



IN LOVE WITH MUMBAI

Actor Chitrangada Singh says there is a madness in Mumbai and she is addicted to it

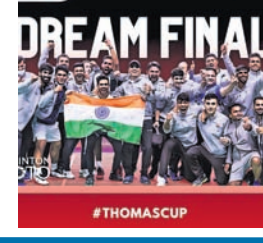
LEISURE P2



SRI LANKA CRISIS

Opposition parties in Lanka announce they would not become a part of Wickremesinghe's interim government

INTERNATIONAL P10



SHUTTLERS ENSURE SILVER

Indian badminton team enter Thomas Cup final for 1st time guaranteeing a silver medal

SPORTS P12

Bypoll to 1 RS seat in Odisha June 13

New Delhi: Bypoll to one Rajya Sabha seat in Odisha will be held June 13, the Election Commission announced Friday. The seat fell vacant following the resignation of BJD MP Subhas Chandra Singh in April. The poll is being held for the rest of the period that is from April 24, 2022 to April 24, 2026. While the notification for this poll will be issued May 26, last date of making nomination is June 2, scrutiny of nominations June 3, last date for withdrawal of candidature is June 6 and the poll will be held June 13 between 9 am to 4 pm.

Vig inspector caught taking ₹10L bribe

Bhubaneswar: The Internal Vigilance Unit of the Vigilance Directorate in Cuttack Friday caught a lady inspector of Sambalpur Vigilance division red-handed while she was accepting a bribe of ₹10 lakh through a private person. Vigilance sources revealed that after getting informed Thursday by the complainant the sleuths laid a trap to nab the accused, Manasi Jena. As per the plan, Jena was Friday caught red-handed while receiving ₹10 lakh from a government official through the private person for the closure of a petition against him which was being investigated by the accused.

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A blacksmith shaping iron nails for chariot construction in Puri, Friday

DEFT HANDS

26 perish in building blaze

Inferno rips through three-storey commercial building in national capital used for providing office space to companies

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 13: A massive fire ripped through a three-storey commercial building near Mundka metro station in west Delhi Friday evening, leaving at least 26 dead and 12 injured, police said.

"Over 50 employees and workers have been reportedly evacuated, while rescue teams have so far recovered 26 bodies," Deputy Commissioner of Police, Sameer Sharma, said.

According to fire department officials, information about the blaze was received around 4.45 pm following which more than 30 fire tenders were pressed into service. The fire broke out in the building near pillar number 544 of the Delhi metro.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal ex-



pressed shock over the accident and offered condolences to the bereaved families. "I wish for speedy recovery of the injured," Kovind said.

"Extremely saddened by the loss of lives due to a tragic fire in Delhi. My thoughts are with the bereaved families. I wish the injured a speedy recovery," tweeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Shocked and pained to know about this tragic incident. I am constantly in touch with officers. Our brave firemen are trying their best to control the fire and save lives. God bless all," Kejriwal tweeted.

TWITTER DEAL ON HOLD: MUSK

London: Elon Musk said Friday that his planned \$44 billion purchase of Twitter is "temporarily on hold" pending details on spam and fake accounts on the social media platform. The announcement that the Tesla billionaire tweeted is another twist amid signs of internal turmoil over his planned buyout of Twitter, including that the social media company fired two of its top managers Thursday. It wasn't clear whether the fake account issue could scuttle the Twitter deal.

Stocks in both Twitter and Tesla swung sharply in opposite directions, with Twitter's stock tumbling 18% and Tesla, which Musk had proposed using to help fund the Twitter deal, jumped 5%.



My faith in judiciary has started dwindling...a few of them are talking about Constitutional rights

Court notices to Centre, state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 13: The court of Puri Civil Judge Senior Division Friday accepted a petition filed by the Puri Lawyers' Association and sent notices to multiple parties including the Union Ministry of Culture, the National Monuments Authority, the Archaeological Survey of India and Puri Collector Samarth Verma.

The court has directed the parties to file their responses and scheduled the next hearing for June 26.

Notices have also been sent to Puri municipality, TATA Projects, Odisha Bridge & Construction Corporation (OBCC) and the chief administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration.

Notably, the court of SDJM had directed Wednesday for filing of cases while hearing a petition over the ongoing Shree Jagannath Temple Heritage Corridor Project in the pilgrim town.

Adjudicating over the petition



filed by Bibhuti Shankar Tripathy, secretary, Puri Bar Association, the court had asked the Singhadwar police to receive the complaint and register cases against Puri District Collector, OBCC and Tata Projects under Section 30A of the AMASAR Act-1951 and 166A of the IPC and initiate a probe.

The petitioner had earlier approached the Singhadwar police alleging illegal construction of projects on the prohibited zone near the temple without the permission of ASI. The petitioner had demanded registration of a case against the three parties under the AMASAR Act. However, the police allegedly refused to register any case in this connection. The petitioner had then moved the SDJM court.

May 9, the ASI had informed the Orissa High Court that no valid permission was given for the heritage corridor project being constructed around the Srimandir.

MONSOON TO HIT KERALA MAY 27

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 13: South-west monsoon, considered as the life-line of India's agri-based economy, is likely to bring first showers to Kerala by May 27, five days earlier than the normal onset date, the weather office announced Friday.

"This year, the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala is likely to be earlier than the normal date of onset. The monsoon onset over Kerala is likely to be May 27 with a model error of four days," India Meteorological Department said.

In 2009, the south-west monsoon had reached Kerala May 23. Weather scientists attribute the early onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala to the influence of the remnants of cyclone Asani that triggered the cross-equatorial flow, a key factor for the seasonal rains.

The early arrival of the south-west monsoon comes at a time when parts of north-west India were experiencing extremely high maximum temperatures. "In association with enhanced cross equatorial winds, conditions are becoming favourable for the advance of Southwest Monsoon into South Andaman Sea, Nicobar Islands and some parts of southeast Bay of



Bengal, around May 15," the IMD said in a statement.

At the same time, the weather office made it clear that past data suggest that there is no association of the date of monsoon advance over the Andaman Sea either with the date of monsoon onset over Kerala or with the seasonal monsoon rainfall over the country. The IMD said due to strong westerly flow from Arabian Sea to south peninsular India in lower tropospheric levels fairly widespread light/moderate rainfall with isolated thunderstorm/lightning/gusty winds likely over Kerala, Mahe, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry and Karaikal, south interior Karnataka and Lakshadweep over the next five days.

Woman, two kids charred to death; husband detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, May 13: In a horrific incident, the charred bodies of a tribal woman and her two children were recovered under mysterious circumstances from their house in Mayurbhanj district Friday, the police said.

Alleging foul play, the woman's brother lodged an FIR in the Jharpokharia police station, accusing his brother-in-law, Mangal Marandi, 28, of murder. When the police reached the spot at Dhipasahi, the bodies were lying inside a room with a gas stove. However, no traces of a blaze were spotted inside the building. The deceased have been identified as Surukuni Marandi, 24, her daughter Sarita, 5, and three-month-old son. The bodies have been sent for post-mortem and a case has been registered, the police said.

