

leisure



KATY BIDS ADIEU TO AMERICAN IDOL

Singer Katy Perry took the *American Idol* stage for the final time as a judge before bidding adieu to the singing-based reality show. Perry, along with names such as Luke Bryan and Lionel Richie, sauntered into the 22nd season finale hand in hand, reports *deadline.com*.

CLARKSON NAMED UK'S SEXIEST MAN

Jeremy Clarkson, aged 64, was crowned the sexiest man in the UK and Ireland for the second time in a row. The English television presenter, journalist, and writer, beat the likes of actors Cillian Murphy, Idris Elba and Tom Holland, as well as Prince William, to secure the top spot.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
If you get a chance to display your presentation skills, don't lose it, says Ganesh. Your eloquence may receive wide acclaim. Your children too may give you reason to be proud. Do remember to take time out for the elderly in your family.

TAURUS
You may feel that you woke up on the wrong side of the bed today, says Ganesh. The day is filled with a fair share of jittery moments and lingering worry. Stand firm and remember that every night has a dawn. The law of averages will make your evening more enjoyable. You may discuss certain intimate issues with your sweetheart for the betterment of your relationship.

GEMINI
Lady Luck is likely to smile on you, foresees Ganesh. You are generally shy, but today is a different day. You will remain outgoing and will be able to freely express your feelings. This temporary change will do a lot of good to your ego, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Those around you have always thought that there is something different about you, but could never put their finger on what exactly it was. You always knew. You are better than them, and today is the day to make them realise that. How? The best course of action is to do your job in the best possible manner.

LEO
Easy come, easy go – that is the best way to sum up money. Try holding on to it, advises Ganesh. As there is a strong possibility that you shall incur a lot of wasteful expenditures today. Always think twice before you spend your hard-earned money. Remember the Grasshopper, cautions Ganesh, and learn from the fable, if not the life philosophies of the famous rich men of our age. Start saving something for a rainy day.

VIRGO
Sense and sensibilities will prevail today as you address relationships. On the emotional front, you may be unclear and oscillate between what you feel and what you really expected of you. But in the end, you may well end up following your inner voice than depend on others. Your intuition is invincibly strong, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
The theatrical you comes to the fore. Ganesh expects you to put up a show in all that you do today, be it a display of devotion to your work, or dedication to your family. You may give the best in the business a run for their money as you prove to be the perfect choice for all tasks assigned to you. A great day at work, and the right amount of affection towards your spouse and children back home – you sure are perfect today!

SCORPIO
Signs indicate you may face unexpected expenses today. But this spending is likely to be on family and friends – especially in entertaining them. But keep track of every penny. To be on the safer side, Ganesh advises you not to have any pockets at all today.

SAGITTARIUS
Pack your bags today for a long business trip, which will bear rich fruits. Be ready to pick up important business pointers and learn your way into your trade. Ganesh predicts pleasant surprises in store later in the day.

CAPRICORN
It's time to party, whether or not you have no reason for it. Friends and even acquaintances will be invited to take part in the celebrations; you will be all charged up to have a blast of a day, says Ganesh. For those engaged in business, profits may come but it won't be the result of the efforts you put in. Any dealings related to real estate and construction will yield good results.

AQUARIUS
You may be sorely disappointed today. With no support from family, and the kids driving you up the wall, you need to keep your cool. Family feuds are highly likely, and neighbours may attempt to interfere. For now, all you need is to remain unruffled, says Ganesh.

PISCES
While you may have a wide circle of acquaintances, it is only a select few who you bless with your munificence. And that is precisely what you will be busy with, as a day filled with socialising and leisure-filled activities beckons, says Ganesh.

Kiara on life, work



Mumbai: Actress Kiara Advani recently made her debut at the 77th Cannes Film Festival, attending the Women in Cinema Gala. On the sidelines of the prestigious event, she opened up in an interview about her professional and personal life, particularly her relationship with actor-husband Sidharth Malhotra.

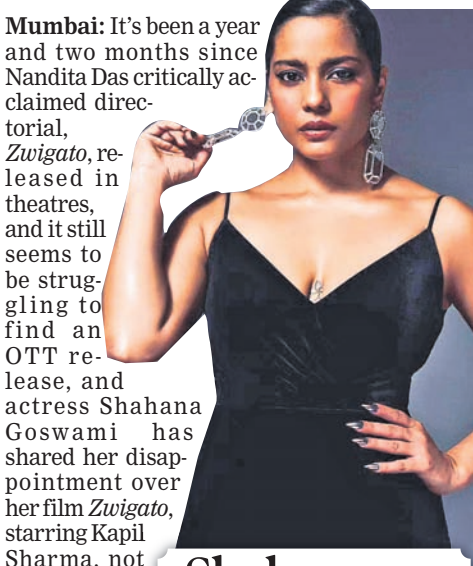
In the interview, Kiara addressed the speculation about their potential future collaborations. She expressed gratitude for the affection they received as a couple through *Shershaah*. "I feel like Shershaah gave us a lot of love as a couple. There's a certain excitement, and people want to see us together," she said.

However, the *Kabir Singh* actress emphasised that any decision to work together again would be based on the appeal of the project itself. She said that they have never really thought of it, like, 'As a couple, how does this work?' "We think we're individual people first and actors first, so that's how we would go about looking for something," Kiara said.

The actress further emphasised that they both love to work together, but the project should be an exciting one.

Kiara and Sidharth tied the knot February 7, 2023, in a private ceremony. Since then, their fans have been eagerly anticipating their next on-

screen pairing. AGENCIES



Mumbai: It's been a year and two months since Nandita Das critically acclaimed directorial, *Zwigato*, released in theatres, and it still seems to be struggling to find an OTT release, and actress Shahana Goswami has shared her disappointment over her film *Zwigato*, starring Kapil Sharma, not getting an OTT release window even after one year of its release.

She said, "It's very unfortunate that *Zwigato* is still not on any OTT platform for viewing, and I honestly don't know the reason behind it. In fact, I keep checking with the makers about when, how, and why, but they also don't have the answers."

The 38-year-old, who played the role of Kapil's onscreen wife Pratima, said, "I know that this film would have been loved by people if they managed to get a chance to watch it. So many people still keep asking about when that will come out on OTT, but I don't know the status. It's very sad."

"I remain hopeful. It's never too late for something good to happen. The long wait for it to appear on an OTT platform might make it even more special. In a year or two, it could become a prized possession. I believe everything happens for the best, so when *Zwigato* finally streams, it will be the right time," she quips. AGENCIES



STARS FULFILL THEIR CIVIC DUTY

Mumbai: One of the most visible features of the just-concluded fifth phase of polling in Mumbai, which also marked the completion of Maharashtra's tryst with the ballot, was the spotlight on Hindi film industry.

As they turned up in casuals, away from the glamour and glitz of events, in cars that ranged from a Maybach (Deepika-Ranveer) to an old-fashioned Maruti (Tabu), followed closely by the paparazzi, the stars obliterated the political figures who usually dominate headlines emanating from Maharashtra.

Even high-profile candidates such as Piyush Goyal and Ujjwal Nikam could not dominate the media mindspace as much as the stars, from Akshay Kumar, who was voting after getting his Indian citizenship, to Shah Rukh Khan, who happily posed for shutterbugs with his wife Gauri and son Aryan, to Amitabh Bachchan, who showed up with wife Jaya, suffering the blazing heat but not showing the least discomfort.

Most of the stars, from Sanya Malhotra to Ranbir Kapoor, were happy to simply flash their inked index finger and not speak, but some, notably Dharmendra, Akshay Kumar, Manoj Bajpayee and Rajkumar Rao, gave statements to the media urging Mumbaiers to vote.

Yet others, such as SRK, Anupam Kher and Paresh Rawal, urged people to not waste the right in statements they put up on their social media handles hours before the fifth phase started at 7 a.m. on Monday.

There was a reason for this constant egging on. Mumbai had recorded a mere 55.11 per cent voter turnout in 2019, which, incidentally, was the highest in three decades – and this was just 4 per cent higher than the percentage recorded in 2014.

And though the final figure is not out yet for the fifth phase, it appears that the Maximum City will again fall short of the tantalising 60 per cent mark that seems to elude it in each election. Ironically, the city's richest and most educated constituency is likely to report the lowest turnout – in the lower 50s. IANS

Mumbai: Actress Jasmin Bhasin is known for her straightforwardness, and recently, she addressed the issue of actors facing criticism for under-

going cosmetic surgeries or any alteration in their appearance. She encountered a social media post where a senior actor was being targeted for looking different, a situation she found unnecessary and toxic. The actress emphasises that such negativity only amplifies insecurities and serves no constructive purpose.

Reflecting on the recent backlash against actor Rajkumar Rao for his jawline surgery, she speaks generally about the pressure actors face to maintain their appearance. She stresses that actors strive to look their best due to the demands of their profession. However, she acknowledges that sometimes things don't go as planned or natural changes occur in the body, emphasising the insensitivity of public scrutiny during such times. AGENCIES

Jasmin highlights the toll such criticism can take on individuals, particularly when they may already be dealing with personal challenges or stress. She questions the need for such harsh attention, noting its potential to exacerbate mental health issues like depression and anxiety.

