



REACHING OUT: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik addresses a gathering during his roadshow as part of the BJD's election campaigning in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, as party leader Kartik Pandian looks on

SC rider for ED arrest

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 16: In what came as a blow to the Enforcement Directorate (ED), often accused of working at the behest of the BJP-led Centre, the Supreme Court Thursday held that the agency cannot arrest anyone under Section 19 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) without specific instruction of the special court holding trial.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said when an accused appears before a court in pursuance of a summons, the agency will have to apply to the court concerned to get his custody.

"If the accused appears before the special court by summons (issued by court), it cannot be treated that he is in custody," it said. "Accused who appeared before the court pursuant to the summons not required to apply for bail, and thus twin conditions of Section 45 of PMLA not applicable," the bench said in its judgment. The twin conditions state that when an accused in a money laundering case applies for bail, the court has to first allow the public prosecutor to be heard and only when it is satisfied that the accused is not guilty and unlikely to commit a similar offence when released, can bail be granted.

The SC judgment was pronounced on a question of whether an accused in a money laundering case has to meet the stringent twin test for bail even in cases where the special court takes cognisance of the offence.

Even Covaxin 'unsafe'

A study by Banaras Hindu University on indigenously-developed Covaxin has claimed to have found Adverse Events of Special Interest like stroke and Guillain-Barre syndrome – a rare disorder that affects nerves – among nearly one-third of recipients. The findings came in the backdrop of UK pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca admitting its Covishield can cause rare side effects of blood clotting and lowering of platelet count. With a majority of Indians having received multiple shots of either of the two anti-Covid vaccines, and given the country's population size, the likely side effects of the hurriedly-prepared vaccines would leave a colossal trail of unwitting victims

Covishield linked to fresh fatal blood clotting disorder

AstraZeneca vaccine, sold in India as Covishield, is linked to a rare fatal blood clotting disorder – Vaccine-Induced Immune Thrombocytopenia and Thrombosis (VITT), according to a new study by scientists from Flinders University, Australia.



low-up period, predominated by viral upper respiratory tract infections.

The study involved 635 adolescents and 291 adults, who received the BBV152 vaccine.

Published in the journal Springer Nature, the study comes amid AstraZeneca admitting its Covid vaccine can cause rare side-effects of blood clotting and lowering of platelet count in a UK court. "Close to one-third of the individuals developed AESIs. New-onset skin and subcutaneous disorders, general disorders, and nervous system disorders were the three most common disorders observed in adolescents after receiving the vaccine," the study said. The participants were interviewed telephonically about long-term AESI after one year of vaccination.

New-onset skin and subcutaneous disorders (10.5 per cent), general dis-

orders (10.2 per cent), and nervous system disorders (4.7 per cent) were the common AESIs in adolescents. General disorders (8.9), musculoskeletal disorders (5.8 per cent), and nervous system disorders (5.5 per cent) were the common AESIs in adults. Menstrual abnormalities were noticed in 4.6 per cent of female participants.

Ocular abnormalities and hypothyroidism were observed in 2.7 per cent and 0.6 per cent of participants respectively. Four deaths (three female individuals and one male individual) were reported in adults, it added.

"Interestingly, adults receiving three doses and those receiving one dose of BBV152 were respectively at four and two times higher risk of AESIs compared with adults receiving two doses of the Covaxin," the study said.

A booster dose mechanically enhances the production of anti-Spike antibodies above that produced by the second dose. Significant cross-reactivity has been shown between anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies and diverse human antigens and this can explain the multi-system AESIs witnessed in the study participant, it said. Adults with co-morbidities had more than two times higher odds of AESIs and persistent AESIs, the study stated.

In response, Bharat Biotech, however, said, "Any study on the safety of Covaxin and its AESI for individuals who received it should examine a wide range of data to avoid investigator bias and ensure effective findings."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Nearly one-third of 926 individuals, who received Bharat Biotech's anti-Covid vaccine Covaxin, reported 'Adverse Events of Special Interest' (AESI), according to a one-year follow up study conducted by a team of researchers at Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

Serious AESI, which included stroke and Guillain-Barre syndrome, were reported in one per cent of individuals, the study, which looked at long-term safety of the BBV152 (Covaxin) vaccine in adolescents and adults, claimed.

The study, conducted from January 2022 to August 2023, stated that nearly 50 per cent of the sample size complained of infections during the fol-

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Is there a way I can vote for two parties? My family needs 15 kgs of free ration

SHORT TAKES

Sec 144 clamped in Khallikote

BHUBANESWAR: The death of a 28-year-old BJP worker during clashes between supporters of BJD and the saffron party at Sri Krushna Saranapur under Khallikote police limits in Ganjam Wednesday triggered massive tension in the locality Thursday, with police resorting to lathicharge and clamping Section 144 CrPC. Dilip Pahana of the village succumbed to injuries during treatment at a nearby hospital. Irate BJP workers vandalised vehicles near the house of Khallikote Assembly seat's BJD candidate and blocked road near the police station. "While arresting eight persons, police officials were attacked by BJP workers with stones, leaving many injured. In retaliation, police resorted to lathicharge and clamped Section 144 CrPC," an official said. Amid violence, the Election Commission decided to deploy 2,000 central forces personnel for polls in Ganjam. P3

'BJP struggling for 200'

BHUBANESWAR: Asserting that INDIA bloc will form the next government at the Centre, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Thursday said the BJP and its partners are struggling to get 200 seats as people are opposed to their policies. Referring to PM's claim that the NDA will secure 400-plus seats this time, Kharge asked, "From where the BJP will get these seats? BJP will not form the government at the Centre. It will struggle to secure 200 seats." P8

Sunil Chhetri hangs up his boots

The long-serving national team captain, 39, has played for the country for 19 years, having scored his first goal during his debut match in 2005



AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 16: The iconic Sunil Chhetri Thursday announced his decision to retire from

Chhetri, with 94 goals, is fourth in the all-time list of international goal scorers behind Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo (128), Iran's Ali Daei (108) and Lionel Messi (106)

international football after the FIFA World Cup qualifying match against Kuwait June 6, bringing the curtains down on

a glorious career that is unparalleled in Indian football for its longevity and consistency.

The long-serving national team captain an-

nounced his decision via a video he posted on X.

Chhetri, who made his debut in 2005, has scored 94 goals for the country. He will leave the scene as India's all-time top scorer and most-capped player.

He is also third in the list of goal scorers among

active players behind Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi and currently sits as the fourth in the all-time list of international goal scorers as well.

Chhetri, 39, will walk into international sunset after rendering yeoman service for nearly two decades, 19 years to be precise, to a team that was heavily reliant on the 5'7" forward to deliver the goods every time he wore the blue jersey.

"The match Against Kuwait is the last," Chhetri said while announcing his decision. MORE: P12

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FURIOSA GETS STANDING OVATION AT CANNES

Chris Hemsworth and Anya Taylor-Joy-starrer *Furiosa* received a thunderous response at the 77th Cannes Film Festival. The audience at the world premiere of *Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga*, gave the high-octane action film a six-minute standing ovation.

SOPHIE TURNER CONTEMPLATED TERMINATING FIRST PREGNANCY

Game of Thrones actress Sophie Turner revealed that she was not sure about stepping into motherhood in her early 20s and even considered terminating her first pregnancy. Turner spoke about how she considered not keeping the child and discussed the situation with her estranged husband, Joe Jonas.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may want to meet up with friends you haven't met in a long time, and the stars indicate that you will have great fun. Your enthusiasm will add a glow to whatever you do. Your sincerity in approach is what makes it special, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
You will focus on nurturing the positive aspects of your life today, says Ganesh. You might exhaust yourself mentally trying to set things straight. It would be better to brainstorm with someone close to you or approach people whom you have differences with.

GEMINI
You will let your personal likes and dislikes cloud your judgement today. Don't let that happen, or you may lose a worthy friend. You are likely to have a chance meeting with your soul mate or maybe even your ex-sweetheart. A romantic evening is on the anvil.

CANCER
Today may not be a productive day for you. Though there may not be any major loss, you may feel a little lost and would like to be left alone. If you have kids, you may suffer from the empty nest syndrome with your kids not at home.

LEO
You may wear the trendiest suit, drive the swankiest car and dine at the costliest restaurant, but if luck is not on your side, you can forget becoming a business tycoon. Fortunately, that is not the case with you today. With a favourable alignment of the cosmos, you are set for a day where your business proposals will be the hardest thing to overlook.

VIRGO
Family matters. And matters of family matter more. Your negotiation skills are supreme and you shall bring harmonious ends to disputes today. Life has taught you to be balanced and level-headed, and you strongly believe that there is progression in opposition.

