



## BATTING FOR COMEDY

Actor Kiara Advani believes comedy is a difficult genre to crack and doesn't often get the credit it deserves

LEISURE P2



## DRAMATIC MOVE

Finland's leaders say they're in favour of rapidly applying for NATO membership enabling expansion of the alliance

INTERNATIONAL P10



## HISTORIC MEDAL

Indian shuttlers beat Malaysia 3-2 to enter semifinal of Thomas Cup ensuring their first-ever medal

SPORTS P12



## Rajya Sabha polls to be held June 10

**Bhubaneswar:** Elections will be held June 10 to fill 57 Rajya Sabha seats from 15 states falling vacant due to the retirement of members on different dates between June and August, the Election Commission of India (ECI) said Thursday. In Odisha polls will take place for three seats as the tenures of MPs Nekkanti Bhaskar Rao, Prasanna Acharya and Sasmit Patra will end July 1. The BJD may field Patra once again, sources said. Among others who are hopeful of getting the BJD nod are Prasanna Patasani, former bureaucrat Asit Tripathy and Pradeep Majhi. P7



## Rajiv Kumar appointed new CEC

**New Delhi:** Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar was Thursday appointed as the next chief election commissioner. He will assume charge May 15 after incumbent Sushil Chandra demits office May 14, a notification issued by the Law Ministry said. Kumar, an officer of the 1984 batch of the Indian Administrative Service of the Bihar/Jharkhand cadre, superannuated from the IAS in February 2020. Born in 1960, Kumar will demit office sometime in February 2025. Prior to joining the ECI, September 1, 2020, Kumar had also been the chairman of the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB). He joined as the PESB chairman in April 2020.

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## FIVE KILLED IN SEPARATE ROAD MISHAPS IN STATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, May 12:** Three persons were killed and over 36 injured in separate road accidents that took place in the state, Thursday.

In the first incident, a woman Kendu vendor and a buyer died on the roadside when they were run over by a speeding truck near Nipa village in Kanjipani Ghat of this district.

Four other buyers suffered serious injuries and have been admitted to the hospital. The deceased have been identified as Niali Mantry of Nipa village under Kanjipani police limits and Sudarsan Chhatra of Bargarh district. Sources said condition of two of the four injured is quite critical and they may be shifted to other hospitals.

Niali was selling Kendu fruit when five persons arrived on a tractor to buy those. While they were negotiating the price, an iron ore-laden truck ran over all the six, killing two on the spot.

Police have launched an investigation into the matter and have launched a manhunt for the driver of the truck who managed to escape with his vehicle.

In another incident a mini-truck driver was killed and six people including children sustained serious injuries when their vehicle was hit by a tanker near Humma in Ganjam district on NH-16. Sources said that the mini-truck, carrying household and decor items, was heading towards Chhatrapur when the accident occurred.

Two persons, including a minor were killed, and six critically injured when a mini-truck and an auto-rickshaw collided on Chandeneswar Road under Bhograi block of Balasore district. The deceased were identified as Gangamani Bhuyan (23) and her niece Asmita (3). MORE P5

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



To those who write & speak about the govt, I'd like to say only sedition law has been suspended, UAPA is still there!

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	52930.31	↓ 1158.08
NIFTY	15808.00	↓ 359.10
DOLLAR	78.24	↓ ₹0.03
EURO	80.93	↓ ₹0.80
GOLD	₹50,704	↓ ₹118
SILVER	₹59,762	↓ ₹990

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	34.4°C	34.6°C
MIN	24.8°C	25.0°C
Humidity	92%	87%
Rainfall	7.9mm	1.4mm
Forecast	Light rain	very likely

# Criminal injured in shootout

Two sub-inspectors of police were also hurt during the encounter with the miscreants, but now their condition is stated to be stable

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** Dreaded criminal Chakradhar Barik alias Chakara was injured after a shootout with cops at Baramunda under Khandagiri police limits in this city on the intervening night of May 11 and 12. In the firing two police sub-inspectors, Rajiv Kumar Nayak and Debadutta Samantray also suffered injuries. However, sources said that the conditions of all the three are stable.

Barik is currently undergoing treatment at the SCB Medical College & Hospital in Cuttack. Once he recovers, he will be arrested, police sources said.

They also informed that Commissionerate Police received a tip-off regarding the gathering of seven to eight notorious anti-socials including Barik and his associates at the Melana Padia (a playground) near Baramunda high school here.

"Yesterday (Wednesday night), Khandagiri police received information that seven to eight suspected criminals had gathered at



An injured Chakradhar Barik being shifted to the hospital; (Inset): Forensic team members examine the car left behind by the miscreants

the Baramunda playground. The cops also learnt that the accused were armed with lethal weapons like pistols and bombs and were planning some criminal acts. Immediately, a team of the Special squad and Khandagiri police rushed to the spot," DCP Prateek Singh

told the media Thursday. "Upon seeing the police, the anti-socials hurled crude bombs at the cops and opened fire as well. In self defence, police fired back and in the exchange Barik was injured. However, his associates managed to give police the slip taking advantage

of darkness," Singh informed.

Barik who suffered bullet injuries below the knee in his right leg was first admitted to Capital Hospital here before being shifted to Cuttack.

Two firearms, seven rounds of live bullets, unused bombs and a car were seized from the encounter spot. Singh also visited the spot to take stock of the situation. A forensic team also visited the spot to examine the car and other materials left behind by the miscreants.

Police sources claimed that Barik was a close associate of notorious miscreant Rabi Rao who was arrested after an encounter with police at Bharatpur in Khandagiri in August 2019.

Subsequently, Barik created another gang. Members of his group were engaged in various criminal activities like loot, snatching, robbery and illegal drugs trade. The gang frequently used to target jewellery shop owners. A total of 16 cases are pending against Barik at different police stations of the city.

# ODISHA GOVT TO OPERATE MCL'S MEDICAL COLLEGE

Once operational, the Talcher facility will cater to the healthcare needs of people in Angul and adjacent districts

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik accorded in-principle approval Thursday to Mahanadi Coalfields Limited's (MCL) proposal to take over the operations of the medical college in Angul district. The state government will run the medical college and hospital, while MCL will provide the necessary funds for it, officials said.

"The medical college will further strengthen the efforts of the state government to improve the capacity of the medical education institutions in Odisha," the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said in a statement.



MCL has constructed the infrastructure in Talcher on 20 acres of land provided by the Odisha government at a cost of ₹500 crore, officials said. The medical college will have 100 seats for MBBS students while the hospital will have 500 beds.

The MCL tried to operate the Mahanadi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (MIMSR) through public-private partnership (PPP) mode initially. However, after communication between the Coal Ministry and the chief minister, a proposal was sent to the

state government for taking over the responsibility of operating it.

The construction was completed in 2018 and the facility was inaugurated by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in 2019. If everything goes according to plan the medical college will be operational in the next couple of years, sources said.

This facility will be a major step towards providing quality healthcare to the people of Angul and adjacent districts. The medical college will further strengthen the efforts of the government to improve the capacity of the medical education institutions in the state, said officials.

Meanwhile, Health department special secretary Dinabandhu Panda in a letter to MCL has asked the PSU to meet the additional capital expenditure required for the college in the next few years and also to bear the entire operational cost of the medical college. MORE P4

# VOICING DISSENT



Teacher aspirants stage a demonstration Thursday near PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, demanding a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in high school appointments for the same

# Honey-trapped IAF official held for espionage

This is not the first time that Pakistan has honey-trapped Indian defence personnel. Last year 4 employees of DRDO in Chandipur had also been lured by a woman and had passed on vital information

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 12:** An Indian Air Force (IAF) sergeant at the records office here has been arrested for allegedly leaking classified and sensitive information about defence installations and personnel to a Pakistan-based 'agent', police said Thursday. They informed that the sergeant had been 'honey-trapped'.

The accused has been identified as 32-year-old Devender Narayan Sharma. He was working as an administrative assis-

tant (GD) at the IAF Record Office at Subroto Park here.

During investigation, it was found that Sharma was allegedly 'honey-trapped' by a Pakistan-based woman with whom he shared sensitive documents related to personnel, national security and defence, police informed. The Delhi Police Crime Branch arrested the sergeant for allegedly leaking the sensitive information through WhatsApp to the 'agent of adversary country' after deceitfully obtaining material and documents from computers and other files, according to police. Police also said Sharma had also received money from the agent for the leaked information.

The case is similar to the one when four contractual employees of the DRDO were arrested in September last year for passing on secrets to the agents of the



neighbouring countries including the ISI. They were sharing vital defence information of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) of the DRDO located at Chandipur in Balasore district. In that case also police said that the four had been contacted by a woman and

had been honey-trapped. The four are still behind bars.

On the basis of a complaint received by the IAF, a case under the Official Secrets Act was registered and the sergeant was arrested May 6 and dismissed from service, police said.

During investigation incriminating evidence such as electronic gadgets and documents were seized, police informed. They added probe is on in the matter.

Sources said that police have also detected some suspicious transactions in Sharma's wife's bank account. Efforts are on to trace the origin from which money was deposited in the account.

Last year in July, two people, including an Indian Army man, were arrested under the Official Secrets Act for allegedly providing classified documents to Pakistan spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

The development had come after a 34-year-old vegetable supplier at the Pokhran Army base camp was held for allegedly getting sensitive documents from an Army man for money and providing them to the ISI.

# Wickremesinghe is new Sri Lankan PM

AGENCIES

**Colombo, May 12:** Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe was Thursday sworn-in as Sri Lanka's new prime minister. The 73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader was appointed as the prime minister by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa after they held closed-door discussions Wednesday.

It was indeed a strange development as the UNP has just one representative in the 225-member strong Sri Lankan Parliament. This is the sixth time Wickremesinghe will be the PM of the island nation.

Members of the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), a section of the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) and several other parties have decided to support Wickremesinghe.

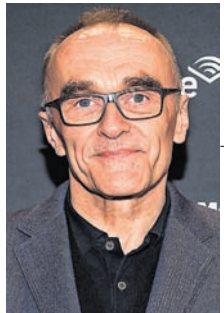


**SELMA BLAIR OPENS UP ABOUT HER PAST**

Actress Selma Blair is not shy in going candid about her past with the world. When promoting her new book *Mean Baby*, the *Hellboy* actress opened up about finding comfort in alcohol from a very young age, spilling details how it became her coping mechanism to survive a horrifying childhood.

**DANNY BOYLE PLANNED TO BRING JAMES BOND BACK TO RUSSIA**

Filmmaker Danny Boyle has revealed his James Bond movie would have been set in Russia. Due to help *No Time to Die* but he dropped out of the 25th film in the iconic franchise due to creative differences, revealed the *Slumdog Millionaire* director.



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

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**ARIES**

You are likely to remain careful and watchful today, foretells Ganesh. And because you'll be invited to parties and other social events, your enthusiasm will remain buoyant. You will also strike the right balance between business and pleasure, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**

In all probability, you will discuss certain sacred issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesh. In the evening, you will be possibly visiting holy places. You had better make up for the lost time to finish pending work in the afternoon. Think twice before you act, warns Ganesh.

**GEMINI**

A fun and frolic filled day awaits you. You will have a lot of fun with your family members, especially children. You will help your children with their work. Marital life will be blissful. Relations with your spouse will be romantic today.

**CANCER**

There is a chance today to benefit from womenfolk. Though you are methodical and disciplined in your work, you will feel rudderless. Yet you will get relief from this monotony and feel jovial, says Ganesh.

**LEO**

You will not be able to reap the rewards of your hard work fully today. You will take all matters very seriously today. You will feel a sense of responsibility and will try to find lasting solutions to problems today. It is a good day to put to rest some worries that have been haunting you for some time now, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**

A cocktail of business and pleasure is on the house today. Parties will run till dawn. You will also take the correct route to success by making important decisions. People will stand to gain if they involve you in their do, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**

Somebody in a position of power at your workplace may decide to pick on you, just for fun. But your luck is strong, and no one but your own thoughts and misgivings can harm you. You shall find it relatively easy to come out of these troubles; much to the chagrin of those who wish otherwise, predicts Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**

Somebody in a position of power at your workplace may decide to pick on you, just for fun. But your luck is strong, and no one but your own thoughts and misgivings can harm you. You shall find it relatively easy to come out of these troubles; much to the chagrin of those who wish otherwise, predicts Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**

You may have to make important decisions of life today, says Ganesh. Remember, haste makes waste, so take every decision only after thinking about its long-term consequences or end results. Be patient.

**CAPRICORN**

Print and electronic media will attract your attention, if you're just planning to begin your career. Your spiritual and philosophical approach give you inner peace, and also inspire you to visit a holy place. Overall, you will have a balanced day, today, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**

You will spend the day introspecting, but the mental peace will still seem distant. Some unavoidable circumstances will force you to handle the situations with diligence, feels Ganesh. Due to your devotion to the Almighty and spiritualism, you will be able to deal with problems pretty well.

**PISCES**

It is difficult for you to be part of one team and to work as a member on two teams, but today you can do anything you want. You will be able to show your expertise to your team today and will be praised by all. Women will make a profit today and will feel encouraged.

**Saba makes relationship with Hrithik 'official'**

**Mumbai:** Did Saba Azad just make her relationship with Hrithik Roshan official? Here's a clue.

She took to Instagram recently to announce her next project Minimum with her fans. His rumoured boyfriend Hrithik Roshan dropped a comment on her post.

Sharing a photo with her team, she wrote, "My next with these gems - in @variety today!! 'Saba Azad, Namit Das, Geetanjali Kulkarni, Rumana Molla to Star in 'MINIMUM', Immigrant Indian Drama Feature Set In Belgium. Produced by Shiladitya Bora and Radhika Lavu, the film is slated to go on floors in June 2022. The international drama will be helmed by writer-actor Rumana Molla in her directorial debut."

Commenting on her post, Hrithik wrote, "Hehe. You gonna kill this! Oui? Oui." Replying to his comment, Saba wrote, "hehe



fingers crossed mon amour". 'Mon Amour' means 'My Love' in French. Reports of Hrithik and Saba dating have been doing the rounds for a long time. The couple has often been spotted hanging out with each other and going

on lunch and dinner dates in the city. The actress is also seen spending quality time with Hrithik's family on various occasions. Apart from that, they have also been indulging in a lot of PDA on social media.



**Comedy is a difficult genre to crack: Kiara**

**Mumbai:** Kiara Advani believes comedy is a difficult genre to crack and doesn't often get the credit it deserves. However, she says it's rare for a female protagonist to do the heavy lifting in comedy films as most of the punches and jokes are reserved for male characters.

Women in Hindi film comedies are mostly passive participants unless it is a rare female-led genre film like *Queen* or *Tanu Weds Manu* and Advani agrees that there is scope for women to do more.

"It's very rare that a female protagonist adds a punch. I am still craving to do that. I'm part of these films, they all have had an interesting arc to the characters. But if I've to compare it to what your male protagonist is doing (in the film), then you just can't compare," the actor said.

"It definitely does disappoint. Maybe now's the time you start speaking up and telling your director that you want more. Maybe now I will start doing that going forward," she added.

**MULTILINGUAL THEATRE FEST KICKS OFF**

**Harkin Das Hero wins hearts on day 1**

**Bhubaneswar:** A five-day multilingual national theatre festival began here at Rabindra Mandap, Thursday.

Bidyakanak Srujanusthan, a City-based theatre troupe and also the organiser of the event, presented Odia play Harkin Das Hero on the inaugural evening.

Written by Hemendra Mohapatra and directed by Jagadish Rana, the play revolved around *Harkin Das Hero*, a character who turns a hero overnight by resolving several complicated issues of the society in one stroke even as he was earlier not taken seriously by the people for his false narrative. The director managed to win the hearts of the audience showcasing the conflicts between good-evil, police-thief and vice-virtue in a humorous way.

Nabin Parida, Malay Mohanty, Govind Mohapatra, Bibekananda Mohapatra, Abhijit Das, Satya Dash and Saunika Sahoo were among the actors who performed on stage. Shakti Prasad Mishra



A scene from the play

scored the music. The dignitaries who attended a meeting ahead of the play included Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi secretary Prabodh Nath, theatre director Abhinna Routray and Sudhakar Patri, president

of the troupe. Seagull Theatre of Assam will Friday present Hindi play *Unchai*, an adaptation from Erostratus by French playwright Jean-Paul Sartre, to be directed by Baharul Islam.

**Kotia tribal kid's 700-km cycle ride now on screen**

**Bhubaneswar:** While Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have locked horns over the possession and title of 21 cluster villages of Kotia panchayat in Koraput district, it is lack of basic educational facilities which has affected people of this region the most.

Young film director Tofan Mohanty has recently made an attempt to highlight the issues

through a short film. Titled *Kotia Guru*, a 26-minute movie produced by Nirmal Samantray, is about an eight-year-old boy who pedaled his way from Kotia to Bhubaneswar covering a distance of 700 km to apprise the Chief Minister about their problems.

The story has been written by Sharanarabinda Ojha while Choudhury Bikash Dash, Bhaswati

Basu, Suraj Mohapatra, Little Master Guru and Mamuni play pivotal roles in the movie.

"We sought permission from the district administration for three days to shoot at Kotia but were allowed just one day," said the director. The viewers will get to see the real picture of education in the movie which will be screened at various festivals, he added.

