



NAVEEN GUARANTEE

STARTING FROM JULY

FREE ELECTRICITY

90% OF FAMILIES WILL BE BENEFITTED

VOTE FOR SANKHA TWICE



ONE VOTE FOR MP



ONE VOTE FOR MLA

leisure



JOHN KRASINSKI ADMITS THAT HIS CHILDREN THINK EMILY IS COOLER

Actor-filmmaker John Krasinski shared that his children Hazel and Violet think their actress-mother Emily Blunt is much cooler than he is. "When they found out that I was going to do it, it was really exciting because it was the first time that I had ever involved them in anything," Krasinski told *People.com*.

EVA WANTS TO WORK WITH PEOPLE SHE LOVES

Actress Eva Longoria has talked about why she approaches new projects by considering her circle of friends first and has revealed that she wants to work with people she loves. "I want to work with people I love. Life's too short to work, and I'd much rather be surrounded by people I love," she said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will be inclined towards deep introspection. You will realise that it is important to understand your inner self. However, Ganesha says spontaneity is equally vital, and playing with children is a very good way to be spontaneous.

TAURUS
This is a great day for students and scholars, declares Ganesha. If you are pursuing higher studies or professional courses you will feel pleased and confident about the progress you are making. Do not, however, expect the atmosphere, or the arrangements to be the way you expect them to be.

GEMINI
You will attempt to be a part of your elders' or your friend's sorrows and try to lighten their burdens. Your kind and courteous nature, as well as your joviality will cheer them up. The later half of the day will be filled with entertainment and happiness.

CANCER
Ganesha counsels you to persevere thoughtfully before signing any document. As it is a day of financial loss, handle middlemen and agents deftly. New tempting offers are seen on the job front. So you may accept a new job.

LEO
You are destined to play the superhero, at least as far as trade and commerce are concerned. Ganesha feels that today, you shall be more tied up in your daily work than is usual. But the upshot of it all is that all your actions seem to get the desired approval as the day progresses. Even your financial prospects will grow from strength to strength.

VIRGO
Ganesha predicts an imaginative and fruitful day for you at the workplace. You will feel your professional best in the afternoon. With your elegance, you will manage to put your ideas across the table and win the approval of your boss. You may pamper your beloved lavishly later in the evening.

LIBRA
Ganesha says that you shall be attracted to the opposite sex today. Today during the afternoon, you will meet people who share the same ideas and thoughts as you do and you will be able to share your feelings with them. You will be interested in knowing new things on various topics. Your increased knowledge will likely lead you on to greater success.

SCORPIO
You take the adage 'slow and steady wins the race' as your life's mantra and act accordingly. It not only makes you stronger, but also takes you higher gradually. Home front too will be quite harmonious and peaceful as you enjoy the family unity.

SAGITTARIUS
It's raining money, literally as your bank accounts swell. When it comes to financial security, now, you are a happy man. However, Ganesha advises you to stay away from pessimistic people who may adversely affect your future.

CAPRICORN
You'll feel trapped and may feel as if everyone is trying to bog you down by hook or crook. Others may bully you and this may shatter your confidence. Do not worry though, as your luck is guarding you, assures Ganesha. Even if others are mean to you, their behaviour will not mar your health or image. You will not surrender to the adversities, as your talents will direct you towards a safer place.

AQUARIUS
Pleasing your boss is more difficult than completing your assignments on time. But, to your surprise, your boss will give you a pat on your back for your efforts and sincerity. It is also a favourable day to begin anything new, be it in personal life or professional front.

PISCES
Other people will have high expectations from you. You will be required to co-operate with others and give your co-workers more of your time than is their due. However, your co-workers will also reciprocate in equal measure when the need arises.

Shilpa shares why she slowed down

New Delhi: Actress Shilpa Shinde opened up about why she slowed down after winning a controversial reality show in 2018, saying that after doing a good thing, she wanted to work on the best things only. "After winning *Bigg Boss*, people were expecting too much from me, and obviously, I am also expecting too much from others when I get good offers. It is a challenge again that if you do a good thing, you will keep wanting to do the best things only," Shilpa told *IANS*. "I don't know what kind of role I would get. I am very choosy. If it is different and is not on TV right now," shared the actress, who was last seen in a cameo appearance as ACP Naina Mathur in the show *Maddam Sir* in 2023. Talking about being a household name as 'Angoori Bhabhi', she said, "That was acting; it depends on how the character is written. The character and the line 'sahi pakde hai' is a cult. It happens only once in your life." The actress added that the same kind of show or character could not be expected again. On the work front, Shilpa is gearing up for the 14th season of the stunt-based reality show *Khatron Ke Khiladi*.



Kangana to quit showbiz!

Mumbai: Actress Kangana Ranaut made a bold declaration during her campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The actress, who is contesting elections in Mandi, claimed that if she wins a seat, she will allegedly 'quit' the film industry. Ranaut was asked if she would leave the Hindi film industry upon winning the Mandi seat, and she responded by saying, "Yes." She elaborated on her decision to leave the film industry and said, "The film world is a lie; everything there is fake. They create a very different environment. It is a glossy world, like a



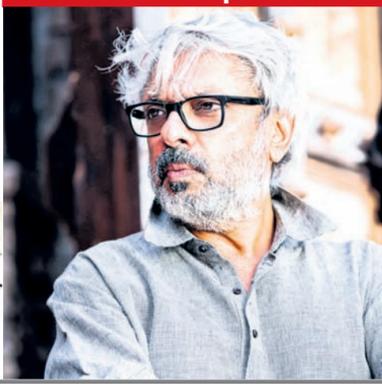
fake bubble, that is meant to attract the audience. This is the reality." Addressing how she would manage the demands of both industry and a political career, Ranaut emphasised her passion-driven approach to life and how she applies the same criteria to her movies. When told that her departure from showbiz would disappoint many, she revealed that several filmmakers have already asked her not to quit the industry, citing that she has one great heroine. Despite her political aspirations, Ranaut assured her commitment to her film projects that are currently in the works. Speaking to *ANI*, she said, "I have several films in the pipeline, including *Emergency*, *Sita: The Incarnation*, which is a trilogy, *Noti Binodini*, which is a biopic, and a thriller with Madhavan. I am committed to completing these projects."

Aditi on her viral 'Gajagamini' walk

Mumbai: Among the myriad clips from *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar* that are doing the rounds on social media, actress Aditi Rao Hydari's seductive 'Gajagamini' walk from the song *Saiyaan Hatto Jao* has become one of the most memorable images from the divisive show. Aditi, who played Bibbojan in the series, spoke about the shot being widely shared on social media and being recreated on reels. In an interview, she said, "I want to ask somebody, Sanjay sir, my dance teacher, what is it? Is it the Gajagamini walk or the Swan walk? What kind of walk is that? I don't know! I'll say it was what Sanjay Sir asked me to do. I followed Sanjay sir and what he told me. I know in Kathak there is Mayur chaal (peacock walk), then there is Gajagamini (walk of seduction), but I am sure it is in all the dance forms, but I don't know. I should find out." About the clip of her walk going viral, she said, "Whatever I see on Instagram, reel upon reel, the whole viral nature of that tukda (piece) is so overwhelming." She added that getting the walk right has been a journey in itself. Aditi also shared that Sanjay was very particular about how she looked during the walk and the way her dupatta flowed, among other things. She said that she got the 'Gajagamini' walk in not too many, maybe three or four takes, and that the entire song sequence took about three or four days to complete.



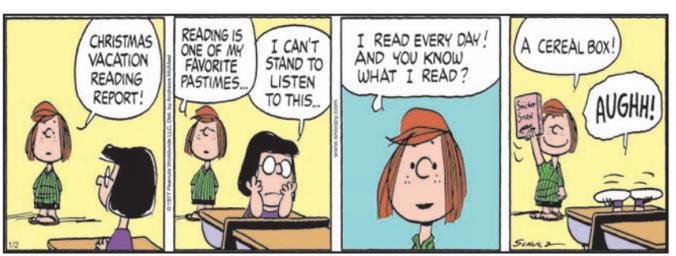
Bhansali on actors taking credit for performances



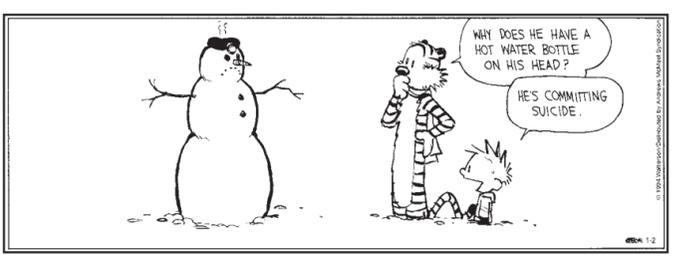
Mumbai: Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar* has been creating buzz since its release. Bhansali, renowned for eliciting exceptional performances from his actors, recently shared that a good performance is a collective effort, crediting the technicians behind the camera as well. In an interview with an entertainment portal, Sanjay emphasised that a performance is not solely the actor's work. Instead, it is a collaborative effort involving the

director, dialogue writer, cinematographer, art director, costume designer, choreographer, editor, and even the person who painted the set. He critiqued the tendency of actors to claim performances as their own, neglecting the contributions of the entire team, which he sees as a significant issue in Indian cinema. The director of *Devdas* echoed this sentiment, stressing the importance of actors recognising that they are not the sole stars. He highlighted that it is the collective effort of the entire crew that makes an actor shine. He also urged for more acknowledgment of the supporting team behind a performance. Despite this, he expressed deep appreciation for actors, noting the need to nurture them and provide support due to the challenges they face. He acknowledged that while actors might feel they have creative freedom, it is often an illusion, with direction subtly guiding their performances.

PEANUTS



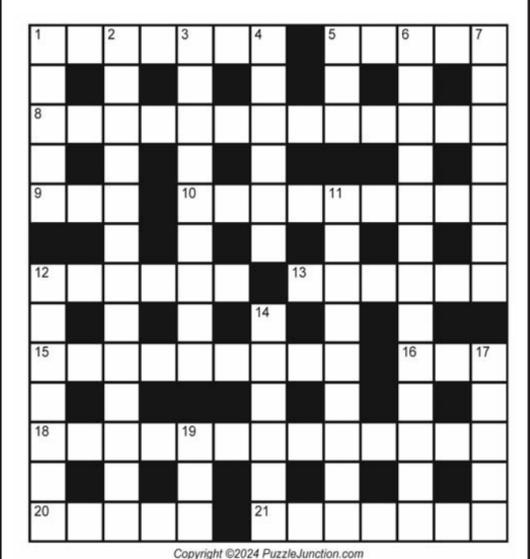
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



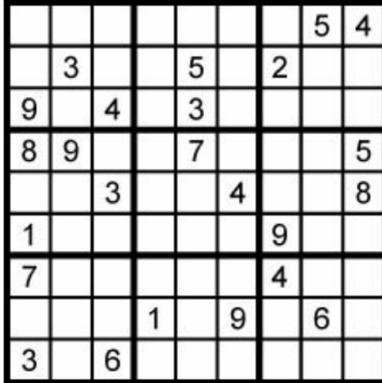
FUN post CROSSWORD



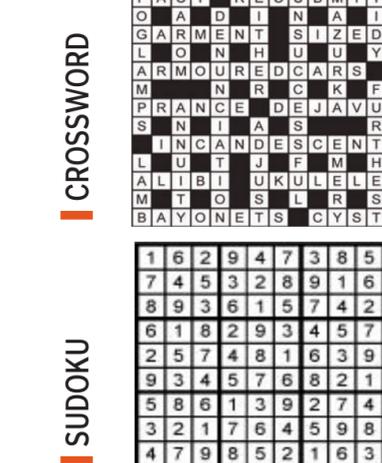
- Across**
- 1 Nursemaids and housekeepers (2,5)
 - 5 Solar system member
 - 8 High standards person
 - 9 Viper
 - 10 Forget to set the alarm
 - 12 Like some floors
 - 13 Court game (5,4)
 - 15 Sweet treat
 - 16 Rocky prominence
 - 18 The study of fossils
 - 20 It may be French
 - 21 Lese majesty
 - Down**
 - 1 Greek letter
 - 2 Gear
 - 3 Contact sport (3,6)
 - 4 Parlour piece
 - 5 Maven
 - 6 Organization formed in 1945 (6,7)
 - 7 Devilish
 - 11 Dock worker
 - 12 Aircraft part
 - 14 Refrigerator attachment
 - 17 Synthetic fabric
 - 19 Take the cake

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



Poll Preparedness

Around 33K security personnel have been deployed for simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, DGP Arun Sarangi says

LEISURE | P2



Netanyahu in trouble

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under mounting pressure from his own War Cabinet and his country's closest ally over post-war plans for Gaza

INTERNATIONAL | P8



FPIs leave equities

Foreign investors have pulled out a massive ₹28,200 crore from Indian equities so far this month owing to poll uncertainties

BUSINESS | P9



Doubles delight

Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty win the doubles title at Thailand Open badminton tournament

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | MONDAY MAY 20 2024

P 1

SHORT TAKES

Samir Dash joins BJP

Bhubaneswar: BJD Nimapara MLA Samir Ranjan Dash Sunday joined the saffron party after quitting the regional outfit. BJP Odisha unit president Manmohan Samal, party's Odisha in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and other leaders welcomed Dash at the party headquarters here. The three-time legislator was annoyed after being denied a party ticket to contest the 2024 Assembly elections. "I have joined the BJP after losing confidence in the BJD leadership. I will ensure that BJP candidate Pravatī Parida wins elections in Nimapara Assembly segment," Dash told reporters.

1 dead, another hurt in Koraput landslide

Koraput: In a tragic incident near Lathiguda village in Dasamantapur block of this district, a man was killed and another seriously injured Saturday in a landslide. The injured person is currently undergoing treatment at the Koraput Medical College, here. The deceased was identified as Madhu Badanayak, 35, and the injured person is Dambarudhara Badanayak, 30. Eye-witnesses said Madhu and Dambarudhara, both residents of Lathiguda village under Koraput Sadar police station limits, were fetching soil from a nearby hill to demarcate some plots of land when the mishap occurred.

Modi to address rallies Monday

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday arrived here on a two-day visit to the state to campaign for BJP candidates in simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state. The PM is scheduled to visit Srimandir Monday. He will hold a roadshow in Puri in the morning, a state BJP leader said. He will later go to Angul where he is scheduled to address a public meeting at Stadium Field Ground. He will campaign for BJP candidates for the Dhenkanal Lok Sabha seat and its Assembly segments. Then he will address another meeting at Cuttack.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sita ji... We will build Sita ji's temple after winning the elections... you said EC's temple

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	39.2°C	39.0°C
Min Temp	27.3°C	27.0°C
Humidity	53%	89%
Rainfall	Nil	84

FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY SKY



COSMIC GLOW: An exceptionally bright meteor was seen over Spain and Portugal at 22:46 UTC May 18, 2024 (00:46 local time, May 19), lighting up the night sky with a bright blue glow for several seconds and leaving a persistent trail in its wake.

State votes in Phase II today

The fate of BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, who is eyeing for a record sixth consecutive term, and several political heavy-weights from across parties is going to be sealed as Odisha goes for the Phase II (all-India Phase V) of the simultaneous polls for 35 Assembly and five Lok Sabha seats today. The high-stakes battle spans from the northern boundaries to deep down south and central regions of the state where over 79.69 lakh voters are scheduled to exercise their franchise for 40 LS and 265 Assembly nominees under the watchful eyes of over 33,000 security personnel and election officials at 9,162 polling stations. The second phase polls hold special significance in the backdrop of the unprecedented exchange of barbs between the top leadership of the two main political parties—BJD and BJP—over a string of issues that have been grabbing headlines, of late

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 19: Tight security arrangements have been made, with the deployment of over 33,000 personnel, for elections to five Lok Sabha and 35 Assembly constituencies in Odisha, Monday, officials said.

CONSTITUENCIES

BARGARH (LS)
Padampur, Bijepur, Bargarh, Attabira (SC), Bhatli, Brajarajnagar, Jharsuguda

SUNDARGARH (LS)
Talsara (ST), Sundargarh (ST), Biramitrapur (ST), Raghunathpali (SC), Rourkela, Rajgangpur (ST), Bonai (ST)

BOLANGIR (LS)
Birmaharajpur (SC), Sonepur,

Loisingha (SC), Patnagarh, Bolangir, Titlagarh, Kantabanji

KANDHAMAL (LS)
Baliguda (ST), G. Udayagiri (ST), Phulbani (ST), Kantamal, Boudh, Daspalla (SC), Brajrajnagar

ASKA (LS)
Polasara, Kabisuryanagar, Khalikote (SC), Aska, Surada, Sanakhemundi, Hinjili

Over 79.69 lakh voters, including 40.33 lakh men, 39.35 lakh women and 851 transgender persons, are eligible to cast their votes at 9,162 polling stations in Aska, Kandhamal, Bargarh, Bolangir and Sundargarh Lok Sabha constituencies, and 35 Assembly seats falling under these parliamentary constituencies, in the second phase of polls in the state.

