forecast of Asani's track and intensity.

Stating that the system will not make landfall either in Odisha or Andhra Pradesh, IMD Director-General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said the cyclone will move parallel to the east coast and cause rainfall from Tuesday evening.

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said the state government has made adequate arrangement for rescue operations. "We do not see any big danger in the state as the system will pass around 100 kilometer off the coast near Puri," he said. However, rescue teams of NDRF, ODRAF and

Fire Services are on standby for any eventuality, he said.

A unit of NDRF has been deployed in Balasore and a unit of ODRAF was sent to Ganjam. ODRAF teams are also on standby in Krushna Prasad, Satpada, Puri and Astarang block in Puri district, and Jagatsinghpur, Mahakalapara and Rajnagar in Kendrapara and Bhadrak.

All the districts have been put on alert and collectors have been empowered to undertake evacuation, keeping in view the local situation, Jena said.

Director-General of Fire Services SK Upadhaya said all the 339 fire stations have been put on alert.

Rainfall will commence in the coastal districts from Tuesday evening under the impact of the cyclone, said Umashankar Das, senior scientist at Bhubaneswar Met Centre. Heavy rainfall is very likely in some areas of Gajapati, Ganjam and Puri Tuesday. The next day, heavy rainfall may happen in Ganjam, Khurda, Puri, Jagatsinghpur and Cuttack. Heavy rainfall is very likely in Puri, Jagatsinghpur; Cuttack, Kendrapada, Bhadrak and Balasore Thursday. The system lay 880 km south-southeast of Puri at 5.30 pm.

Dozens feared dead as Russians bomb school



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Zaporizhzhia, May 8: Dozens of Ukrainians were feared dead Sunday after a Russian bomb flattened a school sheltering about 90 people in its basement, while Ukrainian troops refused to surrender at a besieged steel plant that Moscow's invading forces sped to seize before Russia's Victory Day holiday.

The governor of Luhansk province said the school in the village of Bilohorivka caught fire after Saturday's bombing. Emergency crews found two bodies and rescued 30 people, he said.

"Most likely all 60 people who remain under the rubble are now dead," Gov Serhiy Haidai wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Russian shelling also killed two boys, ages 11 and 14, in the nearby town of Pryvillia, he said.

The largest European conflict since World War II has developed into a punishing war of attrition due to the Ukrainian military's unexpectedly effective defense.

Since failing to capture Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, Moscow's forces have attacked cities, towns and villages in eastern and southern Ukraine but not gained much ground, according to Western military analysts.

To demonstrate success in time for Victory Day on Monday, the Russian military worked to complete its takeover of Mariupol, which has been under relentless assault since the start of the war.

Jagannath culture expert Rajat Kar dies

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Eminent Odia litterateur and Jagannath culture expert Rajat Kumar Kar, a Padma Shri awardee, died at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar Sunday. He was 88 years old and had heart-related ailments.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed condolence over the demise of Kar and said his contribution to Odia culture will remain memorable. Patnaik said his funeral will be held with full state honours.

Kar was known for his commentary during the annual Rath Yatra on TV and radio for six decades. He was also instrumental in the revival of Odisha's dying art of Pala. He was a prolific writer on Upendra Bhanja literature and has seven non-fiction books to his credit.

BRAJARAJNAGAR BYPOLL

BJP names Radharani Panda as its MLA pick

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 8: The BJP Sunday named former MLA Radharani Panda as its candidate for the May 31 bypoll to the Brajaraj Nagar Assembly seat in Jharsuguda district.

The central election committee of the BJP has decided to field Panda from the seat after careful considerations, a statement issued by the party said. Panda had bagged the seat by defeating BJD candidate Anup Kumar Sai in 2014.

She, however, lost to BJD's Kishore Mohanty by a margin of 11,634 during the 2019 Assembly polls. Bypoll was necessitated in Brajaraj Nagar following Mohanty's demise last December. The saffron party, despite its drubbing in the recently concluded rural and urban polls in Brajaraj Nagar area, feels that Panda's organisational skills will help her clinch the seat. (More P3)

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No cash or jewellery, sir! But we have found dozens of gas cylinders and hundreds of litres of petrol!!

ASI digs up millennia-old Harappan city in Rakhigarhi

DNA samples collected from two human skeletons unearthed at a necropolis of the Harappan-era city site have been sent for scientific examination, the outcome of which may further unearth the fascinating story of Rakhigarhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 8: Haryana's Rakhigarhi is famous across the world for the Harappan civilisation. And now, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is conducting new excavations in and around the 7,000-year-old planned Harappan city in Rakhigarhi which will be completed by the end of May.

The excavation and study at Rakhigarhi has so far revealed that this place once housed a planned city made with better engineering.

During excavation, the officials studied the remains of the Harappan culture and got evidence of town planning, including streets, pucca walls and multi-storey houses.

Remains of around 5,000 year-old factory which used to manufacture jewellery have also been traced, which signifies that trading was also done from the city.

According to officials, that time the cities were built using better technology. The techniques which are now being used to build big cities like straight streets, drains, dustbins placed at corners of streets for garbage, were used at that time.

During excavation, the skeletons of two women were found along with jewellery. Along with skeletons, utensils used by the deceased were also buried. Rakhigarhi is the largest



archaeological site of the Harappan civilisation which comes under two modern villages Rakhi-Shahpur and Rakhigarhi-Khash. Rakhigarhi has been classified as major metropolitan centre of the Harappan culture.

Rakhigarhi site is one of the 'five iconic sites' declared by the Central government as per the Union Budget 2020-21

During an investigation conducted in 1969 by Professor Suraj Bhan, it was found that archaeological remains of Rakhigarhi and settlements are of the nature of the Harappan culture. During investigation conducted by the ASI and Pune Deccan College, it came to the fore that this place has a cluster township spread across 500 hectare.

It includes 11 mounds which have been named RGR-1 TO 11.

The excavations carried out by the ASI under the directions of Amarendra Nath during the year 1997-98 to 1999-2000 revealed various occupational phases beginning from the pre-formative stage to mature Harappan period covering the time from 5th millennium BCE to 3rd millennium BCE based on the radio carbon dates obtained from various layers.

There is a procedure going on for an MoU between the ASI and Haryana government under which the ancient things of the Rakhigarhi will be displayed in a museum. The ASI will soon start excavation in September 2022 and after that will throw open these mounds, so that the tourists can get full information. Very soon Rakhigarhi will witness beeline of tourists as the officials want that when the tourists see the remains they get the information about the antique and the truth about it.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP		37.0°C	37.0°C
	MAX	37.0°C	37.0°C
	MIN	25.4°C	25.4°C
Humidity		55%	61%
Rainfall		NIL	NIL
	Forecast	Light rain very likely	

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You are a literary person and today your power of expression will come in very handy. If you are trying to woo your beloved, an intimate conversation will prove beneficial. However, make sure not to avoid office duties, and complete your pending work before your superiors come checking.

TAURUS

Ganesh sees you getting very impatient and restless this day. Thank the stars; in spite of that you will remain adequately steady and focussed on your work, and perform suitably and commendably as expected. During the latter part of the day, your colleagues and superiors are likely to be more helpful and responsive.

GEMINI

A fruitful day loaded with opportunities awaits you. You will be able to complete all your tasks easily at the work-front. However, you will need to put in extra effort to satisfy others. You will be engaged in discussions with your family members and neighbours later on, says Ganesh.

CANCER

Love is not just in the air, it is everywhere. The love bug will bite you so hard that it may make you weep. If you are a part of a long-standing relationship, you will fall in love with your partner all over again.

LEO

If you thought the Rubik's Cube was confusing, wait till you see what the day has in store for you. A rather nasty professional glitch will baffle and bewilder you. You may want to gear up for certain unpleasant situations at work. But keep your head through it all, since you shall need it in the afternoon to impress someone special, and find innovative ways to express your long cherished love.

VIRGO

D.E.A.F – Diet, Exercise and All-round Fitness – describes where you are much to incline today. Savour the most exquisite cuisine today, suggests Ganesh. Later in the day perhaps, you may reach a cross-road in life. A rise in the bank balance will cushion the safety of your future.

LIBRA

Call it a proof of the old saying, 'Blood is thicker than water', but it is your family that will stand you in good stead today, foresees Ganesh. And in keeping with your grateful nature, you are likely to repay your dues later in the day. Don't be surprised if your rivals admit to your feats – it's all in the stars today.

SCORPIO

The faucet of creativity will run wild today, especially when you try sorting things out with your siblings. Today, you shall bypass all incoming troubles with much ease. Your ingenuity will help you bag a job later, perhaps. In the evening, you will be the Good Samaritan and bring peace to someone, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

Ganesh sees you being friendly and jovial throughout the day. Planning a get-away with family will be on top of your to-do list. Honours will be showered on you at your workplace. Be ready to receive much adulation, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN

Scepticism and lack of faith in others may have prevented you from entering into a partnership, but you are likely to do so today, in keeping with the interest of your enterprise. For those engaged in jobs, truckloads of appreciation will come your way for your exceptional performance. Students will make well-informed decisions concerning their career, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

Spirituality takes over you today! You will surely make your way to a temple, mosque or church later in the day, says Ganesh. That, or you may simply meditate in seclusion. Shopping too is a good prospect, and you get your penny's worth if you shop for clothes.

PISCES

A mixed bag of goodies awaits you today. Your boss is likely to grant you a few unexpected concessions at work. For those pursuing studies, good results are in the offing. The evening is likely to be fun-filled and pleasant, says Ganesh.



SELENA GOMEZ POKES FUN AT HER DATING AGE RANGE

Actress-singer Selena Gomez has given some insight into her qualifications for a romantic partner. In the now since-deleted TikTok video, an off-camera voice on the audio asked: "What is your dating range lately?" The 29-year-old lip-synced in response: "31 to coffin."

STAND-UP COMICS DESERVE MORE RESPECT: KEVIN HART

On the recent incident involving fellow comedian Dave Chappelle, American actor comedian Kevin Hart believes that stand-up comedians deserve more respect. Kevin hopes that the Dave incident marks a turning point for the stand-up industry.



Kubbra on her role in The Sandman

New Delhi: Sacred Games actress Kubbra Sait has shared her experience of doing an audio show which is a Hindi adaptation of Neil Gaiman's best-selling series *The Sandman*.

Kubbra says: "I'm elated and I am extremely proud of the fact that I am able to voice an incredible character for one of the greatest shows."

She further adds, *The Sandman* takes its listeners into the world of fantasy and horror and these genres are becoming immensely popular now.

"I think that anything that allows you to think beyond what you really know, or what you think you know and being introduced to a world that is completely not familiar to you is both challenging and exciting."

Adapted and directed by multi award-winner Dirk Maggs, and performed by Vijay Varma (Morpheus) and Tabu (The Narrator), this first part of the audio series, also



features Manoj Bajpayee (Doctor Destiny), Adarsh Gaurav (John Constantine), Neeraj Kabi (Lucifer), Kubbra Sait (Death) and Tillotama Shome (Calliope), Sushant Divgikar (Desire) and others. IANS

'A mother can be both warrior and peacenik'

Mumbai: On the occasion of Mother's Day, actress and former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen shared how being a mother has made her both a warrior and a peacenik. For Sushmita, "Motherhood is truly a state of grace and strength."

Elaborating on the same, the actress, who is a mother of two, said, "She (a mother) can be both a warrior and a peacenik at the same time. In both seasons of Hotstar



Specials Aarya, I challenged myself as a woman and as a mother. In real life, too, I raised two daughters single-handedly and entertained viewers for decades."

The actress, who was last seen in the second season of the Disney+ Hotstar series *Aarya*, intends to be a part of stories which will inspire the next generations, "I know I can fight an endless war for children and make sure there is never an end game in their lives. I hope to be part of more such clutter-breaking stories in Indian cinema that will keep inspiring generations to come."

IANS

SWEET GESTURE



Eminent Hindi film director, producer and actor Imtiaz Ali took a selfie with Pallavi Durua, the first Triba Queen of India from Odisha, during the launching of mascot and brochure of Triba Queen Global Contest - 2022 at Bhubaneswar Club, Sunday. OP PHOTO

Lock Upp trophy for Munawar Faruqui

Mumbai: He was in jail not long ago for "insulting Hindu gods and goddesses", a charge he denies, but well past Saturday/Sunday midnight, controversial comedian Munawar Faruqui was released from Ekta Kapoor and Kangana Ranaut *Lock Upp* with a Rs 20 lakh cheque and brand new car.



He was declared winner of the show, whose finale also featured popular reality show regulars Payal Rohatgi, Anjali Arora, Azma Fallah and Shivam Sharma.

Unlike most reality shows, the *Lock Upp* winner was decided not only on the basis of popular votes, which was topped by Faruqui, but the host, Kangana, had the last word on the subject. It was her seal of approval that finally decided the winner: Payal and Anjali, with whom Faruqui had gotten quite close on the gritty reality show, were declared the first and second runners up.

Faruqui, who, before entering *Lock Upp*, was seeing his shows being cancelled by the Karnataka government, attracted a lot of sympathy and public goodwill by coming across as this boy from a Dongri chawl who had seen poverty, his mother committed suicide and marriage broken up, and had also been abused sexually as a child.

Kangana and he also had a hot exchange initially on his political views, but quite clearly, their differences did not come in the way of the show's celebrity host from declaring him the winner. IANS

'Avengers' comic book artist George Perez dies

Perez's contributions are pivotal in both driving and reinventing DC's long and rich history, tweets the American comic book publisher

Twitter: "His work paved seminal stories across comics, and his legacy of kindness and generosity will never be forgotten."

DC Comics tweeted that Perez's contributions "were pivotal in both driving and reinventing DC's long and rich history."

Perez and writer Marv Wolfman had created such characters as Cyborg, Raven and Starfire.

Their "Crisis on Infinite Earths" a reboot, "saw several major characters killed off in a

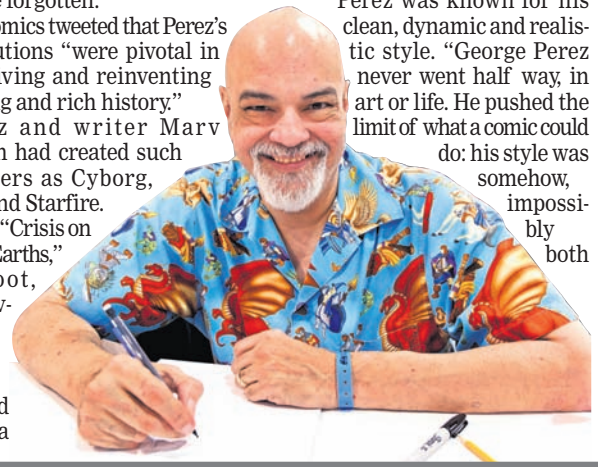
multiverse saga that still resonates in popular culture," according to Deadline.com.

Perez was known for his clean, dynamic and realistic style. "George Perez never went half way, in art or life. He pushed the limit of what a comic could do: his style was somehow, impossibly both

overwhelmingly powerful and subtly graceful," tweeted Tom King, a comic book writer who, like Perez, had won a coveted Eisner Award, an accolade akin to an Oscar in the industry.

Perez's family had moved in the 1940s from Puerto Rico to New York, where his father found work in a factory. His talents emerged early; Perez began working as an assistant at Marvel before turning 20, and was soon working on titles including *Astonishing Tales* and *The Avengers*.

DC publisher Jim Lee said Perez's art style was "both dynamic and incredibly expressive... the perfect storytelling canvas for some of the most important events in DC history." PTI



PEANUTS



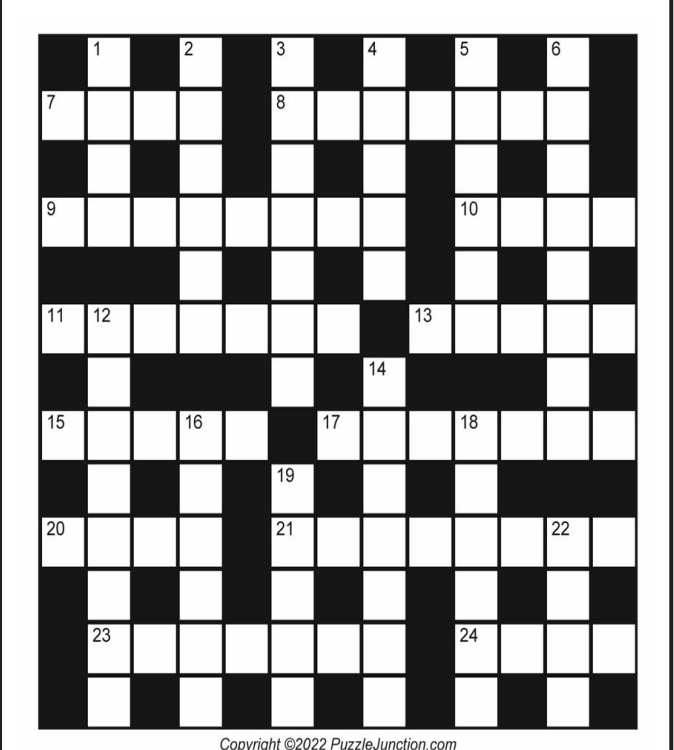
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



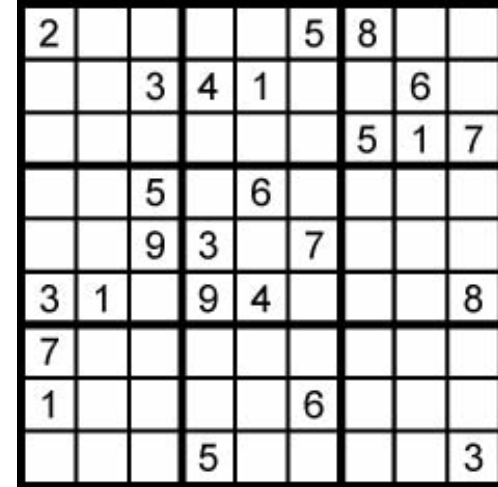
FUN post CROSSWORD



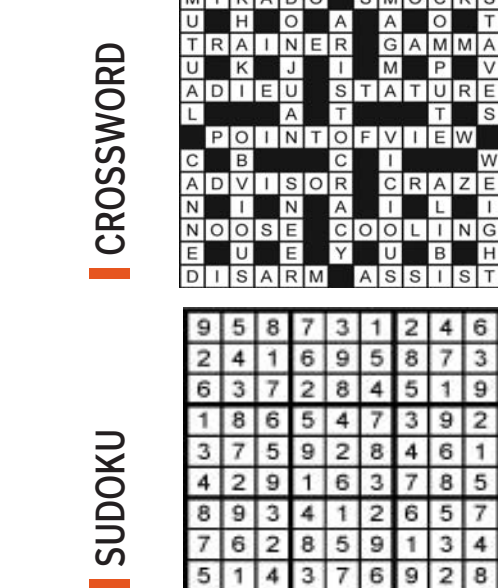
- Across
- 7 Quick
 - 8 Very bad
 - 9 Blood feud
 - 10 Expression of pain
 - 11 Nominate
 - 13 Magical wish granter
 - 15 Lumberjack's leftover
 - 17 Water transport
 - 20 Beach item
 - 21 Circus performers
 - 23 Painkiller
 - 24 Italian automaker
- Down
- 1 Nephrite
 - 2 Artist's hangout
 - 3 Mexican saloon
 - 4 Talking bird
 - 5 Levy
 - 6 Winter driving hazard (5,3)
 - 12 Small amount
 - 14 Airedale
 - 16 Illness
 - 18 Reject outright and bluntly
 - 19 Place to wash up
 - 22 Furniture wood

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



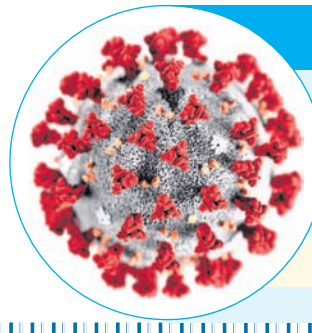
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



SERVICE TO THE LORD

A blacksmith shaped iron nails for chariot construction in Puri, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	51,71,26,900	47,17,80,191	62,76,169
India	4,31,02,194	4,25,57,495	5,24,064
Odisha	12,88,202	12,78,863	9,126

Water bodies in City set for rejuvenation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: In a bid to regulate the groundwater level, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) have decided to rejuvenate as many as 44 water bodies in the City, an official said Sunday.

