

Aditi's vulnerability

Actor Aditi Rao Hydari shares her thoughts on being perceived by many as fragile like glass

LEISURE | P2



Fresh airstrikes

Israel carries out airstrikes Monday in Rafah, hours after it tells Palestinians to evacuate parts of the southern Gaza city

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Service activity up

India's services sector output among fastest in 14 years amid favourable economic conditions

BUSINESS | P11



Comfortable victory

India women beat Bangladesh via D/L method in the 4th T20I extending their lead to 4-0 in the five-match series

SPORTS | P12

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY MAY 7 2024

12 PAGES | ₹5.00

HC commutes death sentence of convict

Bhubaneswar: The Orissa High Court commuted Monday the death sentence awarded by a lower court to a man for rape and murder of a six-year-old girl in Cuttack in 2018 to life imprisonment. A division bench of Justices Sangam Kumar Sahoo and Radha Krishna Pattanaik reduced the capital punishment awarded to Mohammad Mustak by the 3rd Additional Sessions Judge-Cum-Presiding Officer of Children's Court in Cuttack. P3

Indian student fatally stabbed in Melbourne

Chandigarh: A 22-year-old M.Tech student was allegedly stabbed to death in Melbourne during a fight between some Indian students, the victim's uncle said here Monday. He said that one more student was injured in the incident, which took place Saturday around 9.00pm local time. The deceased has been identified as Navjeet Sandhu. The victim's uncle Yashvir informed that Navjeet was attacked by another student when he tried to stop a fight.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I was unnecessarily worried, sir. It's not a notice, but a poem from the EC praising your speeches



BRAVING ALL ODDS: Officials with equipment board a rickety boat to reach their respective polling booths in Kamrup district of Assam, Monday ahead of the third phase of polls, Tuesday PFI/PHOTO

Modi: BJD govt to expire June 4 | Naveen says BJP is 'daydreaming'

3rd phase of polls today

Despite BJD leader Kartik Pandian claiming that both Narendra Modi and Naveen Patnaik are 'statesmen' who do not require each other to win the elections, there were no holds barred when the Prime Minister and the Odisha Chief Minister hit the campaign trail Monday. Both these two leaders were observed fighting each other with daggers drawn. With Modi asserting that the BJD government in Odisha will 'expire' June 4, the day results of the Assembly elections are announced, Patnaik was quick to retort that the 'BJP is daydreaming'. While Modi urged the people to give the BJP a chance to form the government, Patnaik pointed out that the opposition leaders always lie and can only be seen during the elections.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur/Nabarangpur, May 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi called himself Monday 'son of Lord Jagannath' and asserted that the expiry date of the BJD government in Odisha is June 4, the day the Assembly election results will be announced.

Addressing his first election rally in the state, Modi said, "Odisha mein BJD ast hain, Congress past hai aur log BJP per ashwast hai. Sirf BJP ummido ka naya suraj ban kar ubhri hain (In Odisha, the BJD is setting sun, the Congress is battered and people are sure of BJP. And the BJP has emerged as the only ray of hope for the people)."

Modi also urged people to give a chance to the BJP to make Odisha the number one state in the country. In an apparent dig at BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, he said "Odisha needs a CM who understands



Odia language and culture."

While addressing a gathering at Berhampur, Modi said, "The BJP will form a double-engine government here after the ongoing elections. The expiry date of the BJD government is June 4, 2024."

Addressing another rally in Nabarangpur, the tribal heartland of Odisha, Modi claimed that his government has been working for the welfare of indigenous people. "You have seen the track record of 10 years of Modi's leadership. Modi increased the budget for tribal welfare by five times than the earlier allocations," the PM said.



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The BJD was quick to hit back and rebut Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim that the Naveen Patnaik-led government will have its expiry day June 4, the day the Assembly elections results are announced.

"BJP has been daydreaming for many days," said Patnaik who undertook whirlwind tours of Kalahandi and Nuapada districts to address election rallies at Bhawanipatna and Khariar. He was responding to a query by close aide Kartik Pandian while travelling. Responding to Modi's claim

that BJP will form the government in Odisha, Pandian said: "Naveen Patnaik will take oath as the Chief Minister of Odisha for the sixth consecutive time between 11.30am to 1.30pm on June 9." His statement came after Modi said in Berhampur, "I have come here to invite you to the swearing-in ceremony of BJP's CM June 10. On that day, we will implement the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, which the Naveen Patnaik government has been resisting."

Patnaik alleged that his opponents remember the people of the state only during elections and have no sincerity towards them. Addressing back-to-back election rallies in Bhawanipatna and Khariar, the BJD supreme claimed that they disappeared after the elections. "Leaders of the opposition party tell lies to the people and shed crocodile tears during elections. They are only seen during elections and then they disappear," he said.

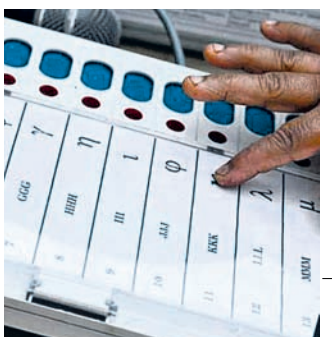
AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 6: A total of 93 seats across 11 states will be up for grabs in the third phase of Lok Sabha polls that will be held Tuesday. As per data available from 2019, the majority of these seats are BJP strongholds. They had won 71 of the 93 seats with the Congress winning only four.

Over 1,300 candidates, including 120 women, are in the fray. Among the bigwigs are Union Ministers Amit Shah (Gandhinagar), Jyotiraditya Scindia (Guna), Mansukh Mandaviya (Porbandar), Parshottam Rupala (Rajkot), Pralhad Joshi (Dharwad) and SP Singh Baghel (Agra).

The states that will vote in this phase include Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. All the three states are well-known BJP bastions. Hence the opposition including the Congress will have to do something special to keep their prospects bright.

Four seats in Assam, five in Bihar, seven in Chhattisgarh, two each in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Goa, 25 in Gujarat, 14 in Karnataka, nine in Madhya Pradesh, 11 in Maharashtra, 10 in Uttar Pradesh and four in West Bengal will be voting May 7. Surat, which was scheduled to vote in this phase,



■ Elections will be held in 93 LS constituencies in 11 states

■ BJP and its allies had won 78 of these seats while the constituents of the INDIA bloc only 12

has already been won uncontested by the BJP.

At 81 out of 93, the BJP is contesting the maximum seats from the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Similarly, from the INDIA bloc, the Congress will fight in 68 seats. In 2019, the NDA had won 78 of the total 93 seats, while the current constituents of the INDIA bloc together got 12. Other parties won three seats.

The NDA's average victory margin of 21 per cent was much higher than that of the INDIA bloc's 11 per cent. Hence to turn the results in their favour the bloc needs a major swing in votes.

Terror threat looms over T20 World Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Port of Spain, May 6: The T20 World Cup in the Americas has received a terror threat, Trinidad's Prime Minister Dr Keith Rowley revealed here Sunday. However, the ICC asserted that a 'comprehensive and robust security plan' is in place to 'mitigate any risks' to the showpiece beginning June 1 in the US and the West Indies.

The tournament - featuring 20 teams, including India - is scattered across nine venues, six of them in the West Indies.

As of now, the threat, according to media reports, is specific to the West Indies, which aside from some preliminary matches will be hosting the entire Super 8 stage along with the semifinals and the final June 29.

"Unfortunately, the threat of

terrorism in its many and varied expressions is an ever-present danger in the world of the 21st century," Rowley was quoted as saying by 'Trinidad Daily Express' here Sunday.

Rowley did not name any organisation but reports here stated that the Islamic State (IS) made the threat through its propaganda channel.

The ICC responded to the development with a statement assuring preparedness. "Safety and security of everyone at the event is our number one priority and we have a comprehensive and robust plan in place," a spokesperson of the global body said, in a

Rowley said 'extra effort in national security preparations and response readiness' will be put in to neutralise the danger. "We are ready to tackle any situation," Rowley stated.

World drinking whisky the Indian way

SINGLE MALT CULTURE GROWING IN INDIA WITH THE AVAILABILITY OF NEW BRANDS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: For more than a decade, Hemanth Rao has been leading the only club in India dedicated to single malts. And at present, he sounds very happy. It is because the old-fashioned Indian way of having whisky, which snobs would once scoff at, is now being adopted by the world.

Rao is the founder of the Bangalore-based 'Single Malt Amateur Club' (SMAC). He pointed out that the borrowed wisdom on all matters connected with whisky is that it's best drunk with a splash of water at room temperature. But, today, one of the most fashionable cocktails - Japanese Highball - is a combination of whisky, soda

and ice, just the way our elders would imbibe their favourite poison. Whisky snobs would shudder at such blasphemy!

Rao recently presided over a guided tasting of two lesser-known single malts - Ardmore and Bowmore at a restaurant in Noida before he spoke to this news agency. Looking back at SMAC's evolution from a 'friend-introduces-friend type of casual club' in 2011 to a formal group with over 7,500 members, including a good number from overseas, notably Dubai and Singapore, Rao said the expansion mirrored the single malt culture's growth in India.

Rao quoted a survey the 'SMAC' conducted last year among 750-plus people across India. He said the Indian single



malt drinker has evolved from a mindset dominated by Glenlivet and Glenfiddich to one that is curious about all the 50-odd variants now available in India.

Easier availability of information and foreign travel has ensured that whisky lovers are looking beyond familiar labels and exploring single malts from

around the world. The proliferation of Japanese single malts in the Indian market is a testament to this fact, Rao said.

Japanese single malts, in fact, became fashionable in India around the same time as the rest of the world after Jim Murray, in the 2013 edition of the 'Whisky Bible', declared the Yamazaki

25 Years Old to be the best.

Buoyed by this heightened curiosity, Indian producers have upped the ante and moved from producing mere IMFL to rolling out single malts, including the now-globally-acclaimed brands Indri, Rampur Asava, Amrut Neidhal and Godawan 02.

The lively growth in popular interest in single malts has accelerated SMAC's activities, too, so much so that Rao now has a business partner, Harsh Thimmaiah, who also works as the manager of Indian tennis star Rohan Bopanna.

Rao pointed out that his job takes him abroad frequently. During his visits he said that he noticed more and more people are drinking single malts the 'Indian way'. "Today they don't have any problems to add a pinch of ice and a dash of soda to the single malt. It proves tastes are evolving with scotch lovers also," Rao pointed out.

leisure



EMILY BLUNT'S AWFUL SHOOTING EXPERIENCE

Actress Emily Blunt has talked about how she felt sick after kissing certain co-stars as she didn't enjoy chemistry with them. So much so, that she wanted to throw up after locking lip with them during shoots, stated Blunt.

JENNIFER CONNELLY WANTS TO GO BACK TO COLLEGE

American actress Jennifer Connelly has confessed she still wants to go back to college to finish her education three decades after dropping out to become a full-time actor. The 53-year-old dabbled with modelling and acting as a child but headed off to Yale University in 1988 to study English.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Today, you will show every one what you're capable of. You are likely to come up with great ideas and work strategies, which will prove productive. However, if appreciation doesn't come your way, Ganesha says you must learn to take disappointment in your stride.

TAURUS
This day you will be compelled to be resigned to your fate. Ganesha does not see your own will power in operation today. Though you would be surrendering yourself to the whims of destiny, do not expect anything good to come out of it. You are likely to take wrong decisions and go of course.

GEMINI
You will end up having an argument with people owing to your aggressive nature. These people could slander your reputation on account of your enmity. However you will be able to defeat them. They will have to give up against your intellectual superiority. Be wary, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will make new friends. You will have a jolly time with them, but some worry or tension will nag you. But Ganesha says that all worries will go away by evening, when you relax with friends.

LEO
You will be seized by a desire to do something new for a change today. Your mood will be bright throughout the day. You will be able to achieve success owing to your energy and enthusiasm. The planets are in your favour, hence you can accept the challenges coming your way and prevail over them, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Expenditures will be like oil spills- wasteful and dirty. But cosmic energies and positivity are gathering wind today, and you should do well to make full use of them in your personal and professional life, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today is the right day to get closer to your loved one. You will spend the evening with your beloved. Today you will be mentally very energetic too. Make the most of the day.

SCORPIO
The day does not begin on a very good note as you seem to be in a belligerent mood. Be calm and patient as your hot temper may spoil a good deal. Limit your conversations and discussions with colleagues and friends, advises Ganesha. Practising meditation and yoga will bring you some respite towards the end of the day.

SAGITTARIUS
No pains, no gains. So, when you go through a lot of turmoil and toil hard for your work, the rewards are definitely going to be fruitful, says Ganesha. Time for get together and soiree with family and friends! In a nutshell, a day with lot of fun activities.

CAPRICORN
Your hands are full with plenty of projects and assignments. Finish them off as soon as you can and spend rest of the day refreshing your mind. Communicating with people of all walks of life will make you enhance your horizon of knowledge, feels Ganesha. Talking about personal life, you will feel free to conduct yourself as per your wish.

AQUARIUS
You are in for a challenging day today. But, luck is by your side and you will be able to come out of the storm hale and hearty, assures Ganesha. If you are a businessman, you may enter into some major business venture, sign important contracts and take up new projects. It will be an exhausting day, but it will keep you charged up.

PISCES
You need to tread cautiously today when it comes to matters related to business. Do not make any decisions in haste, or it could come back to haunt you at a later date. All financial dealings will need to be carefully monitored. Do not indulge in speculative activities or undue risk taking. A little consideration now will save you a lot of trouble later, says Ganesha.

'My vulnerability is my strength'

Mumbai: Actress Aditi Rao Hydari, who has worked with a number of legendary directors including Mani Ratnam and Sanjay Leela Bhansali, recently shared her thoughts on her perception of being delicate.

Talking to a news agency, the *Wazir* actress said that she is perceived in a particular way because of the way she looks, the way she is, or the parts she has played, usually as a fragile, feminine, or petite girl. Often, people say, 'Oh, she will just blow away.' Or, 'Oh, she is like glass; if you touch her, she will break.'

Addressing the perception, she stated, "Today I own it, and I'm what I'm. It is not a burden for me, but if it is for people, then people need to figure it out. My vulnerability is my strength."

The actress further said that she also feels it is also about directors who bring that out in an actor.

Talking about her recent release *Heeramandi*, Aditi says, she is happy that she lived this life of Bibbo Jaan because it was literally like 'here is a girl who is so kind, so feminine, and artistic.'



Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who has been diagnosed with the autoimmune condition myositis, revealed that she is continuously seeking out alternative approaches to healing and recovery.

Samantha's alternative approaches to healing

Taking to Instagram, Samantha shared a picture of herself undergoing a far infrared sauna session, a sauna type that uses light to generate heat.

In the image, she is seen seated with a white towel draped around her. The actress captioned the post: "Continuously seeking out alternative approaches to healing and recovery." The *Family Man* actress

also listed some benefits of using a far infrared sauna. "It improves circulation to the muscles, boosts metabolism, reduces body fat, increases energy, detoxifies the body, reduces cellulite, rejuvenates skin, increases strength, enhances sweating, lessens joints and muscle pain and increases flexibility," she wrote.

In other news, Samantha celebrated her 37th birthday last month by announcing her debut Telugu feature film tentatively titled *Bangaram* under her banner Tralala Moving Pictures. The film is scheduled to hit theatres in 2025.



Kangana compares herself to Amitabh!

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut, who turned politician and is currently Bharatiya Janata Party's candidate for Himachal Pradesh's Mandi Lok Sabha seat, recently claimed that she has received the same amount of love and respect after veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan in the film industry.

In an election rally, Kangana was seen giving a speech when she made this statement. The video also surfaced on social media. In it, she

was seen saying, "The whole country is surprised... whether I go to Rajasthan, or I go to West Bengal, or I go to Delhi, or I go to Manipur, it feels like there is so much love and respect. I can confidently say that after Amitabh Bachchan ji, if anyone gets such love and respect in the industry, I get it."

On the work front, Kangana will be next seen in *Emergency*.



Nandini Satpathy biography to release at KLF May 11

KALINGA LITERARY FESTIVAL
Corner
100th OXFORD BOOKSTORE
Simon & Schuster
Book Release & Discussion
Nandini Satpathy: The Iron Lady of Orissa
by Pallavi Rebbapragada (Author)
Moderated by Panchami Manoo Ukil
Vice-Chairperson - DN Wisdom Tree Global School
Saturday | 11 May 2024 | 3:00 pm
Oxford Bookstore, 2nd Floor, Symphony Mall, Rudrapur, Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR: Kalinga Literary Festival (KLF), one of the prominent literary organisations of Odisha, will host the official book release ceremony of *Nandini Satpathy: The Iron Lady of Orissa*, the highly anticipated biography of the first and only Chief Minister of the state.

Authored by eminent journalist Pallavi Rebbapragada and published by Simon & Schuster, the book will be unveiled here at the KLF Corner of Oxford Bookstore, May 11.

The book delves into the extraordinary journey of a trailblazing leader whose indomitable spirit shaped the political landscape of Odisha.

Renowned academic luminaries are slated to join the event that includes a stimulating discussion with the author.

"Pallavi Rebbapragada's meticulously researched biography offers a compelling narrative that brings to light the resilience and fortitude of Nandini

Satpathy," said KLF Founder and Director Rashmi Ranjan Parida.

Nandini Satpathy's early years were marked by acts of courage and defiance, including her brave stand during the freedom struggle, symbolised by the courageous act of pulling down the Union Jack from Ravenshaw College.

Ascending through the corridors of power, Nandini's meteoric rise saw her become the youngest member of the Rajya Sabha at the age of 31. Her tenure as the Minister of Information and Broadcasting in Indira Gandhi's cabinet witnessed pivotal moments in India's history. However, despite her close association with Gandhi, her principled opposition to the Emergency marked a turning point, leading to her eventual political downfall. Nevertheless, her legacy endures through her fearless implementation of radical reforms and her unwavering commitment to social justice.

NIA'S UNIQUE WOES

Mumbai: Actress Nia Sharma is having difficulty getting out of bed despite having a beauty sleep of almost 15 hours.