SP Rishikesh Khilari visited the spot and a forensic team is investigating the matter.

Give us grandchild or ₹5cr: Couple sues son

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Dehradun, May 13: An Indian couple is taking their son to court demanding that he and his wife produce either a grandchild within a year or cough up almost \$650,000.

Sanjeev and Sadhana Prasad said that they exhausted their savings raising and educating their pilot son and paying for a lavish wedding. Now they want payback.

"My son has been married for six years but they are still not planning a baby. At least if we have a grandchild to spend time with, our pain will become bearable," the couple said in their petition filed with a court in Haridwar last week.

The compensation they are demanding - ₹50 million - includes the cost of a wedding reception in a five-star hotel, a luxury car worth \$80,000 and paying for the couple's honeymoon abroad. The parents also forked out \$65,000 to get their son trained as a pilot in the United States only for him to return to India unemployed.

"We also had to take a loan to build our house and now we are going through a lot of financial hardships," the couple said in their petition.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	52793.62	↓ 136.69
NIFTY	15782.20	↓ 25.80
DOLLAR	78.24	↓ ₹0.01
EURO	80.61	↑ ₹0.26
GOLD	₹49,953	↓ ₹221
SILVER	₹59,273	↑ ₹522

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	35.2°C	35.2°C
TEMP MIN	26.7°C	26.6°C
Humidity	83%	77%
Rainfall	1.6mm	Nil

Forecast: Light rain very likely

In a first, scientists grow plants in soil from Moon

■ Researchers at the University of Florida show plants can successfully sprout and grow in lunar soil

AGENCIES

Washington, May 13: Scientists have for the first time grown plants in lunar soil brought back to Earth by astronauts in the Apollo missions, a step towards producing food and oxygen on the Moon or during future space missions.

The researchers at the University of Florida (UF) showed that plants can successfully sprout and grow in lunar soil.

Their study, published in the journal Communications Biology, also investigated how plants respond biologically to the Moon's soil, also known as lunar regolith, which

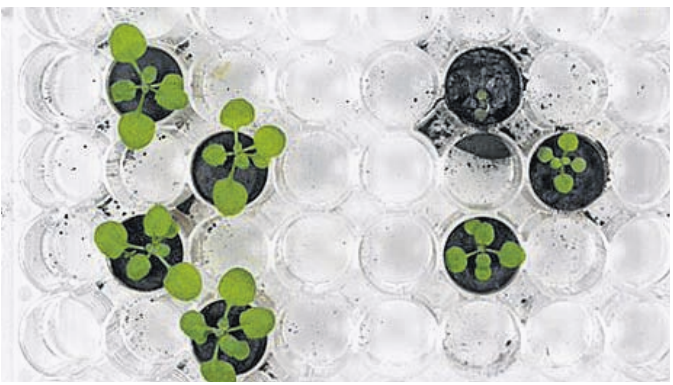
is very different from soil found on Earth. This research comes as NASA's Artemis Program plans to return humans to the Moon.

"Artemis will require a better understanding of how to grow plants in space," said Rob Ferl, one of the study's authors and a professor at UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

"For future, longer space missions, we may use the Moon as a hub or launching pad. It makes sense that we would want to use the soil that is already there to grow plants," Ferl said. The researchers designed a simple experiment: plant seeds in lunar soil, add water, nutrients and light, and record the results.

They only had 12 gm - just a few teaspoons - of lunar soil with which to do this experiment.

On loan from NASA, this soil was collected during the Apollo



11, 12 and 17 missions to the moon.

The researchers applied three times over the course of 11 years for a chance to work with the lunar regolith. To grow their tiny lunar garden, the researchers used thimble-sized wells in plastic plates normally used to culture cells. Each well functioned as a pot.

Once they filled each "pot" with approximately a gram of lunar soil, the scientists moistened the soil with a nutrient solution and added a few seeds from the Arabidopsis plant which is widely used in the research because its genetic code has been fully mapped.

Growing Arabidopsis in the

lunar soil allowed the researchers more insight into how the soil affected the plants, down to the level of gene expression.

As points of comparison, the researchers also planted Arabidopsis in JSC-1A, a terrestrial substance that mimics real lunar soil, as well as simulated Martian soils and terrestrial soils from extreme environments.

The plants grown in these non-lunar soils were the experiment's control group. The researchers found that nearly all the seeds planted in the lunar soils were able to sprout.

"We were amazed. We did not predict that. That told us that the lunar soils did not interrupt the hormones and signals involved in plant germination," said Anna-Lisa Paul, one of the study's authors and a research professor of horticultural sciences in UF/IFAS.



XCX LETS 80S MUSIC INFLUENCE ON HER NEW ALBUM CRASH

Singer Charli CXC is currently 'very inspired' by music from the 80s. The 29-year-old pop star told People magazine: "At the moment I'm very inspired by a lot of '80s music. My current record Crash was really heavily inspired by that, both sonically and visually."

COPPOLA LOCKS CAST OF HIS DREAM PROJECT

Superstar director and five times Academy Award winner Francis Ford Coppola has locked the star cast of his upcoming dream project Megalopolis. The film is set to star Adam Driver, Forest Whitaker, Nathalie Emmanuel, Jon Voight and Laurence Fishburne.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You will understand that being generous with your knowledge is a very satisfying thing. Ganesh says when you give something, it will be returned to you nine-fold in the future. Since you have decided to be more open-minded and considerate, you will gain a lot by way of respect.

TAURUS

Ganesh promises you a bright, eventful day ahead. The day is likely to commence with a series of important meetings and conferences. Later, you will be motivated to take up something extraordinary, something challenging and rewarding.

GEMINI

You face a hectic and challenging day up ahead. You will be busy trying to complete long pending projects at the office and in trying to fulfill all your responsibilities. This will leave you feeling tired and listless.

CANCER

Today, you will show others, literally, how to be successful in life, feels Ganesh. The example that you will set here is likely to become a benchmark for your company. Despite your tendency of getting into confrontations with your seniors, you are likely to be compliant and cooperative at work.

LEO

You are destined to play the superhero, at least as far as trade and commerce are concerned. Ganesh feels that today, you shall be more tied up in your daily work than is usual. But the upshot of it all is that all your actions seem to get the desired approval as the day progresses.

VIRGO

Ganesh predicts an imaginative and fruitful day for you at the workplace. You will feel your professional best in the afternoon. With your elegance, you will manage to put your ideas across the table and win the approval of your boss. You may pamper your beloved lavishly later in the evening.

LIBRA

Today, it is rather unlikely that you will get whatever you wish for. Internal strife with people around you may dominate your workplace, but you shall be able to negotiate this tough state of affairs with deftness, predicts Ganesh. Patience is your key to get over psychological turmoil.

SCORPIO

The day will usher refreshing changes into your personal life, foresees Ganesh. No matter which side of the bed you woke up on, the day promises to present itself in a cheerful light. You will build and enjoy harmonious and cordial relations with your peers at work.

