

BITTER PAST

Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas shares a ‘dehumanising moment’ of her life when she was a struggler in the film industry

LEISUREP2



KHAN'S PARTY FACES BAN

Pak Defence Minister Khawaja Asif says the government is mulling to ban Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party

INTERNATIONALP10



STUNNING VICTORY

HS Prannoy stuns World No.6 Tien Chen Chou at the Malaysia Masters, Sindhu & Srikanth also advance

SPORTSP12

SHORT TAKES

Police bust Maoist camp in Kandhamal

Bhubaneswar: Police busted a Maoist camp Wednesday and seized large quantities of arms, explosives and other materials following an exchange of fire in Budhanal reserve forest under Tumudibandh police station in Kandhamal district. During regular search operations, personnel of the special operation group (SOG) and district police came face to face with a group of around 20 Maoists, an official said. “The exchange of fire lasted for about 30 minutes after which the Maoists fled,” he informed. “The team seized a .303 rifle, two other guns, IEDs, electric wires and gelatin sticks,” he added. The official informed that blood stains were found on the spot which means some of the red rebels may have been injured. P5

Cong govt to revoke Karnataka hijab ban

Bangalore: The new Congress government in Karnataka is all set to remove the ban on hijab in the state, sources said Wednesday. It is waiting to settle down and complete the Cabinet expansion after which the ban will be revoked, they added. While campaigning for the May 10 Assembly polls, the Congress, especially Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, had vehemently stated that ban on hijab and all laws made on communal basis by the previous BJP government would be withdrawn once the party assumes power in the state. Cabinet Minister Priyank Kharge also stated Wednesday that the hijab ban would be withdrawn very soon, but did not specify a time frame. P9

Road mishap in J&K claims seven lives

Jammu: Seven persons including two from Jharkhand were killed and three others critically injured Wednesday after a vehicle ferrying workers of a power project rolled down a hill in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. The accident occurred near Dangduru power project site in remote Dacchan area around 8.35am. Since the mishap, hundreds of workers have been staging a protest at the work site demanding the company to compensate the families of the deceased and pay for the treatment of the injured.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Govt should not withdraw ₹2000 notes. We need bigger currency notes for grocery shopping

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
BOURSES	SENSEX	61773.78	↓ 208.01
	NIFTY	18285.40	↓ 62.60
	DOLLAR	82.83	↓ ₹0.01
	EURO	88.99	↓ ₹0.22
	GOLD	₹60,016	↓ ₹181
BULLION	SILVER	₹71,211	↓ ₹953

WEATHER			
		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	42.8°C	41.6°C
	MIN	27.6°C	27.5°C
Humidity	77%	71%	Forecast
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	Light to moderate rain



MYRIAD HUES: G20 delegates pose in traditional clothes at Nishat Bagh in Srinagar on the last day of the summit

PTI PHOTO

BSE reintroduces single annual exam for Class X

During the Covid-19 period, there were 2 summative exams that the students had to appear in. Now a single exam will definitely reduce their stress, the BSE says

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 24: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha announced Wednesday that it has decided to do away with the summative assessment (SA) system that was in place due to the outbreak of Covid-19. It said that it will reintroduce the pre-pandemic mode of holding a single annual examination for Class X students from this academic session.

Addressing the media, at the board office here, BSE president Ramashis Hazra said Class X students will now have to appear for a 600-mark annual High School Certificate Examination (HSCE). “Now, Class X students won’t have to appear for SAI and II. Like pre-pandemic years, the schools will hold tests quarterly. Twenty per cent marks from the quarterly tests will be added to the annual exam-

SUPPLEMENTARY TEST FROM JULY 3

Cuttack: The supplementary examination for Class X (Matriculation) will begin July 3, BSE president Ramashis Hazra said Wednesday. “Students can apply for the exams between May 26 and July 1. The exams will begin July 3 and conclude July 8,” said the BSE president. The BSE has discontinued the system of holding supplementary examination for two years now, it was learnt.

ination scores,” said Hazra. “There will be no SAs for Class IX students as well. Students will have to appear for a single annual examination. The Board will provide question papers to district education officers (DEOs), who would subsequently send those to schools under their jurisdiction,”

Hazra informed. The BSE president added that it would be the responsibility of the schools to hold the exams, evaluate the papers and publish the results. According to BSE vice-president Nihar Ranjan Mohanty, there would be no change in the internal assessment. “There would be four formative assessments (FAs). The marks awarded will also include the aspirational component. It will be added to the 600 marks of annual exam,” Mohanty pointed out. According to sources, following cancellation of Class X board exams due to Covid-19, the state government revised the exam and evaluation process and introduced SAs for Class IX and X. In the post-pandemic scenario, there were a total of six assessments – four FAs and two SAs – for Class X students in a year, it was learnt.

Defence PSU to use AI in ship-building

■With the help of Artificial Intelligence, the PSU will design ships that will be able to face all types of challenges in the seas

AGENCIES

Kolkata, May 24: Eyeing the Chinese navy’s substantial push in the Indian Ocean, and an increase in the number of its vessels, the Centre in planning to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to built ships that will counter the China threat. Despite expanding its combat prowess, the Indian Navy has grappled with systemic deficiencies and delays in ship-building projects. As a corollary, there has been a growing clamour for the infusion of superior knowhow in naval systems to preserve the Navy’s combat edge. India’s maritime analysts have been worried about the deployment of Chinese warships and



nuclear submarines in India’s near-seas. There has also been the clamour to use AI to counter the Chinese threat. Now, the nearly 140-year-old Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd has taken the first step to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) and boost the Navy’s strength, sources informed. An official informed Wednesday here that GRSE is planning to rope in start-ups for employing AI and

renewable energy in ship design and construction. The GRSE has been a primary contributor to the Indian Navy, building submarines and warships. To identify and encourage the development of innovative solutions towards technological advances in ship-building by start-ups, the Kolkata-based Defence PSU has launched GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme –

Not Prez, PM; only Speaker can inaugurate Parl: Owaisi

Article 53(1): The executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with this Constitution

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 24: Amid 19 Opposition parties deciding to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building May 28 for not inviting President Droupadi Murmu to the ceremony, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi said he will not attend the function as ‘it is a gross violation of the theory of separation of powers’. Owaisi told reporters Wednesday in Hyderabad that the building should be inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. He asserted if Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes forward to have the building inaugurated by the Speaker, AIMIM will attend the programme. The Hyderabad MP did not agree with the view of the Opposition parties that the President of India should inaugurate the new building. “Their argument that the President should inaugurate is also wrong because Article 53 (1)

BJD TO ATTEND

Bhubaneswar: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) said Wednesday it will attend the new Parliament building inauguration ceremony in New Delhi. In a statement, BJD national spokesperson Sasmit Patra said the President of India is the Head of the Indian State and the Parliament represents the 1.4 billion people of India. “BJD believes that these constitutional institutions should be above any issue which may affect their sanctity and honour. Such issues can always be debated later in the august house. Hence, the BJD shall be a part of this momentous occasion,” Patra said. P3

of the Constitution makes it clear that the executive power of the union is vested in the President. They don’t read the Constitution,” Owaisi said. He informed that the Opposition parties did not contact AIMIM as ‘in their view we are ‘untouchables’. P7

MAN KILLED IN ACCIDENT WITH MP’S VEHICLE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, May 24: A scooter rider was killed after a car of Rajya Sabha MP Niranjan Bisi hit the two-wheeler at Tamia Square on Patangarh-Tamia road in this district, Wednesday. The deceased was identified as Tankadhar Biswal, 35, of Indapur village. He sustained critical injuries in the mishap. Police rescued and rushed him to Patnagarh sub-divisional hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

Bisi rejected rumours that he was in the car when the mishap happened. He said he was at his Patnagarh residence while the car was travelling to his native village, Kurtula. He expressed his grief for the mishap and also stated that the deceased was his nephew. “I had gone to Khaprakhol last (Tuesday) night to attend a programme. The driver was returning to his village after dropping me home when the mishap occurred. I was not in the vehicle,” Bisi said. He added that immediately after the mishap, the driver surrendered at the Larambha police station. Bisi also met the bereaved family later in the day and expressed his condolences. Government officials in Patnagarh gave away Rs 30,000 as financial assistance to the bereaved family, tehsildar Lakshman Majhi said.

Mo Bus services to roll out in all panchayats soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: ‘Mo Bus’ services will be available in all panchayats of Odisha, Transport secretary Usha Padhee informed Wednesday. The buses will ply between blocks and panchayats under the ‘Laxmi’ scheme, she added. Padhee stated that in the first phase, the service will be available in six districts. They are Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Kalahandi and Gajapati. It will be extended to other regions later, Padhee said. Earlier this month, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had approved a proposal to extend the ‘Mo Bus’ service to nine towns in Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Ganjam districts. The ‘Mo Bus’ service, which started in the Capital Region in November, 2018 under the SPV Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT), currently covers the districts of Khurda, Cuttack and Puri. Approximately 2 lakh people use the services every day. At present there are 300 buses operating in the Capital Region. The service was launched in Rourkela in January this year.

34-YR-OLD HACKED TO DEATH IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: A 34-year-old man was hacked to death by four persons over past enmity at GED slum in Unit-I locality under Capital police station limits here, Wednesday.

The deceased, identified as Sushant Nayak alias Kalua, who hailed from Nayagarh district, had been residing at the slum for a few months now, police officials said. A case (No 323/2023) has been registered and Sushant’s body has been handed over to his family after an autopsy at Capital Hospital here, the officials added. Four persons, including the prime accused Sujit Nayak are on the run ever since the incident, police said and added that efforts are on to nab them. According to sources, Sujit’s nephew Vishal had allegedly abused Sushant’s niece April 15. Later,



Capital police registered a case (No 262/2023) on the basis of a complaint lodged by the victim’s mother April 26 and launched a probe. Alleging dilly-dally in police probe, victim’s family had even moved the Chief Minister’s Grievance Cell a few days back. Sujit meanwhile had been pressurising Sushant to withdraw the case. Sushant had gone to drop his wife Wednesday morning in Unit-IV area when the four accused way-laid and attacked him with swords killing him on the spot.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL \$5181*

ARIES

You will achieve things today, not by the sleight of your hand but by your communication skills, says Ganesha. Your eloquence shall win many hearts. The stars suggest monetary benefits, but you need to guard against injury and minor ailments.

TAURUS

You are likely to confront a turning point in relationships today, foresees Ganesha. Because you are in need of some compassion and support, you will feel the need to spend time with friends and relatives. Your beloved or better half may bring a change in mood by helping you shed your negative frame of mind, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Your desire for a clean house will reach the level of obsession, predicts Ganesha. You may plan to wash your car, clean your yard and arrange your wardrobe. And you don't trust the housemaid with any of the chores, because no one can clean the house better than you.

CANCER

Today is a crucial and fascinating day for you, predicts Ganesha. You will learn and gain from your bosses and elders. Peers and siblings may extend their full support to you. Your chances of winning legal battles are remote, so an out-of-court settlement may be your best bet.

LEO

If it's a fresh start that you have been looking for, then this day promises to give you just that, predicts Ganesha. If you have already chalked out any plans for your future, today is the day to initiate the implementation. Remember Lions, though, that rushing blindly into anything is not the solution. The slow and steady approach always works.

VIRGO

Today finds you ambitious and meticulous. Actions will not speak - they'll roar! Your planning and scruples will set the pace at work. Expect pats on the back from your bosses and a round of cheers from your peers.

LIBRA

Of late, you have been very concerned about the health of one of your close friends. Take this day to lay your fears to rest by spending time with that friend. Work can wait, as today you must prove to yourself, if not to others, that 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'. Ganesha wishes you the very best.

SCORPIO

Your mind shall take over the proceedings today. And it shall, in all likelihood, draw you to the work bench and keep your nose to the grindstone. But your heart will flutter like a butterfly, and if you manage to strike the right balance, you may win over your special one and your boss too, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

The way you keep your interests alive will keep your mind occupied. Leisure activities and by-lines will by-pass the mundane routine today, foretells Ganesha. Pamper yourself by doing what you like, be it gardening, cooking or even plain old reading. Ganesha also sees a heavy meal with friends late in the day today.

CAPRICORN

Today, you will remain unruffled by the commotion around you, says Ganesha. However, the emotions locked up inside you will probably cloud your power of reasoning and may leave you feeling a little lost. But this will only be a passing phase, and you will come out of the bewilderment in no time. You will promptly get back to pursuing your goals and your reputation with seniors will play a crucial role in bagging you tangible rewards.

AQUARIUS

Today, you will experience the harmonious balance between logic and emotion. You will consequently know how to mix business with pleasure. Money wise, you are content, but trivial issues may bother you today, says Ganesha.

PISCES

An action-packed day awaits you, busy as you will be corresponding with old contacts, telephonic interviews, organising meetings and scheduling tasks, says Ganesha. Do not forget to breathe!



HAILEE STEINFELD IS KEEN TO SETTLE DOWN

American actress and singer Hailee Steinfeld is looking forward to finding her perfect partner. The 26-year-old movie star, who is currently single, has revealed that she feels more confident than ever and she's looking forward to meeting the right partner.

AMANZA SMITH REVEALS SHE IS FREE OF CANCER

Selling Sunset star Amanza Smith has confirmed via social media that she's cancer-free. Taking to Instagram, the 46-year-old said: "Thank you to everyone for your concerns and well wishes towards my health. I am happy to tell you that I am in fact, not only cancer free, but also possibly aging backwards."



Priyanka shares her life's 'dehumanising moment'

Mumbai: Indian actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas did not shy away from talking about an unsavoury incident in Hindi film industry when a filmmaker had said that he 'needed to see her underwear'.

The *Citadel* actress, in an interview with *The Zoe Report*, opened up about shooting for a film in which the actress played the role of an undercover. About the incident, she said it was a 'dehumanising moment' adding that she had walked out of the film.

"This may have been 2002 or '03. I'm undercover, I'm seducing the guy - obviously, that's what girls do when they're undercover. But I'm seducing the guy and you have to take off one piece of clothing (at a time)," she recalled.

"I wanted to layer up. The filmmaker was like, 'No, I need to see her underwear'. Otherwise, why is anybody coming to watch this movie?"

The actress added: "He didn't say it to me. He said it to the stylist in front of me. It was such a dehumanising moment. It was a feeling of, I'm nothing else outside of how I can be used, my art is not important, what I contribute is not important."

After working for two days, she said that she exited the movie. Talking about the director, Priyanka also said that she "just couldn't look at him every day."

AGENCIES

I always wanted to do an action film: Shahid

Mumbai: Actor Shahid Kapoor known for films like *Kabir Singh*, *Jab We Met*, and *Jersey* said that doing an out-an-out action film was something he had wanted to do.

Speaking about his unconventional role in *Bloody Daddy*, Shahid said: "Doing an out-an-out action film was something I have wanted to do but I was waiting for the perfect one. When Ali came to me with this project, I knew this was it! It's high octane, its action packed, it's thrilling, and it's intense, created especially for a digital first audience. Ali's expertise in this genre is unparalleled, and collaborating with him has been incredibly fulfilling. We're incredibly thrilled to witness the audience's response to our creation."

The platform unveiled the action-packed trailer of the Ali Abbas Zafar-directorial at a grand event in Mumbai, ahead of its release.

Produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Sunir Kheterpal, Gaurav Bose, Himanshu Kishan Mehra, and Ali Abbas Zafar, the film casts Diana Penty, Sanjay Kapoor, Ronit Roy, and Rajeev Khandelwal in pivotal roles. *Bloody Daddy* will exclusively stream on JioCinema June 9.

IAN S



Sudden demise of Anupamaa, Sarabhai Vs Sarabhai actors

Mumbai: In a tragic turn of events, Nitesh Pandey and Vaibhavi Upadhyay, two popular actors of television died late Tuesday leaving the entertainment industry in a state of shock.

Nitesh, who essayed the role of Dheeraj Kumar in the top rated television show *Anupamaa*, passed away due to cardiac arrest at the age of 51.

Reports claim that the actor suffered a massive cardiac arrest late Tuesday night in Igatpuri near Nashik. He succumbed to the same instantly. He also worked in films with his National Award winning film *Khosla Ka Ghosla* receiving widespread appreciation. He is now survived by his actress-wife Arpita Pandey.

On the other hand, Vaibhavi, who played the role of Jasmine in the iconic show *Sarabhai Vs Sarabhai* has died in a road accident. Vaibhavi's co-actors Rupali Ganguly, Satish Shah, Deven Bhojani and J.D. Majethia mourned her death.

Rupali, who played Monisha in the television series, shared a picture of the actor and wrote in her story on Instagram. "Gone too soon Vaibhavi!" she tweeted her tributes, quoting Deven's post for Vaishnavi. "This is not fair, gone too soon," Rupali tweeted late Tuesday.

Vaibhavi had also worked in TV shows, including *CID* and *Adaalat*. She made her film debut with *Deepika Padukone's* 2020 film *Chhapaak*.

AGENCIES

Susmita's Dhitang Dhitang charms Sydney audience

Bhubaneswar: Amidst the joint address of Indian diaspora at Sydney by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Aussie counterpart Anthony Albanese, the NSW Girls Team, led by the talented Smita Samantaray, presented the rich cultural legacy of Odisha, Tuesday which stole the show.

The chief attraction of the event was *Dhitang Dhitang* by Sangeet Natak Akademi awardee Susmita Das. Her mesmerising recital, backed by the brilliant composition of Abhijeet Mishra and touching lyrics by Sangram Mohanty, captured the essence of Durua tribe and their vibrant traditions. The crowd was left spellbound, experiencing the sheer magic of Odisha's cultural heritage.

The team comprising Anima Acharya, Aruniva Mohanty, Avipsa Padhi, Bandana Mishra, Gayathri Sreedharan, Mumtaz Lenka, Smita Samantaray, and Subhasree Mohapatra, delivered a breathtaking performance that ignited waves of joy and admiration. Their synchronised efforts and unwavering dedication exemplified the true spirit of Odia culture, captivating the hearts of the Sydney audience.

The event was also aired on select Indian news channels, allowing a wider audience to experience the splendour and grandeur of the occasion.

PNN

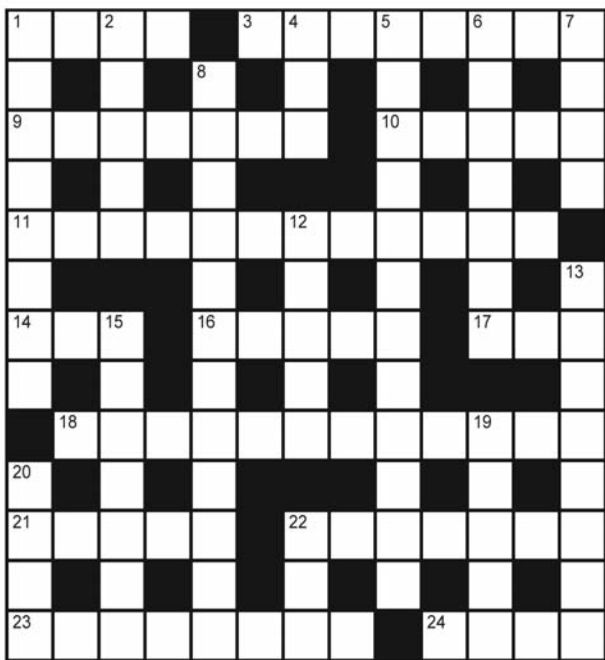


Artists of Nirmal Kalamanch, Patna Wednesday performed Hindi play *Andho Ki Haathi* at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar. Written by Sharad Joshi and directed by Sanjay Upadhyay, the play was inspired by popular Indian folktale in which five blind people gave their own unique description of how an elephant looks. The play was a critique of contemporary social oddities. Among the dignitaries in attendance were Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi Secy Prabodh Rath, Culture Dept. Joint Director Subodh Ch. Acharya and Odisha Natya Sangh president Haren Sahoo. Theatre director Subash Ch. Pradhan and *Orissa POST* Features Editor Bijay Mandal were conferred with Bidyakanak Samman.

