



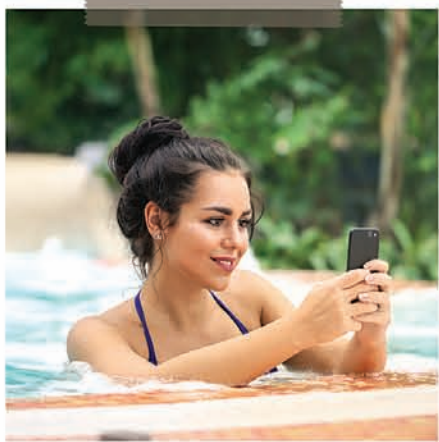
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leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

An enterprising day. The stars say you may visit an ancient place. A museum, perhaps, or a historical place. But your health may require some attention, says Ganesha. If so, it's a good idea to spend an evening by yourself.

TAURUS

It will be a thought-provoking day with titbits of success and rewards scattered here and there, says Ganesha. If you feel you got the short end of the stick, do not let it affect your morale. Every sunrise comes with a different promise and today is not the end of the world. There are strong indications that planetary movements will change things for the better from tomorrow, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Today, you will have the required intentions and courage to propose your sweetheart. You will be dressed to kill, or rather to marry. You will make a favourable impression with the way you'll look tonight.

CANCER

Though your thoughts and views may be quite radical, you will be largely restrained while acting on them, portends Ganesha. You will have no problems starting a new venture or love affair, and taking the required action to keep them afloat.

LEO

'One small drop at a time fills an ocean over time'. Remember this lesson, says Ganesha, and continue to concentrate your efforts on your goal without losing heart. There may be times when you sit back and think twice, but know that all it takes is a small effort and that is what shall enable you to reach the zenith.

VIRGO

Meticulous as you are, hopefully you won't grudge the extra quota of domestic responsibilities that comes your way today. But then, since the work is in a more than satisfactory state, some added issues on the home front won't hurt either. Your subordinates will offer the best of their support, and you shall feel contented at the end of the day.

LIBRA

You will be very unpredictable today, and your mercurial tendencies will remain till the evening. After that, be prepared to get a pleasant surprise. Just bear in mind that being prepared is always a good idea, since you never know when the perfect moment arrives. But everything considered, all Ganesha has to say is, "Stop worrying and start living!"

SCORPIO

Today, the sugar and spice of work and home are delicately balanced to bring out the best in you, says Ganesha. You may spend a lot of your time brainstorming at your desk. In the evening, however, mental exercises will be substituted for pleasure and fun with friends and family.

SAGITTARIUS

Time to open up that can of confetti at the workplace today. Success never smelled sweeter. But you may bleed on the purchase front, says Ganesha, as in your revelry, you may just unknowingly end up shelling an extra buck or two on ordinary items.

CAPRICORN

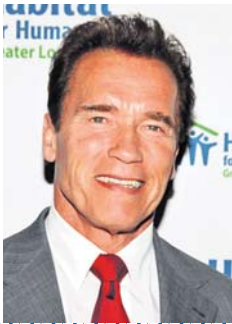
The day will be a maze of complex problems and situations, but you will find your way out in no time, says Ganesha. At work, you may love to play the leader, but that makes you accountable, for both the good as well as the poor performance of your subordinates. In all likelihood, you may be held responsible for the poor performance of your team members.

AQUARIUS

Today is an auspicious day, particularly for astrologers, healers, spiritual guides and gurus, says Ganesha. One will think twice before challenging you today. Greed is not a word in your dictionary, and today, you are even more inspired to work for humanity.

PISCES

The focus is firmly on career advancement today. Business deals, which have been a long time in the making, will finally come through. Those pursuing a profession can expect pay rises or promotions. Make sure your skills are up to the mark to be able to tackle your new responsibilities satisfactorily, says Ganesha.



ARNOLD MAKES CHEEKY REMARK ON HIS SEX LIFE

The Terminator star Arnold Schwarzenegger made a cheeky remark about his sex life during a recent interview. When asked for his euphemism for sex, he joked in an interview, "Why would you use a code word? At my age, sex is becoming a four-letter word. 'Help!'", reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

HELLBOUND STAR YOO AH-IN ATTACKED BY ANGRY FAN

Actor Yoo Ah-in, last seen in the Netflix series *Hellbound*, as well as in *Burning* and *The Throne*, was attacked by a disgruntled fan with a bottle of coffee after a court late Wednesday night dismissed police requests for the formal arrest of the prominent actor on drug use charges, reports Variety.



Raja Kumari exudes elegance at Cannes

Mumbai: Hip-hop artiste Raja Kumari, who is known for her chartbuster song *City Slums*, recently attended the ongoing edition of the Cannes Film Festival. She donned a stunning red custom ensemble designed by celebrity designer Manish Malhotra.

The red ensemble came with a cape and long trail at the back. She attended the film festival for *Inde wild*, a beauty ecosystem, founded by Diipa Khosla. Speaking of her debut, Raja Kumari said: "I am so honoured to have been asked to attend the Cannes Film Festival and support my friends Diipa Khosla and Ind Wild." She

further mentioned: "I always choose Indian Couture for my most important moments and I felt like a goddess wearing Manish Malhotra's sari with an elongated cape. I truly am humbled and grateful for this opportunity to be a part of the first South Asian brand representing at one of the most prestigious events in the world."

IAN S



Aora belts out Mithun's golden hit Jimmy Jimmy

Mumbai: Actor and K-pop singer, rapper, and music producer, Aora has blended the elements of Indian music and K-pop with his latest rendition of the chartbuster track *Jimmy Jimmy*. The new version hit the airwaves Thursday.

The cult hit was first created by the late composer Bappi Lahiri and originally featured in the Mithun Chakraborty-starrer *Disco Dancer*.

Talking about the song, Aora said: "I am thrilled to sing in Hindi for the very first time and present the K-pop version of a beloved Bollywood song like Jimmy Jimmy which happens to be one of my favourites. This collaboration exemplifies my deep admiration for Indian music and my desire to create something truly special that resonates with fans from both cultures."

For the song, Aora partnered with India's oldest music label Saregama to recreate a K-pop version of the track.

In February 2023, Aora mesmerised Indian audiences with his concerts in Mumbai and Jammu and is now determined to foster cultural exchange between India and South Korea with his music.

The song is available to stream on all major audio streaming platforms.

IAN S

Sanya talks about her vulnerable moments

Mumbai: Actress Sanya Malhotra known for *Dangal*, *Ludo*, and *Badhaai Do* has revealed she was eve-teased during her college days in the Delhi metro and felt helpless as no one helped her at all and adds that she is not safe from such incidences even as an actor.

In an interview, the Hit actress recalled one particular incident that made her feel helpless, "There was this one time when I took the metro from Green Park station and I was all alone. A group of about 4-5 boys made me uneasy, sensing trouble ahead. I couldn't shake off the feeling that something bad was about to happen. Soon enough, they began teasing and touching me. Despite my anger, I felt powerless. People often ask, "Why didn't you speak up or take action?" Yet, in such situations, you become paralyzed, your only instinct being to find a safe refuge."

The 31 year old

also disclosed an incident where a man inappropriately touched her from behind while posing for a photo. Despite being surrounded by photographers who witnessed her discomfort, none of them intervened, leaving her feeling uneasy during the encounter.

AGENCIES



BIDYAKANAK'S 5-DAY NAT'L THEATRE FEST CONCLUDES



Artists of Nahli theatre troupe of Kolkata performed Bengali play *Kunj Aur Bhut* at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar on the 5th and last evening of Bidyakanak Srujanasthana's National Theatre Festival - 2023, Thursday. Dramatised from a story of Upendra Kishore Roychoudhury by Sanjay Chattopadhyay and directed by Shaibal Das, the play emphasises how integrity is rewarded while wickedness is penalised. Prabodh Rath, secretary of the Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi, Manoj Pattanaik, Prasanna Mishra, both directors and Rotarian Debashis Mishra were among the notables in attendance. Theatre director Sriman Narayan Mishra and journalist Sasmita Sahoo received Bidyakanak Samman for contributions in their respective fields.

OP PHOTO

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

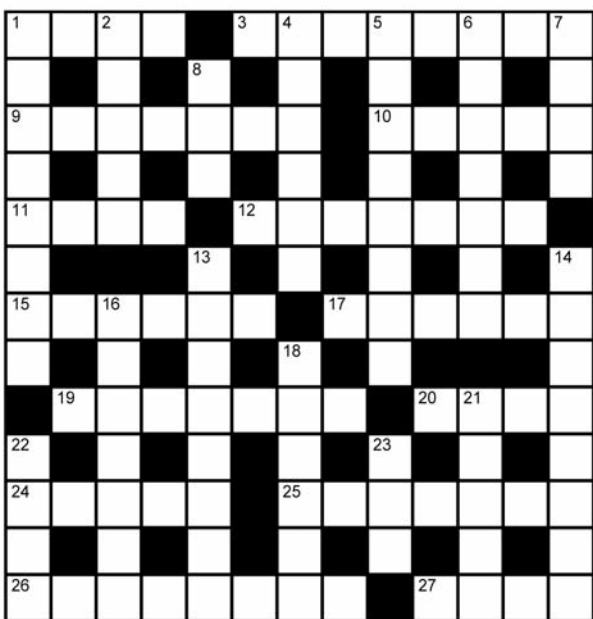


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Good fortune
- 3 Juveniles, to some (5,3)
- 9 Skull part
- 10 South American parrot
- 11 Showy flower
- 12 All together now (2,5)
- 15 Peevishness
- 17 Artist's workroom

Down

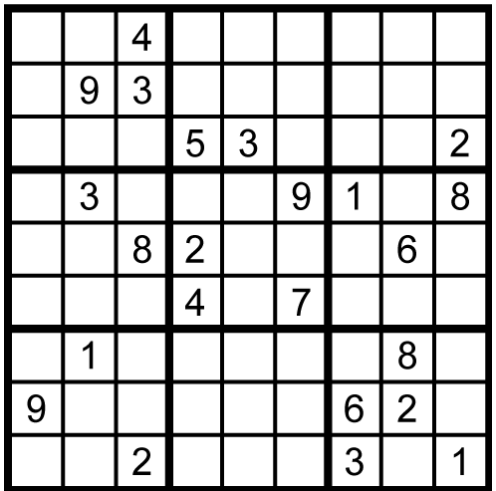
- 19 Took for granted
- 20 Courageous
- 24 Ornamental neckwear
- 25 Delinquent
- 26 Seesawed
- 27 Worry

- 5 Bawl out heatedly
- 6 Zoomed in on the job at hand
- 7 Gape
- 8 Young goat
- 13 Orderly progression
- 14 Timidity (4,4)
- 16 Rub down
- 18 Far removed
- 21 Decree
- 22 Highlander
- 23 Oolong

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.

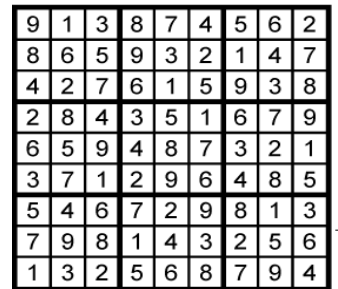


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU





STARTLING DISCLOSURE

Actor Sanya Malhotra talks about some of the vulnerable moments in her life when she felt unsafe

LEISURE



IMRAN MOVES SC

PTI chief Imran Khan files petition in the Pakistan SC challenging army deployment to aid civilian administration

INTERNATIONAL

P8



FINAL SPOT AT STAKE

Mumbai Indians face defending champions Gujarat Titans in IPL Qualifier-2 today for a place in the final

SPORTS

BACK PAGE

P1

SHORT TAKES

Tusker kills woman in Keonjhar district

Keonjhar: A woman panchayat ward member was trampled to death by an elephant in Banbiparipur village close to Telkoi forest of this district. The woman, identified as Draupadi Naik, was attacked Wednesday night and suffered grievous injuries. She died while undergoing treatment Thursday. Draupadi was a ward member of Akula Panchayat No. 10. The elephant attacked Draupadi when she had gone out to collect mangoes after a thunderstorm. Despite suffering injuries, she managed to reach her house from where she was rushed to the Telkoi medical centre. However, despite the efforts of the doctors, she breathed her last.

1 held after car hits 10 Downing Street gates

London: A man was arrested Thursday on suspicion of criminal damage and dangerous driving after a car crashed into the gates of 10 Downing Street in London, the official residence of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the Metropolitan Police said. Sunak was in his office at the time of the incident but left soon after from another exit for a pre-scheduled departure, sources informed. "Armed officers arrested a man at the scene on suspicion of criminal damage and dangerous driving. There are no reports of any injuries. Enquiries are ongoing," the Met police informed.

P8

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Govt wants only Sengol? We also have crowns, attire for kings...

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
BOURSES	SENSEX	61872.62	98.84
	NIFTY	18321.15	35.75
	DOLLAR	82.74	₹0.06
	EURO	88.76	₹0.11
	GOLD	₹59,475	₹385
CURRENCY	SILVER	₹70,373	₹713

WEATHER			
BHUB		CTK	
TEMP	MAX	40.2°C	38.4°C
	MIN	27.8°C	27.0°C
Humidity		67%	69%
Rainfall		14.5mm	15.5mm
Forecast		Light to moderate rain	



MIDNIGHT HONOUR: Director Anurag Kashyap (centre) and lead actors of the movie 'Kennedy', Sunny Leone and Rahul Bhat, pose on the red carpet in Cannes after it became the first Indian film in a decade to get midnight screening at the French Riviera town

PHOTO INSTAGRAM

Parl row now in SC

The plea filed in the apex court states that as per Article 79 of the Constitution, President Droupadi Murmu should inaugurate the new building and not Modi

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 25: The ongoing debate as to who should inaugurate the new Parliament building took a new turn Thursday with a PIL being filed in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Lok Sabha secretariat that the honour should go to President Droupadi Murmu, who is the 'first citizen of India and the head of the institution'.

The petition filed by apex court advocate Jaya Sukin says the respondents - the Lok Sabha secretariat and the Union of India - are 'humiliating' the President by not inviting her for the inauguration. Some 20 Opposition parties have decided to boycott the ceremony to protest the 'sidelining' of the President.

The PIL contended the statement issued by the Lok Sabha secretariat May 18 and invite issued by Secretary General, Lok Sabha about the inauguration of the new Parliament building are violative of the Constitution.

"The President is the first citizen of India and head of the institution of Parliament," the plea noted and sought a direction from the Supreme Court to facilitate the inauguration by Murmu.

"According to the Constitution, Parliament consists of the President of India and the two Houses of the apex legislature, the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha," the plea said.

"Article 79 of the Constitution states that there shall be a Parliament for the Union which



shall consist of the President and the two Houses - Council of States (Rajya Sabha) and the House of People (Lok Sabha). But the Respondents are not following Indian Constitution," the PIL stated.

Referring to Article 79, it said, the President is an integral part of Parliamentary form of democracy and that the apex court's interference is required to save 'democracy of this nation'.

"Further Article 87 says that at the beginning of every Parliamentary session, President shall address both Houses and inform Parliament of the causes of its summons. But the respondents (Lok Sabha secretariat and Union of India) are trying to 'humiliate' the President. The President of India Droupadi Murmu is not being invited to the inauguration of the new Parliament building," the PIL further stated.

Meanwhile a number of other parties like the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Telegu Desam Party (TDP) stated Thursday that

they will attend the inaugural ceremony' as it is of 'national importance'. Earlier YSRC president and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had said that his party MPs will attend the programme.

In another development, the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) which had stated Wednesday that it will attend the programme faced backlash from the Odisha unit of the Congress.

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik had described Murmu as his sister and a tribal daughter of the soil during the Presidential election and lobbied for her candidature, Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra said in Bhubaneswar. "Now where is his love for his sister, tribal daughter and Odisha," the Congress leader questioned.

"With this decision, Naveen has proved that he will always abide by what (Narendra) Modi desires. I condemn his decision, which is against constitutional practices and Odisha," Mishra added. **P5**

Free Wi-Fi for college, university students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: To facilitate e-learning, the Odisha government has decided to provide free Wi-Fi services in all state-run universities and colleges soon, Higher Education Minister, Rohit Pujari said here Thursday.

Pujari said this while speaking to mediapersons after a review meeting conducted by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the achievements of the department during the last four years and the fulfillment of the assurances given in the election manifesto-2019.

All the state public universities are Wi-Fi enabled at present. The Electronics and Information Technology department is in the job to provide free 1 GB data daily to the students at the campuses of all public universities and colleges before the next academic session, Pujari informed.

Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) has been asked to install, commence and operate the Wi-Fi service in the higher educational institutions, officials informed.

Pujari said steps are also being taken to set up science degree colleges in educationally disadvantaged blocks. To encourage students to do research, Chief Minister Research Incentivisation Fellowship Plan (CMRIFP) has been launched with a budgetary outlay of ₹326 crore for five years from 2023-24, informed the minister.

Pujari pointed out that over the past two decades, the number of stu-

Cheetah reintroduction faulty, says SA expert

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 25: On a day when two more cheetah cubs died at the Kuno National Park, wildlife expert from South Africa, Vincent van der Merwe said Thursday that the mortalities will rise if the 'reintroduction project' is not corrected. So far three adult cheetahs and three cubs have died at the park. Forest officials remained tight-lipped regarding the reasons behind the death of the two cubs.

Vincent recommended fencing of the cheetah habitats to circumscribe the overall threat to the big cats recently introduced in India, to prevent their 'extreme ranging behaviour', and protect the 'prey base from anthropogenic pressures'.

"There has never been a successful reintroduction (of cheetahs) into an unfenced reserve in recorded history. It has been attempted 15 times in Africa and it failed every time. We are not advocating that India must fence all of its cheetah reserves, we are saying that just fence two or three and create source reserves to top up sink reserves," Vincent said.

"Source reserves are habitats that provide optimal conditions for the population growth and



reproduction of a particular species. These areas have abundant resources, suitable habitats, and favourable environmental conditions. They can support self-sustaining populations that produce a surplus of individuals, which can then disperse to other areas," he added.

Vincent said that the reintroduction project is going to see even higher mortalities in the next few months when cheetahs try to establish territories and come face to face with leopards and tigers in the Kuno National Park.

Vincent, manager of the 'Cheetah Metapopulation Project' in South Africa, said the best way forward right now would be to get at least three or four cheetahs to 'Mukundra Hills', and let them breed up there. "Mukundra Hills is fully fenced. We know that cheetahs will do very well there. You just need to supply them with prey," he informed.

4 cow vigilantes get 7 years in jail for lynching man

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, May 25: A court in Rajasthan's Alwar district sentenced Thursday four people to seven years imprisonment for lynching Rakbar Khan on the suspicion of cow smuggling in 2018. The fifth accused in the case was acquitted due to lack of evidence.

Police had filed a charge-sheet against the accused Paramjeet Singh, Naresh Sharma, Vijay Kumar, Nawal Kishor and Dharmendra Yadav in 2019. Hearing the matter, the additional district judge, Court-1 held Paramjit, Dharmendra, Naresh and Vijay guilty under IPC sections 341 (wrongful restraint) and 304(1) (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), Public Prosecutor Ashok Sharma said. He said that the court sentenced them to seven years imprisonment and added that Nawal was acquitted due to lack of sufficient evidence.

Rakbar and his friend Aslam were beaten up severely by a group of people on suspicion of cow smuggling in an area under the Ramgarh police station area in Alwar district, July 20, 2018. They had two cows with them when they were attacked by the accused.

They had allegedly purchased the cows from Ladpura village and were taking them to their village in Haryana through a forested area near Lalawandi village when a mob attacked them. Aslam managed to escape but Khan succumbed to injuries at a hospital. The police had taken Khan to a hospital after a delay of about three hours.

Man beheads wife, roams with head

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kashinagar, May 25: Residents of Sara village under Kashinagar police limits in Gajapati district were in for shock of their life when they saw a co-villager returning home carrying the severed head of his wife, Thursday. The victim was identified as Urmila Karji and the accused, Chandrasekhar Karji.

Later police who arrested Chandrasekhar said that he beheaded his wife with an axe over domestic dispute while working at a cashew orchard near the village, Thursday morning. The gruesome incident left the residents of the entire village in a state of shock.

Sources said that during work the two had a heated argument following which Chandrasekhar attacked his wife beheading her in the process.

Other villagers informed the police when they saw Chandrasekhar walking down the village road with the severed head of his wife. The cops arrived and arrested Chandrasekhar.

Police said they have registered a case (No.60/23) and launched a probe. IIC Susant Sahu informed that further investigations are on to ascertain why Chandrasekhar committed such a gruesome act. Police also said that Urmila was the second wife of the accused.

‘Proud Mary’ falls silent

CALLED AS ‘A POWERHOUSE AMONG WOMEN SINGERS’, TINA TURNER WON 8 GRAMMY AWARDS

AGENCIES

New York, May 25: Tina Turner, the American-born singer who left a hardscrabble farming community and abusive relationship to become one of the top recording artists of all time, died Wednesday at the age of 83. She died peacefully after a long illness in her home in Küsnacht near Zurich, Switzerland, her representative said.

The singer of foot-tapping numbers like 'What's Love Got to Do With It', and 'Proud Mary' had become an icon in the entertainment industry with millions of fans worldwide.

In the video for her chart-

topping song 'What's Love Got to Do with It', in which she called love a 'second-hand emotion', Turner epitomised 1980s style as she strutted through New York City streets with her spiky blond hair, wearing a cropped jean jacket, mini skirt and stiletto heels.

Sometimes nicknamed the 'Queen of Rock 'n' Roll', Turner won six of her eight Grammy Awards in the 1980s. In that decade she landed a dozen songs in the Top 40, including 'Typical Male', 'The Best', 'Private Dancer' and 'Better Be Good to Me'. Her 1988 show in Rio de Janeiro drew 1,80,000 people, which remains one of the largest concert audiences for any single performer.

Turner was born Anna Mae Bullock November 26, 1939. Would-be husband Ike Turner discovered her when she was 17 and grabbed the microphone to sing at his club in St Louis in 1957. The band leader later recorded a hit song, 'A Fool In Love', with his protégé and gave her the stage name Tina Turner, before the two married in Tijuana, Mexico.

Ike and Tina bounced between record labels, owing much of their commercial success to a relentless touring schedule. Their biggest hit was a cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival's 'Proud Mary'.

Turner left her husband one night in 1976 on a tour stop in Dallas, after he pummelled her



during a car ride and she struck back, according to her memoir. Their divorce was finalised in 1978.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inducted Ike and Tina Turner in 1991, calling them 'one of the most formidable live acts in history'. Ike Turner died in 2007.

In 1980, she met new manager Roger Davies, an Australian music executive who went on to manage

her for three decades. That led to a solo No. 1 - 'What's Love Got to Do With It' - and then in 1984 her album 'Private Dancer' landed her at the top of the charts. 'Private Dancer' went on to become Turner's biggest album, the capstone of a career in which she sold more than 200 million records in total.

She was inspiring, warm, funny and generous. She helped me so much when I was young and I will never forget her

MICK JAGGER

Cong slams BJD's move to attend Parl opening

Condemning the decision of the BJD to participate in the inauguration of the Central Vista, the Congress says the new Parliament House should be inaugurated by President Droupadi Murmu while the BJD says Congress is doing politics over a 'non-issue'



Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader in Odisha Assembly Narasingha Mishra Thursday strongly criticised Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik over BJD's decision to take part in the inaugural ceremony of the Parliament building in New Delhi. Speaking to media, Mishra said the oppositional parties have decided to boycott the inauguration as Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself decided to inaugurate the building to get cheap political mileage. "The new Parliament House should be inaugurated by the first citizen of India, President Droupadi

“ We might have different ideologies and political views. But all who believe in democracy should grace the occasion. I welcome BJD's decision

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION MINISTER

Murmu, so that the dignity of the President will not be harmed, and the mandate of the people will not be ignored," he said. Naveen had described Murmu as his sister and a tribal daughter of the soil during the Presidential election and lobbied for her candidature, Mishra said. "Now where is his love for his sister, tribal daughter and Odisha," the

Congress leader questioned. "With this decision, Naveen has proved that he will always abide by what Modi desires. I condemn his decision, which is against constitutional practices and Odisha," he said. Senior BJD MLA Amar Prasad Satpathy said, "Our Chief Minister's decision is very clear. All our MPs will attend the inauguration of the new Parliament House. We respect the Constitution and democracy. Our Constitution has given a special importance to Parliament. So, we should not play politics, at least on the inaugural day." Further, it is the prerogative of the Lok Sabha Speaker to invite or not. So, all should obey the decision of the Speaker, Satpathy said. The BJD leader accused the Congress of doing politics over a 'non-issue'. He also raised questions over the role of Congress during the Presidential election. Meanwhile, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has welcomed the decision of BJD to attend the momentous event. "Not any single party but all had fought for India's independence. We might have different ideologies and political views. But all who believe in democracy should grace the occasion. I welcome BJD's decision," Pradhan said.



FLORAL TRIBUTE: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik offering homage to the architect of independent Odisha, Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Dev, on his death anniversary at Naveen Niwas in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Singh takes stock of rural devpt schemes

Bhubaneswar: Rural Development Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh reviewed all the schemes under the department Thursday. Singh gave strict instructions to field officers concerned to spend the approved budgetary allocation for the first three months for various projects in the financial year (FY) 2023-24 within the stipulated time.

Reports sought from DMs as nor'wester pummels state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: With the reports of widespread damage at many places across the state due to nor'wester, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Satyabrata Sahu Thursday sought damage reports from the district Collectors. There are incidents of damage to power infrastructure and falling of trees due to thunderstorms/lightning in different districts Thursday afternoon. Hence, the SRC has directed the districts to coordinate with discoms for immediate power restoration. Local fire services may be utilised for the removal of uprooted trees/broken tree trunks, he said. The Collectors have been directed to submit reports on damages to houses and casualties/injuries, if any, due to thunderstorm/lightning. Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm, lightning and gusty sur-



A car damaged in Barang area

face wind speed reaching 30-50 kmph occurred in some parts of Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Subarnapur, Boudh, Rayagada, Kandhamal, Cuttack, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Koraput, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Balasore, Puri, Keonjhar, Khurda, Ganjam and Malkangiri districts, Thursday. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted similar weather conditions for another four days and issued yellow warning for several districts.

Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places over Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, Rayagada, Koraput, Gajapati, Ganjam and Kandhamal districts Friday, it said. On the other hand, heatwave conditions also continued in some places of Odisha in the daytime. At least 14 places have recorded a maximum temperature of 40 degrees Celsius or above Thursday while five places—Talcher, Sambalpur, Nuapada, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh—experienced a temperature of above 42 degrees Celsius. There will be no large change in maximum temperature at many places over the districts of Odisha during the next 5 days. It is likely to be 42 degrees Celsius or more at one or two places during the next 24 hours over districts of Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Angul, Boudh, Sonepur, Jharsuguda and Bargarh.

Youth's body found hanging on UU campus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: A day after the brutal murder of a youth in the City here, the body of another youth was found hanging under mysterious circumstances on the campus of Utkal University, Thursday. The deceased, Uttam Kumar Nayak alias Kalia, was a native of Dandamukundapur village in Puri district. The 23-year-old youth was staying along with family members in the campus of Utkal University for the past few years. Kalia's father is an employee of the university. A woman from a nearby slum was plucking flowers inside the varsity campus when she spotted Kalia's body hanging with a towel from a tree. On being informed, Saheed Nagar police reached the spot and brought down the body which was later sent to Capital Hospital for post-mortem. Based on the complaint lodged by Kalia's father Sushanta Nayak, police registered a case (199/23) under Section 302 and started an investigation. "I suspect his friends have killed my son. Kalia came out of home after receiving a call from someone. The person who telephoned could be identified by checking his phone. I filed a case against Sania Das who had earlier threatened to kill my son during a dispute a few days ago," alleged Sushanta.

PMC to study impact of dams on Mahanadi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: Acting on relentless requests from Mahanadi Bachao Andolan, People's World Commission on Drought and Flood (PWCDF) has formed People's Mahanadi Commission (PMC) to study the impact of construction of barrages and dams on Mahanadi River. Former state RTI commissioner Jagadananda has been designated as chairman of this commission. The primary aim of the commission is to study the impact of the barrages, dams and river valley projects, and how it is affecting

drought and floods in Odisha and Chhattisgarh. The commission is going to prepare a report with recommendations in six months and submit it to PWCDF, taking advice from the world's top experts to ensure the environmental flow of Mahanadi. "The Commission will evaluate the current condition of Mahanadi River and assess the impact of human activities on its environmental flow and will recommend ways and means for ensuring the sustainable management of the river and its basin while also raising awareness about the importance of maintaining the flow

among policymakers and general public," said a source. The condition of the Mahanadi River, the 6th largest river in India, is deteriorating due to many developmental projects in the river basin and on the river itself in the upper catchment, which are seriously affecting the environmental flow of the river and are detrimental to the riparian zone and the catchment area ecology. Notably, during a consultation on 'Mahanadi Tribunal and the Future of Mahanadi' by Mahanadi Bachao Andolan in the City, there was a consensus on forming the People's Mahanadi Commission.



EXPLORING INNOVATIONS: Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee and OUAT vice-chancellor PK Roul among dignitaries during the state-level research and extension council meeting on millet at OUAT in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

Developing diabetes younger increases 'dementia risk'

The risk of developing dementia increases in persons with Type 2 diabetes who develop glucose resistance earlier in their lives, a significant study has revealed. New research published in Diabetologia, the journal of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes, shows an association between Type 2 diabetes and developing dementia in later life—with the risk of dementia increasing the earlier a person develops the disease. The study investigated the association between prediabetes and dementia. Prediabetes is an intermediate stage of high blood sugar, where



blood sugar is high but has not yet crossed the threshold for Type 2 diabetes.

"Prediabetes is associated with dementia risk, but this risk is explained by the development of di-

abetes. Diabetes onset at an early age is most strongly related to dementia," said the study by Jiaqi Hu and Professor Elizabeth Selvin of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in the US. To reach this conclusion, the authors analysed data from participants of the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study. Those enrolled were aged 45-64 years in 1987-1989 and from four US counties. The cognitive function assessments incorporated data from a scoring system involving three cognitive tests. Among 11,656 participants without diabetes at baseline, 2,330 (20 per cent) had pre-diabetes. They found that the earlier age of progression to diabetes had the strongest association with dementia—a 3 times increased risk of dementia for those developing diabetes before age 60. It fell to a 73 per cent increased risk for those developing Type 2 diabetes aged 60-69 years and 23 per cent increased risk for those developing diabetes aged 70-79 years. At ages 80 years or older, developing Type 2 diabetes was not associated with an increased risk of dementia. "Preventing or delaying the progression of prediabetes to diabetes will substantially reduce the future burden of dementia," the authors noted.

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STRAY DOG MENACE

NHRC seeks report from govt, AHPGIC

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 25: Taking suo motu cognisance of a media report showing stray dogs moving freely inside Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer (AHPGIC) in Cuttack and biting patients, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked the authorities to submit a report within six weeks. The commission has issued notices to state Chief Secretary (CS), AHPGIC director and Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) commissioner to submit a detailed reports on the matter within six weeks observing that if the media report is true, stray dogs biting patients amounts to violation of human rights. The commission instructed that the report should include the steps taken, or proposed to be taken, by the authorities to deal with the stray dog menace and to ensure the safety of the patients as well as their attendants on the hospital premises. As per reports, as many as five patients were bitten by stray dogs on the hospital premises in the last week, delaying their vital procedures like chemotherapy and radiation. According to the report carried May 22, 2023, the 281-bed premier



The commission instructed that the report should include the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the authorities to deal with stray dog menace

government cancer hospital witnesses a daily footfall of 700 to 1,000 patients. The dogs, which can be seen roaming freely in the hospital wards, bite the patients and their attendants, snatching from them food items. The media report specially cited the cases of two cancer patients who suffered dog bites on the hospital premises and as a result, their time-bound treatment for cancer was delayed. The commission observed that apparently the hospital management has not been following the Charter of Patients' Rights issued by the NHRC, which is not acceptable in a rule-based society.

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BERHAMPUR LS SEGMENT

BJD drawing up new strategy to wrest all 7 Assembly seats

FOCUS ON PARALAKHEMUNDI-MOHANA ASSEMBLY SEGMENTS WHERE THE RULING PARTY HAD LOST IN 2019 ELECTIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 25: The ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has started preparing in advance to wrest all the seven Assembly seats under the Berhampur Lok Sabha segment in 2024 elections, a report said Thursday.

The move has been necessitated after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) managed to get over 3 lakh votes from the Berhampur Lok Sabha segment despite the BJD candidate winning the seat in the 2019 general elections.

BJD's Lok Sabha candidate Chandra Sekhar Sahu won from the Berhampur Lok Sabha segment by winning only 1,42,832 votes. BJP candidate Bhruugu Buxipatra came second by winning 3,48,999 votes. Congress candidate V Chandrasekhar Naidu came third by winning only 1,42,832 votes.

