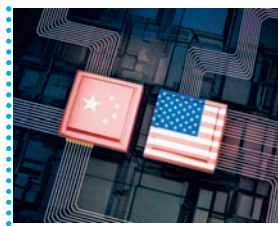




Proud Participation

Kiara Advani will represent India in 'Women in Cinema' section at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film Festival

LEISURE | P2



Biden hikes US tariffs

President Joe Biden unveils a bundle of steep tariff increases on an array of Chinese imports

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Wholesale inflation up

Wholesale inflation rises to 13-month high of 1.26 per cent in April fuelled by rising prices of food articles, especially vegetables

BUSINESS | P11



Royals take on Kings

Rajasthan Royals look to secure their place in the IPL playoffs against Punjab Kings in their penultimate league match

SPORTS | P12

Two election officials killed in road mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri/Nuapada, May 14: Two government employees engaged in election duty died in separate road accidents after completing their duties in Malkangiri and Nuapada districts, respectively, Tuesday.

In the first incident, Indrajit Kirsani, a teacher from Khairput and resident of Bandhaguda village under Mudulipada panchayat in Malkangiri district was killed when a bus collided with his motorcycle Tuesday morning while he was returning after election-related works. Indrajit was engaged as a presiding officer at booth no-122 of Malkangiri Assembly constituency, Monday.

In the other incident, Prasanna Kumar Nayak, 58, a cashier at Sinapali BCC Bank was died after the motorcycle he was riding was hit by a speeding car near Tarbod police outpost in Nuapada district while he was returning home after completing election duty, Tuesday morning. Nayak was the presiding officer at booth no-184 at Ranimunda village of Khadial Assembly constituency. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) NB Dhal has announced an ex-gratia payment of ₹15 lakh to each of the next of kin of the two officials as per the ECI guidelines.

SHORT TAKE

Sanjay Singh assures action against Kejri PA

New Delhi: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar "misbehaved" with AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal at the CM's residence, party leader Sanjay Singh said Tuesday. Addressing media a day after Maliwal alleged that a member of Kejriwal's personal staff "assaulted" her, Singh said AAP supreme Kejriwal will take strict action in the matter. BJP demanded that Singh's statement should be the basis for immediate filing of an FIR by police and those guilty should be promptly dealt with. Police, however, said they are still waiting for her to come and file a formal complaint. P9

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Going to interview the PM?

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	SENSEX	73104.61	▲	328.48	VARIATION
SENSEX	73104.61	▲	328.48		
NIFTY	22217.85	▲	113.80		
DOLLAR	83.90	▲	₹0.31		
EURO	91.00	▲	₹0.00		
GOLD	₹72,141	▲	₹286		
SILVER	₹85,148	▲	₹262		

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.0°C	36.2°C
Min Temp	25.6°C	24.5°C
Humidity	68%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	5.2mm
FORECAST	PARTLY CLOUDY SKY	



RESCUE OPS: Fire Brigade personnel seen cooling the site of the hoarding collapse at Ghatkopar, in Mumbai, Tuesday. At least 14 persons were killed and 76 others injured Monday night when a 100-foot tall illegal billboard fell on a petrol pump

Fake: Not Naxals

Serious doubts have been cast over the credibility of the Chhattisgarh police claims of having neutralised 12 Maoist rebels in an encounter Friday after the next of kin of those killed and tribal activists alleged that those were cold-blooded killing of innocent kendu leaf pluckers. Amid the vehement denial of the charges by the police, the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions deferring the re-accréditation of NHRC, India for the second year in a row Tuesday has come as a poser to the country's record in upholding the rights of its citizens.



Local villagers, mostly women, and family members of the deceased who had been camping in Bijapur district headquarters since Saturday accused the police of staging a fake encounter. The protesting women claimed that police gunned down residents of Pidia and nearby Itawar village when they had gone to pluck kendu leaves, a source of livelihood for many in the region. A woman, who identified herself as Avlam Budri, said her husband was picked up by the police when he had gone to pluck kendu leaves Friday and she is unaware whether he is alive. Tribal activist Soni Sori, who was accompanying them, said Friday's encounter was fake and police opened fire on people from Pidia and Itawar villages out in the forest to pluck kendu leaves. Echoing similar claims, Rakesh Avlam told some local media persons in his Pidia village that police chased villagers who were plucking kendu leaves and gunned them down. Avlam, who is associated with kendu leaf collection work, claimed his cousin brother Motu Avlam who was also collecting the leaves suffered bullet injuries in police firing. According to reports in a leading national daily, Gurnunanda, a resident of Pedia village who witnessed the encounter, said that some villagers had gone to pluck kendu leaves from the forest when the security forces came towards them. Seeing this, the villagers started running away. "They were shot down by the forces while they were running in fear and surprise," he said, according to the newspaper. DIG (Dantewada region-South Bastar) Kamlochan Kashyap refuted the claims, asserting that those killed in the encounter were Maoists and carrying cash rewards. Former Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel of Congress said that unexpected political pressure on security forces should not be such that their actions are questioned.

Modi files nomination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), May 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi filed his nomination here Tuesday, an event attended by several NDA leaders, including Union ministers and chief ministers, in a show of strength as he seeks a third term from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency. Sporting a white kurta-pajama and a blue sadri, Modi reached the district collectorate after a busy morning, which included an aarti on the banks of the Ganga at the Dashashwamedh ghat and prayers at the city's Kaal Bhairav temple. Immediately after filing his papers, the prime minister headed for the Rudraksha Convention Centre to address local party leaders and workers.

A local spokesperson of the BJP said Modi gave the party's office bearers the "mantra of victory" and asked them to make people aware of his government's schemes. Modi also told them to ensure that every booth records at least 370 more votes than it did in the last general election, in celebration of the abrogation of Article 370. After filing his nomination, Modi posted on 'X', "Filed my nomination papers as a candidate for the Varanasi Lok Sabha seat. It is an honour to serve the people of this historic seat. With the blessings of the people, there have been remarkable achievements over the last decade. This pace of work will get even faster in the times to come."

BJD, BJP claim gains in Phase I elections

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 14: Even as the voter turnout in the four Lok Sabha and 28 Assembly seats in south Odisha which went for polls Monday showed a marginal increase as compared to the 2019 elections, both BJD and BJP Tuesday exuded confidence of bettering their past performances. While these Assembly and Lok Sabha segments had witnessed average voter turnout of 74.18 per cent in 2019, this time (till 00.30am Wednesday) they recorded 75.68 per cent polling. BJD leader Kartik Pandian Tuesday claimed that the regional party will secure at least 24 of the 28 Assembly seats in the phase I elections. "BJD is sweeping the elections whether it is first, second, third or fourth phase. In the first phase, BJD is winning a minimum of 24 out of 28 seats," Pandian said.

The regional party in 2019 had won 20 of the 28 Assembly seats while BJP got 4 Assembly seats, followed by Congress 3 and an Independent. However, Pandian did not give any figures on the Lok Sabha seats. "I will not speak on Lok Sabha results. It is a big thing. However, we will definitely perform better than 2019," he said. Pandian claimed that there was a Naveen Patnaik wave this time. BJD Odisha election In-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar Tuesday claimed that his party will win all four Lok Sabha constituencies and 18 out of 28 Assembly seats that went to polls in the first round of voting in the state May 13. Asserting that the saffron party will form the government in Odisha, Tomar said BJP will win at least 16 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha. It is worth mentioning that the highest voter turnout of 82.16 per cent was recorded in the tribal-dominated Nabarangpur Parliamentary seat, followed by Koraput (77.53 per cent), Kalahandi (77.90 per cent) and Berhampur (65.41 per cent). In 2019 elections, in the first phase, the same four Lok Sabha and 28 Assembly seats had witnessed high polling of over 74 per cent. Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency had also recorded the lowest turnout of 65.89 per cent then.



form better than 2019," he said. Pandian claimed that there was a Naveen Patnaik wave this time.

He took 200 flights to steal fliers' jewellery

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 14: He took at least 200 flights and travelled for over 110 days during the past year to steal jewellery and other valuables from handbags of co-passengers.

The Delhi Police cut short the long run of Rajesh Kapoor from law when they arrested the 40-year-old man from a hideout in Paharganj, here, where he allegedly kept the stolen jewellery. Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI) Usha Rangnani Monday said Kapoor was planning to sell the booty to Sharad Jain, 46, who has been arrested from Karol Bagh.

Rangnani said two separate cases of thefts were reported on separate



flights in the past three months, after which a dedicated team from IGI Airport was formed to nab the culprits.

On April 11, a passenger lost her jewellery worth ₹7 lakh while travelling from Hyderabad to Delhi. Another theft was reported February 2, where a passenger had lost jewellery items worth ₹20

lakh while he was travelling from Amritsar to Delhi.

Rangnani said that during investigations, CCTV footage from Delhi and Amritsar airports and the flight manifests were analysed. A suspect was shortlisted as he was seen on both flights on which theft incidents were reported, she said.

The officer said the phone number of the suspect passenger was obtained from the airlines concerned, but he had provided a fake number at the time of booking. After technical surveillance, Kapoor's original phone number was traced and he was caught.

On sustained interrogation, he confessed to have been involved in five such cases, including one in

Hyderabad, the police said.

He disclosed that he spent most of the cash on online and offline gambling.

Kapoor was found involved in 11 cases of theft, gambling and criminal breach of trust, out of which five cases were of airport.

Another police officer said Kapoor would target vulnerable passengers, particularly elderly women travelling internationally. "Recognising the tendency of such passengers to carry valuables in their handbags, he strategically travelled in premium domestic flights, notably Air India and Vistara, bound for destinations like Delhi, Chandigarh, and Hyderabad," the officer said.

Featherlite by PGL Furnitures



SLEEK, STYLISH & MODERN WORKSPACE

CALL NOW 77357 30250

Experience Center: 2nd & 3rd Floor, PGL Honda Building, Fire Station Square, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar

leisure



CLOONEY TO MAKE BROADWAY DEBUT

Hollywood icon George Clooney is finally set to make his Broadway debut in 2025. The 63-year-old actor is taking on his first acting project in a stage adaptation of *Good Night, and Good Luck*, which will be performed in spring 2025 at a yet to be announced Shubert theatre.

JLO WISHES TO WORK WITH MONKEY MAN ACTOR PATEL

Hollywood actress Jennifer Lopez revealed her admiration for actor Dev Patel, expressing her fondness for his work. During discussions about her forthcoming sci-fi thriller *Atlas*, Lopez said she wants to work with the *Monkey Man* actor in a future project.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You will look for new opportunities to increase your competence, and for new ways to enjoy. If your relationship is under stress, it is about time you sorted out things. There is likelihood of making a short trip. If you are feeling under the weather, Ganesh says a long drive with your beloved may do you good.

TAURUS
The day is likely to turn out to be a difficult one. But your maturity and experience in handling adverse situations will come to your aid. You will, as the day advances, be able to sort out the problems that have cropped up and end up on an optimistic note.

GEMINI
You are likely to work extra hard to assert your authority at the workplace. On the work front, your seniors and colleagues will appreciate your devotion and dedication to work. Monetary gains may be expected in the evening, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will make a strong impact with whatever you do today. Ganesh says that you will feel joy in a romantic interlude. Ties with life partner will be stronger and you will enjoy domestic bliss. A situation might arise where you have to draw lines and take side with a circle of friends.

LEO
You need to balance your income and expenditure. It is a good time to invest and speculate in shares. Your debts will be settled, and pending dues will be realised. A work or project that has been delayed for some time, will now be completed. Your relations with your business partners will become stronger now, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today you will be in a very innovative and ingenious mood. Ganesh says a sight-seeing trip either to a museum or some historical monument is on the cards. Being lively and active will help you tone up your body. Entertaining yourself will be a good way to heal the wounds left in the wake of a broken relationship.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will think of restyling or renovating your home today. You shall be able to style your house with artifacts or beautiful paintings. You will invite your friends to your home in the evening and enjoy spending time with them. You may try your luck today in the share market and you can hope to make substantial gains.

SCORPIO
You are on a mission to solve all the pending problems, by finding their solutions today itself. And very aptly, your optimistic attitude and creative outlook would come to rescue you in difficult moments. At this point of time, even your colleagues and superiors support you, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
The day begins with lots of challenges, says Ganesh. Isolated or a one man army, you may have to resolve problems and cross hurdles on your own. Your skills and resourcefulness will go through a rigorous polishing today, may be in a not-so-happening style. However, all's well that ends well.

CAPRICORN
You'll be over-emotional during the first half of the day. You've been quiet for a long period now, and it will be emotionally and physically exhausting for you to express your tensions, fears, dreams, regrets and sorrows, feels Ganesh. The other half will be different as you'll feel energetic and go out of the way to be with others in their tough times.

AQUARIUS
If you are tangled in some legal matters, Ganesh advises you go for an out of court settlement. You are strong, and with patience and perseverance you will sail smoothly through difficult times. People, however, may perceive you as a headstrong or inflexible person.

PISCES
A mixed bag of goodies awaits you today. Your boss is likely to grant you a few unexpected concessions at work. For those pursuing studies, good results are in the offing. The evening is likely to be fun-filled and pleasant, says Ganesh.

Was rejected for being too pretty: Sanjeeda

Mumbai: Sanjeeda Sheikh, a renowned TV actress, has faced numerous challenges breaking into the movies scene, despite her beauty and talent. However, her fortunes changed with the success of *Heeramandi*, directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The release of the series has sparked widespread discussion across the web, bringing Sanjeeda into the spotlight.

In a recent interview with an agency, Sanjeeda Sheikh spoke about her struggles as an actress and her experience of working with renowned director Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

When asked about whether she ever felt insecure, Sheikh admitted, "I did feel insecure about being pretty when I did not get the role. There were times when they would say

that you are 'too pretty', so you won't be getting this part." The actress added the scar on the face in *Heeramandi* added more character to her performance. Sanjeeda expressed that it was a constant reminder for Waheeda's character, who she was, who she has become and who she does not want to become. Sheikh's performance in the series has received widespread acclaim.

Apart from Sanjeeda, the series also stars Manisha Koirala, Sonakshi Sinha, Aditi Rao Hydari, Richa Chadda, Sharmin Segal, Taha Shah Badusha, Farida Jalal, Shekhar Suman, Fardeen Khan, Shruti Sharma and Adhyayan Suman.



WOMEN IN CINEMA

Kiara to represent India at Cannes

Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani is set to represent the country at the *Red Sea Film Foundation Women in Cinema* gala dinner at the 77th edition of the Cannes Film

Festival, being held in the French Riviera from Tuesday. Hosted by *Vanity Fair*, the gala will bring together six women from across the globe to honour their achievements, both in front of and behind the camera.

Kiara made her debut with *Fugly* in 2014, she was then seen playing myriad characters, from the independent Naina in *Jug Jugg Jeeyo* to the complex Nanki in *Guilty* and Preeti, a vulnerable woman caught in a passionate but troubled relationship in

Kabir Singh.

Kiara has then worked in movies such as *Shershaah* and *Satyaprem Ki Katha*, where she showcased her acting prowess.

Kiara tied the knot with her *Shershaah* co-actor in February 2023 at Jaisalmer's grand Suryagarh Palace.

Looking forward, Kiara is now gearing up for the release of the political thriller *Game Changer*, directed by S Shankar and co-starring Ram Charan. She also has *Don 3* and *War 2* in the pipeline.

Nia's two cents on embracing age

Mumbai: Television actress Nia Sharma has talked about embracing age and shared that fillers are not a necessity.

Nia took to her Instagram stories and shared a post featuring Cameron Diaz and Drew Barrymore.

The actress shared the post with the caption: "Why are we still shocked when celebrities don't photoshop their wrinkles, and aren't ashamed to show signs of ageing?"

Nia shared her two cents about embracing age: "Because they own it." "Fillers should be a luxury not a necessity like your daily protein intake... You're gorgeous regardless," she added.

On the work front, Nia will play a negative character in the upcoming supernatural show *Suhaagan Chudail*. The cast also includes names such as Zayn Ibad Khan, Sachin Khurana, Subhalaxmi Das, and Araddhana Sharma, among others.

Korean films better than Hindi movies: Naseer

Mumbai: In a thought-provoking statement, veteran Indian actor Naseeruddin Shah recently shared his views on the current state of Hindi cinema, contrasting it with the rise of Korean films. Speaking at an event in Mumbai, Shah expressed his preference for Korean cinema over what is commonly referred to as "Bollywood".

The veteran actor sug-

gested that the popularity of Hindi films might be short-lived due to their focus on commercial gains rather than meaningful storytelling. He elaborated, stating, "Korean films are better than Bollywood films... We keep claiming that the whole world is watching Bollywood films. First of all, I hate the word 'Bollywood'."

He further elaborated, "Just like Indian food is gaining fame worldwide due to its inherent qualities, Bollywood films are said to be gaining fame. However,



I guarantee that this bubble will burst one day because these films lack substance and are made with motives everyone is aware of."

Naseeruddin Shah remains a prominent figure in Indian cinema. He was recently seen alongside Aamir Khan, Sonali Bendre, and others at a screening celebrating 25 years of the film *Sarfarosh*.

Speaking of the professional front, the 73-year-old actor was last seen in Disney+ Hotstar's series *Showtime*.

