



EDIFICE OF DEMOCRACY: An aerial view of newly-constructed Parliament building that will be inaugurated by PM Narendra Modi May 28 in New Delhi PTI PHOTO

NABA MURDER STILL A MYSTERY

Though the chargesheet submitted by CB says accused Gopal Das had meticulously planned and executed the murder alone, it fails to come up with the reason that prompted the now-sacked ASI to kill ex-minister Naba Das in broad daylight

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Gopal Das, former assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police, had gunned down ex-Health Minister of Odisha Naba Kishore Das due to personal grudge and anguish in stable mind, as per the chargesheet submitted by Crime Branch (CB) in Jharsuguda judicial magistrate first class (JMFC) court, Friday. However, the investigating agency is silent about the exact reason behind the daylight murder of a minister.

CB CHARGESHEET AFTER 117 DAYS

- The CB, which took 117 days to file the chargesheet in the high-profile murder case, had formed 10 teams and deputed them to Jharsuguda, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur and other places even beyond the state to probe into possible angles of the case
- Charges have been framed against Gopal under Sections 307 (attempt to commit murder), 302 (murder) and Arms Act

Gopal, 53, is the lone accused in the January 29, 2023 incident and the murder was a result of past enmity. Charges have been framed under Sections 307 (attempt to commit murder), 302 (murder) and Arms Act, the CB chargesheet said. If proved in court, the ex-ASI may face prison term ranging from 10 years to life sentence and is liable to be fined.

Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Bangalore for evaluation. It referred to the report by the medical board comprising experts from the state-run SCB Medical College and Hospital which suggested that Gopal was mentally sound.

The chargesheet said the accused meticulously planned and executed the murder alone. There was no conspiracy or support from anyone else. The narco test and layered voice analysis confirmed that the police officer had pulled the gun due to personal grudge, it said. "After evaluation of all evidences - oral, documentary, medico-legal, cyber forensic and ballistic opinion, it is clear that accused Gopal Das had developed personal grudge and

anguish against deceased minister Naba Kishore Das. He felt threatened by the minister and his supporters and feared for his life. Gradually, he made up his mind to commit murder," the chargesheet said. The police officer's mental condition was "quite normal" and there was no abnormality at the time, it said.

Meanwhile, Opposition parties alleged that conspiracy angle was not probed and the real reason behind the murder is still under the wraps. Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak said, "The Chief Minister holds the Home portfolio, but his government never wanted to know the actual reason behind the murder. The real reason is still under the wraps."

Similarly, state BJP general secretary Prithviraj Harichandan said, "There is a deep-rooted conspiracy behind the murder of Naba Das. The Crime Branch has not mentioned anything as to why Gopal Das was scared and why he felt threatened by Naba Das and his supporters."

Rubbishing the allegations, BJD leader and Revenue Minister Pramila Mallick said, "The opposition leaders never mind to say anything despite all the good work done by the state government. Whoever is the culprit will be punished and justice will be done."

Plus II results by May-end

Bhubaneswar: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) will declare the results for Plus II exams by May 31. The council will confirm the final date of the result declaration May 28. As per reports, Science and Commerce results will be declared by May-end while that of Arts and vocational course will be declared by June 8. Students can find their results by visiting the official website of CHSE - <https://chseodisha.nic.in/>. They can also obtain their results via SMS, said the CHSE sources. Notably, evaluation of Plus II answer-sheets had concluded May 7.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sengol is supposed to symbolise fair and just... isn't it a mismatch in Delhi?

Parl opening: SC no to plea

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 26: The Supreme Court Friday dismissed a petition seeking directions to Lok Sabha Secretariat that the honour to inaugurate new Parliament building should go to President Droupadi Murmu.

A vacation bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and PS Narasimha refused to entertain the petition filed by advocate Jaya Sukin and held that the petitioner has no locus to file such petition. "What is your locus? We know why you file such petitions. We are not inclined to interfere under

Govt to issue ₹75 coin

NEW DELHI: The Centre will issue a commemorative ₹75 coin to mark the inauguration of the Parliament Building May 28 by the PM. As per a gazette notification by Department of Economic Affairs under the finance ministry, the weight of this coin could be 34.65- 35.35 gram. One side of the coin will bear the image of Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar in the centre flanked by the word 'Bharat' in Devnagri script and 'INDIA' in English, it said.

The apex court did not allow the petitioner to withdraw the plea after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government, submitted that withdrawal being allowed will give him liberty to approach High Court.

"These are not justiciable. The court should note it," Mehta submitted. "The petitioner sought permission to withdraw the plea but the same was not allowed, the bench said.

The petitioner had contended that the respondents - the Lok Sabha Secretariat and the Union of India - are 'humiliating' the President by not inviting her for the inauguration.

Article 32. Be grateful we are not imposing costs," the bench said.

Metro rail work in City to start by year-end

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Work for the much-awaited metro rail project in Bhubaneswar capital region is likely to start by the end of this year, Housing and Urban Development Minister Usha Devi said Friday.

She said this during a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on the project during

the day. Stating that the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation is engaged as a consultant, the minister said the detailed project report (DPR) is being prepared. "The construction work is likely to commence by the end of 2023. The Chief Minister will lay the foundation stone for the project," said the minister.

She also said the survey for the proposed project has been completed. "The DPR, which is being prepared by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, has reached its final stage and routes have been identified. Initially, the metro rail will run between Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, and later it will be extended to Jatni and Puri," the department's secretary G Mathivathanan. Earlier, on the occasion of Utkal Divas April 1, Patnaik

announced the metro rail project for ease of travelling for daily commuters and tourists.

"The project has been studied by various stakeholders and feasibility reports have been prepared. It will predominantly be based on elevated corridors and entirely funded by the state government," Mathivathanan said.

Metro rail will reduce the time taken to cover 64 km between Puri and Bhubaneswar to less than 30 minutes, sources said.

In the first phase, the government will create the metro trunk route from Trisulia near Cuttack to Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar. The route will tentatively touch major landmarks such as Nandankanan, Patia, Vani Vihar, and the railway station. In later phases, the metro will expand to Jatni, Khurda, and Puri, the official said.

On providing safe drinking water to urban population, Mathivathanan said 85 cities of Odisha including all five corporations have achieved 100 percent tap connection for households under the Drink from Tap Mission. The remaining 30 cities would be covered before December 2023. **MORE P3**

The DPR, which is being prepared by the Delhi Metro Railway Corporation, has reached its final stage and routes have been identified

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIAION
SENSEX	62501.69 ↑ 629.07
NIFTY	18499.35 ↑ 178.20
DOLLAR	82.71 ↓ ₹0.13
EURO	88.41 ↓ ₹0.32
GOLD	₹59,330 ↓ ₹130
SILVER	₹70,862 ↑ ₹620

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	37.2°C	36.6°C
MIN	22.9°C	24.5°C
Humidity	72%	68%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light to moderate rain

Reservoir emptied for lost phone

■ Rajesh Vishwas, a food inspector of Pakhanjore in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh, had gone to Paralkot reservoir with his friends last week when his Samsung Galaxy S23 fell into the reservoir while taking a selfie

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanker, May 26: A Chhattisgarh government employee allegedly drained out 41 lakh litres of water from a weir after his mobile phone fell into it in this district of the neighbouring state, an official said Friday. The employee was suspended for the colossal waste of water in the peak of summer at Paralkot reservoir last weekend. The incident came to light Friday, the official said.

Food inspector Rajesh Vishwas, posted in Pakhanjore area of the district, had gone to the reservoir for an outing with his friends May 21 when his mobile phone fell into a waste weir, a channel that carries away surplus water, while taking a selfie, the official said.

Vishwas allegedly roped in villagers and got diesel pumps to empty the water from the weir till his mobile phone was retrieved Thursday, he said.

After the matter came to light, Kanker Collector Priyanka Shukla sought a report in this regard, following which the official was suspended, he said.

The Collector also issued a show-cause notice to the sub-divisional officer (SDO) of Water Resources department, RC Dhivar, for allegedly giving verbal permission to drain out water from the weir.

A report sought from the sub-divisional magistrate of Pakhanjore said

that 4,104 cubic metres, or 41 lakh litres of water was emptied from the structure without permission from the authorities to look for the mobile phone, it said.

"Vishwas misused his position to look for his mobile phone and without seeking permission from the competent officer evacuated water to the tune of lakhs of litre in this scorching summer season which is unacceptable. For the aforementioned act, he has been placed under suspension with immediate effect," reads the suspension order.

The show-cause notice issued to Dhivar stated that as per statements of Vishwas in media, the food inspector had sought verbal permission from him for the purpose. Giving verbal permission to release water without seeking permission from senior officials comes under the category of misconduct, it said.

Govt. of Odisha

A little precaution can keep Heat Stroke away

Take Care, Stay Safe

- Avoid exposure to sun and heavy work in hot weather from 11 AM to 3 PM.
- Drink enough water and, take umbrella & water bottle with you while moving out.
- Children, pregnant women, elderly people, and persons with high blood pressure or diabetes should be more careful.
- Stay away from alcohol, cigarette, tobacco and other intoxicants.
- In case of sudden illness due to heat wave, go to a nearby hospital immediately.
- Free treatment is provided for heat stroke patients in all Government Hospitals.

For more information please call **104 Health Helpline**

Healthy Odisha
Happy Odisha

Health & Family Welfare Department

facebook.com/HFWOdisha
@HFWOdisha
http://www.health.odisha.gov.in

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
If you have children, it's likely you'll spoil them today. After all, it's for days like these that you work hard, says Ganesh. You will also complete pending assignments and it's a productive day for those in medical professions and public services.

TAURUS
You may feel frustrated and stranded in family matters today, says Ganesh. Shower your warmth and care to make up for past mistakes. Your spouse will be supportive and lend you a helping hand to regain your mental composure. Reciprocate with intimacy and go with the flow, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, a strong emotional link with someone special may get established, predicts Ganesh. So you will remain delighted and elated for most part of the day. Still, some petty problems may spoil your happy mood later in the day. Diffuse tension with a light-hearted approach.

CANCER
Today, you will realise that in this materialistic world, everything is judged by its appearance, and what is unseen counts for nothing. You will work hard to be seen and will crave for attention.

LEO
Though God is benevolent, it is not necessary that we reciprocate the magnanimity of the Almighty through our actions. So wake up today with a little prayer on your lips. Make it a point to visit a temple for some peace of mind. The other alternative is to do a small puja at home.

VIRGO
If curiosity killed the cat, it is going to inspire you to go to exotic places and meet new people, says Ganesh. Enriching experiences enter enthusiastically today. But hold on, don't unpack, as you may set off on yet another adventure. Ganesh sees you being crack ductile and malleable.

LIBRA
Lady Luck offers you a mixed bag today, so expect anything and everything. You may also develop a knack for pointing out others' mistakes, while turning a blind eye to your own shortcomings. Ganesh disapproves of this. Look forward to a delightful evening, for, you will have fun in the company of friends.

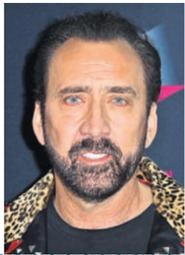
SCORPIO
You've been keeping things within for too long now, and today may just be the day when you vent it all out, says Ganesh. This overwhelming pressure may have an effect on your health. Ganesh counsels you to spend quality time with your loved ones to ease up a bit.

SAGITTARIUS
Skilled at multi-tasking as you are, today you may just take things one by one. Instincts will rule the roost for most of the time. And govern your actions too. But as peculiar as the day may be, you shall find yourself back to being your own assured self.

CAPRICORN
If trouble happens to knock at your door today, your guardian angel will come to your rescue, foresees Ganesh. Unlike many others who waste life running after impossible goals, you will be content with your achievements. But that does not, by any means, imply that you aren't ambitious. Just like yourself, your ambitions will be simple in nature, to the extent that it may elicit awe among people.

AQUARIUS
You will seek spirituality as you feel thoroughly dejected by your present situation. Ganesh says that even struggling courageously with circumstances requires a spiritual endeavour. These trying times give you the patience to deal intelligently with challenges and setbacks.

PISCES
Your spiritual and religious streak comes to the fore. You will likely visit a place of worship to soothe your troubled soul. Meditative techniques may also be resorted to in your quest for peace and calm, says Ganesh.

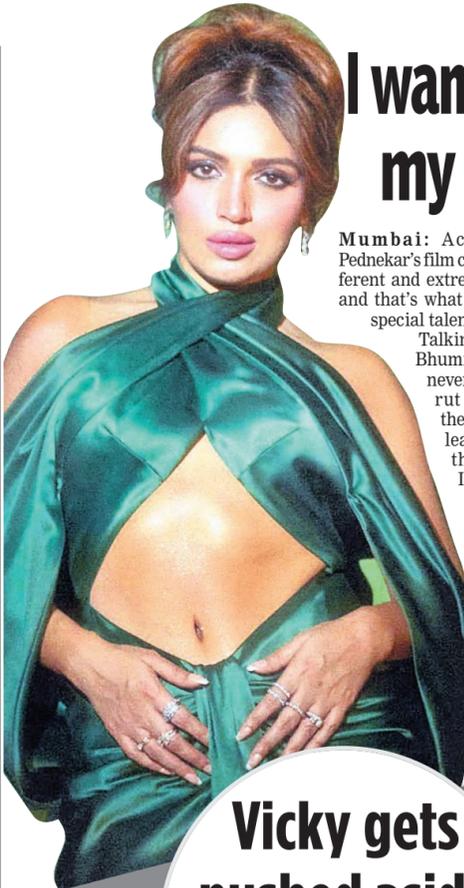


CAGE TO PLAY SUPERMAN CAMEO IN THE FLASH

It takes a super actor to play Superman. The upcoming film version of *The Flash* has reached back to the past in its casting for the Man of Steel. Nicolas Cage will play Superman marking a return to the role for Cage, who was cast in Tim Burton's *Superman Lives* 25 years ago.

KIM LIFTS LID ON HER BREAK-UP WITH PETE

Reality TV star Kim Kardashian has lifted the lid on her split from boyfriend Pete Davidson - calling the break-up 'sad' and revealing they were 'communicating really well' about parting ways. However, she suggested that her famous ex-husband Kanye West caused the split.



I want my films to be my legacy: Bhumi

Mumbai: Actor Bhumi Pednekar's film choices are different and extremely diverse and that's what makes her a special talent.

Talking about this, Bhumi said, "I will never fall into the rut of following the norm to be a leading lady in this industry. I'm aware that I'm a deviation from the rule as to how leading ladies have been on screen and I love that. People will only remember me for the work

that I do on screen. So, it is very important for me to pick the films that I feel in my gut is trying to say something new or aiming to do something extremely disruptive."

Bhumi mentions that she never says okay to a project by seeing who is cast in it. She added, "If you look at my filmography since my debut, you will see me choosing scripts and roles that stand out before anything else like who is making it, who is cast in it, etc. I'm only seeking out the best projects because the films I do will be my legacy."

Meanwhile, on the work front, Bhumi will be seen in *The Ladykiller* alongside Arjun Kapoor.

IANS

Sriya's Karma winning hearts

THE MUSIC VIDEO BY THE KOREAN GIRL GROUP BLACKSWAN, WHICH WAS ENTIRELY SHOT IN ODISHA, HAS ALREADY RECEIVED OVER TWO MILLION VIEWS



Bhubaneswar: Just a week after its release, *Karma*, the music video from popular Korean girl band *Blackswan*, has not only garnered over two million views, but also evoked a lot of interest back home.

Reason: The music video has been totally shot in and around Bhubaneswar, while the band's lead artiste Sriya (originally Shreya Lenka), is from Odisha. She has been in the spotlight ever since joining the renowned K-pop group *Blackswan* last year as India's first-ever member.

Sriya's other bandmates in the video that was released May 19, 2023, are Fatou (the main rapper and leader) from Belgium, Nvee (the main vocalist) from the USA, and Gabi (the sub-vocalist and

dancer) from Brazil.

The video was shot in a single day at picturesque locales like Dhauli, Lingaraj Temple, and its surrounds.

In her reaction to *Orissa POST* Sriya said, "This album is extremely important to my heart because it bears the flavour of Indian music, tradition, culture, festivals, temples, and classical dance, and of course the title *Karma* is a word that was originated in India. In addition, those who are unfamiliar with Odisha can now learn a lot about my home state."

Sagan Lee, the director, claimed that logistical and financial challenges make shooting abroad challenging. However, she continued,

their task was made easy by Odisha Tourism's assistance and friendliness. Lee also thanked Samaresh Routray, a famous actor and producer from Odisha, for going out of his way to support them.

"Odisha Tourism facilitated permits for shooting at the Buddhist site of Dhauligiri Hills and other places. I will also express my gratitude to the locals for their support and love," Lee signed off.

Apart from being released on *Blackswan's* official YouTube channel, the songs will be streamed on major global music services such as Spotify, YouTube Music, MelOn, and others.

PNN

Vicky gets pushed aside by Salman's security

Mumbai: Actor Vicky Kaushal, who is set to host the IIFA ceremony along with Abhishek Bachchan, was pushed aside by Salman Khan's security entourage during a media event in Abu Dhabi.

A Reddit user posted a video where Salman Khan's security can be seen pushing Vicky Kaushal aside while Vicky tries to interact with him.

The video capturing the incident has since then gone viral on the Internet.



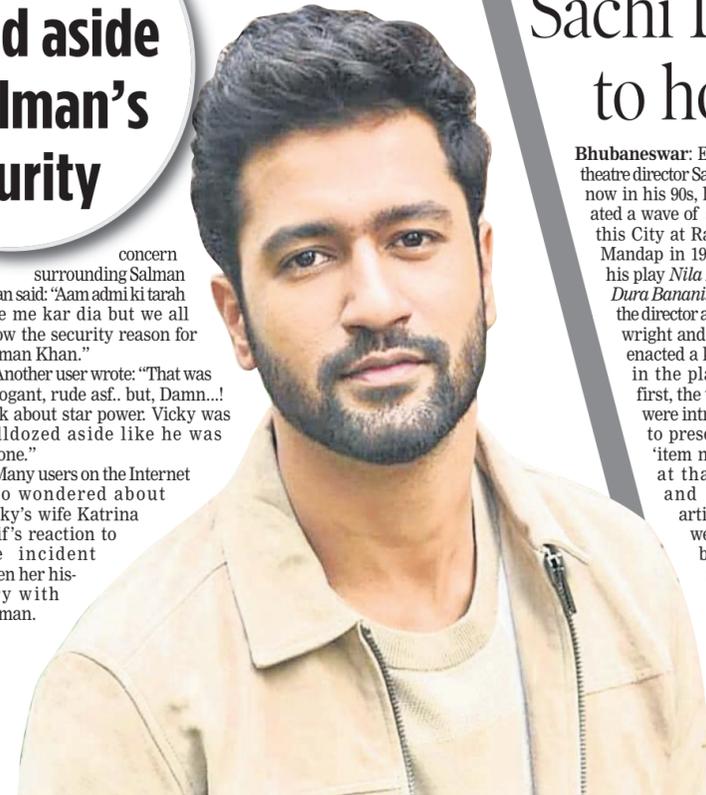
The incident has incited polarising reactions from the Netizens. A user, with a knowhow of security

concern surrounding Salman Khan said: "Aam admi ki tarah side me kar dia but we all know the security reason for Salman Khan."