BMC commissioner and BSCL chief executive officer (CEO) Sanjay Kumar Singh said steps for removal of encroachments and desilting of tanks will be undertaken in a phased manner.

According to BMC deputy commissioner (land) Kamaljit Das, all the 44 tanks in the City are rain-fed and their renovation will improve the water table. "The de-silting of the ponds will be carried out to ensure better water retaining capacity of the tanks. There is a need for community participation in the restoration and renovation of the traditional water bodies as it will add to the environmental and natural beauty of the state's largest urban conglomerate," said Das.

According to Block-wise Ground Water Resources Assessment-2017, the groundwater extraction level in Bhubaneswar was 64 per cent. Anything below 70 per cent is considered to be safe, it was learnt.

The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), however, said that the average water requirement in Bhubaneswar was around 422 million litres per day (MLD) as of 2020. Out of it, groundwater could meet only 112 MLD as compared to 206 MLD in 2010.

In 2019, while responding to a



Disappearance of water bodies is one of the major factors for the rising summer heat in the Capital city. Besides regulating the groundwater table, renovation of water bodies will definitely provide a soothing natural ambience to the fast-growing City

SAMIT MOHANTY | URBAN PLANNER

DEPLETING WATER TABLE

According to Central Ground Water Board, the average water requirement in Bhubaneswar was around 422 million litres per day (MLD) as of 2020. Out of it, groundwater could meet only 112 MLD as compared to 206 MLD in 2010

Rapid urbanization and lesser sources of replenishing the groundwater have been blamed for the decrease in the water table

While replying to a question in the Assembly in 2019, Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das said that 1.12 billion cubic metres of groundwater has depleted between 2009 and 2017, indicating a 6.71 per cent decrease in water level

question in the Assembly, Water Resources Minister Raghunandan Das said that 1.12 billion cubic metres of groundwater has depleted between 2009 and 2017, indicating a decrease in water level by 6.71 per cent.

Rapid urbanization and lesser sources of replenishing the groundwater have been blamed for the decrease in the water table.

With porous lateritic soil, state capital had several water bodies and numerous temples. However, with

rapid urbanisation and growth of the concrete structures, many of the age-old water bodies have disappeared, according to experts.

"Disappearance of water bodies is one of the major factors for the rising summer heat in the Capital city. Besides regulating the groundwater table, renovation of water bodies will definitely provide a soothing natural ambience to the fast-growing City," said urban planner Samit Mohanty.

Bolangir records 42.3° C as heat sings W Odisha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 8: The mercury hovered above 40 degrees Celsius in western Odisha Sunday with Bolangir town recording the maximum temperature in the state at 42.3 degrees Celsius, the Met office said.

Twelve weather stations recorded a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius or more, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said.

Bolangir town was followed by Subarnapur also in western Odisha at 42.2 degrees Celsius, according to the Met office. Both Sundargarh and Boudh also in western Odisha boiled at 42 degrees, while the temperature settled at 37 degrees Celsius in the state capital Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the weather office said.

POLITICKLE BY MANJUL



'Maid service' provider dupes many in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Fraudsters always have new tricks up their sleeves to cheat gullible persons. A private agency in the city here allegedly duped several people on the pretext of providing house maid service.

Vinay Agarwal, a resident of Dumduma area, has alleged that the agency duped him of Rs 10,000 by promising to arrange a maid for his house. He had lodged a complaint in this regard with Badagada police. Agarwal claimed that he came to know about the private agency when its marketing team distributed pamphlets regarding the maid service in his locality.

Agarwal contacted the marketing officials of the agency for ar-



VINAY AGARWAL, A RESIDENT OF DUMDUMA AREA, HAS ALLEGED THAT THE AGENCY DUPED HIM OF RS 10,000 BY PROMISING TO ARRANGE A MAID FOR HIS HOUSE

SIMILARLY, ANOTHER PERSON FROM BADAGADA AREA ALLEGED THAT THE PRIVATE AGENCY HAD COLLECTED RS 18,200 FROM HIM ON THE PRETEXT OF PROVIDING HOUSE MAID SERVICE

range a maid for his house. The marketing officials of the agency collected Agarwal's phone number and address. Subsequently, a representative of the agency visited Agarwal's house and collected a deposit of Rs 10,000.

However, the agency neither arranged a maid for Agarwal's

house nor did they return the amount to the complainant despite repeated phone calls. A few days later, the employees of the private agency stopped responding to Agarwal's phone call, said the complainant.

Similarly, another person from Badagada area also alleged that

the private agency duped him of Rs 18,200 by promising to provide house maid service. He had reportedly contacted the officials of the agency to arrange a maid in October 2021. He also lodged a complaint in this regard with police.

The complainant had initially paid Rs 9,100 to the agency to avail the maid service. A couple of days later, the agency sent a maid to his house and sought Rs 9,100 more for the service. The maid reportedly stopped providing service to the complainant after he deposited the money with the agency.

Later, the complainant sent an email to the agency conveying his intention to discontinue with the maid service. However, the agency did not respond to his messages. It also did not return his money.

Kuchinda addl tehsildar held for taking bribe

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, May 8: Vigilance sleuths have arrested Kuchinda additional Tehsildar Sarada Maharana while the revenue official was accepting bribe of Rs 1.2 lakh from a JCB owner for releasing the vehicle and also for minimising penalty amount.

Acting on a prior written complaint, a trap was laid at the Tehsildar's office in Sambalpur district Saturday and the accused was caught red-handed. Cash to the tune of Rs 3,03,610 was recovered from her government quarters and office room, a senior Vigilance official revealed. Maharana is a 2019 batch ORS officer.

Ashok Patel of Junani village of Khandokata panchayat under Kuchinda tehsil was digging pond on a land to dump fly-ash from his factory

The accused had then seized Patel's JCB machine and slapped a fine of Rs 40,00,000 on him towards royalty and penalty. The bribe was demanded later on

Complainant Ashok Patel of Junani village of Khandokata panchayat under Kuchinda tehsil was digging pond on a land to dump fly-ash from his factory. Maharana had then seized Patel's JCB machine and slapped a fine of Rs 40,00,000 on him towards royalty and penalty. The bribe was demanded later on.

"Bribe money of Rs 1.2 lakh was recovered from the possession of Maharana and seized in presence of witnesses. Right hand wash of the Additional Tehsildar gave positive chemical reaction confirming acceptance and handling of the bribe money," the Vigilance official added.

"Following the trap, simultaneous searches were also launched on the residential quarters of Maharana at Kuchinda and her father-in-law's house at Nayapatna locality in Chandbali of Bhadrak district including the ancestral house at Ambedkar Nagar under Uditanagar police limits in Rourkela of Sundargarh district," the senior official said. Sambalpur Vigilance PS case No-18, dated 06.05.2022 U/s 7 of the PC Act, 1988 as amended by PC (Amendment) Act, 2018 has been registered in this connection and a detailed probe is underway.



Artistes performed Odissi during 5th Guru Debaprasad Das award presentation ceremony organised by Nrutyarchana at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

AILA, AMPHAN, ASANI: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

THE CYCLONE THAT WILL FORM AFTER ASANI WILL BE CALLED SITRANG, A NAME GIVEN BY THAILAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Every year, as a cyclone looms over a region, its name becomes a cause of intrigue for many, who wonder why and how is the storm christened.

With Cyclone Asani, a name given by Sri Lanka that means 'wrath' in Sinhalese, formed in the Bay of Bengal Sunday morning and hurtling towards the east coast of India, the same question pops up again.

globe and a system can last for a week or more.

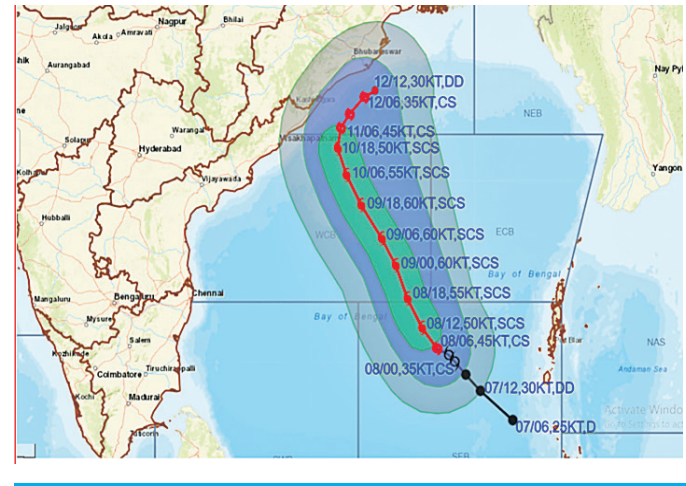
Therefore, each tropical storm is given a name to avoid confusion, facilitating disaster risk awareness, management and mitigation.

Short and easy-to-pronounce names are helpful in rapidly and effectively disseminating detailed storm information between hundreds of scattered stations, coastal bases and ships at sea.

It is less subject to error than the older and more cumbersome latitude-longitude identification methods.

Since 1953, Atlantic tropical storms have been named from lists prepared by the National Hurricane Center in the US.

In the beginning, storms were named arbitrarily. From the mid-1900s, feminine names were started to be used for storms. Meteorologists decided later to name storms from a list for a more organised and efficient system, the WMO stated in its website.



THE NAMING OF CYCLONES IN THE BAY OF BENGAL AND ARABIAN SEA STARTED IN SEPTEMBER 2004 AND THE IMD PROVIDES CYCLONE AND STORM SURGE ADVISORIES TO 13 COUNTRIES ACROSS THE NORTH INDIAN OCEAN

Cyclone Warning Centres worldwide, which are mandated for issuing advisories and naming of cyclonic storms.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is one of the RSMCs and is tasked with giving a title to a cyclone that forms over the northern Indian Ocean when

they have reached a maximum sustained surface wind speed of 62 kmph or more.

The naming of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea started in September 2004. The IMD provides cyclone and storm surge advisories to 13 countries across the north Indian Ocean.

There are six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) and five regional Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres worldwide, which are mandated for issuing advisories and naming of cyclonic storms

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is one of the RSMCs and is tasked with giving a title to a cyclone that forms over the northern Indian Ocean when they have reached a maximum sustained surface wind speed of 62 kmph or more

The list is arranged according to the names that are neutral to gender, politics, religious beliefs and cultures, given by alphabetically-arranged countries. It is used sequentially, column wise

The list is arranged according to the names that are neutral to gender, politics, religious beliefs and cultures, given by alphabetically-arranged countries. It is used sequentially, column wise.

The designation should not be present in the existing list of the six RSMCs. The name of a storm

from the South China Sea that crosses Thailand and emerges into the Bay of Bengal will not be changed. Once a name is used, it will not be repeated again. The word, which can have a maximum of eight letters, should not be offensive to any member country or hurt the sentiments of any group of population. In 2020, a new list was released with 169 names, including 13 names each from 13 countries. Earlier, eight countries had given 64 designations.

Names from India that have been used include Gati (speed), Megh (cloud), Akash (sky). Other designations that have been used earlier included Ogni, Helen and Fani from Bangladesh; and Laila, Nargis and Bulbul from Pakistan.

The cyclone that will form after Asani will be called Sitrang, a name given by Thailand.

The names that will be used in the future include the likes of Ghurni, Probaho, Jhar and Murasu from India, Biparjoy (Bangladesh), Asif (Saudi Arabia), Diksam (Yemen) and Toofan (Iran) and Shakhti (Sri Lanka).

64 Cov positive cases in 2 Rayagada hostels



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: Sixty-four students living in two hostels in Rayagada district were found to be Covid positive as the state reported 71 new cases Sunday, officials said. The state has been recording around 20 cases a day for the last one month, they said.

With this, the state's Covid tally increased to 12,88,202. The death toll stood at 9,126 with no new fatality.

There are 160 active cases in the state at present due to the sudden spike in Rayagada, while 12,78,863 people have recovered from the infection. According to sources, RT-PCR tests of at least 257 inmates of a hostel named 'Anvesha' in Kotlaguda of Rayagada were conducted by state Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department May 4. Forty-four residents were found to be Covid positive, hostel matron Namita Samal said.

"All of them are asymptomatic and have been kept in isolation. All precautionary measures are being taken by the authorities to prevent further spread of the virus," she said. Students of eight English-medium schools in the district live in the hostel.

In Bismakatak block, 20 students of Hatamuniguda Government High School were found to be Covid positive. They lived in the school hostel. District Collector Saroj Kumar Mishra confirmed that 64 cases were reported from the two hostels.

"During random testing, samples of 64 students were found to be positive, but they don't have any symptoms. The health conditions of all the students are stable, and they are under supervision," he said. The new cases were found after testing 15,685 samples in the last 24 hours, recording a cumulative daily test positivity rate (TPR) of 0.45 per cent.

DIAGNOSING ISSUES



CMC Mayor Subhash Singh visited the SCB Medical College & Hospital and had a discussion with Medical Superintendent Lucy Das over the alleged mismanagement at the hospital

NHRC moved seeking ₹15L for rape victim

THE WOMAN, MARRIED IN 2017, CLAIMED SHE HAD TO UNDERGO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL TORTURE BY HER IN-LAWS FOR DOWRY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: A rights activist Sunday filed a petition before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) seeking ₹15



lakh compensation to a middle-aged woman who was sexually abused by sorcerer for 80 days in Jeleswar area of Balasore. The activist Himanshu Sekhar

Nayak in his complaint also sought stringent actions against the persons involved in the inhuman crime, including her in-laws.

The married woman was allegedly raped repeatedly by a 'tantrik' for 79 days in front of her two-and-half-year-old son in Balasore district. Police rescued the woman and her child from a locked room Friday but the accused managed to escape. A manhunt has been launched to arrest him, police sources said.

In her police complaint, the woman alleged that her husband and in-laws had forced her to stay with the tantrik to resolve a mar-

ital discord. The woman, married in 2017, claimed she had to undergo physical and mental torture by her in-laws for dowry.

The tantrik had assured the family that he would resolve the discord if the woman stays with her for a few months. When she refused to oblige, her mother-in-law allegedly sedated her and she later regained consciousness in the tantrik's room and found her son there too.

On April 28, she found that the tantrik had left his mobile phone in the room, and used it to call up her parents and narrate her ordeal. They, in turn, informed the police about the issue.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

All eyes on Naveen as BJP looks to bolster run

With 21 MPs (12 in the Lok Sabha and nine in the Rajya Sabha) and 113 MLAs in the Odisha Assembly, the BJD has 3.22 per cent of the votes. So, the BJD is going to play a crucial role during this Presidential election

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: With the new President of India due to be elected in July this year, all eyes are on Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who alone can ensure a smooth victory for the BJP-led NDA candidate.

Currently, the Opposition parties collectively have a 51.1 per cent share of the Electoral College while the BJP and its alliance partners have 48.9 per cent. The NDA needs only 1.2 per cent to cross the halfway mark. With 21 MPs (12 in the Lok Sabha and nine in the Rajya Sabha) and 113 MLAs in the Odisha Assembly, the BJD has 3.22 per cent of the votes. So, the BJD is going to play a crucial role during this Presidential election.

The BJD is yet to disclose its stand on the election for the top position in India. It will take a decision after the declaration of the candidates for the election.

"We are maintaining equal distance from both the NDA and UPA. Our party president has already made it clear the decision will be based on the merit of the presidential candidate," BJD spokesperson Lenin Mohanty told media.

Though the ruling party in



Odisha has not disclosed its cards, it had supported non-UPA candidates during the last two elections held in 2017 and 2012.

During the last presidential poll in 2017, Patnaik had supported NDA candidate Ram Nath Kovind after receiving a call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At that time, the BJD president had stated that the office of the President of India is above political considerations and the BJD wanted to keep it above politics.

Similarly, Patnaik was the first to propose the name of PA Sangma for the Presidential election held in 2012 against UPA nominee Pranab Mukherjee. In September 2020, he had supported NDA candidate Harivansh Narayan Singh in the election for the post of Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Besides, the Naveen-led BJD has extended its direct or indirect support to the Modi government during the passage of several important Bills in Parliament. The BJD had also supported BJP nominee Ashwini Vaishnav for his elevation to the Rajya Sabha. Vaishnav is now serving as a Cabinet Minister in the Modi government.