OP PHOTO

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Absent
- 3 Thick dark syrup
- 9 Female
- 10 Wet
- 11 Compliment
- 14 Keyboard key
- 16 Home on the range?
- 17 Bygone bird
- 18 Ocean predators (6,6)

Down

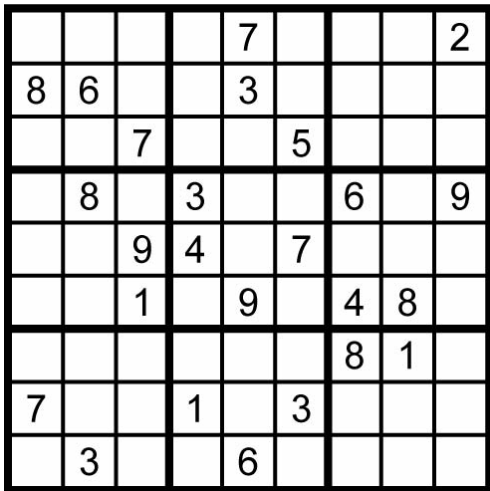
- 21 Out of place
- 22 First-rate
- 23 Hotel record book
- 24 Dundee denizen
- 1 Resign, royally
- 2 Criminal act
- 4 Lummo
- 5 Weak spot (8,4)

- 6 Indication
- 7 Bath leftover
- 8 Salon workers
- 12 Rhino relative
- 13 Ancient language of India
- 15 Chinese city
- 19 Air freshener option
- 20 Carnival
- 22 Litigate

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

SUDOKU

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

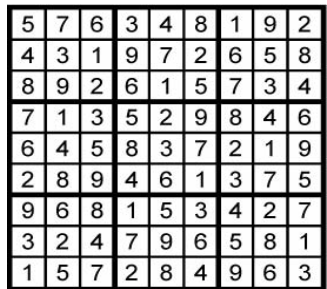


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



downtown

State turns into cauldron as Nuapada boils at 44°C

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 24: Odisha virtually turned into a cauldron Wednesday with at least 25 places recording the maximum temperature at or above 40 degrees Celsius. The entire western region of the state was in the grip of the sweltering heat and Nuapada became the hottest place in the state with the mercury touching 44 degrees Celsius there. According to IMD's evening bulletin of Wednesday, the day temperature in breached the 42 degrees Celsius mark in at least nine places, including Bhubaneswar. Nuapada was followed by Jharsuguda at 43.4 degrees, Talcher at 43.2, Angul at 43.1, Sambalpur at 42.9, Bhubaneswar at 42.8, Sonepur at 42.5, Rourkela at 42.4, and Dhenkanal at 42.3 degrees Celsius. The day temperature recorded a marginal rise in Bhubaneswar where it was 42.6 degrees Tuesday. Neighbouring Cuttack city recorded 41.6 degrees Celsius Wednesday, up from 41 degrees Tuesday. The IMD said there will be no large change in the day temperature during the next five days. The mercury may soar up to 42°C or more at a few places in Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Angul, Boudh, Sonepur, Balangir, Jharsuguda and Bargarh in the interior and western parts of the state during the next three days.

Plea in SC to curb coastal erosion

POST NEWS NETWORK

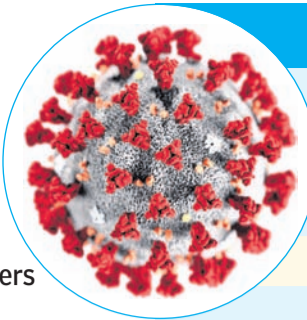
New Delhi, May 24: A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to Odisha and other coastal states for protection of coastal regions from sea erosion. The petitioner, KK Ramesh, has sought directions to prohibit any construction work, alternative work or any other development work in the coastal regions of the state. He also urged the apex court to direct the governments to prohibit the burial of mortal remains in all coastal areas. He pleaded for plantation of suitable trees to protect the coastal regions from the rising sea level. The petitioner also pleaded to cancel Tamil Nadu government's decision to construct the 134-ft tall 'Pen Monument' on Marina beach. The petitioner contended that the sea level along the entire Indian coast is rising faster than the global average. The petition contended that sea level rise could have major consequences for the millions of people living along the Indian coastline. While gradual erosion of the coastline, subsidence and inundation of deltas are long-term concerns for the people living close to the sea, the immediate concern is the combined impact of tropical cyclones and sea level rise, the petition stated.



DEVOTED TO THE LORD: Chariot construction work in full swing at Rath Yard in Puri, Wednesday, ahead of the world famous Car Festival

UPROARIOUS SCENE

Several corporators staged a dharna during a CMC council meet in Cuttack slamming the alleged step-motherly attitude of the civic body towards slum dwellers



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,91,56,586	66,15,52,928	68,81,718
India	4,49,87,891	4,44,49,451	5,31,849
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

SSEPD DEPT REVIEW MEET

28.37L covered under MBPY: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday reviewed the performance of the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department during the last four years where it was revealed that the number of beneficiaries under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) has increased from 23.13 lakh to 28.37 lakh during the period.

SSEPD Minister Ashok Chandra Panda presented the details of the manifesto's assurances transformed into reality and other steps undertaken by the department during last four years. Addressing the media followed by the review, Panda said that Chief Minister has directed to hold regular camps under Bhima Bhoi Bhinnakhyama Samarthyaa Abhiyan (BBSA) in every block and the certificates given to PwDs be uploaded in the portal.

He also directed to transform the special schools under 5T initiative. The minister also emphasised on timely arrangement of financing the institutions working for the empowerment of PwDs, the minister said.

Panda stated that a dynamic approach has been taken for inclusion of beneficiaries under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY). The new categories of beneficiaries such as divorcees and deserted women, transgenders, orphan children and widows of Covid-affected families have been included.

Altogether 14,719 deserted and divorcee women, 1,468 transgen-



IN A NUTSHELL

For rehabilitation of senior citizens and differently-abled, SSEPD dept has taken steps for setting up of Integrated Infrastructure Complexes in 10 districts

Altogether 14,719 deserted and divorcee women, 1,468 transgender persons, 43 children orphaned by Covid and 626 widows (of Covid-affected families) have been benefitted

A total of 103 special schools for students with disabilities, 83 old age homes, 24 rehabilitation centres for beggars, three rehab centres for transgenders and 73 centres for mentally-ill persons are running in the state

der persons, 43 children orphaned by Covid and 626 widows (of Covid-affected families) have been benefitted in this process. Widows, divorcees and deserted women are being identified based on self certification and no death certificate or document of divorcee is required. Similarly, transgender persons, widow and children orphaned by Covid are getting pension under MBPY. Seven geriatric disability centres and 83 old age homes are functioning for the welfare of senior citizens.

Panda said that as per the announcement of Chief Minister in January 2022, artificial limbs/high-end limbs and hearing aid have

been provided to all eligible persons with disabilities irrespective of their family income. A total of 2,974 beneficiaries have availed the benefit of artificial/high-end limbs (Orthosis/Prosthesis) and 685 students with disabilities availed the benefit of hearing aid.

For rehabilitation of senior citizens and PwDs, the department has taken steps for setting up of Integrated Infrastructure Complexes (IICs) in 10 districts. These complexes will be developed as National Level Centre of Excellence. Further, the department has made available 11 of its citizen centric services through online in the portal- ssepd.gov.in. It was highlighted that

the number of beneficiaries under MBPY has increased from 23.13 lakh to 28.37 lakh in last four years.

The process of application has also been simplified and made more transparent. For empowerment of PwDs, two world-class centres of SIEP (Manodaya) have been set up in Bhubaneswar and Sundargarh districts. Other eight such centres are in progress.

Similarly, four rehabilitation centres with computer-aided design & computer-aided manufacturing facilities and district disability rehabilitation centres are functional at Bhubaneswar, Sundargarh, Angul and Keonjhar. One Biju Mahavir Jaipur Foot Centre has been established in Khurda district to provide artificial limbs to PwDs.

Out of 10 Shradhalayas (IICs), six have been completed in Cuttack, Ganjam, Khurda, Kandhamal, Sambalpur and Puri while five have been made operational. Each IIC will accommodate three special schools and one old age home with residential support, healthcare and therapeutic services for PwDs and senior citizens.

Also, there will be provision for free education, vocational training, music school, sports and other activities for students with disabilities.

Altogether 103 special schools for students with disabilities, 83 old age homes, 24 rehabilitation centres for beggars, three rehab centres for transgenders and 73 centres for mentally-ill persons are running in the state, Panda added.

BJD to attend Central Vista opening

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Wednesday said it will take part in the inauguration of the new Parliament building (Central Vista) May 28, even as 19 Opposition parties, including the Congress, decided to boycott the event.

BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra said the party believes that Constitutional institutions should be above any issue which may affect their sanctity and honour. "The BJD shall be a part of this momentous occasion," Patra said. Stating that the President is the head of the Indian State, Patra said

that the Parliament represents the 1.4 billion people of the country. As many as 19 Opposition parties, including the Congress, Left, TMC, SP and AAP, came together Wednesday and announced their decision to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying they find no value in a new building when the 'soul of democracy has been sucked out'.

These 19 parties in a joint statement said, "Prime Minister Modi's decision to inaugurate the new Parliament building by himself, completely sidelining President Droupadi Murmu, is not only a

grave insult but a direct assault on our democracy which demands a commensurate response."

Patra, however, said, "Both the institutions (Parliament and Rashtrapati Bhawan) are symbols of Indian democracy and draw their authority from the Constitution of India. Their authority and stature should always be safeguarded."

Earlier in the day, the state Congress asked Chief Minister and BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik to exert pressure on the Centre to allow the President, who is from Odisha, to inaugurate the new Parliament building Sunday.

Parties 'ready' to face early polls



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 24: Amid speculation about early elections in the state, all the three prominent political parties – BJD, BJP and Congress – have maintained that they are prepared to face an early fight.

BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra said the party enjoys huge support among the people and it is prepared to go to the elections under the leadership of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik anytime.

"I have heard about it and people are discussing it. This is a hypothetical question. If other stakeholders and the Election Commission of India are ready to hold an early election in Odisha, the BJD is prepared for it. We have huge support among the people," he said, replying to a question on the issue.

Noting that Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and BJP state president Manmohan Samal have already spoken about early elections, Mishra said BJD is always prepared for it.

Samal said he understands why

the BJD would prefer to go for an early election, and that it may recommend it.

"The people of Odisha are already in an explosive mood against the BJD government. The BJP will come to power regardless of the timing of the polls," he claimed, adding that his party is also prepared for early polls.

State Congress president Sarat Pattnayak said that if the ruling dispensation dissolves the state Assembly prematurely, and the elections are held early, then his party is ready for it.

"The Congress is ready whenever the election is held, be it at the stipulated time or six months early," he said.

The tenure of the Naveen Patnaik government is scheduled to end June 24, 2024. However, speculations are rife that the Chief Minister may dissolve the assembly to go for polls along with five other states in December this year.

The states where elections are likely to be held in December are Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Cash payment will propel graft: Pradhan to Naveen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 24: Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Wednesday urged Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to reconsider the state government's recent decision to hand over cash as pension to senior citizens, widows and persons with disabilities.

Pradhan alleged that there are many instances of beneficiaries being exploited in the past due to corruption and manipulation by middlemen through cash payments. "The Odisha government's decision to give cash to beneficiaries will encourage corruption and malpractice in the state," he added.

"Keeping in view our commitment to maintaining transparency and rooting out corruption, I urge you to continue the DBT mechanism for payment of pension to old age, widows and divyangjans in Odisha and review the decision of cash payment," Pradhan, the Union Education Minister said in a letter to Patnaik.

The senior BJP leader's opposition to the cash distribution to old age beneficiaries came after the



The Union minister claimed that due to direct benefit transfer mechanism, fake and bogus beneficiaries have been eliminated

state government's Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department asked all district Collectors and commissioners of municipal corporations that the beneficiaries of the Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) will receive pension in cash from June onwards.

The state government's decision in this regard was taken after being criticised for "failing" to ensure pension payment through direct benefit transfer (DBT) to beneficiaries. The Odisha government has decided to return to the old method of cash disbursement.

Stating that effective schemes of the Union government are reaching every citizen without any intermediaries, Pradhan claimed about 2.99 crore beneficiaries in

the country including 20, 95, 695 beneficiaries of Odisha under NSAP (National Social Assistance Programme) of the Government of India are getting assistance through DBT without any problem.

He also claimed that due to DBT system, fake and bogus beneficiaries have been eliminated and the need for intermediaries has been eliminated.

Pradhan claimed that due to the elimination of ghost/duplicate beneficiaries by the adoption of DBT, the Odisha government has made an estimated saving of ₹4,59.96 crore in the 2021-22 fiscal and the central government has also saved approximately ₹2.73 lakh crore cumulatively till the close of 2021-22 due to adoption of DBT.

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OP PHOTO

12L projects completed under MGNREGA: Amat



Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Minister Pradip Kumar Amat addressing the media at Gita Govinda Sadan in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Minister Pradip Kumar Amat said that Odisha has been amongst the best states in implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

Addressing the media, Amat highlighted the achievements of the department promised in the election manifesto during the last four years.

He said for creating rural infrastructure under MGNREGA, more than 12 lakh works have been completed. This includes water conservation, watershed development works, livestock shelter, farm pond, anganwadi centres, play fields and land development.

Under the Central Finance Commission (CFC) and State Finance Commission (SFC) grants, more than 8 lakh projects worth ₹15,590 crore have been taken up towards development of maintenance of PWS, rural haat, rain water harvesting, drainage system, construction and maintenance of schools, anganwadi centres, play ground, rural library and community halls, the Minister said.

Also, under rural health infrastructure programme, 4,176 projects

have been taken up worth ₹1,261 crore. This includes construction and maintenance of sub-centre building, PHCS, BPHU and biomedical waste management facility centre, he added.

Amat said that in Rural Housing Schemes, more than 11 lakh houses have been provided to the rural families in the last 4 years. Moreover, nearly ₹2,150 crore grants have been distributed to more than 35 lakh beneficiaries for repair as well as for early com-

pletion of houses.

Under Ama Gaon Ama Bikash (AGAB) initiative, more than 54,000 projects have been completed and over ₹1,500 crore has been sanctioned for these projects. Moreover, around 7,800 Mission Shakti Gruhas have been taken up at gram panchayat level, he informed.

He said that department has undertaken an ambitious programme of providing household tap water connection to each rural house with a provision of 70 liters per capita per day supply. 206 mega projects as well as 13,000 single-village piped water supply projects have been undertaken with a massive investment of ₹57,000 crore. 61 per cent rural HHs have been covered so far.

He added that 14,000 Women Self Help Groups (WSHG) have been involved in various income generation programs through ORMAS in collaboration with Mission Shakti generating a business of ₹770 crore and profit of over ₹200 crore. Around 800 WSHG members have been involved in activities like nursery-raising and nutrigarden and ₹1,065 crore have been paid to them in the form of income or service charge.

Loan recovery from today: Cooperation dept

Bhubaneswar: The Cooperation department decided to initiate a drive for collection of loans advanced by Primary Agricultural Credit Societies and Large Area Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (PACS/LAMPSCS) and co-operative central banks DCCBs from May 25 to June 25. Cooperation department Secretary Sanjeev Kumar Chadha, in a letter to all the registrar and co-operative societies and district co-operative central banks, said that it has come to the notice of the department that the recovery of loans advanced by (PACS/LAMPSCS) and district (DCCBs) is not being properly attended and monitored. Due to negligence of this aspect, lot of these advances is slipping to Non-Performing Assets (NPA) putting the resources of these public institutions at risk. Growing NPA in financial institutions is eating away the profits generated and compelling to do provisions against these bad/doubtful assets and NPAs for longer terms is adding to the losses incurred. Being public financial organisations, these institutions must adhere to prudent financial norms to perform sustainably. Under these circumstances, it has been decided by the department to initiate a drive for collection of loans advanced by PACS/LAMPSCS and DCCBs from May 25 to June 25. Special drive including vehicle movement is to be done by all these institutions mobilising all the human resources available with them.

Spl legal aid camp for disabled held

Bhubaneswar: A special legal aid camp for disabled persons was jointly organised by district legal services authority, Khurda and Centre For Advocacy and Research (CFAR) at Jokalandi in City. Nearly 400 people attended the camp for redressal of their grievances out of which 92 applications were received for enrolment of Unique Disability IDs, 43 for disability certificate, 8 for issuance of Ration Cards, 21 for to be covered under Madhubabu Pension scheme, 63 applications for free legal assistance, 20 for Persons with Disability (PwD) equipments, 10 for Pwds loans and 43 applications were received for free Bus and Tran Passes. Sudipta Acharya, Member Secretary of Odisha Legal Services Authority, Cuttack and Soudamini Singh, Secretary of District Legal Services Authority, Khurda along with other officials went to the slum area to provide legal aid and assistance to the poor. This is one of the breathtaking attempts by judiciary to reach out to the downtrodden for redressal of their issues. A legal aid camp was set up and experienced lawyers and other legal professionals were present to address their grievances.

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AFFIDAVIT

My self Basanta Kumar Behera, S/o- Maheswar Behera, At-Sunakhala Sahi, Po- Rajsunakhala, Dist- Nayagarh-752065. I have lost my RoR No.-1053 while Travelling from Khordha to Rajsunakhala. If anybody found please contact my Advocate. Adv- Deepak Kumar Sahoo, (Mob- 9937058785)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: Handlooms, Textile and Handicrafts Minister Rita Sahu Wednesday presented the achievements of Handlooms, Textiles & Handicrafts department undertaken by the department during the last four years.

Sahu said that the production in handlooms sector increased to Rs. 410.37 crore and annual per capita income of weavers increased to Rs. 58,085. A total of 1,447 weavers were enrolled under the Baristha Bunakar Sahayata Yojana (BBSY).

Similarly, the annual sales under handicrafts increased to Rs.145.34 crore. She also informed that that nine handloom products and 3 handicraft products have received GI tagging and application have



been filed for another 5 handicraft products. Coverage of Sericulture farmer in Co-operative fold increased to 18,611. Also, Tassar Silk production increased to 129.09 MT, she added.

Sahu said the state government places utmost emphasis on development of handlooms, handicrafts & textiles sector next to agriculture. The sector benefits a large section of

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: The cargo handling capacity of ports in Odisha has been increased by eight times from 19.9 MMTPA in the financial year 2000-01 to 160 MMTPA by the end of financial year 2022-23, Commerce and Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu said here Wednesday.