Another user wrote: "That was arrogant, rude asf. but, Damn...! Talk about star power: Vicky was bulldozed aside like he was no one."

Many users on the Internet also wondered about Vicky's wife Katrina Kaif's reaction to the incident given her history with Salman.

IANS



Sachi Das' 1974 play recreated to honour the living legend

Bhubaneswar: Eminent theatre director Sachi Das, now in his 90s, had created a wave of sorts in this City at Rabindra Mandap in 1974 with his play *Nila Akasha Dura Banani*. He was the director and playwright and he also enacted a key role in the play. In a first, the viewers were introduced to present day 'item number' at that time and the artistes were brought from metros.

In a bid to



A scene from Odia play *Nila Akasha Dura Banani*

recreate the magic of Das and to honour him, Sai Vidyadhar Charitable Trust of Bhubaneswar, Friday recreated play here at Rabindra Mandap amid thunderous applause from the viewers. The legendary director remained present to witness the drama.

The play, about the sacrosanct love between a couple, was directed by young director Abakash Mishra.

The artistes who performed on stage included Karunakar, Biranchi, Chandrasekhar, Manas, Ankita and Ananya. Kailash Senapati scored the music.

Bari MLA Sunanda Das, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and senior journalist Kishre Dwivedi were among the dignitaries present on the occasion.

Several drama directors were facilitated at the event.

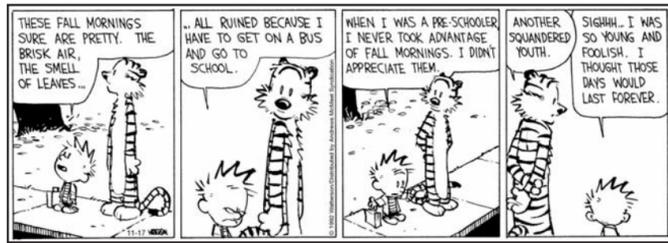
PNN

FUN post

PEANUTS



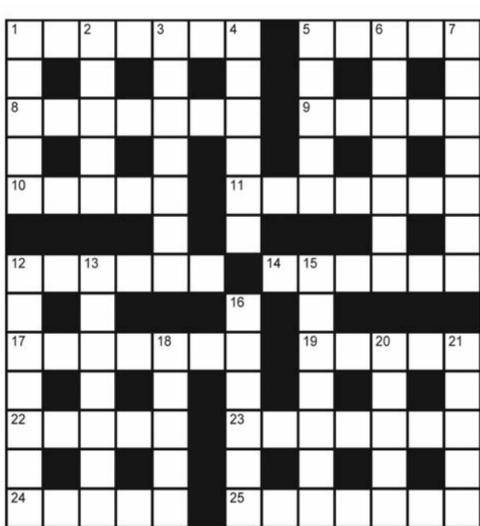
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



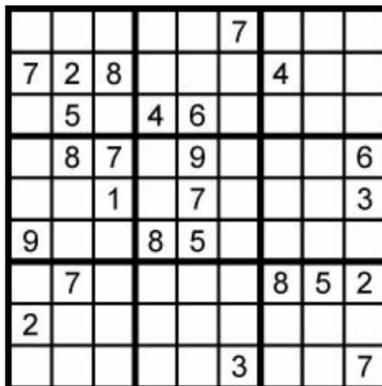
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Old master
 - 5 Giant
 - 8 Stress
 - 9 Eng. physicist Newton
 - 10 Police search
 - 11 Supporting tower
 - 12 Kids' totes
 - 14 Revulsion
 - 17 Mexican cantina favourite
- Down**
- 19 "Haste makes waste," e.g.
 - 22 Furious
 - 23 Adriatic port
 - 24 Expel
 - 25 Certain stone
 - 5 Clan
 - 6 Betrayer
 - 7 Type of weapon
 - 12 Internet landing area
 - 13 Relevant
 - 15 Egg-shaped instrument
 - 16 Jacuzzi (3,3)
 - 18 Unreactive
 - 20 Torch's misdeed
 - 21 Hostile force

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

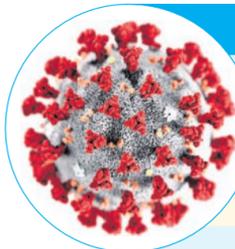
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TAKING STOCK

Puri SP Kanwar Vishal Singh reviews preparedness for Rath Yatra in the Pilgrim City, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	68,92,80,993	66,16,58,792	68,82,766
India	4,49,88,916	4,44,51,353	5,31,856
Odisha	13,36,304	13,26,915	9,204

Piped water for all urban households by Dec end



H&UD Minister Usha Devi and Secretary G Mathivathanan during the media briefing in Bhubaneswar, Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: All households in 115 urban local bodies (ULBs) of Odisha will have piped drinking water supply by December 2023, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Usha Devi said, Friday.

Addressing media here after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik reviewed the performance of H&UD department, Devi said piped water supply connections have so far been given to 100 per cent households under five municipal corporations.

"While 99 per cent of households in 110 ULBs have been given piped water supply, remaining 1 per cent households will get it by December 2023," the H&UD minister said.

Fulfilling another dream of the CM— to provide safe and clean drinking water through tap water connections to all—, households in 85 cities, including all five mu-

nicipal corporations, have achieved 100 per cent tap water connection under the Drink from Tap Mission.

"The remaining 30 cities would be covered under the ambitious initiative before December 2023," Devi said.

As many as 1.73 lakh families have been granted land right certificates in municipalities and notified area councils (NACs). While slum household survey has been completed in five municipal corporations, 1 lakh slum families will be granted land right certificates by December 2023, the minister said.

The H&UD department has constructed 1,62,327 houses. Door to door garbage collection has been ensured in all 2,055 wards in 115 ULBs, she said.

Besides, 252 micro composting centres and 216 material recovery facilities have been functioning in 115 cities for processing solid waste. The department has constructed

and operationalised 112 faecal sludge treatment plants (FSTPs). All these waste processing facilities were being operated and managed by Mission Shakti and Transgender groups.

Highlighting the major achievements of the department, the H&UD minister said, "We are on our journey in transforming the lives of urban denizens."

Adhering to CM's principle of valuing people more than land, the government instead of evicting people from slums empowered them by granting land rights and upgrading their infrastructure, amenities and services to transform slums to Biju Adarsh Colonies.

"Till now, 772 slums have been upgraded as Biju Adarsh Colonies and four towns – Hinjilicut, Digapahandi, Rambha and Purusottampur – have achieved slum-free status," she said.

H&UD Secretary G Mathivathanan said wage employment programme Mukhyamantri Karma Tatpara Abhiyan (MUKTA) was launched during Covid pandemic in April 2020.

"MUKTA is now implemented across 115 ULBs of the state through community partnership involving the Mission Shakti self-help groups (SHGs) and the slum dweller associations," the H&UD Secretary said.

Over 52,000 ward-level projects including public parks, walking tracks, open gyms, children play facilities, city beautification and rain water harvesting structures have been implemented in all the ULBs of the state.



12TH CONVOCATION: Dignitaries including Governor Ganeshi Lal, and Ravenshaw University vice-chancellor Sanjay Kumar Nayak and PG Council chairperson Asima Sahu during the 12th convocation of the varsity in Cuttack, Friday

GAA helps Odisha students crack CSE '22

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The Gopabandhu Academy of Administration (GAA), a premier state-run training institution for civil service officers, has helped Odisha students crack the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2022 conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

For the first time, GAA has established a 'Mock Interview Cell' under the guidance of its director general (DG) Raj Kumar Sharma January 9, 2023.

According to an official, the 'Mock Interview Cell' helped civil service aspirants in their preparation for interviews.

As many as nine candidates, including three women, who qualified the Civil Services Examination (written) 2022, have participated in different sessions of mock interviews and experience sharing classes conducted at the GAA, said the official.

Experts, including senior bureaucrats (retired and in-service), have mentored the candidates, the official pointed out.



Out of the nine aspirants, four have qualified the Civil Services Examination 2022, the results of which were announced by the UPSC May 23, 2023.

They are: Durga Prasad Adhikari (AIR-162), Satya Prakash Mishra (AIR-261), Sushree Suvangi Khuntia (AIR-248) and Suvasnigadha Sethi (AIR-680).

The mock interview sessions were organised under the expert panel members – Aurobindo Behera, IAS (retd), AB Ota, IAS (Retd), Saswat Mishra (IAS), Nikhil Pawan Kalyan (IAS), and

Prathamesh Arvind Rajeshirke (IAS) and KVD Prakash—through hybrid mode.

Four such mock interviews have been conducted under the chairmanship of different eminent bureaucrats and academicians. Additionally, a series of sessions on current affairs, history and culture of Odisha have also been organised by the experts, the officials said.

The aspirants have not only got their doubts cleared, but also got very important tips on how to appear and answer the set of questions

Of the 9 aspirants, who were mentored by experts at Gopabandhu Academy of Administration, 4 qualified the Civil Services Examination 2022, the results of which were announced by UPSC May 23, 2023

in such an interview. They have expressed their happiness for being benefited out of this innovative and useful initiative of the GAA.

GAA joint director Mamatarani Naik has been heading the 'Mock Interview Cell'. GAA additional commissioner and course director Himansu Bhusan Panda also participated in holding mock interviews, it was learnt.

The GAA DG has informed that the 'Mock Interview Cell' will continue as a regular arrangement in the coming years to help groom Odia aspirants for personality tests and interviews.

Gang targeting Mo Bus travellers busted; 3 nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The twin city Commissionerate Police claimed to have busted a notorious gang targeting Mo Bus travellers, with the arrest of four persons here, Friday.

The arrested were identified as Sheikh Munna and Basu Khan of Mangalabag area and Bimbadhar Barik of Badamba area in Cuttack district, said a police official, adding that Bimbadhar has been residing in Gadakana area under Mancheswar police limits in the Capital City here.

The official said the three were nabbed in connection with a case (69/23) registered with the Nayapalli police on the basis of the allegations of a woman February 20, 2023.

The woman alleged that she was travelling along with her son from Kalyani Market Square to CRP Square by Mo Bus February 20 when some miscreants took away her bag containing Rs 10,000 in cash. During investigation of the case, Nayapalli police received an input regarding the accused group roaming in Jayadev Vihar area. A team of Nayapalli police carried out a raid and nabbed the trio from the spot. The accused reportedly confessed before the investigating officials that they used to loot cash, gold ornaments, mobile phones and other items from the passengers travelling in Mo Bus in the twin cities. Later, they used to distribute the booty among themselves at the Gadakana house of Bimbadhar.

Police recovered several bags, wallets and Rs 7,000 in cash following the information revealed by the accused during interrogation. Police also came to know that there are five cases pending against Sheikh Munna while Basu Khan and Bimbadhar are involved in three cases each registered at the Nayapalli police station.

The accused were Friday produced before a local court that sent them to judicial custody.

INCENTIVES FOR COVID WORKERS WITHDRAWN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: The state government has decided to stop incentives to workers handling the Covid-19 pandemic and other related activities.

The decision was taken Friday and came against the backdrop of World Health Organisation (WHO) declaring that Covid-19 is no more a global health emergency.

"In view of WHO declaring that

Covid-19 is no longer a global health emergency, and considering the declining trend of the cases and negligible Covid-19 hospitalisations in the state and all over India, the Odisha government after careful consideration has decided to discontinue incentives to different categories of manpower for Covid-19 related activities as issued vide different notifications of this department," the Health and Family Welfare department said.



IN FULL SWING: Roopakar servitors race against time as Car Festival nears, at Rath Yard in Puri, Friday

City AIIMS' MBBS students to help juniors in research

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Meritorious senior MBBS students will soon be chosen as teaching assistants (TAs) and research assistants (RAs), said new president of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) AK Bisoi here, Friday.

Addressing media during his maiden visit to the AIIMS-Bhubaneswar here, Bisoi said it will be done to inculcate the habit of research and innovation among undergraduate students. He added that the senior students will guide their juniors both in education and research.

Bisoi said that there will be incentives for the TAs and RAs. He

pointed out that the new system will help students innovate in the field of research and also acquire knowledge. He also urged the students to enthusiastically participate in the curriculum and also garner knowledge from all forms of medical science.

An accomplished cardiac surgeon with three decades of professional excellence and innovation, Bisoi was given a rousing welcome by AIIMS-Bhubaneswar executive director Ashutosh Biswas. Bisoi interacted with students, departmental heads and also visited the outpatient department (OPD).

During his visit, Bisoi emphasised on democratic, rule-based and transparent governance systems as these will help in taking

timely and appropriate decisions. He also talked about the importance of creating leaders. For efficiently imparting healthcare, Bisoi stressed on functional coherence between different departments and to create a culture of devotion towards duty and empathy both in education and healthcare services.

Biswas, while welcoming Bisoi, said that the institute will achieve success in research and education under his able guidance. Medical superintendent DK Parida, Registrar BB Mishra, senior faculties and administrative officials accompanied Bisoi during his visit to AIIMS-Bhubaneswar in the Capital City.

China to launch world's 1st oral insulin for Type-2 diabetes

THE NUMBER OF DIAGNOSED PREVALENT CASES OF TYPE 2 DIABETES IN CHINA IS ESTIMATED TO GROW AT A CAGR OF 2.21 PER CENT FROM 57.4 MILLION IN 2022 TO 63.3 MILLION IN 2028

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: China may soon become the world's first country with oral insulin availability, according to a report Friday.

After successfully completing Phase III trials of oral insulin, China's Hefei Tianhui Biotechnology (HTTT) submitted a marketing authorisation application (MAA) to the country's National Medical Products Administration.

Oramed's US-based ORA-D-013-1 Phase III trial for the treatment

of Type 2 diabetes showed significant lowering of A1C levels, which reflects the average blood sugar level for the past two to three months. HTTT is a strategic partner of Israeli company Oramed Pharmaceuticals.

"Oral insulin is a paradigm shift from the traditional injectable insulin market. Therefore, there would be a lot of opportunities and challenges in the commercialisation of oral insulins," said Prashant Khadayat, Pharma Analyst at GlobalData, in a statement.



"Even though insulin delivery through injections has improved significantly for patients, compliance is always an issue for injectable forms of insulin. Hence, oral insulin will always be preferred, potentially reducing the discomfort associated with injections and thereby improving overall compliance, pro-

vided it is equally effective in terms of efficacy and safety. Notably, it is difficult to comment on its efficacy and safety with injectable insulins as Phase III trials included only placebo," Khadayat added.

In November 2015, HTTT in-licensed exclusive rights to Oramed's oral insulin ORMD-0801 in China,

Oral insulin is a paradigm shift from the traditional injectable insulin market. Therefore, there would be a lot of opportunities and challenges in the commercialisation of oral insulin

PRASHANT KHADAYATE | PHARMA ANALYST AT GLOBALDATA

Hong Kong, and Macau.

On the contrary, its partner Oramed terminated its oral insulin clinical trial activities in the US in T2D following disappointing results of the Phase III ORA-D-013-1 trial in January 2023.

Back in July 2006, Pfizer launched the world's first inhaled insulin, Exubera, but barely a

year later, it withdrew Exubera from the market as it was not commercially successful.

"A new mode of insulin delivery is always appreciated, but it should be commercially successful as well. Since, oral insulin is a new form of insulin delivery, HTTT and Oramed should develop an effective commercial strategy to make it successful in the market," Khadayat said.

Currently, there are only two oral insulins in Phase III globally. The number of diagnosed prevalent cases of Type 2 diabetes in China is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 2.21 per cent from 57.4 million in 2022 to 63.3 million in 2028, as per GlobalData.

Considering the huge T2D patient population in China, a new oral insulin treatment option will further improve market access.

State library in City to get a makeover



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Visiting the Harekrushna Mahtab State Library, as per the directions of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, here Friday, 5T Secretary VK Pandian informed that the premier library will soon undergo a renovation with better infrastructure and facilities being provided for students attending the institution.

It was also revealed that the government is planning to open a public library at Bapuji Nagar to prevent over-crowding of the Harekrushna Mahtab State Library. The new public library will also have state-of-the-art facilities with a food court.

During his visit, the 5T Secretary interacted with the students about the facilities at the library, one of the premier institutions in the state attended every day by hundreds of students and youths prepar-

ious civil structures will also be improved. In addition, books will be preserved in a modern way and the entire library will be air-conditioned," informed a government official giving details about the renovation plan.

The new building on the library premises will be equipped with state-of-art furniture and air-conditioning, and steps will be taken to accommodate more students and the public, informed the official, adding that landscaping will be done for the entire library.

"Along with all of this, a food court will be opened for students and visitors with a cafeteria run by Mission Shakti," said the official.

As the students coming to the library are primarily preparing for competitive exams, it will be ensured that enough magazines for competitive exams are kept in the library, which will also soon be managed entirely through IT-enabled 'Smart Management System'.

"Motivational talks will be organised regularly with help of successful personalities from various fields for the students, who will also be given free career counselling. It will be especially helpful for students preparing for the competitive exams," said the official. Wi-Fi facility will be available in the library.

The programme will be implemented by Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) as part of the 5T initiatives. OMC managing director, Culture department director and other officials were present during the 5T Secretary's visit.

The government is planning to open a public library at Bapuji Nagar to prevent over-crowding of the state library. The new public library will also have state-of-the-art facilities with a food court

As the state library has become old, it will be renovated with new benches, tables and other furniture. Besides, the flooring and other infrastructures will also be improved

In addition, books at the state library will be preserved in a modern way and the entire library will be air-conditioned and managed through an IT-based system

ing for competitive exams and the common people alike.