Local political analysts feel that Naveen Patnaik is very likely to support the NDA candidate in the pres-

We are maintaining equal distance from both the NDA and UPA. Our party president has already made it clear the decision will be based on the merit of the presidential candidate

LENIN MOHANTY | BJD SPOKESPERSON

idential poll as he supported the Centre during several crucial times in the past few years.

"Naveen Patnaik is very approachable for the BJP in comparison to other non-UPA regional parties. So, the BJP may first approach Naveen, who is also very likely to extend his support to the central party for the Presidential Poll," said senior journalist Rabi Das.

It seems that there is some understanding between the BJD and the BJP. Though Naveen has a good relationship with other regional party leaders like Mamata Banerjee and MK Stalin, he never attended the anti-BJP political meetings called by them, Das said.

On the other hand, he said, the BJP's top leaders are also not attacking the BJD government like they do the West Bengal government.

FOR A GREENER TOMORROW



Twin City Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarsi graced a plantation drive at the Unit-2 Capital Girls' High School in Bhubaneswar on the occasion of World Red Cross Day, Sunday

Giant groundwater system found below Antarctic ice

The researchers say if the ice surface were to thin - a distinct possibility as climate warms - the direction of water flow could be reversed. Overlying pressures would decrease, and deeper groundwater could begin welling up toward the ice base. This could further lubricate the base of the ice and increase its forward motion

A team of scientists has mapped a huge, actively circulating groundwater system in deep sediments in West Antarctica.

The team at Columbia University estimated that if all of it were extracted, it would form a water column from 220 to 820 metres high -

at least 10 times more than in the shallow hydrologic systems within and at the base of the ice - maybe much more even than that. However, they noted that said such systems, probably common in Antarctica, may have as-yet unknown implications for how the frozen continent reacts to, or possibly even con-



tributes to climate change.

"People have hypothesised that there could be deep groundwater in these sediments, but up to now, no one has done any detailed imaging," said lead author Chloe Gustafson from Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty

Earth Observatory.

Scientists have, for decades, flown radars and other instruments over the Antarctic ice sheet to image subsurface features. Among many other things, these missions have revealed sedimentary basins sandwiched between ice and bedrock. But

airborne geophysics can generally reveal only the rough outlines of such features, not water content or other characteristics.

In the research appearing in the journal Science, the team concentrated on the 60-mile-wide Whillans Ice Stream, one of a half-dozen fast-moving streams feeding the Ross Ice Shelf, the world's largest.

To better map the sediments, they used geophysical instruments placed directly on the surface. Their analysis showed that, depending on location, the sediments extend below the base of the ice from a half kilometre to nearly two kilometres before hitting bedrock. They confirmed

that sediments are loaded with liquid water all the way down. They also showed that the groundwater becomes more saline with depth.

However, if the ice surface were to thin - a distinct possibility as climate warms - the direction of water flow could be reversed. Overlying pressures would decrease, and deeper groundwater could begin welling up toward the ice base. This could further lubricate the base of the ice and increase its forward motion. If it flows upward, it could carry up geothermal heat naturally generated in the bedrock; this could further thaw the base of the ice and propel it forward.

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SHORT TAKES

Jumbo tramples woman to death

Keonjhar: A 70-year old woman was trampled to death by a stray elephant in Banbiharipur village under Telkoi block in this district, in the wee hours of Sunday. The deceased was identified as Jahni Dehuri, a native of nearby Kuladera village. The incident occurred when she entered a cashew forest in Banbiharipur village. She suddenly came face to face with the tusker which attacked her. The pachyderm picked her on its tusk, flung her and trampled Jahni to death. The incident sparked panic in the area. When Forest department officials arrived, locals demanded proper protection to their lives and properties from the menace of animals.

Boy missing in Brahmani river

Dhenkanal: A minor boy has gone missing after he and two of his friends went for a bath in Brahmani river at Radhadeipur panchayat under Gondia police station limits in this district, Sunday. They slipped into deep waters. However, two of the kids were rescued by locals when they raised an alarm. The missing boy has been identified as Sudhabindu Behera, a student of Class-IX of Nuapada village. All the three had gone to take bath at Nuapada ghat of the river. On being informed, fire and police personnel launched a search operation in the river to trace the missing boy when reports last came in.

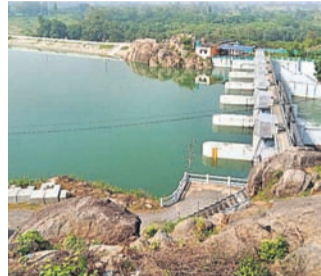
Patient commits suicide at RGH

Rourkela: In a bizarre incident, a patient undergoing treatment at Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH) in Sundargarh district allegedly committed suicide after not being provided alcohol. He was depressed and took the extreme step, sources said. The deceased was identified as Sahara Jhara, a native of Kuanramunda. Reports said, Jhara was admitted to the hospital with a broken leg. However, Saturday night he hung himself with a towel on the premises of the hospital after being depressed as he was not provided with liquor. Police launched a probe into the matter.

Water to be released from Ghodahada dam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, May 8: With the possibility of heavy rainfall due to 'Cyclone Asani', the Water Resources department has decided to release water from Ghodahada dam into the river in Ganjam district. People of riparian villages have been alerted about the water release. The decision was taken after informing the Ganjam district collector and the executive engineer of Chikiti Water Resources division to ensure safety of the dam with possible influx of rainwater.



The dam is capable of retaining water up to a height of 117.80 metres while the present capacity stands at 116.87 metres

A notification to this effected has been issued. The dam is capable of retaining water up to a height of 117.80 metres while the present capacity stands at 116.87 metres. Presently, the dam is 91 per cent full. The release of water from the dam into Ghodahada river is likely to flood many riparian villages including S. Tikarpada, Golunda, Penda, Boripadar, Kaithakhandi, Madhuban, Talasingha, Panad, Dherendi, Jalameripalli, Gumma, Maulabhanja, Tileswar, Kholti, Nuagada, Ambagaon, Bhoipalli, Mahanala, Palashpur and Patagaon.

CYCLONE FEAR



Fishing boats returned ashore in Bhograi area of Balasore district after fishermen were warned of a severe cyclonic storm over the Bay of Bengal, Sunday

'Green Mahanadi Mission' in limbo

No work on development of mangrove forests that could minimise the dangers of cyclonic storm

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, May 8: Mangrove forests have withstood the ravages of cyclonic storms that have wreaked havoc in the state in the last few years, a report said.

However, the 'Green Mahanadi Mission' launched by the Odisha government July 24, 2018 has been left in the cold. It was alleged that the mission is only in pen and paper and no work has so far been done.

The programme aims at checking soil erosion on the river banks and recharging the groundwater reserve through creation of mangrove forests on 400 hectare of land and plantation of saplings on 3,500 hectare of land on the coastline and river banks of Mahanadi and its tributaries.

This has come at a time when the high rise tidal waves are rapidly damaging the coastline and posing serious threat to the existence of Nashi-2, Havelikhati and Ekakula islands in the district. On the other hand, the Geo synthetic tube wall project aimed at checking coastal erosion on Pentha coast has failed in its objective.

In this context, environmentalists at a seminar on environment at Jagatijor of Mahakalapara block



have opined that the damage caused by natural calamities like cyclonic storms can be minimised through creation of mangrove forests within 10km radius of the coastline.

The seminar was organised by Gahirmatha Kaincha Surakshya Samiti and attended by environmentalists Nirakar Das, its secretary Hemant Kumar Rout, Ashok Kumar Swain, Prabhu Prasad Mishra and Arun Kumar Kanungo.

They pointed out that the district is facing cyclonic storms almost every year. The district administration is evacuating people to safer places and providing relief to them but has failed to create mangrove

forests which could have helped in protecting Kendrapara district from the ravages of the calamity.

Kendrapara district which is surrounded by Bay of Bengal in the east has a coastline of 48km stretching from Dhamra river mouth to Batighar. The district being close to sea is always prone to cyclonic storms and various natural calamities. Reports from the District Emergency department said that the cyclonic storms 'Yash' in May 2021, 'Gulab' in September, 2021 and 'Jawad' in December, 2021 impacted the district. Earlier, the district has also been severely affected by cyclonic storms like 'Phailin',

'Hudhud', 'Titli', 'Fani' and 'Amphan'.

However, each time the mangrove forests on the coastline stood as a protective wall against the ravages of the calamity. Over 10,000 people in the state lost their lives in the high tidal waves during the Supercyclone-1999. However, due to presence of the mangrove forests the district lost only 387 lives.

The series of cyclonic storms forced the Odisha government to wake up and take a relook on the issue. The state government decided to implement 'Green Mahanadi Mission' after 'Yash' in 2021. The district administration is yet to identify land even though Mahanadi and its distributaries flow through the district. The mushrooming of prawn gheries is destroying the mangrove forests in the district.

Meanwhile, due to rapid erosion five revenue villages of Satabhaya have been washed away by the sea while Barahipur as the sixth village is soon going to be extinct. Contacted, ADM Pitambar Samal said the district administration is laying stress on plantation which is being executed by the Forest and Panchayatiraj departments.

Couple forced to eat human excreta over suspected sorcery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, May 8: In a shocking incident, an elderly couple was forced to eat human excreta by some villagers here Saturday evening. The man was also beaten up mercilessly leading to the fracture of his leg over suspected sorcery at Sarangada Bazar colony here in Kandhamal district.

The injured man has been identified as Merason Digal (60). He has been admitted to the district headquarters hospital in critical condition.

The incident triggered tension in the area. The son of the couple filed a complaint at the local police station. Police have registered a case in this regard.

Reports said, Merason had gone to local bazaar in search of some work Saturday evening. On returning home, he found that there was no electricity supply in his house. He then went to a neighbour's balcony and sat there waiting for the restoration of power. However, people staying in the



house attacked Merason suspecting that he was performing black magic to harm them. Other villagers also joined and beat up Merason brutally with iron rods.

Seeing the ruckus, Merason's granddaughter informed his family about it. When his wife rushed to rescue Merason, villagers caught hold of her also. Then they forced the couple to eat human excreta and threatened with dire consequences, the complaint said.

IIC of Sarangada police station Badhulika Biswal said that a case has been registered and all those involved in the incident will be arrested soon.

WILDFIRE



A raging wildfire at Purunapani teak and bamboo forest along the Ranipathar ghat road of NH-157 connecting Phulbani with Boudh district has sparked fears of loss of flora and fauna in the area

RDA awaiting govt nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, May 8: A proposal to form the Rushikulya Development Authority (RDA) for development of the Rushikulya river, improving irrigation facility and drinking water supply to some parts of Ganjam district has been shelved.

A proposal in this regard was sent to the state government for approval two years ago, but there has been no response.

Two years ago, during a meeting of the Ganjam Zilla Parishad a proposal was presented to form the Rushikulya Development Authority in line with Chilika Development Authority (CDA). It was done so that the authority could explore irrigation potential and supply of drinking water from the river. At the meeting, a minister, an MP, MLAs, chairpersons of 22 blocks and Zilla Parishad members unanimously agreed to the proposal.

In another meeting of the Zilla Parishad recently, members discussed the irrigation issues and raised question on the status of



the government's response about the Rusikulya Development Authority proposal. The members were informed that the government has not taken any step on the matter.

ZP members said that due to lack of coordination among various departments, issues related to irrigation and drinking water supply from Rushikulya river have remained unresolved.

Even though the Rushikulya major irrigation project is functional, farmers still face water scarcity in both the Rabi and Kharif

seasons. The water available from the project is not sufficient enough to meet irrigational needs of the agriculture in some pockets of the district.

Rushikulya river flows through Chhatrapur, Ganjam, Purusottampur and Aska blocks. The river meets drinking water needs of Berhampur, Gopalpur, Chhatrapur, Berhamur University, and Army Air Defence College at Golabandh.

It was also stated that as the water level in the river is decreasing every by year, three wells along its banks have virtually dried up. Also the Hanspur drinking water project has been affected due to the decreasing water level.

Ganjam District Collector Vijay Amruta Kullang meanwhile said that the state government is giving a lot of importance to irrigation. Review meetings will be held with various departments every month to assess the situation in the district.

Sources in the Irrigation department said that a dam will be built across Rushikulya at Kansarigand at a cost of ₹240 crore.

'Custodial death' sparks tension in Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, May 8: A man was allegedly beaten to death while in custody at the Udala police station here in Mayurbhanj district Sunday. The deceased has been identified as Pradip Das (35). The matter came to the fore after Pradip's cousin Radhakant Das and other family members created ruckus at the Udala sub-divisional hospital.

Additional SP Suresh Chandra Patra and SDPO Sarthak Rao and Mayurbhanj SP Khilari Hrisikshesh Dhyandeo reached the police station and initiated a probe into the matter.

According to reports, gold ornaments were looted from the house of a woman at Udala NAC Ward-5 in January. A case was registered in this connection. Personnel of the Udala and Badasahi police stations arrested Pradip of Mandarpur village in Balasore district in this connection Saturday. He was interrogated at Udala police station Saturday night. All of a sudden, he was admitted to the Udala hospital Sunday afternoon at around 1.00pm, but, he breathed his last while undergoing treatment at around 2.35pm. Doctors treating Pradip said that he was admitted in a critical condition and was unconscious. Despite all efforts, he could not be saved, the doctor informed.

Meanwhile, family members alleged that Pradip was thrashed by cops in the police station as his body had injury marks. They also as to how Pradip was unconscious during his admission to the hospital. Over 300 fellow villagers of Pradip reached the hospital and created ruckus demanding stringent action against the cops responsible for his death.

Pradip worked as a night guard at Balasore Rural Water Supply department and had no criminal cases against his name, the locals alleged. Udala IIC Niraj Kumar Samal denied the allegations of custodial death. He said that the probe will reveal the exact cause of Pradip's death.

Kolab reservoir losing water retention capacity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, May 8: Increasing deposits of silts and earth due to soil erosion in the catchment area has substantially reduced the water retaining capacity of Kolab reservoir in Koraput district. For the last few years, the district has been witnessing erratic rainfall, which is being touted as another factor responsible for the declining water level in the reservoir.

As a result, drinking water crisis has emerged in the peripheral areas. Groundwater level has also plummeted alarmingly adding to the problem. If the reservoir continues to lose its water retention ca-

Jyotirmayi Lenka, a researcher of ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation at Sunabeda, said that there is need for largescale plantation around the reservoir

capacity, many parts of the district will see acute drinking water crisis in future, experts pointed out.

Years ago, the district used to experience rainfall for almost six months a year. But the situation has

changed now.

The reservoir is spread over 1250 square/km. Industrial units like Nalco and HAL use water from it. Supply of drinking water is also made from the reservoir. However, no one is there to maintain the reservoir and carry out restoration work. Unless done so, the Kolab will suffer the same fate like the Indravati, Balimela and Jalaput reservoirs, experts said.

Mud, sand, gravels and stones get deposited in the reservoir continuously. This has led to its depth getting shallow.

Talking about the issue, Jyotirmayi Lenka, a researcher of ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and

SOIL EROSION IN CATCHMENT AREA



Water Conservation at Sunabeda, said that there is need for soil conservation activities in the catchment area of the reservoir: Plants meant to hold the top soil together should be planted in large numbers.

Chief engineer of the Kolab reservoir, Satrugna Maharana, admitted the fact that soil and sand are getting deposited in the reservoir, but pointed out that there is nothing alarming regarding the water level.

Asked about the issue, engineer Sunil Biswal said that if steps are not taken to dredge and desilt the reservoir on a regular basis, irrigation and power production will be affected in the years to come.

FOCUS SRI LANKA CRISIS

CURRENCY BOARD CRUCIAL



The time has come for Sri Lanka to face its financial demons head-on. It will be a difficult fight, but a currency board – which strips the government and the central bank of the opportunity to mismanage the budget and the exchange rate – vastly improves its chances of winning

the more radical step of installing a currency board.

Under such a system, the exchange rate would be set by law, and the central bank would have to be able to cover the entire monetary base with foreign-exchange reserves. By stripping the government of its discretionary power to run big deficits, a currency board would restore credibility to Sri Lanka's finances relatively quickly. Once established, the board would provide the necessary solutions to Sri Lanka's economic problems, with a particular focus on stemming the rupee's decline.

Yes, a currency board is a form of shock therapy. But that is what Sri Lanka's current crisis demands. And, in fact, because it can be installed immediately, and requires no immediate reforms affecting public budgets, state assets, or trade, a currency board amounts to faster-acting and more effective medicine than the long dose of austerity that is often proposed.

The record speaks for itself. The most widely acclaimed modern currency board was established in Hong Kong in 1983. But examples of successful currency boards abound. In fact, in the more than 50 countries where currency boards

have been installed, they have always succeeded at restoring confidence in public finances and the national currency.

In 1992, Estonia established its currency board in record time – just 30 days – to support the transition from the Russian ruble to the new kroon after independence. Its success inspired Lithuania, another post-Soviet state, to establish a currency board in 1994. Lithuania – a country that I represented in Sri Lanka as an honorary consul – has been praised by the International Monetary Fund for its economic transformation, in which the currency board played a central role.

In Bulgaria, a currency board stopped a bout of hyperinflation in its tracks in 1997. The country quickly turned its fiscal deficit into a surplus and tripled its foreign-exchange reserves. Today, it boasts among the lowest debt-to-GDP ratios in the European Union.

Critics argue that currency boards are suitable only for small countries, and that a weak banking system will reduce its impact. But none of this would preclude a currency board in Sri Lanka. We are an island of 23 million people, and there are no weak banks now in operation in our country.

Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, with whom I have discussed this proposal, believes that a version of a currency board should be incorporated within the central bank, rather than as an independent entity. But the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's problematic past performance, including its history of politicisation, makes this suggestion a non-starter; despite the increased credibility and international goodwill brought by its new governor, P. Nandalal Weerasinghe. In any case, a currency board is a very different creature from a central bank, because of its strictly limited functions.

Upended by crisis, Sri Lanka must finally face its financial demons head-on. It will be a difficult fight. But a currency board – which strips the government and the central bank of the opportunity to mismanage the budget and the exchange rate, thereby restoring the credibility of our economic governance – vastly improves Sri Lanka's chances of winning.