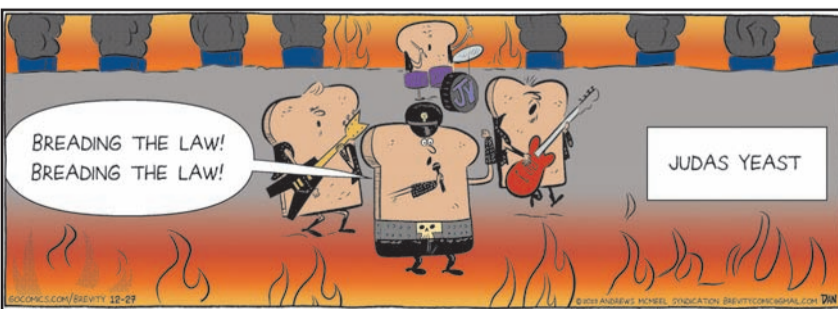
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

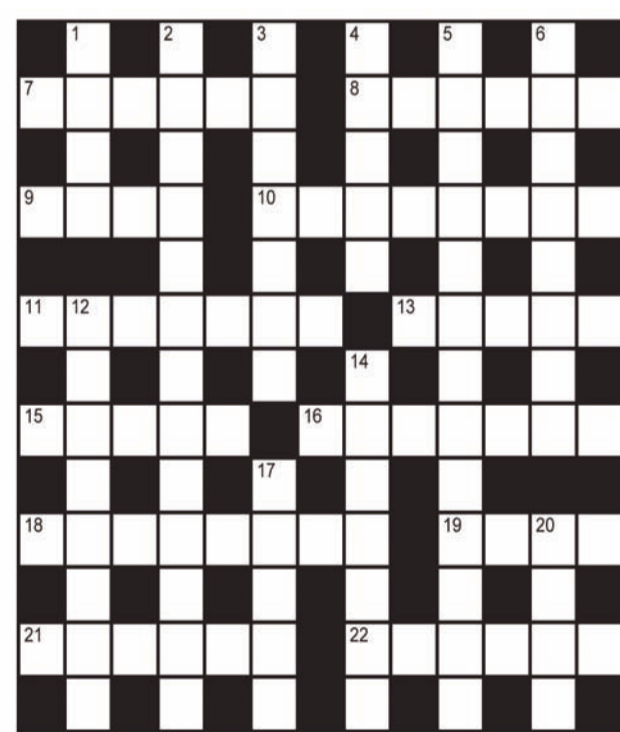


BREVITY



FUN post

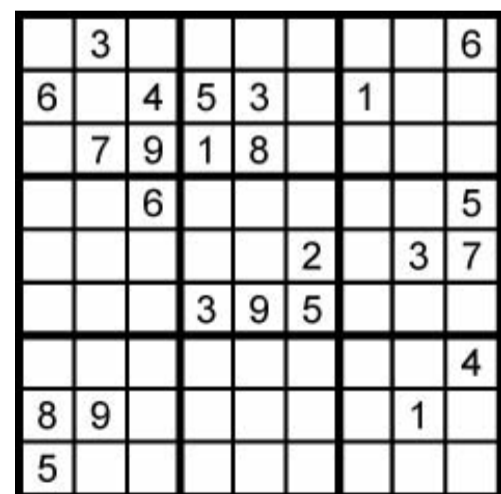
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Ebb
 - 8 Not straight
 - 9 Cordon bleu
 - 10 Drink
 - 11 One of the Balearic Islands
 - 13 Euripides drama
 - 15 Seawall
 - 16 Double-dealer
 - 18 Congenial
 - 19 Pottery oven
 - 21 Cling to
 - 22 Tristan's love
- Down**
- 1 Interlock
 - 2 Like some RVs (4-9)
 - 3 Carelessness
 - 4 Latin dance
 - 5 Win big (3,3,7)
 - 6 Outmoded
 - 12 Tonsils' pals
 - 14 Legendary Arabian bird
 - 17 "The Wild Duck" playwright
 - 20 Female aristocrat

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

IN MEMORIAM

Dignitaries unveil a book on the death anniversary of Padma Shri Rajat Kumar Kar at Buddha Mandir in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



Lawyers can't be sued for 'deficiency in service': SC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 14: In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court Tuesday held that the lawyers do not come within the purview of Consumer Protection Act and cannot be sued for 'deficiency in service' before the consumer courts.

The top court said a considerable amount of direct control is exercised by the client over the manner in which an advocate renders his services during the course of his employment.

The services hired or availed of an advocate would be that of a contract 'of personal service' and would, therefore, stand excluded from the definition of 'service', it said.

A bench of justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal said the legal profession is sui generis (unique) and the nature of work is specialised and cannot be compared with other professions.

The top court said the very purpose and object of the Consumer Protection Act 1986 as re-enacted in 2019 was to provide protection to the consumers from unfair trade practices and unethical business practices, and the legislature never intended to include either the professions or the services rendered by the professionals within the purview of the said Act.

"A service hired or availed of an advocate is a service under a contract of personal service", and therefore would fall within the exclusionary part of the definition of 'Service' contained in Section 2 (42) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. A complaint alleging 'deficiency in service' against Advocates practising legal profession would not be maintainable under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019," the bench said.

The judgment came on a plea filed by the bar bodies and other individuals challenging a 2007 verdict of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission



(NCDRC), which has ruled that advocates and their services come under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

The top court said the object of the Consumer Protection Act was to provide to the consumers timely and effective administration and settlement of their disputes.

"If the services provided by all the professionals are also brought within the purview of the Act, there would be flood-gate of litigations in the commissions/forums established under the Act, particularly because the remedy provided under the Act is inexpensive and summary in nature," the bench said.

Observing that the legal profession cannot be equated with any other traditional professions, the bench said it is not commercial in nature but is essentially a service-oriented and noble profession. "It cannot be gainsaid that the role of Advocates is indispensable in the Justice Delivery System. An evolution of jurisprudence to keep our Constitution vibrant is possible only with the positive contribution of the Advocates. The Advocates are expected to be fearless and independent for protecting the rights of citizens, for upholding the Rule of law and also for protecting the Independence of Judiciary."

"People repose immense faith in the Judiciary, and the Bar being an integral part of the Judicial System has been as-

signed a very crucial role for preserving the independence of the Judiciary, and in turn the very democratic set up of the Nation. The advocates are perceived to be the intellectuals amongst the elites and social activists amongst the downtrodden," it said.

That is the reason they are expected to act according to the principles of "uberrima fides" - the utmost good faith, integrity, fairness and loyalty while handling the legal proceedings of his client, it added.

The top court said being a responsible officer of the court and an important adjunct of the administration of justice, an advocate owes his duty not only to his client but also to the court as well as to the opposite side.

"The legal profession is different from the other professions also for the reason that what the Advocates do, affects not only an individual but the entire administration of justice, which is the foundation of the civilised society. It must be remembered that the legal profession is a solemn and serious profession," it said. The apex court said the legal profession has always been held in very high esteem because of the stellar role played by the stalwarts in the profession to strengthen the judicial system in the country.

"Therefore, having regard to the role, status and duties of the Advocates as the professionals, we are of the opinion that the legal profession is sui generis i.e., unique in nature and cannot be compared with any other profession," it said. In its 2007 judgment, the consumer commission held that advocates come under the purview of the Consumer Protection Act and can be sued in a consumer court by their clients for any deficiency in service. The national consumer forum's verdict had held that the legal services rendered by lawyers would come within the ambit of section 2(1)(o) of the 1986 Act.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: Maharana servitors busy constructing chariots for the Rath Yatra of Srimandir deities in Puri, Tuesday

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

PHASE II POLLS 95 Assembly candidates crorepatis

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 14: As many as 95 of the 265 candidates in fray for 35 Assembly seats in the state going to polls in the second phase (fifth nationally) May 20 are crorepatis, according to a report of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and Odisha Election Watch.

Party wise, the ruling BJD has 30 crorepatis, followed by 24 each from BJP and Congress and three from Aam Aadmi Party which had fielded candidates in 10 Assembly seats.

The three major political parties are contesting all the 35 Assembly seats. Interestingly, 10 Independents contesting the Assembly elections in the second phase are also crorepatis, also one each from the CPI and CPM.

Among the top 10 crorepatis in the fray in the 35 Assembly seats, the ruling BJD accounts for six, followed by two each in BJP and the Congress.

BJP's Rourkela candidate Dilip Ray, a former Union minister, topped the list with total assets

of over Rs 313 crore, followed by Kalikesh Singdeo of BJD with Rs 73.66 crore, and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik who has declared his assets at Rs 71.07 crore.

BJP candidate for Patnagarh KV Singhdeo belonging to the Royal family has declared Rs 67.30 crore assets. Saroj Mukar Meher, sitting BJD MLA from Patnagarh who is seeking re-election, has declared his assets at Rs 67.27 crore.

BJD candidate from Jharsuguda Dipali Das, daughter of former Health minister Naba Kishore Das who was shot dead by a police ASI, has declared her assets at Rs 37.35 crore.

Two Congress candidates Anil Meher contesting from Patnagarh and Nakul Nayak from Daspalla are also crorepatis with total assets of Rs 14.59 crore and Rs 14.26 crore, respectively.

OUT OF 265 CANDIDATES, 87 (33%) CANDIDATES HAVE DECLARED CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST THEMSELVES. AT LEAST 70 OF THEM ARE FACING SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES

41 (15%) FEMALE CANDIDATES ARE CONTESTING IN THE PHASE II ASSEMBLY ELECTION

The candidates having lowest assets are Pradeep Sahu, an Independent contesting Boudh Assembly seat who has declared his assets at Rs 7,000 only. The other two candidates having the lowest assets are Abhiram Dharua from Kantabanji and Satyanaraya Bohidar from Titlagarh.

Assembly seat declaring their assets at Rs 8,000 and Rs 11,000 respectively.

The report said Independent candidate Sohan Sipka contesting the Kantabanji Assembly seat has declared zero assets.

Similarly, 13 out of 40 candidates contesting the five Lok Sabha seats, going to polls May 20 in the state, are crorepatis. While four each are from the ruling BJD, BJP and the Congress, one is Independent candidate.

The report said the average assets of a BJD candidate in the 35 Assembly seats is Rs 12.09

crore, while that of a BJP candidate is Rs 13.11 crore and in case of Congress candidate, it is Rs 2.95 crore.

Out of 265 candidates, 87 (33 per cent) candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves. At least 70 of them are facing serious criminal cases.

The report said five candidates have declared cases related to murder, while 16 others are facing attempt to murder cases, and 11 are accused of crimes against women.

Among the major parties, 28 (80 per cent) candidates from BJP, 17 (52 per cent) from Congress, nine (26 per cent) from BJD and four (40 per cent) out of 10 AAP candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits, it said.

On education details of candidates, the report said that 130 nominees have declared their qualifications to be between 5th and 12th standard pass, while 122 candidates are graduates or above.

Only 41 (15 per cent) female candidates are contesting in the Phase II Odisha Assembly election.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Shah, Rahul to campaign today

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 14: Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will address election rallies in support of their respective party candidates in the state Wednesday.

Shah will hold a roadshow and two public meetings on Wednesday, while Rahul Gandhi will join a bike rally and address an election rally Wednesday.

Shah after his arrival in Bhubaneswar will address two public meetings at Sorada under the Aska Lok Sabha seat and at Boudh under Kandhamal Parliamentary constituency before coming to Cuttack to attend a roadshow in the evening.

Rourkela and Kantabanji, the second seat from where BJD president and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is contesting the Assembly polls, have reportedly been omitted from Shah's itinerary, according to BJP sources. Congress candidate from Bolangir assembly segment Samarendra Mishra said Gandhi will join a bike rally and attend address a public meeting at Bolangir Wednesday.

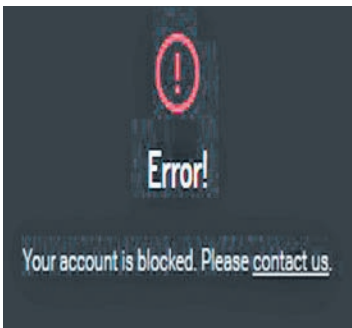
ONLINE BLACKMAILING

OVER 1,000 SKYPE ACCOUNTS BLOCKED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: Over 1,000 Skype IDs run by cross-border cybercriminals engaged in online intimidation, blackmail, extortion and "digital arrests" have been blocked by the government, according to an official statement Tuesday.

Issuing a warning to internet users, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), set up under the Ministry of Home Affairs for coordination on activities related to combating cybercrime, said a large number of complaints are being reported where criminals posing as officials of regulators and enforcement agencies are indulging in intimidation, blackmail, extortion and 'digital arrests'.



"This is an organised online economic crime and is learnt to be operated by cross-border crime syndicates," the statement from the Home Ministry said Tuesday.

Commonly known as the 'parcel scam', the cyber criminals call victims informing about a parcel ad-

ressed to them which contains contraband items like illegal goods, drugs, or fake passports, among others.

In other cases, cyber fraudsters call to convey that a near or dear one of the victim has been found to be involved in a crime or an accident and is in their custody.

"A demand for money is made to compromise in the 'case'. In certain instances, unsuspecting victims are made to undergo 'digital arrests' and remain visually available over Skype or other video conferencing platform to the fraudsters, till their demands are met. The fraudsters are known to use studios modelled on police stations and government offices and wear uniforms to appear genuine," the statement from I4C said.

The Union Home Ministry is closely working with other ministries and their agencies, RBI and other organisations to counter these frauds.

"I4C is also providing inputs and technical support to Police Authorities of States/UTs for identifying and investigating the cases. I4C has also blocked more than 1,000 Skype IDs involved in such activities, in collaboration with Microsoft. It is also facilitating blocking of SIM cards, mobile devices and mule accounts used by such fraudsters," it said.

The agency said a number of victims have lost large amounts of money to such criminals and urged the citizens to call 1930 or visit www.cybercrime.gov.in for assistance in such cases.

Dalmia Bharat Limited

Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers:
A Nation Rising in Unity!

Vidyasagar Setu is a unique blend of astounding longevity and connectivity, serving not only as a vital transportation link but also as an iconic landmark gracing the city's skyline. It is a matter of great pride that Dalmia Cement was used in the construction of India's longest cable-stayed bridge, Vidyasagar Setu in West Bengal.

CIVIL SOCIETY TO EC

Ensure transparency of electoral process

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: A civil society delegation submitted a petition signed by over 4,000 people to the Election Commission (EC) Tuesday, demanding greater transparency in the disclosure of voter turnout figures during the ongoing general elections.

The petition highlighted fluctuations in reported voter turnout figures during the first two phases of the elections.

The letter, which was physically submitted at the poll body's office Tuesday, said there were discrepancies between initial estimates and later revisions, which have sparked doubts and concerns among the public regarding the accuracy and transparency of the electoral process.

The EC has previously said that constituency and booth-wise data of actual number of votes polled is available with the candidates.

In their letter, the delegation references Rule 49S of the Conduct of Elections Rules, which mandates that the presiding officer at each polling station prepares an account of votes, recorded in Part I of Form 17C and provides authenticated copies to polling agents.

Citing specific instances from the first and second phases of polling, the letter pointed out instances where initial turnout estimates of around 60 per cent surged by over six per cent later in the official release of the figures.



The delegation urged the ECI to take immediate steps to enhance transparency by uploading scanned copies of Part I of Form 17C for all polling stations where voting occurred during the initial phases

wise voter turnout figures within 48 hours of the conclusion of each subsequent phase of elections.

"Public trust in the electoral process is paramount for the health of our democracy. We, therefore, urge the ECI to immediately upload on the Commission's website a scanned legible copy of Part I of Form 17C (Account of Votes Recorded) of every polling station where voting took place in the first three phases. Further, for the remaining phases, this information must be publicly displayed on the ECI website within 48 hours of the close of polls," the letter said.

In addition to uploading a scanned copy of the forms, they demanded that a tabulation of the constituency and polling station-wise figures of voter turnout in absolute numbers must also be publicly displayed on the ECI website.

These changes were released without satisfactory explanation from the ECI, it said.

This delay and unexplained revision have fuelled mistrust and raised questions about the reliability of official data, the letter said.

The delegation urged the ECI to take immediate steps to enhance transparency by uploading scanned copies of Part I of Form 17C for all polling stations where voting occurred during the initial phases.

Additionally, they called for the public disclosure of constituency and polling station-

The petition seeking greater transparency in the electoral process has been endorsed by transparency activists, lawyers, information commissioners, retired civil servants and other members of the civil society, including Shabnam Hashmi, Anjali Bhardwaj, Prashant Bhushan, Najeeb Jung, Tushar A Gandhi, Jagdeep Chhokar, MG Devasahayam, Yogendra Yadav, Vrinda Grover, Shailesh Gandhi, Ashok Sharma, Amrta Johri, Navsharan Singh, Jayati Ghosh, Vipul Mudgal among others.



TALENT RECOGNITION: Governor Raghubar Das gives away certificates to students during Odisha State Bharat Scouts and Guides Rajya Puraskar ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

KIIT 11th in Times Young University Rankings

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 14: In a notable achievement in its academic rankings, KIIT Deemed to be University ascended to the 11th position in India in the Times Higher Education Young University Rankings for 2024, which were announced Tuesday.

The 20-year-old university has outshone many older and more established institutions, including several IITs.

In last year's rankings, KIIT was placed in the cohort of 151-200 globally. KIIT's global rank has significantly improved



to 168 in this year's rankings. Out of the 673 universities worldwide evaluated in this year's ranking, 55 were from India, placing KIIT in the elite top echelon of young universities.

The Times Higher Education Young University Rankings specifically lists the world's best universities that are 50 years old or younger, assessing them across their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

KIIT's rise in the rankings is a testament to its robust academic framework and innovative educational practices. The university has consistently been recognised for its dynamic approach to education that emphasises not just academic rigour but also the holistic development of its students.

Commenting on the achievement, Samanta said, "This ranking is a reflection of our relentless pursuit of academic excellence. At KIIT, we are committed to providing world-class education and preparing our students to be global leaders."

Diamond Jubilee Foundation Day Lecture at CSIR-IMMT



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 14: CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) hosted "Diamond Jubilee Foundation Day Lecture of Eminence," here, Tuesday.

Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) secretary M Ravichandran, while delivering his keynote address, discussed vision 2047, exploring India's Blue Economy, opportunities and challenges for a sustainable and resilient future. The event underscored CSIR-IMMT's commitment to research excellence and significant contributions to the scientific community, marking a memorable milestone in its Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) director Debasis Dash discussed the productiveness of the institute related to scientific research. CSIR-IMMT director Ramanuj Narayan thanked Ravichandran for his contribution to the institute's growth.

Kali Sanjay, chief scientist and project leader of the Polymetallic Nodules Programme, coordinated the event and delivered the welcome address. Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Bhubaneswar director Manorama Mohanty said that weather forecasting is a challenging job and she ensures that accuracy is maintained. Ravichandran toured various departments and engaged with scientists, staffs and students. The occasion became an opportunity to showcase the institute's expertise, particularly in the metallurgical extraction of Copper, Nickel, Cobalt and Manganese from polymetallic nodules as well as its processing and characterisation facilities.

Reaccreditation of NHRC deferred again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) has deferred the reaccreditation of NHRC, India for the second year in a row.

Geneva-based GANHRI, through its Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA), is responsible for reviewing and accrediting NHRIs (National Human Rights Institutions) in compliance with the Paris Principles.

It is a "rigorous, peer-based process, undertaken by representatives of NHRIs from each of the four regions: Africa, Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe", according to the website of GANHRI.

GANHRI has deferred the reaccreditation of NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) during its review meeting recently, sources said.

Last year, the review of the NHRC, India, which was due in March 2023 for its reaccreditation, had been deferred for a year, they said.



The deferral means no final decision has been taken as yet, a source said.

In accordance with the UN Paris Principles and the GANHRI Statute, two classifications for accreditation are used by GANHRI: 'A' - fully compliant with the Paris Principles; and 'B' - partially compliant with the Paris Principles.

The NHRC, India established in 1993 had got 'A' status of accreditation the first time in 1999, which it retained in 2006 and 2011 reviews. It was under the process of review for 2016, which was deferred to second session in November, 2017 during which, the Sub Committee on Accreditation of GANHRI recommended that the NHRC, India be again given 'A' status, according to a statement issued by the NHRC in 2018.

GANHRI, too, was set up in 1993. At an international workshop held in Tunis, Tunisia December 13, 1993, a group of NHRIs set the foundation for the global network of national human rights institutions, known today as the GANHRI.

Accreditation takes into account compliance with Paris Principles among other factors. The Paris Principles, as they came to be known, set out the roles, responsibilities and minimum standards for NHRIs to be considered independent and effective.

The Paris Principles quickly received broad support within the UN human rights system. They were endorsed by the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the UN General Assembly in 1993.

The NHRC was set up under the Protection of Human Rights Act, passed by Parliament in 1993. Reacting to the development, Congress leader P Chidambaram said it is "sad and a shame" that the GANHRI has declined accreditation to the NHRC.