"As the library has become old, it will be renovated with new benches, tables and other furniture. Besides, the flooring and var-

4 held for assault on petrol pump staff

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Commissionerate Police Friday arrested four persons including a minor for assaulting the staff and ransacking a petrol pump in Laxmisagar locality in the state capital May 22. The accused have been identified as Santosh Kumar Bholia (19) of Jharpada locality, Debasish Behera (19) and Jay Prakash Dalei (20) of Badagada area in the city. The identity of the minor has not been disclosed by the police.

"Two youths including a minor from Jharpada area came to the petrol pump at Cuttack Road and asked the staff to fill up the tank of their two-wheeler at around 9.00pm May 22. The employees asked the accused to follow the queue and wait for their turn. This led to a heated argument between the two accused and the staff. The two, who are Plus II students of Maharshi College of Natural Law, then called two of their classmates who also arrived at the spot immediately," informed Subhanarayan Muduli, ACP Zone IV



"The four then assaulted the staff and even some customers at the petrol pump. They also ransacked vehicles of other customers as well as items belonging to the pump. Based on a complaint by one of the staff, Laxmisagar police registered a case (No 219/23) and launched a probe into the matter," Muduli added.

Police identified the accused through the examination of CCTV footage and arrested the four accused. During interrogation, the accused reportedly confessed to have committed the crime in a fit of rage. The accused were produced in the JMFC court here while the minor was presented before the Juvenile Justice Board, Khurda.

Sign survey of animals at Debrigarh from May 28



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: Debrigarh Sanctuary under the Hirakud Wildlife Division is all set to conduct sign survey of carnivores and herbivores (census or density calculation) for six days from May 28 to June 2.

26 teams have been formed with 52 trained staffs that will complete survey in 6 days. In the first 3 days, they will cover carnivores and in the last 3 days density of herbivores will be surveyed. These surveys will give critical information on density of prey base inside the sanctuary.

In the pre-monsoon sign survey, the last density calculations reflect density of animals as 29-38 per sq km area inside the sanctuary. In the last survey, Sambar population was highest among herbi-

vores and there was equal distribution of deer, Indian Gaur, wildboar, Chowsingha etc, with reporting of about 70 leopards.

After survey results will come out in a month, the authorities informed.

"Presence of one tiger is ascertained by camera trap, survey results may reflect whether presence of other tiger is there. Since last 7-8 months the male tiger has been regularly camera trapped in the sanctuary. Around 140 cameras and 12 tiger monitoring teams have been regularly monitoring the tiger day and night," informed a sanctuary official.

For the prey density survey, the jungle safari will remain closed from May 31 to June 2 in the morning hours from 6AM to 9AM to avoid biotic disturbances.



FIGHT FOR RIGHTS: Primary school teachers from across the state stage a silent protest near Lower PMG demanding fulfillment of their various demands in Bhubaneswar, Friday

WMO recognition for Cuttack IMD observatory

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, May 26: The Cuttack Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) observatory, along with the observatories at Dwarka and Veraval in Gujarat, has received recognition as a long-term observing station from World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) for its more than 100 years of hydrological observations.

IMD director general Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, a permanent representative of India at WMO, received certification for this recognition from WMO president

IMD director general Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, a permanent representative of India at WMO, received certification for this recognition from WMO president in a ceremony organised during WMO Congress.

The IMD congratulated all the serving and retired colleagues of the observatories of Cuttack, Dwarka and Veraval. "WMO recognised three IMD observatories, viz, Dwarka, Veraval in Gujarat and Cuttack in Odisha, as long term observing stations for more than 100 years of hydrological observations," IMD informed.

Workshop in City on institutional child care

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 26: A programme was organised Friday here by the State Child Protection Society and the Women and Child Development department to emphasise on the importance of providing protection and care to children. The state-level workshop was held to create awareness

among the child care institutions in the city.

Inaugurating the workshop as chief guest, department commissioner-cum-secretary Subha Sharma said, "Institutional care is a type of residential care for large groups of children, which is characterised by a one-size-fits-all approach according to which the same service is provided to

all kids irrespective of their age, gender, abilities, needs and reasons for separation from parents."

Sharma added, "Child care institutions are one of the stakeholders under 'Mission Vatsalya' scheme. Hence the chief functionaries should make short-term plans for the children under their care and support and review the same periodically."

Sharma encouraged the child care institutions to come up with suggestions and recommendations for better implementation of institutional care services for children. She asked these bodies provide correct information ranking assessment for the Child Care Institutions (CCI). She also asked them to correct deficiencies if pointed out.

Meteorite particles may have driven origin of life on Earth: Study

Particles from meteors or volcanic eruptions on Earth around 4.4 billion years ago may have generated the precursors of the molecules needed for the origin of life on the planet, according to a study.

Previous research has suggested that the precursors of organic molecules—hydrocarbons, aldehydes and alcohols—may have been delivered by asteroids or comets or produced by reactions in the early Earth's atmosphere and oceans.

These reactions may have been promoted by energy from lightning, volcanic activity, or impacts. However a lack of data has meant that it is unclear what the predominant mechanism that produced these precursors was.

The new research, published in the journal Scientific Reports, analysed whether meteorite or ash particles deposited on volcanic is-

lands could have promoted the conversion of atmospheric carbon dioxide to the precursors of organic molecules on the early Earth.

The researchers from Max Planck Institute for Astronomy in Germany simulated a range of conditions that previous research has suggested may have been present on the early Earth by placing carbon dioxide gas in a heated and pressurised system (an autoclave) under pressures ranging between nine and 45 bars and temperatures ranging between 150 and 300 degrees Celsius.

They also simulated wet and dry climate conditions by adding either hydrogen gas or water to the system.

The team mimicked the depositing of meteorite or ash particles on volcanic islands by adding different combinations of crushed



samples of iron meteorites, stony meteorites, or volcanic ash into the system, as well as minerals that may have been present in the early Earth and are found in either the planet's crust, meteorites, or asteroids.

The researchers found that the

iron-rich particles from meteorites and volcanic ash promoted the conversion of carbon dioxide into hydrocarbons, aldehydes and alcohols across a range of atmosphere and climate conditions that may have been present in the early Earth.

The new research analysed whether meteorite or ash particles deposited on volcanic islands could have promoted the conversion of atmospheric carbon dioxide to precursors of organic molecules on the early Earth

The researchers found that the iron-rich particles from meteorites and volcanic ash promoted the conversion of carbon dioxide into hydrocarbons, aldehydes and alcohols across a range of atmosphere and climate conditions that may have been present in the early Earth

The researchers suggest that as the early Earth's atmosphere cooled over time, the production of alcohols and aldehydes may have increased, and these compounds may then have participated in further reactions leading to formation of carbohydrates, lipids, and sugars

They observed that aldehydes and alcohols formed at lower temperatures while hydrocarbons formed at 300 degrees Celsius.

The researchers suggest that as the early Earth's atmosphere cooled over time, the production of alcohols and aldehydes may have increased.

These compounds may then have participated in further reactions that could have led to the

formation of carbohydrates, lipids, sugars, amino acids, DNA, and RNA, according to the researchers.

By calculating the rate of the reactions they observed and using data from previous research on the conditions of the early Earth, the researchers estimate that their proposed mechanism could have synthesised up to 600,000 tonnes of organic precursors per year across the early Earth.

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T'gana constable among 7 held for smuggling ganja



POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, May 26: Kalimela police apprehended a group of seven individuals, including a police constable from Telangana, late Thursday night and arrested them on charges related to their involvement in the smuggling of cannabis in this district. The police charged the seven individuals under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Subsequently, they were produced before a court to face legal proceedings. Acting on intelligence infor-

mation, a team under the leadership of Kalimela IIC Suryaprasad Nayak successfully intercepted the smugglers near Kamalpadar area, where they were caught red-handed with 103 kg ganja. The estimated street value of the seized contraband is approximately ₹5 lakh. The constable, identified as R Sreeny Naik, was among those taken into custody during the operation. Other accused were identified as J Bijaya Nayak of Mirpet area of Rangareddy district in Telangana, Balu Yadav of Osmanabad, Maharashtra, K Laxman of Dulagundi village of Kalimela in Malkangiri, R Karthik, R Rajib and N Venugopal of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. The seized items included two cars, three iPhones, as well as ATM, PAN, and Aadhaar cards. Preliminary reports suggest that the illicit consignment was being transported from Malkangiri to Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.



TREAT FOR EYES: Artists perform Medha Dance in the return procession during Sital Sasthi festival in Sambalpur, Friday

OP PHOTO

TARDY IMPLEMENTATION

Central team to monitor PMGSY works in Ganjam

SHOWCAUSE NOTICES SERVED TO FIVE CONTRACTORS IN THE DISTRICT



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, May 26: Projects under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) in Ganjam district have been delayed for long. Even though the contract periods have been completed, works on the projects have failed to make any headway. In this regard, many letters had been issued to the concerned contractors from Rural Works department (RWD), Ganjam-2. But the contractors did not pay any heed to these letters. This situation had arisen as the main contractors had given these contracts to small time contractors. Showcause notices had been issued to these defaulter contractors from the superintending engineer, RWD, Ganjam -2. Reply was sought from these contractors

within seven days of receiving the letter as to why the contracts of these contractors shall not be cancelled and why penalty shall not be charged to these contractors under section SBD clause-52.2 (A), (H). Three contractors were served showcause notice last week for inordinate delay in five road projects while two more contractors were served the same this week, taking the tally to five. On the other hand, delay and irregularity in various PMGSY works in Ganjam have been coming to notice. It has been learnt that, a Central monitoring team will visit Ganjam in this regard to supervise and verify the status of the works done under PMGSY. A letter has been issued in this regard to Odisha Engineer-in-

Chief (Rural Works) from the Ministry of Rural Development. Subsequently, a letter from the Engineer-in-Chief (Rural Works) Odisha has been sent to the Berhampur MP, Ganjam district Collector and the engineers of Rural Works department. In the letter, he has instructed to keep all the documents related to the projects ready for verification. The Berhampur MP was also requested to be available during the Central monitoring team's visit. It has been mentioned in the letter that Anil Kumar Jain will lead the Central monitoring team and the date and time of his arrival will be communicated to all.

As per reports, PMGSY work had started through a contractor 8 September, 2021 from P Jagannathpur to Bhalikhalia via S Gopalpur, Sunaripalli and Purunagarh. This project had to be completed by June 7, 2022. But even after 8 months beyond the deadline of the project, only 47.92 per cent work worth ₹118.15 lakh has been completed. Owing to this inordinate delay, a showcause notice has been issued to the concerned contractor by the superintending engineer. Similarly, PMGSY works on NH-326 Pudamari PWD road via Khairapadar, Gunduriguda, B. Adikanapur, Telapalli was started September 9, 2022. The project deadline for this work had been set for next month. But as of now only 20.73 per cent work has been completed with the expenditure of ₹35.65 lakh.

35 croc hatchlings emerge from eggs at Satkosia centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, May 26: In a good news for animal lovers, a total of 35 hatchlings were found playing with their mother crocodile in the river at Satkosia Crocodile Breeding Centre in Angul district, Thursday. The matter came to light after a CCTV camera installed over there recorded their video. Successful breeding of crocodiles continued for the third year at the centre. Greetings have started pouring into the Satkosia forest range department for this success.



As per reports, Baladamara in Satkosia gorge had not witnessed the breeding of crocodiles for the last 40 years. In 2021, out of the 28 crocodile hatchlings, only three to four crocodiles were found in the gorge. In the year 2022, a total of 32 hatchlings were born from which 12 to 13 could be traced. This year, however, the release of the 35 hatchlings from the eggs of the mother crocodile at the nesting ground near Baladamara is being touted as a success for the Forest department. A blueprint for the protection of these hatchlings in Satkosia gorge is under preparation. As there is sufficient time left for the growth of these hatchlings, special care and attention will be given, said the DFO Saroj Panda.

Marriage of Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati solemnised

PNN & AGENCIES

Sambalpur, May 26: With the marriage of Lord Shiva with Goddess Parvati being solemnised as per the Vedic rituals with much pomp and fervour, the grand homecoming procession of the Divine Couple moved round this city from Thursday midnight to Friday evening as the famous Sital Sasthi festival draws to an end. Several people from across the western Odisha gathered to witness the divine marriage. The entire western Odisha was tastefully decorated for the marriage. Human beings performed the role of parents of Goddess Parvati and offered the hands of Parvati to Lord Shiva. "It was not a festival for us. We feel like giving the hands of our real



daughter to the Lord Mahadev," said Jyoti Sahu and Girija Shankar of Ainthapali who performed as parents of Goddess Parvati on the premises of Mahamaya Mandir of

Fatak this year. Lord Shiva came in a grand procession accompanied by local deities, local people and several performing artistes for the marriage. Marriage of the Lord has been completed in all the places and the 'Divine Couple' are giving 'Jugal Darshan' to the devotees, which is treated to be very auspicious one. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan was in the town to witness the 'Jugal Darshan' in all the places where 'Siba Bibah' was performed. The grand homecoming procession of the Couple moved round the city from midnight of Thursday to evening of Friday. Thousands of artistes from all over the country are scheduled to take part in the procession.

Ex-sarpanch among 3 held for murder of forest guard

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, May 26: Three more poachers including a former sarpanch were arrested Friday in connection with the recent murder of a forest guard in Simlipal Tiger Reserve in Mayurbhanj district. The arrests were made in a joint operation by Baripada police and Forest personnel and as many as 10 country guns were seized from their possession during the raid. It has been found that the former sarpanch identified as Buddhadeb Singh was involved in the crime. The other two poachers have been identified as Sukalal Marndi and Dugul Singh. Balasore SP Sagarika Nath, who is also in charge of Mayurbhanj district, had told the media that police



had identified all five suspects. Two of the accused were arrested early Tuesday. Notably, 35-year-old forest guard Bimal Kumar Jena was shot dead by a group of poachers Monday. Bimal was on patrolling duty in the bordering areas of Simlipal Tiger Reserve. As per police sources, the joint combing operation is going on and it will continue until all the poachers involved in the murder case are arrested.

Priest held for molestation

Jagatsinghpur: A priest of the famous Sarala Temple, identified as Samarendra Raul of Deuli village under Tirtol police limits in Jagatsinghpur district, was arrested Friday for allegedly molesting a woman on the pretext of performing a ritual. Reports said, the woman had visited the shrine with her husband May 15 for worship. Raul had then taken their mobile number and used to call the woman regularly, said sources. He asked her to arrange for a special worship and reached her house Wednesday at around 8pm at night. Asking the family members to leave the house, Raul directed the woman to sit in meditation along with him. Later, he started molesting her making the woman scream for help. When the family members entered the room, she narrated her ordeal following which a police complaint was registered.

Watchtower opens atop Daringbadi's highest hill

POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi, May 26: Daringbadi in Kandhamal district which is known as the Kashmir of Odisha added another feather to its cap following the unveiling of a watchtower constructed atop the highest hill in Greenbadi panchayat. Joining as the chief guest, G Udayagiri MLA Saluga Pradhan inaugurated the watchtower in the presence of Daringbadi block chairperson Susant Kumar Pradhan, BDO Gadadhar Patra, tehsildar Ashok Kumar Das and Zilla Parishad member Ranjan Kumar Pradhan, Thursday. Speaking to mediapersons, BDO Patra said that at the outset roads have been expanded by cutting the hills to help



tourists visit the watchtower and experience the panoramic scenery of the tourist spot. In coming days, pucca road will be built up to the watchtower and guard walls will be erected around it for safety and convenience of the visiting tourists, he said. Reports said that Daringbadi as a tourist site has carved out a special niche for itself in the tourism map of the country. Tourists from various parts of the country and foreign countries flock to Daringbadi between September and

March to spend some quality time in the lap of nature. Situated at a height of about 3,000 feet above the sea level, it is an ideal summer getaway popularly known as the 'Kashmir of Odisha' as it is the only place in the whole state which experiences snowfall during winter. The place is also gifted with natural bounties such as pine jungles, coffee gardens and beautiful valleys. In light of these facts, the block administration is giving a facelift to some tourist sites in the area such as the Hill View Point, Midubanda waterfall and Lovers' Point in the area. Currently the renovation of the Hill View Park is underway while the developmental works undertaken near Patabandha waterfall was unveiled last month.

Youth gets life term for murder

Balasore: Special Judge Lilipta Pashayat of SC and ST Court in Balasore Friday convicted a youth in a murder case and sentenced him to life imprisonment. As per report, accused Ashish Kumar Jena had murdered Narendra Singh of Pondal village under Nilagiri Police Station in Balasore October 9 in 2017. In this regard, a complaint was filed at Nilagiri PS by Chakradhar Singh, brother of the deceased. Police then registered a case (248/17) and started an investigation. The special case (264/386/2017) was pending at the SC and ST court for hearing. However, special judge Lilipta Pashayat, Friday, after hearing from 24 eyewitnesses and on the basis of 43 documents and 8 material objects (clothes), sentenced him to life imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 10,000. In case the penalty amount is not deposited by the accused, he will have to serve an additional 4-month imprisonment. Special public prosecutor Sulalit Kar conducted the hearing of the case.

Woman gives birth to triplets

Dabugao: A woman gave birth to three sons Friday at Dabugao community health centre (CHC) in Nabarangpur district. As per reports, Belu Bhadra (30), wife of Sukuram Bhadra of Parashubhedha village in Borigaon panchayat under this block in Nabarangpur district, was admitted to Dabugao CHC and gave birth to three sons, Friday morning. After obstetrics, Belu along with her newborns was shifted to the Nabarangpur district headquarters hospital (DHH) for better treatment as the infants were underweight. For better treatment, the infants will be kept in special care unit, hospital sources said.

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Letter No. 936/ Date:26.05.2023

1st CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER CALL NOTICE NO.872
DT.12.05.2023, E-Procurement Notice No.RNP NAC-01/2023-24
No.C-433: The last date of receipt of Bids in Portal is here by extended upto 5 PM of dt.02.06.2023. Secondly the date of opening of Bid is fixed on dt.03.06.2023 at 10.00 A.M. in the Office Chamber of Executive Officer of Ranpur NAC instead of dt.30.05.2023.
All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.
Sd./- Executive Officer
NAC, Ranpur
OIPR-13196/11/0002/2324

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- Name of the Work : 12 (Twelve) Nos. of Civil Works
- Tender Cost : Work varies from Rs.5.90 lakhs to 42.01 lakhs
- Bid Document Cost : Varies from Rs.4,000/- to Rs.6,000/-
- Bid Security : Varies from Rs.5,900/- to Rs.42,100/-
- Class of Contractor : D, C & B Class (As applicable)
- Period of Completion : 6 (Six) Calendar Months
- Other details are as follows:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Onliner for Bidding	Date of Opening of Bid
Superintending Engineer, Khurda Irrigation Division, Khurda	KHD 02 - 01 of 2023-24 to KHD 02-12 of 2023-24 (12 Nos. of Works)	29.05.2023 at 11.00 A.M. to 07.06.2023 upto 5.30 P.M.	08.06.2023 at 11.00 A.M.