SAGITTARIUS

Cash transactions will 'flow' your way. Money comes easy to itching palms, says Ganesh, and you will enjoy the green scene as you take stock of your finances with precision. Beware of people with a negative attitude as it might inflict worry on your fortunes, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN

You will be brimming over with power and energy, so much so that you may go head first into a new business venture, something that can match your ability and bring you the desired satisfaction. Pending work will be done away with, leaving you more time for recreation, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

Today is a day for creative expression! Sing away to glory, for you may discover you have a wonderful voice. Focus and precision are your best tools today, says Ganesh. But some event may cast a shadow over your clarity in the evening.

PISCES

You might as well drive into a brick wall and hope it is spongy, as expect to achieve a lot of success today. However, this does not mean that you ought to give up. Indeed, it is the Herculean efforts that you put in today that will bring you many laurels and much appreciation, as well as stupendous success in the near future, says Ganesh.

Chitrangada reboots her relationship with Mumbai

Mumbai: Actress Chitrangada Singh, who made her web debut with the anthology *Modern Love: Mumbai*, says the show has given her a chance to reboot her relationship with the city.

The actress is playing a housewife, with the desire to become a novelist, in the segment titled 'Cutting Chai' opposite Arshad Warsi, also says that women tend to prioritise family over career most of the time.

As the culture of 'cutting chai' is quite synonymous with the Mumbai city, Chitrangada, shares how her relationship with the city and its energy, local trains, 'cutting chai' and other elements, shaped her as a professional actress.

"Being an outsider of Mumbai, as you know I lived in Delhi before, everything that I have achieved as a professional, is the result of my hard work and a gift of Mumbai. Mumbai is my karambhoomi. Initially, when I came to the city it was a little overwhelming and fascinating at the same time because there is so much hustle-bustle that everyone is dealing with. Mumbai is a city of enthusiasts, there is madness and I am now addicted to it," said the Hazaron Khwaishein Aisi fame actress.

The segment is directed by Nupur Asthana. *Modern Love: Mumbai* streaming on Prime Video.



Utkal Tycoons Awards to be held May 15

Bhubaneswar: In an effort to recognise the icons of Odisha's business circle, Utkal Updates and Addiction Fashion Management and Consultancy will organise Utkal Tycoons Awards with Bhubaneswar Runway Week Season-6 in Bhubaneswar, Sunday.

On this occasion John Ajay, Director, Bhubaneswar Runway said that, "The event is being organised to identify and recognise the tycoons of the business fraternity. Besides, the designers will showcase their creations in Bhubaneswar Runway Week season-6. As many as 30 models will participate in the event," said John Ajay, the director of Utkal Updates and Addiction Fashion Management and Consultancy.

Founder of the organisation Sushree Sangita Sahu said "Many startups of Odisha are doing excellent work in the field of business. We will honour and recognise their contribution at the event. Ollywood celebrities like Elina Samantray and Bhoomika will grace the occasion."

The Bhubaneswar Runway Week Season-6 will have designers and brands like Priya S (Priya Mohapatra), Tasa Wings (Sipra Das), TP Garments (Savitri Panigrahi), AJ Fashion Realm (Selina Dashon) and Reemly Design Studio (Reemly Studio) at the event.

BIDYAKANAK SRUJANUSTHAN'S NATIONAL THEATRE FEST- DAY 2



A scene from the Hindi play *Unchai* presented by Seagull Theatre troupe of Assam. The play, an adaptation from *Erostratus* by French playwright Jean-Paul Sartre, was directed by Baharul Islam. The central character of the play was inspired by Erostratus, an insane man of ancient Greek, who torched a temple of western Turkey in 356 BC to become famous overnight. Baharul Islam, Nirmali Sharma, Prashant Kalita and Devojit Barthakur performed on stage. Among the dignitaries, Odia Language, Literature and Culture director Ranjan Kumar Das, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi president Aruna Mohanty, eminent theatre director Dhirendranath Mallick and Rotarian Prabhudutt Subudhi were present at the event. Troupe's secretary Shubhakanta Padhi coordinated the event.

Hindi play Bhagwaan Jagannath Katha today



The cast and crew of the troupe at Bhanjakala Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Friday

Bhubaneswar: Bhandira Tree Theatre Group of Mumbai in collaboration with The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), and Odia Language Literature & Culture Department, Government of Odisha will present, *Bhagwaan Jagannath Katha*, a Hindi play based on the legends of Lord Jagannath from *Skanda Purana*, here at Bhanjakala Mandap, Saturday.

The play will be staged under the Horizon Series of the troupe.

The plot revolves around the appearance of Lord Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra without their hands and

feet and with large eyes and large lips. The six-hour play also showcases the *Navaras of Natya Shastra*.

"Besides, the play will also explain the philosophy of Sanatan Dharma and its practice of idol-worship. Our younger generation must know the scientific aspects of this eternal religion," said Dhananjay Kapoor, the writer-director-producer and founder of the theatre troupe.

For the unversed, the troupe has some of the talented actors, who have been working as professional actors in Hindi film industry for nearly 15 years, as its members.

Jungle Cry trailer offers insight into struggles of orphan kids from Odisha



The Abhay Deol-starrer showcases the riveting story of India's U-14 rugby team who were from the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar

Mumbai: The trailer of the Abhay Deol-starrer *Jungle Cry* was released Friday. The film, based on a true story of unsung heroes, chronicles the journey of 12 underprivileged and orphan children winning the prestigious U-14 Rugby World Cup held in London in 2007.

The sports drama is directed by Sagar Ballary, and is inspired by the lives of Indian rugby coach Rudraksh Jena essayed by Abhay Deol, Paul Walsh played by Stewart Wright, and Professor Achyuta Samanta, the founder of Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), played by Atul Kumar.

The trailer, which has a runtime of little less than three minutes, offers a

gripping insight into the journey of India's U-14 rugby team's challenges and struggles as they go on to corner glory in the prestigious international event.

Commenting on the occasion, Abhay Deol shared that he was in awe of the children who won the U-14 Rugby World Cup, and the coaches who never gave up on them.

He said in a statement, "In the land of cricket, where there is hardly any noise about rugby, 12 young children from rural India made history."

Produced by Prashant Shah under the banner of Bollywood Hollywood Productions, and directed by Sagar Ballary, the movie will release on Lionsgate Play June 3.