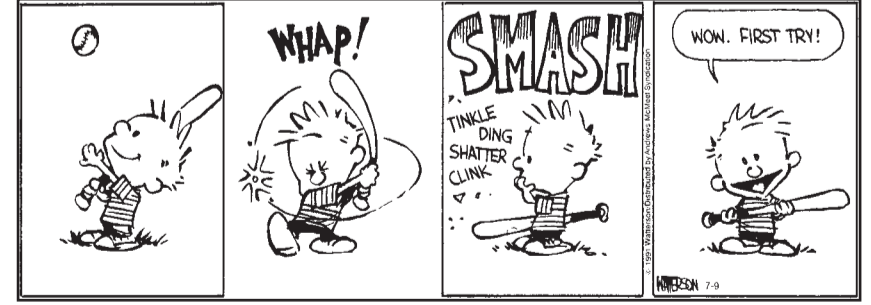


The cast and crew of Odia film *Kotia Guru* during a shoot at Kotia

**PEANUTS**



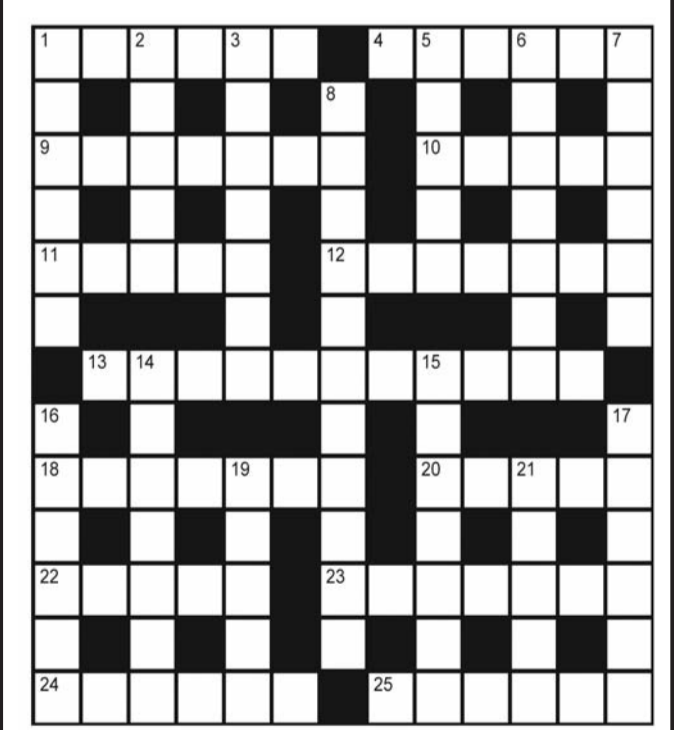
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**BREVITY**



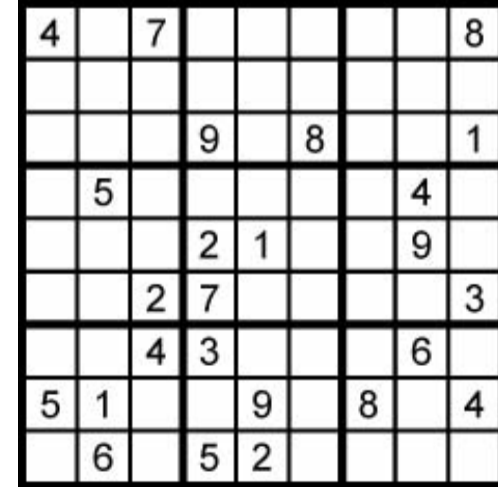
**FUN post CROSSWORD**



- Across**
- 1 Free-and-easy
  - 4 Lasso
  - 9 Suitor
  - 10 Mount Asama locale
  - 11 Couplet
  - 12 Overly sentimental
  - 13 Casino game (6,2,3)
  - 18 He was a prince
  - 20 Genesis tower
  - 22 Eating places
  - 23 It can be standing
  - 24 Onerous
  - 25 Draw back
  - 5 Pear variety
  - 6 Driving force
  - 7 Boarder
  - 8 Foreboding
  - 14 City in Nova Scotia
  - 15 Hug
  - 16 Long-legged shorebird
  - 17 Side-look
  - 19 Illegal firing
  - 21 Hush money
- Down**
- 1 Modest
  - 2 Brazilian dance
  - 3 NATO is one

**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



## NATURE'S GIFT

Lotus flowers in full bloom in Mahanadi near Jobra Maritime Museum in Cuttack, Thursday

COVID-19 TRACKER			
	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	51,93,80,402	47,42,53,438	62,83,094
India	4,31,13,413	4,25,70,165	5,24,181
Odisha	12,88,253	12,78,972	9,126

# Prepare roadmap for forest health: CM



CM Naveen Patnaik, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra, Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha and Additional Chief Secretary Mona Sharma at the inaugural session of two-day conference of DFOs in Bhubaneswar

“Eco-tourism has provided new opportunities to people of the fringe villages, and we should upscale this to harness the untapped potential of our forests. It has brought Rs 10.51 crore business in 2021-22, and local communities have benefited Rs 2.61 crore from it

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

**INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT**

Odisha's forest cover has increased by 537.3 sqkm from 2019-21, trailing Andhra Pradesh (647 sqkm) and Telangana (632 sqkm)

The state's forest cover has increased to 52,155.95 sqkm, comprising 33.5 per cent of the total geographical area, from 51,619 sqkm in 2019

Odisha also topped states and UTs in an increase in mangrove forest cover, adding 8 sqkm of it since 2017

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday asked divisional forest officers (DFOs) to prepare a roadmap for improving forest health or the general condition of forests in state.

Inaugurating a two-day conference of divisional forest officers (DFOs) here, Patnaik said the roadmap will suggest ways to reduce man-animal conflict, prevent trafficking, provide livelihood to people living on the fringe of forests, mitigate wildfires and allow forests to grow without destruction, thus improving their health.

He said the forest cover in the state has increased due to the tireless efforts of Van Suraksha Samiti (VSS) members and forest personnel.

Odisha has recorded the highest increase in mangrove forest cover and the third highest in overall forest cover among all the states and Union Territories between 2019 and 2021, as per the India State of Forest Report-2021.

Noting that afforestation is a key component in providing employment to people residing in villages on the fringes of the forest, thus improving their living standards, he advised officials concerned to rope in women self-help groups for planting seedlings and taking care of those.

He urged the DFOs to carry out the plantation programmes under the 5T Initiative.

This would bring transparency, timeliness and teamwork among

all stakeholders, he added.

He said that eco-tourism has brought Rs 10.51 crore business in 2021-22, and local communities have benefited Rs 2.61 crore from it.

“Eco-tourism has provided new opportunities to people of the fringe villages, and we should upscale this to harness the untapped potential of our forests,” he said.

He expressed happiness over Odisha extensively using digital technology in forest management.

Speaking on various issues such as human-elephant conflict, wildlife trafficking, and incidents of forest fires, he said that these are key concerns where we need to prepare an integrated plan with a focused approach for significant reduction in such cases.

As per the India State of Forest

Report, Odisha's forest cover has increased by 537.3 sq km from 2019-21, trailing Andhra Pradesh (647 sq km) and Telangana (632 sq km).

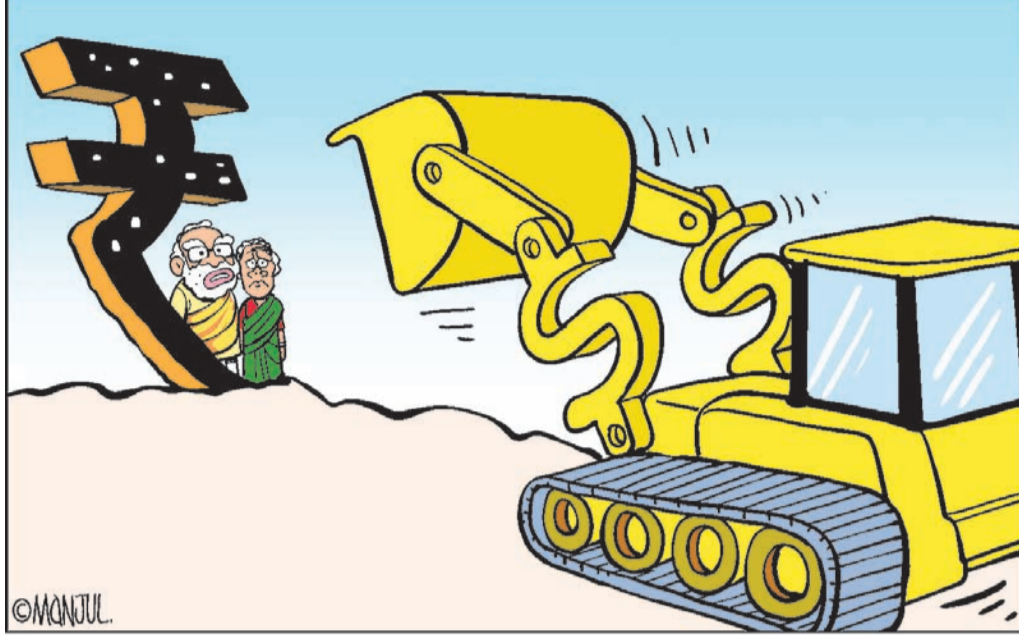
The state's forest cover has increased to 52,155.95 sq km, comprising 33.5 per cent of the total geographical area, from 51,619 sq km in 2019, it said.

Odisha also topped states and UTs in an increase in mangrove forest cover, adding 8 sq km of it since 2017, it added.

At the event, state Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister BK Arukha said that the department has reduced incidents of forest fires by 50 per cent as compared to last year.

Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said that the state's green cover is increasing consistently over the last 20-25 years.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# Brown sugar worth ₹1 crore seized in Khurda; 3 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** The Special Task Force (STF) of the Crime Branch claimed to have arrested three drug peddlers and seized over 1 kg of brown sugar from their possession during a raid at a place near Dadhimachhagadia under Khurda Sadar police limits on the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday.

The accused were identified as Kumar Patasani alias Nalu Goda of Lokanath area, Laxmidhar Swain alias Kalu of Routapada under Begunia police limits and Amarendra Mohapatra alias Dipu of Harirajpur under Banki police limits in Cuttack district, sources said.

On a tip-off, the STF team carried out the raid while the accused were waiting for the buyers near Dadhimachhagadia.

The STF personnel found 1.042



The STF team carried out the raid while the accused were waiting for the buyers near Dadhimachhagadia under Khurda Sadar police limits.

The STF personnel found 1.042 kg of brown sugar with an estimated market value of over Rs 1 crore from their possession.

The STF has seized more than 51 kg brown sugar/heroin, 202 gram cocaine, over 93 quintals of ganja/marijuana and 750 gram opium since 2020

kg of brown sugar with an estimated market value of over Rs 1 crore from their possession, sources added.

The STF team arrested the trio after registering a case (11/22) under sections 21(c)/29 of NDPS Act 1985. The accused were produced before the court Thursday and sent to judicial custody.

The STF has seized more than 51 kg brown sugar/heroin, 202 gram cocaine, over 93 quintals of ganja/marijuana and 750 gram opium since 2020.

At least 144 drug dealers/peddlers have been arrested during the same period.

## 10-day Khadi expo in City from May 14

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** The Odisha Khadi and Gramodyoga Board will organise a 10-day sale-cum-exhibition programme in the city here starting May 14.

The exhibition will be organised on the premises of Odisha Khadi and Gramodyoga Board at Kharvel Nagar here, sources said.

At least 60 stalls will sell Khadi clothes, household articles and other products during the exhibition. Live operation of Charakha and other weaving tools will be showcased at the exhibition. Besides, cultural programmes will be organised to entertain the visitors.

The stalls at the annual expo had grossed around Rs 1.20 crore last year. This year, the organisers are expecting business worth Rs 1.50 crore during the exhibition.

## AT LORD'S SERVICE



Carpenters shaped a hub for chariot construction at Rath Yard in Puri, Thursday

## Dedication to duty brings commendation: Governor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** Being aware of one's duty and responsibilities not only makes him successful but also fetches him respect and commendation everywhere. Former Odisha Governor MM Rajendran is such an example who has created a distinct identity for himself by serving uninterruptedly in many top posts, said Governor Ganeshi Lal while launching Rajendran's book 'Service Uninterrupted' here Thursday.

"Rajendran is an inspiration for the younger generation," said Lal at the book launching ceremony at the Abhishek Hall of Raj Bhawan here.

Congratulating the former Governor for having authored such a valuable book on his long



experience, Lal said the reforms initiated by the former Governor in the functioning of universities were well appreciated in the state.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajendran narrated several instances and events associated with him during his long career as an IAS officer.

Rajendran claimed that he carried out his duty and responsibilities as the Governor of Odisha in accordance with the Constitution of India.

**Ph.D Degree in Education**

Sri Arjun Kumar Mohanta, HOD, Panchayat Samiti Degree Mahavidyalaya, Suliapada, Mayurbhanj has been awarded Ph.D Degree from Utkal University, Vanivihar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha in Education. He was working under the Guidance of Dr. Narayan Bank, Former Reader in Education in Govt. U.G. College of Teacher Education, Baripada, M.B.J. on the topic entitled "Impact of Early Childhood care and Education for the development of pre-school education in the Mayurbhanj District of Orissa". It has been examined and highly appreciated by Prof. Nityananda Pradhan, Principal, RIE (NCERT), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and Prof. (Dr.) P.K. Sahoo, Department of Education, University of Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. Dr. Arjun Kumar Mohanta is the youngest son of late Lal Mohan Mohanta, and Late Saradha Mohanta of Bargeedih village under Bahalada P.S. in Mayurbhanj District. He conveys his heartfelt thanks to his good wishers, Dr. Kunalata Das, Editor the "BHASA", Sri Bijay Kumar Tudu, Sub-Registrar (C.S.), Baripada, Smt. Somabaree Hansdah, I.T.C., Rourkela, wife Lct. Pranati Mohanta, all the Colleagues, friends and relatives for their assistance at the time of need.

# Half of Covid survivors ailing even 2 years after infection, says study

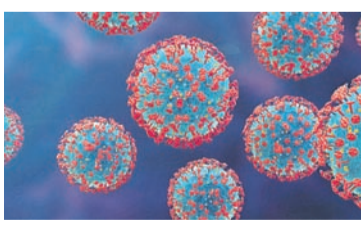
More than half of people hospitalised with Covid-19 still have at least one symptom two years after they were first infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to the longest follow-up study published in The Lancet Respiratory Medicine journal.

The research followed 1,192 participants in China infected with SARS-CoV-2 during the first phase of the pandemic in 2020. While physical and mental health generally improved over time, the study suggests that Covid-19 patients still tend to have poorer health and quality of life than the general population.

This is especially the case for participants with long Covid, who typically still have at least one symptom including fatigue, shortness of breath and sleep difficulties two years after initially falling ill, the researchers said.

The long-term health impacts of Covid-19 have remained largely unknown, as the longest follow-up studies to date have spanned around one year, they said.

"Our findings indicate that for a certain proportion of hospitalised Covid-19 survivors, while they may have cleared



the initial infection, more than two years is needed to recover fully from Covid-19," said study lead author Professor Bin Cao, of the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, China.

"Ongoing follow-up of Covid-19 survivors, particularly those with symptoms of long Covid, is essential to understand the longer course of the illness, as is further exploration of the benefits of rehabilitation programmes for recovery," Cao said in a statement.

The researchers noted that there is a clear need to provide continued support to a significant proportion of people who have had Covid, and to understand how vaccines, emerging treatments, and variants affect long-term health outcomes. They evaluated the health of 1,192 participants with acute Covid-19 treated at Jin Yin-tan Hospital in Wuhan, between January 7 and May 29, 2020, at six months, 12 months, and two years. Assessments involved a six-minute walking test, laboratory tests, and questionnaires on symptoms, mental health, health-related quality of life, if they had returned to work, and health-care use after discharge.

Six months after initially falling ill, 68 per cent of participants reported at least one long Covid symptom, according to the researchers.

By two years after infection, reports of symptoms had fallen to 55 per cent. Fatigue or muscle weakness were the symptoms most often reported and fell from 52 per cent at six months to 30 per cent at two years, the researchers said. Regardless of the severity of their initial illness, 89 per cent of participants had returned to their original work at two years, they said.

They noted that two years after initially falling ill, Covid-19 patients are generally in poorer health than the general population, with 31 per cent reporting fatigue or muscle weakness and 31 per cent reporting sleep difficulties.

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**Bank of India**  
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

**DEMAND NOTICE**

Notice under Section 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act, 2002 for Enforcement of Security Interest

The Bank has granted following various credit facilities to the under mentioned Borrowers & the amount outstanding dues mentioned below has not been paid in time. Therefore Demand notices under Sec. 13 (2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 was issued by the Authorized Officer against the following Borrowers of the **Bank of India, Patia Branch** but the same could not be served on the below mentioned parties which was sent by Regd. Post A.D. Therefore, the contents of the same including the amount outstanding, Loan amount and details of the secured assets are herein furnished below.

PATIA BRANCH / Name and Address of Borrowers	Nature / Limit	Date of NPA/ Date of Demand Notice	Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act	Details of the mortgaged property
Borrowers : 1) Mr. Tapas Kumar Dalei, S/o: Mr. Chaitanya Dalei, 2) Mr. Chaitanya Dalei, 3) Mrs. Rajanibala Dalei, All are at Plot No.: 1090 / 2136, Lane No.: 7, Bhimpur, Aerodrome Area, Dist.: Khurda, Bhubaneswar-751020	Housing Loan / ₹19,00,000/-	30.03.2022 / 04.04.2022	₹ 17,91,338.33 + Interest & expenses thereon	All that part and parcel of Land and Building situated over Khata No.: 544/62, Plot No.: 1090/2136, Area: Ac.0.046 dec., KISSAM: Gharabari at Mouza: Bhimpur, P.S.: Bhubaneswar, SRO: Bhubaneswar, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Standing in

the name of Mr. Tapas Kumar Dalei, Mr. Chaitanya Dalei, Mrs. Rajanibala Dalei, Bounded by North: Chakradhar Dalei, South: Road, East: Plot No.: 216/73, West: Plot No.:216/75

As the above mentioned Borrowers of the Patia Branch have defaulted in repayment of the principal loan/ facility in installments/ interest/ both, the account has been classified as NPA, in accordance with the directions or guidelines issued by the RBI. In spite of our repeated demands you (borrower) have not paid any amount towards the amount outstanding in your account, you have not discharged your liabilities. Hence, we are now constrained to make this publication of Demand Notice, required u/s 13(2) of the said Act and Rule 3 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. You are here by called upon to pay the aforesaid amount alongwith further interest, cost, Incidental Expenses, Charges etc. within a period of 60 days from the date of Notice, failing which we will take necessary action under the provisions of sec 13(4) of the said Act. against all or any one or more of the secured assets including taking possession of your secured assets and sale them. If the dues are not fully recovered in the course of these actions against secured assets, then the Bank reserves the right to take action by filing recovery action against you before DRT/Court for recovery of the same. It may be noted that under the provisions of section 13(8) of the Act, right of redemption is available to you, by paying the dues of the Bank together with all cost, charges and expenses incurred by the Bank, at any time, before the date of publication of notice for public auction or inviting quotations or tender from public or private treaty for transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale of the secured assets. Please take note that as per sub section (13) of the aforesaid Act. after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise. **This notice is issued without prejudice to the rights of the Bank available under any other law.**

Place : Bhubaneswar  
Date: 13.05.2022

Authorised Officer  
Bank of India

# Ex-MLA's ₹133cr seized in money laundering case



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized cash and fixed deposits worth more than ₹133 crore of former MLA Jitendra Nath Patnaik in a money laundering case linked to alleged illegal mining in the state, the agency said Thursday.

The action came after the ED carried out raids at various offices and residential premises of Patnaik and his related entities at Joda in Keonjhar district of the state.

Patnaik, popularly known as Jitu Patnaik, is a former independent MLA from the Champua Assembly constituency.

The agency alleged that the former MLA derived undue pecuniary advantage by way of illegal mining without necessary statutory approvals. "A seizure of cash amounting to ₹70 lakh and 124 fixed deposits amounting to ₹133.17 crore has been made during the search opera-

The action came after the ED carried out raids at various offices and residential premises of Patnaik and his related entities at Joda in Keonjhar district

The agency alleged that the former MLA derived undue pecuniary advantage by way of illegal mining without necessary statutory approvals

tions along with seizure of various incriminating documents and digital evidences," the ED said in a statement.

The money laundering case stems from the FIR and charge sheet filed by the Odisha Vigilance cell against Patnaik and others.

"As per the charge sheet filed by the state vigilance, the accused indulged in illegal mining for a long period causing huge loss to the government exchequer which amounts to be more than ₹130 crore. The ED has been able to recover almost entire amount of proceeds of crime," it said.

# BJP MLA goes against party line, seeks early completion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Puri, May 12:** Going against the party line on the Puri Heritage Corridor Project, BJP MLA of the pilgrim city Jayant Sarangi Thursday said that the work close to the Jagannath temple here should be completed as soon as possible and urged parties not to politicise the issue.

Sarangi's statement came a day after the BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra demanded that the work in the prohibited zone of the 800-year-old temple be stopped accusing the BJD government of the state of carrying out the project illegally.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) May 9 informed the Orissa High Court that the ongoing construction work might have caused damage to the 12th-century shrine and the state government project was being carried out without valid permission from the competent authorities.

"It is better for the temple as



well as for the local people to complete the work without further delay. I also request parties and people not to politicise the corridor project issue," the Puri MLA told in a press conference.

Sarangi said that the ASI's stand has delayed the project which he has been supporting from the very beginning. "If it is not completed before monsoon, people of the pilgrim town would face a lot of problems in their daily activities due to the deep pits dug around the temple for construction of different facilities," he said.

He appealed to both the state and the Central governments to work in coordination with each other for completing the works before the rainy season.

Claiming that he was the first to raise the heritage corridor issue in the Assembly, the BJP leader said that a House Committee headed by the Speaker has been formed to look into the matter. Besides, the matter is under consideration of the Orissa High Court, he added.

The BJP MLAs statement was in contrast to senior BJP leaders such as Patra and Bhubaneswar MP

Aparajita Sarangi.

Patra, who unsuccessfully contested the Puri Lok Sabha seat in 2019, Wednesday charged the BJD administration with undertaking the heritage corridor project work in an "illegal" manner.

Aparajita Sarangi had also demanded that the work for the project be stopped immediately after the ASI informed the High Court that it had not given any permission to undertake construction work in the restricted zone of the temple.