- e-mail Id : eekhurdairrigationdivision@gmail.com
- If required lottery may be held on 17.06.2023 at 11.00 A.M.

Further detail conditions can be seen from the Govt. Website: www.tendersodisha.gov.in.
OIPR-32078/11/0002/2324 Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Khurda Irrigation Division, Khurda

FORM A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
[Under Regulation 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016]
FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE CREDITORS OF MIDEAST INTEGRATED STEELS LIMITED

RELEVANT PARTICULARS

No.	Name of Corporate Debtor	MIDEAST INTEGRATED STEELS LIMITED
1.	Date of incorporation of Corporate Debtor	07th September, 1992
2.	Authority under which Corporate Debtor is incorporated / registered	Registrar of Companies, New Delhi Under the Companies Act, 1956
3.	Corporate Identity No. / Limited Liability Identification No. of Corporate Debtor	L74899DL1992PLC050216
4.	Address of the registered office and principal office (if any) of Corporate Debtor	Regd. Office: H-1, Zamrudpur Community Centre, Kailash Colony, New Delhi-110048 Corporate Office: Mesco Towers, 3915, Lewis Road, Kedar Gauri Square, Khuruli, P. O. Danagadi - 755026 Dist. Jajpur, Odisha Mines; Panchvati, P.O. Barbil Road, Barbil, Keonjhar-758035, Odisha. Mumbai Office: 401, Unit 401, Silver Pearl Building, Water Field Road, Bandra (W), Mumbai - 400050. Kolkata Office: 16, Strand Road, Diamond Heritage, 14th Floor, Room-1412, Kolkata-700011
5.	Insolvency commencement date in respect of Corporate Debtor	24th May, 2023
6.	Estimated date of closure of insolvency resolution process	20th November, 2023 (180th day from the date of Commencement of Insolvency Resolution Process)
7.	Name and Registration number of the insolvency professional acting as Interim Resolution Professional	Atul Kumar Kansal Reg. No.:IBBI/IPA-001/IP-P00035/2016-17/10088 AFA Valid up to: 17th November, 2023 Ground Floor, 221-A/19, Onkar Nagar-B, Tri Nagar, North West, Delhi-110035. E-mail: cakansal@yahoo.com
8.	Address & email of the interim resolution professional, as registered with the board	Immaculate Resolution Professionals Private Limited Unit No. 111-112, First Floor, Tower-A, Spazedge Commercial Complex, Sector-47, Sohna Road, Gurgaon - 122018. E-mail: cirp.misl@gmail.com
9.	Address and e-mail to be used for correspondence with the Interim Resolution Professional	
10.	Last date for submission of claims	07th June, 2023
11.	Classes of creditors, if any, under clause (b) of sub-section (6A) of section 21, ascertained by the Interim Resolution Professional	Not Applicable
12.	Names of insolvency professionals identified to act as authorised representatives of creditors in class (three names for each class)	Not Applicable
13.	(a) Relevant forms and (b) Details of authorized representatives are available at:	(a) Web link: https://ibbi.gov.in/home/downloads (b) Not Applicable

Notice is hereby given that the National Company Law Tribunal, Bench VI, New Delhi ordered the commencement of a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process against M/s Mideast Integrated Steels Limited on 24th May, 2023. The creditors of M/s Mideast Integrated Steels Limited are hereby called upon to submit their claims with proof, on or before 07th June, 2023 to the Interim Resolution Professional at the correspondence address mentioned against entry No. 10 only. The Financial creditors shall submit their claims with proof by electronics means only. All other creditors may submit claims with proof in person, by post or electronics means. Submission of false or misleading proof of claims shall attract penalties.

Date : 26.05.2023
Place: New Delhi
Interim Resolution Professional for Mideast Integrated Steels Limited
Reg. No.: IBBI/IPA-001/IP-P00035/2016-17/10088

Man is a transitional being; he is not final.

SRI AUROBINDO



Ever-changing Rulebook

Everyone in India knows that the country is run on a simple principle: Show me the man, and I'll show you the rule. In fact, rules change depending on how influential or otherwise the person likely to be affected by the rules is. The recent appointment of Karnataka IPS officer Praveen Sood as the new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has revived talk about this adage. Some keen observers have pointed out that while senior Haryana IAS officer and whistle-blower Ashok Khemka was not considered for Central deputation because he did not have any experience of serving at the Centre, the Personnel Ministry did not apply this condition in Sood's case. He, too, apparently has no experience of having served on Central deputation and has not been empanelled, yet he has been named the CBI chief.

Interestingly, there's another interesting trend in the appointment of CBI chiefs. Some observers have noted that the BJP has on two similar occasions, brought in state police chiefs from states in which it lost elections to the Centre as CBI chiefs! They cite the example of IPS Rishi Shukla from Madhya Pradesh and Subodh Jaiswal from Maharashtra. So, Sood's appointment is not an anomaly since there is clearly a precedent. A similar logic was also given when Gen BS Rawat was made Chief of the Army Staff over two senior generals since they did not have combat experience. Not surprisingly, the bureaucratic rulebook seems like a mythical creature, forever elusive and ever-changing, and can only be deciphered by a chosen few!

Controversy over ex-chief secretary's appointment

The recent appointment of ex-chief secretary Somesh Kumar as the chief advisor to Telangana's Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has sparked a controversy and raised concerns among babu and political circles. Having taken voluntary retirement in February, the 1989 batch IAS officer from Andhra Pradesh has been given a three-year term in the rank of a cabinet minister. This has led many to question the potential overshadowing of senior serving babus due to his reported close proximity to the Chief Minister and his penchant to be in the spotlight. Sources have informed DKB that the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) already comprises a substantial number of retired officers from the IAS, IPS and other all India services. According to the CMO's official website, there are a dozen advisors to the CM, of which eight are former bureaucrats. It is widely believed that these advisors, during their tenure in service, impressed the Chief Minister with their work. Now with the appointment of Somesh Kumar as the chief advisor, political and babu observers remain watchful, waiting to see how Kumar's addition to the CMO will impact the functioning of the government and the roles of senior officials.



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

Ravneet Kaur takes the helm at CCI

The appointment of Ravneet Kaur as the new chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for a period of five years comes at a crucial juncture. Amidst months of delay and speculation, Kaur's selection brings hope for the much-needed revitalisation of the regulatory body. This move by the Centre, occurring ten months before her retirement, is a significant step towards ensuring fair competition in India's evolving business landscape. Kaur's extensive experience as a senior Punjab IAS officer, coupled with her notable track record, positions her as a promising leader for the CCI. With the regulatory mandate of the CCI being intensified through recent amendments to the law, the addition of manpower and infrastructure becomes imperative. Interestingly, this is the third senior appointment the Centre has announced after the Karnataka election results. Earlier, the government had cleared the appointment of Praveen Sood as CBI Director and IRS officer Suman Sharma as UPSC member.

The top post at the CCI fell vacant after Ashok Kumar Gupta demitted the chairman's office on 25 October 2022, having completed his four-year term. Later the government gave member Sanjeeta Verma the charge of acting chairperson and also invited applications for three more members. CCI has to have a chairperson and not less than two and not more than six other members, as per the Competition Act. Kaur has held several positions in the government over the last two decades, including as chairperson of the India Tourism Development Corp between 2017 and 2019. With her extensive experience in the government and a proven track record, Kaur's leadership is expected to revitalise the functioning of CCI and reinforce its role in ensuring fair competition, considering that the panel is currently investigating some of the world's biggest companies including Apple, Amazon and Walmart's Flipkart for alleged anti-competitive practices.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian). Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realize there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you. LAO TZU

Thinking is easy, acting is difficult, and to put one's thoughts into action is the most difficult thing in the world. JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment. RALPH WALDO EMERSON

WORDSWORTH

Incalescence

This is an extremely rare word, meaning the process or action of becoming warm or hot. In 1888, the New York Sun (surely the most appropriately named journal to lay claim to it) included it in a squib that borrowed the shade of Dr Samuel Johnson to complain magniloquently about the perils of riding a commuter train in the city on cold winter days: "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "the corporeal gelidity and horripilation superinduced by the niveous atmosphere cannot be mitigated even by the mental incalescence evolved by indignation." "He means," whispered Mr. Boswell, "that it's so infernally cold in the cars of the Third Avenue elevated that even swearing at the directors won't warm you." Incalescence dates from the early seventeenth century; it was one of many words that were imported from Latin by scholars writers around this time, in this case from incalescere, to become warm or hot. That's from calere, to be warm, which is also the source of calorie, calorimeter, and other words. Another rare appearance was in The Ladies' Repository of December 1866: "What the flexible imagination is to the ordinary activity of the mind, the fiery is to its creative energy. Little depends upon the degree of its incalescence — more upon its living, energetic, thoughtful activity and rapid but thorough progress."

LOL

Lesson on blood flow

A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, he said: "Now, students, if I stood on my head the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I should turn red in the



face." "Yes, sir," the boys said. "Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?" A little fellow shouted, "It's because your feet ain't empty."

FOCUS NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

WHO SHOULD INAUGURATE?

Unfortunately, controversy has arisen in the political spectrum regarding who should inaugurate the new Parliament building. Some of the Opposition parties are opposed to its inauguration by the Prime Minister and say that it should be inaugurated by the President or the Speaker of Lok Sabha. It is for the first time in the history of India that a new Parliament is built to house the chambers of India's bicameral Parliament, although additional buildings have been added subsequently to the sprawling Parliament House complex such as the Parliament House Annexe, the Parliament Library building and the Parliament House Annexe Extension building. Political parties opposing the inauguration of the new Parliament House by the Prime Minister argue that these additional buildings were only meant to serve the secretariats of the two Houses and as such were inaugurated by the then Prime Minister; but the new Parliament is going to house the two Houses, viz, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and as such needs to be inaugurated by the President of India and not Prime Minister.



Rup Narayan Das

IN INDIA, WE HAVE ADOPTED A PARLIAMENTARY FORM OF GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS PRIME MINISTER-LED

This article per se doesn't intend to take sides with the unsavoury debate which has regrettably dragged the exalted office and institution of the President of India. Perhaps a closer look at the provisions of the Constitution will illuminate and help steer clear of the debate.

The Constitutional provisions envisaging the relationship between the President and the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister are instructive to put the debate in perspective. Article 79 of the Constitution stipulates that "there shall be a Parliament for the Union which shall consist of the President and the two Houses to be known respectively as the Council of States and the House of the People." Thus, it is amply clear that the President is an integral organ of



It may be mentioned that prior to the Forty-second Amendment of the Constitution, there was no express obligation on the part of the President to act in accordance with the advice rendered by the Council of Ministers

Parliament though she/he is not a member of the either House of Parliament. The President is the seamless connect between the Executive and the Legislature. In terms of the Constitution, and also in actual practice, the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature is one that is most intimate and does not behave any antagonism or dichotomy between the two organs of the body polity.

The President also summons each House of Parliament to meet at such time and place as she/he finds fit. Further, the President also prorogues the Houses or either House and dissolves the Lok Sabha. However, the proposal to summon, prorogue or dissolve the Lok Sabha is made by the Prime Minister with or without the consultation of the Cabinet. In case of disagreement between the two Houses on a Bill, other than a Money Bill, the President has the Constitutional power to summon both Houses to meet in a joint sitting for the purpose of deliberating and voting on the Bill unless the Bill has lapsed by reason of a dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Further, in accordance with Article

118(3) of the Constitution, the President makes rules in consultation with the Chairman of Rajya Sabha and the Speaker of Lok Sabha with respect to a joint sitting of, and communication between the two Houses. Also, the President appoints the Speaker pro tem from amongst the members of Lok Sabha, to preside over the sitting of Lok Sabha. Thus, the President of India enjoys considerable powers relating to the functioning of Parliament in the legislative domain. However, while the President of India is the head of the State and supreme command, the Prime Minister is the head of the government. In India, we have adopted a Parliamentary form of government, which is Prime Minister-led.

The Constituent Assembly never envisaged that the powers and functions vested in the President would be exercised by her/him without the advice of the ministers. This point was emphasised by Dr BR Ambedkar, who said: "Under the draft Constitution, the President occupies the same position as the king under the English Constitution. He is the Head of the state, but not of the executive.

He represents the Nation but does not rule the Nation... The President of the Indian Union will be generally bound by the advice of his ministers. He can do nothing contrary to their advice, nor can he do anything without their advice."

It may be mentioned that prior to the Forty-second Amendment of the Constitution, there was no express obligation on the part of the President to act in accordance with the advice rendered by the Council of Ministers. The Forty-second Amendment Act made it obligatory for the President to act in accordance with the Council of Ministers. This was further amended by the Constitution's Forty-fourth Amendment Act, which provided that the President may require the Council of Ministers to reconsider the advice, either generally or otherwise, but she/he shall act in accordance with the advice tendered after such recommendation. This clearly suggests that we have a Prime Minister-led Parliamentary form of government.

The construction of the new Parliament building is an Executive action undertaken by the Union Ministry of Urban Affairs, and the expenditure is borne by the government. It is rather in the fitness of things that the new Parliament building is being inaugurated by the Prime Minister of the country. Instead of wasting their time and energy in this futile exercise, the Opposition political parties should focus their attention on reaching out to the electorate and engaging in constructive debate for the well-being of the people and the development of the country. The elitist debate in English on TV channels will not help them win elections. Rather cooperative federalism as followed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will.

The writer is a retired Joint Secretary of Lok Sabha Secretariat of Indian Parliament. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM CLIMATE ACTION

The loss & damage fund is coming

Last November's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, concluded on a historic high note, with the last-minute agreement to establish a "loss and damage" fund. The decision to offer financial support to vulnerable countries suffering the worst effects of global warming was a remarkable achievement that has resonated worldwide. But as we move from establishing the fund to implementing it, important questions remain.

What is a realistic funding target? Who will receive financial assistance? Which entities will have final say over the fund?

As we near the halfway mark between COP27 and COP28 in Dubai, the international community must address these critical questions in the spirit of constructive multilateralism that animated the proceedings in Sharm El-Sheikh. Governments, activists, and affected citizens were able to agree on this key plank of climate justice, and we must now demonstrate the same level of collaboration in making it a success.

In March, the COP27 presidency held the first Transitional Committee meeting in Luxor, Egypt, to begin addressing the operationalisation of the fund. The composition of the committee ensured

a diverse range of voices, and complex issues were discussed in a constructive spirit of cooperation.

The three-day meeting concluded with the adoption of a work plan containing substantive and procedural milestones to deliver actionable recommendations well in advance of COP28. Moreover, the plan outlines how the committee will focus on all elements of its mandated recommendations at each gathering, gradually working toward consensus.

The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change defines loss and damage as the harm caused by human-generated climate change. Solutions to postpone, minimise, or prevent such harm to vulnerable communities worldwide must also be human-generated. It is our collective responsibility to implement effective policies to combat global warming, as well as to alleviate suffering and provide financial support to people whose lives have been upended by rising temperatures.

The Transitional Committee meetings are designed precisely for this purpose: to discuss effective methods and modalities that will turn the concept of the loss and damage fund into a tangible reality while identifying gaps in the existing climate-finance system. Requests and demands are currently being analysed and consid-

ered before finalising the mechanics to ensure proper implementation.

Backed by a broad range of government, civil-society, and private-sector stakeholders, the fund is designed to consider the short-, medium-, and long-term effects of climate change on developing countries. It will supply financial and technological resources for responding to loss and damage caused by both immediate and slow-onset events. That could mean early-warning systems, disaster-risk reduction, or ecosystem restoration.

As the architect of the fund, Egypt is committed to ensuring its effectiveness, transparency, and accessibility. We strongly believe that all stakeholders must fully collaborate to fulfil its objectives and make a significant change in the communities hit hardest by global warming. The burden of climate change is unequal, and we have the chance to create a much fairer and stability-enhancing balance.

The loss and damage fund represents a major step forward, but it is not enough. We must continue to work tirelessly to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions — the root cause of climate change. This can be achieved by accelerating the transition to clean energy, empowering communities to adapt their livelihoods, and adhering to scientific recommendations in

line with internationally agreed principles.

At the same time, the need to create a working loss and damage fund that delivers on the promises made at COP27 is acute. East Africa and the Sahel are currently experiencing severe droughts caused by human-induced climate change, which has resulted in meagre rain levels as well as increased evapotranspiration in plants and soil. Plagued by food insecurity, many people in the affected countries are internally displaced or have been forced to migrate, underscoring global warming's disruptive effects and the increasingly limited ability of both nature and humanity to adapt to them.

The newly created fund will remain a top priority in climate discussions, and it is crucial to enter COP28 with a clear strategy for its effective implementation. We must approach the task with a unified sense of purpose — only by working together and getting the details right can we begin to address the vast inequities of the crisis. But given the significance of the task at hand, I am confident that we will succeed.

