



## DESI GIRL

Actor Sara Ali Khan says she strongly relates with the pulse of India and enjoys being 'an Indian desi girl'

LEISURE P2



## WARM WELCOME

UK PM Sunak welcomes Ukraine Prez Zelenskyy on a surprise visit and reiterates his support for the war-torn European nation

INTERNATIONAL P10



## BARCA SECURE TITLE

Robert Lewandowski scores a brace helping Barcelona seal La Liga title after scripting a 4-2 win over Espanyol

SPORTS P12

## Western Odisha districts swelter under heatwave

Bolangir hottest place with 44.4 degree Celsius

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** Several parts of Odisha, mostly the western parts of the state have virtually turned into a boiling cauldron as an intense heatwave condition continued to prevail Monday affecting the normal life at many places across the state.

As many as 18 places recorded a maximum temperature of 40 degree Celsius or more, of which 15 places recorded day temperatures of 42 degree Celsius or above.

According to the evening bulletin of the regional centre of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), Bolangir was the hottest place in the state with day temperature of 44.4 degree Celsius.

Bolangir was followed by Titlagarh with 44 degree Celsius, Jharsuguda-43.6, Bhawanipatna-43.5, Boudh-42.9, Sambalpur, Sonepur and Malkangiri-42.8 degrees each, Angul-42.7, Sundargarh-42.4, Rourkela-42.2, Bargarh-42.1 and Talcher, Nuapada and Nayagarh-42 degree Celsius each.

Similarly, Hirakud town recorded a maximum temperature of 41.9 degrees while it was 40.4 and 40 degree Celsius at Nabarangpur and Bhadrak districts, respectively.

Capital Bhubaneswar witnessed a day temperature of 38.4 degree and Cuttack recorded 37.6 degree Celsius.

Maximum temperature (day temperature) is likely to gradually rise by 2-3 degree Celsius at many places across the districts of Odisha during next 24 hours and no large change thereafter, it said.

The IMD has forecast that the heatwave is very likely to prevail at a few places in the districts of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Bolangir for the next two days.

The Met office has stated that the heat will be tolerable for the general public but would pose health concerns for vulnerable people including infants, elderly and the sick. It is advised to avoid heat exposure, keep cool and avoid dehydration, it added.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Why don't you make a film about your problems? It will certainly draw the govt's attention

## MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	62345.71 ↓ 317.81
NIFTY	18398.85 ↓ 84.05
DOLLAR	82.06 ↑ ₹0.07
EURO	89.43 ↓ ₹0.29
GOLD	₹60,940 ↑ ₹53
SILVER	₹73,300 ↑ ₹246

## WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 38.4°C MIN 27.1°C	37.6°C 27.5°C
Humidity	75%	76%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light to moderate rain



SULTRY DAY: Children enjoy doing somersaults while bathing in a pond on a hot summer day at Baramunda in Bhubaneswar, Monday

PIC- BIKASH NAYAK

## BAJRANG DAL ROW

### Kharge gets court notice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sangrur (Punjab), May 15:** A court here has issued a notice to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in a Rs 100-crore defamation case filed against him for defamatory remarks against the Bajrang Dal and comparing it to the outlawed PFI in his party's Karnataka poll manifesto.

The notice was issued by the court May 12 on a petition filed by Hindu Suraksha Parishad national president Hitesh Bhardwaj. The date for filing of reply to the notice has been fixed for July 10.

The notice read that the respondent issued an election manifesto before the state of Karnataka for the elections. In the said manifesto, at para number 10, the defendant issued defamatory statements against the Bajrang Dal, a unit of the Hindu Suraksha Parishad, by declaring to ban the organisation and comparing it to outlawed organisations like the Popular Front of India (PFI)...," the petitioner has submitted.

The central government had banned the PFI last year.

The petitioner's lawyer, Lalit Garg, Monday said a few days ago, Bhardwaj had filed the defamation suit before the court here.

The comparison of the Bajrang Dal with the PFI has impaired the name and honour of the members of the Bajrang Dal and the Hindu Suraksha Parishad, Garg said.

## Major armed heist in Jajpur

SEVEN DACOITS AT GUNPOINT LOOT GOLD, DIAMOND ITEMS WORTH CRORES FROM A JEWELLERY SHOWROOM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, May 15:** Posing as customers, seven armed dacoits in a daring robbery looted gold ornaments and diamond worth crores of rupees in broad daylight from Senco Gold & Diamonds jewellery showroom at Dala Square in Vyasanagar under Jajpur Road police station limits in this district, Monday afternoon.

Police said initially two dacoits entered into the showroom located at Vyasanagar and after that others also entered into the showroom wearing masks. The seven miscreants threatened the staff and customers at gunpoint and decamped with the gold and diamond ornaments worth over Rs 15 crore within a period of 45 minutes. While leaving, they took the hard disc of the CCTV and fled towards National Highway-200 to the east on their bikes, eyewitnesses said.

Reports said two persons posing as customers entered the showroom and asked the sales personnel to show them gold ornaments. While one of them was examining the ornaments another entered the bathroom and called his accomplices to come inside over phone. Later, the rest five dacoits waiting outside entered and went on a rampage.

The dacoits assaulted some staff members, overpowered the security guard and looted all mobile phones



of the staff and customers. The injured staff was identified as Pranati Parida and Trinayan Mishra who lost their sense after being assaulted by the dacoits.

They looted all the ornaments within just 30 minutes as the looting went on from 1.30pm to 2pm in broad daylight. Curtains on the showroom's windows proved to be an aid to the looters. Jajpur Superintendent of Police (SP) Vinit Agrawal and other senior police officials rushed to the spot on hearing about the looting of ornaments from the showroom and started investigation into the robbery. A scientific team was also pressed into service.

Contacted, Senco Gold & Diamonds spokesperson said, "There was an unfortunate incident

- 2 EMPLOYEES SUSTAIN INJURIES, LOSE SENSE DURING THE ROBBERY
- ROBBERS DECAMP ALONG WITH HARD DISC WHICH CONTAINED CCTV FOOTAGE

of robbery at our Jajpur franchise showroom today. We are in touch with the police officials and authorities on the same and are confident that the culprits will be booked soon. The most important thing for us is that our employees are safe and sound and we appreciate their courage."

The exact amount of ornaments looted by the dacoits is yet to be ascertained but the jewellery show-

## US decries 'targeted' attacks, demolitions

AGENCIES

**Washington, May 15:** The US State Department Monday noted targeted attacks on minorities, home demolitions and hate speeches against Muslims in India among threats facing religious freedom around the world.

The State Department outlined in great detail numerous reports during the year of violence by law enforcement authorities against members of religious minorities in multiple states in India in its 2022 annual report on the state of freedom of religion around the world.

The report was released by Secretary of State Antony Blinken who noted both progress and continuation, and in some instances, the rise of very troubling trends.

Previewing the report earlier, a senior State Department official told reporters that regarding India the document outlined continued targeted attacks against religious communities, including Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindu Dalits, and indigenous communities; dehumanising rhetoric, including open calls for genocide against Muslims;



lynching and other hate-fueled violence, attacks on houses of worship and home demolitions, and in some cases impunity and even clemency for those who've engaged in attacks on religious minorities. "We're also continuing to see, at the state level, some restrictions on religious attire," he added.

Rashad Hussain, the Ambassador at Large at the State Department for International Religious Freedom, cited the Haridwar speeches of December 2021 as particularly problematic. He was referring to a three-day meeting called the Dharma Sansad in December 2021, where speakers called for people to take up arms against Muslims.

India has rejected these unsolicited observations and remarks before and in recent years questioned America's right to stand in judgment on other countries.

## WPI FALLS FOR FIRST TIME IN 3 YEARS IN APRIL

REUTERS

**New Delhi, May 15:** India's annual wholesale price index (WPI) fell for the first time in nearly three years in April, as prices softened across the board.

WPI fell by 0.92% from the same month a year earlier, having risen 1.34% in March. The data compared with a Reuters poll that predicted a fall of 0.20%.

In April, the food index rose 0.17% year-on-year, compared with 2.32% in March, while fuel and power rose 0.93% as against an 8.96% rise in the previous month.

High base effect and falling commodity prices will lend downward pressure on WPI inflation this year, said Madan Sabnavis, an economist at Bank of Baroda.

Low commodity prices will bring down prices of manufactured goods, Sabnavis said.

WPI has been easing for the last 11 months from the 20-year highs of 16.63% recorded in May 2022.

The decline in the rate of inflation was broad based, primarily driven by falls in prices of crude, energy prices, non-food and food articles, the government said in a statement.

Data released Friday showed India's annual retail inflation eased to an 18-month low in April, staying well below the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) upper tolerance limit for the second consecutive month.

## NAVEEN FLAGS OFF FIRST DUBAI FLIGHT

**BHUBANESWAR:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday flagged off the maiden flight from Bhubaneswar to Dubai at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here.

A total of 174 travellers aboard the first direct flight from Dubai to Bhubaneswar, which landed at 4pm, were welcomed by state ministers Aswini Kumar Patra and Tukuni Sahu. A total of 170 passengers boarded the Dubai-bound flight from Bhubaneswar. They were presented with 'Uttariya' (traditional stole), sweets and flowers, before the flight took off at 6pm. Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said aligning Odisha with a global tourism destination such as Dubai will bring in industrial development by facilitating investments, promote tourism and increase connection with the Odia diaspora. A one-side trip will cost Rs 10,000 per person, and the return journey will be at Rs 20,000, an official said.

## Flying car: A step closer to airborne reality

Eve, controlled by aircraft manufacturer Embraer, says it expects to start commercial operations of its fully electric vehicle in 2026

REUTERS

**Sao Paulo, May 15:** A flying car is one step closer to airborne reality following successful wind tunnel testing for the futuristic vehicle being developed by Brazilian electric plane maker Eve Holding Inc, the firm announced Monday.

Eve, controlled by aircraft manufacturer Embraer, said it expects to start commercial operations of its fully electric vehicle in 2026. The concept, called an electric vertical take-off and landing vehicle, or eVTOL, has been dubbed a flying taxi.

The completed wind tunnel tests are seen as key for certification by regulators, as well as future production and sales to buyers worldwide.



"The information we obtained during this phase of development has helped us further refine the technical solutions of our eVTOL,

before committing to production tooling and conforming prototypes," said Luiz Valentini, Eve's top technology officer.

- Eve holds a backlog of nearly 2,800 orders before starting production, with development backed by investors such as United Airlines and Rolls-Royce
- Analysts see the firm on track to meet its lofty plans even if it's not the first flying car to take off

The company expects to conclude the selection of main equipment suppliers in the first half of this year and start building its first full-scale prototype in the second half. Additional testing is planned for 2024.

Eve holds a backlog of nearly 2,800 orders before starting production, with development backed by investors such as United Airlines

and Rolls-Royce.

The wind tunnel tests were completed in Switzerland using an eVTOL scale model, which the company said helped it investigate how components such as its fuselage and wings will perform in flight.

Eve, which debuted last year on the New York Stock Exchange, has signaled that certification is one of its most pressing targets, Reuters reported in February.

Analysts see the firm on track to meet its lofty plans even if it's not the first flying car to take off. The Eve eVTOL is unlikely to be first to market, although the order pipeline provides runway to capture market share of the emerging eVTOL market, according to Jefferies analysts.

# leisure



## KOREAN SINGER HAESOO FOUND DEAD; SUICIDE SUSPECTED

Korean trot singer Haesoo has reportedly died by suicide at the age of 29. Haesoo was found dead in her hotel room. The South Korean police have found a suicide note in the room as well. She was set to perform at an event May 20.

## SHAKIRA 'HOUSE HUNTING' TO SETTLE PERMANENTLY IN MIAMI

Shakira is said to be house hunting so she can settle permanently in Miami. The Hips Don't Lie singer last month moved with her children from Spain to the south Florida city, and is reportedly on the hunt for a new mansion.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
It is a sunny, sparkling day, and the stars spell success. If you're feeling creative, simply pick up a paintbrush or try a new recipe. However, care and caution should be the buzzwords if you are driving alone, suggest Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
You may feel let down as your folks may not extend the support you expected from them, says Ganesh. You should try to remain practical and not get swayed by emotions. It is highly likely that family feuds may erupt today. Ganesh advises you to avoid confrontations and keep smiling to emerge a winner.

**GEMINI**  
An extremely profitable and progressive day awaits you. You may come into a handsome inheritance. Your responsibilities will increase along with a possible promotion at work. However, do not let your success go to your head, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Ganesh advises you to watch your back today. However, he wants to make it clear that you may be at the receiving end of others' actions. Anyway, your cautious and watchful approach will save you from needless discomfiture.

**LEO**  
You have to let go of your stubborn and obstinate streak. You will need to compromise according to the situation. If you do not have such an attitude, arguments and confrontations with your business partners, friends and family members are possible.

**VIRGO**  
The artist in you will set the floor ablaze today. You have the remarkable abilities of a showman and comedian, and people will feel thrilled at your treasure of jokes in the evening, says Ganesh. However, you will do well to conserve some energy for other urgent matters and duties as well.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will be able to show your love and appreciation for your beloved. Small issues will crop up and keep you tensed and uncomfortable today. Just remember good days and old memories and life will seem good again. It is essential to have confidence in yourself if you want to go ahead in life and be happy.

**SCORPIO**  
According to Ganesh, it's a good day for long term and real estate investments. It may lead to benefits and profits in long run. Sit back, relax and enjoy the pleasures of life before you miss out on them. Welcome all the opportunities with open arms.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The wheel of fortune turns towards you today, says Ganesh. Make a wish and it's bound to come true. However don't be over-confident when it comes to decision-making. In case of disappointments, 'this too shall pass' would be the best remedy.

**CAPRICORN**  
You comparatively less experienced than others in the office, but the boss will choose you with a hope to get the company out of the existing troubles. Trusting your intelligence, skills, and potential, you will assigned some crucial matters. It is a great deal to live up to such high expectations, but you will be able to do so and win the hearts of many, predicts Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You need to think dispassionately and with clarity, says Ganesh. As always, sentiments may come in the way of your success today. Be careful, especially while taking decisions that will impact your future. You don't want to study law, just because your friends are doing it!

**PISCES**  
You will feel very emotional about those who are close to your heart. Those people who know you will endear you because of this quality of yours. But Ganesh adds a word of caution; take care of those people whom you hold close to your heart because in your sentiments for them you might not notice their bad qualities or forgive their mistakes.

## Sara enjoys being 'a girl-next-door'

**Mumbai:** Sara Ali Khan believes that the relatability of her characters comes from the fact that she strongly relates with the pulse of her country and enjoys being 'an Indian desi girl.'

Her girl-next-door avatar has always been a fan favourite and once again she will be seen playing a young middle-class woman opposite Vicky Kaushal in the forthcoming Laxman Utekar directorial *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke*.

When asked if she opts for such roles only to gain an edge over other actors, Sara Ali Khan said: "I don't know if it's about gaining an edge, but the truth is that I think I really relate very strongly with the pulse of my country. 'I have grown up thinking of myself

as just another Indian desi girl from Juhu, who lives with her mama, and doesn't really have any frills and fancies, and filmy friends, to be honest with you."

A small-town love story about two warring partners, *Zara Hatke Zara Bachke* is backed by Dinesh Vijan under the Maddock Films banner. The film, slated for a June 2 release, also stars Rakesh Bedi, Sharib Hashmi and Neeraj Sood.



## Big B takes lift to reach workplace

**Mumbai:** Ditching the luxury of his expensive cars, megastar Amitabh Bachchan took a lift from a stranger, whom he fondly called his "ride buddy", to reach his work location on time.

ture of himself riding pillion as an elderly gentleman can be seen riding a Harley Davidson. "Thank you for the ride buddy .. don't know you .. but you obliged and got me on time to location of work .. faster and in avoidance of the unsolvable traffic jams .. thank you capped, shorts and yellowed T - shirt owner," he wrote as the caption.

On the film front, Amitabh will be seen in *Project K*, which also stars Prabhas and Deepika Padukone. The film is directed by Nag Ashwin. He will also be seen in the courtroom drama *Section 84* by Ribhu Dasgupta.



## Adah on showbiz's utter uncertainties

**Mumbai:** Actress Adah Sharma recently shared her thoughts on the film industry and the uncertainties that come with it.

In an interview with a news agency, the 1920 actress said, "Every film I do I think that it will be my last. Because I don't know if I will get another chance or if someone would show faith in me again. But I think the audience's dreams for me were always bigger. Like they would always say that Adah should have been given this or that role...I think, all those dreams are now true. I am so lucky. My dreams were always small like I wanted to play with an elephant or a dog of course. I wanted to do good roles, but never knew how many I will get."

She further added, "As an actor, you always want that people see your work. I'm glad that I got such a chance. I used to wonder if I have to be reborn like Shah Rukh Khan in *Om Shanti Om* to get such an opportunity in this life. But I got this and I'm really happy that people are watching the film and giving so much appreciation."



## Nora wants to celebrate Afro music and dance

**Mumbai:** Actress-dancer Nora Fatehi and Nigerian singing sensation Rema aka Divine Ikubor recently set the stage on fire during his performance in Mumbai as the latter's much hyped three city debut tour of India has kicked off.

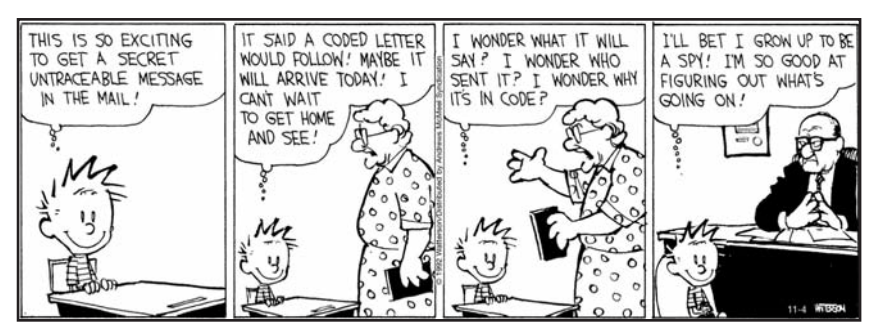
Nora said: "Rema's show was truly spectacular and I enjoyed myself thoroughly on stage. He's such a talented artist with such a warm vibe and collaborative spirit. Being a North African, it's such a proud moment for me to witness how the Afro music and dance movement has become a mainstay

happy to have met Nora Fatehi. He added: "She is a house on fire and her energy is infectious. I thoroughly enjoyed vibing with her on stage in Mumbai tonight on some Bollywood moves!"