The results surprised local intelligentsia, political pundits, party observers and political analysts as the BJP which had no base in this Lok Sabha segment in earlier elections could manage to get over 3 lakh votes in the 2019 elections. Observers believed that this might have become possible with all the pocket votes of the grand old party Congress going to the saffron party.

This Lok Sabha segment comprises Chhatrapur, Berhampur, Gopalpur, Digapahandi and Chikiti Assembly seats from Ganjam district as well as Mohana and Paralakhemundi Assembly segments in neighbouring Gajapati district. The ruling BJD won from all the five Assembly segments in Ganjam district while BJP won from Paralakhemundi and Congress from Mohana Assembly segments in Gajapati district.

Now, BJD has set its eyes on Paralakhemundi and Mohana Assembly segments in Gajapati district. BJD's Berhampur Lok Sabha MP Chandra Sekhar Sahu is spending majority of his time in a month in Gajapati district. BJD's Gajapati district observer and state minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak visited Paralakhemundi during



the first week of this month and supervised the organisational network and strength in the district. A day later, BJD's organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das alias Bobby and minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak suddenly toured Paralakhemundi and held hectic discussions with party leaders and workers in the presence of party MP Sahu.

Therefore, it is anticipated that BJD is preparing an advanced strategy to win from Paralakhemundi and Mohana Assembly segments where it had lost in the 2019 elections. Observers speculated that laying stress on Gajapati district might be part of a greater strategy by the ruling party.

In another case, BJD MLA Pradiip Panigrahi, who had won from Gopalpur Assembly segment under the Berhampur Lok Sabha segment in the 2019 polls, was sacked from the party two years back.

BJD's party organisation is now being looked after by the Chief Minister's political secretary Gopabandhu Das in this Assembly segment. It is still uncertain who will be fielded by the party from this Assembly segment in 2024 elections.

On the other hand, intense infighting has gripped the ruling party in Chhatrapur. A new faction is opposing the party MLA Subhash Chandra Behera in this

Assembly segment for which several new faces have started lobbying hard to get the party ticket from Chhatrapur Assembly segment in the next elections.

Digapahandi MLA Surya Narayan Patra has withdrawn from active politics due to his illness putting the party's position in Digapahandi in an uncertainty. Similarly, Chikiti MLA Usha Devi is now a Cabinet minister in the state but

party workers are unsure whether she will contest from this seat in the next election or allow his son to contest from this Assembly segment. Some frontline leaders of the party are also lobbying hard for the party ticket from this Assembly segment.

BJD's Berhampur MLA Bikram Panda, who lost from this seat four times from 2000 to 2014 as a Congress candidate, became an MLA only after he joined BJD before 2019 elections. A section of party workers are also opposing Panda in this seat.

However, he has managed to keep himself as well as the party safe in this seat due to his continuous and sustained efforts. As a result, the ruling party is in a better and safe position in Berhampur Assembly segment than the rest four Assembly segments in Ganjam district under Berhampur Lok Sabha segment.

Two siblings held for murder



AGENCIES

Kendrapara, May 25: Jamboo Marine police Thursday solved the mysterious murder of a woman two years back with the arrest of two siblings, Kendrapara superintendent of police (SP) Sandeep Sampat Madkar said.

Police also seized a knife, a bike, used for the crime, and also a gold Hanuman locket from the possession of the accused.

Police identified the accused as Pabitra Khuntia, 28, and his elder brother, Basant Khuntia, 36, of Khamagaonbindha under Marshaghai police station.

The SP said Pabitra in association with his brother Basant conspired and murdered his wife Mina alias Sonali Behera, 30, and attempted to kill their 4-year-old child as he suspected the character of his wife. He also suspected that he was not the biological father of his son.

Pabitra took Mina and his son on his bike June 25, 2021 on the pretext of visiting Bhitarkanika National Park where he slit the throat of Mina and dashed the head of the child against a pole in the forest before fleeing the spot.

On getting information, Jamboo Marine police on the next day seized the body of Mina and sent it for autopsy and rushed the critically injured child to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

Mother, step dad sentenced to life for killing minor



PNN & AGENCIES

Balasure, May 25: Additional sessions judge Biswajit Das Thursday convicted a mother and step father for murdering their 13-year-old minor girl and sentenced them to life imprisonment along with a fine of ₹5,000.

Special Public Prosecutor Pranab Kumar Panda said they will have to undergo additional jail term of six months if they failed to pay the fine, the court ruled.

The convicts are identified as Baby Biwi and her second husband SK Abdul Rahim, resident of Khwajabag, Rezaulla Lane under Town police station limits of Balasure district.

Baby and Abdul were arrested after Sheikh Qutbuddin, the first

husband of accused Baby, in an FIR June 25, 2022 lodged with Town police alleged that his daughter was murdered by her mother.

The deceased who was residing with her mother and step father died under suspicious circumstances June 22 last year.

The mother of the deceased maintained that she was afflicted with black magic syndromes and succumbed to the evil spirit's effects. She too performed her last rites.

However, she revealed to her close aides that she with the help of her second husband strangled her to death to eliminate her from their life.

Sheikh Qutbuddin, her first husband, lodged an FIR after he heard about the conspiracy.

The duo confessed to their crime during police interrogation.

3 leopard skins seized; 1 nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: The Special Task Force (STF) of Crime Branch has arrested a wildlife criminal and seized three leopard hides in a raid in Rayagada district. The accused identified as Dambrudhar Majhi is a resident of Hundibora area under Tikiri police limits in Rayagada district.

Following a tip-off, a team of STF raided a secluded place on Rayagada- Koraput NH-326 near Siriguda Swargadham Chowk of Rayagada town Wednesday afternoon. The sleuths found Majhi waiting for the buyer at the spot.

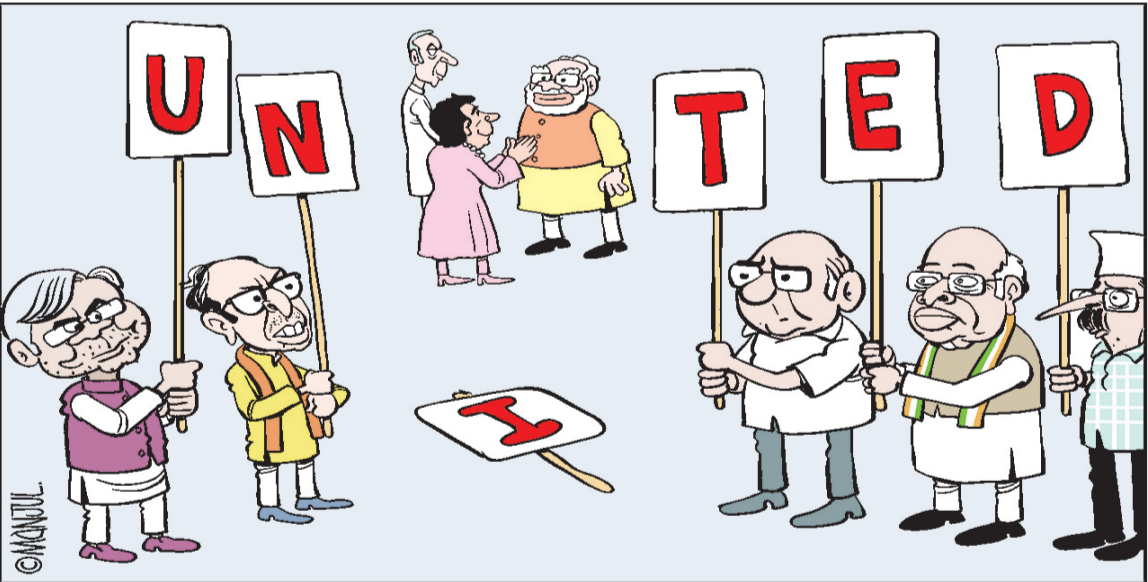
"During the search, three leopard skins and other incriminating



materials were recovered from his possession. The accused person could not produce any document in support of possessing such leopard skins for which he has been arrested and will be forwarded to the Court of SDJM, Rayagada district, Rayagada," STF sources said.

A case (12/23) under Sections 379,411,120 (B) IPC and Section 51 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 has been registered by the STF. The STF sources stated that the leopard skins seized during the raid will be sent to Director of Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun for biological examination.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



OPERATIONAL DELAY

Power cuts, low voltage irk residents

POST NEWS NETWORK

Brahmabarada, May 25: With summer at its worst and temperatures recording above 40 degree Celsius in most parts of the state, unscheduled power cuts have added to the misery of people in Brahmabarada area under Rasulpur block in Jajpur district.

Frequent power cuts and low voltage have made life miserable for the residents despite the state government's tall claims of having adequate power to meet the demand in peak hours.

However, in sharp contrast to this claim, people in Brahmabarada area under Kuakhia electric sub-division of Rasulpur block are reeling under undeclared power cuts for around five to 10 times a day as a newly built electric structure in the area is yet to become operational.

The area has around 12,000 to 15,000 consumers and they depend on Sujapur electric structure which is around 15 km from the place. Power supply comes to a grinding halt in the area when there is slight rain or heavy wind, not to speak of a thunderstorm or torrential rainfall. This has flared up protests as



CRISIS IN BRAHMABARADA

anger has been brewing among the local residents.

The population in the area is rising day by day due to its proximity to National Highway-16. Evidently, the number of power consumers is also increasing. Power officials said that power cuts are occurring in the area due to overloading but residents are not ready to listen to anything.

They have demanded the power officials and the local political representatives to intervene and make the electric structure operational as soon as possible. They have warned of agitation if their pleas are left unaddressed. Sources said people in Brahmabarada

area had demanded establishment of the electric structure in view of the rising population in the area.

A delegation of the residents had met the then Bari MLA Debashis Nayak and pressed him for establishment of an electric structure. Their demands were accepted following which Nayak laid the foundation stone for the electric structure near Brahmabarada College in Brahmabarada panchayat in 2018.

Meanwhile, the construction of the electric structure has been completed since a year back while final checking has also been completed. However, unfortunately it is yet to become operational.

The annoying power problem has slightly been resolved after Tata Power took over power distribution charge in the state but there is no end to sufferings of people with undeclared power cuts getting frequent in the area with each passing day.

People alleged that they have been facing undeclared power cuts at least five to 10 times in a day while low voltage problem is adding to their woes. Efforts to get the response of the power officials failed to yield any results.

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DEMAND NOTICE

DEMAND NOTICE UNDER SECTION 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT,2002

You, the below mentioned borrower & Co-Borrower, have availed loan from Bank of India, Gopalpur Branch by mortgaging your immovable/movable property . You, the below mentioned borrower & Co-Borrower, have stood as borrower & Co-Borrower in respect of the said loan so availed . Consequent to the default committed by you all, your loan account/s has been classified as Non Performing Assets . The bank has, for the recovery of the outstanding dues, issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the Act) which could not be served and therefore the contents of the same are being published herewith as per section 13(2) of the Act read with rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 as and by way of service upon you . Details of the borrower & Co-Borrower, property mortgaged, outstanding dues, Demand Notice sent under section 13(2) and amount claimed thereunder are given as under .

Branch Name / Name & Address of Borrower/Co-Borrower, Loan A/c No.	Date of NPA	Date of Notice under SARFAESI Act	Amount as per Notice under SARFAESI Act	Details of the Mortgaged Property
GOPALPUR BRANCH Borrower: Mr Santosh Kumar Baliarsingh, S/o: Mr Krushna Mohan Baliarsingh, Co-Borrower: Mr Sunil Kumar Baliarsingh, S/o: Mr Santosh Kumar Baliarsingh, both are resident of Jagirbada, Begunia, Khurda-752082 . Loan A/c No.: 5117511000077 (Housing Loan) .	30.03.2023	27.04.2023	Rs. 14,44,779.45 + interest and other expenses thereon	All the part and parcel of land/land and building situated over Plot No.599, Khata No.407, Area: 0.100 dec., Mouza: Jagiribada, PS.: Begunia, Thana No.72, Tahasil/SRO: Begunia, Dist: Khurda, standing in the name of Mr Santosh Kumar Baliarsingh, bounded by: North-Govt. Land & Road (N.H. 57 Khurda to Nayagarh), South- Chittaranjan Nayak, East-Govt. Road, West- Abdul Rashid Khan

You the borrower and Co-Borrower are therefore called upon to make payment of the above mentioned amount-due with further interest payment in full within **60 days** of this notice failing which the undersigned shall be constrained to take action under the said Act to enforce the above-mentioned securities . Please take note that as per Sub-section (13) of the aforesaid Act, after receipt of this notice, you are restrained from transferring or creating any encumbrances on the aforesaid secured assets whether by way of sale, lease, license, gift, mortgage or otherwise . Your attention is also invited to Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured asset .

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 25.05.2023

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

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Branch Address : Annapurma Complex, 559, Lewis Road, Cuttack-Puri Road, Bhubaneswar - 751 014

DEMAND NOTICE

DEMAND NOTICE ISSUED UNDER SECTION 13[2] OF THE SECURISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002

You, the under mentioned Borrower / Mortgagee is hereby informed that the Company has initiated proceedings against you under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and that the Notice under 13(2) of the Act sent to you by Registered Post Ack. Due for Borrower/s has been returned undelivered. Hence, you are hereby called upon to take notice and pay the outstanding loan amount mentioned against the said account with Interest accruing there from within 60 days from the date of this publication, failing which the Company will proceed against you by exercising its right under Sub-Sec (4) of Section 13 of the Act by enforcing the below mentioned security to realize its dues with interests and cost. It is needles to mention that this notice is addressed to you without prejudice to any other remedy available to the Company.


Sl. No.	a) Loan Account Number b) Name and Address of Borrower / Co-borrower	Loan Amount	Date of Demand Notice & Demand Notice Amount & Date of NPA	Description of the Property / Secured Assets
1.	a) Loan A/c. Nos. : HE01URI00000016478 & HE01URI00000017847 b) 1. Tanushree Mohapatra (Applicant) 2. Dhananjaya Mohapatra (Co-Applicant) 3. Utkal Traders (Co-Applicant) All are at : Nuagaon, Puri, Odisha Near Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Puri, Odisha, Pin - 752 014.	Rs. 25,00,000/- & Rs. 1,00,000/- Totaling Rs. 26,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Six Lakhs only)	10.05.2023 Rs. 26,04,633.00 (Rupees Twenty Six Lakh Four Thousand Six Hundred and Thirty Three only) as on 08.05.2023 Date of NPA : 08.05.2023	All that Landed Property of Hal Plot No.1271/8506, Hal Khaitan No.1795/652, Mouza - Srimanchandrapur-24, Tahasil - Satyabadi, Tahasil No. 481, Thana No. 110, Measuring An Area Ac.0.180 Decimals, Kisam-Garabari. Bounded as Follows : On the North - Seller Plot, On the South - Govt Road, On the East-Seller Plot, On the West - Promod Kumar Mohanty.
2.	a) Loan A/c. Nos. : X0HEBHU00003446181, X0HEBHU00003498337 & X0HEBHU00004131348 b) 1. Sunil Kumar Panda (Applicant) 2. Sibananda Panda (Co-applicant) 3. M/s. Arogya Drug House (Co-applicant) 4. Sabita Panda (Co-applicant) All are at : Santapur, near Hanuman Temple Balugaon Banpur, Odisha, Pin - 752 030.	Rs. 59,00,000/- & Rs. 1,00,000/- & Rs. 25,00,000/- Totaling Rs. 85,00,000/- (Rupees Eighty Five Lakhs only)	10.05.2023 Rs. 74,93,835.00 (Rupees Seventy Four Lakh Ninety Three Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty Five only) as on 08.05.2023 Date of NPA : 08.05.2023	District - Khurda, Tahasil - Bhubaneswar, under the Jurisdiction of Office of the District Sub-Registrar, Khurda (BBSR), P.S. - New Capital, P.S. No. 28, Mouza - Bhubaneswar Sahara, Unit No. 38, Pandara, Mutation Khata No. 1330/148, Shitbilan Plot No. 3895/6061, Area Ac 0.030 Decs, & Plot No. 3897/6062, Area Ac 0.045 Decs & Plot No. 3898/6074, Area Ac 0.007 Decs Kisam - Gharabari, Total Area Ac 0.082 Dec which corresponding to Khata No. 520, Plot No. 3895, Area Ac 0.030 Dec out of Area Ac 0.240 Dec, Plot No. 3897, Area Ac 0.045 Dec out of Area Ac 0.130 Dec & Khata No. 280, Plot No. 3898, Area Ac 0.007 Dec out of Area Ac 0.130 Dec marked as Sub Plot No-20. Bounded by : North - Sub Plot No. 21, South - Sub Plot No. 19, East - Plot No. 3999, West - Road.