A total of 40 candidates are in the fray for the five Lok Sabha seats, while 265 nominees, including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, will try their luck in the 35 Assembly segments.

Patnaik is contesting from two Assembly segments—Hinjili under Aska Lok Sabha seat in Ganjam district and Kantabanji under Bolangir parliamentary con-

stituency—around 400 km apart.

Apart from Patnaik, major contestants whose electoral fate would be decided Monday include around half-a-dozen Odisha ministers, BJP's sitting MPs Jugal Oram and Sangeeta Singh Deo, BJD MP Achyut Samant and former Indian Hockey captain Dilip Tirkey.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, chief ministers of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and film actor Hema Malini have campaigned for BJP candidates, while Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leader Rahul Gandhi have canvassed for their party nominees. BJD president Naveen Patnaik and his close aide Kartik Pandian have extensively cam-

aigned across the five Lok Sabha and 35 Assembly seats.

In Aska, tight security arrangements have been ensured following the death of a BJP worker in a clash with BJD supporters.

State Chief Electoral Officer Nikunja Bihari Dhal said 22 companies of Central forces have been deployed in Aska.

Polling personnel, along with EVMs and other materials, have already reached their destinations, he said.

Voting will commence at 7am and continue till 6pm, but the time duration would be shorter in Maoist-hit areas, Dhal said.

Of the 9,162 polling stations, 1,541 will be model polling stations, while 1,041 will be managed by all-woman personnel and 25 will be run by PwD officials. Nearly 20 per cent of the 9,162 polling stations have been identified as critical, including those in Maoist-hit areas, he said.

"With the IMD predicting heat wave conditions May 20, adequate drinking water, ORS and essential medicines will be made available at each polling station. Besides, paramedical staffers, ASHA workers, ambulances and mobile health units will also be deployed," he said, adding that an air ambulance will be kept on standby at Bolangir for exigencies.

Hearing on plea against new criminal laws today

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 19: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a petition challenging the enactment of three new laws that seek to overhaul India's penal codes claiming that they suffer from many "defects and discrepancies".

A vacation bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal is likely to hear the matter.

The Lok Sabha, December 21 last year, passed three key legislations -- the Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha (Second) Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya (Second) Bill. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the bills, December 25.

These new laws -- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya Sakshya Act -- will replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act, respectively.

Seeking a stay on the operation of the three new laws, the PIL filed by advocate Vishal Tiwari has said they were enacted without any parliamentary debate as most of the Opposition members were under suspension.

The plea has sought direc-



tions from the court for the immediate constitution of an expert committee that will assess the viability of the three new criminal laws.

"The new criminal laws are far more draconian and establish a police state in reality and violate every provision of fundamental rights of the people of India. If the British laws were considered colonial and draconian, then the Indian laws stand now far more draconian as, in the British period, you could keep a person in police custody for a maximum of 15 days. Extending 15 days to 90 days and more is a shocking provision enabling police torture," the plea has said.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita encompasses offences, such as acts of secession, armed rebellion, subversive activities, separatist activities or endangering the sovereignty or unity of the country, in a new avatar of the sedition law.

Delhi Police at Kejriwal's residence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: A Delhi Police team reached the official residence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal here, Sunday in connection with its investigation in the alleged assault on AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, sources said.

They said the police team collected electronic devices including CCTV DVR (digital video recorder) to potentially get the footage of the alleged assault on Maliwal May 13 when Bibhav Kumar, Kejriwal's close aide, allegedly attacked her at the CM's residence. Maliwal has alleged that the

CCTV footage of the CM's residence was being tampered with.

Kumar was arrested Saturday and produced in a court which remanded him in five-day police custody. The sources said Kumar is evasive in his replies during his interrogation.

The Delhi Police booked Kumar for molestation and attempted culpable homicide after Maliwal's complaint. The FIR includes charges under Sections 308 (attempt to commit culpable homicide), 341 (wrongful restraint), 354(B) (assault or use of criminal force to woman with intent to disrobe), 506 (criminal intimidation), and 509 (word, gesture, or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the Indian Penal Code at the Civil Lines police station.

Max the cat is now a 'doctor of litter-ature'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Castleton, Vt, May 19: A Vermont university has bestowed the honorary degree of "doctor of litter-ature" on Max the cat, a beloved member of its community, ahead of students' graduation that was held, Saturday.

Vermont State University's Castleton campus is honoring the feline not for his mousing or napping, but for his friendliness.

"Max the Cat has been an affectionate member of the Castleton family for years," the school said in a Facebook post.

The popular tabby lives in a house with his human family on the street that leads to the



main entrance to campus. "So he decided that he would go up on campus, and he just started

hanging out with the college students, and they love him," owner Ashley Dow said, while

speaking to AP.

He's been socializing on campus for about four years, and students get excited when they see him. They pick him up and take selfies with him, and he even likes to go on tours with prospective students that meet at a building across from the family's house, she said.

"I don't even know how he knows to go, but he does," Dow said. "And then he'll follow them on their tour."

The students refer to Dow as Max's mom, and graduates who return to town sometimes ask her how Max is doing.

Max won't be participating in the graduation, though. His degree will be delivered to Dow later.

6 BJP workers injured

Bhanjanagar: Tension prevailed here in Ganjam district after six BJP workers were injured during clashes with BJD workers, Sunday evening. The injured BJP workers were identified as Subas Barad, husband of BJP supported Sarpanch, Khadal Parida, Abhimanyu Nayak, Sibananda Barad, Jagannath Satapathy and Radheshyam Jena. Sources said an argument broke out between the workers of the two rival political parties at Betar under Dihapadhal panchayat, which later turned violent. It has been alleged that six of the BJP workers were injured in the subsequent clashes. Following the incident, BJP supporters staged a road blockade at Betar Chowk on Bhanjanagar-Daspalla highway demanding action against the accused. Heavy police force has been deployed in the area to prevent any untoward incident. Sources said three persons have been detained by police for the violence.

33K police forces for LS, Assembly polls today



IN THE FIFTH PHASE, VOTING WILL BE HELD FOR FIVE LOK SABHA SEATS AND 35 ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES IN STATE

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 19: Around 33,000 security personnel, including 102 companies of Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) and 66 platoons of Odisha Armed Police, have been deployed in the state for the May 20 simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, DGP Arun Sarangi said Sunday.

Briefing the media here, Sarangi said 48 CCTV cameras have been installed at the inter-state

border check posts and 93 inter-state border check posts.

This apart, he said 257 flying squads and 251 static surveillance teams were deployed for elections.

Sarangi said the 4th phase polls in four parliamentary constituencies and 28 Assembly constituencies were completed peacefully without any serious incident May 13 which witnessed massive voter turnout.

He said no repoll was announced in any booth and there was no naxal-related violence during the pre-poll and post-poll period due to intense anti-Maoist operations and real-time intelligence collection.

He said in the 5th phase, five parliamentary constituencies and 35 Assembly constituencies in 11 districts of Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Rourkela, Bolangir, Subarnapur, Kandhamal, Boudh, Nayagarh,

Ganjam and Berhampur (19 booths) will go to the poll, out of which five districts are affected by naxal activities.

"A total of 9,162 polling stations at 7,339 locations, including 556 booths in Maoist-hit areas, will be used. To ensure security, 102 CAPF companies and 66 platoons of Odisha Armed Police, supported by 47 additional SPs, 88 DSPs, 236 inspectors, and 2,000 sub-inspectors are on poll duty," Sarangi said.

In addition, at least 11,800 havildars and constables and 5,800 home guards were also deployed in the election, he added.

The DGP said EVM Strong Rooms have been established at 18 locations which are being guarded round the clock by CAPF and SAP in a 2-tiered Security System.

In the 5th phase of elections, naxals affected districts of Kandhamal, Boudh, Bolangir, and Bargarh are going to Poll, he said, adding that Special Operational arrangements have been launched in these places.

The DGP said as many as 549 Anti Naxalite Operations have been launched in these districts since January 1, 2024 and 117 operational parties of CAPF and 38 units of SOG/DVF are in action.

He said that Chhattisgarh is launching operations in four locations using four operational units of CRPF in the bordering areas.

Sarangi said one Maoist cadre in Kandhamal and two in Boudh have been neutralised adding that the Additional DG of Police, Operation S Deva Datta Singh will be camping in the naxals affected areas.



LORD'S SERVICE: Maharana servitors busy constructing hubs of chariots at Rath Yard in Puri, Sunday

PICT: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

Gandhi, Kharge likely to visit next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, May 19: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party's senior leader Rahul Gandhi are likely to visit Odisha next week for campaigning in simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state, a senior party leader said Sunday.

Speaking to reporters here, AICC in-charge of the state, Ajay Kumar said Gandhi and Kharge are expected to visit the state between May 26 and 28.

The details of their visit would be finalised in two days, he said. "We have requested Priyanka Gandhi ji to come to Odisha for



campaigning May 25. However, she has a rescheduled public meeting in Uttar Pradesh on that day and then she will visit

Himachal Pradesh. We have now requested her to visit Odisha May 26," Kumar said. Rahul Gandhi had held an

election rally in Cuttack April 28 and Bolangir May 15. Kharge had, May 16, held a meeting in Kandhamal and had a press conference in Bhubaneswar.

On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit for election campaigning, the Congress leader said, "Modi ji is coming here to spread lies. He had promised to provide 2 crore jobs each year. Forget about giving jobs, crores of people have lost their jobs and unemployment is at its peak in India."

PM Modi is coming for campaigning but it will have "a negative impact on the election results for BJP candidates" in the state, Kumar claimed.

'Junior Rakshak' tag for 575 NCC cadets

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, May 19: As many as 575 senior wing NCC cadets, who recently completed training held at Bholanath High School, received the 'Junior Rakshak' recognition from Commerce and Transport department. The programme was inaugurated by State Transport Commissioner-cum-Chairman Amitabh Thakur.

In the two-day camp, 176 cadets received training on the first day and 399 cadets on the next day. The cadets were trained on road safety and first-aid for accident victims. The training emphasised the importance of the "Golden Hour" - the critical first hour after an accident.

Master trainers Subas Chandra Pradhan and Shubhrajit Nayak facilitated the training sessions. They informed that 'Junior Rakshaks' will serve as road safety ambassadors, promoting awareness and adherence to safety rules within their families and communities.

The initiative was a significant effort by the Transport department in collaboration with the NCC to reduce road accident fatalities. The Junior Rakshak programme aims to train 32,000 NCC cadets across the state.

Earlier, an MOU was signed in this regard between the Transport department and the NCC at Lok Seva Bhavan March 6.

Speaking on this occasion, Thakur highlighted the collective goal of reducing road accident fatalities and dispelled the myth that helping accident victims leads to harassment. "Instead, helping hands will be honoured and rewarded," Thakur said.

"The department offers a 'Good Samaritan' award with a cash prize of ₹2,000 to those who assist in transporting accident victims to hospitals," he added.

'Zero Shadow Day' in Capital May 21

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 19: The Capital city will witness 'Zero Shadow Day' (ZSD), a rare celestial phenomenon during which no shadow of an object or a being is observed, Tuesday.

Elaborate arrangements have been made at the Pathani Samanta Planetarium for the event at 11:43am.

"This phenomenon occurs twice a year when the sun is at its highest point in the sky at all the regions between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. This leads to the sun rays falling perpendicular to the Earth's surface. With sun exactly overhead, no being or object cast a shadow, resulting in Zero Shadow Day," informed Subhendu Pattnaik, former



deputy director, Pathanisamanta Planetarium here Sunday.

According to Pattnaik, the event takes place when the rotation axis of the Earth is tilted at an angle of 23.5° to the axis of revolution around the sun.

"As the Tropic of Capricorn passes well below the Indian land mass the event can only be observed between Kanyakumari to Tropic of

The event takes place when the rotation axis of the Earth is tilted at an angle of 23.5° to the axis of revolution around the sun

Cancer which passes through Central India little above Odisha," he said.

"The event is observable in all parts of the state, but on different dates and time. For Bhubaneswar, ZSDs will take place May 21 at 11:43am and July 22 at 11:53am," Pattnaik informed.

He said, "One can observe the event by putting up symmetrical objects like bucket, pole, cardboard box, bottle, vertically on a plane surface outside under the direct sun."

Odisha tops medal chart at nat'l skill competition

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 19: Odisha topped the medal chart by winning 15 gold, 16 silver, nine bronze and 12 medallions in the three-day national competition 'India Skills 2024' that concluded at Yashobhumi in New Delhi Sunday.

Applauding the winning team, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said, "The dedication, hard work, and triumphs of the participants have made the entire state proud. Wish them all the best for future." More than 900 contestants from various skill institutions of the country participated in the competition.

The competition was organised in four locations—Bangalore, Manipal, Gandhinagar and New Delhi. The competitors participated in six skill sectors including construction and building tech-



nology, creative arts and fashion, information and communication technology, manufacturing and engineering technology, social and personal services and transportation and logistics.

"Odisha topped the medals tally and proved 'Skilled in Odisha' as the best in the country," Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) chairperson Alka Mishra said.

The finalists of this national level competition will have the chance to showcase their ability at 'World Skills' competitions, scheduled to take place in Lyon, France in September.

Philosophical expertise can benefit public policy

Good evidence-based policy needs to also engage with philosophical questions, a new research work has suggested, adding philosophers might be able to bridge the gap between science and policy.

According to the study published in the journal Nature Human Behaviour, philosophical expertise can benefit public policy development, especially when dealing with complex problems such as those faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Philosophers can help tackle the complexity of problems where there are many interconnected components and a lack of any single optimal solution, said Anne Schwenkenbecher from the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Murdoch University, Australia. The team showed that good evidence-based policy needs to engage with philo-



sophical questions.

"We have shown that some of the problems in translating scientific evidence into public policy are philosophical in nature: how much evidence do we need? What evidence do we need and what does that evidence really show? What obligations do policy-makers have to seek and obtain evidence?" said lead author Schwenkenbecher.

The researchers said that the

philosophical theory of knowledge, or epistemology, could help with "transparency of reasoning", which involved laying open the process, evidence base and reasons that lead to the adoption of a particular piece of public policy.

"Philosophical expertise can help clarify decision-making and integrate philosophical -- in particular ethical and epistemological -- considerations

into policy-making when there are challenges with experts coming together from different disciplines, with varying methodologies and unique points of view, like we saw happening in our own country (Australia) during Covid, as experts sought to find the best policies and solutions as new problems arose," said Schwenkenbecher.

However, despite the benefits, challenges exist in adopting philosophical engagement as a "standard" in interdisciplinary scientific research, the researchers said. "First is a challenge of numbers: there are far fewer academic philosophers than scientific researchers. So, not many scientists have had the opportunity to experiment on the best ways to cocreate and/or innovate with philosophical expertise," the authors wrote.

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Satellite survey reveals huge fraud in paddy cultivation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, May 19: A satellite survey has exposed 'fake' cultivation of paddy on 9,018 plots by some unscrupulous farmers and land owners. The survey has unearthed that in reality paddy was not cultivated during the 2023-24 Rabi season in various areas of Subarnapur district, sources informed Sunday.

Sources pointed out that hundreds of farmers including landowners got their names registered with the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS) and women self-help groups (SHGs). They had done so to get government benefits provided for cultivation of paddy. However, instead of paddy cultivation, they were procuring it from other states and selling it at rates fixed by the government and reaping rich benefits, sources alleged. In the process, the original paddy farmers are losing out on govern-

ment benefits, they added.

The survey has exposed that the plots mentioned as farmlands during registration do not exist at all. In fact, they are abandoned grasslands, water bodies and barren non-cultivable land.

The satellite survey was conducted by the Revenue, Agriculture, and Cooperative departments after large-scale allegations of fake registrations surfaced.

After obtaining the satellite survey report, officials of the district administration then initiated physical examination of the 10,208 doubtful plots. And once it was done, it emerged that there had been rampant 'fake' registration of plots as paddy cultivation lands.

Reports said that paddy cultivation was carried out on 34,000 hectares of irrigated land in Subarnapur district during the 2023-24 Rabi season. During registration, the farmers mentioned that paddy cultivation had been

carried out on 12,959 plots in Subarnapur district. A total of 35,580 farmers registered their names with the 60 PACS and 37 women SHGs groups to sell their harvested paddy crops.

Immediately after registration a field survey was done by a team comprising revenue inspector, village-level agriculture worker, secretaries of the various PACS and women SHGs. Initially 191 fake registrations by farmers came to light and their names were struck off the list. However, it was just the tip of the iceberg.