"The status of NHRC as an accredited Human Rights body was suspended in 2023 and now again in 2024. The GANHRI has concluded that India's NHRC has failed to satisfy the international body that the NHRC is 'able to operate independent of government interference'. That is a rebuke to the NHRC and the government of India," Chidambaram said in a post on X Tuesday. However, the sources maintained that deferral means no final decision has been taken as yet.

'Summer Spree' concludes at BJEM



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 14: A summer camp 'Summer Spree' at BJEM School here concluded with a ceremonial function Tuesday. Students from Class III to IX participated in the programme with great fun and enthusiasm.

Under the supervision of experienced coaches Pradyumna Behera, Anuradha Dora, Rakesh Behera and Rojali Panda, the students participated in various activities including yoga, handicraft and appliqué work,

nail and thread art, data science, martial art, animation and magic show among others.

Gracing the occasion as the chief guest, chairman of the school Raghunath Mishra said that the camp will be helpful in all round development of the students. Principal Sandhya Jena welcomed the gathering and commented that such activities provide an opportunity for the students to learn through fun and enjoyment.

Vice-principal Pallabi Mohapatra delivered the vote of thanks.

Rising myopia among kids due to increased screen time

STUDIES SHOW THAT IN THE 20-YEAR PERIOD FROM 1999 TO 2019, THE INCIDENCE OF MYOPIA AMONG URBAN CHILDREN HAS TRIPLED IN INDIA, FROM 4.44% TO 21.15%, RESPECTIVELY

As many as one-third of all children in urban India aged 5-15 years are expected to suffer from myopia by 2030, eye doctors said, as a result of increased sedentary lifestyle and prolonged use of screens.

Myopia, commonly known as near-sightedness, is a condition where objects are clear, but those farther away appear blurred.

It has become a significant public health issue worldwide with one in every two individuals being myopic as early as 2050, with a rising prevalence among children and young adults.

Myopia rates are indeed rising globally, including in India, there

is evidence suggesting a significant increase in myopia prevalence among urban children in India, said the experts as part of the ongoing Myopia Awareness Week.

Studies show that in the 20-year period from 1999 to 2019, the incidence of myopia among urban children has tripled in India, from 4.44 per cent to 21.15 per cent, respectively.

"We have been witnessing a steady increase in the number of myopia cases in urban children over the last few years. Our predictions, based on the slope of 0.8 per cent every year, indicate that the prevalence of myopia among urban children will increase to 31.89 per cent in 2030, 40 per cent in 2040 and 48.1 per cent in 2050. This means that one out of every two children in India will be suffering from myopia in the next 25 years, up from one in four currently," Smit M Bavariya, cataract surgeon with Dr Agarwals Eye Hospital, Thane, Mumbai, told IANS.



Indeed, myopia is becoming more common in India, especially among the urban population. This tendency has been confirmed by a number of studies and reports, which show that myopia has become more common among kids and teenagers in recent years," added Mahipal Singh Sachdev, chairman and managing director, Center for Sight, New Delhi.

The symptoms include blurry vision, difficulty seeing distant objects, eye strain, headaches,

Excessive screen time stimulates the eyes, retina, and brain of children, leading to accelerated myopic changes due to rapid eyeball growth

SMIT M BAVARIYA | CATARACT SURGEON, DR AGARWALS EYE HOSPITAL, THANE

and fatigue - particularly after prolonged screen use. The experts noted that a sedentary lifestyle, prolonged screen usage, and reduced outdoor activities are contributing to the rapid rise in myopia cases in children.

"Excessive screen time stimulates the eyes, retina, and brain of children, leading to accelerated myopic changes due to rapid eyeball growth," Smit said. A lack of exposure to essential natural light due to being in-

doors also affects eye health, Mahipal told IANS.

The experts also blamed changes in lifestyle brought about by urbanisation, including an increase in near-work activities like studying, reading and extended durations of near-work caused by demanding academic contexts in metropolitan locations.

"Genetic predisposition also matters; it's possible that urban populations have a higher prevalence of genetic risk factors linked to myopia. These all factors put a lot of pressure and strain to our eyes, retina and nerves, as a result of which the incidences are gradually rising," Mahipal said.

To tackle the rising health issue, the experts called for public health initiatives, education campaigns, lifestyle adjustments and enhanced access to eye care services.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Ethanol plant construction sparks row in Nayagarh

VILLAGERS ALLEGE THAT THE UNIT WILL AFFECT WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT DRASTICALLY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, May 14: Construction of a new ethanol plant by 'Juststrive Industries Private Ltd', which has its headquarters in Hyderabad, has sparked resentment among locals and environmentalists in Nayagarh district. It is coming up in Haridabandha mouza of Badagotha panchayat under Nuagaon block. However, locals pointed out that it is being constructed on a plot of 60 acres of land which is close to an elephant corridor. This will certainly affect wildlife and the environment, they added.

The matter came to the fore after members of local outfit, 'Anchalik Vikash Parishad' and



residents of Mahipur and Badagotha areas met Nayagarh District Collector Swadha Dev Singh and submitted a written complaint in this regard Monday. They urged the district collector to intervene and stop the construction of the ethanol plant.

The agitators have also alleged that the management of the company has illegally acquired 26 acres of 'pasture land' for construction of a road adjacent to the plant. They added that

despite repeated protests, road construction has started on the land. The locals also alleged that the plant authorities are going ahead with their plans without the necessary clearances from the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB). They pointed out that their livestock will suffer if the pasture land is converted into a road.

The registration of 60 acres of land in the name of 'Juststrive Industries Private Ltd' without

a proper road connection has come as a huge shock to the residents of the area. Usually in such cases, companies have to show that they have acquired industrial land with road connectivity. However, in this case, the rules have not been followed, the members of 'Anchalik Vikash Parishad' pointed out. They added that the status of the land has been changed to 'Gharabari' (homestead) which indicates ample proof of foul play.

The villagers informed that when a common man purchases land without having proper road connection, registration is denied. However, in this case all rules have been waived. They added that the 26 acres of land couldn't have been acquired by the plant management without the tacit involvement of the local administration.

One of the owners of the company, Ajay Kumar Mohanty however, asserted that the plant is being constructed after getting all the necessary permissions and clearances from state-owned IPICOL. He also said that permission to construct the road on pasture land has been obtained. Mohanty added that they are holding discussions with villagers who are against road construction, to solve the matter amicably. He pointed out that setting up of the plant will help people as local residents will get jobs and there will be many who will indirectly benefit from the unit.

Businessman arrested for grabbing forest land

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 14: A businessman, identified as Rajesh Agarwal, and two of his accomplices have been arrested for allegedly encroaching on forest land and trying to construct a house on it, officials informed here Tuesday. Even though the three were arrested May 11, the Forest department disclosed the matter Tuesday. Officials said that Agarwal had been warned repeatedly and letters had been sent him to vacate the land and stop construction, but he did not do so.

"We investigated the matter and there is proof beyond doubt that Agarwal was illegally constructing a building on land belonging to the Forest department," informed Gyanendra Lima, a ranger of Panposh division.

Lima said that when Agarwal did not heed to warnings to stop construction, officials visited the site. "When we visited the under-construction house, we



found two carpenters inside it making furniture. Agarwal was also present and we arrested all the three," Lima stated.

Officials stated that during interrogation, Agarwal informed that he had purchased the land from a member of the local tribal community for ₹15 lakh. However, terming this statement as 'a blatant lie' an official pointed out that Sundargarh is a scheduled district and tribal land cannot be bought. "We are surprised as to how Agarwal managed to construct a portion of the house without anyone having a whiff of it," the official informed.

The three were forwarded to court Tuesday where their bail pleas were rejected.

Independent candidate held for assaulting BJP nominee



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, May 14: Independent candidate for the Berhampur Assembly seat Shibashankar Das was arrested Tuesday for assaulting BJP's Lok Sabha nominee Pradeep Panigrahy during the first phase of the polls in Odisha, Monday. Das was produced in court Tuesday where his bail plea was rejected and he was sent to judicial custody.

Panigrahy and Das allegedly came to blows at Gosaninuaon in Ganjam district when polling was underway at a booth in Utkalmani UP School. Following the scuffle, the BJP nominee suffered injuries on his neck and chest. Initially Panigrahy was admitted to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital here before being transferred to AIIMS in Bhubaneswar where he is currently undergoing treatment.

Das incidentally is a former mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC). He decided to contest as an independent candidate after failing to get a ticket from the BJP for the Berhampur Assembly constituency. He had alleged earlier Panigrahy played a key role in preventing his nomination. He had contested from the same constituency twice in the past, but on both occasions he was unsuccessful.

Das, 50 was arrested under Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means) of the IPC, after a case was registered against him at the Gosaninuaon police station. A case was registered against him after Panigrahy lodged a complaint, SP (Berhampur) Sarthak Sarangi stated.

Das's wife Asha Kumari Das has also lodged Tuesday a counter FIR alleging that her husband was attacked by the BJP supporters, police said.

Supporters of Das staged a protest in front of the police station where he was held, demanding his release. "We tried to convince the agitators. But they did not listen and continued their protest," Sarangi said. He added that the demonstrators left the place after the arrival of additional forces at the police station. An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police sustained injuries when the protesters allegedly pelted stones, he said

dergoing treatment.

Das incidentally is a former mayor of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC). He decided to contest as an independent candidate after failing to get a ticket from the BJP for the Berhampur Assembly constituency. He had alleged earlier Panigrahy played a key role in preventing his nomination. He had contested from the same constituency twice in the past, but on both occasions he was unsuccessful.

Das, 50 was arrested under Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means) of the IPC, after a case was registered against him at the Gosaninuaon police station. A case was registered against him after Panigrahy lodged a complaint, SP (Berhampur) Sarthak Sarangi stated.

Das's wife Asha Kumari Das has also lodged Tuesday a counter FIR alleging that her husband was attacked by the BJP supporters, police said.

Supporters of Das staged a protest in front of the police station where he was held, demanding his release. "We tried to convince the agitators. But they did not listen and continued their protest," Sarangi said. He added that the demonstrators left the place after the arrival of additional forces at the police station. An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of police sustained injuries when the protesters allegedly pelted stones, he said

Rebuilt COB#2 ignited at RSP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 14: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) achieved a significant milestone Monday with the lighting up of the rebuilt Coke Oven Battery#2 (COB#2). This marked the initiation of the heating up process of the battery. SR Suryawanshi, Executive Director (Works) ignited the state-of-the-art COB#2. Also present on the occasion were other senior officers and employees of RSP, CET and MECON.

The 4.5 metres tall COB#2, was first commissioned in 1958 and it had undergone rebuilding and modification for the last time in 1995. With the objective of operational flexibility and meeting demands for coke as well as for precision adherence to environmental standards, the rebuilding of the oven was initiated December 15, 2020.

The battery was dismantled up to the nozzle deck slab along with associated equipment and refractory. Notably, the

battery has 70 ovens equally distributed in two blocks (2A & 2B). It has been rebuilt again in twin blocks and has compound regenerative twin fuel jet firing systems, with partial re-circulation of waste gases. Staged air supply and computerised heating control systems have also been provided in COB#2, officials said.

The rebuilt COB#2 is designed to comply with stipulated emission standards and guidelines laid by the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) to prevent pollution and also to maintain environment quality in the work area, they added. The officials informed that with the lighting up, controlled heating process of the new refractory lining has commenced. It will now take approximately 90 days to obtain the desired temperature of 1,160 degrees Celsius before charging of coal and pushing of coke into COB#2 starts. It is expected to happen by mid-August, officials informed.

Illegal liquor-making units busted in Keonjhar



Hatadihi: Acting on a tip-off, police busted a number of country-liquor manufacturing units and seized huge quantities of mahua during raids at the Hadagarh Wildlife Sanctuary under Soso police limits in Keonjhar district Tuesday. The police team was led by DSP Prasant Kumar Behera of Anandapur sub-division. The team first raided villages under Soso and Nandipada police limits from where they seized huge quantities of mahua. Later, the team raided Sundarapal, Sangam and Andhari areas within the sanctuary and busted the manufacturing units. Officials said that 8,000 litres of fermented Mahua brew were seized during the raids. Locals are alarmed at the presence of such illegal liquor-manufacturing units within the sanctuary. They said that people involved in the activities might also be associated with poaching. The presence of criminals will only endanger the lives of elephants and other animals in the sanctuary, they opined. However, the miscreants working in these units managed to escape and evaded arrest. Three cases in this regard have been registered at the Soso police station, cops said. They added that raids will be conducted again in the near future to nab people dealing in illegal liquor.

Format C-1
(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)
Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)
Name and address of candidate: Kamakshya Prasad Pradhan; Plot No-885, Chandimata Colony, Rasulgah, Bhubaneswar-751010
Name of political party: "Independent"
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)
Name of Election: Legislative Assembly
*Name of Constituency: 109-Satyabadi, Odisha
I Kamakshya Prasad Pradhan, a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending Criminal Cases				
Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. & Dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Court of Hon'ble JMFC, Bhubaneswar	1776/09	Charges have been framed. Sub judice before Court of Hon'ble JMFC, Bhubaneswar of Smt. S Mishra	IPC section No: 363/365/368/386/392/34
2.	Brahmagiri, GRNL, Case No. 0098 of the year 2021		Subjudice before the court of Brahmagiri, GRNL	IPC section No: 294/323/34/341/354/354-B/506 The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 (Amendment Act, 2018): 3(1)(f), 3(1)(s), 3(2)(va)

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
Sl. No	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
	Nil	Nil	Nil

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. ETCECONIBBS202419, Dated: 06.05.2024

NAME OF WORK : PHASED ARRAY ULTRASONIC TESTING (PAUT) OF FLASH BUTT WELDED JOINTS EXECUTED BY MOBILE FLASH BUTT PLANTS AT SITE USING RDSO VERIFIED PAUT WELD TESTER UNDER THE ENTIRE JURISDICTION OF CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (CON)/ BHUBANESWAR OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.

Approx. Cost of the Work (₹) :
218.92 Lakhs, EMD (₹) : 2,59,500.00, Completion Period of the Work : 12 (Twelve) Months.

Tender Closing Date & Time : At 1200 Hrs. of 28.05.2024.

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers / bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS portal. Only registered tenderer / bidder can participate on e-tendering.

The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-1 of chapter-2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-8 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.

Chief Administrative Officer (Con), Bhubaneswar
PR-13/CH/24-25

Format C-1
(For candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)
Declaration about Criminal Cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)
Name and address of Candidate: Shri Mukesh Mahaling
Name of Political Party: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)
Name of Election: General Election 2024
*Name of Constituency: 66 - Loisingha (SC) Assembly Constituency
I Shri Mukesh Mahaling (Name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending Criminal Cases				
Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and Dated	Status of Case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Sambalpur Town P.S.	Sambalpur Town P.S. Case No. 29, Date: 21.01.2021	Pending for investigation	U/S Disaster management Act, 2005- 56, Epidemic, Diseases Act, 1897-3, IPC 1860-143, IPC 1860-269, IPC 1860-270, IPC 1860-336, IPC 1860-353

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of Offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
	NIL	NIL	NIL

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

Sd./- Mukesh Mahaling

Format C-1
(for candidate to publish in Newspapers, TV)
Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011(Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)
Name and address of candidate: NARASINGHA MINZ, AT/PO- LAING, PS- RAJGANGPUR, DIST- SUNDARGARH, PIN- 770034
Name of political party: BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY
(Independent candidates should write "Independent" here)
Name of Election: ASSEMBLY ELECTION 2024 (ODISHA)
*Name of Constituency: 13-RAJGANGPUR (ST) AC
I NARASINGHA MINZ (name of candidate), a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending criminal cases				
Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status of case(s)	Section(s) of Acts concerned and brief description of offence(s)
1	Special Judge Vigilance Court Sundargarh	VGR-10/2019 Arising out of Sambalpur Vigilance Ps Case No. 33 of 2019	Pending Awaiting for Charge Sheet	U/s 13(2) read with Sec. 13(1) (a) of the P.C act and Sec. 409/34 IPC. (1) A public servant is said to commit the offence of criminal misconduct, (a) if he dishonestly or fraudulently misappropriates or otherwise converts for his own use any property entrusted to him or any property under his control as a public servant or allows any other person to do so; or (b) if he intentionally (2) Any public servant who commits criminal misconduct shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall be not less than one year but which may extend to seven years and shall also be liable to fine. Punishment under Section 409 IPC. As per Section 409 of the IPC, if public servants, bankers, merchants, factors, attorneys, or agents commit a criminal breach of trust, they are punishable with the following: Life imprisonment, or Imprisonment of up to 10 years along with a fine. *34. Acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention. - Where two or more persons, with a common intention to commit a criminal act, do any acts in furtherance of such common intention, each of them is liable for the criminal act done as if it were done by him alone." 1.

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences			
Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of office (s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
1	NIL	NIL	NIL

*In the case of election to Council of States or election to Legislative Council by MLAs, mention the election concerned in place of name of constituency.

MCL MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
Jagruti Vihar, Burla - 768020, Dist. - Sambalpur, Odisha
Tel. (EPABX) : 0663-2542461 to 469 Website : www.mahanadicoal.in

NOTICE

All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd www.coalindia.in, respective subsidiary Company, (MCL, www.mahanadicoal.in), CIL e-Procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>

R-5207

FORM NO. NCLT. 3A
ADVERTISEMENT DETAILING PETITION
[See Rule 35]
IN THE HON'BLE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL CUTTACK BENCH AT CUTTACK
CP (CAA) No.5/CB/2024
Connected with
CA (CAA) No. 2/CB/2024

IN THE MATTER OF:
The Companies Act, 2013.

AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Section 230 to 232 of the said Act;

AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
The Companies (Compromises, Arrangements and Amalgamations) Rules, 2016 and other relevant Rules;

AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Suryo Infra Projects Private Limited, CIN: U45201OR2008PTC010209 a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956; and having its registered office at Dinalipi Bhawan A-54/1 & A-55/1, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, within the aforesaid jurisdiction.
..... Petitioner Transferor Company 1
AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Suryo Financial Services Private Limited, CIN: U67120OR1995PTC003978 a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013; and having its registered office at 3rd Floor, A-54/1 & A-55/1, Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar - 751003, Odisha, within the aforesaid jurisdiction.
..... Petitioner Transferor Company 2
AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Suryo Papers Private Limited, CIN: U21099OR1986PTC001735 a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956; and having its registered office at 3rd Floor, A-54/1 & A-55/1, Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, within the aforesaid jurisdiction.
..... Petitioner Transferor Company 3
AND

IN THE MATTER OF:
Suryo Investments and Transport Limited, CIN: U67120OR1984PLC001307 a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956; and having its registered office at 3rd Floor, A-54/1 & A-55/1, Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, within the aforesaid jurisdiction.
..... Petitioner Transferor Company 4
WITH

IN THE MATTER OF:
Suryo Udyog Limited, CIN: U24119OR1978PLC000785 a company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956; and having its registered office at A-54/1 & A-55/1, Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, within the aforesaid jurisdiction.
..... Petitioner Transferee Company
(hereinafter collectively referred to as the "Petitioner Companies")

NOTICE OF PETITION

A Petition under Section 230 and 232 of the Companies Act, 2013 for sanction of Scheme of Amalgamation of Suryo Infra Projects Private Limited, Suryo Financial Services Private Limited, Suryo Papers Private Limited, Suryo Investments and Transport Limited (the Petitioner Transferor Companies) and Suryo Udyog Limited (the Petitioner Transferee Company) the petitioners above named was presented by the Petitioner on the 8th day of May 2024, and the said petition is fixed for hearing before the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, Cuttack Bench on the 5th day of June 2024. Any person desirous of supporting or opposing the said petition should send to the Petitioner's advocate, notice of his intention, signed by him or his advocate, with his name and address, so as to reach the petitioner's advocate not later than two days before the date fixed for the hearing of the petition. Where any person seeks to oppose the petition, the grounds of opposition or a copy of his affidavit shall be furnished with such notice. A copy of the petition will be furnished by the undersigned to any person requiring the same on payment of the prescribed charges for the same.

