



ALAYA'S CAREER BALANCE
Actor Alaya F expresses her eagerness to explore diverse roles while maintaining balance in her career **LEISURE P2**



NO RESPITE FOR KHAN
More than 70 lawyers and leaders from Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party have parted ways over the May 9 mayhem **INTERNATIONAL P10**



IPL FINAL TODAY
Eyes will be on MS Dhoni and a young Shubman Gill as Chennai Super Kings take on Gujarat Titans with IPL title on the line **SPORTS P12**

UP SHOCKER
CLASS X STUDENT GANGRAPED, KILLED
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya (UP), May 27: A 15-year-old Class X student was pushed off the terrace of her school here after allegedly being gangraped by the manager of the private educational institution and sports teacher, police said Saturday, adding the girl died on the spot. The incident took place Friday, they said. The school management initially told the police that the girl died after falling from a swing. However, when police scanned the CCTV footage, they found that the girl had fallen from the terrace of the school building, officials said. Police have registered a case against school manager Brijesh Yadav, principal Rashmi Bhatia and sports teacher Abhishek Kannaujia under Sections 376D (gangrape), 302 (murder), 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offender) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC and under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Ayodhya SP (City) Madhuban Singh said, "On Saturday afternoon, on the complaint of the family of the girl student, a case was registered against the school principal, school manager and a sports teacher for gangraping the minor girl, murdering her, erasing the evidence and hatching criminal conspiracy and also under the POCSO Act." The victim's father said even after the school was closed for summer vacation, her daughter was called to the school by the principal. After she reached the school, manager of the school Brijesh Yadav and sports teacher Abhishek Kannaujia gangraped her and to hide the crime, they threw her from the terrace of the school," the father alleged.



RED CARPET WELCOME: Actress Urvashi Rautela arrives at Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Friday, to attend the 23rd International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) awards **PTI PHOTO**

TWO KILLED IN JUMBO ATTACK

POST NEWS NETWORK
Soro/Ranpur, May 27: Two persons including a 9-year-old girl were trampled to death by elephants in Balasore and Nayagarh districts, Saturday. The deceased were identified as Pari Dehuri, daughter of Nishikanta Dehuri, at Saralia Chitrasula under Soro police limits in Balasore district and Satya Behera of Natima under Narsinghpur panchayat of Ranpur block in Nayagarh district. In the first incident, a herd of eight elephants strayed into Saralia Chitrasula late Saturday night. On seeing the elephant on their backyard, the family members tried to drive it away. Annoyed by the move, the elephant entered the house and trampled the girl when she was trying to come out of the house. The family members rushed her to a hospital where the doctors declared her dead. In the second incident, a tusker rushed out of a cashew orchard and attacked three labourers while they were on their way to work on bicycles on Kamaguru-Mayurjhalia road in Nayagarh district. Fifty-six-year-old Satya Behera died in the attack.

ALL SET FOR PARL HOUSE OPENING
New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Sunday inaugurate the new Parliament building, equipped with state-of-the-art technology. With carpets from Mirzapur in UP, bamboo flooring from Tripura and stone carvings from Rajasthan, the new Parliament building reflects India's diverse culture. **P7**

11 CMs skip NITI meet

CM Naveen Patnaik and 10 other CMs boycotted the 8th Governing Council meeting citing several reasons

POST NEWS NETWORK
New Delhi, May 27: The eighth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog began under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday but the Chief Ministers from 11 non-BJP-ruled states including Odisha boycotted the meet. While some of the Chief Ministers questioned the way the democracy has been attacked and the non-BJP governments are being toppled as the reasons behind their absence, some others cited personal reasons and the issue of non-payment of central funds. The BJP, however, lashed out at the CMs, who skipped the meeting terming their decision as 'anti-people' and 'irresponsible'. Other than Naveen, the other Chief Ministers who skipped the meeting include Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar,

Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah, Telangana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao and Manipur CM N Biren Singh. As per sources, Naveen remained busy throughout the day in several meetings including review of the four-year performance of different departments including Mission Shakti. Delhi CM boycotted the meeting stating that the Union government has been openly making fun of cooperative federalism. "NITI Aayog's objective is to prepare a vision for India and promote cooperative federalism. But the way our democracy has been attacked in past few years is neither our country's vision nor cooperative federalism," Kejriwal said in a letter to PM Modi. Mann, CM of AAP-ruled Punjab,

- **NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting was meant for only Chief Ministers**
- **Issues such as health, skill development, women empowerment and infrastructure development was deliberated in the NITI Aayog meeting**

Tamil Nadu CM is abroad while Karnataka CM was busy in cabinet expansion. Bihar CM also cited prior programme at Patna while Telangana CM was attending Delhi and Punjab CM in Hyderabad. During the meeting, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the Centre and the states/UTs have collective responsibility to fulfil the aspirations of 140 crore people. "We need to have common vision and strategy. NITI Aayog is taking multiple initiatives for strengthening cooperative and competitive federalism like the Aspirational Districts Programme and Aspirational Blocks Programme. Both these programmes showcase the power of working together as Centre, States and Districts, and the impact of data-driven governance in improving the lives of common citizens at the grassroots level," the PM said.

NABA DAS MURDER
CB: US agency's help sought through Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, May 27: The Crime Branch of Odisha police Saturday issued a clarification in connection with media reports raising questions over the investigation wing's claims that it has sought the help of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in USA for the probe into ex-minister Naba Kishore Das's murder. As per the press note, the family members of now-sacked ASI Gopal Das claimed that the latter was suffering from mental illness. So, a team of medical experts was constituted by DMET to check the mental health of the assassin. Though the team found the accused mentally fit, it suggested further examination for confirmation. "In this process, help was taken from Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Gol, New Delhi, the State Forensic Laboratory of Gujarat and SCB Medical College, Cuttack. The NIMHANS, GOI, Bangalore was also approached to send team of its experts to Odisha to which they expressed their inability," the release said. The CB decided to take the help of Behavioural Analysis Unit of FBI which has been considered the best for such investigations. "Accordingly, on a request of CID-CB, the State Home dept did approach the MHA to request the FBI for help in the investigation of assassination of Naba Kishore Das. In this connection, the Home dept vide letter No.187/C/22.02.2023 requested the MHA to seek help of FBI in accordance with The Mutual Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with USA," it added. MoS, Home, Tusharkanti Behera said, "The chargesheet prepared by the CB still requires some more formalities. Since the probe is being carried out under the supervision of a retired judge, all the details cannot be made available for public now."

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

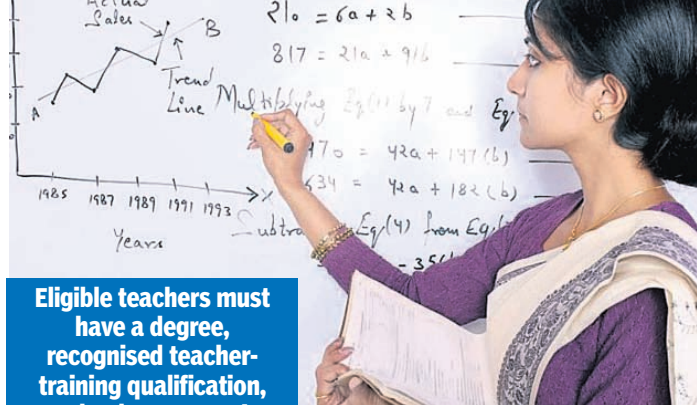


Leather coins?
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BHUB CTK
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MIN 22.0°C 22.0°C
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Rainfall Nil Nil
Forecast Mainly clear sky

UK favours Indian Math, Science teachers

In an effort to boost the number of teachers, the UK govt has begun an overseas recruitment drive under which teachers of Mathematics, Science and Language-teaching qualifications from India, Ghana, Singapore and other countries are being recognised

Hundreds of Mathematics, Science and Language teachers will be brought to the UK from countries such as India and Nigeria this year, with plans to expand recruitment schemes to other countries and subjects, "The Times" newspaper said. The International Relocation Payments (IRP), being run as a pilot in the 2023 to 2024 academic year, is applicable to overseas teachers with a job offer in the UK and covers their cost of visas, immigration health surcharge and other relocation expenses. UK officials reportedly expect between 300 and 400 teachers to get the IRPs in the coming academic year and if it proves a success in attracting overseas staff, the scheme could be extended to other subjects. In an effort to boost the number of teachers, the government has begun an overseas recruitment initiative under which teachers of



Eligible teachers must have a degree, recognised teacher-training qualification, and at least a year's experience. They need to speak English to the undergraduate level
Mathematics, Science and Language-teaching qualifications from India, Ghana, Singapore, Jamaica, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe are

they have a job offer and earn a minimum salary that depends on their role, usually around GBP 27,000 per annum. Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the UK's National Association of Head Teachers, told "The Times" that overseas recruitment "is, at best, a temporary solution". "In March, we launched a one-year trial offering no more than 400 of the best teachers from around the world the opportunity to teach in our schools. This is one of many options we are exploring to ensure there is an excellent teacher for every child," the Department for Education (DfE) said in a statement. The move comes at a time when there is a raging debate over the UK's record net migration figures released earlier this week, which British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak admitted were "too high".

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BEYONCÉ HALTS GIG TO PAY TRIBUTE TO TINA TURNER

Singer-songwriter Beyoncé paused her show in Paris to pay tribute to the passing of music legend Tina Turner after she died aged 83 on Wednesday.

CELINE DION CANCELS WORLD TOUR DUE TO HER RARE NEUROLOGICAL DISORDER

Singer Celine Dion also known as Queen of Power Ballads has cancelled all 2023 and 2024 dates on her Courage world tour due to her ongoing struggle with a rare neurological disorder called Stiff-Person Syndrome.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES You may want to meet up with friends you haven't met in a long time...

TAURUS You will focus on nurturing the positive aspects of your life today, says Ganesh.