Only when the government undertook satellite survey the massive fraud was unearthed. It was found that paddy cultivation had not been done on approximately 10,208 plots under six tehsils. Then a physical survey of the doubtful plots was done and it was found that over 9,018 of them did not exist at all. The pictures of these plots were then uploaded on the website of various departments. However, by then many of the 'fake' farmers had already benefitted.

The Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department later said that no token will be issued to farmers or land owners without physical survey of the plots, after allegations of fake registrations surfaced.

Meanwhile, the district level paddy procurement has announced that it will begin procurement from May 22. With the date fast approaching many farmers' outfits in Subarnapur district have urged officials to conduct survey of the suspected plots.



FOR SELF-DEFENCE: Children learn boxing skills at a summer boxing training camp organised by Ganjam Boxing Club at Mahatma Gandhi Stadium in Berhampur, Sunday

1 dead, another hurt in Koraput landslide

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, May 19: In a tragic incident near Lathiguda village in Dasamantapur block of this district, a man was killed and another was seriously injured Saturday of a landslide. The injured person is currently undergoing treatment at the Koraput Medical College here. The deceased was identified as Madhu Badanayak, 35, and the injured person is Dambarudhara Badanayak, 30.

Eye-witnesses said Madhu and Dambarudhara, both residents



of Lathiguda village under Koraput Sadar police station limits, were fetching soil from a nearby hill to demarcate vari-

ous plots of land. As they were digging a huge chunk of soil fell on them burying them completely. Locals promptly informed the

cops who in turn pressed into service a fire brigade team. The team reached the accident spot and brought out the two from the pile of soil. However, by then Madhu had breathed his last while Dambarudhara was senseless. He was rushed to the hospital where he is undergoing treatment. Doctors said Sunday that Dambarudhara's condition is stable.

Police also sent Madhu's body for post-mortem following which it was handed over to his family for the last rites. A pall of gloom has descended in the Lathiguda village.

Youth killed over past enmity

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, May 19: A youth was killed Saturday evening in a group attack by residents of a neighbouring village over past enmity near Saradhapur cremation ground under Gurandi police limits in Gajapati district. The deceased was identified as Prasant Jena, 24, of Bhinnala village. Some youths of Saradhapur village attacked him with sharp-edged weapons and also beat up the victim mercilessly leaving him in a pool of blood. On being informed, Jena's family members and villagers reached the spot and informed the police.

Gurandi police rushed Jena to the district headquarters hospital at Paralakhemundi. Doctors after initial treatment advised Jena's family members to take him to a better medical facility as his condition was critical. However, he died en route to Vishakhapatnam.

Police have launched an investigation after Jena's family members lodged a complaint. Paralakhemundi SDPO Madhavi Nanda Nayak also visited the spot and took stock of the situation while a forensic team was pressed into service. Villagers claimed that Jena might have been killed due to his alleged affair with a woman residing in Saradhapur village.

2 more held in BJP worker murder case



POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, May 19: Police arrested Sunday two more persons for their alleged involvement in the murder of a BJP worker at Srikrushna Saranpur village under Khallikote police limits in Ganjam district. With the new arrests, the total number of persons so far held in the case has gone up to 11, Ganjam SP Jagmohan Meena said at a press meet here Sunday. Deceased Dillip Pahan, a BJP worker was putting up some banners and posters when he was attacked by a group of people leading to his death May 15.

The two arrested persons have been identified as Sudarshan

Pahan and Papu Tarei of Srikrushna Saranpur village. Meanwhile, a special investigation team (SIT) has launched a probe into the murder. "All those involved in the murder will be arrested soon," the SP said.

The incident occurred when some BJP workers were sticking posters of party's Khallikote Assembly nominee Purna Chandra Sethy at Srikrushna Saranpur village. The BJP workers opposed the move which led to a clash between the two sides. Knives and choppers were used during the brawl which left six injured. Dillip, who was one of the injured, succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment.

NHRC's final reminder to Malkangiri Collector on plight of villagers

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, May 19: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a final reminder warning of coercive action to the Malkangiri Collector over his failure to address the plights of the villagers. Acting on a petition filed by human rights activist and lawyer Radhakanta Tripathy, the NHRC passed the order, May 16 calling for the submission of action taken reports.

The petitioner alleged that despite earlier directions from the NHRC on his petition, more than 20,000 villagers in at least four panchayats—Panaspur, Jantri, Gajalmamudi, and Jodamba—in Malkangiri district are still deprived of basic human rights.

The villagers are deprived of the benefits of various welfare schemes, including the pucca houses, other basic amenities and necessities of life.

The petitioner further stated that due to apathy, negligence, and the failure of the state government, hundreds of villagers are languishing in abject poverty without basic human rights.

In the absence of a road, even a medical team trekked through the hilly terrains for around 8 km to conduct health check-ups of the residents of Taberu



village in Chitrakonda's Swabhimana Anchal.

The residents of the villages are yet to be ensured with safe drinking water, playgrounds, open-air theatres, all-weather roads, primary health care, education under the RTE Act, playgrounds, and construction of toilets for each household under the Centre sponsored Swachha Bharat Abhiyan.

The schools and the Anganwadi centres with toilets, solid waste management, playgrounds and a post office with ATM, much-needed avenues for physical activity and recreation of village people, animal shelters for cows and sheep, community harvesting facilities should be provided to the small and marginal farmers, the petitioner said.

The right to housing, bare necessities of life, and basic amenities are integral parts of the

right to life and personal liberty under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution, he stated.

Tripathy urged the NHRC to recommend the state Chief Secretary and Malkangiri Collector and also Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India to act on these issues immediately and ensure houses under the PMAY, BKY, all-weather road, health care on a war footing, basic amenities to the poor villagers.

The NHRC in its order stated that no response has been received from the district magistrate of Malkangiri and issued a final reminder to the district Magistrate, directing him to submit the called-for report within a period of four weeks failing which the Commission will be constrained to issue a coercive process u/s 13 of the PHR Act, 1993.

Woman killed, kin critical in lightning strike

POST NEWS NETWORK

Aska, May 19: In a tragic incident, a woman was killed while her brother-in-law sustained critical injuries after lightning struck them on their farmland while they were harvesting Til near Humuki village under Kotinada police limits in Ganjam district, Sunday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Runu Jena and the critically injured person as her brother-in-law Bijay Jena, both natives of Humuki village.

According to information, Runu accompanied by Bijay had gone to their agricultural land on the outskirts of their village to harvest Til when a thunderstorm accompanied by lightning lashed the area at around 3pm, Sunday.

Runu died on the spot while family members rescued Bijay and rushed him to Aska government hospital where he is currently undergoing treatment. On being informed, Kotinada police reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. A case (no-3/24) has been registered at Kotinada police station in this regard. Further investigations are on.

Villagers have demanded compensation for the victim woman and her family.



SUMMER FRUIT: Two roadside vendors sell ice apples as heatwave surges in Sambalpur, Sunday

Teacher on poll duty dies in Bolangir

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, May 19: In a tragic mishap, a teacher died while discharging poll duty at a polling station in DAV College of Titilagarh in Bolangir district, Sunday morning.

The deceased teacher was identified as Sushil Kumar Acharya, a teacher of Patuapali Upper Primary School under Agalpur block in Bolangir district.

According to sources, Sushil who was assigned the poll duty had gone to join his duty at a polling booth in DAV College at Titilagarh. However, during his duty he felt sick. He was immediately rushed to the Sub Divisional Hospital at Titilagarh.

As his condition deteriorated, he was later shifted to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital at Bolangir where the doctors pronounced him dead. The family members of the deceased alleged negligence in treatment led to his untimely death.

Tough time ahead for tippers in Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, May 19: With the Sundargarh Lok Sabha constituency and the Assembly segments in it going to polls Monday, the district administration has closed down all liquor shops in this town. The restrictions were imposed Saturday from 4.00pm onwards and the shops will again open May 21. Officials said that as a precautionary measure, 28 IMFL liquor shops, 15 bars and stores-houses of liquor have been closed.

Excise officials informed Sunday that they have personally visited the shops, bars and pubs and have sealed those. "We have conducted checking of stock in each shops before sealing. We will check again May 21, when the shops will reopen. If there is something amiss, then we will take legal steps," informed an Excise official.

Country liquor shops in this



town have also been shut. Two special observers have been appointed to keep watch and prevent selling of liquor till May 21.

The shops did brisk business before they were shut. Tippers stored liquor in sufficient quantities so that they won't fill the pinch till May 21. Shop owners reported long queues in front of their shops all through the day Saturday. "Usually the demand for beer skyrockets in summer. However, this time there was demands for all varieties of liquor," said a shop owner. He added that he had procured sufficient stock as he knew that shops will be closed down.



The heart's words fall back unheard from Wisdom's throne.

SRI AUROBINDO



Murderous Politics

The attempt on the life of Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico is a despicable act of violence. It is also a glaring testimony of what the politics of polarisation can lead to. Those who use communal divide to capture political power, plunder the resources of a country and oppose the fight against corruption need to take a lesson from this horrific incident. The words of the Slovakian President Zuzana Caputova, while condemning the heinous crime, succinctly sum up the danger posed by the brand of intolerant politics that is now sweeping across Europe and spreading to other continents. She stated that a physical attack on the Prime Minister is first of all an attack on a human being, but it is also an attack on democracy. Violence of any kind is unacceptable. "The hateful rhetoric we see in society leads to hateful actions. Please, let us stop it," she said in a fervent appeal to preachers of hate politics.

The inescapable truth is that Fico represents an immensely divisive politics. He has helped polarise his country. In fact, he has long been a divisive figure in Slovakia and beyond. His return to power last year on a pro-Russia, anti-America platform caused alarm among fellow European Union and NATO members triggering fears that he would abandon his country's pro-Western course, particularly on Ukraine.

At the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Slovakia was one of Ukraine's staunchest supporters as the government of the day provided all possible help to Ukraine. But Fico stopped arms deliveries to Ukraine when he returned to power, his fourth time serving as Prime Minister.

Displaying known traits of autocrats, Fico's government made efforts to ostensibly overhaul public broadcasting. This, according to his critics, was a move that would give the government full control of public television and radio. That apart, he decided to shield the corrupt by trying to amend the penal code so as to eliminate a special anti-graft prosecutor. His opponents saw in it a plan to take Slovakia down a more autocratic path. Thousands of demonstrators have repeatedly rallied in the capital and around the country to protest against his policies.

In hindsight, Fico might have smelt the danger his brand of politics was pushing the country to and said only last month on Facebook that he feared rising tensions could lead to the murder of politicians. Typically, like autocrats the world over, he blamed the media for fuelling tensions.

Before Fico returned to power last year, police investigations had begun against many of his political and business associates and dozens have been charged. Ironically, he had once campaigned on an anti-corruption platform, but later, as is usual these days, faced corruption allegations himself. On assumption of power he sought to overhaul the penal system and abolish the office of the special prosecutor that deals with organised crime, corruption and extremism.

The background and motivation of the attack on him are yet to be fully ascertained. But the case is widely seen as a disturbing manifestation of the deep ruptures in Slovak society. "What happened was an individual act, but the tense atmosphere of hatred is our collective work," warned the outgoing President Zuzana, an opponent of Fico. She is stepping down after herself receiving death threats. This will also fuel concerns about extremism and attacks on politicians elsewhere.

The assault on Fico has come on the heels of high-profile political attacks, polarisation and the rise of Far-Right parties in Europe in particular. In Germany, where a neo-Nazi fatally shot politician Walter Lübcke in 2019, the country has now been witnessing a sharp rise in political attacks. Green party politicians have borne the brunt of this aggression, intimidation and death threats. Last November, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, a co-founder of Spain's Far-Right Vox party, was shot in Madrid. The UK witnessed murders of Conservative MP David Amess and Labour MP Jo Cox only five years apart.

Research suggests that violent political language is linked to physical violence. The words of politicians can exacerbate division and sanctify extreme attitudes. It is high time politicians indulging in polarised politics stop playing such dangerous games. Political leaders in India need also take note.

WISDOM CORNER

- Don't gain the world and lose your soul; wisdom is better than silver or gold. **BOB MARLEY**
- Who would set a limit to the mind of man? Who would dare assert that we know all there is to be known? **GALILEO GALILEI**
- Anyone who has obeyed nature by transmitting a piece of gossip experiences the explosive relief that accompanies the satisfying of a primary need. **PRIMO LEVI**

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1784:** The Netherlands yielded to Great Britain some of its holdings in India and Indonesia in a treaty signed as part of the Peace of Paris, a collection of treaties that concluded the American Revolution.
- 1873:** Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis were granted a patent for using copper rivets to strengthen certain areas of trousers, notably pocket corners; the patent was credited with giving rise to blue jeans which today represents one of the most popular types of trousers worldwide.
- 1882:** Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy secretly formed the Triple Alliance, a treaty organization that provided for mutual protection against attacks by other European powers until Italy entered World War I.
- 1902:** Cuba gained its independence from the United States, which had taken control of the island in 1899 after defeating Spain in the Spanish-American War.

LOL

SETTLING A CASE

A big-city lawyer was representing the railroad in a lawsuit filed by an old rancher. The rancher's prize bull was missing from the section through which the railroad passed. The rancher only wanted to be paid the fair value of the bull. The case was scheduled to be tried before the justice of the peace in the back room of the general store. The attorney for the railroad immediately cornered the rancher and tried to get him to settle out of court. The lawyer did his best selling job, and finally the rancher agreed to take half of what he was asking. After the rancher had signed the release and took the check, the young lawyer couldn't resist gloating a little



over his success, telling the rancher, "You know, I hate to tell you this, old man, but I put one over on you in there. I couldn't have won the case. The engineer was asleep and the fireman was in the caboose when the train went through your ranch that morning. I didn't have one witness to put on the stand. I bluffed you!" The old rancher replied, "Well, I'll tell you, young feller, I was a little worried about winning that case myself, because that durned bull came home this morning."



Rup Narayan Das

UNDER TAIWAN'S 'NEW SOUTHBOUND' POLICY, THE COUNTRY HAS ENGAGED WITH INDIA AS NEVER BEFORE

At a time when regime change, be it democratic or otherwise, is mired by controversies of all sorts, Taiwan, a tiny democracy in the volatile Asia-Pacific, living under the shadow of communist China, is witnessing a peaceful change of baton on the 20 May after the Presidential, vice-presidential, and Legislative Yuan election held in January this year. In the election, while the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) won the presidential election, it failed to secure a majority in Taiwan's Parliament - the Legislative Yuan. Its rival the KMT got a majority just by one seat. This has put the governance in a piquant situation. Taiwan has a unique political system in which both the President and the members of the Parliament which provides the Cabinet, are directly elected by the people. It is posing a great challenge to the newly elected President William Lai of the DPP to navigate a fine balancing act.

The consolidation and deepening of democracy in Taiwan as evident from the regular and periodic elections and peaceful transfer of power from one political party to another speak volumes of the democratic culture and tradition of Taiwan. The way Taiwan has protected and promoted democracy against the backdrop of the communist regime in mainland China is admirable and awe-inspiring, more particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. China has attempted to crush the yearning for democracy in Hong Kong by abrogating the commitment of 'one country, two systems'; as promised in the 'Joint Declaration' and the 'Basic Law', and now it is intimidating Taiwan. It is heartening that many democratic countries have realised the Chinese machination and are supportive of Taiwan's fight for democracy. The US is the most vocal one. The US' largesse is not a charitable one as it uses Taiwan as a front against Chinese

FOCUS TAIWAN

DEEP DEMOCRACY



The way Taiwan has protected and promoted democracy against the backdrop of the communist regime in mainland China is admirable and awe-inspiring, more particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic

hegemony and Taiwan's procurement of arms serves the US' military-industrial complex.

Since Taiwan had its first election in 1996, it has witnessed the strengthening of democratic institutions. There have been regular and periodic elections in Taiwan in 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, and in 2020. This is something very remarkable. The two major parties, viz, the KMT and the DPP dominate the narrative of democracy and electoral politics in Taiwan. There are, of course, smaller political parties. The political spectrum in Taiwan is divided into two main camps based on their policy of engagement with the Mainland. While the KMT is generally perceived to be pro-Beijing, the DPP favours a pro-Taiwan policy. DPP maintains that it cannot accept becoming part of China under 'one country, two systems'.

It is not only periodic elections but also other democratic institutions such as the independent judiciary, the rule of law, the free press, the civil service, and the civil society that have been rejuvenated under the rule of DPP. The Taiwanese military is professionalised and

insulated from political interference from partisan objectives. The Taiwanese version of democracy has acquired unique characteristics. It is not an imitation of the Western model of democracy, but native to the social and cultural milieu of Taiwan which supplements and complements the norms of democracy such as honesty, integrity, and industrious nature of its citizenry, their empathy and fellow feeling as contrasted with individualistic nature of Western democracy and the cosmopolitanism of Taiwan is unique. Its democracy is a fusion of Western liberalism and Oriental ethics and values.