Asked whether he was supporting the demolition of several mutts near the temple because of the project, the Puri MLA said, "What can I do if Mutt heads and others come forward to donate land for it?"

However, only two days ago, he had said that no one is happy with the heritage corridor project and all have parted their land for it "out of compulsion".

On May 11, Sarangi said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi should intervene in the contro-

versy and resolve the row, while Thursday, he demanded the project be completed soon. On his changing stance on the issue, Sarangi said, "I have replied according to the questions of the media."

Sarangi claimed that several developmental projects have been taken up in Puri after he became the MLA and none of them, except the heritage project, faced opposition from any quarter.

A PIL claiming that construction work for the project has affected the health of the temple was filed in the high court which had ordered a joint inspection of the Jagannath temple by the ASI and the state government.

The state had informed the court that correspondences were exchanged between the Odisha government and the National Monuments Authority, which functions under the Union Ministry of Culture and is responsible for grant of permission for construction-related activity in the "prohibited and regulated" areas.

# NO COV DEATH IN LAST 9 DAYS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** Fourteen more people, including four children, tested positive for Covid in Odisha, taking the state's coronavirus tally to 12,88,253, the state Health department said in a bulletin Thursday.

The death toll remained unchanged at 9,126 as no fresh fatality was recorded in the last nine days. There are now 135 active cases, while 12,78,939 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 10 in the last 24 hours. Fifty-three patients have died due to comorbidities to date.

# Odisha prioritises women empowerment: Speaker

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 12:** The Odisha Assembly Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro met Daniel Sim, Deputy Consul General of Australian Consulate General-Kolkata, during the latter's courtesy visit to Odisha Thursday and discussed the status of women in state politics, the role of women in law and order maintenance and Parliamentary system between Odisha and Australia were discussed.

Former minister and senior legislators Usha Devi, Latika Pradhan, Suryamani Vaidya, Basanti Hembram, Kusum Tete and



Assembly Secretary Dasarathi Satpathy among others joined the discussion and discussed women empowerment along with some other issues.

Speaker Patro said, "Under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Government

of Odisha has always given priority to women's empowerment. Any state or country can be developed through a holistic approach towards development of women."

"Through the Mission Shakti scheme, women in Odisha, especially in rural areas, have been

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, the Government of Odisha has always given priority to women's empowerment. Any state or country can be developed through a holistic approach towards the development of women

SURIYA NARAYAN PATRO | ASSEMBLY SPEAKER

empowered economically and socially," he said.

Daniel Sim praised the state government's multi-faceted initiatives on women empowerment.

# Odisha govt to operate MCL's medical college

Continued from P1

The Director, Medical Education & Training has prepared a tentative estimate to run the institute. As per the estimation, ₹627.93 crore will be required to meet the expenditure towards salary, maintenance and other services during a period of next five years. An amount of ₹85.74 crore will be needed for the first year, ₹110.59 crore for the second year and ₹127.22 crore, ₹147.83 crore and ₹156.55 crore for the next three years. "You are requested to convey your acceptance of the above proposal for taking further necessary action at this end," Panda told MCL CMD.

# International Nurses Day observed at AIIMS Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar:** The pandemic has exposed weaknesses in the health systems around the world caused by under-investment. Building a resilient nursing workforce is the need of the hour. Dignitaries and experts reiterated so while speaking on the occasion of International Nurses Day at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here Thursday. AIIMS Bhubaneswar's "Students Nurses association" celebrated the day in the mini auditorium of the College of Nursing at the institution. AIIMS Bhubaneswar Medical Superintendent Sachidananda Mohanty, addressing the gathering, said that investing in nursing education, skill training and leadership training has to be prioritized to ensure better preparedness. Associate Professor at the College of Nursing L Anand gave the welcome address and the theme of the day was unfolded by Associate Professor MV Smitha.

# CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Executive Magistrate, Cuttack, I have changed my name from Ishak Saha to Shaikh Ishak for all purposes

## ACCOUNTANTS' MEET

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India announced a three-day seminar on "Cost Excellence - A Sustainable Business Strategy" which will begin May 13 at the IMMT auditorium in Bhubaneswar, Thursday. The event will host more than 600 delegates from different industry associations, government departments, regulators, industrial houses and other professional bodies from across the country

OP PHOTO

# JSW Infra commissions ₹1,300cr Paradip East Quay coal terminal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai/Bhubaneswar, May 12:** JSW Infrastructure has started commercial operations at the Paradip East Quay coal terminal in Odisha, developed at an investment of around ₹1,300 crore.

The fully-mechanised terminal at Paradip Port has an annual handling capacity of 30 million tonnes. Built as a cape compliant terminal, it can handle capesize vessels once the dredging at the port is completed. The terminal has the capacity to unload 25 rakes per day and can load two vessels simultaneously, the Sajjan Jindal-led company said in a statement Thursday.

The company has invested around ₹1,300 crore to establish this terminal after signing a 30-year concession agreement in 2017 with the port trust. Following the commissioning of this coal terminal, the company's current cargo capacity crosses 150 mtpa, and it aims to have a total cargo



handling capacity of 200 mtpa by FY24. Arun Maheshwari, Joint MD and CEO of JSW Infra said. JSW Infra already has an iron ore terminal at the Paradip Port with a capacity to handle 10 mtpa of iron ore/ pellets. This terminal is designed to load the cape vessels within 48 hrs.

JSW Infrastructure is part of the diversified JSW Group and is ranked among the top five port companies in the country. Its nine ports flanked across the east, west and southern coasts. It also operates a terminal at Fujairah in the UAE.

# Pilgrimage tourism rallies with 35-40% rise in passenger interest

**P**assenger interest in travelling to places of religious significance has shown a 35-40 per cent increase in 2022 compared to 2021, studies by travel aggregators have shown.

Online travel portal 'ixigo' compared month-on-month trends based on queries on its apps and website.

It showed that as of March 2022, there has been an increase in searches for religious places like Katra (83 per cent), Tirupati (73 per cent), Haridwar (36 per cent), Rishikesh (38 per cent), Rameswaram (34 per cent), Agra (29 per cent), Prayagraj (22 per cent) and Varanasi (14 per cent).

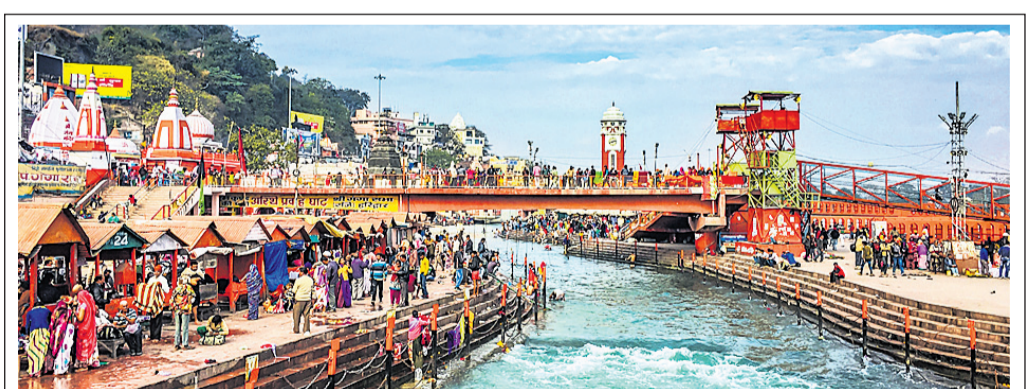
The trend is further amplified by the IRCTC launching religious circuit trains like the Ramayana Yatra Train Tours, the Buddhist Circuit trains, the Jyotirlinga

Darshan Yatra and the Vande Bharat Express from Delhi to Katra, among others.

However, absolute numbers were not available in the surveys.

"Pilgrimage tourism is back on track. Several pilgrimage schemes announced by the government that were halted in January during the Covid wave caused by Omicron have resumed operations and are witnessing strong demand. Search queries for popular pilgrimage destinations like Rishikesh, Rameswaram and Haridwar have seen a month-on-month average increase of 35 to 40 per cent. The effective roll-out of booster doses is encouraging travel confidence, especially among senior citizens," said Aloke Bajpai, the group CEO and co-founder of ixigo.

Also, a study by ConfirmTkt has found a 35-40 per cent increase



Apart from the spiritual experience, pilgrimage tourism has also become more attractive for travelers for its peaceful and rejuvenating vacation offerings including yoga retreats and ayurvedic spas. Search queries for popular pilgrimage destinations like Rameswaram, Prayagraj and Haridwar have seen a year-on-year average increase of 35-40 per cent

DINESH KUMAR KOTHA | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, CONFIRMTKT

in queries for trains to religious destinations, as seen on its app and

website in April this year compared to February 2021.

There have been 47 per cent increase in queries for

Rameswaram, a 36 per cent spike for Katra, 8 per cent for both Prayagraj and Varanasi, 30 per cent rise for Haridwar, 29 per cent for Rishikesh, and a 7 per cent rise in queries for Tirupati.

"Pilgrimage travel is on the rise. With restrictions ending and overall cases on the decline, demand for religious travel is bouncing back," said Dinesh Kumar Kotha, the co-founder and CEO of ConfirmTkt.

"Apart from the spiritual experience, pilgrimage tourism has also become more attractive for travelers for its peaceful and rejuvenating vacation offerings including yoga retreats and ayurvedic spas. Search queries for popular pilgrimage destinations like Rameswaram, Prayagraj and Haridwar have seen a year-on-year average increase of 35-40 per cent," he said.

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# Explosives hidden by ultras years ago found



Police received inputs late May 10 night about explosives hidden in forest between Panching and Balpai villages

The police recovered a CP Riot gun, 38-mm rubber bullet, six packets of liquid explosives and a pair of cutting pliers

The Riot gun recovered was one of the arms looted from Koraput armoury way back in 2004

**Maost activities are still going on in some parts of Boipariguda and Machhkund under Lamtaput block of Koraput**

VARUN GUNTUPALLI | KORAPUT SP

**Koraput, May 12:** Maoist activities are still going on in some parts of Boipariguda and Machhkund under Lamtaput block of Koraput district, said SP Varun Guntupalli while addressing the media here Thursday on recovery of old explosives in a forest, Wednesday. He said security forces and DVF jawans have recovered explosive materials which were long hidden underground by Maoists in Panching forest under Narayanpatana police limits in the district. Guntupalli stated that police received inputs late May 10 night about explosives hidden in forest between Panching and Balpai villages.

A team of DVF and an anti-bomb squad jointly carried out a search operation in the area. The ultras had buried the explosives in the forest many years ago. The police recovered a CP Riot gun, 38-mm rubber bullet, six packets of liquid explosives (OPR gel) and a pair of cutting pliers.

The Riot gun recovered here was one of the arms looted from Koraput armoury in 2004. It may

be noted here that Maoists had mounted an attack on the armoury February 6, 2004. As many as nine riot guns were looted.

Hinting at Maoist activities in Boipariguda and Lamtaput areas, the SP said that Odisha police, BSF and Cobra force have stepped up combing operations in these areas.

Earlier, Narayanpatna, Bandhugaon, Semiliguda, Laxmipur, Nandapur and Pottangi used to see Left-wing extremism, but now there are no such activities being noticed, he added. Police and intelligence wings have been strengthened in these areas.

He urged the Maoists to lay down arms and join the mainstream that would help them avail various rehabilitation facilities.



Students of Anandapur Upgraded Upper Primary School in Keonjhar district staged a demonstration, Thursday, after locking up their school gate over shortage of teachers. They relented after the CRCC assured them of sending a teacher to the school on deputation

## BRAJARAJNAGAR BYELECTION

# Papers of all 14 candidates valid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jharsuguda, May 12:** The nomination papers of all the 14 candidates for the upcoming Brajaraj nagar bypoll that is scheduled to be held May 31 was declared valid after a thorough scrutiny Thursday.

Returning officer and sub-collector Dayamaya Padhi declared all the nomination papers valid.

Among the candidates are BJD's Alaka Mohanty, BJP's former MLA Radharani Panda, Congress nominee and former speaker Kishore Patel, Communist Party's Ramesh Tripathy, Odisha Janata Party's Manoj Pradhan, Hindustan Nirmala Dal's Bijay Jalan, independent candidates Parbati Behera, Tapan Kumar Swain, Suprii Kumar Behera, Aditya Pradhan, Manoj Meher, Sitaram Behera and Dinabandhu Biswal.

Senior BJD leaders and ministers including Naba Kishore Das, Padmanabha Behera, Tukuni Sahu, Prasanna Acharya, and Susanta Singh had participated in the nomination filing programme for Alaka Mohanty, wife of Late Kishore Mohanty.

The BJD leaders claimed that they will win the byelection by a big margin of over 50,000 votes. "Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik



**BJD leaders claimed that they will win the byelection by a margin of over 50,000 votes**

always stands with the people in sorrows and happiness of their lives. Late Kishore Mohanty was also having a strong relation with people of this area. So, we will definitely win the by-poll by a margin of over 50,000 votes," claimed Padmanabha Behera.

Similarly, former MLA Radharani Panda and Kishore Chandra Patel filed their nominations on behalf of the opposition BJP and Congress respectively. In a show of strength, the polit-

ical parties held rallies during the filing of nomination papers of their respective candidates. Several state-level leaders also attended the rallies.

Notably, the bypoll was necessitated by the untimely demise of BJD MLA Kishore Mohanty in December last year. Counting of votes and declaration of results are scheduled for June 3.

Worth mentioning, BJD's Panda bagged the Assembly seat by defeating BJD candidate Anup Kumar Sai in 2014. She, however, lost to BJD's Kishore Mohanty by a margin of 11,634 votes in 2019.

Similarly, Congress' Patel, a three-time MLA, unsuccessfully fought from the seat in 2014. In 2019, Congress had left the seat for CPI.

## Former CDVO gets 2-yr jail for bribery

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, May 12:** A special Vigilance court here Thursday sentenced former chief district veterinary officer (CDVO) of Gajapati district to two years of imprisonment after convicting him in a case of bribery.

Special Vigilance Judge Luna Mohanty also slapped a penalty of ₹5,000 on the ex-CDVO Jalandhar Mallick. In default, Mallick was directed to undergo an additional four months of imprisonment.

Meanwhile, Mallick has retired from his service. The judge pronounced the order after examining the statements of seven witnesses, special public prosecutor Surendra Nath Panda said.

According to the case diary, Mallick, during his stint as the CDVO, had demanded ₹10,000 from a livestock inspector Pramod Kumar Pattnaik working under Gumma block in Gajapati district after he requested him to transfer him to Gunupur. Pattnaik expressed his inability but Mallick insisted on his demand.

Pattnaik lodged a complaint with the Vigilance department, which laid a trap and caught Mallick red-handed when he was accepting bribe from former June 30, 2021. The Vigilance sleuths arrested him and produced him in court after registering a case. Later, Mallick was released from jail on bail.

## SHORT TAKES

### Man ends life after killing wife

**Bolangir:** A man allegedly killed his wife following a scuffle over family feud late Wednesday night and committed suicide by consuming poison early Thursday morning at Khuntasamalei village under Larambha police limits in Patnagarh locality. The deceased was identified as Kunti Tala and her husband as Ghasi from Khuntasamalei village, a source said. Ghasi had returned home in an inebriated condition Wednesday night and had an altercation with his wife over a trivial issue. Things took ugly turn when Ghasi beat his wife with a wooden plank. Kunti fell down on the ground after the fatal attack and succumbed on the spot. Ghasi consumed poison to end his life when he realised his mistake. His family members rushed him to a nearby hospital for treatment. However, doctors at the hospital declared him 'brought dead'. Police have seized the bodies and sent for post-mortem.

### Teen lives on via eye donation

**Berhampur:** The parents of a 15-year-old boy, who died at his residence in Ganjam district Thursday, have donated his eyes. The eyes of Ashutosh, who was a Class X student, were donated to the eye bank in the Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati (MKCG) Medical College and Hospital after the members of the Friends Helping Club persuaded them. Doctors from the Ophthalmology department of the medical college rushed to his house and removed the cornea of the teenager. The corneas will be transplanted to two persons who will get their vision, said a doctor. "We took this step to keep my son alive," said Prabhat Panigrahy, the father of the deceased.

### Dyke in Mahanadi mooted in Boudh

**Boudh:** Zilla Parishad members of the district have expressed concern over acute drinking water crisis in Boudh town and proposed a dyke to be constructed across Mahanadi river to conserve water in dry season. At a recent ZP meeting, the members passed such a resolution which will be sent to the state government, said sources. "The town is on the bank of Mahanadi. The water level in the river is low, leading to drinking water crisis in the town. There is need for a dyke near the ongoing Mirzakud Bridge to store water in the summer," they said. The officials concerned were asked to draw up a plan to this effect and estimate its cost.

# One killed, 32 hurt in separate road mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, May 12:** A driver was killed while 32 others sustained injuries in separate road mishaps Thursday.

In the first incident, a person died while eight others sustained injuries after the pick-up van they were travelling in was hit by a speeding tanker on NH-16 near Humma in Ganjam district.

The incident occurred while the mini truck carrying 'dowry items' from a bride's house in Mardharajpur in Khallikote block was en route to Chhatrapur and a gas tanker hit the truck, killing the driver on the spot.

Police with the help of locals rescued the injured and rushed them to Chhatrapur sub-divisional hospital. A case has been registered in this connection.

Similarly, over 20 persons were

injured after a bus carrying 40 artistes overturned at Jarada Ghati under Parjang police limits in Dhenkanal district. The bus was ferrying the artistes from Kankadahada in Dhenkanal to Deogarh.

The injured were admitted to Kamakhyanager sub-divisional hospital.

Reportedly, the driver was in a drunken state. In yet another incident, a truck rammied into a bullock cart killing two bullocks and injuring four persons travelling on it near Asanpal village under Kundheigola police limits in Deogarh district.

Sources said the injured persons were going to collect firewood. Tension prevailed in the area as the locals blocked Vijayawada-Ranchi National Highway causing severe traffic disruption.

# 1 mn baby turtles make way to sea

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rajnagar, May 12:** Over 1 crore eggs of Olive Ridley turtles getting destroyed in high tides due to the impact of cyclonic storm Asani has shocked the environmentalists and animal lovers. However, 10 lakh turtle hatchlings swimming back to sea after their birth at Nasi-2 island in Gahirmatha marine sanctuary has come as a big relief.

Reports said that the turtles had laid eggs on Nasi-2 beach out of which baby turtles have started coming out of the eggs during last two days. Over 10 lakh turtles have gone back to sea during last two days. This process will continue for next six to seven days as more hatchlings are expected to come out of eggs and move into the sea, forest officials said.

Over 5 lakh turtles had joined mass nesting on Nasi-2 island from March 23 to 28 this year. The female turtles after climbing the



**Forest officials have adopted several measures to protect the hatchlings from dogs, jackals and hunting birds**

beach moved to safer places and dug pits ranging from 1ft to 1.5ft to lay eggs. Each female turtle had laid more than 100 eggs.

After birth, the hatchlings have

moved straight into the sea. Thousands of turtles moving into sea after evening till daybreak is a sight to behold. Since light proves to be dampener on their movement into the sea, the bright light from the nearby Abdul Kalam island remains switched off during the period. The forest officials have adopted several measures to protect the hatchlings from being preyed by dogs, jackals and hunting birds.

# 3 held for attacking BJD youth leader

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, May 12:** It seems that there is no let-up in incidents of post-poll violence in Ganjam district as police arrested three persons on charge of assaulting the city secretary of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) youth wing, Thursday.

The accused were identified as Sanatan Sahu, 26, a defeated candidate for corporator post from ward no-5 under Berhampur Municipal Corporation, his brother Shiba Sahu, 32, and his uncle Purusottam Sahu, 45, Bada Bazaar IIC Prasant Bhupati said.