GEMINI You will let your personal likes and dislikes cloud your judgement today.

CANCER Today may not be a productive day for you.

LEO You may wear the trendiest suit, drive the swankiest car and dine at the costliest restaurant.

VIRGO Family matters. And matters of family matter more.

LIBRA It's a full platter today, and you have to manage it all somehow.

SCORPIO In all probability, you are set to shine out as a man of care and kindness.

SAGITTARIUS Providence smiles upon you today, predicts Ganesh.

CAPRICORN Not many can match you when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle.

AQUARIUS Today, you will wish there were two of you!

PISCES Bright prospects will greet whatever new ventures you decide to focus on today.

I've high expectations from myself: Alaya F

Mumbai: Actor Alaya F who is known for films like Freddy, U-turn talks about her willingness to play all kinds of characters but she does not want to go overboard with it at this point in her career.



Gangubai, Bhool Bhulaiyaa share top technical honours

Abu Dhabi: The IIFA Awards and Weekend 2023 kickstarted here with a ceremony that saw Alia Bhatt-starrer Gangubai Kathiawadi bagging awards in three technical categories.

Actor Rajkumar Rao and filmmaker-choreographer Farah Khan hosted the IIFA Rocks ceremony, winners for technical categories, including cinematography, screenplay, dialogue and editing, were announced.

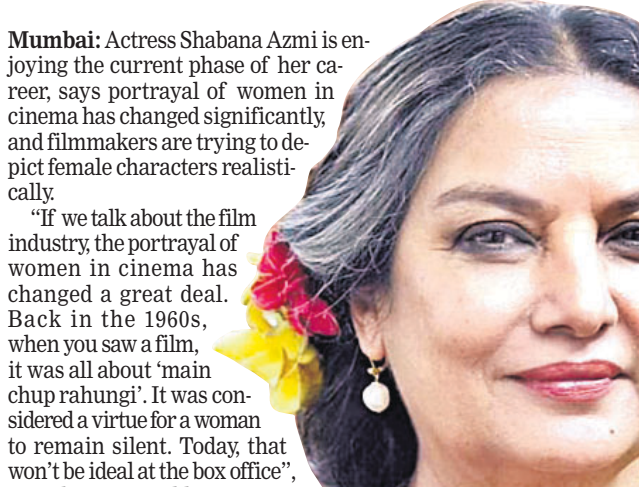


Filmmaker Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Utkarshini Vashishta won the award for best screenplay. The Kartik Aaryan-starrer Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2 won in two technical categories.

Ajay Devgn's crime thriller Drishyam 2 took home the trophy for best editing, whereas Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt's action adventure Brahmastra: Part One - Shiva was adjudged the winner of best special effects (visual).

AGENCIES

'Portrayal of women in Indian cinema has changed'



Mumbai: Actress Shabana Azmi is enjoying the current phase of her career, says portrayal of women in cinema has changed significantly.

"If we talk about the film industry, the portrayal of women in cinema has changed a great deal. Back in the 1960s, when you saw a film, it was all about 'main chup rahungi'."

commitment to keeping her family intact and protecting her children. It embodies a feminist perspective...

"Now you pick rural or urban India, women are [shown to be] working. Even if a film is a love story, the women have a profession...

On the work front Shabana Azmi will be seen next in Karan Johar's Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahani.

AGENCIES

My first Cannes was intimidating: Aditi

Mumbai: Actress Aditi Rao Hydari who garnered acclaim for her web outings in Jubilee and Taj recently was ecstatic to walk for the second time at the prestigious Cannes film festival.

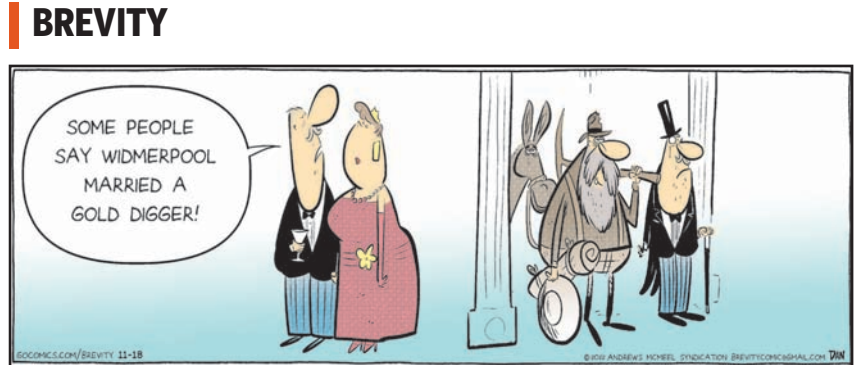
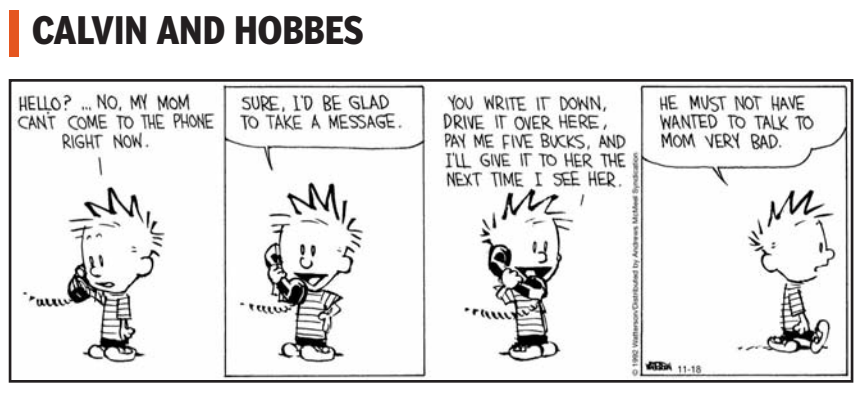
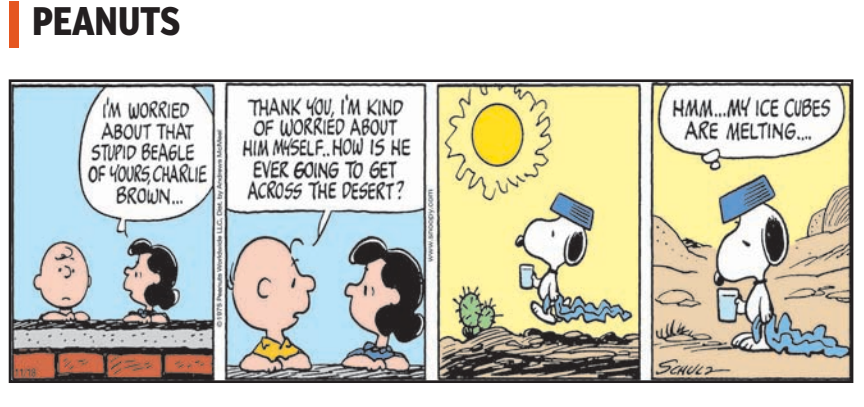
The 36 year old walked the red carpet at Cannes for the second time, says, "Last year it was all new to me, it seemed very daunting but something I kept telling myself is that every step of the way, I will just wear what I like and I will make sure to be myself."

The Bhoomi actress says, "I am new to this and have a lot of responsibilities. It is a lot of fun to walk the red carpet, and feels really special."

AGENCIES

CROSSWORD puzzle grid with numbers 1-24.

- Across 1 Attack item 22 In proportion (3,4) 7 Chessman 3 Loan recipient 23 Variable resistor 8 Historical records containers (4,8) 9 Bottom-feeder 24 Price 12 Up to a time that 10 Gadget 11 Requirement 13 Standing 11 Requirement 14 Sprocket 15 Grain 16 Role player 17 Morsel 19 Insect 17 Morsel 4 Express surprise 20 Former Russian monarch 18 Deafening 5 Enrollment 22 Legume 21 A long oar 6 Vat



SUDOKU puzzle grid.

Sudoku puzzle grid.

SOLUTIONS

Sudoku solution grid.

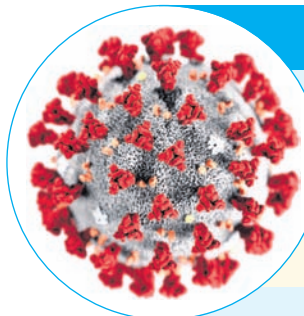
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TAKING STOCK

5T Secretary VK Pandian reviews the progress of Srimandir Parikrama project in Puri, Saturday



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

Dharitri-EFI water body restoration drive kicks off



POST NEWS NETWORK
Khurda, May 27: Dharitri and Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) flagged off the restoration of Haridamdama lake under Mendhahashal gram panchayat here Saturday, marking the beginning of the ambitious initiative to rejuvenate water bodies across the state.

The restoration drive was flagged off by Jatni MLA Suresh Kumar Rautray, Khurda Collector K Sudarshan Chakravarty, Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy, and Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy, EFI founder Arun Krishnamurthy, PD, DRDA Diganta Routroy, Zilla Parishad member Pravat Parida, sarpanch Kaushalya Baliarsingh and JSW

Foundation state head Prasanta Biswal in presence of villagers. The Jatni MLA praised the lake restoration initiative. "The lake has been in a very bad shape for years now. The water body restoration drive by Dharitri is really praiseworthy as it would help the villagers immensely," Rautray, who was the event's chief

guest, said. The Khurda Collector assured all help for the noble initiative. "Haridamdama lake restoration drive by Dharitri and EFI is a welcome move. We will ensure all possible help for rejuvenation of the water

body," Chakravarty, the event's guest of honour, said. Dharitri and Orissa POST Editor Tathagata Satpathy said the water-holding capacity of many lakes and ponds has been dwindling due to poor upkeep. "We (Dharitri) have collaborated with EFI to restore those water bodies," he said. Dharitri and Orissa POST Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy said, "Little steps like this (restoration of water bodies) will go a long way in saving the environment." The EFI founder said rejuvenation of Haridamdama lake will not only help the villagers, but also the animals. JSW Foundation state head Prasanta Biswal welcomed the drive, saying it will help one and all immensely.