Date : 26.05.2023
Place : Bhubaneswar, Odisha

For M/s. Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited
Authorised Officer

“Be courageous, enduring, and vigilant and above all, be sincere, with perfect honesty. Then you will be able to face all difficulties.”

THE MOTHER



Bedlam in Af-Pak

Afghanistan and Pakistan are sinking deeper into disarray, and the United States bears a significant share of the blame. As long as this long-troubled region remains mired in turmoil, Islamist terrorism will continue to thrive, with grave implications for international security.

Begin with Afghanistan. In the nearly 22 months since the US abandoned the country to the Pakistan-backed Taliban militia, a terrorist super-state has emerged. Beyond committing atrocities against the Afghan people and re-imposing medieval practices, including reducing Afghan women’s status to that of chattels, the Taliban has sustained cozy ties with al-Qaeda and several other terror groups.

As a leaked Pentagon assessment reports, Afghanistan has become a safe haven and staging ground for al-Qaeda and Islamic State terrorists planning attacks on targets in Asia, Europe, and the US. This should come as no surprise. The Taliban regime’s cabinet includes a veritable who’s who of international terrorists and narcotics traffickers, and it was in Kabul last year that an American drone strike killed al-Qaeda leader and United Nations-designated global terrorist Ayman al-Zawahiri.

While the Islamic State may be seeking to expand its international operations from Afghanistan, it is al-Qaeda’s alliance with the Taliban that poses the greater long-term international threat. When the US withdrew suddenly from the country, it not only abandoned its allies there, but also left behind billions of dollars’ worth of sophisticated American military equipment, in addition to several military bases, including the strategically valuable Bagram airbase. The Taliban is now the world’s only terrorist organisation with its own air force, however rudimentary.

In a 12-page document issued last month, President Joe Biden’s administration sought to shift the blame for the Afghan fiasco onto Donald Trump, claiming that Biden’s “choices for how to execute a withdrawal from Afghanistan were severely constrained by conditions created by his predecessor.” But, while the Trump administration undoubtedly cut a terrible deal with the Taliban, it was Biden who – overruling his top military generals – made the choices that triggered Afghanistan’s descent into chaos and facilitated the Taliban’s swift return to power.

US policy toward Pakistan has also been deeply misguided. It is thanks to a longstanding partnership with the US that Pakistan’s military and its rogue Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency have been able to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy against neighbouring countries. The Trump administration seemed to recognise this, and pledged to keep Pakistan at arm’s length until it ended its unholy alliance with terrorist organisations.

But the Biden administration has reversed this policy. Even though Pakistan played an integral role in enabling the Taliban – which the ISI helped create in the early 1990s – to defeat the US in Afghanistan, the Biden administration helped the Pakistani government stave off debt default last year. Soon after, the US unveiled a \$450-million deal to modernise Pakistan’s US-supplied F-16s (which it values as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons). The US then helped Pakistan get off the “gray list” maintained by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force, the inter-governmental agency combating terrorist financing.

Today, Pakistan is facing profound political instability, rooted in a skewed civil-military relationship. Pakistan’s military has long been untouchable. It has ruled directly for 33 years. And when not technically in power, it has insisted on a pliant civilian administration that defers to the generals’ de facto leadership. Pakistan’s military, and its intelligence and nuclear establishment, have never answered to the civilian government. On the contrary, since 2017, two prime ministers have been ousted after falling out of favour with the military.

But supporters of one of those prime ministers, Imran Khan, are now mounting the first direct challenge to the military’s authority since Pakistan’s founding 75 years ago. Following Khan’s arrest on corruption charges earlier this month, mass protests erupted across Pakistan.

Demonstrators stormed military properties, including the army headquarters and a major ISI facility, and set ablaze a top army commander’s home. As the political crisis unfolds, Pakistan continues to teeter on the brink of default. It is being kept afloat by short-term loans from allies, until it can convince the International Monetary Fund to restart a suspended bailout programme. This gives the international community leverage to force change in the country.

It is developments at home, especially the unprecedented anti-military protests, that have the greatest potential to force a rebalancing of civilian-military relations. But the military will not go down without a fight: the creeping shadow of military rule has already led to mass arrests, with the chief of army staff announcing trials under military law of civilians charged in the recent violence. The military could declare a state of emergency, in order to give itself carte blanche to stifle dissent, or it could stage another coup. The conflict could also erupt into civil war – ideal conditions for international terrorist forces to thrive.

For now, Pakistan remains a hub of terrorism and is contributing significantly to Afghanistan’s destabilisation. Unless the nexus between Pakistan’s military and terrorist groups is severed, the situation in Afghanistan will not improve, and the battle against international terrorism will not be won.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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WISDOM CORNER

- “What we have once enjoyed we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”

HELEN KELLER
- “Success is due to our stretching to the challenges of life. Failure comes when we shrink from them.”

JOHN C. MAXWELL
- “Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go.”

T. S. ELIOT

WORDSWORTH

Impignorate

This was chiefly a Scots term, the Oxford English Dictionary says, meaning to place in pawn or to pledge or mortgage. It was taken from Latin *pignare*, to pledge. So it isn’t surprising to find it in Daniel Brewster’s Edinburgh Encyclopaedia of 1830: “In the year 1468, Orkney and Zetland were impignorate to James III of Scotland, as a portion of the dowry of his Danish queen.” Another Scot, Robert Louis Stevenson, used it several times in letters, as here to a friend from Honolulu in 1889: “I have got the yacht paid off in triumph, I think; and though we stay here impignorate, it should not be for long, even if you bring us no extra help from home.” But you will search in vain for a more recent serious use, except in the occasional crossword puzzle clue. A supposed letter from a poet to an editor who had displeased him appeared in some American newspapers during 1905: “I tell you, without supervacaneous words, nothing will render ignoscible your conduct to me. I warn you that I would velleicate your nose if I thought that any moral diarthrosis thereby could be performed – if I thought I should not impignorate my reputation.”

FOCUS NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI

CONSTITUTIONAL CONUNDRUM



Judicial review, which is a basic foundational structure of our Constitution, cannot be obliterated by blatant misuse of ordinances to promote political interests and bypass parliamentary debate



Satya Narayan Misra

GANDHI WAS OPPOSED TO ORDINANCE. YET AMBEDKAR WON THE DAY BY CALLING IT A NECESSARY EVIL

The Central government has promulgated an ordinance to nullify a unanimous Supreme Court (SC) judgement, handing over the reins of civil servants in National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD) to the Council of Ministers & for Lt Governor to act on aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. It has also created an NCCSA (National Capital Civil Service Authority) headed by the Delhi CM to deal with service conditions, transfer and posting. Sensing that the ordinance may attract flak, it has now filed a review petition. The spat between the Lt Governor as representative of the President and the CM of NCTD in the matter of who controls the Services has been festering since a notification was issued in 2015 that they will be controlled by the Lt Governor. When the NCTD was created in 1991 through the 69th Amendment it was clearly specified in Article 239 AA (3) (a) that except for public order, police, and land, the Delhi Legislative Assembly will have the power to make law in all matters enumerated in State & Concurrent Lists of the Constitution.

A committee under Justice Balakrishna had recommended in 1991 that the administration of UTs will be part of the Services of the Union even after setting up a legislative council. Given such lack of clarity in the Constitutional provisions and conflicting perspectives, when the matter went to the SC for a decision in 2018, the court ruled that the Lt Governor is bound to follow the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers on all matters except those pertaining to police, public order and land. It also famously observed that “there is no room for absolutism (of Modi) and for anarchism (of Kejriwal) also.” The judgement of 11 May, 2023 goes beyond this and clarifies a wide range of debates and disputes. The SC rightly observes that the civil services in a cabinet form of government are the soul of ad-

ministration. In the triple chain of command, civil services is accountable to ministers, ministers to Parliament/Legislatures, and Parliament is accountable to the electorate. Given the trend of civil servants chiming with the party in power, rather than enforcing the rule of law, the SC has tried to fill a void in Part XIV to rule that Services referred to in this part include UTs as well.

In this quest for clarity, the judges fall back on Article 367 which talks of Interpretation and Para 3 of the General Clauses Act of 1897, where the term state would mean ‘states specified in the first schedule and includes a UT’. This was the article that the government used for scrapping the special status of J&K. Having included UT under the panoply of Services, the SC also avers that Article 239AA gives sui generis status to Delhi. It also concludes that “in a democratic form of government, the real power of administration must reside in the elected arm of the state.” Nothing would have warmed the cockles of

Kejriwal than this unexpected bonanza from the SC.

The ordinance by the Central government under Article 123 creates an NCCSA with the CM at the head and Chief Secretary & Home Secretary as members to decide all Service matters pertaining to Group A and DANICS. The decision will be taken on the basis of the majority. Quite clearly, it’s a ludicrous structure where two bureaucrats who report to the CM can overrule him. The Lt Governor would have primacy in Service matters as he can return the proposals for reconsideration and if not agreed to by the NCCSA, thump his writ over the matter. It would have made sense if NCCSA had CM as the head with CJ of Delhi High Court and LoP as members.

The flagrant misuse of an ordinance-making was adversely commented upon in the landmark DC Wadhwa Vs State of Bihar in 1986 when the court concluded: The power to promulgate an ordinance is essentially a power to be used to meet an extraordinary

situation and it cannot be allowed to be “perverted to serve political ends.” Earlier in RC Cooper Vs Uol’s (1970) case when the government nationalised 14 banks through an ordinance the SC opined that the ordinance was issued not because “immediate action was required but to bypass the Parliamentary debate.” The scope of judicial review over ordinances promulgated by the government was widened by the SC in KK Singh Vs State of Bihar (2017) when it observed that the court will look if it has been passed based on relevant material or whether it amounted to a fraud on power or was actuated by an oblique motive. Unfettered re-formulation of ordinances is unconstitutional.

The ordinance making power of the President was hugely debated by members of the Constituent Assembly. Some members suggested that no ordinance should deprive any citizen of his right to personal liberty except on conviction after trial by a competent court of law. Others said it should expire within 30 days. Gandhi was opposed to ordinance. Yet Ambedkar won the day by calling it a necessary evil. The sentiment holds ground, going by its spurt in 2019 (16) and 2020(15). The Indian experience, including the present one on NCTD smacks of blatant misuse by an autocratic centre, which skirts debate and is intolerant of alternative viewpoints. The last word on the present conundrum in NCTD is yet to play out. The majesty of constitutional morality and power of the SC to deliver clear rulings in areas obfuscated by conflicting subjective perspectives must be respected. Judicial review, which is a basic foundational structure of our Constitution, cannot be obliterated by blatant misuse of ordinances to promote political interests and bypass parliamentary debate.

The writer teaches Constitutional Law. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

Trade and human rights

On 23 May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was playing 20-20 cricket match in an entertainment venue in the City’s Olympic Park in Sydney. As his wont, Modi used the cricketing metaphor to accelerate bilateral relations between the two continents, India and Australia. I call the former a continent for its population and its diversities whereas the latter is known as one for its size and of course resources. Modi said with the Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese by his side, “our ties have entered the T20 mode, our democratic values are the foundation of our ties. Our relations are based on mutual trust and respect. The Indian community in Australia is a living bridge between our countries.”

The grand reception Modi received from an overwhelmingly admiring crowd was likened by Albanese to that of the popular rock star Bruce Springsteen, whose moniker is ‘The Boss’. Calling Modi “the Boss”, Albanese said, “The last time I saw someone on the stage here was Bruce Springsteen, and he didn’t get the welcome that Prime Minister Modi has got.” This comparison was appreciated by a thunderous applause from the Indian diaspora in Australia. That said, let us look at the tangible achievements of the visit.

Both countries are certainly coming closer in their respective interests. I have said a few times before in this column, India is next stop for Australia off the Persian Gulf. India is the most populous country in the world with by far the biggest emerging market. As some American Indologists suggest even if India does a few things wrong, they will be able to solve them and still create and retain the biggest market in just a decade for quite a long time. Supposedly, the Chinese Economy will be on an irreversible decline should the Americans decide to pull the rug from under Beijing’s feet. Australians have perhaps realised that, and as the diplomatic ill-luck would have it, the relations between Canberra and Beijing have soured.

For India, Australia is the biggest supplier of food and energy. It is a partner member of Quad. Both are in the process of signing a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. Political, economic, and strategic complementarities are too big to ignore, especially the common threat posed by China. As the saying goes in India, “The blind does not lose his stick twice.” Australians have walked out of Quad once perhaps at the behest of Beijing. That is

unlikely to happen again. So, the proximity between New Delhi and Canberra will potentially grow.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra in his brief to the Press, said that the talks held between the Prime Ministers of India and Australia focussed on 11 bilateral topics. They were all under the two main rubrics of regional security and economic ties – trade and investment. Modi himself talking to the Press said, “We had constructive discussions on strengthening our strategic cooperation in the sectors of mining and critical minerals...We have decided to set up a task force on green hydrogen.” In addition, issues of defence, security, people-to-people ties formed parts of the bilateral exchange.

Apart from bilateralism, the two leaders discussed the regional challenges, events of regional consequences, like the expansion by Beijing in the South China sea, and East China sea.

To the delight of Indian students and business community Albanese announced the opening of a new Consulate in Bangalore and signed a migration deal to boost Indian students and business travel to Australia.

To the queries from the media on the recent assaults on Indians in Australia, Modi said, “Prime

Minister Anthony Albanese and I have in the past discussed the issue of attack on temples in Australia and activities of separatist elements. We discussed the matter today as well. We will not accept any elements that harm the friendly and warm ties between the India-Australia relationship by their action or thoughts. PM Albanese assured me once again today that he will take strict actions against such elements in the future also”.

On the other hand, Albanese skirted the questions on attacks on journalists and minorities in India and India’s support to Russia on the Ukraine war. He simply said: “New Delhi knows well what it’s doing in its relations. We know them to be non-aligned.”

The questions of human rights, civil liberties, and religious freedoms are main casualties in the big discussions on trade, investment, and national security. Some leader in some country, should begin to talk about the balance between trade and human rights, indeed the balance in world affairs that India should lead, as we have been entreating in this column.

The writer is Secretary General, Association of Democratic Socialism.

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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
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Crowd control

Sir, India is increasingly becoming a “hotspot” for accidents, as a result of massive crowds, leading to jostling and stampede, according to an Australian study. The journal “Safety Science” has attributed 70 per cent of accident deaths between 2010 and 2019 to religious gatherings near riverbeds and on bridges. The quality of crowd management is a far cry from expected standards in India. However, what the study fails to explain is the tendency of the authorities to take people for granted. The New South Wales study has blamed “financial constraints” to upkeep structures as one reason for the crowd related tragedies in India. But what the country lacks is a strong sense of disaster-anticipation. Things do not start on time, restless people are compelled to wait for long, barricades don’t exist or are hardly fool proof, lack of sufficient manpower to control the crowd is so palpable.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Sinking city

Sir, New York City may be sinking under its own weight because the buildings are too heavy, scientists warn. Scientists estimate the mass of the 1,084,954 buildings within the five boroughs of New York City is 1.68 trillion pounds. The combined weight of New York City’s buildings may be causing the metropolis to sink, researchers have said. However, there may be other reasons why the city is sinking – including the way the earth continues to shift after the end of the last Ice Age more than 10,000 years ago, scientists added. Understanding how and why areas such as New York City may be sinking helps researchers estimate the flood risks these areas may face in the future because of climate change. Sea levels along the Atlantic Coast of North America are expected to rise three to four times faster than the global average, researchers noted. “Sea level rise is eventually going to pose inundation challenges in New York and globally,” study lead author Tom Parsons told Live Science. The reason for this could be natural. During the coldest parts of the last Ice Age, giant ice sheets covered much of the planet. This caused the ground directly underneath the ice sheets to sink, which in turn made the edges of landmasses tilt up. After these ice sheets melted, areas that had been shoved up are now sinking down, which previous research suggests may result in as much as 19 to 59 inches of subsidence along the East Coast by 2100.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

tier dairy cooperative system is functioning effectively since 1981 for the benefit of the rural milk producers and consumers, Stalin said.

In order to increase and sustain milk production in Tamil Nadu, Aavin also provides various inputs such as cattle feed, fodder, mineral mixture, animal health care and breeding services for animals of milk producers. In addition, it ensures the supply of quality milk and milk products to consumers at one of the lowest prices in our country. Thus, Aavin plays a vital role in improving the livelihood of rural milk producers and the meeting the nutritional requirement of consumers, he said.



यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया
A Government of India Undertaking

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(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) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Movable/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" and "As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on **27.06.2023**, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to **Union Bank of India** from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder.

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Name & Address of Borrower:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. Lipilekha Industries, Prop.: Jimit Kumar Mitra, At: Kendrapara, Odisha, Legal Heirs: 1) Jyotshnarani Mitra, 2) Pradeep Kumar Mitra, 3) Sandeep Kumar Mitra, 4) Hemdeep Kumar Mitra, 5) Kuldeep Kumar Mitra, 6) Chinmayee Sen, 7) Purnashree Das, 8) Itishree Dey, All are R/O.: Purusottam Vihar, PHD Colony, Vill: Samraipur, P.O/P.S/Dist.: Bhadrak	₹ 8,51,281/- as on 31.10.2009 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No. 1: All that part and parcel of Land and Building situated at Mouza: Samraipur, PS.: Bhadrak, Tahasil: Bhadrak, bearing Khata No.: 821/792, Plot No.: 472/3388, **Total Area: Ac.0.140 Dec.**, KISSAM: Gharbari
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹60,32,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹6,03,200/-

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Name & Address of Borrower/ Guarantor:	Amount Due
Borrower: M/s. Rekha Home Appliances, Prop.: Chandan Kumar Pati, Vill.: Tandara, PO.: Badabiruan, PS.: Panikoli, Dist.: Jaipur - 755015 Guarantor: Mrs. Sasmita Adhikari, W/o.: Chandan Kumar Pati, Vill.: Tandara, PO.: Badabiruan, PS.: Panikoli, Dist.: Jaipur - 755015	₹ 90,37,844.35 on 31.03.2022 with further interest, Cost and expenses

Property No. 2: Existing EM of Freehold Homestead Land in the name of **Chandan Kumar Pati**, Khata No.: 707/95, Plot No.: 1185, Area: Ac.0.42 Dec., Plot No.: 1181, Area: Ac.0.08 Dec., Plot No.: 1179, Area: Ac.0.10 Dec., **Total Area: Ac.0.60 Dec.**, KISSAM: Homestead (Gharabari), Stitiban, The property situated at Dist.: Jaipur, PS.: Panikoli, P. No.: 180, Mouza: Nuapatana, under Tahasil: Vyasanagar, Tahasil No.: 431
Type of Possession: Symbolic / Reserve Price: ₹35,10,000/- / Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹3,51,000/-

BID INCREMENT AMOUNT FOR EACH PROPERTY : ₹10,000/-

DATE & TIME OF E-AUCTION : 27.06.2023 between 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
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Place : Balasore Date: 25.05.2023	Sd/- Authorized Officer Union Bank of India
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Iconic Howrah Bridge to undergo checkup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 25: The 80-year-old iconic Howrah Bridge, which connects the twin cities of Howrah and Kolkata over the Hooghly river, will undergo a detailed health checkup after a gap of 11 years, said a top official of Kolkata port that maintains the structure.

The comprehensive health checkup of the cantilever bridge will be done in consultation with IIT Madras, Kolkata port chairman Rathendra Raman said.

The proposed exercise will be taken up in addition to the routine maintenance of the bridge, he said. "We have decided to conduct an in-depth study on the health of the Howrah Bridge, which hasn't been done for over a decade. This study will provide us with valuable insights on how to improve the bridge's lifespan," Raman said.

A comprehensive health checkup of the bridge was previously con-

THE HOWRAH BRIDGE, ALSO KNOWN AS RABINDRA SETU, WITH 405 METRES IN LENGTH AND 21.6 METRES IN WIDTH, IS CONSIDERED A SYMBOL OF KOLKATA SINCE ITS INAUGURATION IN 1943



ducted 11 years ago, with the expertise of RITES, another official said. The Howrah Bridge, also

known as Rabindra Setu, with 405 metres in length and 21.6 metres in width, is considered a symbol

THE COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH CHECKUP OF THE CANTILEVER BRIDGE WILL BE DONE IN CONSULTATION WITH IIT MADRAS, KOLKATA PORT CHAIRMAN RATHENDRA RAMAN SAID

of Kolkata since its inauguration in 1943. The bridge was taken up for construction after a commission under the chairmanship of Sir R N Mukherjee in 1926 recommended a suspension bridge of a particular type to be built across the Hooghly river.

The port authorities had already started working to scrap the bituminous road surface on the 80-year-old structure and a new layer would be laid to reduce the bridge's load. The National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways & Coasts (NTCPWC), a division of IIT Madras, will advise the authorities for the comprehensive study the port chairman said.

Raman stated that if necessary, another expert consultant would be appointed to assist the port au-

thorities in the initiative. Every day, the Howrah Bridge facilitates the passage of approximately 80,000 vehicles and 400,000 pedestrians, becoming an integral part of their daily lives.

Recognising the bridge's immense importance, the Kolkata port, now known as Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, aims at securing its future and preserving the technological marvel, another senior official said.

The scope of the study is yet to be finalised but experts would closely examine issues such as corrosion and fatigue that the bridge had been facing, he said. "The goal is to identify effective strategies to address these challenges and to ensure the longevity of the bridge," the official added.

TN to invite 200 non-resident Tamil youths every year



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 25: The new project of Tamil Nadu government, 'Verkalai Thedi (In search of roots)' initiated by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin during his visit to

Singapore will bring 200 non-resident Tamils every year to the state as part of a cultural exchange programme. The Chief Minister also said that a statue of founding Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew would be constructed at Mannargudi. It is to be noted that several Tamil youths from the delta regions of Tamil Nadu, including Mannargudi have migrated to Singapore for a living and the announcement of the statue of Lee Kuan Yew is considered as an honour and thanksgiving to Lee Kuan Yew who had supported the Tamil diaspora during his tenure.

The Verkalai Thedi programme is for renewing the cultural links of the youths living in various for-

eign countries with Tamil Nadu.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister will leave for Japan on Thursday and will be meeting officials and business houses during his visit to Tokyo and Osaka. It is to be noted that Osaka is an important trade and commercial centre of Japan and this is the first time a Chief Minister from Tamil Nadu is visiting Osaka.

The Chief Minister and his entourage comprising Industries minister, T.R.B. Raaja and Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu and other officials will return to India on May 31.

Stalin is on his second visit abroad to scout investments and to showcase the state during the Global Investor Meet (GIM) to be held in the state during January 2024. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu during his first visit to UAE after assuming office has garnered Rs 6,000 crore as investments from the UAE.

THE VERKALAI THEDI PROGRAMME IS FOR RENEWING THE CULTURAL LINKS OF THE YOUTHS LIVING IN VARIOUS FOREIGN COUNTRIES WITH TAMIL NADU

Manufacture, storage banned in WB's largest fire-cracker hub



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, May 25: Concerned over three consecutive blasts in illegal fire-cracker outlets in three different places of the state killing 17 persons in the last seven days, the West Bengal government has decided to put a blanket ban on manufacturing at the state's biggest fire-cracker hub, Champahati in South 24 Parganas district for two months.

A notice from Baruipur district police has been sent to the office of the local fire-crackers manufacturers' association asking them to honour and follow the ban imposed for the next two months.

District police sources said the two months ban has been imposed to totally clean up the area on this count during the period. "First we will conduct constant raids and search operations to identify, seize, and destroy illegal fire-crackers from this area. Secondly, we will identify the illegal manufacturing hubs in the area, where manufacturing of illegal fire-crackers has almost become a cottage industry with even domestic houses running such manufacturing and storing outlets in the backyards," a senior district police official said.

After the cleaning-up exercise is completed, he added, then only those with valid licenses will be allowed to start their respective busi-

A notice from Baruipur district police has been sent to the office of the local fire-crackers manufacturers' association asking them to honour and follow the ban imposed for the next two months

District police sources said the ban has been imposed to totally clean up the area on this count during the period

nesses. "However, henceforth the police will be strictly monitoring the entire process of manufacturing and storing of fire-crackers here," he added. Meanwhile, a high-level meeting chaired by the state DGP Manoj Malviya was conducted at the state secretariat Nabanna, which was attended by all the districts' Superintendents of Police.

In the meeting, some SPs, sources said, faced the ire of the DGP for intelligence failures about the illegal manufacturing and storing of fire-crackers in their respective districts.

"The DGP directed the district police Superintendents to activate their respective district intelligence units on this count. He also asked figures of the quantities of illegal fire-crackers seized from each district," said a state government official aware of the proceedings of the meeting.

Bengal govt clears hurdles

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, May 25: West Bengal government has taken a decision to smoothen the process of transfer of ownership of vested land taken on lease by any individual or institutional entity.

Under the changed system, sources said, any individual or institutional entity having taken any vested land on long-term lease will be able to get the ownership of the land after paying 15 per cent of the market price of the same land to the state government.

The decision was taken by the state cabinet recently. However, this changed facility will be available to only those who are already enjoying the long-term lease of vested lands in the state.

Under the current system, any individual or institutional entity can take vested land on lease from the

state government by paying a fee equivalent to 95 per cent of the existing market price of the vested land. In addition to that the leases have to pay an annual rent at the rate of 0.4 per cent of the existing market rate. According to a senior official from the state land reforms department, this new system will be beneficial both for the state government as well as the



individual or institutional entities taking the land on lease.

"A majority of the vested lands were taken on lease at a time when the market price of that land was much lower than the current market. Agreed that those taking it on lease are paying an annual rent free on the existing market rate, but the amount in so negligible that the state government is losing huge amounts. "In the new system the transfer of ownership of that vested land will be done if the individual institutional entity concerned pays just 15 per cent of the current market price of the land. This will add to the exchequer of the state government. After getting ownership of the leased vested lands, the owners concerned will get relief from the trouble of lease renewal or bearing the recurring cost of annual fees," he explained.

THIS DISTRICT AIMS TO SET WORLD RECORD

THE PROJECT IS AN INITIATIVE OF TIRUPATTUR DISTRICT COLLECTOR, N. BHASKARA PANDIAN, WHO SAID THAT THE PONDS ARE BEING DUG FOR RECHARGING GROUND WATER SO THAT THERE IS ENOUGH FOR DRINKING AND FARMING PURPOSES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 25: Tirupattur district in Tamil Nadu is planning to dig 1,500 ponds in 15 days, with an aim to set a world record.

The project is an initiative of Tirupattur District Collector, N. Bhaskara Pandian, who said that the ponds are being dug for recharging ground water so that there is enough for drinking and farming purposes. According to district officials, there are 208 gram panchayats and seven ponds will be dug in each.

Funds for the project will be sourced from the respective village



panchayats and services of workers of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee

Scheme (MGNREGS) would be used for digging the ponds. Tirupattur is trying to beat the per-

formance of Tiruvannamalai district that had dug up 1,127 ponds in 30 days time. The Tirupattur dis-

trict administration is planning to involve private participation in digging the ponds and ponds that are dug in private properties would be allowed to grow fish fingerlings.

The fish fingerlings will be grown with the support of the fisheries department.

The ponds, according to sources in the district administration, will be 72 feet long, 36 feet wide, and 6 feet deep and to prevent soil erosion, indigenous tree varieties will be planted on the banks. The tree varieties include Alam, Arasam, Vembu, Pungan and Maruthu.

A new step helping villagers access govt services via phones

CALLED JUGALBANDI, THE CHATBOT CAN UNDERSTAND QUESTIONS IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES, WHETHER SPOKEN OR TYPEWRITTEN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 25: Microsoft, along with AI4Bharat at the Indian Institute of Technology Madras, has created a new generative AI-driven chatbot that is helping Indian farmers access government assistance on their mobile devices.

Called Jugalbandi, the chatbot can understand questions in multiple languages, whether spoken or typewritten. It retrieves information on relevant programmes - usually written in English - and relays it back in local language.

While the Jugalbandi chatbot is still new, it could one day offer all Indians easy access to information in the local language through a mobile phone, instead of having to head to the local community service centre and stand in

line just to get basic information.

"We saw this Jugalbandi as a kind of 'chatbot plus plus' because it's like a personalised agent," said Abhigyan Raman, a project officer at AI4Bharat, an open-source language AI centre based at IIT Madras.

"It understands your exact problem in your language and then tries to deliver the right information reliably and cheaply, even if that exists in some other language in a database somewhere," Raman added.

Jugalbandi was introduced to villagers in Biwan, Haryana, in early April. It has expanded to cover 10 of India's 22 official languages and 171 of a total of approximately 20,000 government programmes, according to Smrita Gupta, a lawyer who works for OpenNyAI, a collaborative whose mission is to bring greater access



to law and justice through AI. It is one of several groups working on the chatbot.

The Jugalbandi AI assistant is powered by language models from AI4Bharat and reasoning models from Microsoft Azure OpenAI Service. It is accessed through the mobile messaging system WhatsApp, which is widely used in India, and the duet in this case is the conversation between the user and the chatbot.

A villager sends a text or audio message to a WhatsApp number, which initiates the Jugalbandi bot. That is transcribed to text using the

AI4Bharat speech recognition model. That, in turn, is translated to English by the Bhashini translation model trained by AI4Bharat.

Based on the prompt, Azure OpenAI Service's model retrieves information on the relevant government scheme. The answer is translated to Hindi. That is then synthesised with the AI4Bharat text-to-speech model and sent back to WhatsApp - and the villager's ear.

In July 2022, the Central government launched Bhashini to provide language solutions as digital public goods. Research groups like the Indian Institutes of Technology,

the International Institute of Information Technology and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing are all experimenting to augment the Bhashini platform.

AI4Bharat is one such research group. It has received funding from Nilekani Philanthropies, started by the co-founder of software giant Infosys Nandan Nilekani and his wife Rohini, as well as from Microsoft.

Pratyush Kumar, co-principal investigator at AI4Bharat and a principal researcher at Microsoft Research India, said the team initially explored how to translate legal judgments, working with the Supreme Court of India. They also worked with schools and colleges to transcribe videos and add subtitles, which can help children learn more effectively.

At the same time, organisations like OpenNyAI were thinking of applications on the ground. "We brainstormed a bit," said Kumar. One of the results was Jugalbandi. Jugalbandi "can really scale a lot of our work," said Aaditeswar Seth, co-founder of Gram Vaani.

Erode forest division seeks approval to capture tusker

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, May 25: The Erode Forest division has written to the Tamil Nadu state forest department seeking permission to capture and relocate the lone tusker that is raiding and destroying maize fields and other crops in Kadambur area.

Sources in the Erode Forest division said that several local farmers have complained about the elephant entering their maize fields and other fields and destroying the crops.

However, the elephant has not caused any physical harm to anybody and is a silent one except for raiding crops and eating away the fully grown plants and crops.

K.R. Arumugan, a farmer at Kadambur who has grown maize on five

acres of land while speaking to IANS said, "The elephant is entering our farmlands through various routes and destroying and eating away fully grown plants and produce. It is causing us financial setbacks as we have a commitment with banks and other financial institutions."

A senior officer with the forest department of Erode said, "We have sent a letter to the higher ups for permission to capture the elephant as complaints galore against it for raiding farms and crops. However, the elephant has till now not caused any physical harm to anyone."

Sources in the Erode Forest division said that several local farmers have complained about the elephant entering their maize fields and other fields and destroying the crops



of the day quote

Because of the BJP government's policies, youths are coming back to the mainstream of development in the North East. BJP is committed to fulfil the youths' aspiration

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

New government has come, it is known that they will do appeasement politics, they have power, let's see what they will do. But if any injustice happens to people, we will fight both legally and politically

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI | FORMER K'TAKA CM

During the G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting, the entire world has witnessed awe-inspiring socio-economic progress of Jammu Kashmir. Faster & Inclusive growth and our sustained effort to boost tourism sector is attracting the attention of the entire world

MANOJ SINHA | LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF J&K

SHORT TAKES

Suman Sharma sworn in as UPSC member

New Delhi: Senior bureaucrat Suman Sharma was Thursday sworn in as the member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Sharma is a 1990-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) officer. UPSC Chairman Manoj Soni administered the oath of office and secrecy to the newly appointed member, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

MP police nab sand mafias

Bhopal: Like a scene straight out of a Bollywood flick, the Madhya Pradesh police chased down tractor-trolleys loaded with illegally mined sand, and arrested the drivers after cordoning off the area in Morena Thursday. A video of the chase has gone viral on social media. It all started after the sand mafias tried to run away with tractor-trolleys loaded with sand, but the alert cops cornered off the area and managed to nab them after a brief chase.