FUN post

PEANUTS



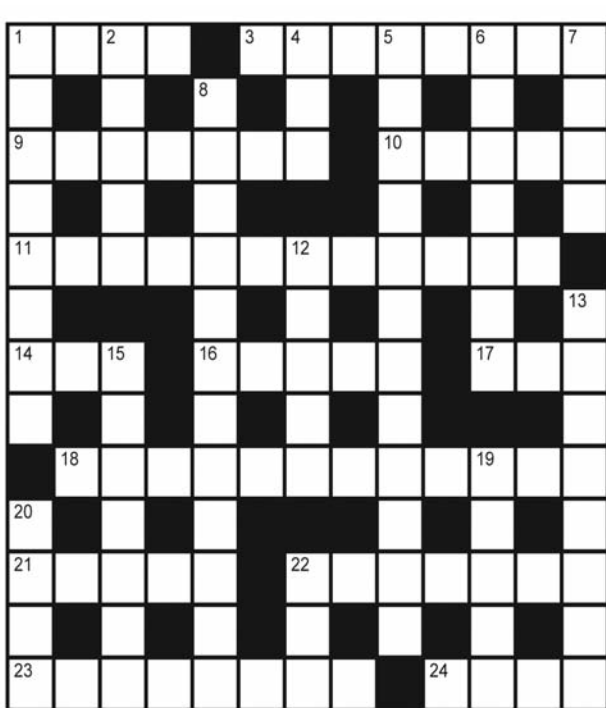
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



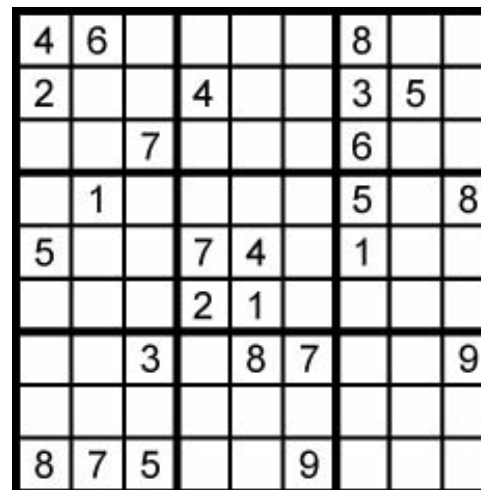
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2022 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Surefooted goat
 - 3 Squawk box
 - 9 Pak choi, e.g.
 - 10 Throng
 - 11 Indoor sporting venue (7,5)
 - 14 Preschooler
 - 16 Dog noise
 - 17 Acapulco aunt
 - 18 Present-day
 - 21 Thrush
 - 22 Billiards accessory (4,3)
 - 23 Pirate's target
 - 24 Eye affliction
 - 6 On the money
 - 7 Assemble
 - 8 Setts, e.g. (6,6)
 - 12 Dread
 - 13 Largest of Jupiter's satellites
 - 15 Difficulty
 - 19 Cravat
 - 20 Champagne designation
 - 22 Duffer's goal

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught.
SRI AUROBINDO



Tough Talk

Bad data is all around. Even as the Centre is vigorously questioning the WHO's Covid death figures in India during the Covid pandemic, it also has issues with information supplied by the states to the Finance Ministry for the release of funds under centrally sponsored schemes. Apparently, the problem has grown so alarmingly that Finance Secretary TV Somanathan has to step in.

Sources have informed DKB that Somanathan recently fired off a stern missive to all chief secretaries warning that providing false information for borrowing purposes will lead to stringent action against those responsible. Apparently, there have been several instances in which the ministry was provided wrong information, either deliberately or negligently by states. In one case, this led to over-borrowing by a state during the tenure of one government and therefore deduction of that amount during the tenure of its successor, which created a big problem for the Centre.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

In his missive, Somanathan has warned that if a state is found to have submitted false or wrong information, the concerned IAS or IPS officers will face action which can affect their empanelment, central or inter-cadre deputation, and even foreign training and assignments. That's tough talk.

Babus may do well to remember that during the Modi sarkar, senior IAS, IPS and IFS officers have been dismissed from service for misconduct, disproportionate assets and inefficiency.

PMO team strengthened
The appointment of former Petroleum Secretary Tarun Kapoor as Advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes as no surprise to most babu-watchers, though there may have been some who expected to see the return of Bhaskar Khulbe to the PMO after his term ended in February. For now, at least, Kapoor is known to be close to Modi and played a key role during the pandemic, and earlier as the one who worked hard to implement one of Modi's pet projects, the development of city gas distribution networks, among other assignments.

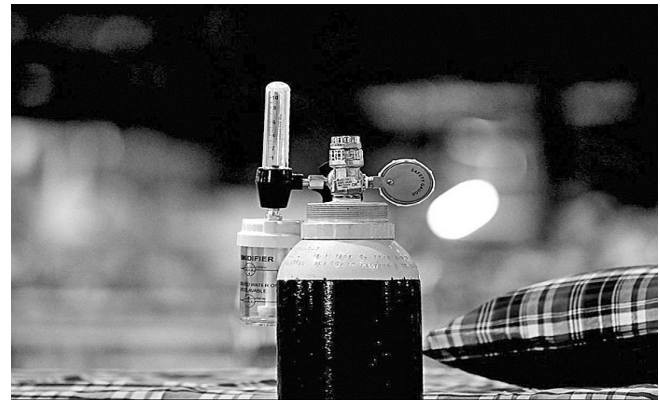
He may be one of the very few IAS officers to have served the Manmohan Singh government as well as the Modi sarkar. He may be seen as "old school" and "low profile", but there is a teeny whisper that his appointment to the PMO may also have something to do with him being from Himachal Pradesh, which is due for elections later this year.

But apart from Kapoor, Modi has fortified the PMO by inducting two additional secretaries Atish Chandra and Hari Ranjan Rao, raising the number of additional secretaries to five as against four joint secretaries. This imbalance, some say, will be rectified with the possible induction of some joint secretary-level officers shortly.

Change of guard at DoPT
The appointment of a new Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) in the secretary-level reshuffle came as a surprise to some babus, especially those from the Central Secretariat Service (CSS) cadre. The incoming secretary S Radha Chauhan replaces Pradip Kumar Tripathi who has been shifted out as Secretary (Coordination) in the Cabinet Secretariat.

FOCUS HEALTH INFRA

INVESTMENT IN OXYGEN



Not only is oxygen an essential treatment for almost all of the health conditions targeted by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, it is also a critical pillar of effective pandemic preparedness and response

COVID-19 has taken at least 18 million lives, and it is anyone's guess how many of those deaths were due to a lack of medical oxygen. Governments don't want to talk about the issue, because that could mean admitting that thousands—or even hundreds of thousands—of their citizens died unnecessarily. But unless health systems take steps to ensure a sufficient supply of oxygen in the future, they will be risking a repeat of the past two years.



Leith Greenslade

OXYGEN PRODUCERS SHOULD BE GIVEN MORE INCENTIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LOW- AND MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES GOVERNMENTS AND GLOBAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

While high-income countries are already working to secure their supplies of medical oxygen, many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) will continue to need international support. Deaths from a lack of medical oxygen in these countries preceded the pandemic, because global health and development agencies made no serious effort to help LMIC governments close the gap between need and supply.

prevent oxygen shortages. To date, the Taskforce has delivered almost \$1 billion—including \$560 million from the Global Fund alone—to LMIC governments and their United Nations and NGO partners. This money has been spent on liquid oxygen, pressure swing absorption oxygen-generating plants, mobile oxygen concentrators, oxygen therapies, and the workforce needed to install, operate, and maintain the equipment.