Be that as it may, President Tsai Ing-wen, who is demitting the exalted office after her two consecutive terms leaves behind a rich legacy of valour and resolve not to capitulate to China's threat, machinations, and coercion; and in deepening democracy in Taiwan. China has not only been jettisoning the electoral process in Taiwan but also trying to debunk democracy in that country. China's intimidation increased menacingly during the visit of the then Speaker of the

House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan in 2022. China fired missiles that breached the Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIF), and the median line across the Taiwan Strait. Beijing also resorted to economic coercion by stopping the ban on the import of Taiwanese pineapples and grouper. It also indulged in cyber-attacks and grey zone tactics. President Tsai, however, didn't buckle and maintained her poise boosting the morale of the people. When Tsai first came to power in 2016, Beijing threatened to poach the diplomatic allies of Taiwan through cheque-book diplomacy and other allurements. Beijing succeeded in depleting Taiwan's handful of diplomatic allies, but its attempts didn't succeed in denuding its diplomatic allies completely. While Taiwan lost few of its diplomatic allies, it made good its loss through active parliamentary diplomacy - a new trend in Taiwan's global profile. Defying China's 'one China' principle, more and more members of parliament from across the world, including from India, are now reaching out to Taiwan.

During the eight-year tenure of Tsai's presidency, India-Taiwan relations have also been scaled up notwithstanding having no diplomatic relations between the two due to India's 'one China' policy. Under Taiwan's 'new southbound' policy, the country has engaged with India as never before. Bilateral trade between India and Taiwan has increased. Taiwan's investment in India has also increased. Taiwan is now investing in India in cutting-edge technology including semiconductors and in manufacturing of smartphones. Taiwan has also made policy decisions to encourage Indian talents in white collar jobs. The number of Indian students studying in Taiwan has also increased.

The writer was a Taiwan Fellow in 2022. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM ENERGY TRANSITION

Public-private cooperation for green action

As countries around the world experienced record temperatures last year, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres declared, "We must turn a year of burning heat into a year of burning ambition." But to move away from fossil fuels and unlock the green transition's economic benefits, such as job creation and universal access to clean energy, industry leaders and policymakers must work together to translate the commitments made at the Dubai COP28 into actual renewable gigawatts. COP28 marked a historic turning point in the battle against climate change. Rallying around the UAE Consensus, world leaders pledged to move away from fossil fuels, agreeing to triple renewable power capacity to at least 11,000 gigawatts and double energy efficiency by 2030.

But ambition alone is not enough to achieve these targets and limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius. Governments must invest in mature, cost-competitive renewable technologies that can be rapidly deployed at scale. When integrated with long-duration energy storage, green hydrogen, and system optimisation, these technologies represent the most reliable and flexible way to accelerate the energy

transition. Renewables will undoubtedly shape the global energy landscape in the coming years. Both solar and wind power are expected to grow significantly, with hydropower serving as the backbone of grid flexibility. Consequently, renewables are poised to become the twenty-first century's dominant source of global electricity.

But as a joint report released by the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and the Global Renewables Alliance (GRA) ahead of COP28 noted, tripling renewable capacity will require cooperation between the private and public sectors. Partnerships should focus on initiatives that deliver immediate results, such as mobilising low-cost financing, accelerating permitting processes, clearing grid connection backlogs, reforming government auction mechanisms for renewable-energy projects, and diversifying global supply chains. A strong commitment to inclusivity and the active participation of developing economies must be at the heart of these efforts. IRENA and GRA are demonstrating this commitment by collaborating on the annual reports commissioned by the COP28 Presidency to monitor progress toward the

global tripling target and facilitate the energy transition.

We must, however, move faster, especially if we aim to ensure that progress is equitably distributed around the world. While renewable power capacity rose by 473 gigawatts in 2023, the economic benefits of the energy transition did not reach every country. Remarkably, 83% of these increases were concentrated in China, the EU, and the US, leaving many countries in the Global South behind.

In fact, the shift to renewables is alarmingly slow in many parts of the world. Opportunities to address development and access challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 500 million people still lack access to electricity, are being squandered. This sluggish transition can be attributed largely to the lack of affordable financing, adequate planning, and the policy and market frameworks needed to support the adoption of renewable energy. Tellingly, public fossil-fuel subsidies reached \$1.3 trillion in 2022 - roughly the annual investment needed to triple renewable capacity by 2030.

A critical first step toward fostering greater public-private cooperation in pursuit of COP28's ambitious targets is to reform the

global financial architecture. Africa, for example, accounts for 17% of the world's population but has received less than 2% of global investments in renewable energy over the past two decades, underscoring the need to reduce capital costs and attract private investors. Developing industrial clusters and initiating grant programmes could also help foster environments conducive to innovation and private-public partnerships.

Governments and business leaders should harness the current political momentum to foster cooperation between policymakers and private investors. As governments develop appropriate policy and market frameworks to facilitate the transition to renewables, the private sector - historically responsible for 86% of global investments in renewable energy - is poised to lead the charge. Together, we can achieve a clean, secure, and just energy future. But to realise this vision, we must act fast.

Francesco La Camera is Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency. Bruce Douglas is CEO of the Global Renewables Alliance. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

Orissa POST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Strategic achievement

Sir, The Chabahar Port holds significant strategic importance for India's regional ambitions, serving as a crucial gateway for enhancing trade ties with Central Asia. This port provides a direct and cost-effective route to access the region's abundant resources, bypassing the often volatile and restrictive land routes through Pakistan. The development of Chabahar allows India to strengthen its economic outreach and secure a stable supply chain, which is essential for sustaining its growth and expanding its influence in the region. Chabahar also plays a pivotal role in countering China's growing influence, particularly in light of its control over Pakistan's Gwadar Port. By establishing a foothold in Chabahar, India can create a strategic balance and mitigate the dominance that China seeks in the region. This move is part of India's broader strategy to assert its presence and challenge China's Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to create an extensive network of trade routes under Beijing's influence. The collaboration between India, Iran, and Afghanistan on the Chabahar Port also underscores the diplomatic and geopolitical significance of the project. This partnership not only facilitates a reliable trade route to Afghanistan but also strengthens India's ties with Iran, enhancing its diplomatic leverage. The port is more than just an economic asset; it is a symbol of India's commitment to building strong regional alliances and promoting stability in a historically tumultuous area. However, India's involvement in the Chabahar Port project is not without challenges. The potential risk of US sanctions looms large, particularly given the Trump administration's past stance on Iran. **Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH**

Solar power boost

Sir, Subsidy is being offered for rooftop solar panels to enhance the renewable energy capacity of the country. However, poor people residing in houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana may not make an effort to build a solar rooftop. In this context, the installation of solar panels on many such rooftops may be considered on the basis of 'Public-Private Partnership' between the Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency (OREDA) and any private sector company of our state. The renewable energy capacity may soar significantly this way. **Nabnit Panigrahi, RAYAGADA**

HEATWAVE IN DELHI

'SANKALP PATRA' INITIATIVE TO BOOST VOTER TURNOUT

Outdoor workers bear brunt of deadly heat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: The Delhi poll body has launched a 'Sankalp Patra' initiative aimed at school-children to boost electoral participation in the national capital during the general elections. "The Sankalp Patra, a pledge form, was distributed to students who, in turn, brought those to their parents to sign, committing to vote," it said in the statement Sunday.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO) Office, targeted schools under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Council



The approach capitalised on the influential role of children in motivating civic engagement within their families

commitments have been collected, pledging participation in the upcoming elections May 25," the poll body said.

Praising the initiative, Delhi CEO P Krishnamurthy highlighted the pivotal role of academic institutions in nurturing a culture of democratic participation from a young age. As Delhi prepares for the elections, the initiative aims to boost voter turnout and instil civic duty in students by involving them in the democratic process, the statement added. The national capital's seven Lok Sabha seats goes to the polls May 25.

The statement said the initiative witnessed an overwhelming response from parents across public schools. "As of now, nearly 16 lakh signed

The approach capitalised on the influential role of children in motivating civic engagement within their families

As parts of India grapple with extreme heat, outdoor workers, the elderly and children are particularly affected. People are less productive during hot weather and children struggle to learn



ventilation and little shelter from extreme heat," she said. **NEED FOR ROBUST HEAT ACTION PLAN**

Chandni Singh, senior researcher at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements and IPCC lead author, said state and city-level heat action plans are proving "insufficient to deal with the heat we are now experiencing".

In urban areas, Singh said, the experience of heat depends on factors such as residential location, occupation and access to cooling.

"Understanding this unequal heat risk is a critical first step to developing nuanced heat action plans. Delhi's current heat action plan needs to map heat hotspots and overlay this with existing vulnerability maps to inform heat action," she said. Prepared last year, the city's heat action plan talks about altering school timings, suspending non-essential water use and providing uninterrupted power supply to health facilities to mitigate the impact of extreme heat. But it has not been implemented yet.

IMPACT ON OUTDOOR WORKERS

There are around 3.4 million unorganised workers in Delhi, according to the central government's e-Shram portal.

Dharmendra Kumar of NGO Janpahal said most of these workers labour outdoors. "They often live in cramped one-room apartments without proper ventilation or cooling systems, exacerbating the effects of heat."

According to Bibyani Minj of Delhi-based Nirman Mazdoor Panchayat Sangam, a trade union of construction workers, there are around 10 lakh construction workers (including unregistered ones) in the city and a majority of them are migrants.



Women walk as mirage appears on the Kartavya Path on a hot summer day in New Delhi

Delhi witnesses slight dip in road mishap fatalities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: Slight decrease in road accident fatalities has been witnessed in Delhi in the first five months of this year, according to the data released by the Delhi Police.

The data stated that up till May 15, a total of 518 people lost their lives in 511 accidents. This marks a decrease from the 552 deaths recorded in 544 crashes during the same period last year.

"We have identified different locations like National Highway-24, NH-8, Ring Road, Rohtak Road, GT Road, and Mathura Road are among the top ten roads in Delhi where the highest number of fatal crashes have occurred this year so far. With this information, we can implement targeted enforcement measures to enhance road safety and ensure compliance with traffic regulations, ultimately aiming to reduce fatalities on these roads," a senior police officer said.

Police further said that in addition to law enforcement measures, the Delhi Traffic Police has prioritised community engagement and collaboration to



THE DATA STATED THAT UP TILL MAY 15, A TOTAL OF 518 PEOPLE LOST THEIR LIVES IN 511 ACCIDENTS. THIS MARKS A DECREASE FROM THE 552 DEATHS RECORDED IN 544 CRASHES DURING THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR

foster a culture of road safety. "Several educational programs in partnership with schools, colleges, and awareness campaigns such as Raahgiri are being conducted regularly to teach people about road safety norms and safe driving practices," said the officer.

Likewise, 27 candidates are in the fray from Khadoor Sahib, of which 18 are Independents. There are 20 candidates in the fray from Jalandhar, including eight Independents. Sixteen candidates are contesting from Hoshiarpur, comprising four Independents. Out of the total 28 candidates from Anandpur Sahib, 13 are Independents.

328 LS candidates allotted poll symbols in Punjab, says CEO

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, May 19: Punjab Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Sibin C Sunday said that 328 candidates contesting for 13 Lok Sabha seats in the state have been allotted election symbols.

Out of 328 candidates, 169 are Independent candidates. Sibin C said 26 candidates are contesting from Gurdaspur, including 14 Independents, while 30 candidates are contesting from Amritsar, out of which 18 are Independents.

Likewise, 27 candidates are in the fray from Khadoor Sahib, of which 18 are Independents. There are 20 candidates in the fray from Jalandhar, including eight Independents. Sixteen candidates are contesting from Hoshiarpur, comprising four Independents. Out of the total 28 candidates from Anandpur Sahib, 13 are Independents.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: Sitting under a tree, Suman Mandal strenuously fans her two-year-old son on a hot summer afternoon near a construction site in south-east Delhi's Sewa Nagar.

The mercury has soared to 46 degrees Celsius and Mandal, 37, and her two children - the other aged four - are visibly sluggish. "It is very difficult to work in this heat. But I cannot skip work or I will lose income," she said, adding the heat also takes a toll on her children.

Wearing a checkered scarf to shield himself from the searing sun, Sanjay Verma, 49, zig-zags across south Delhi for eight hours, delivering food. He says the crippling heat is slowing him down. "I take a break and drink water every 30 minutes, otherwise I will faint or drop dead."

As parts of India grapple with extreme heat, outdoor workers, the elderly and children are particularly affected. People are less productive during hot weather and children struggle to learn.

Only one year (2007) saw the mercury exceeding 40 degrees Celsius for more than 150 days in the previous two decades. The International Institute for

Environment and Development's (IIED) analysis of temperatures in the world's 20 biggest capital cities also shows Delhi reached or surpassed 40 degrees Celsius on 1,557 days (around 43 per cent) in the last 10 years.

The IIED analysed only airport site data for consistency across cities. The data from the Indira Gandhi International Airport has been used for Delhi. The densely packed city recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius on 1,254 days (around 34 per cent) during 2004-2013 and 1,180 days (around 32 per cent) during 1994-2003, the analysis shows.

Anna Walnycki, a principal researcher on IIED's human settlements team, said the alarming rise in extreme heat events in India due to climate change is significantly impacting health, wellbeing and productivity of all, especially those living in low-income and informal communities. "Low-income households have limited capacity to adapt to extreme heat because of poor access to water and electricity. In addition, the design and construction of informal houses often means there is poor

EXPERTS SAY SPELLS OF EXTREME HEATWAVE BECOME MORE FREQUENT AND SEVERE DUE TO CLIMATE CHANGE. A NEW ANALYSIS SHOWS DELHI LOGGED A HIGH OF 40 DEGREES CELSIUS OR ABOVE ON MORE THAN 150 DAYS IN EIGHT OF THE LAST 10 YEARS

Akali Dal seeks action against Hans Raj Hans



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, May 19: The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) urged the Election Commission to take note of the alleged threats to farmers' organisations by the BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Faridkot, Hans Raj Hans, and direct the police to register a case against the singer-politician.

In a letter to the Election Commission, SAD leader Bikram Singh Majithia said, "Hans Raj Hans has openly issued threats to farmer organisations and announced they would be subject to state repression post the elections". He said the BJP candidate had gone to the extent of saying he would personally oversee the beating of all farmer leaders and representatives who had asked the BJP to explain why it was discriminating against them. "This goes beyond the scope of an inflammatory speech and a criminal case should be registered against Hans immediately".

In a separate statement, Majithia also termed the utterances as shocking and intolerable in a democratic society. He demanded that the BJP take action against Hans Raj Hans and take back his candidature from Faridkot constituency. "If this is not done, Punjabis will understand that Hans was reflecting the BJP's mindset and game plan against the farm organisations."

Expressing solidarity with the farming community, Majithia said "no one has the right to talk to the 'annadaata' in this manner".

Modi to address 3 poll meetings in Punjab May 23, 24

Chandigarh: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address three election meetings in Punjab May 23 and 24, a senior party leader said Sunday. The PM will address a rally in Patiala in support of party candidate Preneet Kaur May 23. A day later, he will address rallies at Gurdaspur and Jalandhar for candidates Dinesh Babu and Sushil Rinku, respectively. The stakes are high for the BJP this time as it is in the parliamentary fray alone for the first time. The Akali Dal snapped nearly three-decade-long ties and pulled out of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in September 2020 over the contentious, now-repealed farm laws. On earlier occasions, the BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) had been contesting as part of the seat-sharing pact since 1996. During the 2019 elections, the Congress won eight out of 13 Lok Sabha seats in Punjab. The BJP and SAD won two seats each, while the AAP could only manage to secure one seat. Punjab will go to the polls in a single phase for 13 parliamentary seats June 1.



AMRITPAL ENTERS POLL FRAY

KEEN BATTLE ON CARDS IN KHADOOR SAHIB SEAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, May 19: With the unexpected entry of radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh into the poll fray, a keen electoral battle is in the offing in Punjab's Khadoor Sahib, a Sikh majority parliamentary constituency which is considered a citadel of the Shiromani Akali Dal.

Amritpal Singh, the chief of the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit, who is lodged in Assam's Dibrugarh jail under the National Security Act, has thrown his hat into the ring as an Independent.

The Khadoor Sahib constituency, which is known as a 'Panthic' seat, has voters from all three regions - Majha, Malwa and Doaba. It has nine Assembly segments - Jandiala, Tarn Taran, Khem Karan, Patti, Khadoor Sahib, Baba Bakala, Kapurthala, Sultanpur Lodhi and Zira.

Seven Assembly segments are held by the AAP while one each by the Congress and an Independent. The Shiromani Akali Dal candidates Rattan

Singh Ajnala and Ranjit Singh Brahmputra won the Khadoor Sahib seat in the 2009 and the 2014 general Assembly elections.

However, SAD candidate and former Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) chief Bibi Jagir Kaur lost the seat to Congress nominee Jasbir Singh Dimpa in the 2019 Lok Saha polls.