HE DEPT STOPS SALARY OF 233

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 27: The Higher Education (HE) department has withheld the salary of principals and head clerks of 233 colleges for gross negligence and failure to carry out the instruction of higher authorities. An order issued by the Higher Education department Special Secretary said the salary was withheld as they failed to furnish the required information in response to the letters of assistant directors after repeated reminders. The HE department, in its order, said, "You have failed to furnish the required information in response to the letters of the assistant director even after repeated reminders. It shows gross negligence in discharging government duty on your part along with failure to carry out instructions of authorities of the Higher Education department." The HE department directed the principals not to draw and release the salary/remuneration for the month of May 2023 of themselves as well as of the head clerk/clerk of the concerned colleges till compliance with the orders is made and clearance given from the department.

Fund for social security assistance to SHGs soon



Mission Shakti Minister Basanti Hembram (R) and commissioner-cum-secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan address the media in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, May 27: The state government has decided to create a dedicated fund to provide financial assistance to members of women self-help groups (SHGs) in case of accidental deaths, major injuries and diseases, Mission Shakti commissioner cum secretary Sujata R Karthikeyan said here, Saturday.

In a bid to transform women SHGs into MSEs, the state government has facilitated business worth ₹4,949 crore to the SHGs in convergence with 20 government departments

BASANTI HEMBRAM | MISSION SHAKTI MINISTER

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday reviewed the performance of Mission Shakti department and implementation of promises made in election manifesto of 2019. Speaking to media, Sujata said Mission Shakti department has 7 million women organised into 6 lakh SHGs. A dedicated fund, in line with the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF), will be created in the next two to three months to provide financial support to women SHG members in case of accidental death and major injury, she said. For the first time in the history, credit flow to SHGs has crossed ₹11,000 crore in 2022-23. This is a quantum leap over a period of eight years. The credit flow has been increased 19 times over a period of eight years (2014-15 to 2022-23), Karthikeyan said.

She further said that the average loan size of SHGs has also seen a big jump from ₹1.06 lakh in 2016-17 to ₹3.01 lakh. This quantum jump was boosted by the state government's decision to provide zero interest loans upto ₹5 lakh. In the past four years, ₹587 crore has been reimbursed directly to bank accounts of more than 4 lakh SHGs, with ₹216 crore in the last year alone. With an aim to convert women SHGs into MSEs, the state government has facilitated business worth ₹4,949 crore to the SHGs in convergence with 20 government departments, said Mission Shakti Minister Basanti Hembram. Convergence guidelines have been prepared to incentivise the role of SHGs in different schemes. This has created opportunities for more than

1 lakh SHGs and enhanced their economic standing by generating a cumulative income of ₹1,226 crore in the last 4 years. As many as 11,008 clusters have been promoted under different livelihood sectors, she said. Further, 102 Mission Shakti Cafes have been opened across the state to provide healthy and nutritious food to people in a homely setting while being a good source of revenue generation for SHG members. With high quality training being provided by Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), these cafes have a daily footfall of 50-100 and average monthly earning of ₹50,000, she pointed out. The SHGs have set up 1,147 millet enterprises, promoting healthy and sustainable food practices. Pisciculture is being done by 13,431 SHGs in 13,501 GP tanks, which led to a business turnover of ₹139 crore. For the first time, Mission Shakti institutions have received huge infrastructure support for strengthening SHGs and creating markets for their products. The department has constructed 6,662 Mission Shakti Gharas at GPs and Urban areas with an allocation of ₹5 lakh (rural) and ₹7.09 lakh (urban), the secretary said. Similarly, 127 Mission Shakti Bhawans were constructed at block level at a cost of ₹50 lakh for each unit. Mission Shakti Bhawans constructed at district level with an allocation of ₹1 crore for each unit. Besides, 119 Mission Shakti outlets opened in 22 districts. District level Mission Shakti Bazaars are under construction. The state level Mission Shakti Bazaar will be opened soon, informed the secretary. This budget has the Mission Shakti Scooter scheme, where two lakh members will be covered. Interest subvention for loans upto ₹1 lakh for purchase of scooter will be borne entirely by the state government, she added.

Srimandir Lions' Gate to be silver coated

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, May 27: Lions' Gate, the main entrance to Srimandir in Puri, will be coated with silver during the annual Rath Yatra, when the deities will be away from the 12th century shrine, Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Ranjan Kumar Das said, Saturday. A devotee has agreed to donate adequate quantity of silver to be used in plating, he added. The

design has been finalised reflecting the temple architecture. The work will be completed before the deities' return to Srimandir from Gundicha Temple. Rath Yatra will commence June 20 and Bahuda Yatra is scheduled for June 29, it was learnt. The temple managing body members along with core committee Chief NC Pal and the silver artisans had visited the temple and the Lions' Gate. It was decided to work within nine days

during absence of the deities in main temple. The work will be done amid round-the-clock tight security and under CCTV cover, the chief administrator informed. Except for the servitors, no one will be allowed to pass through the doors during execution of the work. Devotees will be allowed to enter and exit through other three gates he added. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has accorded necessary permission

for the work, Das said. Earlier, eight doors of the temple were silver-plated. Devotees had donated the silver for the work. This apart, the damaged 'Ratna Pallank', huge bed on which deities sleep during Pahuda, will be remade keeping its weight and size at par with the old one. "While ivory work was extensively done to decorate the old 'Pallank', we will approach the state government to provide ivory for a new one for the deity," the chief administrator said.

State attracts ₹5,000cr investments in tourism

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, May 27: Active investor facilitations and Odisha's progressive Tourism Policy have helped welcome global hospitality brands and amusement park with investments worth over ₹5,000 crore, said Tourism Minister Aswini Kumar Patra, Saturday. Addressing media here, Patra said despite the Covid pandemic, the state has witnessed a domestic footfall of 37,42,221 and international footfall of 2,269 tourists in 2021, which is expected to increase further. Despite global pandemic like Covid and natural calamities like floods and cyclones, the tourism sector in the state has made a quick recovery. This is reflected with the entry of leading global hospitality and amuse-

ment park brands in the state with investments of more than ₹5,000 crore, he said. Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Tourism, Surendra Kumar said that the budget of the Tourism department in 2022-23 is ₹660 crore in comparison to ₹2.67 crore in 2000-01, which is an increase of 246 per cent or which conveys the focus being given by the state towards the tourism sector. He further stated that the state has witnessed a massive growth in tourist footfall over the last 23 years. The state welcomed 28,88,392 domestic tourists and 23,723 international tourists in 2000, which peaked in 2019 to 1,53,07,637 domestic tourists (increase of 433 per cent) and 1,15,128 (increase of 385 per cent) international tourists till the onset of Covid pandemic. Expansion of a highly success-

ful glamping festival, Eco-Retreat Odisha, from one location in 2019 to seven unique ecotourism destinations in the state by 2022. The destinations are Satkosia, Bhitarkanika, Hirakud, Daringbadi, Putsil and Sonapur apart from Ramchandi Beach in Konark. Launch of water-based recreation at the Tampara Lakefront Project in Ganjam and Silver City Boat Club at Mahanadi river in Cuttack, which provides tourists with recreational facilities such as water sports, Kumar said. In 2016, Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra Yojana was launched by the Chief Minister. Under this scheme, pilgrimage tours to various parts of the country have been provided to more than 19,000 senior citizens of BPL families till date.

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of the day quote

Inflation, unemployment, agrarian distress has dominated the nine years of Modi rule. The Centre's debt has increased from ₹65 lakh crore in 2014 to ₹135 lakh crore now



PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN | CONGRESS LEADER

In the last one year, permanent jobs were given to 17,000 people in Delhi. There has been a perceptible change in the heavily polluted Yamuna and hopefully, the river will be restored to its previous glory



V K SAXENA | DELHI LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The expansion of the Maharashtra cabinet will take place soon



DEVENDRA FADNIS | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM

SHORT TAKES

NEET aspirant commits suicide

Kota (Rajasthan): A 16-year-old NEET aspirant allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself from a ceiling fan at her uncle's house in Kota Thermal Power Plant colony here Saturday, police said. The deceased has been identified as Sakshi Choudhary, a Class 11 student, they said. In a suicide note recovered from her room, the teen held no one responsible for the suicide, however, her family members stated that average performance in her class 10 board exams could be the reason behind her extreme step, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Kunhari) Shankar Lal said.

Army destroys landmine in J&K

Jammu: The Army Saturday detected and destroyed a landmine in a forward village near the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. The landmine, in a rusted condition, was detected by the Army troops during patrolling in Malikpur village of Mendhar sector, the officials said. They said the area was cordoned off and the landmine was later destroyed by the Bomb Disposal Squad in a controlled explosion.

Two Naxals held

Medininagar (Jharkhand): Two Naxals belonging to the banned Tritiya Sammelan Prastuti Committee (TSPC) outfit were arrested in Jharkhand's Palamu district Saturday, police said. The rebels, identified as 32-year-old Surendra Singh and 25-year-old Nakul Singh, were nabbed in Madhuri forest in Padwa area, around 190 km from state capital Ranchi. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Rishav Garg said that the duo was nabbed while travelling on a motorcycle from Basu village. Levy amounting to Rs 50,000 in cash, TSPC pamphlets, four mobile phones and a power bank were seized from their possession, he said.

Four killed

Pratapgarh (UP): Four members of a family were killed Saturday morning when their motorcycle was hit by a car here Saturday morning, police said. The family members, who were seriously injured in the collision between the speeding car and the motorcycle near Shivdayal Ganj of Prithviganj town, were taken to the medical college for treatment where doctors declared two of them, identified as Manoj Singh (39), resident of Sangpur Pratapgarh and his son Shivam (8), dead. Additional Superintendent of Police (East) Vidyasagar Mishra.