The writer, one of Sri Lanka's leading businessmen, is chairman of Supreme Global Holdings.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



RM Manivannan

WHILE ESCALATING PROTESTS MAY BRING ABOUT A CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT, IT IS FAR FROM CERTAIN THAT THIS WOULD LEAD TO IMPROVED SOCIAL OR POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The war in Ukraine has generated an economic tidal wave, which is crashing over countries near and far. Among the more far-flung is Sri Lanka, half a world away from the battlefield, where surging food and fuel prices have supercharged a downward spiral that was already underway. Now, the island is being rocked by street protests, and every member of the cabinet – except Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, the brother of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa – has resigned. To save Sri Lanka from economic collapse and sociopolitical disaster will require radical action.

Currently, no credible discussions on a viable strategy to meet the deepening crisis are taking place. So, while escalating protests may bring about a change of government, it is far from certain that this would lead to improved social or political conditions. Whoever is in charge, the imperative remains the same: Sri Lanka must address the grave economic crisis it faces, beginning by putting its public finances in order.

There is no time to lose. Finance Minister Ali Sabry, who has been on the job barely a month, says that the country's foreign-exchange reserves now stand at under \$50 million. And with around \$7 billion of the country's \$51 billion in external debts due this year, a debt moratorium has been put in place. Moreover, the \$600 million the World Bank has given to provide for essential food imports won't be nearly enough to stop the financial bleeding.

With public coffers all but empty, balance-of-payments pressures mounting, and a massive debt overhang looming, the first priority should be a plan to address Sri Lanka's dire fiscal position, including an effective implementation mechanism. Such a plan must include all the standard consolidation measures, such as eliminating waste and tightening budget management. But, with confidence in public finances depleted and the rupee's value plummeting, Sri Lanka must also take

SPECTRUM CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Huge infra investments are no panacea



Shivaji Sarkar

INFRA FUNDING HAS LARGE LEAKAGES THAT HAVE TO BE PLUGGED TO SAVE THE POOR FROM FURTHER SLIPPING INTO CRISIS

Amid the rising disaster risk threats to infrastructure, the world plans massive investments of \$94 trillion for disaster resilience in the India-initiated Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). The catch line is what the world invested in 200 years is to be done in 20 years.

The global infrastructure investment is estimated at \$2.7 billion a year. According to insurance giant Lloyds, 12 per cent funds get lost in disasters and 88 per cent funds in rebuilding. A disaster-related to weather, climate or water hazard occurred every day on average over the past 50 years – killing 115 people and causing US \$202 million in losses daily, according to a new report of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). The costs are to rise as inflation rises and interest rates are hiked.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi says that infrastructure is about people and providing them high quality, dependable, and sustainable services in an equitable manner. The fourth international conference of CDRI in New Delhi does not focus on financing but sees infra plus green nature in totality through integrated approach of community-based efforts. An effort to save public fund! Many cities across

the world and island nations are at great risks. In India, for example, cities like Bhubaneswar, Visakhapatnam, Chennai and Kolkata are perceived to be at climatic risk, says Kaushal Kishore, member-secretary of NDMA, the co-chair of ICRI. The other co-chair is Veena Reddy, Mission Director, USAID. Reddy says India may lead the hydrogen initiative.

The meet draws the contours but subtly deliberates the high investment projections because infra is never likely to have an infinite life. As the resources are limited how would this expenditure be sustainably funded, Shiva Mokotoko, CEO, RBN Fund of South Africa asks. The private sector is a miser on such investment. It means it has to come through public funding, euphoria for financing by the poor.

It is stated that the existing methods and tools of disaster risk reduction, and climate risk management, in particular, provide for powerful capacities for substantially reducing risks and adapting to climate change. What are to be saved are telecom towers, power plants, digital infra, transportation and communication.

Furthermore, new changes, such as Arctic ice melting, are happening faster than was pre-

dicted by the IPCC reports. It seems that the future is more serious and challenging. Such meets discuss whether this can be stopped with pouring of funds and sharing by large private entities. Can it create the resilience?

The Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan built on a quake prone area, close to the sea could have been prevented in 2011. Not much is known to have been discussed on the problems of the Three Gorge Dam of China overflowing often and accumulation of massive turbid water. There are instances of severe Kerala floods due to dam busts. Now India is building nine major dams including in fragile Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram. The most circumspect on finances appears to be Africa. The Ghana Chief Director, Ministry of Environment Cynthia Asare Bediako wonders how to create the fund for reducing carbon emission. She says climate change has no boundaries and how to forge policies that can help most challenges of sustainable livelihoods and jobs. She wonders on private participation and if the CDRI could help. The African Development fund officer Surminsu calls for relook at policies as also on sustainable energy that is the first to break during a

disaster. Poor countries need tech transfers that CDRI stresses.

Kishore points at the Pacific islands. They are at continuous risk and need about \$3 billion to support them. On the energy front, many questions remain. There is \$10.2 billion UNFCCC fund for green climate fund. Edwin Koekkoek, counsellor, energy, of European Union, says that while mix of alternate energy is being worked out, there remain limitations. On having hydrogen, its import and export, EU is working with India on how to invest in energy infra.

Vandana Kumar, Secretary, Renewable Energy Ministry says that India is taking steps to create the hydrogen support, its storage and transportation issues and the green energy to the world. On finances, CDRI appraisal is likely to be mandatory for state projects, says Baldeo Purusharth, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs.

Nobody can prevent climate change but for its sake the world cannot plunge into investing sums into an abyss. Infra funding has large leakages that have to be plugged to save the poor from further slipping into deep crisis. Discreet funding and protecting fragile ecology would create the dream resilient infra development.

INFRA

WISDOM CORNER

- The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why. **MARK TWAIN**
- You must have chaos within you to give birth to a dancing star. **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**
- However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at. **STEPHEN HAWKING**

WORDSWORTH

Stylite

One of the most remarkable examples of religious self-denial, the stylites were a group of early Christian ascetics who spent long periods of time sitting or standing on top of narrow pillars. (The word comes from the Greek stylos for a column.) The best known of these pillar hermits, pillar saints or pillar monks was the first, St Simeon Stylites, who sat for thirty years from AD423 onwards on top of a column some 40 cubits high (a cubit was an ancient measure of length, approximately the length of a forearm, say 18 inches or 44 cm). He was followed by several others, including his disciple St Daniel Stylites and Simeon the Younger. The stylite sometimes allowed himself a roof or a small hut for protection against the weather, but was otherwise exposed. Many remained standing day and night, only prevented from falling by a guard rail; some even stood on one leg. The record for stylitic behaviour is probably held by the sixth-century St Alpius, who is reputed to have remained on his pillar for 67 years without a break, for the last fourteen of them lying down because his feet could no longer support him. The practice died out shortly after the turn of the last millennium.

LOL

Good news & bad news

Patient: I'm in a hospital! Why am I in here?
 Doctor: You've had an accident involving a bus.
 Patient: What happened?
 Doctor: Well, I've got some good news and some bad news. Which would you like to hear first?

Patient: Give me the bad news first.
 Doctor: Your legs were injured so badly that we had to amputate both of them.
 Patient: That's terrible! What's the good news?
 Doctor: There's a guy in the next ward who made a very good offer on your slippers.



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

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Press freedom in India

Sir, India's rank has further decreased in the recently published Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders. India is now placed at 150 among 180 countries. India's rank has continuously decreased since 2016. The ranks were out after considering certain components like safety, abuses against journalists, and press freedom. India's deterioration in the Press Freedom Index is a result of the growing harassment of journalists by the State. Nowadays, a journalist has to go through abuses, social media trolls and death threats, and many more. India has also witnessed the death of several journalists in recent years. The rankings have further maligned the image of India in international forums. To ensure journalistic freedom, the Indian State needs to adopt a more tolerant policy on critical views and take prompt action against trolls and threats. India as the largest democracy to save its democratic values should ensure enough freedom and safety for the fourth pillar of democracy.

Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK

Develop border infrastructure

Sir, This refers to "Tap tech for border roads; Rajnath to BRO." Orissa POST, May 9. Defense Minister Rajnath Singh has rightly said that the development of the border areas is a major part of the government's "comprehensive defence strategy," noting that it will bolster the overall security apparatus of the country. It is most relevant as the lack of solid infrastructure along the Indian side of the LAC had rendered large tracts of contested land acutely vulnerable to Chinese probing and creeping forms of encroachment. Add to this, reports suggest China is augmenting not only its infrastructure for troops along the disputed border with India, but also having created resettlement villages that are permanent constructions on its side with far better amenities than those on the Indian side, particularly on the border with Arunachal Pradesh. This forced rehabilitation is a strategy by China to claim more area by tactically placing the border population and gain legitimacy. The tactic is to keep people there and then push the border by soldiers. But on Indian side, we do not have border population and it is proving to be a lacuna because, if the Chinese troops try to enter, it will be difficult to substantiate the claims. Thus, the situation demands authorities to ramp up the development of road, rail, water, power and communications infrastructure along the borders to improve the living conditions for the people in these regions which in turn will stem out-migration and ensure Indian presence in the border.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE



I am extremely saddened to witness rising violence against doctors. Several false cases are being lodged against upright and hardworking doctors. They need a better, and more secure, working environment
N V RAMANA | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

TN POISED FOR HOTTER DAYS

Tamil Nadu seems to be poised for hotter days after the cyclonic storm as the weather system will induce north-westerly winds blocking the sea breeze, said Indian Meteorological Department



of the day quote

Let's resolve and take a pledge to ensure best implementation of health policies for well-being of our citizens to fulfill aim of Antyodaya. The citizen in the last mile should be our priority for delivery of health services

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

BJP ideologically stands with Sanskrit, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will leave no effort to promote Indian traditions and culture

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

Kejriwal government is working on a war footing to implement schemes announced in the Rozgar Budget. It is the first in India to come up with 'Food Truck Policy' on lines of USA and Europe, to streamline food truck business in city

MANISH SIDOSIA | DELHI DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

Accident claims 5

Hyderabad: Five persons were killed and 21 others were injured in a road accident in Telangana's Kamareddy district Sunday, police said. The accident occurred when a truck hit a trolley auto near Hasanpalli Gate in Yellareddy mandal. Five persons, including the driver of the trolley auto, died on the spot. The injured were shifted to government hospital at Banswada, where condition of some of them is stated to be critical.

Girl found dead

Mumbai: In a mystery development, the body of a young girl from Bihar was found in the toilet of the S4 coach of the Swaraj Express in Palghar, a Western Railway official said here Sunday. The incident was reported nearly two hours post the train left Bandra Terminus at 11 a.m. today after passengers on the Mumbai-Vaishnodevi Katra (Jammu) train complained. Accordingly, the train was given a special halt at Dahanu Road station in Palghar at 13.10 pm. The co-passengers informed that the girl had gone inside the toilet but did not come out for a long time so they summoned the Traveling Ticket Examiner (TTE) on board the train.

8-year-old killed

Bahraich: An 8-year-old boy was killed in a crocodile attack in a pond in Bahraich, officials said Sunday. The incident occurred on Saturday afternoon and the remains of the body were recovered by divers Sunday. Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Akashdeep Badhawan said, "Virendra of Gud village under Motipur police station limits was attacked by a crocodile when he went to the pond with his sister." While bathing, a crocodile caught him and pulled him under the water. His sister rushed back home and informed the family members. Soon, the forest department officials launched a search operation.

Infiltrator shot dead

Jammu: Army foiled an infiltration bid on the Line of Control (LoC) late Saturday evening during an operation in which one infiltrator was killed in J&K's Rajouri district. A defence ministry statement said that the army gunned down an infiltrator on the LoC in Lam area of Nowshera sector in Rajouri district and thwarted an intrusion bid by the militants. The body of the slain infiltrator has been recovered.

CRPF men suffer despite big spending on choppers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 8: Despite spending big on helicopters to facilitate injured Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel during operations in Naxal areas, a struggle persists for air evacuations. According to the annual report of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for 2020-21, the Centre has allocated Rs 150 crore for providing helicopter facilities to the security forces in the Naxal-affected areas to deal with any emergency. As per this report, the MHA released Rs 109 crore to the central forces for 2019-20, while Rs 69.35 crore was disbursed for the use of

helicopters during 2020-21. It is estimated that around Rs 50 crore was also spent on providing the helicopter (chopper) facilities under 'Assistance to Central Agency for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) Management Scheme'. Under this scheme, helicopters are hired by the CRPF, Central Armed Police Forces, as well as other central agencies. Normally, the chopper service is provided by the Indian Air Force and is used for both operational and tactical support of the security forces operating in Naxal-affected areas. Commenting on the availability of the helicopters during such operations, sources in the central



security forces said that there should be a fair audit of the expenditure incurred on the chopper services and also to examine that how much has been spent on

the evacuations of the injured security personnel. "It must be evaluated and an analysis must be made that how many chopper rounds were made

for evacuating the injured jawans. It has also to be ascertained whether the helicopters were ready in areas when the major operations begin. Does the helicopter arrive on time to take the injured jawans?" the sources queried. They also said that there should be an analysis of the helicopters' log books to know how many flights were conducted. However, some senior CRPF officers, on the condition of anonymity, said the choppers hired or requisitioned from the Border Security Force are being used for officers from headquarter and frontiers to the operational areas as it saves time and other logistic support.

WILL CHINTAN SHIVIR LEAD TO REPEAT OF 2004 FOR CONGRESS?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 8: The Congress Working Committee is meeting Monday to drive the agenda for the party's Chintan Shivir in Udaipur. This will be fourth such Shivir during Sonia Gandhi's presidency, with the earlier ones organised in 1998, 2003 and 2013. Only the 2003 Shivir was beneficial for the party which helped it to clinch power in 2004 for 10 years.



Ahead of the CWC meet, a meeting was held on May 3 in the Congress War Room where senior leaders Ambika Soni, Jairam Ramesh, Mukul Wasnik and party general secretary, organisation K.C. Venugopal discussed the preparations for the Chintan Shivir. Another meeting was called the previous day under the chairmanship of former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda in which the subject of agriculture was discussed. Congress sources say that there will be open discussion in the brainstorming session but they were wary of dissenters who can be spoilers. This Shivir is more important for the party as it has been losing elections since 2014 except in a few states where it won. In the recent Assembly elections, the party lost in all the five states which went to the polls and was wiped out by the AAP in Punjab where the party had its government. But the real

challenge for the party is to defeat the Hindutva politics which it has been unable to counter. The party could learn from the previous shivirs. In the Pachmarhi session, Sonia Gandhi underlined the electoral defeats which she said were inevitable and is not a cause for worry. But she pointed out that what is disturbing is the loss of the social base. The Congress was unable to devise any strategy about the coalition era which it termed to be a transient phase. But the same thing was revisited in Shimla and the party did course correction and forged alliances. Sonia Gandhi walked up to late Ram Vilas Paswan, then her next door neighbour, and adding the RJD, the Congress emerged a formidable force in Bihar. Though the Congress could not form its own government since 1998 and after the emergence of re-

IED filled with RDX seized in Punjab, 2 held

The development came three days after four people were arrested with the recovery of three IEDs packed in a metallic case (weighing 2.5 kg each) and one pistol in Karnal by the Haryana police following the inputs from its Punjab counterpart



Chandigarh, May 8: The Punjab Police Sunday recovered an explosive device packed with around 1.5 kg of RDX and arrested two men in a village in Tarn Taran district. The IED, packed in metallic black colour box and having a gross weight of over 2.5 kg, was also equipped with timer, detonator, battery and sharpnels, police said, adding they averted a possible terrorist attack in the border state with the arrests and the recovery. The development came three days after four people were arrested with the recovery of three IEDs packed in a metallic case (weighing 2.5 kg each) and one pistol in Karnal by the Haryana Police following the inputs from its Punjab counterpart. The police said those arrested Sunday have been identified as

Baljinder Singh alias Bindu (22), a resident of village Gujjarpura in Ajnala, Amritsar; and Jagtar Singh alias Jagga (40) of village Khanawal of Ajnala, Amritsar. A motorcycle and two mobile phones were also recovered from their possession, police said. Bindu was working as a nursing assistant in a private hospital in Ajnala, while Jagga is a labourer and both were carrying out this activity for money and drugs, the police said in a statement here. Additional Director General of Police (Internal Security) R N Dhoke said the Tarn Taran Police had received secret information that Bindu and Jagga carrying explosives were roaming in Naushehra Pannuan area and were planning to carry out a blast to spread terror among the people there.

MINOR RAPED BY COP IN UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Aligarh (Uttar Pradesh), May 8: Yet another case of a police constable raping a minor girl has come to light. According to reports, a 16-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a policeman who is related to her family in the village near Atrauli in Aligarh. The accused policeman, who was posted in the Bulandshahr district, was suspended on Sunday after a report from the Aligarh Senior Superintendent of Police was sent about the incident that took place on Friday. He has now been arrested.

According to the police, the girl was visiting a relative when the accused policeman, who is related to the family, took the girl to a neighbouring village on his motorcycle and allegedly raped her. Later, he also allegedly threatened her with dire consequences if she disclosed it to anyone, and fled the spot. However the minor informed her relatives about the incident, following which a case was registered at the Atrauli police station. The girl has been admitted to a hospital for a medical examination. A senior police officer said a case under the relevant sections of the IPC and the POSCO Act was filed against the policeman after the medical report confirmed the rape charge. The incident comes days after a 13-year-old rape survivor was allegedly raped again by the in-charge of a police station in Lalitpur when she had gone there to register a complaint.

RAJ MINISTER'S SON BOOKED IN RAPE CASE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: A 23-year-old woman from Jaipur has alleged that Rohit Joshi, the son of Rajasthan Minister Mahesh Joshi, raped her on multiple occasions over a year, following which the Delhi Police has registered a zero FIR, officials said Sunday. A senior Delhi Police officer said the Rajasthan Police has been intimated about the FIR and will further investigate the matter. The case was registered on May 8 at a police station in North District under sections 376 (rape), 328 (causing hurt by means of poison, etc), with intent to commit an offence, 312 (causing miscarriage), 366 (kidnapping, abducting or inducing woman to compel her marriage, etc), 377 (unnatural offences) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code, the police said. Mahesh Joshi, the Minister for Public Health Engineering, could not be reached over phone for his reaction. In her complaint, the woman alleged that the minister's son raped her on several occasions between January 8 last year and April 17 this year and also promised to marry her. The woman said she developed friendship with Rohit Joshi on Facebook last year and since then they have been in contact. The two met in Jaipur first and he allegedly invited her to Sawai Madhopur on January 8, 2021. During their first meeting, she alleged, he spiked her drink and took advantage of it. When she woke up the next morning, he showed her naked photographs and videos which worried her, reads the FIR.