Paramjit Kaur Khalra, the wife of human rights activist Jaswant Singh Khalra, had also unsuccessfully contested the 2019 elections from this seat and had secured 20 per cent of the votes.

The sudden announcement of Amritpal Singh jumping into the fray came April 24 when his legal counsel Rajdev Singh Khalsa claimed that the jailed preacher had agreed to fight the polls as an Independent candidate on his request.

Later, Amritpal Singh's father Tarsem Singh said his son was not willing to fight an electoral contest but he changed his mind at the instance of the 'sangar' or community which wanted



him to enter the poll fray.

Paramjit Kaur Khalra is leading the poll campaign of Amritpal Singh. Tarsem Singh has said that his son was getting overwhelming support from the people. He also said that those campaigning for the jailed leader son will raise the issues of release of 'Bandi Singhs' (Sikh prisoners who have completed their terms) and the drug menace in the state.

Amritpal Singh, who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was arrested in

Moga's Rode village April 23 last year following an over a month-long manhunt.

The Khalistan sympathiser, who also acted as a crusader against drugs, had escaped the police net in Jalandhar district March 18, switching vehicles and changing appearances.

The Punjab Police had launched the crackdown after the February 23 Ajnala incident last year in which Amritpal Singh and his supporters, some of them brandishing swords and guns, broke through barricades and barged into the police station

on the outskirts of Amritsar city, and clashed with police for the release of Lovepreet Singh Toofan, one of his aides.

Tarsem Singh has even called the SAD's move of fielding its candidate against his son a "historical mistake." During the poll campaign in favour of party candidate Valtaha at Jandiala, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said Amritpal Singh is fighting the Lok Sabha polls from the Khadoor Sahib seat to "free" himself, asking people whether the radical preacher was fit to lead them.

Badal asked people to determine whether a person who had acquired 'Sikhi saroop' one year earlier was fit to lead them or the 103-year-old party which was steeped in the blood of their forefathers.

He even urged people to evaluate if Amritpal Singh had been "propped up by central agencies". "What other explanation can be that a person who was first propped up, then projected, then arrested and is now being kept in safe custody only to be used

as a candidate in the parliamentary elections to counter the popularity of the SAD," said Badal. The Simranjit Singh Mann-led SAD (Amritsar) is supporting Amritpal Singh from the Khadoor Sahib seat in this election.

Over 16.67 lakh voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in the Khadoor Sahib constituency is going to polls June 1 in the last phase of the Lok Sabha elections. Earlier known as Tarn Taran, the Khadoor Sahib seat came into being in 2008 after a delimitation exercise. Tarn Taran, which is part of the Khadoor Sahib constituency, was once the hotbed of militancy.

SAD nominees Major Singh Uboke, Prem Singh Lalpur, Tarlochan Singh Tur and Rattan Singh Ajnala had won the erstwhile Tarn Taran constituency in 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004 respectively.

SAD (Amritsar) chief Simranjit Singh Mann had won the erstwhile Tarn Taran Lok Sabha seat in 1989 by securing 88 per cent of the votes.



Several leaders and workers of BJP including Sasmita Das from Soro Assembly segment under Balasore Lok Sabha constituency join BJD at Sankha Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) national president and Bangalore South MP Tejasvi Surya holds a roadshow in support of the party candidates in Sambalpur, Sunday

Development only weapon against BJP's lies: Naveen



Keonjhar/Hatadihi, May 19: Noting that "development is his only weapon against the BJP's lies", Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday called upon people not to get misled by "crocodile tears" of the visiting politicians.

The BJD supremo first addressed a huge gathering at Raisuan under Keonjhar Sadar Assembly constituency before proceeding to Chhenapadi under Hatadihi block of Anandapur Assembly segment.

In his trademark style, Patnaik sought feedback from the gathering on the BJD government's welfare schemes.

Addressing the gathering at Raisuan, Naveen said, "Thank you for coming from distant places and attending this event in such large numbers, despite the scorching heat. I want to ask you, are the schemes like Biju

Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), Mission Shakti, Mamata Yojana, LACMI Bus Service, 5T School Transformation, Nua O Scholarship and KALIA Yojana, Puri Parikrama Prakalpa and Samalei Prakalpa good initiatives. He further sought to know whether he (Naveen Patnaik) and the conch symbol are good.

"Opposition parties are spreading lies and shedding crocodile tears. Don't get misled by the crocodile tears of politicians visiting the state. Development is my only weapon against the BJP's lies," he said.

Listing various welfare schemes of his government, he appealed to people to make BJD candidates victorious.

The Chief Minister claimed that power bills upto 100 units will be waived for the consumers from the month of July while all Mission Shakti women will get allowances.

Senior BJD leader Kartik

Pandian cautioned people against falling for "false propaganda" of the BJP.

"Our CM loves the tribal community. He formed a Special Development Council for protection of tribal art, culture and places of worship. Also, over 50,000 petty police cases against tribals have been withdrawn," he said.

Pandian claimed that Naveen Patnaik will be sworn in as the CM for the sixth consecutive term June 9 and after taking oath he will give assent to three important schemes like free electricity which will benefit 90 per cent of families, expansion of BSKY and pension scheme for elderly Mission Shakti members.

He also urged the voters to cast vote in favour of 'double conch' and elect BJD MP candidate Dhanuraj Sidhu, MLA candidates Badri Narayan Patra, Sanatan Mahakud, Jagannath Naik, Meena Majhi and Abhimanyu Sethi.

MODI'S ROADSHOW IN PURI TODAY

Bhubaneswar, May 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who arrived here Sunday on a two-day visit to the state to campaign for BJP candidates in simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state, would leave for Puri Monday morning to hold a roadshow there.

After his arrival at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here, Modi went to the state headquarters of BJP where he held a meeting with the party's

state leaders.

As his cavalcade moved towards the party office, people, gathered on both sides of the road, cheered for the PM and waved cutouts of the BJP's election symbol 'lotus'.

As soon as Modi arrived at the party's state headquarters for the first time, he was given a ceremonial welcome by Odisha BJP leaders.

The PM is scheduled to leave Bhubaneswar around 7:25am Monday for Puri and visit the Srimandir.



Modi will hold a roadshow in the pilgrim town in the morning, a state BJP leader said.

Elaborate security arrangements with the deployment of 66 platoons (each platoon comprises 30 personnel) have been made in Puri for the roadshow, police said.

After the roadshow, the PM will take a helicopter to reach Angul where he is scheduled to address a public meeting at Stadium Field Ground. He will campaign for BJP candidates for the Dhenkanal Lok Sabha seat and its Assembly segments.

After the Angul meeting, the PM will leave for Cuttack and address another election rally at Killa Padia.

This is Modi's third visit to the state in the last two weeks during the ongoing Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

25cr lifted out of poverty by Modi govt: Rajnath

Sambalpur, May 19: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Sunday claimed that as many as 25 crore people have been pulled out from poverty under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Singh said this while addressing an election rally at Rairakhole under Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is the BJP candidate in the Sambalpur constituency.

"Beginning from Jawahar Lal Nehru to Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, all have failed to eradicate poverty from the country. However, Modi is the first Prime Minister who could reduce the miseries of the poor people in this country," the Defence minister said. The senior BJP leader said the people will get pucca ghar, piped water, Ayushman Bharat card and other facilities as soon as the BJP government is formed in Odisha.

Singh blamed both the Congress and BJD for the sorry state of affairs of Odisha. The Congress has ruled the state for 50 years and BJD for 25 years.

BJD, BJP spar over remarks against party their leaders

Bhubaneswar, May 19: Opposition BJP and ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha Sunday engaged in a heated exchange of words over alleged remarks made against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik with both parties accusing each other of disrespecting their leaders.

While the BJP alleged that senior BJD leader Kartik Pandian termed Modi as a 'tourist' to Odisha, the ruling BJD alleged that saffron party leaders have been regularly using 'derogatory language' against Patnaik, disrespecting his age, experience and people's faith in him.

Addressing a press meet here, BJP leader and MP Aparajita Sarangi said Pandian should not call the PM a 'tourist' to Odisha and refrain from making negative remarks against him.

"As a former IAS officer, he (Pandian) should know that people should talk in a dignified manner even while doing politics. Special training is being given to IAS officers on how to behave in a dignified way," Sarangi said.

She also alleged that the senior BJD leader had used derogatory words like 'aukat' (capacity)

Will ensure Pravati's victory: Samir Dash

Bhubaneswar, May 19: BJD's Nimapara MLA Samir Ranjan Dash, who joined the BJP hours after quitting the regional outfit Sunday, said that he would ensure the victory of the saffron party candidate Pravati Parida, once an archival of Dash.

BJP Odisha unit president Manmohan Samal, party's Odisha in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar and other leaders welcomed Dash at the party headquarters here.

Dash had earlier in the day resigned from the regional outfit before joining the national party. The three-time legislator was annoyed after being denied a party ticket to contest the 2024 Assembly elections. "I have joined the BJP after losing confidence in the BJD leadership. I will ensure that BJP candidate Pravati Parida wins the election in Nimapara Assembly segment," Dash told reporters.



PNN & AGENCIES

INDIA govt will herald stable, predictable policymaking: Cong

The most important contribution of the INDIA government will be to remove the current environment of distrust and fear, and create a healthy ecosystem where private enterprises, regulatory authorities, tax authorities and government will work in a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect, says Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh



New Delhi, May 19: Amid stock market volatility, the Congress Sunday accused Home Minister Amit Shah of inciting "fear-mongering" and said an INDIA coalition government shall herald a new age of stable, predictable policymaking and overall prosperity.

The opposition party's assertion came after Home Minister Shah in an interview with a TV channel said the stock market shouldn't be linked with elections, but a stable government does help it perform better.

He also suggested that the

market will shoot up after June 4 as a result of the BJP and its allies sweeping the Lok Sabha elections.

In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said there is no basis to the "fear-mongering, incited by the outgoing Home Minister, about the INDIA government in financial markets".

The record of the Congress party in providing strong and inclusive economic growth speaks for itself, he said.

"It is a matter of record that economic growth and investment were much higher under Dr Manmohan Singh than under

the Modi government. Private investment and the share of manufacturing as a percentage were much greater under Singh than in the past decade," he said.

Ramesh said that "self-inflicted policy blunders" such as demonetisation, GST and an ill-planned lockdown played an important role in growth being lower in the last decade.

But equally important is the atmosphere of fear and uncertainty created by the Modi government that has led to the biggest exodus of wealth creators from India to locations such as Dubai, London and Singapore, he claimed.

In this context, the most im-

portant contribution of the INDIA government will be to "remove the current environment of distrust and fear, and create a healthy ecosystem where private enterprises, regulatory authorities, tax authorities and government will work in a spirit of mutual cooperation and respect, as we wrote in our Nyay Patra manifesto", he said.

"We also stated that 'regulatory oversight will be based on clearly enunciated laws and rules that will be applied fairly and without discrimination'," the Congress general secretary in-charge communications said.

This is a complete contrast with the Modi government's "vindictive and arbitrary approach whose main goal has been to extort funds, suppress competition against a favoured few and eliminate all freedom in decision-making", Ramesh said.

These anti-competitive policies have contributed to underinvestment, concentration of economic power and un-

sustainable K-shaped growth, he claimed.

"Our manifesto also promises to implement a clear, transparent and predictable tax regime. We will replace the current GST with a GST 2.0 that will be a single, moderate rate (with a few exceptions). We will enact a Direct Taxes Code and maintain stable personal income tax rates throughout the next five years," Ramesh said.

"We will eliminate 'Angel tax' and all other exploitative tax schemes that inhibit investment in new micro, small companies and innovative startups," he said.

Ramesh further said that the Congress has made important announcements in its manifesto to deal with the Modi government's poor record on price rise, jobs and stagnant wages and its "utter failure" on the demand side of the economy.

"We will implement all of these within established principles of fiscal responsibility. We remind



The fight is to save the Constitution. The BJP and the RSS are attacking it, and I want to tell them that no power can tear and throw the Constitution away
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

RED ALERT ISSUED IN KERALA

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Sunday issued red alert for four districts in Kerala - Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, Idukki, and Alappuzha - forecasting extremely heavy rainfall until May 21



of the day vote

The nation will be doomed and become a colony of foreign forces who are busy destabilising the integrity and unity of India if Congress-led INDIA bloc is allowed to rule

ANURAG THAKUR | UNION MINISTER

I have been repeatedly saying that those sitting in Delhi are misleading the people by saying Article 370 was responsible for terrorism. How many years have passed since the abrogation of the Article? Has terrorism stopped?

FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

Shinde was already named as the leader of the Shiv Sena legislature party but the BJP said they would not like Shinde as CM of the alliance

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

POST OF THE DAY



Mahatma Gandhi's first Satyagraha was conducted on the soil of Motihari in Champaran and it was the starting point of India's independence movement. A Satyagraha Park has been constructed. The Gandhi Museum has on display an array of photographs and relics of the Champaran Satyagraha. But they lack proper maintenance. Here's what Former Bihar Minister Brij Kishor Singh said. "I spent my childhood with Gandhian philosophy. When Gandhiji came here during a riot, I joined him. I worked alongside him. Champaran is the Karmabhoomi of Gandhiji. Gandhiji came here when people were troubled. The same people are with Gandhiji today as well."

SHORT TAKES

Two killed as luxury car hits motorcycle

Pune: Two persons were killed when a speeding luxury car driven by a juvenile hit their motorcycle in Maharashtra's Pune city Sunday, police said. The 17-year-old car driver was detained after a case was registered against him under relevant provisions, they said. The police are also in the process of taking legal action against the boy's parents, an official said. The accident took place around 3.15 am in Kalyani Nagar.

SC notice to Delhi govt on Suresh's plea

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has sought response from the Delhi government on a plea filed by alleged conman Suresh Chandrasekhar seeking a direction to authorities to shift him from Mandoli jail to any other prison except those in Punjab and Delhi. A division bench of Justices Bela Trivedi and Pankaj Mishra issued notice to the AAP government.

T'gana: 3 die in lightning strikes

Hyderabad: Three persons lost their lives in separate incidents when lightning struck them in Vikarabad district of Telangana Sunday, police said. The incidents took place in two villages in Yalal mandal of Vikarabad district when it was raining, they said. Two persons died after being struck by lightning in an agricultural field while another man, who was standing under a tree, died in another lightning strike.

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS PHASE FIVE

49 constituencies to vote today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Lucknow, May 19: Polling will be held Monday in 49 constituencies in six states and two UTs in the fifth phase of Lok Sabha elections that will decide the electoral fate of several prominent leaders like former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, Union ministers Rajnath Singh and Smriti Irani and former J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Over 8.95 crore people, including 4.26 crore females and 5,409 third-gender electors, are eligible to vote in this round and 9.47 lakh polling officials have been deployed across 94,732 polling stations. Among the seats going to polls, 13 are in Maharashtra, 14 in Uttar Pradesh, seven in West Bengal, five in Bihar, three in Jharkhand, five in Odisha, one in J-K and the lone seat in Ladakh. This round covers the least number of seats (49) in the seven-phase elections. It is another important phase for the BJP as over 40 of these seats were with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

On the eve of polling, the Election Commission Sunday pointed out that Mumbai, Thane and Lucknow have shown apathy towards voting in the past and asked city dwellers there to turn out in higher numbers.

The poll authority noted that in the past these cities have "suffered" from urban apathy in voting.

In Maharashtra, where polling will be held in 13 Lok Sabha constituencies, including six in Mumbai, Piyush Goyal, Bharati Pawar (Dindori) and Kapil Patil



OVER 8.95 CRORE PEOPLE, INCLUDING 4.26 CRORE FEMALES AND 5,409 THIRD-GENDER ELECTORS, ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THIS ROUND AND 9.47 LAKH POLLING OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN DEPLOYED ACROSS 94,732 POLLING STATIONS
AMONG THE SEATS GOING TO POLLS, 13 ARE IN MAHARASHTRA, 14 IN UTTAR PRADESH, SEVEN IN WEST BENGAL, FIVE IN BIHAR, THREE IN JHARKHAND, FIVE IN ODISHA, ONE IN J-K AND THE LONE SEAT IN LADAKH. THIS ROUND COVERS THE LEAST NUMBER OF SEATS (49) IN THE SEVEN-PHASE ELECTIONS
IT IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT PHASE FOR THE BJP AS OVER 40 OF THESE SEATS WERE WITH THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (NDA)

(Bhiwandi) are among the key nominees of the BJP, which has also fielded prominent lawyer Ujjwal Nikam (Mumbai North Central), Shiv Sena's Shrikant Shinde (Kalyan) and city Congress chief Varsha Gaikwad (Mumbai North Central) are also among the candidates in this phase, which is the last for the state in this election.