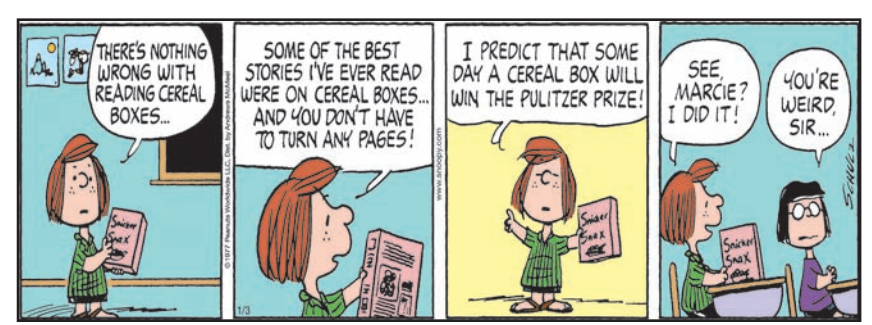
As she continues her work in the industry, Jasmin advocates for a more empathetic approach towards public figures' appearances and personal struggles. AGENCIES

Jasmin slams trolls mocking actors' surgeries

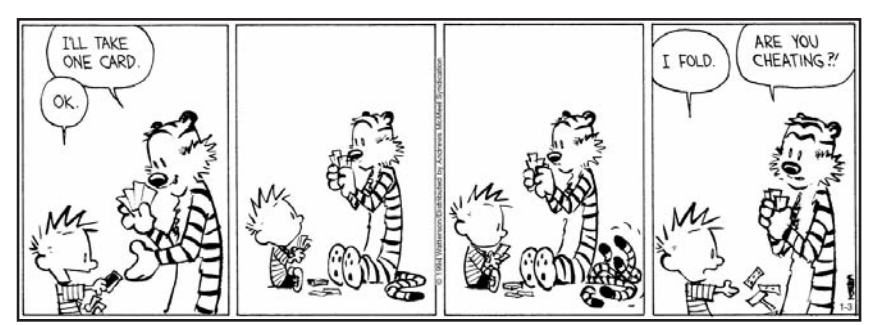


FUN post

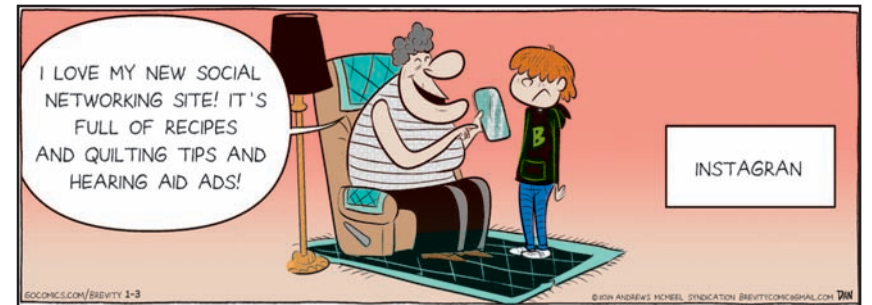
PEANUTS



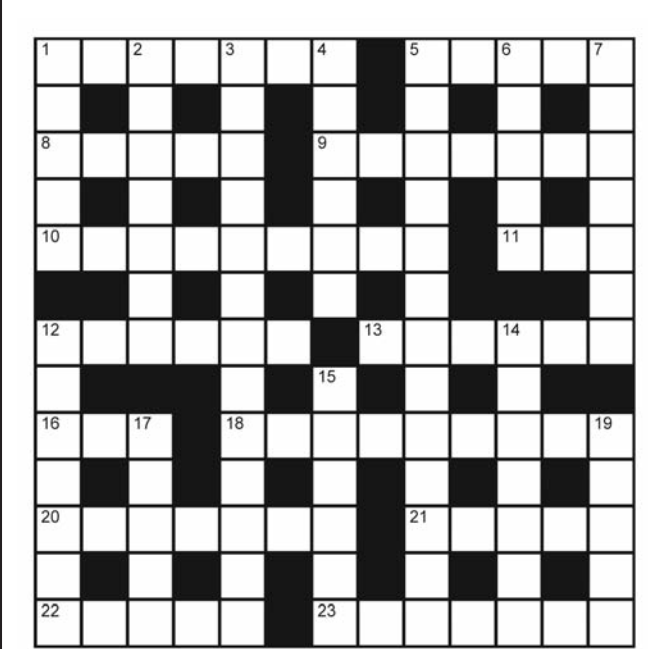
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Kind of penguin
 - 5 Short trip
 - 8 Cut corners
 - 9 Leaves the premises
 - 10 Contrasting
 - 11 Literary olio
 - 12 Farm youngsters
 - 13 Peace officer
 - 16 Dry, as wine
 - 18 Use ballast
 - 20 Bitter
 - 21 Fishing expedition
 - 22 Trip the light fantastic
 - 23 Gofers' trips
 - Down
 - 1 Relaxed
 - 2 Aching
 - 3 Deplorable
 - 4 Brush up on
 - 5 London's bane, circa 19th century (4,3,6)
 - 6 Before modern or sound
 - 7 Florence is there
 - 12 Crème brûlée, e.g.
 - 14 Symbol of purity
 - 15 Lacking social polish
 - 17 Fresh from the shower
 - 19 Decorative jugs

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.

		6		3	5			8
			6			9		
		9	4	7				2
								3
9			3				8	
			5			7		
		5				3		4
	3				1			
2						5		7

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	U	P	A	I	R	S	P	L	U	T	O	
L	A	C	E	R	N	C						
P	E	R	F	E	C	T	I	O	N	I	S	T
H	A	H	T	I	O							
A	S	P	O	V	E	R	S	L	E	E	P	
H	C	E	T	D	U							
C	R	E	A	K	Y	T	E	N	N	I	S	
O	R	E	M	V	A							
C	A	N	D	Y	C	A	N	E	T	O	R	
K	A	G	D	I	A							
P	A	L	A	E	O	N	T	O	L	O	G	Y
I	A	T	E	R	A	N	O					
T	O	A	S	T	R	E	A	S	O	N		

SUDOKU

2	7	8	9	1	6	3	5	4
6	3	1	4	5	8	2	9	7
9	5	4	7	3	2	8	1	6
8	9	2	3	7	1	6	4	5
5	6	3	2	9	4	1	7	8
1	4	7	6	8	5	9	3	2
7	2	9	5	6	3	4	8	1
4	8	5	1	2	9	7	6	3
3	1	6	8	4	7	5	2	9

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Distress sale

Tribals under Dabugaon block in Nabarangpur district resort to distress sale of Sal seeds on account of their lack of awareness about MSP

STATE | P3



Straight talk

Taiwan elects Lai Ching-te as its new president, who promises to maintain the island's democratic status despite Chinese aggression

INTERNATIONAL | P8



Peak power demand

India's peak power demand is hovering near the projected 235 GW level in May, following excessive use of cooling appliances

BUSINESS | P9



IPL Qualifier 1 today

KKR face an unpredictable SRH for a place in the final in a match expected to be a power-hitting slugfest

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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BHUBANESWAR | TUESDAY MAY 21 2024

P1

4 of family killed in Dhenkanal mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, May 20: Four members of a family were killed Monday as the bike they were travelling on was hit by a Hyva truck near Pingua village under Nihalprasad police limits in Dhenkanal district Monday. Among those killed were a couple and their two kids, a boy and a girl, a senior officer of Nihalprasad police station informed. Efforts are on to ascertain their identities, police added.

Eye-witnesses said that the truck hit the two-wheeler from the rear. The man and the woman died on the spot. Locals rushed the kids to a nearby hospital for treatment, but they succumbed to their injuries. Cops have seized both the bike and the truck involved in the accident.

Police said that the driver of the truck fled the scene immediately after the accident. Efforts are on to trace him. Police also informed that the bodies have been sent for post-mortem. However, till the time of filing the report no one has come to identify and receive the bodies.



WOONG VOTERS: (L) Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik addresses a gathering while participating in a roadshow Monday in Bhubaneswar; (R) Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to the crowd during a roadshow in Puri along with Lok Sabha candidate Sambit Patra, Monday



OP PHOTOS

Sporadic violence mars Odisha polls

Odisha registered its second poll-related death Monday when an auto driver was fatally stabbed in Bargarh district when he was carrying voters to a polling booth. However, CEO NB Dhal and senior police officials termed the murder a thing of personal enmity. This incidentally is the second poll-related death after a BJP worker was killed in Khallikote, May 15. In the 2nd phase, the overall voter turnout stood at 69.34%, till reports last came in, as compared to 75.68% in the first phase

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: One person was killed in an incidence of poll-related violence Monday in Bargarh district while a member of Odisha police's Special Operation Group (SOG) was injured during a shootout with

Maoists in Nupada district as Odisha recorded 66.70 per cent voter turnout till 10.00pm in the polling for five Lok Sabha constituencies and 35 Assembly segments, officials said. The jawan who is currently undergoing treatment at Raipur is currently out of danger, officials said.

Voting started at 7.00am in Aska, Kandhamal, Bargarh, Bolangir and Sundargarh Parliamentary constituencies along with 35 Assembly segments within the jurisdiction of these Lok Sabha seats.

Voting in a booth under Kantamal Assembly segment was stopped after some people created a disturbance, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Odisha, Nikunj Bihari Dhal informed. One presiding officer of a booth in the Kantamal Assembly segment was taken into custody by police after some irregularities were found at



Security tightened outside the Sarsara Primary School polling booth under Sadar block in Bargarh district after the murder of a person, Monday

the polling station, Dhal said.

Regarding the murder of a man near Sarsara village under Sadar police limits in Bargarh district, the CEO said: "It is not a poll-related violence, but an incident of crime which had taken place outside the polling station. It was due to personal enmity. Polling was not affected because of the incident," he said. In the Assembly elections,

LOK SABHA POLLS

Bargarh	76.20%
Sundargarh	67.74%
Bolangir	71.46%
Kandhamal	70.37%
Aska	60.78%

eight constituencies recorded over 70% voter turnout. They

60% TURNOUT IN 5TH PHASE

NEW DELHI: Over 60 per cent voter turnout was recorded Monday in 49 constituencies in six states and two Union Territories in the fifth phase of the Lok Sabha elections amid sporadic incidents of violence in West Bengal along with EVM glitches at some booths in the state. While Maharashtra recorded the lowest voter turnout at 54.33 per cent, West Bengal recorded the highest polling percentage at 75.56%.

P7

are Bhatli (79.23%), Jharsuguda (78.50%), Biramitrapur (75.50%), Boudh (75.12%) Attabira (74%), Brajarajgarh (73.02%), Bonai (73.25%) and Daspalla (72%). However, the turnout was lowest in Hinjili at 58.21%. CM Naveen Patnaik is contesting from Hinjili and Kantabanji (67.96%).