Sidhu to meet Mann today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu said he will meet Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Monday to discuss the revival of the state's economy days after he had called the CM a "younger brother" and an "honest man". Sidhu, who had been attacking the AAP-led government in the state over various issues including the law and order situation, said Punjab's resurrection was possible only with a collective effort. "Will meet CM @BhagwantMann tomorrow at 5:15 PM in Chandigarh to discuss matters regarding the revival of Punjab's economy... Punjab's Resurrection is only possible with an honest collective effort..." said Sidhu in a tweet Sunday. Sidhu April 22 had said the party



lost the Punjab elections because of the "mafia raj" that prevailed in the state and it now needed to reinvent itself, and praised Mann as a "younger brother" and an "honest man". Sidhu had said he will support Mann, whose Aam Aadmi Party trounced the Congress in

the recent assembly polls, if he fights against the mafia. Notably, AICC incharge of Punjab affairs Harish Chaudhary had also written to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, seeking disciplinary action against Sidhu for trying to "portray himself above the party."

Helpline for elderly receives over 79,000 calls seeking support

Out of the total 5,07,493 calls received by the helpline since October 1 last year, 4,28,442 have been 'non serviceable calls', constituting 84 per cent of the total calls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Over 79,000 calls, including those related to pension, Covid support and abuse, have been received by the national helpline for the elderly since October last year, according to official data. However, out of the total 5,07,493 calls received by the helpline since

October 1 last year, 4,28,442 have been 'non serviceable calls', constituting 84 per cent of the total calls received on the helpline. The non-serviceable calls include call drops, nuisance calls, calls for services for non-elderly, calls with out of scope requests and calls outside office hours. As many as 79,051 serviceable calls have been received by the helpline over the period on issues related to pension (22,430 calls), Covid support (6,406), abuse (4,748), old age homes (2040), emotional support (1,856) and maintenance (1,326), according to official data. More calls on the toll-free number 14567 have been received from men (44,348) than women (18,363). The helpline was launched to ad-



dress the issues of elders especially in view of the pandemic. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has started state-wise call centres in 28 states and UTs under the ELDERLINE project. The helpline also helps connect people to old age homes, caregivers, day care centres, hospitals and doctors, elder care products, etc. These calls are generally made by callers who need these details looking for specific elder care services. About 5,959 calls led to field interventions like rescue of a homeless elderly and care for an abused elderly. Among states/UTs, the highest number of calls have been received from Uttar Pradesh at 96,764 fol-

lowed by Maharashtra at 40,239, Rajasthan at 30,219 calls, Karnataka at 29,953 and Madhya Pradesh at 26,689 and Uttarakhand at 23,685. A senior official said the helpline is still picking up in many states and the volume of calls is expected to increase soon. The official said in case of mental support the calls are connected to mental health professionals with experience in geriatric therapy and counselling. Also, the kind of calls received can help authorities ascertain the areas to focus upon. On the occasion of International Day for Older Persons, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu had dedicated Elderline to the nation and lauded the help extended by it to senior citizens.

Khalistan flags draped over HP Assembly gate

While CM Jai Ram Thakur condemned the 'cowardly' act, the AAP, which is making inroads in the poll-bound state, termed the incident a 'complete security failure' on the part of the BJP-led govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dharamshala/New Delhi, May 8: Khalistan flags were found tied on the main gate and slogans scrawled on the walls of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly complex in Dharamshala, police said Sunday.

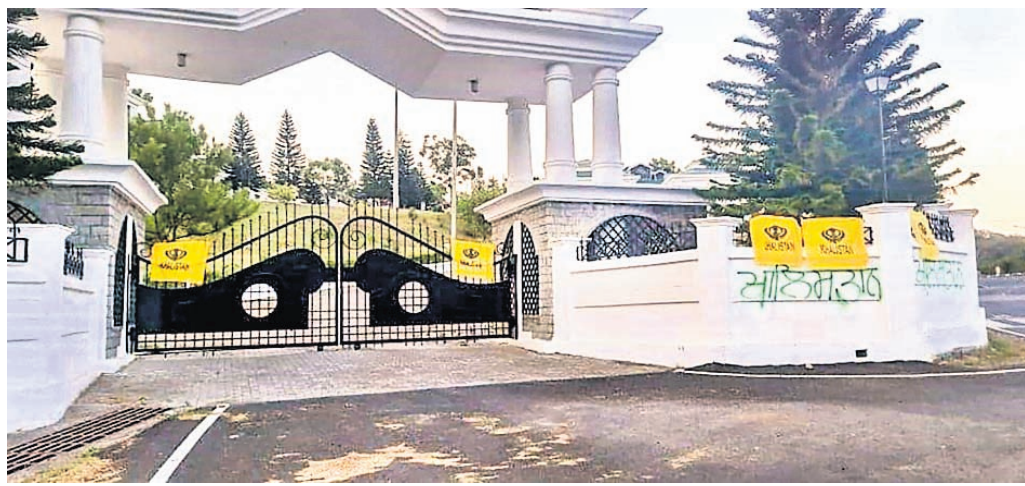
While Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur condemned the "cowardly" act, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is making inroads in the poll-bound state, termed the incident a "complete security failure" on the part of the BJP-led government.

The flags, which were removed by the administration, were put up on the outer side of the gate number one of the assembly complex, police said.

"It might have happened in the late night or early morning today. We have removed the Khalistani flags from Vidhan Sabha gate. We are investigating and going to register a case," Kangra Superintendent of Police Khushal Sharma said.

The winter session of the HP assembly usually held in Dharamshala.

Condemning the incident, Chief Minister Thakur said the culprits will be caught soon. "I condemn the cowardly incident of raising Khalistan flags at the gate of Dharamshala Assembly Complex



Khalistan flags tied to the main gates and walls of Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha complex, at Tapovan in Kangra district, Sunday

in the dark of night. Only the winter session of the assembly is held there, and hence require tighter security arrangements during that time only," he tweeted.

"Taking advantage of this, the cowardly incident was carried out, but the government will not tolerate it. Wherever the culprits are, they will be caught soon. Strict action will be taken against the perpetrators of this incident," Thakur said.

SDM, Dharamshala, Shilpi Beakta said, "It is an alert call for us."

"We received information this morning around 7.30am. We have

removed the flags and walls have been painted again. We are inquiring about the matter and are going to register a case under relevant sections of Himachal Pradesh Open Places (Prevention of Disfigurement Act), 1985."

The rest of the details can be shared after investigation, she added. Meanwhile, the AAP slammed the BJP, asking how will its government save the people of the country when it failed in ensuring national security.

Taking to twitter, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia

said that the putting up of the Khalistan flags outside the gate of Himachal assembly building in Dharamshala was a "complete" failure of the BJP government in dealing with the matter pertaining to national security and keeping the respect of the people of the hill state.

"The government which cannot save the Legislative Assembly, how will it save the people. This is a matter of Himachal's respect, security of the country. The BJP government has completely failed," Sisodia said in his tweet.

Ahead of Shah's Assam visit, NE outfits warn of anti-CAA stir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, May 8: Ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's three-day Assam visit, various organisations in the northeast have once again threatened to restart their agitations against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act if the Centre tried to implement it in the region.

Shah would attend at least eight different events Monday and Tuesday, coinciding with completion of one year of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led second government in Assam, headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was sworn in May 10 last year.

The All Assam Students' Union, the Rajgor Dal, a political party headed by Independent MLA Akhil Gogoi, the Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chhatra Parishad in Assam, and the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) in Meghalaya announced to resume their agitations against the CAA after Shah Thursday announced in West Bengal that the government would implement the CAA as soon as the Covid-19 pandemic ends.

KSU president Lambokstar Marnagar said in Shillong that any attempt to implement the CAA would provoke unrest in the hill state. "The Centre, instead, responding to the Meghalaya Assembly's unanimous resolution and demands of all most all polit-



ical parties, should extend the Inner-Line Permit system, an 1873 regulation, in the entire Meghalaya to curb the entry of illegal immigrants," Marnagar told the media.

The Confederation of Meghalaya Social Organisations (CoMSO), an umbrella body of more than 17 organisations, has been spearheading the agitation since 2019 for the introduction of ILP in the remaining parts of the state.

If the ILP - a temporary official travel document that allows an Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period - is enforced in the entire Meghalaya, like in four other northeastern states - Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur, the state

would keep itself out of the purview of the CAA. Gogoi said that the people of Assam would never accept this 'anti-people' law. Gogoi, who is also the president of the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, said that the BJP should realise that all sections of people are against the CAA as this is an anti-people law.

He had spearheaded the massive protests against the contentious citizenship law in Assam since 2019 and was arrested in connection with violent protests in the state in 2019 and was charged under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The Central government had earlier announced that the CAA would not apply to the ILP and the Tribal Autonomous District Council (TADC) areas. In the northeastern states, there are 10 TADCs, constituted under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. While Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram have three TADCs each, Tripura has one.

All the eight northeastern states and neighbouring West Bengal witnessed violent protests in 2019 and early in 2021 against the CAA, which seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslims minorities - Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, who have migrated from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014, after facing faith-based persecution.

BSF helped form 1st Mukti Bahini group along Tripura border

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, May 8: One of the lesser known facts of the Bangladesh liberation war is that India's Border Security Force (BSF) helped form the first group of Mukti Bahini or the Bangladesh Liberation Force a day after the Pakistani army unleashed a reign of terror in that country some 51 years ago along the Tripura border.

Major PK Ghosh, who was then commanding four border outposts (BOP) of BSF at Sreenagar, Amlighat, Samarendranagar and Nalua in the southern part of Tripura bordering Chittagong division, in the then east Pakistan was instrumental in this.

Major Ghosh, an octogenarian war hero, now settled in Delhi, when contacted, told PTI in detail about first crossing over the Indo-Pak border and formation of first Mukti Bahini group March 26, 1971.

on me. I took a cover name as Prof. Ali and accompanied them to investigate. The villagers came out to meet their leaders and raised slogan - Joi Bangabandhu, Joy Bangladesh. During that time came a burst of LMG fire from Pak soldiers, but there was no damage," he said.

"At about 5 pm in the afternoon the first group of Mukti Bahini with 6 EPR boys under the command of Havildar Nooruddin was formed. They took oath on the spot. (I) Deployed them in groups of 3 each, on either flank of northern end of Shubhapur bridge with clear instructions to deny entry of Pak soldiers in the village and water point and also to fire only one round at a time to conserve ammunition and draw fire from Pak troops," Ghosh said.

Returning to the Srinagar BOP in the evening at about 7, Ghosh prepared a special report on the situation without mentioning his cross-

Buckwheat to generate big bucks for Meghalaya farmers

THE AREA UNDER THE SUPERFOOD CULTIVATION HAS ALREADY INCREASED TO 100 ACRES FROM FOUR ACRES IN A SPAN OF NINE MONTHS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, May 8: The Meghalaya government is betting big on buckwheat plantation, planning to expand its cultivation to 1,000 acres in the state over the next few years, as the "land and weather conditions are perfect" for growing the cash crop, a senior official said.

He noted that the area under buckwheat cultivation in the state has already been increased to 100 acres from four acres in a span of around nine to 10 months.

"Buckwheat is a superfood, filled with valuable nutrients. In the next two to three years, we will have successfully grown buckwheat on 1,000 acres. Land and weather conditions in Meghalaya are perfect for this cash crop,"



Meghalaya Farmers' (Empowerment) Commission chairman KN Kumar told PTI, on the sidelines of a food exhibition here.

Given that it is not a high-maintenance crop, buckwheat can help generate supplementary income for the farmers of the state, he explained.

According to Kumar, the state is expecting a yield of 500 MT this year. "The government is buying buckwheat from farmers at Rs 40 a kilogramme. The crop is in demand in various parts of the world, including Japan," he added.

of the state, which, however, took a hit during cyclone Amphan. Later, in August last year, four acres in East Khasi Hills were allotted for growing the crop, and the initiative turned out to be successful," he explained.

According to Kumar, the state is expecting a yield of 500 MT this year. "The government is buying buckwheat from farmers at Rs 40 a kilogramme. The crop is in demand in various parts of the world, including Japan," he added.

Crime rate declined in Assam, claim police

At least 47 alleged criminals have been gunned down by the police and 113 others injured while attempting to escape from custody or attacking the law enforcers since the Sarma government assumed power in May last year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, May 8: The average crime rate and the number of pending cases have declined considerably during the last one year, police has said. The average crime rate per lakh population was 384 last year and it has come down to 222 this year, Additional Director General of Police (CID) AVY Krishna has said.

He said that the number of pending cases, which were 1,09,081 in May 2021, has declined to 83,947 in April 2022. The average monthly registration of cases has come down to 6,247 this year from 11,103 last year, Krishna said. A total of 28,400 cases have been disposed of in the first quarter of 2022 as against 24,159 in the corresponding period last year.

On the war against drugs, the officer said that Assam Police has



nabbed 4,838 drug traffickers and seized contraband worth Rs 548.53 crore since the Himanta Biswa Sarma government came to power in May last year. A total of 94 kg of heroin, 2,348 kg of ganja, 187 kg of opium, 38 lakh Yaba and other tablets, 2.2 lakh cough syrup bottles, 0.31 kg of cocaine and a cash amount of Rs 2.4 crore along with 320 vehicles have been seized and 648 bighas (84.24 hectares) of opium cultivation and 32 bighas (4.16 hectares) of cannabis cultivation destroyed.

At least 47 alleged criminals have been gunned down by the police and 113 others injured while attempting to escape from custody or attacking the law enforcers since Sarma government assumed power in May last year. These 'encounters' have created a political furore in the state, with the opposition branding Assam Police as 'trigger-happy' and accusing it of indulging in 'open killings'.

At 14K ft, children make poly bricks from trash

INDO-ASIAN-NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, May 8: The ideals of environment protection displayed by three minor siblings largely owing to Buddhist thoughts have set an example for others, especially for city dwellers, to replicate the ways to curb plastic litter piling on the higher reaches of the Himalayas. Here the impact of climate change is keenly felt even on agriculture - the mainstay of the local economy.

The siblings - Tenzin of Class IV, Thinley Palmo of Class II and the youngest Cheering Palmo - from a remote village in Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh presented five plastic bottles filled with plastic wrappers to visiting Tribal Development Minister Ram Lal Markanda, who asked the local administration to honour them for promoting behavioural change.

"I have asked my children not to dispose the plastic waste in the garbage bins. Now they are packing waste wrappers of chocolates, biscuits and chips in empty pet bottles of one litre or two litres and using a stick to push all the plastic deep into the bottle. Later, the bottles are handed over to the local authorities to use as poly bricks," father Tenzin Lama of Lingti village, one of the highest in-



habited places on earth, told IANS over phone.

According to the UN Environment Programme, the initiative to recycle plastic highlights the economic and environmental opportunities when the globe moves from a linear economy, where products, once used, are discarded, to a circular one, where products and materials continue in the system for as long as possible.

Local authorities say the pet bottles filled with non-recycled plastic will be used as poly bricks for construction of a breast wall, a low stone wall that is constructed on the hillside to support the bank of the earth. The minimum weight of a poly brick from a two litre bottle stuffed with plastic waste is 500

grams. Block Development Officer Tashi Dolkar told IANS that the locals, especially school-goers, have been encouraged to dump non-recycle waste so that it can be used as sustainable low-cost construction material for laying tiles and the retaining walls.

She said students in Kibber village have constructed a bench made from poly bricks.

Located at 14,010 feet, Kibber village in Lahaul-Spiti district some 20 km from subdivision Kaza, covered by snow during most of the year, is known for a Buddhist monastery and a wildlife sanctuary, the habitat of the snow leopard.

Agriculture, which is facing the brunt of climate change, is the prime occupation of the pictur-

One can be horrified to see the amount of garbage like polythene and paper bags, empty beer and liquor bottles, food sachets and clothes dumped carelessly in the mountains

esque but thinly populated Spiti Valley that is flush with a single crop of vegetables, mainly the high-valued broccoli and lettuce, and is irrigated exclusively by snow and glacial melts in summer.

In the entire valley, houses are made from locally available stones with no use of bricks and building material.

In recent years, livestock in the high mountains have started dying a slow and painful death as locals complain plastic food wrappers have been found in their stomachs, resulting in impaction that causes failure of digestion.

The Spiti Valley, a cold desert dotted by tiny hamlets spread over the Himalayan peaks, adjoining Tibet, takes you to a land of Buddhism and virgin nature.

Members of the hospitality industry say the Spiti Valley these

days saw a sudden influx of tourists with the opening of high mountain passes. The Buddhist-dominated valley attracts globetrotters not only for nature-based activities but also to ancient monasteries like Tabo and Dhankar.

The ugly fact is that despite the authorities installing waste disposal and drop off points visitors carelessly dump non-biodegradable waste along the banks of the glacial-fed rivers.

One can be horrified to see the amount of garbage like polythene and paper bags, empty beer and liquor bottles, food sachets and clothes dumped carelessly in the mountains.

As part of Himachal Pradesh's initiative launched October 2, 2019, it is to buyback non-recyclable plastic waste. Every year about 60 tonnes of plastic waste is collected.

Under the buyback policy, the government is procuring plastic waste at a minimum support price of Rs 75 per kg. Under the scheme, 227 tonnes of plastic has been procured till date.