In Uttar Pradesh, Rajnath Singh (Lucknow), Irani (Amethi), Jyoti, Kaushal Kishor (Mohanalganj) and Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma (Jalaun) are the five Union ministers in the fray. Voting will also take

place for the Assembly bypolls to the Lucknow East Assembly constituency.

Rahul Gandhi, who has contested from Wayanad in Kerala, is also in the fight for Rae Bareilly, a Nehru-Gandhi family pocket borough represented by his mother Sonia Gandhi since 2004. The BJP has fielded UP minister Dinesh Pratap Singh. In Amethi, Irani, who had defeated Rahul Gandhi in 2019, is seeking a second term, while KL Sharma, an aide of the Gandhi family, has been fielded by the Congress. Senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh is eyeing a fourth term from

BJP sees AAP as challenge: Kejriwal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Sunday claimed the BJP has launched a campaign to crush AAP as the saffron party sees it as a challenge.

He also urged party workers and leaders to be braced for even bigger challenges. AAP's march towards the BJP headquarters in the national capital was stopped midway as party leaders and workers raised slogans against the saffron party and hailed Kejriwal.

Kejriwal had Saturday said that he and other AAP leaders would march to the BJP headquarters "so that the Prime Minister can send anyone he wishes to jail".

The BJP is saying it will send AAP MP Raghav Chadha and Delhi ministers Atishi and

Saurabh Bharadwaj to jail, he had claimed, hours after his aide Bibhav Kumar was arrested in connection with the "assault" on party MP Swati Maliwal. AAP later said in a statement,

Addressing party workers and leaders ahead of the march, Kejriwal said there will be bigger challenges ahead and asked the cadre to be prepared.

"The Prime Minister has made up his mind to completely destroy and crush the Aam Aadmi Party, for which he has started an operation called 'Operation Jhadoo'," Kejriwal said. A 'jhadoo' or broom is AAP's election symbol.

"How did I come to know about this? There are many people who go to meet the prime minister, many of them know us too. So, after meeting him (Modi), they tell us, and almost everyone has the same version, that the first thing the Prime Minister talks about is that these Aam Aadmi Party people are growing very fast," Kejriwal claimed.

"Before this party (AAP) grows too big and becomes a challenge for the BJP in the future, Aam Aadmi Party should be crushed here itself. Under this operation, big leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party will be arrested, they are being arrested," the Delhi Chief Minister claimed.

Kejriwal should break silence: BJP

New Delhi: The BJP Sunday said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should not indulge in theatrics and instead break his "silence" on the alleged assault on AAP MP Swati Maliwal by his aide Bibhav Kumar. The reaction came after Kejriwal led a massive Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) protest near the BJP headquarters here against Kumar's arrest in connection with the incident.

SNIPPETS

Key Antarctica meetings begin in Kochi today

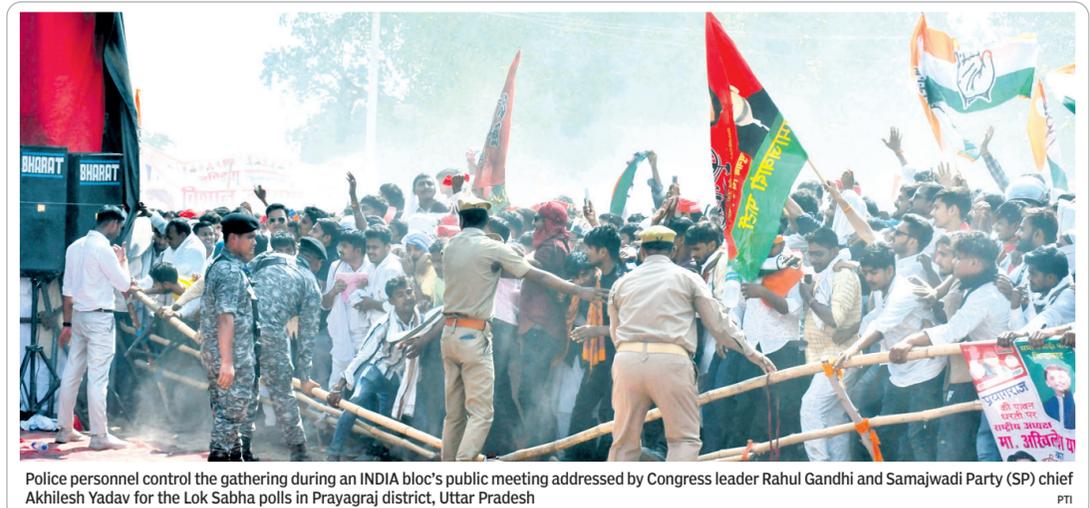
New Delhi: The 46th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting begins in Kochi Monday under the shadow of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, an issue that has been affecting the discussions for the past two years. The 10-day deliberations among signatory nations to the Antarctic Treaty are expected to focus on collaboration between parties on research and exchanging information on plans for sustainable management of resources in the icy continent. Also on the agenda for the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) is the development of a framework for regulating tourism in Antarctica, given the pristine and delicate nature of the continent, and applications by Belarus and Canada for consultative status at the deliberations.

Teacher jailed for saying 'nobody should vote for Modi'

Muzaffarpur: A government school teacher in Bihar has been arrested and sent to jail for allegedly telling children in his class "nobody should vote for Modi", an official said Sunday. According to Muzaffarpur SSP Rakesh Kumar, the teacher has been booked for violating the election model code of conduct, after an FIR lodged by the district education officer. DEO Ajay Kumar Singh said teacher Harendra Rajak's conduct was brought to his notice by family members of a number of students of the government secondary school at Amrakh in Kurhani block. "A written complaint was submitted by the family members that children were being told by the teacher that nobody should vote for Modi since foodgrains unfit for human consumption were being distributed under the free ration scheme", the DEO said.

Another mix-up in surgery at Kerala hospital

Kozhikode (Kerala): Allegations of medical negligence continued to haunt the Government Medical College Hospital here, with a man lodging a complaint with the police Sunday alleging that an implant meant for another patient was wrongly inserted into his broken hand. The fresh allegations surfaced just days after a doctor was suspended for allegedly operating on the tongue of a four-year-old girl, instead of surgically removing the child's sixth finger. An officer of the Medical College police station said an FIR is being lodged over the alleged mix-up that took place at the Medical College Hospital Saturday. "The man has raised some suspicions regarding his surgery. A detailed investigation is required to ascertain the claim in the complaint," the officer told PTI. The man was admitted to the Government Medical College Hospital for surgery after being referred from the Beach Hospital (Government General Hospital), where he was admitted following a road accident. The error in the treatment was reportedly detected in an X-ray after the surgery. There was no immediate reaction from the hospital or the state health department on the issue.



Police personnel control the gathering during an INDIA bloc's public meeting addressed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav for the Lok Sabha polls in Prayagraj district, Uttar Pradesh

CISF to take over Parl security from today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: More than 3,300 CISF personnel will take over the complete counterterrorism and anti-sabotage security duties at the Parliament complex from Monday following the withdrawal of over 1,400 CRPF staff from the country's most important symbol of democracy, official sources said.

The Parliament duty group

(PDG) of the CRPF wound up its entire administrative and operational paraphernalia - vehicles, weapons and commandos - from of the complex Friday and its commander, a deputy inspector general (DIG)-rank officer, handed over all the security points in the complex to the incoming CISF group. A total of 3,317 Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel are being inducted for securing both the old and new

Parliament buildings and the associated structures in this complex located in central Delhi, a senior officer told PTI.

In a major security breach on the anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, two persons jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour December 13, 2023, released yellow smoke from canisters and shouted slogans before being overpowered by MPs.

Man stripped, dragged, tied to motorbike for 'cow smuggling'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Garhwa, May 19: A 60-year-old man was allegedly stripped and dragged after being tied to a motorcycle by three persons on suspicion of cow smuggling in Jharkhand's Garhwa district, police said Sunday.

The incident occurred near Amrora village, around 275 km from Jharkhand's capital Ranchi, when the man, identified as Surswati Ram was on his way to Banshidhar Nagar Untari with his cattle Friday afternoon.

Banshidhar Nagar Untari sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Satyendra Narayan Singh said that an FIR has been lodged in this regard.

"According to the FIR, three persons, identified as Rahul Dubey, Rajesh Dubey and Kashinath Bhuiyan, were on a motorcycle. They intercepted the old man and accused him of being involved in cow smuggling," Singh said.

They also stripped the old man and tied him to their motorcycle. "They dragged me to some distance and escaped after leaving me on the road," Ram stated in the FIR. The old man was brought to Banshidhar Nagar Untari sub-divisional hospital for treatment. Singh said Kashinath Bhuiyan was arrested, while search operation is on to nab the rest of the accused.

Unrelenting heat disrupts daily life in swathes of India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: The unrelenting heat turned daily activities into an arduous task in large parts of India Sunday, with Najafgarh in southwest Delhi reaching a sweltering 47.8 degrees Celsius - the highest in the country so far this season.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported a severe heat wave in parts of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

Even the hill stations in Himachal Pradesh, safe havens for people escaping the punishing heat in the plains, reeled from the scorching conditions.

Maximum temperatures reached 36 degrees Celsius in Dharamshala, 44.4 degrees in



Una, 42.4 degrees in Bilaspur, 36.6 degrees in Solan and 40 degrees in Kangra.

The Met office has issued a red warning for Delhi, Chandigarh, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, stressing the need for "extreme care for vulnerable people". An orange alert was issued for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Gujarat, emphasising "high health concern" for

vulnerable people, including infants, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases."

The mercury reached or surpassed 47 degrees Celsius in at least eight places across India, with Najafgarh logging a searing 47.8 degrees, making it the warmest place in the country for the second time in the last three days. In the national capital, Pitampura recorded 47 de-

grees Celsius and Mungeshpur 47.7 degrees, at least seven notches above the usual temperature for these areas at this time of the year. According to a new analysis of airport site weather data, Delhi reached or surpassed 40 degrees Celsius on 1,557 days (around 43 per cent) in the last 10 years.

The densely packed city recorded temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius on 1,254 days (around 34 per cent) during 2004-2013 and 1,180 days (around 32 per cent) during 1994-2003, according to the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

The mercury soared to 46.7 degrees Celsius in Rajasthan's Ganganagar, 47.5 degrees in Madhya Pradesh's Datia, 47 degrees in Sirsa and 47.2 degrees in Nuh of Haryana, 46.4

degrees in Punjab's Bathinda, 47.7 degrees in Agra and 47.2 degrees in Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh.

High heat and humidity also troubled residents in coastal areas of Gujarat.

Anna Walnycki, a principal researcher on IIED's human settlements team, said the alarming rise in extreme heat events in India due to climate change is significantly impacting the health, wellbeing and productivity of everyone, especially those living in low-income and informal communities.

Chandni Singh, senior researcher at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements and IPCC lead author, said state and city-level heat action plans are proving "insufficient to deal with the heat we are now experiencing."

international



There is no doubt that my government will survive the floor test. The differences between the ruling alliance and opposition parties will be sorted out through dialogue
PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL PRACHANDA | PM, NEPAL

MUSK UNVEILS STARLINK IN BALI

Tech billionaire Elon Musk launched Sunday his Starlink service in Indonesia's resort island of Bali as the country aims to extend internet to its remote areas. Millions of people in Indonesia, a vast archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, are not currently hooked up to reliable internet services



of the day quote

I'm extremely concerned about this (strengthening of diplomatic ties) because, remember, these are two countries (Russia-China) that do not believe in democracy
GRANT SHAPPS | DEFENCE MINISTER, UNITED KINGDOM

The cooperation between the two armies, between China and Cambodia, is conducive to the security of both countries and the security of the region
WANG WENTIAN | CHINA'S AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA

We want our children to study for free, especially those from poor households because the poverty we have was not created by us. It was created by settlers who took everything, including our land. We'll take all those things back, make money and educate our children
JACOB ZUMA | FORMER PRESIDENT, SOUTH AFRICA

New cracks in Israel's ruling coalition

AN ULTIMATUM RAISES PRESSURE ON NETANYAHU TO MAKE POSTWAR PLANS FOR GAZA, EVEN AS FIGHTING RAGES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, May 19: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under mounting pressure from his own War Cabinet and his country's closest ally over postwar plans for Gaza, even as the war with Hamas shows no sign of ending. On Saturday, Benny Gantz, a member of the War Cabinet and Netanyahu's main political rival, said he would leave the government June 8 if it did not formulate a new war plan including an international, Arab and Palestinian administration to handle civilian affairs in Gaza. Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, the third member of the Cabinet, has also called for a plan for Palestinian administration, and said in a speech this week that he wouldn't agree to Israel governing Gaza itself. The United States has meanwhile called for a revitalized Palestinian Authority to govern

Gaza with assistance from Saudi Arabia and other Arab states ahead of eventual statehood. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan is expected to push those plans when he visits Israel Sunday. So far, Netanyahu has brushed them all off. But Gantz' ultimatum could reduce his margin for maneuver. Netanyahu has ruled out any role for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza, saying he plans to hand civil responsibilities over to local Palestinians unaffiliated with it or Hamas. But he has also said that it's impossible to make any such plans until Hamas is defeated because it has threatened anyone who cooperates with Israel. Netanyahu's government is also deeply opposed to Palestinian statehood. In a statement issued after the ultimatum, Netanyahu said Gantz' conditions would amount to "defeat for Israel, abandoning most of the hostages, leaving Hamas intact and establishing a Palestinian state." Netanyahu added, however, that he still thought the emergency government was important for prosecuting the war, and that he "expects Gantz to clarify his positions to the public." Gantz' departure would leave Netanyahu even more beholden



Something has gone wrong. Essential decisions were not taken. Acts of leadership required to ensure victory were not carried out. A small minority has taken over the command bridge of the Israeli ship and is leading it toward a wall of rocks
BENNY GANTZ | MEMBER, WAR CABINET

to his far-right coalition allies, including National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who could more easily bring down the government if he doesn't meet their demands. They have called for Israel to reoccupy Gaza, encourage the "voluntary emigration" of Palestinians from the territory and reestablish Jewish settlements that were removed in 2005. Critics of Netanyahu, including thousands who have joined weekly protests in recent months, accuse him of prolonging the war for his own po-

litical survival. Gantz, who brought his centrist party into the government days after the October 7 attack that triggered the war, warned Netanyahu not to "choose the path of fanatics and lead the entire nation to the abyss." Netanyahu denies such accusations, saying he is focused on defeating Hamas and that elections would distract from the war effort. Polls indicate Netanyahu would be driven from office if new elections were held, with Gantz most likely to replace him. That would probably mark the

Fresh graft allegations levelled against Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 19: Pakistan's accountability watchdog has levelled fresh corruption allegations against jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, accusing him of "illegally" possessing and selling seven high-value watches and 10 other precious gifts linked to the state gift repository when he was in power, media reports said Sunday. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) launched an inquiry against the 71-year-old Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi over the alleged misuse of the Toshakhana, the state gift repository, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. The beleaguered former first couple has been convicted in earlier Toshakhana corruption cases as well. In January, Khan and Bushra were sentenced to 14 years in jail each by an accountability court for alleged corruption in state gifts they got from the state repository. The sentence was later suspended by the Islamabad High Court (IHC). The previous Toshakhana graft case was filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the charges of hiring the sale of state gifts.

SHORT TAKES

Slovak PM stable

Banska Bystrica: Slovakia's populist Prime Minister, Robert Fico, remained in serious condition Sunday but has been given a positive prognosis four days after he was shot multiple times in an assassination attempt that has sent shockwaves across the deeply polarised European Union nation, the defence minister said. "The worst of what we feared has passed, at least for the moment. But his condition remains serious," Robert Kalinak told reporters. "His condition is stable with a positive prognosis." The country's Specialised Criminal Court in the town of Pezinok Saturday ordered the suspected assailant, who is charged with attempted murder, to remain behind bars.

Floods wreak havoc

Kabul: At least 47 people have died after continued heavy rain and flooding in northern Afghanistan, an official said Sunday, a day after a similar number were killed in a central province. Shamsuddin Mohammedi, head of the information department for Faryab province said, at least 300 hundred houses were destroyed, based on initial reports. On Saturday, at least 50 died in the central province of Ghor, said Mawlawi Abdul Hai Zaem, the head of the province's information department. Last week, flash floods caused by heavy rains devastated villages in northern Afghanistan, killing 315 and injuring over 1,600.