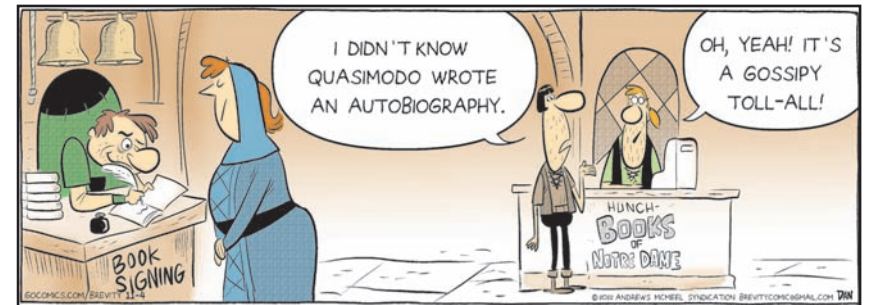
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

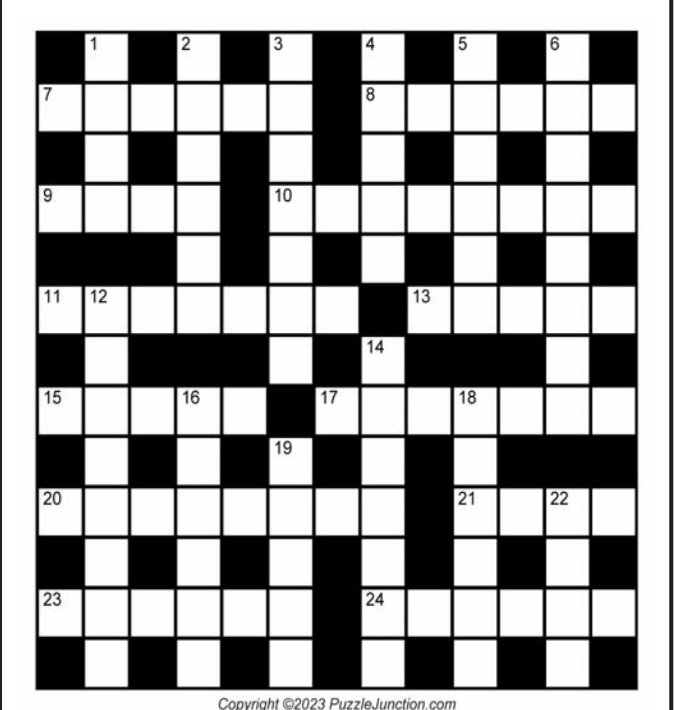


### BREVITY



### FUN post

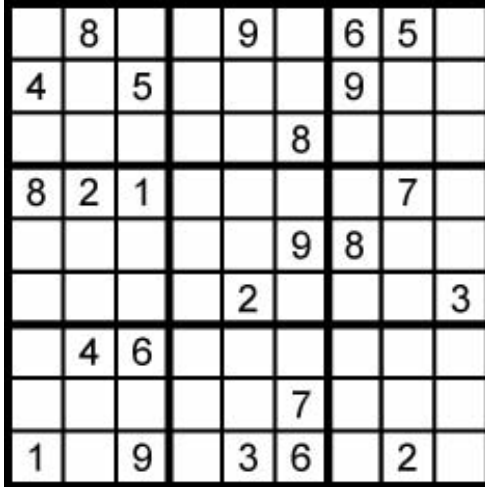
### CROSSWORD



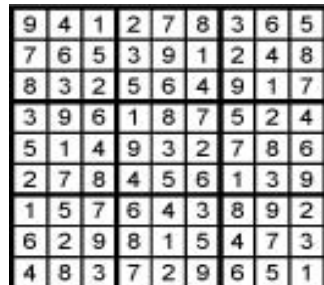
- Across
- 7 Ravel classic
  - 8 Russian physiologist who studied dogs
  - 9 Persian spirit
  - 10 Pasta type
  - 11 Explanation, maybe
  - 13 Man of steel?
  - 15 Poker ploy
  - 17 Indonesian island
  - 20 Shoeless
  - 21 Ill-mannered
  - 23 Regress
  - 24 *La Loge* artist
  - 3 Inactive
  - 4 Elbowroom
  - 5 Exaggerate
  - 6 Cloudburst
  - 12 Parlour game
  - 14 Carrion collector
  - 16 Goeteborg locale
  - 18 Cooks' wear
  - 19 Origins
  - 22 Plumbing problem
- Down
- 1 District
  - 2 Sheep originating in Spain

### 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

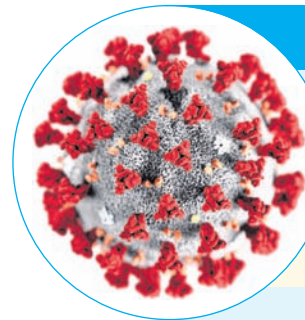


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



**JOB STABILITY**  
Odisha Junior Teachers' Association members hold a demonstration at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar seeking regularisation of jobs, Monday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,83,14,591	66,07,50,092	68,74,455
India	4,49,81,475	4,44,35,204	5,31,778
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

## G-20 CULTURE WORKING GROUP MEETING

# Committed to promoting cultural dialogue: Reddy

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** India is committed to promoting cultural dialogue, encouraging shared learning, and strengthening cooperation among G20 members, while also giving due consideration to the unique cultural contexts and heritage of each nation, said Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy here Monday.

Reddy was addressing the inaugural session of the G-20 second Culture Working Group meeting here. Reddy, along with Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai attended the inaugural session of the meeting.

Addressing the delegates, Reddy said culture plays an important role in global policymaking, as it leads to more inclusive and sustainable solutions to address contemporary challenges.

In this light, the G20 Culture working group plays a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and promoting dialogue among members, he said.

"By pursuing a collective vision, we aim to create a more equitable and culturally aware global policy landscape that acknowledges the immense value of cultural diversity. The role of culture in promoting social cohesion, fostering intercultural dialogue, and promoting mutual understanding cannot be overstated," the Minister pointed out.

"The ancient Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (Whole world is a family) beautifully connects with the concept of unity in diversity, as it promotes the idea that despite our differences in culture, religion, language, or ethnicity, we are all a part of one global family", he opined.

Highlighting the importance of



CM Naveen Patnaik being greeted by Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy in City, Monday

cultural exchange, Reddy said that it can contribute to sustainable development by promoting local economies, preserving cultural heritage, and supporting community development. "It is our duty to build upon the foundation laid by previous presidencies, to ensure that culture remains a key focus in the G20 agenda," he said.

The Culture Minister further said that local traditions and knowledge can teach about caring for the environment and using resources wisely. People who have lived close to nature for many years know how important it is to live in balance with the environment. "By incorporating their knowledge and practices into modern sustainable development strategies, we can create

a more resilient and sustainable future," Reddy stated.

Emphasizing culture as a vital component in creating a pro-planet society, he said the G20 Culture Working Group can significantly advance the current efforts to put culture at the center of global policymaking. "By working towards this goal, we can foster a more inclusive, equitable, and environment-friendly global community", he added.

Rai underlined the co-timing of India's G20 presidency and the beginning of its journey of "Amrit Kaal" and said India is moving towards making itself a futuristic, prosperous, inclusive and developed nation by the time it completes 100 years of its independence.

## Naveen inaugurates craft exhibition

**Bhubaneswar:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Monday inaugurated the exhibition 'Sustain: The Craft Idiom' at Kala Bhoomi- Odisha Crafts Museum here in the City. It will continue till May 22. The theme of the exhibition is 'Harnessing Living Heritage for a Sustainable Future.'

The exhibition showcases more than 35 crafts and various languages and scripts of India through objects and live teaching demonstrations. Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and DoNER G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of State for Culture and Parliamentary Affairs Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union Minister of State for Culture and External Affairs Meenakshi Lekhi and Union Minister for State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai were present on the occasion. 'Sustain: The Craft Idiom', presents varied expressions of India's age-old living heritage and indigenous knowledge systems that have sustained individuals, communities, and societies in shaping their beliefs, values and traditions since time immemorial. 'Sustain: The Craft Idiom' is composed of three constituent experiences - Akshara, Stambh and demonstrations by master artisans and teachers. The first section of the exhibition 'Akshara - Crafting Indian Scripts,' highlights diverse languages and craft practices of India, reflecting unique worldviews and traditions.



FISHING TIME: Fishermen ready their nets to catch fish near Jobra anicut in Cuttack, Monday

## Newly elected legislator Dipali Das takes oath

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** Two days after winning the Jharsuguda Assembly bypoll with a thumping margin, Dipali Das of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) took oath as a legislator of the Odisha Assembly, Monday.

As Speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha recently resigned from his position, Deputy Speaker Rajanikanta Singh administered the oath of office to Dipali in the state Assembly here.

The newly elected legislator was accompanied by her family members. Two women ministers Rita Sahu and Pramila Mallick, government chief whip Prasanta Muduli, BJD MLAs Pranab Balabantaray, Ananta Narayan Jena and Susant Rout were also present during the oath taking ceremony.



Speaking to mediapersons, Dipali said, "I will devote myself to the service of the people of Jharsuguda. Will work honestly for the development of my constituency and fulfil dreams of my father (Naba Kishore Das)."

It is worth mentioning here that Dipali along with her brother Vishal Das met Chief Minister and BJD supreme Naveen Patnaik at his residence Sunday evening and

sought his blessings.

Dipali had won the seat with a margin of over 48,721 votes defeating her nearest BJP rival Tankadhar Tripathy. Tarun Pandey of the Congress finished a distant third with only 4,496 votes.

According to the results announced by the Election Commission of India, Dipali got 1,07,198 votes while BJP's Tripathy received 58,477 votes.

The by-election was held following the murder of Dipali's father and the then Health Minister Naba Kishore Das January 29 this year.

Amid speculation whether Dipali Das will be a part of the council of ministers, Revenue Minister Pramila Mallick said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik would decide regarding the ministry reshuffle as it is his prerogative.

## 3R campaign by BMC launched in City



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Monday launched a mega campaign on "3R" (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) to make the environment free from waste.

The campaign was launched at Utkal Galleria Mall in the presence of BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange among others.

"A mega campaign launched today on "3R" Reduce, Reuse & Recycle at Utkal Galleria Mall, the aim is to make our environment free from waste", the BMC said while appealing the citizens to join the initiative by donating items, reusing items and reducing the waste generated.

Kiosks will be opened in various locations of the City where citizens can donate items that can be processed and converted into valuable commodities, the BMC stated.

## STF to seek 5-day remand of accused in OTP sharing case

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** The Special Task Force (STF) will soon move the SDJM court here seeking five-day remand of the three accused held recently for selling One Time Passwords (OTP) and mule accounts to Pakistani agents involved in anti-India activities.

We have been waiting for some more detail information about the case so that the accused could be interrogated properly. We will soon seek the court's permission to take the trio on remand for further enquiry into the matter, told STF IG JN Pankaj.

The STF has also written letter to the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), umbrella organisation launched by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), requesting to share details about the Pakistani agents who made payments to the accused in lieu of the OTPs and mule accounts.

Following the receipt of information from NPCI, we will request the concerned banks to share the transaction and other bank account details of the accused. We have so far unearthed around

14 bank accounts and 61 ATM cards from the possession of the accused persons," STF IG added.

Following a tip-off, the STF sleuths arrested one accused Pathani Samant Lenka from Master Canteen area here May 11. Pathani Samant was reportedly planning to go Kolkata to procure pre-activate SIM cards. Later, his other associates identified as Soumya Pattanaik and Saroj Kumar Nayak alias Amit were too apprehended by the cops.

Pathani Samant and Saroj belong to Nayagarh while Soumya is a native of Jajpur district.

The accused were members of a Facebook group, Free Recharge Box with more than 147 thousand members.

"The accused used to procure huge numbers of SIMs in others' name and later sell the OTPs (linked/generated using the SIMs) to various clients including some Pakistani Intelligence Operatives (PIO)/ ISI agents in Pakistan as well as in India," revealed STF in a press note Sunday. The OTPs were used to create fake accounts on social media like WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram, and also for opening email accounts with an Indian identity.

## 1st humanised mouse model for rare genetic disease developed

Scientists, including one of Indian-origin, have for the first time developed mice with a defected human gene responsible for a rare genetic disease, an advance that may help to develop new therapies for people with the condition.

Although animal models for congenital adrenal hyperplasia exist, this is the first to reproduce the human condition in mice and able to survive without any treatments.

Congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) is a group of inherited conditions, which affects about 1 in 15,000 births.

In the most common form, called 21-hydroxylase deficiency, mutations in the CYP21A2 gene cause the adrenal glands - a pair of small organs located above the kidneys - to produce low levels of cortisol and excess amounts of androgen hormones, such as testosterone.

This leads to early puberty, girls having male features, and various health issues. Currently steroid hormone replacement therapy is used for treatment, but this may often have harmful



side effects.

In this study, researchers from the University Hospital Carl Gustav Carus in Dresden, Germany, replaced the gene Cyp21a1 in mice with the human gene CYP21A2 carrying a mutation.

They found that the genetically modified mice at 20 weeks had enlarged adrenal glands while expressing the human mutated gene.

In addition, similarly to the human disease, the mutation caused both male and female mice to have low levels of corticosterone - the main stress hormone in mice that is the equivalent to cortisol in humans - and other hormonal imbalances.

"Our mice accurately mimic the symptoms seen in human patients," said lead

author Shamini Ramkumar Thirumalasetty, a biologist at the varsity. "For example, the female mutant mice also have issues with fertility, which we believe is most probably due to the hormonal imbalances triggered by congenital adrenal hyperplasia," she added.

This mouse model will now allow the team to study the mechanisms of the disease and to find the most effective treatments.

"Although novel treatments are being developed to minimise the side effects of steroid hormones, these drugs lack effective in vivo models for pre-clinical testing," said Thirumalasetty.

"Our mouse can serve as an excellent model to test novel drugs and treatment options for patients with congenital adrenal hyperplasia, such as stem cell therapies, and will facilitate the transition from basic research to the clinic."

The mouse model was presented at the ongoing 25th European Congress of Endocrinology 2023 in Istanbul, Turkey.



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# Naveen flags off first direct flight to Dubai



Dubai, Patnaik said, is a major travel and tourism junction in the Middle East that can provide for Odisha a gateway to the European and the US markets

To mark the occasion, delegates from Mission Shakti, the World Skill Centre, Special Development Council, Panchayati Raj, and celebrated sportspersons, boarded the flight with travellers

Bhubaneswar to Dubai.

Special arrangements were made to see off the travellers from the state. The flyers were felicitated with Uttariya, an Odisha Tourism kit bag and were offered sweets and flowers by the hostesses at the departure terminal.

The travellers who arrived on the first direct flight from Dubai to Bhubaneswar were given a warm welcome in presence of Tourism Minister Aswini Kumar Patra and Commerce & Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu.

Patnaik had made a commitment back in June 2022 during the Odisha Investors' Meet held in Dubai to establish international flight connectivity between the state and Dubai in the first phase.

These flights, being operated by Indigo Airlines, will run thrice a week. The flight will depart Dubai at 11.25 am and reach Bhubaneswar at 5.20 pm. In the return journey, it will depart the Odisha capital at 6.30 pm and reach the city in the United Arab Emirates at 9.45 pm.

The state government is also working towards establishing direct flight connectivity with the Southeast Asian markets through Singapore and Bangkok, which will commence from early June 2023.

A group of non-resident Odias living in UAE flew in on the inaugural Dubai-Bhubaneswar direct

flight to meet the CM in the evening to thank him for his intervention in kickstarting these flights.

Senior member of the Odia Community of UAE Priyadarshini Panigrahi, who is the head of an Indian MNC's MENA operations, met the CM at 'Naveen Nivas' after landing in the direct flight.

Meanwhile, Opposition BJP and Congress have raised questions on the visit of BJD MLAs, their family members and some leaders to Dubai on the first flight. Alleging the ruling party MLAs were sent to Dubai by spending government money, BJP MLA Subash Panigrahi said such move is a total misuse of state funds.

"If Biju Janata Dal MLAs go on a visit to Dubai with government money, it must be condemned. The ruling party legislators should not be allowed to misuse government funds by undertaking foreign visits," he told the media.

Similarly, Congress leader Santosh Singh Saluja said it is not proper for the BJD MLAs to visit Dubai on government money. "Odisha is a poor state. If the ruling party MLAs want to visit Dubai for some reason, they should have gone from their own resources," he said.

However, BJD MLA Debi Prasad Mishra said, "We are visiting Dubai with tickets from our own pockets."



**FRESHNESS APLENTY:** A fruit seller takes stock of a pile of jackfruits, ice apples, pineapples and mangoes, among other fruits, near Chhattra Bazar market, ahead of 'Sabitri Brata' in Cuttack, Monday

## Land banks soon for compensatory afforestation

*While the lands included in the land bank will be provided to state government free of all charges, the Union ministries/departments will be required to pay the cost of the land as fixed by the collector of the concerned district*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** In order to provide land for different projects requiring compensatory afforestation, the Odisha government has decided to create a 'Compensatory Afforestation Land Bank' in each district of the state by including degraded revenue forest lands, informed a resolution of the Revenue and Disaster

Management department Monday.

"The lands to be included in the Land Bank should not have been notified as forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or any other law nor managed as forest by the Forest department," said the resolution.

The lands included in the said land bank will be provided only for projects undertaken by Central government and state government that require land for compensatory

afforestation.

"While the lands included in the land bank will be provided to state government departments free of all charges, the Central government ministries/departments will be required to pay the cost of the land as would be fixed by the collector of the district concerned," the resolution stated.

The government has laid down the guidelines for identification of degraded revenue forest land for land bank, creation of such land banks and handing over of land from land bank to the Forest department.

As per the guidelines, identified land should be a compact patch of minimum extent of 25 hectares

However, if the land is in continuity with a land declared or notified as forest under the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or under any other law for time being in force, or within a designated or identified tiger or wildlife corridor; there will be no restriction on size of the land.

The resolution said the state government has taken the decision as compensatory afforestation is one of the most important conditions stipulated by the Centre while approving proposals for de-reservation or diversion of forest land for non-forest uses under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

## Samanta dedicates new park for children of City

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** In another patient-friendly initiative, a new Children's Park adjacent to the Paediatrics department has been inaugurated on the hospital premises by KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta.

"The park is a noble initiative from KIIMS and will provide a cheerful experience to the kids and their mothers. Children can enjoy the park and have many types of amusing experiences. All the facilities can be availed for free," informed a KISS official.

The inaugural function was attended by, among others, pro-vice-chancellor of School of Medicine, CBK Mohanty, principal of KIIMS Ambika Prasad Mohanty, KIIMS Medical Superintendent Ram Chandra Das and several other doctors.



**TOUGH TUSLE:** Temporary shop owners confronted BDA authorities Monday while the authorities were trying to vacate them from illegally occupied space in Unit-II market area in Bhubaneswar, Monday

## 15-day food fest to promote millets

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** Taking innovative steps toward promoting millets among the millennial and Gen Z of the state, Odisha Millets Mission has started collaborating with restaurants and chefs.

One such initiative undertaken is the ongoing Millet Food Festival, under the 'farm-to-plate' mission of the state government, held to normalize consumption of millets in regular diet.

Odisha Millet Mission, along with Michael's Kitchen, a fine-dining restaurant in City, is organising this food festival to commemorate the International Year of Millets 2023. The 15-day festival, scheduled from May 5 to May 20, is attracting crowd by offering various organic national and international dishes with millets as the lead ingredient.

The festival featured a master-



class from May 7 to 11, helmed by the celebrated master chef and owner of the restaurant himself, Chef Michael. The masterclass delivered insights on how to manage a restaurant and how new dishes and food items can be made from millets. The session was attended by 30 participants from Mission Shakti WSHGs, eager to learn how to manage their own businesses.

Speaking on the success of the event, Agriculture and Farmers'

Empowerment principal secretary Arabinda Padhee said, "We are happy to see local professionals coming up and joining hands with the government to bring about a change at their own level. Professionals like Chef Michael with their influence can create more acceptability around millets as a day-to-day crop and the government is open to support any such initiative."

Commenting on the session, Michael said, "It brings me immense joy to be part of a mission so important. The general public should understand the immense nutritional value millet brings to their plates. Training these wonderful groups of women, so they have a better understanding of new recipes and management skills, brought me absolute pleasure."

Such training sessions are helping upskill and empower Mission Shakti WSHG members.

## Govt establishes new private unitary university

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, May 15:** The Higher Education department issued a notification regarding establishment of a new private unitary university in the name of "Jagadguru Kripalu University" at Dampada Tehsil in Cuttack.

In a notification, the department secretary Bishnupada Sethi informed that by the order of the Governor, Higher Education department in exercise of powers conferred under sub-section (1) of section 3 of Jagadguru Kripalu University, Odisha Act 2020, the state government do hereby establish a private Unitary University in the name of Jagaduru Kripalu University, Odisha, at Village Banara, Tahasil-Dampada district Cuttack with immediate effect.

## Prepare for the public safety hazards posed by AI: Experts

For the most part, the focus of contemporary emergency management has been on natural, technological and human-made hazards such as flooding, earthquakes, tornadoes, industrial accidents, extreme weather events and cyber attacks.

However, with the increase in the availability and capabilities of artificial intelligence, we may soon see emerging public safety hazards related to these technologies that we will need to mitigate and prepare for.