At least 10 per cent of the plastic waste is being used in surfacing roads by the Public Works Department, while the rest is being procured by four cement facilities for kilns, replacing a portion of conventional fossil fuels, like coal.

of the **quote**

This was bound to happen some day. The confrontation between Punjab, Delhi and Haryana police is an example of what lies in store in the future... the police serving their respective political masters will lead to the ultimate breakdown of federalism that is already in peril

P. CHIDAMBARAM | FORMER UNION HOME MINISTER

Rajasthan tops in the country in the allocation of budget for labourers under the MGNREGA scheme and even the payment rate for them has increased here rapidly

ASHOK GHELOT | RAJASTHAN CM

The delimitation process was a "smokescreen" to draw a veil over the "obscure agenda at work" and no amount of "gerrymandering" can change the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

2 terrorists killed

Srinagar: A Pakistani Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist was among two ultras killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, police said. The gunfight in the Cheyan Devsar area of the south Kashmir district broke out after security forces launched a cordon and search operation there following inputs about the presence of terrorists, a police official said. In the ensuing exchange of fire, two terrorists were killed, he said. Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said one of the slain ultras was a Pakistani named Haider.

Couple killed

Jashpur: A businessman and his wife were killed while their two children sustained critical injuries after a speeding truck collided with their car in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district, police said Sunday. The accident took place Saturday night when the family, from Kunkuri town here, was returning home after having dinner at a nearby dhaba, an official said.

19 cops injured

Palghar: Nineteen policemen were injured and 12 of their vehicles damaged when they tried to control attack on employees of a steel company by over 100 members of a labour union here in Maharashtra, an official said Sunday. The police have so far arrested 27 people in connection with the incident that took place on Saturday in the company's factory premises located in an industrial area in Boisar town of Palghar district, they said. Heavy security has been deployed in the premises. The situation there is tense, but under control, Palghar police spokesperson Sachin Navadkar said.

Silver seized

Jaipur: The police have seized over 1,200 kg of silver bricks and ornaments worth Rs 8 crore from Rajasthan's Udaipur district, officials said Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, a police team intercepted a private bus going to Agra from Ahmedabad on Friday night and recovered silver bricks and ornaments during search, they said. "When the bus driver could not give a satisfactory reply and could not produce documents related to the consignment, a total of 1,222 kg silver was seized," Station House Officer, Gordan Vilas, Chail Singh said.



Is there any political party in India which wants to have an alliance with the Congress? Will Rahul, who could not win his own constituency, make his party win elections in Telangana?

K. T. RAMA RAO | TRS WORKING PRESIDENT

NEW RESPONSIBILITY

Gauhati High Court's Chief Justice, Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia and Gujarat High Court judge, Justice Jamshed B. Pardiwala, who have been elevated to the Supreme Court, will be sworn in by Chief Justice of India NV Ramana today



GUJARAT POLLS: BJP ON A WAR FOOTING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ahmedabad, May 8: The Bharatiya Janata Party's preparations for the December-end Assembly polls in Gujarat are on a war footing with its state unit president C.R. Patil and Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel leading the charge.

For the last six months the party's seniors at the national level have been paying visits to the state to assess the situation on the ground and taking feedback on the party's preparedness.

Party General Secretary B.L. Santhosh was on a two-day visit to the state and met RSS pracharaks, Chief Minister and state unit president, other office-bearers and various cells senior leaders. His assessment and analysis will help the party's national leadership to prepare campaign strategy for the Assembly elections, said party sources.

Before Santhosh, party's national president J.P. Nadda visited the state for two days, Prime Minister

GEARING UP



Narendra Modi himself has addressed four public rallies and three government events in a span of 30 days. Uttar Pradesh Governor and former Chief Minister Anandiben Patel has addressed gatherings in major functions. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah's visits to the state have also increased. Even Gujarat In-charge Bhupendra Yadav took stock of the ground situation on April 21.

In the last six months the party has held many programmes, including 'Yuva Yatra' by the Youth Morcha and meetings by the party's women cells. The party's media cell is trying to reach out even to the smallest media houses not only in major cities but also in small towns to increase the party's reach to every citizen. The BJP has been in power in the state for the last 27 years. The first

time it came to power on its own was in 1995 with a vote share of 42.5 per cent. In 2002 Assembly polls, its vote share reached 49.8 per cent and it won 126 seats. This graph instead of growing is either stagnant or has come down over the years. In 2012 Assembly elections, the BJP's vote share was 49 per cent by winning 119 seats, which marginally grew to 49.1 per cent in 2017, but suffered loss as its seats

went down by 10 seats and it managed to win 99 seats.

On the other hand, the Congress vote share has been constantly increasing. In 2017 Assembly elections the Congress vote share was 41.4 per cent, three per cent higher than 2012 Assembly elections.

The biggest challenge the party faces is rising inflation, unemployment, and anti-incumbency. Realising the hurricane tasks, the party gave the organisational reins to C. R. Patil in July 2020 and changed the entire government in September 2021. Hoping that this will cool the anti-incumbency feelings, the party cadres will be encouraged and boosted, and will work with energy and enthusiasm.

The entire exercise is aimed to ensure that the blunder it faced in 2017 is not repeated in 2022, and it gets more seats. Gujarat not just being the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but it being close to his heart, he can't afford to lose the state, is the observation of the political analyst Dilip Patel.

US-returned Chennai couple murdered by domestic help

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 8: In the shocking double murder of a couple, who returned from the US, allegedly by their driver-cum-domestic help, in Chennai, police have recovered 1,000 sovereigns of gold and 50 kg of silver from the accused.

The couple, Srikanth, 58, and his wife Anuradha, 52, had returned to their home at Chennai after ten months of their stay in the US with their daughter, Sunantha.

Driver Lal Krishna, who is from Nepal and who was working with them for the past ten years, picked them up and dropped them at their home. However, when the daughter tried to contact her parents, their phones were found switched off.

The panicked daughter called their relatives and asked them to file a police complaint. Police on reaching the home found blood stains and on enquiry, found that the couple had a farm house at Nemmeli on the ECR.

Police tracked Lal Krishna and his friend Ravi and found that they were travelling to Kolkata and informed the Andhra Pradesh Police, who intercepted the duo at Ongole. On questioning, they confessed that they had beaten the couple to death.

They also informed the police that they had buried the bodies at the farm house at Nemmeli and police recovered the bodies.

Lal Krishna and his parents were working for Srikanth and Anuradha over the past ten years. However, Lal Krishna, according to police, had sent his parents back to Nepal a few weeks ago.

Petition in HC to open 20 rooms in Taj Mahal

Rajneesh Singh said he has been trying to ascertain facts about the 20 locked rooms of Taj Mahal since 2020 through the Right to Information Act

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 8: A petition has been filed in the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court seeking directives to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to open 20 rooms inside the Taj Mahal in Agra to ascertain whether the Hindu idols and inscriptions are hidden there.

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) media in-charge of Ayodhya district, Dr Rajneesh Singh has filed the petition which is yet to come up for hearing. Advocate Rudra Vikram Singh is representing the petitioner in court. "There is an old controversy related to the Taj Mahal. Around 20 rooms in Taj Mahal are locked and no one is allowed to enter. It is believed that in these rooms there are idols of Hindu gods and scriptures," said Dr Rajneesh Singh.

"I have filed a petition in the high court seeking directives to ASI to open these rooms to ascertain facts. There is no harm in opening these rooms and setting to rest all con-

troversies," said Singh Sunday.

In the plea, the petitioner has sought directives from the court to the state government to constitute a committee that would examine these rooms and look for any evidence related with the Hindu idols or scriptures there.

Rajneesh Singh said he has been trying to ascertain facts about the 20 locked rooms of Taj Mahal since 2020 through the Right to Information Act (RTI).

Singh had filed an RTI in 2020 with the Union ministry of Culture seeking information about the rooms.

"Since 2020, I have been trying to ascertain facts about the locked rooms of Taj Mahal. I had filed an RTI. Replying to the RTI, the Union ministry of Culture informed the Central Information Commission (in Delhi) that these rooms were locked due to security reasons and no detail was provided about these rooms," he added. "In the RTI, I had sought details about the locked rooms (what is inside them) and directives to open them," Singh said.

"When all my efforts failed then I have approached the Lucknow High Court seeking directives to the government to open these rooms and constitute a fact-finding committee to find out whether Hindu gods and scriptures are inside them," he added. It may be pointed out that several right-wing organisations claim Taj Mahal to be Tejo Mahalaya, a Hindu temple.



Kuru Kolumn

Major changes ahead in RAW, CBI

Decks have been cleared for changes in CBI and RAW with the six months' extension given to Praveen Sinha as Special Director in the CBI last week. Sinha was to retire April 30 and his six months' extension in tenure came in the nick of time. Sinha's extension paves the way for shifting of CBI director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal to RAW. It transpires that he may be rewarded with the post of director, RAW in June and replace incumbent Samant Goel who completes

his extended tenure in June this year. It now transpires that Samant Goel may be appointed as Deputy National Security Adviser.

Tussle for a RS seat in Maha

Maharashtra is witnessing an interesting battle for a Rajya Sabha seat. As many as six seats are falling vacant. Of this, the BJP will win two, while the NCP, Sena and Congress one seat each. The sixth seat will go to a joint candidate of the Sena and NCP as both these parties have surplus votes in the Assembly. If reports emanating from the BJP are any indication, the party is keen to re-nominate Chhatrapati Sambhaji due to political clout he commands in Maharashtra as a descendant of Sahuji Maharaj. Since he joined the BJP after getting the Presidential nomination in 2016, the party may re-nominate him for a regular seat as NCP-Sena are also keen to rope him in. The BJP is set to give the other seat to Piyush Goyal. The BJP will

MAINTAINING FRESHNESS



A woman vendor sprinkles water on fruits in New Delhi

Jilted lover who caused blaze held

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, May 8: The Madhya Pradesh Police claimed to have arrested a person who had allegedly ignited a fire in a three-storey residential building that left seven people dead and nine injured here.

Police Sunday identified the accused as Sanjay Dikshit (27), who had committed the act in a rage after being rejected by a woman. Indore's Vijay Nagar police station in-charge Teheeb Qazi said the accused was nabbed in the intervening night of Saturday and Sunday and booked under the Indian Penal Code Sections 302 (murder) and 436 (mischievous by fire intending to cause destruction of any building), the police said.

He had allegedly torched the scooter of a woman residing in the residential building in Vijay



Nagar locality on Saturday after she rejected his marriage offer: Dikshit, a resident of Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, was working in a private firm here for the last couple of months, the police said. Meanwhile, a video surfaced on social media purportedly showing Dikshit, having blood on hands and legs, lying on a stretcher in a hospital here, writhing in pain. The police said he had tried to flee the spot after committing the crime and in the process fell on the road

in the Lohamandi area and got injured.

As per the police, Dikshit allegedly torched the woman's scooter in the building's parking area and soon the fire spread upwards, engulfing the premises. "Earlier it had appeared that fire broke out due to short-circuit but after scanning CCTV footage of the houses near the gutted building, we found that a man ignited the blaze by setting fire to a vehicle in the building parking area," the police said.

Why PK fell out with BJP

There is an interesting tale behind the fall out between PM Modi and Prashant Kishor. After the big Lok Sabha win in 2014, Modi wanted to reward PK for his immense contribution. Modi was impressed with PK's capabilities and watched his work during his days in the UNO and finally hired him in 2012- two years before the Lok Sabha polls. PK and his men had even been given a floor at his official residence in Gandhinagar to chalk out Lok Sabha poll strategy. Surprisingly, PK opted to work for the BJP instead of joining the government after the Modi's win. Modi directed PK to go to Amit Shah who was BJP chief then to carve out a role for him. After prolonged deliberations which were kept under the wraps, Amit Shah told him that no special post of "poll strategist or poll coordinator" can be created in the BJP. He was also told that this kind of a post can't fit into the "Sangh Parivar" structure. Obviously, Amit Shah saw PK as his rival as well. Other seniors in the party also did

Value of MPs' vote may dip to 700 in July Prez polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: The value of the vote of a Member of Parliament is likely to go down to 700 from 708 in the presidential polls scheduled in July due to the absence of a legislative assembly in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Saturday.

The value of the vote of an MP in a presidential election is based on the number of elected members in legislative assemblies of states and union territories, including Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir.

The Electoral College for the presidential election comprises the members of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and those of the legislative assemblies of states and union territories including Delhi, Puducherry and Jammu and Kashmir.

Before it was bifurcated into two union territories of Ladakh, and Jammu & Kashmir in August 2019, the erstwhile state of J&K had 83 assembly seats. According to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, the Union Territory of J&K will have a legislative assembly, while Ladakh will be governed directly by the Centre.

The government had announced that elections to the legislative assembly would be held after the completion of the delimitation of assembly constituencies.

Sonia buys peace

Congress president Sonia Gandhi has swung into action to put the party's house in order. Though talks with poll strategist Prashant Kishor broke down, the high command is busy placating dissident leaders of the party nick-named as G-23. The overhauling state units will also be over before the Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir at Udaipur in mid-May. The key element of overhauling the state units is to accommodate G-23 leaders who raised a banner of revolt against the style of functioning in 2020 particularly in respect of Rahul Gandhi. The fact that Anand Sharma was appointed Chairman, campaign committee of Himachal Pradesh where Assembly polls are due this year-end, signals that things are moving in the right direction. Anand Sharma had met Sonia Gandhi recently while Bhupinder Singh Hooda met Rahul Gandhi a couple of weeks ago.

international



I think he's (Vladimir Putin) in a frame of mind in which he doesn't believe he can afford to lose. I think he's convinced right now that doubling down still will enable him to make progress
WILLIAM J. BURNS | DIRECTOR, CIA

'ELIZABETH: THE UNSEEN QUEEN'
Unseen footage from the Queen Elizabeth II's archive is set to be aired in a BBC documentary. 'Elizabeth: The Unseen Queen' will follow the monarch's life as a princess in her own eyes and own words. The documentary will air 29 May in honour of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee



of the day quote

It is now incumbent on all political parties and elected representatives to deliver on their mandate. Power-sharing and principles of partnership, equality and mutual respect are at the heart of the Good Friday Agreement
MICHEAL MARTIN | PM, IRELAND

I hope that we will have a strong presence in parliament to lead, once again, the fight against the social policies that Emmanuel Macron wants to put in place
MARINE LE PEN | FAR-RIGHT POLITICIAN, FRANCE

First they blamed us, then they didn't appreciate us, our country and tribal areas were destroyed and now (they) are again asking for bases. I would have never agreed to this and the problems (between us) started from there
IMRAN KHAN | FORMER PM, PAKISTAN

SHORT TAKES

Jill Biden's surprise visit to Ukraine

Uzhhorod: US First lady Jill Biden made an unannounced visit to western Ukraine Sunday, holding a surprise Mother's Day meeting with the nation's first lady, Olena Zelenska, as Russia presses its punishing war in the eastern regions. Biden travelled under the cloak of secrecy, becoming the latest high-profile American to enter Ukraine during its 10-week-old conflict with Russia. "I wanted to come on Mother's Day," Biden told Zelenskyy. "I thought it was important to show the Ukrainian people that this war has to stop and this war has been brutal and that the people of the United States stand with the people of Ukraine."

High alert in Philippines

Manila: The Philippine police and military said Sunday they were on high alert as last-minute preparations continued for the country's general election, even as the overall situation remained "relatively peaceful". Filipinos vote Monday to choose President Rodrigo Duterte's successor, a vice president, 12 senators, hundreds of congressmen and thousands of governors, mayors and provincial and city councillors.

1st Omicron BA.5 variant in NZ

Wellington: New Zealand reported its first case of Omicron BA.5 variant at the border, said the Ministry of Health in a statement Sunday. A person who has travelled from South Africa to New Zealand has been confirmed as having the BA.5 variant of Omicron, reports Xinhua news agency. According to the Ministry, this follows the detection of BA.4 May 1, also in a person who had travelled from South Africa.

Rare monkeypox virus case in UK

London: The UK health authorities have confirmed a case of monkeypox, which is a virus passed from infected animals such as rodents to humans, in someone with a recent travel history to Nigeria where they are believed to have caught it. The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said monkeypox is a rare viral infection that does not spread easily between people and is usually a mild "self-limiting illness" and most people recover within a few weeks.

STRESSING UNITY, SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE G7 leaders mark VE Day

THE NEW SANCTIONS WERE ANNOUNCED AHEAD OF THE MAY 9 VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY (VE DAY), WHEN RUSSIA TRADITIONALLY CELEBRATES NAZI GERMANY'S DEFEAT IN 1945 WITH HUGE MILITARY PARADES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, May 8: Leaders from the Group of Seven developed democracies pledged Sunday to phasing out or banning the import of Russian oil, as they met with Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, for online talks to stress their support and to display unity among Western allies on Victory in Europe Day, which marks Nazi Germany's surrender in 1945.

Cutting out Russian oil supplies "will hit hard at the main artery of (President Vladimir) Putin's economy and deny him the revenue he needs to fund his war," the G7 countries, which include the US, Britain, Canada, Germany, France and Italy and Japan, said in a statement. "We will ensure that we do so in a timely and orderly fashion, and in ways that provide time for the world to secure alternative supplies," they added.

Casting a look back at World War II, the leaders stressed unity in their resolve that Putin must not win. "We owe it to the memory of all those who fought for freedom in the Second World War, to continue fighting for it today, for the people of Ukraine, Europe and the global community," they said. The US also announced new sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. They include cutting off Western advertising from



G7 to phase out or ban Russian oil import
US Imposes visa restrictions on Russian military officers
US diplomats return to Kyiv embassy on first visit since invasion

UK pledges more military aid to Ukraine

London: Britain said it would provide a further 1.3 billion pounds (\$1.60 billion) in military support and aid to Ukraine, making the pledge ahead of a planned video call on Sunday by Group of Seven leaders with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The new pledge almost doubles Britain's previous spending commitments on Ukraine and the government said this is the highest rate of spending on a conflict since the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, although it did not give details of this calculation. "Putin's brutal attack is not only causing untold devastation in Ukraine - it is also threatening peace and security across Europe," Johnson said.

Russia's three biggest television stations, banning US accounting and consulting firms from providing services to any Russian, and piling additional restrictions on Russia's industrial sector, including cutting off Moscow from wood products, industrial engines, boilers, bulldozers and more. The new round of US sanctions will hit three of Russia's most pop-

ular television stations in Russia - Channel One Russia, Russia-1, and NTV - that the US has said have been at the forefront of spreading misinformation on invasion.