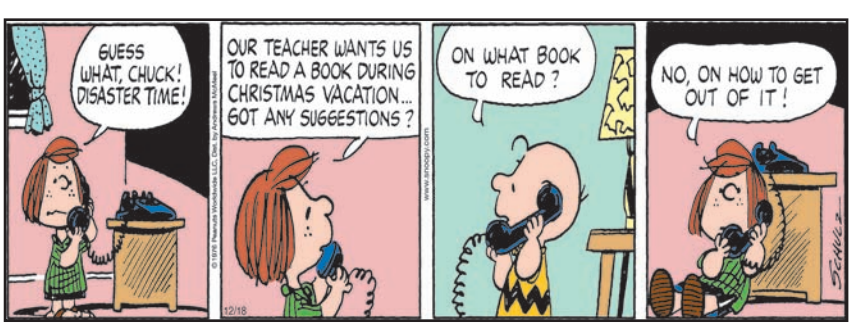
Nia took to Instagram stories and posted a picture of herself in bed. The actress is lying down on her stomach, with only half of her face visible, sporting pink pyjamas.

She captioned it: "Waking up after 15 hours of sleep and still deciding whether to leave (the) bed."

The actress, who made her debut on the small screen with Kaali - Ek Agnipariksha, is gearing up for her return with *Suhaagan Chudail*, a supernatural thriller, a genre the actress is familiar with. She was previously seen as a shape-shifting serpent in the show *Naagin*.

FUN post

PEANUTS



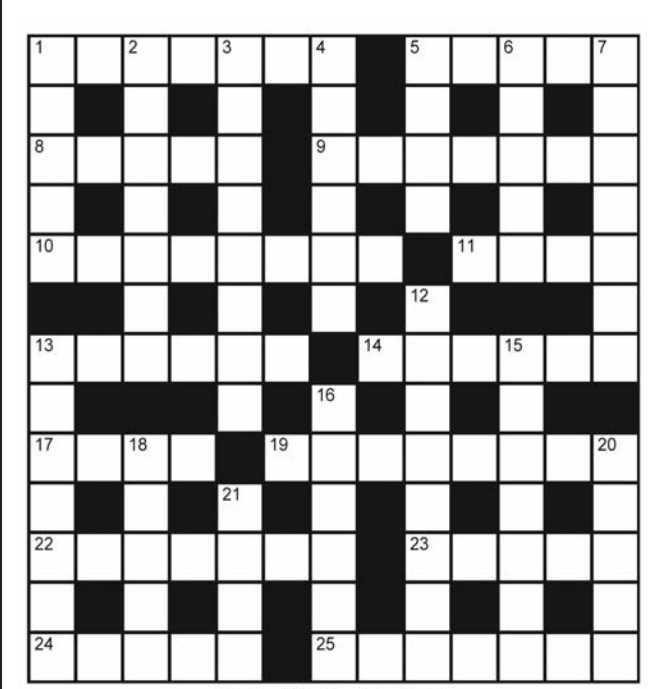
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



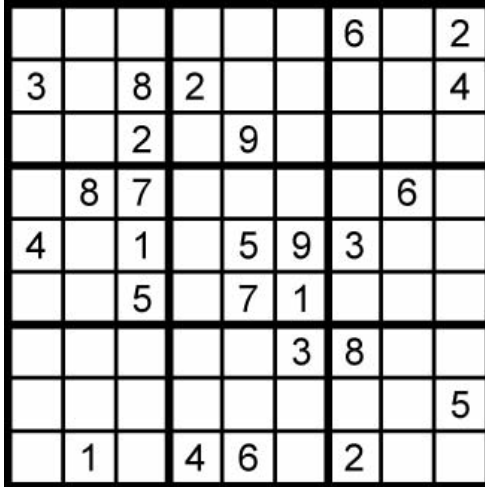
CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 Inflexible realm
5 Post-op time
8 Illegal firing
9 Fragrance
10 Steel-plated
11 Fringe
13 Tempt
14 Word of misgiving
17 Asian staple
19 Precious stones
22 Shoreline problem
- Down**
23 Neptune's realm
24 Culinary herb
25 Sideways
6 Hunting dog
7 Cocktail additive, at times
12 Irish clover
13 Ness resident?
15 Water holder
16 City on the Danube
18 Sidekick
20 Taste or touch, e.g.
21 Small high-pitched flute

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

65 candidates in Phase I polls have criminal cases



BJD's Digapahandi Assembly seat nominee, Biplab Patro richest candidate with a total wealth of ₹33.36 crore	Independent candidate for Bhawanipatna, Ramesh Kumar Mahanand and BSP candidate for Rayagada, Purna Chandra Majhi have zero assets	BJP has the maximum 18 candidates with criminal background
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FOUR CANDIDATES ARE ILLITERATE

Bhubaneswar, May 6: As many as 65 of 243 candidates remained in the fray for the first phase of Assembly elections in Odisha have criminal cases pending against them, according to a report of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR). In the first phase, voting for 28 Assembly constituencies along with four Lok Sabha seats will be held May 13. Out of 65 (27 per cent) candidates, who have declared criminal cases against themselves, 48 (20 per cent) face serious criminal charges, said the ADR in its report released, Monday. Among the major parties, 18 BJP candidates, 17 Congress, 9 BJD and 3 from AAP have declared criminal cases against them in their affidavits. Out of the 243 candidates, including 32 females, 70 (29 per cent) are crorepatis. While 13 candidates have assets worth more than Rs 5 crore, 25 others have declared assets of Rs 2 crore to Rs 5 crore, the report said. With a total wealth of Rs 33.36 crore, Biplab Patro, BJD candidate for the Digapahandi Assembly segment in Ganjam district is the richest person in

the fray for the first phase poll. BJD nominee for the Gopalpur Assembly seat, Bikram Kumar Panda and BJP candidate for Dharamgarh, Sudhir Ranjan Pattjoshi are the second and third richest candidates in the race, respectively. Panda has assets worth Rs 15.94 crore, while Pattjoshi owns properties worth Rs 12 crore. Independent candidate for Bhawanipatna, Ramesh Kumar Mahanand and BSP candidate for Rayagada, Purna Chandra Majhi have declared that they have zero assets. Informing about the educational qualifications of the candidates, the ADR report said 132 (54 per cent) candidates have declared their educational qualifications to be between 5th and 12th standard while 100 (41 per cent) candidates have an educational qualification of graduate or above. Besides, seven candidates are diploma holders and four others are literate. A total of 26 candidates in the race have declared their age to be between 61 to 80 years, and 73 candidates between 25 to 40 years, while 144 candidates are in the age group of 41 to 60 years.

CM's aircraft diverted to Jharsuguda

Bhubaneswar, May 6: An aircraft carrying Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik was diverted to Jharsuguda Monday, as it could not land at the Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here due to inclement weather, officials said. Patnaik and his close aide Kartik Pandian were in the aircraft while returning to Bhubaneswar after an election meeting at Khariar in Nuapada district. It could not land at BPIA due to heavy rain and gusty winds, Pandian said in a video message. He said the aircraft hovered over the Capital City for around half-an-hour before it was diverted to Veer Surendra Sai Airport at Jharsuguda.

BJD moves EC against Jagdev

Bhubaneswar, May 6: The BJD Monday filed a complaint with the Election Commission (EC), alleging that BJP candidate for the Khurda Assembly seat Prashant Jagdev threatened office-bearers of state-run Mission Shakti. A delegation of BJD leaders, which included Rajya Sabha MPs Sulata Deo and Sasmit Patra, filed the complaint with the chief electoral officer (CEO) of the state. The BJD alleged that Jagdev has been intimidating and coercing the master bookkeepers participating in Mission Shakti in the Tangi block of Khurda district. The BJD urged the EC to take action against him and ensure that the polls are held in a free, fair, and transparent manner. Meanwhile, the BJP alleged that BJD's candidate for Cuttack Lok Sabha constituency Santrupt Misra has used the logo of 'Ama Odisha Nabin Odisha', a state government programme, in his campaign hoardings. Misra has put up the hoardings in public places and along the roadside, which is also a violation of the model code of conduct, alleged state BJP spokesperson Dilip Mallick. He urged the EC to remove the hoardings and take action against the BJD candidate.

Congress accuses PM of neglecting Odisha

New Delhi, May 6: The Congress Monday said the BJP has steadily reduced Odisha's Central funding in recent years and accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of 'neglecting' the people of the state. Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh posed questions to the prime minister ahead of his rallies in Odisha. "Why has Odisha's Central funding steadily decreased? Will the PM commit to legal status for the SC-ST sub-plan? Will the Sitalapalli wagon factory ever be completed?" Ramesh said in a post on X. Elaborating on what he said were 'jumla details', Ramesh alleged that Odisha has suffered 'gross neglect' at the hands of the Modi government. "In their usual style, the BJP has steadily reduced Odisha's Central funding in recent years. According to CAG reports, Central transfers as percentage of revenue receipts have been consistently decreasing from 57 per cent in 2017-18 to 38 per cent in 2021-22," he said. Similarly, the CAG noted that the state's share of Union taxes, as a percentage of revenue receipts of the state, has been continuously decreasing from 2018-

19 to 2021-22, Ramesh said. "Grants under recommendation of the Fifteenth Finance Commission have also decreased recently. What happened to the PM's favourite slogan - Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas? Why is the PM neglecting the people of Odisha?" the Congress leader asked. Ramesh said the BJP has had an incredibly poor record when it comes to tribal welfare. "The BJP has overseen a consistent rise in crimes against Adivasi persons according to latest data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The crime rate has increased from 21.6% in 2018 to 28.6% in 2022," he said. The BJP's allocation for Adivasis in the Central Budget has also consistently fallen short of the 8.2% target set by the NITI Aayog in 2017, he pointed out. Why have the PM and the BJP ignored India's Adivasi communities, Ramesh asked. He said the Congress Party has guaranteed a legal status to the SC-ST sub-plan, which would require the Central government to meet this 8.2% budget target. Can the PM commit to the same, he asked. Ramesh further said the Sitalapalli rail wagon factory has been in cold storage ever since it was sanctioned by the UPA government in 2013.



CISCE discontinues merit lists for Class X, XII exams

New Delhi, May 6: The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) has discontinued merit lists for Class X and XII exams from this year to avoid unhealthy competition among students, board officials said Monday. The results for CISCE Class X and XII board exams were announced Monday morning in which the pass percentage saw a marginal increase from last year. "We have discontinued the practice of issuing merit lists for board exams from this year. The move is aimed at avoiding unhealthy competition among students," CISCE chief executive and secretary Joseph Emmanuel said. The CBSE had last year stopped the practice of announcing merit lists for the both these board exams. During the pandemic, when board exams were not conducted due to closure of schools and students were marked using alternative evaluation methods, both CBSE and CISCE had not issued any merit list. However, the practice was resumed after the schools reopened.



'EVERY SAINT HAS A PAST AND EVERY SINNER HAS A FUTURE' ORISSA HC COMMUTES DEATH SENTENCE OF MAN

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Observing that 'every saint has a past and every sinner has a future', the Orissa High Court Monday commuted the death sentence awarded by a lower court to a man for rape and murder of a six-year-old girl in Cuttack in 2018 to life imprisonment. A division bench of Justices Sangam Kumar Sahoo and Radha Krishna Pattanaik reduced the capital punishment awarded to Mohammad Mustak by the 3rd Additional Sessions Judge-cum-Presiding Officer of Children's Court in Cuttack, who had convicted him under Sections 363 (kidnapping), 376AB (rape on a woman under 12 years) and 302 (murder) of IPC and 6 of the POCSO Act. According to the case details, the minor girl went missing from her home under Salipur police limits in Cuttack April 21, 2018 evening. A few hours later, locals found her lying naked on the verandah of a nearby school and shifted her to a local hospital after informing the family. As her health deteriorated, she was referred to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, where she remained in coma and succumbed a few days later. On a complaint filed by the victim's grandfather, the police, during investigation, found that Mustak had taken the minor to a shop in the locality to buy her



chocolates before taking her towards the school. The victim's brother also saw Mustak following her before the incident. Taking into account forensic evidence and medical reports, the trial court concluded that the victim had been subjected to rape. It awarded death penalty for the offences under Sections 302 and 376AB of the IPC. The court also awarded jail term to the convict and slapped penalty on him for offence under Sections 363 of IPC. However, no separate sentence was awarded for offence under Section 6 of POCSO Act. Challenging the trial court's conviction, Mustak moved HC. In its order, the HC observed that the injuries inflicted upon the victim by Mustak were fatal and death was proved to have been caused due to coma as a result of blunt trauma injury to head. "Thus, the commission of offence under Section 302 of IPC was proved against the appellant," the bench observed. However, the HC was of the view that there is no clinching evidence on record to convict Mustak under Section 376AB of IPC or 6 of POCSO Act. Instead, it was convinced that offence under Section 354 of IPC was squarely made out against Mustak. So far as the question of imposition of capital punishment was concerned, the HC held that no material was produced to show that the possibility of reformation has been foreclosed. The HC held Mustak guilty for murder. But his sentence was commuted to the imprisonment for life. However, a rider was imposed that he shall undergo minimum sentence of 20 years before which he shall not be eligible for consideration of remission. The HC also sentenced him to undergo five years of RI under Section 354 of IPC and seven years RI under Section 363. The HC ordered the District Legal Services Authority, Cuttack for grant of compensation to the parents of the victim under the Odisha Victim Compensation Scheme, 2017, if the same has not already been granted to them pursuant to the trial court's order.

Not lack of oxygen, genetic defects cause cerebral palsy

Cerebral palsy is a disorder affecting one's ability to move. It is the most common motor disability in children, with symptoms emerging in infancy and early childhood

Genetic defects underlie about a fourth of Chinese children affected by cerebral palsy, and not a lack of oxygen at birth as previously thought, new research has found. Cerebral palsy is a disorder affecting one's ability to move. It is the most common motor disability in children, with symptoms emerging in infancy and early childhood. The disability is sometimes also associated with autism and intellectual deficiencies. Birth asphyxia, or receiving insufficient oxygen at the time of being born, can cause physical harm, especially to the brain, and is considered one of the main causes of cerebral palsy. The world's largest study of cerebral palsy genetics, involving more than 1,500 affected Chinese children, found that mutations were significantly higher in a fourth of these children receiving insufficient oxygen at birth. Researchers said this indicated that birth asphyxia could be secondary to the underlying genetic defects. The results, published in the journal Nature Medicine, are consistent with smaller studies globally, they said. According to human geneticist



Josef Geetz from the University of Adelaide, who co-led the Australian team, 24.5 per cent of Chinese children in the study had rare genetic variations linked to cerebral palsy.

"This revelation mirrors our earlier findings in our Australian cerebral palsy cohort, where up to one-third of cases have genetic causes. "Our research shows at least some babies who experience birth asphyxia and are diagnosed with CP (cerebral palsy) may have improper brain development as a result of the underlying genetic variants rather than a lack of oxygen," said Geetz. The researchers identified 81 mutated or altered genes that caused cerebral palsy in the children. These genes are known to be important to brain and embryo development, and may also affect molecular processes responsible for respiration, they said. "A lack of oxygen at birth is often claimed to be the cause of CP in medical litigation following a diagnosis and this has led to the presumption that the condition is preventable with better obstetrics or midwifery. This is simply not the case," said co-lead author Alastair MacLennan, an obstetrician and a professor, the University of Adelaide. "Crucially, clinically actionable treatments were found in 8.5 per cent of cases with a genetic cause. It is exciting to see how genetic pathways to cerebral palsy inform tailored treatments for these individuals," said Geetz. The results highlighted the need for early genetic testing in children having cerebral palsy, especially those with risk factors like birth asphyxia, to ensure medical care and treatment, said MacLennan.

BUDDING TALENT

Students participating in a drawing competition at BJEM School in Bhubaneswar, Monday



HONOUR: Principal, Regional Institute of Education (RIE) Bhubaneswar Prakash Chandra Agarwal presenting a memento to Governor Raghuraj Das at a function organised to mark the 61st annual day of the prestigious institution in City, Monday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK



NORWESTER EFFECT: Fallen branches of trees following thundershower in the Capital city cause obstruction to vehicular traffic at the busy Rajmahal Square, Monday

Thunderstorm causes temporary disruption

City recorded 10.5mm rainfall till 5:30pm while the maximum temperature remained below 40 degrees Celsius at 39.8 degrees



ing free flow of peak evening hour traffic.

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Following torrential rains and thunderstorm activity, fallen trees and broken branches caused obstruction on many roads in and around the Capital city, severely affecting movement of vehicles, Monday afternoon. The Special Relief Commissioner's office directed the Fire Service, ODRF and OFDC personnel to clear the blockade immediately. The emergency personnel cleared the roads of the obstructions afterwards, ensur-

The City recorded 10.5mm rainfall till 5:30pm Monday while the maximum temperature remained below 40 degrees Celsius at 39.8 degrees.

Meanwhile a special bulletin issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) regional centre here has forecast thunderstorm with lightning, accompanied by gusty surface wind, across the state during the next four to five days.

The IMD has cautioned fishermen, especially in the north

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) regional centre has forecast thunderstorm with lightning, accompanied by gusty surface wind, across the state during the next four to five days

Odisha coast till May 7. "Due to anticipated strong gusty surface wind speed reaching 40 to 50 kmph likely along and off north Odisha coast during May 6 to May 7, 2024, fisherman are advised not to venture into sea along and off north Odisha coast during the period," the special bulletin read.

The weather bureau has also predicted likelihood of light to moderate rain/thundershower at a few places over the districts of coastal Odisha, Mayurbhanj,

Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Kandhamal, Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, and at one or two places over the remaining districts.

There is also the likelihood of thunderstorm with lightning accompanied with gusty surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph and hailstorm in Ganjam, Nayagarh, Khurda and Puri districts, the weather bureau stated.

"Thunderstorm with lightning accompanied with gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Gajapati, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Kandhamal, Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur," the bulletin read.

Meanwhile, Bolangir was the hottest place in the state at 44.5 degrees Celsius, followed by Titilagarh recording 44 degrees Celsius.

KIIT-DU, KPIT Technologies launch Co-Branded M-Tech Programme

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 6: In a ground-breaking partnership, KIIT-DU and KPIT Technologies Limited Monday signed an MoU to launch a Co-Branded M-Tech programme focused on Automotive Electronics & Software aimed at preparing the next generation of technology experts.

The collaboration will bring together KPIT's industry-leading capabilities in automotive technology with KIIT's advanced educational framework.

Expressing his delight on the collaboration, KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta said, "We have a strong intellectual capital and talent base to partner with industry in bridging the talent gap and nurturing future-ready digital professionals."

Highlighting the uniqueness of the partnership, KPIT Technologies Limited co-founder, CEO and MD Kishore Patil said, "The tie-up with KIIT-DU is novel and unique of its kind for KPIT in India. We are focused on de-



veloping the next generation of automotive technology professionals and are excited to impart training among the KIIT-DU students."