LIBRA
It's a full platter today, and you have to manage it all somehow. The day promises to be full of activities, especially those that involve writing letters and reviving old contacts. Expect a call to appear for an interview for a better job. Also, look forward to being put in charge of organising events at work, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
In all probability, you are set to shine out as a man of care and kindness. Ganesh advises you to shut the doors on worries and open the windows to let merrymaking and happiness sweep you off your feet today. The social bug will bite you hard, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Providence smiles upon you today, predicts Ganesh. Catching a film with your beloved today is a very good idea. Chances are you may have a nice outing along with your friends or family. In either case, the load in your wallet is likely to lessen, steadily if not dramatically.

CAPRICORN
Not many can match you when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle, and as Ganesh says, health won't be an issue today either. On the work front, you are likely to complete pending projects successfully and your boss, who may be furious because of the delay caused, will reluctantly admit that you did justice to the work and that it was worth the wait.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will wish there were two of you! You are deluged with pending work, and even doubling up efforts will not seem enough. You may even cancel your movie date, deciding to deal with your sweetheart's tantrums later.

PISCES
Bright prospects will greet whatever new ventures you decide to focus on today, says Ganesh. It is a good time to implement your plans. Apart from short-term monetary gains, you may also find yourself pursuing activities which bring you intangible rewards, like goodwill for example.

Deepika features in global disruptors' list

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone has added another feather to her cap as she joined the ranks of global disruptors for the class of movers and shakers 2024. Alongside international stars Eva Longoria, Uma Thurman, and Lee Sung Jin, she has been recognised by the international publication *Deadline* for her significant contributions to the entertainment industry.

As the only Indian star featured on the Global Disruptors List, she solidifies her position as a trailblazer on the world stage, hailed as 'Racket to Rocket: India's Surprise Superstar' on a mission to break barriers and taboos.

This acknowledgement places the actress, who is expecting her first child with her husband and actor Ranveer Singh, among an exclusive cohort of influential personalities who are actively reshaping the global entertainment landscape.

In a statement reflecting on her journey and motivations, Deepika emphasised her profound appreciation for the collaborative nature of the film industry, stating, "Of course, the success of a movie is important, but for me, the time I've had with people and the experiences I have on the set of a film are the most important." The information has also been shared by Deepika's team on her official website.

On the work front, Deepika has *Singham Again* and *Kalki 2898 AD* in her kitty. AGENCIES



Banita joins Bridgerton cast

Mumbai: British-Indian actress Banita Sandhu, who made her screen debut with Shoojit Sircar's *October* opposite Varun Dhawan, has joined the cast of popular show *Bridgerton Season 3*.

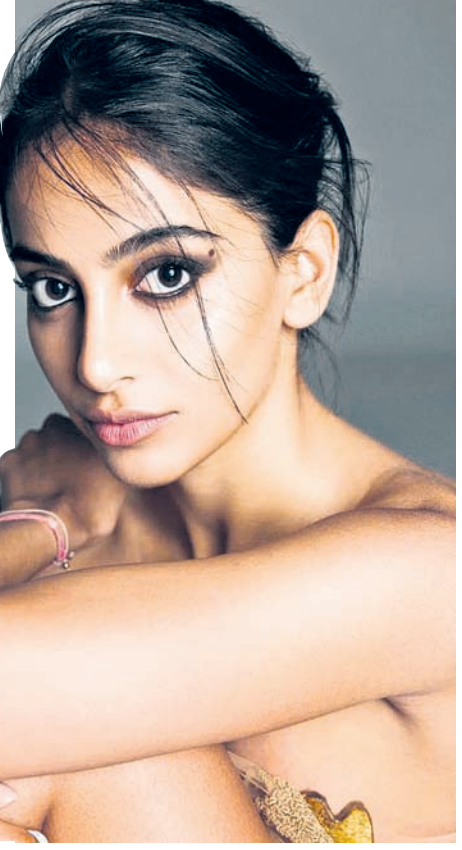
Banita, who plays Miss Malhotra in the Netflix series based on the book by Julia Quinn, has been hailed by the netizens on Twitter as soon as her character got introduced in the show.

Banita's character Miss Malhotra is anticipated to bring a new and unique dynamic among eligible bachelors. She has a crucial role amid the brewing romance between Penelope Featherington and Colin Bridgerton. Despite being a new addition to *Bridgerton* cast, Banita's fresh appearance is gaining prominence among fans on Twitter. A person tweeted, "Banita Sandhu is in BRIDGERTON whatttttt!?!?"

A fan also captioned her tweet as, "Banita about to eat up her 2 minutes of

screen time Bridgerton (cart emoji)." A netizen shared a screenshot of one of the scenes from the show featuring Banita and tweeted, "Banita Sandhu in Bridgerton (cart emoji) season 3." A fan also wrote, "Let's hope she appears all throughout the season."

Bridgerton is currently streaming on Netflix. AGENCIES



'Turned to fashion for self-discovery'



Mumbai: Actress Bhumi Pednekar revealed that she struggled with confidence while growing up and said that she turned to fashion as a form of self-discovery.

"When I was growing up, I struggled with feeling confident, especially because of the pressure to fit into certain beauty ideals. But instead of letting that define me, I turned to fashion as a form of self-discovery," Bhumi said.

The actress added: "As I've gotten older, my relationship and understanding of beauty and fashion have

evolved. It's not just about looking good anymore or following trends. It's about embracing my individuality, expressing my personality, and celebrating what makes me unique. Today, fashion and beauty are a medium through which I can express myself, my emotional canvas, and my state of mind."

Even though Bhumi has received mixed views over her fashion and style statement, she will still experiment with her looks as she loves it and she loves it that way, but her fashion is to shatter that perception and show people who she really is and how she wants to be seen.

"I'm a young, confident Indian woman who is expressing herself through fashion, and I'm enjoying the love that my looks are getting," ends the *Bhakhshak* actress. AGENCIES



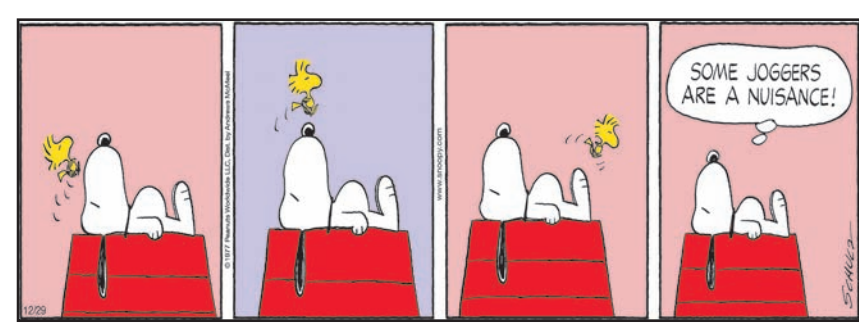
Vicky's unique wish

Mumbai: Actor Vicky Kaushal has solidified his place in the industry through his dedication and versatile performances, starting with his debut in *Masaan* (2015). After winning millions of hearts in movies like *Udhm Singh*, *Uri*, *Dunki* and *Sam Bahadur*, the actor has expressed a keen interest in portraying negative characters, finding them intriguing and challenging.

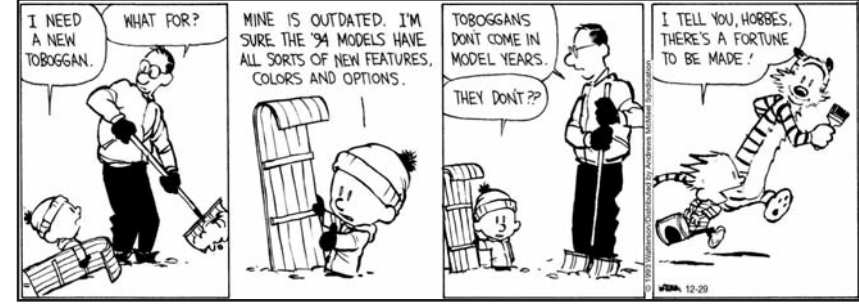
In a recent interview with an entertainment portal, he was asked if he would ever portray a wicked villain. He responded by saying, "Oh, I would love to. I would love to because there's so much, like—you must have heard this from many actors because it is probably true—that there is so much in that. It just sounds fun to get to play a full-blown negative character: I don't know when that'll happen, but I really would do it."