In 2004, the Odisha Port Policy was notified identifying 14 prospective locations as non-major ports. Odisha Port Policy 2022 was launched during the Make in Odisha Conclave 2022, including the areas such as development of captive jetties, non-major ports, and non-nationalised inland waterways, the Minister said.

Sahu said 55 new bus stands have been built at block-levels under Phase-I of the scheme while 70 new locations have been identified for Phase-II.

Online service delivery platforms for RTOs have been strengthened to provide citizens with seamless experience. To reduce the



Commerce and Transport Minister Tukuni Sahu addressing the media in City, Wednesday

waiting time for citizens visiting RTOs, Smart Queue Management System has been implemented across the state, she said.

Odisha Maritime Board was constituted in 2022 to oversee the development of non-major ports and non-nationalized waterways and holistic maritime development, including cruise shipping, marine tourism, coastal economic zone, ship building and repair facilities and seaplanes. The department

has signed an MOU with JSW for developing a captive jetty at Jatadhari Muhan.

Under the 5T initiative, as many as 31 out of 32 services notified by the C&T department under Odisha Right to Public Services (ORTPS) Act are being delivered online. The achievement was attained by 2022, the Minister said.

In September 2019, the Chief Minister had directed to make the Regional Transport Offices (RTO)

broker-free. The same was achieved and the RTO offices were installed with information kiosks and Smart Queue Management System (SQMS) which help save time for the visitors by allowing them to get their queries addressed through the kiosks and services availed through the SQMS.

Till 2015, Odisha had 7 districts (Boudh, Deogarh, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Malkangiri, Nayagarh & Nabarangpur) which were unconnected by rail network. The state government has set a high priority area to get railway connectivity to all districts and came forward to contribute for early completion of various ongoing but lagging projects to bring about rail connectivity to the unconnected districts, she said.

As of now, rail connectivity to two such districts namely Kendrapara and Nayagarh has been established. It is envisaged that with timely completion of the on-going projects, all the districts will be covered with the rail network of the country, Sahu added.

Handloom sector production at ₹410cr: Min

‘Whitathon’ organised by LV Prasad Eye Institute

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 24: LV Prasad Eye Institute’s Mithu Tuli Chanrai Campus recently organised a retinoblastoma (eye cancer) awareness walk in the Capital city. The walk was a part of the ‘Whitathon’ event held by the institute across its campuses including Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada. Odia film actor Sabyasachi Mishra, who was present on this occasion, interacted with retinoblastoma survivors.

‘Whitathon’ is the institute’s annual cause-related event focused on raising awareness for early diagnosis and treatment of retinoblastoma – a life and vision-threatening



ing eye cancer that occurs in small children. Institute’s ocular oncologist Devijyoti Tripathy said, “Our aim is to raise awareness about early detection and treatment of retinoblastoma eye cancer in children within the community. No child should die of eye cancer because of lack of awareness and delayed diagnosis and treatment.”

Rare genetic mutation allows woman to feel no pain

In a startling revelation, a team of scientists has uncovered the unique molecular make-up of a woman who can’t feel pain, heals more rapidly and experiences reduced anxiety and fear.

The team from University College London discovered the biology underpinning a rare genetic mutation that allows the woman named Jo Cameron to live virtually pain-free.

The study, published in Brain, follows up the team’s discovery in 2019 of the ‘FAAH-OUT’ gene and the rare mutations that cause Cameron to feel virtually no pain and never feel anxious or afraid.

The new research describes how the mutation in FAAH-OUT ‘turns down’ FAAH gene expression, as well as the knock-on effects on

other molecular pathways linked to wound healing and mood.

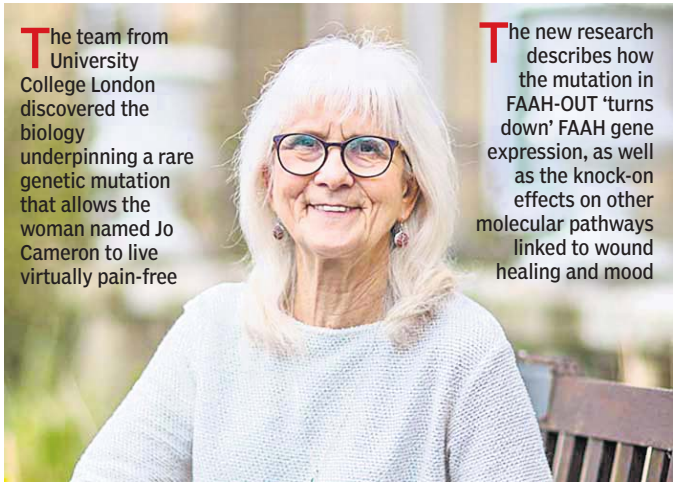
It is hoped the findings will lead to new drug targets and open up new avenues of research in these areas.

Jo, who lives in Scotland, was first referred to pain geneticists at UCL in 2013, after her doctor noticed that she experienced no pain after major surgeries on her hip and hand.

After six years of searching, they identified a new gene that they named ‘FAAH-OUT’, which contained a rare genetic mutation.

“The ‘FAAH-OUT’ gene is just one small corner of a vast continent, which this study has begun to map.

As well as the molecular basis for painlessness, these explorations have identified molecular pathways affecting wound healing and



mood, all influenced by a ‘FAAH-OUT’ mutation,” explained Dr

Andrei Okorokov (UCL Medicine) and a senior author of the study.

In combination with another, more common mutation in FAAH, it was found to be the cause of Jo’s unique characteristics.

In the study, the team from UCL sought to understand how ‘FAAH-OUT’ works at a molecular level, the first step towards being able to take advantage of this unique biology for applications like drug discovery.

This included a range of approaches, such as CRISPR-Cas9 experiments on cell lines to mimic the effect of the mutation on other genes, as well as analysing the expression of genes to see which were active in molecular pathways involved with pain, mood and healing.

The team observed that FAAH-OUT regulates the expression of

FAAH. When it is significantly turned down as a result of the mutation carried by Cameron, FAAH enzyme activity levels are significantly reduced.

Two other key genes that were altered were BDNF, which has previously been linked to mood regulation and ACKR3, which helps to regulate opioid levels. These gene changes may contribute to Jo Cameron’s low anxiety, fear and pain.

“By understanding precisely what is happening at a molecular level, we can start to understand the biology involved and that opens up possibilities for drug discovery that could one day have far-reaching positive impacts for patients,” said Professor James Cox A from UCL Medicine.

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Divorce cases see uptick in Rourkela

This year, a total of 180 divorce cases have been filed by May end. Over 300 cases of 2022-23 are pending for hearing in the court

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 24: Marriage, a union of two souls and true minds, plays an important role in formation of a healthy society. However, marriages are often heading towards divorce nowadays and couples are ending up separated.

As per reports, divorce cases are on the rise in Rourkela smart city, which has a higher percentage of inhabitants who are highly educated. The separation between the couple is resulting in broken families and the children are the most impacted when their parents get separated.

According to Rourkela Family Court counsellor Arati Choudhury, 400 divorce cases and 139 maintenance cases had been filed in between January to December, 2022. This year, a total of 180 divorce cases have been filed here by May end. Around 39 divorce cases were filed in January, 52 in February, 49 in March, 17 in April and 23 till date



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

in May. The number is expected to go up by the end of this month.

Over 300 cases of 2022-23 are pending for hearing in the court. It is apprehended that number of cases may go higher this year than the previous year. She said that misunderstanding between the couple, fail-

ure in reconciliation and ultramodern lifestyle are the reasons behind the increasing number of divorce cases in the Steel City.

Mostly, people employed in police department, administrators, educationists, healthcare professionals like doctors, RSP officials

and personnel of income tax are in the list of the people applying for divorce in the court, she said.

Earlier, people used to take undue advantage of the dowry law. However, after amendments were brought in the law, the problems have eased a little. People visiting the courts in such cases are insisting on getting more maintenance. In some cases, maintenances are being given more than once.

As a result, this is destroying the mental peace of the opposite party for which many of them are resorting to suicides. This is likely to have an adverse effect on the society in coming days for which there is an urgent need to bring urgent changes in the Maintenance Act.

People are also demanding alimony in case of domestic violence. The pressure on the family court could be greatly reduced if people are discouraged from filing such cases in the court. Similarly, rampant use of various social media, women becoming financially re-

liant and lack of proper understanding between the couple are other reasons behind the increasing number of divorce cases in the family court.

One of the main reasons why divorce rates are increasing is because women have advanced a lot in the past few years financially, socially, and economically. There is no great dependency on the other person for these things.

Earlier women used to remain in a relationship even if it was abusive, such was the dependency. Today, they are educated and smart enough to take care of themselves without anyone's favour.

When contacted, social activist Harapriya Pattnaik said that the unnecessary interference of the bride's side in traditional marriage is often leading to separation. Mass awareness programmes should be undertaken to remove these ills from the society failing which divorce cases will only increase in coming days.

PNN & AGENCIES

Maoist camp busted; arms, articles seized



hour. However, the Maoists managed to escape taking advantage of the jungle terrain.

During subsequent search in the area a Maoist camp was detected from which one .303 rifle, two other rifles, electric wire, tiffin IEDs, pregnancy testing kit and other camp articles of Maoists have been recovered.

Blood stains were found at the spot suggesting injury to a few Maoist cadres in the exchange of fire.

Senior officers are monitoring the development. Combing operation also continues in the area. More SOG and CRPF teams have been deployed to intensify the operation.

2 dead as truck hits police SUV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, May 24:Two persons, including a home guard, were killed and two others seriously injured after a truck collided with their SUV near Kamalpur Square in Boudh district Wednesday.

According to locals, a team of Baumsuni police of Boudh district was returning in the SUV from Cuttack after completing a rescue operation when a truck coming from the opposite direction collided with the SUV.

The deceased have been identified as home guard Jagannath Meher and driver Prashant Rana. The duo reportedly died on the spot.

Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) Nagaraj Pradhan and another home guard Susant Sahu were critically injured in the accident.

However, the truck driver fled from the spot after the accident.

The Boudh police have launched a search operation to nab the truck driver.

3 HELD FOR QUADRUPLER MURDER

POST NEW NETWORK

Bargarh, May 24: The district police here cracked the quadruple murder case at Jhikijhiki village under Bhatli police limits in Bargarh district as it arrested three persons for the offence, Wednesday.

The murder took place over past enmity over property dispute between the two families. In the murder case, Gurudev Bag, 35, his wife Shibagri, 30, son Chudamani, 15, and daughter Srabani, 10, were killed, Monday. Police arrested the



deceased's uncle Shiba Bag, 58, aunt Parbati, 50, and their son Nakul, 27 on the charge.

Later, police produced the accused persons in Bargarh court which rejected their bail pleas and remanded them to Bargarh

sub-jail custody. Bhatli police registered a case over a complaint filed by the deceased's kin Saroj Pandey, 35, in this connection. The accused persons had eliminated the whole family May 21 night, police said.

Cricketer dies in lightning strike

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, May 24: A local cricketer identified as Sagar Jena, 30, died after being struck by lightning while he was playing the game at Belgaon village under Basta police limits in Balasore district, Wednesday afternoon.

As per reports, some youths of the village were playing cricket at a nearby playground. However, a thunderstorm started lashing the village when

their game was midway. Just when the youths decided to stop the match and return home, all of a sudden, lightning struck there and Sagar sustained severe injuries in the lightning strike.

Jena was rescued by other youths and immediately rushed to a hospital in Basta in critical condition. However, doctors at the health facility declared him 'brought dead'. A pall of gloom descended on the village after the news of Sagar's passing away spread.

Farmer dies of sunstroke

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rupsa, May 24: A farmer allegedly died of sunstroke at Ambakuduchi village under Singla police limits in Balasore district, Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Balaram Behera, 35, of the village. He is alleged to have died due to blistering heatwave and excessive humidity prevailing in the area. He suddenly fell sick while working on farmland and collapsed after losing his sense.

On being informed, family members rushed him to the Basta community health centre where doctors pronounced him dead.

Singla police registered a case and sent the body for post mortem. Balaram had married four years back and is survived by his widow and a four-year-old daughter. Locals have demanded financial assistance to the bereaved family as he was the lone breadwinner of the family.




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MAHALING BRANCH / Borrower: Sri Hare Krushna Sahu, S/o.: Late Bikram Sahu / Guarantor: Sri Narayan Sahu, S/o: Hare Krushna Sahu, Both are At: Kantamal, PO.: Kuhura, Dist.: Kalahandi, PIN-766036 in the name of Sri Hare Krushna Sahu, S/o.: Late Bikram Sahu.	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Kantamal, Khata No.: 262, Plot No.: 644, Area: Ac.0.01, Kissam: Ghara, Plot No.: 651, Area: Ac.0.05 Dec., Kissam: Ghara, Plot No.: 944, Area: Ac.0.45Dec., Kissam: Bari in the name of Sri Hare Krushna Sahu, S/o.: Late Bikram Sahu.	₹ 2,61,430/- as on 23.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	13.01.2023 / 23.05.2023
M. RAMPUR BRANCH / Borrower: Smt. Labanya Sahu, W/o.: Sri Bijaya Sahu, At: M. Rampur, PO.: M. Rampur, Dist.: Kalahandi-766102 / Guarantor: Sri Ugrasen Barik, S/o: Indra Barik, At: Bhatel, PO.: Sergarh, Dist.: Kalahandi-766102	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Rampur, Khata No.: 905/731, Plot No.: 1074/2687, Area: Ac.0.04Dec., Kissam: Gharabari-2, in the name of Smt. Labanya Sahu, W/o: Sri Bijaya Sahu	₹ 2,07,082/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	13.01.2023 / 20.05.2023
M. RAMPUR BRANCH / Borrowers: 1) Sri Niranjan Maharana, S/o.: Sri Biswanath Maharana, 2) Sri Biswanath Maharana, S/o.: Late Khetra Maharana, Both are At/PO.: M. Rampur, Dist.: Kalahandi-766102	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Rampur, Khata No.: 570, Plot No.: 1421, Area: Ac.0.03Dec., Kissam: Gharabari-2, recorded in the name of Sri Biswanath Maharana, S/o.: Late Khetra Maharana	₹ 2,67,115/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	13.01.2023 / 20.05.2023
M. RAMPUR BRANCH / Borrower: Sri Sudarsan Panda, S/o.: Late Banamali Panda / Guarantor: Sri Saroj Kumar Padhi, S/o: Sudarsan Padhi, Both are At: M. Rampur, PO.: M. Rampur, Dist.: Kalahandi-766102	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Rampur, Khata No.: 848, Plot No.: 1035, Area: Ac.0.02Dec, Kissam: Gharabari, recorded in the name of Sri Sudarsan Panda, S/o.: Late Banamali Panda	₹ 1,94,354/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	13.01.2023 / 20.05.2023
KESINGA BRANCH / Borrower: Sri Nuajan Podh, S/o.: Bhujan Podh, At: Dendoguda, PO.: Laitara, Dist.: Kalahandi-766012	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Dendoguda, Khata No.: 220/183, Plot No.: 1489/1961, Area: Ac.0.04Dec, Kissam: Gharabari, recorded in the name of Sri Nuajan Podh, S/o.: Bhujan Podh & Baisadha Podh, W/o: Nuajan Podh	₹ 7,17,741/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	22.12.2022 / 20.05.2023
KESINGA BRANCH / Borrower: Sri Gayadhar Suna, S/o.: Muralidhar Suna / Guarantor: Sri Lambodhar Suna, S/o: Muralidhar Suna, Both are At/PO.: Kikia, Dist.: Kalahandi-766011	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Kikia, Khata No.: 192(Corresponding old Khata No.), New Khata No.: 350/432, Plot No.: 1179, Area: Ac.0.05Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Plot No.: 1187, Area: Ac.0.01Dec, Kissam: Gharabari, recorded in the name of Sri Gayadhar Suna, S/o.: Muralidhar Suna.	₹ 8,48,352/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	22.12.2022 / 20.05.2023
KESINGA BRANCH / Borrower: Sri Dhanu Chinda, S/o.: Gadadhar Chinda / Guarantor: Sri Prasant Chinda, S/o: Dhanu Chinda, Both are At: Dangarmurali, PO.: Kikia, Dist.: Kalahandi-766011	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Dangarmurali, Khata No.: 123/76(New), Corresponding Old Khata No.: 48, New Plot No.: 546/1010, Corresponding Old Plot No.: 546, Area: Ac.0.03Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, recorded in the name of Sri Dhanu Chinda, S/o.: Gadadhar Chinda	₹ 4,89,433/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	13.01.2023 / 20.05.2023
KESINGA BRANCH / Borrower: Sri Ganthi Matali, S/o.: Basudeb Matali / Guarantor: Sri Dambardhar Padhan, S/o: Jugal Kishor Padhan, Both are At:Kikia, PO.: Kikia, Dist.: Kalahandi-766011	All that Part & Parcel of the Property consisting of Mouza: Kikia, Corresponding Old Khata No.: 86, New Khata No.: 350/434, Plot No.: 1542, Area: Ac.0.01Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Plot No.: 1549, Area: Ac.0.05Dec., Kissam: Gharabari, recorded in the name of Sri Ganthi Matali, S/o.: Basudeb Matali	₹ 4,47,414/- as on 20.05.2023 + interest & expenses thereon	13.01.2023 / 20.05.2023
Place: Bhawanipatna Date: 24.05.2023		Sd/- Authorised Officer Utkal Grameen Bank	

यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India आंध्र प्रदेश A Government of India Undertaking आंध्र प्रदेश Andhra Pradesh Corporation	REGIONAL OFFICE: BHUBANESWAR 3/1 A, CIVIC CENTRE, IRC VILLAGE, NAYAPALLI, BHUBANESWAR - 751015, Ph. No.: 0674-2541936/2538502/26, Email: crld.robhubaneshwar@unionbankofindia.bank
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) & 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Co-obligant(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/ symbolic/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 27.06.2023 for Property No. 1 & 2 and 14.06.2023 for Property No. 3, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s)/Co-applicant(s)/Co-obligant(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit & Bid increment amount are also mentioned hereunder.	
SRIKSHETRA BRANCH, CT ROAD, PURI-752002, Ph. No.: 06752-220690, Email: ubin0814431@unionbankofindia.bank	
Name & Address of Borrower/Co-obligants/Guarantors/Mortgagors: Borrower: Mr. Prakash Sahu, S/o.: Late Charan Sahu, At: Radhagobinda Lane, Markandeswar Sahi, Puri / Co-obligants/Guarantors/Mortgagors: 1) Mr. Bikash Kumar Sahu, S/o.: Late Charan Sahu, 2) Mr. Mamata Behera, D/o.: Late Charan Sahu, 3) Mrs. Rashmita Mahapatra, D/o.: Late Charan Sahu, 4) Mrs. Sasmita Sahu, D/o.: Late Charan Sahu, 5) Mrs. Sulochana Sahu, D/o.: Late Charan Sahu, All are At: Radhagobinda Lane, Markandeswar Sahi, Puri, 6) Mr. Gajendra Sahu, S/o.: Suresh Sahu, At: Hadagadia Sahi, Jamuna Lane, Puri	Amount Due ₹ 11,83,007.35 as on 30.06.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No.1: Land and Building at Khata No.: 509, Plot No.: 357/1347, Area: Ac.0.022 Dec, Radhagobinda Lane, Mouza: Markandeswar Sahi No.: 1 Puri Unit No.: 19, Circle No.: 778, P.S.: Baseli Sahi, Dist.: Puri, PIN -752001, in the name of Late Charan Sahu , Bounded by North: Mr. Anand Sahu, South: Mr. Narayan Mohanty, East: Mr. Charan Sahu, West: Sweeper Path Reserve Price: ₹37,50,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹3,75,000/- / Bid Increment Amount : ₹40,000/-	
PURI MAIN BRANCH, LOKNATH LODGE, INFRONT OF TOWN POLICE STATION, GRAND ROAD, PURI, Ph. No.: 06752-223498, Email: ubin0539449@unionbankofindia.bank	
Name & Address of Borrowers/Co-obligants/Mortgagors: Borrowers/Co-obligants/Mortgagors: 1) Trilochan Mohapatra, 2) Manorama Mohapatra, 3) Rakesh Kumar Mohapatra, All are At: Markandeswar Sahi, Radhagobinda Lane, Puri - 752001	Amount Due ₹ 11,46,479.29 as on 06.09.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No.2: Land of Area 1394 Sq.ft with G+2 RCC Roof Residential Building therein having Floor Area G+ 1st Floor of 1298 Sq.ft and 2 nd Floor of 1261 Sq.ft bearing Khata No.: 445, Plot No.: 356/1313, Mouza: Markandeswar Sahi-2, situated at Hadagadia Sahi, Radhagobinda Lane, Puri - 752001, Bounded by North: Karunakar Dutta, South: Manoj Kumar Pursty, East: Road, West: Sweeper Passage Reserve Price: ₹81,62,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹8,16,200/- / Bid Increment Amount : ₹80,000/-	
SOUBHAGYA NAGAR BRANCH, FRIENDS COLONY, SOUBHAGYA NAGAR, BARAMUNDIA, BHUBANESWAR, PIN-751003, Ph. No.: 0674-2560103, E-mail: ubin0831115@unionbankofindia.bank	
Name & Address of Borrowers / Co-applicants / Co-obligants / Mortgagors / Guarantors: 1) Mr. Chakradhara Mohanty, S/o: Late Bhagaban Mohanty, At: Flat No.: A-207, Trahi Jagannath Enclave, Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar-751002, 2) Mr. Sarbeswar Mohanty, S/o: Mr. Chakradhara Mohanty, At: Flat No.: A-207, Trahi Jagannath Enclave, Sundarpada, Bhubaneswar-751002	Amount Due ₹ 13,08,296/- as on 04.05.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses
Property No.3: Residential Flat No.: 207, 2nd Floor, Block- A of the Apartment "Trahi Jagannath Enclave" with Flat Area: 697 sft at Khata No.: 225 which corresponds to Hal correction Khata No.: 377/98, Plot No.: 631, Village/Mouza: Kuha, Sundarpada, PS: Airfield, Tahasil: Jatani, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha - 751002, Standing in the name of Mr. Sarbeswar Mohanty and Bounded by North: Flat A-208, South: Flat A-206, East: Flat A-202, West: Block - B. Reserve Price: ₹25,60,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹2,56,000/- / Bid Increment Amount : ₹30,000/-	
DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : 27.06.2023 for Property No. 1 & 2 and 14.06.2023 for Property No. 3 between 11:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. (with 10 minutes unlimited auto extension), e-Auction Website : www.mstcecommerce.com	
LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF EMD : On or before the commencement of E-Auction	
For Registration and Login and Bidding Rules visit: https://www.mstcecommerce.com/aucautionhome/ibapi/index.jsp	
For detailed terms and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/english/home.aspx or https://ibapi.in/Sale_Info_Home.aspx	
For further details please contact to Respective Branch	
This May also be treated as Notice under rule 8(6) / rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s) of the said loan about the holding of E-Auction Sale on the above mentioned date.	
Place : Bhubaneswar Date: 24.05.2023	Sd/- Authorized Officer Union Bank of India

All problems of existence are essentially problems of Harmony.

SRI AUROBINDO



Building a Better SDR

With much of the developing world teetering on the edge of a debt crisis, the calls for a new issuance of special drawing rights (SDRs, the International Monetary Fund's reserve asset), have grown louder and more urgent. But to have the desired effect, the IMF must modify its allocation criteria and clarify how SDRs can be used to support low- and middle-income countries through the current economic turmoil.

One proposal currently being considered is to expand SDR allocation beyond individual countries to include multilateral development banks and dedicated funds. The idea of channeling SDRs to multilateral institutions like the World Bank and regional development banks, which are uniquely equipped to assist emerging and developing countries, has become increasingly popular in recent years. The Bridgetown Initiative, led by Barbadian Prime Minister Mia Mottley, has called for a new issuance of SDR\$500 billion (\$650 billion) "or other low-interest, long-term instruments" to support the creation of a multilateral agency that would accelerate "private investment in the low-carbon transition, wherever it is most effective."

Similarly, the recent report by the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism (of which I was a member) recommends the "immediate, and thereafter regular" annual issuance of additional SDRs to aid countries facing foreign-exchange shortages. The report also suggests that IMF shareholders amend the organisation's Articles of Agreement to permit "selective SDR allocation." This proposed change aims to facilitate a more targeted and effective distribution that prioritises the most vulnerable countries over the world's largest economies, which receive the lion's share of SDR allocations under the current rules.

Another proposed amendment stipulates that "specific conditions" would automatically trigger SDR allocations to ensure a "swifter global response." Notably, the report emphasises that eligibility for SDR allocation should not be conditional on the recipient country adopting an IMF-supported fiscal consolidation programme.

Unfortunately, these proposals were not even discussed during the Spring Meetings of the IMF and World Bank in April. But we must continue to pursue these reforms, because increased international liquidity, delivered in a timely and efficient manner, is needed more than ever.

By modernising the outdated system of SDR allocation, the international community could also narrow the climate-finance gap. But, first, the many developing countries currently at risk of a severe debt crisis must receive immediate budgetary support. Unless we create a global financial safety net, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals stand little chance of being met.

The ongoing financial turmoil highlights the current system's inherent inequities. Over the past few weeks, governments that control global reserve currencies, such as the United States and Switzerland, have pumped massive amounts of liquidity into the banking sector to rescue private banks. In contrast, debtor countries that have applied for debt relief under the G20's Common Framework for Debt Treatments have been waiting for years for a fraction of those sums.

The sovereign-debt crisis currently engulfing the world's poorest countries, which also happen to be the countries most affected by climate change, requires immediate action. At a minimum, low- and middle-income countries grappling with balance-of-payments challenges should be given the opportunity to bolster their foreign-exchange reserves through a new SDR allocation.

But even if a fresh allocation is eventually agreed upon, countries must understand how to make the most of it. Unfortunately, the IMF's vagueness on this issue has caused much confusion, with some asserting that SDRs belong to central banks, not governments, and others insisting that they are loans rather than assets distributed by the IMF.

Consequently, many recipient countries' newly allocated SDRs simply augment foreign-exchange reserves. While this can have a positive impact by increasing a country's perceived creditworthiness, it can also hinder more effective uses of SDRs, particularly in times of acute shortages and fiscal constraints.

The Ecuadorian economist Andrés Arauz has highlighted these concerns, arguing that there is no legal basis for central banks to appropriate SDR allocations. The IMF's own guidance says that members "enjoy a large degree of freedom in how to manage the SDRs allocated to them," including the extent to which "central banks are involved in their management and whether the budget can directly use them for budget support." According to the Fund, SDRs are "allocated and held by the member and instructions for its use come through the fiscal agency of the member" (emphasis added). In other words, governments can use SDRs as they see fit.

The confusion over the nature and status of SDRs stems, in part, from the IMF's own misclassification of these assets. As Arauz points out, prior to the release of the IMF's latest balance-of-payments manual (BPM6) in 2009, SDR allocations were treated as equity rather than as liabilities that recipient countries must repay. The BPM6, however, reclassified them as liabilities, essentially treating them as debt. This change, which was made without clear reasoning or transparent discussion, must be contested, because it can deter the use, transfer, and recycling of SDRs, preventing allocations from fulfilling their potential.

Some countries, particularly in Latin America, have demonstrated creativity in their use of SDRs. Ecuador, for example, used them to finance its 2021 investment plan. The same year, Paraguay channeled its allocation to investments in health, education, housing, and other public expenditures, and Argentina used its \$4.6 billion allocation to pay off maturing debt, fulfilling its obligations to the IMF.

In other countries, central banks' perceived role as the custodian of SDRs did not completely restrict alternative uses. Colombia, for example, used SDRs to facilitate a domestic debt swap between the government and the central bank and generate short-term liquidity. Although Mexico's central bank asserted its ownership of the country's SDRs, the Mexican government acquired international reserves from it through a currency exchange in late 2021.

The current crisis is an opportunity to construct a fairer, more sustainable international monetary system. A sensible reform agenda must include increased SDR issuance and the creation of more efficient and equitable distribution mechanisms. To achieve this, the G7 countries, as the IMF's largest shareholders, must demonstrate a modicum of wisdom and leadership.

The writer is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

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WISDOM CORNER

- In all chaos there is a cosmos, in all disorder a secret order.
- He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.
- Being entirely honest with oneself is a good exercise.

CARL JUNG
FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE
SIGMUND FREUD

FOCUS NATION

DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE

India has an opportunity to benefit from the demographic dividend though there are differences of opinion on the subject given the resources at the command of the government and the huge developmental needs. It is significant to note that 68 per cent of India's population is in the 15-64 age group out of which close to 50 per cent is around the age of 25 years.

This should be seen in the backdrop of the UNFPA pegging India's mid-year population at 142.86 crore and China's at 142.57 crore, thereby India becoming the most populous nation of the world, according to the State of the World Population Report 2023 released last month. Given that India has in recent years been adding 1.6 to 1.7 crore annually to its population and, with a few weeks to go for June-end, it could mean that the country has already crept ahead.

India's young are considered an asset. The qualified young generation have accomplished a list even with meagre opportunities at their command. With 26 per cent of the population below the age of 25, the onus has to be taken by the government to make them properly educated and impart the necessary technical training to them. Also, development programmes are equally important though the government is woefully lacking in healthcare, nutrition as also education for the masses.

Health experts are of the opinion that India's new position comes amid lingering concerns about an unmet need for contraception and the persistence of child marriage. A 2019-21 nation-wide health survey found that 9.4 per cent had unmet need for contraception, implying that even when couples want to adopt a contraceptive method, it is not available to them. The UNFPA suggested that "population anxieties have seeped into large portions of the general public. Yet, population numbers should not trigger anxiety or create alarm. Instead, they should be seen as a symbol of progress, development and aspirations if individual rights are upheld."

Facing the country's demographic challenge is indeed an enormous task. There is a need for

far more resources to develop the country and meet its massive infrastructural needs. These relate both to physical and social infrastructure development though in recent years, the private sector has come forward in a big way. The living standards of the people have to improve for which there is need for enough opportunities in various sectors, especially in the rural areas, which unfortunately are still stagnating.

To start with, it may be said that more jobs must be created so that there is reallocation of labour in productive sectors. In 2021-22, while the average value added per person engaged as a worker was Rs 3.9 lakh, it was Rs 1.6 lakh for agriculture and allied sectors and Rs 1.5 lakh for persons engaged in hotels and restaurants. Despite the emphasis on manufacturing and infrastructure, the increase in employment in these sectors has been negligible.

Employment growth in manufacturing during 2011-12 to 2021-22 was a low 0.55 per cent against the overall employment growth of 1.42 per cent. Start-Up India, Productivity Linked Incentive (PLI) and 'Make in India' schemes have only touched the periphery of the problem. As regards self-employment where India has the highest number, thanks to agriculture and trade and crafts, over 55 per cent of the workers are counted as self-employed though about a third are helpers in household enterprises.

The self-employed being the most significant component of the workforce, it goes without saying that special measures are needed



The government has not provided any substantial direct financial relief such as cash transfers to the poor as it is generally believed that equal distribution of wealth is not on the government's agenda

for them. It includes use of technology, marketing strategies, availability of capital and credit, soft skills. In fact, each self-employed person will need an innovative approach. Another important area is training and skill development which has been started by the government, but it needs to reach all corners of the country. The ministry of skill development estimated an additional requirement of 10.3 million persons in different sectors for training. Nearly 50 per cent of these persons were in the category of manufacturing, logistics and ITs. However, it needs to be stated that more specialised training and skill development needs to be imparted.

If the country's youth can be gainfully utilised in the development process, then only the demographic challenge would be to India's advantage. But for that there is a need for a significant shift in strategy by providing them not just skilled training but also ensuring better opportunities for them. Obviously, the need for employment generation should be the first on the priority list, whether it is in the government or private sector. Moreover, informal sector jobs have to be made more rewarding. In this connection, there is a need for transforming the rural sector to make it vibrant through better infrastructure facilities. But how can this be done? Obviously through generation of more resources to boost manufacturing and infrastructural development.

It needs to be pointed out here that unfortunately Prime Minister Modi has been reportedly pampering

the rich in the hope that private investment would flow to the country. But this has not happened. The fortune of India's 100 billionaires has steadily increased over the last 4-5 years with around 70-75 per cent of the wealth generated going to the coffers of the richest 1 per cent while 67-70 million Indians, who comprise the poorest half of the population saw only a 1 per cent increase in their wealth.

Besides making the rich richer, the tax policies have also deprived the poor of the income support they desperately need to overcome the loss of earnings caused by the pandemic. The government has not provided any substantial direct financial relief, such as cash transfers to the poor as it is generally believed that equal distribution of wealth is not on the government's agenda. The reduction in corporate tax has witnessed a steady decline in collections in the last three years while there is no inheritance tax on the super-rich which is not the case with most countries where it is around 20 per cent on an average.

India is producing, on an average, 70 millionaires every day even as over 20 per cent of Indians live on less than \$1.25 a day. Added to this is the deplorable condition of the country's children who suffer from underweight and stunting due to undernourishment. Unless policies are geared in the right direction of generating resources, these cannot be ploughed back into manufacturing and infrastructural development - areas which are key to utilising the young population and creating employment opportunities.

There is no dearth of talent in the country, but its utilisation leaves much to be desired. As rightly pointed out by economists, along with the services sector, more emphasis has to be given to specialised manufacturing to absorb the labour force. But such manufacturing should result in import substitution and also expand the scope of the export market.

An overall strategy rather than piecemeal planning is what the Centre must work towards.

The writer is Sr. Consultant & Guest Faculty at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kolkata.

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SPECTRUM DEVELOPMENT

Poverty & multiple deprivation: A diverse picture

As per the latest National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), Consumption Expenditure Survey (CES) 2011-12, around 33 per cent of Odisha's population is poor in comparison to 22 per cent for all India. Though the percentage of poor in Odisha is still higher than the national average, the percentage decline in poverty Head Count Ratio (HCR) in Odisha in recent period (2004-05 to 2011-12) is the highest among the states. Comparing the 50th (1993-94) and 61st (2004-05) rounds of CES where poverty in India as a whole (both rural and urban) declined by 9 percentage points, the decline for Odisha was 2 percentage points. In the period between 2004-05 and 2011-12 the decline in poverty was 20 percentage points in Odisha which is much higher than the national average of 7 percentage points. The decline in the percentage of poor during 2004-05 to 2011-12 for rural Odisha was 25 percentage points from 61 per cent to 36 per cent while for rural India it was 16 percentage points. While the poverty HCR shows a declining trend for the state, in the multidimensional deprivation the state stood first showing a precarious picture.

For a better world

Sir, Biodiversity, the living fabric of our planet, is currently facing an unprecedented crisis in parallel with the technological advancements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. While these advancements bring risks, they also present opportunities to preserve and protect biodiversity. Recognising the significant economic and societal consequences of ecosystem collapse, as highlighted by the World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2023, it is crucial to accelerate progress in this area. The loss of biodiversity not only poses a threat to ecosystems but also jeopardizes human health. The decline in biodiversity contributes to the spread of zoonotic diseases, while intact biodiversity provides crucial tools to combat pandemics such as coronaviruses. Biodiversity is essential for providing food, water, climate regulation, pollination, and even medicines. Soil fertility, genetic resources, and marine species are all critical for global food production and human well-being. Amidst the urgency to address the biodiversity crisis, the historic Kunming-Montréal Global Biodiversity Framework has emerged as a beacon of hope. By aiming to protect nature, halt biodiversity loss by 2030, and restore nature by 2050, this framework sets ambitious goals for countries worldwide. With the expectation that countries will submit their implementation plans to COP16 in 2024, the need for urgent action to safeguard nature is underscored. The adoption of the framework has brought renewed optimism and emphasises the importance of translating agreements into tangible actions. By building back biodiversity and implementing the agreed-upon measures before 2030, we can strive to achieve protected and sustainable biological diversity by 2050, aligning with the core message of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the key international instrument for sustainable development.

The recent release of the Multiple Indicator Survey (MIS) 2020-21 by NSSO can be used to find out the multidimensional deprivation among regions, socio-religious groups, states. The author has used twenty-eight indicators from four dimensions of multidimensional deprivation—housing deprivation (five indicators), basic amenities deprivation (eight indicators), social deprivation (seven indicators), and material deprivation (eight indicators) from the survey. The study uses data from the 2011 Census, the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, and the Multiple Indicator Survey 2020-21 of the NSS (National Sample Survey). The composite index of multiple deprivations was constructed by standardising the variables and using the equal weighting method. Odisha found to be the most deprived state in India's rural areas having an index 0.649. Besides Odisha, states with extremely high levels of rural multidimensional deprivation include Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Meghalaya, Assam, Rajasthan, and Tripura. Most of the northern states, such as Jammu and Kashmir (present-day UT), Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and two southern states, Kerala and Goa, are the least deprived in India scoring 0.164.

In terms of material, social and basic amenities deprivation, rural Odisha comes third. While among the indicators of housing deprivation, a higher percentage of rural households in Odisha have kutcha roof houses (64.00%), kutcha wall houses (65.13%), and dilapidated houses (8.82%). Likewise in terms of basic amenities, a large proportion of rural households in the state are deprived of having waste-water outlay (88.11%), having access to piped water into dwelling units (93.60%), not having a principal source of drinking water inside premises (73.70%), using unclean fuel as a primary source of Cooking (76.40%), having no access to latrine (36.40%), no bathroom (78.36%). Similarly, a sizable proportion of rural households in the state also suffers from several indicators of social deprivation, including the percentage of illiterate above 25 years (27.80%), not registered with civil authority for a birth certificate (69.66%), female-headed households with no adult male member between age 16 and 59 (5.28%), and not having access to mass media (41.90%). The rural households of

the state also suffered a lot in terms of different indicators of material deprivation, like the Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) being less than half of the median value (93.87%), households without salaried jobs (93.24%), monthly income of less than Rs 5,000 (87.94%), not having telephone facilities (66.36%), and not having television (80.64%). Although Sahoo et al. (2020) and Sahoo & Senapati (2022) in their study examined the state of Odisha, which has experienced higher growth in MPCE and a faster reduction in rural poverty among the rural occupational groups and in rural Odisha as a whole during the post-reform period, still the highest deprivation in rural Odisha among the states shows that the state's welfare programmes and policies are not able to make much impact on the wellbeing of the masses in rural Odisha. Targeted spatial intervention is needed in addition to the formulation and implementation of social sector programmes to address persistent regional disparities in multidimensional deprivation.