COVID management, oxygen production and distribution systems will need to be embedded in global health infrastructure. International organizations with mandates to improve newborn and child survival, infectious- and chronic-disease management, and PPR all have a stake in access to oxygen. These agencies should formalize their nascent ACT-A oxygen partnership by transforming it into a Global Oxygen Alliance with a mandate extending to 2030 (to align with the SDGs), and with a membership broadened to include international agencies focused on chronic diseases.

provide loans for this purpose as well. Third, oxygen producers should be given more incentives and opportunities to work in partnership with LMIC governments and global health and development agencies. Memoranda of understanding, non-disclosure agreements, and transparent and competitive tenders for equipment procurement, installation, and maintenance should all be made available, building on the ACT-A COVID-19 Oxygen Emergency Taskforce's existing blueprint [15] for industry partnerships. Moreover, development finance institutions should offer loans, equity, and guarantees to oxygen producers, and support LMICs seeking to reduce their dependence on oxygen imports and fragile global supply chains.

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

India's role in Lankan crisis

The Sri Lankan civil unrest starting from the second week of March, reached the violent nadir last Monday, May 9, when eight lives were lost and about 200 injured. The supporters of Mahinda Rajapaksa, the head of one of the powerful political families in South Asia, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, attacked the peaceful protesters demonstrating outside his house in Colombo. The video footage of goons and musclemen beating up a lone lady amongst the demonstrators unleashed a wave of anger across the country. The protesters damaged public property, torched the city buses, and in South Hambantota, the ancestral house of Rajapaksa was burnt down.



DK Giri

WE OUGHT TO NOTE THAT A CRISIS LIKE WHAT WE PRESENTLY SEE IN SRI LANKA IS WAITING TO HAPPEN IN ANY COUNTRY UNLESS ECONOMY IS EFFICIENTLY MANAGED

since the Island nation got independence in 1948. At the same time, on that Monday, one Sri Lankan lawmaker from Rajapaksa's party shot to death a 27-year-old young man and then killed himself as he was overpowered by the crowd. Mahinda's resignation has not assuaged the anger of Sri Lankans across the country, who are demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa must also quit.

The main revenue spinner, was hit badly by the Covid-19 pandemic, the remittance from abroad reduced, and inflexible foreign exchange rate hit Sri Lankan trade. The rating agencies lowered the ranking of Sri Lanka since 2020 and thereby locked it out of international financial markets. Consequently, the foreign exchange reserves depleted by more than 70 per cent.

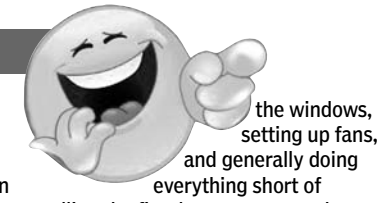
guided by the best interests of the people of Sri Lanka expressed through a democratic process". India has supported Sri Lanka with \$3.5 billion. The Union Government and the Government of Tamil Nadu have sent rice and other supplies in order to mitigate the shortages of essential items. New Delhi has also promised a hand to Sri Lanka in working out a bailout plan from the World Bank.

WORDSWORTH

Agog
It comes, like much of our language, from French. Middle French had gogue, entertainment, fun or amusement. From this developed en gogues, in good humour. English took it in and gave it a home, but changed the first element to on and then to a-, at the same time shortening the unpronounced ending. It's still widely to be found, though its usage has dropped off in the last half century. Standard dictionaries say it has the sense that you're using — eager or curious to hear or see something. The compound all agog ("I was all agog to discover who the new Dr Who would be") has an air of bouncy immature anticipation that makes it difficult to use in serious contexts.

LOL

Wise cooking advice
This weekend, I discovered a cooking tip I haven't seen listed in any cookbooks. While you are preparing the food, and after the guests have arrived, you contrive to fill the house up with smoke, preferably enough to get at least two smoke detectors going. Then you go rushing about the house, opening all



the windows, setting up fans, and generally doing everything short of calling the fire department. Let the guests sit for about 1/2 hour at 50 degrees (as a result of opening the windows) and serve the food. By this point, you have established expectations in your guests' minds that you can't fail to exceed!

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

LIC at crossroads

Sir, The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is deeply rooted in the lives of Indian people. The LIC today is, however, at a crossroads where the danger of that flame being put off. The Department of Investment and Public Assets Management is giving final touches to the procedure for finalising bids for the ultimate privatisation of the LIC. The LIC derives its strength from the confidence of the country's common people.

Inflation woes

Sir, Driven by continued global crude price upsurge India's April 2022 CPI inflation turned out to be at a 95-month high of 7.8%. This is the fourth month in a row that retail inflation has remained above 6%, which is the upper tolerance threshold for inflation under the monetary policy framework.

Letters

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As it is the public sector that has come forward to respond to the pressing needs of the people. The argument for privatising the LIC is based on the thinking that the move will augment the corporation's efficiency. But surely the LIC couldn't have grown from a Rs 5-crore company to one worth 32 lakh crore if it lacked efficiency. The LIC has a more than 76-per cent share of the country's insurance market, even after the government and the insurance regulatory authority allowed private players to compete with. Does that make the LIC incompetent? Every right thinking person must protest this step. **Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR**

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

CLIMATE CHANGE CRISIS

'Delhi, Mumbai will be 5°C warmer in 2080-99 period'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 13: Delhi and Mumbai's mean annual temperature will be five degrees Celsius higher in the 2080-99 period as compared to the 1995-2014 period if global CO2 emissions double by 2050, according to Greenpeace India's new heatwave projections based on Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change's sixth assessment report.

A recent heatwave in Delhi saw the maximum touching 43.5 degrees Celsius April 29, which is well above the average maximum temperature for the month. An analysis of the historical daily temperature for April from 1970 to 2020 shows that only four years have recorded a value higher than 43 degrees Celsius, it said.

Chennai will be four degrees Celsius warmer than now on average with a projected mean annual temperature of 31 degrees Celsius. Its annual maximum temperature will increase from 35.13 degrees Celsius at present to 38.78 degrees Celsius in the 2080-99 period.

Such a drastic and rapid increase in temperature will mean India will experience more unprecedented and prolonged heatwaves, extreme weathers, increased hospitalisations and irreparable damage to agriculture and wildlife risking food and nutritional security, Greenpeace India said.

"Heatwaves are fatal for public health and the economy. It also puts ecosystems at risk. We have enough science to link such extreme weather events to climate change.