On the work front, Vicky will be seen next in *Chhava* sharing the screen with Rashmika Mandanna. AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

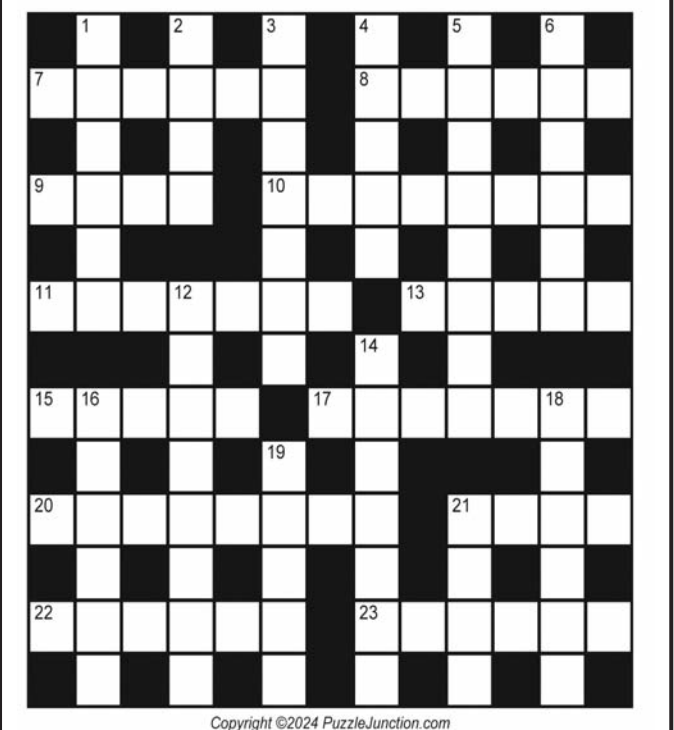


BREVITY



FUN post

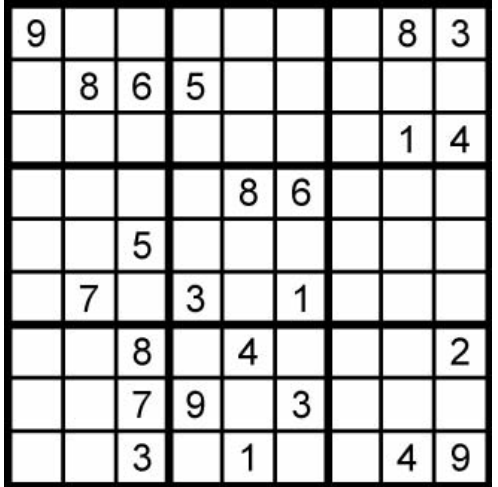
CROSSWORD



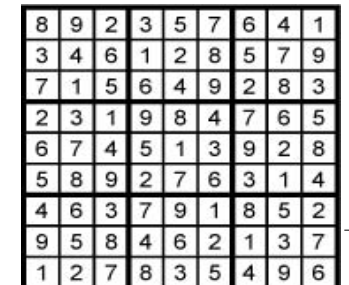
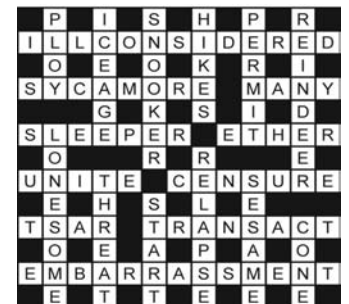
- Across**
- 7 Anise flavoured liqueur
 - 8 Milk curdler
 - 9 Catcall
 - 10 Protect from heat, cold, or noise
 - 11 Animate
 - 13 Willow twig
 - 15 Theatre employee
 - 17 Take apart and analyse
 - 20 Safety device (4,4)
 - 21 Flub
 - 22 Church officer
 - 23 Hold
 - 4 Gown
 - 5 Investigation and review
 - 6 Docile
 - 12 Type of theft
 - 14 Sharp reprimand (4,3)
 - 16 Malmö locale
 - 18 Option
 - 19 Adolescents
 - 21 Chow
- Down**
- 1 Celebrity
 - 2 Picnic pest
 - 3 Lover-to-be?

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

MAKING OF THE JUGGERNAUTS

Construction work for the sibling deities' chariots in progress ahead of the Rath Yatra in Puri, Thursday



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28 Lok Sabha candidates in Phase III polls crorepatis



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 16: As many as 28 of the 64 candidates in fray for six Lok Sabha (LS) constituencies-Sambalpur, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Keonjhar and Dhenkanal- in the state going to polls in the third phase (sixth nationally) May 25 are crorepatis, according to a report by poll watchdog Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), and Odisha Election Watch (OEW).

Party wise, the ruling BJD has six crorepati candidates, followed by four each from BJP and Congress, and three from BSP which had fielded candidates in five of the six LS seats. Interestingly, eight Independents contesting the elections in the third phase are also crorepatis.

The average assets per candidate contesting the Phase III LS polls in the state stands at ₹11.80 crore.

BJD's Cuttack candidate Santrupt Misra, a former HR head of Aditya Birla Group, tops the list with total assets of over ₹482 crore, followed by party's Dhenkanal candidate Abinash

and ₹15.57 crore, respectively. Dillip Kumar Baral, an Independent contesting from Puri LS seat, has the lowest declared assets of ₹4,000, while Subash Chandra Bhoi a SUCI candidate from the same constituency, and Natabar Maharana (Bhartiya Bikas Parishad) contesting from Bhubaneswar seat own assets worth ₹19,500 and ₹25,000, respectively.

The report said the average assets of BJD candidates contesting in the third phase election is ₹95 crore, while that of BJP candidates is ₹5 crore.

The report also said 19 (30 per cent) candidates have declared their educational qualification to be between 8th and 12th standards, while 43 (67 per cent) candidates have declared of having educational qualification of graduate or above. One candidate is a diploma holder, while another has declared himself as 'just literate'.

Samal with ₹36 crore, and Ram Prasad Hembram of BSP from Keonjhar constituency who has declared his assets at ₹35 crore.

Union Minister and BJP nominee from Sambalpur LS segment, Dharmendra Pradhan has declared that he owns assets worth ₹6.92 crore, while Sambit Patra, BJP candidate from Puri, has declared assets worth ₹1.98 crore.

BJP national spokesperson and Bhubaneswar candidate Aparajita Sarangi has total assets worth ₹4.62 crore, the report said.

Similarly, BJD nominees Pranab Prakash Das (Sambalpur), Arup Mohan Patnaik (Puri) and Manmath Kumar Routray (Bhubaneswar) have declared that they own assets of ₹2.30 crore, ₹22.97 crore

18 (28%) CANDIDATES HAVE DECLARED CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST THEM

13 CANDIDATES HAVE DECLARED SERIOUS CRIMINAL CASES AGAINST THEM

ONE CANDIDATE HAS DECLARED CASES RELATED TO MURDER (IPC SECTION -302) AGAINST HIM

Also, out of 64 candidates analyzed, 18 (28 per cent) have declared criminal cases against themselves, while 13 have declared serious criminal cases against them. One candidate has declared cases related to murder (IPC Section -302) against himself.

Four candidates have declared cases related to attempt to murder (IPC Section 307) against themselves, and an equal number of candidates have declared cases related to crime against women against them.

Naveen leads roadshow in Bhubaneswar



Artistes performing tribal dance during Chief Minister and BJD Supremo Naveen Patnaik's roadshow in City

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik led a roadshow in state capital Bhubaneswar Thursday, seeking votes for his party BJD.

Accompanied by his close aide Kartik Pandian, Patnaik also addressed people in between the roadshow, urging them to vote for 'conch' - the election symbol of his party.

The roadshow began at Ganganagar Chhak amid tight security with a large number of people lined up on both sides of the road to have a glimpse of the chief minister.

"Though we have seen him on TV, this is an opportunity to see him physically," said Susama Behera, a housewife.

Patnaik waived and greeted people as his vehicle proceeded through Gopabandhu Chhak, DAV School (Unit-8), HDFC Bank Square, Mamta Ali School, Srikrishna Club, Behera Sahi, Bayababa Mutt Chhak and Master Canteen Square before culminating at Sisu Bhawan Square.

Before the roadshow, Patnaik said he was always elated to meet the people.

Tight security arrangements were made, and traffic restric-

NADDA'S ROADSHOW IN CITY

BHUBANESWAR: During a roadshow here to garner support for party candidates, BJP president J P Nadda Thursday asserted that people of the state have "decided to give rest" to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik by electing the saffron party to power. Nadda, who was standing in a saffron-coloured open-hood vehicle flanked by Bhubaneswar BJP MP and candidate Aparajita Sarangi and Ekamra-Bhubaneswar Assembly seat's party nominee Babu Singh, was seen waving at crowds on both sides of the road during the roadshow from Mausina Chhak to Lingaraj temple.

tions were imposed on certain areas in the city for the road show.