They were accused of barging inside the business establishment of Seemanchal Sahu, the city secretary of BJD's youth wing, and assaulting him and ransacking his shop, Wednesday night. They also demanded ₹10,000 from his shop. Seemanchal sustained critical injuries in the attack and was hospitalised. He lodged a complaint with Bada Bazaar police after his health condition improved, Thursday. The accused were produced in the court and remanded to judicial custody.

Reports said Sanatan contested as a corporator candidate against BJD's Padmini Mishra and had spent over ₹12

## POST-POLL VIOLENCE

lakh during the polls but was defeated. He suspected Seemanchal's support to Padmini as the reason behind his drubbing. Later, Sanatan and Seemanchal entered into a war of words by posting objectionable comments against each other on social media platforms. Enraged, Sanatan accompanied by his brother and uncle visited his grocery shop and launched a fatal attack on Seemanchal.

**COLLECTORATE, ANGUL**  
ଜିଲ୍ଲାପାଳଙ୍କ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଅନୁଗୋଳ  
**DISTRICT EXCISE OFFICE, ANGUL**  
ଜିଲ୍ଲା ଅବକାରୀ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ, ଅନୁଗୋଳ  
Telephone: 06764-230567 (O)/230234(R)/230685(F)  
Website: www.angul.nic.in/ E-mail: dm.angul@nic.in

**NOTICE INVITING APPLICATION FOR SETTLEMENT OF 02 NOS. OF TARI SHOPS I.E. JARAPADA & PHULJHARI FOR ANGUL DISTRICT**

No. /Ex.Date

Applications are invited for settlement of 02Nos. of Tari Shops i.e Jarapada & Phuljhari of ANGUL DISTRICT for the year 2022-23 onwards by way of lottery through offline mode.

The persons interested to participate may apply offline in "Form-B" from dtd. 13.05.2022 (Friday) to 26.05.2022 (Thursday) (upto 01.00PM). Lottery will be held on dtd. 03.06.2022 (Friday) (at 10AM onwards) in the office Chamber of Collector, Angul.

The details of the shops to be settled and the terms and conditions applicable thereof are available in the notice boards of the District Excise Office, Angul and Collectorate, Angul.

Sd./- 12.05.2022  
Collector, Angul

# 32 gharial hatchlings born in Satkosia gorge

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bantala, May 12:** Much to the delight of wildlife lovers and environmentalists, as many as 32 gharial hatchlings have come out of the eggs at Satkosia gorge sanctuary in Angul district, a report said.

Satkosia divisional forest officer (DFO) Saroj Kumar Panda told mediapersons here, Monday, that all the hatchlings have been born in natural way which has brought glory and fame to the sanctuary.

The DFO said that the forest officials during patrolling had come to know about a female gharial repeatedly visiting Baladmar area in the gorge to lay eggs.

This alerted them as CCTV's were installed at the site to safeguard the nesting site of the gharial. Moreover,



to protect the eggs from predators like dogs and other animals, barbed wires

were erected around the nesting site as fence.

Finally, their long wait paid off as 32 hatchlings were born out of the eggs laid by the female gharial.

Last year, around 28 baby gharials had taken birth in the gorge. The birth of the hatchlings had gladdened the forest and sanctuary officials. However, soon they faced a big challenge of protecting the hatchlings.

Notably, 25 of the 28 gharial hatchlings that took birth last year went missing. Three of them were rescued from Puri Canal and kept under observation and supervision in the Nandankanan Zoological Park near Bhubaneswar.

This year, they are guarding the movement of the hatchlings through CCTV cameras. They have also restricted the entry of visitors to Baladmar area where 30 hatchlings have taken birth, he added.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER CUTTACK (R&B) DIVISION NO.1: CUTTACK**  
E-Mail I.D.-seepwcuttack@gmail.com  
Tel./ Fax No.(0671)-2304128

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**(e) PROCUREMENT NOTICE**  
Bid Identification No. S.E. CTC(R&B)-06 of 2022-23  
No.B-184: (SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE)

1. The Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No.1, Cuttack on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites on Percentage rate basis bid in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractor for Road works as mentioned below.

2. No. of Work :- 04 Nos.  
3. Nature of work :- Roads works  
4. Class of Contractor :- "B" & "A" Class  
5. Tender Paper Cost :- Rs.6000/- (Online)  
6. Available of bid documents :- From 14/05/2022 to 5PM in the website :- 23/05/2022  
7. Date of Opening of Bid :- 11 AM of 24/05/2022  
8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd./- (Er. P.K. Majhi)  
Superintending Engineer, Cuttack (R&B) Division No.1  
OIPR-34091/11/0007/2223

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

# THE PLASTIC PANDEMIC



The weight of plastic waste dumped by India is equivalent to the weight of over 250 thousand bottlenose dolphins, one of the most commonly found dolphin species in the ocean

83 per cent of all the mismanaged waste available to enter the ocean," according to Dr Jenna Jambeck, lead author of the study and professor of environmental engineering at the University of Georgia, US.

Though India holds a prominent position among plastic waste generators the country has not taken a strong position in the battle against polluting plastic. Although among the 175 countries that adopted end of plastic pollution resolution, India seemed to hold back stating that countries should be allowed to decide the actions to be taken voluntarily. India also said that amidst this push for reduction of plastic, developing countries should be allowed to set down their own goals in line with their development plans. This stand is in contrast with India's past efforts to bring the problem to the fore, especially in 2019 at the United Nations Environment Assembly.

While it is unclear how effective the move initiated in Nairobi will be, India must take a stronger role in curbing plastic waste especially as it is a frontline producer.

The collective push against plastic comes against a backdrop of conflict and geopolitical turmoil and can be showcased as "multilateral cooperation at its best," as President of the UN Environment Assembly and Norway's Minister for Climate and the Environment, Espen Barth Eide puts it. "Plastic pollution has grown into an epidemic. With today's resolution we are officially on track for a cure," says Eide. He and others from the participating nations classify the path-breaking resolution taken in Nairobi entitled "End Plastic Pollution: Towards an internationally legally binding instrument" as "historic". India must play a more central role in this historic effort.

The writer is an independent researcher and author.  
@THEBILLIONPRESS

Large sections of the Indian subcontinent starting from Balochistan and Sindh in Pakistan all the way to Odisha and Bihar in eastern India are experiencing extreme heat. Such heat waves in India are expected to increase in duration and become three to four times more common in the future. This marker of climate catastrophe has not spared the Earth's poles, the Arctic and Antarctic regions are getting more heat than ever before, even though it is the beginning of winter in the south polar region. One of the most visible examples of this climate calamity and the havoc being caused to the planet is identified as plastic pollution, so much so that recently a majority of the world concentrated solely on plastic and adopted a resolution to curb its spread.

to the present day, plastic has travelled from a wondrous discovery to a poisonous reality.

From local beaches to the distant Arctic, plastic products are choking the oceans and killing wildlife. The pervasiveness of the pollution caused by plastic, WWF says, is at a point where by 2050 there may be more plastic than fish in the ocean. More recently, there have been images of divers fishing up plastic masks dumped in the ocean, many of them single-use plastics, worn during the COVID pandemic. India has been identified at the helm of the top ten countries polluting the oceans with plastic. A recent study done by the UK-based packaging group RAJA (an amalgam of the founders' names Rachel Marcovici and Janine Rocher) found India to be the worst country for plastic waste in the oceans in 2020, with some 126.5 million kg of plastic per year being dumped. The weight of plastic waste dumped by India is equivalent to the weight of over 250 thousand bottlenose dolphins, one of the most commonly found dolphin species in the ocean. Despite the United States producing double the amount of India's plastic waste

annually (42 billion kg), only 2.4 million kg of it ends up in the oceans. But this could be on account the US exporting its plastic waste to African or South East Asian countries.

The Indian government did admit to the country's part in the plastic problem saying India's plastic waste generation has more than doubled in the last five years with an average annual increase of 21.8 per cent. A frightening 79 per cent of the plastic produced the world over enters the environment as waste and a minuscule 9 per cent is all that is recycled.

In an earlier study published in the Science Journal, researchers quantified the amount of plastic entering oceans from the coastlines of 192 countries. Of the 275 million metric tonnes (MT) of plastic waste generated by 192 countries in 2010, nearly 8.8 million MT entered the world's oceans and seas. The study placed India (rank 12) in the list of top 20 dischargers of plastic waste into the high seas from their coastlines. China ranked first, followed by countries in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Africa, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh among them. "The top 20 countries, including India, account for



Ishan Chauhan

**IN A FAIRLY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME FROM 1907 TO THE PRESENT DAY, PLASTIC HAS TRAVELLED FROM A WONDROUS DISCOVERY TO A POISONOUS REALITY**

Heads of State, environment ministers and other representatives from 175 nations focussed on the threat of plastic and endorsed a historic resolution at the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi in March this year to end plastic pollution. The resolution, based on three initial draft resolutions from various nations, addressed the full lifecycle of plastic, its production, design and disposal and established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) which will work on a legally binding instrument looking at diverse alternatives to address the problem of plastics. Also looked at will be the design of reusable, recyclable products and materials with international collaboration facilitating access to technology. In conjunction with the first session of the INC by this year end, the UN Environment Programme will convene a forum to share knowledge and best practices in different parts of the world.

Plastics have a strong relationship with climate change. They contribute about 3.8 per cent of global emissions, nearly double that of the aviation sector. In a fairly short period of time from 1907

## West Got It Wrong

The West responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine with sanctions of unprecedented severity and scope. By the standard of proportionality, the reaction of the United States, the European Union, and their allies seems appropriate. Serious international aggression demands a serious response. But by the standards of consistency, efficiency, and fairness, it is far from clear that the West has chosen the correct strategy. Governments may need to rethink the design of the sanctions regime.

So far, Western commentary has focused on the strength of the punitive measures. These have targeted trade, by restricting exports of technology and imports of Russian oil and gas; finance, by preventing transactions by designated Russian banks; official assets, by freezing much of the Russian central bank's foreign-exchange reserves; foreign investment, by forcing Western firms to cease operations in Russia; and personal assets, by expropriating possessions of Russian oligarchs and officials.

Many have argued for even stronger sanctions. The EU, for example, is currently trying to reach consensus on phasing out imports of Russian oil by the end of 2022, on the grounds that payments for these supplies are funding the Kremlin's war machine. As Russia escalates its attacks on Ukraine, the West should probably ratchet up its response as well.

But policymakers must first answer a more fundamental question: Is the current sanctions strategy truly serving the West's interests, or are there better ways to achieve the same goal?

In war, ends may overwhelm means. When the survival of the international order itself is at stake, as it is now, it may seem as if ends are all that matter. But when the fighting in Ukraine eventually stops, the means that the West has employed will have consequences. So, even in extremis, countries that uphold democracy and the rule of law must strive to adhere to certain principles.

Forfeiting expropriation should be a key tenet, but the West violated it by effectively seizing Russian official foreign reserves, annulling claims on Western goods and services that Russia had legitimately acquired over time. Such retroactive confiscation is one of the worst kinds of expropriation.

The ramifications of this decision may not be visible today, but the damage will become apparent over time. Other countries might be less willing to hold reserves in US dollars or euros, or deal with US banks. And some large countries, such as China, might one day be tempted to apply the same measure against the US, citing the current expropriation as a precedent. More broadly, freezing Russia's foreign reserves has damaged trust in the very international system that the West aims to preserve.

True, the sanctions on Russian trade and financial activities are not retroactive. But they reflect a misdiagnosis.

The Western sanctions aim to inflict economic pain on Russia by depriving it of basic inputs and consumer goods. Russia is a classic commodity producer, with relatively limited manufacturing capacity. It exports oil and gas, while importing inputs to supply its factories and consumer goods to satisfy its population's needs. The sanctions are intended to curtail those imports, thereby reducing Russia's productive capacity and hence its ability to wage war.

But seeking to curb the ways in which Russia can accumulate hard currency is a remarkably indirect way of reducing the country's imports. There is a much more straightforward means of reaching this objective: restricting supplies from the West.

Under this strategy, the West would continue to buy oil and gas from Russia, but would not provide any goods in return. Already, the US and the EU have banned exports of high-tech and dual-use products, which could be used by Russia's military. This list should be widened to encompass all exports. And diplomatic efforts should focus on expanding the number of countries participating in the export boycott. To ensure its legality, the World Trade Organisation's national-security exception should be invoked.

Of course, Russia would still accumulate dollars and euros, which it could use to pay for imports from other countries, such as China. But Russia would not find it easy to switch suppliers, because Europe, the US, and their allies currently account for more than 50% of the country's imports. For example, the French automaker Renault appears poised to offload its majority stake in AvtoVAZ, Russia's largest automobile producer, and to stop supplying it with parts and machinery. Redesigning the Lada manufacturer's cars and assembly lines will take time and resources, and in the meantime, production will grind to a halt.

Russia could of course respond by trying to import Western goods from third-country suppliers. But again, this would not be easy. The US has a system for monitoring such diversions, and has already warned other countries that it will "bring the full force of the law to hold accountable those that knowingly violate the new rules."

Russia might also consider responding by stopping its exports of oil and gas. But in the end, doing so would be far too dangerous to its strategic interest. After all, if it stopped accumulating foreign exchange, it would be unable to import anything at all, from any country.

Aside from efficiency, shifting to a supply-based sanctions strategy would have three other advantages. First, restricting exports to Russia - which account for only a small proportion of European and US exports and a smaller share of production - would reduce the costs of sanctions to the West and be far less disruptive to the global economy than ending energy imports from Russia.

Second, an export-oriented approach would allocate the costs of sanctions more fairly. The burden would shift from European energy consumers to the far smaller number of Western firms exporting to Russia, which are much more able to absorb the costs.

Finally, restricting exports to Russia would result in fairer burden-sharing among the countries imposing sanctions. The current approach favours Germany at the expense of the US - but not in the obvious sense that Germany is still able to import gas from Russia. The reason is that German firms can continue to supply the Russian market, whereas the financial sanctions are undermining trust in US financial markets and banks, and in the US government itself.

The US has carried the load for Germany in order to deal with what is primarily a European problem. In effect, Germany has managed to invert former US Treasury Secretary John Connally's famous quip directed at Europe about the dollar being "our currency, but your problem." Dollar-related sanctions have become America's problem and Germany's solution.

Russia's illegal military action can and should be countered by an economic response that is principled, effective, fair, and legal. The West can achieve such a response by replacing its current sanctions with comprehensive and collective restrictions on exports of goods to Russia.

Arvind Subramanian is senior fellow at Brown University. Josh Felman is Director of JH Consulting. @PROJECTSYNDICATE

### WISDOM CORNER

- Sadness is but a wall between two gardens. **KHALIL GIBRAN**
- Courage is grace under pressure. **ERNEST HEMINGWAY**
- Do it for joy and you can do it forever. **STEPHEN KING**

### SPECTRUM ENVIRONMENT

## Ecosystem restoration good for health

Humanity currently faces multiple, interlinked existential crises. The catastrophic consequences of climate change, ecological degradation, and biodiversity loss have cascading knock-on effects on human health and well-being. As the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates, ecosystem damage can contribute significantly to a global public-health emergency. But scientists are also increasingly finding that ecological restoration, by reversing the threats to soil, biodiversity, water, and other ecosystem services, can deliver major health benefits.



Anuja Malhotra & Abi Vanak

**ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION IS A CLEAR AND IDENTIFIABLE WAY TO TACKLE THE GLOBAL DISEASE BURDEN AND IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH**

There have been many attempts to understand the nexus between ecological degradation and human health. A recent study of over 6,800 ecosystems across six continents provided further evidence that deforestation and extinction of species will make pandemics more likely. Ecosystem damage also leads to water contamination, creating breeding grounds for infectious diseases. Similarly, soil degradation not only reduces agricultural productivity, but also has been linked to disease and increased mortality.

The emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 are closely associated with the health of ecosystems. For example, 75% of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic, caused by unsustainable use of natural re-

sources, factory farming of animals, and other industrial-scale anthropogenic factors.

Ecosystem decline has also contributed in recent decades to reduced immunological resilience and an increase in allergic conditions in humans. The effects are not limited to physical health, but also include mental-health problems such as an increase in eco-anxiety, or fear of environmental damage due to ongoing ecosystem degradation. Conversely, restoring natural ecosystems could provide pathways for reversing some of the effects of climate change and ease the global chronic-disease burden, thus improving human health and well-being. One recent study showed that soil restoration and the reintroduction of native plant species led to a reduction in physical and psychological impacts of certain diseases. In another case, ecological restoration of an urban river in northwest England was linked to psychological benefits for surrounding communities.

There is also evidence that ecological restoration can protect people from extreme climate events and related public-health crises. Finally, using alternative cooking fuels such as biogas in improved stoves, thereby reducing the need for fuelwood and helping to prevent forest degradation, has been shown to improve respiratory health and household diets.

Some prominent international efforts to reap the benefits of ecological restoration to planetary and human health are already underway: The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, running from 2021 to 2030, and the land degradation neutrality programme of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification encourage signatory countries to recognise the central importance of ecological restoration. Likewise, the #HealthyRecovery initiative, signed by over 4,500 health professionals from 90 countries, urged G20 leaders to fund projects that enable ecological restoration as part of their pandemic stimulus packages.

In recent decades, researchers have developed various models - including the Mandala of Health, the Wheel of Fundamental Human Needs, and, more recently, the One Health approach - to capture the interconnected relationship between humans and nature. The challenge now is to develop a unifying framework to maximise the synergy of ecological restoration and human health. Policies designed to address one should not exclude the other.

We therefore need to redefine ecological degradation, understand its far-reaching effects on human health, and recognise that these effects cannot be fully addressed without structured, context-specific ecological restoration plans. Achieving this will require insti-

tutionalising and mainstreaming inter-sectoral collaboration between scientists and practitioners from the ecological, medical, and sustainability domains.

Alliances and a sense of ownership among core governance structures of public health and ecosystem restoration will be crucial. In India, for example, a pioneering effort to mainstream cross-disciplinary initiatives is bringing together the government, scientists, and local partners and practitioners with the aim of improving zoonotic-disease control.

Ecological restoration is a clear and identifiable way to tackle the global disease burden and improve public health. As the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration commences, policymakers should encourage collective action to spur inclusive, interdisciplinary activities that demonstrate the positive global benefits of restoration for social, physical, and mental health. We owe it to ourselves and to the planet to mitigate at least some of the threats we have created.

Anuja Malhotra is a policy analyst at the Centre for Policy Research in Ecology & the Environment (ATREE). Abi Vanak is a senior fellow at the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation at the ATREE. @PROJECTSYNDICATE

### Another controversy

Sir, A local civil court's order to videograph and inspect the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Gyanvapi mosque complex in Varanasi has triggered yet another controversy. The videography and inspection were done to collect evidence to find whether Hindu religious structures were partially razed to build the mosque. Those who filed a petition in the court said that they had the right to worship in the mosque area where many deities were present. The Places of Worship Act lays down that a religious place must retain the same character it had August 15, 1947. The principle in the Act shows that the sanctity of all religious places must be preserved. True, history may give different versions of the origin of religious places. However, historical evidence cannot be used as an excuse to change or remove the places of worship. All places of worship have equal importance. People belonging to different religions have the right to visit the religious places of their choice and offer prayers there. People must show religious tolerance and allow others to worship in the concerned religious place. Any attempt to degrade or consecrate religious places must be strictly dealt with. If any injustice was shown to any religion in the past, it must be treated as part of history. We cannot depend on the occurrences of the past to change the religious practices of people of the present time. **Venu GS, KOLLAM**

### Power crisis

Sir, The power crisis, which India has been facing now possibly like never before, is due to the combination of reduced coal supplies and a failure of an effective policy measure by the ministry of power at the Centre. But we need to accept the fact that in the last financial year, India's domestic coal supplies were plagued by the second wave of COVID-19, and followed by heavy monsoon rains. For a country which is wholly reliant on coal, and still in the process of recovery from the pandemic, issues with supply of coal must have been handled effectively well in advance by the ministry. It is likely that India's vast population and the underdeveloped energy infrastructure will hit the power crisis harder and last for much longer. In the present crisis situation, it is unlikely that many of the thermal power plants that are shut down in the country or working on very low capacities, will be able to overcome the crisis immediately. And with international coal prices hitting the roof, importing coal will certainly cost India a bomb. **Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
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# national

## of the day quote

What happened in Sri Lanka should serve as a wake-up call. Since 2014, India is being whipped into a communal frenzy & imagined fears. It is treading the same path of hyper nationalism & religious majoritarianism. All at the cost of disrupting social cohesion & economic security

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | FORMER J&K CM

The two orders of the Supreme Court on the issue are being studied. Also a Commission has been constituted to give political representation for the Backward Classes. The Leader of the Opposition has written a letter in this connection. All these aspects will be discussed with legal experts while taking the decision

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh has bulldozed law and order. It has now become most unsafe for women

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### Five killed in road accident

**Noida:** Five people, including four from Maharashtra and one from Karnataka, were killed in a road crash on the Yamuna Expressway in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida Thursday morning, police said. Two other people who were along with the deceased in an SUV have been hospitalised with injuries after the 5 am road crash, the police said. UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed grief over the incident and directed Gautam Buddh Nagar district officials to ensure proper treatment to those injured.