KCR urges Centre to withdraw ordinance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, May 27: Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu Saturday demanded that the Centre withdraw its ordinance on control of services in Delhi, after he held a meeting with the chief ministers of Delhi and Punjab. He made the demand during a joint press conference with Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann who called on him here to discuss the issue of the Centre's ordinance. Rao alleged that the way the Centre issued the ordinance reminded one of the days of the Emergency. "(PM) Narendra Modi ji and BJP leaders speak so vociferously against the Emergency. Exactly the same thing happened before the Emergency. Post Allahabad



High Court judgment, a Constitutional amendment was made nullifying that judgment," Rao said. Claiming that the NDA government is on a path similar to the imposition of the Emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975, he asked what is the difference between the Indira Gandhi regime then and the Centre now. "We demand that

the Prime Minister withdraw the ordinance. Yourself. Or else, we will all support Arvind Kejriwal ji. We will stand by him. We will use all our strength in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to defeat that ordinance and see to it that the ordinance is not passed," he said. Rao alleged that the NDA government insulted the people of

Delhi. The Centre is not allowing the elected government of Delhi to function and is not honouring the Supreme Court judgment, he alleged. "Not honouring the Supreme Court's larger bench judgment means going towards Emergency," he said. He felt that the "whole system" would support Kejriwal as it is a "question of the existence of democracy".

Kejriwal thanked Rao for his support. "People across the country ask where would people go for justice if the Prime Minister does not accept the Supreme Court's orders," the Delhi Chief Minister said. "In a way, Prime Minister is challenging the people of Delhi that he would not let the government function, whatever the government (be) elected by the people," he claimed,

accusing the Centre of meddling when a non-BJP government is elected by the people in any state. He alleged that the BJP either "purchases MLAs, dislodges government or breaks MLAs by sending ED or brings an ordinance misusing the Governor, as seen in different states". Observing that the BJP does not have a majority in Rajya Sabha, he said if all non-BJP parties defeat the ordinance in the upper house, it will generate confidence among people of the country that the Modi government would not return to power in 2024. The fight is to safeguard democracy, he said. Mann alleged that Raj Bhavans have become "BJP offices" and the Governors are BJP's "star campaigners" of the incumbent NDA government at the Centre.

Cops book makers of 'Diary of West Bengal'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, May 27: Kolkata police said it had registered an FIR against the producer and director of the film 'Diary of West Bengal' alleging that the movie's trailer had promoted enmity between different groups.

The FIR has been lodged with Amherst Police Station and a legal notice was sent to director Sanoj Mishra asking him to appear before the Investigating Officer (IO) of the case on May 30, a senior police officer said.

"An FIR has been lodged with us under IPS sections IPC 120B/153A/501/504/505/295A read with section 66D/84B Information Technology Act' 2000 and section 7, Cinematograph Act' 1952 and a legal notice has also been sent to the film director. "An investigation is on and we have summoned him (Mishra) to appear before us at the Amherst Police Station on May 30 as a part of our probe," the officer said.

Section 120B of IPC deals with criminal conspiracy, 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups), 501 (defamatory matter), 504 (intentionally insult), 505 (public mischief) 295 A (outrage religious feelings).

The movie trailer speaks of immigration and settlements of Rohingyas and radical Bangladeshis in West Bengal and of communal disturbances. Mishra, who is also the writer of the film, when contacted claimed that his film is not on West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, though a woman, featured on the posters of the movie, has resemblance to the very popular posture of the fiery leader while delivering speeches.

On receiving a notice from the Kolkata Police, Mishra said that he is consulting legal experts and would be reaching the city soon. TMC state spokesperson Joy Prakash Majumdar said that the film was made by people who want to peddle an agenda of "dividing people on the basis of religion."

MAMATA APOLOGISES FOR BLAST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Egra (WB), May 27: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Saturday apologised to the people of Egra area in Purba Medinipur district of the state for a blast at an illegal firecracker factory here, in which 12 people were killed and many injured.

The Trinamool Congress supreme, who reached Khadikil village in this area, 11 days after the blast, also said the incident could have been averted if the state had received proper intelligence inputs. "I will bow my head down to you and apologise for the incident (blast at the illegal fire factory on May 16)... Had intelligence worked properly then this blast could have been averted," Banerjee said after distributing compensation cheques of Rs 2.5 lakh each to relatives of those killed and Rs 1 lakh to every person injured, in the blast.

She also handed over appointment letters for jobs as home guards to one member each from the family of those killed in the May 16 blast. Stating that two members from the family which owned the illegal factory, have been arrested, Banerjee urged the villagers to keep the local police informed in case they find any other illegal fireworks units operational.



She also said she had been trying to visit Khadikil since the day of the blast, but could not because of bad weather, Banerjee said. "We remained in touch with the people here. I could not come because of the bad weather. Today, I have come here to be with you, not to do politics." "Our police had arrested the principal accused from a hospital in Cuttack where he had taken admission using a fake name. But unfortunately, he passed away before revealing anything," she added. The Bengal CM was accompanied by state chief secretary H K Dwivedi.

NIA busts terror module in MP

The arrests were made during overnight raids at 13 locations in Jabalpur in an intelligence-led joint operation with the Anti-Terror Squad of Madhya Pradesh police, a spokesperson of the federal agency said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 27: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has busted an ISIS-linked terror module with the arrest of three people in Madhya Pradesh, an official said Saturday.

The arrests were made during overnight raids at 13 locations in Jabalpur in an intelligence-led joint operation with the Anti-Terror Squad (ATS) of Madhya Pradesh Police, a spokesperson of the federal agency said.

The official identified the arrested trio as Syed Mamoor Ali, Mohammad Adil Khan and Mohammad Shahid and said they will be produced before the NIA special court in Bhopal. A host of

sharp-edged weapons, ammunition (including prohibited bore), incriminating documents and digital devices were also seized during the searches, the spokesperson said. The NIA had, May 24, registered a case, during its investigations into the pro-ISIS activities of Khan, who came to the agency's notice in August last year. "The NIA learnt that he and his associates were involved in disseminating ISIS propaganda through social media platforms, as well as through on-ground 'Dawah' programmes, in order to unleash violent terror attacks in India at the instance of ISIS. The module had been conducting meetings

in local masjids and houses and hatching plans and conspiracies to spread terror in the country," the spokesperson said.

The official said the investigations revealed that the three accused were highly radicalised and were determined to carry out violent "jihad". "They were engaged in collecting funds, disseminating ISIS propaganda material, motivating and recruiting youth, and trying to procure arms and ammunition with the objective of carrying out terrorist acts," the spokesperson said.

The official said Ali had created a local group by the name of 'Fisabilillah' and was also operating a WhatsApp group by the same name. "Along with his associates, he was trying to procure pistols and was in contact with a Jabalpur-based illegal arms supplier for this purpose."

A staunch ISIS follower and supporter, the NIA said Khan had managed to assemble an active group of Jabalpur-based like-minded radicalised individuals. "Some of the module members were already contemplating Hijrat (flight) to conflict theatres, while others had plans to form a local outfit for carrying out violent jihad in India," the spokesperson said.

Complaint against Kharge, Kejri for remarks on Prez

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 27: Supreme Court lawyer Vineet Jindal has lodged a formal complaint against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge accusing them of making inflammatory remarks regarding the President's caste.

In his complaint filed with the Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora, Jindal has alleged that the intention behind the statements was to create discord among various communities and groups, while attempting to foster a sense of mistrust towards the Centre.

The complaint seeks appropriate action against the accused parties for their alleged actions which according to him is an offence under section 121, 153A, 505 and 34 of the Indian Penal Code.

"I am filing this complaint against Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister Delhi, and others who have made provocative, inflammatory, derogatory, and inciting statements with the sole motive of promoting enmity between the communities by mentioning the



caste of the President of India Droupadi Murmu.

"Recently I have seen many prominent leaders in media reports making provocative statements by referring to the caste of our Hon'ble President of India regarding the event of the inauguration of the new Parliament building.

"The statements given by Kharge and Kejriwal have been made intentionally, to refer to the caste of the esteemed President of India with the objective of portraying that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the present government have deliberately not invited the President for the inauguration of the new Parliament building.

Court not an institution to sermonise society: SC

THE TOP COURT MADE THIS OBSERVATION WHILE ORDERING PREMATURE RELEASE OF A WOMAN CONVICTED FOR MURDER OF TWO CHILDREN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 27: Court is not an institution to sermonise society on morality and ethics and rather, it is bound by the rule of law while taking decisions, the Supreme Court has said.

The top court made this observation while ordering premature release of a woman convicted for murder of two children. The woman had an affair with a man who used to often threaten her. So she decided to commit suicide along with her children.

She bought pesticides meant for

plants and administered poison to her two children. Thereafter, when she poured the pesticide in a tumbler to consume it herself, her niece pushed it down. Unfortunately, the two children were declared dead on arrival in the hospital and an FIR under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code was lodged.

The trial court convicted the woman under IPC sections 302 (murder) and 309 (suicide) and sentenced her life imprisonment besides a fine. The high court partly allowed her plea by acquitting her under Section 309 while upholding the conviction



under Section 302 of IPC.

The woman pleaded for premature release, saying she was in prison for almost 20 years. However, the recommendation of the State Level Committee was rejected by the Tamil Nadu government considering the cruel and brutal nature

of the offence committed by her. A Supreme Court bench of justices Ajay Rastogi and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said the woman never tried to murder her sons with a view to continue her illicit relationship. "On the contrary, she had tried to commit suicide herself

along with her children not with a view to continue her illicit relationship with her paramour but rather, in disappointment and frustration over the quarrel picked up by her paramour. "This court is not an institution to sermonise society on morality and ethics and we say no further on this score, bound as we are, by the brooding presence of the rule of law," the bench said.