Sambit: Jagannath is disciple of Modi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 20: BJP Lok Sabha candidate from Puri Sambit Patra said Monday that Lord Jagannath is a devotee of Narendra Modi while talking to mediapersons in Puri.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik slammed Patra for his comment. "Mahaprabhu Shree Jagannath is the Lord of Universe. Calling Mahaprabhu a bhakt of another human being is an insult to the Lord. This has hurt the sentiments and has demeaned the faith of crores of Jagannath bhaktas and Odias across the world," said Patnaik on 'X'.

"The Lord is the greatest Symbol of Odia Asmita. Calling Mahaprabhu a bhakt of another human being is totally condemnable. I strongly denounce the statement made by the BJP Puri Lok Sabha candidate and I appeal to the BJP to keep the Lord above any political discourse. By this you have deeply hurt Odia Asmita and this will be remembered and condemned by people of Odisha for a very long time," Patnaik added.

Other political parties including the Congress also came down heavily on Patra for his remark. Congress leaders said that Patra had hurt Odias and it was a "direct attack on

I STRONGLY DENOUNCE THE STATEMENT MADE BY BJP PURI LOK SABHA CANDIDATE AND I APPEAL TO BJP TO KEEP THE LORD ABOVE ANY POLITICAL DISCOURSE

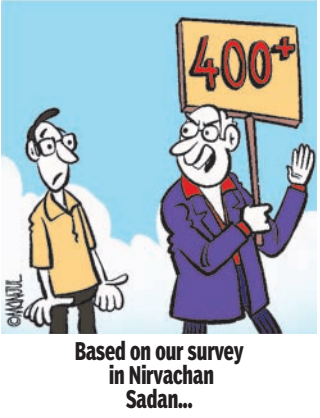
NAVEEN PATNAIK

Odisha Asmita'. Congress leaders also lodged a complaint with the CEO of Odisha over Patra's comments and filed a complaint at the Town Police station in Puri.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also criticised Patra. "I strongly condemn this statement of BJP. They have started thinking that they are above God. This is height of arrogance. Calling God bhakt of Modi ji is an insult to God," Kejriwal said on 'X'.

Amid uproar over his words, Patra took to 'X' and said he spoke to multiple media channels after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's roadshow in Puri where he mentioned that 'Modi ji is an ardent Bhakt of Shri Jagannath Mahaprabhu... by mistake during one of the bytes, I pronounced just the opposite. I know you too know and understand this... Sir let's not make an issue out of a nonexistent issue... We all have slip of the tongue sometimes,' Patra said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Based on our survey in Nirvachan Sadan...

'Casual', 'cavalier' plea rejected by SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 20: The Supreme Court refused Monday to entertain a petition which challenged the enactment of three new laws that seek to overhaul India's penal codes. A vacation bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mithal however, allowed petitioner advocate Vishal Tiwari to withdraw the plea.

The Lok Sabha on 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 will replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act respectively.

At the outset, the bench told Tiwari, "We are dismissing it (petition)." The bench said these laws have not come into force so far. As the court showed its disinclination to entertain the plea, Tiwari urged that he be allowed to withdraw the petition.

"The petition has been filed in a very casual and cavalier manner," the bench observed. "If you had argued more, we would have dismissed it with cost but since you are not arguing, we are not imposing cost," the bench added.

Seeking a stay on the operation of the three new laws, the PIL filed by Tiwari had claimed they were enacted without any Parliamentary debate.

Iranian President Raisi dead in chopper crash

AGENCIES

Dubai, May 20: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, 63, the country's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, 60, and several other officials were found dead Monday, hours after their helicopter crashed in a foggy, mountainous region of the country's northwest, the state media reported.

The crash comes as the Middle East remains unsettled by the

Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month. During Raisi's term in office, Iran enriched uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels, further escalating tensions with the West as Tehran also supplied bomb-carrying drones to Russia for

its war in Ukraine.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed shock and sadness Monday at the demise of Raisi, and said his contribution in strengthening India-Iran bilateral relationship will always be remembered. "Deeply saddened and shocked by the tragic demise of Dr Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran," Modi said on X.



Saudi's 1st all-women band creating waves

MORE AND MORE WOMEN TURNING TO ARTS AS A FORM OF EXPRESSION AS SAUDI ARABIA RELAXES RULES

AGENCIES

Riyadh, May 20: Leaning into the microphone in Saudi Arabia's capital, Nora lets loose a primal scream. Guitars wail and drums throb behind her as part of a set with her bandmates during a recent show.

The performance by *Seera*, an all-women psychedelic rock band that blends traditional Arabic melodies with the resurgent psychedelia of bands like *Tame Impala*, would have been unthinkable just years earlier in the kingdom.

But as Saudi Arabia liberalises some aspects of its society, *Seera* represents way women now are finding their voice and expressing themselves through the arts in a nation long associated with ultra-conservative Islam and the strict separation of sexes.



"We didn't know how people would react," said Meesh, the band's bassist, who like other members asked to be identified by their stage names. "We believe strongly in self-expression. To our surprise, they really had open arms for us," Meesh added.

The band's name, *Seera*, can mean 'life' or 'biography' in Arabic. Band members say they try to embrace the multiple meanings one can draw from a word in the language in its sound, whether through driving drums and cymbals or the synthesizer

backing the guitars.

Seera's music style revolves around life experiences of the four-member band, who are all Saudi nationals. They sing in the Saudi dialect of Arabic, while drummer 'Thing' wears a traditionally embroidered red face covering. "I thought this would be great as a reflection of the culture, the heritage and the roots," 'Thing' said.

The members are quick to point out they aren't the first female band in the kingdom. Instead, they say that goes to *The Accolade*, which was formed in 2008 and could only play underground. Things have changed radically in the kingdom in recent years since the accession of King Salman and his assertive son, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

In 2018, women gained the right to drive. Movie theatres

and other entertainment centres opened up for them. Women are no longer required to wear the fully cloaking black abaya. However, clear limits still remain on speech and any political activity in the tightly-governed kingdom.

But in the arts space, Saudi Arabia is slowly opening up, as could be seen by *Seera's* show earlier this month at 'The Warehouse', a live music space in Diriyah neighbourhood of this town.

There, dozens of youths in leather jackets and black rock T-shirts swayed and danced to the music. The fashion choices resembled any other punk show at a club in the West, though there was an absence of smoking or any alcohol in the dry kingdom. This scene couldn't have been seen in any part of the kingdom even a decade ago.

WEATHER

BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	38.8°C / 38.2°C
Min Temp	28.4°C / 25.5°C
Humidity	70% / 67%
Rainfall	Nil / Nil

FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY SKY



When one does not progress one feels bored.

THE MOTHER



Ladakh Lesson

The Union Territory of Ladakh, carved out of the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir in 2019, went to polls today. What makes the contest for the lone Lok Sabha seat in Ladakh, the country's largest Parliamentary constituency in terms of area, significant is that the outcome of the election may be considered a referendum on the region's demand for statehood and its inclusion under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

Ladakh is divided into two regions – the Buddhist-majority Leh and the Shia Moslem-majority Kargil. For many years, the Buddhist community has been advocating for a distinct region for their people, while those in Kargil have expressed their desire to merge with the Moslem-majority region of Kashmir. In the wake of 5 August 2019 when Article 370 of the Constitution was abrogated, the people of Ladakh were initially happy because they considered it an escape from the step-motherly treatment they were receiving in undivided Jammu & Kashmir. They have long wanted to get either a separate state or UT status. However, the euphoria soon gave way to resentment and a year later, the districts of Kargil and Leh came together to create the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance with the objective of addressing the issues concerning the people of the UT. They realised that now the UT was being remote-controlled from Delhi and the local inhabitants had no say in governance and decision-making. The two civil society groups have organised massive demonstrations in protest against the Union government over their demand for statehood. Their other demand is the enforcement of the Sixth Schedule, a Constitutional safeguard that preserves the rights of tribal communities to establish self-governing bodies for legislating on matters concerning land, healthcare, and farming among other things. It is pertinent to note that almost 97 per cent of Ladakh's inhabitants belong to tribal groups.

The protests for statehood and inclusion under Sixth Schedule hogged international headlines in March this year when noted climate activist Sonam Wangchuk began a 21-day hunger strike in sub-zero temperatures. Thousands joined Wangchuk for the cause as they believed that autonomy and provision of Sixth Schedule are both crucial to protect the region's fragile ecosystem and the interests of its people. Wangchuk has accused the BJP of going back on its promise of including the UT under the Sixth Schedule. The Himalayan region is highly vulnerable to climate change, putting its inhabitants at great risk. The shrinking glaciers result in water scarcity and more frequent floods, worsening the condition for locals. If proper measures are not taken, living conditions in these mountains will continue to deteriorate. These threats make the Sixth Schedule all the more crucial for Ladakh.

Apart from these issues, pasture lands, used for grazing by the local nomadic tribes, being taken over by China is another major concern. Cases of Chinese troops entering Ladakh and preventing residents from allowing their livestock to graze have exacerbated tensions. In January this year, a confrontation occurred between a group of local herders and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers when the locals were prohibited from taking their cattle to their customary grazing areas near the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The location of Ladakh holds great geostrategic significance for India as it shares borders with both China and Pakistan, and both had strongly opposed India's decision to revoke Article 370. This problem has become even more complex because the Government of India simply refuses to accept ground realities and hence is unwilling to recognize the fact that China has indeed occupied massive tracts of land in Ladakh in the recent past.

Whatever may be the results of the polls, one must commend the spirited people of Ladakh who have come together for a cause putting aside their differences of region and religion – a lesson for other parts of the country where easily getting divided on irrelevant issues is usually the norm.

Tragedy in Iran

The cruel irony of the sad demise of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi along with the country's foreign minister and several other officials 20 May after their helicopter crashed in a foggy, mountainous region in the country's northwest is that the chopper was manufactured in the US, the regime's sworn enemy. The maintenance of the helicopter had suffered due to non-availability of spare parts, the supply of which was stopped as part of the sanctions against Iran by the US and its Western allies. Iran had purchased the Bell helicopter in the early 2000s. Aircraft in Iran face a shortage of parts. For this proper safety checks are often not carried out. Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif sought to blame the US for the crash in an interview soon after the tragic news was made public. In strong words of condemnation he said "one of the main culprits of the tragedy is the US, which embargoed the sale of aircraft and aviation parts to Iran and does not allow the people of Iran to enjoy good aviation facilities." This, according to him, will be recorded "in the list of US crimes against the Iranian people." The accusation would sound far-fetched if one considers the fact that it is unbelievable that the helicopter of the country's all-powerful President had not gone through the motions of rigorous checks before he boarded it.