The writer is COP27 President and Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

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

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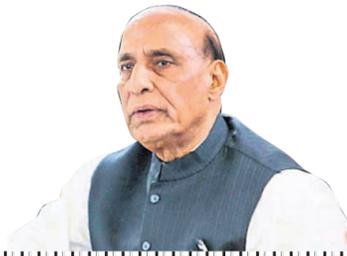
Upskill teachers

Sir, The system of education in India is unfortunately marred by a severe shortage of teachers, which makes quality education a far cry for children. A report by a child rights NGO says that there is a shortage of more than 5 lakh teachers in elementary schools in the country, and about 14% of public secondary schools do not even have the minimum requirement of teachers. While opening of new schools keeps increasing significantly, the quality of education remains abysmally poor due to the fact that teachers are overburdened with multiple activities like supervising mid-day meals, conducting surveys, carrying out administrative works, and even entrusted with managing election duties apart from their primary duty of teaching. According to an estimate, one in every six teachers in public schools is not professionally trained. There must be a system in place to ensure that teachers are upskilled, vacancies should be filled within a timeframe, and they are not tasked with too many responsibilities, so that their focus remains on teaching. A proper policy framework is required at each step to check for flaws, thereby making way for inclusive education. **Ranganathan Sivakumar**, CHENNAI

Record output

Sir, The projected record foodgrain output for the 2022-23 crop year in India is undoubtedly a highly commendable and positive development for the agriculture sector. It reflects the hard work of farmers, the expertise of scientists, and the favourable policies of the government. Achieving a record production despite challenges like unseasonal rains demonstrates the resilience and productivity of the agricultural community. A strong foodgrain output is crucial for ensuring food security and stability in the country. The increased production of key crops like rice, wheat, and maize, along with higher production of pulses and coarse grains, will contribute to meeting the food demands of the population and potentially reduce the need for imports. To keep the agricultural sector growing and improve farming, we need to invest in research and development. This means finding better ways to do things and using new technologies. Farmers should have access to these modern methods and tools, as well as better infrastructure like irrigation systems and roads. They also need support in the form of loans and help selling their crops. By doing these things, we can help farmers be more successful and ensure that agriculture continues to improve. While celebrating the record production, it's important to focus on maintaining the quality of the produce. **Krishna Kumar Vepakomma**, HYDERABAD

national



India must focus on advancements in defence technology to deal with a "double threat" along the borders
RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

CASE TRANSFERRED

All the cases related to the Krishna Janmabhoomi dispute will now be heard by the Allahabad High Court. The high court has transferred the cases currently being heard in the lower court in Mathura to itself



of the day quote

In the last nine years, the Modi government has become a 'Vishwaguru' in snatching the employment of crores of youths

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

The AAP government in Punjab of trying to muzzle the voice of media ever since it assumed power

SUKHBIR BADAL | SHIROMANI AKALI DAL PRESIDENT

It's "daughters' era" as the girl students are making all of them proud with their "rare" achievement

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

PARLIAMENT INAUGURATION ROW

No let-up in war of words



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chennai, May 26: With the new Parliament building set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there was no let-up in the war of words between the BJP and the Congress on Friday over the event and the ceremonial sceptre Sengol was also dragged into the political row. Prime Minister Modi said the new Parliament building to be inaugurated Sunday will make every Indian proud and shared a video of the new complex, as several union ministers hit out at the 20 opposition parties including the Congress over their decision to boycott the inauguration ceremony. He also urged people to share the video on the social media platform using the hashtag 'My Parliament My Pride'.

A group of 270 eminent citizens including former bureaucrats, ambassadors and veterans condemned the opposition parties for their decision and claimed that all the "family-first" parties have come together to boycott all that represents India. The Supreme Court, meanwhile, refused to entertain a PIL seeking a direction to the Lok Sabha Secretariat for inauguration of the new Parliament building by President Droupadi Murmu, saying, "it is not a function of the court to look into this".

While Union Home Minister Amit Shah accused the Congress of reducing the Sengol to a "walking stick", BJP president J P Nadda said what connects the boycotting parties is their dynastic leadership whose "monarchic" methods are at loggerheads with the principles of the Constitution.

Shah said the Congress needs to "reflect" on its behaviour as he denounced the party's claim that there was no evidence of the Sengol being a symbol of transfer of power by the British to India in 1947. The golden Sengol will be installed near the Chair of the Speaker in the new Parliament building. "Why does the Congress party hate Indian traditions and culture so much? A sacred Sengol was given to Pandit Nehru by a holy Saivite Mutt from Tamil Nadu to symbolize India's freedom but it was banished to a museum as a 'walking stick'," Shah tweeted.

Shah's remarks came after Congress leader Jairam Ramesh claimed there was no documented evidence of Lord Mountbatten, C Rajagopalachari and Jawaharlal Nehru describing the Sengol as a symbol of transfer of power by the British to India. The head of a Tamil Nadu monastery sought to counter Ramesh's claim, saying the Sengol was handed over to Lord Mountbatten and then it was presented to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1947 to symbolise transfer of power from British and wrong claims made in this respect by some people has caused sadness. Tiruvavaduthurai Aadeenam, Ambalavana Desika Paramacharya Swami said the Sengol that was away from the gaze of people would now be prominently displayed in Parliament for the world to see.

To a question by reporters in Chennai on any proof for the handover of the Sengol, the pontiff said there were evidences including photographs and reports that appeared in newspapers and magazines in 1947.

Kejriwal to skip NITI Aayog meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday, saying that he would boycott the NITI Aayog meeting over Centre's recent ordinance and charged that "cooperative federalism" in the country was being turned into a "joke".

The chief minister of the AAP-ruled Punjab, Bhagwant Mann, has also declared to boycott the NITI Aayog meeting to be held on Saturday.

The ordinance brought recently by the BJP-led central government has taken back elected Delhi government's executive control over bureaucracy that was earlier given to it by the Supreme Court through its verdict on May 11.

Kejriwal, in his letter to Prime Minister Modi, also alleged that the non-BJP governments in the country were being toppled through the use of money or threat of central probe agencies like ED and CBI orchestrating defection of their MLAs, and questioned whether such action encouraged cooperative federalism in the country.

The NITI Aayog meeting will take place on Saturday and the objective of the Commission was preparing a vision of India and furthering cooperative federalism, Kejriwal pointed in his letter.

"The way democracy has been attacked, non-BJP governments have been toppled and stopped from functioning in the last few years, it's neither vision of India nor cooperative federalism," he alleged.

Court grants NOC for passport

The former Congress president had surrendered his diplomatic passport upon his disqualification as an MP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: A Delhi court Friday granted a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for issuance of an 'ordinary passport' for three years instead of 10, the period for which it is normally issued, following an objection raised by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy.

The former Congress president had surrendered his diplomatic passport upon his disqualification as an MP. "I'm partly allowing your application."

Not for 10 years but three years," Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Vaibhav Mehta told Rahul Gandhi's counsel while pronouncing the order in a packed courtroom.

The court noted the National Herald case was pending at the stage of cross examination of the complainant in pre charge evidence and Rahul Gandhi has been regularly appearing either in person or through his counsel and has not hampered or delayed the proceedings.

Rahul Gandhi is an accused in the case in which Swamy is the complainant.

"This court has to take into account the public interests involved and also has to keep in view the rights of the applicant to travel



Rahul Gandhi is slated to visit Washington DC, New York and San Francisco

The Congress leader will likely address Indian Americans, meet lawmakers at the US Capitol, and interact with members of think tanks, Wall Street executives and university students during his stay

abroad. Therefore, this court after going through the submissions of both the sides and after perusal of the record is of the view that ends of justice would suffice if the applicant is granted NOC for renewal of the passport of the applicant as per rules for a period of three years," the judge said.

Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to visit the United States in the first week of June during which he will attend meetings and interact with university students.

He is slated to visit Washington DC, New York and San Francisco. The Congress leader will likely address Indian Americans, meet lawmakers at the US Capitol, and interact with members of think tanks,

Wall Street executives and university students during his stay.

The magisterial court, in the forenoon, reserved its order on Rahul Gandhi's plea for grant of NOC after hearing submissions of his lawyers and Swamy.

Swamy opposed the application, saying it was "devoid of any merit" and insisted the passport should be issued only for one year and renewed every year thereafter.

"It is a special case. The passport should not be issued for 10 years. It seems wrong," he said, and claimed Gandhi's Indian citizenship was under question. He alleged Rahul Gandhi was a British citizen.

Rahul Gandhi's advocate Tarannum Cheema contested Swamy's claim and said two petitions asking for initiating criminal proceedings against the Congress leader on the citizenship issue have already been dismissed by higher courts.

Cheema, along with advocates Nikhil Bhalla and Sumit Kumar, urged the court to allow the passport to be issued for 10 years since such relief has been granted by higher courts in cases involving more serious offences. They said in the present case even charges have not been framed.

The National Herald case is based on a private criminal complaint by Swamy against Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and others, accusing them of cheating, conspiracy and criminal breach of trust. Swamy has accused them of cheating and misappropriation of funds in acquiring ownership of the now-defunct daily newspaper National Herald.

SHORT TAKES

NIA seeks death penalty for Yasin

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday approached the Delhi High Court seeking death penalty for separatist leader Yasin Malik, who was awarded life term by a trial court here in a terror funding case. The plea by the agency has been listed for hearing on May 29 before a bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Talwant Singh. On May 24, 2022, a trial court here had awarded life imprisonment to Malik, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief, after holding him guilty for various offences under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and the IPC.

Air India plane returns to Delhi

New Delhi: An Air India plane en route to Vancouver returned to Delhi shortly after takeoff on Friday due to a technical issue. The Boeing 777 aircraft landed back safely in the national capital, the airline said in a statement. "Air India flight AI185 Delhi to Vancouver dated May 26, 2023, operated by B777 aircraft has air returned to Delhi following a technical issue shortly after takeoff," it said. An airline spokesperson said there were 298 passengers onboard the aircraft, and later they were taken in another plane to Vancouver.

Driver thrashed

New Delhi: A bus driver from Noida depot was allegedly thrashed by a group of street vendors at Delhi's Durga Bai Deshmukh Metro station, the police said Friday. The injured person has been identified as Omkar Singh, who works as a contract driver. According to the police, a PCR call regarding a quarrel at Durga Bai Deshmukh Metro station was received at 12:45 p.m. on Thursday, following which a police team reached the spot. "The injured was rushed to S.J. Hospital for the treatment. He suffered injury on his head," said a police officer.

Serial killer held

Patna: A serial killer, who was involved in three back-to-back murders within 10 days, were arrested by police in Bihar's Muzaffarpur, an official said. Muzaffarpur SSP Rakesh Kumar said that the accused committed the crime only for a mobile phone and a few bucks. The accused used to target labourers and night guards using iron rod, wooden hammer and other tools. The accused, identified as Shiv Chand Paswan alias Bholwa, committed the crime between April 30 and May 8 in Kolhua Paigambarpur locality under Ahiyapur police station.

Jain gets interim bail on medical grounds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: The Supreme Court Friday granted jailed former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain interim

Directorate in a money laundering case in May last year. A vacation bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and PS Narasimha allowed Jain, 58, to undergo treatment in a hospital of his choice and asked him to produce medical records by July 10. "After hearing learned counsel for the parties, at present there is no reason to dis-

believe the Report of GB Pant Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research. We think it appropriate that the citizen is having a right to take treatment of his choice, at his own expenses, in a private hospital.



"Therefore, we deem it appropriate to release the petitioner on interim bail on medical grounds for a limited period of six weeks," the bench said. The top court also imposed certain conditions like Jain shall not influence or meet

the witnesses and not leave the National Capital Region (NCR) without leave of the trial court. It said during the period when he is on interim bail, all relevant treatment papers and documents related to prognoses shall be produced before the apex court. It also asked Jain to stay away from media, including social media.

"The petitioner (Satyendar Jain) shall refrain himself to appear before Print or Electronic Media or any social media platform to give any statement on any issue during the interim bail," the bench said in its order. It listed the matter for further hearing on July 10.

Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Jain, said the former minister is suffering from a spine problem, has lost 35 kg weight and has virtually turned into a skeleton. He placed on record

the medical reports of Jain issued by the GB Pant Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research, New Delhi, dated May 4, 2023.

Singhvi said the hospital is the mandatory referral hospital for Tihar jail and its report cannot be refuted. Additional Solicitor General SV Raju, appearing for the ED, sought Jain's examination by a panel of doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) or Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital. If medical reports suggest treatment, the probe agency will not oppose it, he said.

He submitted that Jain had moved petitions for bail on medical grounds in the case earlier as well, but the pleas were withdrawn as the agency sought his examination by a medical board of AIIMS or RML hospital.

Central agency warns of phone virus that hacks into call logs

The virus is also capable of 'bypassing anti-virus programs and deploying ransomware on the targeted devices', the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or CERT-In said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: An Android malware called 'Daam' that infects mobile phones and hacks into sensitive data like call records, contacts, history and camera has been found to be spreading, the national cyber security agency has said in its latest advisory.

The virus is also capable of "bypassing anti-virus programs and deploying ransomware on the tar-

geted devices", the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team or CERT-In said. The agency is the federal technology arm to combat cyber attacks and guard the cyber space against phishing and hacking assaults and similar online attacks.

The Android botnet gets distributed through third-party websites or applications downloaded from untrusted/unknown sources, the agency said. "Once it is placed in the device, the malware tries to



bypass the security check of the device and after a successful attempt, it attempts to steal sensitive data, and permissions such as reading history and bookmarks, killing

background processing, and reading call logs etc," the advisory said.

'Daam' is also capable of hacking phone call recordings, contacts, gaining access to camera,

modifying device passwords, capturing screenshots, stealing SMSes, downloading/uploading files, etc. And transmitting to the C2 (command-and-control) server from the victim's (affected persons) device, the advisory said.

The malware, it said, utilises the AES (advanced encryption standard) encryption algorithm to code files in the victim's device. Other files are then deleted from the local storage, leaving only the encrypted files with ".Enc" extension and a ransom note that says "readme_now.Txt", the advisory said. The central agency suggested a number of do's and don'ts to avoid getting attacked by such viruses and malware. The

Cert-In advised against browsing "un-trusted websites" or clicking on "un-trusted links". Caution should be exercised while clicking on any link provided in unsolicited emails and SMSes, it said. Install and maintain updated anti-virus and anti-spyware software, it suggested.

It also suggested that users should be on the lookout for "suspicious numbers" that don't look like "real mobile phone numbers" as scammers often mask their identity by using email-to-text services to avoid revealing their actual phone number. "Genuine SMS messages received from banks usually contain sender ID (consisting of bank's short name) instead of a phone number in the sender information field," it said.

Women use umbrellas to protect themselves from the scorching sun in Dehradun

PTI PHOTO

Lumpy virus threat looms large in Hamirpur, Una HP govt abolishes NPA for doctors

Hamirpur/Una (HP), May 26: Animal husbandry department has sounded alarm in Una and Hamirpur districts against the threat of lumpy virus, found among cows and buffaloes, officials said. The authorities alerted the two districts following the reports of outbreak of the virus in the neighbouring states of Punjab and Uttarakhand. Lumpy skin disease is an infectious disease caused among cattle by lumpy virus. The infection causes formation of knots in the body of animals, which also suffer from weight loss, fluid discharges from the mouth, high fever and reduced milk, as the condition worsens.



Nearly 25,000 animals were affected by lumpy virus in Hamirpur and Una district last year, with about 1,209 animals dying in Una alone. A spokesman of the Animal Husbandry Department said Wednesday that the animal husbandry department in Una district has geared up against the disease. The department has appealed to the dairy farmers to get their animals vaccinated and have asked them to not buy and sell animals from neighbouring states.

- Lumpy skin ailment is an infectious disease caused among cattle by lumpy virus
- The infection causes formation of knots in the body of animals, that also suffer weight loss, fluid discharges from the mouth, high fever and reduced milk, as the condition worsens
- Nearly 25,000 animals were affected by lumpy virus in Hamirpur and Una district last year, with about 1,209 animals dying in Una alone

Una Deputy Director, the Animal Husbandry Department, Dr. Jai Singh Sen said that the department is fully prepared to deal with the lumpy virus. He said the vaccine is available absolutely free of cost in all veterinary institutes of the district. "Don't buy and sell animals from Lumpy affected areas," Sen stressed. He also appealed to the cattle rearers to immediately report any symptoms such as high fever, loss of appetite, loss of milk and thick lumps in the skin in their cattle to the nearest veterinary hospital or pharmacy. He said that this year so far not a single case of this disease has been reported in Una district.



Shimla, May 26: The Himachal Pradesh government on Thursday announced that doctors recruited henceforth across departments, including Health and Family Welfare and Animal Husbandry, will not be entitled to Non-Practicing Allowance (NPA). The announcement drew a sharp reaction from medical and veterinary associations, who termed it "anti-people" and demanded that the notification be withdrawn. "The Non-Practicing Allowance (NPA) will not be admissible to all doctors recruited henceforth in Health and Family Welfare, Medical Education, Dental, Ayush and Animal Husbandry departments of the state government," the official notification stated. The Himachal Medical Association described the decision as "anti-people". The duties of doctors are different from duties discharged by employees of other departments as they serve the patients by risking their own lives and had demonstrated their loyalty to the patients during the Covid-19 pandemic, the association said in a statement issued here. The Himachal Pradesh Veterinary Officers Association demanded that the government withdraw the notification. This decision is not in the interest of veterinarians. Resentment among veterinarians would affect the entire animal husbandry sector and harm the interests of farmers, said Dr. Neeraj Mohan and Dr. Madhur Gupta, president and general secretary of Himachal Pradesh Veterinary Officers Association, respectively. The state government had earlier reduced the NPA from 25 per cent to 20 per cent of the basic pay and now the NPA is being denied to future doctors, they said.

THE HIMACHAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION DESCRIBED THE DECISION AS "ANTI-PEOPLE"

Raj govt to open 70 new sub-health centres across state

Jaipur, May 26: The Rajasthan government will open 70 new sub-health centres (SHCs) across the state to strengthen health services infrastructure, according to an official statement. Eleven SHCs will be opened in Sikar, nine in Nagaur, six each in Alwar and Karauli, five in Sawai Madhopur, four each in Bhilwara and Tonk, three each in Jaipur, Churu and Rajsamand, two each in Chittorgarh, Dausa, Jalore, Jhunjhunu, Kota and Udaipur, and one SHC each in Ajmer, Baran, Bharatpur and Pali, it said. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has approved a proposal for the project, it said and added a woman health worker will be posted at each of these SHCs. In his Budget speech, Gehlot had announced that SHCs will be opened in the state in a phased manner. In another decision, agriculture course will be started in 50 government higher secondary schools of the state. The statement said teachers will be appointed in these schools for the course. The course will be started in eight schools each in Jaipur and Alwar, five in Ajmer, four in Sikar, three each in Barmer, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Dungarpur and Jhalawar, two each in Bundi, Jodhpur and Nagaur, Sriganganagar and Jaisalmer, and one school each in Jalore and Pali. The chief minister has also tourism development works at Jaldevji Mataji Temple Sansera in Railmagra in Nathdwara (Rajsamand). A financial provision of ₹10 crore has been approved for this, the statement said.