The apex court said the case cannot be simply bracketed as a 'cruel and brutal' offence as the woman herself was trying to end her life but was prevented by her niece in the nick of time.

"Moreover, the recommendation of the State Level Committee conveyed by the Additional Director General of Police/Inspector General of Prisons also notes her undisputed reflective conduct as

also the long period of incarceration already undergone," it said.

The top court said there is no valid reason or justifiable ground for the State not accepting the recommendation of the State Level Committee for premature release of the woman. "We are not oblivious to the crime but we are equally not oblivious to the fact that the appellant (mother) has already suffered at the cruel hands of fate. The reason thereof is an arena this Court would avoid entering.

"The appellant is held entitled to the benefit of premature release as per G.O issued by the Home (Prison-IV) Department, under the signature of Additional Chief Secretary to Government. Accordingly, the appellant is directed to be released forthwith, if not required in any other case," the bench said.

of the day quote

Your Shaheds, which terrorise Ukraine every night, mean only that the people of Iran are being driven deeper and deeper into the dark side of history



VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

The UK and India are trusted partners united by the unique living bridge that closely connects our countries and people



TARIQ AHMAD | MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOUTH ASIA, UK

It will be an honour for Brazil to welcome representatives from all over the world in our Amazon



LUIZ INÁCIO LULA DA SILVA | PRESIDENT, BRAZIL

SHORT TAKES

High alert in Serbia

Belgrade: Serbia Saturday condemned NATO-led peacekeepers stationed in neighbouring Kosovo for their alleged failure to stop "brutal actions" by Kosovo police against ethnic Serbs, and said that its armed forces stationed near the border will remain on the highest state of alert until further notice. Serbia's top political and security leadership, led by President Aleksandar Vucic, met in Belgrade Saturday following violent clashes a day earlier between Kosovo police and ethnic Serbs that injured more than a dozen people. In response to the clashes, Vucic Friday ordered troops closer to the border with Kosovo.

Avalanche in Pak kills 10

Islamabad: At least 10 people were killed and 25 injured when an avalanche hit the Gilgit-Baltistan region in Pakistan Saturday, police said. According to the police, 10 people, including three women were killed in the calamity in the Shunter Top area of Astore district in the mountainous region. "Rescue work was launched with the help of locals and later the Pakistan Army soldiers also joined the operation," the police said. GB Chief Secretary Mohiuddin Wani confirmed the mishap and said rescue teams were working in the affected area. Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Minister Khalid Khurshid Khan expressed deep sorrow over the incident.

Iran and Taliban exchange gunfire

Dubai: The Taliban and Iran exchanged heavy gunfire Saturday on the Islamic Republic's border with Afghanistan, sharply escalating rising tensions between the two nations amid a dispute over water rights. Iran's state-run IRNA news agency quoted the country's deputy police chief, Gen. Qassem Rezaei, accusing the Taliban of opening fire first Saturday morning on the border of Iran's Sistan and Baluchestan province and the Afghan province of Nimroz. IRNA said Iran inflicted "heavy casualties and serious damage."

Nepal PM to visit India May 31

Kathmandu: Nepal's Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" will travel to India Wednesday on a four-day official visit during which he will hold talks with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi and other leaders to further strengthen the age-old, multifaceted bilateral ties, the foreign ministry here said Saturday.



We urge the institutions in Kosovo to de-escalate immediately and call on all parties to resolve the situation through dialogue

OANA LUNGESCU | SPOKESWOMAN, NATO

BILL TO MAKE DIWALI A FEDERAL HOLIDAY

Congresswoman Grace Meng has introduced a bill in the US Congress to declare Diwali, the festival of lights, a federal holiday



US panel on China suggests NATO+ status for India

NATO Plus, currently NATO Plus 5, is a security arrangement that brings together NATO and five aligned nations - Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel, and South Korea - to boost global defence cooperation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 27: In a significant development ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States, a powerful Congressional Committee has recommended strengthening NATO Plus by including India. Bringing India on board would facilitate seamless intelligence sharing between these countries

and India would access the latest military technology without much of a time lag.

The House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Chairman Mike Gallagher and Ranking Member Raja Krishnamoorthi, overwhelmingly adopted a policy proposal to enhance Taiwan's deterrence, in-

cluding through strengthening NATO Plus to include India.

"Winning the strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party and ensuring the security of Taiwan demands the United States strengthen ties to our allies and security partners, including India. Including India in NATO Plus security arrangements would build upon the US and India's close partnership to strengthen global security and deter the aggression of the CCP across the Indo-Pacific region," the Select Committee recommended.

An initiative of the Republican leadership, the Select Committee is popularly called the China



Committee. Indian-American Ramesh Kapoor, who has been working on this proposal for the past six years, said this is a significant develop-

ment. He hoped that the recommendation would find a place in the National Defense Authorization Act 2024 and finally end up becoming a law of the land.

In its set of recommendations, the China Committee said that economic sanctions against China in case of an attack on Taiwan will be most effective if key allies such as G7, NATO, NATO+5, and Quad members join, and negotiating a joint response and broadcasting this message publicly have the added benefit of enhancing deterrence.

Prime Minister Modi will pay an official state visit to the US next month.

Russia tells US: Don't lecture Moscow on nuclear deployments

REUTERS

Moscow, May 27: Russia Saturday dismissed criticism from US President Joe Biden over Moscow's plan to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, saying Washington had for decades deployed just such nuclear weapons in Europe.

Russia said Thursday it was pushing ahead with the first deployment of such weapons outside its borders since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said the weapons were already on the move.



Biden said Friday he had an "extremely negative" reaction to reports that Russia has moved ahead with a plan to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. The US State Department denounced the Russian nuclear deployment plan. "It is the sovereign right of Russia and Belarus to ensure their security by means we deem necessary amidst of a large-scale hybrid war unleashed by Washington against us," Russia's embassy in the United States said in a statement.

"The measures we undertake are fully consistent with our international legal obligations."

Putin, who has cast the Ukraine war as a battle for the survival of Russia against an aggressive West, has repeatedly warned that Russia, which has more nuclear weapons than any other country, will use all means to defend itself.

The Russian Embassy called the US criticism of Moscow's planned deployment hypocritical, saying that "before blaming others, Washington could use some introspection". "The United States has been for decades maintaining a large arsenal of its nuclear weapons in Europe. Together with its NATO allies it participates in nuclear sharing arrangements and trains for scenarios of nuclear weapons use against our country."

'DARK DAY'

PTI faces existential threat

Trouble seems to be spiraling for former Pakistan PM and PTI party chief Imran Khan as over 70 lawyers and leaders have parted ways from the party over May 9 protests to stop Khan's arrest



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 27: Imran Ismail, the former Sindh governor and ousted prime minister Imran Khan's close aide parted ways with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party Saturday, hours after an anti-terrorism court ordered his release from prison.

Earlier, an anti-terrorism court in Karachi ordered Ismail's release from Karachi's Central Prison after furnishing a personal bond of Rs 50,000.

Over 70 lawyers and leaders from the party have parted ways with Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party (PTI) over the May 9 mayhem. Top PTI leaders -- including the party's Secretary General Asad Umar, former information minister Fawad Chaudhry and former minister for human rights Shireen Mazari -- have resigned.

Ismail, who knew Khan since his days as a cricketer, and someone who has always been at the forefront in defending him on television shows, made the announcement while addressing the press.

"I am resigning from all positions of the PTI. Khan sahib I bid adieu to you and PTI," he said at a press conference.

On May 9, violent protests erupted after paramilitary Rangers arrested Khan, 70, from the Islamabad High Court (IHC)

Your people are revealing that Imran Khan is the mastermind of May 9 (incidents). How will the people stand when the leader himself is a jackal?

MARYAM NAWAZ | SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, PML-N

premises.

His party workers vandalised a dozen military installations, including the Lahore Corps Commander's House, the Mianwali airbase and the ISI building in Faisalabad in response to Khan's arrest.

The mob also stormed the Army headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi for the first time.

Police put the death toll in violent clashes to 10 while Khan's party claims 40 of its workers lost their lives in the firing by security personnel.

Thousands of Khan's supporters were arrested following the violence that the powerful Army described as a "dark day" in the history of the country.

Ismail categorically denied being part of the May 9 mayhem. He decided to part ways he was set free from prison.

"Whoever did the attack, we as a nation are united with one voice that there is an inquiry and they meted out exemplary punishment whether they're from the PTI or

Cocaine found in Khan's urine samples

Pakistan's Minister for National Health Services, Abdul Qadir Patel, claimed Friday that alcohol and cocaine were detected in the urine samples of former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan, which were taken after his arrest on May 9 by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), media reports said. "On May 9, Imran Khan Niazi was presented before the medical board for examination. When he was taken into custody by the NAB, he was in an intoxicated state," Qadir claimed at a press conference here. The Express Tribune reported. The medical board, according to Patel, found Khan to be a "habitual user of illegal substances" as evidence of the presence of alcohol and cocaine in his urine samples was found, the report said.

not," he said.

"I was among the four people who laid the foundation of the PTI, among its founding members and then a long struggle was before you ... there were many ups and downs in the struggle and we dreamed of a developing and prosperous Pakistan," he said.

Ismail added he was not sure whether he would continue in politics.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said last week that those involved in attacks on military installations would be tried in the military courts while those charged with attacks on civilian targets would be prosecuted under civilian laws.

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had said that the government was mulling a possible ban on Khan's PTI party following the attacks by his supporters on military installations after the former prime minister's arrest.

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

US DEBT CRISIS

Treasury warns of June 5 default

REUTERS

Washington, May 27: Democratic President Joe Biden and a Republican negotiator said Friday they were working on a deal to raise the US government's \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling after the Treasury Department warned that a June 5 default loomed without action.