"The Automotive Industry and Software Technology is changing the face of the world. There is a fast-growing demand for a market-ready workforce, and industry and academia must work closely together to develop quality tech talents," KIIT-DU vice-chancellor Saranjit

Singh said.

"The partnership combines KPIT's industry-leading capabilities in automotive technology with KIIT's advanced educational framework. This initiative not only aims to enhance the quality of the talent pool but also ensures that graduates are immediately employable and capable of contributing to innovative research and advancements in the field," he added.

Chief Secy's mother passes away at 81

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 6: Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena's mother Sankutala Jena passed away at around 1.40 pm Tuesday. She was 81.

Following her demise, Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu

Garg, Additional Chief Secretary Surendra Kumar and Principal Secretaries including Arabinda Kumar Padhee, Hemant Sharma, Bishnupada Sethi, Vishal Kumar Dev, Sanjay Kumar Singh, Chithra Arumugam and Manoj Kumar Mishra and VIPs visited Jena's government quarters in Unit VI area here to pay homage to the departed soul. Her last rites were performed at Swargadwar in presence of the Chief Secretary and relatives.



CME on semen analysis held at SUM Hospital



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: A Continuing Medical Education (CME)-cum-workshop on 'Semen Analysis Made Easy: Manual and Automatic' was held at Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) and SUM Hospital here recently.

Around 50 participants attended the CME, organised by the Centre for Human Reproduction (CHR) in association with the Odisha chapter of Indian Fertility Society (IFS).

The first session of the CME was addressed by Head of CHR Sujata Pradhan, in the presence of IMS & SUM Hospital Medical Superintendent

Pusparaj Samantashinhar and IFS Odisha chapter Secretary Akshay Kumar Mohapatra.

A brainstorming session on Conventional Semen Analysis as per World Health Organisation (WHO) protocol followed. Senior Embryologist at CHR Chidananda Dash addressed the session, while Sales Head of ADVY Chemicals Subhankar Das spoke about semen analysis using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automatic systems.

The programme concluded with a workshop on manual and automated semen analysis, emphasising on standardisation of the procedure and promotion of correct practice.

AMRI Hospitals' Liver Clinic to open May 8

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: AMRI Hospitals will inaugurate its Liver Clinic in Bhubaneswar May 8 and will also organise a free liver health check-up camp on the day.



AMRI doctors advised people to get vaccinated against hepatitis virus and go for regular check-ups to prevent liver diseases and ensure optimal liver function

According to AMRI sources, the health camp is being organised keeping in view the rising liver transplant cases in India caused due to various factors, including hepatitis and lifestyle changes.

"Liver transplantation stands as the definitive solution for End-Stage Liver Disease. Timely consultation and surgery are

pivotal for its success. We encourage everyone to seize this opportunity by visiting our liver clinic at AMRI Hospital Bhubaneswar for a complimentary consultation on the inaugural day," said AMRI's Consultant Liver Transplant Surgeon Rajasekhara K.

AMRI doctors advised people to get vaccinated against hepatitis virus and go for regular check-ups to prevent liver diseases and ensure optimal liver function.

AMRI's Senior Consultant in Medical Gastroenterology Pratap Behera said, "Our liver plays a vital role in maintaining overall health. Simple lifestyle adjustments, such as adopting a balanced diet, regular exercise and moderating alcohol consumption, can significantly mitigate the risk of liver diseases. Let's prioritise liver health and wellness, setting the standard for healthcare excellence in our region."

Behera and Gyanranjan Rout, Consultant in Medical Gastroenterology at AMRI Hospitals, will be in charge of the clinic where comprehensive care for various liver diseases including viral, alcohol-induced, NASH, autoimmune, or drug-induced liver health problems will be provided.

The clinic will also have facilities for a range of lab tests and radiological investigations, the hospital said.



CAREGIVERS: Guests and participants at a special function to mark the International Day of Midwife at SCB College of Nursing in SCB Medical College and Hospital campus in Cuttack, Monday

Captivating journey into the heart of flavour

The anticipation for a day of guilt-free indulgence has finally arrived. Wondering how to make the most of this food-lovers holiday? Look no further than the Godrej Food Trends Report 2024, your guide to an extraordinary culinary experience. With a blend of excitement, exploration, and mouth-watering delights, this year's International No Diet Day celebration promises to be a captivating journey into the heart of flavour and culinary innovation.

"International No Diet Day is an opportunity to take a break from dietary restrictions we might impose on ourselves by focusing on health and body positivity while also indulging in flavourful culinary exploration," says Rushina Munshaw Ghildiyal, Managing Director of Perfect Bite Consulting and Editor of the annual Godrej

Foods Trends Report 2024. "Our Food Trends Report 2024 showcases how mindful indulgence can provide unforgettable moments for those looking to explore culinary delights. Artisanal chocolate, a bespoke cocktail, street food in Banaras or a gourmet burger; let this International No Diet Day be a celebration of culinary adventure."

The food report convened over 190 thought leaders from diverse culinary backgrounds, including celebrity chefs, bloggers, and nutritionists who shared their insights on the comprehensive trends cited in the report. This diverse set of industry experts curated a guide for you to savour this International No Diet Day.

Key ideas to celebrate International No Diet Day: **Mithai Trends:** Dive into the world of mithai this International No Diet Day and experience the evolving flavours of India. With

INTERNATIONAL NO DIET DAY



67 per cent of experts predicting a strong demand for special diet versions, including low-sugar and vegan options, there has never been a better time to indulge guilt-free in these delightful treats!

Indian Street Food Trends: Take your taste buds on a journey to Banaras this International No Diet Day and explore the vibrant flavours of its street food.

Recommended by 80 per cent of industry experts, this culinary adventure promises to blend tradition with innovation. From Shreeji's Malaiyo to Vatika's Apple Pie, there's something for every food enthusiast to savour and enjoy!

Snacks and Convenience Food Trends: Embrace a healthier snacking lifestyle this

International No Diet Day by trying out non-fried alternatives. With 89 per cent of experts recommending healthier choices, you can enjoy your favourite snacks guilt-free. Say goodbye to greasy chips and hello to baked or air-fried alternatives that are sure to satisfy your cravings!

Dessert Trends: The world of desserts is brimming with innovative flavours and trends that cater to every craving. From classic favourites with a modern twist to unique international creations, there's something out there to satisfy your sweet tooth.

Indulge in the subtle sweetness of sea salt caramel or explore the rich decadence of halwa-flavoured chocolates. 80.8 per cent of experts predict that exotic international desserts will be most sought after by diners looking to add adventure to their meals.

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Miscreants rob transport firm staffers of ₹13.82 lakh



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 6: Miscreants robbed cash worth ₹13.82 lakh from two employees of a private transport company on National Highway-49 near Jamudiha village under Sadar police limits in this district, Monday.

The incident took place at about 9.30am when the two employees with the cash in a bag were on their way to Suakati from Keonjhar town to pay the 'chalan' money of trucks.

According to the victims, two robbers wearing helmets and

masks chased and waylaid them on the road.

They scared them by brandishing a gun and robbed the money before absconding. It is suspected that they sped away along Thakurdihi- Gonasika rural road. On being informed, police officials of Sadar PS rushed to the spot but by then the robbers had escaped.

Meanwhile, police personnel have launched an investigation into the incident.

Police are trying to detect them by scanning the CCTV footages at Gonasika, but are yet to catch them. Despite repeated alerts from the police department, many company personnel are carrying large amounts of cash with them without taking adequate safety measures and informing the police which has concerned the administration.



TREAT TO THE EYES: Artistes from Andhra Pradesh perform a traditional dance on the concluding day of Maa Thakurani Yatra at Daringbadi in Kandhamal district, Monday

OP PHOTO

TB scare in Ganjam due to short-supply of medicines



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 6: After HIV AIDS, nowadays tuberculosis (TB) has acquired an alarming proportion in Ganjam district with 18,669 patients being identified during last three years.

Spread of the bacterial disease has worsened due to short supply of free medicines by the Union government. As a result, people suffering from the disease are being pushed into the jaws of death.

Sources said that TB patients were being given free medicines every month in the past. However, the essential medicines are not available as per demand in the district due to disruption in supply of medicines by the Union government.

In case of emergency, the district health department is purchasing medicines from various pharmaceutical companies

and delivering those to the patients, a health official said.

However, patients have to consume around 10-12 tablets as they fail to get medicines with various compositions which they used to get earlier, the official said.

Thousands of patients afflicted with TB are being identified in the district every year. The rapid spread of the disease is attributed to migration of the district's residents to other states in search of livelihood. Health officials said people infected with HIV have 70 per cent chance of getting afflicted with TB.

A person gets afflicted with TB when his immunity to diseases declines. Moreover, the bacteria spread through cough and sneezes of an affected person. An affected person can only be saved when there is an early detection and treatment of the disease.

However, every year scores of people afflicted with TB die of the disease which has acquired an endemic proportion in Khallikote, Kodala, Polsara, Bhanjanagar, Chhatrapur, Jagannathprasad and Aska blocks.

According to available information, 5,600 TB patients were identified in 2021, 6,480 in 2022 and 6,589 in 2023. The district administration has taken up various projects to combat the disease under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). The affected patients can get their examinations done and receive treatment free of cost. They are also provided with free medicines for complete recovery from the disease.

The affected patients are also being given ₹500 as financial assistance for nutritious food which aids in recovery from the disease. However, due to disruption in medicine supply, the patients have to suffer through a harrowing time.

The disruption in medicine supply is not only limited to Ganjam but other districts in the state are also bearing its brunt. Adding to their woes, TB medicines are not readily available in adequate amount in private drug stores as the Centre was supplying free medicines for years together.

As a result, patients in need of TB medicines are often left disappointed when they visit any private pharmacy store to buy the medicines.

Nilgai family finds new home in RSP's IG Park



PNN & AGENCIES

Rourkela, May 6: Three Nilgais, one male and two females, were transferred from the old Nilgai enclosure to the newly constructed moated Nilgai enclosure at Indira Gandhi (IG) Park of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) here.

RSP sources Monday said the new moated Nilgai enclosure constructed inside IG Park covering an area of 2,200 sq mtr, has all facilities like 24-hour potable drinking water, retiring room, feed trough and wallowing-pond.

It is noteworthy that two orphan Nilgai calves were rescued by the Forest department September 15, 2020 from a village location and were handed over to IG Park authorities for necessary care and treatment.

As the two calves were very young, bottle feeding of milk was started immediately along with vitamin supplementation. The two calves were hand-reared and housed inside a modified Sambhar enclosure. The two calves after being sub-adult were fed with deer mash and green grass.

After adulthood, they gave birth to a female calf. As the space was limited, to house the three Nilgais, a new enclosure was constructed which was inaugurated May 3.

General observers review Keonjhar poll preparations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, May 6: The general observers for Keonjhar district Sunday reviewed the poll preparedness by the district administration.

The review meeting was held at the conference hall of the circuit house where the two general observers -- Minhaj Alam, IAS and Ashish Modi, IAS -- assigned for Keonjhar district jointly presided over the meeting. The two observers reviewed the poll preparation put together by the district administration for the upcoming simultaneous general election and Assembly polls in Keonjhar district scheduled for May 25.

In this review meeting, District Election Officer and Collector Vishal Singh presented all the information related to the election preparations.

The general observers took stock of all aspects of preparedness especially voters' ac-

cess to polling location and condition of booths, EVM preparations, training to polling officers, sector officers, micro observers, election expenses management, C-Vigil report, MCMC report, postal ballot, home voting, illegal drugs, seizure of money in sensitive booths, police deployment, required police force, flying squads and SST.

They expressed satisfaction on the poll preparation stating the arrangement to be up to the mark and hoped that the simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies May 25 will be conducted in a completely free, fair and peaceful manner.

Among others, additional district magistrates, Jadumani Mahala and Lalit Soreng, CDO-cum-EO, Zilla Parishad, Keonjhar Bishnu Prasad Acharya, Sub-Collector Trilochan Mohanty and Deputy Collector (Elections) Bikash Chandra Sahu attended the meeting.

Forest officials nab 4 suspected poachers

PNN & AGENCIES

Berhampur, May 6: Forest personnel have arrested four people who were allegedly trying to poach wild animals by setting fire in a jungle in Ganjam district, officials said Monday.

The accused were held Sunday night while they were trying to torch a portion of the jungle in the Gajalabai reserve forest of the Sorada range in the district.

Two country-made guns, an axe, torchlight, rope, a mobile phone and four motorcycles were seized from their possession, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Ghumusar South Division, BK Acharya, said.

The accused were identified as Niku Pradhan (20), Hiroj Pradhan (23), Saniya Pradhan (24) and Pramod Pradhan (32) of Basabali village near Daringbadi in Kandhamal district, he said.

During patrolling in the reserve forest area, the forest staff, including the anti-poaching squad, tracked down the four accused.

The accused were held Sunday night while they were trying to torch a portion of the jungle in the Gajalabai reserve forest of the Sorada range in Ganjam district

The accused were suspected to be in the forest to kill wild animals after setting fire in the area, he added.

The DFO said patrolling was further intensified in the forest area after the arrest of the four people.



Boy found dead in hostel room

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, May 6: A minor boy, a student of Class X, was found hanging from the ceiling of his hostel room here, police informed Monday. Personnel of the Town police station here stated hostel inmates had first noticed the body and informed the police.

The deceased, a native of Gopinathpur village under Birdi block of this district, had been studying at a private residential school here and was staying at the hostel. Police initially suspect it to be a case of suicide, but are probing the matter and looking into all angles. However, the deceased's family

The deceased's family has ruled out suicide and called it a case of 'murder'

has ruled out suicide and called it a case of 'murder'.

Police said that the father of the deceased had met the latter on the hostel premises and was with him till about 9-9.30 in the night. "It is apparent that the boy died after that," Town police station IIC Gokul Ranjan Dash said. "When we found the body it was hanging with a bed sheet tied round his neck. We are probing the matter to ascertain the cause behind the mysterious death," Dash informed.



POLL PREPAREDNESS: Polling officials receive training on EVMs in the presence of ADM (Revenue) Subhendu Kumar Samal at Goutam Buddha Sanskruti Bhawan in Jajpur town before leaving for their respective booths, Monday

OP PHOTO

Notice to shift medicine store from CHC campus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tihidi, May 6: A notice has been served Monday to vacate a medicine store running inside the community health centre (CHC) campus at Tihidi in Bhadrak district. As per reports, acting on the direction of the Health Secretary, Bhadrak CDMO and Tihidi medical officer sent a notice by post to the medicine store owner asking him to shift the store out of the CHC campus within 15 days.

As per reports, the state government through a circular (No-4538/H) in 2015 had directed not to extend the contract validity of the existing medicine stores and disallow opening of any new

medicine store inside the health centres. The circular was issued following the decision of the state government to provide free health services with round-the-clock free medicine distribution to patients.

Some medicine store owners had challenged the instruction of the state government in the Orissa High Court and a stay order was issued by the court in this regard. However, the state Health Secretary has questioned why the medicine stores have been operating inside the hospital campuses in the absence of any interim order from the court and also sought a reply in this regard within three days of receiving the letter.

SARADA TURNS GOOD SAMARITAN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 6: Minister for Labour and ESI Sarada Nayak, who is contesting for the Rourkela Assembly seat on BJD ticket in the ongoing polls, showed his humane side Monday morning as he rescued a seriously injured person lying on the road on his way to an election campaign meeting.

The accident took place near Sector-21 Chowk on the Ring Road here. The crossing is prone

to accidents. The injured man, a cyclist, was hit by a speeding bike from behind. The biker without attending to the injured sped away from the spot anticipating public anger.

Meanwhile, Nayak was going to attend an election meeting in his car when he noticed the man on the other side of the road. The minister asked his driver to turn back and reached the spot. Finding the person in a serious condition, he immediately rushed him in his



car to Rourkela Government Hospital (RGH).

He had injuries, as some of the witnesses said, in his leg, waist and back. "Fortunately, he had no injury to his head but was unconscious, probably in shock," said one person. The condition of the injured person was stated to be stable. "What I did is not something big. Anyone would have done the same," the minister said over phone when asked for reaction.

NOTICE

I, Natabara Sahu, S/o Late Mangulu Sahu resident of Gaigotha Street, Berhampur, Ganjam, Odisha, 760009 do hereby declare that

1. My Father Mr. Mangulu Sahu and Mother Mrs. Kunti Sahu died in the year 2017 and 2021 respectively.
2. My one Brother Mr. Tripati Sahu, died on 2003 also at the time of his death he was unmarried and had no legal heir / successor.
3. Below mentioned Property was jointly owned by Myself Natabara Sahu and my brother Mr. Tripati Sahu Post My brother's death I am (Natabara Sahu) the sole surviving owner of this property and having peaceful possession of it for last 16 years.
4. My Father Late Mangulu Sahu do not have or had any other Siblings ever except Mr. Tripati Sahu. I am giving this declaration which is true and best to my information and knowledge.

Regards,
Natabara Sahu
Mob - 9437135002, 7008389772



One of the chief obstacles to the establishment of a progressive harmony is our eagerness to prove to an opponent that he is wrong and we are right.

THE MOTHER



Gender Apartheid

Hijab is back with full fury in Iran. The white vans of the morality police patrol, known as Guidance Patrols (Gasht-e-Ershad) are out in force once again. Videos show women and girls being dragged from the streets and detainees reportedly being beaten and abused. Adding fuel to fire, fresh details of the case of Nika Shakarami, reportedly sexually assaulted and killed by men working for the security forces in 2022, have emerged buttressing the charge of brutality by the morality police. Her family said last week that her sister Aida had just been arrested for breaching the dress code.

Supporters of the jailed Nobel Peace laureate Narges Mohammadi are circulating her purported message from prison urging Iranians to protest against what she describes as a “war against women.” All this is happening at a time when the attention of the world has shifted from the acts of omission and commission of the repressive regime in Tehran to the outbreak of hostilities between Iran and Israel over the latter’s recent air strike hitting Iran’s embassy in Damascus.

However, the women of Iran have been singled out by the regime not only for curbing their freedom to choose what they would wear, but making them an object lesson for defiance of authorities that has emboldened the population, irrespective of genders, to voice protest against alleged rampant corruption by government officials and religious heads.