12 dead as heavy rain batters Tonk

Jaipur, May 26: At least a dozen people died and several were injured in separate incidents due to heavy rain and thunderstorm in Rajasthan's Tonk district, officials said Friday. Accompanied by gusty winds, heavy rain battered several places in the district on Thursday night, leading to the loss of human lives and damage to houses. A thunder squall with a maximum speed of 96 kmph was reported at the Jaipur International Airport. Meanwhile, the MeT issued an orange alert at several places in the state Friday, forecasting heavy rain and strong thunderstorms reaching a speed of 50-60 kmph. Some places could also witness a hailstorm. Tonk District Collector Chinmayee Gopal said the 12 deaths were reported from across the Tonk district - three in Tonk city, three in Niwai block, two each in Malpura and Devli and one each in Toda Rai Singh and Uniara. The injured persons have been admitted to different hospitals in the district, Gopal said. A few places have reported water and electricity outage issues, which the administration is trying to resolve, the district collector said. The field staff, who have been active since night, are trying to assess the total loss due to the rain and storm. Once the report is ready, compensation will be provided to eligible persons according to government rules, she added. Disaster Management and Relief Secretary PC Kishan said the deceased will be given relief from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). According to weather data noted in the last 24 hours till 8.30 am on Friday, Jaipur tehsil recorded 6 cm of rainfall, while Malpura of



The MeT issued an orange alert at several places in the state Friday, forecasting heavy rain and strong thunderstorms reaching a speed of 50-60 kmph. Some places could also witness hailstorms

Accompanied by gusty winds, heavy rain battered several places in the district Thursday night, leading to the loss of human lives and damage to houses. A thunder squall with a maximum speed of 96 kmph was reported at the Jaipur International Airport. Tonk, Lakshmanagarh of Sikar, Pilani of Jhunjhunu, Bonli of Sawai Madhopur, Hindaun of Karauli, Sambhar of Jaipur, Chaksu of Jaipur, Chomu of Jaipur and Sarwar of Ajmer recorded 5 cm each. Several other places across the state recorded 1 to 4 cm of rainfall. In view of the bad weather, the MeT on Friday issued an orange alert for northern parts of the state, including Ganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bikaner, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Alwar, Nagaur, Jaipur, Dausa, Bharatpur, Dhaulpur, Karauli districts. "Thunderstorms will continue in the districts of Bikaner, Jaipur, Bharatpur, Ajmer, Kota divisions on May 27 as well," the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said in a weather bulletin.

HIMACHAL GOVT PLANS TO ENCOURAGE EV USE



Dharamshala, May 26: Himachal Pradesh government discussed plans to encourage the use of electric vehicles and has set a target to transform the state into a 'Green Energy State' by March 2026. During a review meeting in Dharamshala, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu stressed the importance of identifying suitable locations for charging stations along the proposed three Green Corridors Highways in Himachal Pradesh, according to a release. These highways include Parwanoo-Nalagarh-Una-Hamirpur-Sansarpur Terrace and Bilaspur-Hamirpur-Kangra, and Mandi-Dharamshala-Kangra. He also emphasised the need to develop charging infrastructure within cities to encourage the use of electric vehicles (EVs), according to a statement. The state government has set a target to transform Himachal Pradesh into a Green Energy State by March 31, 2026, the statement said. To achieve this goal, the Himachal Pradesh cabinet approved the Rajiv Gandhi Self-Employment Scheme 2023. The scheme will provide a uniform 50 per cent subsidy for the purchase of e-taxis, e-buses, and e-trucks. This scheme not only provides self-employment opportunities for local youth but also enables government departments to hire electric vehicle service providers, it added. Sukhu directed the officers of the transport department to organise a meeting with stakeholders within the next 10 days to kickstart the creation of an electric vehicle ecosystem. The state government aims to transition all government vehicles to EVs gradually and lead the way in green energy, the chief minister said.

Shimla gets light, sound show at Bantony Castle

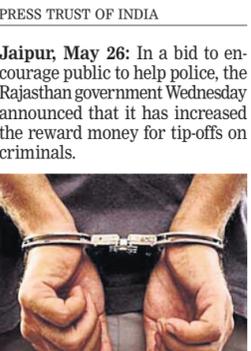
THE 129-YEAR-OLD HERITAGE BANTONY CASTLE WAS ONCE THE SUMMER PALACE OF THE MAHARAJA OF SIRMAU. ITS MAIN BUILDING IS A DOUBLE-STORY STRUCTURE CONSTRUCTED IN THE MOCK TUDOR-STYLE CROWNED WITH A GABLE ROOF AND MINI-TOWERS.



Shimla, May 26: Shimla got another addition to its list of attractions with the opening of a light and sound show at the Bantony Castle in the heart of the city. The show is mounted a few metres away from the famous Scandal Point on the Mall Road and was announced open by Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri here Tuesday night. The light and sound show depicts the history of Shimla town, erstwhile summer capital of British India, besides the history of Bantony Castle. Conservation and renovation of Bantony castle has cost Rs 29 crore and seating arrangement has been made for 70 people to watch the show, a statement issued here said. The 30-minute-long show has been prepared in Hindi and English and voiced by actor Anupam Kher, who too hails from Shimla. It is a unique effort and both the locals and tourists should watch

as it gives a peep into the history of Shimla, Agnihotri said, calling the Bantony Castle an important property of the language, art, and culture of the city. The show is a first of its kind where digital technique has been used to present the history of Shimla in a theatrical mode. Bantony Castle has over the years housed offices of Punjab and Himachal government, including the State Police Headquarters, while its annexe accommodated the Employment Exchange. Spread over an area of 19,436.83 sqm, the property includes the main wooden structure, annexe, and sprawling lawns surrounded by thick deodar forests. The building was vacated after the owners won the legal battle, but was later acquired by the state government in 2016.

Rajasthan govt raises reward amount for tip-off on criminals



Jaipur, May 26: In a bid to encourage public to help police, the Rajasthan government Wednesday announced that it has increased the reward money for tip-offs on criminals. According to the order issued by Joint Government Secretary Jagveer Singh, the reward amount payable to those who give information on criminals has been increased following approval from the finance department. The order enables the Rajasthan Director General of Police (DGP) to declare a reward of up to ₹5 lakh on any criminal, as against the reward limit of ₹1 lakh allowed earlier. The Additional Director General of Police (Crime) and Additional Director General of Police (SOG) have also been empowered to increase the reward amount from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh. The Range Inspector General of Police and Deputy Inspector General can declare a reward from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000. At the same time, compared to a reward limit of ₹5,000 earlier, the District Superintendent of Police (DSP) and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) can now declare rewards of up to ₹25,000 on any criminal, the order added.

Land allotted for Pak Hindu migrants in Jaisalmer

THE ANNOUNCEMENT, MADE BY JAISALMER DISTRICT COLLECTOR TINA DABI, CAME A WEEK AFTER THE MIGRANTS STAGED A PROTEST FOLLOWING THE DEMOLITION OF THEIR HOUSES AS PART OF AN ANTI-ENCROACHMENT DRIVE IN AMARSAGAR AREA



Jaipur, May 26: The Pakistan Hindu migrants, who were displaced from government land in Mool Sagar village of Rajasthan's Jaisalmer, will now get 40 bighas of land. The district administration has made this announcement in this perspective. A few Pak migrants with relatives were living in temporary houses built on government land, which were recently removed. The BJP as well as Congress leaders protested the move. Thereafter, District Collector Tina Dabi allotted 40 bighas of government land for these migrants. However, those with Indian citizenship will only get this land. Earlier, the Collector arranged food, water and accommodation for them free of cost, after leaders from across the parties raised objections to their removal. These refugees are currently living in Rain Basera. Arrangements for food have been made for them by the district administration at Indira Rasoi. All 50 families are currently settled in Rain Basera. After allotment of land by urban improvement trust (UIT) in Mool Sagar, now very soon these migrants will go to the new place and make huts. City Development Trust Secretary Jagdish Ashiya said that on the orders of Collector Tina Dabi, instructions were given to mark the place for Pak refugees and settle them there in seven days. Under his supervision, a committee was formed by taking Pak refugees along with them. Thereafter about 40 bighas of land in the village was reserved for them. The UIT officer said that there was a plan to settle 250 families on about 40 bighas of land. UIT will give lease to those who have got Indian citizenship. On the other hand, those who have not yet got citizenship, their records will be kept at this place and efforts will be made for their citizenship. As soon as they get citizenship, they will also be given land pattas. At present, these 50 families will be able to build their homes in the new place.

of the day quote

Encroachments in the name of 'land jihad' will not be allowed to vitiate the atmosphere of Uttarakhand

PUSHKAR SINGH DHAMI | UTTARAKHAND CM

I believe that the inauguration of the new Parliament building should be taken as a festival of democracy and it should be celebrated in that spirit. It should not be made a subject of controversy. It is unfortunate if it becomes a subject of controversy

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

The space sector has registered a quantum jump in the last nine years of the Modi government

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Leopard beaten to death in MP

Khargone (MP): A leopard was allegedly beaten to death by villagers after it attacked and injured a man at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone district Friday, a forest official said. The incident took place in Chainpur village Friday morning, when the feline, aged around three to four years old, was allegedly attacked with sticks and stones and killed on the spot, divisional forest officer Prashant Kumar Singh said. Prima facie, it appears that the animal had attacked one Umesh Davar while he was on his way to a farm, he said.

Ruckus at Patna airport

Patna: Agitated passengers created ruckus at the Patna airport after a SpiceJet flight was delayed, said officials here Friday. The passengers, who were scheduled to fly to Delhi on Thursday, waited for the entire night and finally the flight was available in the morning hours of Friday. The Patna-bound SG 471 from New Delhi was diverted to Varanasi airport on Thursday evening. The airline company claimed that the flight could not land at the Patna airport due to bad weather. Hence, it was diverted to Varanasi. The same flight had to return from Patna to Delhi.

80 officials transferred

New Delhi: Eighty officials in various prisons in Delhi were transferred weeks after the killing of gangster Tiltu Tajpuriya inside Tihar prison by members of a rival gang on May 2. However, the prison spokesperson said that these were routine transfers. According to officials, 80 officials have been transferred within jails including Mandoli, Tihar, Rohini jails and headquarters. "The officials include five deputy superintendents, nine assistant superintendents, eight head warders and 58 warders," said the official.

Man booked

Panaji: A 28-year-old man has been booked by Goa police for allegedly raping a minor girl and impregnating her in South Goa district. Police said that the mother of the victim has filed a complaint stating that the accused person raped her daughter, because of which, she became pregnant. The accused individual is identified as Rahul Chandra from West Bengal. "He is working in Goa. But presently he is absconding. We are looking out for him," police said. Police informed that the accused person and victim were friends for the last two years.

9 YEARS OF MODI GOVT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: With Prime Minister Narendra Modi completing nine years in office, the Congress Friday demanded his apology for what it said was "betrayal" of the people and asked him nine questions on issues ranging from rising prices and unemployment to national security and social harmony.

The Opposition party also said the government should mark this day as 'Maafi Diwas' and released a booklet 'Nau saal, Nau sawaal'. It said Modi became the prime minister on this day nine years ago and therefore, the party wants to ask nine questions of him.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said, "The BJP built its edifice in 9 years on false promises and people's suffering." "Inflation, hatred and unemployment - Prime Minister ji, take responsibility of these failures of yours," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi, using the hashtag and shared the nine questions to the prime minister.

Party general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh told a press conference that Rahul Gandhi had raised critical issues during the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the nine questions are based on that.

SCHOOL JOBS SCAM

SC declines relief to Abhishek

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: The Supreme Court Friday stayed the Calcutta High Court order, which imposed a cost of Rs 25 lakh on Trinamool Congress leader Abhishek Banerjee while dismissing his plea seeking recall of a previous order pertaining to probe into the school jobs scam case.

A vacation bench comprising Justices J K Maheshwari and P S Narasimha observed the high court had considered the points raised by Banerjee in his plea but the imposition of cost of Rs 25 lakh was "perhaps not warranted". "But then, it does not mean that no cost can be imposed at all.... I think the order is a very balanced and fair order," Justice Narasimha observed.

The bench said it will stay the imposition of cost and will hear in July Banerjee's plea against the high court's May 18 order dismissing a petition filed by him seeking recall of a previous order of the high



court which said probe agencies such as the CBI and ED could interrogate him in the case.

"Re-list in the week commencing July 10. Till the next date of listing, the imposition of the cost part by the impugned order shall remain stayed," the bench said. Senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Banerjee, referred to the high court order, and said there were "errors apparent" in it.

"We are not doing anything, we are only issuing notice and asking for response," the bench observed, adding that it will post the matter for hearing after the vacation.

Congress asks PM nine questions



Flanked by party colleagues Pawan Khera and Supriya Shrinete, Ramesh said the booklet is a report card of the nine years of the Modi government and Congress leaders will hold press conferences in 35 cities across the country on Saturday to highlight the "failures" of the government.

"We want the prime minister to break his silence on these nine questions," he said, adding that Modi speaks when he needs to be silent and prefers to remain silent when he needs to speak up. Ramesh also said that during the last nine years, the prime minister has re-branded schemes of the UPA by giving new names to them and has become the 'prachar mantri' by

working hard on doing branding and marketing of such programmes.

He also claimed that the "clean chit" given to China on June 19, 2020 has proved "very dangerous" for India, whereby its negotiating position was weakened. Posing the questions to the prime minister, he said, "Why is it that inflation and unemployment are skyrocketing in India? Why have the rich become richer and the poor poorer? Why is public property being sold to Modi's friends, even as economic disparities are increasing?"

Ramesh also asked why the agreements made with farmers while repealing the three "black" farm laws have not been honoured and



Governments of the same ideology are working in the Centre and state, because of which people of Maharashtra are getting benefits of various schemes

EKNATH SHINDE | MAHARASHTRA CM

175 SHEEP DIE IN UP

As many as 175 sheep have died in Bhaksa village of Gorakhpur district in Uttar Pradesh after being administered medication for deworming. The animals belonged to one Naresh Pal, a resident of Bhaksa village



Deficient rains in June, predicts IMD



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: Barring the northwestern region, India is set to receive normal rainfall this monsoon season despite the El Nino phenomenon which is set to return after a three-year hiatus, the weather office said on Friday.

However, most parts of the country will witness deficient showers in June, except some pockets in peninsular regions such as south Karnataka and northern Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Ladakh, the India Meteorological Department forecast for the season.

The weather office said the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean has begun and there was a 90 per cent probability of development of the El Nino phenomenon, which is known to affect monsoon rains in India.

However, a positive Indian Ocean Dipole is likely to develop during the monsoon season which would offset the adverse impact of the El Nino and bring rains to most parts of the country. "It is El Nino and positive IOD this year. The impact of El Nino in central India was likely to be compensated by positive IOD. But that may not happen in the case of northwest India," D Sivananda Pai, head of the IMD's Environment Monitoring and Research Center told reporters here.

In view of the above, IMD has re-

tained its forecast for a normal monsoon season for the country, barring the northwestern region, which includes Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab, considered as the granaries of India.

The weather office said rainfall during the June-September period is likely to be 96 per cent of the long-term average, with an error margin of four per cent of the long period average. The IMD also said that southwest monsoon over the 'monsoon convergence zone', or the rainfed-regions of India, is expected to be normal at 96-106 per cent of the LPA.

In April, the IMD had forecast a normal monsoon with the country expected to witness 96 per cent rains of the long-term average, with an error margin of five per cent of the long period average. The weather office defines normal rainfall as between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the 50-year average of 87 cm for the four-month southwest monsoon season.

Southwest monsoon normally sets in over Kerala on June 1 with a standard deviation of about seven days. IMD has been issuing operational forecasts for the date of monsoon onset over Kerala from 2005 onwards.

Last year, the monsoon reached Kerala on May 29. The operational forecasts of the date of monsoon onset over Kerala during the past 18 years (2005-2022) were proved to be correct except in 2015, the IMD said.

The weather office said the warming of the equatorial Pacific Ocean has begun and there was a 90 per cent probability of development of the El Nino phenomenon, which is known to affect monsoon rains in India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, May 26: Hundreds of dead fish floating on the waters of the Dal Lake in J&K's Srinagar on Friday caused concern among the public and the experts over the ecological health of this water body.

Locals were surprised to find dead fish in hundreds floating over the waters of Dal Lake. Experts suggest that this could have many reasons, including the lack of oxygen caused in the lake water due to pollution.

"Discharge of effluents, growth of weeds and thermal stratification



at different parts of the lake are the main reasons behind the large-scale mortality among the fish in

the lake," said an expert here. It must be mentioned that recently an unknown fish species

BJP worker booked for ticking off doc

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagapattinam (TN), May 26: A BJP worker was booked Friday for allegedly picking up a quarrel with a hijab-clad woman doctor over not wearing the white coat at a primary health centre in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu, police said.

Police registered three cases against party functionary Bhuvaneshwar Ram, who hails from Thirupooni in the district, for questioning the woman doctor for wearing hijab during duty hours but not donning the white coat. He was heard questioning her credentials in a video of the incident that went viral.

The incident took place inside the Thirupooni primary health centre in the southern district on May



24 night. "I doubt if you are really a doctor. Why are you not in uni-

form, why are you wearing a hijab?" he could be heard asking the doc-

The incident took place inside the Thirupooni primary health centre in the southern district on May 24 night

Nursing staff at the PHC, who came to the rescue of the duty doctor, also put out a video of Ram picking up a fight with the doctor

tor in the video.

Nursing staff at the PHC, who came to the rescue of the duty doctor, also put out a video of Ram picking up a fight with the doctor. The BJP worker had taken one Subramanian who complained of discomfort to the PHC for treatment but when he saw the night duty doctor clad in hijab, he started quarrelling with her, police said.

A senior police official said that three cases under Indian Penal Code Sections 294 (b) (uttering obscene words in public place), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharging duty) and 298 (uttering words with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings) were registered against Ram and a search is underway to trace and arrest him.

Large mortality of fish in Dal Lake worries locals



called the alligator gar fish was found in Dal Lake. Unknown in the Valley, the alligator gar fish is an aggressive survivor capable of devouring fish, weeds and other forms of life inside the lake waters.

How did the alligator gar fish, which is native to North America and also found in some parts of Bhopal and Kerala, find its way

into the Dal Lake?

Farming of this fish species is banned in India. Opinions of experts vary with most of them saying that this fish species could have been brought into the Valley by some fish lover in a glass aquarium.

"Once the fish grew to large size, the owner of the glass aquarium could have dropped it into the Lake. This seems to be a very likely reason," said another ichthyologist (biologist studying fishes). Whatever the actual reason for the mass mortality of fish in Dal Lake, unless the authorities take this as Nature's warning, life inside the water body could face extinction.

Body of hotelier found in trolley bags

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Malappuram (Kerala), May 26: In a gruesome incident, a hotelier in Kerala was allegedly murdered by his former employee and the latter's female friend, who then dumped the body parts in a gorge a week ago, police said here Friday.