Dated: 14/05/2024
Place: Bhubaneswar

Sd./- Shaswat Kumar Rout
(Advocate for Petitioner)
Plot No. 687 K-3B, Kalinga Nagar Ghatikia, Bhubaneswar-751029

FOCUS TECHNOLOGY

RISE OF 'FINTERNET'



What we call the 'Finternet' is a vision of multiple financial ecosystems that connect with one another, much like the internet, in order to give individuals and businesses full control over their financial lives. We foresee a world in which people and companies can use any device to transfer any financial asset – no matter the amount – to anyone in the world. These transactions would be cheap, secure, near-instantaneous, and available to all

digital form of this money is thus a necessary foundation for the Finternet. Commercial banks will also play a crucial role in interacting with consumers, not least by providing tokenised bank deposits that will form the lifeblood of the Finternet's monetary system.

Moreover, a robust regulatory and supervisory structure must underpin the Finternet. Safeguards such as deposit insurance and public oversight of financial-services providers should be maintained to protect customers and ensure that money has the same value regardless of whether it is issued by a central bank or a commercial bank.

The radical use of new technology could streamline the layers of manual checks now required to comply with rules and regulations. This would enable the creation of products that otherwise might not be developed due to compliance burdens, while also ensuring that the Finternet is not used by bad actors seeking to exploit loopholes.

Making the Finternet a reality will take years, but we must start now. The technology is mature enough, and, crucially, we are not yet locked into rigid institutional frameworks or trapped in "walled gardens" of services created by monopolies. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to redesign the architecture of the financial system, and we should be thinking big and imaginatively, instead of focusing narrowly on individual technologies.

We know where we need to go. Equally important, we have the tools to get there. Now the global financial system just needs its "Neil Armstrong moment" – a small step that represents a giant leap for mankind.

Agustin Carstens, a former governor of the Bank of Mexico, is General Manager of the Bank for International Settlements. Nandan Nilekani, Co-Founder and Chairman of Infosys, is Founding Chairman of UIDAI (Aadhaar). PROJECT SYNDICATE

The financial system is ready for a giant leap forward. It's time to explore new frontiers. We foresee a time when applying for a mortgage or a small business loan could be as easy as texting a friend or booking a hotel room online.

There has been some progress on technology to enable such a new reality, as evidenced by the proliferation of mobile-payment apps. But transforming financial services will require creating an entirely new system to match the advances made in communications since the advent of the internet and smartphones. Today's mobile phones are powerful computers, after all, so it would be a waste not to maximise their use.

To this end, we have drawn on our joint expertise in economics and technology to offer a blueprint for the future financial architecture. What we call the "Finternet" is a vision of multiple financial ecosystems that connect with one another, much like the internet, in order to give individuals and businesses full control over their financial lives. We foresee a world in which people and companies can use any device to transfer any financial asset – no matter the amount – to anyone in the world. These transactions would be cheap, secure, near-instantaneous, and available to all.

This new system would be particularly important for emerging and developing economies, where large gaps in access to financial services remain despite efforts to bolster inclusion. Many services are simply unavailable or not widely available, particularly to people living in remote areas and with low incomes. And even when people are able to access financial products, using them is often expensive and slow.

Important breakthroughs in recent years have paved the way for the Finternet. One example is tokenisation, whereby tokens representing digital assets can uniquely identify ownership as well as applicable rules. Another is programmable ledgers, the digital platforms that combine

the record-keeping functions of traditional databases with the governance arrangements required to update them.

To unlock the value of financial innovation and build a seamless, interconnected network, we must combine all these elements and break down the current financial system's barriers and silos. Specifically, bringing together different tokenised assets on unified programmable ledgers would drastically reduce the need for lengthy messaging, clearing, and settlement systems that create extra costs, take more time, and limit access to credit and other financial services.

Unified ledgers would also enable "smart contracts," which can trigger an action – transferring ownership of a house, for

example – if prespecified conditions are met. They could even bundle together numerous automated transactions. So, in the case of a property transfer, the payment of the purchase price and anti-money laundering checks could happen at the same time and take seconds rather than weeks. Overall, these ledgers would meet – and perhaps surpass – today's regulatory and supervisory standards, while also being faster, cheaper, and more reliable than current systems.

But technology is not enough. Central banks, as the guardians of public money, have a major role to play in the new financial architecture. The money they issue is the vehicle through which all economic transactions are ultimately settled. A



Agustin Carstens & Nandan Nilekani

CENTRAL BANKS, AS THE GUARDIANS OF PUBLIC MONEY, HAVE A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN THE NEW FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Meloni & Media

Change yourself if you wish to change the world.

THE MOTHER



There is bad news from Italy. The Far-Right government of Giorgia Meloni is virtually gagging the media and using the country's public broadcaster for the ruling alliance's propaganda. On the other hand, there is also good news. It is observed that Italian journalists are not taking the blatant attempt to control the media lying down. According to the latest audit of Press freedom by Reporters Without Borders, Italy has slipped down in international rankings. The report stated the Meloni government is going ahead with its plan to sell off a state-controlled news agency to a Press baron who is also an MP in her ruling coalition. However, we in India should not find these acts strange. Such manipulations by the party in power to control both state and private media to launch pro-government propaganda, has become common practise. What is happening in Italy now is causing serious concern for the fate of freedom of speech in the country as neo-Fascist powers are at the helm of affairs. Interestingly it is in Italy that fascist forces, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, had grabbed power over a century ago. Time seems to have turned full circle.

As has been the case in India where the government has been using the law of sedition to intimidate journalists and social activists critical of the government's acts of omission and commission, the radical Right government of Italy is using the country's draconian defamation law to silence independent voices. This week, a philosopher from Rome's Sapienza University will become the latest public intellectual to face court proceedings after having been accused of defamation by a government figure. In a talk show, Donatella Di Cesare described the language used by the agriculture minister, Francesco Lollobrigida (Meloni's brother-in-law), as neo-Nazi in tone. Under Italy's strict defamation laws, she risks a substantial prison sentence if eventually found guilty in a criminal court.

But, Di Cesare is not an isolated case. Meloni herself is pursuing an aggravated defamation case, on similar grounds, against an 81-year-old historian. She has also sued the writer and journalist Roberto Saviano apart from journalists working at the Left-wing newspaper Domani.

In broadcasting, the situation is even more grim. The tradition in the state broadcaster, RAI, has for decades been that the ruling party uses it as a political prize. Even then no party in power in the past took control of the news outlet so brazenly as Meloni's administration is doing for which it has already earned the sobriquet of "Tele Meloni." The corporation's director-general, Giampaolo Rossi, a close Meloni ally is an admirer of Viktor Orban and a onetime apologist for Vladimir Putin. A year after he was appointed, internal disension has come out in the open. Last week, disgusted journalists began a series of strikes mainly against "deteriorating" working conditions and alleged editorial interference and pressure from Meloni's government. At a Press conference, Enrica Agostini, a senior political reporter, said that in 25 years at RAI she had "never experienced pressure and censorship like now."

That things were heading towards undeclared censorship became clear last month when one of Italy's leading authors, Antonio Scuderi, accused RAI of censorship after an invitation to deliver an anti-Fascism talk to mark Italy's Liberation Day was withdrawn at the last minute. Scuderi had shot into international limelight through his 2018 novel-*M: Son of the Century* -, based on the rise of Benito Mussolini. His crime, in the eyes of Meloni's Brothers of Italy, is that in an interview following the election victory of Meloni and her party in 2022, he sought to differentiate between 20th-century Fascism and the modern radical Right. He said the real danger now is not the survival of democracy, but "the quality of that democracy." What he meant is the current global phenomenon of neo-Fascist, neo-Nazi parties using the democratic route of elections to seize power and then impose authoritarian, intolerant rule on the people.

Meloni's high esteem for the Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban, the self-styled champion of "illiberal democracy," is well known. Since taking office 18 months ago, she has – unlike the Hungarian PM – supported Europe's political mainstream views on issues such as Ukraine. But at home, her government's policy of bullying critics follows the example of Orban.

Another sign of protest is journalists at Italy's state broadcaster went on strike protesting what their union termed "suffocating control" by Meloni's administration. They expressed their resolve not to allow the government to turn RAI into a mouthpiece for the government. Their counterparts in India can take a leaf out of their book.

WISDOM CORNER

The first test of a truly great man is his humility. By humility I don't mean doubt of his powers or hesitation in speaking his opinion, but merely an understanding of the relationship of what he can say and what he can do.

JOHN RUSKIN

The whole difference between construction and creation is exactly this: that a thing constructed can only be loved after it is constructed; but a thing created is loved before it exists.

CHARLES DICKENS

The changes in our life must come from the impossibility to live otherwise than according to the demands of our conscience not from our mental resolution to try a new form of life.

LEO TOLSTOY

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1886: American poet Emily Dickinson, who commanded a singular brilliance of style and integrity of vision, died in Amherst, Massachusetts.

1914: Mountaineer Tenzing Norgay, who, with Sir Edmund Hillary, was the first person to stand atop the summit of Mount Everest, was born in Tshechu, Tibet.

1928: Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse made his debut with the premiere of the cartoon Plane Crazy. The 6-minute film shows Mickey trying to fly an airplane in reference to Charles Lindbergh. Today, Mickey Mouse is one of the world's most recognized cartoon characters and the official mascot of the Walt Disney Company.

1940: In San Bernadino, California, brothers Maurice ("Mac") and Richard McDonald opened a drive-in restaurant that gave rise to the fast-food chain McDonald's.

1948: Egypt, Syria, Transjordan and Iraq invade Israel. The First Arab-Israeli War was initiated by Israel's proclamation of independence on the day before the invasion. It lasted nearly 10 months and caused thousands of casualties on both sides.

IN JEST THIS

Hug a tree & show your love

I have a confession to make: I do not remember the last time I hugged a tree.

This is embarrassing partly because I have a dozen trees around my house and appreciate them greatly, not just for their beauty but for all the benefits they provide. Even so, I have not taken the trouble to hug any of my trees, nor given any of them a loving tap, not even the maple tree.

I wouldn't normally feel guilty about this – after all, I'm not the only person who is slacking off in tree hugging – but then I heard about Abubakar Tahiru, a 29-year-old Ghanaian forestry student who has hugged more trees than Pope Francis has hugged people.

Well, perhaps that's not quite true. The Pope has probably hugged more than a million people in his lifetime (that's just 30 per day). But the Pope, unlike Tahiru, does not have a Guinness World Record for hugging.

Tahiru, who is pursuing a master's degree in forestry at

Auburn University in the US, recently set a world record for the most trees hugged in one hour. In just 60 minutes, he hugged a staggering 1,123 trees, averaging almost 19 per minute. Each tree got just 3.2 seconds of his love.

"Achieving this world record feels incredibly rewarding," said Tahiru, who went to America last year after earning a bachelor's degree in Ghana. "It's a meaningful gesture to highlight the crucial role of trees in our ecosystem and the urgency of environmental conservation."

Where did all this hugging take place? It happened at Tuskegee National Forest in Alabama, a conservative state where the majority of people are probably frowning at all this tree-hugging.

Husband: "I don't know how I feel about this. This man has barely been in our country for a year and he's already hugging all our trees."

Wife: "I suppose it's okay, as long as he got their consent."

Tahiru did not break a previous world record – he just set a new one. Guinness told him that he needed to hug 700 trees to become the first holder of this record, and he easily beat that mark.

In case you are interested in breaking his record, you should know that Guinness, for the purpose of this record, defines a hug as "both arms wrapped around a tree in a close embrace." Don't try to get away with half-hugs or pretend hugs like you do with people! Each tree should feel like it got an authentic hug.

Guinness also states that "no tree may be hugged more than once." This is a good rule. After all, if one tree got hugged more than once, the other trees would be jealous. Please remember this rule the next time you're in a forest.

Another Guinness rule is that "no damage can be caused to any tree or else the attempt is dis-

qualified." Tahiru had to hug each tree quickly, but also gently. After each hug, a Guinness official apparently checked to make sure the tree was fine.

Official: "You okay?" Tree: "Hurt. Definitely hurt." Official: "Physically?"

Tree: "Emotionally. He just hugged me and moved on to the next tree, like it didn't mean anything to him."

Official: "He cares for you – more than most humans do. That's why he's doing this – to bring more attention to the importance of trees."

Tree: "Please tell him to bring more hugs for me. And longer than three seconds this time please."

Official: "Okay, I'll tell him. Once he has set the record, he can come back and hug you all he wants."

Tree: "I'll be right here. I'm not going anywhere. That's the thing about trees. We are reliable. You can count on us. Can we count on you?"



Melvin Durai

ABUBAKAR TAHIRU, A 29-YEAR-OLD GHANAIAN FORESTRY STUDENT, HAS HUGGED MORE TREES THAN POPE FRANCIS HAS HUGGED PEOPLE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Pressing priority

Sir, Currently, there is a severe shortage of tuberculosis treatment drugs in some districts of Odisha. According to the government's TB report, Odisha ranks second in terms of the number of TB patients in the country. If the government does not take immediate action, the Prime Minister's TB Free India campaign is likely to fail by 2025. Thousands of tuberculosis patients in our state will go into critical condition. In this regard, the supply of medicines to the state is a pressing priority.

Nabnit Panigrahi,
RAYAGADA

Capital outflow

Sir, The trajectory of remittances over the past decade and a half paints a fascinating picture of economic dynamics, particularly between two major players, India and China. India has seen a remarkable growth in inward remittances, soaring from \$53 billion in 2010 to \$111 billion in 2022, showcasing a robust compound annual growth rate of 6.4%. Conversely, China's inward remittances experienced a peak of \$64 billion in 2015, only to taper off to around \$51 billion by 2022, despite initial growth. Examining outward remittances provides further insight into these trends. China's outward remittances surged from \$2.5 billion in 2010 to a staggering \$30 billion in 2022, highlighting the nation's expanding global economic influence and its domestic "common prosperity" initiative, which incentivises wealthy individuals to remit funds abroad. This surge underscores China's evolving role in global financial flows and its efforts to address domestic wealth disparities. Despite India's impressive inward remittance figures, its outward remittances have also increased, albeit at a slower pace. From \$6.4 billion in 2010, outward remittances have grown to \$17 billion in 2022, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 8.5%. However, India's net remittance position remains heavily skewed at -\$94 billion, indicating a significant outflow of talent and capital from the country. To sustain India's growth trajectory and address the persistent net remittance deficit, it is crucial to prioritise talent retention and domestic innovation. By fostering an environment that nurtures creativity, offers competitive opportunities, and rewards excellence, India can harness the full potential of its human capital.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

BMC, GRP dispute delayed action on illegal billboards

AFTER TRAGEDY, BMC SAYS IT WILL ACT AGAINST ALL ILLEGAL HOARDINGS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 14: No action was taken in the past against the giant hoarding that crashed on a petrol pump in Chheda Nagar area Monday evening as a dispute was going on between the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Government Railway Police (GRP), an official said.

A day after the collapse of an illegal hoarding claimed 14 lives in Ghatkopar, the Mumbai civic body Tuesday said it would take action against all hoardings erected without its permission.

The drive will start with the removal of the remaining three hoardings on the GRP land in Ghatkopar, said municipal commissioner Bhushan Gagrani Tuesday after visiting the site where rescue operation is underway.

"Regarding this incident, a case has been registered. We have also directed all civic officials and assistant commissioners to remove such hoardings erected without our permission or which are dangerous in their respective wards immediately. In the next few days you will find this action completed," he said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde also gave directives in this regard to the civic body, Gagrani added. The BMC does not have an elected body at present as civic elections are pending for more than two years.

Reiterating that the BMC had not given any permission for the hoarding that collapsed Monday, Gagrani said it had been conducting correspondence (with the owner and concerned

THE DRIVE WILL START WITH THE REMOVAL OF THE REMAINING THREE HOARDINGS ON THE GRP LAND IN GHATKOPAR, SAID MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER BHUSHAN GAGRANI

agencies) regarding it for the last two years, and also lodged a police complaint for the poisoning of trees on its periphery. "A stand was taken that we (GRP) do not need permission (for a hoarding on railway land) under the Railway Act. The BMC's response was that it was not legally correct. And hence, in the whole episode, so far there was no action," the commissioner claimed.

An assistant police commissioner (admin) had given permission for the four hoardings on the GRP land (including the one that collapsed) on behalf of the commissioner of railway police, Mumbai, but no permission had been obtained from the BMC, a civic official had claimed earlier.

The death toll in the incident stands at 14 while the condition of two injured persons was critical, Gagrani said, adding that most of the injured are admitted to the Rajawadi hospital while those who require neurosurgery have been shifted to the KEM hospital. Both hospitals are run by the BMC.

exceeding their size limits and standing on a weak foundation like the one in Ghatkopar," he said.

Somaiya said he has requested Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis to get such dangerous hoardings removed across Mumbai immediately.

The civic body has prepared a plan to raze the remaining hoardings on the GRP land where the billboard collapsed, an official said.

The BMC had earlier said that it issued a notice to Ms Ego Media Private Limited for installing the hoarding that collapsed on the petrol pump.

A senior civic official said the assistant municipal commissioner of the N-ward had issued a notice to an advertisement agency to remove these hoardings with immediate effect, but the civic body has not received any response so far.

Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra posted a clip on his X handle showing the hoarding collapsing and said such an incident was unacceptable.

"And we're a city trying to transform itself into a modern metropolis. CM Shinde has ordered a probe into all hoardings. Stringent rules must follow," he added.

CM Shinde visited the incident spot late Monday evening and ordered a structural audit of all hoardings in the city.

The hoardings, if found illegal and dangerous, would be removed immediately, he said.

It is a very unfortunate incident. The government will probe it, and the people responsible will face action, Shinde told reporters.

He announced an aid of ₹5 lakh to the kin of each person killed in the incident.

Death toll at 14; search and rescue ops still on

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 14: The death toll in the hoarding collapse incident in Mumbai has risen to 14 while 75 others are injured, civic officials Tuesday said as rescue and search operations continued a day after the tragedy.

Mumbai Police Commissioner Vivek Phansalkar assured strict action against those responsible for the incident, while the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said it will take down the remaining billboards on the GRP land where the hoarding collapsed. The 120 x 120 square feet illegal hoarding fell at a petrol pump in Ghatkopar area during dust storms and unseasonal rains that lashed Mumbai on Monday.