Over the past 20 years, Ali Asgary of York University, Canada, and his colleagues—along with many other researchers—have been leveraging AI to develop models and applications that can identify, assess, predict, monitor and detect hazards to inform emergency response operations and decision-making.

We are now reaching a turning point where AI is becoming a potential source of risk at a scale

that should be incorporated into risk and emergency management phases—mitigation or prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

AI hazards can be classified into two types: intentional and unintentional. Unintentional hazards are those caused by human errors or technological failures.

As the use of AI increases, there will be more adverse events caused by human error in AI models or technological failures in AI based technologies. These events can occur in all kinds of industries including transportation (like drones, trains or self-driving cars), electricity, oil and gas, finance and banking, agriculture, health and mining.

Intentional AI hazards are potential threats that are caused by using AI to harm people and properties. AI can also be used to gain unlawful benefits by compromising security and safety systems.

Many AI experts have already warned against such potential threats. A recent open letter by re-



Up until now, AI hazards and risks have not been added into the risk assessment matrices much beyond organizational use of AI applications. But the time has come when we should quickly start bringing the potential AI risks into local, national and global risk and emergency management

searchers, scientists and others involved in the development of AI called for a moratorium on its further development.

Public safety and emergency management experts use risk matrices to assess and compare risks. Using this method, hazards are qualitatively or quantitatively as-

■ We are now reaching a turning point where AI is becoming a potential source of risk at a scale that should be incorporated into risk and emergency management phases

■ AI hazards can be classified into two types: intentional and unintentional. Unintentional hazards are those caused by human errors or technological failures

sessed based on their frequency and consequence, and their impacts are classified as low, medium or high.

Hazards that have low frequency and low consequence or impact are considered low risk and no additional actions are required to manage them. Hazards that have

medium consequence and medium frequency are considered medium risk. These risks need to be closely monitored.

Hazards with high frequency or high consequence or high in both consequence and frequency are classified as high risks. These risks need to be reduced by taking additional risk reduction and mitigation measures. Failure to take immediate and proper action may result in severe human and property losses.

Up until now, AI hazards and risks have not been added into the risk assessment matrices much beyond organizational use of AI applications. The time has come when we should quickly start bringing the potential AI risks into local, national and global risk and emergency management.

Governments have also started developing some risk assessment guidelines for the use of AI-based technologies and solutions. However, these guidelines are limited to risks such as algorithmic bias

and violation of individual rights. In its 2017 Global Risk Report, the World Economic Forum highlighted that AI is only one of emerging technologies that can exacerbate global risk. While assessing the risks posed by the AI, the report concluded that, at that time, super-intelligent AI systems remain a theoretical threat.

However, the latest Global Risk Report 2023 does not even mention the AI and AI associated risks which means that the leaders of the global companies that provide inputs to the global risk report had not viewed the AI as an immediate risk. AI development is progressing much faster than government and corporate policies in understanding, foreseeing and managing the risks. The current global conditions, combined with market competition for AI technologies, make it difficult to think of an opportunity for governments to pause and develop risk governance mechanisms.

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# Lightning claims 400 lives in Odisha annually

Deaths due to lightning 25% more than loss of lives in other calamities



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, May 15:** Natural calamities and Odisha seem to go hand in hand. The state has repeatedly been hit by cyclones, floods, droughts and lightning and many lives have been lost. However, lightning deaths have really become a matter of concern in the state with 400 or more lives lost annually.

Since the Super Cyclone in 1999, lightning strikes have claimed over 5,000 lives till date in Odisha. Since 2015-16, at an average, 400 or more people have died due to lightning. A total of 474 people were killed in lightning in 2017-18, which is 18.5% more than the deaths registered in 2016-17.

The victims usually are farmers, vendors, hawkers and construction workers – people who work in the open. Government sources said that deaths due to lightning is 25 per cent more than loss of lives in other natural calamities.

Officials pointed out that developing awareness about lightning strikes is the only possible measure to bring down the death rate. Lightning deaths are a major challenge for the administration.

Many have alleged that lives of common people have been pushed into peril due to lack of proper weather forecast.

The Odisha government has declared lightning deaths as state-specific disaster in 2015 and formed an executive committee to save people from lightning on the basis of Disaster Management Act-2005. As part of this move, the affected families are provided with ₹4 lakh financial assistance.

The committee for 2023-24, in its first meeting held May 2, decided to undertake special awareness drive in 10 districts where maximum lightning deaths have occurred. They are Mayurbhanj, Ganjam, Keonjhar, Balasore, Cuttack, Sundargarh, Nabarangpur, Jajpur, Bolangir and Koraput.

Officials said a sum of ₹1.14 crore will be spent for creating awareness about lightning in the

above mentioned 10 districts. Funds will be spent in preparing posters, conducting awareness campaigns, staging street plays, paintings and plays – all to educate the people about lightning strikes.

Lawyer Chandrasekar Panda, a resident of Jajpur Road said lightning deaths have increased due to lack of green cover. He alleged that mindless felling of trees is taking place on the pretext of development, but at the same time fresh saplings are not being planted leading to lightning deaths.

Panda pointed out lightning deaths can be substantially reduced if there is a proper system of weather forecast. He however, added that the administration lacks the proper knowhow to correctly predict weather movements.

Eminent trade union leader Mayadhar Nayak said lightning deaths are a man-made disaster due to lack of proper awareness programmes. He said clearing of forests along with growth of concrete jungles has led to climate change and increase in pollution level which in turn has led to the rise in lightning strikes. He said despite awareness programmes, people are still not cautious for which lightning deaths are increasing in Odisha.

When contacted, district emergency officer Umesh Chandra Lenka said that it is very difficult to predict when lightning will occur. However, whatever information is available is immediately released to the tehsildars and block development officers (BDOs) in rural areas to undertake preventive steps before the lightning strikes.



**MANGO FAIR:** Guests taking stock of various varieties of mangoes on display after inaugurating an 'Amba Mela' (mango fair) organised by ORMAS at Titilagarh High School ground in Bolangir district, Monday

# Rare 10th century idols found in Bhadrak dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barikpur, May 15:** Two rare idols of 'Bhairava' dating back to the 10th century were recovered Monday from the Baitarani riverbed near Mudhapada village in Sholampur panchayat of Bhandaripokhari block in Bhadrak district. The idols were found during construction work for a project. Notably, 'Bhairava', a fearsome manifestation of Lord Shiva is worshipped by both Hindus and Buddhists.

The breakthrough came when some workers engaged in work on the riverbed found something shining and found an idol. Later, they found another idol close by. They informed local villagers who in turn informed INTACH member and researcher Biswambhar Rout about the discovery.

Rout rushed to the spot and seized the two idols. He then informed the Archeological department about the discovery. Eminent archeologist Sunil Pattnaik stated that the idols belonged to the 10th century after examining them. One of the idols is 1.5 feet in height and built of black granite stone. Three out of its four arms were found broken with the lone intact one in a blessing pose. The idol has clotted hair and is being offered a garland by a Gandharva (celestial being). Two



guards with weapons stand at the bottom of the idol.

The second idol is built of khondalite stone. It is the idol of 'Bajra Bhairav' with four arms and mounted on a headless lion. One of its arms is in blessing pose while the remaining three are holding weapons.

Later the idols were handed over to the Sholampur museum for research with the assistance of local villagers including Gajendra Kumar Mohanty, Ramesh Jena, Bijay Sahu, Bibeknanda Mallick and Amulya Jena.

# Man kills self after wife dies by suicide

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kantabanji, May 15:** In a shocking incident, a man died by suicide by hanging himself after his wife ended her life in a similar manner at Dabiri village under this police limit in Bolangir district, Sunday night. The deceased was identified as Godhan Mallick, 45, and Chandrakala Mallick, 40, both residents of Dabiri village.

Godhan's wife Chandrakala was suffering from anaemia. Forced to go through acute pain everyday she decided to end her life and died by suicide Sunday night. Unable to come to terms with his wife's death, Godhan also decided to end his life. He left home and hanged himself from a tree located three kilometers away at Tanapada.



On being informed, Kantabanji police officials reached the spot and launched an investigation and registered two cases of unnatural death. A forensic team was also pressed into service. A pall of gloom and mourning descended among the villagers after reports of the deaths spread.

Sources said that Godhan married Chandrakala after his first wife Sabitri died six years back. Chandrakala was suffering from anaemia since a long time. Godhan was working as a casual labourer in a stone quarry. So he was finding it very difficult to manage the treatment cost as well as other family expenses. Paucity of work forced Godhan to abandon treatment of his wife.

Chandrakala, since then had slipped into depression as she lost all hope of getting cured. It led to her taking the drastic step.

# Partial response in Odisha to strike called by Maoists



PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhawanipatna, May 15:** The 24-hour bandh call by the Maoists evoked partial response Monday in parts of Odisha and Jharkhand, police said. Major disaster was averted when police found an improvised explosive device (IED) on Bhawanipatna-Thuamul Rampur-Kashipur Road. The IED was disguised with trees and leaves, but police managed to locate and defuse it.

In Odisha, the bandh call evoked partial response in some rural areas of seven of the 30 districts. The Maoists had given the bandh call in the districts of Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Boudh, Rayagada, Gajapati and Ganjam.

"An IED, allegedly planted by the Maoists, was defused in Kitpadar, around five kilometers from Bhawanipatna, the district headquarters of Kalahandi," police said.

"A major incident was averted. Combing operation and patrolling has been intensified," SP Abhilash G said. Local villagers had informed the police after spotting the IED.

The CPI (Maoist) had called the bandh in support of their 12-point charter of demands. They put up posters and banners at Pankalgru in Chandrapur block and obstructed the road with trees to prevent the movement of vehicles.

The Maoists have also demanded the establishment of Adarsha schools and hospitals in every panchayat of Rayagada district. Their other demands include fair dis-

tribution of forest land among the poor; accurate valuation of forest products and the fulfillment of demands put forth by Anganwadi workers and teachers.

Normal life in rural areas in at least four districts of Jharkhand – West Singhbhum, Garhwa, Latehar and Palamu – were partially affected as some markets remained shut and few vehicles plied on the roads. However, train and long-distance bus services functioned normally. However, there was no visible impact of the bandh in the urban areas of these districts.

Inspector General Rajkumar Lakra informed that no untoward incident was reported from Garhwa, Latehar and Palamu, which comprises Palamu zone, till afternoon. He said police remained on high alert in most of the Maoist-prone localities.

In West Singhbhum, the impact of the bandh was visible in the blocks of Goilkera and Sonua, where markets were shut and movement of vehicles was sparse.

The bandh, which began Sunday midnight, was called by the banned CPI (Maoist) outfit to protest against the police encounter in which five Maoists were killed in Jharkhand's Chatra district, besides an alleged drone attack on a hideout belonging to the red rebels in neighbouring Chhattisgarh.

Five Maoists, including four carrying a total bounty of ₹60 lakh on their heads, were killed in a gunfight April 3 with security forces in Chatra.

# Two arrested for smuggling heroin

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Tihidi, May 15:** Two persons were arrested late Sunday night near Hatauri village under Tihidi police station in Bhadrak district while allegedly smuggling a large quantity of brown sugar, police said Monday. They informed that the two accused were produced in court Monday.

The accused has been identified as Kamalakanta Sethi and Rajendra Patra of Palia village under Paliabindha panchayat of the district.

Officials said that Tihidi IIC Mohammed Hafeez was out on a night patrol with his team when they intercepted a two-wheeler with two persons. During interrogation, the two failed to reply to queries satisfactorily. Police then searched the side box of the bike and found the heroin there. The two accused tried to flee into the dark of the night, but were caught and taken to the police station.



# EAST COAST RAILWAY

**e-Tender Notice No. SNTGSUBBS0T/012023, Dated: 05.05.2023**  
**NAME OF WORK / UTILITY SHIFTING (LC GATES, CABLES, LOCATION BOX AND OTHER SIGNALLING GEARS) AND SUPPLY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF NEW/ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING (EI) AT NTPC EXCHANGE YARD, MODIFICATION OF EXISTING ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING (SIEMENS MAKE) AT LINGARAJ SILO SIDING, YARD REMODELING OF NTPC BLOCK CABIN, LINGARAJ SILO AND NTPC BLOCK CABIN IN CONNECTION WITH DOUBLING OF LINGARAJ SILO SIDING TO NTPC EXCHANGE YARD OF MCL SIDING AND NTPC BLOCK CABIN YARD OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.**  
**Cost of the Work: ₹15,32,81,238/-, EMD: ₹9,16,400/-, Completion Period of the Work: 09 (Nine) Months.**  
**Tender Closing Date & Time: At 12:00 hrs. of 29.05.2023.**  
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.  
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The Borrower, Co-Borrowers and Legal Heir of Mr. Bikram Keshari Khandual having failed to repay the amount as mentioned above, notice is hereby given to the Borrower, Co-Borrowers and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules on this 12-05-2023.  
The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.  
The Borrower, Co-Borrowers and Legal Heir of Mr. Bikram Keshari Khandual in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED for an amount Rs. 4,47,784/- (Rupees Four Lakhs Forty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty Four Only) as of 12-05-2023 and interest thereon @ 24% p. a. + Statutory Expenditure + Legal expenses + Incidental charges.  
**Schedule Of Property:** All the piece and parcels of immovable property under Khata No. 155, plot no.80 measuring an area Ac 0.012.5/dec out of Ac 0.025 dec total out of Ac. 2.79 dec i.e. Ac 2.790 dec situated at Mouza/Revenue Village: Aska Narsinghpur @ Pudgeswarpalli, now Raghunath palli, P.S. Aska No. 1, Tahasil-Aska, Dist. Ganjam, Odisha under the Jurisdiction of Sub Registrar: Aska. Bounded by: North: Danda Road, South: House of Raghunath Sahu, East: Raghunath sahu, West: House of T. Baskar Rao.  
for SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD.,  
AUTHORISED OFFICER  
Date: 12-05-2023

**CENTRAL SILK TECHNOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**  
**CENTRAL SILK BOARD**  
Ministry of Textiles-Govt. of India  
CSB Complex, BTM Layout, Madivala, BENGALURU - 560 068, Karnataka  
No.CSB/CSRI/Training/Master Reeler/2023-24 **WALK-IN-INTERVIEW** Date: 16.05.2023  
**Position: Master Reeler/Weaver/Technicians (72 No.) on contract basis**  
**Scheme: Silk Samagra-2**  
Applications are invited for the position of Master Reelers/Weavers/Technicians (72 No.) for the period up to 10 months or from June 2023 to March 2024.  
Interested candidates may attend Walk-in-Interview on **May 29 & 30, 2023 at 11.00 am**. For details on eligibility, remuneration, place of posting, address for attending interview etc., refer website, <http://csri.res.in> & <http://csb.gov.in>  
CBC: 41109/12/0002/2324 **Officer Incharge/Scientist-D**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
**OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, RANPUR NAYAGARH (ODISHA), PIN-752026**  
**e-Mail: eorangepurnac.ranpur@gmail.com**  
**Tender Call Notice No.872, dt.12.05.2023**  
**E-Procurement Notice No.RNP NAC-01/2023-24**  

1	Name of the Work	Individual Civil Construction Works as per DTCN
2	No. of Works	30 Nos.
3	Value of Work	Rs.1,75,593/- to Rs.16,92,542/-
4	Class of Contractor	'D' & 'C'
5	Period of Completion	As per DTCN
6	Date of Publication	15.05.2023
7	Date and Time of availability of document in the Portal	From Dt.16.05.2023 at 10 AM to Dt.25.05.2023 upto 5 PM
8	Last Date/Time for receipt of bids in the Portal	Dt.25.05.2023 upto 5 PM
9	Date and Time of Opening Bid	Dt.30.05.2023 at 10 AM
10	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Executive Officer, NAC, Ranpur

  
Further details can be seen from e-Procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.  
**Sd./- Executive Officer N.A.C., Ranpur**  
OIPR-13062/11/0001/2324

# Teacher gets 20-yr RI for raping minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasore, May 15:** A special POCSCO court sentenced Monday an elderly teacher to 20 years rigorous imprisonment after convicting him for the rape of a minor in 2019. The convict was identified as Basant Das, 59, a native of Rampur village under Simulia police station limits in this district.

Judge Ranjan Kumar Sutar of the special POCSCO court also slapped a penalty of ₹5,000 on Das, apart from the prison sentence. In default, Das has to undergo an additional two years of imprisonment, the judge

said while delivering the order.

The judge passed the order after examining statements recorded by 15 witnesses and 18 documents related to the case, special public prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda said. The judge also directed the district legal services authority (DLSA) to give ₹4 lakh financial assistance to the victim and his family, Panda said.

According to the case diary, Das lured the 11-year-old girl to his home with chocolates when her family members were away somewhere. There he molested and raped her.

Das lured the 11-year-old girl to his home with chocolates when her family members were away somewhere. There he molested and raped her



The girl narrated her ordeal before her mother when she returned home. The matter came up before

the cops after the girl's mother lodged a complaint at Simulia police station. Police registered a case and arrested the accused before producing him in court.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**BERHAMPUR IRRIGATION DIVISION, BERHAMPUR**  
Phone/Fax No.0680-2281983, e-mail: eebam\_irr@yahoo.com  
**e-Procurement Notice No.e-BEID-02/2023-24**  
No. A-141:1. Name of the Scheme : Critical, State Plan, Restoration & Road Works for the F.Y. 2023-24. 2. Total No. of Works: 50 (Fifty) Nos. of Individual Works. 3. Estimated Cost: Varies from Rs.5.64 Lakhs to Rs.44.65 Lakhs. 4. Period of Completion: Two/ Six Months. 5. Other details as follows:  

Sl. No.	Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Period of availability of Bids online	Period of Submission of Bids online	Date and Place of Opening of Bids online
1 to 50	Superintending Engineer, Berhampur Irrigation Division, Berhampur	e-BEID-46/2023-24 to e-BEID-95/2023-24	From 18.05.2023 (10.00 AM) to 29.05.2023 (5.30 PM)	From 18.05.2023 (10.00 A.M.) to 29.05.2023 (5.30 P.M.)	30.05.2023 (11.00 A.M.) in the office of the Superintending Engineer, Berhampur Irrigation Division

  
Bidders are to participate in ONLINE Bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Govt. of Odisha e-Procurement Website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of the tender can be seen in the above website only.  
OIPR-32025/11/0002/2324 **Sd./- Superintendent Engineer, Berhampur Irrigation Division**

Widen your consciousness to the dimension of the earth and you will have a place for everything.

THE MOTHER



## Turkey At Crossroads

Turkey's presidential election is all set to go for a runoff as neither the incumbent, Recep Tayyip Erdogan nor his main challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu, could get the mandatory 51 per cent of votes for outright victory in the first round. Erdogan secured 49.4 per cent of the vote against Kilicdaroglu's 44.8 per cent, according to the state-run Anadolu news agency. The outcome of the election is being keenly watched internationally since it will have, among other things, a bearing on the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Despite being a NATO ally, Erdogan is a Moscow sympathiser. This is for the first time during his tenure, first as Turkey's Prime Minister and then President spanning 20 years, Erdogan is facing stiff challenge from his rivals. He began as a liberal, democratic politician, but in a few years he turned into an autocrat sending ominous signs to the democratic population of the country. His victory, it is feared, would make him even more autocratic. Six Opposition parties put up a common candidate, Kilicdaroglu, against him to forestall that possibility banking on the growing disenchantment of a large number of people with his rule.

Over the years, Erdogan consolidated his position with a lethal mix of policies geared to the welfare of the rural population and the working class and placating conservative religious groups by giving them freedom to practise their faith curtailed by the country's secular constitution.

On the contrary, Kilicdaroglu is projecting himself as liberal, democratic and humble, determined to prevent the country's slide into an even worse form of autocratic rule which has become a recent trend in government formation in the West and Asian countries. The two different kinds of political outlook are exemplified in the way the two leaders ended their election campaign. Erdogan concluded his election campaign by praying at Hagia Sophia – a mosque and major historic site in Istanbul. In contrast, Kilicdaroglu visited the tomb of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey and a staunch secularist.