Arbitrary decisions

Sir, This refers to the report "TMC, CPI, AAP to boycott event," OrissaPOST May 24. I am happy to note that there has been a union of mind among the three prominent Opposition parties to fight against the alleged high handedness of the BJP when the latter indirectly insulted the President of India after denying her the right to inaugurate the new Parliament building. I think, the Opposition parties should leave no stone unturned to bring to the notice of the public how the ruling party at the Centre takes arbitrary decisions on matters of public importance without taking the Opposition parties into confidence.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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

of the day quote

I have personally not said anything for which I need to apologise. People were asking me questions on why PM Narendra Modi scrapped those currency notes and whether that was an eccentric decision



ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY | CONGRESS LEADER

They (farmers) do not belong to any caste, creed and religion, but are the ones who fulfil the needs of society with their hard work and feed the country and the world. Due to the hard work of the farmers of Uttar Pradesh, today, the state is being established as an economic superpower in the country



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

We are opposed to the proposed inauguration by PM and we will boycott it. The inauguration (of the new Parliament building) should be done by the honourable President



TEJASHWI YADAV | BIHAR DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

2 killed, 26 hurt as bus overturns

Raigarh: Two passengers were killed and 26 others, including women and children, injured when a private bus overturned in Chhattisgarh's Raigarh district on Wednesday morning, police said. Eleven of those injured are serious, they said. The accident took place when the bus was going to Raigarh from Lailunga town in the district. The bus driver lost control of the vehicle which overturned at Chharbhanta turn under Gharghoda police station limits, said Dipak Mishra, sub-divisional officer of police, Dharamjaigarh area. Two passengers died on the spot, while 26 others, including 10 women and two children, sustained injuries, he said.

1 dead after DTC bus loses control

New Delhi: One person died while five others were injured after a DTC cluster bus lost control and hit five vehicles in Delhi's New Friends Colony area, the police said Wednesday. The mishap occurred at around 4:45 p.m. when the bus going from Nehru Place to Maharani Bagh lost control and rammed into multiple vehicles, causing the death of one person besides leaving five others injured, two of them critically. The identity of the deceased man is yet to be ascertained.

Two IEDs found

Bijapur: Two powerful Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) planted by Naxals under a road were recovered in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh Wednesday, police said. A major tragedy was averted as the bombs were detected in time, said an official here. The two devices, weighing 25 kg each, were found under the Awapalli-Basaguda road when a team of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) was out on a search operation. The IED which claimed the lives of 11 persons in neighbouring Dantewada district in April had been planted by using the same foxhole mechanism, the police official said.

Villager shot dead

Amritsar: A villager was shot dead by four unidentified people in a village in the Sathiala village, 40 kilometers away from here, Wednesday, police said. The assailants pumped 15 to 20 bullets into Jarnail Singh, Superintendent of Police Jugraj Singh said. Jarnail, an agriculturalist, was rushed to a hospital where he was declared brought dead, police said. The entire episode was captured on CCTV cameras.



Through technology, we are trying to take justice to every home. Under E courts phase three, Rs 7,000 crore has been provided by the government of India. Through technology, judicial work can be linked with common life

BY CHANDRACHUD | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

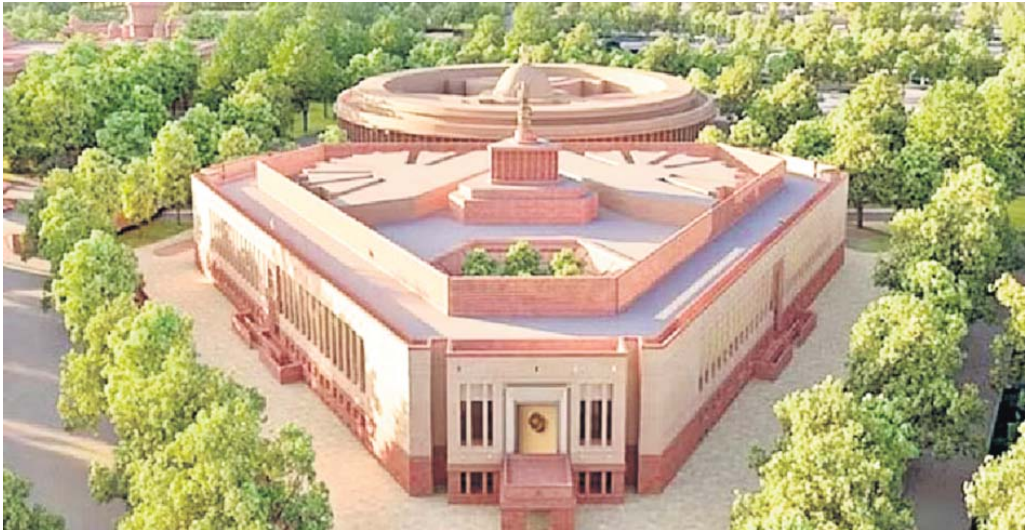
VP DECORATES 35 BSF PERSONNEL

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Wednesday decorated 35 Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, including two for displaying bravery in thwarting a cattle smuggling bid along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal, for rendering commendable service



Oppn to shun Parl building inauguration

THE DECISION BY THE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO BOYCOTT CAME AMID A WAR OF WORDS ON THE MATTER BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE OPPOSITION, WHICH HAS BEEN DEMANDING THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD INAUGURATE THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING AND NOT THE PRIME MINISTER



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: As many as 19 opposition parties, including the Congress, Left, TMC, SP and AAP, came together Wednesday and announced their decision to boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying they find no value in a new building when the "soul of democracy has been sucked out".

Reacting to the Opposition's decision, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said they will respond as per their wisdom but asked them not to politicise the event in which 'Sengol', a historical sceptre from Tamil Nadu, which was received by the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to represent the transfer of power from the British and will be installed in the new complex.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi termed the call by the opposition parties as "unfortunate" and urged them to reconsider their stand. Noting that the inauguration of the Parliament building is a momentous occasion, the opposition parties in a joint

THE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD EARLIER BOYCOTTED THE CEREMONY TO LAY THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE BUILDING BY MODI IN DECEMBER 2020

THE GRAND OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDING, IT IS LEARNED, WILL BE MARKED BY THE CHANTING OF HYMNS, A "HAVAN" AND A "PUJA"

THE RITUALS WILL START IN THE MORNING AND THE MAIN PROGRAMME IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN THE AFTERNOON. BESIDES PM MODI, THE LOK SABHA SPEAKER WILL BE PRESENT AT THE OPENING CEREMONY

statement said, "despite our belief that the government is threatening democracy, and our disapproval of the autocratic manner in which the new Parliament was built, we were open to sinking our differences and marking this occasion".

However, Prime Minister Modi's decision to inaugurate the new Parliament building by himself, "completely sidelining President Droupadi Murmu, is not only a

grave insult but a direct assault on our democracy which demands a commensurate response".

Attacking Modi, the parties said, "Undemocratic acts are not new to the prime minister, who has relentlessly hollowed out Parliament. Opposition Members of Parliament have been disqualified, suspended and muted when they raised the issues of the people of India. MPs from the Treasury benches have disrupted Parliament."

While the BSP has not made its stand clear on whether it will attend, its MP Danish Ali called for opposition unity. Shiromani Akali Dal and BJD said they will attend the new Parliament inauguration function. The TDP, AIADMK and YSRCP have also not made their stand clear yet but are likely to be present at the inauguration. BRS said it will announce its decision Thursday. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi said if Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla does not inaugurate the new Parliament building, his party would not attend. Addressing a press conference, Shah, accompanied by Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag

Singh Thakur and Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy, said the government of India has invited everyone to be present at the inauguration. "Everyone will act as per their wisdom," he said when asked about the boycott call. Noting that 'Sengol' can't be associated with politics, he said, "This is the real purpose. Don't mix this with politics. This is an old tradition that is going to be connected with the new India. Politics has its own place. Everyone works as per their wisdom."

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Joshi said, "boycotting and making an issue out of a non-issue is most unfortunate. I appeal to them to reconsider their decision and join the function."

Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said the fact is that a new Parliament building has been built in record time by this government under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and added that even in the past governments, you have seen prime ministers who have either inaugurated or laid foundation stones. The opposition parties said the president is not only



A beautiful carving of 'Nandi' atop the 'Sengol', a historical sceptre from Tamil Nadu, that will be installed in the new Parliament building. The Senegol was received by first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to represent transfer of power from the British and was kept in a museum in Allahabad

the Head of State in India, but also an integral part of Parliament as she summons, prorogues, and addresses it.

BJP accuses Congress of hypocrisy

New Delhi: What was the "locus standi" of Sonia Gandhi when she along with the then PM Manmohan Singh inaugurated legislative buildings in Manipur and Tamil Nadu, the BJP asked Wednesday while countering the Congress' criticism over the inauguration of new Parliament building by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The BJP alleged that opposition parties were making it an issue because of their "extreme hatred" for Modi. "Congress' hypocrisy knows no limits," BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla charged as he reminded the opposition party that former prime minister Indira Gandhi had inaugurated the Parliament House Annexe and her successor Rajiv Gandhi laid the foundation stone of the Parliament Library building in 1987. Many opposition parties, including the Congress, have announced a boycott of the ceremony May 28, demanding that President Droupadi Murmu and not PM Modi do the inauguration. Accusing the government of "completely sidelining" President Murmu, 19 opposition parties have, in a statement, said they find no value in a new building when the "soul of democracy has been sucked out". Poonawalla alleged that the Congress had no problem when the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi inaugurated the Assembly building and complex in Manipur in 2011.

ED raids online gaming firms



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 24: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday said it detected illegal foreign remittances of about Rs 4,000 crore after it carried out multi-state raids against foreign-registered online gaming websites and companies operating in the country in alleged violation of the foreign exchange law.

In a statement, it said that Rs 19.55 lakh and more than USD 22,600 in cash were seized apart from freezing 55 bank accounts during this operation carried out under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange

The searches were carried out May 22-23 at 25 premises in Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh

The federal probe agency said the raids led to the finding that these online gaming companies and websites were registered in small island countries like Curacao, Malta and Cyprus

Management Act (FEMA).

"However, all of them are linked to Indian bank accounts opened in the name of proxy persons who have no links with online gaming activity. The amount collected from the general public through gaming websites is then routed through multiple bank accounts and finally remitted out of India by mis-declaring the purpose of remittances against import of services and goods."

"Remittances out of the income from racing/riding etc., or any other hobby are not allowed under the provisions of FEMA, 1999," it said. The ED said it found that

"hundreds of companies were opened by the key persons in the name of their employees for layering and sending remittances to the tune of about Rs 4,000 crore in the guise of payments for import of goods and services".

Several PAN (permanent account number issued by the income-tax department) cards, Aadhaar cards used for creating such firms, mobiles used for operating bank accounts of these firms and office stamps have been seized, it said.

Some key persons were found using international virtual mobile numbers for instant messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal etc. And using pseudonyms such as Pablo, John, Watson etc. For "masking" their actual identity, it said.

To escape from investigating agencies, they are using remote-based server/laptops which are being used through remote-access apps like Anydesk, Team viewer etc, the ED found. The agency seized two such remotely accessed laptops from the premises of an entity providing server services located far away from the actual operational places.



A Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM) being test-fired from INS Mormugao

PTI PHOTO

Temperature drops slightly in some states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: Rains brought the much-needed respite from heat in some states Wednesday but accompanying thunderstorm killed four people in Uttarakhand, while as many were injured after being struck by lightning in Rajasthan. A powerful thunderstorm cou-

pled with rain pounded parts of Uttarakhand, uprooting trees and killing at least four people in separate incidents.

Two people were killed in Haridwar district while the Pauri and Nainital districts recorded one fatality each in the storm that hit the state late on Tuesday, officials said. A child was killed and three peo-

ple were injured when a 100-year-old peepal tree uprooted by the storm fell on them in the Jwalapur area of Haridwar district, Senior Superintendent of Police Ajay Singh said. In a separate incident, a pilgrim from Sonapat in Haryana was killed when a tree fell on him in the Chamgadar Tapu area near Haridwar's Har ki Pauri.

GOVT TO LAUNCH 60-DAY 'TOBACCO FREE YOUTH CAMPAIGN'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

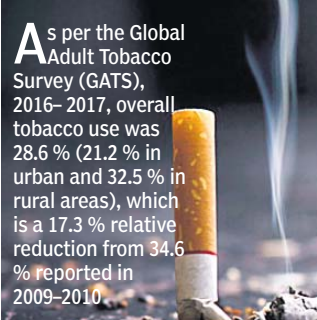
New Delhi, May 24: The Union Health Ministry is planning to launch a 60-day pan India campaign on the theme 'tobacco-free youth' May 31 which will focus on taking steps to prevent initiation of tobacco use among youngsters and assisting users to quit.

According to the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), current tobacco use among young adolescents (13-15 years) in 2019 was 8.5 per cent and in the previous round (2010), it was 14.6 per cent - a decline of 42 per cent.

Several initiatives like 'tobacco-free educational institution' are part of the campaign being planned for World No Tobacco Day observed

May 31. In a letter, Joint Secretary of the Health Ministry V Hekali Zhimomi urged states and Union Territories to conduct special drives for enforcement of the provisions of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act (CoPTA), 2003.

It especially noted provisions related to the prohibition on ban on smoking in public places (section 4), prohibition on sale within 100 yards of an educational institution and sale to and by persons aged less than 18 years (section 6) and ban on the sale of tobacco products without statutory pictorial warnings (section 7). The Global



Burden of Disease Study estimates that there were over 1.2 million (12 lakh) deaths due to smoking and secondhand smoke (SHS) in India in 2019, and more recently WHO has estimated that 1.35 million (13.5 lakh) deaths occur every year due to tobacco use overall in

India. Though India remains a global leader in introducing and implementing robust tobacco control measures, tobacco continues to be a major public health threat in the country. As per the Global

As per the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), 2016-2017, overall tobacco use was 28.6% (21.2% in urban and 32.5% in rural areas), which is a 17.3% relative reduction from 34.6% reported in 2009-2010.

Though India remains a global leader in introducing and implementing robust tobacco control measures, tobacco continues to be a major public health threat in the country. As per the Global

Tobacco use has declined but data reveals that its use is still unacceptably high among adolescents and adults in India

Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), 2016-2017, overall tobacco use was 28.6 per cent (21.2 per cent in urban and 32.5 per cent in rural areas), which is a 17.3 per cent relative reduction from 34.6 per cent reported in 2009-2010. The Health Ministry is enabling a provision for citizens to take a "No Tobacco Pledge" directly on the MyGov platform of the Government of India and states have been urged to give wide publicity to this and encourage maximum participation in the campaign from May 31 to June 21. "It may be noted that

the ministry is planning to undertake the 'Tobacco Free Youth Campaign' which is proposed to be launched pan India May 31." "In this regard, we request all the states and UTs to take necessary action/pre-planning for debriefing the district nodal officers and concerned stakeholders," the joint secretary said in the letter to the states and UTs. The activities under the programme would include evidence-based mass media campaigns, warning against the deadly impact of tobacco use to motivate tobacco users to quit, change social norms as well as prevent early initiation, especially among the youth, according to a Tobacco-Free Youth Campaign Module which has been shared with states.

Prices of essentials see steep surge in trouble-torn Manipur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, May 24: Prices of essential commodities have skyrocketed in Manipur since ethnic violence started some three weeks ago, as import of products from outside the state has been affected, with several items being sold at double the normal price.

In most parts of the landlocked northeastern state, items such as rice, potato, onion and egg besides LPG cylinders and petrol are selling at rates much above the ones fixed by the government.

“Earlier, one 50-kg bag of superfine rice costs Rs 900 but now it has gone up to Rs 1,800. Prices of potatoes and onions also increased by Rs 20 to Rs 30. In general, prices for all the essential commodities brought from outside have gone up,” said Manglembi Chanam, a government school teacher in Imphal West district.

She said LPG cylinders are being sold in the black market for Rs 1,800, while a litre of petrol costs Rs 170 in many parts of Imphal West district.

“Prices of eggs have increased as well, with one crate containing 30 eggs costing Rs 300 instead of the usual Rs 180. Were it not for the security forces escorting trucks carrying essential commodities, the price rise would have been more. Even potatoes had reached Rs 100 per kilo before security forces came into the scene,” Chanam said.

Truck movement to the Imphal Valley had stopped due to road-blocks and fear among transporters as 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.

“As a result, the stock of essential supplies in the state dwindled and began to reach critical levels which resulted in planning movement through NH 37,” a defence official said.

Movement of trucks on NH 37 commenced May 15 and security forces remain committed to restoring complete normalcy, the spokesperson said.

Prices of key commodities also increased in districts which were



CURFEW RELAXATIONS CANCELLED

In fresh incidents of violence in restive Manipur, a man was gunned down by the armed assailants of a different community while two others were injured in separate incidents in Bishnupur district Wednesday, police said. In view of the violence, district authorities have cancelled the curfew relaxation in Bishnupur, Imphal East and Imphal West districts, where curfew was relaxed from 5am to 4pm. Police officials in Imphal said that some armed youths had raided a few villages in Moirang in Bishnupur district and on hearing the commotion, some inmates of a relief camp there came out to see what was happening and a man, identified as Toijam Chandramani, 29, was hit by a bullet from behind. He was immediately taken to a private hospital in a serious condition but succumbed to the bullet injury after some time. As tension escalated after Chandramani’s death, additional para-military and police personnel have been deployed to control the situation.

not much affected by the violence between Meitei and Kuki community people that left over 70 people dead.

Rebecca Gangmei, 41, who runs a grocery shop and an eatery in Tamenglong district headquarters, said, “Prices of essential items particularly rice witnessed a steep rise though there has been no violence in our district. Only the prices of meat have not seen much changes as it is not imported and taken from locals.”

Pamchuila Kashung, an assistant professor in the government college in Ukhrul district, said she is lucky as she stays near Nagaland from where essential items come.

“Despite that, prices of some items have increased, particularly rice,” Kashung said.

Some people also said prices of tobacco products too have risen manifold.

An official of the consumer affairs department said the govern-

ment fixes prices from time to time and anyone selling products at higher rates is liable to be punished.

The state government has issued a list of revised wholesale and retail prices of as many as 18 food items days after the violence broke out.

Though the violence in Manipur began May 3, it was preceded by tension over the eviction of Kuki villagers from reserve forest land, which had led to a series of smaller agitations.

Meiteis account for about 53 per cent of Manipur’s population and live mostly in the Imphal Valley. Tribals – Nagas and Kukis – constitute another 40 per cent of the population and reside in the hill districts.

The ethnic clashes claimed over 70 lives and some 10,000 army and para-military personnel had to be deployed to restore normalcy in the northeastern state.