The two sides have been negotiating for weeks on an agreement to raise the federal government's self-imposed borrowing limit, with Republicans also pushing for sharp spending cuts. Without a deal, the United States could face a calamitous default.

"Things are looking good," Biden told reporters. "I'm optimistic."

Republican Representative Patrick McHenry said he concurred with Biden's comments, while cautioning that negotiations had not yet concluded. "I'm hopeful," said McHenry, one of House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy's lead negotiators with the White House. "But we have to make sure we have a line on tax, we have a line on agreement - there's significant challenges ahead."

The two spoke, separately, shortly



after US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the government would run short of money to pay its bills June 5. Yellen had previously said that date could come as soon as June 1, meaning that the new forecast allowed for more time but a harder final deadline.

Negotiators are discussing a deal that would lift the limit for two years, but remain at odds over whether to stiffen work requirements for some anti-poverty programs.

McCarthy left the Capitol on Friday following a conference call in which one of his top lieutenants told fellow Republicans no deal had been reached, CNN reported.

Any agreement would have to win approval in the Republican-controlled House and the Democratic-led Senate before Biden could sign it into law - a process that could take more than a week.

Chinese carrier sailed through Taiwan Strait

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, May 27: Taiwan's Defence Ministry said Saturday that it detected three Chinese warships, including the Shandong aircraft carrier, passing through the Taiwan Strait, as Beijing keeps up pressure on the self-ruled island it claims as its own.

The ministry said it was monitoring the movements of the ships and will respond accordingly.

In a tweet, the ministry said that the three vessels were headed north along the Taiwan Strait at noon and were steering along the west of the median line -- an unofficial boundary once tacitly accepted by both sides.

China claims Taiwan as its own territory to be brought under its control by force if necessary and regularly sends ships and warplanes into airspace and waters near the island.

The ministry also said that in the 24 hours from 6 am Friday to Saturday, it detected 33 of China's People's Liberation Army aircraft and 10 navy vessels around Taiwan.

Twelve of the aircraft had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait or entered the island's air defense identification zone.

In response, Taiwan's armed forces deployed aircraft, navy vessels and land-based missile systems. In April, the Chinese military said it was "ready to fight" after completing three days of large-scale combat exercises around Taiwan that simulated sealing off the island in response to Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's trip to the US.

Last August, China intensified war games around Taiwan, with missile firings and incursions into Taiwanese waters and airspace following then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei.

HK's 2nd largest pro-democracy party disbands

The city, which used to be a bastion of free speech and expression, has not seen a large-scale pro-democracy protest since 2020 under the fear of China

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Hong Kong, May 27: One of the few remaining pro-democracy parties in Hong Kong voted to dissolve itself Saturday, joining a growing list of organisations that have disbanded as authorities crackdown on dissent.

Civic Party chairman Alan Leong told reporters that the dissolution of the party was a "writing on the wall" as there was no one to take over. None of its members at an extraordinary general meeting filed nominations for executive positions.



Thirty of the 31 members voted to disband, with one person abstaining.

The party, which was founded in 2006, was made up of mostly professionals, lawyers and academics. At its peak, it won six seats in the Hong Kong legislature during the 2012 elections, and was the city's second-largest pro-democracy party after the Democratic Party.

Several members were charged with subversion under the sweeping national security law that was imposed by Beijing follow-

POLITICAL CRACKDOWN

Today, the Civic Party is bidding farewell. We hope Hong Kong people will live in the moment with a hopeful and not too heavy heart. Live in truth and believe in tomorrow

ALAN LEONG | CHAIRMAN, CIVIC PARTY

ing massive 2019 protests calling for political freedoms that were promised the semi-autonomous territory after its handover from Britain in 1997.

They were accused of participating in an unofficial primary to pick up the best candidates for the legislative elections that would allow the pro-democracy camp to win a majority of seats. Authorities, however, said that the primary was aimed at subverting the government.

In a written statement, Leong

thanked "all like-minded people who joined our long walk to democracy for different parts of the journey."

Since the national security law was passed, the city has undergone major changes to its political landscape. An overhaul of Hong Kong's electoral system was made to ensure that only "patriots" loyal to China would be able to take office, and more than 200 people have been arrested for allegedly committing acts that endanger national security.

Many pro-democracy political organisations in Hong Kong have already disbanded. They include the protest organizer Civil Human Rights Front and the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, which was behind the annual Tiananmen Square vigil to mark the 1989 massacre in Beijing of pro-democracy activists by Chinese soldiers. The vigil has been banned for the last three years.

business

of the day quote

Bill Gates | FOUNDER, MICROSOFT

We need to mount a comprehensive, broad response (to issues like Covid-19) based on innovation and cooperation

The industry is progressing at a rapid rate, and to maintain our stature as the 'Pharmacy of the World', we need to focus on quality and affordable manufacturing with an increased focus on research and innovation

Mansukh Mandaviya | UNION MINISTER

In my opinion, India will be the bright shining light for the world and driven by of course young people in India who are driving startups

Ritesh Agarwal | FOUNDER, OYO

SHORT TAKES

ONGC Q4 net dips

New Delhi: India's top oil and gas producer ONGC posted a surprise loss in the March quarter after it made over ₹12,100 crore provision for a contested tax liability. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) reported a net loss of ₹247.70 crore in the January-March quarter as compared to a net profit of ₹8,859.54 crore a year back, according to a company statement. Service tax department at various work centres had raised a demand for payment of service tax on the royalty the company paid to the state and central government on crude oil and natural gas it produces from below ground. The company challenged the demands in courts.

China industrial profits drop 18%

Beijing: Profits at China's industrial firms slumped in the first four months of 2023, official data showed Saturday, as companies continued to struggle with margin pressures and soft demand amid a faltering economic recovery. Profits fell 20.6% in January-April from a year earlier, compared with a 21.4% decline in the first three months, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). In April alone, industrial firms posted a 18.2% drop in profit year-on-year.

IPL teams give better returns than stock mkt

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 27: IPL teams have given phenomenal returns compared to the stock market, with the Rajasthan Royals leading the pack with 29 times returns. According to a research by Treelife, if you had invested ₹1 lakh in IPL teams it would have far outperformed the Sensex and blue chip stocks. The Rajasthan Royals tops the list with 29 times return, so the ₹1 lakh invested is now ₹29.07 lakhs. It is followed by Kolkata Knight Riders with 28 times, Chennai Super Kings with 24 times and Mumbai Indians with 22 times. Comparing it to the stock market,



FROM MOBILE PHONES TO CHIPS

In the wake of chip supply chain disruptions during pandemic and the ongoing US-China restrictions, India is looking to be a global player in semiconductors

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 27: In 2018, South Korean giant Samsung inaugurated the world's largest mobile factory in India. The 35-acre facility at Sector 81 in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae-in officially inaugurating it together - placing the country firmly on the global manufacturing map. Even before that, the country saw a massive turnaround in mobile manufacturing. Before 2014, there were two mobile manufacturing factories and now, more than 200 manufacturing units have been set up in India, producing millions of devices and exporting them to other countries.

Fast forward to 2023. Led by locally-manufactured mobile phones, India's electronics industry saw a record exports of electronic goods at an estimated ₹1,85,000 crore in FY22-23 - compared to ₹1,16,936 crore in FY21-22 - marking a whopping 58 per cent increase.

STEEL DEMAND TO GROW 7.5%: ISA

Global demand dragged down India's steel exports to a five-year low during the financial year that ended in March 2023

REUTERS

New Delhi, May 27: India's steel consumption is expected to grow by 7.5% during the current fiscal year to March 2024, boosted by rising demand from the domestic construction, railways and capital goods sectors, a leading industry body said Friday. Steel demand is expected to be 128.9 million tonne during 2023-24, up from 119.9 million tonne during the previous year, the Indian Steel Association (ISA) said in a statement. The steel sector has benefited from India's strong economic growth, and industries such as automotive and consumer durables are expected to fuel steel consumption, ISA said. Economic growth in Asia's third largest economy is forecast to average 6.0% for the current fiscal year and then rise to 6.4% in 2024-25,

India's electronics making picks up



Electronics industry saw a record exports of electronic goods

Mobile phone exports crossed \$10b threshold for the first time

India's semiconductor market was valued at \$22.7 billion in 2019

According to data by the India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), mobile phone exports made history by crossing the \$10 billion threshold for the first time in any fiscal year, reaching an estimated \$11.12 billion (over ₹90,000 crore) in FY23.

This growth has been primarily driven by the Apple ecosystem, which alone crossed a record \$5 billion in exports from India in FY23. The country has now taken a leap on manufacturing IT hardware (laptops, servers, tablets), semiconductors and more. Vedanta-Foxconn Semiconductors Limited (VFSL), a joint venture between Foxconn and Vedanta Group, is one such example.

Vedanta and Foxconn signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Gujarat government last year to invest ₹54,000 crore to set up the semiconductor and display manufacturing plant which is India's first. In April, Vedanta Group signed MoUs with 20 Korean companies from the display glass industry for the development of an electronics manufacturing hub in the country.

PLI 2.0 FOR IT HARDWARE

The Centre last week approved an updated production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for IT hardware, nearly doubling the overall outlay for the scheme to around ₹17,000 crore.

GO FIRST CANCELS FLIGHTS TILL MAY 30

Go First Airlines Saturday announced that its flight operations will remain cancelled till May 30 adding that a full refund will be issued to the passengers. The official media account of Go First Airlines took to Twitter and said, "Due to operational reasons, Go First flights until May 30, 2023, are cancelled. We apologise for the inconvenience caused"



Nepal starts power exports to India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, May 27: Nepal has started exporting electricity to India from Saturday, as the generation of hydroelectricity from run-of-the-river projects increased with the onset of the monsoon in the Himalayan country. Last year also, Nepal exported hydroelectricity to India from June to November.