The election outcome in the first round clearly shows Erdogan's tactic has not paid off as per his expectations. He appealed to the electorate for outright victory with 51 per cent of votes, extolling what he claimed were the virtues of his long rule, campaigning on a platform of stability, independent foreign policy and continuing to bolster Turkey's defence industry. Recently, he raised the wages of government workers by 45% and lowered the retirement age.

However, over the last two years, Turkey's currency has plummeted and prices have soared sky high, prompting a cost of living crisis. This has eroded Erdogan's working class support base. When a devastating earthquake on February 6 ruined large parts of southeast Turkey, he failed to rise to the occasion. The affected people could not get the relief from the government as they expected. His botched rescue effort and lax building controls encouraged by his party provided much needed ammunition to the Opposition which has clearly benefited, as the poll results show.

The outcome of the vote set the stage for a two-week battle between Erdogan and Kilicdaroglu to secure victory in a May 28 runoff that may reshape Turkey's political landscape. If Erdogan eventually loses, his defeat could allow Turkey to move back towards democracy and greater freedom. This is the pledge which a united Opposition has given to the people to elect their common candidate.

Erdogan's first decade in power since 2003 was marked by high growth and sharp reductions in inequality and he pushed through major infrastructure improvements. But he came across as an authoritarian pretending to be progressive after he started a harsh crackdown on nationwide protests against him in 2013. Then a failed coup attempt in 2016 led to intensified political repression. Since then he has jailed many journalists and dissidents and also come down heavily on women's, LGBTQ+ and other civil rights groups.

Many inside and outside Turkey hope that the Opposition's promise of reviving the economy could help Europe diversify its supply chains away from China which is exerting its influence on Erdogan. The Opposition has hinted that they would turn towards the West, while Sweden hopes an opposition victory would hasten its entry into NATO that Erdogan has been thwarting.

The fate of the presidential race in Turkey is going to have a deep and far-reaching geopolitical impact affecting Europe, Africa and Asia as the strong man image being projected by many leaders in different countries will take a beating. It may well convince people across the world that the idea of democracy is still alive and can bring about changes if unwanted individuals are unseated. The alternative is not important when change is sought.

### WISDOM CORNER

Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into an abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

In all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order.

CARL JUNG

If you don't stand your ground, then all that happens is people push you backwards.

JORDAN PETERSON

### WORDSWORTH

#### Hullabaloo

You can tell the origin of this word is puzzling because several explanations have been put forward for where it comes from. The sound is so evocative of the uproar, noisy confusion, commotion or fuss to which it refers that some dictionaries just say that it is echoic. The standard explanation is that it was at first a rhyming cry *halloo-baloo*, perhaps from the hunting field. However, the *Oxford English Dictionary* points to the old Scots term *balow* or *baloo*, which appeared in some early nursery rhymes and which has been used in Scots since the eighteenth century for a lullaby. How a noise intended to lull babies to sleep turned into part of a word for uproar and confusion is best left to the reader's imagination. A more inventive suggestion is that it derives from French. In itself that's not much of a stretch because of the close links between Scotland and France at this period. However, the French origin suggested, *bas le loup!*, bring down the wolf, is just too much of a stretch to swallow. On the other hand, the word *hurluberlu* exists in French, meaning scatter-brained. This appears to have been first used by Rabelais in the sixteenth century. There's also *hurlu-burlu*, boisterous activity, known from about 1540 and which famously appears in the scene with the three witches at the start of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*: "When the Hurly-burly's done, / When the battle's lost, and won". This seems to be a contracted form of *hurling* and *burly*, where a *hurling* is an even older term for a commotion, disturbance or tumult. *Burling* never existed on its own, and is no more than a rhyming variation on the first word, as has happened also in *nambly-pambly*, *itsy-bitsy* and others. The French *hurluberlu* is roughly contemporary with *hurlu-burlu*. There is a suggestion that Rabelais' usage might be linked both to it and to the Scots words that eventually produced *hullabaloo*, through related terms that shared the old idea of hurling. By the way, the usual spelling now is *hullabaloo*, but it has been spelled in so many ways down the years that that has to be considered arbitrary. The first time it appeared, in Smollett's *Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves* of 1762, it is spelled very differently: "I would there was a blister on this plaguy tongue of mine for making such a hollo-ballo".

# A VICTORY, SOME CONCERNS

### FOCUS POLLS



Ajit Ranade

**KARNATAKA HAS NEVER RETURNED AN INCUMBENT BACK TO POWER SINCE 1985**

It is a record broken after thirty-four years. Both in terms of number of seats and vote share, the Congress party's victory in the elections to the Karnataka Assembly is the highest it has been in the past thirty-four years. It is a decisive and sweeping mandate, with a record voter turnout of 72%. There will be endless analyses of the factors and players who contributed to this thumping victory. Was it a severe case of anti-incumbency? Karnataka has never returned an incumbent back to power since 1985. Was it because of disgust against the corruption captured by the phrase of "40% commission"? Was it because of an excessive focus on issues touching religious fault lines? Was it voter fatigue with hate speech? These are all negative motivator factors.

What about the positive motivators that led to this victory? Was it the five guarantees that the Congress manifesto mentioned? These were about free power, guaranteed minimum income, free food and free bus passes, and unemployment insurance. Some of these promises sound like freebies and some like social protection. The latter is needed, and the former is troublesome. In the end, this debate about causative factors will never be conclusive. All factors surely mattered to some extent. And the voters as always are influenced more by emotive factors than rational, economic or objective factors. This is a feature of all political elections in India.

But there is one aspect of the outcome which should worry us all. It is about the rise of criminal elements. If anything, it calls for an urgent need for reforms which can cleanse the electoral process. The share of winning candidates who have pending criminal cases has jumped sharply from 35% in 2018 to 55%. The rising share cuts across political parties. Of these 55% newly elected legislators, even if one looks at those with only serious criminal cases, the trend is alarm-



What about the positive motivators that led to this victory? Was it the five guarantees that the Congress manifesto mentioned?

ing. That share of winning candidates has gone up from 24 to 32%. The serious cases are those related to murder, assault, kidnap and rape or economic offences. These are non-bailable offences, which attract a maximum punishment of 5 years or more. The law is clear about the definition of what constitutes a "crime." These are not merely the filing of a complaint, or a First Information Report (FIR) with the police. The criminal cases are the outcome of a competent magistrate applying his or her judicial mind, and then framing charges. Of course, a person is innocent until proven guilty. Only convicted persons are barred from contesting elections. And that too if the conviction is not under appeal in a higher court. Pending cases can go on for years and years in the appeal process. Hence the electoral law as it stands has failed to keep criminal elements out of our State legislatures and Parliament. Prime Minister Modi in his maiden speech in the Rajya Sabha in June 2014 had expressed great anguish about this issue. He had said that cleansing the polity of criminal elements would be a top priority and asked the courts to fast track these particular cases. But no new law has been passed for disqualification.

The issue of disqualifying candidates with criminal backgrounds

has been discussed for more than three decades. The 170th report of the fifteenth law commission under Justice Jeevan Reddy in 1999 had submitted reforms to disqualify candidates. The 244th report of the twentieth law commission under Justice A P Shah had very detailed proposals for disqualifying criminal candidates. This report was submitted in February 2014. Much earlier, a committee led by Home Secretary NN Vohra had submitted a report on the criminalisation of politics in October 1993. It is thus clear that at least since early 1990's the issue of a criminal taint to politics has been of great concern to everyone. And yet the share of those with criminal backgrounds keeps rising. This is a phenomenon seen in Parliament as well as the State legislatures. There is no use saying that the people keep electing those with criminal backgrounds, so what can we do. Last month a gangster turned politician and his brother were shot dead by vigilantes while in police custody, and before television cameras that recorded the killings. That was wrong. Extrajudicial killings and vigilantism need to be condemned. But it is also a matter of concern that the person was a Member of Parliament once and had been elected to the UP Assembly a total of five times.

The problem of cleansing politics has a supply side and a demand side. The latter aspect means that voters need to choose clean candidates. Demand for tainted politicians should decrease. Voters should reject firmly anyone with a criminal background. However, there is also a supply problem. Voters often don't have any "clean" choices on the ballot list. What if all the candidates contesting from a constituency are tainted? Here comes the supply side solution. We need to put a bar on criminal candidates from contesting elections. The right to contest is not a fundamental right as per the Constitution. And if the concern is that the cases against them are false cases, then their names should be cleared by the courts. Politicians complain about the politics of vendetta, where ruling parties slap false cases against Opposition members. The Justice Shah committee has specified safeguards against such a possibility in their reform recommendations of 2014. It is time that voters must insist that the mere disclosure of criminal cases is not enough. We need to move from disclosure to disqualification. The disclosure (via self-sworn affidavits) law came in 2003. More than twenty years have passed but the share of criminal elements is rising relentlessly. It is time we passed a strict law, as per the recommendation of the Law Commission's report of 2014, to debar criminal candidates from contesting. There are other electoral reforms needed too, relating to transparency in political financing, in engendering inner party democracy and also subjecting political parties to the Right to Information law. But surely the most urgent need is to bar, at least those with serious criminal cases against them, from getting a ticket. Surely a nation of 1.3 billion can find a few thousand clean and non-criminal legislators.

The writer is a noted economist. ©THE BILLION PRESS

### SPECTRUM TECHNOLOGY

# Winners & losers in the AI arms race

The first rule of forecasting, the financial journalist Jane Bryant Quinn once observed, is this: give them a forecast or give them a date; just never give them both.

So, here's a not very bold forecast: Generative artificial-intelligence models like ChatGPT will revolutionise the economy. We just can't say when. Nor can we say where. Among the key questions lost amid the flurry of commentary on generative AI is which countries will benefit, and which will not. Will the United States, a first mover in this domain, grow even more dominant economically? Will developing countries' traditional route to economic growth, which runs through employment in export-oriented manufacturing, be overrun by AI-empowered robots? Will India and the Philippines, which seek to grow by expanding their service sectors, find this avenue barred as generative AI displaces coders and AI-powered chatbots supplant call-centre employees?

Certainly, the US possesses advantages in developing large language models (LLMs). It benefits from close business-university collaboration, lubricated by a deep-pocketed venture-capital industry. It is no coincidence that ChatGPT came out of the US, and out of Greater Silicon Valley in particular. Earlier general-purpose technologies boosted the economic and geopolitical dominance of the pi-

oneering country. The steam engine commercialised by Matthew Boulton and James Watt both symbolised and inaugurated the half-century when Great Britain emerged as the first industrial country and its navy ruled the seas. Meanwhile, as British and other industrial manufactures inundated markets, handicraft industries in countries like China and India were rendered uncompetitive, causing per capita incomes to stagnate and even fall.

Yet first-mover advantage can be exaggerated. The dean of modern business historians, Alfred Chandler, has been criticised on this score. After all, Britain had already lost its lead in per capita income to the US by the late nineteenth century. To cite a more recent example, Netscape was a first mover for web browsers, but it was unable to hold its early lead over Microsoft's Internet Explorer and other rivals. China today, like Microsoft then, has deep pockets. It spends nearly as much as the US on research and development. Its political leaders don't have to overcome resistance to additional public spending on R&D in the National People's Congress; they can simply impose their will. For China, the kind of privacy concerns inhibiting adoption of LLMs elsewhere are not a constraint.

Contrast this with Europe. Earlier this year, Italy temporarily banned ChatGPT for training the model

with users' feedback and for exposing their information to others. Subsequently, the European Commission proposed a raft of rules and regulations governing the use of AI. The Commission envisages strict preconditions on AI's use in education, health care, and personal management. One can imagine that such restrictions will slow development and adoption of the technology in Europe, compared to the Wild West stance of the US and the less privacy- and personal-security-centric approach of China. At the same time, clear delineation of what is permissible, and under what conditions, may enable European developers to coordinate their efforts. Because they will be proceeding under a uniform set of rules, their advances are more likely to be compatible, and they should be able to build on one another's efforts.

Recall how cellphone adoption advanced more quickly in Europe than the US. Nokia became a market leader partly because Europe developed a common G2 standard for cellular networks, whereas the US adopted a confusing mishmash of incompatible standards.

Developing countries would seem to be at a significant disadvantage in this AI arms race and are at risk of losing their competitive advantage: abundant low-cost labour. Yet AI also holds out the promise of benefits for these countries. Companies like Apollo Agriculture

use agronomic machine learning and satellite imaging to provide customised advice to smallholder farmers in Kenya. AI can also be used to reduce technological and financial impediments to economic development. For example, using AI to gauge credit risk in the absence of bank branches and loan officers would enable the operation of peer-to-peer lending platforms and a loosening of financial constraints on budding entrepreneurs.

More than anything, however, economic development depends on human development – that is, on the accumulation of human capital. Where developing countries lack the resources, financial and otherwise, to increase significantly their spending on traditional modes of education, AI holds out hope for providing what is missing. It can be used to design individualised learning assistants capable of providing personalised instruction to students in settings where teachers are in short supply. When it comes to economic development, a bit of additional literacy and numeracy can go a long way.

Throughout history, technological change has created both winners and losers. There is no reason why AI, like previous technologies, shouldn't produce more of the former than the latter.

The writer is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley.



Barry Eichengreen

**MORE THAN ANYTHING, HOWEVER, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPENDS ON HUMAN DEVELOPMENT - THAT IS, ON THE ACCUMULATION OF HUMAN CAPITAL**

### Caustic setback

Sir, The drubbing in the Karnataka elections is one of the most caustic setbacks for PM Modi and the BJP. The loss has severely dented BJP's claim of being a truly pan-India political party. Humiliatingly enough, it draws a blank in the South now. Those who were boasting of making the country Congress-free have been ousted mercilessly by the people of Karnataka. The results have burst BJP's balloon as people have shown doors to the saffron party which was taking along the divisive agenda all the time. Thankfully, the Congress won with a thumping majority, thus killing any hopes of the BJP indulging in horse-trading its way to power. The Karnataka election results have proved that 'Modi magic' no longer works and his aura and invincibility can effectively be broken. Simply and precisely put, the political alphabets in the South have only 23 letters now after the deletion of 'B', 'J', 'P'.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

### The 'silent killer'

Sir, It is widely known that hypertension is a global public health epidemic, with approximately 1 billion adults affected by the condition worldwide. It affects people across all socio-economic and income strata and becomes more prevalent with age. If left untreated, hypertension can lead to various cardiovascular disorders such as myocardial infarction, stroke, and heart failure. According to global health survey reports, hypertension has been the leading cause of death and disability-adjusted life years since 1990. It is projected that the number of people with hypertension will increase by 15-20%, reaching close to 150 crores by 2025. India, in particular, faces a significant challenge with hypertension affecting a large number of people. Approximately one in four men and one in five women in India have hypertension, totalling over a billion people. World Hypertension Day is an annual event observed on May 17 to raise awareness about the importance of cardiovascular health and the prevention, detection, and management of hypertension. Also known as the silent killer, hypertension is characterised by high blood pressure levels and poses a significant risk for cardiovascular diseases. It often goes unnoticed and affects around 40% of adults over 25 years old. Regular blood pressure monitoring is essential to combat hypertension, caused by factors like stress, obesity, poor diet, and a sedentary lifestyle. By adopting a proactive approach to a healthier lifestyle, individuals can effectively manage hypertension and reduce its impact on their well-being.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

## 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)

Orissa POST

B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

of the day quote

A large number of officers are working as BJP workers. These officers interfered (in the civic polls) right from the voter list to counting of votes

AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

The state government is making all-out efforts to eradicate these diseases and moving forward to achieve the target of eliminating AIDS by the year 2030

SUKHVINDER SINGH SUKHU | HIMACHAL PRADESH CM

We will have to protect the culture for our Constitution. Today is the time to protect our culture and our constitution

KAMAL NATH | CONGRESS' MP UNIT CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

FIR against Sanjay Raut

Mumbai: The Nashik Police have filed an FIR against Shiv Sena (UBT) MP and Chief Spokesperson Sanjay Raut for advising the police and government officials to ignore the orders of the 'unconstitutional' government of Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, officials said here Monday. Raut had made the comments Friday after the Supreme Court verdict on the June 2022 split in the original Shiv Sena which toppled the erstwhile Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) regime headed by former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Surender Chauhan elected Shimla Mayor

Shimla: Newly elected Deputy Mayor Uma Kaushal of the Shimla Municipal Corporation Monday refused to attend office after the same was shifted from the famous Town Hall building on the Mall Road in the heart of the city to Sabzi Mandi. "I will not join office till it is shifted back to Town Hall," she told PTI and added that the municipal authorities and urban development officials have been apprised about her resentment and the same has also been conveyed to the local MLA.

Nor'wester hits Bengal

Kolkata/Howrah: At least two people were killed, many trees were uprooted and suburban train services were affected as nor'wester hit several southern districts of West Bengal Monday evening, officials said. A 65-year-old man was killed when his kutcha house collapsed during a thunderstorm in Amsha village in Uluberia police station area in Howrah district, a senior police officer said.

40 kids injured in road accident

Ludhiana: FForty children were injured in a head-on collision between a school bus and a Punjab Roadways bus in Jagraon, about 50 km from Ludhiana Monday, police said. Ten passengers travelling in the roadways bus were also injured, they said. All the injured were taken to hospitals in Ludhiana. The condition of the three children is stated to be serious.

'Mocha' damages over 230 houses

Atizawl: At least 236 houses and eight refugee camps have been damaged after super cyclone 'Mocha' struck several parts of Mizoram, officials said Monday. A total of 5,749 people in more than 50 villages were affected by the powerful winds Sunday, they said. However, there were no reports of fatalities.



Ours is Sanatana Dharm. We don't consider Hindutva a Dharma. Slogans like 'Dharm Ki Jai Ho, Adharm Ka Nash Ho, Praniyo Me Saddhbhawna Ho, Vishwa Ka Kalyan Ho' mark gatherings of Sanatana Dharm. This is Sanatana Dharm DIGVIJAYA SINGH | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

JHARKHAND SHOCKER

A tribal girl was allegedly beaten and then paraded with her head shaved after she refused to follow a panchayat order to get married to a person arranged by her family without her consent, in Jharkhand's Palamu district. The girl was also garlanded with shoes, and finally left in the forest in the night



DKS cancels Delhi visit, sparks off speculations

FORMER CHIEF MINISTER SIDDARAMAIAH AND SHIVAKUMAR WERE CALLED BY THE PARTY HIGH COMMAND FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION ON GOVERNMENT FORMATION. SIDDARAMAIAH ARRIVED THIS AFTERNOON IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL BUT SHIVAKUMAR CANCELLED HIS VISIT

AGENCIES

Bangalore, May 15: The suspense over the new Karnataka Chief Minister intensified Monday as state Congress president D K Shivakumar cancelled his visit to the national capital citing health issues after he and Siddaramaiah, both frontrunners for the top post, were called by the central leadership for discussions.