Harsh “hijab and chastity” legislation is on its way and the authorities have started using traffic camera footage to fine women driving bareheaded or in hats, confiscate their cars, sentence them to morality classes or flogging. In many cases, women are being denied access to public transport or banks by officials accusing them of flouting the dress rules. Even businesses have been closed for not enforcing the law for employees or customers. As international attention is now focused elsewhere, like the conflict in Gaza for example, the regime in Iran seems to have found it an opportune moment to intensify pressure on defiant women and their male supporters who are seen protesting when women are being picked up from the streets by morality police personnel in notorious white vans. The movement for the rights of Iranian women to dress the way they choose got a shot in the arm when Mahsa Amini died in custody in September 2022. The young Iranian-Kurdish woman had been detained by the morality police for “improper hijab.” In protest, young women of Iran took to the streets and cast off their scarves in fury. Their parents too joined the chorus of condemnation of the government. Men lent force to the cries of “woman, life, freedom.” That became a turning point and the regime responded with vengeance, killing hundreds and arresting thousands. In no time, the demonstrations were quelled successfully with speed. But many women refused to obey the strict dress code.

The authorities in Iran are a worried lot because the protesting women are effectively encouraging the men folk to question President Ebrahim Raisi’s failure to fulfil his electoral promises to pursue rampant corruption among top government officials that has led to many recent scandals. The situation has become so explosive that the Raisi government has become an advocate of Guidance Patrols and has completely forgotten its election promises of dismantling them. Some newspapers have even written editorials sharply criticising the Raisi government for resuming the white vans, reneging on its election pledge to dismantle them and sanctioning their resurgence on the streets. Raisi had made the promise during his election campaign in 2021. The official media such as the government mouthpiece, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), however, claims the government had promised to launch special investigative units as guidance patrols to clamp down on corruption and made significant progress in this regard. But, there is no substantive evidence to prove the claim that the government had dismissed scores of administrators for misconduct or incompetence. These included officials appointed by previous administrations as well as Raisi’s own.

There is hardly any doubt that the repressive administration in Iran is less busy in curbing corruption and inefficiency than using its resources to purge dissenting voices to establish even harder control over state institutions, including universities – the cradle of free spirit and youth rebellion. The women of the country have not only proved to be soft targets, but also scapegoats.

A society incapable or unwilling to protect its children and women is destined to perish. The ancient people of Persia (today’s Iran) may not be exceptions.



Jagdish Rattanani

A COMMITMENT TO THIS SHARP IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING IS CRITICAL TO THE REVIVAL OF THE CONGRESS

As the long-winded election campaign plods on, a lot has already changed on the Indian political scene. For one, the Congress for the first time in more than a decade is able to clearly and in sharp relief articulate its political position before the electorate. This is the Indian National Congress firmly to the Left of Centre, less a question of degree and more a question of direction and position and the quadrant in which the party sits in the current political landscape. What is emerging from the party of liberalisation and privatisation is now no more a tentativeness with the agenda of social justice, wealth/income inequality or workers’ rights; it is a clear placing of the flag, a sharp turn to the Left never before as clear as it was during the era of bank nationalisation under Indira Gandhi. The response of the electorate, just anecdotal at this stage, shows that the party is finding resonance and is in sync with the mood of the nation.

A commitment to this sharp ideological positioning is critical to the revival of the Congress, and while some will say the position has been forced by circumstance, it nevertheless appears to have been embraced wholeheartedly by the rank and file and the top leadership. This is one significant election outcome long before the announcement of the poll results on 4 June. Do note that the BJP because of its own sloganeering and expectation-setting has to cross its previous mark of 303 to be seen as victorious; the INDIA bloc has to pull the BJP below 272 to claim victory. Barring the possibility, extremely remote at this time, of the Congress and/or the INDIA bloc faring very poorly at these polls, what we have is a party that will shape the direction of policy in India in the days ahead. This is a role that the Congress had abdicated, sliding into irrelevance and ceding ground to the BJP in

FOCUS CONGRESS

PRO-POOR POSITIONING



The Congress will need more young blood and people of commitment to build a team so that the party can remain vibrant, whether it is in power or not

the absence of a clear political direction tied into a cogent positioning of the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the party. Without that, what we had was a plain and toothless attack on the communalism and corruption of the BJP that did not carry conviction and did not work with the electorate. The story has now changed.

The decade-long slide of the Congress, and its quieter slide even while it held power at the Centre, was the inevitable consequence of a party noted for leading a neo-liberal agenda, given that its only accomplishment in recent times was the 1991 economic reforms. The reforms, too, were forced by circumstance. They attempted an unleashing of “animal spirits” on the one hand but also led to curbing of workers’ rights and the fuelling of widespread corruption on the other hand, this corruption moving from public sector hegemony to private sector brazenness in the absence of strong governance and weak or non-existent policing or collusion. Broadly speaking, these developments unsurprisingly fuelled the rise of the pro-BJP moneyed classes, who in alignment with the other assorted gentry in terms of class, caste and status, cited the cases of high corruption under the Congress to work for bringing the BJP to power. The deplorable

role played by Anna Hazare, who led the India Against Corruption movement but has stayed silent since then, even in the face of emerging monumental corruption scandals from the BJP stable, has already been exposed.

In this frame, GDP growth at any cost became the talking point of the Indian elite looking to cash in on the coming business boom. The BJP in power took it to its extreme by hand-picking its favourite business houses for special honours while others were asked to settle disputes via the Enforcement Directorate. The rest of India was left to wallow in the failed ideas of trickle-down economics and food coupons that feed 80 crore Indians today, more than half of India, under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.

Adding further strength to the Congress today is a leadership that is looking ready and robust, willing to take on the challenges before the nation. Rahul Gandhi has bloomed in the leadership role, and is looking good in the seat, sending out the right messages and signals as he mixes stories and experiences from the Nyay Yatra to create exciting political narratives that are bold, grounded and refreshing. It is remarkable that Rahul has been able to do that with a campaign that

has stayed away from any bitterness in the face of innumerable odds, and a bitter and hateful BJP campaign that has focused a large amount of its resources to denigrate him and his family. Rahul’s emergence also proves that there is a limit to reliance on ‘pundits’, some of them giving questionable advice and one even questioning the timing and wisdom of the hugely successful Nyay Yatra.

What this resurgence of the Congress has also done is to derail in part the BJP campaign, which led from the very top by the Prime Minister himself has tended to focus on what the Congress is doing or its perceived ills rather than what the BJP has done and what it promises for the next five years. This marks an internal collapse for the BJP, and if the party is not careful to pull back that slide, it will be walking into a trap of talking more about the opponent than about itself.

Lastly, it is important to note that the Congress has rejected Manmohan Singh and all that he brought to the table, whether it says so explicitly or not. This is a necessary condition for the new Congress to build credibility. In the end, Manmohan Singh was a bureaucrat who may have succeeded in the sub set of economics but failed miserably in the super set of politics. The former is a tool; the latter is a philosophy. Efficient use of any tool is dangerous in the absence of an understanding of why it is being used and where it will lead. This should be a warning to today’s Congress to stay away from retired bureaucrats. It will have to keep a sharp eye on corruption. And the Congress will need more young blood and people of commitment to build a team so that the party can remain vibrant, whether it is in power or not.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal. @THEBILLIONPRESS

SPECTRUM VACCINATION

None should die from preventable cancer

Jessica Pettway, a YouTube fashion and lifestyle influencer, died last month from cervical cancer at the age of 36. Her untimely death – and those of countless other women – probably could have been prevented, thanks to an effective vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV), which is responsible for about 95% of cervical cancers. But not nearly enough people are getting it.

A recent Public Health Scotland study shows just how effective the HPV vaccine is at preventing cervical cancer: Among the 40,000 women born between 1988 and 1996 who received the vaccine before turning 14, there has not been a single case of cervical cancer. This includes women who received only one or two doses, rather than the full three-dose protocol. The implication is clear: if all eligible girls and women are vaccinated globally, we could eliminate nearly all cervical cancers.

Moreover, because HPV is typically transmitted sexually, protecting boys also means protecting girls. That is why all girls and boys aged 9-14 years – and, ideally, women and men until the age of 45 – should be getting the vaccine. The good news is that HPV-vaccine programmes have been introduced in many

countries across the Global North, including Australia, Canada, the UK, and the US. Moreover, the Global South is starting to catch up: last year, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Eswatini, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Togo added the HPV vaccine to their immunisation schedules. But eliminating cervical cancer will require governments everywhere to get on board.

The top priority for effective HPV-vaccination programmes is to vaccinate girls before they become sexually active – the recommended age is 9-14 years. School-based programmes are a good place to start, but in many countries, one cannot expect all – or even most – girls to be in school. Nigeria, for example, has more than 12 million out-of-school children, some 60% of whom are girls. Given this, governments must work with community leaders, community-based organisations, and community health workers to take HPV vaccine to people where they live.

But ensuring that girls get vaccinated is not just a logistical challenge; there is also an important social component. A recent Behavioural Insights Lab survey, in which I was principal investigator, showed that just 60% of the male and female caregivers

of girls aged 9-17 across six states in Nigeria would be willing to have these children vaccinated.

Community perceptions were a major determinant of respondents’ stances on the vaccine. Most caregivers (72%) reported that they were very likely to discuss HPV vaccination with their family and friends, and those who perceived that their family and friends supported it were more likely to believe that their female child would get vaccinated. We thus concluded that interventions that leverage positive family and peer influences and encourage discussion of HPV vaccination within caregivers’ social networks are likely to boost vaccine uptake.

Knowledge about the HPV vaccine also makes a big difference, though the type of messaging used in any educational campaign is crucial. Depending on the context, a focus on the vaccine’s general health benefits, rather than its role in preventing sexually transmitted infections, can help to reduce stigma. In our study, caregivers were 30% more likely to have their child vaccinated against HPV if they were exposed to messaging emphasising the vaccine’s positive effect on girls’ future prospects.

And, again, vaccination pro-

grammes must not neglect boys, for whom the vaccine also represents a cost-effective – and potentially life-saving – intervention. Countries where HPV vaccines are already approved for males – including Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, South Korea, Switzerland, the UK, and the US – should be leading the way. The US Centers for Disease Control recommends boys get the HPV vaccine between the ages of 11 and 12.

People who were not vaccinated in adolescence should also have access to the vaccine. In the Scotland study, women who received the three-dose protocol between the ages of 14 and 22 had significantly reduced incidence of cervical cancer compared to the unvaccinated. In fact, one can receive the HPV vaccine until age 45.

No one should die from a vaccine-preventable cancer. It is too late to save Jessica, but we can honour her memory – and those of all the people who have died of HPV-linked cancers – by radically expanding access to HPV vaccination.

The writer is a Senior New Voices Fellow at the Aspen Institute. @PROJECTSYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

Have you learned the lessons only of those who admired you, and were tender with you, and stood aside for you? Have you not learned great lessons from those who braced themselves against you, and disputed passage with you?

WALT WHITMAN

No one can be perfectly free till all are free; no one can be perfectly moral till all are moral; no one can be perfectly happy till all are happy.

HERBERT SPENCER

Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word happy would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness. It is far better take things as they come along with patience and equanimity.

CARL JUNG

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1861: Rabindranath Tagore, poet, short-story writer, song composer, playwright, essayist, and painter who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, was born in Calcutta (Kolkata).

1895: Alexander Popov demonstrates the world’s first radio receiver. The Russian physicist had initially built the device as a lightning detector. He achieved the first radio transmission between two buildings the following year.

1915: A German submarine sunk the Lusitania, a British ocean liner, indirectly contributing to the entry of the United States into World War I. 1198 lives were lost in the attack, making it the deadliest shipwreck during World War I. The fact that some of the dead were U.S. citizens influenced the country’s decision to enter the war in 1917.

1945: A German delegation that included General Alfred Jodl went to U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower’s headquarters in Reims, France, and signed the surrender documents. The capitulation ended World War II, one of the bloodiest conflicts of all time. According to estimates, between 40 and 71 million people died in the war and the Holocaust initiated by Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime.

1946: Sony Corporation, a major Japanese manufacturer of consumer electronics products, was founded by Ibuka Masaru and Morita Akio. The company started as Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering. It is today one of the leading manufacturers of electronic products.



Jeanyi M. Nsofor

IF ALL ELIGIBLE GIRLS AND WOMEN ARE VACCINATED GLOBALLY, WE COULD ELIMINATE NEARLY ALL CERVICAL CANCERS

Awareness key

Sir, Asthma is a chronic illness that affects both children and adults, particularly in economically disadvantaged countries. Organisations like the UN and the WHO are dedicated to diagnosing, preventing, and treating asthma. In countries like India, asthma significantly disrupts daily life, hindering school attendance and work. Globally, approximately 339 million people suffer from asthma, resulting in around 1000 deaths daily. However, many of these fatalities could be prevented with timely access to appropriate medication. Asthma can induce fear due to its impact on breathing, triggered by factors such as pollen, dust, pets, smoke, or cold air. Although asthma lacks a cure, effective treatments like inhalers and steroids exist to manage symptoms. World Asthma Day, observed annually on 7 May, serves as a reminder to learn about asthma and its management. This year, the focus is on education, recognising its transformative potential in improving lives. An Asthma Action Plan, offering personalised strategies for managing and preventing worsening symptoms, is essential for caregivers, including daycare providers and schools. Regrettably, the number of asthma-related deaths is rising, partly due to insufficient awareness. However, with enhanced support and research, we can empower individuals with asthma to lead healthy lives and avert severe attacks.

Fourth estate

Sir, It is really unfortunate that in the world’s largest democracy, press freedom has been on a constant slide down. Many observers describe a decline in the quality of freedom of expression in India ever since the BJP came to power in 2014. Press is called the fourth pillar of democracy, but its state has been a worrying factor in the country in the last some years, as India’s score in the World Press Freedom Index fell over the last year from 36.62 to 31.28 as reported by Reporters Without Borders (RSF for Reporters sans Frontiers) recently. Under the Modi government, journalists, especially from smaller media outlets, have constantly been facing harassment and threats. But every attack on the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression only adds to the strength of the fourth estate in our country.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

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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Delhi LG for NIA probe against Kejriwal; AAP says conspiracy by BJP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: Delhi Lt Governor VK Saxena has recommended an NIA probe against Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for allegedly receiving political funding from the banned terrorist organisation 'Sikhs for Justice', Raj Niwas sources said Monday.

AAP alleged that the recommendation is yet another conspiracy against Kejriwal at the behest of the BJP. In a letter to the Union Home secretary, the Lt Governor's secretary said Saxena had received a complaint that the Kejriwal-led AAP allegedly received USD 16 million funding from extremist Khalistani groups for facilitating the release of Devendra Pal Bhullar.

Bhullar, who is in Amritsar Central Jail, was convicted in connection with the killing of nine people in a bomb blast in 1993 in Delhi. He was sentenced to death by a designated TADA court August 25, 2001 and is undergoing life imprisonment after the Supreme Court commuted his death sentence.

"The electronic evidences adduced by the complainant require investigation including forensic examination," Saxena

has said in the letter according to sources. The complaint is made against a chief minister and relates to political funding received from a banned terrorist organisation, the letter stated.

The move comes a day ahead of the Supreme Court considering granting Kejriwal interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. The AAP chief, who is in Tihar jail, was arrested March 21 by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with an excise policy linked money laundering case.

The complaint refers to a video released by Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, where he alleged that the Kejriwal-led AAP received USD 16 million from Khalistani

groups between 2014 and 2022, sources said.

In the complaint to the LG, it has also been alleged that Kejriwal held closed-door meetings with Khalistani leaders at Gurudwara Richmond Hills, New York, during his visit in 2014. Kejriwal allegedly promised to facilitate the release of Bhullar in return for substantial financial backing from Khalistani factions to AAP.

In a series of posts on social media, a former AAP worker, Munish Kumar Raizada, also shared purported pictures of Kejriwal's meeting with Khalistani leaders, the complaint said, according to sources.

Reacting to the development, AAP leader and Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj called it yet another conspiracy against Kejriwal at the behest of BJP.

The move comes a day ahead of the Supreme Court considering granting Kejriwal interim bail in view of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections



POLL FRENZY: Samajwadi Party supporters wave at party chief Akhilesh Yadav's helicopter as he arrives in Kannauj, Monday

Yadavs in focus as 3rd phase a litmus test for SP

AGENCIES

Lucknow, May 5: Ten Parliamentary constituencies of Uttar Pradesh will go to polls in the third phase of Lok Sabha elections Tuesday, with all eyes on Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav's family members.

These 10 Lok Sabha constituencies - Sambhal, Hathras, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Badaun, Bareilly and Aonla - witnessed the culmination of a high-pitched campaign Sunday evening.

Of the 10 seats that will vote Tuesday, the BJP won eight in 2019 - Hathras, Agra, Firozabad, Fatehpur Sikri, Etah, Badaun, Bareilly and Aonla - while Mainpuri and Sambhal went to the Samajwadi Party.

This phase will be a test for the Samajwadi Party's (SP) first family as well, with Dimple Yadav, Akshay Yadav and Aditya Yadav contesting Mainpuri, Firozabad and Budaun respectively.

In Mainpuri, an SP bastion that the party has never lost, sitting MP Dimple Yadav will take on Jaiveer Singh of the BJP.

In Firozabad, BJP candidate Chandra Sen Jadon is contesting against Akshay Yadav and in Budaun, Aditya Yadav - the son of Shivpal Yadav - is making his electoral debut against Durvijay Shakya of BJP.

The third phase unfolds with the emergence of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), prominently including Yadavs, Lodhs, and Kachhi/Shakya/Murao communities, exerting influence as decisive factors across various



constituencies. Alongside, the enduring impact of Muslim and Jat demographics remains significant in select areas.

The third phase has also seen some high-pitched campaigns by leaders of all parties.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and UP Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath led the BJP's campaign against, what they called, dynasty and appeasement politics of the Congress and the Samajwadi Party (SP), and slammed the Opposition for declining the Ram Temple invitation.

The SP, which has much at stake in phase three, pushed its caste census pitch and alleged that the BJP will end reservation and hence is seeking 400-plus seats in the Lok Sabha.

Several constituencies, including Sambhal, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Mainpuri and Aonla are witnessing a three-way battle between the NDA and INDIA alliances and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) while others like Hathras, Firozabad, Etah and Budaun will see a two-way contest between the BJP and the

Samajwadi Party. The saffron party retained the winning candidates from Etah, Agra (SC), Aonla, and Fatehpur Sikri. It also gave a ticket to Parameshwar Lal Saini from Sambhal Lok Sabha seat.

The Congress has fielded one candidate - Ramnath Singh Sikarwar from Fatehpur Sikri, while its INDIA bloc ally, the Samajwadi Party, has fielded candidates in the remaining nine seats in this phase.

Sambhal, Hathras (SC), Agra (SC), Fatehpur Sikri, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etah, Budaun, Aonla and Bareilly are the constituencies where polling will be conducted.

Over 1.88 crore voters are eligible to decide the fate of 100 candidates in this phase.