### Temp above 46 °C at several places in Raj

**Jaipur:** The blistering heat that swept large swathes of Rajasthan further intensified Thursday with Barmer recording a high of 48.1 °C. Other parts also reeled under heatwave conditions with most of the districts registering day temperatures above 45 °C. Apart from Barmer that was the hottest place in the desert state Thursday, Jalore and Ganganagar recorded a maximum of 47.7 and 47.3 °C, respectively, while the day temperature in Phalodi (Jodhpur), Pilani (Jhunjhunu), Jaisalmer and Bikaner was 47.2 °C, 47 °C in Nagaur, 46.9 °C in Churu, 46.7 °C in Sangaria (Hanumangarh), Kota and Bundi, according to a Meteorological department report.

### EV goes up in flames

**Hyderabad:** An electric two-wheeler went up in flames here after "smoke and fire emanated from its battery", though no one was injured in the incident, police said Thursday.



**West Bengal government is heading for bifurcation of several existing districts in the state**  
MAMATA BANERJEE | WB CHIEF MINISTER

## CHARIOT BELONGS TO MYANMAR

A gold-colored chariot-like structure, which washed ashore in Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam district Tuesday, is believed to have come from Myanmar. After a thorough check of the structure, which resembles the shape of a monastery and the inscriptions on it, local officials said it belonged to Myanmar



## BRAINSTORMING SESSION

# Chintan Shivir begins today

In a bid to overcome internal challenges and electoral setbacks, the Congress' three-day conclave will focus on time-bound party restructuring for strengthening the organisation and evolving a strategy for future alliances



AGENCIES

**Udaipur, May 12:** Facing the daunting task of revamping the party after a series of poll reverses, over 400 Congress leaders will go into a huddle at its 'Chintan Shivir' starting here Friday focusing on time-bound party restructuring, finding ways to combat politics of polarisation and getting battle-ready for upcoming electoral challenges.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the 'Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir' is also aimed at deliberating on challenges facing the country such as "freefall of the economy", increasing inequality of wealth, price rise of essential commodities, "deep-rooted conspiracy" to hand over farming sector to a select group of private corporates, "attack on India's territorial integrity by China, "attack" on rights of Dalits, SCs/STs, minorities and attempts to divide by using Hindu-Muslim rhetoric.

The Congress has chosen six subjects and constituted groups to examine and submit their primary reports on actionables for the same, he said.

These groups are political, social justice and empowerment, economy,

Congress organisation, Kisan and Khet Mazdoor and Youth. These groups will present their first impressions for a conclusive discussion during the 'Chintan Shivir' (brainstorming session).

The roadmap will provide a way forward not only to the Congress to meet up with the current set of "reverses and challenges", but will also pave the way for a resilient, strong and inclusive nation, he said. Sending out a clear message to critics within the organisation. Congress president Sonia Gandhi at a CWC meeting earlier this week cautioned ahead of the session that self-criticism is needed in party forums but it should not be done to erode self-confidence and morale, as she asserted that it is time "to repay our debt to the party".

The issue of leadership in the Congress is not likely to be discussed at the Udaipur conclave, party sources said, even as several leaders at the shivir are likely to rake up the issue of Rahul Gandhi taking over the party leadership. Top Congress leaders will come out with solutions and clear the party's stance on key issues including polarisation, Centre-state ties, form-

ing of alliances and attempts at bringing in "uniformity", especially in the Northeast, that are confronting the country and the party, Congress sources said.

Unlike in the past, when 'Chintan Shivirs' did not set any set timelines, the Udaipur declaration will state time-bound initiation and accomplishment of structural changes in the organisation at all levels - national, state, district and block levels.

The conclave will begin with introductory remarks of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi May 13 and a valedictory address by Rahul Gandhi May 15.

The shivir will begin Friday afternoon following which over 400 delegates will discuss subject-specific issues across six groups.

These discussions will continue on the first and second day and the conclusions will be recorded in the form of a declaration, a draft of which will be discussed at the CWC meeting to be held there on the last day.

Rahul Gandhi and several other leaders would reach Udaipur by train in an overnight journey, while Sonia Gandhi would reach Udaipur May 13 by air.

## Four CBI officers held, dismissed from service for fake C'garh raid



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 12:** In the swiftest action against erring personnel, the CBI has dismissed its four officers under a stringent constitutional provision and arrested them after they were allegedly found involved in staging a raid on a company in Chandigarh to extort money, officials said Thursday.

The CBI received a complaint from a Chandigarh-based businessman on May 10 that six people, including four from the CBI, had entered into his office and threatened him of arrest on the charges of supporting and providing money to terrorists. They also claimed to have information regarding it.

"It was further alleged that the accused forcefully took the complainant in a car and demanded Rs 25 lakh from him," CBI Spokesperson R C Joshi said.

As part of its zero-tolerance policy towards corruption, CBI Director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal swung into action, looked into the matter and found prima facie involvement of his men in the embarrassing episode. Under Article 311, presidential pleasure stands withdrawn and a government official is dismissed from service. The accused - Sumit Gupta, Pradeep Rana, Ankur Kumar and Akash Ahlawat (all sub-inspectors at the CBI's Delhi-based units) - were taken into custody by the agency on Wednesday night and Thursday after registering a case against them under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including 388 (extortion by threat of accusation of an offence), under which the minimum sentence is 10-year imprisonment and the maximum is life imprisonment.

# WHO must be reformed: Modi

India has been pressing for the TRIPS waiver to ensure scaling up of the vaccine production for equitable and global access

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**New Delhi, May 12:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday called for reforming the World Health Organisation (WHO) and streamlining its approval process for vaccines and therapeutics, and favoured making flexible the WTO's rules relating to trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS).

In his address at the second global virtual summit on COVID-19 hosted by US President Joe Biden, Modi also said that a coordinated global response is required to combat future health emergencies and called for building a resilient global supply chain for equitable access to vaccines and medicines. Modi said the World Health Organisation must be reformed and strengthened to build a more resilient global health security architecture. The Prime Minister's call for making flexible rules of the WTO, particularly the TRIPS, came over a year-and-half after India and South Africa placed a proposal at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to temporarily waive intellectual property rights for producing COVID-19 vaccines to effectively deal with the pandemic.

"It is clear that a coordinated global response is required to combat future health emergencies. We must build a resilient global supply chain and enable equitable access to vaccines and medicines," Modi said. "The WTO rules, particularly TRIPS, need to be more flexible. WHO must be reformed and strengthened to build a more resilient global health security architecture," he said in the opening session of the summit. "We

also call for streamlining WHO's approval process for vaccines and therapeutics to keep supply chains stable and predictable. As a responsible member of the global community, India is ready to play a key role in these efforts," Modi said. In his address, the prime minister also spoke about how India's Genomics Consortium has contributed significantly to the global database on the virus and added that New Delhi will extend this network to countries in its neighbourhood. Referring to India's handling of the pandemic, Modi said the country has fully vaccinated almost 90 per cent of the adult population and more than 50 million children. Modi participated in the first global virtual summit on COVID-19 hosted by Biden on September 22 last year as well.

The second summit intends to galvanize new actions to address the continued challenges of the pandemic and build a stronger global health security architecture. President Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa were among the key leaders who addressed the summit.

## Gyanvapi survey to continue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Varanasi, May 12:** A local court rejected Thursday a plea to replace the advocate commissioner it had appointed for conducting a videography survey of the Gyanvapi-Shringar Gauri complex here and ordered the completion of the task by May 17.

The district court also appointed two more lawyers to help the advocate commissioner carry out the survey at the mosque, which is located close to the iconic Kashi Vishwanath temple. It ordered police to register FIRs if there are attempts to scuttle the exercise.

The court is hearing a plea by a group of women to allow daily worship of Hindu deities whose idols are located on an outer wall

of the mosque.

The mosque management committee had opposed filming inside the mosque and also accused the court-appointed commissioner of partiality. Amid the opposition, the survey was stalled for a while.

The court of Civil Judge (Senior Division) Ravi Kumar Diwakar also dismissed objections to the opening of the two closed basements in the mosque complex for the survey, according to the counsel representing the Hindu petitioners.

The judge rejected the application for replacing advocate commissioner Ajay Kumar Mishra and also appointed Vishal Singh as special advocate commissioner and Ajay Pratap Singh as assistant advocate commissioner.



Security personnel keep vigil after security was beefed up following the courts verdict on the case of the Gyanvapi Masjid complexes survey, in Varanasi PTI PHOTO

## HIP HIP HOORAY



People visit the beach as waves caused by the movement of Cyclone Asani crash on the shore, in Kochi PTI PHOTO

## Sc refuses to grant interim relief on pleas seeking stay

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 12:** The Supreme Court Thursday declined to grant interim relief to petitioners challenging the amendments to LIC Act by Finance Act of 2021, which facilitated the LIC IPO.

A bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said: "We are of the view that no case of interim relief has been made out. No interim relief granted." The top court declined to interfere with the LIC IPO process

## LIC IPO SHARE ALLOTMENT

at this juncture. A bunch of policy holders had moved the apex court alleging violation of the LIC Act.

"In matters of IPO, the court will be reluctant in granting interim relief. It is about investments", said the bench also comprising Justices Surya Kant and P.S. Narasimha. The counsel for a pe-

itioner said the amendments to the LIC Act, seriously affects the interest of participating policyholders and the amendments should not have been carried out through Money Bill. A counsel argued "what is the legal character of LIC" and added that it is a mutual benefit society converted into a joint stock company. The bench noted that the petitioners' counsel argued that the process which led to the enactment of the LIC Act was on the basis that it was a Money Bill.

## Two pilots killed in chopper crash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Raipur, May 12:** A Chhattisgarh government helicopter crashed at the Raipur airport Thursday night, killing two pilots, police said.

The incident took place during a flying practice at the Swami Vivekananda Airport in Raipur under Mana police station limits at around 9:10 pm, said Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Prashant Agrawal. Two pilots on board the chopper were seriously injured in the crash and immediately taken to a nearby private hospital where they were declared dead, said the SSP. The deceased were identified as Captain Gopal Krishna Panda and Captain A P Shrivastava, said the police officer. The cause of the crash was not immediately known.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel expressed grief over the tragedy and consoled the death of the pilots.



# New computer model can help assess Covid impact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 12:** Scientists have developed an ultra-large scale computerised model of 1 million to 100 million individuals, closely representative of the Indian population, that they say can help assess the impact and progression of an infectious disease, including Covid-19, at the most granular level.

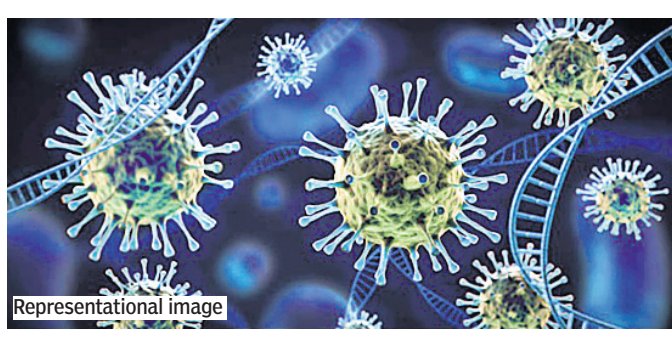
The synthetic population model termed BharatSIM has been developed by using data from sources such as the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) surveys and Census. Developed by researchers at Ashoka University in Sonapat, Haryana in collaboration with global technology company Thoughtworks, the tool is also being used to make predictions on Covid-19. It also allows adding in-

terventions like lockdowns, levels of vaccine coverage to determine the effects of the disease.

The scientists said the model would be made available with open access, helping governments, NGOs, and researchers to test interventions and outcomes through these simulations, they said.

"BharatSIM allows us to assess the impact of a pandemic of infectious disease at the most granular level, since the basic unit there is the individual person," said Gautam Menon, Professor of Physics and Biology at Ashoka University.

"Imagine a map of India with lots of individuals moving around on it, like a strategy game. These individuals are not all the same: each has been constructed carefully using machine learning techniques



Representational image

to be a realistic person, with a family, a workplace, and demographic characteristics," Menon told PTI.

These are developed based on a combination of various large-scale surveys such as the Census, India Human Development Survey (IHDS), etc.

The synthetic population model has been termed BharatSIM

It allows adding interventions like lockdowns, vaccine coverage to analyse

The model uses high-performance computing infrastructure

interventions, including lockdowns and school closures.

"The model incorporates geographical information as well, therefore we can look at the impact of the disease in different areas, such as wards in a city," added Debayan Gupta, Assistant Professor of Computer Science at Ashoka University.

"The model uses high-performance computing infrastructure to

run these large-scale simulations on cities and states with their real-size population. Although, our simulation engine is also efficient enough to simulate mid-range cities easily even on a run-of-the-mill laptop," Gupta told PTI.

The outputs of the system are fed into a "visualisation engine", which helps quickly analyse and gain insight into what would otherwise be a huge quagmire of data. Combined, the researchers hope that it will prove to be a powerful aid to understand various what-if scenarios with extreme granularity.

All prior disease models for Covid-19 in India are based on what are called 'compartmental' descriptions which make specific assumptions about how people interact with each other in spreading the disease.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
E-Tender Notice No.: ST-SBP-TENDER-2022-03, Dated: 09.05.2022  
Name of the work: COMPREHENSIVE ON SITE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR AUTOMATIC CALL DISTRIBUTION (ACD) SYSTEM OF SECURITY HELP LINE-182 AT PRESENT-139 INSTALLED AT DIVISIONAL SECURITY CONTROL/SAMBALPUR.  
Tender Value: ₹ 26,85,850.60, EMD: ₹ 5,300/-  
Cost of Tender Document: ₹ 1,180/-  
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 01.06.2022  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against the e-tenders. Even if these are submitted on firm's letterhead and receipt in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>  
Note : The prospective tenders are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender.  
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) PR-104/N/22-23 Sambalpur

# Taj Mahal in communal cauldron

**A LEGAL SUIT IN THE LUCKNOW BENCH OF THE ALLAHABAD HC, DEMANDING OPENING OF THE 20 ODD SEALED CHAMBERS IN THE TAJ, HAS OPENED A PANDORA'S BOX**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, May 12: It is not the first time that the 17th century monument of love, the Taj Mahal has been caught in communal cross fire that shows no signs of early abatement.

The current phase was triggered by the visit, a fortnight ago, by a Hindu seer who was prevented from entering the world heritage monument, ostensibly due to the religious symbols he was carrying. This provoked a backlash from the local Hindutva outfits to raise war cries.

Ever since historian PN Oak in his controversial book 'Taj Mahal, the True Story', essayed to establish that the Taj was indeed a Hindu temple built by Rajput kings, there have been periodic demands to allow research and extensive investigations to explore the truth in various claims. Till about three decades, the Taj has been considered a secular monument, but then some minority groups claimed it was their property. Later, a planned process of communalisation of the monument began, with increasing presence of the



PICTURE PERFECT: A tourist poses for photograph in front of the Taj Mahal during sunrise, in Agra, Thursday PTI PHOTO

Muslims, a local historian recalled. After events in 1992 and later, the Hindutva groups retaliated by offering 'pujas' and performing 'aarti' of the imaginary Shiva temple from outside the monument.

Tourism bodies in Agra have been consistently expressing concern over the continuing tug of war between the Hindutva and Muslim groups over conducting 'puja-aarti' and offering 'namaz' inside the Taj Mahal premises. The length of the ceremonial 'chadar' offered during the annual Shah Jahan Urs, has also continued to lengthen each year from a few metres to over a thousand metres.

The fear of communal flare up

could impact tourism, the industry leaders fear. Sometimes, it is 'namaz', other times it is 'puja' and 'aarti' with sprinkling of Ganga Jal by a variety of outfits from Bajrang Dal to Shiv Sena and so on. Now a legal suit in the Lucknow bench of the high court, demanding opening of the 20 odd sealed chambers, has opened a Pandora's box.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) sealed the chambers and blocked the staircases leading to pathways in the basements, more than three decades ago. While officials claim periodic repairs and maintenance work are undertaken in the basement, conservationists fear that the underground cham-

bers may not have been opened for a significantly long time to avoid brewing controversies relating to its original ownership.

Local historians are more concerned with the safety of the monument that attracts millions of tourists round the year. If the sealed chambers are opened for public view, it would be possible to undertake conservational work, if required, as there were unconfirmed reports of minor cracks and termite colonies in some parts of the foundation. "We need to be assured that all is well with the foundation which could be affected by the toxic and polluted water of the river Yamuna," said a conservationist.

## Allahabad HC junks petition

Lucknow: The Allahabad High Court's Lucknow bench Thursday dismissed the petition seeking opening of 22 rooms in the Taj Mahal premises. The two-judge bench ripped into the petitioner who sought opening of the 22 locked rooms, stating that the truth about the iconic monument needs to come out, and that he has filed multiple PILs for the same. "Tomorrow you will ask for permission to see our chambers. Please, don't make mockery of the PIL system," the bench said during the hearing. The writ petition, seeking to "find the truth" behind the 22 locked rooms in the Taj Mahal, was filed last week before the Lucknow bench by Rajneesh Singh, who is the media in-charge of the BJP's Ayodhya unit. The petition cited the claims of some historians and Hindu groups about the mausoleum actually being an old Shiva temple. The petition has sought the Archaeological Survey of India form a special committee to examine the locked rooms and release the report to the public. "What judgment do you want us to pronounce? Who built the Taj Mahal? Don't go into historical facts... Mandamus can only be issued when rights have been infringed. What rights of yours have been infringed?" the bench asked.

# Irulas held as bonded labour in TN brick kiln



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 12: In Tamil Nadu, the Hosur RDO has commenced an investigation into the complaint received by the Krishnagiri District Collector that 10 Irulas are being held as bonded labour in a brick kiln in the district.

The complaint was made by an Irula person who is working in the kiln for the past year along with his family.

Sakappan (37), an Irula tribal member from Perunkaadu near Marandahalli in Dharmapuri district in his petition to the district collector, said that he and his family along with another family were working as bonded labourers in a brick kiln at Denkanikottai. He said that the families were working for the past one year in the kiln and they were ten people in total.

The Irula tribe member said that they had taken Rs 75,000 for each family from the brick kiln owner and that they are being harassed by

the owner of the brick kiln.

He also said that he, his wife and two children were working in the kiln and there was another family of one Shakhthivel. In the petition to the district collector, he said that Sakhthivel's two-year-old daughter died after being electrocuted in the kiln.

The office of the Hosur RDO when contacted informed IANS that the investigation is on and that a team of officials will be visiting the brick kiln and taking a statement from the complainant and necessary action if required.