The three central observers, who interacted with party MLAs on their choice for the CM's post after the Congress Legislature Party meeting Sunday, briefed party chief Mallikarjun Kharge and submitted their report. After the meeting, Randeep Surjewala, AICC in-charge for Karnataka, said the party was not in a hurry and would take a decision after wider consultations. "The observers have submitted the report to the Congress president. We will hold consultations with all senior state leaders, including Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar, and after that a decision will be taken by the Congress president," he said. Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were called by the party high command for further discussion on government formation. Siddaramaiah arrived this afternoon in the national capital but Shivakumar cancelled his visit, hours after confirming he would be flying to Delhi, fuelling speculation that the fac-



tional fighting in Karnataka Congress had reared its head again. Shivakumar cited health reasons for the change in his travel plans but sources said he is likely to come to Delhi Tuesday. "I have some problem in the stomach. Doctor is coming in 10 minutes. It's burning. It looks like some infection and I have a fever.... Please let me be free..." he told reporters. Sources close to him confirmed he is not going to Delhi today. Amid various claims about the number of MLAs supporting him and Siddaramaiah for the CM's post, Shivakumar said earlier on Monday that his strength is 135, as under his presidency in the state the party had won the seats. The move by Shivakumar, seen by many as a "pressure tactic" to assert his claim on the top post, indicated that the leadership war in

the southern state is far from over. The three observers - Sushilkumar Shinde, Jitendra Singh and Deepak Babaria, deputy by the Congress, returned to the national capital Monday morning. They along with AICC general secretary in-charge of Karnataka and general secretary organisation K C Venugopal met Kharge and held discussions on the views expressed by the MLAs, the sources said. The deliberations in Delhi were preceded by intensive consultations, one-on-one interaction with MLAs and even a 'secret ballot' in Bengaluru during and after the meeting of the Congress Legislature Party. After the Congress party's stupendous victory in the May 10 assembly polls, the party faces the uphill task of satisfying the two camps and is working on a 'formula'.

Woman shot dead for drinking liquor in gurdwara complex

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patiala, May 15: A woman, who was undergoing treatment for alcohol addiction, was shot dead for allegedly consuming liquor on the premises of a gurdwara here, police said Monday.

The accused, who has been arrested, said he committed the act in a fit of anger as his religious sentiments were hurt, they said. Parwinder Kaur, in her late 30s, was allegedly consuming liquor near the 'sarovar' (holy pond) of Dukhniwaran Sahib gurdwara on Sunday evening. Nirmaljit Singh Saini, a regular visitor to the gurdwara, shot at Kaur multiple times using his licensed revolver, Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Varun Sharma said.

Saini, a property dealer with no previous criminal records, told gurdwara officials that he was upset over the incidents of sacrilege, including the recent one at Morinda gurdwara, police said. The accused was produced before a court here that sent him to 14-day judicial custody. As Kaur emerged from the gurdwara manager's room accompanied by police personnel, she was fired at by Saini, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) officials said, adding that the man surrendered before police voluntarily and handed over his weapon to them. "Saini fired five rounds at the woman with his 32-bore licensed revolver," police said in an official statement. The SSP said three bullets hit Kaur and she died on the spot.



Drugs seized from Indian waters worth ₹25,000 crore: NCB



NCB officials said because of the high purity of the seized methamphetamine, the value of the contraband has increased

Initially valued at Rs 12 000 crore, NCB had said that it was the largest seizure of methamphetamine in the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, May 15: Two days after the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) had announced the seizure of over 2,500 kilograms of methamphetamine from a vessel in Indian waters in a joint operation with the Navy, the anti-drug agency Monday said the actual commercial value of the contraband after its latest evaluation was close to Rs 25,000 crore.

"Upon our inspection, we found that the quality of the seized contraband is very high. Currently, the estimated street value of the drugs are at around Rs 25,000 crore," a senior official of the NCB told PTI. The official said various agencies have come together and they are probing the Pakistan links to the seizure. "The Pakistani national, who was detained will be produced before the court here this evening and we will seek his custody," the official said. The officials said the product was packed in such a professional manner that even if it was aboard a ship for a longer duration, the moisture will not affect the drugs. "The plastic boxes have various signages or emblems on top of it and we suspect that multiple drug manufacturing labs were involved in it," the official said.

Giving details of the seizure at a press conference held here Saturday, NCB Deputy Director General (Ops) Sanjay Kumar Singh had said that it was carried out as part of 'Operation Samudragupt' which targeted maritime trafficking of drugs originating from Afghanistan.

This is the third major seizure by NCB of maritime trafficking of drugs through the southern route in the last one and a half years, the agency had said adding that as part of the operation, so far around 3,200 kg of methamphetamine, 500 kg of heroin and 529 kg of hashish have been seized. The agency claimed that the latest consignment of over 2,500 kg of methamphetamine was meant for India, Sri Lanka and Maldives from Afghanistan.

The drug cache had started on a "mother ship" - a large vessel that distributes narcotics to various boats during its journey - from the Makran coast around Pakistan and Iran, it said.

As many as 134 sacks of suspected methamphetamine, the intercepted boat and some other items salvaged from the ship along with the Pakistani national were brought to Mattancherry Wharf and handed over by the Navy to the NCB, it said.

AKOLA CLASH

More than 100 detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Akola, May 15: More than 100 people have been detained so far in connection with a clash between two groups in Maharashtra's Akola city that left a man dead and injured eight others, including two policemen, an official said Monday.

While state minister Girish Mahajan claimed that the violence was possibly "pre-planned", Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said there are some organisations and people who want the state to be unstable, but the government will teach them a lesson. Internet services have been shut in the city to prevent the spread of rumours on social media, while curfew has been relaxed in a few areas and peace restored, said Akola Superintendent of Police Sandip Ghuge.

The clash broke out Saturday night in the Old City area of Akola over a religious post which went viral on a social media platform, he

said. Members of two groups pelted stones at one another and indulged in large-scale vandalism. The unruly mobs also set on fire some two-wheelers and four-wheelers during the violence, the SP said. One person was killed and eight others, including two policemen, were injured in the violence.

More than 100 people have been detained so far in connection with the clash, he said.

After the incident, District Magistrate Nima Arora ordered a curfew, which requires people to stay at home, in four police station areas of the city to maintain law and order, the SP said.

On Monday the official said, the curfew was relaxed in areas under the jurisdiction of City Kotwali and Ramdas Peth police station limits.

However, it will remain in force within the limits of Dabki Road and Old City police stations at night (between 8 pm and 8 am), while some relaxations will be provided during day time, he said.

THE CLASH BROKE OUT SATURDAY NIGHT OVER A RELIGIOUS POST WHICH WENT VIRAL ON A SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM. MEMBERS OF TWO GROUPS PELTED STONES AT ONE ANOTHER AND INDULGED IN LARGE-SCALE VANDALISM. ONE PERSON WAS KILLED AND EIGHT OTHERS, INCLUDING TWO POLICEMEN, WERE INJURED IN THE VIOLENCE



NO RESPITE: A security personnel stands guard under an umbrella during a hot summer afternoon in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

NIA carries out raids in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, May 15: The NIA Monday carried out raids at 13 locations in the Valley as part of its clampdown on terrorist outfits and their offshoots and affiliates disrupting peace and communal harmony in Jammu and Kashmir by spreading terror, officials said.

The raids were conducted in Anantnag, Srinagar, Pulwama, Shopian and Budgam districts of Kashmir during which incriminating material and documents were seized, an NIA spokesman said.

He said the agency launched extensive searches at 13 locations of sympathisers, cadres, hybrid terrorists and overground workers (OGWs) linked with newly formed offshoots and affiliates of several proscribed Pak-backed terror organisations.

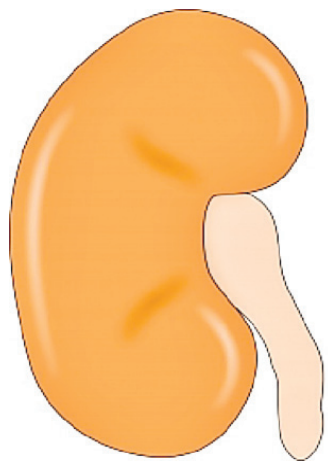
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 15: A team of researchers has developed an AI-based approach to predict whether a person with Type 2 diabetes will develop kidney disease, a frequent and dangerous complication of diabetes.

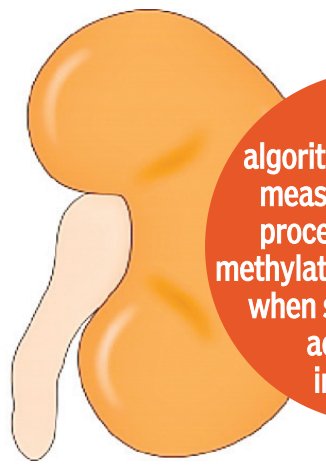
The study by researchers from Sanford Burnham Prebys in the US and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, published in Nature Communications, could help doctors prevent or better manage kidney disease in people with type 2 diabetes.

"Our team has demonstrated that by combining clinical data with cutting-edge technology, it's possible to develop computational models to help clinicians optimise the treatment of Type 2 diabetes to prevent kidney disease," said Kevin Yip, a professor and director of

AI CAN PREDICT DIABETIC KIDNEY DISEASE EARLY



Bioinformatics at Sanford Burnham Prebys. The new algorithm depends on measurements of a process called DNA methylation, which occurs when subtle changes



accumulate in our DNA. DNA methylation can encode important information about which genes are being turned on and off, and it can be easily measured

through blood tests. "Our computational model can use methylation markers from a blood sample to predict both current kidney function and how the kidneys will function years in the future, which means it could be easily implemented alongside current methods for evaluating a patient's risk for kidney disease," said Yip. The researchers developed their model using detailed data from more than 1,200 patients with Type 2 diabetes in the Hong Kong Diabetes Register. They also tested their model on a separate group of 326 Native Americans

with Type 2 diabetes, which helped ensure that their approach could predict kidney disease in different populations.

"This study highlights the unique strength of the Hong Kong Diabetes Register and its huge potential to fuel further discoveries to improve our understanding of diabetes and its complications," says study co-author Juliana Chan, MD, FRCP, a professor in the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, who established the Hong Kong Diabetes Register more than two decades ago. The researchers are currently working to further refine their model. They are also expanding the application of their approach to look at other questions about human health and disease such as determining why some people with cancer don't respond well to certain treatments.

The new algorithm depends on measurements of a process called DNA methylation, which occurs when subtle changes accumulate in our DNA

# Pilot threatens massive agitation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, May 15:** Flanked by 15 Congress MLAs at a rally here, dissident leader Sachin Pilot Monday served notice to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot - agree to their demands by the month-end or face a state-wide agitation.

The public meeting marked the completion of Pilot's five-day foot march from Ajmer to Jaipur over "inaction" by the Gehlot government on "corruption" during the previous BJP term in the state. Apart from a call for a high-level probe into corruption, Pilot spelled out two other demands - disbanding the Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC) and its reconstitution, and compensation for those affected by the cancellation of government recruitment exams after paper leaks.

"If action is not taken by this month-end on these three demands, an agitation will be launched across the state," Pilot said. The former deputy CM also referred to the one-day fast he held last month. "So far, I have done 'anshan' and taken out a 'yatra'. If action is not taken in the interest of the youth on these three demands, I will launch an agitation in the entire state," he said.

"We will walk on foot with people in villages and hamlets, and get them justice," he added. Pilot said he would not be cowed down. "I promise that I will continue to serve the people of Rajasthan till my last breath, even if I remain on any post or not. Nothing can scare



Pilot said his agitation was not against anyone but against corruption and for the youth

Pilot said whoever talks about factionalism and betrayal of the party should introspect over their "betrayal" and the "insult" to party leader Sonia Gandhi last year. He said they should think "whether we or they broke discipline"

Pilot said whoever talks about factionalism and betrayal of the party should introspect over their "betrayal" and the "insult" to party leader Sonia Gandhi last year. He said they should think "whether we or they broke discipline"

and Kailash Meghwal for "saving" his government in 2020 - when Pilot and 18 other Congress MLAs rebelled.

"What kind of policy is this that you malign the image of your own party leaders and praise others," Pilot asked. "I have never levelled charges against anyone. I have never said bad words against anyone. They left no opportunity to abuse me but this does not worry me," he said, adding that in a democracy, it's the people's blessings that count.

Questioning the selection of the RPSC chairman and members, he claimed that it was common knowledge that these appointments were political. "The appointments need to be done in a transparent manner, and people like scientists and lecturer need to be chosen," he said.

me or suppress me, I have fought for you and will continue to do so," he said.

Pilot said his agitation was not against anyone but against corruption and for the youth. But Gehlot, who became the chief minister after the party ignored his own claim to the post in 2018, was clearly the main target.

He referred to the boycott by CM loyalists of the Congress Legislature Party meeting in September last year - when there was speculation over the possibility of Gehlot being made the party's national president with the top Rajasthan post being given to Pilot.

Pilot said whoever talks about factionalism and betrayal of the party should introspect over their "betrayal" and the "insult" to party leader Sonia Gandhi last year. He said they should think "whether we or they broke discipline"

"We remained in public even after being abused and worked for strengthening the organisation, and you are abusing and maligning us after eating 'malai' (cream)," he said in a possible reference to Gehlot and his camp. "This will not do," Pilot said.

He also referred to a recent remark by the CM in which he credited BJP leaders Vasundhara Raje

# Will not put up posters from next election, says Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sikar (Rajasthan), May 15:** Senior BJP leader and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Monday asserted that votes are won on the basis of "politics of service" rather than on "posters and banners".

He said he has now decided that he will not put up posters or offer tea to people in his constituency in the next election as "those who have to vote will vote and those who do not will not". At the same time, he exuded confidence in increasing his winning margin in the next poll. Gadkari was addressing a programme on the death anniversary of former vice president Bhairon Singh Shekhawat at Khachariyawas village in Sikar district of Rajasthan.

"I have fought the election in a very tough constituency. Everyone had asked me not to contest from there, but I fought with determination. Now I have decided that



in the next election, I will not put up posters or banners, will not give tea or do anything else. Those who have to vote will vote and those who do not will not," he said.

"Votes are obtained by 'politics of service', 'politics of development', welfare of the poor in villages, giving poor people health facilities, employment to youth and good education to children," he added. The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways said the concept of "politics of service" was brought in by RSS ideologue Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, and that he defined his politics on this concept.

"The biggest problem of politics

Votes are obtained by 'politics of service', 'politics of development', welfare of the poor in villages, giving poor people health facilities, employment to youth and good education to children

NITIN GADKARI | BJP LEADER

is the emptiness of ideas. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat stayed with principles and never compromised with his ideology. Politics for Shekhawat was a medium to serve people and an instrument for socio-economic reform," he said. Gadkari, who represents Nagpur constituency, said the 'politics of service' does not come with talks, books or research, but with actions and deeds.

He said the work on the Delhi-Jaipur electric highway is on and when electric buses will run, the ticket cost will be Rs 30 lesser to the (present) fare.

# Ramgarh crater set to emerge as tourist spot

It is believed that this crater was formed by the impact of a meteorite falling from space 600 million years ago. The diameter of this crater is 3.5 km

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, May 15:** The third crater of the country and the first of Rajasthan is being developed as a tourist destination by the tourism department.

Situated at a distance of about 40 kilometers from the Baran district headquarters of the state, the Ramgarh Crater is a geo heritage zone believed to be 600 million years old. Director of Tourism Department, Rashmi Sharma, said, "Ramgarh crater will emerge as the most favourite tourist destination of the country. The budget announcement was made by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to develop this area as a Geo Heritage tourist



destination. In compliance with the budget announcement, development works are being done here at a cost of Rs 57.22 crore, which include beautification of the lake, construction of infrastructure and other decorative works." Director Rashmi Sharma, the tourism department is moving forward to promote geology tourism.

In this series, abundant possibilities of tourism are being developed in Ramgarh Crater. According to Sharma, there is harmony of geology, archeology and history with natural beauty to at-



PTI file photo

**Ranchi, May 15:** DNA profiling of elephants as part of a census has begun in Jharkhand's Palamau Tiger Reserve, officials said Monday.

The census is being done under the guidance of a five-member team of the Wildlife Institute of India, they said. "DNA profiling of elephants is being done to develop a scientific method for estimation of jumbo population. It is an advanced way of counting, which will help avoid inaccuracy." Wildlife research biologist Shahzada Iqbal, who is leading the team working on the project in the Palamau Tiger Reserve, said.

In Jharkhand, the elephant census will also be conducted in Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, around 10 km from Jamshepur. He said that they are collecting elephant dung from the reserve area.

"This dung will be analysed for DNA profiling, which will also help understand characteristics of a particular elephant such as height, age, health and nutrition level," he said, adding that similar exercise would be carried out in Dalma.

According to the last headcounts in 2017, there were 555 elephants in Jharkhand. The elephant census takes place every five years. In the second phase of the current census, cameras will also be installed in the reserve forest to match results from the DNA profiling, a Palamau Tiger Reserve official said.

Of the 1,129.93 sq km area of PTR, 414.08 sq km is marked as 'core' (crit-

ical tiger habitat), and the remaining as the 'buffer' zone. In the buffer zone, 53 sq km is open for tourists.

The reserve forest has been divided into 51 grids for DNA profiling of elephants, PTR Deputy Director Prajesh Jena said. "The DNA profiling exercise in Palamau reserve forest is expected to conclude by the end of this month," he said, adding that there are 15 members in the census team, including five from WII.

The population of elephants in the PTR is estimated around 200. "We could know the exact count after completion of the census," Jena said. Experts believe that scientific studies, DNA profiling and corridor identification may help reduce man-elephant conflict in Jharkhand.

In its RTI reply to advocate Satya

In Jharkhand, the elephant census will also be conducted in Dalma Wildlife Sanctuary, around 10 km from Jamshepur

According to the last headcounts in 2017, there were 555 elephants in Jharkhand

The elephant census takes place every five years

Prakash, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change stated that 462 people have died in man-elephant conflicts in five years since 2017. Wildlife experts as well as forest officials noted that encroached corridors, shortage of forest food and habitat fragmentation are the factors exacerbating man-elephant conflicts.

# 2 Raj govt employees develop 250 apps to make learning easy

Surendra Tatarwal and Suresh Ola's efforts to help students pursue education with ease have won them recognition and both central and state governments have conferred them awards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, May 15:** Two Rajasthan government employees have developed more than 250 mobile applications in eight years to provide study material in Hindi to rural students free of charge.

Known as "App Gurus", Surendra Tatarwal and Suresh Ola got to work in 2015 to make learning easy for students who were finding it difficult to get study content in their preferred language, Hindi, online. Both Tatarwal and Ola, hailing from Sikar district, have post-graduate degrees in computer sciences. While Tatarwal is a sales tax officer, Ola is a headmaster in the education department.

Tatarwal and Ola's efforts to help students pursue education with ease have won them recognition and both central and state governments have conferred them awards. Among the major awards received by the duo include National ICT Awards 2019 by Union Ministry of Education; Rajasthan Bhamashah Shiksha Vibhushan Samman 2019-20 for donating mobile apps to state government for up-gradation of education in the state; and Rajasthan E-Governance Award 2016-17 for remarkable con-



tribution in the field of e-governance by mobile apps in the field of education.

"We developed these mobile applications in our free time after government service hours. While we were preparing for competitive exams, we found that rural students were not able to get study content in Hindi. We first uploaded content on blogs (for the students) and later in 2015 started developing subject-specific mobile applications," Ola said.

He said applications carry the study material for primary, middle and senior secondary classes, as well as for students pursuing graduation and post-graduation. He said they have donated about 100 mobile applications to the state government to further develop study content and cater to the needs of the students.

"Our mobile applications have been downloaded by lakhs of users and have crores of page views," Tatarwal said.

# Khunti gives new life to its water bodies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, May 15:** Khunti district, merely 30 kms from Jharkhand's capital Ranchi, has been carrying out a silent revolution for the past five years which has led to rejuvenation of dried up water bodies.

The campaign is being run in Karrah, Murhu, Adki Khunti and Torpa blocks by villagers, officers of district administration and Gram Sabhas, public representative and Jansewa Welfare society.

Under this campaign, water which used to get wasted due to overflow is being stopped by making dams with sandbags at various places on the rivers and drains. Till date, at more than 300 places, people have made 'dams' with the help of gunny bags filled with sand.

Due to this campaign, illegal extraction of sand from the rivers of the area has been stopped. As hundreds of people gather for the work, the feeling of community has been strengthened, through which solution to many problems are emerging.