The US also said it imposed some 2,600 visa restrictions on Russian and Belarusian officials and issued a new visa restriction policy that applies to Russian military officials and authorities.

VICTORY DAY MESSAGES

Decades after World War II, darkness has returned to Ukraine, and it has become black and white again. Evil has returned, in a different uniform, under different slogans, but for the same purpose
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

Today, our soldiers, as their ancestors, are fighting side by side to liberate their native land from the Nazi filth with the confidence that, as in 1945, victory will be ours
VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

Freedom and security will prevail - just as freedom and security triumphed over lack of freedom, violence and dictatorship 77 years ago
OLAF SCHOLZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

Canadian PM Justin Trudeau made a surprise visit to Ukraine Sunday, touring the northern town of Irpin, which had been heavily damaged by Russia's attempt to take the capital of Kyiv.

Lanka Oppn snubs Rajapaksa's offer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, May 8: Sri Lanka's main Opposition SJB said Sunday that it has rejected an offer by embattled President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to its leader Sajith Premadasa to head an interim government, amid continued political uncertainty in the country which is now under a state of emergency.

"Our leader refused to accept the president's offer," Tissa Attanayake, the national organiser for Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) told reporters.

Rajapaksa had called over the telephone both Premadasa and Harsha de Silva, the SJB economic guru, on the prospect of forming an interim government which had been a demand endorsed by the powerful Buddhist clergy as well as the group which had broken away from the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) coalition.

COVID DEATH COUNT

After India, Pak questions WHO

AGENCIES

Islamabad, May 8: The Pakistani government has rejected the World Health Organization's (WHO) report on number of Covid-19 deaths in the country, questioning the United Nations body's methodology to collect data and supposing an error in the software used to collate the numbers.

In a recent report, the WHO estimated there were 260,000 Covid-19 deaths in Pakistan - eight times the official figure. Official records state Pakistan had 30,369 Covid-19 deaths with over 1.5 million infections.

"We [authorities] have been gathering data manually on Covid deaths, it could have a difference of a few hundred but it can't be in hundreds of thousands. This is completely baseless," Samaa News quoted Health Minister Abdul



Qadir Patel as saying.

According to the report, nearly 15 million people were killed either by the coronavirus or by its impact on overwhelmed health systems in the past two years across the world, more than double the official death count of 6 million. Most of the fatalities were in Southeast Asia, Europe and the Americas.

Minister Patel said the govern-

ment has explained the calculation process to the WHO in a note rejecting the world health body's numbers.

Patel said the methodology of data collection is questionable, adding that authorities in Pakistan collected the figures from hospitals, union councils, and graveyards.

He suspected "some error" in the data collection software used by the WHO which has been "showing figures in average", according to the Samaa News report.

Responding to WHO report, the health ministry said a reporting mechanism is in place whereby every Covid-19 related death is reported on a district level, which is then collated at a provincial level by the respective healthcare systems, and finally, a cumulative number is shared on a national level which is reported via official channels.

Syria Prez Assad visits Iran in rare trip

The Tehran visit marked Assad's first trip to the Iranian capital in over two years

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tehran, May 8: Syrian President Bashar Assad met with Iranian leaders in Tehran Sunday, Iranian and Syrian media reported, marking his second trip to major wartime



ally Iran since Syria's civil war erupted in 2011.

Nour News, a website close to Iran's Supreme National Security

Council, reported that Assad met Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ebrahim Raisi.

It said the leaders praised the strong ties between their nations and vowed to boost relations further. Assad was reported to have left Tehran for Damascus later Sunday.

"Everybody now looks at Syria as a power," Khamenei told Assad in the meeting, according to Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency, believed to be close to the coun-

try's powerful paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

"The respect and credibility of Syria is now much more than before," Assad, for his part, said that strong relations between Iran and Syria served as a bulwark against American and Israeli influence in the Middle East.

"America today is weaker than ever," Syrian state news agency, SANA, quoted Assad as saying. "We should continue this track," he added, praising Iran's help in Syria's "fight against terrorism."

Beijing hardliner Lee elected as HK leader

Lee was the only candidate and won with over 99% of the vote in which nearly all 1,500 committee members were carefully vetted by the central government in Beijing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, May 8: John Lee, a hard-line security chief who oversaw a crackdown on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, was elected as the city's next leader Sunday in a vote cast by a largely pro-Beijing committee.

He will replace current leader Carrie Lam July 1. Her five-term was marked by huge pro-democracy protests calling for her resignation, a security crackdown that has quashed virtually all dissent, the recent Covid-19 wave that had overwhelmed the health system - events that have undermined Hong Kong's reputation as an international business hub with Western-style freedoms.

The election followed major changes to Hong Kong's electoral laws last year to ensure that only "patriots" loyal to Beijing can hold office. The legislature was also reorganized to all but eliminate opposition voices.

The Chinese government's liaison office in Hong Kong also congratulated Lee and said the election was conducted in a "fair, just and orderly manner in accordance with laws and regulations."

Mainland China's Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council said in its congratulatory note that the "successful election" proved that the city's new electoral system is "good" and in line with the "one country, two systems" framework that Hong Kong is governed by.

Critics say freedom of speech and assembly that Hong Kong was promised to keep for 50 years when it was handed over by Britain to China in 1997 has been eroded as Beijing exerts greater control over the territory.

Sunday morning, three members of the League of Social



I look forward to all of us starting a new chapter together, building a Hong Kong that is caring, open and vibrant, and a Hong Kong that is full of opportunities and harmony
JOHN LEE | CHIEF EXECUTIVE, HONG KONG

Democrats, a local activist group, protested the election by attempting to march toward the election venue while displaying a banner demanding universal suffrage that would allow Hong Kongers to vote both for the legislature and the chief executive.

"Human rights over power, the people are greater than the country," the banner read. "One person, one vote for the chief executive. Immediately implement dual universal suffrage."

One protester was handing out flyers before police arrived and cordoned them off. Police also searched the protesters' belongings and took down their personal details, though they made no immediate arrests.

Lee's role as Hong Kong's next leader has sparked concern that Beijing could further tighten its grip. He spent most of his civil service career in the police and security bureau, and is a staunch supporter of a national security law imposed on Hong Kong in 2020 to stamp out dissent.

PASSION PLAY



Rochus Rueckel as Jesus and cast members perform during the rehearsal of the 42nd Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. After a two-year delay due to the coronavirus, Germany's famous Oberammergau Passion Play is opening soon
PTI PHOTO

BREAKING OWN WORLD RECORD

Nepali Sherpa, 52, scales Mt Everest for 26th time

EVEREST HAS BEEN CLIMBED 10,657 TIMES SINCE IT WAS FIRST SCALED IN 1953 FROM NEPALI AND TIBETAN SIDES - MANY HAVE CLIMBED MULTIPLE TIMES, AND 311 PEOPLE HAVE DIED SO FAR, ACCORDING TO THE HIMALAYAN DATABASE

AGENCIES

Kathmandu, May 8: A Nepali sherpa scaled Mount Everest for a record 26th time, beating his own previous record set last year, a government official said Sunday.

Kami Rita Sherpa, 52, scaled the 8,848.86-metre (29,031.69-foot) mountain Saturday along the traditional southeast ridge route leading 10 other Sherpa climbers.

"Kami Rita has broken his own record and established a new

world record in climbing," said Taranath Adhikari, director general of the Department of Tourism in capital Kathmandu.

Kami Rita's wife, who gave her name as Jangmu said she was happy over the achievement of her husband.

The climbing route used by Kami Rita was pioneered by New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary and Nepal's sherpa Tenzing Norgay in 1953 and remains the most popular. This year Nepal



has issued 316 permits to climb Everest in the peak season, which runs through May, compared with 408 last year, the highest ever.

The Himalayan nation, which is heavily reliant on climbers for foreign exchange, faced criticism for allowing overcrowding and several climber deaths on the mountains in 2019.

RUSSIAN CLIMBER DIES

Russian climber Pavel Kostrikin died at Camp I of Mount Everest, the first reported death of a foreigner on the world's highest peak in the current climbing season that began in March, a Nepali official said Sunday. Kostrikin, 55, died at the camp, which is located at an altitude of around 5,360 metres (17,585 feet) during a rotation on the 8,848-metre (29,031 feet) mountain on Saturday, said Bhisma Kumar Bhattarai, an official of Nepal's Department of Tourism. "The Russian climber fell sick at Camp II and died after being brought to the Camp I," Bhattarai said. Camp II on the normal southeast ridge route on Everest is located at a height of around 6,400 metres (20,997 feet). Hiking officials said the body of Kostrikin would be brought to Kathmandu when the current cloudy weather conditions improve.

of the day quote

Looking ahead, the near-term operating environment will remain challenging. We expect to see more sequential inflation. Growth will be predominantly price-led

RITESH TIWARI | CFO, HUL

We spent about Rs 2,600 crore on construction last fiscal year. Our construction spend is estimated at Rs 3,800 crore during the current fiscal

ABHISHEK LODHA | MD & CEO, MACROTECH DEVELOPERS

I think last year, the economy started doing well again and we saw growth in the commercial vehicle market by around 26 per cent. We (Tata Motors) have grown by 33 per cent. We have done better than the industry

GIRISH WAGH | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TATA MOTORS

SHORT TAKES

FPIs withdraw ₹6,400cr in May

New Delhi: Foreign investors have pulled over Rs 6,400 crore from the Indian equity market in the first four trading sessions of the ongoing month when the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and US Federal Reserve raised interest rates. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) remained net sellers for seven months to April 2022, withdrawing a massive amount of over Rs 1.65 lakh crore from equities. This was largely on the back of anticipation of a rate hike by the US Federal Reserve and due to the deteriorating geopolitical environment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. After six months of selling spree, FPIs turned into net investors in the first week of April amid correction in the markets and invested Rs 7,707 crore in equities.

AAI partners with self help groups

New Delhi: In efforts to help artisans, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has started providing space for self help groups at various airports to sell their locally-developed products. Self Help Groups (SHGs) are already showcasing their products at 12 airports, including at Agartala, Kushinagar, Udaipur and Madurai, under the AVSAR (Airport as Venue for Skilled Artisans of the Region) initiative. Airports at Varanasi, Calicut, Kolkata, Coimbatore and Raipur, among others, in coordination with the respective state governments are in the process of allotting space to local SHGs, according to AAI. Other airports that plan to have SHG outlets are Vizag, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Silchar, Dibrugarh and Jorhat.

May discoms dues to gencos rise 4%

New Delhi: Total outstanding dues of electricity distribution companies to power producers rose by 4.04 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,21,765 crore in May 2022, according to the official data. Discoms owed a total of Rs 1,17,026 crore to power generation firms in May 2021, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators). On a sequential basis too, total dues in May 2022 increased from Rs 1,20,954 crore in April 2022. The PRAAPTI portal was launched in May 2018 to bring transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and discoms.



The timing of RBI's rate hike came as a surprise but not the action itself as people thought it should have been done anyway....It came as a surprise because it's between the two MPCs meetings. But the US Fed had been saying it all the while

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

BIDS FOR SCI SALE BY SEPT

The government is likely to invite financial bids for Shipping Corporation of India by September, after the process of demerger of non-core assets is completed, an official said. As part of the strategic-sale process, the government is hiving off Shipping House and the Maritime Training Institute and some other non-core assets of Shipping Corporation of India (SCI)



JET AIRWAYS GETS CLEARANCE TO FLY AGAIN

The security clearance was seen as one of the biggest hurdles in the path to the airline's recommencement of operations. The airline stopped services in April 2019 after being bogged down by financial woes

line in its old avatar was owned by Naresh Goyal and had operated its last flight April 17, 2019.



ording to an official document.

The Jalan-Kalrock Consortium is currently the promoters of Jet Airways. The air-

Last Thursday, the airline conducted its test flight to and from the

Hyderabad airport in a step towards obtaining the air operator certificate. A letter sent by the civil aviation ministry to the airline May 6 informed it about the grant of the security clearance by the Union home ministry.

The letter, which has been accessed by PTI, said, it is "directed to refer to your application... to convey security clearance for change in shareholding pattern of the company/firm, for scheduled operator permit, on the basis of security clearance received from the Ministry of Home Affairs".

Last Thursday's test flight was conducted to prove to aviation regulator DGCA that the aircraft and its components are operating normally.

After the test flight Thursday, the airline has to conduct proving flights after which the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will grant the air operator certificate.

Proving flights are similar to commercial flight with DGCA officials and airline officials as passengers and cabin crew members on board.

TO AVOID INSOLVENCY

Future Enterprises to sell insurance biz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Debt-ridden Future Group firm Future Enterprises Ltd expects to raise around Rs 3,000 crore from selling its stake in the insurance business to pare debt, which may save the company from facing the rigour of the insolvency process, according to industry sources.

Earlier Thursday, Future Enterprises Ltd completed the sale of its 25 per cent equity in Future Generali India Insurance Company Ltd (FGIICL) to joint venture partner Generali for Rs 1,266.07 crore. After this transaction, FEL will directly and indirectly continue to hold 24.91 per cent shares in FGIICL.

"Now in the next 30-40 days, they will sell the remaining 25 per cent stake of the General insurance business for another Rs 1,250 crores to another entity," a source said.

Besides, FEL is also planning to sell its 33.3 per cent stake in its Life Insurance JV - Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Limited (FGILICL).

"Also in separate deals remaining 33 per cent stake of Life insurance business will be sold to Generali and separately to one more Indian entity for a little above Rs 400 crore," he said, adding after this the Kishor Biyani-led group firm would completely exit the insurance sector.

From these exercises, FEL would raise nearly Rs 2,950 crore and will pay to its lenders, he added.

"This is part of the exercise that Future Group is doing to pay off as much debt of various cos so they can be regularised and do not go into insolvency," he said.

March 31, FEL defaulted on repayment of Rs 2,911.51 crore of loans to the consortium of banks and lenders.

Later it also missed a 30-day review period as per the scheme of One Time Restructuring (OTR) for Covid-hit companies with its consortium of banks.

Besides, it has also missed a deadline for payment of interest on non-convertible debentures (NCDs) which were due in the month of March and April.

The total financial indebtedness of FEL, including short-term and long-term debt is Rs 6,778.29 crore.

LOWEST SINCE MARCH 2019

Foreign funds' share in India equities at 19.5%

March alone saw the sixth consecutive month of FPI outflows, which was the most severe since March 2020 on the back of continued geopolitical risks, elevated inflation led by supply side issues, rising commodity costs



IN OVERALL ALLOCATION, FINANCIALS STILL LED THE CHART WITH 31.4 PER CENT FOLLOWED BY DISCRETIONARY (9 PER CENT)

Foreign funds' ownership in the domestic equities was at 18.6 per cent in December 2017, the lowest in five years, and the peak was in December 2021, when they owned 21.4 per cent of domestic equities

Of the \$619 billion of FPI ownership, the highest incremental allocation were in energy stocks with 16.2 per cent, followed by IT at 14.8 per cent, and communication services at 4 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 8: Foreign funds' ownership in domestic equities fell to pre-Covid lows and hit a multi-year low of 19.5 per cent in March this year in NSE500 companies valued at \$619 billion, shows an analysis.

At 19.5 per cent the FPI ownership in March 2022, is the lowest in the past three years, when it was 19.3 per cent in March in 2019, which was a pre-Covid period.

On a year-on-year basis their ownership stood at 21.2 per cent, second highest on record in March 2021, according to a report by the Wall Street brokerage Bank of America Securities India.

Significantly the share loss of foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) has been well corrected by the steeply rising ownership of the stocks by

domestic funds, who pumped in \$6 billion in March and \$14.6 billion in FY22, the report said.

Even amidst the pullout emerging market funds have been steadily increasing their allocation to India (19 per cent in March vs 13.3 per cent in January 2021) as against China (34.6 per cent in March vs 42.2 per cent in January 2021).

Similarly, MSCI India valuation premium to emerging markets is still at 38 per cent and to the world at 10 per cent above respective long term average remains elevated, but in the long-term, this premium is justified as India is better placed amongst emerging markets, the report said.

Apart from India, other emerging markets, including Taiwan,

Korea and the Philippines also saw massive outflows so far this fiscal.

The record fall was mainly due to the massive outflows of \$5.4 billion in March and a whopping \$15.7 billion in FY22. Such a massive pullout came after they pumped in \$23 billion in 2020 and \$3.7 billion in 2021.

The Wall Street brokerage expects the market to trade sideways in the near-term, given the soaring inflation impacting volume growth and margins across several sectors.

The brokerage has not offered any upside to its December Nifty target of 17,000 points but said it prefers financials, industrials, select autos among cyclical and utilities and healthcare among defensives.

"BEST INVESTMENT"

Poonawalla woos Musk to make cars in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 8: Serum Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawalla Sunday wooed Elon Musk to invest in India to manufacture Tesla electric cars, saying it will be the best investment he would have ever made.

Musk, who has made a successful \$44 billion acquisition bid for Twitter, had in the past asked India to reduce import duties to sell Tesla electric cars but the government has insisted on local manufacturing.

In a post on Twitter, tagging Musk, Poonawalla said, "... just in case you don't end up buying @Twitter, do look at investing some of that capital in INDIA for high-quality large-scale manufacturing of @Tesla cars."

He further said, "I assure you



this will be the best investment you'll ever make." Last month, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had said if Tesla was ready to manufacture its electric vehicles in India then there was 'no problem' but the company must not import cars from China.

In August last year, Musk had said that American electric vehicle maker Tesla may set up manufacturing unit in India if it first succeeds with imported vehicles in the country.

'India coal move commercially unviable'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 8: Amidst the coal crisis where the Centre has invoked an emergency law to operate idle coal import-based utilities, energy transition experts believe the electricity generation for 1.35 billion people based on expensive imported coal for blending is commercially unviable - both high and inflationary.

They say combined with the global pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war, which has increased coal prices internationally, it should be a death knell for coal. The time to ramp up wind and solar is now so that India is prepared to deal with a warming world.

The experts told IANS Sunday that it is counter-intuitive that the government is actually looking to auction new mines, re-open old mines and old thermal power plants, which will not only create stranded assets but exacerbate climate change. Rather it should be look-



ing at better energy planning, and diversifying the energy mix keeping in mind emissions, global disruptions and the inflationary nature of fossil fuels.