The outpourings of anger all the same bring out the truth about the regime run by the 63-year-old Raisi now in the grip of its worst crisis as the Middle East is going through a turbulent phase in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war and its spillover affecting neighbouring countries, including Iran. Raisi under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel just last month. A conservative cleric and former judiciary chief, Raisi was the focus of international attention for his decades of vicious crackdowns against his own people's aspirations for greater personal freedom and democracy. He was instrumental in the arrest, torture and execution of tens of thousands of the Islamist regime's opponents.

Educated in the seminary city of Qom since he was 18, he came to be known as "the butcher" for his alleged involvement in the execution of thousands of political prisoners in the late 1980s, according to Iran's Opposition. As judiciary chief, he ordered the arrests and executions of dozens of protesters against the regime in 2019-2020. His role came in for sharpest criticism in recent times when he crushed the "Women, Life, Freedom" movement that followed the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini with iron-fisted repression. Tens of thousands were arrested, and the death toll is estimated to be over 500.

Raisi was believed to be the fittest candidate to replace the 85-year-old, ailing Khamenei as supreme leader for his loyalty to the regime and its brutal methods. However, his lack of competence in managing the country's economy, which is in trouble, cast doubts about his final elevation. On top of it, the circumstances around his presidential win in 2021 undermined his credibility as a potential leader. He had managed to secure victory through massive disqualification of opponents and on the back of record-low turnout. Most people opted not to vote, while a large number of voters who turned up deliberately spoiled their ballots as a mark of their disapproval of the candidate. His death triggers speculation that Khamenei's own son, Mojtaba, could be the frontrunner in the race to succeed his father.

Iran's foreign policy under Raisi was marked by a direct confrontation with the West, with its leaders repeatedly threatening all-out war against Israel since the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza. He also provided military purpose drones and other weapons and political support to Vladimir Putin's Russia in the ongoing Ukraine-Russia war. Iran's ties with China under Xi Jinping were cemented through collaborations, sale of Iran's oil to China and operation of a large number of Chinese companies in Iran. It is unlikely that Iran's stand on the raging Hamas-Israel war and attacks on Israel by Iran-backed Houthis and Hezbollah would change after Raisi's demise. The situation may become even more complicated before a proper replacement of Raisi is found.

In short, the geopolitical situation in and around the Middle East is poised for an even murkier and uncertain phase. This is not good for the world's economy and peace.

VULNERABLE WORLD ECONOMY

FOCUS FRAGMENTATION

Today's economic outlook is strangely contradictory. While global markets, led by technology and energy, have been ebullient over high short-term profits, the mood at the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund last month was decidedly somber. Two global institutions that normally speak in banalities issued strong warnings about the growing risks of economic fragmentation.



Bertrand Badré & Yves Tiberghien

IF LEADERS RESPOND WITH TIT-FOR-TAT POLICIES AIMED AT SECURING ADVANTAGES OVER RIVALS, THE INTEGRATED GLOBAL ECONOMY COULD UNRAVEL

The idea that an interdependent global economy can work within a geopolitical system based on the national sovereignty of nearly 200 states has always reflected a certain amount of idealism. Or perhaps it was more like hubris. This strange marriage did, after all, collapse in the 1930s, with the division lasting through the end of World War II.

But idealism was not dead, and the global system was subsequently rebuilt on a foundation of agreed rules, shared international institutions, a degree of mutual forbearance, and crisis management. From the start, security considerations were kept as separate as possible from the economy, but this became especially important in the 1990s, when countries with radically different regimes began integrating into the global economy.

Today, however, the foundations of this system are eroding fast, and global economic integration has seemingly gone into reverse. As Gita Gopinath, the IMF's first deputy managing director, recently explained, economic fragmentation could have far-reaching implications for trade, such as reduced efficiency gains, and increase the risk of macro-financial volatility. Fragmentation could also reduce capital flows to the Global South and undermine the provision of global public goods, including climate action.

Five key factors are driving this trend toward fragmentation. First, rising geopolitical risks have fueled mistrust and reduced systemically important countries' will to cooperate. Though policymakers rarely acknowledge it, a crisis over Taiwan – a flashpoint in the Sino-American rivalry – could



The idea that an interdependent global economy can work within a geopolitical system based on the national sovereignty of nearly 200 states has always reflected a certain amount of idealism

well bring down the global economic system.

Second, key countries are increasingly allowing security considerations to shape economic policy, with some taking expansive action to secure access to inputs, infrastructure, and technologies. While this is understandable, countries must exercise restraint. Whereas globalisation happened gradually, a deglobalisation process driven by security-motivated measures (which are almost guaranteed to trigger escalation by rivals and partners) would probably be fast and unwieldy, posing severe systemic risks.

The third factor underlying economic fragmentation is a deepening rift between the Global North and Global South. Public and private support for developing economies has collapsed at a time when many are wrestling with the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic and confronting climate change. The decades-long trend toward convergence with developed economies has seemingly been interrupted, and resentment is building in the Global South. Net financial flows to developing countries have turned negative in 2023, and the trend is worsening in 2024. This partly explains the reluctance or refusal of many Global South countries to back the West on key geopolitical issues, such as sanctions against Russia in response to its war of aggression in Ukraine.

Fragmentation also reflects the rapid escalation of climate risks and disasters. With "once-a-lifetime" floods, mega-fires, and droughts proliferating, many countries are at risk of destabilization within the next few years, and there is no global "safety net" in place. Meanwhile, as Harvard's Dani Rodrik has pointed out, countries are competing for dominance in green technologies, rather than working together to accelerate progress.

Lastly, the exponential growth of artificial intelligence is fueling national competition, rather than the global cooperation that is required. As MIT's Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson have noted, regulations, policies, and institutions will be essential to ensure that AI creates jobs, rather than only destroying them. Global South countries need a voice in AI regulatory efforts.

To be sure, the global economic system still has many sources of resilience. As the recent Indonesian, Indian, and Brazilian G20 presidencies have shown, most of the Global South remains committed to both interdependence and global governance. Furthermore, the private sector is still characterised by interdependence. We still have dedicated international organisations, global education networks, and a global civil society.

But we must not underestimate the dangers ahead. There

is good reason to think that the coming months and years will bring a series of shocks and crises. If leaders respond with tit-for-tat policies aimed at securing advantages over rivals, the integrated global economy could unravel. The speed of that process could overwhelm policymakers, and the path from economic pain to social upheaval to the abandonment of shared global rules may well prove to be short.

As it stands, leaders are so preoccupied with wars, power struggles, social tensions, and political polarisation that they appear largely unwilling to invest in saving the integrated global economy, let alone strengthening its capacity to deal with the existential risks we face. But history, economic theory, and current empirical trends indicate that this is a mistake.

Even a partial collapse of our interdependent global economic and financial systems would be catastrophic, not least because it would undermine investment in global public goods. For politicians worried about migration's effect on their countries, it is worth noting that, without massive investments in combating climate change, reversing desertification, and reducing poverty, millions could be attempting to cross the Mediterranean by 2050.

National security must be a priority for policymakers. But measures to "secure" the economy must be combined with efforts to improve communication with rivals and invest in global public goods. To this end, world leaders should use the G20 and other plurilateral bodies to elevate working groups and institutions that support collective governance, with a focus on managing AI risks, addressing climate change, and averting the collapse of the global economic system on which we depend.

Bertrand Badré is a former managing director of the World Bank. Yves Tiberghien is Professor of Political Science and Director Emeritus of the Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM NATION

The Constitution at crossroads

Rahul Gandhi, flaunting a copy of the Indian Constitution and, assuring the minorities and backward sections of society that their rights would be protected, and PM Modi riding a wave of Hindu nationalism bring to memory the contrasting perspective of Dr. Ambedkar and MS Golwalkar. Ambedkar piloted a Constitution based on equality and brotherhood while Golwalkar, the RSS ideologue, wanted the Constitution to be based on the ancient Indian scripture Manusmriti. Since Modi is an unabashed admirer of Golwalkar, it is ironic how he makes Ambedkar a centerpiece of his political campaign. Politics, as they say, is the art of the possible, where both Modi and Rahul swear by Ambedkar. India's ongoing general election has become the proscenium where the theatre of the absurd is played out by its principal actors.

Golwalkar was an ardent admirer of both Hitler and Mussolini and was particularly moved by the ideological link between the

Manusmriti and the philosophy of Nietzsche who, in turn, had inspired Hitler. To keep up the purity of the race and its culture, Germans purged the country of the Jews. Golwalkar argues in his book "Bunch of Thoughts" that territorial nationalism is barbarism. A nation is not a bundle of political and economic rights, but an embodiment of national culture, ancient and sublime Hinduism. He sneered at democracy which is alien to Hindu culture and lavished praise on the code of Manu, as the greatest and wisest lawgiver of mankind. Deendayal Upadhyaya wanted that the Constitution should embody a Hindu political philosophy, befitting an ancient nation like Bharat.

Ambedkar responding to these vicious tirades against the Constitution wrote: "If we wish to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principles of government of the people, by the people and for the people, let's resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evil that lies across our path, nor to be weak in our

initiative to remove them."

Though Ambedkar said that "democracy in India is only a top-dressing which is essentially undemocratic" he never lost faith in Parliamentary democracy, rule of law, universal suffrage, and equality of all citizens in free India, unlike Golwalkar and Deendayal who wanted an unequal India based on ancient scriptures, languages like Sanskrit, Hindu supremacy and second class status to minorities like Muslims.

It is indeed most disquieting that echoes of Deendayal and Golwalkar are heard when the nation celebrates Constitution Day on 26 November. The resurrection of ideas of Golwalkar goes back to the medieval obscurantism of a society based on deep prejudices against women and minorities, which is the bedrock of Manusmriti.