"We have started selling 600 MW hour electricity to India from Saturday, as the generation of hydroelectricity from run-of-the-river projects increased with the onset of the monsoon in the Himalayan country. Last year also, Nepal exported hydroelectricity to India from June to November."

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BIZ BUZZ

Kamal Watch Co inaugurates third showroom in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Kamal Watch Co, a leading name in the world of luxury timepieces, proudly announces the launch of its third showroom in Bhubaneswar, also making it the 50th showroom in India. The grand inauguration ceremony took place at Jaydev Vihar May 27, in the august presence of esteemed dignitaries, including Jagannath Swain Mohapatra, Chief Priest of Puri Shree Jagannath Temple along with film star and Member of Parliament, Anubhav Mohanty. The event was marked by a symbolic ribbon-cutting and the traditional lighting of the lamp, signifying the commencement of an exciting new chapter for the brand. Nishanth Totla, Director at Kamal Watch Concepts, expressed his gratitude and vision for the brand, saying, "It is an honor to be associated with Kamal Watch Co, a brand that exemplifies timeless elegance and exceptional craftsmanship. With the launch of this showroom, we aim to provide an unmatched retail experience, showcasing a wide range of luxury timepieces from renowned international and Indian brands." Kamal Watch Co has established itself as a leading authority in the world of watches, with 50 stores across the country offering a remarkable selection of over 5,000 styles from 70 esteemed brands. The brand's commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction has earned it the prestigious title of 'Best Watch Dealer' among discerning customers. The newly launched showroom in Jaydev Vihar, Bhubaneswar, boasts an extensive collection of trendy, suave, and chic timepieces, featuring over 70 prestigious international brands and premium Indian brands. Whether one is in search of a premium Swiss timepiece, a vintage analogue watch, a contemporary digital watch, or a cutting-edge smartwatch, Kamal Watch Co is the ultimate one-stop destination. The showroom proudly offers a wide range of renowned brands, including Movado, Rado, Versace, Longines, Armani Exchange, Michael Kors, Fossil, Emporio Armani, Annie Klein, Bering, Titan, Tommy Hilfiger, and TAG Heuer, among many others. Each watch comes with a brand warranty, assuring customers of the utmost quality and authenticity.



Media delegation visits JSW plant

Jagatsinghpur: A delegation of 30 senior journalists - Jagatsinghpur district from established National and State level publications, embarked on a 3 day familiarisation trip to JSW Vidyanager Steel Works, the single location largest steel plant of India. The trip is organised by Anil Singh, President of BPSL & JUSL and JUSL Sr Management. The familiarisation is facilitated by JSW Vidyanager Works, President PK Murugan, COO LR Singh and Ralph Sunil, chief of Administration and CSR.



World's 1st EV to earn best-selling car tag

TESLA MODEL Y SURPASSED TOYOTA'S RAV4 AND COROLLA MODELS TO TOP GLOBAL SALES RANKINGS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 27: Tesla Model Y has become the first all-electric vehicle to be billed as the world's best-selling car, a report has shown. Tesla Model Y surpassed Toyota's RAV4 and Corolla models to top global sales rankings in the first quarter of 2023, according to data from Jato Dynamics. The 2023 Model Y starts at \$47,490, considerably more than the 2023 Corolla (\$21,550) and RAV4 (\$27,575), reports The Verge. Tesla sold an impressive 267,200 units of the Model Y globally during this period, marking a significant 69 percent increase compared to the same duration last year. Notably, a majority of the Model Y sales originated from China, which has emerged as a crucial market for Tesla, even surpassing its home market, the USA, in terms of importance. Tesla CEO Elon Musk even estimated back in 2016 that this model would draw demand "in



Tesla is dominating the US EV market while other automotive giants like Ford, General Motors, Stellantis, Volkswagen and Hyundai are struggling to provide strong competition. Moreover, with the recent price cuts by Tesla and all versions of Tesla's Model Y becoming eligible for the EV tax credit subsidy, it is expected that Tesla will take an even higher market share

ABHIK MUKHERJEE | ANALYST, COUNTERPOINT RESEARCH

the 500k to 1 million unit per year level." Musk in 2021 predicted that the Model Y would claim the top spot in the world. "We think Model Y will be the best selling car or vehicle of any kind in the world. Probably next year, I'm not 100 per cent certain next year, but I think it's quite likely," he had told investors. Tesla remains the market leader

in the electric vehicle (EV) market in the US with more than 50 per cent share, selling more cars than the other 17 automotive groups combined. EV sales increased to represent 7 per cent of all US passenger vehicle sales in 2022, according to Counterpoint Research. It is worth noting that this is the first time an electric vehicle has surpassed an internal combustion

engine (ICE) vehicle to become the world's highest-selling car. Within Tesla's current lineup, the Model Y is a smaller and more affordable crossover compared to the top-spec Model X. If Tesla decides to launch the Model Y in India, it could be a significant addition to its lineup, considering the rising popularity of SUVs and electric vehicles in the country.

Forex reserves decline by \$6bn to \$593.48bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 27: India's foreign exchange reserves dropped by \$6.052 billion to \$593.477 billion during the week ended May 19, RBI said Friday. The drop in the kitty has snapped two consecutive weeks of increases. In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had increased by \$3.5 billion to take the overall quantum just shy of \$600 billion. In October 2021, the country's forex kitty had reached an all-time high of \$645 billion. The reserves have been declining as the central bank deploys the kitty to defend the rupee amid pressures caused majorly by global developments. For the week ended May 19, the foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, declined by \$4.654 billion to \$524.945 billion, according to the Weekly Statistical Supplement released by the RBI Friday. Gold reserves dropped by \$1.227 billion to \$45.127 billion, the RBI said. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by \$137 million to \$18.276 billion, the apex bank said. The country's reserve position with the IMF was down by \$35 million to \$5.13 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data showed.

A Super-Titanic clash

GILL GETS READY TO SPOIL DHONI'S FAREWELL PARTY AS FOUR-TIME WINNERS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS LOCK HORNS WITH DEFENDING CHAMPIONS GUJARAT TITANS HAVING TITLE AT STAKE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 27: MS Dhoni wouldn't mind a 'Farewell to Remember' but a young Shubman Gill, oozing grace, would do everything under his control to prevent Chennai Super Kings from beating Gujarat Titans to its fifth IPL title, here Sunday.

Nearly 19 summers back when a young Dhoni was making his first strides in India blue, a four-year-old Gill was taking stance on a vast farmland in Punjab's Fazilka village on Pakistan border, with a handmade customised bat, prepared by his dotting grandfather.

Sunday, at the 132,000-seater Narendra Modi Stadium, the soon-to-be 42 Dhoni will have one last assignment in his favourite Canary Yellow jersey - to stop Indian cricket's megastar-in-waiting and do a 'High Five'.

Three centuries and 851 runs don't happen in every season but on a batting belt at the Motera, what will be Dhoni's strategy to rein in the 'Mohali Marauder'?

Will it be Deepak Chahar's swing or Ravindra Jadeja's wicket-to-wicket bowling? Or will it be Moeen Ali, who could be the 'Joker in the Pack' with his enticing flighted deliveries outside the off-stump which could sharply break back. Can Matheesa Pathirana bowl some incisive toe-crushers?

A technically near-perfect batter against a captain known for thinking out of the box - it can't get more exciting than this.

His die-hard fans might expect him to come back again next year but even Dhoni, who has played the entire season with a heavily strapped left knee might find it extremely difficult to keep up with the demands of the shortest format.

So for every 'Thala' (elder brother in Tamil) fan, it's all about savouring the Dhoni moments till it lasts. In this CSK set-up, he could afford to bat at No.8 in most games but entering the finals with a bowling line-up that missed Deepak Chahar for the better part of first half and had to turn a profligate Tushar Deshpande into a dependable wicket-taker.

Turning an inconsistent Shivam Dube into a six-hitting bully or overseeing the return of Jadeja,



PLAYERS TO WATCH OUT FOR GT: Shubman Gill, Hardik Pandya, Rashid Khan, Mohammed Shami
CSK: Devon Conway, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Deepak Chahar, Matheesa Pathirana

the T20 bowler, the legend of Dhoni will never cease to exist. It will only grow and his captaincy stories will also be burnished with coats of myth decades down the line.

They say familiarity breeds contempt but contempt would be the last word in Dhoni and CSK's mind when they face Hardik Pandya's Titans.

The CSK logo features a 'Roaring Lion' but they would take the team from Land of Gir Forest lightly at their own peril. After 73 games, the two of the most consistent teams are pitted against each other in the summit clash.

No team has emulated the structural and team building ethos of Chennai Super Kings as minutely as Gujarat Titans, another team, where cricketing decisions



are based on sound logic, consistency and no interference from overbearing owners.

There is a skipper in Pandya, who believes that there is only one way to lead the team. It's called 'The Mahi Way'.

Batters win matches but bowlers win tournaments is an old saying and it couldn't be more apt when one tracks Titans' performance.

Mohammed Shami (28 wickets), Rashid Khan (27 wickets) and Mohit Sharma (24 wickets) have executed plans more often than not and thus it hasn't really affected the Titans that second highest run-scorer after Gill's 851 runs is skipper Hardik Pandya (325), who is more than 500 runs behind.

Wriddhiman Saha, a keeper-par-excellence, would consider himself lucky, that team management never thought of replacing him despite a strike-rate of 127 opening the batting and only one fifty plus score in 16 knocks.

And herein, Dhoni would try

to seize the opportunity. If they can get Gill on early, none of the other batters have shown wherewithal to fight hard and bowlers would need a decent total on board.