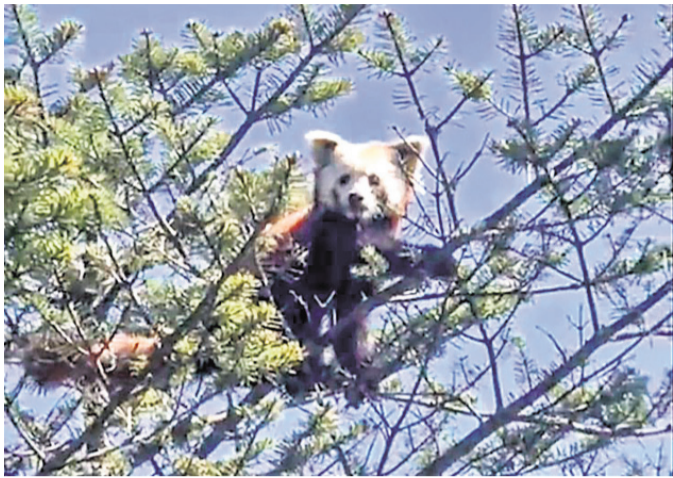
Endangered red panda spotted in Tawang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Itanagar, May 24: A little red panda, listed as endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature list of threatened species, has been spotted at Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, Chief Minister Pema Khandu said Wednesday.

Perhaps this is for the first time a red panda has been spotted in the border district of the northeastern state.

“Cute and little #RedPanda spotted in Tawang! The small mammal is listed as endangered in the International Union for Conservation of Nature list of threatened species. These bamboo-munching species mostly reside in Himalayan regions of the Northeast. Let us together pro-



tect them. They are important to safeguard biodiversity and maintain ecological integrity,” Khandu tweeted along with a

video of the mammal.

According to the World Wildlife Fund website, the red panda is slightly larger than a domestic cat,

with a bear-like body and thick russet fur. The belly and limbs are black and there are white markings on the side of the head and above its small eyes.

Red pandas are very skilful and acrobatic animals that predominantly stay in trees.

It is the state animal of Sikkim which hosts the Red Panda Festival every year. The winter event features parades, live music and draws tourists and locals alike.

Almost 50 per cent of the red pandas’ habitat is in the Eastern Himalayas.

They use their long, bushy tails for balance and to cover themselves in winter, presumably for warmth.

Primarily an herbivore, the name panda is said to come from the Nepali word ‘ponya’, which means bamboo or plant-eating animal.

RPF rescues 36 minors from rly stations in NE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, May 24: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) has rescued 42 people, including 36 minors, in a week from trains and railway stations, and also apprehended two persons involved in human trafficking, an official said Wednesday.

NFR’s Chief Public Relations Officer Sabyasachi De said that the RPF, during the checking and drives conducted between May 16-22 at different trains and railway stations, rescued 42 people.

Later, they were handed over to the respective child lines as per norms for safe custody and family members after proper verification.

The drives were conducted at different locations in Katihar, Purnea, Barsoi, Kumedpur, New Bongaigaon, Rangiya, Kamakhya, Guwahati, Mariani, Tinsukia, New Jalpaiguri, New Tinsukia and Dimapur railway stations. Of the 36 minors, there were three runaway minor girls and a minor boy. The RPF remains vigilant for suspected persons involved in human trafficking as well as the movement of children in a suspicious manner, travelling alone, without a proper guardian, the CPRO said.

Favourite for film shootings, this railway station to get a makeover

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 24: The City station, located in old Lucknow, is emerging as a favourite shooting location for filmmakers. The Railways has now decided to give a makeover to the City station.

The station, with a daily traffic load of 1,600 passengers is to be modernised under the ‘Amrit Bharat Station Scheme’ of the Union Ministry of Railways. The makeover cost is around Rs 8 crore.

The station, with a daily traffic load of 1,600 passengers, is to be modernised under the ‘Amrit Bharat Station Scheme’ of the Centre

Mahesh Gupta, public relation manager, NER, said: “The station, which is already the most sought-after railway station for film shooting these days, would benefit from the revamp in terms of demand and facilities. Because it is located in old Lucknow and has an ambience of the Lucknow of the past, it is popular with filmmakers and production houses.”

“In the last few years, this has led



to an increase in railway revenue recorded from the shooting of these films and web series. In just one financial year, NER has earned approximately Rs 9 lakhs from two films shot in the city station.”

Some of the movies that have been filmed here in recent times include ‘Bareilly Ki Barfi’, ‘Chhote Nawab’, ‘Jabariya Jodi’, ‘Patni Aur Woh’, ‘14 Phere’, ‘Inspector Avinash’, ‘Kanjoos Makkhichoos’, ‘Umesh Chronicle’ and ‘Single Salma’.

Meanwhile, two web series – ‘Manfordganj’ and ‘Breathe Season 2’ – were also shot at the station.

According to the railway officials, the modernisation will be carried out for which a master plan has been prepared and will be implemented in a phased manner.

These include development of the circulating area of the main entrance, beautification of station including local art and culture, up-grading of ‘platform surface’, and improved lighting.

Meghalaya, Assam CMs discuss border disputes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, May 24: Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met Meghalaya CM Conrad K Sangma Wednesday, and held discussions for resolving the disputes between the two Northeastern neighbours in the remaining six areas along the border.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Sarma announced that he along with Sangma will visit the disputed areas in Assam’s Karbi Anglong and Meghalaya’s West Jaintia Hills, where the problem is little bit complicated, next month.

“We will jointly visit Karbi Anglong and West Jaintia Hills districts in June-end as there is some unrest. It will be a confidence-building measure so that people on both sides are assured that we are resolving the differences,” Sarma said.

“I believe that through discussions, mutual trust and confidence, we will be able to resolve the other six areas of disputes much earlier than expected,” he said.

Sangma said that though the differences in these six areas are complicated, these too can be resolved with a spirit of trust and friendship.

“Things are complicated but we believe that when there is a will, there is a way,” he said.

Sangma said survey and other allied work in the six areas for which an agreement was signed

between the two states in the first phase last year is underway.

“We have asked different departments and the Survey of India to continue working in the first six areas,” he said.

When asked if any deadline was set for finding solutions to the remaining six areas, Sarma said, “These six areas are a little bit complicated, putting a time frame is not a proper idea but we will meet in July to review the progress of work.”

Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as a separate state in 1972, and it challenged the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, leading to disputes in 12 areas of the 884.9-km-long border.

Sarma on assuming the chief minister’s office in May 2021 had announced that his priority was to resolve long-standing boundary disputes with neighbouring states.

Subsequently, three regional committees were set up to resolve the issues in a phased manner. The regional committees submitted their recommendations, which were handed over to Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi, followed by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) March 29, 2022 to resolve disputes in six of the 12 areas.

According to the agreement, 36.79 sq km of the disputed area was taken up for settlement in the first phase, with Assam getting full control of 18.51 sq km and Meghalaya over 18.28 sq km of land.

BSP will reach out to youth in UP to counter Bhim Army

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 24: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), that had avoided banking on young blood, is now apparently feeling threatened by the growing influence of the Bhim Army among Dalit youth.

The Bhim Army has been rapidly making inroads among the Dalit youth and its leader Chandra Shekhar is popular among them. BSP President Mayawati has now told her party cadres to bring in youth and give them responsibility in the party.

The party will decentralise responsibilities and assign more of its workers the important work within the party structure.

Mayawati has already appointed



her nephew Akash Anand as the party’s national coordinator but he lacks visibility and outreach among the cadres.

The BSP has its focus on Lok Sabha 2024 elections and is keen to retain its national party status.

The party also wants to do well in the assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana in 2023, said sources.

Heritage pumps to green Taj Mahal gardens lost and found

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, May 24: How were the gardens around the Taj Mahal and the Golf Course in the Agra Circuit House watered more than a century ago when there was no electricity or solar energy?

A group called Heritage Lovers of Agra, found the answer to this question when they discovered a set of huge Hydrams, rusting and neglected in an unused well, two days ago.

Sharing this discovery with IANS, Gopal Singh, owner of the Coral Tree, said: “Our group was shocked at the sorry state of the five Blakes’s Hydrams (self acting water pumps) supplied by the London-based firm of Blakes in 1907 to Lord Curzon, the then Viceroy of India, whose contribution to restoration and conservation of historical buildings is well known.”

Mukul Pandya, a conservationist said: “These five pumps installed at various locations in the Circuit

House, Golf Course and the Shah Jahan garden area were used to water the plants and also run the fountains in the Taj Mahal, for over half a century. The loud noise of the hydraulic pumps sounded like a steam engine running at full speed, according to a gardener late Data Ram who died in 2020, at the age of 89.”

The well where the pumps were installed is filled up with garbage due to non-use and the pumps are heavily rusted, requiring urgent repair and mechanical intervention.

The heritage lovers have in a memorandum to the Archaeological Survey of India, the Irrigation department of the Uttar Pradesh government and the chairman of the Taj Trapezium Zone Authority requested the authorities “to initiate appropriate measures to save these heritage pumps and get them repaired, as these Hydram pumps are the best example of green energy, as they do not cost anything, using only the power of the flow of run-



ning water”. Experts say that no fuel is required to run these pumps, and are considered highly reliable in terms of continuous use.

The present owners of the company headquartered in London are willing to help restore them, after they were approached for information. Charles, a director of the company says: “The three cast iron pipes supply the power water to the Hydrams which can force water for a mile nearly 400 feet above the ram. While it is fantastic to have found them, it was always my intention to

have them working again.”

“Getting them going again is not some kind of a mad idea since our Hydram pumps are the best example of green energy, and are part of the heritage of the greater Taj Mahal complex, and if restored, would cause a high degree of interest among visitors who should be interested in their green credentials,” Charles added.

The concerned government departments have been urged to restore and restart use of these hydram pumps. Since the original manu-

facturer is ready to provide all technical support and help, this should not be too difficult. Submersible pumps are a disaster as they deplete underground reserves, Yogesh Sharma of the group said.

The authorities were told that if for any reason, “it is not possible to repair and restore these valuable heritage pumps, we would like to suggest that these antique pieces be displayed prominently so that tourists can take a look. A sign board giving full details can be placed on a raised platform.”

of the day quote

Fake cases are being pressed against my associates and ED raids are taking place. Let them do what they want

SANJAY SINGH | AAP LEADER

The situation in 2014, 2019 and now is different. The Congress will review each seat in the first week of June and take a decision

NANA PATOLE | MAHA CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's decision to install the sacred Sengol in the New Parliament building is a historic moment. The sacred Sengol is of national significance and holds historical importance. It was first received by Jawaharlal Nehru August 14, 1947, in presence of leaders like Shri Rajendra Prasad, from priests specially flown in from Tamil Nadu

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Mamata to skip Niti Aayog meeting

Kolkata: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has decided to skip the Niti Aayog meeting slated to be held in New Delhi May 27, a senior official at the state secretariat said Wednesday. The decision came a day after the TMC, of which Banerjee is the chief, announced that it will boycott the inauguration of the new Parliament building in the national capital. The reason behind Banerjee's skipping of the Niti Aayog meeting is not known.

Gangster Jarnail Singh shot dead

Chandigarh: Gangster Jarnail Singh was shot dead in broad daylight by three masked assailants in Punjab's Amritsar city Wednesday. Prima facie it seemed to be a gang rivalry, said the police. Singh, who belonged to the Gopi Ghamshampuraya gang, was on bail. Senior police officials rushed to the spot to investigate the case. The armed assailants fired 20-25 bullets at Jarnail Singh, who was taken to a nearby hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Kerala CM turns 78

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Wednesday turned 78 and leaders cutting across political lines greeted the Marxist veteran. However, there were no formal birthday celebrations in the state to mark the day, even as Vijayan continued with his official work as usual, sources close to him said. "The day is also significant as he completed seven years as chief minister of the state," they told PTI.

K'TAKA GOVT ALL SET TO OVERTURN HIJAB BAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bengaluru, May 24: The new Congress government in Karnataka is all set to remove the ban on hijab in the state, sources said Wednesday. The new government is waiting to settle down and complete the cabinet expansion. While campaigning for the May 10 Assembly polls, the Congress Congress, especially Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, had vehemently stated that ban on hijab and all laws made on communal basis by the previous BJP government would be withdrawn once the party assumes power in the state. Asked about Amnesty International's rising concern on hijab ban in Karnataka, DyCM Shivakumar Wednesday stated in



The Covid pandemic has demonstrated that health threats are not confined to national borders and require a coordinated global response

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

Kejriwal meets Uddhav over Centre's ordinance

Addressing the media jointly, both leaders slammed the Centre for attempting to force the Ordinance to control Delhi services as "an Ordinance emerging from arrogance" and the need to "wake up the people of the country"



AGENCIES

Mumbai, May 24: Attempting to drum up support for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s fight against the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called on former Maharashtra chief minister and Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Uddhav Thackeray at his home here Wednesday. "The Ordinance decision is coming out of the arrogance. An arrogant and selfish person cannot run the country," said Thackeray, expressing support for Kejriwal's fight with the Centre. Flanked by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Kejriwal said that "we have come together to wake up the people of the country". Thackeray said that the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Matoshri are known for maintaining relations which go beyond politics. "The Supreme Court verdict was necessary for Delhi and the country's democracy. But what kind of democracy is it when the Centre brings an Ordinance like

this? We have to make the people aware of all this," Thackeray said. Kejriwal said even the AAP keep good relations with all and "now we are part of the Thackeray family". "The people of Delhi have fought a big battle for rights. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking away our authority by the Ordinance though the SC verdict came (May 11) in our favour after 8 years," Kejriwal said. "Their politics is unethical, wrong and dangerous to the country and a threat to democracy. They are blatantly misusing power and various institutions to hound political rivals," said Thackeray. Soon after the apex court judgement giving the powers to the state government to appoint officers in Delhi, the BJP government brought forth an Ordinance to annul the decision on grounds that Delhi does not have full statehood, and gave all the powers to the Lt. Governor. Kejriwal has been on an all-India round of all the top Opposition parties in the country to block the Centre's Ordinance in the Rajya Sabha.

‘Some bank branches run short on day 2 of ₹ 2K note exchange’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: Some bank branches ran out of cash and temporarily halted the exchange of withdrawn ₹2000 currency notes as they awaited replenishment of supply from the currency chest on the second day of note swap Wednesday. More than anticipated demand during the first half in some of the branches led to the shortage of ₹500 and below denomination currency temporarily at some places, sources said. Customers had to wait for some time till replenishment came from the currency chest, sources added. However, senior officials of various banks said there were no major complaints of currency shortage for exchange. "We are maintaining a continuous supply of ₹500, 200 and 100 denominations notes at all our all branches across Delhi circle to ensure smooth exchange process of 2,000 rupee notes," Canara Bank Chief General Manager (CGM) Bhavendra Kumar

said. Unlike November 2016, when old 500 and 1000 rupee notes - constituting some 86 per cent of the currency in circulation - were banned overnight, ₹2000 currency notes continue to be legal tender for now, and the exchange window is more than double of that provided in 2016. While the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has not made the presentation of a valid ID or filling of deposit forms mandatory, there were complaints from some places that banks were demanding customers to submit identity cards as proof. Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das Wednesday said that RBI is monitoring the situation regularly with regard to the withdrawal of ₹2,000 currency notes and expressed confidence that the entire exercise will be completed in a non-disruptive manner. He said that RBI has given four-month time for exchanging as well as depositing the ₹2,000 currency notes to ensure that there is no hardship faced by anyone.



Vidhana Soudha, "I don't want to comment on the matter of hijab as it is a policy matter." However, Priyank Kharge, the cabinet minister addressing press reporters maintained that the Congress will withdraw the ban

on hijab, halal cut and cow slaughter laws. Sources claimed that the party is all set to withdraw these laws, including the Anti-Conversion law brought by the previous BJP government. A decision will soon be

taken on the construction of a 114-foot tall Jesus Christ statue in Kapalabetta near Kanakapura town. This is proposed to be the largest Christ statue in the world. The Hijab row which was started by six students of Udupi Pre-University Girl's College had turned out to be a crisis in the state last year. The students refusing to attend classes without hijab still maintain that they will wait for the final verdict of the Supreme Court.

Azam acquitted in hate speech case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Rampur (Uttar Pradesh), May 24: In a major reprieve for Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan, a Rampur court Wednesday acquitted him in a hate speech case. The Rampur court overturned the verdict of a lower court, which had found the Samajwadi leader guilty last year of hate speech targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. He was convicted under Sections 153A (promoting enmity between two groups), 505 (statement conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code and section 125 of the Representation of People Act 1951. Azam Khan, after being convicted in the case, was sentenced to three years in prison. He had appealed against the order, after which he was acquitted. Interestingly, the Rampur Assembly seat, which he held was declared vacant after he was disqualified following his conviction. BJP's Akash Saxena was elected in the subsequent by election. Constitutional experts, who did not wish to be quoted, said that the case required deeper study since his conviction had been quashed but he had already been disqualified from the Assembly. A former UP Assembly Speaker said, "It is for the Supreme Court now to review the provisions under which Azam Khan was disqualified without waiting for disposal of his plea against the conviction. The state government jumped the gun in his case - and also others - without waiting for the outcome of the appeal. The apex court will now have to decide what is to be done in such cases."



Delegates participating in the third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting visit a market at Polo View in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

MANOHAR JOSHI CRITICAL

The health condition of former Maharashtra chief minister and ex-Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi is critical and he continues to be in a semi-comatose state, a city-based private hospital, where he was admitted two days back after suffering from brain haemorrhage, said Wednesday



RAHUL'S FRESH PASSPORT PLEA

Court asks Swamy to file reply by tomorrow



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: A court here Wednesday asked former BJP MP Subramanian Swamy to file his reply by Friday to a plea of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi seeking a no-objection certificate for issuance of an "ordinary passport" to him after he surrendered his diplomatic passport upon his disqualification as an MP. Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Vaibhav Mehta, while posting the plea of Gandhi May 26, observed the right to travel is a fundamental right and courts had placed no restrictions on the movement of the Congress leader who travelled several times without having to obtain a permission. The ACMM also said that while granting bail to Gandhi in December 2015, the court had placed no restrictions on his travel and the plea of Swamy for imposition of restrictions was rejected then. Gandhi, who was disqualified as a Lok Sabha member after his conviction in a defamation case, is an accused in the National Herald case in which Swamy is the complainant. The Congress leader, whose sentence has been suspended in the defama-

tion case filed over his remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's surname, had moved the court seeking a no-objection certificate Tuesday. Gandhi's counsel Tarannum Cheema, who appeared along with advocates Nikhil Bhalla and Sumit Kumar, sought grant of a no-objection certificate (NOC) to the Congress leader so that he could secure a fresh passport. ACMM Mehta, however, said Swamy has the right to file a reply on the application. The court allowed Swamy to file his response by May 26 after he sought time. The magistrate said he will hear arguments on the matter the same day. The National Herald case is based on a private criminal complaint of Swamy against Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others, accusing them of cheating, conspiracy and criminal breach of trust. The accused are reputed persons having deep political grassroots and there is no apprehension that they will flee, a magisterial court had noted while granting bail to them on December 9, 2015. Swamy has accused them of cheating and misappropriation of funds in acquiring ownership of the now-defunct English daily newspaper National Herald.