Police said they have found a corpse stuffed in two trolley bags suspecting it to be that of Siddique (58), a missing hotelier from Kozhikode district. The deceased, a native of Tirur, was running a restaurant at Kozhikode's Olavanna.

The body of Siddique was found in a gorge along the Attappady ghat road and three suspects have been taken into police custody. Tirur police said the body was found cut into two halves, and the torso was in one trolley bag while the lower part was in the other.

Malappuram Superintendent of Police S Sujith Das told the media that the hotel owner is suspected to have been murdered by Shibilli, a former employee of his hotel, and Sharfana, a female friend of the accused.

"We suspect that Shibilli and his female friend Sharfana are involved in this. They were absconding but were detained in Chennai with the help of railway police. Our team has reached there, and they will be brought here soon," he said.



international

of the day quote

Our economy, banking and financial system are quite strong. Meanwhile, some Gulf states and such stocked money in our system. This is recent and this relieved our central bank and market, even if for a short while

TAYYIP ERDOGAN | TURKISH PRESIDENT

We in Asia don't want to choose between US and China. Many of us cannot make that choice because we have already made our choice, and that choice is Asia

RANIL WICKREMESINGHE | SL PRESIDENT

We have stood with our partners in condemning the steady erosion of civil and political rights and Hong Kong's autonomy

JAMES CLEVERLY | BRITAIN'S FOREIGN SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

13 Indians found guilty of tax evasion

Dubai: Thirteen Indian nationals, including seven companies owned by them, have been convicted of money laundering and tax evasion by the Abu Dhabi Criminal Court, a media report said. The court found them guilty of laundering Dh510 million involving unlicensed provision of credit facilities through points of sale (POS), the Khaleej Times reported last week. Four of the Indians were sentenced to jail terms ranging from five to 10 years, followed by deportation, and the court ordered them to pay fines ranging from Dh5 million to Dh10 million.

Senior PTI leader quits Imran's party

Islamabad: Firdous Ashiq Awan resigned from Imran Khan's party Friday over the recent violent and "terrorist activities" and said the former prime minister and Pakistan cannot go together, becoming the latest senior leader to quit the opposition party. Awan, 53, served as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information and Broadcasting from 2019 to 2020. She is the latest politician who resigned from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

Kosovo Serbs clash with police

Pristina (Kosovo): Small groups of ethnic Serbs in northern Kosovo Friday clashed with police while trying to block the entrance of municipal buildings to prevent recently-elected officials from entering them, according to local media. Police fired tear gas and several cars were set ablaze. In response to the clashes, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said in a written statement carried on state-run RTS television that he put the army on a "higher state of alert."

Palestinian killed

Jerusalem: A Palestinian man was shot and killed Friday in the occupied West Bank after sneaking into a Jewish settlement and trying to stab a resident there, the Israeli army said. In a statement, the military said the man attempted to stab a resident in the Tene Omarim settlement and was shot by an armed civilian. It said the incident had set off an alarm and soldiers were scanning the area. The Palestinian Health ministry confirmed the death and identified the killed man as Alaa Qissaya, 28. Security camera footage from the site shows a Palestinian male crawling in under a gate and walking into the settlement while holding a knife.

Border regions attacked: Russia

AFTER MONTHS OF ATTACKS ON ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, RUSSIA HAS SHIFTED THE FOCUS OF ITS MISSILE STRIKES TO TRY TO DISRUPT PREPARATIONS FOR A UKRAINIAN COUNTER-ATTACK, A SENIOR MILITARY INTELLIGENCE OFFICIAL SAID LAST WEEK



AGENCIES

Kyiv, May 26: Russia's southern Belgorod region bordering Ukraine came under attack on Friday from Ukrainian artillery fire, mortar shells and drones, authorities said, hours after two drones struck a Russian city in an area next to the annexed Crimea Peninsula. Moscow's forces, meanwhile, struck a building containing psychology and veterinary clinics in the city of Dnipro, in central Ukraine, killing two people and wounding 30, including two children, Ukrainian officials said. Video released by regional Gov. Serhiy Lysak showed fire engulfing the three-story building that appeared almost destroyed, with only parts of a wall standing, as firefighters battled the flames. A Russian S-300 missile hit a

Russia carries out new air strikes on Ukraine
President Zelenskyy condemns latest attack
Ukkraine fired rocket and drone at southern Russia - Moscow

dam in the Karlivka district of Donetsk province in eastern Ukraine, threatening nearby settlements with flooding. The town of Graivoron in Russia's Belgorod region, about 7 kilometres (more than 4 miles) from the Ukrainian border, came under fire for several hours, damaging four houses, a store, a car, a gas pipeline and a power line, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported. Closer to the frontier, a recreation centre, a shop and an empty house were damaged in

the village of Glotovo. One woman was wounded when nearby Novaya Tavolzhanka was shelled, Gladkov said. Earlier this week, the Belgorod region was the target of one of the most serious cross-border attacks from Ukraine since the war began 15 months ago. Details of the raid were murky. Russia blamed the Ukrainian armed forces, but two Russian groups said they were involved, with the aim of bringing down Russian President Vladimir Putin. Officials in Russia's southern city of Krasnodar, in the region of the same name bordering Crimea, said two drones struck there. Witnesses told local media they heard something like the sound of a moped and then two explosions. The blasts smashed a hole in the roof of one building and blew out win-

dows in an apartment building. Drone attacks against Russian border regions have been a regular occurrence since the start of the invasion in February 2022, with attacks increasing last month. Earlier this month, an oil refinery in Krasnodar was attacked by drones on two straight days. Ukraine's Defense Ministry on Thursday published video that appeared to show a marine drone heading for Russia's Ivan Khurs

Moscow has dismissed allegations that its soldiers have committed war crimes and denies deliberately targeting civilians although it has bombed cities across Ukraine since invading 15 months ago

reconnaissance ship in the Black Sea. The video didn't show the drone hitting the ship. The video followed reports by Russia's Defence Ministry on Wednesday that Ukraine had launched an unsuccessful attack on the Ivan Khurs using three unmanned speedboats, with all three destroyed prior to reaching the ship. Moscow released video allegedly showing the destruction of one of the marine drones. At least two civilians were killed and three others wounded in Russian attacks on Ukraine in the previous 24 hours, the Ukrainian president's office reported Friday.

Biden, McCarthy to close US debt ceiling deal for two years



AGENCIES

Washington, May 26: The White House and congressional Republicans Friday aim to put the final touches on a deal to raise the US government's \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling for two years while capping spending on everything but military and veterans, according to a US official. Negotiators for Democratic President Joe Biden and House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy appeared to be nearing a deal as the two sides reached agreement on key issues, such as spending caps and funding for the Internal Revenue Service and the military. House Speaker Kevin McCarthy said on Friday negotiators "made progress" on an agreement with the White House to raise the debt limit as they race to close out a deal ahead of a looming deadline to avert a potentially catastrophic default.

McCarthy told reporters at the Capitol that there is still more work to do. The two sides are narrowing

on a two-year agreement that would curb federal spending and lift the borrowing limit ahead of a deadline as soon as June 1 when Treasury could run out of money to pay the nation's bills. A person familiar with the talks said the two sides are "dug in" on whether or not to agree to Republican demands to impose stiffer work requirements on people who receive government food stamps, cash assistance and health care aid, some of the most vulnerable Americans. Yet both Biden and McCarthy expressed optimism heading into the weekend that the gulf between their positions could be bridged. A two-year deal would raise the debt limit for that time, past the 2024 presidential election. House Republicans have pushed the issue to the brink, displaying risky political bravado in leaving town for the Memorial Day holiday. The US could face an unprecedented default as soon as June 1, hurling the global economy into chaos.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND THE REPUBLICAN SPEAKER HOPE TO STRIKE A BUDGET COMPROMISE THIS WEEKEND
ANY DEAL WOULD NEED TO BE A POLITICAL COMPROMISE, WITH SUPPORT FROM BOTH DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS TO PASS THE DIVIDED CONGRESS

'TIME TO WIDEN INDIA-UK TIES'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 26: UK Opposition Leader Sir Keir Starmer Friday said it was time for the India-UK relationship to be widened across all critical areas as he set out the Labour Party's foreign policy pitch in the lead up to the general election expected next year. Starmer said he sees huge scope of mutual benefit from enhancing the bilateral ties. According to a statement, he would be making a keynote address to open India Global Forum's (IGF) annual UK-India Week summit in London next month. The address will mark the first major insight into the Labour leader's vision for the party's relationship with India, which went through some strain over sensitive issues such as Kashmir under his predecessor Jeremy Corbyn. The IGF UK-India Week, now in its fifth year, is a five-day series of events to be held between June 26 and 30 to bring together senior politicians, business and thought leaders from the UK, India and around the world to focus on the prospects of strengthening India-UK ties across different sectors. "I believe it's timely that Sir Keir will be opening UK-India Week

The time has now come to look to the future and work on how we can deepen and widen our cooperation in critical areas such as trade and investment, technology and innovation, climate action, diversity and inclusion, and healthcare, the future of work, skills and education - all areas where I see huge scope for mutual benefit

SIR KEIR STARMER | UK OPPOSITION LEADER

this year. We are at a critical juncture, and so his participation underscores the importance of the need for a bipartisan approach to the relationship with India," said IGF Founder and CEO Professor Manoj Ladwa. "Given the ups and downs in Labour's ties with India in recent years, I am sure his intervention at India Global Forum will be eagerly awaited, and in my view, much needed," he said. The UK-India Week 2023, themed around 'Leading with Purpose', will cover a range of issues from infrastructure and sustainable finance to technology and innovation and conclude with the UK-India Awards.



LET'S GO CYCLING: Cyclists ride during the 19 stage of the Giro D'Italia from Longarone to Tre Cime di Lavaredo, Italy

PTI PHOTO

Man breaches German chancellor's security

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, May 26: German police have been left red-faced after a member of the public was able to slip into a VIP convoy for Chancellor Olaf Scholz and then give him a hearty hug as he prepared to board a plane at Frankfurt Airport. Tabloid newspaper Bild reported Friday that Scholz's bodyguards only realised their mistake later, and

chased the man down. In a statement, federal police said the man was detained. Nobody was hurt but an investigation into the security breach has been launched, police said. Scholz's office confirmed the incident, which happened late Wednesday as Scholz made his way back to Berlin following a celebration for the 25th anniversary of the European Central Bank. "The encounter and hug at Frankfurt Airport (...) was indeed

not planned by the chancellor," Scholz's spokesperson Wolfgang Buechner told reporters in Berlin. "As such it was a surprise to him, but it wasn't a big deal in this particular situation," he added. Buechner said Scholz continues to have "full confidence in the work of the police. Nevertheless there are questions surrounding this incident and they will be carefully investigated."

Journey to India proved productive for Pakistan: Bilawal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 26: Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that the decision to attend the SCO's Foreign Ministers meeting in India earlier this month proved "productive and positive" for the country. Addressing a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Thursday, Bilawal said that it was important for his ministry to project Pakistan's case and point of view not only in India but also in front of other participants of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). "As far as the Kashmir issue, bilateral issues between Pakistan and India and the responsibilities of multilateralism are concerned, my conclusion after the trip is that it is a productive and positive decision to participate in the event," he said.

Passenger plane flies with open door, lands safely

AGENCIES

Seoul, May 26: South Korean police Friday detained a passenger on suspicion of pulling the door of an Asiana Airlines plane carrying 194 people, right before the aircraft landed at the Daegu International Airport, official said. After departing from Jeju Island, the plane was on its way to Daegu, 237 km southeast of Seoul, when the exit door suddenly opened, according to airport officials. The plane shortly landed with the door open, Yonhap News Agency. The aircraft was about 250 metres above ground when the door opened, the officials said. None of the 194 people aboard fell out of the plane or were hurt, but 12 passengers showed symptoms of breathing difficulty and some of



them were taken to a hospital, but none were in serious condition.

According to the police, when the suspect tried to pull the lever of

the door, flight attendants were not able to stop him because the plane was about to land. Police said he was not drunk at the time of detention, but remained tight-lipped about why he did so. "It is difficult to have a normal conversation with him," a police official said. "We will investigate the motive of the crime and punish him." Police said he was travelling alone. According to witnesses, the suspect attempted to jump out after opening the door. "Flight attendants shouted for help from male passengers and people all around clung to him and

pulled him in," a witness said. Among the passengers were 48 elementary- and middle-school athletes scheduled to compete in a national sports event on Saturday in the nearby city of Ulsan. "Children quivered and cried in panic," the mother of one of the athletes said. "Those sitting near the exit must have been shocked the most." Another 44-year-old passenger said a door in the middle of the left side of the plane opened with a detonating sound about 10 minutes before landing. "It was chaos with people close to the door appearing to faint one by one and flight attendants calling out for doctors on board through broadcasting while others were running down the aisle in panic," the passenger said.

THE INCIDENT TERRIFIED SOME OF THEM BUT NO ONE WAS INJURED, THOUGH SOME PASSENGERS WERE ASSESSED AT A HOSPITAL

business

of the day quote

The government is attempting to link tax collected at source for payments made by individuals with tax deducted from their income sources, a move that will help in ensuring cash flows of the individual taxpayers are not impacted

PW Skills is committed to bridging these gaps by investing ₹120 crore in the next 2-3 years to bolster our offerings by providing quality content, taught from the basics by industry professionals, at highly competitive prices

Economic activity in fourth quarter of FY23 remained uneven, with domestic demand for services outpacing that for goods and surprisingly robust exports of services amidst a contraction in merchandise items

SHORT TAKES

M&M logs record net profit in FY23

Mumbai: Driven by robust performance across business verticals, Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported an 18 per cent jump in consolidated profit at ₹2,637 crore for the March quarter and highest-ever annual profit of ₹10,282 crore in FY23. The Mumbai-based company had reported a profit after tax (PAT) of ₹2,237 crore in the January-March quarter of 2021-22 fiscal. For the year ended March 31, 2023, the company posted a consolidated PAT of ₹10,282 crore, up 56 per cent, from ₹6,577 crore in FY22. The company said the FY23 profit is the highest-ever profit reported by the company in a fiscal year.

Moody's upgrades TaMo's outlook

New Delhi: Moody's Investors Service Friday said it has upgraded its rating outlook on Tata Motors to positive from stable. Moody's has also affirmed the company's B1 corporate family rating (CFR) and its B1 senior unsecured ratings. "The rating affirmation and outlook change to positive reflect our expectation that the substantial improvement in Tata Motor's credit profile over the past few quarters will sustain over the next 12-18 months," Moody's Senior Vice President Kaustubh Chaubal said. Steadily growing volumes and profitability will support the company's earnings and free cash flow expansion, enabling debt reduction even as its capital expenditure stays elevated, he added.

Layoffs in Indian startups rise unabatedly

ABOUT 27K EMPLOYEES LOST JOBS AT INDIAN STARTUPS TO DATE, OVER 8K THIS YEAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: At least 27,000 tech employees at Indian startups have lost their jobs since the funding winter crept in last year, and the list is only growing.

Nearly 26,868 employees have been handed over pink slips by 98 startups, including unicorns led by the edtech majors, according to data by leading startup news portal Inc42. At least 22 edtech startups have slashed 9,781 jobs to date.

In the first five months into 2023, more than 8,000 employees lost their jobs in India by nearly 50 startups.

India reclaims top spot in smartwatch shipments globally

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: Global smartwatch shipments contracted 1.5 per cent (year-on-year) in the first quarter this year and the 121 per cent growth in India's shipments managed to restrict the decline, a report showed Friday.

In terms of the regional markets, India surpassed North America, reclaiming its position as the top region with a 27 per cent share of global smartwatch shipments, according to Counterpoint Research.

"India's smartwatch market grew 121 per cent YoY driven by affordability, rising customer demand and availability of a wide variety of options in the budget segment. Around 40 per cent of the total shipments were driven by the less than ₹2,000 price band, its highest proportion ever," said senior analyst Anshika Jain.

The share of India-based players crossed 90 per cent for the first time as they were quick in terms of up-



grading their portfolios and adapting their products to customer needs at a reasonable price point.

This was the second consecutive quarter of a YoY decrease in global shipments (Q4 2022 saw 8 cent decline), which were hit by the seasonal decline in demand for products from major players like Apple and Samsung, along with consumer sentiment dampened by global financial pressures.

Fire-Bolt surpassed Samsung for the first time in the global smartwatch market, capturing the second spot.

Apple's shipment volume fell 20 per cent YoY in Q1. This was the first time in three years that its Q1 shipments fell below 10 million units.

Indian brand Fire-Bolt's shipments increased by approximately three times compared to the previous year and saw a 57 per cent growth compared to the previous quarter.

Huawei, the most influential Chinese OEM, saw a 14 per cent YoY decline in its shipments in the Chinese market, which is a key market for the company, the report said

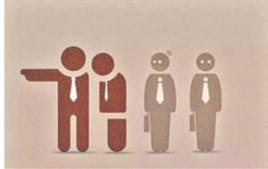


We have to advance our reputation with affordability and quality. Bargaining with quality damages our world-class reputation. I do not want to tolerate that

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA | CHEMICALS AND FERTILISERS MINISTER

RELIANCE ENTERS SNACKS MARKET

Reliance Retail has partnered with General Mills, a leading US-based multinational manufacturer of branded processed consumer foods, entering into the fast-growing snacks segment as per its ambition into the FMCG segment. Its step-down FMCG arm Reliance Consumer Products Limited (RCPL) announced its foray into the western snacks category with the launch of Alan's Bugles in the Indian market



- 26,868 EMPLOYEES HANDED PINK SLIPS BY 98 STARTUPS
- OVER 8K EMPLOYEES LOST THEIR JOBS BY NEARLY 50 STARTUPS
- 695 TECH FIRMS HAVE SACKED 1.98L EMPLOYEES THIS YEAR

Homegrown virtual events platform Airmeet sacked about 30 per cent of its workforce, or at least 75 employees, according to the report.

Corporate expense management platform Happay, owned by credit Card bill payment provider CRED, slashed nearly 35 per cent of its

workforce as part of a restructuring exercise.

Another homegrown edtech startup Teachmint laid off over 70 employees, its second round of job cuts after sacking about 45 workers more than five months ago.

Chennai-based edtech startup Skill-Lync laid off employees as

it consolidates operations across Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad amid global macroeconomic conditions.

The year 2023 has become the worst year for tech employees as nearly 2 lakh tech employees -- from Big Tech firms to startups -- have been sacked to date globally, as companies like Meta, BT, Vodafone and many others announced further plans to lay off more employees in coming months.