Polling in Bhubaneswar is scheduled to be held May 25.

The BJD has fielded Manmath Routray against BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi in the

Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha constituency. For the Assembly elections, the party has re-nominated MLA Ananta Narayan Jena in Bhubaneswar Central, minister Ashok Panda in Bhubaneswar-Ekamra and MLA Susant Rout in Bhubaneswar North.

NAVEEN CONDEMNS GANJAM VIOLENCE

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Thursday condemned the violence at Khallikote in Ganjam district in which a BJP worker died during clashes between supporters of the ruling BJD and the saffron party, Wednesday.

"Deeply disturbed and saddened at the very unfortunate and tragic incident of violence in the Khallikote area. Such incidents of violence have no place in our democracy and civil society. I strongly condemn this incident. My deepest condolence to the family who has lost their loved one and praying for early recovery of those who sustained injuries. I am sure police will take strong and exemplary action against the perpetrators of this heinous crime," CM Patnaik posted on his 'X' account.

Expressing deep concern over the incident, the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Odisha, Nikunja Bihari Dhal Thursday instructed the Ganjam district Collector and Superintendent of Police (SP) to take immediate steps to establish peace by getting the violence under control in the district.

Local sources claimed that the deceased, Dilip Pahan, along with other BJP workers, who recently joined the party after leaving the ruling BJD, were putting up election campaign posters at Srikrushnasaranapur village late Wednesday night. A scuffle broke out when some BJD workers objected to putting up the posters. Several persons, including Dillip, sustained serious injuries in the fight. Dilip succumbed to the injuries while undergoing treatment at the MKCG hospital.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Beware of WhatsApp calls from Pak numbers: Police

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 16: Odisha Police Thursday issued a warning to mobile users, urging caution against answering calls originating from Pakistani numbers starting with +92 on WhatsApp.

Through their official social media platform, the Odisha Police advised mobile users to exercise vigilance and refrain from engaging with callers claiming to be police officers demanding money under false pretenses involving their relatives.

The cautionary measure was prompted by a surge in reports across the state regarding fraudulent calls, wherein cybercriminals impersonate law enforcement officials to extort money



from unsuspecting individuals. These deceptive tactics, increasingly adopted by cyber fraudsters, involve falsely accusing recipients' relatives, exploiting their trust to manipulate them into divulging personal information or transferring funds. The Odisha Police emphasized the importance of remaining vigilant and urged citizens not to disclose any details upon receiving such calls.

Prior to this advisory, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications had issued a similar cautionary notice, warning mobile users to be wary of incoming calls from foreign numbers, specifically those beginning with +92, on WhatsApp.

The Ministry's advisory underscored the importance of withholding information when confronted by callers purporting to be government officials threatening to disconnect mobile services due to alleged involvement in illicit activities.

AGE NO BARRIER FOR THIS 90-YEAR-OLD SPRINT QUEEN

Mazzenga is one of the unsung stars of Italian Athletics, currently holding five world records, nine European records and 28 best Italian performances in various categories of Masters sprinting-competitive races for older runners organised by age group.

"I am very happy and satisfied, and also a bit surprised because I didn't think I went that fast," Mazzenga said modestly after her record-breaking run May 5, beating the previous record of 53.35 seconds set by Japan's Emiko Saito in 2022.

The women's 200 metres world record, one of the oldest athletics records on the books, was set by the late American athlete Florence Griffith Joyner with a time of 21.34 seconds in 1988. She was 28 at the time.

The World Masters Athletics record for the women's 50 and over category is 24.33 seconds, held by Jamaican-Slovenian athlete Merlene Ottey, while the record for women 70 and over is 31.30 seconds, held by Ingrid Meier of Germany. There is even a record for women aged 100 and over of 1 minute, 29.79 seconds, held by Diane Friedman of the United States.



Like many athletes, Mazzenga follows precise rituals for her races: she runs strictly without socks and never wears the same shoes as for training.

She also likes to enjoy a beer with fellow runners to celebrate her successes, even though she usually has no direct rivals in her W90 category. "If I have no competitors, I know that I'll win from the start, so my aim is to do a good time," she said the day after her latest world record, proudly polishing the trophies on display in her living room.

She ran as a young woman, but then stopped for many years after getting married and having children. Her running career as a Masters athlete, which she kicked off at the age of 53, has

been an important comfort for Mazzenga's later years. "It got me through some difficult times, which of course haven't been lacking in a life as long as mine," she said.

"Running also allowed me always to be surrounded by a lot of people, so that I was never alone," she added.

Her next commitments include the Italian championships starting in June and she has an eye on the world championships in Sweden next year, but Mazzenga joked that she prefers "not to make long-term plans."

REUTERS

HOARDING COLLAPSE

Toll at 16, rescue operation ends

The crime branch team of Mumbai Police arrested Bhavesh Bhide from Udaipur Thursday. Bhide is the director of Ego Media Private Limited, the advertising agency responsible for erecting the hoarding at Ghatkopar area in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 16: Bodies of a retired General Manager of Mumbai airport ATC and his wife were retrieved from the wreckage at the crash site of a giant hoarding here, taking the toll to 16 as the rescue operation was called off Thursday morning with no hopes of finding survivors three days after the tragedy, officials said.

Former Mumbai ATC Manoj Chansoria (60) and his wife Anita (59) were missing since Monday evening when they left for Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh from the ATC guest house in western Mumbai in a car.

The bodies of a man and a woman were extricated from a car stuck underneath the collapsed hoarding shortly after midnight Wednesday and the victims were later identified as Manoj Chansoria and his wife, they said. Five interconnected girders of the hoarding had to be cut one by one to rescue the bodies of the couple.

A 120 feet x 120 feet billboard, which according to officials was illegally installed, collapsed on a petrol pump in the Chhedha Nagar area of suburban Ghatkopar during a dust storm

Monday evening, killing 14 people and injuring 75 others.

A Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) official said the bodies of Chansoria and his wife were in a "decomposed state" and taken to the nearby civic-run Rajawadi Hospital around 1am.

On Tuesday night, Chansoria's mobile phone location was tracked to the petrol pump on which the hoarding had collapsed a day earlier. It is believed Chansoria had stopped at the petrol pump for refuelling his car when the billboard crashed.

The search and rescue operation at the crash site, which went on for 66 hours, was called off at around 10.30am Thursday, an official of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said.

BMC Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani made an announcement about it after inspecting the site.

Speaking to reporters, Gagrani said 16 people have died in the tragedy and the search and rescue operation was now complete at the site.

The civic chief said they have thoroughly checked the site to ensure that no more person is trapped there.

Now, the work of clearing the

BODIES OF EX-GM OF ATC, WIFE RETRIEVED AT CRASH SITE



Another hoarding collapses on stationary mini truck near Pune

A hoarding installed on the roadside collapsed on a stationary mini truck in Pimpri Chinchwad area of Maharashtra's Pune district Thursday as a result of strong winds, police said. "A 30 x 30 feet hoarding erected on the margin of the road at Jai Ganesh Samraja chowk in Moshi area collapsed around 4:30pm. It fell on a stationary tempo truck and a couple of two-wheelers. Fortunately, no injuries were reported as there was nobody inside or on the vehicles," an official from the Pimpri Chinchwad police said. A crane was pressed into service to remove the crashed iron structure, he said.

debris will continue through the day, he said.

He said agencies like BMC, Mumbai Police, BPCL, NDRF, Mumbai fire brigade and Mahanagar Gas participated in the rescue operation and completed it "maintaining proper coordination."

Action is being taken on a 'war footing' to remove illegal hoardings in the metropolis, the IAS officer said.

"There should be no hoardings (in the city) other than those meeting the specifications laid down for them. So it is not a question of who owns them or whose place they are in," Gagrani said.

Gagrani said structural stability of hoardings is mandatory for the ones permitted by the BMC.

Similarly, the Railways have been directed to follow the specifications and remove those hoardings that do not conform to the parameters, he said.

The illegal giant hoarding that collapsed in Ghatkopar stood on a piece of land in possession of the Government Railway Police (GRP), officials had said.

90 hospitalised after temple feast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 16: In a suspected food poisoning case, at least 90 persons were admitted to different hospitals after consuming eatables during a temple feast in Maharashtra's Nanded district, police said Thursday.

The incident occurred Wednesday evening at Naigaon, an official said.

"A feast was organised and food was served to devotees just outside a Shiva temple. They were given 'ambil' (porridge) and 'khir' (a sweet dish) to eat," he said.

But after having food, the devotees felt dizzy and started vomiting, he said.

"Initially, some of them were rushed to a hospital. But towards late evening, there were more complaints of food poisoning. Till late night, a total of 90 people were admitted to various hospitals for treatment," he said.