7 killed in two road mishaps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, May 24: Seven persons were killed and more than 15 others injured in two separate road accidents in Dewas and Umaria districts of Madhya Pradesh Wednesday, officials said. In Dewas, four persons died after a truck hit an auto-rickshaw at around 4 am on a jail square on Indore-Bhopal bypass road. A family was going towards Indore in the auto-rickshaw. A dumper truck coming from the opposite site overturned after breaking the road divider and hit the auto-rickshaw, Superintendent of Police Sampat Upadhyaya said. A woman, her two children aged 2 and 3, who were travelling in the auto-rickshaw, and a person sitting in the

truck were killed, the official said. The woman's husband was injured and undergoing treatment, he said. In Umaria district, three persons were killed and 15-20 others injured when a bus overturned at Ghangri overbridge in a bid to avoid hitting a motorcycle, divisional commissioner (Rewa division) Rajiv Sharma said.

The bus was carrying people to attend a programme of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at Bharola, officials said. The injured persons were undergoing treatment, Sharma said. Financial help will be provided to the families of the deceased and the injured persons as per government provisions, he said.



of the day quote

Relations between the two countries (China and Russia) are at an unprecedented high level, influenced by the increased turbulence in the international arena and the pattern of sensational pressure from the collective West

MIKHAIL MISHUSTIN | PM, RUSSIA

Australia and India share a commitment to a stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Together we have an important role to play in supporting this vision

ANTHONY ALBANESE | PM, AUSTRALIA

To our colleagues in the opposition: don't get your hopes up. This government will last its full four years

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PM, ISRAEL

SHORT TAKES

Australia to open Consulate in B'lore

Sydney: Prime Minister Anthony Albanese Wednesday announced that Australia will now open a new Consulate-General in Bangalore this month, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India will open a consulate in Brisbane as part of the efforts of the two countries to enhance bilateral ties. In his media statement after holding talks with Prime Minister Modi here, Prime Minister Albanese said the opening of the new diplomatic mission in Bangalore will help in connecting the country's businesses to India's booming digital and innovation ecosystem. The opening up of the Consulate-General in Bangalore this month will be the fifth diplomatic mission in India. Others are in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. Meanwhile, India currently has three consulates in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Brisbane currently has an Honorary Consulate of India.

Boris faces new partygate probe

London: Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was fined for breaking his own government's pandemic lockdown rules, has been reported to police again over more potential breaches. The Times of London said Tuesday that Johnson was reported by civil servants over alleged visits to Chequers, the prime minister's official country retreat, as well as potential breaches in the leader's Downing Street residence. The Metropolitan Police force and Thames Valley Police said they were assessing details relating to incidents between June 2020 and May 2021.

Sudan conflict displaces 1.3mn

Cairo: The fighting between Sudan's military and a powerful paramilitary force has displaced more than 1.3 million people, the UN Migration agency said Wednesday. The International Organisation for Migration said the clashes have forced over 1 million people to leave their homes to safer areas inside Sudan. Some 320,000 others have fled to the neighbouring countries of Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic and Libya. The fighting erupted April 15 after months of escalating tensions between the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces commanded by Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo.



The Asia-Pacific region does not welcome NATO's plan to open a liaison office in Japan

MAO NING | SPOKESPERSON, CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY

DESANTIS TO JOIN US PREZ RACE

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is expected to make his long-awaited foray into the 2024 presidential race. His entry changes the shape of the contest for the Republican nomination, as he likely will emerge as former President Donald Trump's biggest rival. The nominee will face US President Joe Biden, a Democrat, in the November 2024 general election



PLANNED PROTESTS

Pak mulls ban on PTI

PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING BANNING FORMER PRIME MINISTER IMRAN KHAN'S PARTY FOR ATTACKING THE STATE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 24: Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif Wednesday said the government is mulling a possible ban on Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party following the attacks by his supporters on military installations after the former prime minister's arrest.

On May 9, violent protests erupted after the arrest of 70-year-old Khan by paramilitary Rangers. His party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commander house, Mianwali air-base and the ISI building in Faisalabad. The Army headquarters in Rawalpindi was also attacked by the mob for the first time. Police put the death toll in violent clashes to 10.

Talking to the media here, Asif said that Khan was still reluctant to condemn the attacks by his supporters on military and civilian installations.

"A decision (to ban PTI) has not been taken yet, but a review is surely underway," he told reporters.

He, however, said that the matter will be referred to the Parliament for approval if the government finally decides to ban the former ruling party.

The minister said that the former premier considered the army as his adversary. His (Khan's) entire politics was done in the lap of the army and today he has suddenly decided to stand against it, Asif said.

The minister said that Khan's own leaders who had quit the party were saying the same thing. Whatever I am saying is being said

There is a lot of evidence and their people are telling themselves that they were briefed about this beforehand. I feel that his struggle of a year ... all his plans failed and this was his last move against the armed forces

KHAWAJA ASIF | DEFENCE MINISTER, PAKISTAN

by all the people leaving PTI, he said. "They have said that everything happened with planning. In fact, they were facilitated."

He also criticized Khan for not condemning the attacks on the military facilities.

"Till now, he (Imran) has not condemned [the violence] in clear words. He says that he did not know, he was [in custody]. He had his phone [...] he repeated that this reaction was expected and will happen again if he is arrested," said Asif.

Asif claimed that the vandalism of military installations across the country May 9 was "coordinated attacks planned by Khan."

The minister said that Khan's party challenged the foundation of the state by "challenging the defence installations" May 9.

"Is there any crime that was not committed on May 9? The ISI office was attacked, they tried to enter the Cantonment in Sialkot but that attack was repulsed ... they also set fire to the Lahore Corps Commander's house," he claimed.

However, PTI leader Barrister Ali Zafar said that the party would challenge the ban in the court as

Khan's close aide quits

In another blow to ousted Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan, his close aide and former information minister Fawad Chaudhry Wednesday resigned from his party which is under pressure from the government over the May 9 violence. Chaudhry's resignation came a day after former minister for human rights Shireen Mazari quit 70-year-old Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party and condemned the actions of the former prime minister's supporters who attacked and torched sensitive defence installations across Pakistan May 9. "My earlier statement where I unequivocally condemned 9th May incidents, I have decided to take a break from politics, therefore, I have resigned from party position and parting ways from Imran Khan," he tweeted. He was the PTI's senior vice president and the party spokesman.

a political party cannot be banned. He told the media that when a ban was imposed on the Jamaat-i-Islami in the 1960s, it was set aside by then-chief justice Alvin Robert Cornelius.

"Efforts were made to put a ban on Jamaat-i-Islami long ago. The SC had said that you cannot ban a political party and it is everyone's right to form a political party," Zafar said.

He further said that vandalism was an individual act and "a political party cannot be banned".

The defence minister also said that the coalition government would take every such step to prevent others from targeting the armed forces in the future. He also said that May 25 will be celebrated to pay tribute to the country's slain soldiers. Khan's party said that he will address the nation at 7pm tonight.

Khan was ousted from power in April last year after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China and Afghanistan.



REJECTING RACISM: People hold smoke flares, as they protest in solidarity with Real Madrid soccer player Vinicius Jr, who was racially abused during a club match in Spain, near the consulate of Spain in Sao Paulo, Brazil

REUTERS

BAKHMUT BATTLE

Over 20K soldiers died: Wagner boss

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, May 24: The head of the Russian private army Wagner says his force lost more than 20,000 fighters in the drawn-out battle for Bakhmut, with about 20 per cent of the 50,000 Russian convicts he recruited to fight in the 15-month war dying in the eastern Ukrainian city.

The figure was in stark contrast with claims from Moscow that it lost just over 6,000 troops in the war, and is higher than the official estimate of the Soviet losses in the Afghanistan war of 15,000 troops between 1979-89.

Analysts believe the nine-month fight for Bakhmut alone have cost the lives of tens of thousands of soldiers, among them convicts who reportedly received little training before being sent to the front.

Russia's invasion goal of "demilitarising" Ukraine has backfired because Kyiv's military has become stronger with the supply of weapons and training by its Western allies, Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin said in an interview published late Tuesday



with Konstantin Dolgov, a pro-Kremlin political strategist.

Prigozhin also said the Kremlin's forces have killed civilians during the war, something Moscow has repeatedly and vehemently denied.

Prigozhin, a wealthy businessman with longtime links to Russian President Vladimir Putin, is known for his bluster -- often spiced with obscenities -- and has previously made unverifiable claims, some of which he later backtracked on.

Earlier this month, his spokespeople published a video of him shouting, swearing and pointing at about 30 uniformed bodies lying on the ground, saying they were Wagner fighters who died in a single day. He claimed the Russian Defence Ministry had starved his men of ammunition and threatened to give up the fight for Bakhmut.

'WANTED TO KILL PRESIDENT BIDEN'

Indian-origin teen crashes into White House

The 19-year-old crashed a U-Haul truck containing a Nazi flag near the White House and has been arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 24: A 19-year-old Indian-origin man accused of deliberately crashing a rented truck into a White House barrier has praised Adolf Hitler to investigators and said that he aimed to "kill" President Joe Biden if necessary to seize power, media reports said.

Sai Varshith Kandula, of Chesterfield, Missouri, rented the U-Haul truck Monday night immediately after flying from St Louis to Dulles International Airport on a one-way ticket, a Secret Service agent said in a statement of facts filed in federal district court in Washington DC, NBC News reported.

US Park Police arrested Kandula after he crashed the rented truck into the security barriers on the north side of Lafayette Park shortly before 10 pm Monday, sending multiple pedestrians running from the scene.

The crash was a good distance from the White House gates, but the incident prompted road and sidewalk closures, and the nearby Hay-Adams hotel had to be evacuated. No one was injured in the crash. He drove the vehicle onto a sidewalk outside the White House and into a metal barrier just north of the



White House. Kandula put the truck in reverse and crashed into the barrier a second time before United States Park Police officers took him into cus-



tody, according to the document. Kandula told authorities he had been planning the attack for six months and detailed the plans in a "green book," the document says.

He "stated his goal was to 'get into the White House, seize power; and be put in charge of the nation,'" the document states.

"When agents asked how he would seize power, Kandula stated he would 'kill the President if that's what I have to do and would hurt anyone that would stand in my way'"

The document was included with a criminal complaint charging Kandula with depredation of property of the United States over \$1,000, the report said.

When Secret Service agents asked Kandula about a flag with a swastika he removed from a backpack, he allegedly said he'd bought it online because Nazis "have a great history," according to reports.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, May 24: President Joe Biden is not planning to invoke the 14th Amendment to prevent a US debt default, the White House said Tuesday, ruling out a constitutional solution to the current debt impasse.

President Biden and the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives Kevin McCarthy have held three rounds of face-to-face talks to try and reach a deal to lift the current borrowing limit so the US can meet its existing spending commitments.

Invoking the 14th Amendment to the constitution, which some legal scholars have argued would allow the US Treasury to simply ignore the debt limit, "is not going to fix the current problem we have right now," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters.



Biden previously said he was looking into whether he could invoke the 14th Amendment, but was concerned of the economic damage that could occur while any legal challenges played out.

The remarks from Jean-Pierre suggest he has parked any plans he may have had to use a constitutional mechanism to resolve the debt crisis.

Jean-Pierre also appeared to rule out a short-term extension to the debt ceiling to allow Biden and McCarthy's teams more time to negotiate, telling reporters such a solution is "not on the table."

Zimbabwe tops 'most miserable country' list; India at 103

SWITZERLAND HAD THE LOWEST HAMI SCORE, MEANING ITS CITIZENS ARE THE HAPPIEST FOLLOWED BY KUWAIT, IRELAND

AGENCIES

Washington, May 24: The Hanke's Annual Misery Index (HAMI) 2022 list of the world's most miserable countries is released. As per the index, Zimbabwe has topped the list of world's most miserable country.

The African country that has surpassed war-torn nations like Ukraine, Syria, and Sudan, has majorly been plagued with skyrocketing inflation, which touched 243.8 percent last year. A total of 157 countries were analysed for the rankings, as per the report.

"Thanks to stunning inflation, high unemployment, high lending

rates, and anemic real GDP

growth, Zimbabwe clocks in as the WORLD'S MOST MISERABLE COUNTRY in the Hanke 2022 Annual Misery Index. Need I say more?" Steve Hanke tweeted.

He also blamed the country's reigning political party ZANU-PF and its policies for inflicting "massive misery"

Venezuela, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan, Argentina, Yemen, Ukraine, Cuba, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Haiti, Angola, Tonga, and Ghana are the other countries in the top 15 list of most miserable nations.

Meanwhile, Switzerland had the lowest HAMI score, meaning its citizens are the happiest. "One reason for that is the Swiss debt brake," Hanke wrote, crediting the low

India ranked 103 on the list, with the contributing factor to the misery being unemployment

Surprisingly US ranked 134th, with unemployment as the leading culprit of unhappiness

Pakistan ranked at 35, with inflation being the most contributing factor in its misery



debt-to-GDP ratio for the nation's joyous success.

The second-happiest country was Kuwait, followed by Ireland, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Niger,

Thailand, Togo, and Malta.

India, on the other hand, ranked 103 on the list, with the contributing factor to the misery being unemployment, according to the index.

The US ranked 134th on the list, with unemployment as the leading culprit of unhappiness. Finland, which has been ranked the world's happiest country for six years in a row by the World Happiness Report, was ranked 109th on the misery index.

Pakistan which is currently grappling with economic and political crisis ranked at number 35 in the world's most miserable countries list, with inflation as the most contributing factor.

Notably, The Annual Misery Index is compiled by Steve Hanke, professor of Applied Economics at John Hopkins University. The indexes are the sum of unemployment (multiplied by two), inflation, and bank-lending rates, minus the annual percentage change in real GDP per capita.

of the day quote

The government is working to bring down logistics cost to 9 per cent of GDP in the next three years from the current 14-16 per cent

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

Misuse of data, misselling, predatory practices etc have to be guarded against. Self-policing is the best policing

V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

Last year's sale (of cement) was not okay because we were hit by an extraordinary tsunami of increase in coal prices and pet coke, and the exchange rate of the dollar also gone up

N SRINIVASAN | VC AND MD, INDIA CEMENTS LTD

SHORT TAKES

Hindalco logs 37% fall in profit in Q4

New Delhi: Hindalco Industries Ltd Wednesday reported a 37 per cent fall in its consolidated net profit to ₹2,411 crore for the March quarter due to a rise in operational costs. The company had posted a net profit of ₹3,860 crore during the January-March quarter of 2021-22, the company said in a regulatory filing. Total income of the company was ₹56,209 crore in the quarter under review against ₹56,057 crore in the year-ago quarter. The expenses were higher at ₹53,372 crore against ₹51,026 crore a year ago due to a rise in power and fuel charges, employee benefit expenses and inventory costs. The company's Managing Director (MD) Satish Pai in a statement said, "Our copper business delivered exceptional results recording its highest-ever EBITDA, driven by robust market demand, stable operations and higher value-added product sales."

Arnault loses \$11.2bn in a day

Washington: Bernard Arnault, the world's richest person, had \$11.2 billion wiped from his fortune in one day over concerns that a softening US economy will dampen demand for luxury goods. The founder of LVMH - whose offerings include Louis Vuitton handbags, Moët & Chandon Champagne and Christian Dior gowns - had seen his wealth balloon for most of 2023 as share prices of European luxury companies surged. On Tuesday, he gave back some of those gains. LVMH shares fell 5% in Paris - the most in more than a year - amid a broader decline that erased about \$30 billion from the European luxury sector. Even with the selloff, the French billionaire still has a net worth of \$191.6 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. He's added \$29.5 billion so far this year.



We have strong foreign exchange reserves... In the worst case with whatever difficulty anybody may have, India is comfortable for the next 5 or 6 years, given our forex reserves today, to be able to meet our forex requirements

PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

Inflation war not over: Das

GROWTH EXPECTED TO EXCEED 7% IN FY23 AS INFLATION HAS MODERATED, SAYS RBI GOVERNOR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das Wednesday said the growth for 2022-23 is expected to be more than the advance estimate of 7 per cent on the back of economic momentum maintained in the third and fourth quarters of the last fiscal. As per the second advance estimate released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) in February, the economy is estimated to grow at 7 per cent in 2022-23 against 8.7 per cent in the preceding fiscal.

"There is a possibility that it could be even more...It will not be a surprise if the GDP growth of last year comes slightly above 7 per cent," he said at a CII event here.

Provisional Annual Estimates for the year 2022-23 will be released May 31, 2023. The governor, however, emphasised that although inflation has moderated, there is no room for complacency. He assured that the war against inflation is not over and the RBI will remain alert to evolving situations.

"It initially appeared in the third



In fact, all the high-frequency indicators, around 70 of them, which we monitored in the Reserve Bank of India, almost in all of these high-frequency indicators, the momentum was maintained in the fourth quarter. So therefore, we should not be surprised if the growth is slightly more than 7 per cent

SHAKTIKANTA DAS | GOVERNOR, RBI

quarter that there was a pent-up demand which was supporting the economic activity, but all the economic indicators in the fourth quarter of last financial year show that economic activities sustained momentum," he said.

For the current financial year, he said the RBI has projected a growth rate of 6.5 per cent.

NO CUT IN REPO RATE

About the global scenario, he said the coexistence of high inflation

and banking stress is complicating the responses of central banks, as they face or trade-off between the risk of either straining financial markets or having to tolerate a longer period of high inflation.

"Amidst these global uncertainties, the Indian banking system remains stable and resilient with strong capital and liquidity positions, improving asset quality better provisioning coverage and improved profitability," he said.

LIC Q4 net profit surges over 5-fold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: Insurance behemoth LIC Wednesday posted a more than five-fold jump in consolidated net profit to ₹13,191 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023.

The insurer had earned a profit of ₹2,409 crore in the same quarter a year earlier.

However, the total income of the insurer during the March quarter declined to ₹2,01,022 crore from ₹2,15,487 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal, LIC said in a regulatory filing.

LIC's income from first-year premium also came down to ₹12,852 crore against ₹14,663 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal.

The income from renewal premiums in the reporting period rose to ₹76,328 crore compared to ₹71,473 crore a year ago, while the single premium decreased to ₹43,252 crore from ₹58,251 crore.

For the entire financial year 2022-23, LIC registered a multi-fold rise in net profit to ₹35,997 crore from ₹4,125 crore in the previous financial year.

The board of LIC has recommended a final dividend of ₹3 per equity share with a face value of ₹10 each for the year ended March 31, 2023. Shares of the LIC closed at ₹593.55 or 0.61 per cent higher on the BSE.

Last year, the government raised ₹20,557 crore by diluting its 3.5 per cent stake in the LIC through the initial public offering (IPO), the country's biggest ever.

LIC shares were listed at a discount of 8.62 per cent at ₹867.20 apiece on BSE over the issue price of ₹949 a share.

Shares of the LIC closed at ₹593.55, down 0.61 per cent on the BSE. Investors have lost nearly ₹2.5 lakh crore since the listing of shares.

The government sold over 22.13 crore shares or a 3.5 per cent stake in LIC through the IPO. The price band of the issue was ₹902-949 a share. However, shares were allocated to investors May 12, 2022, at the upper end of the price band.

UBER STEPS UP GREEN DRIVE

Ride-hailing platform Uber Technologies is stepping up its efforts to go green in India by introducing more electric vehicles, giving its users the option to hire electric vehicles while booking their ride. As part of the launch of 'Uber Green' in June, it will add 25,000 electric cars on its platform in partnership with fleet providers like Lithium, Everest and Moove, the company said



Adani Enterprises under short-term ASM framework

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 24: Leading bourses BSE and NSE will put the securities of Adani Enterprises under the short-term ASM framework from Thursday.