Granville Austin in his epic commentary on the Indian Constitution "Working a Democratic Constitution" (1999) observes that "democracy, social revolution, and national unity are three strands that form

a seamless web." The nation has to realise its goals in the Preamble which puts primacy on liberty, equality, socio socio-economic justice for all its citizens where a secular spirit should permeate and fraternity and brotherhood bind all its citizens. Despite the economic prosperity that we have achieved, rising inequality, lack of employment opportunities on a large scale, and most importantly denial of equal opportunity to quality education and healthcare make courses like Hindu Rashtra extremely toxic. The famous sociologist Andre Beteille wrote: "A constitution may indicate the direction in which we are to move, but the social structure will decide how far we move and at what pace." Quite clearly a social structure based on religious divide will only drive us on a path of disaster. Instead of foisting cultural homogenisation, the time for fostering brotherhood was never so keenly called for.

The writer teaches Constitutional Law. Views are personal.



Satya Narayan Misra

POLITICS, AS THEY SAY, IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE, WHERE BOTH MODI AND RAHUL SWEAR BY AMBEDKAR

Uninspiring claim

Sir, This refers to "I.N.D.I.A gov't will herald stable, predictable policymaking: Cong." OrissaPOST, May 20. The Congress touched the most significant factors of providing a stable government and predictable policymaking by the I.N.D.I.A government, if voted to power defeating BJP. Firstly, the alliance should clarify the pertinent questions - confronting the electorate that whether the Opposition bloc has a common agenda to govern the country? Can it name a leader to lead the coalition? Until now, the Opposition's major charge against the Modi government is that the latter would change the Constitution. It didn't even attempt to provide an alternative narrative and optics to the people. Its incessant charge that Modi government is vindictive doesn't resonate and influence voters, as people strongly believe all politicians are corrupt. It's unconvincing that the Opposition alliance can provide stable government, even as the so-called allies are fighting against each other in several constituencies. Also, its fresh in the minds of the people, how the Congress-led UPA government indulged in scams in its decade-long regime and eventually faced a humiliating defeat in 2014, even as policy paralysis has inflicted damage to the economy. Thus, the Congress' claim is uninspiring.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Long life span

Sir, An individual's life span is dictated by a myriad of factors. According to the Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study, the global life expectancy is expected to increase by 4.9 years in men and 4.2 year in women by the year 2050. This trend will tend to be more exemplified in nations with history of very low life expectancy. While diseases and disorders have taught people lessons, mortality and morbidity around them have disciplined their lives. But enhanced life span means more exposure to communicable diseases like cancers. Therefore, a paradigm shift from communicable, maternal and nutritional diseases to the non-communicable ones will almost become a norm. An Indian's life expectancy, that was 67.4 in 2021, is expected to be 75 years for men and 80 for women by 2050. Health outcomes can be significantly improved by efficiently addressing the risk factors and maintaining a safe environment.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

B-15, Rasulguri Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Congress to stir against CAA

THE BJP-LED GOVERNMENT HAS FORMED A SIX-MEMBER EMPOWERED COMMITTEE IN THE STATE TO PROCESS APPLICATIONS FOR CITIZENSHIP UNDER THE CAA



We strongly oppose the CAA's implementation and will submit a memorandum to the chief secretary on Tuesday. Following that, the party, along with its tribal wing, Adivasi Congress, will launch a statewide protest against this controversial Act

SUDIP ROY BARMAN | CONGRESS MLA

Manikya Debbarma, remained silent on the CAA's implementation.

"The Tipra Motha was established to oppose the CAA, yet

the regional party is now silent. Its leaders claim the Act won't be implemented in the Sixth Schedule Areas of the state, but if the CAA is enforced, the entire state's demographics will change since the autonomous tribal council is part of the state," he said.

"We strongly oppose the CAA's implementation and will submit a memorandum to the chief secretary on Tuesday. Following that, the party, along with its tribal wing, Adivasi Congress, will launch a statewide protest against this controversial Act," he added.

STATE-LEVEL COMMITTEE

The Tripura state government has started the process of appointing officials to the State Level Empowered Committee and the District Level Committee for the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), 2019. In an official notification, R Reang, IAS, Director of the Directorate of Census Operations in Tripura, has instructed all district magistrates to nominate a Tripura Civil Service (TCS) officer as an invitee for the District Level Committee. This move is part of the broader effort to process citizenship applications under the amended law. The notification, referencing a communication from RD Meena, Director (Citizenship) at the Ministry of Home Affairs, reads, "With reference to the subject cited above, I am to inform you that RD Meena, Director (Citizenship), Govt of India, MHA, Foreigners Division (Citizenship Wing), has intimated the Director of Census Operations of all States/UTs regarding the constitution of the District Level Committee in connection with the implementation of CAA, 2019 for processing citizenship applications under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955." "In this regard, you are requested to nominate one TCS officer who shall be an invitee of the District Level Committee for the purpose of processing citizenship applications under Section 6B of the Citizenship Act, 1955. The name of the said officer may kindly be sent to this directorate at the earliest," it said. In a parallel directive, S Debbarma, Undersecretary of the Tripura Government, reiterated the urgency of the nominations. In his communication to the District Magistrates, Debbarma emphasised the need for prompt action, requesting that the nominated officers' details be forwarded immediately for onward submission to the Ministry of Home Affairs. As Tripura moves forward with these appointments, it marks a critical step in the practical implementation of the CAA, aiming to facilitate the legal processing of applications from eligible individuals within the state.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, aims to provide citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan who arrived in India before December 31, 2014. The act has sparked significant debate and varying responses across the country, with states preparing to execute its provisions amid public scrutiny and political discussions

and Christians - from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who came to India before December 31, 2014.

Barman noted that the current 31 per cent reservation for Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Tripura will automatically decrease if the population of non-tribals increases after citizenship is granted to the "thousands" of migrants from

the three countries.

He accused the BJP of using the CAA for political gain and warned that the move would embolden extremists in other countries to intensify their persecution of religious minorities.

Criticising Tipra Motha without directly naming it, Barman questioned why the "messiah" of Tripura people, an indirect reference to Pradyot Kishore

KERALA RAINS Emergency centres, hospitals on alert

Incessant rains push possibility of landslides, epidemics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 20: With heavy rains continuing to lash several parts of the state, the Kerala government said Monday that emergency operation centres have been opened in all district collectorates and taluk offices as there is a possibility of landslides and mudslides.

Hospitals have also been put on alert and supplies stocked to handle any eventuality, such as an epidemic outbreak.

Special directions have been given to alert tourists who arrive in the state about the rain situation, state Revenue Minister K Rajan said.

He stressed the need for strict regulations in hilly areas in the wake of possible landslide threats.

"The Disaster Management Authority has warned that there is even the possibility of mudslides on the road due to heavy rains," he told reporters here.

Safety boards would be installed in such areas to warn travellers about the threat of a possible landslide, he said.

District collectors have told to impose a night travel ban in hilly areas if necessary, Rajan explained.

"The 24x7 Emergency



Operation Centres have been opened in all collectorates and taluk offices with the coordination of various departments to tackle all urgent situations," the revenue minister added.

Meanwhile, intense water logging, uprooting of trees, and snapping of electric wires were reported in various places across the state Monday due to heavy rains.

Health Minister Veena George today said the Health Department has issued a warning to all districts about the possible outbreak of epidemics in the wake of continuing heavy rains.

"Many epidemics are likely to occur due to climate change. Hospitals have been alerted. Instructions have already been given to ensure availability of medicines," she said in a statement.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) continued to place Pathanamthitta, Kottayam and Idukki districts on "red alert", forecasting extremely heavy rainfall Monday and Tuesday.

'Maitri Setu, Agartala-Akhaura rail link to be made operational soon'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, May 18: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha said the Maitri Setu in South Tripura and Agartala-Akhaura (Bangladesh) rail link will become operational very soon.

The Maitri Setu built over river Feni connecting South Tripura's Sabroom with Bangladesh's Ramgarh was jointly inaugurated March 9, 2021 and Agartala-Nischintapur (Indian part of Agartala-Akhaura rail link) was inaugurated November 1, 2023 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina.

But both connectivity facilities are yet to be made operational.

"Election is almost over, and a new government will be formed. Under the leadership of PM Modi, who has always emphasized the Act East Policy and provided us with the HIRA (highway, i-way, railway, airway) model, the Maitri Setu will become operational soon", the chief



minister told reporters Friday. "The trial in Agartala-Akhaura railway link has already been completed, and it will also be made operational soon," Saha said, adding that many investors are coming to the northeastern state to invest.

"The future of Tripura is bright. After the rail connectivity is established, we will be able to reach Kolkata in a short period," he said.

Anil Kumar Khandelwal, Member Infrastructure, Railway Board inspected Nischintapur railyard (Indian part of Agartala-Akhaura) May 15 to check the ongoing work.

"The construction work in Agartala-Akhaura railway proj-

The Matri Setu built over river Feni connecting South Tripura's Sabroom with Bangladesh's Ramgarh was jointly inaugurated March 9, 2021

ect has almost been completed. Now, the train service will be made operational after discussion between both sides," he said.

Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) Manager, Agartala, Debashish Nandi Saturday told PTI, "We are ready to open the Maitri Setu by introducing passenger movement in the first phase. All necessary facilities including immigration have been put in place at Sabroom Land Custom Station (LCS). The goods movement can be flagged off later. The final date of the beginning of passenger movement will be taken by Delhi and Dhaka."

KERALA PASSES ORDER TO INCREASE 1,200 NEW WARDS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, May 20: A special cabinet meeting here Monday chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan passed an ordinance to add one new ward in all the local bodies in the state.

The ordinance will now be sent to the Governor for his nod. As per this ordinance, the total number of wards will increase from around 21,900 to 23,100 in the 2025 local election.

As of now, there are 1,200 local bodies in the state comprising 941 grama panchayats, 152 block panchayats, 14 district panchayats, 87 Municipalities and six Corporations.

The ordinance has directed the State Election Commission to take steps for delimitation to add another 1,200 wards.

The committee to be set up under the State Election Commissioner has to submit its report in six months.

The last time the full-fledged delimitation took place was in 2010, while in 2015 it was a limited exercise.