The condition of all of them is stable and they are out of danger, the official added.

Taking cognisance of the incident, a police team visited the spot and an inquiry is being conducted, he said.

ICG evacuates British crewman off Kochi coast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, May 16: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has successfully coordinated the medical evacuation of a critically ill crewman of British nationality from a foreign vessel off the Kochi coast Thursday, a Defence release said here.

In a Swift operation India Coast Guard Ship C-410 ensured prompt and safe medical evacuation of a 62-years critically ill crew of MV Alvin Point off Kochi

It said Wednesday, at about 9pm, the United Kingdom Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centres (MRCC) raised a message to the MRCC in Mumbai regarding the medical emergency of the crew member, namely Kenneth Hiller (62), with a probable diagnosis of deep vein thrombosis onboard the vessel Alvin Point, which was proceeding from Dubai to Muara.

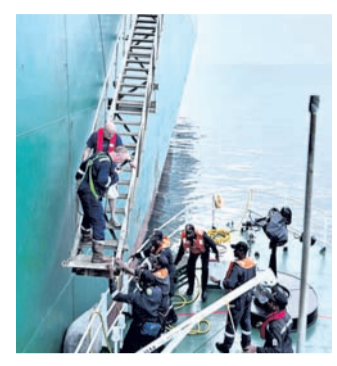
Considering the gravity of the situation, MRCC Mumbai directed the Maritime Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) in Kochi to coordinate the operation and also advised the vessel to proceed with the best available speed to Kochi for medical evacuation.

MRSC Kochi arranged for telemedicine to assess the criticality of the patient's condition and advised providing first aid.

Thereafter, District Headquarters No-4 (Kerala and Mahe) launched ICG ship C-410 with a medical team. ICG ship Arnvsh was also diverted towards the vessel to provide medical assistance and evacuate the patient to the shore, the release said.

ICG ship C-410 rendezvoused with the foreign vessel Alvin Point off Kochi, and the patient was transferred onboard C-410 for passage to Kochi harbour. Initial medical assistance was provided to the patient onboard the ship and was brought to Kochi, it said.

Upon arrival, the patient was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for further medical support. The condition of the patient is reported as stable and is kept under observation, the release added.



Kin of man who died in Oman protest outside AISATS office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 16: The family of a man who died in Oman recently protested with his body outside the AISATS office here Thursday, seeking compensation, stating that had Air India (AI) Express not cancelled flights, his wife would have been by his side and he may not have died.

The family members of the deceased said his wife was unable to go and see him due to the AI Express cabin crew strike, which led to repeated flight cancellations and he died in that Gulf nation with no one to take care of him.

The man's father-in-law claimed that had the wife been provided a ticket to travel, maybe the death could have been prevented.

The body of the man was brought to Kerala in the morning, and his relatives went with it directly to the office of Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited (AISATS) which provides gateway services that

include ground handling, passenger assistance and air cargo handling.

Subsequently, AI Express officials arrived there and held a discussion with the family members, including the woman's father, in the presence of police.

After the discussions, the protest was called off, and the body was taken home to perform the last rites.

The person was hospitalised in Muscat, Oman following a massive heart attack, leading his wife to book tickets on an AI Express flight for May 8.

However, she, along with hundreds of other passengers, were in for a rude shock when they reached airports across the state and informed that all flights were cancelled.

Air India Express had cancelled 'scores of flights' last week due to a shortage of cabin crew members, as a section of them reported sick to protest against alleged mismanagement at the Tata Group-owned airline.



People cover themselves with a cloth on a hot summer day, in Mumbai, Thursday

5 held for kidnapping

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Akola, May 16: The police in Maharashtra's Akola district have arrested five persons for allegedly kidnapping a businessman, an official said Thursday.

The businessman was bundled into a car by two to three persons near his scrap godown May 13. After being informed about the kidnapping, the police launched a probe and even announced a reward of ₹25,000 for credible information connected with the case, the official said.

The accused freed the businessman, whom they had brought on an autorickshaw, Wednesday night.

The crime branch which was tracking the auto subsequently arrested five persons for their alleged role in the kidnapping. They also recovered a car and two country-made pistols from them, he said.

District Superintendent of Police Bachchan Singh said the five kidnapped the businessman for easy money. They wanted to demand a ransom of ₹1 crore, but could not get through to his family members, the SP said.

Rains to intensify in Kerala; IMD issues orange alert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 16: Rains in Kerala are likely to intensify in the next few days as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Thursday predicted very heavy rainfall in the state between May 18 and 20 due to likely prevalence of strong westerly and south westerly winds in the region.

The IMD issued an orange alert for Palakkad and Malappuram for May 18, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Idukki for May 19 and in seven districts of the state for May 20.

It also said that while an orange alert has been issued in some districts for May 20, the rainfall would probably be similar to that of a red alert.

For Thursday, the IMD had issued a yellow alert in nine out of the 14 districts of the state.

A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20cm within 24 hours, while an orange alert means very heavy rain between 6cm to 20cm. A yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6cm to 11cm.



The IMD also predicted thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds from Thursday till May 20 in some places in the district.

It further said that squally weather with strong winds are likely to prevail along and off the southern Kerala coast and advised fishermen in those areas not to venture into the sea from May 18 to 20.

As a result of the heavy rains and winds, there is a likelihood of poor visibility, waterlogging of roads, uprooting of trees, damage to vulnerable structures, possibility of flash floods and landslides, the IMD said.

It advised people to follow traffic advisories, avoid staying in vulnerable structures, stay away from river fronts or areas that face waterlogging problems and not work in the fields during thunderstorms and lightning.

IMD predicted thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds till May 20 and advised fishermen not to venture into the sea

Map-based QR code to help voters locate polling booths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, May 16: The district authorities in Maharashtra's Thane have unveiled a map-based QR code system for three Lok Sabha (LS) constituencies in the district to facilitate voters in finding the route of their polling booth, an official said Thursday.

There are three LS seats in Thane district - Thane, Kalyan and Bhiwandi.

This initiative has been introduced in response to consistent complaints received from voters that they find it difficult to locate their polling booth to cast their vote, district collector and district election officer Ashok Shingare said.

Upon closer inspection, they found that the surgery had been performed on her tongue, not on her hand as intended.

As the issue created uproar in Kerala, the state government initiated action, suspending associate professor Bejohn Johnson, pending an inquiry.

Health Minister Veena George announced the decision to suspend the doctor after receiving a report from the director of Medical Education, who was asked to conduct an immediate investigation into the incident earlier in the day.

An official statement said the minister has also directed that



"This map-based QR code system is aimed at guiding voters seamlessly to their designated polling booths. Separate QR code has been assigned to each of the three Lok Sabha constituencies. Voters can simply scan the QR code, select the relevant assembly constituency and choose their specific polling station," he said.

Doctor operates tongue instead of removing a sixth finger; suspended

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kozhikode, May 16: A doctor has been suspended after a wrong surgery was performed on a four-year-old girl at the Government Medical College Hospital here Thursday.

The child had been scheduled for surgery to remove a sixth finger on her hand at the Maternal and Child Care Centre of the Medical College Hospital, instead of which an operation was performed on her tongue mistakenly.

The girl's family alleged that the error came to light when they discovered cotton stuffed in the child's mouth post-surgery, prompting them to investigate further.

Upon closer inspection, they found that the surgery had been performed on her tongue, not on her hand as intended.

As the issue created uproar in Kerala, the state government initiated action, suspending associate professor Bejohn Johnson, pending an inquiry.

Health Minister Veena George announced the decision to suspend the doctor after receiving a report from the director of Medical Education, who was asked to conduct an immediate investigation into the incident earlier in the day.

An official statement said the minister has also directed that



a detailed inquiry is conducted and further action taken.

George has given strict directives to the hospitals to ensure that protocols are followed correctly, it said.

Meanwhile, the family has lodged a complaint with the police, seeking action against those responsible for the grave error.

"No one should have such an experience again at the Medical College Hospital," the child's family said.

They said that the child had no issue with her tongue.

The family also said the hospital authorities should take responsibility if any adverse consequences arise for the child due to this procedure.

"The hospital authorities informed us that it was a mistake as they had scheduled surgery for two children on the same date," a family member said.

A family member said the doctor had apologised to the family for the error.

Expressing shock over the incident, Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly VD Satheesan said it was "serious medical malpractice" and sought strict disciplinary action against those responsible for it.

"Presently, the government's actions seem to undo the progress Kerala has achieved in the health sector over the years," he said in a statement here.

Satheesan alleged that the credibility of government hospitals is being questioned due to repeated medical errors.