HC seeks Delhi govt, police plan for handling bomb threats in schools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: The Delhi High Court Monday sought a detailed response from the Delhi Government and Delhi Police regarding their preparedness and procedures for handling bomb threats in schools.

Justice Subramonium Prasad was hearing a plea filed by lawyer Arpit Bhargava after a bomb threat email was received from Delhi Public School, Mathura Road, last year, which later turned out to be a prank by one of the students "just for fun".

Bhargava, who is a parent, recently also filed an application contending the lack of progress in investigating and resolving three out of five bomb threat incidents reported in schools last year.

Last week, a total of 125 bomb

threat complaints were received from different schools on the emergency helpline number 112 from 5.47am to 2.13pm.

Bhargava's plea contends the lack of a coordinated action plan to ensure the safety and security of schoolchildren, teachers, and staff in response to bomb threats.

Justice Prasad sought information on the specific roles of nodal officers assigned to handle such threats, the number of mock drills conducted, and the preparedness measures in place across different zones.

The court has given the authorities 10 days to file an affidavit detailing their current protocols and the circulars issued on this matter over time.

Bhargava stressed the urgency of establishing a comprehensive



sive action plan, criticising the current lack of specific procedures tailored to the unique environment of schools.

In court, the counsel for the Delhi Government, Santosh Kumar Tripathi, assured that the police have a Standard

Operating Procedure (SOP) for responding to both hoax and real threats, which includes immediate police notification and evacuation protocols.

However, Justice Prasad expressed concern that these SOPs might be too generalised and

not sufficiently focused on the specific needs of schools, which range from nursery to high school levels.

Further submissions revealed that while mock drills are regularly conducted, there is a pressing need for a more specialised SOP that addresses the unique vulnerabilities of educational institutions.

The court stressed the necessity of involving parents in these drills and ensuring that every school has a robust and rehearsed evacuation plan.

The matter is set to be heard next May 16.

Last week, the Directorate of Education (DoE) apprised the High Court of its "zero-tolerance policy" regarding safety in schools, particularly amid concerns related to bomb threats.

Fascination with ISIS can't be dubbed as association: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The Delhi High Court Monday granted bail to an alleged ISIS supporter in a case under the anti-terror law UAPA, saying his fascination with the banned terrorist organisation cannot be dubbed as his association with it.

A bench headed by Justice Suresh Kumar Kait stated that 30-year-old Ammar Abdul Rahiman was, at best, a highly radicalised person who believed in ISIS ideology and was merely downloading and storing certain allegedly objectionable contents on his mobile phone but there was nothing to indicate that he made any endeavour to further disseminate these.

Any curious mind, the court observed, can access and download such content from the internet, which, by itself, is not a crime.

Merely because the mobile device of the appellant was found carrying incriminating material including photographs of terrorist Osama bin Laden, Jihad Promotion, ISIS flags, etc. and he was also accessing lectures of hard-liner Muslim preachers would not be enough to brand him as a member of such terrorist organisation, much less his being acting in furtherance of its cause, the bench, also comprising Justice Manoj Jain, said.

Such type of incriminating material, in today's electronic era, is freely available online and mere accessing the same would not be sufficient to hold that he had associated himself with ISIS.

Everyone wants votes but none dares to campaign in red light areas of UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 6: Everyone wants their votes but no one wants to campaign in these areas. These are the red light areas of major cities in Uttar Pradesh where politicians don't dare to tread.

Candidates are hesitant to be seen here but still send messages through pamphlets to the voters. They even send 'goodies', albeit discreetly, and ask for votes.

In Prayagraj, Meeranagar is one such area that has Madras Gali, Satya Gali, Julaha Gali and Pahadi Gali, which are largely inhabited by sex workers.

According to a source, the women in the area are politically aware and familiar with local politics.

"They have their own political affiliations and watch television to remain abreast with political activities. Some leaders even talk to them on phone and provide whatever facilities they



need. However, no candidate is ever seen here. They campaign by proxy," said a source.

A local trader who owns a garment shop in the area, said, "Campaigning here is done by those who are involved in the 'trade'. They work on behalf of various parties during elections and even ensure a voter turnout on polling day."

Interestingly, he added, most houses in the area hoist flags of whichever party is in power. This is done to avoid police action. In Safedabad in Barabanki

District, the red light area is said to be a SP stronghold.

The maze of narrow lanes and bylanes, with drains overflowing, has SP flags in abundance. Pradeep Yadav, in his early forties, is the "guardian" of the area. "We did not let the BJP win even during the Modi wave. We will again make the SP win this time," he said. There are about 800 women living in these lanes and there is no poll talk.

"These women will vote wherever Yadav says," informed a candidate and added, "There is

no point campaigning because no one listens to us."

Civic amenities in the area are deplorable but no one is concerned - neither the residents, nor the authorities.

In Varanasi, about half a kilometre from the railway station is Shivdaspur. Songs play loudly through the day and night in the lanes that are strewn with garbage. The women here say that they have never seen a leader in person. "Sirf TV par dekha hai," they say.

Similarly, political leaders have never campaigned in Lucknow's 'Chawal wali gali' in the old city area. The 'Chawal wali gali', incidentally, never sold rice. The lane is full of sex workers living here since ages. No one knows how the lane got its name but it is now synonymous with the sex trade.

Situated near Akbari Gate, this lane also has an array of shops selling various items like pickles, unique spices and street food.

'EDUCATION SHOULDN'T SUFFER'

Anand Mahindra offers help to 10-yr-old Delhi boy selling rolls

Sharing a video on X, Mahindra extended his support to the boy who has taken responsibility of his family at this age, and appreciated his efforts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 6: Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra Monday came forward to help a 10-year-old Delhi boy, who was selling rolls after his father's demise, saying that the boy's education should not be affected and his foundation would explore ways of helping him.

Sharing a video on X, Mahindra extended his support to the boy who has taken responsibility of his family at this age, and appreciated his efforts. "Courage, thy name is Jaspreet. But his education



shouldn't suffer. I believe he's in Tilak Nagar, Delhi. If anyone has access to his contact number, please do share it. The Mahindra Foundation team will explore how we can support his education," he wrote.

The post has been viewed over 500K times since being shared. The post saw a lot of responses from many users.

"He is not giving up. This kid has decided to take up the responsibility & stand up for him-

self. His courage is inspiring which is pushing him to stand during odd times," a user wrote.

"His courage and 'never give up' attitude is inspiring! May he get support from the community and do well in future," another user said.

One more user mentioned, "Jaspreet is fearless! Education is crucial. It's great that the Mahindra Foundation is stepping in to support his education."



Cong anti-Sanatan: Nadda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, May 6: In a scathing attack on Congress, BJP president JP Nadda Monday alleged that the grand old party is "anti-Sanatan" and "anti-Ram" and that it joins hands with anti-national forces.



Nadda, who addressed election rallies at Peddapalli and Bhongir in Telangana, also said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accusing the BJP of seeking to end reservations is a case of pot calling the kettle black.

Referring to the Poonch terror attack two days ago, Nadda said a former Punjab Chief Minister (Charanjit Singh Channi) called it a stunt. "Such anti-national leader of Congress, (they) mislead the country like this."

When Balakot air strikes were carried out, Congress leaders shamelessly sought proof, he said.

He further claimed that when Batla House encounter happened in Delhi (in 2008) and terrorists were eliminated, Congress leader Salman Khurshid stated that Sonia Gandhi 'cried bitterly'. "Crying for whom, terrorists," Nadda asked.

In a veiled reference to the recent comments of Maria Alam,

malaria, he added.

Describing the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM, BRS and Congress as 'ABC', he charged that they drive the agenda of the Muslim League ('ye sabhi teeno ke teeno Muslim League ka agenda chalane wali party yaan hai' in Hindi). All of them follow the 'principles and policies' of Tablighi Jamaat and the parties disturb the mainstream, he claimed.

"Are they not supporters of Razakars," he asked.

The Razakars were the private militia of the Nizam of erstwhile Hyderabad state in pre-independent India.

These parties cannot celebrate 'liberation day' September 17 (the day erstwhile princely state of Hyderabad under Nizam rule merged with the Indian Union in 1948) and the BJP, when it forms government in Telangana, would celebrate the day on a grand scale, he said.

Referring to Rahul Gandhi's remarks that the BJP would end reservations, Nadda said 'ulte chor kotwal ko dante' (pot calling the kettle black).

The Congress "hijacked" the reservations of Dalits, adivasis and OBCs time and again, he alleged.



BJD's Bhubaneswar-Central MLA candidate Ananta Narayan Jena files nomination at the sub-collector's office in the Capital city, Monday



BJP's MLA candidate for Barabati-Cuttack Assembly seat Purna Chandra Mohapatra files papers at the sub-collector's office in the Millennium city, Monday

GHASIPURA ASSEMBLY SEAT

Badri, Shambhu, Soumya file papers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hatadihi/Keonjhar, May 6: BJD nominee and Ghasipura MLA Badri Narayan Patra, BJP candidate Shambhunath Rout and independent candidate Soumya Ranjan Patnaik filed their papers on the last day of nomination filing for upcoming election in the office of the Anandapur sub-collector, Monday.



Soumya seeking Badri's blessings by putting the latter's right hand on his head created laughter during the filing of nomination papers

in the area and the issue being discussed in every nook and corner of the Assembly segment.

The development assumes significance as Soumya had targeted Badri two days back. Soumya had informed the mediapersons that time has come for a change and the power needs to be shifted from the hand of those involved in murder, exploitation and goondaraj. And, the people of Ghasipura Assembly constituency are interested in handing over the reins of power in the hands of a good leader.

Notably, Badri has won Ghasipura Assembly seat five times whereas Soumya is contesting from the seat for the first time.

Remove fake content within three hours: EC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The Election Commission (EC) Monday directed political parties to remove fake content from their social media platforms within three hours of such content being brought to their notice.

This is part of directives issued by the poll panel to political parties for responsible and ethical use of social media in election campaigning to ensure a level playing field for all stakeholders after taking cognisance of certain violations by them.

Recently, deepfake videos featuring Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and actors Aamir Khan and Ranveer Singh posted on certain social media handles were taken down and criminal complaints were filed.

The election watchdog also warned the parties against misuse of AI-based tools.

"Taking cognisance of certain violations of MCC and the extant legal provisions by Political Parties/their representatives while using social media for election campaigning, the Commission today has issued directions to political parties for responsible and ethical use of social media in election campaigning to ensure level playing field among all stakeholders," a EC statement said.



Over 35 BJD leaders join Congress party at a merger-cum public meeting at Purusandha panchayat near Agarpada in Bhadrak district in the presence of Congress' Bhandaripokhari Assembly nominee Niranjana Patnaik and other party leaders, Monday



BJD's nominee for Jayadev Assembly constituency Naba Kishore Mallick filing his nomination papers before the returning officer in Bhubaneswar, Monday

Uma, Sujit scuffle during nomination



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 6: Congress candidate for Puri Assembly seat Uma Ballav Rath and Sujit Mohapatra, who has been dropped by the party, engaged in a tussle at the sub-collector's office here during filing of nomination papers, Monday.

According to sources, the two leaders and their supporters reached the sub-collector's office to file the papers but fought with each other, Monday. Sources said both sides indulged in fistcuffs along with tussle with each other. This was the second day when Rath faced attacks, said sources.

Notably, Rath was injured when he was attacked by some unknown miscreants Sunday. Rath, who sustained head injuries, had filed a complaint at

Kumbharpada police station.

Rath said he was campaigning near the bus stand when he was suddenly attacked by unknown people with bricks and glass bottles. Locals intervened and saved him, prompting a police response led by the City DSP.

"Some unknown miscreants assaulted me while I was canvassing near the bus stand. Suddenly, some people came and attacked me," Rath, a former MLA, told reporters.

It is suspected that Rath's candidature as the Congress nominee could have been a reason behind the attack. Though the party had initially announced Sujit Mohapatra as its candidate for the seat, it later dropped him and declared Rath as its nominee. However, Rath said he would not blame anyone.

In UP, political parties mushroom during elections

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, May 6: There is something in Uttar Pradesh that happens during elections - new political parties are born at an alarming rate.

Majority of the parties that mushroom during elections tend to bask in reflected glory with names that sound suspiciously similar to established political parties. Most of them vanish after the elections are over.

These parties are registered but unrecognised by the State Election Commission (SEC).

The latest example of this is the Rashtriya Shoshit Samaj Party (RSSP), headed by controversial leader Swami Prasad Maurya.

The RSSP was born in February this year after Maurya quit the Samajwadi Party. He had earlier walked out of BSP to join the BJP and then left the BJP to join SP.

Maurya announced that he would contest the Kushinagar seat and sought support from the INDIA bloc which did not respond to his feelers.

Two days ago, Maurya opened channels of communication with the BSP and there is a strong buzz that he may return to his parent party and contest from Kushinagar as BSP candidate.

The Peace Party, founded by Ayub, made a debut in 2012 Assembly polls by winning



four Assembly seats. Later, the party vanished from the political horizon and nothing is now heard of it.

Most of the parties that mushroom during the poll season have names that sound similar to established political parties.

There is the Bahujan Maha Party, Bahujan Mukti Party, Bahujan Kranti Party and Bahujan Vijay Party that sound like clones of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

The BSP, incidentally, has the maximum number of clones with the Bharatiya Samaj Party (also BSP) having caused maximum damage to the original by confusing voters in the 2012 Assembly elections.

Other parties basking in reflected glory include Jantantrik Bahujan Samaj Party, Loktantrik

also has a clone that goes by the name of Akhil Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) while the BJP has to counter the Bhartiya Janjagran Party - also BJP.

Among the 115 registered parties with the UP State Election Commission, there are parties with names like Right to Recall Party, Political Justice Party, Apni Jantantrik Party, Bhartiya Labour Party, Parivartan Samaj Party, Sanatan Samaj Party and Bhartiya Maha Shakti Morcha.

There is also the Jan Adhikar Manch floated by former BSP minister Babu Singh Kushwaha.

Kushwaha is now contesting elections from Jaunpur on a Samajwadi symbol.

Former IPS officer Amitabh Thakur's Azad Adhikar Sena is also contesting the elections.

A retired official of the State Election Commission, said, "Most of these parties are promoted by the main political parties so that they can get additional booth agents and additional vehicles in the name of these parties. Most of these parties with names similar to a bigger party, do not even

make an effort to popularise themselves. However, at times, such parties also damage the main outfit by creating confusion in the mind of the voter."

For instance, in 2017 UP Assembly elections, the relatively unknown Pichhda Varg Mahapanchayat Party (PVMP) contested the polls with the matchstick as its poll symbol.

The party claimed to have the support of OBCs "who have been betrayed by almost all parties" and said it would contest all 403 seats. The PVMP failed to make any waves in the polls and its performance was not even worth recording.

The party vanished from the political horizon after that.

The Sarv Sambhav Party (SSP), headed by Bollywood actor Rajpal Yadav, met with a similar fate.

The SSP entered the poll arena in the state in 2017 but nothing was heard about the SSP or its leaders after that.

An SEC official said that the registration of political parties was often done with ulterior motives.

"The Election Commission should debar parties that register themselves and then do not contest elections or even get a specified number of votes. Many of these outfits make good money during elections by outsourcing their agents and vehicles. Strict action needs to be taken in cases of such parties," he said.

Bahujan Samaj Party has the maximum number of clones with the Bharatiya Samaj Party (also BSP) having caused maximum damage to the original by confusing voters in 2012 Assembly elections

of the day quote

BJP is chalking out a blueprint to win polls by spreading lies. Will you vote for a riot plotter PM?
MAMATA BANERJEE | CM, WEST BENGAL

First he ran from Amethi to Wayanad and now he is contesting from Rae Bareilly and the Congress is sure to be wiped out from Rae Bareilly also
ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

Be it the brave women wrestlers or daughters like Ankita Bhandari, the prime minister did not try to provide justice to any daughter. The BJP government has always protected those who commit crimes against women
NETTA D'SOUZA | FORMER CHIEF, ALL INDIA MAHILA CONGRESS

SHORT TAKES

Hoax bomb threat

Ahmedabad: On the eve of Lok Sabha elections in Ahmedabad, as many as 10 schools here received an email Monday threatening bomb blasts, though a police statement said this was a hoax as searches failed to unearth anything suspicious. After being alerted, police as well as bomb detection and disposal squad, dog squad and Crime Branch teams reached these schools and conducted a thorough search, a statement by Ahmedabad City Crime Branch informed. "No explosives were found during the search operation. Our teams are patrolling these areas and technical surveillance has also been initiated about the sender of the email. We appeal to people not to panic and to stay away from rumours. This threat was a hoax," the statement said.

Bomb blast kills teen

Kolkata: A teenage boy was killed and two others were injured in a bomb explosion in West Bengal's Hooghly district Monday, prompting the local BJP MP Locket Chatterjee to block the arterial for two hours demanding NIA probe into the incident. The incident occurred at Pandua in Hooghly district near a pond where a group of boys were playing. Police said the boy succumbed to his injuries in a hospital in Pandua while two other injured persons were transferred to a healthcare facility in Chinsurah for better treatment.

Cash stash recovered

Ranchi: At least six cash counting machines are working non-stop to give a number to the mountain of cash recovered from a room in Jharkhand capital Ranchi during a raid in a money laundering case. Cash worth Rs 34.23 crore has been counted over the past 12 hours, sources said, and several officials are at work to reach a final number. Multiple cash counting machines, officials said, have broken down and new ones brought in. The room where the cash mountain has been unearthed belongs to Jahangir, house help of Sanjiv Lal, a personal secretary to Jharkhand Rural Development minister and Congress leader Alamgir Alam.

5 students drown

Kanniyakumari: Five students of a private medical college in Tiruchirappalli drowned in the sea off the coast of Kanniyakumari Monday, police said. Expressing grief, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin conveyed his condolences and sympathies to the kin of the deceased and said necessary assistance would be provided to the bereaved families after getting the Election Commission's permission.



If the BJP leaders read the words 'generation of wealth' as 'redistribution of wealth', they should either go back to middle school or consult an eye doctor
P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

THREE YEARS TO PEAK COVID-19 CASES

Exactly three years ago, India's daily Covid-19 cases peaked at 4.14 lakh as the country grappled with the worst phase of the pandemic and a return to normality seemed a distant dream. While cases and deaths gradually declined and India crawled back to normality as people learnt to live with the virus, the scars of lockdowns and deaths remained



RESERVATION ROW Will scrap 50% cap: Rahul

The former Congress president again battled for a caste census, saying it will reveal everything about the status of people and change the direction of politics in the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alirajpur, May 6: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday claimed the BJP-led NDA will not even get 150 seats in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls and that these elections were aimed at saving the Constitution which the saffron party and RSS want to change.