2 dead as truck hits stationary vehicle

New Delhi: Two persons were killed while four others injured after a truck hit another stationary truck in the national capital's Welcome area Thursday, an official said. The deceased were identified as Ravi Kishan and Satish Kumar. The injured individuals -- Doje, Mahesh, Naurang and Sunil -- have been hospitalised. The police said that the accident took place at around 12.30 a.m. on the flyover near the Welcome metro station.

30 injured as truck rams into bus in TN

Chennai: At least 30 people were injured after a truck rammed into a private bus at Sri Perumbudur in Tamil Nadu Thursday. The driver of the truck, Madasamy (34) of Thoothukudi is critically injured and admitted to Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Chengalpattu Government Hospital. Police said that the accident occurred when the driver of the truck, Madaswamy lost control over the vehicle which hit the traffic meridian, jumped to the opposite track and hit the bus which was coming with staff of a private company at Sri Permbudur.

Tremor hits Kutch

Ahmedabad: A tremor of 3.0 magnitude hit Kutch district in Gujarat Thursday evening with its epicentre near Bhachau, the Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) said. The tremor was recorded at 6.40 pm, the Gandhinagar-based institute said.



I don't know whether the (next Assembly) election will happen after five years, what all may happen I don't know, let's see. The future of this government is dependent on the results of the upcoming Parliament elections, I know it. I'm not speaking by hiding things, nor am I making any astrological predictions

H D KUMARASWAMY | JD(S) LEADER

Shah appeals for peace in Manipur

Manipur has been on the boil after an eruption of interethnic violence this month killed dozens of people and left tens of thousands displaced

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, May 25: Union Home Minister Amit Shah Thursday appealed to the people of Manipur to maintain peace and promised that justice will be ensured to all sections of the society.

Shah, while laying the foundation stone of the tenth campus of the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) to be set up in Changsari area in Assam's Kamrup district, said he will travel to Manipur to help resolve disputes. "I will go to Manipur soon and stay there for three days but before that, both groups should remove mistrust and suspicion among themselves and ensure that peace is restored in the state," he said.

"The Centre will ensure that justice is delivered to all those who suffered in the clashes in the state, but people must hold dialogue to ensure peace," Shah said.

During the last six years, prior to the recent clashes, there was no blockade or bandhs in Manipur and "people must ensure the return of such a situation again". "Charcha ke saath hi shanti ho sakti hain (Peace can only be restored through dialogue)," he said.

Referring to the establishment of NFSU campus in Assam, the Union home minister said that this will guarantee 100 per cent employment opportunities for students taking up courses in the institute.

"The Centre is planning to bring changes in the law to make it compulsory for forensic experts to visit the spot for crimes that attract more than six years of imprisonment," he said.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has plans to bring about changes in the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc) and the Evidence Act in the spirit of the Constitution to increase the conviction rate which will help in the delivery of criminal justice," he added.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma during the ceremonial distribution of appointment letters to candidates qualified for various government departments in Guwahati

Policing can be divided into three parts: law and order situation, crime investigation and ensuring justice by punishing the guilty, the home minister said.

"This is not the age of using third-degree measures or force on the accused but there are scientific ways of collecting evidence through psychology, fingerprints and DNA profiling and we need experts for these," he said. The conviction rate in the country is low at 50 per cent and this is mainly due to lack of evidence or witnesses turning hostile which creates hurdles for the police in submitting chargesheets in the court, he added.

"We have decided to strengthen the forensic infrastructure, upgrade and modernise the laboratories, set up regional forensic laboratories and also district-level

mobile forensic laboratories," Shah said. This will require manpower and generate employment opportunities while research and development in this sector will be intensified and implemented at the grassroots level, he said.

Shah thanked Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for speedily allotting 50 acres of land for the establishment of the state-of-the-art institute from where 3,000 to 5,000 graduates and post-graduates will emerge in different branches of forensic science, wildlife forensics, cyber security, narcotics, digital forensics, drone forensics, forensic psychology and forensics justice and law. The campus will also provide training to the police, judiciary and forensic scientists of all neighbouring countries.

One killed in fresh violence

Imphal: One person was killed and another injured in a fresh violence between suspected militants and a group of people in an area bordering Bishnupur and Churachandpur districts in strife-torn Manipur, police said Thursday. Toijam Chandramoni, 30, was shot dead during the violence. Wednesday, and Leichombam Abungnao, aged 22, was injured when suspected militants opened fire at the group of people, mostly comprising those who were displaced during the recent ethnic clashes in Churachandpur and took shelter in a relief camp at Moirang in Bishnupur, the officer said. There were reports that militants late Tuesday night torched the houses of some villagers at Toronglaobi in Bishnupur district, he said.

Jain collapses in Tihar Jail, admitted to ICU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: Jailed AAP leader Satyendar Jain was admitted to an ICU at a government hospital here Thursday after he collapsed in the prison due to dizziness, prompting Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to target the Centre over his deteriorating health.

Earlier in the day, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said former Delhi minister Jain was first admitted to the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Hospital and later shifted to the Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital due to breathing problems. This was the second time in a week that the former minister was taken to hospital. Jain has been in Tihar jail since his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering case in May last year.

According to AAP sources, Jain has been shifted to an ICU at the



This was the second time in a week that the former minister was taken to hospital

Jain has been in Tihar jail since his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering case in May last year

LNJP Hospital and he was "critically ill". The LNJP Hospital is the largest hospital under the Delhi government.

Jain was brought to the emergency department of the LNJP Hospital and doctors examined him, a senior doctor at the hospital said. "Jain has some spinal issues. In the past too he was brought to LNJP Hospital to undergo treatment for it," he said.

Anti-tobacco warnings for OTT programmes soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: OTT platforms may soon be mandated to display anti-tobacco warnings and disclaimers as are seen in movies screened in theatres and in television programmes with the Health Ministry likely to amend the relevant rules, officials sources said Thursday.

The ministry is actively considering amending the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Rules, 2004, and a notification in this regard is likely to be issued soon, they said.

According to the draft notification, publishers of online curated content displaying tobacco products or their use will be required to display anti-tobacco health spots each of a minimum of 30 seconds at the beginning and middle of the programme, an official source told PTI. "The anti-tobacco health warning message



shall read as 'Tobacco causes cancer' or 'Tobacco kills'. Besides, the anti-tobacco health warning messages, health spots and audio-visual disclaimers will have to be in the same language as used in the online curated content."

According to officials, the use of tobacco products and smoking are shown extensively in web series and movies streamed on OTT platforms and without any disclaimers

in clear violation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003. "The OTT platforms, because of their huge popularity, play a crucial role in promoting tobacco use among children and youth in our country," an official said.

Ranjit Singh, an advocate in the Supreme Court said amendment to the rules will truly make India a world champion in regulating tobacco promotion through enter-

MiG-29K fighter jet makes maiden night landing on INS Vikrant

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 25: In a first, a MiG-29K fighter jet undertook a maiden night landing on the indigenously-built aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. The Navy termed it as a 'historic milestone'.

The Indian Navy said, "A MiG-29K has successfully made a night landing on India's indigenous INS Vikrant warship. This achievement of the Navy is a big step towards the growing power of self-reliant India." The maiden night landing was made on Wednesday night when INS Vikrant was sailing in the Arabian sea, an official said.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh congratulated the Navy for the successful maiden night landing trials of the MiG-29K on INS Vikrant. "Congratulations to the Indian Navy for successfully undertaking the maiden night landing trials of MiG-29K on #INSVikrant," the Defence Minister said on Twitter.

"This remarkable achievement is a testimony to the skills, perseverance and professionalism of the Vikrant crew and Naval pilots. Kudos to them," he tweeted.

Earlier, the naval version of the Tejas aircraft had successfully landed on INS Vikrant in February. However, the MiG-29K landing is believed to be more important. The major reason for this is that while the Tejas aircraft landed during the day, the MiG-29K's landing took place at night.

Kejriwal gets NCP's full backing for Delhi fight



Sharad Pawar in a meeting with Arvind Kejriwal, Bhagwant Mann, AAP leaders Sanjay Singh, Raghav Chadha and Atishi Marlena and others in Mumbai

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 25: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann Thursday met Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar who offered his "full support" to the Aam Aadmi Party in its fight to safeguard its powers against the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Central government.

"Democracy is under attack from the BJP. We must all unitedly safeguard it. Efforts are being made to deprive the rights of governments elected by the people and create hurdles for them. We shall fully support the AAP's fight in parliament," declared Pawar after his half-hour meeting with Kejriwal-Mann and other leaders.

Pawar said that this is no longer restricted to Delhi or any individual party, but a national problem concerning every state, especially the non-BJP states and he would speak with all non-BJP parties to join and unitedly fight this movement to protect democracy with the AAP.

Kejriwal said that great injustice was being done by the BJP to the people of Delhi even after the 8-year long legal battle in the Supreme Court and now the Centre has brought the Ordinance to usurp the state's rights on appointments of officials. "This struggle has gone beyond Delhi. It's a fight to safeguard the federal structure of the country which the BJP is trying to undermine," he said.

Armed with two consecutive successes in Maharashtra, a beaming Kejriwal said he will take an appointment to meet Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi for their support in his crusade

Referring to the BJP's machinations in non-BJP states, Kejriwal said that if the people vote against it, then the BJP buys out its MLAs to topple the government, or put Central investigating agencies to hound their leaders or harass them through the Governors who do not allow the elected governments to function. "This is the message that if the people don't vote for the BJP, then they will either bring it down or not allow it to function. This must stop and we have to unitedly save democracy and the federal structure," urged Kejriwal.

"We are said to be the world's biggest democracy, but the reality is that attempts are being made to kill it through various means. The state Raj Bhavans have become like BJP headquarters and the Governors interfere in every routine work of the state government and don't allow them to work," added Mann.



HIP HIP HOORAY: Students celebrate their success after the announcement of Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education Class X and XII results in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Jaishankar meets envoys of US, Russia

New Delhi: Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington next month, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar Thursday discussed with US Ambassador Eric Garcetti various aspects of ties between the two countries. Separately, Jaishankar also met Russian Ambassador Denis Alipov. Modi's upcoming visit to the US is understood to have figured prominently in the meeting between the external affairs minister and the US ambassador. "Great to welcome Ambassador Eric Garcetti of the United States. Discussed the enormous progress in our relationship, especially over the last decade. Exchanged views on the recent Quad Summit," Jaishankar tweeted. "Confident that India-US ties will continue to grow from strength to strength," he said. Replying to Jaishankar's tweet, Garcetti said: "Thank you, @drsjashankar, for the gracious welcome! As the U.S. Ambassador to India, I am thrilled to be here and witness the strong bond between our nations."

of the day quote

Artificial Intelligence use and its promotion in the country is the need of the hour for national development

SYED AMINUL HAQUE | PAKISTAN'S MINISTER FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND TELECOMMUNICATION

Russia will respond quickly and extremely harshly to future incursions

SERGEI SHOIGU | RUSSIAN DEFENCE MINISTER

Houthi-launched attacks have caused losses estimated at \$1 billion

MAEEN ABDULMALIK | YEMEN PM

SHORT TAKES

3 dead in Japan

Tokyo: Three people including two police officers were killed in Nagano in central Japan Thursday and a suspect with a rifle and knife was holed up inside a building, according to police and media reports. A witness told NHK public television that a woman fell while being chased by the suspect, who then stabbed her with a knife and shot at two police officers as they arrived at the scene in a patrol car in Nakano city in Nagano prefecture. The witness said he asked the suspect why he attacked her, and he replied that he wanted to kill her, NHK said.

South Korea, US hold drills

Seoul: The South Korean and US militaries conducted large live-fire drills near the border with North Korea Thursday, despite the North's warning that it won't tolerate what it calls an invasion rehearsal on its doorstep. The drills, the first of five rounds of live-fire exercises through mid-June, mark 70 years since the establishment of the military alliance between Seoul and Washington. North Korea typically reacts to such major South Korean-US exercises with missile and other weapons tests.

Imran's close aide resigns

Islamabad: Ousted Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan suffered another jolt as the head of his economic team and one of his close aides Asad Umar resigned from all party positions, amid the government's crackdown on the opposition over the May 9 violence. Umar, who was Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's Secretary General, announced stepping down from all party positions shortly after he was released from Adiala Jail Wednesday.

Pak journalist goes missing

Islamabad: A prominent Pakistani television journalist known for his public support of former Prime Minister Imran Khan has gone missing, the police, his family and his employer said. Sami Abraham's disappearance was first announced in a police tweet late Wednesday, hours after he went missing. His family and the Karachi-based independent BOL television, where Abraham works, claimed on Thursday that he had been abducted. Abraham has long publicly opposed the government of Khan's successor, Premier Shahbaz Sharif. Khan, a former cricket star turned Islamist politician, was in office in 2018-2022 and was ousted in a no-confidence vote in the parliament last year.

Sierra Leone's iconic tree felled by storm

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dakar (Senegal), May 25: Torrential rains in Sierra Leone's capital felled the centuries-old Cotton Tree, a national treasure whose loss has left "a gap" in people's hearts, the country's President Julius Maada Bio said Thursday. "There is no stronger symbol of our national story than the Cotton Tree, a physical embodiment of where we come from as a country," Bio told the Associated Press. "Nothing in nature lasts forever, so our challenge is to rekindle, nurture, and develop that powerful African spirit for so long represented."

Standing 70 metres tall and 15 metres wide, the roughly 400 year-old tree has been Sierra Leone's na-

tional symbol for decades. It has appeared on bank notes, woven into lullabies and visited by royalty, such as Queen Elizabeth the II, to mark the country's independence

in 1961, according to a statement by Zebek International, a press agency working with Sierra Leone's government.

While the tree had withstood damage throughout the years, including a lightning strike that has left it partially scorched, Wednesday's storm left nothing of the tree but a stump.

For Sierra Leone, the loss is comparable to the fire that destroyed Paris' Notre Dame Cathedral in 2019, said Zebek, the government's press agency. Sierra Leone is among the countries most impacted by climate change. In 2017 more than 1,000 people were killed by a landslide due to heavy rains.

Bakhmut withdrawal has begun, claims Wagner



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, May 25: The head of the Russian private military contractor Wagner claimed Thursday that his forces have started pulling out of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine and handing over control to the Russian military, days after he said Wagner troops had captured the ruined city.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, Wagner's millionaire owner with longtime links to Russian President Vladimir Putin, said in a video published on Telegram that the handover would be completed by June 1. There was no immediate comment from the Russian defence ministry. It was not possible to independently verify whether Wagner's pull-out from the bombed-out city has begun after a nine-month battle that killed tens of thousands of people.

Ukraine's deputy defence minister said Thursday that Wagner units have been replaced with regular troops in the suburbs but Wagner fighters remain inside the city. Ukrainian forces still have a

Russia and Belarus signed a deal formalising the procedure for deploying Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian territory. Control of the weapons will remain with Moscow

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced that five Swedish diplomats are to be expelled from the country. A statement said the decision is a response to Stockholm's "openly hostile step" to declare five employees of Russian foreign missions in Sweden "personae non grata" in April

foothold in the southwestern outskirts, Deputy Minister of Defence Hanna Maliar said.

Prigozhin's Bakhmut triumph delivered a badly needed victory for Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has lost momentum and now faces the possibility of a Ukrainian counteroffensive using advanced weapons supplied by Kyiv's Western allies.

Top Ukrainian presidential advisor Mykhailo Podolyak said Thursday that Ukraine's coun-

teroffensive was already underway, cautioning that it should not be anticipated as a "single event" starting "at a specific hour of a specific day." Writing on Twitter, Podolyak said that "dozens of different actions to destroy Russian occupation forces" had "already been taking place yesterday, are taking place today and will continue tomorrow."

Prigozhin has a long-running feud with the Russian military leadership, dating back to Wagner's creation. He has also built a reputation for inflammatory — and often unverifiable — headline-grabbing statements that he later backtracks on.

During the 15-month war in Ukraine, he has repeatedly and publicly chastised Russia's military leadership, accusing them of incompetence and failure to properly provision his troops as they spearheaded the battle for Bakhmut.

Wagner's involvement in the capture of Bakhmut has added to Prigozhin's standing, which he has used to set forth his personal views about the conduct of the war. "Prigozhin is ... using the perception that Wagner is responsible for the capture of Bakhmut to advocate for a preposterous level of influence over the Russian war effort in Ukraine," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said.

His frequent critical commentary about Russia's military performance is uncommon in Russia's tightly controlled political system, in which only Putin can usually air such criticism. His flat statement of what he would do over the next week in Bakhmut came a day after he again broke with the Kremlin line on Ukraine.