Rescue teams were facing a challenge as they cannot use gasoline-powered cutter equipment and oxyfuel cutter which can result in a blast or fire as there is a petrol pump at the site, an official of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said.

At least 12 fire engines and other vehicles were involved in the search and rescue operation since the incident Monday. Two NDRF teams, comprising 100 personnel, also joined the operation Monday evening.

Two heavy duty cranes and two hydra cranes were being used in the operation along with two earth-excavating machines and 25 ambulances, the civic official said.

The NDRF teams used two cranes weighing 500 tonnes each to pull up the hoarding from both sides. After creating a gap of about 3.5 to 4 feet, the rescuers crouched into the tiny space to look for people trapped underneath, NDRF assistant commandant Nikhil Mudholkar said.

MUMBAI HOARDING TRAGEDY



During the search Monday night, three girders of the hoarding were pulled using two hydraulic cranes. Efforts are underway to pull two more big girders using hydraulic cranes, and once this is done, the NDRF will be able to find out if more people are trapped inside, he said.

So far, 89 persons were pulled out from under the collapsed hoarding, of whom 14 were declared dead, officials said.

The injured persons were admitted to six hospitals in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane and 32 of them were discharged so far, they said.

The condition of one of the injured persons admitted to the Rajawadi Hospital was critical, a BMC official said.

Police Commissioner Phansalkar visited the spot late

Monday evening and assured of strict action against those responsible for the incident.

A case has been registered against Bhavesh Bhide, the owner of Ms Ego Media Private Limited and others for culpable homicide not amounting to murder and other relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code at Pant Nagar police station, another official said.

The billboard was illegal and no permission was taken to install it, as per civic officials.

An Assistant Police Commissioner (Admin) had given permission for erecting four hoardings on behalf of the Commissioner of Railway Police, Mumbai, including the one which collapsed, but no official permission or NOC was obtained from the BMC, as per

a civic official.

BJP leader Kirit Somaiya asked how the permission for erecting the billboard was given by a police officer when the civic body is the authority for it.

The former MP also claimed permissions for the hoarding and a petrol pump (where the billboard collapsed) were given when Uddhav Thackeray was the chief minister of Maharashtra.

Had the then director general of police been strict, such a hoarding would not have come up, he told reporters.

Somaiya said the permission on paper was given for a 40 feet hoarding whereas the billboard which collapsed was 120 feet tall.

"I believe that there are similar 400 hoardings in various parts of Mumbai, which are

ADI KAILASH YATRA BEGINS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pithoragarh, May 14: The Adi Kailash yatra commenced Tuesday with the first batch of 49 pilgrims arriving at Dharchula base camp en route to Jolinkong which offers a view of the sacred peak.

The first batch of 49 pilgrims, including 32 men and 17 women from different parts of the country, reached the base camp of the yatra at Dharchula, Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) general manager Vijay Nath Shukla said.

The pilgrims are on their way to the Shiv-Parvati temple, which is situated alongside a lake at a height of 18,500 feet in Jolinkong from where one can see the sacred Adi Kailash peak. The temple was opened Monday.

Over 200 devotees were present on the occasion of the opening of the temple for the year, said Gopal Singh Kutiyal, the chief priest of the temple.

Jolinkong came into prominence in October last year when prime minister Narendra Modi paid obeisance at the lakeside temple and had a darshan of the Adi Kailash peak from there.



The pilgrims are on their way to the Shiv-Parvati temple, which is situated alongside a lake at a height of 18,500 feet in Jolinkong from where one can see the sacred Adi Kailash peak

Pithoragarh, Dharchula, Gunji, Bundi, Chaukori and Bhimtal, in-charge of the KMVN base camp Dhan Singh Bisht said.

The pilgrims will leave for New Delhi on the eighth day. Over 500 pilgrims from across the country have booked for the yatra this year so far, Bisht said.

The present phase of Adi Kailash yatra will go on for May and June. It will remain closed in the monsoon months of July and August and will resume from September to November, he said.

Priests, locals stir in Badrinath against 'mismanagement' of Char Dham Yatra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gopeshwar (U'khand), May 14: Priests and locals protested in Uttarakhand's Badrinath Monday against the alleged mismanagement of the Char Dham Yatra by the district administration, causing inconvenience to people.

Shops were kept closed at the Himalayan temple in protest and the Panda community and locals hit the streets.

The agitators created a ruckus in support of more than half-a-dozen of their demands, including stopping the VIP darshan system in Badrinath, removing barricades from the traditional routes for the locals and the facility of entering the temple as before.

Later, after talks between the agitators and officials of the temple committee, the barricading was removed from the roads.

Joshimath Sub-Collector Chandrashekhar Vashishth said



higher officials have been informed about the other demands of the agitators.

Meanwhile, on the demand of the agitators to stop the VIP darshan system, Temple Committee vice-president Kishore Panwar said the system has not been started yet on the instructions of the state government.

Seeing the tremendous enthusiasm of the devotees, the Uttarakhand government has written a letter to the chief secretaries of all the states and Union territories, requesting

them not to allow VIPs to come for Char Dham darshan for the next 15 days.

The Char Dham Yatra started May 10.

Earlier in the day, pilgrims, priests and locals held a protest and kept markets and shops closed for some time, causing inconvenience to the pilgrims in need of essential commodities.

There is anger against the local administration regarding the alleged irregularities in the name of the master plan for Kedarnath and Badrinath.

Talking to PTI Bhasha, Parveen Dhyani, who is associated with the Badrinath Teerth Purohit organisation, alleged that the houses of more than a dozen members of the Panda community have been demolished. On the other hand, he said chaos has been created by the temple committee in the name of VIP darshan and the main pedestrian route leading to the houses of the locals closed.

However, after the agitation, the administration removed the barricades from the pedestrian paths and also closed the counter for VIP darshan, Dhyani said.

The residents of Badrinath will hold a meeting Tuesday to decide the next course of action to get their other demands fulfilled.

The sub-collector said after talks with the agitators, obstructions have been removed from the road leading to Bamani village, while higher officials have been informed of their other demands.

'Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders a precious gem in crown of India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 14: Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane Tuesday described Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) as a precious jewel in the crown of India that has contributed immensely in building capacities for naval and commercial purposes.

Aramane also released a commemorative coin marking 250 years of the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, a defence public sector undertaking (PSU).

MDL is a precious jewel in the crown of India and has contributed immensely in building capacities for naval and commercial purposes. MDL is the biggest shipyard in the country contributing most to the assets of the Indian Navy, he said.

To mark this occasion of im-

mense significance, MDL also saw the inauguration of adjacent land acquired from MPA (Mumbai Port Authority), launch of prototype of indigenous midget submarine 'Arowana', commissioning of Solar Electric Hybrid boat.

MDL completed the platform design and hull of the midget submarine named 'Arowana' which was launched by the defence secretary. MDL has been building submarines since 1984. The midget submarine is being developed as a proof of concept.

The defence secretary also commissioned the solar electric hybrid boat with top speed of 11 knots designed and co-developed with indigenous technology partners. The running cost is almost 110th of a diesel boat and also has a very low maintenance cost.

Pithoragarh, May 14: Forest fires that occur annually in Uttarakhand not only cause significant damage to the region's precious forest resources like trees, plants, bushes, herbs and thick layer of soil but also threaten rare Himalayan fauna - wild animals, reptiles, mammals, birds, butterflies, common flies honey bees and soil-enriching bacteria.

"We have several rare species of birds whose breeding season coincides with the forest fire season, from April to June. Frequent and uncontrolled forest fires are gradually making these species highly endangered in Uttarakhand forests," Sanjeev Chaturvedi, chief conservator of forest (Research), said.

According to the CCF, avian species like the cheer pheasant, kalij pheasant, rufous-bellied woodpecker, common rose, chocolate pansy and common crow have their breeding season from March to June, which is also the

U'khand forest fires threaten rare Himalayan fauna: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



period when most fires occur in the region's forest area.

The cheer pheasant, a native bird of western Himalayas, which inhabits at altitudes of 1800-3200 metres is highly vulnerable to forest fires as it makes its nest in deep bushes on ground and its breeding season coin-

monal have also become endangered due to several reasons, including forest fires in the breeding season, Surendra Panwar, a researcher and keen watcher of the Himalayan birds in Munsiyari, said.

According to Panwar, the number of the rarest of rare Himalayan quail, a species known to be beloved by world-famous ornithologist late Salim Ali, is also declining in the region due to the carelessness of the stakeholders of Himalayan fauna. Jagdish Bhatt, founder director of Wings Foundation, an NGO working towards preserving the Himalayan butterflies, says that of the total 350 species of butterflies found in the Himalayan region, 120 are on the verge of getting endangered as they breed in host plants that are destroyed in forest fires.

Even their caterpillar larvae get destroyed in fires making these varieties highly endangered, Bhatt said.

The Dehradun-based Forest Research Institute is also re-

searching the impact of forest fires on the yellow-headed tortoise that is found throughout the South Asian region. It is listed in schedule 4th of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and also appears in appendix of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) due to its being endangered, sources said.

Under the study to find the impact of forest fires on its (yellow-headed tortoise) existence, we will deploy radio transmitters on tortoise track for two years in the Chilla range of the Rajaji National Park, CCF Chaturvedi said.

Forest fires in Uttarakhand have affected more than 1,437 hectares of forests since November last year, according to a forest department bulletin.

The recent spell of rains in various parts of the state provided much-needed respite from them with no fresh incidents reported in the past few days, it said.



'No difference between BJP, BJD; Cong only alternative in Odisha'

THERE IS NO 'LEHAR' (WAVE) IN FAVOUR OF PM MODI BUT ONLY 'ZEHAR' (POISON) IN HIS LANGUAGE: JAIRAM RAMESH



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 14: There is no difference between the BJP and BJD. Congress is the only alternative in Odisha that is fighting against the BJP-BJD 'alliance'. Voting for BJP is like voting for BJD and vice-versa, Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh alleged here Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference here, the senior Congress leader alleged they are engaged in a fake fight in the ongoing Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Odisha and said BJD and BJP are two sides of the same coin.

"The prime minister and the chief minister are indulged in a 'fake boxing' match. However, the reality is that the BJD had given full support to the BJP in Parliament during the last 10 years," he alleged.

The BJD MPs supported anti-farmer, anti-tribal and anti-environment Bills in both houses of Parliament and even the rul-

Asserting that the Congress is in favour of extending the 50 per cent cap on reservations, Ramesh asked the CM to clarify his stand on the issue.

"Why have you (Patnaik) not fully implemented the Forest Rights Act and Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Rules in Odisha," the former Union minister questioned.

Ramesh claimed that there is no 'lehar' (wave) in favour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but only 'zehar' (poison) in his language.

Training his guns on PM Modi, Jairam said that the language of the outgoing prime minister indicates he is tensed and confused.

He (PM) has realised that farmers, youth, labourers, women and backward classes are upset with him. That's why he talks about Hindu-Muslim, Muslim League, black money given to Congress in tempos and 'mangalsutra', Ramesh said.

"There is no 'lehar' (wave) on the ground in favour of the PM but only 'zehar' (poison) in his language. This indicates that time has arrived for a change," Ramesh claimed.

In the past four phases of elections held in 379 Lok Sabha seats, it was clear that BJP became 'saaf' (finish) in south India and 'half' in north, west and east, he said, adding that INDIA bloc will get a majority in this election.

The Congress is fighting this election to save the Constitution and democracy as 'dhantrantra' (capitalism) is prevailing in the country, he said.

ing party in Odisha elected BJP nominee Ashwini Vaishnaw in Rajya Sabha polls, he said.

Hitting out at Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, he said, "Did you not extend 100 per cent support to the BJP in Delhi? Is it not true that the BJD supported the weakening of the Forest Rights Act, amendment in the Forest Conservation Act, Land Acquisition Act, and the Labour Code?"

The Congress leader alleged that not a single penny has been spent on the development of Odia during the Modi rule, while Rs 650 crore has been allocated for Sanskrit, whereas the Manmohan Singh government had given classical language status to six languages including Odia.

Advocating for a caste-based census, Ramesh said the exercise is necessary to give proper reservation to the SC, ST and backward communities. He asked Patnaik to clarify whether he was in support of it.



BJP's Balasore Lok Sabha nominee Pratap Chandra Sarangi and party's Assembly nominees participate in a procession in Balasore town before filing of nomination papers, Monday

Shah's Rourkela visit called off; Naveen set to address rally today

NADDA, SAI TO VISIT SUNDARGARH DISTRICT MAY 16, 17 RESPECTIVELY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 14: Union Home Minister Amit Shah's scheduled visit to Rourkela was cancelled Tuesday even as no reason was cited for the last minute cancellation.

Shah was supposed to address an election rally at Rourkela Wednesday at 3pm at the Aerodrome Field. However, the programme has been cancelled.

Speaking about the cancellation, state spokesperson of BJP Dhiren Senapaty said, "I am not sure but last night I got the information that Amit Shahji's visit to Rourkela has been cancelled. He was supposed to address an election rally here

Wednesday." When questioned further, he declined to say anything more on the cancellation.

The development has certainly dampened the spirit of the cadres of the saffron party here. "We were waiting for Shah's visit. This would have benefited us immensely but the last minute cancellation is not good," said one BJP cadre.

However, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik is all set to address an election rally here Wednesday at Sector-13 Melana Field at 11.30am. The meeting of the CM is scheduled to be held just 500 metres away from where Shah would have addressed the BJP rally.

Meanwhile, it is learnt that

there will be two other high-profile visits of top saffron party dignitaries. On May 17, Chhattisgarh CM Bishnu Deo Sai is going to address an election rally at Biramitrapur Assembly constituency and BJP national president JP Nadda is going to address an election rally at Sundargarh May 16. Meanwhile, the preparation at Aerodrome Field is going on briskly.

Speaking about this, Senapaty said, "Naddaji is coming to Sundargarh May 16 and Sai to Biramitrapur May 17." When asked why the preparation was going on at the Shah's venue he said, "Probably some big leader may come soon."

Contentious Kotia witnesses robust turnout of 76.53%

Koraput: The disputed Kotia panchayat area, which both Odisha and Andhra Pradesh claim to be part of their territory, witnessed a robust voter turnout of 76.53 per cent in the simultaneous Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in the eastern state Monday. The turnout was better than that of 2019, when 74.77 per cent of the voters had exercised their franchise. In this election, 4,217 of 5,502 registered voters in Kotia exercised their franchise at nine designated polling stations, officials said, adding a total of 2,172 of 2,913 woman electors cast their votes. "People of Kotia participated in the general elections very enthusiastically and exercised their franchise without any pressure or fear," state Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Nikunja Bihari Dhal said.

BJP changes Soro Assembly candidate at last moment

Bhubaneswar: The BJP changed its candidate for the Soro Assembly constituency in Balasore district Tuesday, the last day for filing of nominations. The BJP nominated Parshuram Dhada in place of Rajendra Das. The party had earlier announced the name of Das as its candidate for the Soro Assembly seat and he submitted his nomination papers Tuesday. Dhada the sitting MLA from Soro had resigned from the BJD after the regional party denied ticket to him. He joined the BJP last month. The BJP named Dhada as the Soro Assembly candidate Tuesday. Dhada submitted his nomination papers Tuesday. Speaking to media persons, Das said he has submitted his nomination as the party had announced his name. "I don't know about Rajendra Das's nomination. As per the instructions of my party, I have filed the nomination," Dhada said. Odisha BJP election in-charge, Vijaypal Singh Tomar, said, "Our parliamentary party has decided to nominate Parshuram Dhada for Soro Assembly segment and central leadership has formally declared his name around noon." Election for Soro Assembly constituency will be held June 1.

With minimal assets, wage earners take on heavyweights

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 14: At a time when lakhs or even crores are splurged by candidates to win elections, three wage earners, who were declared as the candidates with lowest assets by the State Election Commission (SEC), took on political heavyweights in the first phase of Assembly elections Monday.

These MLA-contenders belong to the southern Odisha. The prolonged negligence of elected leaders and local authorities to provide basic facilities forced them to contest elections by their own means, they said.

A farmer by profession, Ramesh Jani, who contested from Laxmipur (ST) constituency as a Republican Party of India (RPI) candidate, has movable assets worth a mere Rs 1,000, as per his election affidavit. Mentioning about his election expenditure, Ramesh said he crowd-funded from his native village Badankera, where the locals

came forward and contributed money ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 2,000. Ramesh claimed that he spent a total of Rs 10,000 for his election expenses.

"Whenever we approached the local MLA regarding our concerns, they would dissuade us as if we are outsiders. Otherwise why a farmer like me, who spends his entire day looking after crops, would decide to fight the elections," he asked.

Ramesh said he took the decision to foray into political arena when a local tribal group, Desia Mukti Morcha, had a consensus that a member amongst them must contest elections and represent local issues.

Another political greenhorn, Siba Prasad Sagadia, who works as sweeper in a local hospital, contested as an Independent candidate from Koraput Assembly constituency (SC). Siba is a resident of Dhepa Sahi, who earns a maximum wage of Rs 250 on a daily basis. In his election affidavit, Siba filed that he has



BHUBAN KHORA



RAMESH JANI



SIBA PRASAD SAGADIA

total movable assets worth Rs 1,921.

"Whether I win or lose, the point I wanted to make is anybody can contest elections, if they have a strong desire to serve the public. After seven decades of independence, the concerns and plights of Koraput people are met with a deafening silence by the state government, which operates from Bhubaneswar. If voted to power, I would create employment opportunity for local youths here and make them fi-

nancially independent," he said.

After much struggle with finances, my friends arranged a truck for campaigning, which only managed to tour for a day, May 10, as it was the last day of campaigning, Siba said.

"While I quit working as a wage labourer to contest polls, the local support has been great. Several people have donated money, ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 5,000 to support my candidature. However, if I lose, it would be tough to find work again," he

stated.

Likewise, Bhuban Khora, an independent candidate from Koraput (SC) Assembly constituency, tested the electoral waters for the first time. Bhuban stated that he would for sure face a crushing defeat against the political heavyweights, who did not hesitate to spend lakhs and even crores of rupees for their election campaigning. However, the intent behind his move was to highlight a series of poll issues before the public, which ranges

from returning land properties to tribal people seized by private companies to facilitating enhanced infrastructure in the area.

A resident of Koraput Sadar, Bhuban is a BA graduate from a government college in Koraput. He said that he works as a construction labourer, from which he makes a daily income of Rs 400, depending on work availability. Bhuban, according to his election affidavit, owns total asset of Rs 6,000.

For contesting elections, Bhuban said the locals took up the charge to bear his daily expenses. Meanwhile, to highlight his poll planks, he was active on social media to reach a wider audience.

"Though a crushing defeat is certain, I wanted to make people realise the negligence of elected leaders through highlighting core issues. This definitely would have created a sense of awareness among voters to choose their leaders wisely," he added.