REFUGEE IN FOREST: Displaced people take shelter in a makeshift tent as they wait to get proper rehabilitation at Panisagar forest area, in Tripura. Several families from various parts of Tripura have taken refuge in the forest land of Panisagar after losing their land

PTI PHOTO

NO VALID DOCUMENTS

5 Bangladeshis held for entering India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agartala, May 20: Five Bangladeshi nationals were arrested from Tripura's Khawai district for entering Indian territory without any valid travel document, a police officer said Monday.

The five Bangladeshi citizens identified as Litan Das (37), Babul Das (26), Pankaj Sarkar (18), Nikku Sarkar (22) and Rupan Das (26) sneaked into Khawai after crossing over border fencing at Ashrambari, a border village and were going to Santirbazar in South Tripura district, they officer said.

"They entered Indian territory after crossing over border fencing at Ashrambari. When the five were travelling from Ashrambari to Santirbazar by a vehicle, they were detained on Sunday," said the official.

He said as they could not pro-

duce any passport or visa for travelling to Indian territory they were arrested.

The five arrested Bangladeshi nationals would be produced before court Monday, he added.

Meanwhile, Hannan Miah, a resident of Sepahijala district, who was wanted by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in a human trafficking case, was arrested from Rastarmatha Sunday, said Officer in Charge (OC), Bishalgarh police station, Rana Chatterjee.

The arrest was made following a request from the NIA Guwahati office, he said, adding that the mastermind of the human trafficking case will be taken to Guwahati on transit remand.

According to police, Hannan who was on the run for many months, is the mastermind of a human trafficking case lodged by NIA in Guwahati.

As LDF govt hits 3-yr mark, CM highlights feats

VIJAYAN BOASTS ABOUT KOCHI WATER METRO, HIGHWAYS, INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 20: The Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala marked its three-year anniversary in office Monday.

Celebrating his government's entry into the fourth year, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan highlighted the state's achievements, stating that the Kerala model is advancing by fulfilling manifesto promises and initiating new projects.

Through social media, Vijayan emphasised the government's dedication to shaping a progressive Kerala, showcasing its commitment to social welfare and economic growth. He noted that the government's approach, balancing social welfare and economic development, has earned national acclaim.

"Kochi Water Metro has



started operations. National highway development is progressing rapidly. The industrial sector is expanding through projects including 'Entrepreneurial Year', the chief minister said.

He claimed that the fundamental sectors, including public education and health, have been strengthened.

"Big companies are investing in IT and the startup sector is gaining international recogni-

tion. It has become a model for the country in public welfare schemes, including employment guarantee scheme, social security pensions and Karunya Insurance," Vijayan said.

He said his government has received national recognition, including from Niti Ayog, in areas including governance, development, quality of life, education, and health.

"It is the support given by the

people that gives energy and motivation to the government to make all this possible. Despite the attempts of many forces to isolate the state and put it in crisis, we are able to overcome it all because the government and the people stand hand-in-hand with each other," Vijayan said.

The chief minister said that even when communalism and sectarianism subjugated many regions, the state under Left rule

It is the support given by the people that give energy and motivation to the government to make all this possible. Despite the attempts of many forces to isolate the state and put it in crisis, we are able to overcome it all because the government and the people stand hand-in-hand with each other



PINARAYI VIJAYAN | CM, KERALA

was able to set an example for others by upholding the greatness of democracy, religious harmony, and humanity.

"We express gratitude to all who supported us in advancing this development model and strengthening Kerala's secular fabric, even when we encountered numerous hurdles. Let's stay united and rally forward for a brighter tomorrow of enhanced democracy, unity, and prosperity," he said.

As part of the anniversary celebrations, the chief minister shared sweets at the office, joined by Chief Secretary Venu V and other officials.



A boy taking his disabled kin to Ekatali booth in Jharsuguda, Monday



A pink booth at Chhend in Rourkela under Sundargarh Lok Sabha seat



Polling underway amid tight security at Bandhabahal under Brajarajnagar Assembly segment in Jharsuguda district



BJP's Sundargarh Lok Sabha nominee Jual Oram showing his inked finger after casting his vote



Former minister Prasanna Acharya flaunts his inked finger after casting his vote at Brahmachari Primary School in Bargarh



BJD candidate for Bolangir Assembly seat Kalikesh Narayan Singh Deo



Congress candidate for Bolangir Assembly seat Samarendra Mishra



BJP's Bargarh Lok Sabha nominee Pradip Purohit and his wife after casting votes at Paikamal Girls' Upgraded UP School in Bargarh district

CMO under grip of corrupt coterie: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Angul/Cuttack/Puri, May 20: Asserting that Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government in Odisha is on its way out, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday said he was hurt over the "destruction" of the state.

Addressing public meetings in Dhenkanal and Cuttack Lok Sabha seats, Modi said though the state is rich in mineral resources, its people are distressed.

The PM said the Odisha Chief Minister's office and residence are under the grip of a coterie which destroyed the state and shattered the dreams of the youths.

"Who is responsible for the sorry state of affairs in Odisha? It is the BJD government which is under the control of some corrupt people. A handful of corrupt persons have grabbed the Chief Minister's office and residence. Small workers of BJD have now become crorepatis," the PM said.

Coming down heavily on BJD, Modi said the state government has prevented people from availing the benefits of mineral resources. "In 2014, Modi had prepared a new mineral exploration policy, under which Odisha is getting high royalty," he said.

Stating that Odisha received ₹50,000 crore as mineral royalty and ₹26,000 crore from the district mineral fund (DMF), Modi said the money should have been spent on roads, schools and drinking water, but the BJD has "misused" it.

What the BJD government has given to Odisha, Modi asked, adding that the BJD has given land mafia, sand mafia, coal mafia, and mining mafia to the state. The BJD MLAs and ministers are indulging in such practices day and night, the PM said.

He also said that the Modi government is allocating a higher amount of funds to the state. But, the BJD government is "misappropriating" the funds.

Modi said neither the mineral resources nor the cultural heritage of Odisha is safe in the hands of the BJD government.

"Even, the temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri is not safe in the hands of this government," Modi said, expressing concern over the missing keys of Lord Jagannath's Ratna Bhandar (treasury) for last six years.

"A coterie roaming around the Chief Minister is responsible for this," Modi said, adding that one particular mafia has captured all the sectors and does not allow any competition in the state. "After BJP forms the government in Odisha, we will break the backbone of this mafia," Modi said.

He said the Modi government is allocating a higher amount of funds to the state, but the BJD government stalls their implementation of big projects. Later, the ministers and MLAs allocate such contracts to their close people after getting cuts or commissions.

Modi said Odisha wants to



PM Narendra Modi addressing the Vijay Sankalp Samabesh at Balyatra Upper Ground in Cuttack, Monday

know why the BJD has suppressed the judicial commission report on Ratna Bhandar keys. "The role of BJD in the case is a suspect. The BJP government after it comes to power June 10 will make the report public," Modi said, adding that it is said that the Ratna Bhandar key has gone to Tamil Nadu.

While claiming formation of a double-engine government in the state, Modi rejected the possibility of a hung Assembly in Odisha. "Some media persons are saying that Odisha is going to witness a hung Assembly. It is just a rumour because BJP will form a full majority government in the state. BJP can only take forward development of the state to a new height," he said.

Referring to BJD's demand to announce the name of BJP's CM face for Odisha, Modi said: "I have experience in running a state government. Though Modi

will be in Delhi, he will ensure that Odisha's BJP government does not face any difficulty."

He said people have imposed faith on the BJD government for the past 25 years. "Entire Odisha is now introspecting what the people have got in these years. Farmers are facing hardships, youths are migrating to other states for livelihood while the situation is worse in tribal hinterland," he said.

Expressing concern over the large migration of people from Odisha despite the state being rich in natural resources like mines, forests and water, Modi asked: "Why people of Odisha are forced to reel under extreme poverty?"

Noting that he came from the land of Lord Somnath to offer prayers in the land of Lord Jagannath, the PM said, "After seeing the poverty in Odisha, I feel hurt. Who has destroyed my Odisha? Who has ruined the dreams of the youths? This gives me extreme pain."

Earlier in the day, Modi offered prayers at the Srimandir in Puri and led a roadshow here to canvas support for BJP candidates.

He led the roadshow from Marichkote Square to Medical Square on Grand Road in Puri. The PM was accompanied by state BJP president Manmohan Samal, party's Puri Lok Sabha candidate Sambit Patra and Puri Assembly nominee Jayanta Sarangi.

Strong wave in INDIA bloc's favour: Ramesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sirsa (Haryana), May 20: Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh Monday claimed that there is a strong wave in the country in favour of INDIA bloc and the coalition is going to form the next government at the Centre.

History is repeating itself in the country after 20 years as the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) of opposition parties is all set to defeat the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), just like the Congress-led UPA defeated the NDA in 2004, Ramesh said here.

The Congress general secretary, who was here to campaign for former Union minister Kumari Selja, the party's Lok Sabha poll candidate from Sirsa, expressed confidence that the INDIA bloc will sweep all the 10 parliamentary constituencies in Haryana, besides emerging victorious in the state Assembly polls that are scheduled to be held a few months after the general election.

Accompanied by AICC secretary Vineet Punia, Ramesh said people have understood that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is "spreading an epidemic of lies in the country by repeatedly lying about everything". "The Prime Minister cannot



speak a single truth even by default," the Congress leader was quoted as saying in a statement. He also claimed that Modi has lost the trust of people. Recalling the 2004 Lok Sabha polls, which the BJP had fought on the theme of "India Shining" under the leadership of the then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Ramesh said nobody had believed 20 years ago that the saffron party would lose the election. "But the Congress-led UPA made that happen and it is going to make that happen again," he said, adding, "History is set to repeat itself."

Ramesh said reports after five phases of polling suggest that the INDIA bloc is headed for a "clear and decisive victory". He alleged that the BJP is

against reservation and wants to change the Constitution. Mentioning some of the guarantees the Congress has given in its "Nyay Patra" (manifesto), Ramesh said farm loans will be waived and farmers will also get a legal guarantee on the minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

He also said in case of any damage or loss to their crops, farmers will be compensated within 30 days.