I will say generally that our partnership with India is one of our most consequential relationships. We work with India closely on our most vital priorities

MATTHEW MILLER | SPOKESPERSON FOR THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE

LAUNCH SUCCESSFUL

Iran successfully test-launched a ballistic missile with a potential 2,000-km range Thursday, state media said, two days after the chief of Israel's armed forces raised the prospect of 'action' against Tehran over its nuclear programme



In this photo released by the Korea Aerospace Research Institute, the Nuri rocket lifts off from a launch pad at the Naro Space Center in Goheung, South Korea. South Korea launched the commercial-grade satellite Thursday for the first time as part of its growing space development program, as rival North Korea is pushing to place its first military spy satellite into orbit

AP/PTI

Imran moves SC against 'undeclared martial law'



► Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and more than 600 leaders and former Assembly members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party have been barred from leaving the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 25: Pakistan's beleaguered former Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the deployment of the army to aid the civilian administration in some provinces, terming it as "undeclared martial law" in the coup-prone country.

Khan moved the Supreme Court of Pakistan against Shehbaz Sharif's government that invoked Article 245 in several provinces including Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and Islamabad - the Federal Capital Territory.

Under Article 245 of Pakistan's Constitution, the army can be called in to aid the civil administration to defend the country. In his petition, the 70-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief urged the court to take notice of the martial law-like situation in parts of the

country and the ongoing aggressive crackdown on his party.

Khan said that the arrests, investigations and trials of citizens under the Army Act 1952 were "unconstitutional and void and of no legal effect and amounts to negation of the Constitution, the rule of law and independence of the judiciary."

"The dictated exercise of this power by the federal cabinet in the absence of objective conditions for the exercise of that power is clearly violative of the fundamental rights," the petition said.

He said that the "dismantling of PTI through forcible quitting of party membership and office are unconstitutional and void being against Article 17 of the Constitution," the Dawn newspaper reported.

The plea named Prime Minister Sharif, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz, ex-president Asif Ali Zardari, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and other as respondents, the report said.

The embattled politician also pleaded with the apex court to appoint a commission led by an apex court judge to probe the events surrounding his arrest on May 9 and subsequent incidents.

Car crashes into gates of 10 Downing Street

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 25: A man remains under arrest Thursday on suspicion of criminal damage and dangerous driving after a car crashed into the gates of 10 Downing Street in London, the official residence of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the Metropolitan Police said.

Sunak was in his office at the time of the incident but left soon after from another exit for a pre-scheduled departure, sources from 10 Downing Street said. The cordons placed by police around the street have since been lifted even as armed officers remain on guard at the Prime Minister's office, as is usual.

According to reports, counter-terrorism police are not involved in the ongoing police enquiries at this stage. "At around 16.20 hours [local time] a car collided with the gates of Downing Street on Whitehall," the Met Police said in a statement. "Armed officers arrested a man at the scene on suspicion of criminal damage and dangerous driving. There are no reports of any injuries. Enquiries are ongoing," the police said.

Officers could soon be seen winding down the heightened security operation on Whitehall, the main political hub of London between Trafalgar Square and Parliament Square. Officials inside Downing Street were initially asked to stay indoors but could soon be seen moving out of offices, including from the Cabinet Office which is next door to 10 Downing Street.

Meanwhile, images on social media showed a silver passenger car with its boot open slammed into the gates of Downing Street, which is significantly protected with barriers and a solid double-barrel black iron gate at all times. As CCTV footage emerged, a handcuffed heavy-set man with white hair could be seen being led away by armed Met Police officers. Eyewitnesses reported hearing a bang and officers shouting at the suspect as taser guns were deployed before the arrest.

World's 20 richest countries fuelling forced labour: Report

ASSOCIATED PRESS

United Nations, May 25: The world's 20 richest countries are fuelling forced labour and account for over half the estimated 50 million people living in "modern slavery," according to a report released Wednesday.

The report by the Walk Free foundation, a rights group that focuses on modern slavery, said six members of the Group of 20 nations have the largest number of people in modern slavery — either in forced labour or forced marriage.

India tops the list with 11 million followed by China with 5.8 million, Russia with 1.9 million, Indonesia with 1.8 million, Turkey with 1.3 million and the United States with 1.1 million. "Most of the countries with lowest prevalence of modern slavery — Switzerland, Norway,

Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Ireland, Japan, and Finland — are also members of the G20," the report said.

"Yet, even in these countries, thousands of people continue to be forced to work or marry, despite their high levels of economic development, gender equality, social welfare, and political stability, as well as strong criminal justice systems."

Last September, a report by the U.N.'s International Labour Organization



The report by the Walk Free foundation, a rights group that focuses on modern slavery, said six members of the Group of 20 nations have the largest number of people in modern slavery — either in forced labour or forced marriage

and International Organization for Migration and Walk Free esti-

mated that 50 million people were living in "modern slavery" — 28

million in forced labour and 22 million in forced marriage — at the end of 2021. That was a 10 million increase in just five years from the end of 2016.

"Modern slavery permeates every aspect of our society," Walk Free Founding Director Grace Forrest said in a statement. "It is woven through our clothes, lights up our electronics and seasons our food" — and it "is a mirror held to power, reflecting who in any given society has it and who does not."

This is most evident in global supply chains, where G20 nations import \$468 billion worth of products annually considered "at risk" of being produced by forced labor including electronics, garments, palm oil, solar panels and textiles, the report said.

Australia-based Walk Free said its 172-page report and estimates of

global slavery in 160 countries draw on thousands of interviews with survivors collected through nationally representative household surveys and its assessments of a nation's vulnerability.

It said the increase of nearly 10 million people forced to work or marry reflects the impact of compounding crises — "more complex armed conflicts, widespread environmental degradation, assaults on democracy in many countries, a global rollback of women's rights and the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic."

These factors have significantly disrupted education and employment, leading to increases in extreme poverty and forced and unsafe migration, "which together heighten the risk of all forms of modern slavery," the report said.

of the day quote

We are sanguine that TRAI, with a more open-minded study of the multi-dimensional complexities of spectrum usage in space, will allocate it by administrative methods to help the nascent space industry to grow and be globally competitive

AK BHATT | DIRECTOR GENERAL, ISPA

We are also working with the councils of both life and general insurance to have a UPI-like moment for the insurance sector. A conceptual framework has been contemplated

DEBASISH PANDA | CHAIRMAN, IRDAI

So far the indicators are good in terms of demand sustaining at high levels, although the additional moves that we were getting from pent-up demand and low channel inventory that have subsided

SHAILESH CHANDRA | MD, TATA MOTORS PASSENGER VEHICLES LTD

SHORT TAKES

VFSL names Mike Young as senior VP

New Delhi: Vedanta-Foxconn Semiconductors Limited (VFSL), a joint venture between Foxconn and Vedanta Group, on Thursday said it has appointed Mike Young as Senior Vice President - Project Management Office and Manufacturing Operations for its semiconductor business in India. Young will oversee the execution of manufacturing and operational processes as VFSL looks at setting up a semiconductor fab in India, the company said in a release.

Hearing of Zee's merger plea

New Delhi: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has deferred the hearing to Friday Zee Entertainment's petition against the NCLT order, directing bourses NSE and BSE to reconsider their approval for its merger with Culver Max Entertainment. A two-member NCLAT bench Thursday directed the counsel appearing for Zee Entertainment Enterprise Ltd (ZEEL) to remove defects in the petition and directed to list the matter for the next day for hearing.

LIC shares settle nearly 2% higher

New Delhi: Shares of LIC Thursday ended nearly 2 per cent higher after the company posted more than five-fold jump in consolidated net profit at ₹13,191 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2023. The stock ended with a gain of 1.69 per cent at ₹603.60 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 3.72 per cent to ₹615.65. At NSE, it advanced 1.62 per cent to settle at ₹603.55. The company's market valuation climbed ₹6,356.63 crore to ₹3,81,776.86 crore. In traded volume terms, 2.55 lakh shares of the company were traded at BSE and over 51.87 lakh shares on NSE during the day.

inDrive to enter Bengaluru, Pune

New Delhi: Global ride-hailing platform inDrive Thursday said it is planning to expand operations to Bengaluru and Pune shortly. The California-based online ride-hailing platform launched its services in 2019 and is now present in 10 cities, such as Delhi-NCR, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Bhopal. The platform follows a fair-price setting model under which passengers and drivers negotiate fares among themselves. It offers ride-hailing, intercity, freight and delivery services in India.



No doubt, addressing global warming is important. But it's also equally important for developing countries to ensure that there is adequate and affordable energy available for powering economic growth

V ANANTHA NAGESWARAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER

BMW INDIA DRIVES IN NEW Z4 ROADSTER

Luxury automaker BMW India Thursday launched new version of Z4 Roadster in the country priced at ₹89.3 lakh (ex-showroom). The model comes as a completely built-up unit (CBU)



Wheat output set to touch fresh record

THE PREVIOUS RECORD OF 109.59 MILLION TONNES IN WHEAT OUTPUT WAS ACHIEVED DURING THE 2020-21 CROP YEAR



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: India's wheat production is set to touch a new record at 112.74 million tonnes in the ongoing 2022-23 crop year (July-June), higher by five million tonnes from the previous year on increased acreage and yield despite unseasonal rains, as per the Agriculture Ministry's latest data released Thursday.

Besides wheat, a record output has been estimated in rice, maize, oilseeds, and sugarcane. Even the country's overall foodgrains output is estimated to be a record 330.53 million tonnes in the 2022-23 crop year, as against the actual output of 315.61 million tonnes in the previous crop year, as per the third estimate.

INDIA'S OVERALL FOODGRAINS OUTPUT IS ESTIMATED TO BE A RECORD 330.53 MILLION TONNES IN THE 2022-23 CROP YEAR

BESIDES WHEAT, A RECORD OUTPUT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED IN RICE, MAIZE, OILSEEDS, AND SUGARCANE

Foodgrain basket comprises wheat, rice, nutri-coarse cereals and pulses.

"The production of wheat in the country is estimated at 112.74 million tonne, which is higher by 5 million tonne as compared to previous year's production," the Agriculture Ministry said.

Wheat production had declined to 107.74 million tonnes due to heat wave in key growing states in 2021-22 crop year. The previous record of 109.59 million tonnes in wheat output was achieved during the 2020-21 crop year.

Sowing of wheat, the main rabi (winter) crop, had begun from October onwards, while harvesting is expected to get over by June 15 this year.

According to the third estimate, rice output is pegged at a record 135.54 million tonnes for 2022-23 crop year, as against 129.47 mil-

lion tonnes in the previous year.

Maize production is also estimated to be at a record of 35.91 million tonnes, as against 33.73 million tonnes in the said period.

Total production of nutri-coarse cereals including maize has increased to 54.74 million tonnes in 2022-23 as against 51.10 million tonnes in the previous year.

In case of pulses, production is estimated to be marginally higher at 27.50 million tonnes in 2022-23 when compared with 27.30 million tonnes in the previous year.

Except for gram and moong, production of tur and urad is estimated to be lower in the 2022-23.

Tur production is pegged lower at 3.43 million tonnes as against 4.22 million tonnes, urad output to be down at 2.61 million tonnes as against 2.77 million tonnes, while gram production is estimated to remain flat at 13.54 million tonnes in the same period.

However, production of oilseeds is pegged to be at a record of 40.99 million tonnes in 2022-23 owing to higher production of soyabean and mustard seed, as against 37.96 million tonnes in the previous year.

Soyabean production is estimated to be at a record 14.97 million tonnes as against 12.98 million tonnes, while rapeseed-mustard output is likely to be a record at 12.49 million tonnes as against 11.96 million tonnes in the said period.

In case of cash crops, sugarcane production is estimated to be a record at 494.22 million tonnes in 2022-23 crop year, as against 439.42 million tonnes in the previous year.

Cotton production is estimated to be higher at 34.34 million bales of 170 kg each for 2022-23, as against 31.11 million bales in the 2021-22 crop year.

Whereas jute/mesta production is pegged lower at 9.49 million bales of 180 kg each for 2022-23, as against 10.14 million bales in the previous year. The government releases total four estimates before the final one at different stages of crop growth and harvesting.

Germany slips into recession

Economists said high inflation hit consumer spending, with prices in April 7.2% higher than a year ago

REUTERS

Berlin, May 25: The German economy was in recession in early 2023 after household spending in Europe's economic engine finally succumbed to the pressure of high inflation.

Gross domestic product fell by 0.3% in the first quarter of the year when adjusted for price and calendar effects, a second estimate from the statistics office showed Thursday. This follows a decline of 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2022. A recession is commonly defined as two successive quarters of contraction.

German GDP data showed "surprisingly negative signals", Finance Minister Christian Lindner said Thursday. He added that comparing Germany with other highly developed economies, the economy was losing potential for growth.

"I don't want Germany to play in a league in which we have to relegate ourselves to the last positions," he said, referring to the forecasts of the International Monetary Fund, which predicted a recession in 2023 only in Germany and Britain among European countries.

Robert Habeck, Germany's economy minister, said his nation's previous high dependency on Russia for energy supply led to the recession but the growth fore-

RETIREMENT PERK

₹25L tax exemption on leave encashment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: In line with the Budget announcement, the finance ministry Thursday hiked the tax exemption limit for leave encashment upon retirement for private sector salaried employees to ₹25 lakh.

So far, the tax exemption on leave encashment for non-government employees was ₹3 lakh which was fixed in 2002, when the highest basic pay in the government was ₹30,000 per month.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), in a statement, said the aggregate amount exempt from income tax under section 10(10AA)(ii) shall not exceed the limit of ₹25 lakh, where any such payments are received by a non-government employee from more than one employer.

The increased limit for tax exemption on leave encashment on retirement or otherwise of non-government salaried employees is ₹25 lakh with effect from April 1, 2023.

"In pursuance to the proposal in the Budget speech, 2023,... The Central government has notified the increased limit for tax exemption on leave encashment on retirement or otherwise of non-government salaried employees to ₹25 lakh w.e.f. 01.04.2023," the CBDT said.



■ A recession is commonly defined as two successive quarters of contraction

■ Germany's GDP fell by 0.3% in the first quarter of the year. It follows a decline of 0.5% in the fourth quarter of 2022

■ The German Bundesbank, however, expects the economy to grow modestly in the second quarter

casts were much bleaker.

"We're fighting our way out of this crisis," Habeck said at an event in Berlin Thursday.

"Under the weight of immense inflation, the German consumer has fallen to his knees, dragging the entire economy down with him," said Andreas Scheuerle, an analyst at DekaBank.

Household consumption was down 1.2% quarter on quarter after price, seasonal and calendar adjustments. Government spending also decreased significantly, by

4.9%, on the quarter.

"The warm winter weather, a rebound in industrial activity, helped by the Chinese reopening, and an easing of supply chain frictions were not enough to get the economy out of the recessionary danger zone," ING global head of macro Carsten Brzeski said.

By contrast, investment was up in the first three months of the year, following a weak second half of 2022. Investment in machinery and equipment increased by 3.2% compared with the previous quar-

BIZ BUZZ

BOI organises CSR programme



others members of OAB May 25. In this august occasion RN Sarkar, DGM, NBG-Odisha, S Malaya Das, Zonal Manager, Ashok Kumar Jena DZM of Bhubaneswar Zone along with other officials of the Zone were also present. This Braille embosser/Printer converts emboss braille characters on to paper for tactile reading by blind reader. Md. Jafar Iqbal and members of OAB has expressed their gratitude to Bank of India for its commitment to the noble cause.

Bhubaneswar: Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Zone handed over one Braille Embosser and Indian Braille Translator to Orissa Association for the Blind under Corporate Social Responsibility for supporting physically challenged persons of the society. The Braille Embosser & Translator was handed over by our respected General Manager, Bikram Keshari Mishra, NBG-Odisha to Md. Jafar Iqbal, vice-president, OAB in presence of

Bank of Maharashtra tops PSU lenders' chart in profit and loan growth in FY23

Bhubaneswar: State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has emerged as the top performer among public sector lenders in terms of loan and deposit growth in percentage terms during 2022-23.

The Pune-headquartered lender also recorded highest growth in profitability with bottom-lines growing almost 126 per cent to ₹2,602 crore during the year.

However, all the 12 public sector banks together recorded 57 per cent jump in net profit at ₹ 1,04,649 crore in FY23, according to published yearly numbers of public sector banks (PSBs).