BJD's Basudevpur Assembly nominee Bishnubrata Routray participating in a party workers' meeting at Narendrapur village in Arandua panchayat of Basudevpur block in Bhadrak district, Tuesday



Various party workers joined Congress in the presence of party's Assembly nominee Amiya Mohapatra at a merger meeting held at Sundarpur panchayat under Chandbali block in Bhadrak district, Tuesday

national

of the day quote

Looking at old photographs with my mother, I also remembered my father and grandmother, whose started this tradition of service and was carried forward by me and my mother

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

After 1962, Rajiv Gandhi went to China in 1988 in many ways that was the key step towards normalising the ties (with China)...there was a clear understanding that we will discuss our boundary differences but we will maintain peace and tranquillity on the border. And the rest of the relationship will carry on

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

Where is the rift within us? Is there a fight among us? They (BJP) saying it is different, they say it for politics...where is the internal rift?

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

SHORT TAKES

Dheerj Wadhawa held in DHFL scam

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested former DHFL Director Dheeraj Wadhawan in connection with the alleged defrauding of a 17-member lender bank consortium to the tune of ₹34,000 crore, officials said Tuesday. Wadhawan, arrested from Mumbai Monday night, was produced before a special court here which remanded him in judicial custody Tuesday, they said.

Six killed as car hits truck

Hapur (UP): Six people have died and one was grievously injured when their car collided with a truck here, police said Tuesday. The incident occurred late Monday night near Braighat toll plaza, when the driver lost control over the car and it hit the truck, they said. The injured person has been referred to a hospital in Meerut.

Salman residence firing: 1 more held

Mumbai: The Mumbai police have arrested one more member of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang in connection with firing outside Hindi film superstar Salman Khan's residence here last month, officials said Tuesday. The accused, identified as Harry alias Harpal Singh (34), a resident of Sirsa city in Haryana, was apprehended by a team of the Mumbai crime branch from Fatehabad in his home state Monday evening, an official said.

Sushil Modi cremated

Patna: Senior BJP leader and former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi was cremated with full state honours in Patna Tuesday evening. The air reverberated with chants of 'Sushil Modi Amar Rahein', as surging crowds broke down barricades when the mortal remains of former Bihar DyCM were consigned to flames at Digha Ghat crematorium in Patna. The last rites were performed by his sons Uttarkash Modi and Akshay Modi, who lit the pyre in an emotionally charged atmosphere. BJP President J P Nadda, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary and several other ministers also attended the funeral. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar was conspicuous by his absence at the funeral of Sushil Kumar Modi.



The only guarantee in the Lok Sabha polls is that BJP and Modi are not returning to power. The INDIA bloc would secure between 295 and 315 seats while the BJP would be restricted to a maximum of 200

MAMATA BANERJEE | TMC SUPREMO

FOUR NEWBORN TIGER CUBS DIE

Four newborn tiger cubs were killed due to 'suffocation' under the weight of mother tigress in Ranchi's Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park, a zoo official said Tuesday



'Kejriwal's PA misbehaved with Maliwal at CM house'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar "misbehaved" with AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal at the CM's residence, party leader Sanjay Singh said Tuesday.

Addressing a press conference a day after Maliwal alleged that a member of Kejriwal's personal staff "assaulted" her, Singh said AAP supremo Kejriwal will take strict action in the matter.

BJP demanded that Singh's statement should be the basis for immediate filing of an FIR by police and those guilty should be promptly dealt with.

Police, however, said they are still waiting for her to come and file a formal complaint, but added that they have not closed the DD (daily diary) entry as Maliwal had come to the police station Monday and said she would return to lodge a case.

Calls and messages to Maliwal did not elicit any response.

National Commission for Women chief Rekha Sharma expressed concern over Maliwal's safety in a post on X. She wondered if Maliwal was under pressure not to lodge a police complaint and urged the AAP leader to "speak up".

During the press conference Tuesday, Singh said it is a "highly condemnable incident" and added the Aam Aadmi Party is in solidarity with her during this hour.

"Yesterday morning, Maliwal had gone to meet Arvind Kejriwal at his residence. While she was waiting to meet him in the drawing room, Bibhav Kumar came



AAP to be made accused in excise policy case: ED

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Tuesday contended before the Delhi High Court that it will make the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) an accused in the money laundering case stemming out of the Delhi excise policy scam. The ED's submission was made while opposing the bail plea of former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the money laundering case. "AAP is going to be made a co-accused in the next prosecution complaint (charge sheet) to be filed in the case," ED's counsel contended before Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma.

and misbehaved with her. This is a highly condemnable incident. Kejriwal has taken cognisance of it and will take strict action in the incident," he added.

Maliwal was earlier the chief of the Delhi Commission For Women (DCW).

"Maliwal has done a lot of work for the country and society.

AAP's new campaign

New Delhi: The Aam Aadmi Party Tuesday launched the 'Washing Machine Ka Kaalu Jaadu' campaign to target the BJP and "expose" its "claim of fighting and ending corruption". The campaign was launched by AAP Delhi state convener Gopal Rai and cabinet minister Saurabh Bharadwaj. Rai is also a minister in the Arvind Kejriwal government.

She is a senior party leader. We are with her during this time. The party does not support those (who insult women). The whole incident has been taken seriously by Kejriwal," he said, adding that she had reported the matter to the police by calling on 112. Maliwal Monday went to the Civil Lines Police Station and alleged that a member of the Delhi Chief Minister's personal staff "assaulted" her at the chief minister's official residence, police officials had said.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said the AAP's silence regarding the incident Monday reflects the mentality of the party.

"Sanjay Singh's statement that the party will take action in the matter is quite embarrassing..." he said.

Sachdeva said instead of deciding after violence against a woman, arrests should have been made immediately.

"Sanjay Singh claims that Arvind Kejriwal was not there at the time, but the BJP knows through sources that this entire incident occurred at the behest of and in front of Arvind Kejriwal," he alleged.

BOMB SCARE IN DELHI AGAIN

7 hosps, Tihar jail get bomb threat emails

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: Seven Delhi hospitals and Tihar Jail received bomb threats by email Tuesday, two days after similar messages were sent to 20 hospitals, the airport and the office of the Northern Railways' CPRO in the capital, officials said.

Nothing suspicious has been found as of now, officials said. While the Delhi Fire Service (DFS) said that they received bomb threat calls from four hospitals, the Delhi Police said that they received calls from seven hospitals and Tihar Jail.

According to police, the emails were sent from 'beeble.com', a Europe-based mailing service company, with the same content sent to hospitals Sunday.

The officer said Tuesday the email had come from the ID "courtsigod123@beeble.com".

The content of the letter read, "I have placed explosive devices inside your building. They will explode in the following hour. This isn't a threat, you have a few hours to disarm the bomb or else the blood of innocent people inside the building will be on your hands." "The group called 'Court' is behind this massacre," it said.

The officer said the e-mail was sent to one hospital with copies marked to others and Tihar Jail. According to a DFS official, the spate of calls began at 10.45 am. The first hospital to call was Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital in north Delhi's Ashok Vihar at 9.45 am. The second call came at 10.55 am from Dada Dev Hospital in Dabri in southwest Delhi, the third at 11.01 am from Hedgewar Hospital in east Delhi's Farsh Bazar and the fourth at 11.12 am from GTB Hospital in Shahdara, also in east Delhi.

POLL AFFIDAVIT

Modi declares total assets worth ₹3 crore



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), May 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi possesses assets amounting to a little over ₹3 crore, most of it in bank fixed deposits, according to his election affidavit.

As required, Modi submitted the affidavit while filing his nomination papers Tuesday as an election candidate from the Varanasi parliamentary constituency, a seat he has held twice earlier.

According to the affidavit displayed on the Election Commission website, his movable assets are worth ₹3,02,06,889. Most of this amount is in the form of fixed deposits with the State Bank of India that total over 2.85 crore.

Other assets include four gold rings weighing 45 grams valued at ₹2.67 lakh, cash in hand totalling ₹52,920, National Savings Certificates worth ₹9.12 lakh and income tax deduction of ₹3.33 lakh for the past financial year.

Under "immovable assets", the affidavit says "Nil". Typically, land and houses fall

under this category. Jashodaben is mentioned as Modi's spouse. On assets held by her, the document says "Not known". The two live apart.

No criminal case is pending against Modi, nor has he been convicted of any crime, according to the document. There are no liabilities due to the government.

The prime minister is described as a resident of Ahmedabad, and his profession as public life and political activity.

He did his SSC in 1967, got a BA degree from Delhi University in 1978 and an MA from Gujarat University in 1983.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Modi had declared assets worth ₹2.5 crore including a residential plot in Gujarat's Gandhinagar, fixed deposits of ₹1.27 crore and ₹38,750 cash in hand.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, he disclosed total assets of ₹1.65 crore.

The PM has a website and is on Facebook, microblogging site X, YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp, according to the affidavit.

H D Revanna walks out of prison

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 14: JD(S) MLA H D Revanna was released from the central prison here Tuesday, a day after a Special Court for Elected Representatives granted bail to him in a woman abduction case linked to sexual abuse charges against his son and MP Prajwal Revanna.

The woman was allegedly kidnapped to prevent her from testifying against Prajwal, police sources have said. As the imprisoned leader walked free after spending six days in the jail, his supporters greeted him with slogans. Revanna went to meet his father Deve Gowda with a large convoy of vehicles.

Addressing reporters, Revanna said he will abide by the court orders. The 66-year-old former minister visited a temple in the city after stepping out of the jail and offered special prayers.

Revanna, son of former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, was arrested by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in an alleged case of kidnaping a woman linked to the allegations of sexual abuse of women by Prajwal Revanna, May 4. The special court judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat heard the matter and granted conditional bail to Revanna.



@ANUGURWARA

RANT - after watching this distressing video and the ones of that illegal structure falling on people. Read at your own risk. India has - more than ever before - become a nation where only those with access to wealth and power are able to lead comfortable lives within the bubbles they construct for themselves. Everyone else is a statistic and a temporary headline in the event of a tragedy. Every common person is only racing from

birth to death, navigating through one obstacle after another. For most people, death can literally happen any time - bad roads, flooding, unsafe electrical poles, fights in the neighbourhood, road rage, animals loose in the streets, contaminated foods, botched medical practices, unauthorised structures falling on their heads, broken infrastructure crashing down during or after construction - or just mobs baying for your blood because you are different. Regulations are a joke. There is no value for human life. The infrastructure and ecosystem is not designed for those without privilege. Worse still, the overburdened justice system is not reliable. The era of leaders is over. Politicians have taken over from the mafia. Most who get into politics don't do so to serve the masses. They do so to get away from them and elevate themselves above the commoners. Politics is the most profitable taxpayer funded, tax-free business there is. Movie stars live in ivory towers right in the middle of a garbage dump. Some of them make more money than most Hollywood actors but live less than 1/10th of their lifestyles when in India. Surrounded by security, assistants and servants - politicians, celebrities and the 1% secure their own bubbles by hook or crook, evade taxes, exploit every legal & financial loophole and avoid accountability. Yet, we worship them and place them on a pedestal because we want access to the power they hold. Because we want to be able to know someone when we are in a police station, a hospital or in court. We want to use a reference to get admission, get a job or just get pension. The collective self esteem of a billion people is at an all time low and being lowered still to suit the political ambition of a few hundred people desperately holding on to power. The rich won't protest societal injustice because they can escape into their bubbles whenever needed and pay their way into convenience. The middle class doesn't have the time to protest because they've been pushed into being on survival mode all day every day. Time lost is money lost. The poor can't protest beyond a point because hunger is real and the above two classes won't allow them to. Our children are growing up in an environment of corrupted education and contaminated nutrition. Their physical and intellectual growth is stunted when compared to developed countries. India's children swing between malnourishment and obesity. An entire generation ahead will feel the effects of this sheer neglect of childhood. We don't care about our young and our elderly. Women are not safe anywhere. Our teenagers are hooked up to dopamine all day - youth in cities, towns and villages are addicted to porn, violent games and on the hunt for get-rich-quick schemes. I blame the system that doesn't empower them otherwise. We are squeezed dry to pay direct and indirect taxes, endlessly waiting for our lives to upgrade a little bit. Buying a vehicle or a home now is literally a process of extracting blood money. Most of India is one medical bill away from poverty. We haven't lost count of human tragedies and disasters. We will queue up in the thousands on bridges and hillsides to offer our prayers to the Gods who look on silently at the destruction our own fellow humans have caused in their name. This post will be forgotten in a few hours too. You and I will both get busy because life goes on and we must move forward with it. Let's get back to election gossip, IPL and Orry. Let's forget about all this. For just one more day. End.

CLIMATE DISASTERS HIT INDIA

Over half million displaced in 2023: Report

According to meteorologists, cyclonic storms are intensifying rapidly and retaining their intensity for longer durations due to global warming

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: India experienced over half a million internal displacements due to floods, storms, earthquakes, and other disasters in 2023, a sharp dip from around 2.5 million displacements in 2022, according to a global report released Tuesday.

Deadly floods left behind a trail of destruction in the Himalayan states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand last year. The glacial lake outburst flood in Sikkim in October 2023

led to the collapse of a hydroelectric dam, killed more than 100 people, and affected more than 88,000.

In Delhi, identified as a "flood displacement hotspot", the Yamuna River overflowed after heavy rains July 9, 2023, prompting authorities to evacuate residents from their homes. The report by the Geneva-based Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) said around 27,000 displacements in the national capital.

Delhi recorded 153 mm of rainfall July 9 in just 24 hours,

the highest single-day rainfall since July 25, 1982. Overall, South Asia reported around 3.7 million internal displacements in 2023, with disasters causing 3.6 million, the lowest figure since 2018.

Researchers attributed the decline in displacements due to disasters partly to the El Nino event, which brought below-average rainfall during the monsoon and a weaker cyclone season. However, floods and storms continued to displace people, often in the same areas.

At 3,52,000, India's flood displacement figure was the lowest since 2008, with the largest event triggering about 91,000 displacements in Assam in June, affecting 20 districts. Cyclone



Biparjoo, which formed in the Arabian Sea in early June, led to widespread flooding across Gujarat and Rajasthan, causing 105,000 displacements as it moved inland. Cyclone Mocha, the largest disaster displacement event of 2023 in South Asia, triggered 1.3 million displacements in Bangladesh, mainly in Cox's Bazar district.

Forecasting and early warnings allowed authorities to initiate emergency procedures before Mocha's landfall, aiding pre-emptive evacuations from densely populated areas.

The IDMC said South Asia's cyclone season was less intense in 2023 than in previous years because of El Nino, but storms still triggered 1.8 million move-

ments, about half of the region's disaster displacements.

Government-led pre-emptive evacuations accounted for at least three-quarters of this figure. According to the report, disasters triggered 26.4 million displacements in 2023, the third highest annual total in the last 10 years. No country is immune to disaster displacement, said Alexandra Bilak, the director of IDMC.

Extreme weather events such as floods and heatwaves are becoming more frequent and are projected to increase manifold in India in the future due to climate change, according to a 2022 report by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar.

international

of the day quote

It should not be forgotten that there are so many overlaps and mutual exchanges

The enemy is learning quickly. The situation related to the use of new technologies changes literally every week, and here we need not just to learn, we need to preempt the enemy

Especially in the past few weeks, we have seen some momentum building but unfortunately, things didn't move in the right direction and right now we are in a status of almost a stalemate. Of course, what happened with Rafah sent us backward

SHORT TAKES

Cave-in leaves 2 miners dead

Warsaw: Two miners were killed and one remains missing after a cave-in at the Myslowice-Wesola coal mine in southern Poland early Tuesday in which 12 other miners were hurt, mining authorities said Tuesday. The cave-in happened around 3:30 am some 870 metres (2,800 feet) underground in an area where 15 miners were working, said Rajmund Horst, the deputy head of the company that runs the mine. He said two of the miners located by rescuers and brought to the surface were declared dead, while one was being taken to the hospital.

Army whistleblower sentenced to prison

Melbourne: An Australian judge sentenced a former army lawyer to almost six years in prison Tuesday for leaking to the media classified information that exposed allegations of Australian war crimes in Afghanistan. David McBride, 60, was sentenced in a court in the capital, Canberra, to five years and eight months in prison after pleading guilty to three charges including theft and sharing with members of the press documents classified as secret. He had faced a potential life sentence. Justice David Mossop ordered McBride to serve 27 months in prison before he can be considered for release on parole.

Eight dead as bus overturns in Florida

Ocala (US): A bus carrying farmworkers in central Florida overturned Tuesday, killing eight people and injuring about 40 other passengers, authorities said. The bus was transporting 53 farmworkers when it collided with a truck in Marion County, north of Orlando, the Florida Highway Patrol said. Authorities say the bus swerved off State Road 40, a straight but somewhat hilly two-lane road that passes through farms. It crashed through a fence and ended up on its side in a field.

Pak, IMF start talks for bailout package

Islamabad: Pakistan and the IMF have started negotiations for a fresh bailout package to address the cash-strapped country's fiscal challenges and implement crucial reforms, media reports said Tuesday. The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) mission chief to Pakistan, Nathan Porter Monday called on Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to "kick start the discussions on further engagement with the Fund," the Ministry of Finance said in a statement.

Blinken in Kyiv to assure US support

Blinken's trip comes just weeks after the US Congress finally approved a \$61 billion financial aid package for Ukraine after months of political wrangling, unlocking much-needed arms for the country's stretched troops



Kyiv, May 14: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Tuesday that American military aid on its way to Ukraine will make a "real difference" on the battlefield, as the top diplomat made an unannounced visit to reassure an ally facing a fierce new Russian offensive. In increasingly intense attacks along the northeastern border in recent days, Moscow's troops have captured around 100 to 125 square kilometres (about 40 to 50 square miles) of territory that includes at least seven villages, according to open source monitoring analysts. Though most of those villages were already depopulated, thousands of civilians in the area have fled the fighting.

Analysts have called this moment one of the most dangerous for Ukraine since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 — and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked Tuesday for more air defence systems to protect civilians under Russian fire in the northeast. "We know this is a challenging time," Blinken said in the Ukrainian capital where he met with Zelenskyy. But he added that American military aid is "going to make a real difference

against the ongoing Russian aggression on the battlefield." The visit comes less than a month after Congress approved a long-delayed foreign assistance package that sets aside \$60 billion in aid for Ukraine, much of which will go toward replenishing badly depleted artillery and air defense systems. Some of that "is now on the way," Blinken said, and some has already arrived in Ukraine. Moscow's renewed offensive in the northeastern region of Kharkiv is the most significant border incursion since the early days of the war — and comes after months when the roughly 1,000-kilometre (620-mile) front line barely budged.

More than 7,500 civilians have been evacuated from the area, according to authorities. The Kremlin's forces are also expanding their push to the northern border regions of Sumy and Chernihiv, Ukrainian officials say, and Kyiv's outgunned and outnumbered soldiers are struggling to hold them back. Troops fought street to street on the outskirts of Vovchansk, which is among the largest towns in the Kharkiv area, regional Gov. Oleh Siniubov said on national television. Two civilians were killed in Russian shelling Tuesday, he said.

POK ON EDGE

3 killed in firing, teargas shelling

Islamabad, May 14: At least three people were killed and six others injured when security forces opened fire on protesters who attacked paramilitary Rangers in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, which has been rocked by protests against high prices of wheat flour and inflated electricity bills, media reports said Tuesday.



The paramilitary Rangers, which were called in to maintain law and order in the disputed region, came under attack in the regional capital Muzaffarabad while moving out of the town, the Dawn newspaper reported. Instead of exiting via Brarkot, the village bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the 19-vehicle convoy, including five trucks, chose to exit the region from Kohala, it said.