The Krishnagiri District Collector's office also said that there will be stringent action against anyone who is indulging in bonded labour and brick kiln employment without a proper license.

While in some areas of the state, the Irula community are trying to wriggle out of years of slavery, in some other areas of the state, the community is living in difficult circumstances including working as bonded labourers.

# Higher judiciary should reflect cooperative federalism: Stalin

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 12: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Justice of India NV Ramana to ensure that the judiciary also reflect the spirit of Co-operative Federalism enshrined in our Constitution.

Stalin in a letter to Modi and Ramana said certain important aspects relating to the higher judiciary - like setting up of regional benches of the apex court, having judicial diversity and proportional representation of the states in judicial bench and the use of Tamil as the official language of the Madras High Court - needs to be addressed early.

Referring to the appointments of judges of High Court and Supreme Court, Stalin said it should reflect the diverse and pluralistic society of India. "For the past few years, we have been witnessing declining representation from all the sections of the society in the higher judiciary, leading to a 'diversity deficit', Stalin said.

A broad based, heterogeneous group of judges representing various sections of the society as a whole alone can reflect the views and values of society as a whole, particularly on issues involving historical, traditional, linguistic and cultural matters, he said.



According to Stalin, all the states must find proportional representation on the Bench of the Supreme Court. The Chief Minister said establishment of Permanent Regional Benches of the Supreme Court is another issue that would reflect the federal character of India.

Considering the fact that the Supreme Court is located at New Delhi (which is not equidistant to all parts of the country) and is far away from many states, particularly the Southern, South Western & Eastern States, the citizens in these states are deprived of their fundamental right to approach the Court, Stalin said.

While there are 25 High Courts across the nation, it is seen from data that the number of appeals being filed in the Supreme Court is more from States around the NCR region than States located further away from Delhi, Stalin added.

He said the Constituent Assembly Debates show that even the framers of the Constitution, as early as 1950, recognised that the Supreme Court would need to have branches in other parts of the country as the nation grows. That is why in Article 130, the Constitution permits the Court to sit in other places in the country.

"Therefore, I request you to take appropriate steps to establish Permanent Regional Benches of the Supreme Court in New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai, apart from the Constitution Bench in New Delhi, so that the citizens in other parts of this vast country have equal access to the Supreme Court," Stalin said.

Recalling Ramana's words judicial proceedings cannot be like chanting of mantras in a wedding that nobody understands at a function held here, Stalin said making law and justice comprehensible to the common man in its proceedings is essential in the justice delivery system.

In four High Courts - Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Hindi has been authorised as the official language in addition to English. One therefore wonders what impediment is there to make the official language of other states the official language of the High Court in addition to English, Stalin said.

## KUDANKULAM N-PLANT

# Critical safety component made by Rosatom

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 12: Russia's integrated nuclear power player Rosatom Thursday said critical components for the upcoming atomic power plant number 5 at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu have been made by its group company.

According to Rosatom, the group company has manufactured four guide vanes for reactor coolant pump set (RCPS) housings for

Unit 5 with a generation capacity of 1,000 MW.

The Russian nuclear power major said RCPS housing is a first safety class item. At a nuclear plant, it ensures coolant circulation in the primary circuit and operates under pressure of 160 atmospheres and temperature of 300 degrees.

The reactor plant equipment of one power unit includes four RCPS.

Each guide vane consists of upper and lower discs, between



which 13 guide blades are welded. The vanes are fixed in the pump

housing and designed to direct coolant flow inside the pump, Rosatom said.

India's atomic power plant operator Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL) has two 1,000 MW plants (Units 1 and 2) at Kudankulam, while four more (Units 3, 4, 5 and 6) are under construction.

All the six units are built with Russian technology and equipment supplied by Rosatom.

## PATIENTS' PEOPLE



INT'L NURSES DAY: Nurses light candles on the occasion of International Nurses Day, at Government Rajaji Hospital in Madurai, Thursday PTI PHOTO

# Low yield will make 'Aam' turn 'Khaas' BJP to get more RS seats from UP

**THE SAVING GRACE, HOWEVER, IS THE QUALITY OF THE FRUIT WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE BETTER BECAUSE THE YIELD IS LOW**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 12: 'Aam' is going to turn 'khaas' for the second consecutive year since the yield is much lesser than expected.

Mango growers in Malihabad on the outskirts of Lucknow say that the extreme temperatures in April have taken a toll on all varieties of mangoes.

More than 20 per cent of the fruit has been lost due to the temperature that started rising in March and continued in April, said Insram Ali, President of All India Mango Growers Association.

Naseem Baig, President of the



Malihabad Phal Mandi Samiti, said, "This was not what we had expected. The flowering known as 'baur' got destroyed due to heat. The high temperature and scorching heat have not only impacted Dussehri but also the late maturing varieties like Chausa, Langda, Safeda and Lakhnauva, all of which are also high on export demand."

Baig added, When the baur itself gets destroyed it does not leave much for the growers for damage control.

The saving grace, however, is

the quality of the fruit which is expected to be better because the yield is low.

Since less yield means more nutrition for the surviving fruits, Dussehri is expected to be sweeter, juicier and bigger in size and of course, more expensive too, said Salim, another mango grower.

Dussehri is expected to hit the market by the end of May or beginning of June and the price will be decided after the harvest and assessment of quality.

A mango tree yields a good quan-

tity of fruit every alternate year. Going by its cycle, Malihabad mango belt is in its 'off-year' and this has reduced the number of panicles already.

The onslaught of heat rendered another blow to the mango crop.

Mango crops are sensitive to weather changes during the flowering stage. Weather conditions affect the emergence of panicles (baur) which is the very first stage of the crop and usually happens in January.

This year, even the winters were quite harsh and extended and this made the panicles emerge very late in mid-February.

Uttar Pradesh has at least four lakh hectare under mango cultivation in north and central parts of the state.

It is the second largest mango producing state after Andhra Pradesh.

"Since the past two years, we have suffered huge losses because imports were impacted due to the pandemic and its restrictions. This year we hoped for a bumper crop but the weather has dashed our hopes," said Insram Ali.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, May 12: The BJP is set to increase its members in Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh, while the BSP and the Congress would be the major losers in the upcoming election to 11 seats of the upper house from the state.

Uttar Pradesh sends 31 members to Rajya Sabha. Among the 11 retiring MPs from the state, five are from the BJP three from the SP, two from the BSP and one from the Congress.

The Election Commission Thursday announced that voting will be held June 10 to fill 57 Rajya Sabha seats from 15 states, including 111 from Uttar Pradesh. These seats will be falling vacant due to the retirement of members between June and August.

Kapil Sibal from Congress, Satish Chandra Mishra, BSP general secretary, and Reoti Raman Singh of Samajwadi Party are among the members whose terms are ending.

With 403 elected members in the UP assembly, a candidate will require at least 37 votes for victory.



The outcome of the recently held state assembly elections has changed the equation this time.

With 273 MLAs, the BJP-led NDA will be able to get seven members elected easily, while SP and its allies (RLD and SBSP), with strength of 125 legislators will be able to ensure victory of three candidates.

For the 11th seat, both SP and BJP will be trying to win the support of other parties, including Raja Bhaiyya's Jansatta Dal Loktantrik

and the Congress which have two MLAs each and the lone legislator of Mayawati's BSP.

After the retirement of Sibal, the Congress' representation in the upper house from the state will be nil.

BSP's two senior leaders - Satish Chandra Mishra and Ashok Siddharth - will retire in July after which it will have only one member Ramji Gautam in the upper house.

The five retiring BJP RS MPs include Zafar Islam, Shiv Pratap Shukla, Sanjay Seth, Surendra Nagar, and Jai Prakash Nishad.

Those completing their term in the SP include former UP Legislative council chairman Sukhran Singh Yadav, whose son Mohit has joined the BJP.

Besides Yadav, the tenure of Reoti Raman Singh and Vishambhar Prasad Nishad will also end in July.

The election commission has announced May 24 as the date of notification for RS polls while voting is to be held June 10. The results will also come on the same day.



of the day quote

We are committed to making India a global medical value hub by further strengthening our traditional medicine industry and boosting 'Heal in India' and 'Heal by India' initiatives

Regional parties have a very important role to play and we have to work together to ensure that in 2024, we are able to defeat the NDA

For the past few years, we have been witnessing declining representation from all the sections of the society in the higher judiciary, leading to a 'diversity deficit'

SHORT TAKES

IAS officer Pooja Singhal suspended

Ranchi: A day after being arrested in connection with a money laundering case and remanded to the custody of the Enforcement Directorate, the Jharkhand government Thursday suspended state mining secretary Pooja Singhal, an official said.

Sec 144 back in Khargone

Bhopal: Section 144 has been re-imposed in the riot-hit Khargone district of Madhya Pradesh as a preventive measure. A notification issued jointly by the district administration and the police Wednesday stated that no rallies, processions, Jagarans and shobha yatras or political rallies will be allowed in the district till July 10.

Amanatullah Khan arrested

New Delhi: Delhi Police Thursday arrested Aam Aadmi Party MLA Amanatullah Khan for 'rioting' and 'obstructing' South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) officials from carrying out an anti-encroachment drive in the Madanpur Khadar area of the national capital.

Youth hacked to death on busy road

Hyderabad: A youth was hacked to death by unidentified men on a busy road in Hyderabad's Attapur area. The incident occurred around midnight at Pillar Number 96 of PVRN Expressway under the limits of Langar House Police Station.

Sena MLA dies of cardiac arrest

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MLA from Mumbai, Ramesh Latke, died of a cardiac arrest in Dubai, party leader Sanjay Raut said Thursday. He was 52. Latke, who represented Andheri East assembly constituency in the city, died late night Wednesday.

MONSOON SET TO ARRIVE EARLY

The Southwest Monsoon is likely to advance into South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal around May 15, almost four days earlier than its normal expected date, as per the IMD report

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 12: The Southwest Monsoon is likely to advance into South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal around May 15, almost four days earlier than its normal expected date, the India Meteorology Department (IMD) announced Thursday.

Kerala, too, may witness monsoon arrival four days early May 26, as indicated by the IMD's extended range forecast.

However, the official announcement regarding the exact date would be made around May



15 when the IMD issues its second stage South-West Monsoon forecast.

"Fairly widespread to widespread light/moderate rainfall is very

International Nurses Day is an opportunity to express our gratitude to nursing fraternity, which is recognised for its selfless service to humanity. Their deep commitment to protecting lives and public health is commendable

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

ISRO'S NEW MISSION

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has conceptualised a twin aeronomy mission aimed at capturing latitudinal and longitudinal effects of space weather events on the Earth's upper atmosphere



The early onset of monsoon could bring cheer as most parts of the country witnessed extremely high temperatures over the past fortnight

speed reaching 40-50 kmph, gusting to 60 kmph, is also likely over south Andaman Sea May 15 & 16," the IMD statement said.

Southwest Monsoon - considered the real Finance Minister of India - has a wide ranging impact on India's economy with agriculture, economy, trade, travel, almost everything decided by the rainfall quantum and timing.

Former Secretary, Earth Sciences, M Rajeevan Nair, said: "Generally SouthWest Monsoon reaches Andaman & Nicobar Islands by May 19-20. This time it is at least a week in advance."

relation between the arrival of SW monsoon at Andaman and Nicobar Islands and that at Kerala. "However, the extended range forecast of IMD shows that conditions will turn favourable, and Kerala will most likely receive southwest monsoon rainfall by May 26."

The heavy rainfall that Kerala has been witnessing for at least the last two days is a side impact of the Cyclone Asani and its remnant system on the east coast, but things would change in the next two days.

At present, the IMD uses a criterion adopted in 2016 for declaring the onset of monsoon over Kerala, which was based on the daily rainfall of 14 stations over Kerala and neighbouring area along with wind field and along longwave radiation (OLR) over southeast Arabian Sea.

It emphasises on the sharp increase in rainfall over Kerala along with setting up of large-scale monsoon flow and extension of westerlies up to certain criterion.

T'gana man rapes tribal woman even after her death



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, May 12: In a horrific incident, a man raped a tribal woman even after she died while resisting his sexual assault.

A construction worker committed the heinous crime at Choutuppal near Hyderabad Monday night but was arrested by police Wednesday.

According to police, E Harish Goud raped and brutally killed the 28-year-old tribal woman working in a brick kiln warehouse at Choutuppal in Yadadri Bhuvanagiri district, about 40 km from Hyderabad.

Finding the victim alone in the warehouse, the accused sought sexual favours. When she refused and threatened to reveal this to her husband, he tried to sexually assault her. As she resisted, he hit her on the face with a log, resulting in bleeding injury. Police investigations revealed that though the victim succumbed to the assault, he still raped her. After committing the act, he robbed the silver articles she was wearing and escaped. The 25-year-old has been booked for rape, robbery and murder. Choutuppal police registered a case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Booster norms relaxed for overseas travellers

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 12: Relaxing norms for Covid vaccine precaution dose, the Centre Thursday allowed citizens travelling overseas to get the shot before the stipulated nine-month waiting period as required by the guidelines of the destination country.

The Union Health Ministry's decision to relax the norms about the precaution dose for overseas travellers was based on recommendations by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI).

"Indian citizens and students travelling overseas can now take the precaution dose as required by the guidelines of the destination country. This new facility will be available soon on the CoWIN portal," Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said in a tweet.

The advisory panel last week had recommended that those who need to travel overseas can take the precaution dose of Covid vaccine as required by the country they are travelling to before the mandatory nine-month gap.

Currently, all those above 18 years who have completed nine months after the second dose are eligible for the precaution job.

The ministry had received several representations seeking the precaution dose of Covid vaccine for those who have to travel abroad for employment, business commitments, admission to foreign educational institutes, participating in sports events, and bilateral and multilateral meetings as part of India's official delegation.

"The issue was discussed in a

India logs marginal dip in Covid cases

NEW DELHI: India Thursday witnessed a marginal decline in Covid-19 cases with 2,827 fresh infections registered in the past 24 hours, against previous day's 2,897, as per the Union Health Ministry's data. In the same period, 24 fatalities were recorded taking the nationwide toll to 5,24,181. Currently, the active caseload stands at 19,067, accounting for 0.04 per cent of the total positive cases. The recovery of 3,230 patients in the last 24 hours took the cumulative tally to 4,25,70,165. Consequently, India's recovery rate stands at 98.74 per cent. Meanwhile, the Daily Positivity rate has also reported a slight decline at 0.60 per cent, while the Weekly Positivity Rate in the country currently stands at 0.72 per cent.

meeting of NTAGI held last week after which it recommended that those who need to travel overseas can take the booster shot, before the stipulated nine-month waiting period, as per the booster guidelines of the country they are travelling to," a source had said.

India began administering precaution doses of Covid vaccines to healthcare and frontline workers and those aged 60 and above with comorbidities from January 10 this year.

The comorbidity clause was removed in March making all people aged above 60 eligible for the precaution dose of Covid vaccine.



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

SHOW OF STRENGTH



The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully fired an extended-range version of the BrahMos air launched missile from Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft with a direct hit on the designated target in the Bay of Bengal region

EC announces RS polls to 57 seats from 15 states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 12: Elections will be held June 10 to fill 57 Rajya Sabha seats from 15 states, with the Akali Dal likely to lose presence in the upper house and the BJP's tally to remain below 100 after touching the milestone recently.

The Election Commission Thursday announced elections to the seats that will be falling vacant due to the retirement of members on different dates between June and August. Prominent among those retiring are Union ministers Piyush Goyal and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Congress leaders Ambika Soni, Jairam Ramesh and Kapil Sibal, and BSP's Satish Chandra Misra.

Members are retiring between June 21 and August 1. The BJP currently has 95 and the Congress 29 MPs in the 245-member House.



While 11 seats are falling vacant in Uttar Pradesh, six members each are retiring from Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, five from Bihar and four each from Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

Three members each from Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, two each from Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Punjab Jharkhand and Haryana, and one from Uttarakhand are also retiring. The BJP is set to suffer losses in Andhra Pradesh, where it has three outgoing members, Jharkhand and Rajasthan but is

hopeful of making up for it in states like Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The Akali Dal's lone member from Punjab Balwinder Singh Bhunder and Congress' Ambika Soni are likely to make way for members from the Aam Aadmi Party whose huge strength in the assembly will ensure that it wins both seats.

Five BJP MPs are among the 11 retiring Rajya Sabha members from UP, and the party along with its allies is in a position to win eight seats, while the opposition Samajwadi Party may retain its tally of three.

In Maharashtra, the ruling coalition Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress coalition has the strength to ensure its victory in all the three seats it holds, while the BJP can comfortably win two of its three seats. "The elections are also likely to see the BSP's presence in the upper house reducing to a mere one.

AT LEAST 168 TERRORISTS OPERATING IN J&K: ARMY

IN 2021, SECURITY FORCES ELIMINATED 180 MILITANTS, OUT OF WHICH 18 WERE FOREIGN ELEMENTS

AGENCIES

Jammu, May 12: At least 168 terrorists are operating in Jammu and Kashmir while 75 have been killed in encounters with security forces this year, officials said.

Among those neutralised include 21 foreign mercenaries, they pointed out. In the past 11 months, 11 terrorists were encountered and 12 infiltration bids were foiled in the vicinity of the Line of Control (LoC) alone, they said. "The intensity of (counter-terrorism) operations will continue to be high till all of the residual 168 plus terrorists surrender or are eliminated," a senior army officer told PTI.

He said the overall situation is progressively improving due to



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

the proactive army-guided deployment, leading to a positive environment to accelerate the gov-

ernment's development initiatives. "Dividends of peace have started reaching the people and they are

Kashmiri Pandit shot dead

SRINAGAR: A government employee belonging to the Kashmir Pandit community was killed by militants inside his office in Chadoora of Budgam district in Jammu and Kashmir Thursday, drawing strong condemnation from political parties. Two gunmen entered the Tehsil office in Chadoora town and shot at Rahul Bhat, a clerk posted there under the special employment package for migrants, officials said. The officials said Bhat, who was residing in a migrant colony at Sheikhpura in Budgam district, was shifted to a hospital here but succumbed to injuries.

further getting motivated to preserve and sustain peace", the officer added.

In 2021, security forces eliminated 180 militants, out of which 18 were foreign elements. This was possible due to synchronised intelligence network and support from civil population, he said.

Last year, 495 over ground workers (OGWs) were apprehended, while 87 OGWs were nabbed in the first four months this year. "Ceasefire violation, infiltration bids or any other misadventure attempted by the adversary will be met firmly and strongly," the officer said.

# international



**Africa has become the main target of the Islamic State terrorist group by suffering 41 per cent of all its attacks worldwide**  
NASSER BOURITA | MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER

## WHO REVELATION

The number of new coronavirus cases reported worldwide has continued to fall except in the Americas and Africa, the World Health Organisation said in its latest assessment of the pandemic



## of the day quote

Japan supports tough sanctions against Russia and ample support for Ukraine because the war shakes the foundation of the world order not only in Europe but also in Asia  
FUMIO KISHIDA | JAPANESE PM

Pakistan is committed to the high-quality development of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and looks forward to fast-tracking key projects and accelerating industrial relocation to Pakistan, especially in CPEC Special Economic Zones  
BILAWAL BHUTTO ZARDARI | PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Elections in the country will only be held after poll reforms are introduced  
ASIF ZARDARI | CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY

## SHORT TAKES

### Denmark to charge ex-defence minister

**Copenhagen (Denmark):** Denmark's top prosecuting authority Thursday said it would seek to have a former defence minister's parliamentary immunity lifted so he could be charged with illegally disclosing "highly classified information". The office of the director of public prosecutions said it would contact Denmark's parliament, the Folketing, regarding the immunity of Claus Hjort Frederiksen. He served as the country's defence minister from November 2016 to June 2019.

### Pak PM meets Nawaz in London

**Islamabad:** Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has met his elder brother and former premier Nawaz Sharif in London and briefed him on key political, economic and administrative issues facing the cash-strapped country. Shehbaz, accompanied by a group of senior leaders of his Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, travelled to London on a private trip Wednesday. The meeting would approve a strategy to steer the country out of economic and constitutional crises.