Khunti resident Ajay Sharma, a journalist by profession and one of the facilitators of this campaign, says that due to the drying up of all the water sources including Murhu's Tajna river, Banai river, Torpa's Karo river during the summer, the region faced water crisis. Sharma and his colleagues formed a public service welfare society in 2018 in Tapkara village. During that time, cement work



Under this campaign, water which used to get wasted due to overflow is being stopped by making dams with sandbags at various places on the rivers and drains

was going on in Ranchi on a large scale for the construction of Ring Road. The society got some empty sacks of cement from there which were filled with sand and a dam was built within few hours in the village. After that, all the people together cooked 'khichdi' and had a collective feast. This campaign of collective cooperation was named Madait (Help) and 'Janshakti Se Jal Shakti Tak'.

Due to their hardwork, Tapkara did not face water crisis that year.

this campaign from the beginning. Due to illegal sand mining, existence of Banai river, the lifeline of Murhu, was in danger. The villagers along with the district administration and the Society built dams from sacks filled with cereal on the river due to which the river is full of water for 12 kms from Ganaloya Pump House to Ghaghari village. The Banai river is about 50 kms long. It cascades into Panchghagh Falls, a famous tourist place of Khunti.

Earlier, the river had reached the verge of drying up. Due to less water in Panchghagh, tourists' footfalls had also reduced.

On April 22, Earth Day, on the border of Murhu-Adki, people built a 300-feet-long sack dam on this river in which DC Shashiranjana, SP Aman Kumar, DDC Nitish Kumar Singh and SDO Aniket Sachan also participated.

On May 16, a one-day campaign to build 'bori dam' is scheduled to be held in Madgaon, in which many officers and people's representatives will also participate. There are dozens of small mountain rivers, rain drains and water sources in Khunti district, but their water either dries up in summer or goes waste. Many such rivers and water sources were drying up due to illegal sand mining, deforestation and encroachment.

This campaign has given new life to Chunghatti river of Fudi village under Khunti Sadar block, Charo and Chengarjhor river in Torpa block, Narda river in Adki and Tajna and Banai river in Murhu. Due to the presence of water in the river, the surrounding water sources have also been recharged and water crisis issue has been resolved. To save the river, the people of many villages have also "banned" illegal sand mining from their border. Now, the villagers are not facing any kind of problem of water for their cattle and bathing. Moreover, children are also enjoying a lot of water sports in the river.



# national

## of the day quote

India is home to many cultures, cuisines, customs and lifestyles, where people belonging to different communities, practising different faiths, speaking different languages, observing different rituals not only coexist but also celebrate each other's diverse way of life

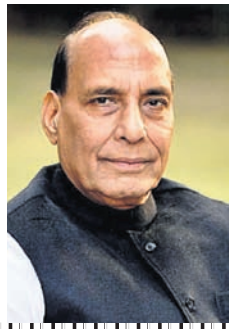
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

We have been getting appeals from the families of these 36,000 (teachers) who lost their jobs. I feel very bad. We have decided to move the division bench

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Glad to have visited Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFF) in Gandhinagar district of Gujarat. It is being developed as a state-of-the-art financial hub

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL PRADESH CM



The world is changing with a rapid speed. The defence sector is also witnessing a change as we can see multiple technical changes in this sector. Many problems have arisen in the defence sector, especially the threats in cyberspace have increased

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

## STEPS TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT

The government Monday launched "Meri LiFE" (My Life) mobile application to empower young people and encourage their participation in tackling climate change. The app, inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mission LiFE, aims to promote mindful utilisation instead of wasteful consumption. LiFE stands for lifestyle for environment



## 184 fishermen reach Guj after release from Pak jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 15: A total of 184 fishermen from Gujarat, who were released by Pakistani authorities last week, reached Vadodara Monday morning by a train from Punjab, the state government said.

These fishermen were caught by Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) nearly four years ago from the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) near Gujarat coast in the Arabian Sea, claiming they had crossed the notional border and entered Pakistani waters, the government said in a release.

In all, Pakistan released 198 Indian fishermen last week. Out of them, 184 are from Gujarat, three from Andhra Pradesh, four from Diu, five from Maharashtra and two from Uttar Pradesh.

"Thanks to the diplomatic efforts of the central government, these fishermen, lodged in Pakistani jails, were released and handed over to Indian authorities at the

Wagah border in Punjab on May 13," the release said. The Gujarat government made representations in the past to the Centre to secure the release of these fishermen, it said.

On Monday morning, the fishermen who arrived at the Vadodara railway station were welcomed by Gujarat Fisheries Minister Raghavji Patel and other dignitaries, including MLAs

Keyur Rokadia and Chaitanya Desai, the release said. Out of the 184 fishermen from Gujarat, 152 are from Gir Somnath district, 22 from Devbhumi Dwarka, five from Porbandar and one each from Junagadh, Jamnagar, Kutch, Valsad and Navsari, it said. From Vadodara, local authorities sent the fishermen sent to their destinations in four buses, the release said.

In March, the Gujarat government informed the Legislative Assembly that as of December 2022, as many as 560 fishermen from Gujarat were languishing in Pakistani jails after they were apprehended in the Arabian Sea.



FUN TIME: People play in water at Wonderland water park in Jalandhar, Punjab

PTI PHOTO

## SHORT TAKES

### Passenger 'molests' air hostess on flight, held

Amritsar: A male passenger was arrested for allegedly molesting an air hostess on board a Dubai-Amritsar flight in an inebriated state, police said Monday. Rajinder Singh, who hails from Kotli village of Jalandhar in Punjab, got into a heated argument with the air hostess and allegedly molested her Saturday, police said. "The air hostess brought the incident to the crew's notice. The accused was allegedly in a drunken state," police said. The crew members then notified the Amritsar control room about the matter and the assistant security manager of the airline lodged a police complaint.

### Illicit liquor claims 3 lives

Janjgir: A newly married serviceman and two of his friends died after allegedly consuming illicit liquor in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district Monday, police said. The incident took place in Rogda village under Nawagarh police station limits. The deceased have been identified as Nandlal Kashyap, Satish Kashyap and Paras Ram Sahu, an official here said. As per preliminary information, Nandlal, an army jawan, was on leave and got married last week.

### 6 killed, 21 hurt in road accident

Balodabazar: Five women and a child were killed and 21 others injured when a mini goods truck they were travelling in collided head-on with another big truck in Chhattisgarh's Balodabazar district, police said Monday.

## ARYAN KHAN CASE

# Wankhede in trouble over foreign visits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 15: Foreign visits undertaken by former NCB officer Sameer Wankhede, booked for the CBI over an alleged ₹25-crore bribe demand from superstar Shah Rukh Khan's family to spare his son in a drugs case, will be under the scanner of the agency, officials said.

A Narcotics Control Bureau's Special Enquiry Team (SET) had red-flagged alleged improper explanations and apparent misdeclaration of "the expenditure" given by then NCB Zonal Director Wankhede on his foreign visits. These findings were referred by the Centre to the CBI which had registered an FIR against the officer and four others May 11.

"He has also not declared the source of his foreign visits properly. It was also found that Wankhede has indulged himself in sale and purchase of expensive wrist watches with a private entity Viral Rajan, without intimating the department (present or parent)," the SET said in the findings which are now part of the FIR. The details of FIR made public Monday show that independent witness K P Gosavi and one Prabhakar Sail, now deceased, were included by the NCB in the Cordelia cruise ship drug raid October 2, 2021 on the directions of Wankhede.

Gosavi in conspiracy with his aide Sanvile D'Souza and others had entered into the conspiracy to "extort an amount" of ₹25 crore from the family members of Aryan, son of Shah Rukh Khan, by "threatening them of the accusation of offences of possession of Narcotics



substances". In order to let him walk free, Gosavi and D'Souza negotiated the amount bringing it down to ₹18 crore and even collected a token of ₹50 lakh and returned a part of the amount later, the FIR alleged.

Aryan Khan, who was formally arrested by the NCB October 3, 2021 after a raid on the Cordelia cruise ship a day before, was granted bail by the Bombay High Court October 28 after he had spent 25 days in jail. But his name was not included in the list of accused in the NCB charge sheet for a lack of evidence.

The SET in its findings, now part of the FIR, said Aryan Khan and other suspects in the Cordelia Ship drugs bust case were brought to the NCB office in Gosavi's private vehicle October 2, 2021. Wankhede in the capacity of the immediate supervisory officer "had directed" to take Gosavi and Prabhakar Sail as the

independent witness in the proceedings against the accused in the drug bust case, the FIR states.

He had directed then NCB Superintendent V V Singh to let Gosavi "handle the accused" while taking him to the NCB

Office thereby "allowing a free-hand" to him and others in order to create a visual impression that Gosavi had the custody of the accused, it says.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) booked 2008-batch IRS officer Wankhede and four others - Vishwa Vijay Singh, Intelligence Officer Ashish Ranjan, and two private persons K P Gosavi and Sanvile D'Souza - for alleged criminal conspiracy (120-B IPC), and threat of extortion (388 IPC) besides provisions pertaining to bribery under the Prevention of Corruption Act on a complaint from the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

The CBI in its complaint has alleged that Sameer Wankhede had demanded ₹25 crore from Shah Rukh Khan and his family to spare his son Aryan Khan in the Cordelia Cruise drugs case

## Toll in TN's hooch tragedy touches 14

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Villupuram (TN), May 15: The death toll in Tamil Nadu's hooch tragedy in two northern districts increased to 14 Monday and 51 people who consumed the poisonous brew were being treated in various hospitals, the government said.

After visiting those being treated at Villupuram government medical college hospital, Chief Minister M K Stalin told reporters here that investigation into the matter would be transferred to the CB-CID and he assured tough action.

According to preliminary police probe, use of methanol by illicit brewers has led to the tragedy. AIADMK chief and Leader of Opposition, K Palaniswami said he had spoken in Assembly on increased "illicit liquor" availability in Tamil Nadu. Had the government taken appropriate action, such incidents could have been averted. "Chief Minister Stalin is fully responsible. He should resign from his post, he is an inept CM," he told reporters in Tiruchirappalli. He alleged deterioration of law and order situation in the state. After consuming illicit liquor, nine persons died in Villupuram district and five others in Chengelpet district.

The nine persons belonged to Ekkiyarkuppam fishing village near Marakkanam in Villupuram district. In Villupuram, 40 persons are being treated at the medical college hospital here at Mundiampakkam. Three others were being treated at JIPMER Hospital and another person at Puducherry government hospital.



## MANIPUR VIOLENCE

# Separate administration call in Kuki areas rejected by CM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, May 15: Chief Minister N Biren Singh Monday rejected demands made by 10 MLAs including 7 from his own party, for a separate administration for the Kuki-dominated districts of the northeastern state, stating, "the territorial integrity of Manipur will be protected".

The Chief Minister, who had made an air-dash to Delhi Sunday to confer with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, said measures are being taken to ensure that militants, who had signed a peace pact dubbed 'suspension of operations', return to their designated camps.

Singh also appealed to people not to hold dharnas or rallies in view of the sensitive phase the state has been witnessing since race riots between the majority Meiteis and the Kukis earlier this month. He also said no force would be used to break the blockades imposed by some groups on highways in the state in the wake of the rioting, and instead "efforts would be made to reason with these demonstrators".

The Chief Minister, who was

speaking to reporters at a press conference here, said, "I assure the people that the territorial integrity of Manipur will be protected at all costs".

"Measures are being undertaken with the supervision of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to make the SoO (Suspension of Operations) groups return to their camps and strengthen efforts to bring normalcy back to the state," he added.

Singh said that he and his ministers, who had travelled to Delhi with him, had briefed Shah about the prevailing situation in the state and "conveyed to him the sentiments of the people of Manipur on the situation" as also intelligence "on the involvement of armed militants in the recent violence".

Clashes broke out in Manipur after a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill districts May 3 to protest against the Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status.

The violence was preceded by tension over the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations.

## Rlys to get uniform signages at stations

New Delhi: Signages at railway stations across India will be standardised on the basis of colour, font and the use of pictograms for the ease of passengers, Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Monday as he released a booklet containing details of the project. The Indian Railways, which is redeveloping 1,275 stations across India under the 'Amrit Bharat Stations Scheme', will seek to have uniform signages across stations to make it convenient for passengers. "As you all know, under the leadership of the prime minister, the Indian Railways has been working tirelessly to enhance passenger experience at railway stations. It was felt to issue standard guidelines on signages at stations that will be consistent and adequate. The booklet on Standard Signages at Stations on Indian Railways prioritises simple language, clear font, easy-to-see colours and intuitive pictograms.

# BJP, GET YOUR READING GLASSES RIGHT!

High voltage can trip both circuit breakers and election results. As happened in Karnataka where all the kings horses and all the king's men could not put BJP in power again.

The piece de resistance of the ceremonial supper delivered by experienced cooks under the expert supervision of their own master chef had tickled the palate in the Gujarat polls, last December, but failed to enthuse diners in the 'gateway to the south' this Saturday. If demolition drives and the bulldozer rides baked a bonanza in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, the polarizing potpourri of hijab and Tipu Sultan brought to a boil with 'Bajrangbali' being substituted for Bajrang dal was a gastronomic disaster.

The flavour of Karnataka in the taste of India shall linger for some time to come even as a servile visual media makes a desperate attempt to distract popular at-

ention with local self-government election results of Uttar Pradesh and the party in power promotes movies to suit its political predilections.

The results have brought numerous national issues to the fore but what is a matter of discussion within the BJP circles in Gujarat is the inherent usefulness of requisitioning manpower from this state for campaigning in Karnataka. Ploys that had worked well in Gujarat were put to use like door-to-door donation drive for the Ram-Mandir at Ayodhya, distributing pamphlets and the like. The output has hardly been worth talking about, though the cell here would have you believe that it made a difference in 20 seats, off course without naming them.

The large scale deployment from Gujarat was done because the party national leadership had decided to implement the 'page pramukh' model which had worked successfully in Modi-Shah's home state.



The leaders and cadres were imparted training before their deployment in Karnataka. The model entails a party leader being put in-charge of every page of the electoral roll with a team that will ensure creating rapport with the identified voters, and ensuring that they cast their vote and in favour of the saffron outfit. If successful this model was to be replicated countrywide. The results point to abject failure of the experiment in

Karnataka whether because of language barriers or any other reason.

Prime Minister Modi, of all persons, should have known better from the Congress experience in Gujarat since he was one of the key players in the game. It was for the first time in 1995 that the BJP came to power in Gujarat on its own steam with the installation of Keshubhai Patel as Chief Minister. However, shortly thereafter Shankersinh Vaghela had rebelled, walking out with a large chunk of party legislators to Khajuraho. A temporary truce was worked out, Patel was replaced with Suresh Mehta as chief minister and Narendra Modi banished out of the state. However the truce did not last and the rebels broke away to form a government led by Vaghela's regional outfit with Congress support. In the elections that followed both Vaghela's outfit and the Congress bit the dust. Earlier in 1990 when the Janta party splintered and the

erstwhile Jan Sangh segment which had merged into it broke free to form the BJP, in Gujarat Chimanbhai Patel had initially formed the Janata Dal (Gujarat), did away with the BJP and merged his regional set-up into the Congress to continue as Chief Minister.

The direct result of these two Congress experiments to thwart the people's mandate and come to power through the backdoor has been that it is now almost a quarter century that it sits in the parking bay deprived of a seat at the head of the table in Gujarat.

Despite this firsthand knowledge, Modi's BJP chose the shortcut of destabilising elected governments in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Goa. It has paid the price in Karnataka losing even their tooth in the gateway to the South. In their quest for a Congress-mukt Bharat, they have already engineered a BJP-mukt deccan for themselves.

# international



**Mutually complementary cooperation is possible between South Korean companies, which possess excellent manufacturing technologies, and Japanese companies, which are highly competitive in materials, components and equipment**  
YOON SUK YEOL | SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT

## CLEANLINESS CAMPAIGN

A 10-member team comprising five Nepal Army personnel and five Sherpas Monday successfully scaled Mt Everest, the world's highest peak, as part of a campaign to rid four peaks in the Himalayan nation of solid waste, the Nepal Army said Monday



## of the day quote

Poland has received its first shipment of US-made HIMARS rocket launchers, part of an upgrade of its defences amid security concerns due to the war in neighbouring Ukraine

MARIUSZ BLASZCZAK | MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE OF POLAND

The catastrophe to the Palestinian people is still ongoing. The Palestinians still don't have an independent state, and they don't have the right to return to their homes as called for in a General Assembly resolution adopted in December 1948

RIYAD MANSOUR | PALESTINIAN DIPLOMAT

The exchange of delegations between Tehran and the IAEA is continuing and both sides are satisfied with the progress being made in the technical aspect

HOSSEIN AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN | IRANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Army steps in

**Zagreb:** Rescue teams and hundreds of soldiers were deployed on Monday to help people in parts of Croatia hit by floods. Heavy rain in recent days caused some rivers to overflow their banks, flooding homes, roads and public buildings in some towns. Classes in the town of Obrovac were cancelled after water got into the schools there. Parts of the town were left without electricity, and water covered the center of Obrovac. In nearby Gracac, about a dozen people had to move to upper floors or evacuate their homes to avoid surging water. Some 300 army troops stepped in to help people in need and to bolster flood defenses, authorities said. Emergency crews said they were bringing food to people stuck in their homes.

### 2 dead, 3 injured

**Augusta (US):** Two people were killed and three others injured when shooting broke out at a motorcycle club gathering in Georgia, authorities said. The Richmond County Sheriff's Office said it arrested 10 people in the shootings in Augusta, where a motorcycle club was holding an event Saturday night. "A rival motorcycle gang, yet to be identified, came to that event," Sheriff Richard Rountree told reporters. "Words were exchanged and multiple shots were fired." Richmond County Coroner Mark Bowen identified the dead as Keith Coates, 30, of Valdosta, Georgia, and Germaine Farrell, 51, of Daytona Beach, Florida.

### 1 killed, 59 hurt

**Bratislava:** A crash between a bus and truck on a major highway in western Slovakia killed one person and injured dozens, officials said Monday. Firefighters reported that at least 59 people were injured. The accident closed the D2 highway that links the Slovak capital, Bratislava, with the neighboring Czech Republic, police said. Details about the nature of the injuries have not been released, but rescuers said some people were seriously hurt.

### Jet crashes

**Copenhagen (Denmark):** A military training jet crashed in central Finland and Monday, the Finnish Air Force said, adding the pilots ejected. The British made single-engine Hawk aircraft crashed south of Keuruu, which sits some 290 kilometers (180 miles) north of Helsinki. The air force said on Twitter that the pilots were undergoing health checks.

# Turkey faces election runoff

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Ankara, May 15:** Conservative Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces a runoff with his main rival in two weeks that will decide who leads a country struggling with sky-high inflation and hosting Syrian refugees as it plays a key role in the Middle East and in NATO expansion.

Election officials said on Monday that the May 28 second round will allow Turks to decide if their nation remains under the increasingly authoritarian president's firm grip for a third decade, or if it can embark on the more democratic course promised by Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The vote shows how Turkey has become extremely polarized, some voters commented.

"I am not happy at all," voter Suzan Devletsah said. "I worry about the future of Turkey." Erdogan faced electoral headwinds due to a cost-of-living crisis and criticism over the government's response to a devastating February earthquake. The nationalist's retreat was still less marked than predicted. But with his alliance retaining its hold on the parliament, he is now in a good position to win in the second round.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan greets supporters at the AK Party headquarters in Ankara, Turkey

"On May 28, God willing, if Tayyip Erdogan fulfills expectations, he will win," Erdogan voter Engin Duran said. As in previous years, Erdogan led a highly divisive campaign. He portrayed Kilicdaroglu, who had received the backing of the country's pro-Kurdish party, of colluding with "terrorists" and of supporting what he called "deviant" LGBTQ rights.

In a bid to woo voters hit hard by inflation, he increased wages and pensions and subsidized electric-

ity and gas bills, while showcasing Turkey's homegrown defense industry and infrastructure projects. Kilicdaroglu campaigned on promises to reverse crackdowns on free speech and other forms of democratic backsliding, as well as to repair an economy battered by high inflation and currency devaluation.