As the convoy reached Muzaffarabad in a "charged atmosphere", it was pelted with rocks near Shorran da Nakka village, to which they responded with teargas and firing, the report said. A social media clip verified by Dawn showed three Rangers vehicles ablaze on the Muzaffarabad-Brarkot road. After entering the city through the Western Bypass, the Rangers were welcomed with rocks again, prompting them to use teargas and bullets. The shelling was so intense that the entire neighbourhood reeled from it, the report said.

Biden hikes US tariffs on an array of Chinese imports

THE TARIFFS COME IN THE MIDDLE OF A HEATED CAMPAIGN BETWEEN PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN AND HIS REPUBLICAN PREDECESSOR, DONALD TRUMP, IN WHICH BOTH CANDIDATES ARE VYING TO SHOW WHO'S TOUGHER ON CHINA

minimum and medical equipment — an election year move that's likely to increase friction between the world's two largest economies.

The tariffs are to be phased in over the next three years, with those that take effect in 2024 covering EVs, solar cells, syringes, needles, steel and aluminum and more. There are currently very few EVs from China in the US, but officials worry low-priced models made possible by Chinese government subsidies could soon start flooding the US market. Chinese firms can sell EVs for as little as \$12,000. Their solar cell plants and steel and aluminum mills have enough capacity to meet much of the world's demand, with Chinese officials arguing their production keeps prices low and would aid a transition to the green economy. Lael Brainard, director of the

Ex-Indian Army officer with UN killed in Gaza

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, May 14: A former Indian Army officer, who had joined one of the UN agencies three weeks ago, was killed in war-torn Rafah in Gaza, becoming the "first international casualty" for the world body since the Israel-Hamas conflict started last year.

The United Nations has called for a full investigation while Israel has ordered a separate investigation into the attack.

Col Waibhav Anil Kale, 46, who took premature retirement from the Indian Army in 2022, joined the UN as a Security Coordination Officer in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS) recently, officials in New Delhi said Tuesday.

Kale, who had commanded the 11 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles in Kashmir and had been an instructor at the army's Infantry School in Mhow, was travelling along with another DSS staffer to the European Hospital in Rafah when their UN vehicle was struck Monday morning. The other person, not identified, was seriously injured.

"Kale had joined as a security service coordinator with the UN three weeks ago. The former infantry officer decided to join the UN to pursue his career and also because he was keen on hu-

manitarian mission work," his brother-in-law Wing Commander Prashant Karde (Retd) told PTI in Mumbai.

He is survived by wife Amruta and two teenage children, Karde said. "The last rites of the 46-year-old will be held in Pune in two days after his body is flown via Cairo. His mortal remains will land either in Mumbai or Pune depending on the availability of flights," Karde, a senior commander with IndiGo, said. Kale had joined the Indian Army in 1998 and had also served as Contingent Chief Security Officer with the United Nations between 2009 and 2010, Karde said. According to his LinkedIn profile, he earned his BA from the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi and had degrees in Behavioral Science and International Humanitarian Law and had studied at, among other institutions, the Indian Institute of Management at Lucknow and Indore.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres was "deeply saddened to learn of the death of a United Nations Department of Safety and Security (DSS) staff member and injury to another DSS staffer." A statement by Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said that Guterres condemned all attacks on UN personnel and called for a full investigation. Guterres

CURFEW IMPOSED IN NEW CALEDONIA

Authorities in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia announced a two-day curfew and banned gatherings Tuesday after violent unrest on the vast archipelago with decades of tensions between indigenous Kanaks seeking independence and colonisers' descendants who want to remain part of France



sent his condolences to the family of the fallen staff member. "With the conflict in Gaza continuing to take a heavy toll — not only on civilians but also on humanitarian workers — the Secretary-General reiterates his urgent appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and for the release of all hostages," the statement added.

In a post on X, Guterres said the UN vehicle was struck in Gaza, "killing one of our colleagues & injuring another" and said, more than 190 UN staff have been killed in Gaza.

Responding to questions on the incident during a press brief-

ing, Haq said at this point, "We are in the process of informing the relevant governments and the relevant family members..."

He added that they were "international staff" and confirmed that "this is, in fact, the first international UN casualty"

While there have been international casualties involving workers for the World Central Kitchen in Gaza, Haq said that "of UN staff, I believe I've not been previously aware of an international casualty."

Haq added that the vehicle was headed to the hospital "as part of their regular work. They go to different locations to assess security conditions. And this was the European hospital in Rafah."

When asked for details about how their vehicle was struck, Haq said "We're still accumulating details. We expect to get reports, including from the relevant authorities." He added that close to 190 UN personnel have been killed in Gaza since October 7, "most of them national staff of the UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA."

Haq added that the UN is "going to set up measures for accountability. A lot of that... ultimately requires an end to the conflict so that we can work these out, but we will be working with the authorities on the ground to get restitution for all of those who have been killed."

SNIPPETS

Another top Russian Defence Ministry official arrested

Moscow: A second senior Russian defence official was arrested on bribery charges, officials said Tuesday, days after President Vladimir Putin replaced the defence minister in a Cabinet shake-up that fuelled expectations of more such purges. Lt Gen Vury Kuznetsov, the 55-year-old chief of the Defence Ministry's main personnel directorate, was arrested in a raid early Monday on his suburban Moscow villa, Russian media reported. He was detained on charges of bribery and jailed pending an investigation and trial, according to the Investigative Committee, Russia's top state criminal investigation agency. Kuznetsov is accused of accepting an "exceptionally large bribe," a charge punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

Georgia approves controversial law

Tbilisi: The Georgian Parliament Tuesday approved in the third and final reading a divisive Bill that sparked weeks of mass protests, with critics seeing it as a threat to democratic freedoms and the country's aspirations to join the European Union. The Bill requires media and nongovernmental organisations and other nonprofits to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20 per cent of their funding from abroad. The government says the bill is necessary to stem what it deems as harmful foreign influence over the country's politics and to prevent unspecified foreign actors from trying to destabilise it.

Cohen testifies in Trump's hush money case

New York, May 14: A New York appeals court Tuesday upheld the gag order in Donald Trump's hush money trial, finding that the judge "properly determined" that Trump's public statements "posed a significant threat to the integrity of the testimony of witnesses and potential witnesses in this case as well." Trump had asked the state's intermediate appeals court to lift or modify the gag order, which bars him from commenting publicly about jurors, witnesses and others connected to the case, including Judge Juan M Merchan's family and prosecutors other than District Attorney Alvin Bragg. At an emergency hearing last month, just days before the trial started, Trump's lawyers argued that the gag order is an unconstitutional curb on the presumptive Republican nominee's free speech rights while he's campaigning for president and fighting criminal charges. In its ruling, the five-judge appeals panel noted that Trump wasn't claiming that the gag order had infringed on his right to a fair trial. The appeals court ruled that Merchan "properly weighed" Trump's free speech rights against the "historical commitment to ensuring the fair administration of justice in criminal cases, and the right of persons related or tangentially related to the criminal proceedings from being free from threats, intimidation, harassment, and harm."

US warns of potential sanctions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, May 14: Any country having business dealings with Iran runs the "potential risk of sanctions", the US has warned, noting that it is aware that Tehran and New Delhi have signed a deal concerning the Chabahar port. India Monday signed a 10-year contract to operate the strategic Iranian port of Chabahar that will help New Delhi expand trade with Central Asia. Located in Sistan-Balochistan

province on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast, the Chabahar port on the Gulf of Oman — which New Delhi had proposed to develop way back in 2003 — will provide Indian goods a gateway to reach landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia using a road and rail project called International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), bypassing Pakistan. US sanctions on Iran over its suspected nuclear programme had slowed the development of the port.



- ❖ The tariffs are unlikely to have much of an inflationary impact because of how they're structured
- ❖ Administration officials said they think the tariffs won't escalate tensions with China, yet they expect China will explore ways to respond to the new taxes on its products
- ❖ It's uncertain what the long-term impact on prices could be if the tariffs contribute to a wider trade dispute

White House National Economic Council, said the tariffs will raise the cost of select Chinese goods and help thwart Beijing's efforts to dominate the market for emerging technologies in ways that pose risks to US national security and economic stability. "China is simply too big to play by its own rules,"

Brainard told reporters on a Monday call previewing the announcement. Administration officials have stressed the decision on tariffs was made independently of November's presidential election. But Brainard noted in her remarks the tariffs would help workers in Pennsylvania and Michigan,

two of the battleground states that will decide who wins the election.

Under the findings of a four-year review on trade with China, the tax rate on imported Chinese EVs will rise to 102.5 per cent this year, up from total levels of 27.5 per cent. The review was undertaken under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which allows the government to retaliate

against trade practices deemed unfair or in violation of global standards.

Under the 301 guidelines, the tariff rate is to double to 50 per cent on solar cell imports this year. Tariffs on certain Chinese steel and aluminum products will climb to 25 per cent this year. Computer chip tariffs will double to 50 per cent by 2025.

For lithium-ion EV batteries, tariffs will rise from 7.5 per cent to 25 per cent this year. But for non-EV batteries of the same type, the tariff increase will be implemented in 2026. There are also higher tariffs on ship-to-shore cranes, critical minerals and medical products.

The new tariffs, at least initially, are largely symbolic since they will apply to only about \$18 billion in imports. A new analysis by Oxford Economics estimates the tariffs will have a barely noticeable impact on inflation by pushing up inflation by just 0.01 per cent.



Any unchecked explosion in retail trading in F&O can create future challenges not just for the markets (but) for investor sentiment and also for household finances

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
UNION FINANCE MINISTER

INDIGO PLANS TO BUY 100 SMALL PLANES

IndiGo is in discussions with aircraft makers to purchase up to 100 small planes as the airline looks to strengthen its presence in the regional routes, according to a source. The carrier, which recently ordered 30 wide-body A350 planes, is expanding domestic and international operations.



of the day quote

Our performance in the past fiscal reflects our strategy of profitable growth. Our performance in Europe has been much better than the overall market, with market share gains across product categories

ONKAR KANWAR | APOLLO TYRES CHAIRMAN

With rising affluence, low per-capita consumption levels, and a strong premiumisation trend, we are confident in the mid-to-long-term potential of the Indian alcohol sector

LALIT KHAITAN | RADICO KHAITAN CMD

The domestic travel market is picking up very well and we are seeing religious tourism as one of the important thrust areas. India is also gaining importance in the international markets for medico tourism and a value-for-money shopping destination

RAVI JAIPURIA | DEVIYANI INTERNATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Q4 RESULTS CORNER

Bharti Airtel profit tanks 31%

New Delhi: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel Tuesday posted a 31 per cent drop in consolidated profit to ₹2,072 crore in the March quarter mainly due to devaluation of the Nigerian Naira. The company had registered a profit of ₹3,005.6 crore in the year-ago period. The consolidated revenue of operations increased 4.4 per cent to ₹37,599.1 crore during the quarter under review from ₹36,009 crore a year earlier. "Consolidated performance was impacted primarily by the devaluation of the Nigerian Naira. We added 7.8 million smartphone customers and delivered an industry leading ARPU of ₹209," Bharti Airtel Managing Director Gopal Vittal said.

Colgate-Palmolive PAT grows 20%

New Delhi: Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd Tuesday reported a 20.1 per cent increase in profit after tax (PAT) to ₹379.8 crore in the March quarter. The company had posted a PAT of ₹316.2 crore in the same quarter a year ago, Colgate-Palmolive (India) said in a regulatory filing. The company's net sales in the quarter under review increased to ₹1,480.7 crore from ₹1,341.7 crore in the same period a year ago, it added. The company maintained sequential growth momentum in the fourth quarter of FY24 on the back of strong performance in toothpaste. Rural markets continued to exhibit positive signs of demand recovery, growing ahead of urban, the company said.

Bajaj Electricals net down 43.4%

New Delhi: Bajaj Electricals Ltd Tuesday reported a 43.47 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹29.31 crore in the March quarter with revenue impacted by weakness in appliances and general trade. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of ₹51.85 crore in the year-ago period. Bajaj Electricals said in a regulatory filing. Consolidated total revenue from operations in the quarter under review was ₹1,188.08 crore as compared to ₹1,291.97 crore in the same period a year ago, it added. Total expenses in the fourth quarter were lower at ₹1,186.09 crore as compared to ₹1,231.69 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Wholesale inflation at 13-month high

INFLATION FUELLED BY RISING PRICES OF FOOD ARTICLES, ESPECIALLY VEGETABLES, AMID EXPECTATIONS OF RBI HOLDING INTEREST RATES IN THE POLICY REVIEW NEXT MONTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: The wholesale inflation rose to a 13-month high of 1.26 per cent in April fuelled by rising prices of food articles, especially vegetables, amid expectations of RBI holding interest rates in the policy review next month.

The wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation has been rising for two months in a row. It was 0.20 per cent in February and 0.53 per cent in March. WPI inflation was 0.79 per cent in April last year.

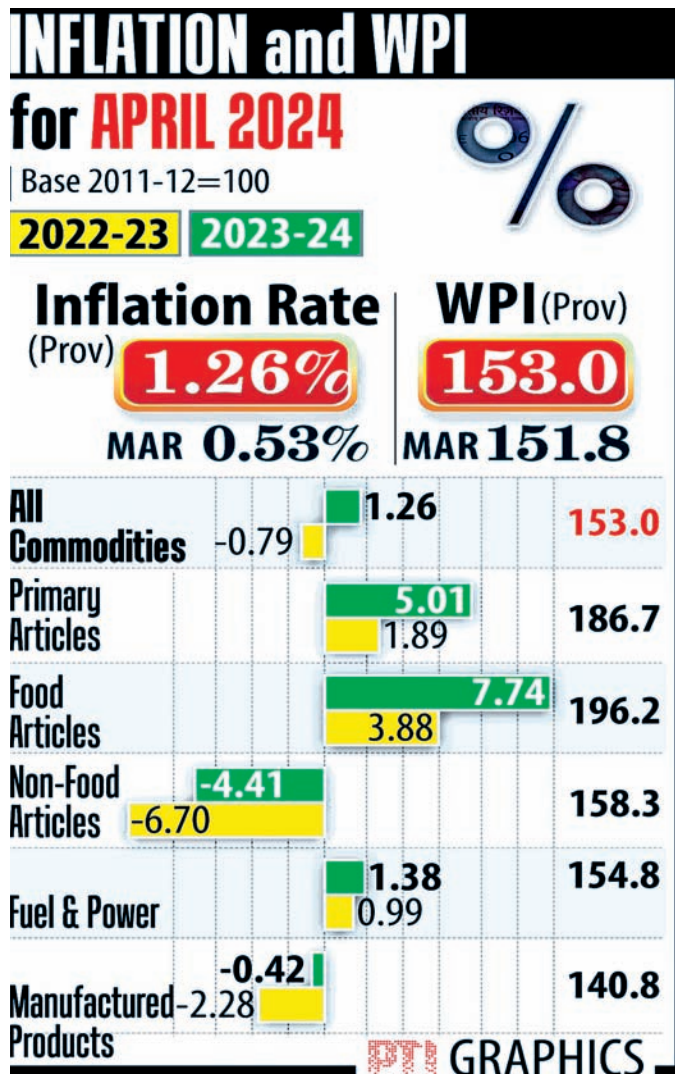
The April WPI print is at a 13-month high. The last high was seen in March 2023, when inflation was 1.41 per cent.

"Positive rate of inflation in April 2024 is primarily due to increase in prices of food articles, electricity, crude petroleum and natural gas, manufacture of food products, other manufacturing etc," Ministry of Commerce & Industry said in a statement Tuesday.

As per the data, inflation in food articles rose to 7.74 per cent in April as against 6.88 per cent in March. In the fuel and power basket, inflation stood at 1.38 per cent in April, up from (-)0.77 per cent in the previous month.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said WPI inflation is heavily sensitive to global commodity prices which is undergoing upturn year after year.

"A lot of commodity prices have shown an uptrend in last few months, including the crude oil prices that we saw in April. As of now what we have seen in commodity prices, I would expect



the WPI to move up further and cross 2 per cent in the next two months of May and June," Nayar said.

ICRA forecasts average WPI for current fiscal at 3.3 per cent.

In the food articles basket, vegetables inflation was 23.60 per cent in April, up from 19.52 per cent in the previous month.

Inflation in potato jumped to 71.97 per cent in April from 52.96

Domestic passenger vehicle sales up 1.3% in April: SIAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: Passenger vehicle wholesales in India rose to record levels in April driven by strong demand for utility vehicles, automobile industry body SIAM said Tuesday.

The overall passenger vehicle dispatches from companies to dealers rose 1.3 per cent year-on-year to record levels of 3,35,629 units in April, as compared to 3,31,278 units in April 2023.

Utility vehicle sales stood at 1,79,329 units last month, up 21 per cent from 1,48,005 units in the same month last year.

Passenger car dispatches, however, declined by 23 per cent to 96,357 units, as compared to 1,25,758 units in April 2023.

Van sales rose 15 per cent to 12,060 units last month, as against 10,508 units in April last year.

As per the data issued by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), two-wheeler wholesales rose 31 per cent to 17,51,393 units last month, as compared to 13,38,588 units in April last year.

Motorcycle wholesales stood at 11,28,192 units last month, up 34 per cent, as compared to 8,39,274 units in the same month last year.

Scooter wholesales rose 25 per



cent year-on-year to 5,81,277 units in April, as compared to 4,64,389 units in the same month last year.

Three-wheeler wholesales rose 14.5 per cent to 49,116 units last month, as against 42,885 units in April 2023.

SIAM President Vinod Aggarwal said the current fiscal has started on a reasonably good note for the auto industry, as all the segments have posted growth in April 2024, compared to April 2023, driven by positive consumer sentiments and festivities during the month.

"Above normal monsoon rainfall, policy continuity post-elections and government's push on manufacturing and infrastructure would propel the overall economic growth which would help in continuing the auto sector's growth trajectory," he added.

Stock markets rise for 3rd day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 14: Benchmark Sensex climbed 328 points while Nifty closed above the 22,200 level Tuesday as stock markets continued the winning march for the third straight day on the back of gains in index major Reliance Industries and positive inflation data.

Rising for the third day, BSE Sensex rose by 328.48 points, or 0.45 per cent, to settle at 73,104.61. The 30-share index rallied 510.13 points, or 0.70 per cent, to touch a high of 73,286.26 in day trade. As many as 20 Sensex stocks ended with gains while 10 declined.

The broader Nifty of NSE rose by 113.80 points, or 0.51 per cent, to settle at 22,217.85 with 36 of its constituents ending in the green and 14 in the red.

Gains were led by metal and auto shares while FMCG and pharma shares declined due to profit taking, analysts said.

From the Sensex basket, Mahindra & Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, JSW Steel, NTPC, IndusInd Bank, Sun Pharma, UltraTech Cement, State Bank of India, Reliance Industries, and Maruti were the major gainers.

Nestle, Tata Consultancy



Services, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, ITC, and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

Retail inflation eased to an 11-month low of 4.83 per cent in April as prices of some kitchen items declined, though overall food basket firmed up marginally, according to government data.