"Apart from just asking for a report right away, what steps has the health department and the minister taken to address each incident? This isn't the first problem at Kozhikode Medical College," he pointed out, recalling the case of Harshina, who protested after a device got stuck in her stomach during surgery.



BATTLEFIELD 2024



Star campaigners of BJD, Babusan Mohanty and Elina Samantray, canvassing for the regional party's Bhograi Assembly nominee Goutam Buddha Das in Balasore district, Thursday

BJD leader and Chief Minister's close aide Kartik Pandian addressing an election meeting at Saintala in Bolangir district

BJP struggling to get 200 seats: Kharge

Press Trust of India
Bhubaneswar, May 16: Asserting that INDIA bloc will form the next government at the Centre, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Thursday said the BJP and its partners are struggling to get 200 seats as people are opposed to their policies.



Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's claim that NDA will secure 400-plus seats this time, Kharge asked, "From where the BJP will get these seats? You (Modi) are nowhere in sight in South India. In the rest of the country, seats will come down by half. BJP will not form the government at the Centre. It will struggle to secure 200 seats."

Dwelling upon various failures of the state and central governments, Kharge hoped that this time the coalition government will come to power at the Centre to save democracy and protect the Constitution as well as to make India united.

Dismissal of Modi's guarantees, Kharge said, "In the past too, the PM had made promises like Rs 15 lakh per family, doubling of income of farmers by 2022, two crore jobs per year and others. Those have not been fulfilled. Rather Modi increased the prices of all commodities including oil and cooking gas."

backward communities," Kharge said, adding, "As soon as the INDIA bloc government is formed, we will fill all these vacant posts. We will start working on this August 15, which is within two months of formation of the government."

NEARLY 67% TURNOUT IN 1ST 4 PHASES OF LS ELECTIONS

Press Trust of India

New Delhi, May 16: The cumulative turnout in the first four phases of Lok Sabha elections has been recorded at 66.95 per cent, the Election Commission (EC) said Thursday, adding 45.10 crore of the nearly 97 crore electors have voted so far in the ongoing electoral exercise.



A TOTAL OF 379 SEATS ACROSS 23 STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES HAVE VOTED IN THE FIRST FOUR PHASES OF ELECTIONS

In a statement, the poll panel urged the electorate to come out and vote in large numbers in the coming phases. According to the poll authority, the updated voter turnout in the fourth phase of polling held May 13 was 69.16 per cent, 3.65 percentage points higher than the corresponding phase in the 2019 parliamentary polls. The updated voter turnout figures for the third phase of polling in Lok Sabha election stood at 65.68 per cent. In the third phase of the 2019 general election, the turnout was 68.4 per cent.

In the first phase of the ongoing general elections, a 66.14 per cent turnout was recorded. In the 2019 elections, the turnout in the first phase was 69.43 per cent. The election watchdog said there is enhanced focus on to inform, motivate and facilitate voters in the remaining three phases of the parliamentary polls and state chief electoral officers have been asked to step up measures.

believes that partnership and collaboration are essential pillars of voter awareness programme. It's really heartening to see that on Commission's request, different institutions, influencers and celebrities having significant reach are working enthusiastically on pro-bono basis," Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said.

Babus running govt in Odisha; MLAs, MPs redundant: Nadda

Press Trust of India

Padampur/Sundargarh, May 16: BJP president JP Nadda Thursday warned the people of Odisha that their votes were not being effectively utilised, as those elected to power were not the ones governing them.

one person who is taking the stage here and there is no place for the MPs and the MLAs. Are you able to meet your Chief Minister? Does he speak to you in Odia?", Nadda asked the gathering in both the places.



Nadda emphasised the necessity for a young, locally rooted Chief Minister who actively manages daily administration, stressing the importance of preserving Odisha's cultural identity and pride.

pointed out that PM Narendra Modi has been very concerned towards the state's development. "Modi has always ensured the state's development. He increased the grant-in-aid and also established a permanent campus of IIM at Sambalpur," he said.

cover due to non-implementation of the scheme in Odisha. "It would have helped Odias living outside the state but Naveen Patnaik did not like this health cover being given by Modi and kept harping on Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojna," he said.

SP, Cong want to try out 'TMC politics' in UP: Modi



Bhadohi (UP), May 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday said the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress want to try out the "Trinamool politics", terming it a politics of appeasement and harassment of the Dalits and women.



BJP's Dhenkanal Lok Sabha nominee Rudra Narayan Pani campaigning with his supporters at Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal district, Thursday



Congress' Bhadrak Lok Sabha nominee Ananta Prasad Sethi and Basudevpur Assembly candidate Ashok Kumar Das holding a roadshow at Basudevpur in Bhadrak district, Thursday



Today marks Sikkim's completion of 49 years in the democratic system. The journey from voluntary integration into the world's largest democracy May 16, 1975 until today has been profoundly memorable and meaningful for Sikkim and its people
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

WE'LL BE PART OF INDIA BLOC: MAMATA

A day after announcing that she would extend outside support to the opposition front INDIA after it comes to power, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Thursday said she is very much part of the anti-BJP alliance at the national level and would continue to be in it



of the day quote

When Article 370 was scrapped, Rahul Gandhi had said that it would lead to bloodshed. Five years have elapsed and not a pebble has been hurled



She (Mamata Banerjee) has lost her credibility. She has understood the crude reality that voters are gearing towards the INDIA bloc. She has realised that she has been isolated in national politics



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

While pressing the button, remember if you are pressing the button for Kejriwal's freedom or for sending Kejriwal to jail



ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

PoK will come back to India: Jaishankar

Indicating at serious economic issues plaguing Pakistan, the External Affairs minister said the neighbouring country's policy of continuously going against India has brought it down to where it is



ity bills, continue to clash with police over the past many days.

"PoK is a different category because eventually PoK is India and it will come back to India, I don't think we should ever have any doubt about it. Pakistan has a lot of other problems, including in Balochistan and various other parts as well," commented the EAM.

Pakistan's economic woes too continue to dampen its credibility amid fears of a complete meltdown, he said.

"They also have severe economic problems right now. Whether they do the right reforms, and whether they take the right policies... Because, this policy of continuously going against India, today has brought Pakistan down to where it is. We have to see whether there is any change in thinking there," stated Jaishankar.

Earlier this week, while addressing a campaign rally in Palghar, Union Home Minister Amit Shah also made it clear that "PoK was, is, and will continue to be an integral part of India" and no power can challenge this position.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 16: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar Thursday said that Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) is an inseparable part of the country that will eventually come back to India.

Reacting to the growing unrest and continued violence that is taking place in PoK, he said that there is no doubt that people in PoK have been watching and getting affected with the massive development that has been taking place in Jammu and Kashmir over the last few years.

"People in PoK are seeing the positive changes across the Line of Control and they are asking themselves that if things are like that, then why are we suffering and why are we accepting this kind of mistreatment? So, they are undoubtedly getting affected by all this. We would love to see where this goes," said EAM Jaishankar while speaking at 'Vishwabandhu Bharat' interaction in Nashik, Maharashtra.

Complete chaos prevails in PoK's Muzaffarabad which has been rocked by violent protests as the locals, fed up with the rising inflation and high electric

Air India no more a State entity: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 16: Air India Limited (AIL) ceased to be State or its instrumentality under Article 12 of the Constitution after its disinvestment and take over by the Tata Group in January 2022, and no case of alleged violation of fundamental right would lie against it, the Supreme Court ruled Thursday.

The apex court dismissed the appeals filed against a September 20, 2022 verdict of the Bombay High Court which had disposed of four writ petitions instituted by some employees of AIL over alleged stagnation in pay and non-promotion of employees and delay in payment of wage revision arrears, among others.

The top court noted that the petitions before the High Court had claimed violation of Articles 14 (equality before law), 16 (equality of opportunity in matters of public employment), and 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta noted that the High Court had disposed of the pleas on the ground of non-maintainability of the writ petitions owing to the privatisation of AIL.

It said there was no dispute that the Government of India, having transferred its 100 per cent share to Talace India Pvt Ltd, ceased to have any administrative control or deep pervasive control over the private entity and



hence, "the company after its disinvestment could not have been treated to be a State anymore after having been taken over by the private company".

"Thus, unquestionably, the respondent no.3 (AIL) after its disinvestment ceased to be a State or its instrumentality within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution of India," it said.

The bench said once AIL ceased to be covered by the definition of State within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution, it could not have been subjected to the court's writ jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution.