As per the data by layoffs tracking site Layoffs.fyi, 695 tech companies have shown the doors to around 1.98 lakh employees so far this year.

RECESSION IN GERMANY Exporters flag biz woes

RECESSION IN GERMANY, EUROPE'S BIGGEST ECONOMY, LIKELY TO HURT INDIAN EXPORTS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: With the German economy contracting for two consecutive quarters, India's exports from sectors such as apparels, footwear, and leather goods to the European Union nation are likely to be impacted adversely, according to exporters.

Data released by the Federal Statistical Office Thursday shows that Germany's gross domestic product (GDP) declined by 0.3 per cent from January to March. This follows a drop of 0.5 per cent in Europe's biggest economy during the last quarter of 2022.

"This is going to affect Indian exports not only to Germany but Europe as a whole since other countries are also already in recession," Mumbai-based exporter and Chairman of Technocrat Industries Sharad Kumar Saraf said.

He said India's export to

Germany stood at \$10.2 billion in 2022-23 and it could see a fall due to long-term recession in Germany and the most affected sectors would be leather products, chemical, and light engineering items.

Economic think-tank GTRI co-founder Ajay Srivastava said: "Recession will adversely impact India's exports of value \$2 billion. This includes smartphone, apparels, footwear, and leather goods. In a recession, daily use products are the first to be impacted".

Export of iron and steel products will also be impacted due to the soon to be levied carbon border tax by Germany, he said.

Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPCC) Chairman Narendra Goenka said the recession in Germany would affect order flows into India. "Business will be down by minimum 10 per cent. This slowdown will definitely impact the investment flow from Germany," Goenka added.

Recession will adversely impact India's exports of value \$2 billion. This includes smartphone, apparels, footwear, and leather goods. In a recession, daily use products are the first to be impacted

AJAY SRIVASTAVA | CO-FOUNDER, GTRI

However, Saraf said Germany is the ninth largest investor in India and investments from there may not be affected since in recessionary conditions, German companies would be looking at cheaper alternatives.

Yogesh Gupta, Regional Chairman, FIEO (Eastern Region), said since Germany is the main growth driver for the EU (European Union), recession in that nation will impact the purchasing there.

"However, it is too early to comment on the impact of the recession on Indian exports," Gupta said.

In 2022-23, India's exports to Germany included machinery (\$1.5 billion); electronics (\$1.2 billion), including smartphones (\$458 million); apparels (\$960 million); organic chemicals (\$822 million); footwear (\$332 million); leather goods (\$305 million); articles of iron and steel (\$474 million); and auto components (\$406 million).

Two consecutive quarters of contraction is a common definition of recession, though economists on the euro area business cycle dating committee use a broader set of data, including employment figures.

Germany is one of the 20 countries that use the euro currency.

Equities rally for 2nd day; Sensex up 1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 26: Equity benchmark indices extended their previous day's rally Friday, with the Sensex climbing 1 per cent, amid massive buying in bellwether stocks, unabated foreign fund inflows and a largely positive trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 629.07 points or 1.02 per cent to settle at 62,501.69. During the day, it rallied 657.21 points or 1.06 per cent to 62,529.83. The NSE Nifty climbed 178.20 points or 0.97 per cent to end at 18,499.35.



From the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries jumped the highest 2.79 per cent. Sun Pharma, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Technologies, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement,

Tata Steel and Titan were among the other major gainers. Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and NTPC were the laggards.

The rupee appreciated 12 paise

ENTERTAINMENT GIANT

NCLAT clears hurdle for Zee-Sony merger



NCLAT SETS ASIDE NCLT ORDER DIRECTING STOCK EXCHANGES TO REASSESS APPROVALS FOR ZEE-SONY MERGER TO CREATE \$10 BILLION MEDIA MAMMOTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: In a relief to Zee Entertainment, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) Friday set aside the NCLT order, which directed leading bourses NSE and BSE to reconsider their approval for the Zee-Sony merger.

A two-member NCLAT bench observed that the order passed by the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) was against the "principle of natural justice" as it did not grant any opportunity to Zee Entertainment to respond over the issue of Shrirpur Gold Refinery, a Subhash Chandradel Essel Group firm.

The appellate tribunal has sent the matter back to the NCLT to decide afresh and pass an order after hearing both parties.

"We are of the opinion that the impugned order is required to be set aside primarily on the ground of non-compliance with the principle of natural justice. Accordingly, the impugned order is set aside and the matter is remitted to the NCLT to examine the same and pass appropriate order after hearing both the parties without being influenced by this order," said the NCLAT bench comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar and Alok Srivastava.

Earlier May 11, the NCLT had directed BSE and NSE "to review their earlier approval for Zee-Sony merger scheme and provide their fresh NOCs for the same before

the next hearing date". The NCLT's direction came after counsels of NSE and BSE raised some fresh points relating to the scheme of merger and placed the recent Sebi order dated April 25, 2023, on Shrirpur Gold Refinery for the Bench's cognizance, where the Zee Promoters' names appear in the context of diversion of funds.

"The exchanges should also review and confirm that the non-compete clause of the scheme has been reviewed and approved by them and SEBI, and the manner of payment of non-compete fee from one Mauritius Entity to another is in compliance with the SEBI policies in this regard," the NCLT had said May 11.

This was challenged by Zee Entertainment Enterprise Ltd (ZEEL) before the NCLAT, contending that it was not granted an adequate opportunity by the NCLT to present its side and it didn't follow the principles of natural justice.

As per the scheme of the arrangement, Sony will indirectly hold 50.86 per cent of the combined company. The founder of Zee will own around 4 per cent and the rest will be with the other shareholders of ZEEL.

Moreover, Sony Group will also pay a non-compete fee of ₹1,100 crore to the Essel Group promoters.

Earlier this month, Japanese conglomerate Sony Group Corporation Chairman and CEO Kenichiro Yoshida said he expects the merger to be complete within the first half of this fiscal.

In September 2021, Sony Pictures Networks India and ZEEL entered into a non-binding term sheet to bring together their linear networks, digital assets, production operations and programme libraries.

The combined entity will own over 70 TV channels, two video streaming services (ZEE5 and Sony LIV) and two film studios (Zee Studios and Sony Pictures Films India), making it the largest entertainment network in India.

PhonePe first app to link 2L RuPay credit cards to UPI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 26: Leading fintech company PhonePe has announced that the company has become the first digital payments app to successfully enable the linkage of two lakh RuPay credit cards to the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). It has also processed a Total Payment Value (TPV) of ₹150 crore via RuPay Credit on UPI.

The company said it aims to offer a comprehensive suite of solutions for RuPay Credit on UPI in partnership with NPCI to popularise its usage among the customers and merchants alike.

The company has already enabled the acceptance of RuPay credit cards on UPI across 12 million merchant outlets in the country, achieving the highest merchant penetration in the ecosystem.

Moreover, PhonePe mentioned that the overall widespread acceptance of UPI has ensured that customers have ample opportunities to utilise their RuPay credit cards for transactions. On the consumer side, the company is driving the adoption through seamless and intuitive nudges on the PhonePe app.

These contextual communications are encouraging customers to adopt RuPay credit cards through UPI as their preferred payment option.

Moving forward, PhonePe will continue to collaborate closely with NPCI to scale the RuPay Credit penetration in the country through enhanced functionalities.

Indian economy witnessing snowball effect: WEF Prez

WEF expects almost 6% economic growth for India which will be the highest growth for any big economies of the world

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 26: India is expected to clock the highest growth among the world's big economies this year and the country's economy is witnessing the "famous snowball effect" that will lead to more investments and more jobs, according to World Economic Forum (WEF) President Borje Brende.

"There have been reforms that have led to less red tape, better climate for investments and also the digital revolution is really happening in India," Brende said and stressed that he is "very bullish

and optimistic" about the country's growth trajectory but not so optimistic about global growth.

India, which currently holds the G20 presidency, is one of the fastest growing key economies in the world and WEF has had close collaborations with the country for the past many years.

"When the snowball starts to roll, it gets bigger and bigger, and that is what is happening with the Indian economy. The growth will lead to more investments, more jobs... It will be an exponential growth in the coming years and you will see a situation where more poverty is eradicated and more opportunities are there for young people

poverty is eradicated and more opportunities are there for young people," Brende told PTI in an interview in the national capital.

Brende, who was on a short visit to India, had discussions about ongoing collaborations as well as

When the snowball starts to roll, it gets bigger and bigger, and that is what is happening with the Indian economy. The growth will lead to more investments, more jobs... It will be an exponential growth in the coming years and you will see a situation where more poverty is eradicated and more opportunities are there for young people

BORJE BRENDE | PRESIDENT, WEF



India's G20 presidency with stakeholders. He met various Union ministers and company executives, among others.

He highlighted that India has more of a broad ecosystem of startups than in any other developing

country and that is growing. This is something that other countries can also be inspired by he added.

Geneva-headquartered WEF is an international organisation for public private cooperation, and is known for its annual Davos meeting, often described as the biggest congregation of the global elite. The Forum engages the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

This year, WEF expects almost 6 per cent economic growth for India and will be the highest growth for any big economies of the world, he said.

"We, at WEF see the growth path forward for India that is also strong.. Overall, I am optimistic, provided there are no external factors that will influence negatively. We have no

time for wars, conflicts and we have no time to be complacent," he said.

Earlier this month, the United Nations in a report said that India's economy -- the largest in the South Asia region -- is expected to expand by 5.8 per cent in 2023 and 6.7 per cent in 2024 (calendar year basis), supported by resilient domestic demand.

On what India needs to do in the short-term, Brende said the country is already seeing and capitalising on the yield from the reforms that have taken place.

"That should be the inspiration to continue with the reform agenda. Investing more in infrastructure, connecting different regions even better and India needs more investment in education, upskilling, reskilling and right skilling in the years to come," he said.

Gill leads GT into final Sindhu, Prannoy in Malaysia Masters semis



Shubman Gill & Mohit Sharma (inset)

Ahmedabad, May 26: Shubman Gill extended his sensational run with a third century (129, 60b, 7x4, 10x6) of the season as Gujarat Titans crushed Mumbai Indians by 62 runs to storm into their second consecutive IPL final here Friday. Gill fired Gujarat Titans to a huge 233/3 and in reply, Mumbai, struck by a string of injuries, went down fighting in Qualifier 2 with Suryakumar Yadav (61, 38b, 7x4, 2x6) and Tilak Varma (43, 14b, 5x4, 3x6) providing the resistance. Mohit Sharma, introduced in the 15th over, finished with figures of 2-2-0-10-5, triggering a collapse as MI collapsed from 149/4 in 14 overs to 171 all-out in 18.2 overs. The 23-year-old Gill scored his third century in the last four in-

nings, recorded the highest score of the season for any batter and took his tally to 851 runs in yet another sensational knock. Gill's whirlwind knock made him only the second Indian batter after Virat Kohli (2016) and overall fourth in the history, after Jos Buttler (2022) and David Warner (2016), to score more than 800 runs in an IPL season. Chasing 234, MI were forced to rejig their batting line-up with Ishan Kishan being substituted after he ran into Chris Jordan during change of overs in the first innings and hurt his eye. Rohit Sharma also copped a blow to his hand while fielding and Cameron Green had to retire hurt for a bit, after being smacked on his left forearm by Hardik Pandya. Mohammad Shami caused early

troubles for Mumbai, getting rid of makeshift opener Nehal Wadhwa (4) and Rohit (8), but Varma took on the India and GT pace spearhead, hitting four fours and a six to collect 24 runs off the fifth over. Earlier, Gill began sturdily and turned brutal in the second half of the innings, adding 138 runs for the second wicket with B Sai Sudharsan, who happily played second fiddle with a 31-ball 43 before he was retired out. Gill hit three sixes off MI's hero of the last game, Akash Madhwal (1/53), in the 12th over to cross the 800-run mark. He brought up his fifty off 32 balls with two sixes and three fours and unleashed a flurry of sixes against seamers and spinners alike here at the Narendra Modi Stadium. Gill also surpassed Yashasvi Jaiswal's 62-ball 124 to record the highest individual score this season, with Mumbai Indians being on the receiving end on both the occasions. In the process, the 23-year-old also went past RCB's Faf du Plessis (730 runs) to claim the Orange Cap. Additionally, Gill's 129 bettered Virender Sehwag's 122 against Chennai Super Kings in the 2014 season as the highest score for a batter in the IPL playoffs. After a 30-minute delay to the start due to rain, GT had made a sedate start. A vital moment had come at the end of the sixth over when Tim David at mid-on dropped a catch to provide Gill with a lifeline, with GT finishing the powerplay at 50/0. Gill certainly had luck on his side as twice in as many balls he managed to survive, off Kumar Kartikeya. After Kishan could not run-out the batter who had gone down the track and had an inside edge deflecting the ball into his pads, Gill hit the next delivery in the air only to find the ball dropping very close to the fielder at deep midwicket.

BRIEF SCORES: GT 233/3 (Shubman Gill 129, Sai Sudharsan 43) beat MI 171 (Suryakumar Yadav 61, Tilak Varma 43; Mohit Sharma 5/10, Rashid Khan 2/33, Mohammed Shami 2/41) by 62 runs.

Kuala Lumpur, May 26: Star Indian shuttlers PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy advanced to the women's and men's singles semi-finals of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament with hard-fought wins over their respective opponents here Friday. While double Olympic medalist Sindhu, seeded sixth in the tournament, beat lower ranked Yi Man Zhang of China 21-16, 13-21, 22-20, Prannoy earned a 25-23, 18-21, 21-13 win over Kenta Nishimoto of Japan in the quarterfinals. Sindhu faces seventh seed and world number nine Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia in the semifinals on Saturday. Tunjung upset second seed Yi Zhi Wang of China in the quarterfinals 21-18, 22-20. Tunjung has been in fine form recently and Sindhu had lost to her in the Madrid Spain Masters final in straight games in April. The Indian will, however, go into the semifinals with a 7-1 head-to-head advantage over Tunjung. World No.9 Prannoy faces qualifier Christian Adinata, ranked 57, of Indonesia, who beat Kidambi Srikanth 16-21, 21-16, 21-11 in another quarterfinals, in the semifinals of Saturday. Prannoy has never played against the 21-year-old Adinata, who began playing at the senior level just last year. For World No.13 Sindhu, it was a revenge of sort for her round-of-32 loss to Zhang, ranked 18th, in the All England Open earlier this year. She had also beaten her Chinese oppo-



nent in the same tournament last year. The first game was an intriguing one. Sindhu found herself on the back foot as she trailed 0-5, but she made a fine recovery and made the score 10-all. After that, Sindhu led all through and clinched the first game 21-16. In the second game, Zhang learnt her lessons and did not allow Sindhu to come back unlike in the first. From 2-all, it was Zhang who led all through till the end to make the tie 1-1. The decider was neck-and-neck all through and it could have gone



either way. From 12-all onwards, the shuttlers didn't give each other more than a two-point lead, and it went like that till 17-all. But from there, Sindhu zoomed to take a 20-17 lead but Zhang won the next three points to level the score 20-20. But ultimately, Sindhu held onto her nerve to grab the next two points to win the third game and the match. Prannoy also found himself in a neck-and-neck tussle with Nishimoto in the first game as the duo was level on 12-all, 17-all and 20-all. They were on level terms in the next three deuce points before Prannoy won 25-23. The second game went just like first initially but Nishimoto zoomed ahead after 9-all to take 17-11 lead. Prannoy fought back to reduce the gap but it was not enough as his Japanese opponent made the tie 1-1. The decider, however, turned out to be a one-sided affair in favour of Prannoy as he just outplayed his opponent after 4-all to win it easily and pocket the match.

Manchester United secure Champions League return

Manchester, May 26: It has not always gone smoothly for Erik ten Hag in his first year in charge at Manchester United. There is still much work to be done if the 20-time league champion is to be restored to their former glories. But Thursday night, in front of a packed Old Trafford, Ten Hag achieved what he called his "main objective" of securing a return to the Champions League with a 4-1 win against Chelsea. Goals from Casemiro, Anthony Martial, Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford fired United to a victory that means a top-four finish is now certain. United moved up to third and two points above Newcastle going into the season finale. It could get better still for Ten Hag, who has already lifted his first trophy — the League Cup in February. United will face Manchester City in the FA Cup final June 3 at Wembley.

Manchester United secure Champions League return

While silverware adds sparkle to an encouraging debut season under the Dutch coach, qualification for the Champions League has been the ultimate measure by which his predecessors have been judged during a turbulent 10 years since iconic former manager Alex Ferguson retired. Needing just a point from their last two games of the season, first half goals from Casemiro and Martial put United on course for the win against Chelsea that ensured there would be no late slip up to let in archrival Liverpool. United's win assures Liverpool will finish fifth with a Europa League spot, which Mohamed Salah said is not good enough. The Liverpool forward tweeted that he's "devastated." The jubilant scenes at Old Trafford were a world away significant setbacks — a 3-6 loss to Manchester City and a humiliating 0-7 rout by Liverpool as recently as March. Belgium secured back-to-back

FIH PRO LEAGUE: INDIA CONCEDE LATE GOAL TO LOSE TO BELGIUM

London, May 26: India conceded a late goal to lose 1-2 against Olympic champions Belgium in a keenly-contested FIH Men's Hockey Pro League match here Friday. All the goals in the match came through penalty corners. It was World No.2 Belgium who took the lead in the 18th minute through Thiabeau Stockbroekx before India equalised via Mandeep Singh in the 25th minute. But the Indian defence crumbled in the dying minutes of the match as they conceded a few penalty corners, one of which was converted by Nelson Onana (60th minute). The match was even-stevens till the final hooter with both the teams matching each other. India got the first chance in the fifth minute but Hardik Singh's effort from top of the circle was saved by an agile Belgium goalkeeper Loic van Doren with his extended left hand. Belgium secured back-to-back

penalty corners in the 18th minute and Stockbroekx broke the deadlock from the second chance, deflecting in Loick Luypaert's feed after India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh made a double save. It took India seven minutes to draw parity through an opportunist Mandeep who tapped home from a rebound after skipper Harmanpreet Singh's flick from a penalty corner was saved by the Belgian defence. India too had a few great chances to take the lead but Sukhjeet Singh and Gurjant Singh's efforts were saved by the Belgian custodian. The Indian crumbled under Belgium's relentless pressure in the final minute of the game and conceded back-to-back penalty corners, the second of which was put into goal by Onana from a rebound after Sreejesh made the initial save. India will take on hosts Great Britain in their second match of the Europe leg of the Pro League here Saturday.

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