Representational image

The national capital's annual maximum temperature (the median of June month record from 1995 to 2014) stands at 41.93 degrees Celsius

It will leap to 45.97 degrees Celsius in the 2080-99 period and can go up to 48.19 degrees Celsius in 'some extreme years', as per the NGO report

Mumbai's mean annual temperature will be five degrees Celsius higher in the 2080-99 period as compared to the 1995-2014 period and the annual maximum temperature will increase from 39.17 degrees Celsius at present to 43.35 degrees Celsius, the report said

Unfortunately, if we do not act now, the threat is only going to increase in frequency, duration and magnitude," said Avinash Chanchal, Campaign Manager, Greenpeace India. Inland cities are at a higher risk of heatwaves in the absence of regulation by oceans and a higher temperature range than coastal areas. The impaling temperature rise is expected to severely impact citizens particularly in cities like Delhi, Lucknow, Patna, Jaipur and Kolkata which share similar temperature patterns, he said.

Unfortunately, it will be the vulnerable communities who will face

the crisis in its worst form. The most vulnerable populations, including the urban poor, outdoor workers, women, children, senior citizens, sexual minorities etc are at a significantly greater risk, as they lack adequate access to protective measures, Chanchal said.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. Its sixth assessment has been published in three parts with the first in August 2021, the second in February 2022, and the third in April 2022.

Maha villagers clash over Shivaji statue, naming of entry gate

THE FIGHT STARTED AFTER ONE GROUP WANTED THE VILLAGE ENTRY GATE TO BE NAMED AFTER CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ AND OPPOSED THE REMOVAL OF A STATUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Jalna, May 13: Over 30 policemen received minor injuries after two groups clashed in a village in Maharashtra's Jalna district over the installation and removal of a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and naming a village entry gate after late BJP leader Gopinath Munde, resulting in over 300 people being booked for violence, officials said Friday.



Representational image

The additional superintendent of police of the region was among those who was injured in the stone pelting that took place Thursday in Chandai Eko village under Hasnabad police station limits in Bhokardan tehsil, over 400 kilometres from the state capital, they added.

"Two groups entered into an argument over the statue as well as

naming the entry gate after the BJP leader. As it degenerated into a violent scuffle, a team from Hasnabad police station arrived at the site to take control of the situation," an official said.

"In the evening, a group from the village blocked a road, and then pelted stones at a police team that went to clear the route. Among the 30-odd policemen who received minor injuries was Additional

Superintendent of Police Vikrant Deshmukh. A gas gun had to be used to bring the mob under control and restore law and order," he said. Three police vehicles were damaged in the incident, which saw three FIRs being registered under various IPC sections, leading to over 300 people being booked of which 34 were arrested, the official informed.

As per an official, the fight started after one group wanted the village entry gate to be named after Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and opposed the removal of a statue of the legendary warrior-king that had been installed at the site.

"Another group sought that the gate be named after Munde. When local authorities brought an excavator to remove the statue, tensions flared up, resulting in stone-pelting at the machine and then at each other," he said.

Villagers said 10 people were injured in police action, which they claimed included firing in the air apart from lobbing tear gas shells.

Delhi HC asks Centre to take steps to save vultures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 13: The Delhi High Court Friday asked the Centre to examine a petition raising concerns over the decline in vulture population allegedly on account of the use of certain veterinary drugs, and asked it take measures to save the birds that are an important link in the food chain.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice Vipin Sanghi issued notice to the Centre, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, the National Biodiversity Authority, the Indian Veterinary Research Institute as well as the Bombay Natural History Society on the public interest litigation by lawyer Gaurav Kumar Bansal and sought their response.



"We direct respondent 1-3 (Centre) to examine the aspect raised by the petitioner in the petition and take whatever measures that are called for to save vultures which are an important link in the food chain and are essential for maintaining the environment. Response be filed in four weeks," said the bench also comprising Justice Navin Chawla.

The petitioner sought the protection and conservation of vultures and claimed that there are certain veterinary drugs in the market which are harmful and toxic to these birds and yet no serious efforts have been made by the authorities till date to ban them.

According to the Bombay Natural History Society, population of Oriental White Backed Vulture and Long Billed Vultures had declined by more than 92 per cent between 1991 and 1993 and also in 2000.

As per one more study, by the year 2007 the population of vultures had declined by an astonishing 99.9% for Oriental White Backed Vulture and Long Billed Vultures, the petition submitted.

Shiv Sena slams Owaisi for visiting Aurangzeb's tomb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aurangabad/Mumbai, May 13: The Shiv Sena Friday said AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi's visit to the tomb of Aurangzeb at Khuldabad in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district was aimed at vitiating the atmosphere of the state and the followers of the 17th century Mughal emperor will meet the same fate as his.

Shiv Sena MP and party spokesperson Sanjay Raut said Aurangzeb fought against Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and after his death with the Marathas for 25 years.

"He was an aggressor who invaded Maharashtra and destroyed its temples," Raut told reporters.

"Owaisi brothers are doing politics with an aim to vitiate the atmosphere of Maharashtra. We have accepted this challenge. We buried Aurangzeb in this soil. His (Aurangzeb) followers, who want to do politics, will meet the same fate in Maharashtra."

"You keep coming to Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad) and pay obeisance to Aurangzeb, you needle us and Maharashtra. But I would like to say that the Marathas entombed Aurangzeb in the soil of Maharashtra. You (Owaisi) are now reading namaz on his tomb. Time will come that you will be in the same grave," he said.

Aurangzeb, considered the last effective Mughal emperor, ruled for nearly 49 years until his death in 1707. In the last two decades of his rule, he shifted his focus on the Deccan which brought him in direct conflict with the Marathas. Accused of being a bigot and a religious fanatic, Aurangzeb had or-

OWAISI THURSDAY VISITED AURANGZEB'S TOMB BEFORE ADDRESSING A RALLY IN AURANGABAD CITY

SANJAY RAUT SAID THAT BY OFFERING NAMAZ AT AURANGZEB'S TOMB, THE OWAISI BROTHERS (AKBARUDDIN AND ASADUDDIN) WERE CHALLENGING MAHARASHTRA

dered the execution of Sambhaji, the son of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

Former Shiv Sena MP Chandrakant Khaire and the party's Aurangabad district unit chief and MLC Ambadas Danve took a strong objection to Owaisi's visit to the tomb. But All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) Lok Sabha MP Imtiaz Jaleel said there was no need to draw a "different meaning" out of it.

Defending Owaisi, AIMIM leader Jaleel said, there are many tombs in Khuldabad and they have a history.

Talking to reporters, BJP MLA Nitesh Rane said, "Akbaruddin Owaisi knows that there is a weak government in Maharashtra and nobody can even touch him (even after visiting the tomb). This is the true Hindutva of this government!"

"Later, he also tweeted saying, 'I appeal to the police to stay away for 10 minutes. And after that, if we do not send him (Owaisi) to Aurangzeb, then we are not the true soldiers of Shivaji Maharaj.'"

Maharashtra Congress spokesman Sachin Sawant took a swipe at the BJP for demanding action against Owaisi.



Flock of flamingos stand in a pond on the eve of World Migratory Bird Day in Navi Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

Delhi stares at water crisis, sends SOS to Haryana

THE DELHI GOVERNMENT HAS NOW TARGETED INCREASING THE WATER SUPPLY TO 998 MGD TO MEET THE GROWING DEMAND THIS SUMMER SEASON AND TO 1,180 MGD BY JUNE 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 13: The Delhi government Thursday sent an SOS to Haryana, the third time in two weeks, urging it to release additional water in the Yamuna river to prevent a water crisis in the national capital.