Addressing an election rally at Jobat town in Alirajpur district under the Ratlam-Jhabua Lok Sabha seat in Madhya Pradesh, Gandhi also said the Congress government will ensure the 50 per cent cap on reservation is removed in the interest of the people.

"These Lok Sabha elections are for saving the Constitution which the BJP and RSS want to scrap, change and throw away," Gandhi claimed.

The Congress and the opposition INDIA alliance were protecting the Constitution, he said.

"It is due to it (Constitution) that the tribals, Dalits and OBCs are getting benefits. The tribals have the right over water, land and jungles due to the Constitution," Gandhi said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to snatch the people's



BJP leaders have clearly said that they will change the book (Constitution). They have given the slogan of 'abki baar, 400 paar'. Leave aside 400, they won't even get 150 seats
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

rights, he claimed. "We want to stop that," he added.

"Their leaders have said that they will snatch away reservation given to tribals, Dalits and OBCs," Gandhi claimed.

"I want to tell you from this stage that leave aside (talk of) snatching reservation, we are going to raise it above 50 per cent. The court has contained the reservation limit at 50 per cent," he said.

Gandhi said the Congress government will work for giving reservation to tribals, Dalits and OBCs as per their need.

"We call you adivasi, the first owner of the land and jungle.

The Forest Rights Act, PESA have been implemented to protect your rights. They want to reverse the benefit we have extended to you all," Gandhi claimed.

The INDIA alliance, if voted to power, would go ahead with a caste-based census and economic census for the uplift of the tribal, Dalits, OBC and the poor from general castes.

"This is revolutionary work which we are going to do," he said. "Modiji only cares for 22 billionaire businessmen and has waived their loans of lakhs of crores," Gandhi claimed.

The opposition alliance thinks

about the uplift of tribals, Dalits, OBCs and the poor from general castes, he said.

Gandhi alleged that PM Modi lied about his government giving employment to two crore (youth annually).

He further said the Congress wants to turn crores of people into "lakhpathis" in the country.

Under the Mahalaxmi Yojana, a poor woman will be given Rs 1 lakh (annually) until her family is pulled out of poverty, Gandhi said.

"As part of the scheme, a woman will get Rs 8,500 per month," he said.

Gandhi also said the opposition alliance, once voted to power, will enact a law to ensure the minimum support price (MSP) to farmers for their produce.

"As soon as our government is formed, we will waive the loans of farmers," he said.

Gandhi claimed that currently unemployment in the country was the highest in the last 45 years.

The Congress leader also announced an increase in wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) from Rs 250 to Rs 400 per day.

DEROGATORY POST FIR against Nadda, Malviya, Vijayendra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 6: An FIR has been registered against BJP president JP Nadda, the party's IT cell head Amit Malviya and Karnataka unit chief BY Vijayendra in connection with a social media post allegedly intimidating members of SC and ST community not to vote for a particular candidate, police said Monday.

The action was taken following a complaint lodged by the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) with the Election Commission and police Sunday alleging violation of model code of conduct, they said.

In the complaint, the KPCC cited a video uploaded on 'X' by the official account of Karnataka State BJP which, it alleged, is operated by Malviya, on instructions of Nadda, Vijayendra and Social Media incharge - Karnataka BJP, May 4.

"The said video posted on social media featured animated characters of (Congress leader) Rahul Gandhi and (Chief Minister) Siddaramaiah. In the clip, the SC, ST and OBC community are portrayed as "eggs" in a nest and it also suggested Rahul Gandhi planting a big egg labelled as Muslim community. It is projected as though funds are being fed to the chick depicting the Muslim community, which then kicks out SC, ST and OBC communities," it alleged.

Zero tolerance for someone like Prajwal: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asserted that there should be zero tolerance for someone like Prajwal Revanna, and accused the Congress government in Karnataka of allowing the JD(S) MP to go out of the country and releasing the incriminating sex videos after the polls were over in the region dominated by Vokkaligas.

Modi told Times Now that the responsibility to take action in the raging matter lay with the state government as it was a law and order issue, according to the transcript of the interview provided by the broadcaster.

He said the presence of thousands of videos indicates that it is



of the time when the JD(S) was in alliance with the Congress. These videos were gathered when they were in power and they released it during the elections after Vokkaligas exercised their franchise, he added.

The videos were released after he was sent out of the country, the prime minister said, calling the development very suspicious. If the state government had information, it should have kept a watch and there should have

Hoax bomb emails: Centre favours enhanced security, CCTVs in schools

New Delhi: Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla Monday reviewed situation in the wake of hoax emails received by some schools in the national capital last week and emphasised the need to enhance security, CCTV cameras and regular monitoring of emails in the schools. Bhalla also asked the Delhi Police and schools to have close coordination for an effective response mechanism so that misinformation does not create any unnecessary panic. "Home Secretary reviews the situation in wake of hoax emails received by some schools in Delhi last week. He stressed the need to prepare detailed protocol and SOPs to handle any such situation in future," a home ministry spokesperson said. "Home Secretary also emphasised the need to enhance security, CCTV cameras and regular monitoring of emails in the schools," the spokesperson said. The meeting was attended by Delhi Chief Secretary and Delhi Police Commissioner. On May 1, more than 200 schools in Delhi-NCR received an identical threat e-mail claiming that explosives had been planted on their premises, triggering massive evacuations and searches as panic-stricken parents rushed to pick up their children.

No breakthrough in terrorist attack on IAF convoy, posters of accused 'appear'

Jammu: A breakthrough eluded the security forces in the Poonch terrorist attack on a convoy of Indian Air Force even as a massive search operation in a vast area of the Jammu and Kashmir district entered the third day Monday, officials said. The streets in and around Surankote woke up to posters of two people, named as prime accused in the case, and announcement of a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh for giving information. Though the police and the Army denied putting up these posters, officials in the know of the development said that an "enthusiastic" unit of the security forces had decided to put up the posters initially but took them down later after a reprimand from their superiors. More than 20 persons were detained for questioning as the security forces are gathering clues to neutralise the terrorists who fled into nearby dense forests after carrying out the ambush near Shahsitar in Surankote area Saturday evening. Five IAF personnel were injured in the attack and one of them later succumbed to injuries at a military hospital.



MARINE HEATWAVE

Coral bleaching in Lakshadweep intensifies

Marine heatwaves are rare extreme weather events that involve prolonged periods of abnormally high ocean temperatures

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, May 6: Researchers at the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have recorded widespread bleaching affecting the coral reefs in the Lakshadweep Sea due to marine heatwaves.

A survey from several Lakshadweep islands showed that a considerable percentage of the hard coral species have undergone severe bleaching, primarily due to a prolonged period of marine heatwave affecting the region since late October 2023.

These temperatures often exceed the 90th percentile of typical regional ocean temperatures based on historical data.

In Lakshadweep, the Degree Heating Week (DHW) indicator,



which measures accumulated heat stress, has surged above 4 degrees Celsius-weeks.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this level of DHW poses a substantial risk of coral bleaching, threatening the region's diverse marine

ecosystems.

Dr KR Sreenath, senior scientist of CMFRI said such heat stress levels signify a severe threat to coral health, leading to extensive bleaching where corals lose the symbiotic algae (zooxanthellae), compromising their survival by depriving them

of essential nutrients.

"If the DHW continues to rise, reaching beyond 12 degrees Celsius weeks, it could precipitate an unprecedented biodiversity crisis due to multispecies mortality," said Dr Sreenath.

According to Dr Shelton Padua, senior scientist at CMFRI, the primary causes of these marine heatwaves are excessive heat atmospheric transfer coupled with shifts in ocean currents, leading to unusually high water temperatures.

"Since October 27, 2023, the Lakshadweep Sea, spanning from 80.0 to 12.0 N latitude and 71.0 to 75.0 E longitude, has been experiencing these conditions, with temperatures consistently registering rises greater than 1 degree Celsius above the norm," said Dr Padua.

Viewing that the health of marine ecosystems is integral to the livelihoods of coastal communities, influencing tourism and fisheries sectors, Dr Sreenath said that the ongoing marine heatwaves are likely to cause significant economic losses by disrupting their vital ecosystem services.

"Death and disintegration of coral reefs can threaten the coastal communities, leaving them vulnerable to the impacts of sea level aggressions," added Dr Sreenath.

CMFRI has been actively undertaking studies to better understand ecological changes affecting coral reefs besides initiating a comprehensive national project aimed at investigating the resilience potential of various coral reefs in India.

INDIA bloc echoing voice of Pak: Trivedi

One INDIA bloc leader is giving cover fire to Pakistan on the Mumbai terror attack, another is speaking about its nuclear weapon while somebody is describing the martyrdom of a soldier as a poll stunt
SUDHANSHU TRIVEDI | SPOKESPERSON, BJP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The BJP Monday highlighted a series of statements made by INDIA bloc leaders that, it said, were against the nation's interest, as the ruling party accused the opposition of echoing the voice of Pakistan and asked people to be wary of such "traitors".

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited Maharashtra Congress leader Vijay Wadettiwar's allegation that an RSS-affiliated police officer and not terrorist Ajmal Kasab killed the then anti-terrorism squad chief Hemant Karkare and former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi's claim that the attack on IAF personnel in Jammu and Kashmir was a poll stunt to slam the party.

He cited five other instances, including Pakistani leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain's criticism of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and praise of Rahul Gandhi, and Farooq Abdullah's reference to Pakistan having nuclear weapons, to allege that these INDIA bloc leaders are echoing the neighbouring country's stand.

"If the defence minister is saying it, then go ahead. Who are we to stop? But remember, they (Pakistan) are also not wearing bangles. It has atom bombs, and unfortunately, that atom bomb will fall on us," Abdullah said.

What the National Conference leader has said is very "astounding, revealing and shocking" as so far only a few Pakistani leaders considered reckless or radicalised religious leaders have made such comments, Trivedi claimed.

Replying to a question related to Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir, the former J-K chief minister had

said that Pakistan is not wearing bangles and has nuclear weapons. Such remarks are also an insult to women, the BJP leader said.

Noting that Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has written a column in a Bangladeshi newspaper slamming Modi while analysing the ongoing Lok Sabha elections, Rajya Sabha MP Trivedi said while elections are being held in India he is building public opinion in another country.

The Congress leader has also referred to the Valley as India-administered-Kashmir, he alleged.

Tharoor, however, later clarified saying he does not agree with that usage and has never used such a term in any of his writings or statements anywhere, ever.

"It has been interpolated by the editors of the newspaper that my syndicated column appeared in. I disavow such language unequivocally, but have no control over what foreign newspaper editors do," he said in a post on X.

Modi had said that the Congress manifesto carried Muslim League's imprints, he noted, adding that every word spoken by its leaders echoed Pakistan's stand. The Left parties want the country's nuclear stockpiles removed, he said.

All these developments are not merely a coincidence but a deliberate and dangerous experiment, Trivedi said.

"In whose hands these leaders are playing," he asked, telling people to be wary of "traitors" hiding within the country.

Various kinds of powers outside are attempting to halt the rise of a proud and confident India, he said.

Reports of NEET-UG question paper leak baseless, says NTA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: The reports claiming question paper leak in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG are "completely baseless and without any ground", the National Testing Agency (NTA) clarified Monday.

Stressing that every question paper has been "accounted for", the NTA said that purported images of the question paper circulating on social media have no relation with the actual paper.

"It has been ascertained from NTA's security protocols and Standard Operating Procedures that the social media posts pointing towards any paper leak are completely baseless and without any ground. To put rumours to rest, it is also stated that every single question paper has been accounted for," said Sadhana Parashar, Senior Director, NTA.

Parashar said that no external person or agency can access the centres once the examination starts.

She said that after the gates of the examination centres are closed, no one from outside is permitted access inside the halls, which are under CCTV surveillance.

"All other photographs of question papers circulating in social media have no relation to the actual examination question paper which has been administered," she added.

The entrance exam was conducted Sunday at 4,750 centres in 571 cities including 14 cities abroad.

international

of the day quote

These results suggest we are heading for a hung parliament with Labour as the largest party
RISHI SUNAK | PM, UK

We believe that the isolation of Russia, and especially of its criminal leader, must be continued
GABRIELIUS LANDSBERGIS | FOREIGN MINISTER, LITHUANIA

Our people and the government will give a warm welcome to Indian arrivals. As the Tourism Minister, I want to tell Indians to please be a part of Maldives' tourism. Our economy depends on tourism
IBRAHIM FAISAL | TOURISM MINISTER, MALDIVES

SHORT TAKES

Xi meets Macron

Paris: China's President Xi Jinping arrived at the French presidential palace Monday for a two-day state visit that is expected to focus both on trade disputes and diplomatic efforts to convince Beijing to use its influence to move Russia toward ending the war in Ukraine. In Paris, Xi first joined a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen meant to address broader EU concerns. Macron said in his introductory remarks the meeting would first address trade issues and how to ensure "fair competition", then the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.

Panama's new prez

Panama City: José Raúl Mulino said he was practically retired from politics just over six months ago. Now, he'll be Panama's president for the next five years. Standing before a pack of supporters Sunday night, Mulino said: "I never imagined this." In a historic and tumultuous election, preliminary results put Mulino on top to lead the normally sleepy Central American nation through a moment of political tension, historic migration and a struggling economy.

Trump fined \$1,000

New York: The judge presiding over Donald Trump's hush money trial has fined him \$1,000 for violating his gag order and sternly warned the former president that additional violation could result in jail time. The fine marks the second sanction for Trump for inflammatory comments about witnesses since the start of the trial last month. He was fined \$9,000 last week for nine violations. Judge Juan M Merchan warned Monday that additional gag order violations could potentially result in jail time, though he said that was "the last thing I want to do".

Floods toll surges

Rio De Janeiro: Massive floods in Brazil's southern Rio Grande do Sul state have killed at least 75 people over the last seven days, and another 103 were reported missing, local authorities said Sunday. At least 155 people were injured, while damage from the rains forced more than 88,000 people from their homes. Approximately 16,000 took refuge in schools, gymnasiums and other temporary shelters. The floods left a wake of devastation, including landslides, washed-out roads and collapsed bridges across the state. More than 800,000 people are without a water supply, according to the civil defence agency.



One of the biggest challenges India faces is China. China in every aspect will never treat India as an equal partner
MUKESH AGNI | PRESIDENT, US-INDIA STRATEGIC AND PARTNERSHIP FORUM

1ST ANNIV OF CHARLES' CORONATION

Britain's King Charles III Monday marked the first anniversary of his coronation following a difficult year that has seen a cancer diagnosis and continuing tensions with his estranged son Prince Harry



Flee Rafah: Israel orders Gazans

TO BACKGROUND OF BOMBS, PALESTINIANS FLEE RAFAH TO SEEK SHELTER ELSEWHERE ONCE AGAIN

RAFAH, May 6: Israel's military carried out airstrikes in Rafah Monday, residents said, hours after Israel told Palestinians to evacuate parts of the southern Gaza city where more than a million people uprooted by the war have been sheltering. Fears are growing of a full-blown assault in Rafah, long threatened by Israel, against holdouts of the Palestinian militant group Hamas as ceasefire talks in Cairo stall. Instructed by Arabic text messages, phone calls, and flyers to move to what the Israeli military called an "expanded humanitarian zone" 20 km (7 miles) away, some Palestinian families began trundling away under chilly spring rain. A senior Hamas official said the evacuation order was a "dangerous escalation" that would have consequences. "The US administration, alongside the occupation, bears responsibility for this terrorism," the official, Sami Abu Zuhri, told Reuters, referring to Israel's alliance with Washington. Aid agencies have warned that the evacuation order will lead to an even worse humanitarian disaster in the crowded coastal enclave of 2.3 million people reeling from seven months of war.



34,735 Palestinians killed and 78,108 injured in Israel's military offensive on Gaza since October 7, says Gaza health ministry

I say to the leaders of the world: No amount of pressure, no decision by any international forum will stop Israel from defending itself. Never again is now
BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | PM, ISRAEL

Any Israeli operation in Rafah will put truce talks in jeopardy
IZZAT AL-RASHIQ | HAMAS OFFICIAL

"Forcing over a million displaced Palestinians from Rafah to evacuate without a safe destination is not only unlawful but would lead to catastrophic consequences," British charity ActionAid said. Israel's military said it had urged residents of Rafah to evacuate in a "limited scope" operation. It gave no specific reasons nor did it say if offensive action might follow. Nick Maynard, a British surgeon trying to leave Gaza Monday, said in a voice message from the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing into Egypt: "Two huge bombs have just gone off immediately outside the crossing. There's a lot of gunfire as well about 100 meters from us. We are very un-

clear whether we will get out." "Driving through Rafah, the tension was palpable with people evacuating as rapidly as they could." Israel has been threatening to launch incursions in Rafah, which it says harbours thousands of Hamas fighters and potentially dozens of hostages. Victory is impossible without taking Rafah, it says. The prospect of a high-casualty operation worries Western powers and neighbouring Egypt, which is trying to mediate a new round of truce talks between Israel and Hamas under which the Palestinian Islamist group might free some hostages. The Rafah plan has opened an unusually public rift between Israel and Washington, which has repeatedly warned its ally not to attack the city because of potential civilian casualties. An Israeli broadcaster, Army Radio, said the evacuations were focused on a few peripheral districts of Rafah, from which people would be directed to tent cities in nearby Khan Younis

"Where can we go?"

Amid pouring rain, some of those sheltering in Rafah said they had begun packing up their things from the densely packed tents and preparing to leave even before Israel's directive arrived. "Whatever happens, my tent is ready," a resident told AFP. But others said the area they were being told to flee to was already overcrowded, and they did not trust that it would be safe. Abdul Rahman Abu Jazar, 36, said he and 12 family members were in the designated evacuation area. Jazar and his family did not know what to do, he said, because the "humanitarian zone" they were told to head for "does not have enough room for us to make tents because they are (already) full of displaced people". "Where can we go? We do not know. How will we deal with her after that? Should we watch her die without being able to do anything?" he told AFP.