Under Dhoni, if players like Ajinkya Rahane (299 runs in 13 matches, two fifties) and Shivam Dube have found their groove this season, youngsters bowlers such as Sri Lanka's Pathirana (17 wickets in 15 matches) and India's uncapped Deshpande (21 wickets in 15 matches) have also been able to find their feet at the IPL stage.

In CSK's batting line-up, Devon Conway (625 runs in 15 matches, six fifties) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (564 runs in 15 matches, four fifties) have time and again provided CSK with resolute starts at the top.

The big-hitting Dube (386 runs in 15 matches, three fifties) is the second joint-highest six-hitter for CSK in this IPL with 33 sixes, joined by Gill in the list. There are no clear favourites and it could be one of the finest finals in history of IPL.

India lose to Britain in Pro League hockey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 27: A lacklustre India suffered their second successive defeat in the European leg of the FIH Men's Hockey Pro League, going down to dominant hosts Great Britain 2-4 here Saturday.

Timothy Nurse struck a field goal for Great Britain in the sixth minute while Harmanpreet equalised for India from a penalty corner in the 13th minute.

Sorsby Thomas scored Britain's second in the 31st minute, helping them regain the lead before Lee Morton came up with an excellent goal on the 33rd minute after catching the Indians napping.

Harmanpreet reduced the deficit for India with his second goal of the day - this one too from a penalty corner - in the 42nd minute, the strike helping him become the all-time top-scorer in the Pro League with 35 goals.

Bandurak Nicholas regained England's two-goal lead with his 53rd minute strike at the Lee Valley Hockey Centre, and India could not put up a fight from there. India had lost to Olympic champions Belgium 1-2 Friday.

Nurse opened the account for England with his maiden goal at the senior level. He dribbled his way past Lalit Kumar Upadhyay and Mandeep Mor down the left to enter the Indian 'D' before shooting the ball past keeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak, who started at goal ahead of the seasoned PR Sreejesh.

Britain scoring a quick first goal was not surprising as the home team started on an aggressive note and seemed to be on the lookout for

creating opportunities, even as Hardik Singh earned India an early free-hit with his searing run.

The Indians looked like they were struggling to keep up with the intensity of the Englishmen. Before the hosts took the lead, Brendan Creed's pass found an unmarked Sam Ward, but the latter's attempt was thwarted by a brilliant Pathak at the Indian goal.

Few moments later, Ward was again in the thick of things but Pathak made a timely intervention by kicking the ball away to safety. Then, the duo of Jarmanpreet Singh and Karthi initiated the first real attacking move by the Indian team, surprising the English goalkeeper and nearly scoring the equaliser.

The Indians found the equaliser when Harmanpreet Singh hit the back of the net off a penalty corner on the 13th minute. Their morale boosted by the equaliser, the visitors looked to dominate the Britons and called the shots in the second quarter when an Indian goal was also disallowed following a review after the English opted for a video referral.

Meanwhile, Wallace Zachary's penalty stroke was saved by a diving Sreejesh to keep the match in balance. However, the hosts regained the lead when Sorsby converted a penalty corner in the third quarter. Morton Lee made it 3-1 for England with the home team's second strike - a field goal - in the third quarter.

Heading into this game, both India and Great Britain were tied with 19 points at the top of the table, but the latter have consolidated their position following Saturday's win.



Harmanpreet Singh (No.13) scored both the goals for India

Prannoy in final, Sindhu loses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, May 27: Star Indian shuttler HS Prannoy entered the men's singles final of the Malaysia Masters after his opponent Christian Adinata of Indonesia conceded the semifinal match following a nasty knee injury here Saturday.

World No.9 Prannoy was leading 19-17 when Adinata lost his footing while landing after a jump return and his left knee buckled, leaving the Indonesian shuttler grimacing in pain.

The 21-year-old Adinata, a 2019 World Junior Championships winner, was quickly attended by Prannoy and the Indonesian coach before being eventually wheeled out of the court.

Prannoy will now take on the winner of the other semifinal match between China's Weng Hong Yang and Chinese Taipei's Lin Chun-Yi in the final Sunday. It will be Prannoy's first final of the season and second since the runner-up finish at the Swiss Open last year.

Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu, however, couldn't make it to the women's singles finals after suffering a 14-21, 17-21 loss to Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska Tunjung. It was a second successive loss for Sindhu following seven wins against the tricky World No.9 Indonesian.

It was a one-way traffic for Prannoy, who was off to a flying start, leading 11-1 in a jiffy. However after the break, it was Adinata, who accumulated points in buckets, taking seven of the next nine points.

A jump cross court smash helped Prannoy find his confidence back but unforced errors and Adinata also playing some smart shots saw



the Indonesian making it 10-14. Adinata was quick in his returns and played a few cross court winners and a body-smash. An on-the-line return on the backline saw him make it 14-15 before he drew parity at 16-16 when Prannoy went wide again. Prannoy dominated the short exchanges next to lead 19-17 before the match ended abruptly following the injury to Adinata.

A two-time former winner here, Sindhu couldn't play her aggressive game with Tunjung managing to keep control of the rallies with her solid defence and produce her tricky strokes to finish points.

The Indian took a 3-0 lead early on but it soon evaporated with Tunjung producing some exquisite shots to turn the tables. Tunjung tried to mix her strokes to keep Sindhu guessing but the Indian defended well to hold her fort, moving to 9-7. She entered the break at 11-8 with a straight smash and a

body return. However, things changed after the change of sides as the Indonesian held the momentum with some attacking winners. Tunjung grabbed six game points with Sindhu finding the net and she converted it with another winner.

The second game started on an even keel before Tunjung suffered an injury on his forehand at 5-5. But it had no effect on the Indonesian, who kept things under control to enter the break with an 11-9 cushion.

Tunjung continued to make life difficult for her. The Indonesian looked a bit tired and made some errors but she didn't allow the match slip away. She soon grabbed six match points after Sindhu erred again. The Indian saved three with two cross court returns. However, Sindhu missed the net shot after another engrossing rally to sign off at the semifinal stage.

WC details to be announced during WTC final

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, May 27: The schedule and venues for the upcoming 50-over World Cup in India is expected to be announced during the final of the World Test Championship in London, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said Saturday after the board's Special General Meeting (SGM) here.

A decision on the Asia Cup 2023, to be held before the World Cup, will also be taken in the coming days as representatives of some of the Asian Cricket Council members are here for the IPL final, to be played on Sunday between Chennai Super Kings and Gujarat Titans. "The venues for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 will be decided at



a press conference during the ICC World Test Championship Final. The complete schedule for the tournament will also be revealed," Shah said. "The future of the Asia Cup 2023

TRAP SHOOTER BHOWNEESH FINISHES 5TH IN SHOTGUN WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Almaty (Kazakhstan), May 27: Paris Olympics quota winner Bhowneesh Mendiratta found the going tough in the trap finals, finishing fifth in the ISSF World Cup for Shotgun here Saturday.

The 23-year-old from Faridabad, who was in joint lead with four others after the first three rounds of qualification with a score of 73 out of 75 Friday, came up with identical scores of 24 each in the remaining two rounds of qualification Saturday.

Bhowneesh aggregated 121 out of 125 over the two days of qualification, which saw him make the six-shooter finals at joint fourth position.

However in the finals, the Indian

shooter erred and became the second marksman to get eliminated, shooting down 24 clay pigeons out of 30.

Bhowneesh, however, did well to outlast two-time world and Tokyo 2020 mixed team trap champion Alberto Fernandez of Spain in the final. Fernandez finished sixth with a score of 21/25.

Italian stalwart Massimo Fabbrizi, the two-time World Champion and London Olympics silver medallist, won gold, finishing with 46 hits in the 50-shot final. Australia's 27-year-old James Willet, the trap mixed team world champion, won silver with a score of 43/50, while yet another former world champion, Khalid Almdhaf of Kuwait, bagged bronze.

will be decided once we have a meeting with the ACC members (Test playing nations) and the Associate nations," Shah added.

The BCCI secretary informed that 15 stadiums have been short-listed for improvement in basic facilities for the fans, keeping them in mind and more stadiums will be added at a later stage. Grant Thornton has been given the task for this purpose.

The BCCI will also be announcing specific committees in a week's time, which will handle the 2023 World Cup in India and the Women's Premier League, along with a committee to draft the POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) policy.

Shah informed, "As far as the venues for the ICC Cricket World Cup

are concerned, each office-bearer will be responsible for each venue. We are looking at all the metros as venues for the tournament."

"We will create a committee to structure the POSH policy. The draft is ready; it will be presented before the AGM for ratification and necessary approvals," he added.

Additionally, the proposed limited-overs series between India and Afghanistan will be held before the World Cup, but the dates and venues are yet to be worked out.

Shah added that the impact player rule in this IPL has been appreciated by all teams and players, which has resulted in a record number of totals in excess of 200, with the boundaries and sixes also crossing the 1,000 and 2,000-mark.

India eves register win over Australia A

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Adelaide, May 27: The Indian women's hockey team put up a spirited showing in the fifth and final game of its tour Down Under, registering a 2-1 win over Australia A in a closely-fought contest here Saturday.

Navneet Kaur (10th minute) and Deep Grace Ekka (25th) scored the goals for India. Abigail Wilson (22th) scored the lone goal for hosts.

Earning three quick penalty corners, India put pressure on Australia A defence and Navneet Kaur scored the first goal with a reverse hit to give India the lead.

Australia A earned their first

penalty corner of the night midway into the second quarter, and Abigail found the back of net with a dragkick to level the scoreline. But minutes later, Ekka put India back in the lead with a dragkick of her own on a penalty corner.

Controlling the midfield, Neha Goyal set up penetrating runs for Indian attackers as Australia A defence felt the pressure. India managed to maintain their lead as the third quarter came to a close.

With 15 minutes left on the clock, both the teams showed urgency. India kept possession in the final few minutes to prevent the hosts from creating an opportunity.