MILITARY MENACE

Myanmar rebel group claims control of town

Naypyidaw: A powerful armed ethnic group in Myanmar said Sunday it had won control over a town in the western state of Rakhine after weeks of fighting, denying accusations it had targeted members of the Muslim-minority Rohingya during the offensive. Khine Thu Kha, a spokesman for the Arakan Army (AA), said its soldiers had taken Buthidaung near Myanmar's border with Bangladesh, marking another battlefield defeat for the ruling junta that is fighting opposition groups on multiple fronts. "We have conquered all the bases in Buthidaung and also took over the town yesterday," Khine Thu Kha told Reuters by telephone. Some Rohingya activists accuse the AA of targeting the community during the assault on Buthidaung and surrounding areas, forcing many of them to flee for safety. "AA troops came into downtown, forced the people to leave their homes and started torching houses," May San Lwin, co-founder of the Free Rohingya Coalition advocacy group told Reuters, based on what he said were eyewitness accounts. Myanmar has been in turmoil since a 2021 military coup, which led to the rise of the resistance fighting alongside long-established ethnic minority rebel groups. The conflict has escalated since October, when an alliance of ethnic armies including the AA launched a major offensive near the Chinese border, taking swathes of territory from the better-armed junta and presenting its biggest challenge since taking power. The junta has lost control of around half its 5,280 military positions, including outposts, bases and headquarters, according to one estimate.



Congolese army foils coup

Kinshasa: Congo's army says it has "foiled a coup" early Sunday morning and arrested the perpetrators, including several foreigners, following a shootout between armed men in military uniform and guards of a close ally of Congo's president that left three people dead in the capital, Kinshasa. At first, local media identified the armed men as Congolese soldiers but then reported they were linked to self-exiled opposition leader Christian Malanga who later posted a video on Facebook threatening President Felix Tshisekedi. Tshisekedi was re-elected as president in December in a chaotic vote amid calls for a revote from the opposition over what they said was a lack of transparency. Congolese army spokesperson Brigadier General Sylvain Ekenge said on state television Sunday that the attempted coup d'etat was "nipped in the bud by Congolese defence and security forces and the situation is under control." He did not give further details. This also came amid a crisis gripping Tshisekedi's ruling party over an election for the parliament's leadership which was supposed to be held Saturday but got postponed. Footage, seemingly from the area, showed military trucks and heavily armed men parading deserted streets in the neighbourhood as the army said the situation has been brought under control. Meanwhile, the self-exiled Malanga appeared in the live-streamed video surrounded by several people in military uniform and said "Felix you're out, we are coming for you". Tshisekedi hasn't so far addressed the public about Sunday's events. The United States Embassy in Congo issued a security alert Sunday, urging caution after reports of gunfire.

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Mount Ibu erupts; 7 villages evacuated

JAKARTA: A volcano on the remote Indonesian island of Halmahera has spectacularly erupted, spewing a grey ash cloud into the sky, and people from seven nearby villages have been evacuated, authorities said Sunday. Mt Ibu erupted Saturday evening, sending ash 4 km high, as streaks of purple lightning flashed around its crater, according to information and images shared by Indonesia's volcanology agency. A joint team comprised of police, military and search and rescue officials was dispatched to the area to evacuate residents from surrounding villages. Abdul Muhari, from the disaster mitigation agency, said in a statement. Photos shared by the disaster agency showed authorities assisting the elderly, while other residents were moved in pick-up trucks and accommodated in emergency tents for the night. Authorities have recommended that a 7-km radius be cleared. Indonesia's volcanology agency raised the alert level of the volcano to the highest level Thursday, after Ibu erupted multiple times earlier this month. Ibu's activities follow a series of eruptions of different volcanoes in Indonesia, which sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" and has 127 active volcanoes. Flash floods and cold lava flow from Mount Marapi, one of the most active in West Sumatra province, covered several nearby districts following torrential rain on May 11, killing more than 60 people. In recent weeks, North Sulawesi's Ruang volcano has also erupted, spewing incandescent lava. The eruption prompted authorities to evacuate more than 12,000 people on a nearby island.



Lightning appears amid a storm as Mount Ibu spews volcanic material during an eruption, as seen from Gam Ici in West Halmahera, North Maluku province, Indonesia

Trade ties with India stopped due to 'heavy duties': Pak min



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, May 19: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has said that trade ties between Islamabad and New Delhi have remained suspended since 2019 due to the imposition of "heavy duties" by India on imports from Pakistan after the Pulwama attack. In a written reply submitted to the National Assembly Saturday, Dar, who also holds the deputy Prime Minister's slot, said: "India decided to impose 200 per cent duty on imports from Pakistan, suspended the Kashmir bus service and trade across the Line of Control after the Pulwama attack."

According to the Dawn newspaper, Dar was responding to a question by Pakistan Peoples Party lawmaker Sharmila Faruqi seeking details about trade challenges faced by Pakistan in its relations with neighbouring countries, especially India. Pakistan downgraded its ties with India after the Indian Parliament suspended Article 370 August 5, 2019, a decision that Islamabad believed undermined the environment for holding talks between the neighbours. "We have consistently advocated constructive engagement and result-oriented dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir with India," Dar said Saturday. The foreign minister said that the "onus is now on Delhi to take steps for the creation of an environment that is conducive to peace and dialogue".

Thotakura becomes 1st Indian space tourist

JEFF BEZOS' BLUE ORIGIN RESUMES SPACE TOURISM FLIGHTS AFTER TWO-YEAR HIATUS

Washington, May 19: Gopi Thotakura, an entrepreneur and a pilot, Sunday became the first Indian to venture into space as a tourist aboard Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin's NS-25 mission. Thotakura was selected as one of the six crew members for the NS-25 mission, making him the first Indian space tourist and the second Indian to venture into space after the Indian Army's Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma in 1984. Blue Origin's seventh human flight, NS-25, lifted off from Launch Site One in West Texas Sunday morning, the company announced on social media. This mission was the seventh human flight for the New Shepard programme and the 25th in its history. To date, the pro-

gramme has flown 31 humans above the Karman line, the proposed conventional boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space. New Shepard is a fully reusable sub-orbital launch vehicle developed for space tourism by Blue Origin. According to Blue Origin, "Gopi is a pilot and aviator who learned how to fly before he could drive." He co-founded Preserve Life Corp, a global centre for holistic wellness and applied health located near Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. In addition to flying jets commercially, he pilots bush, aerobatic, and seaplanes, as well as gliders and hot air balloons, and has served as an international medical jet pilot. A lifelong traveller, his most recent adventure took him to



the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Andhra Pradesh-born Thotakura is a graduate of Embury-Riddle Aeronautical University. Other crew members of the flight include Mason Angel, Sylvain Chiron, Kenneth L Hess, Carol Schaller, and former Air

Force Captain Ed Dwight, who was selected by President John F Kennedy in 1961 as the nation's first Black astronaut candidate but was never granted the opportunity to fly to space. During the flight, each astronaut carries a postcard to space on behalf of Blue Origin's foun-

datation, Club for the Future. This programme gives students access to space on Blue Origin's rockets, including an all-digital method to create and send postcards. The Club's mission is to inspire and mobilise future generations to pursue careers in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) for the benefit of Earth. New Shepard's engine is fuelled by highly efficient liquid oxygen and hydrogen. During the flight, the only byproduct is water vapour with no carbon emissions, the company said. Jeff Bezos' space company had paused its suborbital tourism programme following a liftoff malfunction of the New Shepard rocket. In September 2022, an uncrewed flight of New Shepard ended in flames around a minute after liftoff.

of the day quote

I think India, at this point, is one of the strongest markets in the world with its fundamentals. When I look at the opportunity in India... it is a high-growth market and has enterprise needs, so that is a great fit for us

MATT HICKS | CEO, RED HAT

We are at the end of Q4 earnings. Positive earnings reports could provide some relief in this uncertain market

PRAVESH GOUR | SENIOR TECHNICAL ANALYST, SWASTIKA INVESTMART

I see a doubling of the demand (for zinc) in the next five to 10 years. The market for primary and refined zinc in India is currently close to 800 to 1,000 tonne (per annum) and has a great opportunity to increase with all the developments that we are witnessing in India

MARTIN VAN LEEUWEN | GLOBAL DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL ZINC ASSOCIATION

SHORT TAKES

Mcap of 8 of top ten 10 firms rises

New Delhi: Eight of the top-10 most valued firms added ₹1,47,935.19 crore in market valuation last week, with Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) and Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest gainers. Last week, the BSE benchmark climbed 1,341.47 points or 1.84 per cent. The National Stock Exchange (NSE) and BSE conducted a special trading session in the equity and equity derivative segments May 18 to check their preparedness for handling major disruptions or failures at the primary site. Reliance Industries continued to remain the most valued firm, followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, LIC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC.

Tata Motors hikes investment outlay

New Delhi: Tata Motors group has raised its investment outlay for FY25 to ₹43,000 crore for new products and technologies, with its British arm Jaguar Land Rover absorbing the maximum share, according to a senior company official. In FY24, Tata Motors group had given a guidance of 3 billion pound investment for Jaguar Land Rover (about ₹30,000 crore) and ₹8,000 crore for Tata Motors -- a total of about ₹38,000 crore. "Investment by JLR ended at 3.3 billion pounds (more than ₹33,000 crore), and Tata Motors did more than ₹8,200 crore. So, the total we ended was at about ₹41,200 crore investment in FY24," Tata Motors Group CFO PB Balaji said in an earnings conference.

Nayara petrol sales jump, exports drop

New Delhi: Nayara Energy, India's largest private fuel retailer, posted a 48 per cent jump in petrol sales in the first quarter of the 2024 calendar year, while exports dropped as the firm met rising local demand for fuel. In the January-March quarter, Nayara sold 70 per cent of all petroleum products it produced at its Vadinar oil refinery in Gujarat in the local Indian market, a company statement said. "Nayara Energy is primarily focused on catering to the growing demand of petroleum products in India through institutional business, sales to other oil companies and through its own retail chain," it added.



High airfares remain a challenge that impacts India's leisure and business travelers

MADHAVAN MENON | EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, THOMAS COOK

PURI TAKES CHARGE AS CII PREZ

Sanjiv Puri, Chairman and Managing Director of ITC, has assumed office as the president of the Confederation of Indian Industry for 2024-25, the chamber said Sunday. He takes over from R Dinesh, Chairman of TVS Supply Chain Solutions. Puri heads ITC Ltd, a conglomerate with businesses in FMCG, hotels, paperboards & packaging, agribusiness, and IT



POLL JITTERS FPIs on selling spree

FOREIGN INVESTORS WITHDRAW ₹28,200 CR FROM INDIAN EQUITIES ON ATTRACTIVE CHINESE MARKET VALUATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: Foreign investors have pulled out a massive ₹28,200 crore from Indian equities so far this month, owing to uncertainties about the outcome of the general elections and attractive valuations of Chinese markets.

The withdrawal was way higher than a net pullout of over ₹8,700 crore in April on concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields. Before that, FPIs made a net investment of ₹35,098 crore in March and ₹1,539 crore in February.

"Going forward, there is likely to be a dramatic change in foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs) equity flows in response to election results. Political stability will attract huge inflows in the Indian market, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said. Following the Lok Sabha elections, FPI inflows into India could strengthen due to three key factors -- potential easing of interest rates by the US Federal Reserve, positive resolutions in global geopolitical tensions and India's increasing weight in the MSCI Emerging Markets Index projected to exceed 20 per cent by mid-2024, Karthick Jonagada, smallcase Manager and founder,

Quantace Research, said. According to the data with the depositories, foreign portfolio investors experienced a net outflow of ₹28,242 crore in equities this month (till May 17).

"There are two main reasons why FPIs have been selling in FY2025. First, there's uncertainty about the general elections. FPIs generally don't like uncertainty; they prefer to play it safe and lock in the profit they made last year. Second, the market valua-

ing geopolitical crisis in the Middle East, relative valuation discomfort, and the strength of US bond yields," Vipul Bhowar, Director, Listed Investments, Waterfield Advisors, said.

DEBT MARKET SHINES
On the other hand, FPIs invested ₹178 crore in the debt market during the period under review.

"With economic challenges, such as recessionary pressures and inflationary concerns, along with geopolitical tensions, it's not surprising to see volatility in FPIs. This situation has made investors cautious," Bharat Dhawan, Managing Partner of Mazars in India, said.

Before this outflow, foreign investors put in ₹13,602 crore in March, ₹22,419 crore in February, and ₹19,836 crore in January. This inflow was driven by the upcoming inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JP Morgan Index.

JP Morgan Chase & Co in September last year announced that it will add Indian government bonds to its benchmark emerging market index from June 2024. This landmark inclusion is anticipated to benefit India by attracting around \$20-40 billion in the subsequent 18 to 24 months.

Overall, FPIs withdrew a net amount of ₹26,000 crore in equities in 2024 so far. However, they invested ₹45,000 crore in the debt market.

The withdrawal was way higher than a net pullout of over ₹8,700 crore in April

tions are high," MojoPMS Chief Investment Officer Sunil Damania said. "In addition, FPIs are reallocating funds to China and Hong Kong, which are trading at attractive (cheaper) valuations compared to Indian stocks," Anirudh Naha, CIO-Alternatives of PGIM India Asset Management, said.

Vijayakumar believes that the main trigger for the FPI selling has been the outperformance of the Kong Kong index Hang Seng, which shot up by 19.33 per cent during the last one month. They are moving money from expensive markets like India to cheap markets like Hong Kong.

"Further, FPIs withdrawal could be attributed to the ongo-

GDP growth may be 6.7% in Q4; 7% in FY24: Ind-RA

Indian economy grew 8.2% in June quarter, 8.1% in Sept quarter and 8.4% in Dec quarter of 2023-24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: India Ratings and Research expects the country's GDP growth rate for the March quarter at 6.7 per cent and around 6.9-7 per cent for the 2023-24 fiscal, its principal economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said.

The GDP numbers for the fourth quarter (January-March 2024) and the provisional estimates for the 2023-24 fiscal are scheduled to be released by the government May 31.

"We are expecting the fourth quarter growth to be 6.7 per cent and the overall GDP growth for FY24 to be around 6.9-7 per cent,"

Sinha told PTI Videos in an interview.

He said the growth rate in the first two quarters benefited from a low base, though the 8.4 per cent growth rate in the third (October-December 2023) quarter was surprising.

"When we analyse the data, then what is visible is the wedge between the GVA and GDP. A large impetus to Q3 GDP has come from higher tax collection, but this phenomenon is unlikely to be repeated in the fourth quarter. The wedge between the GDP and GVA is unlikely to be repeated in the fourth quarter," he noted.

BIZ GROWTH IN FY24 BoM tops among PSU banks

BANK OF MAHARASHTRA WAS FOLLOWED BY SBI, BOI AND CANARA BANK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: State-owned Bank of Maharashtra recorded the highest growth rate last fiscal in terms of total business and deposit mobilisation among public sector lenders at a time when most banks are facing difficulty in achieving double-digit growth.

The Pune-headquartered lender has registered a 15.94 per cent rise in the total business (domestic) in FY24, followed by the country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) with 13.12 per cent growth, according to published financial numbers of the public sector banks (PSBs).

However, SBI's total business (deposit and advances) was about 16.7 times higher at ₹79,52,784 crore compared to ₹4,74,411 crore of Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) in absolute terms.



Similarly, BoM continued to maintain its top spot in terms of growth in deposit mobilisation, with a 15.66 per cent rise in FY24. It was followed by SBI (11.07 per cent), Bank of India (11.05 per cent) and Canara Bank (10.98 per cent).

Out of 12 public sector banks, only these four lenders could log a double-digit growth in deposits in the financial year 2023-

24. In terms of low-cost CASA deposits, the Bank of Maharashtra continued to top the chart with 52.73 per cent growth, followed by the Central Bank of India with a 50.02 per cent rise at the end of March 2024.

A higher level of current account and savings accounts helps banks to keep their cost of funds low.

With regard to loan growth, the Kolkata-based UCO Bank was a tad higher at 16.38 per cent, followed by BoM at 16.30 per cent. SBI also reported 16.26 per cent growth in advances in FY24.

Loan growth of remaining public sector banks was lower than 16 per cent during the fiscal.

On the asset quality side, the Bank of Maharashtra and SBI reported the lowest gross non-performing assets with 1.88 per cent and 2.24 per cent, respectively as of March 31, 2024. In terms of net NPAs, BoM and Indian Bank reported the lowest numbers, with 0.2 per cent and 0.43 per cent respectively.

In terms of capital adequacy ratio, the Bank of Maharashtra was leading PSBs at 17.38 per cent, followed by Indian Overseas Bank at 17.28 per cent and Punjab & Sind Bank at 17.16 at the end of FY24.

Reliance seeks access to ATF pipelines, storages of oil PSUs

ATF DEMAND IN INDIA IS GROWING IN DOUBLE DIGITS AS MORE PEOPLE FLY. IT ROSE BY 11.8% IN FY24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: Reliance Industries Ltd has sought access to pipelines and storages that public sector oil companies have built over the years for supplying jet fuel (ATF) from depots and oil refineries to airports, as it looks for a larger pie of fuel trade at some of Asia's busiest airports.

Reliance, which produces a fourth of India's aviation turbine fuel (ATF), wants access to storage depots outside the Delhi airport as well as to pipelines leading to Mumbai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad airports. It currently supplies small volumes of ATF when compared with supplies made by state-owned firms.