But as the results came in, it appeared those elements didn't shake out the electorate as expected. Turkey's conservative heartland overwhelmingly voted for the ruling

party, with Kilicdaroglu's main opposition winning most of the coastal provinces in the west and south. The pro-Kurdish Green Left Party, YSP, won the predominantly Kurdish provinces in the southeast.

The uncertainty drove the main Turkish stock exchange BIST-100 more than 6 per cent lower at the open Monday, prompting a temporary halt in trading. Though shares recovered briefly during the day, the index was back to the initial lows near closing time. Western nations and foreign investors were particularly interested in the outcome because of Erdogan's unorthodox leadership of the economy and often mercurial but successful efforts to put the country that spans Europe and Asia at the center of many major diplomatic negotiations.

Preliminary results showed that Erdogan won 49.5 per cent of the vote on Sunday while Kilicdaroglu grabbed 44.9 per cent, and the third candidate, Sinan Ogan, received 5.2 per cent, according to Ahmet Yener, the head of Supreme Electoral Board. The remaining uncounted votes were not enough to tip Erdogan into outright victory, even if they all broke for him, Yener said.

# Maryam Nawaz joins sit-in outside Pak SC



Maulana Fazalur Rehman and Maryam Nawaz wave to supporters during a protest outside the Supreme Court in Islamabad, Pakistan

PTI PHOTO  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, May 15:** PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz Sharif Monday demanded the resignation of Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial and blamed him for the "anarchy" and "crisis" in the country as she joined the ruling coalition's sit-in outside the Supreme Court to protest some of the recent rulings which they said provided blanket relief to former Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Addressing a gathering of protesters outside the Supreme Court here, Maryam, the daughter of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party supremo Nawaz Sharif, accused the Supreme Court of imposing a "judicial martial law" in Pakistan.

She said that "free and fair elections are not possible until Umar Ata Bandial remains the country's top judge" and that polls will be held at its scheduled time "after you (Bandial) step down". Accompanied by Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) President Maulana Fazalur Rehman and other leaders of the multi-party alliance, the 49-year-old PML-N leader said: "All of you should be aware that the anarchy [...] and crisis that has taken over the country today, the place of its genesis was not Zaman Park as much as Umar Ata Bandial's post."

"Today, when the army is standing with the democracy and Constitution of Pakistan ... the fifth martial law in Pakistan ... judicial martial law has been imposed from this building," she said, apparently referring to some of the rulings from the apex court. Maryam accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan of doing what "terrorists or Pakistan's en-

emies could not do". "He and his wife stole the public's money and then bought plots from this money," Maryam Nawaz said, adding that Khan, "trained" his "minions" at Zaman Park and set fire to the Jinnah House.

"Elected prime ministers are sent packing and some are hanged ... and [these decisions] are stamped here," she said, lambasting the apex court over its failure in "delivering justice to the oppressed, bringing the powerful under the law and strengthening democracy".

"But the facilitators [...] sitting in this building are murdering justice," she said. "Are you happy to see a sea of people outside the Supreme Court?" Maryam asked the top judge of the country. Maryam Nawaz and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl chief Fazalur Rehman earlier in the day joined the ruling coalition's sit-in outside the Supreme Court.

# Mocha floods homes, many hurt

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Dhaka, May 15:** Rescuers early Monday evacuated about 1,000 people trapped by seawater 3.6 meters (12 feet) deep along western Myanmar's coast after a powerful cyclone injured hundreds and cut off communications. Damage and six deaths have been reported, but the true impact was not yet clear in one of Asia's least developed countries.

Strong winds injured more than 700 of about 20,000 people who were sheltering in sturdier buildings on the highlands of Sittwe township such as monasteries, pagodas and schools, according to a leader of the Rakhine Youths Philanthropic Association in Sittwe. He asked not to be named due to fear of reprisals from the authorities in the military-run country.

Seawater raced into more than 10 low-lying wards near the shore as Cyclone Mocha made landfall in Rakhine state Sunday afternoon, he said. Residents moved to roofs and higher floors, while the wind and storm surge prevented immediate rescue.

"After 4 p.m. yesterday, the storm weakened a bit, but the water did not fall back. Most of them sat on the roof and at the high places of their houses the whole night. The wind blew all night," the rescue



Mocha made landfall near Sittwe township with winds blowing up to 209 kilometers (130 miles) per hour, Myanmar's Meteorological Department said

group leader said.

Water was still about 1.5 meters (5 feet) high in flooded areas later Monday, but rescues were being made as the wind calmed and the sun rose in the sky

Sittwe township with winds blowing up to 209 kilometers (130 miles) per hour, Myanmar's Meteorological Department said. By midday Monday, it had weakened to a tropical depression, according to the India Meteorological Department. The State Administration Council issued disaster declarations for 17 townships in Rakhine state. High winds crumpled cell phone towers, but in videos collected by local media before communications were lost, deep water raced through streets and wind blew off roofs.

# Sunak welcomes Zelenskyy on surprise visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, May 15:** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Monday welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and reaffirmed his support for the war-torn European nation.

This is the fourth European country that Zelenskyy has visited in the past few days. He made an unannounced visit to Paris on Sunday to meet French President Emmanuel Macron, after trips to Germany and Italy, where he met those countries' leaders and Pope Francis.

Downing Street said Zelenskyy will update Sunak on his meetings with European leaders over the weekend as Ukraine prepares for an intensified period of military activity. The visit also comes ahead of the Council of Europe Summit in Iceland, which Sunak is due to travel for this week, ahead of a visit to Tokyo for the G7 Summit in Japan.

"This is a crucial moment in Ukraine's resistance to a terrible war of aggression they did not choose or provoke. They need the sustained support of the international community to defend against

the barrage of unrelenting and indiscriminate attacks that have been their daily reality for over a year," said Sunak.

"We must not let them down. The frontlines of [Russian President] Putin's war of aggression may be in Ukraine but the fault lines stretch all over the world. It is in all our interest to ensure Ukraine succeeds and Putin's barbarism is not rewarded," he said.

Sunak said the UK is sustaining its support to Ukraine with tanks, training, ammunition, and armoured vehicles.

# China jails US citizen

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Beijing, May 15:** China sentenced a 78-year-old United States citizen to life in prison Monday on spying charges, in a case that reflects the deterioration in ties between Beijing and Washington over recent years.

Details of the charges against John Shing-Wan Leung, who holds permanent residency in Hong Kong, have not been publicly released. Leung was detained April 15, 2021, by the local bureau of China's counterintelligence agency in the southeastern city of Suzhou, according to a news release posted by the city's intermediate court on its social media site.

His detention came after China had closed its borders and imposed tight domestic travel restrictions and social controls to fight the spread of COVID-19. Such investigations and trials are held behind closed doors and little information is released other than vague accusations of infiltration, gathering secrets and threatening state security.

Relations between Washington and Beijing are at their lowest in decades amid disputes over trade, technology, human rights and China's increasingly aggressive approach toward its territorial claims involving self-governing Taiwan and the South China Sea. High-level government visits have been on hold and US companies are delaying major investments amid mixed messaging from Beijing.

# Florida man sets record for living underwater

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Key Largo (US), May 15:** A university professor broke a record for the longest time living underwater without depressurisation this weekend at a Florida Keys lodge for scuba divers.

Joseph Dituri's 74th day residing in Jules' Undersea Lodge, situated at the bottom of a 30-foot-deep lagoon in Key Largo, wasn't much different than his previous days there since he submerged March 1.

Dituri, who also goes by the moniker "Dr. Deep Sea," ate a protein-heavy meal of eggs and salmon prepared using a microwave, exercised with resistance bands, did his daily pushups and took an

hour-long nap. Unlike a submarine, the lodge does not use technology to adjust for the increased underwater pressure.

The previous record of 73 days, two hours and 34 minutes was set by two Tennessee professors -- Bruce Cantrell and Jessica Fain -- at the same location in 2014. But Dituri isn't just settling for the record and resurfacing: He plans to stay at the lodge until June 9, when he reaches 100 days and completes an underwater mission dubbed Project Neptune 100.

The mission combines medical and ocean research along with educational outreach and was organised by the Marine Resources



Development Foundation, owner of the habitat.

"The record is a small bump and I really appreciate it," said Dituri, a University of South Florida educator who holds a doctorate in biomedical engineering and is a retired US Naval officer. "I'm honoured to have it, but we still have more science to do."

His research includes daily experiments in physiology to monitor how the human body responds to long-term exposure to extreme pressure. "The idea here is to populate the world's oceans, to take care of them by living in them and really treating them well," Dituri said.

The outreach portion of Dituri's

## of the day quote

The global garment production is expected to increase by 63 per cent by 2030, with a huge contribution by the Indian garment industry

**NAREN GOENKA** | CHAIRMAN, AEPIC

We are looking for meaningful partnerships and collaborations. This partnership (Teleport) allows us to explore more successful collaborations in the market

**NIPUN ANAND** | FOUNDER AND CEO, PRADHAAN AIR EXPRESS

We completed an excellent year and have announced our maiden dividend to reward our shareholders. With a strong Akshaya Tiritiya, we have had a fantastic start to the current financial year as well

**RAMESH KALYANARAMAN** | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KALYAN JEWELLERS

## SHORT TAKES

### BSE relaunches two derivative contracts

**Mumbai:** BSE Monday relaunches Sensex and Bankex derivative contracts in its bid to boost derivative trading at the country's premier bourse. The relaunch of derivative contracts comes with a reduced lot size of futures and options and a new expiry cycle of Friday from Thursday earlier, BSE said. Derivatives are considered to be high-risk-reward financial instruments aimed at hedging risk in the equity market. BSE had launched Sensex-30 derivatives (options and futures) for the first time in 2000. The Sensex-30 derivatives are made up of 30 of the largest and most actively traded companies on BSE.

### Zara logs 40% revenue growth

**New Delhi:** Global fashion brand Zara, has posted a growth of 40.42 per cent in its India revenue at ₹2,562.50 crore for FY23, according to the latest annual report of Trent Ltd. Its profit was also up 77.66 per cent to ₹264.30 crore for the financial year ended on March 31, 2023. Inditex Retail India Private Ltd (ITRPL), a JV which is engaged in the operation of Zara stores in India, in FY22 reported a total income of ₹1,824.82 crore and a profit of ₹148.69 crore.

### Go First insolvency

**New Delhi:** The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal will pass its order May 22 on petitions filed by three aircraft lessors against Go First's voluntary insolvency resolution proceedings. A two-member bench headed by Chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan Monday reserved its order after completing the hearing on the three petitions. The bench also asked the parties to submit additional documents, if any, in the next 48 hours. The appellate tribunal was hearing a batch of petitions filed by SMBC Aviation Capital Ltd, GY Aviation and SFV Aircraft Holdings.

### NSE net rises 31%

**New Delhi:** The National Stock Exchange (NSE) Monday reported a 31 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at ₹2,067 crore for the three months ended March. In comparison, the exchange had posted a net profit of ₹1,580 crore in the year-ago period, NSE said. The consolidated income from operations stood at ₹3,453 crore for the fourth quarter of the last fiscal, up 31 per cent from the year-ago period.



It gives us immense pleasure to inform the market participants that NSE has launched the NYMEX WTI crude oil and natural gas futures contracts today

**SRIRAM KRISHNAN** | CHIEF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, NSE

### NPCI BRINGS CVV-LESS PAYMENTS

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) Monday said RuPay has now introduced the CVV (Card Verification Value) free payment experience for its debit, credit and prepaid cardholders who have tokenized their cards on the merchant application or webpage



# Vice Media files for bankruptcy protection

Vice Media is the new entrant in a string of digital media setbacks as the firm which was once valued at \$5.7bn has agreed sale for \$225mn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, May 15:** Vice Media is filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, the latest digital media company to falter after a meteoric rise. Vice said Monday that it has agreed to sell its assets to a consortium of lenders — Fortress Investment Group, Soros Fund Management and Monroe Capital — in exchange for \$225 million in credit. Other parties will also be able to submit bids.

The bankruptcy filing arrives just weeks after the company announced it would cancel its flagship "Vice News Tonight" program amid a wave of layoffs — which was expected to impact more than 100 employees in the company's 1,500-person workforce, the Wall Street Journal reported. The company also said it would end its Vice World News brand, making Vice News its only brand worldwide. Monday's filing comes amid a wave of media layoffs and closures



— including job cuts at Gannett, NPR, the Washington Post and more over recent months. In April, BuzzFeed Inc. Announced that its Pulitzer Prize winning digital media outlet BuzzFeed News was being shut down as part of a cost-cutting drive by its corporate parent. Digital advertising has plum-

The sale process will strengthen the company and position it for long-term growth, thereby safeguarding the kind of authentic journalism and content creation that makes VICE such a trusted brand for young people and such a valued partner to brands, agencies and platforms

**BRUCE DIXON** | CO-CEO, VIC

meted this year, cutting into the profitability of major tech companies from Google to Facebook. Vice Media's roots date back to 1994, with the launch of Vice's

original punk magazine in Montreal. Vice soon moved to New York and built itself into a global media company. The media company's assets also includes film and TV production, an in-house marketing agency, and brands such as Refinery 29 and Unbothered. The media company has struggled to turn around profits in recent years. Amid its financial crunch, Vice secured \$30 million in debt financing from Fortress Investment Group in February, the Wall Street Journal reported. In 2017, Vice was valued at \$5.7 billion. Now, however, most experts estimate the company is worth just a fraction of that.

## Sebi warns SC against premature conclusion to Adani investigation

REUTERS

**Mumbai, May 15:** India's market regulator told the Supreme Court on Monday that any incorrect or premature conclusion of its investigation into the Adani group's possible lapses of regulatory disclosures will be "legally untenable" and not "serve the ends of justice".



The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in a filing, said it has approached 11 overseas regulators for information relating to whether the Adani group has violated any norms regarding its publicly available shares.

The first such request, the SEBI said, was made as early as October 6, 2020.

"(An) analysis would have to be conducted on the documents received from various sources before conclusive findings can be arrived at," the regulator said.

India's Supreme Court is hearing an appeal from SEBI to give it an additional six months to complete its probe into the Adani group.

The probe comes after US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research in January raised several governance concerns around billionaire Gautam Adani's group, and alleged improper use of tax havens and stock manipulation by the ports-to-energy conglomerate. The group has denied all the allegations.

On Friday, SEBI sought six months to complete its probe, rather than the two months it given was March 2.

However, the Supreme Court, in oral arguments, said that it was inclined to give a three-month extension. Oral arguments do not necessarily match the final court order, which will likely be given Monday.

Ahead of that order, SEBI, in its filing, reiterated that the Adani group's transactions highlighted by Hindenburg for violating Indian laws are highly complex and included many sub-transactions across numerous jurisdictions.

## 21-MONTH LOW

# Trade deficit dips

Under merchandise exports, only 11 of the 30 key sectors exhibited positive growth in April and at imports front, 23 out of 30 key sectors recorded negative growth



- Exports fall for 3rd straight month by 12.7% in April
- Imports declined by about 14%, fifth month in a row

The demand scenario is not looking very good as far as Europe is concerned, and the US also we have seen a decline in demand. For the next 2-3 months, I think the demand scenario does not look very optimistic

**SANTOSH KUMAR SARANGI** | DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FOREIGN TRADE

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, May 15:** India's exports contracted by 12.7 per cent, third month in a row, to \$34.66 billion in April even as the trade deficit reduced to a 21-month low of \$15.24 billion, the government data showed Monday.

The decline in exports is mainly on account of poor demand in India's key destinations — the Europe and the US — and it may take some more months for the situation to improve.

"There is a possibility that opening up of Chinese economy combined with some boost in demand in the Europe and the US economy from August-September onwards might give a boost to global exports," DGFT (Director General of Foreign Trade) Santosh Kumar Sarangi told reporters here said. Imports too declined by about 14 per cent, fifth month in a row, to \$49.9 billion as against \$58.06 billion recorded in the same month last year, the data showed.

Trade deficit in April last year stood at \$18.36 billion. The previous lowest level was recorded in April 2021, when the deficit stood

at \$15.10 billion.

On imports, Sarangi said that the decline is because of cooling down of commodity prices and reduced demand for products which are considered as discretionary like gems and jewellery.

In April, export sectors which recorded negative growth included petroleum products, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, chemicals and ready-made garments of all textiles.

However, electronic goods, pharma, rice and oil meals registered positive growth. The shipments of electronic goods increased by 26.49 per cent to \$2.11 billion in the month under review.

Crude oil imports dipped by 13.95 per cent to \$15.17 billion. Gold imports too contracted by 41.48 per cent to \$1 billion in April.

According to the data, exports of goods and services in 2022-23 rose by 14.68 per cent to \$775.87 billion (earlier it was \$770 billion) as

against \$676.53 billion in 2021-22. Imports increased by 17.65 per cent to \$894.19 billion, leaving a trade deficit of \$118.31 billion in 2022-23.

### TRADE WITH NATIONS

India's exports to the US in April declined by 17.16 per cent to \$5.9 billion. Similarly to the UAE it dipped by 22 per cent to \$2.23 billion in April. The other export destinations where the country's exports reported negative growth included China (4.31 per cent), Singapore (28.7 per cent), Bangladesh (43.31 per cent) and Germany (14.44 per cent) during the month under review. However, the shipments registered positive growth in the Netherlands, UK, Saudi Arabia, and Italy.

On the other hand, imports from Russia jumped by 204 per cent to \$4.98 billion due to increasing inbound shipments of crude oil from that country. However, imports from China, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Indonesia, Korea, and Singapore recorded negative growth in the month under review.

# Debt MFs attract ₹1.06L-cr in FY23

Flows in the debt mutual funds are expected to be impacted going forward due to the new tax rules, whereby investments in debt mutual funds that are bought on or after April 1, 2023, will be taxed as short-term capital gains at applicable tax rates



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, May 15:** After massive outflow in March, debt-oriented mutual funds witnessed a sharp turnaround in April as they attracted Rs 1.06 lakh crore with liquid schemes accounting for 60 per cent of the inflow.

Barring credit risk and banking and PSU fund categories, all the other segments witnessed net inflows and expectedly, categories having shorter maturity profiles were the biggest beneficiaries, the data with the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed.

According to the data, debt mutual funds witnessed an inflow of Rs 1.06 lakh crore in April as compared to a net outflow of Rs 56,884 crore in the preceding month.

The huge inflow has pushed the assets under management (AUM) of fixed income funds or debt funds from 11.81 lakh crore in March to Rs 12.98 lakh crore last month.

In terms of categories, liquid funds received the highest net in-

flows of Rs 63,219 crore, accounting for 60 per cent of the total flows of debt funds during the month under review. This was followed by the money market fund category that attracted Rs 13,961 crore and ultrashort duration fund that saw a net infusion of Rs 10,663 crore.

Also, investors would have preferred to invest in categories with shorter maturity profiles such as low duration, money market and short duration funds since there is still some degree of uncertainty over the direction that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) could take with respect to interest rates going ahead, he added.

Floater funds received net inflows of Rs 3,911 crore due to their ability to withstand changing interest rates scenarios

On the other hand, credit risk fund and banking and PSU fund segments saw outflows to the tune of Rs 356 crore and Rs 150 crore respectively.

# Sensex, Nifty climb to five-month highs

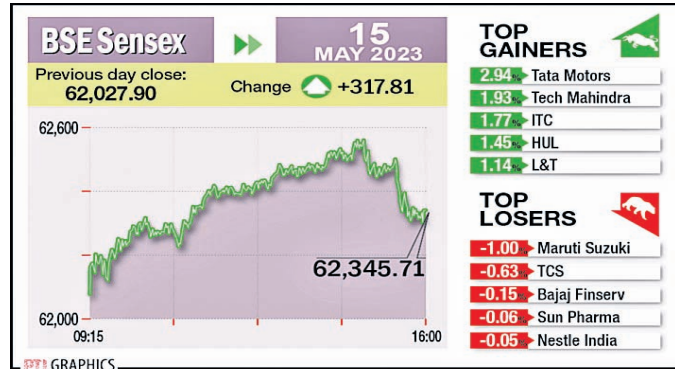
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, May 15:** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty gained around half a per cent to close at nearly five-month high levels Monday following continuous foreign fund inflows and firm trends in Asian and European markets.