"The respondent no.3 (AIL), the erstwhile government run airline having been taken over by the private company Talace India Pvt Ltd, unquestionably, is not performing any public duty inasmuch as it has taken over the government company Air India Limited for the purpose of commercial operations, plain and simple, and thus no writ petition is maintainable against respondent no.3 (AIL)," it said.

UK watchdog applies extra control measures on Indian spices

REUTERS

Hyderabad, May 16: Britain's food watchdog has applied extra control measures on all spice imports from India, it said Wednesday, becoming the first to ramp up scrutiny of all Indian spices after contamination allegations against two brands sparked concerns among global food regulators.

Hong Kong last month suspended sales of three spice blends produced by MDH and one by Everest, saying they contained high levels of a cancer-causing pesticide ethylene oxide.

Singapore also ordered a recall of the Everest mix, and New Zealand, the United States, India and Australia have since said they are looking into issues related to the two brands.

MDH and Everest - two of India's most popular brands - have said their products are safe for consumption.

UK's Food Standards Agency said in light of the concerns it has "applied extra control measures for pesticide residues in spices from India which includes ethylene oxide"

In the most stringent crackdown so far impacting all Indian spices, the UK's Food Standards Agency (FSA) said that in light of the concerns it has "applied extra control measures for pesticide residues in spices from India which includes ethylene oxide".

The agency did not elaborate on the exact steps it is taking. "The use of ethylene oxide is not allowed here and maximum residue levels are in place for herbs and spices," James Cooper,



deputy director of Food Policy at the FSA, said in a statement to Reuters.

India's Spices Board, which regulates exports, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. India is the biggest exporter, consumer and pro-



Dark clouds cover the skyline at Azhimala Shiva temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

MERCURY MAY HIT 45 DEG C IN DELHI

Northwest India to face extreme heat

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 16: Heatwave conditions are expected over northwest India during the next five days, with Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi predicted to bear the maximum impact, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Thursday.

A fresh heatwave spell will also commence over east and central India from May 18.

The Met office issued an orange alert for Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Delhi, emphasising "high health concern" for vulnerable people, including infants, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases.

It warned of an increased likelihood of heat-related illnesses in people exposed to the sun for prolonged periods or engaging in heavy work.

"Severe heatwave conditions are very likely in some parts of west Rajasthan during May 17-20 and in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi during May 18-20," the IMD said.

The mercury could soar to 45 degrees Celsius in the national capital by Saturday.

A yellow alert has been issued for east Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Gangetic West Bengal and Odisha.

The Met office had earlier predicted a higher-than-normal number of heatwave days in the northern plains and central India in May.

Normally, the northern plains, central India and adjoining areas of peninsular India experience around three days of heatwaves in May.

April saw record-smashing maximum temperatures in east, northeast and southern peninsular India, prompting health warnings from government agencies and some states to suspend in-person classes in schools.



According to IMD data, heatwave days in April were the highest in 15 years in Gangetic West Bengal and nine years in Odisha

Several places recorded their highest-ever April day temperatures, with the mercury soaring to 47 degrees Celsius.

At least two people died in Kerala due to suspected heatstroke.

According to IMD data, heatwave days in April were the highest in 15 years in Gangetic West Bengal and nine years in Odisha. Odisha also experienced the longest heatwave spell (16 days) in April since 2016.

On Wednesday, a group of leading climate scientists said similar heatwaves could occur once every 30 years and they have already become about 45 times more likely due to climate change.

The World Weather Attribution (WWA) group emphasised that heatwaves intensified by climate change are making life much tougher for people living in poverty across Asia.

Amid the prevailing but weak El Nino conditions, the IMD had earlier warned of extreme heat in India during the April-June period, coinciding with the seven-phase Lok Sabha elections which end June 1.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CASE

MLA HD Revanna gets interim bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, May 16: A court here Thursday granted interim bail to JD(S) MLA and former Karnataka Minister HD Revanna in a sexual harassment case.

The case of sexual harassment of a 47-year-old house help was registered against Revanna and his son and MP Prajwal Revanna at the Holenarsipur town police station in Hassan district April 28.

Prajwal reportedly left for Germany April 27 and is still at large.

The complainant had claimed that the father-son duo had sexually abused her at the 66-year-old MLA's house.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) which is probing the alleged sexual abuse charges against Prajwal and related cases, had sought custody of the former minister.

Revanna's advocates sought anticipatory bail in the case. However, the 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court (ACMM) heard the matter and gave interim relief to Revanna till Friday.

The SIT had sent two notices to Revanna, son of JD(S) patriarch and former PM HD Deve Gowda, and Prajwal to join the investigation, but both of them skipped it.

On Thursday Revanna applied for anticipatory bail and the SIT objected to this and sought his custody or that he be remanded in judicial custody. The court, after hearing both sides, decided to hear the matter again Friday and till then gave relief to Revanna.

Govt slashes prices of 41 medicines

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 16: The Union government has reduced the prices of 41 commonly used medicines and six formulations used to treat diseases such as diabetes, heart and liver ailments.

Antacids, multivitamins, and antibiotics are among the medicines that will become cheaper, according to a notification issued by the Department of Pharmaceuticals and National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA).

The pharma companies have been instructed to pass on the information on the reduced price of various medicines to dealers and stockists with immediate effect. The decision was taken at the 143rd meeting of the NPPA in order to ensure that the cost of essential medicines remains affordable for the public.

India is among the countries with the highest number of diabetes cases in the world with over 10 crore diabetes patients in the country who are expected to benefit from the price cut.

Last month, the Department of Pharmaceuticals released its annual revised ceiling prices for 923 scheduled drug formulations.



We have not seen the PM among the public in the last 10 years. Indira ji used to come here on foot. He just waves at the public from his vehicle and never comes down from the stage. If he doesn't listen to 'Janta ki mann ki baat' but only says his own 'Mann ki baat', then how will he know about the problems being faced by the public. He (the PM) says he has never said anything about Hindu-Muslim. But their (BJP) whole politics is based on this... (Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was addressing an election rally in Uttar Pradesh's Raebareilly)

SHORT TAKES

Lightning claims 11 lives in Bengal

Malda: At least 11 people were killed Thursday afternoon after being struck by lightning in various places across Malda district of West Bengal, a government official said. Several persons were also injured in the lightning strikes. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed her grief over the deaths and extended her condolences to the bereaved families.

Bangalore student found dead

Bangalore: A female college student was found dead in suspicious circumstances at her residence in Subramanyapura police station here. The body of the woman, identified as 20-year-old Prabhudhya, was found with her throat slit and cut marks on her hands. The police have registered a case of unnatural death. The incident took place Wednesday night and came to light Thursday.

Kejriwal's aide booked for assault

New Delhi: Delhi Police Thursday registered an FIR in connection with the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal by an aide of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, even as the BJP hit out at the AAP supremo for maintaining silence over the incident. Bibhav Kumar, the personal assistant of Kejriwal, has been named as an accused in the case, officials said.

international



Over the years, we've had so much more participation by Indian Americans in the electoral process running for office. But the numbers are still not reflective of the size of the growing population
KAMALA HARRIS | VICE PRESIDENT, US

MOUNT IBU ON BOIL

Indonesian authorities Thursday raised the alert level for Mount Ibu, a volcano in North Maluku province, to the highest level following a series of eruptions since last week. The 1,325-metre volcano on the island of Halmahera has been spewing thick grey ash and dark clouds up to 5,000 meters into the air every day since last Friday



of the day quote

The Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry has helped strengthen economic links between Singapore and India by providing local firms with market outreach and advisory on the Indian market
LEE HSIEH LOONG | FORMER PM, SINGAPORE

The United States underscored the importance of ensuring AI systems are safe, secure and trustworthy in order to realise these benefits of AI — and of continuing to build global consensus on that basis. The United States also raised concerns over the misuse of AI, including by the PRC
ADRIENNE WATSON | NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL SPOKESPERSON, US

The Sudanese people are trapped in an inferno of brutal violence with famine, disease and fighting closing in and no end in sight
CLEMENTINE NKWETA-SALAMI | TOP UN HUMANITARIAN OFFICIAL, SUDAN

Xi, Putin vow closer ties

THE TWO ALLIES CONDEMN INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE US BEHAVIOUR

Beijing, May 16: Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin condemned what they cast as increasingly aggressive US behaviour Thursday and pledged to deepen their countries' already close defence and military ties.

In a clear snub to Washington, whose top diplomat flew into China last month to try to persuade Beijing to scale back its relationship with Moscow, Xi signalled Beijing and Moscow saw eye to eye on a range of important issues, including on Ukraine, and would resist Western pressure to downgrade their ties. "The China-Russia relationship today is hard-earned, and the two sides need to cherish and nurture it," Xi told Putin. "China is willing to ... jointly achieve the development and rejuvenation of our respective countries, and work together to uphold fairness and justice in the world."