'NEW CHAPTER'

EU ends rule of law proceedings against Poland under Tusk

BRUSSELS, May 6: The European Union Commission is to end six years of rule of law proceedings against Poland. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Monday, marking the opening of a "new chapter" for the country. The proceedings were launched when far-right populist party PiS ruled the country. Donald Tusk, a pro-EU liberal, became prime minister last year, putting Poland on a more pro-EU course. The EU said in a statement that Poland had launched a series of legislative and non-legislative measures to address concerns about the independence of the justice system. "Today marks the opening of a new chapter for Poland," Von der Leyen said in a post on X. Poland had recognised the primacy of EU law and was committed to implementing the judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights, the EU said. Poland's Law and Justice (PiS) party, which ruled for eight years, had carried out a deep overhaul of the judiciary which the EU said damaged democratic checks and balances and brought courts under political influence.

INDIA MATTERS

Ferry service to resume between Lanka's Jaffna, Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu



Colombo: The passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam in India and Kankesanthurai (KKS) suburb of Jaffna district in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka is set to resume May 13, the Indian High Commission said Monday. The service, which had been launched in October last year after nearly 40 years, was halted a few days later owing to rough weather. "Strengthening maritime connectivity between India and Sri Lanka was a vital component of the vision document for economic partnership jointly adopted during the visit of the president of Sri Lanka to India in July 2023. The resumption of the ferry service is an affirmation of the people-centric policies of the Government of India," the high commission said in a statement.

Williams set for 3rd space trip

Washington: Indian-origin astronaut Sunita Williams is ready to fly into space for the third time Tuesday as the pilot aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft in its first crewed test flight. Boeing's Starliner will blast off for the International Space Station from Cape Canaveral in Florida. Starliner will carry Williams, 58, and Butch Wilmore to the International Space Station, marking what could be a momentous and long-awaited victory for the beleaguered Boeing programme. "We are all here because we are all ready. Our friends and family have heard about it and we've talked about it and they are happy and proud that we are part of the process to fix it all," the BBC quoted Williams as saying. The mission has been delayed for several years because of setbacks in the spacecraft's development.



RESPONSE TO WEST'S THREAT

Putin orders N-drills near Ukraine

Moscow has been making steady gains in eastern Ukraine and stepped up aerial attacks and shelling on border regions



MOSCOW, May 6: Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered nuclear weapons drills near Ukraine, Moscow said Monday, in response to "threats" from Western officials to deploy NATO troops to Ukraine. The announcement came as Russian forces said they captured two villages in the war-torn regions of Donetsk and Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine, where outgunned and out-manned Ukrainian troops have struggled to hold the line. Russian officials in the border region of Belgorod meanwhile announced that Ukrainian attack drones had killed six people and wounded over 30, including several children. Putin has upped his nuclear rhetoric since ordering his army into Ukraine in 2022, warning in February there was a "real" risk of nuclear war. The defence ministry gave no date for the drills, but said they would involve the air force, navy

and troops stationed near Ukraine. It said they were aimed at ensuring Russian territorial integrity in the face of Western "threats." The Kremlin specified that the exercises were a response to statements by French President Emmanuel Macron and British officials. Russia has in recent days hit out at Macron for telling The Economist magazine he was "not ruling anything out" in the West's response to the conflict in Ukraine, including sending troops to the country. It has also blasted UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron for saying Kyiv has the right to strike targets inside Russia.

'DANGEROUS RHETORIC'

"They are talking about the readiness and even the intention of sending armed contingents to Ukraine -- that is, in fact, to put NATO soldiers in front of the Russian military," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. Peskov singled out "dangerous rhetoric" issued by Macron, who said the question of sending troops to Ukraine would "legitimately" arise if Russia broke through Ukrainian front lines and Kyiv made such a request. Macron made similar statements in February. Ukrainian forces have been dependent on Western military aid to battle Russia but NATO has

This is a completely new round of escalating tensions. It is unprecedented and requires special measures
DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESMAN, KREMLIN

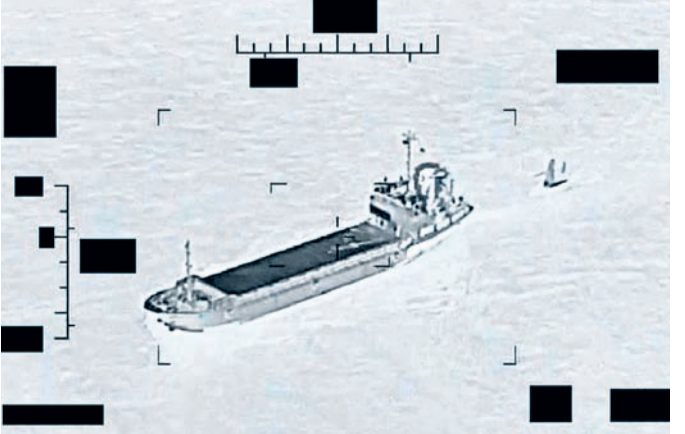
said it will not send troops into Ukraine. Russia's defence ministry said troops from the Southern Military District, which borders Ukraine and includes the occupied Ukrainian territories will take part in the drills. "During the exercise, a set of measures will be taken to practise the preparation and use of non-strategic nuclear weapons," it said in a statement. Russia also threatened to strike British military facilities and said it would hold drills simulating the use of battlefield nuclear weapons amid sharply rising tensions over comments by senior Western officials about possibly deeper involvement in the war in Ukraine. After summoning the British ambassador to the Foreign Ministry, Moscow warned that Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory with UK-supplied weapons could bring retaliatory strikes against British military facilities and equipment on Ukrainian soil or elsewhere.

Houthi, Ukraine sea drone attacks reshape ocean warfare

SEA DRONE WARFARE HAS ARRIVED AS AMERICA IS FLOUNDERING, SEEKING TO COUNTER CHINA'S NAVAL POWER

WASHINGTON, May 6: The US Navy's efforts to build a fleet of unmanned vessels are faltering because the Pentagon remains wedded to big shipbuilding projects, according to some officials and company executives, exposing a weakness as sea drones reshape naval warfare. The lethal effectiveness of sea drones has been demonstrated in the Black Sea where Ukraine has deployed remote-controlled speed boats packed with explosives to sink Russian frigates and minesweepers since late 2022.

Yemeni-backed Houthi rebels have employed similar vessels against commercial shipping in the Red Sea in recent months, albeit without success. These tactics have caught the attention of the Pentagon, which is incorporating lessons from Ukraine and the Red Sea into its plans to counter China's rising naval power in the Pacific, Pentagon Spokesman Eric Pahon told Reuters. In a signal of the Pentagon's intent, Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks announced an initiative in August - named Replicator - to deploy hundreds of small, relatively cheap air and sea drones within the next 18-24 months to match China's growing military threat. This public show of commitment masks years of hesitation by the US Navy to build a fleet of unmanned vessels despite repeated warnings this was the future of maritime warfare, according to interviews with a dozen people with direct knowledge of the US sea drone plans, including Navy officers, Pentagon officials, and sea drone company executives. Two Navy sources and three executives at sea drone manufacturers said the biggest impediment to progress has been a Department of Defense (DoD) budget process that prioritizes big ships and submarines built by legacy defense contractors. "At some point, you hit the DC problem," said Philipp Stratmann, CEO at Ocean Power Technologies (OPT), a New Jersey-based firm that supplies



the US Navy with the WAM-V, an autonomous surface drone. "You hit the fact that there is a military industrial complex that has the best lobbyists and knows exactly how the money flows and contracting works in the DoD." A Navy spokesperson said it "acquires capabilities based on fleet demand signals", referring to the messages headquarters receive from commanders at sea. The Navy has a budget of \$172 million this year for small and

medium-sized underwater sea drones, falling to \$101.8 million in 2025, the spokesperson said. That's a tiny fraction of the \$63 billion Navy procurement budget proposed by President Joe Biden's administration for 2025.

Military sea drones can range from missile-armed speed boats to minehunting miniature submarines and solar-powered sailboats equipped with high-definition spy cameras, underwater sensors and loudspeakers used to holler warnings at enemy ships. There aren't enough Navy sailors trained to pilot drones or to analyze vast swathes of data sent back from the craft's cameras and sensors, the sources said. The spokesperson said the Navy was in the process of improving its data collection and analysis from sensors. Pentagon spokesman Pahon said the DoD has been "laser-focused on accelerating innovation over the last three years", including the use of sea drones. Acknowledging budget chal-

lenges, Pahon said the Pentagon was using innovative ways to cross "the valley of death", a term used to describe the torturous approval process new inventions travel through to be purchased in large quantities. **REPLICATOR PROGRAMME** One example Pahon cited was the Replicator program: the short-term, \$500 million-a-year project is designed to cut through bureaucracy and fast track the deployment of thousands of cheap aerial and sea drones. These drones will be used to match China's rapidly-growing air and naval power in the Asia-Pacific region, the Pentagon's Hicks said at the project's launch in August. She said Replicator is being funded mainly by reallocating funds from the existing Pentagon budget. As part of the initiative, the Pentagon in January issued a solicitation for private companies to deliver small sea drones to the Navy, demanding production capacity of 120 vessels per year, with deployment beginning in April 2025.

business

of the **quote**

As we go forward post-elections, you will start to see inflation. This is my forecast and I will be very happy if it is proven wrong but it seems that post-election, we will start to see a 4 per cent kind of inflation

VARUN BERRY
BRITANNIA INDUSTRIES VICE CHAIRMAN & MD

Despite the GST rate being less than the prescribed Revenue Neutral Rate and COVID-19 affecting the revenues, GST collections (as a percentage of GDP) have now reached the levels they were before GST (both net and gross)

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Balanced trade would be good for our own people, our civilisation and would be our gift to the world

SRIDHAR VEMBU | ZOH0'S CEO

SHORT TAKES

CIL's contribution to state coffers up

New Delhi: State-owned Coal India Ltd's contribution to the government exchequer increased by 6.4 per cent to ₹60,140.31 crore in FY24, over the financial year 2022-23. Coal India Ltd (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, paid ₹56,524.11 crore to the government exchequer in FY23, according to provisional figures of the coal ministry. Total levies paid to the government in March 2024 also went up by 14.8 per cent to ₹6,069.18 crore from ₹5,282.59 crore paid in the corresponding month of FY23. Of the total ₹60,140.31 crore paid to the government exchequer in FY24, maximum amount of ₹13,268.55 crore was made to the state government of Jharkhand, followed by ₹12,836.20 crore to the Odisha government, ₹11,890.79 crore to Chhattisgarh, ₹10,865.96 crore to Madhya Pradesh, and ₹6,188.89 crore to Maharashtra among others.

Indian Bank Q4 net jumps 55%

New Delhi: Public sector lender Indian Bank reported a 55 per cent jump in net profit at ₹2,247 crore in March quarter of 2023-24. The bank had a net profit of ₹1,447 crore in March quarter of the preceding fiscal. Total income increased to ₹16,887 crore in March quarter of FY24, from ₹14,238 crore in the fourth quarter of FY23. Net Interest Income (NII) increased by 9 per cent YoY to ₹6,015 crore in March quarter of FY24, from ₹5,508 crore in March quarter of FY23. For full 2023-24 fiscal, net profit went up by 53 per cent YoY to ₹8,063 crore, from ₹5,282 crore in FY23. Total income for FY24 increased to ₹63,482 crore, from ₹52,085 crore in FY23. Shares of Indian Bank were trading at ₹535.75, down 1.44 per cent over previous close on BSE.

Marico Q4 net rises 4.9%

New Delhi: Homegrown FMCG major Marico Ltd Monday reported a 4.9 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹320 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2024. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹305 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal, Marico said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated revenue from operations during the quarter under review stood at ₹2,278 crore as against ₹2,240 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses in the fourth quarter were lower at ₹1,894 crore compared to ₹1,907 crore a year ago, the company said.

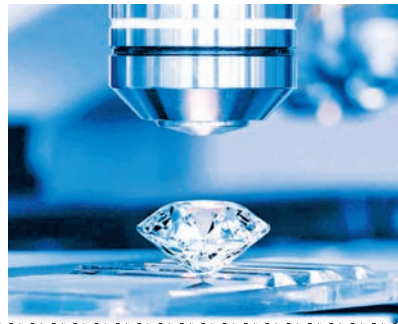


The basic principle is that CBDC can have the same degree of anonymity as cash, no more and no less

SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR

EXPORTS OF LAB-GROWN DIAMONDS TO GROW

Exports of lab-grown diamonds are expected to rise by 7-9 per cent to \$1,500-1,530 million in 2024-25 as demand for naturally mined diamonds remains sluggish, a report by CareEdge Advisory said Monday. Both domestic consumption and exports of man-made diamonds are expected to increase this fiscal due to their low cost, the report said



Service activity growth in April among fastest in 14 years: PMI

LATEST UPTURN IN OUTPUT ATTRIBUTED TO FAVOURABLE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, DEMAND STRENGTH AND RISING INTAKES OF NEW WORK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



On the job front, a few service providers in India showed an increased appetite for new hires in April, amid rising inflows of new business. However, several companies indicated that payroll numbers were sufficient for current requirements, and the rate of job creation was marginal and softer than that seen at the end of the previous fiscal year.

"In response to increased new orders, firms expanded their staffing levels, though the pace of hiring growth decelerated," Bhandari said.

On the price front, wage pressures and higher food prices meanwhile led to another increase in cost burdens, which firms partially passed on to their customers.

"Input costs continued to rise sharply, albeit slower than in March, but resulted in squeezed margins for service firms, as only part of the price rise was passed on to clients through output charges," Bhandari said.

Meanwhile, confidence among service providers towards the year-ahead outlook for business activity improved to a 3-month high.

Marketing efforts and efficiency gains, alongside plans to price competitively and predictions that demand conditions will remain favourable, boosted optimism, the survey said.

Meanwhile, the HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index moderated to 61.5 in April, from 61.8 in March, the latest reading was one of the highest seen in close to 14 years and signalled a substantial rate of expansion across the private sector.

"In terms of overall activity, aggregate output across both the manufacturing and service sectors rose significantly in April, albeit at a slightly slower pace, indicating sustained health in these sectors," Bhandari said.

During April, manufacturers continued to note a stronger increase in new business intakes than service providers. Aggregate sales rose sharply, and at one of the fastest rates since mid-2010.

Composite PMI indices are weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices. Weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to official GDP data.

BSNL to launch 4G services across India in August

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: State-owned BSNL will start rolling out 4G services across the country from August, using completely indigenous technology in line with the government's 'Atmanirbhar' policy, according to official sources.

BSNL officials claimed to have recorded peak speed of 40-45 megabit per second on the 4G network which has been rolled out in the premium spectrum band of 700 megahertz (Mhz) as well as in 2,100 Mhz band during the pilot phase.

The company has rolled out 4G services in Punjab using indigenous developed technology by IT company TCS and state-run telecom research organisation C-DoT-led consortium and onboarded around 8 lakh subscribers.

"The 4G core developed by C-DoT is performing very well in the BSNL network in Punjab. It was installed in July last year. It takes 12 month to prove the success of such complex technology but the C-DoT core has stabilised within 10 months.

BSNL will launch atmanirbhar 4G technology across the country in August," a senior government official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI.

The core network is a collection of network hardware, devices, and software that provides fundamental services in a telecommunication network. Telecom regulator Trai in a recent paper explained core as part of a network that offers the functionality of aggregation, call control, switching, authentication, charging, gateway functionality, etc.

TCS, Tejas Networks and government-owned ITI have bagged orders worth about ₹19,000 crore from BSNL for deploying 4G network which is upgradable to 5G.

Sensex closes flat, Nifty slips on profit-booking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 6: Benchmark Sensex closed almost flat in a range-bound trade Monday as investors booked profits in index heavyweights amid high valuation concerns.

The 30-share BSE Sensex edged up 17.39 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 73,895.54. The barometer hit a high of 74,359.69 and a low of 73,786.29.

The broader NSE Nifty declined 33.15 points or 0.15 per cent to close at 22,442.70.

From the Sensex basket, Kotak Mahindra Bank jumped 5 per cent after the company reported a 25 per cent growth in its March quarter net profit at ₹5,302 crore, limited by a drop in the core income due to narrow interest margins.

Tata Consultancy Services, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, Sun Pharma, Tech Mahindra and IndusInd Bank were among the other major gainers.

Titan tanked 7 per cent after its March quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

State Bank of India, NTPC, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro were the other laggards.

The domestic indices traded in a range-bound manner, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"The broader indices also witnessed major selling pressure due to valuation concerns and profit-booking," he added.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge declined 1.06 per cent, midcap index dipped 0.95 per cent.

Consumer durables tanked 1.95 per cent, services declined 1.95 per cent, utilities (1.76 per cent), power (1.26 per cent), industrials (0.80 per cent) and commodities (0.78 per cent).

Healthcare, IT, auto, realty and tech were the gainers.

Aditya Gaggar Director of Progressive Shares said that a steep correction in PSU stocks put pressure on the index to trade lower. A vertical fall in the Mid and Smallcaps dented the market sentiments further however, select FMCG, IT, and Pharma counters supported the market, he added.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.80 per cent to USD 83.62 a barrel. In Asian markets, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory. Japan and South Korea's markets were closed for the holidays.

European markets were trading with gains.

MF stake in NSE-listed firms at all-time high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 6: Mutual funds' ownership in NSE-listed companies reached an all-time high of 8.92 per cent in three months ended March 2024 propelled by net inflows of ₹81,539 crore during the quarter, according to primeinfobase.com, an initiative of Prime Database Group.

In comparison, the holding of mutual funds was at 8.81 per cent in the quarter ended December 2023. LIC, the single-largest domestic institutional investor, saw its share (across 280 companies where it owns more than 1 per cent) increasing to 3.75 per cent as of March 2024 from 3.64 per cent as of December 2023.

The share of Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), which includes domestic mutual funds, insurance companies, banks, financial institutions, pension funds,

Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) as a whole increased to 16.05 per cent in the quarter under review from 15.96 per cent in the preceding quarter. This increase was on the back of a huge inflow of ₹1.08 lakh crore. On the other hand, the share of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) declined to an 11-year low of 17.68 per cent as of March 2024, down from 18.19 per cent as on December 2023, resulting in the gap between FPI and DII holding narrowing to an all-time low with DII holding now being just 9.23 per cent lower than FPI holding. The widest gap between FPI and DII holding was in the quarter ended March 31, 2015, when DII holding was at 49.82 per cent. "Indian markets are moving towards Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) with the share of DIIs set to overtake that of FPIs in the next few quarters," Pranav Haldea, Managing Director, PRIME Database Group, said.

Tanishq presents 'GlamDays'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 6: With the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya approaching, Tanishq, India's largest jewellery retail brand from the house of Tata unveils 'GlamDays', a stunning and versatile range of contemporary daily wear jewellery inspired by designs from around the world.