The firm made the suggestion in its comments to oil regulator PNGRB's draft regulation

calling for supply of ATF in all existing and future airports through pipelines that can be accessed by any supplier so as to bring in competition and cut fuel cost.

While the fuel market is open, airplanes at the country's busiest airports are fed by pipelines that were built by state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) over decades.

Reliance, which has been for more than a decade now seeking access to pipelines that supply ATF to airports especially at Mumbai, stated that "the common carrier pipeline scope (which gives third parties access to pipelines built by PSUs) should encompass the associated storage facilities and pumping stations at the 'off-site' oil ter-



minal facilities as they form an integral part of the ATF supply chain."

"This will promote a competitive market for supply and distribution of ATF to the airport 'on-site' storage facilities," it said.

Out of the 17.12 million tonne of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) produced by public and private sector refineries, 8.2 million tonne is consumed within the country and the rest is exported.

of storage they can't supply much.

Reliance said it was "necessary to declare off-site ATF storage facilities at Bijwasan (outside the airport) as common user facility so that other suppliers or interested airlines can position ATF at the Bijwasan common user facility through rail wagons and use the common carrier pipeline from Bijwasan."

For Mumbai, the second biggest hub, the firm wanted two ATF pipelines of HPCL and BPCL that bring fuel from the two refineries of the PSUs in the city, to be operated on a common carrier basis by giving other companies the right to use them.

For Bangalore, which is home to the third largest airport in the country, Reliance wanted tie-in connection to the common carrier pipeline from the upcoming ATF tank farm at PL's marketing terminal at Devangonthi as bringing products through tanker trucks to

the airport fuel farm was not feasible in view of traffic woes.

While the pipeline supply to Hyderabad airport is operated on a common carrier open access basis, Reliance wanted the capacity of the pipeline to be increased to accommodate future demand and allow access to the storage tanks and rail wagon unloading facilities at Malkapur.

It made similar suggestions for Kochi and Lucknow airports.

"Pipelines are an efficient, economical and safe mode of bulk transportation from supply installations to demand centres and these measures (proposed by PNGRB) will promote competition, ensure compliance with environmental and safety statutes and avoid infructuous investments by optimum utilisation of product storage and pipeline infrastructure," Reliance said.

Such competition, it said, will benefit airline companies, which incur one-third of their cost on fuel.

MFs invest ₹1.3L-cr in equities in 2024

Notwithstanding occasional challenges, the Indian stock markets have generally shown a positive trajectory, thus catching investors' interest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 19: Mutual funds (MFs) showed strong confidence in Indian equities this year, injecting around ₹1.3 lakh crore, driven mainly by significant retail investor interest and the robust performance of the stock market.

Mutual funds, which manage long-term wealth for domestic investors, prioritise the Indian market's underlying growth potential and are less rattled by short-term events like elections, which allows them to keep investing in equities, Tradejini COO Trivish D said.

Additionally, the growing interest in systematic investment plans (SIPs) on the back of astonishing compounding stories by influencers and industry veterans has perked investors, who otherwise wish to stay away from the markets, to start participating through these mutual funds, he added.

According to the data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), MFs invested ₹26,038 crore in the first fortnight of the ongoing month and ₹20,155 crore in April. Moreover, the highest MF buying for 2024 was experienced in March, as they put in a net of ₹44,233 crore.

STRONG MKT PERFORMANCE



Also, they invested ₹14,295 crore in February and ₹23,010 crore in January. With the latest deployment, mutual funds investment in equities reached around ₹1.3 lakh crore in 2024 (till May 16), the data showed.

In stark contrast, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been withdrawing money from equities and pulled out over ₹25,000 crore this year so far, owing to a volatile global environment, uncertainty over rate cuts, and profit booking. This is a great sign for the Indian markets, symbolising the falling dependency on foreign money and the strengthening of retail individ-

uals and DIIs, including mutual funds, to keep markets afloat. "The Indian market's fundamentals remain robust. The GDP is projected to grow at a steady rate of 7 per cent for FY25, and the fiscal deficit has decreased to 5.8 per cent, the lowest level in five years. Additionally, the steady increase in SIP contributions, which reached a new peak of ₹20,371 crore in April 2024, indicates that investors are becoming more disciplined and confident in the market," Feroze Azeez, Deputy CEO, Anand Rathi Wealth Ltd, said.

"Equity has been one of the best-performing asset classes in recent years, and consequently receiving robust flows from domestic investors like mutual funds

HIMANSHU SRIVASTAVA | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR MANAGER RESEARCH, MORNINGSTAR INVESTMENT RESEARCH INDIA

Chirag, Satwik cruise to title

SECOND TOURNAMENT VICTORY OF THE SEASON FOR INDIAN PAIR AHEAD OF THE PARIS OLYMPICS



STANDING TALL: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty pose with their medals Sunday after winning the doubles title at the Thailand Open

Bangkok, May 19: In a confidence-boosting performance ahead of Paris Olympics, star Indian shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty won Sunday the Thailand Open Super 500 badminton tournament with a straight-game victory over Chen Bo Yang and Liu Yi of China, here.

Satwik and Chirag, the World No.3 pair, prevailed 21-15, 21-15 over Liu and Chen, ranked 29th, for their ninth BWF world tour title in men's doubles. It was also the second title of the season for the Asian Games champions following their triumph at the French Open Super 750 in March.

"It has been a lucky tournament for us. The journey started from here. We lifted this title in 2019 and again we are lifting it here now. After 2019, we went on to win many tournaments and, hopefully, we will continue doing so," Satwik said after the win.

"They (opponents) keep on playing fast and we knew we couldn't relax. Overall, I think it's the best match we played throughout the tournament. We were calm and kept things under control and we are happy we played well," Satwik stated.

Sunrisers ride on Abhishek knock



Abhishek Sharma of SRH pulls a delivery during his match-winning knock against PBKS, Sunday

KADAM SEALS GAMES BERTH

New Delhi: Ace para-shuttler Sukant Kadam has sealed his berth for the upcoming Paralympics Games in Paris and will compete in the quadrennial mega event for the first time and represent the country in the men's SL 4 category, officials said here Sunday. The Paralympic Games will be held in Paris from August 28 to September 8. "This is a dream come true for me, I have worked really hard to qualify for the Paralympics," Kadam said from Bahrain.

Hyderabad, May 19: Abhishek Sharma (66, 28b, 5x4, 6x6) bossed the bowlers of Punjab Kings (PBKS) with yet another explosive half century as Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) cruised to a four-wicket win in their IPL encounter here Sunday. Opting to bat on a flat track, Punjab Kings posted an imposing 214/5 riding on Prabhsimran Singh's (71, 45b, 7x4, 4x6) fine knock and skipper Jitesh Sharma's final over heroics (32 n o, 15b, 2x4, 2x6). But SRH looked in complete control of the tall chase even after losing Travis Head off the first ball and chased down the target with five balls to spare. The win took SRH to second place in the table with 17 points from 14 matches as they would need to wait for the result for the match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

(RR). RR, who have 16 points, can topple SRH for the prized No 2 spot with a win over KKR in Guwahati. Finishing inside the top-two gives the teams an extra chance of making the final. Abhishek went about his business with utmost nonchalance for a 21-ball 50, his third half century of the season. Henrich Klaasen (42, 26b, 3x4, 2x6) Rahul Tripathi (33) and Nitish Reddy (37) made handy contributions in their complete domination act. Shashank Singh dismissed Abhishek against the run of play with the batter getting beaten by a slower ball and ended up gifting a catch to Shivam Singh at covers. However, Klaasen and the others completed the formalities. **Brief scores:** PBKS 214 for 5 (Prabhsimran Singh 71, Rilee Rossouw 49, T Natarajan 2/33) lost to SRH 215 for 6 (Abhishek Sharma 66, Henrich Klaasen 42) by four wickets.

SHORT TAKES

Para-athletes bag 2 medals in Japan

Kobe (Japan): The Indian team picked up their first medals in the World Para Athletics Championships with high jumper Nishad Kumar and 200m runner Preethi Pal winning a silver and bronze respectively here Sunday. Kumar, a Tokyo Paralympics silver medalist, cleared 1.99m to finish second in the men's T47 high jump final and pick up India's first medal on the third day of competitions. Preethi then added a bronze to India's tally after finishing third in women's T35 200m final with a time of 30.49 seconds. Meanwhile Deepthi Jeevanji qualified for the women's T20 400m final after winning her heat race with an Asian record time of 56.18 seconds.

Juve appoint interim coach

Turin (Italy): Juventus under-19 coach Paolo Montero will take charge of the senior team for the final two matches of the season after Massimiliano Allegri was fired last week. The 52-year-old Montero, who played for the Bianconeri, has never coached a Serie A team but Juventus announced Sunday that he would make the step up for the final two league matches. The two games are against Bologna and Monza. Allegri was fired Friday for his ugly outburst toward the referees in last week's Italian Cup final. The coach was also reportedly aggressive towards journalists after the match and Juventus said his behaviour was not in line with its 'values'.

Mbappé dropped from PSG squad

Paris: Kylian Mbappé has been left out of the PSG squad traveling to Metz for the final league game of the season to be played Sunday. PSG have already been crowned champion for a record-extending 12th time. The star striker is leaving PSG after seven seasons. Asked to comment, PSG did not give a reason to justify Mbappé's absence. The forward, who is widely expected to join Real Madrid, is not in the list of PSG players who are not available because of an injury. Mbappé incidentally is the club's all-time top goalscorer with 256 goals, including 191 in the league.

Rohit slams broadcaster for 'breach' of privacy

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 19: India skipper Rohit Sharma lashed out Sunday at the IPL broadcaster for 'breaching' cricketers' privacy by recording their conversations with friends and colleagues at training and on match days and then telecasting the contents. Rohit expressed his disappointment after a video involving him and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) assistant coach Abhishek Nayar, in which the former is seen contemplating his future at Mumbai Indians (MI), went viral.



This desire to get exclusive content will one day break the trust between fans and cricketers. Let better sense prevail

"The lives of cricketers have become so intrusive that cameras are now recording every step and conversation we are having in privacy with our friends and colleagues, at training or on match days," Rohit posted on 'X'. "Despite asking Star Sports to not record my conversation, it was and was also then played on air, which is a breach of privacy. The need to get exclusive content and focused only on views and engagement will one day break the trust between the fans, cricketers and broadcasters. Let better sense prevail," Rohit added. Rohit was seen making a request to the broadcasters to shut down the audio while recording him after his chat with Nayar. The conversation between the

two took place after MI's IPL fixture against KKR, May 11. The audio of the chat was posted by KKR on their social media handle and fans assumed that the cricketer is speaking about leaving MI after the ongoing season. Following the controversy, the video was taken down by KKR's social media team. Rohit was once again seen May 17 having a chat with Dhawal Kulkarni ahead of MI's fixture against Lucknow Super Giants. Seeing himself being recorded, the opener, with folded hands, requested the broadcaster to turn off the audio.

Swiatek warms up for Paris

AGENCIES

Rome, May 19: Iga Swiatek refused to take victory at the French Open for granted despite romping to a third title here sweeping aside Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 6-3 in Saturday's final. World No. 1 Swiatek will be red-hot favourite to successfully defend her Roland Garros crown after comfortably prevailing on the clay against second-ranked Sabalenka. In front of a packed centre court crowd Swiatek became the first woman since Serena Williams in 2013 to win on the clay surface at Madrid and Rome in the same season. She can join Williams in a European capital city hat-trick if she wins her fourth French Open title, and third in a row, with the clay-court Grand Slam starting May 26 in Paris.



Iga Swiatek is all smiles as she poses with the trophy after winning the singles title at the Italian Open at Rome

"Obviously I am confident. I feel like I'm playing great tennis but that doesn't change the fact that I just want to stay humble," Swiatek told reporters. "Grand Slams are different. There's a different pressure on the court and off the court. Of course I love to visit Paris and be there. It's a great place for me to be and I really enjoy my time there. But these are a hard seven matches that you need to win so I don't take anything for granted," Swiatek added. Swiatek won her 12th successive match on clay by besting

Belarusian Sabalenka as she did in the recent Madrid final. The Pole took her winning record over Sabalenka to 8-3 in another hugely impressive display from what has been an almost flawless tournament from the four-time Grand Slam winner, who didn't drop a single set on her way to another championship victory. Saturday's match was less dramatic than Madrid's three-set thriller as Sabalenka, who

has won the two most recent Australian Opens, gave herself too much to do. Swiatek took the opening set in just 36 minutes in a clinical display of tennis against Sabalenka, who has said repeatedly that Rome is her dream tournament to win. Swiatek broke Sabalenka's serve in game seven of the second set and it was only a matter of time before she closed out the match and championship.

Bhaker shines in Oly selection trials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, May 19: Olympian shooter Manu Bhaker emerged as the most successful athlete in the Olympic Selection Trials (OST) Rifle/Pistol, winning the women's 10m air pistol OST T4 match on the concluding day of the exercise here Sunday. Overall, this was Manu's fourth win in the trials across two events, the other being the women's 25m pistol event. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) conducted a series of four trials in Delhi and Bhopal in pistol and rifle to select the squad for the Paris Olympics. Manu shot 240.8 in the OST T4 10m air pistol final at the MP State Shooting Academy ranges, leaving Hangzhou Asian Games champion Palak a huge 4.4 points behind in second. Rhythm Sangwan took the third spot. Earlier, Elavenil Valarivan won the women's 10m air rifle OST T4 with a score of 254.3, 0.3 above the current world record of 254.0 set by China's Han Jiayu in the ISSF World Cup in Baku this month. Ramita (253.3) and Mehuli Ghosh (230.3) were second and third respectively. Divyansh Panwar won the men's air rifle OST T4 with a score of 253.3, just 0.4 below his own existing world record. Arjun Babuta (250.0) and Rudranksh Patil (229.5) were second and third respectively.

Manchester City create history

FIRST CLUB IN ENGLAND TO WIN FOUR PREMIER LEAGUE TITLES ON THE TROT IN 140 YEARS

AGENCIES

London, May 19: On a day Jurgen Klopp ended his Liverpool tenure with a win, Manchester City entered the history books by becoming the first club in England to bag the Premier League title for four times in succession in 140 years. No other English club have managed to achieve the feat and this will certainly put Pep Guardiola at the top of the podium as one of the greatest coaches of all time. His disciple, Mikel Arteta gave Guardiola a run for his money no doubt, but then Arsenal hobbled at the finishing line. In the end, there was no doubt regarding the best team in England. City hammered West Ham 3-1 in their last game to ensure that their name is scripted in history. Arsenal again stuttered before winning 2-1 against Everton while Liverpool gave Klopp a fitting farewell with a 2-0 win over the Wolves as the 'toughest' league in the world



JUBILATIONS BEGIN: Phil Foden of Manchester City celebrates after scoring the first goal against West Ham as teammates run to congratulate him

ended Sunday. In the end, City showed that they had the power and the resilience to stay focused when it mattered, the most. Goals by Phil Foden (2nd and 18th) and Rodri (59th) were the perfect riposte that Guardiola had for all his critics. Coming into the game, City knew they had to win, and they did not leave anything to chance with Foden getting into the act twice within

the first 20 minutes. It was game, set and match for City with the other teams being 'also ran'. City finished with 91 points from 38 games, just ahead of Arsenal who ended with 89. Liverpool were a distant third with 82, but then they had abandoned their chase with more than seven games to go. Arsenal were the only team capable of catching City, if the latter fal-

VERSTAPPEN ON A ROLL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Imola (Italy), May 19: Max Verstappen held off a challenge from McLaren's Lando Norris to win the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix here Sunday and extend his Formula 1 championship lead. Verstappen started on pole position and stayed ahead of Norris at the start but was put under pressure by the McLaren driver again near the end and won by less than a second. "Especially the last 10, 15 laps, I had no grip any more. I was really sliding a lot. I saw Lando closing in," Verstappen said. "It's very difficult when the tires are not working anymore and you have to go flat out, so I couldn't afford to make too many mistakes. Luckily, we didn't and super happy, of course, to win here today," the Dutchman added. It was the defending champion's fifth win in seven Grand Prix races this year. Norris's second place Sunday underlined the McLaren team's credentials to be the closest challenger to Verstappen and Red Bull this season. "It hurts me to



Max Verstappen

say it, but one or two more laps, I think I would have had him," Norris said. "It would have been beautiful, but just not today," he added. Charles Leclerc was third for Ferrari, the Italian team's first podium finish here since 2006. Leclerc closed in on Norris midway through the race but made a mistake and ran across the grass, losing time. Oscar Piastri had qualified second for McLaren but was dropped to fifth because of a penalty for impeding Kevin Magnussen in a Haas. He got ahead of Sainz at the pit stops and finished fourth, ahead of the Spanish driver.