Poor people will be given 10-kg ration instead of five kg, the Congress leader said.

Voting for 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana is scheduled to take place in the sixth phase of the seven-phase election May 25 and the counting of votes will be taken up June 4.

Slain BJP worker's family casts votes in Ganjam



AGENCIES

Berhampur, May 20: The family members of a 28-year-old BJP worker, who was killed in a pre-poll clash with BJD supporters in Ganjam district, exercised their franchise amid tight security Monday, officials said.

Dillip Pahan was killed in a clash between BJP and BJD supporters at Srikrushnasaranapur village last week over putting up posters of candidates.

His widow Sabitri and father Rama Chandra Pahan were among four members of his family who cast their votes in their village, which falls under Khallikote Assembly seat and Aska parliamentary constituency. "Initially, we had thought of not casting our votes in this mo-

ment of grief. But later we decided that we must exercise our democratic right," Rama Chandra Pahan said.

Dillip's younger brother, who had sustained injuries in the clash, is undergoing treatment at AIIMS Bhubaneswar.

A platoon of central armed police forces was deployed in the village and patrolling was conducted, an official said, adding that no untoward incident happened and voting passed off peacefully.

Over 650 of the 1,071 voters in the village exercised their franchise till 5:30 pm, sources said.

A total of 11 people have been arrested in connection with the clash and an SIT has been formed to probe the incident.

Sabitri, the widow of the deceased BJP worker, however, claimed that the main accused were yet to be nabbed.

"Around 40 people were involved in the clash. We demand that the main accused be nabbed at the earliest," she said.

Parties infuse star power in campaign to woo voters

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, May 20: As celluloid has become an essential ingredient of Indian politics, especially elections, several political parties are roping in stars from the tinsel world to bask in their reflected glory and add a dash of glamour to the campaign for the ongoing simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Odisha.

Apart from big leaders like Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who are campaigning for their party candidates, the parties are infusing 'star power' of the film industry to woo the voters.

Recently, BJD's Jharsuguda Assembly candidate Dipali Das and Sundargarh Assembly nominee Jogesh Singh brought stars like Bhagyashree and Neil Nitin Mukesh of the Hindi film industry to campaign to wean away the voters in Jharsuguda and Sundargarh districts recently, said sources.

Similarly, veteran actress Hema Malini, known as 'Dream Girl' of Bollywood, was also roped in by BJP for campaign-

BJD's Jharsuguda Assembly candidate Dipali Das and Sundargarh Assembly nominee Jogesh Singh brought stars like Bhagyashree and Neil Nitin Mukesh of the Hindi film industry to wean away the voters in Jharsuguda and Sundargarh

Veteran actress Hema Malini, known as 'Dream Girl' of Bollywood, was also roped in by BJP for campaigning in places like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Deogarh

This apart, several actors and actresses from Odia film industry hitting the campaign trail also added hues to the hustings



ing in places like Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Deogarh.

This apart, several actors and actresses from Odia film industry hitting the campaign trail also added hues to the hustings.

Odia actors Babushaan Mohanty and Elina Samantaray were seen campaigning for Gautam Buddha Das, BJD candidate for Bhograi Assembly seat under Balasore Lok Sabha segment. They also canvassed for

BJD's Chhatrapur Assembly candidate Subash Chandra Behera.

Star couple Sabyasachi Mishra and Archita Sahu also campaigned for BJD candidates in Berhampur and Kalahandi.

Meanwhile, young Odia stars are also not far behind as Sivani Sangita and Sailendra Samantaray joined campaigning for BJD's Malkangiri candidate Manas Madkani. Likewise, young actress Suryamayee

Mohapatra was also seen campaigning for BJD candidates.

Both BJP and BJD had released the list of 'star campaigners' for Odisha which went to polls from May 13. The list includes Babushaan, Elina, Suryamayee, Sivani and others for BJD, and Hema Malini, Pinki Pradhan, Anubhav Mohanty, Sritam Das and Harihar Mohapatra for BJP. In the hustings 2024, these

cmk

of the day quote

Today it is the BJP, maybe tomorrow Congress will come to power in Delhi but any party that is in power can never pick you up and take you to Kashmir. That is not going to happen and you have to show boldness on your part for your return to your homes in the valley and we will also support you

MHEBOOBA MUFTI | FORMER CM, JK

For social and economic equality, it is necessary to count every person and every class. Because, the OBC community, with whose support BJP leaders became MPs, are being ignored

SACHIN PILOT | SENIOR LEADER, CONGRESS

Seeing its defeat, the BJP wants to rob democracy by putting pressure on the government machinery to deny the mandate

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

POST OF THE DAY

This is absolutely devastating. Ukraine is being slowly erased, eroded, destroyed... a man and his minions have been allowed to terrorize countries because of money and power. And those who makes excuses for people like that having a seat at the table, those politicians who say big words and sing fun songs while people are dying...are complicit.

@TETYANAUKRAINKA

SHORT TAKES

Mute woman from PoK held along LoC

Rajouri: A 45-year-old mute woman from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) was detained by the Army along the Line of Control in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Monday. The woman was detained from forward Pukheri village in Laam sector late Sunday night, they said. According to an identity card recovered from her possession, the woman is a resident of Sakhi Nath village in Kotli district of PoK. She is believed to have inadvertently entered the Indian territory, the officials said.

18 killed as vehicle plunges into valley

Kawardha: Seventeen women and a man were killed and four others injured when a mini goods vehicle they were travelling in plunged into a valley in Chhattisgarh's Kabirdham district Monday, police said. The victims were returning after plucking tendu leaves from a forest in the vehicle meant for transporting goods, he said. The vehicle skidded off the road, tumbled down considerably and crashed onto the road below the valley, the official said. After being alerted, a police team rushed to the spot and launched the rescue exercise, the official said. The remaining four injured persons, including three women, were referred for further treatment, he said.

5 drown in Ganga

Begusarai: Five persons, all men aged between 17 and 20, drowned in Ganga in Bihar's Begusarai district Monday, police said. The incident happened at Simaria Ghat where residents of a nearby village had come for a holy dip, said Neeraj Kumar Chaudhary, the SHO of Chakia police station.



We are not thinking of any cabinet reshuffle after the Lok Sabha elections. For no reason we will discontinue any guarantee schemes

YATHINDRA SIDDARAMAIAH | CM, KARNATAKA

ONE-DAY MOURNING FOR RAISI

A one-day state mourning will be observed across India Tuesday as a mark of respect for Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter crash, the Union Home Ministry has announced. The national flag will be flown at half-mast on all buildings where it is regularly flown across India and there will be no official entertainment during the period of state mourning



Gujarat ATS nabs 4 Lankans with IS links

Ahmedabad, May 20 : The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) has arrested four Sri Lankans with links to the banned outfit Islamic State (IS) who were allegedly on a mission to carry out terror activities in India, police said Monday. Acting on a tip-off, the ATS apprehended the accused at the Sardar Vallabhai Patel airport here after they travelled from Sri Lanka's capital Colombo via Chennai Sunday night, an official said. The men travelled to India to carry out terror activities at the behest of IS, Director General of Police Vikas Sahay said. The ATS team also recovered three Pakistan-made pistols and 20 cartridges lying abandoned at a location in the city's Nana Chiloda area based on geo-coordinates and photographs found on the mobile phone seized from the accused, Sahay said. The men were allegedly directed by their Pakistani handler to collect these weapons, he said. The accused, Mohammad Nurhat (35), Mohammad Faarukh (35), Mohammad Nafran (27) and Mohammad Rasdeen (43), took a flight from Colombo and reached Chennai in the wee hours of Sunday. The men informed investigators that they were earlier associated with the banned Sri Lankan radical militant outfit, National Thowheeth Jamath (NTJ), and joined IS after getting in touch with Pakistani handler Abu Bakr Al Bagdadi, he said.

Over 60% turnout in Phase V LS polls

Voting in five seats in Bihar, Jharkhand (3), Maharashtra (13), Odisha (5), UP (14), West Bengal (7) and two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir (1) and Ladakh (1) was held Monday with scattered incidents of violence

AGENCIES



New Delhi, May 20: Over 60 per cent voter turnout was recorded Monday in 49 constituencies in six states and two Union Territories (UTs) in the Phase V of Lok Sabha elections. There were sporadic incidents of violence in West Bengal besides EVM glitches at some booths in the state and neighbouring Odisha and complaints of slow voting in Maharashtra. West Bengal recorded the highest polling percentage at 76.05, while Maharashtra recorded the lowest at 54.33 per cent, with six Lok Sabha constituencies of Mumbai witnessing voting between 47 per cent and around 55 per cent per cent. Thane recorded a turnout of 49.81 per cent, according to the EC's voter turnout app. The EC had Sunday flagged

urban voter apathy in Mumbai, Thane and Lucknow and had urged people to come out and vote. Among other states, Bihar recorded 54.85 per cent turnout, Jharkhand 63.09 per cent, Odisha 69.34 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 57.79 per cent and Ladakh 69.62 per cent. The figures, the EC said, were "approximate trend" as data was still being collated. According to the figures made available by the Election Commission around 10 pm, the approximate polling percentage was 59.06. The last four phases have registered a total voter turnout of 66.95 per cent. With the end of polls in the fifth phase, voting has been completed in 25 states and UT and 428 constituencies out of 543 in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Two more phases --