### 22 get 5-year jail term each

**Lahore:** A Pakistani Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) has sentenced at least 22 accused to five years of imprisonment each for allegedly attacking a Hindu temple in Punjab province in 2021. In July 2021, miscreants allegedly attacked the Ganesh temple at Bhong city of Rahim Yar Khan district in Punjab province with sticks, bamboos and weapons. The angry mob allegedly assaulted the security guard, damaged idols, walls, doors and electric fittings and set part of the temple ablaze, desecrating the holy Hindu temple.

### Sherpa woman breaks own record

**Kathmandu:** A Nepali Sherpa broke her own record as the most successful female climber of Mount Everest by reaching the summit of the world's highest peak Thursday. Lakpa Sherpa and several other climbers took advantage of favourable weather to reach the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit early in the morning, her brother and expedition organizer Mingma Gelu said. He said she was in good health and was safely descending from the peak. A native of Nepal, Sherpa lives in the US with her three children in West Hartford, Connecticut.

## Ex-Lanka PM faces travel ban



Stranded Sri Lankans wait at a bus terminus during relaxation in nationwide curfew that began Monday evening in Colombo  
PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, May 12:** A Sri Lankan court Thursday imposed a ban on overseas travel on former Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, his son and MP Namal Rajapaksa and 15 others in view of investigations against them for the deadly attack on peaceful anti-government protesters in Colombo this week.

The Fort Magistrate's Court asked them to surrender their passports to the court due to the investigations taking place on the attacks on the GotaGoGama and MynaGoGama peaceful protest sites on Monday. At least nine people were killed and over 300 others injured in the violence.

The magisterial order came as a response to a request by the police's criminal investigation division who are conducting the investigations into the Monday's violence. The court issued the bans on 13 legislators representing the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), including Johnston Fernando, Sanath Nishantha, Pavithra Wanniarachchi, C B Ratnayake, and Sanjeeva Edirimanne. Senior Deputy Inspector General (SDIG) of the Western Province Deshabandu Tennakoon is also in the list of people who need to remain in the country for investigations into the violence.

The group was accused of brutally assaulting protesters opposite Mahinda Rajapaksa's prime ministerial residence and near the secretariat of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Mahinda Rajapaksa, in a show of political strength, rallied his grassroots supporters to force him not to resign his position as the prime minister. By then the pressure had mounted on him from within the ruling coalition to resign to make way for the formation of an interim all-party government.

He made a passionate speech and the charged up supporters at-



tacked the protesters who had been for weeks demanding the resignation of the Rajapaksas, blaming them for the country's worst economic crisis.

A number of government MPs' homes and offices were torched by enraged mobs around the country Monday and Tuesday, in a wave of spontaneous violence that was triggered by the attack on anti-government protesters by supporters of Mahinda Rajapaksa.

Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned a few hours later and a curfew was imposed across the country. Mahinda Rajapaksa, known for his brutal military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) during his presidency from 2005 to 2015, saw his private residence set on fire on Monday. He, along with his wife and family, fled his official residence - Temple Trees - and took shelter at the naval base in Trincomalee after a series of deadly attacks on his supporters.

In a late-night televised address to the nation on Wednesday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said action would be taken against the instigators of Monday's "incident". Sri Lanka is facing its worst economic crisis since gaining independence from Britain in 1948. The crisis is caused in part by a lack of foreign currency, which has meant that the country cannot afford to pay for imports of staple foods and fuel, leading to acute shortages and very high prices.

## Plane catches fire; 40 hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, May 12:** Over 40 people were injured when a passenger plane of China's Tibet Airlines with 113 passengers and nine crew onboard veered off the runway and caught fire while taking off in the country's southwest Chongqing city on Thursday, the second major aviation accident in the country in two months.

All the 122 people aboard the Tibet Airlines flight TV9833 from Chongqing to Nyingchi in the Tibet Autonomous Region have been safely evacuated, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) said. The Airbus A319-100 had been in service with the airline for nine-and-a-half years, according to the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post.



The plane bursts into flames after skidding off the runway at the Chongqing airport. Over 40 people who suffered bruising and sprains during the evacuation were taken to a nearby hospital. The crew members aborted the take-off after discovering an anomaly in the Airbus A319 aircraft. The plane caught fire on the left side of its nose after veering off the runway.

All people aboard the plane were evacuated and the injured were rushed to the hospital for treatment. Currently, one runway of the Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport has been closed and the other two are operational, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

## N Korea fires missiles amid 1st virus outbreak

Earlier Thursday, North Korean state media confirmed the country's first Covid-19 infections as Kim ordered nationwide lockdowns to slow the spread of the virus

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Seoul, May 12:** North Korea fired three short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea Thursday, South Korea's military said, in the latest of a series of weapons demonstrations this year that came just hours after it confirmed its first case of the coronavirus since the pandemic began.

The launches could underscore North Korea's determination to press ahead with its efforts to expand its arsenal despite the virus outbreak to rally support behind the leader, Kim Jong Un, and keep up pressure on its rivals amid long-dormant nuclear diplomacy. South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement the three missiles launched from the North's capital region Thursday afternoon flew toward the waters off the country's eastern coast. It said South Korea's military has boosted its readiness and surveillance while maintaining close coordination with the United States.

Japan also detected the North Korean launches. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida instructed officials to do their utmost to analyze the launch, ensure safety of aircraft and vessels in the area and take precaution and readiness for any possible emergencies, according to his office.

The Japanese coast guard said



that a possible ballistic missile from North Korea was believed to have landed at sea. It urged vessels around the Japanese coasts to watch out for falling objects and report them to the authorities.

Earlier Thursday, North Korean state media confirmed the country's first COVID-19 infections as Kim ordered nationwide lockdowns to slow the spread of the virus. Kim also ordered officials to bolster the country's defense posture to avoid any security vacuum.

In recent months, North Korea has test-launched a spate of missiles in what experts call an attempt to modernize its weapons and pressure the United States and its allies into accepting it as a nuclear state and relax sanctions on the North. Some observers say that despite the elevated anti-virus steps, North Korea would likely continue its weapons tests to try to boost public morale at home and strengthen loyalty toward the Kim leadership.

Thursday's launches were the North's first weapons fired since the inauguration of new conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol Tuesday. Yoon's office said his national security adviser Kim Sung-han was planning to convene a meeting to discuss the launches.

North Korea has a history of rattling new governments in Seoul and Washington in an apparent bid to boost its bargaining chips in future negotiations.

## DRAMATIC MOVE

# Finland seeks NATO membership 'without delay'

Russia reacted to the development with a warning saying that if Finland joins NATO, it will "inflict serious damage to Russian-Finnish relations as well as stability and security in Northern Europe"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Helsinki, May 12:** Finland's leaders said Thursday they're in favour of rapidly applying for NATO membership, paving the way for a historic expansion of the alliance that could deal a serious blow to Russia as its military struggles with its war in Ukraine.

The dramatic move by Finland was announced by President Sauli Niinisto and Prime Minister Sanna Marin. It means that Finland is all but certain to join NATO, though a few steps remain before the application process can begin. Neighbouring Sweden is expected to decide on joining NATO in coming days.

"NATO membership would strengthen Finland's security. As a member of NATO, Finland would strengthen the entire defence alliance," Niinisto and Marin said in a joint statement. "Finland must apply for NATO membership without delay," they said. "We hope that the national steps still needed to make this decision will be taken

- UN considers investigation into possible Russian war crimes in Ukraine
- Pentagon says it would not be hard to integrate Finland into NATO
- G7 foreign ministers meet to discuss Ukraine war, impacts



rapidly within the next few days." Russia reacted to the development with a warning. The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that if Finland joins NATO, it will "inflict serious damage to Russian-Finnish relations as well as stability and security in Northern Europe." "Russia will be forced to take retaliatory steps of military-

technical and other characteristics in order to counter the emerging threats to its national security," the ministry said.

"History will determine why Finland needed to turn its territory into a bulwark of military face-off with Russia while losing independence in making its own decisions," it added.

The ministry's statement follows Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov's comment earlier Thursday that Finland's decision wouldn't help stability and security in Europe.

Peskov said that Russia's response will depend on NATO's moves to expand its infrastructure closer to the Russian borders.

Previously, the Kremlin had warned of "military and political repercussions" if Sweden and

- Finland wants security after Russian invasion of Ukraine
- Sweden expected to follow suit in bid to join alliance
- Ukraine forces aim to cut Russian battlefield supply lines

Finland decide to join NATO. Should they apply, there will be an interim period lasting from when an application has been handed in until all 30 NATO members' parliaments have ratified it.

In NATO member Estonia, which also borders Russia, Prime Minister Kaja Kallas tweeted that "history being made by our northern neighbors."

# First image of giant black hole at heart of Milky Way revealed

THE IMAGE WAS PRODUCED BY A GLOBAL RESEARCH TEAM CALLED THE EVENT HORIZON TELESCOPE (EHT) COLLABORATION, USING OBSERVATIONS FROM A WORLDWIDE NETWORK OF RADIO TELESCOPES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Geneva, May 12:** Astronomers unveiled the first image of the supermassive black hole lurking at the centre of our own Milky Way galaxy which is four million

times more massive than the Sun, terming it a "gentle giant" while announcing the breakthrough Thursday.

The finding, published in The Astrophysical Journal Letters, greatly improves our understanding of what happens at the very centre of our galaxy and offers new insights into how these giant black holes interact with their surroundings.

The image shows a fuzzy glowing ring of red, yellow, and white surrounding a darker center. The picture of the black hole known as Sagittarius A\* (Sgr A\*) - only the second one ever to be imaged - was produced by a global research team called the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT) Collaboration, using observations from a worldwide network of radio telescopes.

"It is the first direct image of the gentle giant in the center of our galaxy," said Feryal Ozel, an as-



tronomer at the University of Arizona during a news conference in Washington. "This image shows a bright ring surrounding the darkness, the telltale sign of the shadow of the black hole," Ozel said.

Black holes are regions of space where the pull of gravity is so intense that nothing can escape it, in-

cluding light. The EHT achievement follows the collaboration's 2019 release of the first image of a black hole, called M87\*, at the centre of the more distant Messier 87 galaxy.

The two black holes look remarkably similar, even though our galaxy's black hole is more than a

"We were stunned by how well the size of the ring agreed with predictions from Einstein's Theory of General Relativity"

GEOFFREY BOWER | EHT PROJECT SCIENTIST

thousand times smaller and less massive than M87\*.

"We have two completely different types of galaxies and two very different black hole masses, but close to the edge of these black holes they look amazingly similar," said Sera Markoff, Co-Chair of the EHT Science Council and a professor of theoretical astrophysics at the University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

"This tells us that General Relativity governs these objects up close, and any differences we see further away must be due to differences in the material that sur-

rounds the black holes," Markoff said. The finding was unveiled during simultaneous press conferences around the world, including at the European Southern Observatory (ESO) headquarters in Germany.

The image is a long-anticipated look at the massive object that sits at the very centre of our galaxy. Scientists had previously seen stars orbiting around something invisible, compact, and very massive at the centre of the Milky Way.

This strongly suggested that this object - known as Sagittarius A\* (Sgr A\*) is a black hole, and the image provides the first direct visual evidence of it. Although we cannot see the black hole itself, because it is completely dark, glowing gas around it reveals a tell-tale signature: a dark central region (called a shadow) surrounded by a bright ring-like structure.



**India's economic growth rate is likely to slow if the central bank hikes interest rates**  
TV SOMANATHAN | FINANCE SECRETARY

## TOUGH TIME FOR NON-POWER SECTOR

Coal India Limited, in a bid to minimise the shortage of dry fuel for thermal electricity generating plants, is supplying more coal than its commitment to them, forcing the non-power sector to brace for tougher days. As a number of states have been facing an unprecedented power outage, Coal India is pushing more fuel to power plants than its commitment of 1.65 million tonne per day, said an official



## of the day quote

Raw material prices are already going up and now the US dollar is going up as the Indian rupee is devaluing. All manufacturers would be now looking at the bottom line (income/profit). From June onwards, we will see a price increase of 3 to 5 per cent

ERIC BRAGANZA | PRESIDENT, CEAMA

We may consider doing a preferential trade agreement with Oman to begin with because we are looking for a comprehensive agreement between the GCC region and India, (which is) under active discussion

PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

The demand environment for technology continues to be robust despite the challenges seen over the last two years, and global clients have a razor-sharp focus on accelerating digital transformation with efficiency

ROSHNI NADAR MALHOTRA | CHAIRPERSON, HCL TECHNOLOGIES

## SHORT TAKES

### FM meets UAE Min of Economy

**New Delhi:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Thursday had a courtesy meeting with Abdullah Bin Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy, United Arab Emirates (UAE). Both sides discussed the strong economic and commercial engagement between India and the UAE and the comprehensive strategic partnership which is driving the multifaceted bilateral relations, the finance ministry said in a statement. Marri and a high level UAE delegation are in New Delhi for India-UAE Economic Partnership Summit - 'India-UAE CEP': Unleashing the Golden Era'.

### Tata Motors Q4 net loss narrows

**New Delhi:** Homegrown auto major Tata Motors Thursday reported narrowing of consolidated net loss to ₹992.05 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2022. The company had posted a consolidated net loss of ₹7,585.34 crore in the same period last fiscal, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing. Total consolidated revenue from operations stood at ₹78,439.06 crore in the fourth quarter as against ₹88,627.90 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

### PNB shares dip 14% after Q4 earnings

**New Delhi:** Shares of Punjab National Bank (PNB) Thursday tumbled nearly 14 per cent after the company reported over 60 per cent decline in standalone net profit for the quarter ended March 2022. The stock tanked 13.60 per cent to end at ₹28.60 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 13.89 per cent to its 52-week low of ₹28.50. On the NSE, it plummeted 12.53 per cent to settle at ₹28.95 apiece. In volume terms, 171.82 lakh shares were traded on the BSE and over 20.34 crore shares on the NSE during the day.

### L&T Q4 consolidated PAT rises 10% YoY

**Mumbai:** India's largest infrastructure company Larsen & Toubro Limited May 12 reported a 10 per cent year-on-year rise in consolidated net profit at ₹3,621 crore, which was below analysts' expectations. The infrastructure giant's consolidated revenue from operations rose 10 percent on-year to ₹52,851 crore for the reported quarter, missing analysts' expectations.

## BLOODBATH IN CRYPTOCURRENCY MARKET

# Bitcoin's 2021 gains wiped out in stablecoin rout

The digital currencies continued to bleed Thursday, thanks to multiple factors. The unstable algorithms of stablecoins are hurting the crypto market sentiments, while the US dollar-pegged tokens are getting depegged and dragging the market lower

REUTERS

**Hong Kong, May 12:** Cryptocurrencies extended their sell-off Thursday, with Bitcoin falling to its lowest levels in 16 months as a stampede out of so-called stablecoins sent shockwaves around broader markets.

The latest blow to Bitcoin and its smaller rival Ether, which has shed more than half its market value so far this year, came from a meltdown this week in TerraUSD, also one of the world's biggest cryptocurrencies.

Bitcoin dropped to a low of \$25,401.05, its lowest level since Dec 28, 2020. In the past eight sessions, it has lost a third of its value, or \$13,000, and is down more than 45% so far this year. From a peak of \$69,000 in November 2021, it has lost nearly two-thirds of its value.

TerraUSD, also known as "UST", slipped below its 1:1 peg to the dollar this week, roiling cryptocurrency markets already under pressure alongside tumbling stock markets.



The Terra incident is causing an industry-based panic, as Terra is the world's third-biggest stable coin. But TerraUSD couldn't hold its promise to maintain a stable value in terms of US dollars

IPEK OZKARDESKAYA | SENIOR ANALYST, SWISSQUOTE BANK

"The collapse of the Peg in TerraUSD has had some nasty and predictable spillovers. We have seen broad liquidation in BTC, ETH and most ALT coins," said Richard Usher, head of OTC trading at BCB Group, adding that the moves are reminiscent of the bank runs during the 2008 financial crisis.

Stablecoins are digital tokens pegged to the value of traditional assets, such as the US dollar. They are popular in times of turmoil in crypto markets and are often used by traders to move funds around and speculate on other cryptocurrencies.

Thursday, TerraUSD was quoted around 50 cents, according to CoinGecko price data.

Unlike most stablecoins which are backed by reserves, TerraUSD is an algorithmic, or "decentral-

ized", stablecoin. It was supposed to maintain its peg via a complex mechanism which involved swapping it with another free-floating token. But even reserve-backed stablecoins, which say they have sufficient assets to maintain their pegs, were showing signs of stress Thursday.

Major stablecoin Tether slipped below its dollar peg, hitting as low as 98 cents Thursday, according to CoinGecko. USD Coin was trading at around \$1.04 while Binance USD was at \$1.07 - a significant breakout of its usual range.

Market players are still assessing the fallout of the collapse of TerraUSD to identify whether major companies or investors have been badly hurt. That would be a possible clue to wider contagion.

# US inflation data sings Dalal Street

Equity investors have become poorer by more than ₹18.74 lakh crore as the market continued to remain bearish for the fifth session on the trot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 12:** The Sensex nosedived over 1,150 points while the Nifty crashed below the 16,000 level on Thursday, extending their losing streak to the fifth straight session, as world markets were unnerved by elevated US inflation which triggered concerns of accelerated rate hikes.

The forex market too bore the brunt of heightened risk aversion, with the rupee plunging to a fresh lifetime low of 77.63 per US dollar intra-day amid foreign capital outflows. The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 1,158.08 points or 2.14 per cent to finish at an over two-month low of 52,930.31. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 359.10 points or 2.22 per cent to 15,808.00. Barring Wipro, all Sensex constituents finished in the red.

IndusInd Bank lost 5.82 per cent, followed by Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, HDFC, Titan and L&T. In value terms, HDFC twins and Reliance Industries were the top drags on the benchmark.

Global markets were hammered by a fresh wave of selling after US reported consumer inflation of 8.3 per cent in April, slightly lower than the level in March but still way

## RUPEE SLUMPS TO NEW ALL-TIME LOW

The rupee plunged by 25 paise to close at its lifetime low of 77.50 against the US currency Thursday as the dollar touched a fresh two-decade high in global markets on strong risk-averse sentiment and a higher-than-expected US inflation triggered fears of aggressive rate hikes. The local currency also touched its record intra-day low of 77.63 to a dollar as losses in domestic stocks, concerns over weak growth, and persistent forex outflows negated the impact of a fall in crude oil prices. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened steeply lower at 77.52 against the greenback and moved in a range of 77.36 to 77.63 in the day trade. The rupee finally ended at 77.50, down by 25 paise over its previous close of 77.25, cutting short its two-day winning run. Previously, the domestic unit had closed at the record low of 77.44 against the greenback May 9.

beyond the Federal Reserve's target of 2 per cent. A total of 2,614 stocks declined, while 747 advanced and 86 remained unchanged.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude declined 2.02 per cent to \$105.7 per barrel. Continuing their selling spree, foreign institutional investors offloaded shares worth ₹3,609.35 crore Wednesday, according to stock exchange data.