"Haryana is releasing less water in the river due to which the water level at the Wazirabad pond has

dropped to a critical low of 671.80 feet, as against the normal level of 674.5 feet. Several areas in Delhi may face water shortage," an official said.

The India Meteorological Department has issued a 'yellow' alert, warning of a heatwave at most places in the capital Friday and Saturday. An 'orange' alert has been issued to caution people about a severe heatwave Sunday. The mercury is predicted to leap to 46-47 degrees Celsius at isolated places in the coming days, weather experts said.

"Even the flow via CLC (Carrier-Lined Channel) and DSB (Delhi Sub-Branch) is fluctuating... The lifting of 120 cusec of water from the Wazirabad pond is affected due to the low pond level. This will affect water production adversely. Due to peak summer, the water requirement is more," the SOS sent to the Haryana irrigation department read.

"It is requested to supply 150 cusecs of raw water additionally through DD-8/river route, to ensure that 120 cusec of raw water



Representational image

reaches the Wazirabad pond in this time of crisis, till the arrival of monsoon," it said, adding, "This may be treated as an SOS in the larger public interest of the national capital."

Officials said operations at

Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants have been affected. Starting Friday morning, the water supply will remain affected till the water level at the Wazirabad pond returns to normal. The city government had ear-

lier written to the Haryana irrigation department in this connection May 3 and April 30.

Haryana supplies 610 million gallons of water a day to Delhi through two canals - Carrier-Lined Channel (CLC) and Delhi Sub-Branch (DSB) - and the Yamuna. The CLC and the DSB are supplied water from Hathni Kund via the Munak canal and the Bhakra Beas Management Board.

Besides, Delhi receives 253 MGD from Uttar Pradesh through the Upper Ganga Canal, and 90 MGD is drawn from ranney wells and tubewells installed across the city. The Chandrawal and Wazirabad water treatment plants have a capacity of 90 MGD and 135 MGD, respectively.

The two plants lift raw water from the Wazirabad pond, treat it and supply it to northeast Delhi, west Delhi, north Delhi, central Delhi, south Delhi, including Delhi Cantonment, and New Delhi Municipal Council areas.

Delhi requires around 1,200 MGD of water, while the DJB supplies around 950 MGD.

international



Russian President Vladimir Putin is humiliating himself on the world stage
LIZ TRUSS | UK FOREIGN SECRETARY

50,000 AFFECTED BY HEAVY RAIN IN CHINA

Some 50,000 residents of China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region have been affected by floods caused by extensive heavy rain that began May 8, the regional emergency management department said Friday



of the day quote

Market awaiting policy & action, which Imported Govt has failed to provide. Both myself & Shaukat Tareen had warned the 'Neutrals' that if conspiracy succeeded our fragile economic recovery would go into a tailspin. That is what has now happened

We are following developments concerning Sweden and Finland carefully but we are not of a favourable opinion

Germany is bracing for energy sanctions imposed by Russia. Overall, gas flows to Germany are almost unchanged

SHORT TAKES

Missile attack kills 10 Syrian soldiers

Beirut: A missile struck a Syrian military bus in the country's north early Friday, killing 10 soldiers, Syria's state-run media and an opposition monitor said. It wasn't immediately clear who was behind the attack, one of the deadliest since a truce deal reached more than two years ago. The official news agency SANA said "terrorists" targeted the bus in the western countryside of Aleppo, in the Anjara area. Nine soldiers were wounded in the attack, the report said. There was no claim of responsibility.

Queen attends horse show

London: Queen Elizabeth II attended the Royal Windsor Horse Show Friday, watching her beloved equines from the comfort of a Range Rover before walking to her box in her first public appearance in person in weeks. The monarch sat in the front passenger seat and spoke to a small group through the window after pulling up to the parade ground near Windsor Castle, where she has spent much of the past two years. The queen seemed relaxed and smiled while dozens of photographers a few feet away tried to capture the moment.

Nepal holds local elections

Kathmandu: Nepal Friday conducted local elections across the country even as reports of sporadic violence trickled in from various parts of the nation. The National Human Rights Commission said the local level polls held Friday could not become peaceful as expected. Violent activities were reported from several places across the nation during the local elections held in a single phase. The activists of rival political parties clashed in some places.

11 dead, 31 rescued after boat capsizes

Washington: Eleven people died and 31 others were rescued after a vessel capsized off the coast of Puerto Rico, the US Coast Guard said Friday. The Coast Guard tweeted that responding crews have rescued 31 survivors -- 11 female and 20 male, adding that "11 deceased have been recovered", reports Xinhua news agency. The vessel, which capsized approximately 19 km north of Puerto Rico's Desecho Island, was suspected of taking part in an "illegal migrant voyage", the Coast Guard said, adding that most of the people on the boat were reportedly from Haiti.

North Korea reports 6 deaths after admitting Covid-19 outbreak

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, May 13: Six people have died and 350,000 have been treated for a fever that has spread "explosively" across North Korea, state media said Friday, a day after the country acknowledged a Covid-19 outbreak for the first time in the pandemic.

North Korea likely doesn't have sufficient Covid-19 tests and said it didn't know the cause of the mass fevers. But a big coronavirus outbreak could be devastating in a country with a broken health care system and an unvaccinated, malnourished population.



One of the six people who died was infected with the omicron variant, KCNA said. But it wasn't immediately clear how many of the total illnesses were COVID-19

The North's Korean Central News Agency said of the 350,000 people who developed fevers since late April, 162,200 have recovered. It said 18,000 people were newly found with fever symptoms Thursday alone, and 187,800 are being isolated for treatment.

One of the six people who died was infected with the omicron variant, KCNA said. But it wasn't immediately clear how many of the total illnesses were Covid-19.

North Korea imposed a lockdown Thursday after acknowledging its first Covid-19 cases. Those reports said tests from an unspecified number of people came back positive for the omicron variant.

It's unusual for isolated North Korea to admit to the outbreak of any infectious disease, let alone one as menacing as Covid-19, as it's intensely proud and sensitive to outside perception about its self-described "socialist utopia."

While North Korean leader Kim Jong Un had occasionally been candid about his worsening economy and other problems, he had repeatedly expressed confidence about pandemic response and wasn't seen wearing a mask in public until Thursday.

SL Oppn refuses to be part of new govt

AGENCIES

Colombo, May 13: Most of the Opposition parties in Sri Lanka Friday announced that they would not become a part of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's interim government but would support its economic policies from outside to help the debt-ridden island nation's early recovery.

The 73-year-old United National Party (UNP) leader was appointed as Sri Lanka's 26th Prime Minister Thursday as the country was without a government since Monday when President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's elder brother and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigned after violence erupted following an attack on the anti-government protesters by his supporters. The attack triggered widespread violence against Rajapaksa loyalists, leaving nine people dead and wounding over 200 others.