Combining elegance with a modern fashion-forward aesthetic, GlamDays promises to elevate your everyday style, becoming a treasured addition to every woman's wardrobe. In addition to this versatile range, Tanishq will be hosting a series of engaging and interactive styling sessions at its stores. The styling sessions are curated to provide customers with a personalised experience with stylists offering expert advice and guidance to help customers discover the perfect daily wear pieces to complement their individual style and personality.



With over 10,000 unique designs to choose from and create a stunning new look every day you and your jewellery can #MakeEverydaySparkle. Drawing inspiration from diverse global designs, GlamDays redefines everyday elegance with stylish yet versatile daily wear jewellery that can be adorned everyday from AM to PM. To add to the excitement, Tanishq is also offering customers up to 20% off on making charges of gold jewellery and on diamond jewellery value. In addition, customers can also make use of Tanishq's 'Gold Exchange Program' wherein customers can avail upto 100% exchange value on old gold purchased from any jeweller in India.

ICICI Bank enables UPI facility in India for NRI customers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 6: ICICI Bank Monday announced that it has enabled instant payment facility UPI for its non-resident Indian (NRI) customers in India through their international mobile numbers.

According to the bank, this will significantly enhance convenience of making everyday payments.

"With this facility, the NRI customers of the bank can make payments for their utility bills, merchant and e-commerce transactions with their international mobile number registered with their NRE/NRO bank account held with ICICI Bank in India," a statement released here by the bank said. According to the statement, the bank has made this service available through its mobile banking app iMobile Pay.

Indian airlines to cater to half of int'l traffic by FY'28: CRISIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 6: As much as half of the country's international air passenger traffic is expected to be catered by Indian airlines by financial year 2027-28, credit ratings agency CRISIL said Monday.

The share of Indian airlines in international passenger traffic, including originating or terminating as well as the traffic transitioning through the country, is seen surging 700 basis points to around 50 per cent by 2027-28, from 43 per cent in the previous fiscal, it said.

The improvement would be driven by Indian airlines deploying additional aircraft and adding new routes in the international segment, as well as their inherent advantage of superior domestic connectivity compared with foreign carriers, CRISIL Ratings said in its report.

The report noted that business profiles of Indian carriers will strengthen as a result of their rising share in international traffic, which is more profitable than the domestic segment.

India's international passenger traffic grew to around 70 million in fiscal 2024, from a low of 10 million in pandemic-hit fiscal 2021, and has surpassed the pre-pandemic level, according to CRISIL.

The share of Indian airlines, which was rising steadily earlier, picked up pace since the pandemic, it said.

"A noticeable shift in spending patterns has emerged after the pandemic, as evident in the increasing inclination of Indians towards international leisure travel. Increasing disposable incomes, easing visa requirements, growing number of airports and enhanced air travel connectivity are boosting international



travel," said Manish Gupta, Senior Director and Deputy Chief Ratings Officer at CRISIL Ratings.

The government's focus on making India a hub for tourism is also expected to provide a fillip to inbound traffic.

Thus, international passenger traffic is likely to clock a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10-11 per cent over the next four fiscals, against a mere 5 per cent CAGR in the four years prior to the pandemic, he added.

Indian airlines have added 55 new international routes over the past 15 months, taking their tally beyond 300, it said.

These include direct flights originating from additional cities to popular long-haul destinations in the United States, Europe and Australia, effectively reducing flying time and eliminating layovers, CRISIL said.

It also said that Indian airlines are also aiming to deploy additional aircraft on the short- and medium-haul international routes and leveraging codeshare agreements with major global airlines to offer onward connectivity to passengers.

As such, CRISIL said, Indian airlines have certain natural advantages in cornering a larger share of the country's international traffic compared with foreign airlines.

They have superior domestic connectivity than their overseas counterparts, which serve only select Indian cities, and can offer end-to-end international connectivity on a single ticket to

travellers from tier 2 and tier 3 cities, the report stated.

India's geographic location also lends itself well to air connections between the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific regions, potentially positioning the country as a hub for international travel, the report noted.

"To capitalise on the growth in international travel, Indian airlines are investing in widebody and long-range narrow body aircraft for network expansion, adding new international routes and introducing long-haul non-stop flights to key destinations," said Ankit Kedia, Director, CRISIL Ratings.

Aided by the planned fleet addition and network expansion strategy, Indian airlines could log a CAGR of 14-15 per cent in the international segment over the next four fiscals, taking their market share to 50 per cent, Kedia said

INDIANS RELAY INTO PARIS



Nassau (Bahamas), May 6: The Indian men's and women's 4x400m relay teams qualified for Paris Olympics after finishing second in their respective second-round heats at the World Athletics Relays here Monday.

In the women's competition, the quartet of Rupal Chaudhary, MR Poovamma, Jyothika Sri Dandi and Subha Venkatesan clocked 3 minutes and 29.35 seconds to finish second behind Jamaica (3:28.54) in heat number one to book a Paris Games ticket.

Later, the men's squad of Muhammed Anas Yahiyah, Muhammed Ajmal, Arokia Rajiv and Amoj Jacob finished with a collective timing of 3 minutes and 3.23 seconds to also finish second in their heat, behind USA (2:59.95).

The top two teams in each of the three heats in the second round were to qualify for the

Olympics to be held from July 26 to August 11.

It was a sort of a surprise that the women's 4x400m team qualified for the Olympics as the focus was more on the men's 4x400m team which has broken Asian record in back-to-back global events – Tokyo Olympics and 2023 World Championships – as well as winning 2023 Asian Games gold.

The Indian women's team had finished fifth in the first-round qualifying heat Sunday with a time of 3 minutes and 29.74 seconds.

The men's team had failed to finish in the first-round qualifying heat after second leg runner Rajesh Ramesh pulled out midway due to cramps. Arokia Rajiv took the place of Ramesh in the team and he ran the third leg after Anas and Ajmal.

The Indian men's 4x400m team was on third position when anchor-leg runner Jacob took the

baton from Arokia but the Delhi boy ran a fantastic race to overtake his Mexican opponent and finish second.

It was not about the timing but more about Olympics qualification for the Indian men's team which ran 3:00.25 at the Tokyo Olympics for the then Asian record before bettering it during the 2023 World Championships with yet another Asian record of 2:59.05. Monday's timing was well below the team's best.

India had even given a mighty scare to formidable USA during the heat race at the 2023 Budapest World Championships before settling for the second place.

Meanwhile, India pulled out of the mixed 4x400m relay second in the heat race at the 2023 Budapest World Championships before settling for the second place.

For the men's 4x400m, this will be the fourth time India will be taking part in the Olympics, the first being in the 2000 Sydney Games. With this, India now have at least 19 Paris-bound track and field athletes and the list includes defending javelin throw champion Neeraj Chopra among others.

The athletics events at the Games will begin August 1. A total of 70 teams have qualified for relay events at the Paris Olympics following two days of thrilling action at the World Athletics Relays Bahamas.

India eyes beat Bangladesh

Sylhet, May 6: India continued their dominant run against Bangladesh with a 56-run win via Duckworth-Lewis (D/L) method in the rain curtailed fourth women's T20 here Monday.

A late start and then over an hour-long delay due to persistent rain and hail meant that the contest had to be shortened. Harmanpreet Kaur (38) and Richa Ghosh (24) shared a 44-run stand to help India post 122/6 against Bangladesh after persistent rain reduced the contest to 14 overs a side.

The hosts had to chase 125 in 14 overs under the DLS method to secure their first win of the series. But the batters, barring opener Dilara Akter (21), Rubya Haider (13) and Shorifa Khatun (11 not out), failed to reach double digits as they kept losing wicket in clusters.

India handed a maiden debut to 33-year-old leg spinner Asha Sobhana, who returned with figures of 2/18 in three overs. Senior all-rounder Deepti Sharma (2/13) picked two wickets while Radha Yadav (1/12) and pacer Pooja Vastrakar (1/15) accounted for one batter each as India restricted Bangladesh to 68/7. India lead the five match series 4-0.

Earlier, playing her 300th international game, Kaur stitched a crucial partnership with the big-hitting Ghosh (24) to inflate India's total. The duo came out after the rain break with positive intent and shared as many as eight boundaries and a six in a span of 28 deliveries.

India lost opener Shafali Verma (2) early on. Shorifa Khatun



bowled a fuller length ball and the opener tried to clear the in-field but couldn't middle it as the ball went flying in the hands of Ritu Moni at extra cover.

Dayalan Hemlatha (22) smashed a couple of fours and sixes before her rampage was stopped by Marufa Akter, who trapped the Indian leg before wicket. Play was stopped with India at 48/2 in 5.5 overs.

Smriti Mandhana (22) restarted the game by hitting a classy boundary. But the opener, who looked scratchy throughout her innings, couldn't stay in the middle for long, falling victim to Rabeya Khan.

That is when Ghosh (24) and Kaur joined forces to inflate India's total before Ghosh was caught at long off. Kaur too was run out in the last over.

BRIEF SCORES
India Women 122/6 in 14 overs (Harmanpreet Kaur 39, Richa Ghosh 24, Dayalan Hemlatha 22, Smriti Mandhana 22; Marufa Akter 2/24, Rabeya Khan 2/28) beat Bangladesh Women 68/7 (Dilara Akter 21, Rubya Haider 13, Shorifa Khatun 11 n o; Deepti Sharma 2/13, Asha Sobhana 2/18, Radha Yadav 1/12, Pooja Vastrakar 1/15) by 56 runs via D/L method.

SHORT TAKES

Dipi, Karuna help Odisha beat Maha

Ranchi: Odisha beat Maharashtra on the sixth day of the National Women's Hockey League (NWLH) 2024 (Phase 1) here Monday. Odisha got the better of Maharashtra 2-1. Dipi Monika Toppo (23rd minute) and Karuna Minz (55th) found the target for Odisha, while Maharashtra's lone goal came from the stick of Sunita Kumari (51st). In the opening game of the day, Bengal edged past Mizoram 1-0 in a keenly-contested battle. Despite Mizoram's early dominance and superior attacking prowess, it was Bengal who seized the opportunity. Shivani Kumari (18th minute) scored the only goal of the match.

Jyoti to lead India

New Delhi: Defender Jyoti Singh was Monday named the captain of the Indian junior women's team by Hockey India with midfielder Sakshi Rana as her deputy in a 22-member squad which will tour Europe from May 21 to 29. India will play six matches across three nations against Belgium, Germany and two club teams in the Netherlands – Bredase Hockey Vereniging Push and Oranje Rood – from May 21 to 29.

THE SQUAD: GOALKEEPERS: Aditi Maheshwari, Nidhi; DEFENDERS: Jyoti Singh (C), Lalithanthuani, Anjali Barwa, Puja Sahoo, Mamita Oram, NirruKullu; MIDFIELDERS: Kshetrimayum Sonia Devi, Rajani Kerketta, Priyanka Yadav, Khaidem Shileima Chanu, Sakshi Rana (VC), Anisha Sahu, Supriya Kujur; FORWARDS: Binima Dhan, Hina Bano, Lalrinpuii, Ishika, Sanjana Horo, Sonam, Kanika Siwach.

Referee with camera

London: The referee for late Monday night's Premier League match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United will wear a camera on his head for a programme that will be broadcast later this year offering an insight into the demands of being a match official. The league said the head-mounted device – or "RefCam" as it is being called – worn by Jarred Gillett at Selhurst Park will be integrated into the referee's usual communications system. The technology is being used on a one-off basis, the league said, as part of filming for a short program promoting match officials. The footage will not be broadcast live. "Fans will be able to view it later in the year as part of a program...aimed at offering further insight and education into the demands of officiating in the Premier League," the competition said.

SKY powers MI to 7-wicket win over SRH

Mumbai, May 6: Suryakumar Yadav's special hundred after a disciplined bowling effort set up Mumbai Indians' seven-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the IPL here Monday.

Suryakumar scored his second IPL century (102 n o, 51b, 12x4, 6x6), taking his team to an emphatic win in 17.2 overs after SRH recovered to post 173/8. The win lifted MI from the bottom of the points table to the ninth spot while SRH, despite the loss, remained fourth with 12 points in 11 games.

Joining forces inside the powerplay with MI left reeling at 31/3, the pair of Suryakumar and Tilak Varma (37 n o, 32b, 6x4) did a superb recovery job with 143-run unbeaten stand to script a comprehensive victory.

For that matter, MI could have been reduced to 31/4 had a Bhuvneshwar Kumar (1/22) delivery in the fifth over not pitched outside the leg stump with the veteran seamer pinning Varma in front of the wickets.

Ishan Kishan (9) perished early



once again while Naman Dhir (0) endured a nine-ball duck. Rohit Sharma's poor run of form continues as he was sent back by Pat Cummins (1/35) for 4.

With their backs against the wall, Suryakumar picked Marco Jansen to attack as he collected 22 runs off the seventh over to begin his job. But shortly after

he completed his fifty off 30 balls, Suryakumar was seen stretching and wincing in pain while looking to manage a strain, presumably to his groin.

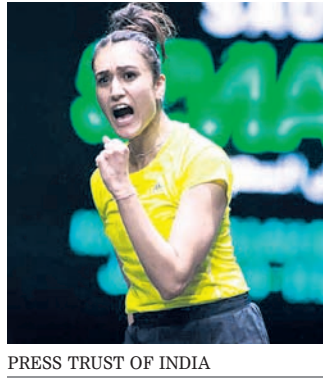
However, by his credit, the World No.1 T20 batter hung around till the end to take MI over the line as he finished the game with a flurry of boundaries – two sixes and as many fours off his last four balls.

Earlier in the first half, Hardik Pandya (3/31) struck form before the T20 World Cup while veteran Piyush Chawla (3/33) also bagged three wickets as MI restricted SRH for a below-par total.

However, to his credit, SRH skipper Cummins chipped in with an unbeaten 17-ball 35 (2x4, 2x6) late in the innings to take them past the 150-run mark. Travis Head top-scored with 48 (30b, 7x4, 1x6).

BRIEF SCORES
SRH 173/8 (Travis Head 48, Pat Cummins 35 n o; Hardik Pandya 3/31, Piyush Chawla 3/33) lost to MI 174/3 (Suryakumar Yadav 102 n o, Tilak Varma 37 n o; Bhuvneshwar Kumar 1/22) by 7 wickets.

Manika stuns World No.2 to enter pre-quarterfinals



round of 16 Tuesday.

In mixed doubles, Harmeet Desai and Yashaswini Ghorpade surprised the Spanish fifth-seeded pair of Alvaro Robles and Maria Xiao 3-2 (11-5, 5-11, 3-11, 11-7, 11-7) to storm into the quarterfinals. In the pre-quarters, the Indian duo had beaten the Chilean pair of Nicolas Burgos and Paulina Vega 3-2 (11-7, 9-11, 11-4, 4-11, 11-5).

Asian Games bronze medalists Ayhika and Sutirtha Mukherjee ended a successful day in Jeddah when the pair defeated Mariam and Marwa Alhodaby 3-0 (11-7, 1-3, 11-4) to enter the pre-quarters.

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However, Sreeja Akula, who upstaged Manika in the world ranking to occupy the No.38 position, lost 7-11, 11-3, 11-9, 12-14 to Jieni Saho after leading the Portuguese in two games.

Earlier other Indians went down with good fights in singles including A Sharath Kamal, Archana Kamath, Manav Thakkar and Sutirtha Mukherjee. Sharath, who met Aruna Qadri of Nigeria in the round of 64, lost after a gutsy performance after leading 2-0. Qadri beat Sharath 8-11, 11-13, 11-8, 11-5, 13-11.

RUBLEV OVERCOMES FEVER TO WIN MADRID OPEN TITLE

Madrid, May 6: Despite sleepless nights struggling with a fever, Andrey Rublev found a way to fight back and win the Madrid Open for the first time. Rublev was feeling sick all week but rallied to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime in three sets Sunday and clinch his second Masters 1000 title.

Rublev won 4-6, 7-5, 7-5 after Auger-Aliassime double-faulted on the last point of the final at the clay-court tournament in the Spanish capital.

"I would say this is the most proud title of my career," Rublev said. "I was almost dead every day. I was not sleeping at night. The last three, four days I didn't sleep." Rublev gave "full credit to the doctors," who were "doing some tricky things" just to make sure he could play.

"I have no words," the eighth-ranked Rublev said. "If you knew what I had been through in the past nine days you would not imagine that I would be able to win a title."

The 26-year-old Russian won his first Masters 1000 title at Monte Carlo last year. Auger-Aliassime was playing in his first final at this level.

Rublev entered Madrid on a four-game losing streak after early exits at Indian Wells,

Norris holds off Max to win Miami Grand Prix

Miami, May 6: McLaren's Lando Norris capitalised on a bit of good fortune to win the Miami Grand Prix Sunday, holding off Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen for his first Formula One victory.

It was a long overdue triumph for the Briton who held the record for most podiums without a win (15), having finished runner-up an agonising eight times in 110 grand prix.

Verstappen had seemed well placed to claim a fifth win in six races until a midway crash allowed McLaren to cash in on a safety car period, with Norris pitting and coming out with the lead.

Seeking a hat-trick of wins here, the Dutchman filled Norris's mirrors on the restart but his Red Bull could offer no challenge as the McLaren pulled clear. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc completed the podium, coming home third ahead of teammate Carlos Sainz.

Golden high five for India boxers at Asian C'ships

Astana (Kazakhstan), May 6: Five youth Indian boxers Brijesh Tamta, Aryan Hooda, Yashwardhan Singh, Laxmi and Nisha put up impressive performances to clinch gold medals at the ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth Boxing Championships here Monday.

Brijesh gave India its first gold medal of the tournament with a unanimous 5-0 win over Tajikistan's Muminov Muinkhodza in the men's 48kg final. Aryan (51kg) continued the momentum with an equally dominant 5-0 victory against Kyrgyzstan's Kamilov Zafarbek. Yashwardhan Singh (63.5kg) had to work hard against Gafurov Ruslan of Tajikistan before winning 4-1.

In the women's category, reigning junior world champion Nisha grabbed the yellow metal in the 52kg category outperforming Kazakhstan's Otynbay Bagzhan in a 5-0 win. Laxmi (50kg) completed India's golden high five with a referee stop the contest (RSC) win in the second round of the bout against Enkh Nomundari of Mongolia.

Meanwhile, nine youth boxers, Sagar Jakhar (60kg), Priyanshu (71kg), Rahul Kundu (75kg), Aryan (92kg), Tamanna (54kg), Nikita Chand (60kg), Shrushti Sathe (63kg), Rudrika (75kg) and Khushi Pooniya (81kg) ended campaigns with silver medals.