In terms of percentage increase in gross advances, BoM recorded 29.4 per cent jump in loans at ₹1,75,120 crore as of March 2023. It was followed by Indian Overseas

Bank and UCO Bank with 21.2 per cent and 20.6 per cent growth, respectively.

However, in absolute terms, aggregate loans of the country's biggest lender SBI were nearly 16 times higher at ₹27,76,802 crore. With regard to deposit growth, BoM witnessed 15.7 per cent rise and mobilised ₹2,34,083 crore at the end of March 2023.

Bank of Baroda was second with 13 per cent growth in deposits (Rs 10,47,375 crore) while Punjab National Bank recorded 11.26 per cent increase at ₹12,51,708 crore, according to the data.

BoM retained the top position in terms of garnering low-cost Current Account and Savings Account (CASA) deposits with



53.38 per cent followed by Central Bank of India (50.18 per cent).

Total business growth of BoM was also the highest at 21.2 per cent at ₹4,09,202 crore followed by Bank of Baroda at 14.3 per cent (Rs 18,42,935 crore) at the end of FY23.

In terms of Retail-Agriculture-MSME (RAM) loans, BoM registered the highest growth of 24.06 per cent followed by Punjab National Bank at 20.85 per cent and Punjab & Sind Bank at 20.70 per cent on an annual basis.

Strong performance of Indian banks to continue, says S&P

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: S&P Global Ratings Thursday said Indian banking sector profitability will stabilise at a healthy level, and asset quality will continue to improve.

Indian banks' earnings will likely remain healthy. The sector has improved substantially in the past seven years, from a period when many public-sector lenders were grappling with bad loans, S&P Global Ratings credit analyst Deepali Seth Chhabria said. A strong recovery is underway in the Indian banking sector, and lenders have just reported their best results in a decade, S&P Global Ratings said. It expects the sector profitability to stabilise at a healthy level, and that banks' asset quality will continue to improve.

Indian banking profitability is benefiting from higher net interest margins and lower credit costs.

A recovery in written-off accounts is also boosting the profitability of banks, she added. India's strong economic performance is bolstering the banking sector.

Crowds throng 8th Bhubaneswar International Trade Fair-2023



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 25: The eighth Bhubaneswar International Trade Fair-2023 being organised at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar witnessed a huge footfall of visitors on the sixth day, Wednesday.

With a host of new varieties of international goods such as ladies' suit and chocolates from Dubai, Kurti and ladies' accessories from Thailand, famous dry foods from Afghanistan, carpets and lights from Iran, beautiful designer sarees from Bangladesh and Malaysia's

water fountains meant for home décor being exhibited and sold at very reasonable prices at a single venue, visitors and interested buyers are thronging the trade fair in great numbers.

Apart from international goods, domestic goods made in different states of India, such as household and décor items, varieties of antique pieces, attractive apparels for both males and females, are available in pocket-friendly rates in the fair.

Different kinds of household articles from Kerala, Punjab, Haryana, Bhagalpur, Delhi, Hyderabad are

being sold at great prices pulling crowds to the fair. Many food items and delicacies, both Indian and foreign, have good demand in the food fair.

As part of the cultural programme, a dance performance staged by little child artistes and dancers of 'Sajan Dance Group' entertained the visitors and garnered praise.

Notably, Gupta Event Management chairman Sujit Gupta, and assistant director Payal Gupta informed that the International Trade Fair will continue till 29 May, 2023.

Ircon International Ltd logs highest ever Operating Revenue for 2nd year in a row

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 25: Ircon International Limited, a Miniratna (category-I) schedule A public sector enterprise and a leading turnkey construction company in the public sector (under Ministry of Railways), has announced its financial results for the fourth quarter and year ended March 31, 2023.

Key financial highlights for the year which ended March 31, 2023 (Consolidated) showed that the total income increased by 41.7% to ₹10,750 crore as against ₹7,586 crore in FY22. Revenues from operations for the period increased by 40.5% to ₹10,368 crore as compared to ₹7,380 crore in FY22. EBITDA stands at ₹1,117 crore in FY23 as against ₹846 crore in FY22, a jump of 32.1%. The company's EBITDA margin stood at 10.39%. Profit Before Tax for FY23 increased by 29.4% to ₹ 891 crore as compared to ₹ 689 crore in FY22. Profit After Tax for FY23 increased by 29.2% to ₹765 crore as against ₹592 crore in FY22. EPS stands at ₹8.14 per equity share of the face value of ₹ 2 per share.

As for the quarter which ended March 31, 2023 (Consolidated), the total



income stands at ₹3,954 crore in Q4 FY23 as against ₹3,011 crore in Q4 FY22, a jump of 31.3% Yo-Y. Revenue from operations during the quarter increased by 28.1% to ₹3,781 crore as against ₹2,953 crore in Q4 FY22. EBITDA was at ₹370 crore, an increase of 37.4%, as compared to ₹269 crore in Q4 FY22. The company's EBITDA margin stood at 9.35%. Profit Before Tax increased by 36.0% to ₹301 crore in Q4 FY23 as against ₹221 crore in Q4 FY22. Profit After Tax increased by 6.1% to ₹257 crore in Q4 FY23 as against ₹242 crore in Q4 FY22. EPS stands at ₹2.73 per equity share of the face value of ₹2 per share.

On Dividends, the Board of Directors have recommended final dividend of ₹1.20 per equity share on the face value of ₹2 per share subject to approval of shareholders in ensuing Annual General Meeting (AGM). This final dividend is in addition to interim dividends of ₹1.80 per equity share, as declared and paid earlier in FY23.

CLASH OF POWERHOUSES

Upbeat Mumbai Indians lock horns with defending champions Gujarat Titans for a place in the final where the winners will face Chennai Super Kings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 25: Akash Madhwal's breathtaking bowling performance against LSG in the Eliminator would have given five-time IPL champions Mumbai Indians wings and they would be fancying their chances against defending champions Gujarat Titans in Qualifier 2 which will be played in the world's largest stadium here Friday.

MI, at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai Wednesday night, knocked out LSG from the race to the final with an 81-run win. The massive MI victory was a warning to the rivals that they could lift their game according to the occasion even in the absence of several key players.

MI pride themselves on thriving when the odds are stacked against them, something they have done throughout the season. Having finished last in the previous edition, Rohit Sharma's men have ground it out this season to remain in contention for a sixth IPL title even with limited resources.

The likes of Cameron Green, Suryakumar Yadav and Tim David have responded well to the challenges and now form the backbone of the batting department with the young Nehal Wadhwa too making a huge impact, and the opening pair of Rohit and Ishan Kishan doing quite a fair job.

It will be a stern test for the Titans' bowling attack, led by Mohammad Shami (26 wickets in 15 matches), to get the better of MI's batting, which has improved drastically towards the business end of the tournament.

Madhwal has been a revelation with the ball. The right-arm bowler returned a dream spell of 3.5-0-5-5 against LSG to put his side into the virtual semifinal after a three-



wicket burst that set up victory in their crucial last league game against Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Veterans Piyush Chawla (21 wickets in 15 matches) and Jason Behrendorff (14 wickets in 11

matches) have also been impressive, while an otherwise expensive Chris Jordan also enjoyed a fine outing

Asia Cup venue to be decided post-IPL final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: A decision on Asia Cup's fate will be taken on the sidelines of the IPL final, which will be attended by a host of top Asian Cricket Council (ACC) dignitaries, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Thursday. The Asia Cup has been scheduled for September 1-17 window.

Pakistan have the hosting rights for this year's Asia Cup but with BCCI deciding against sending their team to the neighbouring country without government permission, PCB chairman Najam Sethi had proposed a 'hybrid model' where they will organise at least four games on home soil and India will play their matches at a neutral venue. It couldn't be confirmed whether Sethi has been formally invited for the IPL final.

"As of now, the decision with regards to hosting of Asia Cup has not yet been finalised. We are busy with IPL but the top dignitaries of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), Bangladesh and Afghanistan Cricket Board are coming to watch the IPL final. We will have a discussion and take a final decision in due course," Jay Shah told this agency.

It has been learnt from ACC sources that Sethi's proposed hybrid model looks like a feasible solution although ACC had made no formal statements. According to the model, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Afghanistan play four preliminary matches in Pakistan and India would play all their games at neutral venues.

The two Indo-Pak games will also be held in Sri Lanka although the PCB wants them in Dubai. The weather in UAE in September is not at all conducive for 50-over games although to make the 'hybrid model' work logistically, UAE is a far better option for the Asian Cricket Council.

"ACC head Jay Shah will summon an executive body meeting where a formal announcement will take place. The PCB doesn't mind



JAY SHAH

playing India at a neutral venue. PCB would prefer Dubai because it would lead to more gate receipts but it is open to playing in another country (read Sri Lanka) provided the ACC matches the gate receipts amount (USD 0.5 million) that Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) received in 2022 from the Indo-Pak games in Dubai," an ACC source privy to development told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Format and other modalities

The six teams in the Asia Cup are India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Nepal. One group will have India, Pakistan and Nepal while the other group will comprise Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

According to ACC sources, if the 'hybrid model' goes ahead, then Pakistan would like to host the following four games in their country.

As per the format, the top two teams from each group will constitute Super Fours where they again play against each other. After the Super Four round robin phase, the top two teams will play the final.

The Super Fours will ensure that at least two Indo-Pak encounters are guaranteed, which is profitable for the host nation, broadcaster as well as ACC. If India and Pakistan qualify for the summit clash, then it will be three matches between the arch-rivals.

As far as final is concerned, even if India doesn't qualify, the ACC will conduct it at a designated neutral country - Sri Lanka or UAE.

Indian trio reaches quarters



PV SINDHU, KIDAMBI SRIKANTH (INSET UP), HS PRANNOY (INSET DOWN)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, May 25: Star Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu, HS Prannoy and Kidambi Srikanth booked their places in the quarterfinals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament with contrasting wins over their respective rivals here Thursday.

While double Olympic medalist and sixth seed Sindhu disposed of Aya Ohori of Japan in straight games in women's singles, Prannoy had to dig deep to get the better of Shi Feng Li of China in a tough three-game men's singles contest.

Later in the day, Srikanth prevailed over India Open champion and eighth seed Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand.

Taking the court first, World No.13 Sindhu extended her domination over Ohori, ranked 28th, taking just 40 minutes to beat the Japanese 21-16, 21-11 in the round of 16. It was her 13th win over the Japanese in as many meetings. Sindhu will face China's Yi Man Zhang in the quarterfinals.

World No.9 Prannoy then overcame a game deficit to beat World No.11 and reigning All England champion Li 13-21, 21-16, 21-11 in one

hour and 10 minutes to book his berth in the last-eight stage. Prannoy will next meet Japan's Kenta Nishimoto, who has claimed victories in 2022 Japan Open and Spain Masters this year.

Coming into the match with a 0-3 head-to-head record, Srikanth notched up a 21-19, 21-19 win over Vitidsarn to also make it to the quarterfinals. The 2021 World Championships silver medallist will meet Indonesian qualifier Christian Adinata.

Lakshya Sen, however, lost to Angus Ng Ka Long of Hong Kong 14-21, 19-21 to end his campaign.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 25: A rejuvenated Indian men's hockey team will look to carry on their fine form from the home leg and maintain their supremacy at the top of the standings when they begin the Europe sojourn of the FIH Pro League against Olympic champions Belgium here Friday.

During the European leg of the tournament, India will also take on the Netherlands and Argentina in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

India overcame a disappointing World Cup campaign earlier this year to climb to the top of the 2022-23 Pro League table with an unbeaten record against world champions Germany and mighty Australia.

The Indians secured three outright wins from the Rourkela leg, while also winning a shootout bonus point in the fourth match against the Kookaburras. India are currently leading the table with 19 points from five outright victories from eight matches and two from shootouts.

The Harmanpreet Singh-led side will look to carry on with their winning momentum when it takes on Belgium Friday and Great Britain Saturday in the Lee Valley Stadium here.

Hosts Great Britain will be riding on their recent success in



Christchurch, New Zealand where they won 5-2 and 6-1 against New Zealand, and also beat Australia 2-1 and 3-3 (4-2 SO) to gather 19 points from eight games with four outright wins and three from shoot-outs.

Belgium, on the other hand, will look to climb up the charts from their current seventh position. They have so far played just four matches in this edition of the Pro League and have won a match each against Argentina and Germany.

The Pro League matches in Europe will also be the first real test for India's new chief coach Craig Fulton, and it remains to be

seen how he fits into the high-pressure job after taking over from Australian Graham Reid, who guided the side to a historic bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics. India last played Great Britain in the quarterfinals of the Tokyo Olympics, which they 3-1.

Since 2016 Rio Olympics, India have played Belgium in 19 matches of which Belgium have won nine and India eight, with two matches ending in draws. India last played Belgium in Antwerp last year, where they lost 2-3 and won 3-3 (5-4 SO) in the previous edition of the Pro League.

Harmanpreet said can't wait to renew the rivalry against Belgium. "As a team, India have built a healthy rivalry against Belgium particularly over the last 5-6 years. We enjoy playing this opponent and the team is always pumped up to do well against them," he said.

"If you look at the stats, we have always produced close encounters against Belgium. The mind frame that we are in at the moment, we are confident of yet another good show against them," added Harmanpreet, who also happens to be the highest scorer in the League so far with 11 goals.

Protesting wrestlers on tour of Haryana, Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 25: The protesting wrestlers, including Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat, Thursday stepped up efforts to gather support in their fight against WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh by touring different parts of North India as they sought backing for the planned women's 'Mahapanchayat' May 28.

While Bajrang and Vinesh visited Jind in Haryana, Rio Games bronze medallist Sakshi Malik and her husband Satyawart Kadian reached Punjab to seek support from women's organisation, requesting them to come in large number for the women's panchayat before the new Parliament building on the day of its inauguration.

Wrestler Sangeeta Phogat, who is holding fort at Jantar Mantar, said they are all touring and meeting

khap leaders to plan the future course of action.

"Vinesh and Bajrang are meeting khap leaders in Jind and Sakshi and Satyawart are in Punjab to seek more support for our Maha Panchayat May 28," Sangeeta told this agency. "We are determined to

hold the panchayat near new Parliament building if our demand for the arrest of Brij Bhushan is not met."

It's been over a month now that the top wrestlers of the country are sitting at iconic Jantar Mantar in protest against Wrestling Federation of India president Brij Bhushan, who they have accused of sexual harassment of seven women grapplers, including a minor.

The wrestlers also took out a candle light march May 23 on completion of one month of their agitation.

Rodrygo inspires Real victory



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, May 25: Rodrygo scored an 89th-minute winner as Real Madrid defeated Rayo Vallecano 2-1 in a Spanish league (La Liga) match marked by tributes to Madrid forward Vinicius Junior.

It was Madrid's first game since the latest case of racial abuse against Vinicius, who considered leaving the field Sunday after being

insulted by Valencia fans. Rodrygo celebrated Wednesday by raising his right fist above his head in a stance against racism. He dedicated the goal to his Brazil teammate.

"We've gone through a lot together because we both left Brazil at a very young age," Rodrygo said. "We came to this great club and won everything, and it's very sad to have to go through this situation.

I wanted to salute Vini, he knows that I'm always by his side. We will keep fighting against racism."

Madrid's players came to the field wearing Vinicius' No.20 jersey, and a huge banner was displayed behind one of the goals with the words "We are all Vinicius. Enough is enough."

Vinicius did not play because of a minor knee problem. Wearing street clothes, he came out briefly before the match to salute the fans and his teammates.

Karim Benzema opened the scoring at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in the 31st, with the visitors equalising with Raül de Tomás in the 84th.

The victory moved Madrid to second place ahead of Atletico Madrid, who drew 3-3 at Espanyol. Madrid hadn't won in two matches in all competitions, having been eliminated by Manchester City in the semifinals of the Champions League. Rayo, which has lost three in a row, stayed in 11th place.

LAUTARO BRACE HELPS INTER SECURE ITALIAN CUP CROWN



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, May 25: Take note, Manchester City, the bigger the match, the bigger the performance from Lautaro Martinez lately.

After scoring key goals against Benfica and city rival AC Milan to help secure Inter Milan a spot in the Champions League final, Martinez netted twice as the Nerazzurri produced a 2-1 comeback over Fiorentina to defend the Italian Cup trophy Wednesday.

It's the second trophy that Inter

have won this season after also beating Milan in the Italian Super Cup in January — when Martinez also scored.

After a couple of matches to finish up Serie A, Martinez and Inter will be aiming for one more trophy when they face City in the Champions League final June 10 in Istanbul.

Martinez now has a career-best 27 goals across all competitions for Inter this season, having also helped Argentina win the World Cup in December.