## FOOD & FUEL PRICES SKYROCKET

# April CPI inflation soars to 8-yr high

EARLIER THIS MONTH, THE MPC RAISED THE KEY POLICY RATE (REPO) BY 40 BASIS POINTS WITH AN AIM TO TAME THE RISING INFLATION. IT WAS THE FIRST RATE HIKE AFTER AUGUST 2018

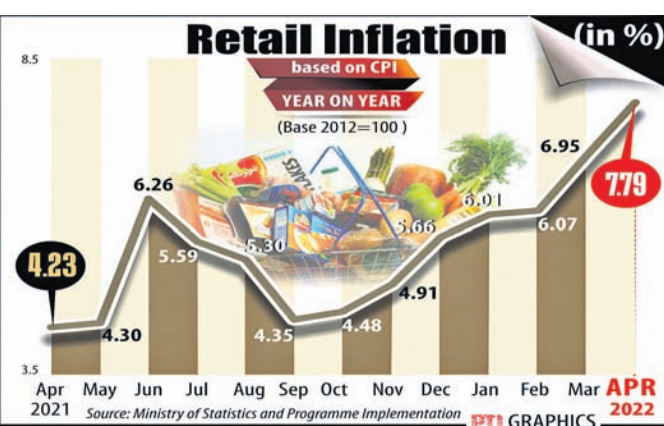
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 12:** Driven by rising food and fuel prices, retail inflation soared to an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April this year, which may prompt the Reserve Bank to go in for another interest rate hike in the next month policy review to tame price rise.

Worried over the rising inflation, the RBI in a surprise move raised the repo rate by 40 basis points to 4.40 per cent last week. Inflation has remained above the RBI's comfort zone of 6 per cent for four months in a row mainly due to the Russia-Ukraine war which has impacted the prices of commodities across the globe.

The previous high in the consumer price index (CPI)-based retail inflation was recorded at 8.33 per cent in May 2014. CPI inflation was 6.95 per cent in March this year and 4.23 per cent in April 2021.

Inflation in the food basket rose to 8.38 per cent in April from 7.68 per cent in the preceding month and 1.96 per cent in the year-ago month,



showed the data released by National Statistical Office (NSO) Thursday.

The rate of price rise in 'fuel and light' category in the retail inflation basket quickened to 10.80 per cent in April from 7.52 per cent in March.

In the 'oils and fats' category, inflation remained at an elevated level of 17.28 per cent (18.79 per cent in March 2022) during the month, as Ukraine is one of the major sunflower oil producers in the world and India imports a major

portion of the commodity from the war-ravaged country.

Vegetables witnessed an inflation print of 15.41 per cent during the month as against 11.64 per cent in March, the data showed.

Notably, retail inflation has remained above 6 per cent since January 2022. The Reserve Bank of India has been mandated by the government to ensure that inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

## March IIP growth at 1.9%

**New Delhi:** Industrial production growth remained subdued at 1.9 per cent in March compared to a year ago, mainly due to poor performance by the manufacturing sector which showed staggered impact of the third wave of the pandemic. Factory output measured in terms of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had recorded a growth of 24.2 per cent in March 2021, as per government data released Thursday. As per the data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, growth in the mining sector was 4 per cent in March 2022 against a growth of 6.1 per cent in the same month last year. The manufacturing sector expanded by meagre 0.9 per cent, compared to a growth of 28.4 per cent in the year-ago period. Power sector showed a growth of 6.1 per cent compared to 22.5 per cent growth a year ago. For the full fiscal 2021-22, IIP grew 11.3 per cent as against an 8.4 per cent contraction in 2020-21.

# Ford takes U-turn on EV plans

REUTERS

**Washington, May 12:** Ford Motor Co said Thursday it had dropped plans to make electric vehicles (EVs) in India for exports, while it explores options for its two factories in the country that stopped production last year.

"After careful review, we have decided to no longer pursue EV manufacturing for exports from any of the Indian plants," a spokesperson for Ford India said in an email.

The company did not offer details on its U-turn, while adding that its previously announced business restructuring continues as planned, including exploring alternatives for its manufacturing facilities in India. "We continue to work closely with unions and other stakeholders to deliver an equitable and balanced plan to mitigate the impacts of restructuring," the spokesperson added.

Talks for the sale of the Sanand

The US car maker said in Feb it would manufacture EVs in India and also got approval for the Indian gov't \$3.5-bn PLI scheme for making clean-fuel vehicles

plant in Gujarat with Tata Motors were progressing well, while Ford was pursuing multiple suitors for its Chennai factory, India's Economic Times newspaper said in a report, citing people familiar with the matter.

Earlier this year,

Ford had said it was considering producing EVs in India for export, and possibly for sale in the domestic market.

The company had less than 2% of the Indian passenger vehicle market when it stopped production in the country last year, having struggled for more than two decades to generate profits.

Several car makers are planning to make EVs in India, with the government offering billions of dollars in incentives to build EVs and their parts locally as it seeks to cut oil imports and pollution.



# Air France-KLM, IndiGo implement codeshare pact

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 12:** Air France-KLM and IndiGo Thursday announced that they have implemented a code-share agreement allowing each airline to sell seats on other's flights. The agreement between the two was signed December 23 last year.

With the implementation of the codeshare agreement, Air France and KLM will offer their passengers access to 30 new Indian cities, a joint statement of the two carriers said. This means that Air France and KLM will be able to sell seats, on its distribution system, of IndiGo flights on 30 domestic routes.

Similarly, IndiGo will be able to sell seats on the European airline group's flights on more than 300 routes, the joint statement said. IndiGo also has codeshare agreements with Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways and American Airlines.

# ROYAL CHALLENGE AWAITS KINGS

# IPL gives India more finishing options in DK, TEWATIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 12:** Royal Challengers Bangalore, who have found much-needed momentum towards the business end of IPL, will back themselves to ride past an inconsistent Punjab Kings and get closer to a playoff spot here Friday.

Having put up complete performances in their last two games, RCB seemed to have figured out their best combination.

Barring Virat Kohli, all of their batters are in top form with uncapped Rajat Patidar and Mahipal Lomror complementing seasoned pros like skipper Faf du Plessis, Glenn Maxwell and Dinesh Karthik, who has been among the best finishers in the tournament alongside Gujarat's Rahul Tewatia.

The bowling packs a punch too in the presence of in-form pacers



Josh Hazlewood and the ever-reliable Harshal Patel. Mohammad Siraj has not been at his best but trust him to deliver when the team wants it the most.



off-spin, both in powerplay and middle overs, while Wanindu Hasaranga is among the leading wicket-takers in the tournament with 21 scalps including a five-wicket haul.

Kohli, who is in the middle of his worst IPL season, is due for an impact knock and that could come against Punjab. A win on Friday would take RCB to 16 points though 18 seems to be a safe number for a playoff berth.

Punjab, who have three games left, need to win all to have a shot at the top-four finish. They had started their campaign with a win over RCB and are on 10 points with five wins and six losses. The fact that they have not been able to win two games in a row sums up their inconsistent run.

Shikhar Dhawan and Bhanuka Rajapaksa have delivered at the top, so has Liam Livingstone and Jitesh Sharma in finishing the innings. Jonny Bairstow finally got runs after being promoted to open the innings alongside Dhawan. Skipper Mayank Agarwal, who has moved himself down the order,

needs to lead from the front.

On the bowling front, Sandeep Sharma has been tidy but could do with some wickets in the powerplay. Lead pacer Kagiso Rabada has done well to take 18 wickets but has gone for close to 9 runs per over.

Arshdeep Singh has been brilliant, especially in the death overs, and has impressed many with his ability to land yorkers at will. Despite a solid squad at their disposal, Punjab have flattered to deceive and they must raise their game before it is too late yet again.

**TODAY'S MATCH**

RCB vs PBKS

Time: 07:30 pm

TELECAST

Star Sports channels & Hotstar



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 12:** IPL form can't be the sole criteria for a national call-up but Dinesh Karthik and Rahul Tewatia with their stellar shows as finishers for their respective franchises have certainly made a strong case for themselves in the coming months leading up to the T20 World Cup.

The ICC event in Australia is still more than four months away but the selectors and team management will soon have to decide on their core group of players, starting with the five match home series against South Africa next month.

The finisher's job is only gaining significance in the power-packed modern game and the Indian team is definitely in need of players who can go ballistic from ball one.

In the absence of Hardik Pandya due to fitness issues, the Indian team management tried out Deepak Hooda and Venkatesh Iyer in the middle-order post World Cup debacle last year but they haven't yet found closure as far as their search is concerned.

Hardik, who has done well in the IPL in what has been his comeback competition, too has thrown himself back into national contention. However, Hooda and Hardik have been batting higher up in the order for their respective IPL teams but are expected to play lower down

for the national team. Venkatesh has had a tough second year in the IPL and has gone down in the pecking order of finishers.

With Ravindra Jadeja being the only established finisher in the Indian team, IPL performers like Karthik and Tewatia sensed an opportunity and have made full use of it.

Tewatia has built a reputation of winning games from improbable situations while Karthik has shown insatiable hunger to make another comeback.

Former India chief selector MSK Prasad feels both Karthik and Tewatia must be tried in the series against South Africa beginning June 9 besides calling for Hardik's return.

Hardik has not been bowling for Gujarat Titans in every game but has bowled closed to 20 overs during the course of the season besides getting crucial runs at number four.

Prasad's former colleague in the erstwhile selection committee, Sarandeep Singh, said the Baroda all-rounder has to bowl regularly to be in the scheme of things.

Tewatia had received an India call up last year but failed a fitness test. He added that Venkatesh should be persisted even if he is having an ordinary IPL.

Among other players who should be tried in other roles against South Africa including young pacer Umran Malik, reckons Prasad.

# MI dash CSK's playoff hopes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 12:** Mumbai Indians Thursday snuffed out defending champions Chennai Super Kings' faint hopes of making the Indian Super League playoffs with a five-wicket win in a low-scoring match here.

Opting to bowl, MI shot CSK out for 97 with pacer Daniel Sams (3/16) running through the MS Dhoni-led side's top-order with three quick wickets in a fiery opening spell, and then huffed and puffed to overhaul the small target of 98 with 31 balls to spare.

MI were four wickets down for 33 runs in the fifth over before Tilak Varma (34 n o) and Hrithik Shookan (18) calmed the frayed nerves with a 48-run stand for the fifth wicket. MI reached 103/5 in 14.5 overs. Tim David remained not out on 16 off just seven balls.

With their eighth loss in 12 matches, CSK are out of reckoning for a playoffs berth. They remained at ninth position with eight points.

Already out of reckoning for a play-offs berth long time ago, MI remained rooted at the 10th and bottom place with three wins from 12 matches.

Both CSK and MI have two inconsequential matches left to be played. It will be the first time in IPL history that neither MI nor

CSK would be part of the playoffs.

Defending 97, Mukesh Choudhary (3/23) struck in the fifth ball of the opening over getting rid of Ishan Kishan (6). Simarjeet Singh (1/22) dismissed skipper Rohit Sharma in the fourth over. Choudhary then raised hopes of a CSK miracle by having Daniel Sams (1) and Tristan Stubbs (0) in the space of three balls in the fifth over.

Moeen Ali broke the fifth-wicket partnership between Varma and Shookan by having the latter in the 13th over but it was too late as MI needed just 17 runs from 7.2 overs.

Earlier, Sams tore apart the CSK top-order from which the Dhoni-led team never recovered. Riley Meredith (2/27) and Kumar Kartikeya (2/22) chipped in with two wickets apiece while Jasprit Bumrah (1/12) and Ramandeep Singh (1/5) got one each as CSK innings folded in 16 overs.

CSK's woes were compounded with the non-availability of DRS due to power cut at one of the floodlight towers at Wankhede Stadium after the start of their innings during which they lost three wickets, with two being LBW decisions.

Captain Dhoni played a lone hand for CSK with a 33-ball 36 not out (4x4, 2x6). None of his colleagues gave him company in a



pathetic batting display. Dwayne Bravo (12), who shared 39 runs with Dhoni for the seventh wicket, the best partnership in the CSK

innings, was the second best batter. But for the 15 extras Mumbai bowlers conceded, the CSK total would have been much lower. In the

end, Dhoni ran out of partners.

Conway was struck on the pad off the second ball of the innings bowled by Sams. The umpire raised his finger though the ball hit him just below the knee-roll and looked to be going down the leg. There was no DRS, and Conway had to go for nought.

Two balls later, Moeen Ali (0) edged another Sams delivery as CSK were down two wickets for five runs in the opening over. It was the turn of Bumrah to join the party as he dismissed Robin Uthappa (1) who could not ask for DRS review of the LBW decision.

CSK got a bit of relief after the 10-ball mayhem but Sams was not done yet as he removed opener Rituraj Gaikwad (7) in the fifth over. CSK were 32/5 after powerplay. After Shivam Dubey was out in the seventh over, Dhoni and Bravo slowed down the procession to the dressing room, as they took CSK to 72/6 at the end of 12th over.

But CSK were back to square one as Bravo, Simarjeet Singh and Maheesh Theekshana fell in the space of eight balls to be reduced to 87/9 at the end of 15 overs.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
CSK 97 (MS Dhoni 36 n o; Daniel Sams 3/16, Kumar Kartikeya 2/22, Riley Meredith 2/27) lost to MI 103/5 (Tilak Varma 34 n o; Mukesh Choudhary 3/23) by 5 wickets.

# KDB's 4-goal burst lifts City Historic medal for Indian men shuttlers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, May 12:** With his four-goal burst and 'Zen' celebration, Kevin De Bruyne did his best impersonation of a future Manchester City teammate.

Erling Haaland is joining City next season as one of the most sought-after strikers in world soccer and even he would be hard-pressed to produce the kind of finishing demonstrated by De Bruyne in a 5-1 rout of Wolverhampton to maintain City's Premier League title charge on Wednesday.

After the Belgium midfielder completed his hat trick — his first for City — by the 24th minute, he celebrated with the 'Zen' pose made famous by Haaland in recent years at Borussia Dortmund. The short term is all about retaining the title, and City restored its three-point lead over



**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER:** Kevin De Bruyne celebrates a goal against the Wolves with teammate Phil Foden

Liverpool with the win at Molineux. Pep Guardiola's team needs four points from its final two games — against West Ham and Aston Villa — to guarantee first place but its superior goal difference of 7 might mean three points is now enough.

City might be running out of defenders, however, after Aymeric Laporte and Ferdinandinho — a midfielder who filled in at center back — came off with what Guardiola described as 'problems'. Center backs Ruben Dias and John Stones as well as right back Kyle Walker are already out for the rest of the season because of injury. Guardiola does, though, have De Bruyne in sublime form.

Jamie Vardy scored twice to help Leicester beat last-placed Norwich 3-0. Leicester snapped a seven-game winless run in all competitions and moved into 10th place. Norwich has already been relegated along with Watford.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangkok, May 12:** The Indian men's badminton team scripted a memorable 3-2 win over Malaysia to enter the semifinals of Thomas Cup for the first time in 43 years but the women's side bowed out after losing 0-3 to Thailand in the Uber Cup here Thursday.

India is thus assured of at least a bronze at the Thomas Cup. The country has not won a medal at the event since 1979.

The World No.8 pairing of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Kidambi Srikanth and HS Prannoy rose to the occasion to see India home. India will next take on either Korea or Denmark.

Lakshya Sen couldn't go the distance in the opening singles, losing 21-23, 9-21 to reigning world champion Lee Zii Jia in 46 minutes.

With the Malaysian fans throng-



ing the Impact Arena, Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy took to the court and the duo dished out a superlative performance to outwit World No.13 Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin 21-19, 21-15 to bring India back in the five-match tie.

Srikanth rode on his superior and varied strokeplay to outclass World No.46 NG Tze Yong 21-11, 21-17 and give

India a 2-1 lead. The combination of Krishna Prasad Garaga and Vishnuvardhan Goud Panjala went down to Aaron Chia and Teo Ee Yi as the match went into the decider.

World No.23 HS Prannoy was all fired up in the final contest as he catered to a 21-13, 21-8 win over 22-year-old Jun Hao Leong as India completed a come-from-behind victory.

Earlier, double Olympic medalist PV Sindhu fought hard before losing to Ratchanon Intanon as the Indian women's team crashed out of the Uber Cup Finals after being drubbed 0-3 by Thailand in the quarterfinals.

World No.7 Sindhu was off colour for the second consecutive day as she squandered a one-game lead to go down 21-18, 17-21, 12-21 against Intanon, ranked eighth, in a 59-minute first women's singles match.

India were down 0-2 when the women's doubles pair of Shruti Mishra and Simran Singh lost 16-21, 13-21 against the Thai pair of Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai.

It was no better for Aakarshi Kashyap, who surrendered 16-21, 11-21 to Pornpawee Chochuwong in the second singles match that lasted 42 minutes, as Thailand completed a 3-0 thrashing.

# Inter claim Italian Cup crown Colosseum in cradle: India's largest hockey stadium



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Rome, May 12:** Inter Milan remained on course for a league and cup double by beating Juventus 4-2 after extra time in the Italian Cup final. Ivan Perisic scored twice in extra time after Hakan Calhanoglu had converted a controversial late penalty Wednesday.

Juventus had turned the match around early in the second half with two goals in as many minutes from Alex Sandro and Dusan Vlahovic after going behind on an early Nicolo Barella strike.

For Inter it was the first of what could be an impressive double as it is also tussling with city rival AC Milan at the top of the Serie A

standings, although the defending champions are two points behind the Rossoneri with two matches remaining.

Juventus also lost to Inter in the Italian Super Cup in January and it is the first year since 2011 it has finished the season without a trophy. It was looking for a record-extending 15th Italian Cup and had won five of the past seven editions, including last year's.

But it was Inter that got off to the perfect start at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome as it took the lead with less than seven minutes on the clock. Barella was given too much time and space by the Juventus defenders and he cut in from the left before curling into the top far corner.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Rourkela, May 12:** Cranes lifting heavy material, dusty roads leading up to the site, people in safety jackets and helmets doing their work amid heaps of sand and cement lying scattered all over the place.

There are ample signs that the construction of the country's largest hockey stadium is in full swing.

Come January next year, the Birsamunda International Hockey Stadium in Odisha's tribal-dominated Sundargarh district will be packed to the rafters during the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup.

As many as 20,000 supporters will be rooting for the Indian hockey team, which is riding high on the Tokyo Olympics success and will seek to not only better the quarterfinal finish in the 2018 edition in Bhubaneswar, but also win the showpiece event.

The work at the stadium on the outskirts of Rourkela city started in June last year and it is going on round the clock as officials battle to complete it within the deadline. Normally, it takes around 18-24



months to build a stadium of this size.

"But, we designed and planned it in such a way so that we can save time in engineering and the conventional construction part," Sports Department infrastructure consultant Swagat Singh said.

The executing agency of the 200-crore stadium is the Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation of Odisha and it has subcontracted the Larsen and Toubro.

The 80-crore accommodation near the practice pitch is being done by another contractor and its deadline is October, the official said. The 35-acre site includes the stadium and accommodation inside the 120-acre campus of the Biju Patnaik University of Technology. "It's India's largest hockey stadium. We're also assuming it to be the world's biggest, but yet to get that confirmation from the FIH," he told a group of journalists at the site, 293 km northwest of capital Bhubaneswar.

Singh exuded confidence of fin-

ishing the work in time by August. "Almost 50-60 per cent of the work has been completed," he told this agency. The workforce size is around 400. The casting is done at night and preparatory work in the morning due to the searing heat for the past few weeks.

By the end of this month, the complete shell will be done. Once the skeleton structure is completed, the workers will start giving the finishing touch. There are many USPs of this project, one of which is that it is a disabled-friendly stadium. "In other stadiums, there are multiple floodlights, but we are integrating it within the building itself so that it won't hamper the aesthetics," Singh said.

The colosseum-like structure is

continuous, making it more functional in terms of viewing. Singh highlighted that one will get a clear picture without any vision block no matter at what gallery or at which angle a spectator sits.

There will be some light projection and the facade has been designed in such a way that cultural aspects of the region can be integrated. "Wall arts and murals will also be there. It will be an amalgamation of culture and heritage," Singh said.

Just like the Hollywood Sign on Mount Lee in Los Angeles, the administration had planned to write Rourkela on the lush green and scenic Durgapur Hills, which overlooks and runs across one side of the stadium.

"But there are some technical and stability issues," Additional District Magistrate Subhankar Mohapatra said. "We're still trying tough."

He informed that they are planning to hold for a Pro League in October-end that will act as a test event. Post the World Cup, the government is mulling to convert the entire complex as an academy so that it remains a benchmark.