Rising for the second straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 317.81 points or 0.51 per cent to settle at 62,345.71, the highest closing level since December 14. During the day, it rallied 534.77 points or 0.86 per cent to 62,562.67.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 84.05 points or 0.46 per cent to end at 18,398.85 points, a level not seen since December 20, 2022.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata



Motors jumped nearly 3 per cent after announcing its quarterly earnings. ITC, Tech Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, Tata Steel and Mahindra & Mahindra were the

other biggest gainers. Fueled by rising domestic demand, pricing actions and easing supply chain issues, Tata Motors reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,408 crore for the March quar-

ter and aims to improve the profit margins this fiscal despite headwinds. Maruti, Tata Consultancy Services, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finserv and Nestle were the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were buyers Friday as they bought equities worth Rs 1,014.06 crore. Foreign investors have shown strong buying interest in Indian equities in May and invested more than Rs 23,152 crore in the first fortnight.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.24 per cent to \$74.34 per barrel.

The rupee fell 13 paise to 82.31 against the US currency Monday, weighed down by the strength of the American currency in the overseas market.

# First cannabidiol-based product approved in India

AGENCIES

**Hyderabad, May 15:** Biophore India Pharmaceuticals Monday announced that it has received approval from the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) for manufacturing and marketing of Cannabidiol in India.

Cannabidiol or CBD, is the active ingredient in the cannabis or hemp plant, and some form of CBD is used for therapeutic purposes for certain medical conditions.

A press release from the drug maker said its subsidiary Zenara Pharma has received approval for the final product, Cannabidiol Oral Solution 100mg/ml for use in neu-



rological disorders. The approval currently received is for the treatment of seizures associated with Lennox-Gastaut syndrome, Dravet syndrome or tuberous sclerosis complex in patients 1 year of age or older.

This is the first time ever that a Cannabidiol-based product has been approved in India delivering a unique therapy option.

# '50 lakh people directly dependent on coal mining'

INDIA WILL PRESS FOR 'JUST ENERGY TRANSITION' AT G20

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, May 15:** India will press for a "just energy transition" at the G-20 parleys, a top government official said Monday, pointing out that 50 lakh people are directly dependent on coal mining.

The country, which is keen to up its pace of development to take care of an increasingly aspirational population, has chosen a path of climate justice and aims to pursue a balanced growth model based on the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities, Union

coal secretary Amrit Lal Meena told reporters here.

"As per our estimation, about 50 lakh people are engaged directly or indirectly in coal mining activities, especially in eastern Indian states. So, just transition has to cater to that challenge," he said.

Meena said questions surrounding livelihoods of these 50 lakh people, alternate vocations, skulking, healthcare and education have to be considered while charting the way forward.

A query on the challenges he foresees from the delegates, especially nations pressing hard for more action from India to help limit the impact of climate change, was also not answered.

He said India has identified 30 mines where the coal mining has



India is targeting an increase in overall coal production to 1,012 million tonne in FY24, up from the 892 million tonne in FY23

been over and coal companies have started a 2-3 year exercise of closure. Apart from that, India is also putting the de-coaled land to en-

vironmental friendly use, which may include creating forests by putting fly ash or using it for agricultural purposes, Meena said.

India needs coal to help achieve the economic growth targets, and the government is also pushing forward with the agenda of higher private sector involvement in the coal mining

**AMRIT LAL MEENA** | UNION COAL SECRETARY

The aim is to get up to a fourth of the overall coal extracted by private enterprises by 2030, Meena said, adding that response from the private sector for the seventh round of coal mine auctions has been "encouraging".

So far, 87 mines have been allotted to private sector companies since 2020 in six rounds of auction, and the target is to have private installed capacity of 500 mil-

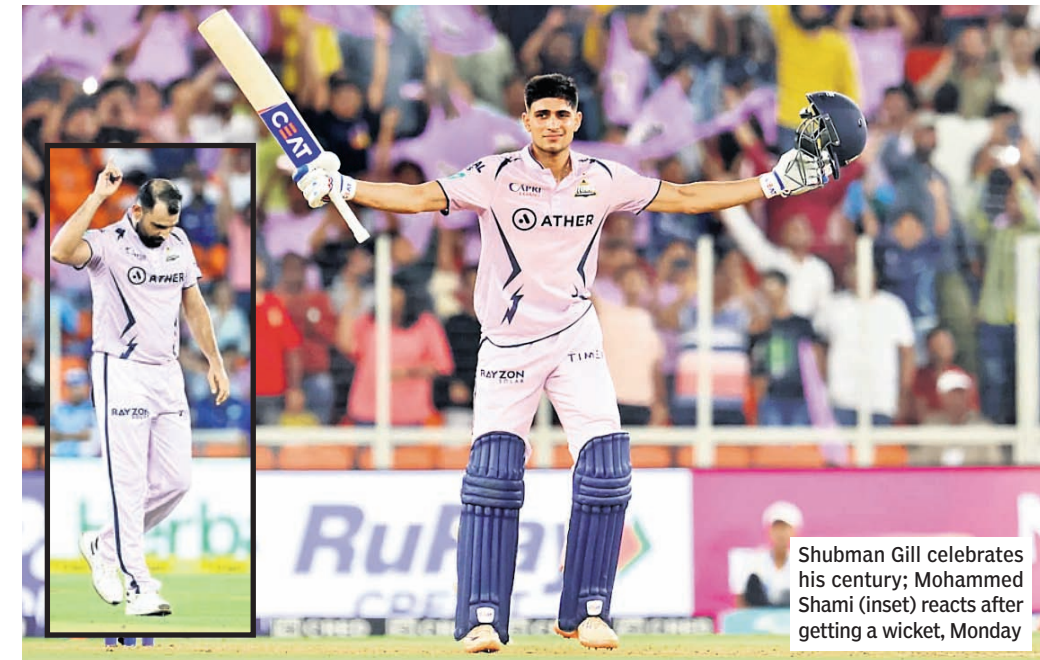
lion tonne at peak rate capacity, Meena said, adding that it takes up to four years for a mine to start production after it is allotted.

Meena said four of the 87 mines have already started production, and a majority of the rest will start production by FY25.

The coal production will keep climbing up and hit a peak in 2040, after which it will plateau as the country will start relying more on renewable sources, he said.

At present, the coal ministry is also focused on ensuring that wherever possible, "we can reduce the coal imports" and within two years, the "substitutable" one will be done. However, India will continue to import coking coal used in steel plants because there is no local production of it at all, he added.

# GILL, SHAMI LIFT GT India knocked out of Sudirman Cup



Shubman Gill celebrates his century; Mohammed Shami (inset) reacts after getting a wicket, Monday

**Press Trust of India**  
**Suzhou, May 15:** India were knocked out of the Sudirman Cup badminton tournament after going down meekly to Malaysia in the second Group C match of the mixed team championships here Monday. Star shuttlers Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu couldn't produce the goods as it was all over for India in

the prestigious tournament. While Srikanth was too erratic in men's singles contest, Sindhu showed great fightback in the decider after squandering an opening game advantage only to go down in the end to World No.30 Goh Jin Wei. It was always going to be an uphill task for Dhruv Kapila and Ashwini Ponnappa to tame the

world No.8 pair of Goh Soon Huat and Lai Shevon Jemie and the Indian combination tried their heart out before losing 16-21, 17-21. An error-prone Srikanth then couldn't get India's campaign back on track, going down 16-21, 11-21 to World No.8 Lee Zii Jia in a lopsided men's singles contest as the team was 0-2 down after the first two matches.

World No.12 Sindhu then erased a 2-11 deficit in the third game but couldn't go the distance, losing 21-14, 20-22 to Goh in the women's singles as India conceded a 0-3 lead to Malaysia in the five-match tie. The result meant India were third in the group with Chinese Taipei and Malaysia finishing as the top two teams to qualify for the quarterfinals.

## Wrestlers approach Olympians in other nations for support

**Press Trust of India**

**New Delhi, May 15:** The protesting wrestlers Monday decided to make their "agitation global" by approaching Olympic medallists and athletes from other countries and warned that if their demand for the arrest of former national federation (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh is not heeded to, a "big call" will be taken after May 21. India's top wrestlers Olympic medallists Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Asian Games gold medalist Vinesh Phogat among others are protesting at Jantar Mantar here for the last 23 days, demanding the arrest of Brij Bhushan for allegedly sexually harassing women grapplers, including a minor. "We will make this protest global. We will approach Olympians and Olympic medallists in other countries. We will write to them asking them for their support," said Vinesh. She alleged that some elements tried to tarnish their protest on Sunday night and also said that the wrestlers were being stalked at the protest site. "Some people tried to disrupt our protest." She also said the wrestlers will not just confine themselves to the protest site but also try to make every citizen in the country aware of their plight.

## 'Soft Signal' scrapped, free hit rule tweaked

**Press Trust of India**

**Dubai, May 15:** The ICC has decided to do away with the contentious 'soft signal' by on-field officials, which had often been criticised by experts as it is believed to have created more confusion for TV umpires after a decision was referred upstairs. The 'soft signal' was used to determine the validity of catches taken inches off the ground, which couldn't necessarily be confirmed through naked eye. According to ICC rules, a "soft signal is the visual communication by the bowler's end umpire to the third umpire (accompanied by additional information via two-way radio where necessary) of his/her initial on-field decision prior to initiating an Umpire Review." Till now the on-field umpire would either signal 'out' or 'not out' based on their gut feeling. And the third umpire was compelled to go by 'soft signal' as most of the footages proved to be inconclusive. The ICC announced changes to the 'playing conditions' after the CEC approved the recommendations from the men's cricket committee led by Sourav Ganguly and the women's cricket committee.

"The major change involved the soft signal being scrapped, with umpires no longer required to give a soft signal when referring decisions to the TV umpire. The on-field umpires will consult with the TV umpire before any decisions are taken," the ICC said. The other big announcement involved making helmets mandatory for high-risk positions. Compulsory use of helmets will be for the following: when batters are facing fast bowlers, when wicketkeepers are standing up to the stumps, when fielders are close to the batter in front of the wicket.

**New 'free hit rule'**  
There was also a minor addition to the free hit rule with any runs scored off a free hit when the ball hits the stumps will be counted as runs scored from now. This would mean that batters can now be bowled off a free hit and attempt a run for the same. The changes will come into effect June 1, 2023 with the Lord's Test between England and Ireland, a four-day one-off match. The following World Test Championship final between India and Australia, starting June 7, will also follow these new playing conditions.

## Arsenal's defeat leave City a win away from title

**Associated Press**

**Liverpool, May 15:** Manchester City are one win away from a third straight Premier League title and a fifth in six seasons under Pep Guardiola. City were tested by a new rival in the form of Arsenal, but Mikel Arteta's team have buckled under the pressure of trying to keep pace with Guardiola's relentless trophy-winning machine. While the race is not over yet, it would take a remarkable collapse for City to throw it away now. It was the fifth time in seven games that Arsenal have dropped points in the closing weeks of the season. By comparison, City's 3-0 win against Everton earlier in the day extended their unbeaten run to 21 games in all competitions, including 11 straight wins in the league. Arsenal's challenge has melted in the heat of the battle, with Brighton's second-half goals from Julio Enciso, Deniz Undav and Pervis Estupinan all but ending the Gunners' hopes of a first title in 19 years. City can be crowned champions with a win against Chelsea Sunday, but could win the title sooner than that if Arsenal lose to Nottingham Forest a day earlier. Arsenal have 81 points — four behind City's 85.

**Press Trust of India**  
**Ahmedabad, May 15:** Shubman Gill (101, 58b, 13x4, 1x6) hit his maiden IPL century as Gujarat Titans became the first team to seal a place in the playoffs of the ongoing edition with a convincing 34-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here Monday. Gill added 147 runs for the second wicket with Sai Sudharsan (47, 36b, 6x4, 1x6), to power GT to 188/9 despite a late comeback by SRH's Bhuvneshwar Kumar (5/30). With the bat, SRH were never in the hunt as they kept losing wickets at regular intervals to be restricted to 154/9. Heinrich Klaasen (64, 44b, 4x4, 3x6) played a lone hand for SRH, while Mohammed Shami (4/21) and Mohit Sharma (4/28) shone with the ball for GT. SRH were off to a disastrous start, losing the wickets of Anmolpreet Singh, Abhishek Sharma and Rahul Tripathi inside the third over, with the scoreboard reading just 12. It became

worse for SRH in their must-win game as Shami picked up his third wicket in the form of rival skipper Aiden Markram an over later. Then, Mohit dismissed Sanvir Singh and Abdul Samad in the seventh over to reduce the visitors to 49/6. This season's campaign was as good as over for SRH as Marco Jansen became Mohit's third victim in the ninth over. Reeling at 59/7, SRH finally managed a partnership through Klaasen and Bhuvneshwar (27) as the duo adding 68 runs for the eighth wicket. Earlier, sent into bat GT suffered an early blow losing Wriddhiman Saha in the third ball of the innings. After a sedate start, GT broke the shackles in the third over. Both Gill and Sudharsan dealt in boundaries to take GT to 65/1 in six overs. Gill, in particular, was at his attacking best. At the end of the 10th over, GT were 103/1. It was mayhem thereafter with Gill and Sudharsan going hammer and tongs to maintain a healthy run rate of over 10 till 14 overs.

Sudharsan finally departed in the 15th over off Jansen. GT skipper Hardik Pandya didn't last long, handing Bhuvneshwar his second scalp of the day. David Miller perished in the next over while attempting a big hit. Rahul Tewatia was the next to depart as SRH picked up four wickets in four overs. Gill, however, went about his business and brought up his century in 56 balls with a single to long-off in the 19th over. Soon after raising his ton, Gill perished in the opening ball of the final over, caught by Samad off Bhuvneshwar. Rashid Khan got a thick edge in the next ball and Noor Ahmad also departed during an excellent final over by Bhuvneshwar.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
GT 188/9 (Shubman Gill 101, Sai Sudharsan 47; Bhuvneshwar Kumar 5/30) beat SRH 154/9 (Heinrich Klaasen 64, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 27; Mohammed Shami 4/21, Mohit Sharma 4/28) by 34 runs.

# BARCELONA'S 'PHOENIX-LIKE' RISE FROM ASHES



**Associated Press**  
**Barcelona, May 15:** Barcelona's risky bet to mortgage the club's future paid off — in the short term at least — when a team led by newcomer Robert Lewandowski clinched their first Spanish league title in four years. Barcelona won their 27th league

title, second to Real Madrid's 35, with four rounds remaining after a 4-2 win at Espanyol with a pair of goals by Lewandowski. Now the club can finally start a new chapter after winning its first major title since the painful exit of Lionel Messi two years ago. Here is how Barcelona led the league since the 13th round, brushing aside an ar-

guably more talented Real Madrid side and giving Atletico Madrid no chance of catching up. **WIN NOW, PAY LATER!** When club president Joan Laporta, the man who first hired Pep Guardiola nearly 15 years ago, returned for a second stint in charge near the end of the 2019-2020 sea-

son, he found a club in ruins. The financial situation of the club with 1.3 billion euros (USD 1.4 billion) of debt meant Laporta could not honour his pledge to convince Messi to stay. Instead, Laporta told Barcelona's greatest player that he had to leave because the club could not afford him. So last season, after seeing the

team win zero titles, Laporta and his board decided it was time for drastic action. They sold off 25 per cent of their Spanish league TV rights for the next 25 years for 667 million euros (USD 725 million) along with other assets. That cash was used to revamp the squad with the transfers of Lewandowski, Jules Koundé, Raphinha and signing free agents Franck Kessie, Andreas Christensen and Marcos Alonso. Even though Barcelona once again flopped in the Champions League group phase, in addition to losing to Manchester United early in the Europa League playoffs, it did put Barcelona back in contention in the Spanish league.

**USUAL LEWA THINGS**  
Lewandowski showed that the former Bayern Munich star still has the ability to regularly find the holes in rival defenses when given just a sliver of space. The 34-year-old Lewandowski had no trouble at all adapting to his new team after eight highly successful seasons with Bayern. The Poland striker leads the Spanish league with 21 goals.

**LAST WALL OF DEFENCE**  
After a couple of years where the German appeared to have lost his best form, Marc-Andre ter Stegen was back to playing like the goalkeeper that helped Barcelona win its last Champions League title back in 2015. While Madrid leads the league in scoring with 70 goals, Barcelona needed just 64 goals to win the title thanks to their great defense that

**It's a magnificent feeling, a feeling of job well done. This is important to give the club's project some stability. The league title shows that things have been done the right way and that we have to stay on this path**

XAVI HERNANDEZ

conceded a competition-low 13 goals. Ter Stegen kept 25 clean sheets. **BRIGHT FUTURE** The best news for Barcelona is that its future seems secure after the continued growth of their youngest starters.



Midfielders Gavi Páez (18) and Pedri González (20) have won the past two Golden Boy awards for Europe's best under-21 players, while Alejandro Balde (19) displaced long-time starter Jordi Alba as Xavi's preferred option at left back this season.

## Lewa brace seals deal

for the locker room. Robert Lewandowski scored twice to lead the Catalan club to their first league title since 2019. The title was secured with four rounds remaining and two years after Messi left amid the club's financial struggles. The last time Barcelona had celebrated a league title without Messi in their squad was back in 1998-99. He came into the first team in 2004-05 and won the title that season. Alejandro Balde and Jules Koundé also scored for Barcelona, which now has 27 league titles, eight fewer than Real Madrid. Third-place Atletico Madrid are 16 points back. Javi Puado and Joselu added scored for the hosts. The victory over city rival Espanyol gave Barcelona an insurmountable 85 points from 34 matches, 14 points more than Madrid.

## Invasion disrupts celebrations

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona players celebrating the team's Spanish league title success on Sunday had to leave in a hurry after Espanyol fans invaded the pitch and started running toward them. A large group of Espanyol supporters from the ultra section behind one of the goals jumped onto the field and headed for the players who were singing and celebrating in the center. Security guards quickly intervened to keep players and the club's officials safe. Some of the guards confronted the fans but were pushed back toward the tunnel. Riot police had to stand in front of the tunnel's entrance with shields to prevent the fans from going in. The supporters threw chairs and other objects before dispersing without any other incidents. Barcelona coach Xavi had tried to



take his players into the locker room even before the fans' actions. "It was a moment of celebration, euphoria, it was normal, but we were not in our home and at one point I felt that it was more respectful if we went back into the locker room," he said.

## CL future hangs in balance

**BARCELONA:** Despite winning the La Liga title Sunday, Barcelona are still in doubt of their participation in the Champions League this coming season because of their involvement in the Negreira refereeing 'scandal'. It was reported earlier that the CL participation of Xavi's side would be finalised on or before May 15 despite the ongoing investigation. As yet, it has been reported that UEFA does not possess "any information that supports prohibiting Barcelona from competing" because it has not been proven that there was "clear incompatibility" between the positions Jose Maria Enriquez Negreira held as Vice President of Technical Committee of Referees and as owner of the company that received payments from the club. The RFEF (the Spanish football body) had already come to the same conclusion.

All that said, the investigation rumbles on and UEFA still has the right to sanction a club at their disposal, even if previously agreeing to a licence, if rules are found to be broken. **Return of Messi** The question of whether Lionel Messi should be brought back to Barcelona at the end of his mixed stint at PSG hangs over everything else that will happen this summer. Above everything, the financial aspect is the most tricky one. As things stand Barca will need to sell players, not sign them, to meet La Liga's strict Financial Fair Play rules, and even if Messi accepts a substantial pay cut he would still expect to be the club's highest earner. However, according to La Liga president Javier Tebas, Sergio Busquet's call to end his Barca career gave a huge boost to the Catalan giants' urge to re-sign Messi.