Putin's visit comes weeks after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken flew into China to raise concerns about what he said was China's support for Russia's military and a day after he said Washington would continue to impose sanctions on Chinese companies supplying Russia's defence sector. Blinken's China trip appears to have been an unsuccessful attempt to undermine a "no limits" partnership proclaimed when Putin visited Beijing in February 2022, just days before

he sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine triggering the deadliest land war in Europe since World War Two. SENDING A MESSAGE By picking China for his first foreign trip since being sworn-in this month for a six-year term that will keep him in power until at least 2030, Putin is sending a message to the world about his priorities and the strength of his personal ties with Xi. Xi said both sides agreed that a political settlement to the Ukraine crisis was the "right direction" and the joint statement said both countries were opposed to a drawn out conflict in Ukraine and its possible transi-

It is of fundamental importance that relations between Russia and China are not opportunistic and are not directed against anyone
VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

SHORT TAKES

Indonesia's flood toll rises to 67

Tanah Datar: The number of people killed by flash floods and mud slides over the weekend in Indonesia's West Sumatra province has risen to 67, and 20 are still missing, authorities said Thursday. The government plans to relocate survivors to safer areas. Five who had been reported missing were found dead, increasing the death toll from 62 Wednesday, the national disaster management agency BNPB said in a statement. More than 4,000 people have been evacuated to nearby buildings and temporary shelters.

Mosque attack leaves 8 dead

Abuja: At least eight worshippers were killed and 16 others injured early Wednesday morning after a man attacked a mosque with a locally made explosive in northern Nigeria's Kano state, resulting in a fire outbreak, the police said. The suspect, a 38-year-old local resident, confessed that he attacked the mosque in Kano's remote Gadan village "purely in hostility following (a) prolonged family disagreement," police spokesman Abdullahi Haruna said in a statement Wednesday. Numbers of police and gen-

State of emergency in New Caledonia

Protests kill 4; France sends more police to restore calm

Sydney, May 16: The French government sent more police to the Pacific island of New Caledonia Thursday and said it would crack down on rioters, scrambling to restore order after three nights of upheaval that have killed four people. Rioters angry with an electoral reform have burnt businesses, torched cars, looted shops, and set up road barricades, causing a "dire situation" for access to medicine and food in the French-ruled Pacific island, authorities said. "Everything's burning, people have literally no limits, because they are literally shooting at each other, I've never seen this much violence," New Caledonia student Olivia Iloa said. France declared a state of emergency in New Caledonia and went on to put at least 10 people under house arrest and ban TikTok.



darmes in New Caledonia will rise from 1,700 to 2,700 by Friday evening, with a small number of soldiers assisting. "The situation in New Caledonia remains very tense, with looting, riots, fires, attacks which are unbearable," Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said. President Emmanuel Macron "asked us to show the utmost firmness towards looters and rioters," Attal said, announcing a toughening of sanctions. Rioting erupted over a new bill, adopted by lawmakers in Paris Tuesday that will let French residents who have lived in New Caledonia for 10 years vote in provincial elections - a move some local leaders fear will dilute the indigenous Kanak vote.

Ferry service resumption between Ngapattinam, KKS delayed indefinitely

Colombo: The resumption of the passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam in India and the Kankesanthurai region near Jaffna in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka has been delayed again for an indefinite period, Aviation Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva has said. The passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and Kankesanthurai (KKS) suburb of Jaffna district, which was to resume May 13, was delayed due to a technical shortcoming, de Silva said Wednesday. The nature of the technical shortcoming was not revealed by the minister. The service, launched in October last year after nearly 40 years, was halted a few days later owing to rough weather. Since then, the resumption of the service, which is a vital component of India-Sri Lanka maritime cooperation, has been delayed three times. Situated in the northern region of Sri Lanka, the Kankesanthurai Port or the KKS Port, with an area of approximately 16 acres, is located at a distance of 104 kilometres (66 nautical miles) from Karaikal Port in Pondicherry.



Pakistani lawmaker lauds India

Islamabad: Pakistani lawmaker Syed Mustafa Kamal drew a comparison between India's achievements and the precarious situation in Karachi, by mentioning India's moon landing mission. The Muttahida Quami Movement Pakistan (MQM-P) leader said that while India is landing on the moon, Karachi is making news of children being killed by falling in open gutters. "Today, the condition in Karachi is that, while the world is going to the moon, children are dying by falling into gutter in Karachi. On the same screen, there is news that India landed on the moon, and just after two seconds, the news is that a child died in an open gutter in Karachi," Kamal said in his address to the Parliament Wednesday. He further highlighted the lack of fresh water in Karachi. The MQM-P leader also said citing a report that there are 70 lakh children in Karachi and over 2.6 crore children in Pakistan, who are not able to go to schools.

Nijjar murder case

Ottawa, May 16: An Indian national charged in connection with the killing of a Khalistani separatist appeared before a Canadian court, which ordered him to re-appear May 21 alongside three co-accused arrested in the high-profile case that has severely strained India's relations with Canada. Amandeep Singh, a 22-year-old suspect in the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, appeared via video in a Surrey court Wednesday, and the matter has been put forward to next week, local media reports said. Nijjar, 45, was killed outside Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia June 18, 2023. Amandeep was charged May 11 with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder, just over a week after identical charges were announced against three co-accused -- Karan Brar (22), Kamalpreet Singh (22) and 28-year-old Karanpreet Singh. Amandeep appeared in court in Surrey virtually from Ontario, where he was already in the custody of Peel Regional Police for unrelated firearms charges. A judge set his next court date for May 21 — when he'll appear alongside the other three men charged with conspiring to kill Nijjar. More than two dozen people gathered outside the courtroom before Amandeep's appearance, holding flags in support of Khalistan. The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September last year of the "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. India has dismissed Trudeau's charges as "absurd" and "motivated." External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had recently said that by allowing political space to Khalistani separatist elements, the Canadian government is sending a message that its vote bank is "more powerful" than its rule of law.

GAZA WAR

APART FROM HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES, ALIA BHATT, PRIYANKA CHOPRA AND VIRAT KOHLI ARE AMONG THE PROMINENT INDIAN NAMES WHO HAVE COME UNDER CRITICISM

Washington, May 16: There's a new movement making rounds on the internet, and it's against the celebrities who have kept mum over Israel's relentless bombardment of Gaza where men, women and children continue to die every day. The movement, known as 'Blockout 2024', has gained momentum, with a growing list of celebrity names being blocked on the social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. The Blockout list features globally recognised names, including Kim Kardashian, Taylor Swift, Beyonce, Kylie Jenner, Miley Cyrus, Selena Gomez, Zendaya, Zac Efron, Kanye West, Katy Perry and many others. Apart from Hollywood celebri-

Celebs being mass-blocked for not 'speaking up'

ties, Alia Bhatt, Priyanka Chopra, and Virat Kohli are among the prominent Indian names who have come under criticism for not "speaking up". What is the Blockout 2024 movement? A recent Instagram post has shed light on the 'Blockout 2024' social media movement urging users to take action against celebrities and influencers who have stayed silent on Israel's retaliation of the October 7 attack by Hamas. According to the post, the movement says the Israeli occupation is committing genocide against Palestine and criticises celebrities for "shamelessly remaining silent" and for "spreading lies and propaganda." The movement argued that these celebrities and influencers "make millions" from



their followers and consumers, and therefore, it is within the power of consumers to decrease their popularity, followers, and engagement by following and blocking them on social media platforms. "We don't need them, they need us," it claimed. "If their profits plummet, they will listen," the post read, stat-

ing that big corporations prioritise profits above all else. The movement also says not to tag or mention the celebrities as it would only boost their engagement. "No engagements mean no \$\$\$," they said, adding that this is the "absolute bare minimum that we can do." They stressed the movement was "about applying pressure"

on accounts with a huge number of followers "to speak up and use their platforms for good." It questions supporting celebrities "who can't even speak out about a genocide" despite their massive influence and support from their followers. Furthermore, it stressed this was not just a passing online trend but a real-life issue af-

The Blockout 2024 movement intensified after pictures from the Met Gala 2024 surfaced alongside harrowing images from Gaza's Rafah region, the latest and last frontier to come under attack from Israel

fecting thousands of children and families in Palestine. It called for an end to "celebrity worship" and urged users to remember the cause behind the movement — advocating for the victims of the conflict in Gaza and beyond. "This is for the thousands of parents who had to go around and collect their children by their LIMBS," they said. The post concluded with a call for action, with chants of "Free Congo! Free Sudan! Free Palestine!"