The reason for opting the dirtiest fossil fuel is that India, world's third largest energy consumer with electricity demand growing by 4.7 per cent each year, is going to be tough to put new money into renewable energy. But experts believe this is exactly what needs to

If we are to meet the 2030 target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel capacity, we have to aggressively support investments in energy storage and re-introduce favourable regulatory conditions for rooftop and behind-the-metre investments in renewable energy

BHARATH JAIRAJ | DIRECTOR (ENERGY PROGRAM), WRU INDIA

be done with the pathway that the coal sector is facing investor challenges on funding, challenges on logistics and planning, as well as volatility in prices.

"Frequent climate extremes and power shocks only indicate how much climate action and energy transition needs are intertwined and affected by not just domestic events but also regional and international tremors," Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) India Policy Director Martand Shardul said.

"Stocking coal through increased domestic production and imports might yield relief, however, these exigencies demand a rapid shift to clean energy and enhanced re-

newable energy investments to boost social good, planetary health and economic resilience."

Sounding a cautionary note, International Institute for Sustainable Development Policy Advisor Balasubramanian Viswanathan said: "In the midst of the power shortage crisis, we need to take whatever short-term measures are available to keep the fans on. But some interventions have medium- and long-term implications, and here we must be very careful. We absolutely must not make new investments in our coal-dependent power system, which will just contribute to worse crises in the future."

Global scramble for metals thrusts Africa into mining spotlight

Companies and investors are considering projects they may have previously overlooked, while governments are also looking to Africa, anxious to ensure their countries can procure enough metals to feed an accelerating net-zero push

REUTERS

Johannesburg, May 8: The need to secure new sources of metals for the energy transition amid sanctions on top producer Russia has increased the Africa risk appetite for major miners, who have few alternatives to the resource-rich continent.

This year's Investing in African Mining Indaba conference, which runs May 9-12 in Cape Town, will see the highest-ranking US govern-

ment official in years attending, organisers say, as well as representatives from the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals Corporation (JOGMEC), in a sign of rich countries' rising concern about securing supply.

"The reality is that the resources the world wants are typically located in difficult places," said Steven Fox, executive chairman of New York-based political risk consultancy Veracity Worldwide.

The US administration wants to position itself as a strong sup-



porter of battery metals projects in sub-Saharan Africa, he said.

"While Africa presents its challenges, those challenges are no more difficult than the corresponding set of challenges in Canada. It may be easier to actually bring a project to fruition in Africa, than in a place like Canada or the US," he added.

Certainly, the risks of mining in sub-Saharan Africa remain high. The acute security challenge facing mines in the gold-rich Sahel region was highlighted last month when Russia's Nordgold abandoned its Taparko gold mine in Burkina Faso over an increasing threat from militants. And even in the

As a mining company, there aren't many opportunities and if you are going to grow, you're going to have to look at riskier countries. Clearly, after Russia-Ukraine people are more sensitive to geopolitical risk and you cannot predict which projects are going to work out and which are not

GEORGE CHEVELEY | PORTFOLIO MANAGER, NINETY ONE

continent's most industrialised economy, South Africa, deteriorating rail infrastructure is forcing some coal producers to resort to

trucking their product to ports. Yet with Russia's 7% of global nickel supply, 10% of the world's platinum, and 25-30% of the world's palladium off the table, Africa's rich deposits of those metals start looking a lot more attractive.

Kabanga Nickel, a project in Tanzania, secured funding from global miner BHP in January, and CEO Chris Showalter said it is seeing increased demand from potential off-takers.

"Not everyone's going to be able to get clean battery metals from a friendly jurisdiction, so I think some difficult decisions will have to be made, and it is going to force people to make some new decisions about where they want to source."

Du Plessis, Hasaranga sink SRH

ALL-ROUND SHOW BY RCB HELPS THEM BRIGHTEN THEIR CHANCES OF A TOP 4 FINISH



Skipper Faf du Plessis led from the front with an unbeaten half century for Bangalore



Wanindu Hasaranga

AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 8: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) handed a crushing 67-run defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in their IPL encounter here Sunday. Batting first RCB posted 192 for the loss of three wickets riding on a superb knock from skipper Faf du Plessis (73 n o, 50b, 8x4, 2x6) and an eight-ball unbeaten 30 (1x4, 4x6) from Dinesh Karthik. Then spinner Wanindu Hasaranga (5/18) created havoc with the ball as SRH were bowled out for 125 in 19.2 overs. It was SRH's fourth loss on the trot.

The win also helped RCB to avenge their shocking nine-wicket loss to Hyderabad in the first outing at the Brabourne stadium when they had collapsed to 68 all out.

Making amend for a sloppy outing on the field, Hasaranga cleverly used his wrong ones and derailed SRH's chase in the middle overs with wickets of the hard-hitting Nicholas Pooran (19) and Jagadeesha Suchith (2) in successive overs.

The Lankan then ended his spell in style with a double-wicket maiden, dismissing Shashank Singh and Umran Malik in successive deliveries to virtually seal

BRIEF SCORES
RCB 192 for 3 (Faf du Plessis 73 n o, Rajat Patidar 48, Dinesh Karthik 30 n o, Jagadeesha Suchith 2/30) beat SRH 125 in 19.2 overs (Rahul Tripathi 58, Wanindu Hasaranga 5/18) by 67 runs.

the win for RCB. Except for Rahul Tripathi (58, 37b, 6x4, 2x6) none of the SRH batters could get going.

For RCB, it was their second win in a row, coming on the back of a hat-trick of defeats as they firmed up their place inside the top four. Like RCB, SRH too had a jittery

start and went on to lose two wickets in the first over in their tall chase of 193. Like Virat Kohli, SRH skipper Kane Williamson also went for a golden duck. It was a rare instance, only the third in IPL that a wicket fell on the first ball of both the innings.

Earlier, Du Plessis countered the early loss of Kohli by putting on 105 runs for the second wicket with Rajat Patidar (48, 38b, 4x4, 2x6). Coming in at No. 4 Glenn Maxwell (33, 24b 3x4, 2x6) also played a useful knock before Karthik put an awesome display of power hitting to take RCB to a commanding total.

Preparations on right track for men's World Cup: Amit

STAR INDIAN DEFENDER HAPPY THAT ROURKELA IS ALSO A VENUE

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 8: With exactly 250 days to go for the FIH Hockey Men's World Cup to be hosted here and in Rourkela, one of India's main stalwarts, Amit Rohidas has said that the team's preparations are going on 'smoothly' in spite of Covid-19 again disrupting the international schedule. India will host the showpiece hockey event January 13-29, with the top 16 teams in the world competing for the trophy.

"We are back in SAI (Sports Authority of India), Bangalore. The atmosphere here is excellent with six hockey teams currently based out of the same centre. With Covid-19 continuing to disrupt the international hockey calendar, we are taking each day as it comes and don't want to be worried about things that are not in our control," said Rohidas, who recently captained the Indian team in a couple of FIH Pro League engagements at home.

"Our preparations are going on smoothly with our focus on improving the areas we felt needed work, post the FIH Pro League home games," the penalty corner specialist added.

Rohidas also spoke about the emotions of the people of Odisha in the build-up to the tournament. "The people of Odisha, particularly those who live in Rourkela and Sundargarh are extremely excited that an event



Craze for hockey in Sundargarh district is unmatched. People are excited that they will be able to watch top players in action
AMIT ROHIDAS

as big as the World Cup is happening in their city," Rohidas pointed out.

"The craze for hockey in this region is unmatched, and with the biggest stadium in India being developed in Rourkela for hockey, people are counting days to experience a world class event. For us players, it will be great to play in Rourkela and experience this hockey craze," Rohidas added.

Having produced multiple international hockey stars, Sundargarh district in Odisha has been the hockey nursery of the sport in India. Along with the Kalinga Stadium here, which had hosted the 2018 Men's World Cup, the stadium in Rourkela will be the second venue for the 2023 edition of the tournament.

"The stadium in Rourkela will be top notch, with the Odisha government putting in great efforts to complete the work well in time for the World Cup. At the Kalinga Hockey Stadium too, there is upgrade work going on in full swing," said Gyanendra Ningombam, president, Hockey India (HI).

SHORT TAKES

Winning start

Bangkok: The Indian badminton teams began their Thomas and Uber Cup campaigns in emphatic fashion, thrashing Germany and Canada respectively here Sunday. While the men's team won their Group C Thomas Cup encounter 5-0, the women counterparts emerged 4-1 victorious in Group D against Canada. All the top Indian shuttlers including Lakshya Sen, PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth, HS Prannoy won their respective matches in quite emphatic fashion. Sindhu looked in fine touch as she defeated Canada's Michelle Lee 21-17, 21-10 while Sen trounced Germany's Max Weisskirchen 21-16, 21-13.

Lahiri impresses

Potomac (US): Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri battled cold, wet and windy conditions here Saturday to rise to the third place at the Wells Fargo Championship after the end of the third round. The Indian ace, still looking for a breakthrough win on the PGA Tour after seven years, shot an even par 70, which looked likely to be much better till he came to home stretch. Lahiri had birdies on eighth and nine, missed another on 10th, but from 12th to 18th he dropped three shots while picking up just one more birdie on 14. Keegan Bradley emerged on top of the leaderboard with a 3-under-67 on the day.

Title for Gukesh

Punta Prima (Spain): Indian GM D Gukesh emerged Sunday champion in the 1st Chessable Sunway Formentera Open 2022 tournament here. It was a hat-trick of titles for Gukesh after he had previously won the La Roda tournament and the Menorca Open in recent weeks. The 15-year old Gukesh (Elo 2637) settled for a draw with Armenian GM Haik M Martirosyan in the final round to win the title with eight points. He finished six wins and four draws.

Leclerc takes pole

Miami: Formula One (F1) World Championship leader Charles Leclerc praised the enthusiasm of Ferrari's many American fans here Saturday, but warned of a tense battle ahead after leading the Italian team to a front-row lockout at the inaugural Miami Grand Prix. The 24-year-old Monegasque claimed pole position ahead of his Ferrari teammate Carlos Sainz after defending World Champion Max Verstappen made a rare error and slipped to third on the grid for Red Bull at a packed Miami International Autodrome.

City to host IGP this month

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 8: The Indian Grand Prix (IGP) 3 and 4, which were originally scheduled to be held in Madurai May 17 and 21, will now be held here May 21 and 24, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said Sunday. This is the second time the venue of the two one-day events has been changed.

"Earlier these meets were to be held at Madurai. The Grand Prix meets have been shifted to provide better facilities to the athletes," the AFI said in a release. "These two meets have special importance as the athletes can achieve the qualification marks for the World Athletics (Championships), Commonwealth Games and the postponed Asian Games," it added.

There will be 17 events in both the meets which include nine for women and eight for men. The meets will be held in the evening on both the days at the Kalinga Stadium here.

The Government of Odisha along with AFI and the Odisha Athletics Association will conduct the event.



The athletics track at the Kalinga stadium in Bhubaneswar

FILE PHOTO

Events for women participants include sprint in 200m, 8,000m, 5,000m categories, 100m hurdles, high jump, triple jump, shot put, discus and hammer throw while men can participate in 100m, 400m, 1,500m sprints, pole vault, long jump, discus and javelin throw events.

Some of the top Indian athletes are expected to take part in the events including Odisha's own

Dutee Chand. However, Priya Mohan who recently had beaten Dutee in the 200 metres will miss the event as she will be attending some foreign meets. Mohan will be participating in three events in Europe which is a part of her build-up to the Commonwealth Games.

It is not yet known whether spectators will be allowed to witness the event.

CONWAY, MOEEN STAR IN CHENNAI VICTORY KINGS CRUSH DC

AGENCIES

Navi Mumbai, May 8: Devon Conway's (87, 49b, 7x4, 5x6) blazing blade and Moeen Ali's (3/13) effective off-breaks beautifully complemented each other as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) outclassed Delhi Capitals in every department of the game, winning their IPL match

by a comprehensive 91-run margin. Put in to bat, Conway completed a hat-trick of half centuries to set up a winning score of 208 for six in 20 overs.

The scoreboard pressure was always mounting on Capitals as they could only manage 117 in 17.4 overs with Moeen taking wickets of Mitchell Marsh (25) and skipper Rishabh Pant (21) in quick succession to finish the contest. Mukesh Choudhary (2/22), Simarjeet Singh (2/27) and Dwayne Bravo (2/24) then completed the formalities.

BRIEF SCORES

CSK 208 for 6 (Devon Conway 87, Ruturaj Gaikwad 41, Anrich Nortje 3/42) beat DC 117 all out in 17.4 overs (Mitchell Marsh 25, Moeen Ali 3/13) by 91 runs.

CSK are now up to eight points from 11 games and can earn a maximum of 14 points if they win their remaining three games, which unfortunately doesn't look like being enough for play-off qualification.

DC remain on fifth position with 10 points and will now need to win all three remaining games and also expect a few other results to favour them if they harbour any hopes of qualification.

Put into bat, CSK were off to a flying start as Conway and Ruturaj Gaikwad (41, 33b, 4x4, 1x6) put on 110 runs for the first wicket in just 11 overs. From then on DC were always

fighting a losing battle as Shivam Dube (32, 19b, 2x4, 2x6) and skipper MS Dhoni (21, 8b, 1x4, 2x6) added quick runs. None of the DC bowlers could make an impression on the CSK batters. Even though Anrich Nortje (3/42) picked up two wickets he went for plenty.

Malik's genuine pace will be hard to ignore: Chappell

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, May 8: India's cricketing establishment has over the years shown patience in grooming a pack of world-class fast bowlers but in near future, the genuine pace of Umran Malik will be hard to ignore, feels former Australia captain Ian Chappell.

"India's pace bowling revolution shows no sign of abating, and the name on IPL watchers' lips is currently that of the pacy Umran Malik. In the past India displayed patience in developing their fast bowling group but the genuine pace of Malik will be hard to ignore," Chappell wrote in his column for 'ESPNCricinfo'. "In a world where fast bowling is a valuable commodity, India are now a shining light," Chappell added.

According to Vhappell, the IPL indeed has played a huge role in transforming India from a side with potential to a dominant force in world cricket.

MAN CITY CLOSE IN ON PL TITLE

LIVERPOOL'S QUADRUPLE HOPES JOLTED AS THEY DROP POINTS AGAINST SPURS



NODDING HOME: Man City's Raheem Sterling beats a Newcastle player to score the opening goal for his side, Sunday

AGENCIES

Manchester, May 8: Manchester City took another step forward to retain the Premier League title with a 5-0 hammering of Newcastle at the Etihad here Sunday. The win took Manchester City to 86 points from 35 games, three more than Liverpool who are on 83 points from the same number of matches. City now have a comfortable three-point cushion over their main rivals thanks to the 1-1 draw Liverpool played against Tottenham Hotspur

late Saturday evening.

The Real Madrid debacle seemed a thing of distant past as City played the same kind of free flowing football that they are known for.

Raheem Sterling (19th and added on time), Aymeric Laporte (38th), Rodri (61st) and Phil Foden (90th) kept the fans as well as Pep Guardiola in good humour. It now just looks a matter of time, before City players hold aloft the Premier League trophy.

Even though he did not score a goal, Kevin de Bruyne was the star

player for City as he controlled the play with some superb passing and off the ball runs. His movements were pleasing to the eye and he had a hand in all the five goals scored by his teammates.

"It is an important point but we all know the situation," said Klopp after the game played late Saturday evening. "We are now top of the table and if we and City lose all the rest of our games then great, but we all know that will not happen. I would love to sit here and say yes City will drop points,

but the problem is I can't see it happening," Klopp added.

Son Heung-min rounded off a brilliant team move to put Spurs in front on 56 minutes. Luis Diaz's deflected shot levelled 16 minutes from time, but Liverpool failed to find a winner.

Twenty-one points separated the sides when the match began, but Spurs have made a habit of saving their best for the big occasions. Antonio Conte's men are unbeaten in all four meetings with Manchester City and Liverpool this season.

The second half followed the same pattern like the first, with Liverpool camped in the Tottenham half, but this time Spurs did pick them off on the counter-attack.

Harry Kane was given time to assess his options and played in Ryan Sessegnon who slid the ball across the box for Son to tap in his 20th Premier League goal of the season to move within two of Mohamed Salah. Incidentally, after the goal, Salah had a chance to hit the target, but shot wide.

However Diaz, who has been sensational signing since arriving in January made another contribution with a slice of fortune. His shot from outside the box took a huge deflection off Rodrigo Bentancur to wrong-foot Hugo Lloris. However, that was as far Liverpool could get.

Meanwhile Manchester United's dismal season hit a new low as Brighton condemned them to a 0-4 defeat that ended their hopes of finishing in the Premier League's top four.

Alcaraz's giant-killing run continues in Madrid

Spanish teen sensation beats Djokovic after scalping Nadal



WELL DONE MATE: Novak Djokovic (left) congratulates Carlos Alcaraz after the match Saturday in Madrid

AP PHOTO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, May 8: Rafael Nadal one day Novak Djokovic the next. The list of victims of Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz keeps growing. And so does the hype over tennis' newest sensation.

After defeating his idol Nadal in the quarterfinals Friday, the 19-year-old Alcaraz rallied to beat top-ranked Djokovic 6-7 (5-7), 7-5, 7-6 (7-5) after more than 3 1/2 hours Saturday to reach the final of the Madrid Open.

"It was one of those matches to enjoy," Alcaraz said. "Despite the tension, despite being the semifinals, being 7-6 in the third-set tie-breaker... I've enjoyed it. Until the last point I was being able to smile," the teenager added.

In the women's final, Ons Jabeur

of Tunisia won her biggest career title by defeating Jessica Pegula of the US in three sets. Jabeur, the first Arab woman in the top 10, won 7-5, 0-6, 6-3 for her second career title.

Alcaraz became the first player to beat Nadal and Djokovic at the same clay court event. He converted his third match point in front of a raucous home crowd on the Caja Mágica centre court. A win Sunday will give Alcaraz his fourth title this season, the most by any player. He had won earlier in Miami, Rio de Janeiro and Barcelona.

Alcaraz will face defending champion Alexander Zverev, who defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 3-6, 6-2. The second-seeded German player converted three of his five break opportunities to clinch the victory in nearly two hours.