"The domestic market has sustained its recovery path from recent lows, aided by a modera-

Sebi plans tighter rules for listing of small businesses

REUTERS

Mumbai, May 14: India's markets regulator and exchanges will tighten rules for public offers of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), according to two sources, after complaints of misuse of a separate listing platform introduced in 2012 to enable small businesses access the capital markets.

The regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), is considering raising the minimum size of such public offers to 300 million-500 million Indian rupees (\$3.59 million-\$5.99 million), said the two sources who are directly familiar with the discussions.

The new rules are slated to be issued later this year after the regulator and exchanges consult stakeholders, they said.

Currently there is no minimum issue size prescribed but companies listing on the platform are required to have a post issue capital base of 250 million rupees.

"A minimum offer size will ensure that serious companies are accessing the capital markets and in turn safeguard the interest of investors," said one of the two sources. The sources declined to be identified as they were not authorised to speak to media.

The markets regulator and exchanges, who implement the policies on behalf of the regulator, did not reply to requests for comment.

Buoyed by India's surging equity markets, public issues by



SMEs soared in the financial year ending March 2024 to 205 companies raising 60 billion rupees compared to the 125 firms that raised 22 billion rupees in the previous year, according to PRIME Database, a capital markets data provider.

SMEs in India are defined as companies with an annual turnover of 50 million to 2.5 billion rupees. Some of these issues were subscribed 500-1000 times, raising concerns around misuse of the platform, the sources said.

Alongside introducing a minimum issue size, these companies will also be asked to make more disclosures, the sources said.

"The merchant bankers will be asked to make more upfront disclosures of objects of the issue, financials of the issuer and risk factors," said the first source.

Earlier this year, SEBI chairperson Madhavi Puri Buch said some issuers and bankers were misusing the framework provided for SME listing. SEBI is collecting evidence following complaints of price manipulation in the segment, Buch said.

Foreign investors turn to hedging on poll jitters

REUTERS

Mumbai, May 14: Foreign investors are loading up on options to hedge their equity portfolios against a slide in benchmark indexes as they worry that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party may not achieve the landslide victory predicted by opinion polls just weeks ago.

The last major poll had estimated, that the ruling BJP would win 342 seats, comfortably above the 272 majority required to return to power.

But a lower turnout so far in India's general elections and changing political rhetoric have dampened expectations of a landslide victory for the BJP and its allies. Votes are set to be counted June 4.

Foreign investors worried about the election outcome will resort to buying puts of the Nifty 50 or the Bank Nifty, which are the most liquid derivatives, said Vineet Arora, managing director at Dubai-based investment firm NAV Capital.

They may opt for derivatives on other indexes depending on their portfolio composition, he said.

Ahead of the results, the net open interest of put options on Indian indexes held by foreign investors hit the highest since at least January 2019, according to data compiled by Reuters, based on information provided by the National Stock Exchange.

The net open interest - the difference between long put and



short put positions - is currently at 2.5 times the daily year-to-date average.

The Nifty 50 Index last week fell 1.9%, compared to a 1.85% rally in US equities and a 1% gain in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index.

A put option is a derivative contract that investors turn to protect their equity portfolio from losses.

A buyer of a put option pays a premium and, in turn, earns the right to sell the underlying at a particular price, called the strike price.

A pick up in the open interest, an indicator used to determine the extent of wagers on the contracts, has coincided with increased foreign investor selling in the cash market.

Foreign investors took out

\$2 billion from Indian equities last week, having taken out \$1.9 billion in April. They had bought \$4.2 billion in March.

Volatility has risen with the Nifty volatility index at its highest in one-and-a-half years.

It is 'quite possible' that foreign investors are looking at the price action on the Indian market and deciding to hedge, said Samir Arora, fund manager at Mumbai-based Helios Capital.

Buying puts is among the easiest way to hedge exposure, he added.

The highest open interest on puts is at 22,000 and 21,000 strike price for the monthly contract expiring June 27. Open interest on weekly contracts is much lower due to limited volumes.

High hopes for athletics in Paris

AFI PRESIDENT SUMARIWALLA BELIEVES INDIA CAN WIN TWO ATHLETICS MEDALS IN 2024 OLYMPICS, INCLUDING ONE FROM NEERAJ

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 14: India have the potential to surpass the single-medal achievement from the Tokyo Olympics in the track and field events at the Paris Games, Athletics Federation of India (AFI) president Adille Sumariwalla said Tuesday.

At the Tokyo Games, Neeraj Chopra had become the first Indian track and field athlete to win a gold in the Olympics as he clinched the men's javelin event with a throw of 87.58m. He became only the second Indian to win an Olympic individual gold after shooter Abhinav Bindra, who stood on top of the podium during the 2008 Beijing Games.

"We can no doubt perform better in the Paris Olympics than in Tokyo. We can win more medal in Paris," Sumariwalla said in a press conference.

Reigning Olympic and World Champion Chopra is expected to win a medal in Paris. "I had never in the past given any prediction of any event in which we can win a medal. But, if we our athletes performed their best (better than their personal best) in



Neeraj Chopra (C) arrives Tuesday in Bhubaneswar for the ongoing Federation Cup

PICS: DSY'S 'X' ACCOUNT

many events, we can win medals or finish in top four," he said, mentioning men's 4x400m relay, men's long jump and men's 3000m steeplechase, among others.

The AFI president also made it clear that except for Chopra, it will be mandatory for all the other athletes to participate in the National Inter-State Athletics Championships to be held in Panchkula from June 27 to 30 to get selected for the Paris Olympics.

AFI rules state that all the athletes will have to participate in the National Inter-State Championships if they have to get selected for major multi-sport events like the Olympics, Asian Games or the Commonwealth Games, unless the federation gives an exemp-



Kishore Jena gears up for his match at the Kalinga Stadium

tion on the request of particular athletes or their coaches.

Asked whether Chopra taking part in the Federation Cup was taken impromptu or after detailed discussion, he said, "Every athlete will have to take part in the National Inter-State. But National Inter-State is clashing with the Paris Diamond League (which Chopra is taking part), which is very important for Neeraj considering that the Olympics will be held there.

"So, taking into account the federation rules, we gave him permission to take part in the Federation Cup (instead of National Inter-State)."

Chopra has not taken part in any domestic competition since the Federation Cup in March 2021 and he will feature in the men's javelin final Wednesday, marking his participation in a do-

NATIONAL FEDERATION CUP ATHLETICS COMPETITION DAY 3 RESULTS AT A GLANCE

MEN

3000m steeplechase: Sumit Kumar (MP) 8:39.67 seconds, Dhuladev Baban (Maharashtra) 8:46.65s, Ankit Rajesh (Haryana) 8:46.97s

Shot put: Tajinderpal Singh Toor (Punjab) 20.38m, Samardeep Singh Gill (MP) 18.93m, Aryan Tyagi (UP) 18.07m

Hammer throw: Damneet Singh (Punjab) 66.28m, Ashish Jakhar (Haryana) 66.24m, Devang (Delhi) 64.75m

Long jump: Jeswin Aldrin (Tamil Nadu) 7.99m, Arya S (Karnataka) 7.83m, Muhammed Anees (Kerala) 7.81m

WOMEN

3000m steeplechase: Chhavi Yadav (MP) 10:07.57s, Komal Chandrakant J (Maharashtra) 10:18.69s, Manju Ajay Yadav (MP) 10:19.21s

Discus throw: Nidhi Rani (Haryana) 52.55m, Shalini Chaudhary (MP) 51.50m, Sunita (Haryana) 51.10m

Pole vault: Rosy Meena Paulraj (Tamil Nadu) 4.05m, Baranica Elangovan (Kerala) 4.00m, Mariya Jaison (Tamil Nadu) 3.90m

mestic event after three years.

Sumariwalla also said that the AFI is expecting at least 35 track and field athletes to take part in the Paris Olympics. There were 26 track and field athletes in Tokyo Olympics. Already, 20 have qualified including the two relays and 11 athletes are within qualification slots according to World Athletics rankings.

DC keep playoff hopes alive with win over LSG



TRISTAN STUBBS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: Commanding fifties from Abhishek Porel and Tristan Stubbs was complemented by a clinical bowling effort as Delhi Capitals kept their slim IPL playoff hopes alive with a 19-run win over Lucknow Super Giants in their final league fixture here Tuesday.

Porel (58, 33b, 5x4, 4x6) and Shai Hope (38, 27b, 3x4, 2x6) shared 92 runs off 49 balls to give the hosts an aggressive start. Tristan Stubbs' blitzkrieg (57 n o, 25b, 3x4, 4x6) along with his 47 and 50-run partnerships with Rishabh Pant (33, 23b, 5x4) and Axar Patel (14 n o) powered DC to 208/4.

The bowlers then joined the party to restrict the visitors to

189/9, despite a belligerent 27-ball 61 (6x4, 4x6) from Nicholas Pooran and a 33-ball 58 not out (3x4, 5x6) by Arshad Khan. Ishant Sharma (3/34) was excellent with the ball for DC.

After the loss in their penultimate league game, LSG are all but out of the playoff race. DC's win paved the way for Rajasthan Royals qualification to the playoffs. Delhi moved to 14 points, same as Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad, and their playoff chances depends on a sequence of other results.

BRIEF SCORES: DC 208/4 (Abhishek Porel 58, Tristan Stubbs 57 n o) beat LSG 189/9 (Nicholas Pooran 61, Arshad Khan 58 n o; Ishant Sharma 3/34) by 19 runs.

Royals aim to secure playoff berth vs PBKS



RIYAN PARAG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, May 14: Riyan Parag, the hottest cricketing property to emerge from India's north-east, is expected to get a grand welcome from his home fans when Rajasthan Royals try to ensure a safe passage into the IPL playoffs against the ousted Punjab Kings in their penultimate league game Wednesday.

Placed second in the 10-team table with 16 points, Royals need to ensure one win in their next two 'home' games here. That will be enough to seal a last four berth.

For the past few years, Guwahati has been Royals' second home base and it was a strategic move by the franchise having invested a good six years in tapping Parag's potential.

Panned for being inconsistent on social media platforms, Parag's homecoming this year is special as his performance of 483 runs at a strike-rate of 153 despite not being an opener is simply outstanding.

A stable core and improvisation as per match situations have already made Parag an India contender for the next T20 series where he is expected to make his international debut. As and when it happens, Parag will become the first cricketer hailing from the north-eastern part of the country to wear the senior team's iconic blue jersey.

Parag's emergence as the cricketing face from the region makes this and the RR's next

MATCHDAY
Indian Premier League
RR vs PBKS
Time: 07:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: Jio Cinema

match against KKR more significant. The support for the 22-year-old will be organic and that will also help Sanju Samson and his men against PBKS, which unearthed two T20 gems in Shashank Singh and Ashutosh Sharma but once again failed to fire as a team.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan's absence due to injury made matters worse as his stand-in Sam Curran didn't exactly look the part. Samson, on the other hand, has grown in stature as a leader in what is expected to be his best season as a batter.

He already is the team's top scorer with 486 runs. The dynamic opening duo of Yashasvi Jaiswal (344 runs) and Jos Buttler (359 runs) have had an average season by their standards.

RR's strongest aspect is their bowling unit that has never been taken to the task as such during the whole season. Sandeep Sharma (Economy Rate 8.07) at the death and Trent Boult (ER 8.38) at the start have executed plans to the "T".

R Ashwin has only become sharper as the tournament has progressed and Yuzvendra Chahal can always produce that magic ball against the run of play.

Swiatek to face Keys in quarters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, May 14: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek remained on course for an uncommon Madrid-Rome double after beating Angelique Kerber to reach the Italian Open quarterfinals Monday.

It was a ninth straight win for Swiatek, and the two-time Rome champion will next face Madison Keys after the American player eased past Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-1 in a match that was interrupted by an environmental protest.

Swiatek needed eight set points to secure the opener but had no such problems at the end of the second, sealing a 7-5, 6-3 victory on the first match point when Kerber's return went wide.

The match against Keys will be a repeat of last week's Madrid Open semifinal, which Swiatek won. The Polish player is attempting to become the first woman to win the "dirt double" since Serena Williams in 2013.

Keys' match in Rome was temporarily suspended at 3-1 in the second set after two protesters jumped onto the court and threw confetti, while others from the environmentalist group glued themselves to the stands.

The players returned to the locker room and the protestors did not resist when security in-



tervened before police and firefighters also arrived to handle the situation.

Two more Americans were through to the quarterfinals after third-seeded Coco Gauff rallied to beat Paula Badosa 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 and Danielle Collins eased past Irina-Camelia Begu 6-0, 6-3.

Second-seeded Aryna Sabalenka fought back from a set down and had to fend off three match points — after getting treatment for a back problem — before beating Elina Svitolina 4-6, 6-1, 7-6(9-7) in a match that finished well after midnight local

time. Victoria Azarenka, Jelena Ostapenko and Qinwen Zheng also advanced.

In the men's tournament, defending champion Daniil Medvedev survived a scare before prevailing against Serbian qualifier Hamad Medjedovic 7-6(7-5), 2-6, 7-5 in their third-round match.

The second-seeded Medvedev will face Tommy Paul in the round of 16 after the American beat Dominik Koepfer 6-4, 6-3. Also advancing were Hubert Hurkacz, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Sebastian Baez and Nicolas Jarry.

Manika rises to career-high World No. 24

NEW DELHI: Ace women's table tennis player Manika Batra rose to a career-best singles ranking of 24 following her success in the Saudi Smash, becoming the first Indian woman paddler to break into the top-25 in world rankings. The 28-year-old Khel Ratna awardee, who was in 39th spot before the tournament, jumped 15 spots following her run in Jeddah, where she reached the quarterfinals. In an Instagram post, Manika wrote that the ranking boost had come at the right time as she aims to secure a Paris Olympics berth.

Meiraba enters main draw at Thailand Open

BANGKOK: India's Meiraba Luwang Mainsnam progressed to the main draw of the men's singles competition at the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament here Tuesday. The 21-year-old from Manipur, who trains at Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy, beat compatriot Shashwat Dalal 15-21, 21-14, 21-16 and then notched up a 21-19, 21-9 win over Malaysia's Kok Jing Hong to enter the main draw. He will face fellow Indian and fifth seed HS Prannoy Wednesday.

Duran late goals save Aston Villa's night

BIRMINGHAM: Substitute Jhon Duran was a late savior for Aston Villa Monday, scoring twice in the last five minutes against Liverpool to grab a remarkable 3-3 home draw and edge his team closer to next year's Champions League. The home side went behind in the second minute with an own goal from goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, and although Youri Tielemans equalised soon after, goals from Cody Gokip and Jarell Quansah put Liverpool in the driving seat. Duran, coming in as substitute after 79 minutes, scored in the 85th and 88th. Villa remained fourth, five points ahead of Tottenham.

Three young squash players in TOPS scheme

NEW DELHI: With eyes firmly set on the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, young squash players Anahat Singh, Abhay Singh and Velavan Senthilkumar were Tuesday included in the TOPS Development Group. Squash, which was included in the 2028 Olympics programme in October, is popular in India, with exponents doing well in the Asian and Commonwealth Games. For years, Saurav Ghosal, Dipika Pallikal and Joshna Chinappa have kept the flame burning and are now passing the baton to the next generation of players.

Barca second in La Liga with win over Sociedad

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, May 14: Barcelona moved above Girona into second place in the Spanish league (La Liga) after beating Real Sociedad 2-0 Monday.

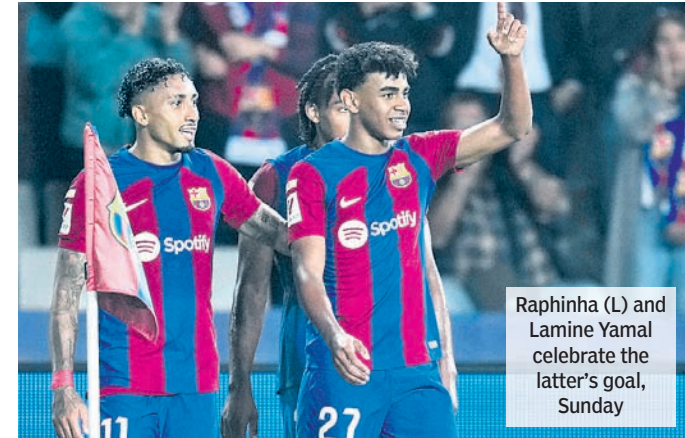
Sheraldo Becker had the ball in the net midway through the first half for Sociedad but the goal was disallowed for offside. Barcelona, though, gradually took control with Raphinha hitting the woodwork after 38 minutes and Lamine Yamal breaking the deadlock two minutes later.

Ilkay Gundogan broke for-

ward and slipped a cross ball to Yamal who made no mistake from 15 yards out. It was the 16-year-old's fifth goal of the league season.

"It was an important game to recover second place," Yamal said. "Real started well and we took a bit of time to find ourselves. But we got better little by little."

Raphina completed the scoring from the penalty spot three minutes into stoppage time after Alvaro Odriozola was adjudged to have handled in the box. The result pushed Barcelona to one point more than Girona.



Raphinha (L) and Lamine Yamal celebrate the latter's goal, Sunday

India likely to play semis in Guyana



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 14: India will play the second semifinal of the T20 World Cup in Guyana June 27 if the cricketing giants reach the last four stage of the competition.

As per ICC's playing conditions for the showpiece in the USA and Caribbean, reserve day is only kept for the final in Barbados June 29. "If India qualifies for the semi-finals, they will play in the second semi-final scheduled for Guyana, June 27," stated the playing conditions.

The decision on scheduling has been taken considering the

timing of the semifinals in Trinidad and Guyana. The first semifinal in Trinidad June 26 is a night affair while the knockout game in Guyana is a day game, more suited for the Indian TV audience.

The second semifinal will start at 8.30 pm IST and will have an added time of 250 minutes if the game is impacted by weather. The added time for the first semifinal will be applied over two days.

"The Final, June 29, will have a reserve day June 30. The semifinals will each have additional time added in order to complete the match which will total 250 minutes. For the first semifinal

EVES TO PLAY SA

NEW DELHI: India will host South Africa women's cricket team for a multi-format series, including a Test match after almost a decade, from June 16 and July 9. The series will consist of a Test in Chennai, three ODIs in Bangalore and as many T20Is in Chennai, the BCCI announced Tuesday. The ODIs are a part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-2025. The ODIs will start at 1.30 pm while the T20Is are scheduled to begin from 7 pm.

THE SCHEDULE
June 13: SA vs BP's XI (warm-up);
June 16: 1st ODI; June 19: 2nd ODI;
June 23: 3rd ODI; June 28-July 1: One-off Test; July 5: 1st T20I; July 7: 2nd T20I; July 9: 3rd T20I.

June 26, 60 minutes will be available at the end of the day's play with the remaining 190 minutes scheduled for 2 pm, June 27.

"Whilst the additional 250 minutes for the second semifinal scheduled June 27 will be utilised if needed through extended playing hours on the scheduled day," according to the playing conditions.

India will be aiming to win an elusive ICC trophy and they will begin their campaign against Ireland in New York June 5 before taking on arch-rivals Pakistan at the same venue June 9.