"We cannot become a part of this Rajapaksa-Wickremesinghe government," Wimal Weerawansa, a legislator for the independent group from President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's SLPP said. Former President Maithripala Sirisena's SLFP central committee has also decided not to be part of the government.

The Marxist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) said they would also not be part of the government while the main Opposition Samagi Jana Balavegaya (SJB) said United National Party (UNP) leader Wickremesinghe has no legitimacy



INDIAN ENVOY CALLS ON WICKREMESINGHE

The Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay Friday became the first foreign envoy here to call on the new Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and discussed with him continued cooperation between the two countries for economic recovery and stability in this island nation. Wickremesinghe, 73, was sworn-in as Sri Lanka's 26th prime minister Thursday to stabilise the country's debt-ridden economy and end the political turmoil. Baglay visited Wickremesinghe immediately after the latter assumed duties in his office Friday, Prime minister's office sources said. They discussed the current situation in the country amid the ongoing economic crisis, the worst since the country gained independence in 1948.

as he was not even elected in the 2020 parliamentary election.

SJB general secretary Ranjith Madduma Bandara said the party would not accept ministerial positions and called for Wickremesinghe's resignation.

JVP leader Anura Kumara Dissanayake said the decision taken by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to appoint Wickremesinghe as Prime Minister; is one that was made with zero regard to the voice

of the people. The JVP leader ridiculed the decision, saying the appointment has no legitimacy and has no democratic value.

"Wickremesinghe is a person who held the post of Prime Minister; formed governments, and yet could not even win a single seat at the last General Election. He did not even have the required number of votes to enter parliament. If an election is used to measure the consent of the people, elections have shown



Sri Lankans protest demanding president Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation and decrying the appointment of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in Colombo, Sri Lanka

Protesters vs cops as scribe's coffin heads for burial

AGENCIES

Jerusalem, May 13: Thousands of people packed Jerusalem's tense Old City Friday for the burial of veteran Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Akleh, after Israeli police reached the spot during the start of the funeral procession.

Israel and the Palestinians have traded blame over the fatal shooting of the Palestinian-American on Wednesday during an Israeli raid in the occupied West Bank.

The interim findings of an Israeli army investigation could not determine who fired the bullet that killed Abu Akleh, the military said.

But an army statement noted a soldier could have fired the bullet that killed the 51-year-old journalist, in what Al Jazeera called a

AL JAZEERA JOURNALIST FUNERAL



deliberate "killing in cold blood".

"The investigation shows two possibilities for the source of the shot that killed her," the army said.

The first could have been "massive fire of Palestinian gunmen (at Israeli soldiers), as part of which hundreds of bullets were shot from a number of locations."

"The other option is that during

Jerusalem. Israel forbids public displays of Palestinian flags and often storms individuals who hoist them at rallies or protests in the city.

'SISTER OF ALL PALESTINIANS'

Thousands of mourners attended the funeral at a church in Jerusalem's Old City in the afternoon. Roads were closed along the route of the procession as Israel bolstered security to "ensure the funeral takes place safely and without violence that could endanger participants or others", an Israeli police spokeswoman said.

In a sign of Abu Akleh's prominence, she was given what was described as a full state memorial Thursday at Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas's compound in Ramallah before being transferred to Jerusalem.

Russia takes losses in failed river crossing

AGENCIES

Kyiv, May 13: Russia lost significant numbers of troops and important equipment when Ukrainian forces thwarted their attempt to cross a river in the east, British officials said Friday, another sign of Moscow's struggle to win decisive victories and salvage a war gone awry.

Ukrainian authorities, meanwhile, opened the first war crimes trial of the conflict, in proceedings that will be closely watched by international observers eager to ensure atrocities are fairly prosecuted. A Russian soldier stands accused of killing a Ukrainian civilian in the early days of the war.

The trial gets underway as Russia's campaign in Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland of the Donbas makes faltering progress. Ukraine's airborne forces command has released photos of what it said was a damaged Russian pontoon bridge over the Siversky Donets River and several destroyed or damaged Russian military vehicles nearby.

Ukrainian news reports said troops thwarted Russian passage across the river earlier this week, leaving dozens of tanks or military vehicles damaged or forcing troops to abandon them.

Britain's Defense Ministry said Friday that Russia lost "significant" elements of at least one battalion tactical group -- about 1,000 troops -- as well as equipment used to quickly deploy a makeshift floating bridge while trying to cross the river. They have struggled to do so, even after diverting troops from other parts of the country to the Donbas, the statement said. Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials



Indian Embassy in Ukr to resume ops

India Friday announced that its embassy in Ukraine would resume its operation from the Ukrainian capital Kyiv from May 17. The embassy was temporarily operating from Warsaw in Poland since mid-March. "The Indian Embassy in Ukraine, which was temporarily operating out of Warsaw (Poland), would be resuming its operation in Kyiv with effect from May 17," the Ministry of External Affairs said. It said the embassy was temporarily relocated to Warsaw March 13.

claimed another success in the Black Sea, saying their forces took out another Russian ship, though there was no confirmation from Russia and no casualties were reported. The Vsevolod Bobrov logistics ship was badly damaged but not thought to have sunk when it was struck while trying to deliver an anti-aircraft system to Snake Island, said Olesiy Arestovych, an adviser to the Ukrainian president. In April, the Ukrainian military sank the Moskva cruiser, the flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet. In March it destroyed the landing ship Saratov.

Taliban enforce gender segregation for restaurants

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kabul, May 13: The Taliban in Herat province have implemented a gender segregation plan in the province's restaurants, media reports said.

Men are not permitted to dine with their family members in family restaurants, according to sources, Khaama Press.

Owners have been verbally reminded that the rule applies "even if they are husband and wife", according to Riazullah Seerat, a Taliban official at the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the report said.

According to a woman who did

not wish to be identified, the manager of a Herat restaurant Thursday told her and her husband to sit separately.

Seerat also stated that the ministry has issued a directive requiring Herat's public parks to be gender segregated, with men and women authorised to attend only on separate days, Khaama Press reported. "We told women to go to parks on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The other days are set aside for males to visit for leisure and exercise," he said.

Since regaining control in August last year, the Taliban have increasingly implemented restrictions that separate men and women.



Last week, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada had issued an order in Afghanistan, saying that if a woman did not cover her face outside her home, her father or closest male relative would be summoned and eventually incarcerated or fired from government jobs, Khaama Press reported.

At a press conference in Kabul, a spokesman for the Ministry for the

Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice read out a statement from the Afghan supreme leader. The statement detailed the procedures taken by the Ministry authorities to supervise the process of mandatory hijab. The initial stage in this procedure is to locate the residences of unveiled ladies and to counsel and warn the women's parents. The woman's father or guardian is summoned to the relevant department in the second stage, and in the following steps, a case is lodged against the woman's father or parents, and the person's trial begins, Khaama Press reported.

Men are not permitted to dine with their family members in family restaurants