The parameters for shortlisting securities under ASM include high-low variation, client concentration, number of price band hits, close-to-close price variation and price-earning ratio.

Adani Enterprises Ltd is short-listed in short-term Additional Surveillance Measure (ASM) framework Stage-I effective from May 25, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the BSE said in two separate circulars Wednesday.

Under the short-term ASM, the exchanges said, "applicable rate of margin shall be 50 per cent or existing margin whichever is higher, subject to maximum rate of margin capped at 100 per cent, with effect from May 26, 2023 on all open positions as on May 25, 2023 and new positions created from May 26, 2023."

In March, NSE and BSE removed Adani Enterprises from the short-term ASM framework.

BIZ BUZZ



Hyundai Motor India Ltd has organised a mega RSO Digital Float activity to boost enquiry generation in the rural territories of West Bengal and Odisha. The initiative was flagged off from HMIL ERTC near Axis Mall in Kolkata

PPL quality control lab receives NABL accreditation

Paradeep: PPL quality control laboratory at Paradeep plant site has received the certificate of accreditation from National Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratory (NABL). It is a constituent board of quality council of India, a symbol of stringent quality adherence.



This certificate of NABL accreditation is another proud achievement of PPL. Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL) is the second phosphatic fertilizer plant to receive this prestigious accreditation. This recognition reflects company's commitment towards quality, people competency & skill to deliver highest degree of accuracy & precession in analysis of quality parameters and FCO conformance. It also continues to demonstrate PPL's incessant commitment to best-in-class quality parameters for all their products.

OVO Farm brings blockchain technology in egg industry

Bhubaneswar: To bring in trust and transparency for the benefit of consumers, OVO Farm, the largest egg producing company of east India is taking the lead in disrupting the egg industry of India with its product and process innovation. The egg major has recently launched its unique block chain technology that facilitates traceability of their eggs at every stage of the supply chain, from the farm to the end consumer. OVO Farm, under its flagship brand 'Kenko' caters high quality fresh and hygienic eggs whose authenticity could be traced by scanning the QR code available on each product. Speaking on the vision behind introducing blockchain technology, Samarendra Mishra, Co-Founder & Director of OVO Farm said, "Through our blockchain technology we want to ensure quality and make sure that right products are reaching to our customers. Each of our products has a unique scan code on its label which gives information about the journey of the product right from the producing unit till it reaches customers. We at OVO Farm are committed to our mission of producing and catering fresh, hygienic and nutritious eggs for a healthy community." Consumers can access this information through a QR code on the pack, and get details such as the location of the farm, the date of processing, packaging and transportation history of the product that they are buying. Kenko, the flagship brand of OVO Farm caters products of 6 varieties including Hi-Pro, Brown, Immuno, MoreOVO and On-Day which are available in packs of 6, 10 and 20 eggs. Each of its products has its own unique nutritional value, straight from the farm with zero human touch.



THE JEWEL OF JAIPUR

IHCL's Rambagh Palace, Jaipur: World's top hotel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 24: Indian Hotels Company's (IHCL) Rambagh Palace, Jaipur, in Rajasthan has topped the list as the world's number one hotel in the annual 2023 Travellers' Choice Awards by travel site TripAdvisor.

This 1835 palace-turned-luxurious property is also dubbed "The Jewel of Jaipur".

Ozen Reserve Bolifushi - Bolifushi Island, Maldives was ranked second on the list followed by Hotel Colline de France - Gramado, Brazil,

in third place.

Shangri-La The Shard, London was placed at the fourth place, followed by The Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong at fifth place, JW Marriott Marquis Hotel Dubai (6th), Romance Istanbul Hotel - Turkiye (7th), Ikos Dassia - Dassia, Greece (8th), Ikos Andalusia - Estepona, Spain (9th) and Padma Resort Ubud - Puhu, Indonesia (10th).

The Rambagh Palace, Jaipur also ranked number one in the category of top luxury hotels for 2023, in the world in the 21st edition



of Travellers' Choice Awards. Travellers' Choice Awards by

TripAdvisor is based on analysis of 12-months of review data on its

D-St halts 3-day winning streak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 24: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower Wednesday, snapping their three-day gaining streak following profit-taking in financials, metal and oil shares amid a bearish trend in the global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 208.01 points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 61,773.78 in volatile trade. The index opened lower but bounced back in late-morning deals to hit a high of 62,154.17. The barometer later gave up gains to hit a low of 61,708.10 in line with weak European markets.

The broader NSE Nifty declined 62.60 points or 0.34 per cent to end at 18,285.40 after losses in Adani

Entertainment, Adani Ports and Tata Motors.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Motors, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC, Bajaj Finserv, Reliance Industries, Hindustan Unilever, Larsen & Toubro, Asian Paints and Tata Steel were the major laggards. Sun Pharma, Titan, ITC, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra and Power Grid were among the winners.

The rupee appreciated by 17 paise to 82.68 against the US dollar, supported by foreign capital inflows.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital market Tuesday as they purchased shares worth ₹1,185.84 crore, according to exchange data.

AKASH ‘ENGINEERS’ LSG EXIT

Uttarakhand pacer’s memorable five-wicket haul helps Mumbai Indians set up a clash against defending champions Gujarat Titans in Qualifier-2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 24: Little known Uttarakhand engineer Akash Madhwal bowled a dream spell as his five-wicket haul (5/5) took five-time champions Mumbai Indians one step closer to summit clash after thrashing Lucknow Super Giants by 81 runs in IPL Eliminator here, Wednesday.

MI scored 182/8 in 20 overs and it seemed 15 short given explosive batting firepower of Lucknow but Madhwal’s incredible figures of 3.3-0-5-5 and some terrific ground fielding led by skipper Rohit Sharma saw Gautam Gambhir mentored side crumble for a paltry 101 in 16.3 overs.

There were three run-outs in what turned out to be a forgettable evening for the Sanjiv Goenka owned franchise. MI will now take on Gujarat Titans Friday in the second Qualifier in Ahmedabad to decide on Chennai Super Kings’ opposition for the big final Sunday.

If the first part of the evening belonged to a fiery Naveen-ul-Haq, whose 4/37 made everyone feel wary about MI’s final score, Madhwal reassured the faith that his skipper showed in him.

The delivery that clinched the final was one bowled to dangerous Nicholas Pooran (0) from round the wicket. He delivered it from slightly wide off the crease and it shaped inward before nipping away with a touch extra bounce forcing the southpaw to edge it to Ishan Kishan behind the stumps.

That literally broke LSG’s back and on either side of that wicket, Madhwal took four more to enhance his reputation having been a tennis ball cricketer till the age of 23.

Skipper Rohit, who has been pil-



loried for his fitness threw himself around and the relay throw to run Krishnappa Gowtham out was a fabulous effort.

Earlier, flamboyant Afghanistan seamer Naveen picked up four wickets as Lucknow Super Giants

managed to keep Mumbai Indians under-check at 182/8 in 20 overs.

Naveen, who has been under spotlight since his angry exchanges with Virat Kohli during a league game against RCB, was constantly booed by the Chepauk crowd but

he did well enough to dismiss MI skipper Rohit (11 off 10 balls), batting mainstay Suryakumar Yadav (33 off 20 balls), last match’s hero Cameron Green (41 off 23 balls) and the ever dangerous Tilak Varma (26 off 22 balls).

Naveen getting Surya and Green in one over could well prove to be decisive as MI were atleast 15 short of par-score. MI also needed to replace Surya with Impact Player Nehal Wadhwa, whose 23 off 12 balls took them past 180-run mark.

Wadhwa smacked a six and hit two fours in the final over bowled by Yash Thakur (3/34) to boost MI’s score. The impressive Mohsin Khan (1/24) conceded only 6 runs in the penultimate over before Wadhwa stepped up the pace in Thakur’s next, the final over of the innings.

Skipper Rohit (11, 10 balls, 1x4, 1x6), who began slowly, fell trying to up the pace, jumping out to hit Naveen only to find Ayush Badoni in the way in the fourth over.

Yash Thakur struck in the next over, getting Ishan Kishan (15, 12 balls, 3x4) to nick one to the keeper: Suryakumar and Green gave some momentum to the innings with a 66-run third wicket partnership in a little over six overs.

Green, who hammered a ton in the final league match against SRH, slammed six boundaries and 1 six while Yadav hit two maximums and an equal number of fours in his 20-ball knock.

BRIEF SCORES: MI 182/8 (Cameron Green 41, Suryakumar Yadav 33, Tilak Varma 26, Nehal Wadhwa 23; Naveen-ul-Haq 4/38, Yash Thakur 3/34) beat LSG 101 (Marcus Stoinis 40, Kyle Mayers 18, Deepak Hooda 15; Akash Madhwal 5/5, Chris Jordan 1/7) by 81 runs.

IPL has taken heavy toll: MSD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, May 24: Describing himself as an “annoying skipper,” MS Dhoni said months of intense preparation for the IPL has taken a “heavy toll” on him and that he would take a call on his retirement in eight to nine months.

There have been speculations that 2023 could be a swansong season for Dhoni, who has led Chennai Super Kings to their 10th IPL final Tuesday.

“Frankly, it takes a heavy toll. I have been out of home for literally four months,” Dhoni said at the post-match presentation after winning the last game of the season at Chepauk.

“I will always come to CSK. I have been out of home from January, been practicing since March, so we will see,” he added. “January 31 was when I got out of the house, finished my work, and started practicing from 2nd or 3rd of March. It takes a lot, but I have ample time to decide.”

“I don’t know... I have 8-9 months to decide. Why take that headache now. I have ample time to decide. The auction is in December,” the 41-year-old said.

Personally, Dhoni has had a quiet season with the bat, managing just 104 runs from 15 matches at an average of 34.67, and was also seen struggling with his knee especially while running between the wickets.

The World Cup-winning captain, however, has not missed a match this season. After CSK’s final league game, he was also seen wearing a brace. “I will always be there for CSK, whether that is in the playing form or sitting somewhere outside... I don’t really know.”

The four-time champions, who had finished at the ninth spot in 2022, dished out a commanding performance to outclass Gujarat Titans.

One of the best captains to have



played the game, Dhoni said he can be an “annoying” skipper as he too often keeps changing his bowlers and fielders. “You see the wicket, you see conditions, and you keep adjusting the field. I can be an annoying captain because I change the field every time. It can be annoying but I believe in my gut feel. That’s why I keep telling the fielders to keep an eye on me.”

On the number of fast bowlers coming out of CSK stable, Dhoni said: “We try to create an environment and work out what is the strength of a fast bowler. We try to give them confidence and tell them

‘please try to explore your bowling’. We try to motivate them as much as possible. Support staff is there, Bravo and Eric are there.”

Asked if Dhoni made it look like a bigger total, GT skipper Hardik Pandya said: “That’s the beauty about him (Dhoni), with his mind and the way he uses the bowlers, it feels like he’s adding 10 runs.

“We kept losing wickets, he kept changing the bowlers, credit to him. Would be nice to meet him Sunday. We expected dew would come, it didn’t come. We didn’t do right in both the departments. We’ll give a crack again after two days.”

Indian quartet sails through Barcelona suffer second loss on trot



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, May 24: Star Indian shuttler PV Sindhu had to dig deep to beat Denmark’s Line Christophersen in the women’s singles opening round, while HS Prannoy dished out a superlative display to stun world number six Tien Chen Chou of Chinese Taipei in men’s singles of the Malaysia Masters here Wednesday.

Later on the day, Lakshya Sen stunned World No.4 Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 21-10, 16-21, 21-9 in the other men’s singles match. The



World No.22 Indian will face Ng Ka Long Angus of Hong Kong in the pre-quarterfinals.

Sindhu, seeded sixth, had to toil for one hour and two minutes to get the better of Christophersen 21-13, 17-21, 21-18 and maintain her superiority over the World No.33 Dane, who the Indian had defeated four times earlier. The two-time Olympic medallist Indian, ranked 13th in the world, will next play Japan’s Aya Ohori.

World No.9 Prannoy, later, held his nerves after going a game down to upset Chou, ranked sixth, 16-21,



21-14, 21-13 in his opening match to enter the pre-quarterfinals. Prannoy will next lock horns against Shi Feng Li of China.

The other Indian man to enter the second round was Kidambi Srikanth, who defeated Toma Junior Popov of France 21-12, 21-16. He will be up against Thailand’s Kumlavut Vitidsarn, seeded eighth.

However, it was curtains for qualifier Ashmita Chaliha, Aakarshi Kashyap and Malvika Bansod in the women’s singles competition as they suffered straight-game defeats to crash out in the opening round.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, May 24: Barcelona forward Raphinha took off his jersey and revealed his message of support for fellow Brazilian Vinicius Junior.

The message, which included anti-racism words in Portuguese and the phrase “we are together, Vini,” was on his undershirt and visible when Raphinha was substituted off in the second half of Barcelona’s 3-1 loss to Valladolid Tuesday. He raised his right fist while leaving the field.

It was the first matchday in the Spanish league since the outpouring of support for Vinicius following the latest case of racial abuse against the Real Madrid star forward on the weekend.

Vinicius, who is Black, has been subjected to repeated racist taunts since he arrived in Spain five years ago. Since the Spanish league season began in September, he has experienced racist abuse by fans at least five rival teams, including Valencia Sunday.

Barcelona’s second consecutive defeat since clinching the title with



games to spare was overshadowed by the fallout from that.

Players from Barcelona and Valladolid held a banner before the match with the words “racists out of football”, which is one of the slogans of a campaign against racism launched jointly by the Spanish league, Spanish federation and the government’s top

sports authority. Anti-racism slogans were also shown during the national and international broadcast of the game.

The win moved Valladolid three points clear of the relegation zone. The club owned by former Brazil striker Ronaldo can stay safe going into the last two rounds if Getafe fails to win at Real Betis Wednesday

Barcelona were coming off a 1-2 loss to Real Sociedad at home after securing their first Spanish league title since 2019 in the previous round.

Valladolid, who had lost five straight matches, took a 3-0 lead with an own-goal by Barcelona defender Andreas Christensen and with goals from Cyle Larin and Gonzalo Plata. Robert Lewandowski, the league’s leading scorer, netted late for Barcelona.

Real Sociedad strengthened their hold on the final Champions League spot with a 1-0 home win over 10-man Almeria. Takefusa Kubo scored the winner in first-half stoppage time to give Sociedad their second straight victory — and fourth in five matches.

The win allowed Sociedad to open an eight-point gap to fifth-placed Villarreal, which hosts relegation-threatened Cadiz Wednesday. Sociedad will clinch the Champions League place if Villarreal fails to beat Cadiz.

Almeria, sitting four points from the relegation zone, has lost three of their last five games. They had forward Luis Suarez sent off with a straight red card in the 36th.

Unfortunate day for paddlers at TT Worlds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Durban, May 24: Star Indian paddler Manika Batra fought hard before going down to Adriana Diaz of Puerto Rico 3-4 in the round of 32 at the World Table Tennis Championships here Wednesday.

No player ever lorded over any Grand Slam tennis tournament the way Nadal has ruled the French Open, winning it year after year after year for a read-it-again-to-make-sure total of 14 times. It is impossible to overstate what a monumental development it is that Nadal’s name will be absent from the bracket when play begins Sunday.

The last time they held the clay-court major without him? Back in 2004 — back before women and men received equal prize money there, before the main stadium was reconstructed with a retractable roof, before night sessions were added to the schedule.

“Him and Roland Garros is something special,” said Coco Gauff, the 19-year-old Floridian who was the runner-up to Iga Swiatek for the 2022 women’s title in Paris. “I remember last year... I made the mistake of doubting him. Next thing you know, he pretty much stormed his way to the final and won in straight sets.”

Then, using the now-familiar acronym for “Greatest of All-Time,” Gauff continued: “He’s just a GOAT”

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, May 24: There’s a reason a statue of Rafael Nadal stands outside Court Philippe Chatrier on the southwest outskirts of Paris.

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in that way. A GOAT’ on clay. Someone you can’t underestimate.”

Every man in the field — well, every realistic and honest man — knew there was one player to avoid in the draw. And they all knew it was almost certain that Nadal would leave France with yet another Coupe des Mousquetaires. His career record at Roland Garros: 112-3.

“He’s obviously always going to be the favorite,” said Casper Ruud,

the Norwegian who was the runner-up to Nadal last year, “if he plays.”

He won’t play this time: Nadal, who turns 37 June 3, ruled himself out last week with the hip flexor injury that’s sidelined him since January. His aim is to return to Paris in 2024 for what probably would be his last French Open.

“Roland Garros will always be Roland Garros, with or without me,” Nadal said, “without a doubt.”

Perhaps. Really, though, no tennis event and athlete are linked quite the way this event and this athlete are.

So the question becomes: Who takes advantage of his absence? Will it be the wunderkind considered an heir apparent, Carlos Alcaraz, who won the U.S. Open in September at age 19, finished last season ranked No. 1 and just returned to that spot? What about Novak Djokovic, who owns two

victories against Nadal at the French Open and two titles of his own at the place? Or Daniil Medvedev, coming off his first clay title? Or Holger Rune, who’s beaten Djokovic twice in a row?

The stakes for Djokovic are obvious: A championship would be his 23rd at a Slam, breaking a tie with Nadal for the men’s record. As it is, the 36-year-old from Serbia has won 10 of the past 19 major trophies.

Nadal collected a half-dozen in that span, while three men claimed one apiece, all at the US Open: Alcaraz, Medvedev and Dominic Thiem.

For quite a while, folks have been wondering when the Big Three would give way to the next group. Roger Federer retired last year. Nadal appears close to joining him. Djokovic is still thriving, although he did deal with discomfort in his surgically repaired right elbow lately.

“I’m personally still trying to hang in there with all of them. I’m happy with — of course, very happy with — my career so far,” he said. “I still have the hunger to keep going.”

That sort of desire exists for Nadal, too. He just could not will his hip to heal quickly enough. It will be odd to hold a French Open without him. Odd for the tournament itself, for other players, for spectators. And odd for him.

India juniors maul Chinese Taipei in Asia Cup hockey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Salalah (Oman), May 24: Defending champions India started their Men’s Junior Asia Cup hockey campaign on a rousing note with a thumping 18-0 win over minnows Chinese Taipei at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex, here Wednesday.

The Indians toyed with the Chinese Taipei defence, scoring goals at will. Arajteet Singh Hundal (19th, 19th, 30th, 59th minutes) and Amandeep (38th, 39th, 41st) scored a hat-trick each, while Bobby Singh Dhama (10th, 46th) and Aditya Arjun Lalage (37th, 37th) and skipper Uttam Singh (10th, 59th) found the back of the net twice.

Sharda Nand Tiwari (11th), Angad Bir Singh (37th), Amir Ali (51st), Bobby Poovanna Chandura (54th) and Yogember Rawat (60th) were the other goal-getters for India in the lop-sided Pool A contest.

India will next play Japan Thursday before taking on arch-rivals Pakistan Saturday and Thailand Sunday. India will aim to qualify for this year’s Junior World Cup by winning the tournament here. The Junior World Cup will be played in Malaysia in December this year.