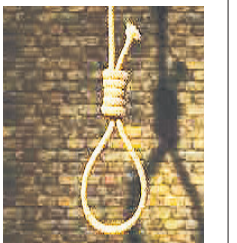
May 25 and June 1 - are remaining now. Counting of votes is June 4. Scattered incidents of violence marred the polls in seven Parliamentary constituencies of West Bengal where TMC and BJP workers clashed in various parts of Barrackpore, Bongaon, and Arambagh seats. In Bongaon constituency's Gayeshpur area, local BJP leader Subir Biswas was allegedly beaten by TMC supporters outside a booth. He was later shifted to the hospital. In the Kalyani area of the same constituency, Union Minister and BJP candidate Shantanu Thakur caught a person using the identity card of his rival TMC candidate Biswajit Das inside a polling booth. The person was later removed from the booth by Central forces. TMC workers also held protests in some areas following allegations that central forces were assisting BJP workers in 'intimidating' voters at some booths of Hooghly. "There was no violence anywhere in the state. About 250 complaints regarding slow voting and EVMs were received by the EC," according to Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer Navdeep Rinwa. In three booths in the Jhansi constituency in Lalitpur dis-

trict, 100 per cent of polling was reported. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who is in the fray from Rae Bareilly which was represented by his mother and former party president Sonia Gandhi earlier, visited different polling booths in the constituency and posed for pictures with local residents. He also interacted with Congress booth workers in Bachhrawan and visited a Hanuman temple in Churua. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (Lucknow), Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani (Amethi), Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Kausal Kishor (Mohanalganj), Minister of State for Consumer Affairs Sathvi Niranjan Jyoti (Fatehpur) and Union Minister of State for MSME Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma (Jalaun) are among those in the fray in seats in Uttar Pradesh. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati was among the early voters in Lucknow. Defence Minister Singh, who is eyeing a fourth term from Lucknow, cast his vote at a polling booth in Vipul Khand here and also appealed to the people to vote. The Congress alleged EVM malfunctioning at several places and accused the BJP of not allowing people to cast votes in three booths in Bela Khara village in Rahi block.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Two get death penalty for raping, burning minor girl

Jaipur: A POCSO court in Rajasthan's Bhilwara Monday awarded death sentence to two men for raping and burning alive a 14-year-old girl in a coal furnace in August last year. "Kalu and Kanha were awarded death penalty by the court," Special Public Prosecutor Mahaveer Singh Kishnawat said. The court Saturday had convicted the two for the crime that took place in August last year. Seven others accused of destroying evidence were acquitted by the court. Kishnawat said the acquittal will be challenged in the high court. Welcoming the court's decision, the victim's mother said justice has been done and she was satisfied with the punishment. Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot said his government had taken immediate action against the accused and arrested them. "At that time ADG Crime was sent to the spot and the case was taken up under the Case Officer Scheme. The charge sheet of this case was filed within about a month. Today, within about 10 months, these culprits have been sentenced," he said. The girl had gone missing while she had gone to graze cattle August 2 last year. The two men raped her and then hit her with sticks. Considering her dead, they threw her in a coal furnace.



ED alleges ₹7cr foreign funding to AAP

THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE WRITES TO MHA SEEKING FCRA PROBE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, May 20: The Enforcement Directorate has written to the Union Home Ministry alleging the Aam Aadmi Party, which rules Delhi and Punjab, has received more than ₹7 crore foreign funds in contravention of the FCRA, official sources said Monday. The federal probe agency sent the communication after it recovered some documents and emails during a drugs-linked money laundering probe against former Punjab AAP MLA Sukhpal Singh Khaira and some others. The probe was launched in 2021 and Khaira was arrested by the ED that year. He is now with the Congress party. Official sources said the ED had sent a detailed communication to the Union Home Ministry in August last year, underlining the alleged violations by the AAP and categorising these instances as contravention of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) and The Representation of the People Act. It is understood that the ED recently shared some fresh inputs in this case with the Ministry of

Home Affairs (MHA). Sources said the ED found the AAP received overseas donations of about ₹7.08 crore till now and they allegedly "mis-declared and manipulated" the identities and nationalities of the foreign donors apart from some other details. The agency has also informed the MHA about the verified names of the donors, their nationalities, passport numbers,

amount donated, mode of donation and bank account number of the receiver, billing name, address, phone numbers, email, time and the date of donation and payment gateway used, the sources said. Some fundraising events held by the AAP through its overseas wing volunteers in the USA and Canada between 2015 and 2016 are reported to have been made in alleged violation of the FCRA, the agency told the ministry. Alleging violations in a particular instance, the ED also informed the MHA that the names of some Canada-based people and their nationalities had been "concealed" in the party's financial records to "hide" the foreign donations being made to the party into its Indian bank account.

Graffiti targeting Kejriwal appear in several metro trains; Police files FIR

The police have registered an FIR and started a probe into the graffiti bearing AAP national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's name found scribbled inside metro trains and at stations, an officer said Monday. The Aam Aadmi Party Monday accused the BJP of being behind the graffiti and sought time from the Election Commission for a meeting on the issue. Deputy Commissioner of Police (metro) G Ram Gopal Naik said the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has given a complaint regarding defacement inside the metro coaches. "Accordingly, a case under relevant laws has been registered at Rajouri Garden Metro Police Station for further investigations," he said. Another police officer said pictures of certain messages scribbled inside metro trains and at stations were shared through the Instagram account "ankit.goel_91". One of the graffiti inside a metro train read, "Kejriwal Dilli Chhor Diye (Kejriwal, leave Delhi). Please. Otherwise, you will have to remember three slaps, which you planted (sic) before the election. Now the real and actual punch/slap will be there soon. Today's meeting at Jhandewalan.... Ankit.Goel_91". Another message read: "#CM Delhi leave us, we don't need freebies anymore. #45 Crore on CM Awas."

Govt working with spice makers to ensure EtO norm compliance

New Delhi, May 20: The government has found that some samples of Everest Spices were non-compliant under the strictest standards (0.1 mg per Kg) regarding presence of ethylene oxide and it has been asked to take corrective measures, an official said Monday. In view of the reports on the recall of two Indian spice brands -- MDH and Everest -- products in Singapore and Hong Kong due to the presence of ethylene oxide (EtO) residue in certain spices, the government has conducted these tests on the presence of this carcinogenic chemical. "We have carried out sample testing from both these companies and we have found that all 18 samples of MDH were compliant with standards. Different countries follow different MRL (maximum residual limit) for EtO. While the EU has fixed this limit at 0.02-0.1 mg per kg, Singapore's limit is 50 mg per kg and Japan has 0.01 mg per kg. These samples were tested for 0.1 mg per kg.

PM ACCUSES TMC OF VOTE BANK POLITICS; MAMATA CLARIFIES STANCE

Jhargram, May 20: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday engaged in a heated exchange over the latter's remarks against Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha, with Modi accusing the TMC of threatening monks for vote bank politics and Banerjee clarifying that her criticism was directed at certain individuals, not the institutions. Addressing an election rally in West Bengal's Jhargram, Modi condemned the vandalism at Ramakrishna Mission ashram in Jalpaiguri Sunday and accused the TMC regime of instigating

violence against monks to appease their vote bank. "It is shameful that the TMC has taken up the onus of hurting the religious faith of Hindus in Bengal. The CM is threatening the Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Ashram monks. On Sunday, Ramakrishna Mission ashram in Jalpaiguri was attacked. The people of Bengal will not tolerate this," Modi said. His remarks followed the vandalism incident Sunday, where miscreants stormed the Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) premises in Jalpaiguri, threatening monks and other employees at gunpoint. The attackers then vandalised the premises, breaking CCTV cameras and locking the main gate before fleeing. Police later rescued the stranded monks and staff. An RKM official suggested that a local land mafia was behind the early Sunday morning



incident, which was reportedly a property dispute issue. The monks had lodged a complaint at Bhaktinagar police station against a local tough and his associates. Modi criticised Banerjee's recent comments against certain monks of RKM and BSS that they were working as per instructions of the BJP, asserting that these socio-religious organisations are being threatened to appease the TMC's vote bank. "ISKCON, RKM, and Bharat Sevashram Sangha are known for service and morality, but today the CM of Bengal is threatening them. This is being done to ap-

pease the vote bank. As the CM is threatening the monks, TMC goons now dare to attack Ramakrishna Mission," he said. Addressing an election rally in Goghat under Arambagh Lok Sabha constituency Saturday, Banerjee had claimed, "Some monks of Ramakrishna Mission and Bharat Sevashram Sangha are working under the influence of BJP leaders in Delhi." Criticising her statements, Modi said, "The TMC does not care about the sentiments of the people of Bengal. They have no sympathy for the feelings of the Hindus here. The people of Bengal will not tolerate this insult."

The Prime Minister accused Banerjee of abusing saints and monks of the state to appease her vote bank. Modi had also accused Banerjee of "threatening" these socio-religious organisations under pressure from Muslim extremists to "appease" the TMC's vote bank. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, speaking at rallies in Onda and Panskura earlier, praised the RKM and BSS for their philanthropic work and clarified that her criticism was directed at specific persons. "I am not against the Ramakrishna Mission, why should I be against an institution or insult it?" Banerjee said. "I have spoken about one or two persons." Swami Pradiptananda Maharaj of BSS, also known as Kartik Maharaj, announced he had sent a legal notice to Banerjee, demanding an apology for her alleged defamatory remarks about the organisation.

international



The effects of the use of starvation as a method of warfare, together with other attacks and collective punishment against the civilian population of Gaza are acute, visible and widely known
KARIM KHAN | CHIEF PROSECUTOR, ICC

BALTIMORE TRAGEDY: SHIP REFLOATS
The container ship that caused the deadly collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge was refloated Monday and has begun moving back to port. The Dali has remained at the collapse site since it lost power and crashed into one of the bridge's supporting columns March 26, killing six construction workers and snarling traffic into Baltimore Harbour



Leaders killed in chopper crashes

Abdul Salam Arif, President of Iraq (1966): Abdul Salam Arif, the second President of Iraq, played a crucial role in the 1958 revolution that overthrew the monarchy. On April 13, 1966, Arif died when his Iraqi Air Force plane crashed near Basra.

Sanjay Gandhi, Indian politician and Congress leader (1980): Sanjay Gandhi, son of former prime minister Indira Gandhi, died June 23, 1980. Sanjay's life was cut short when he lost control of his aircraft at Delhi's Safdarjung airport.

Rashid Karami, Prime Minister of Lebanon (1987): Rashid Karami, Lebanon's most frequently elected Prime Minister, was a prominent figure during the Lebanese Civil War. On June 1, 1987, a bomb exploded in his helicopter en route to Beirut, killing Karami and wounding several others on board.

Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, President of Pakistan (1988): General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, the sixth President of Pakistan, died August 17, 1988. His C-130 Hercules aircraft crashed shortly after takeoff from Bahawalpur.

Madhavrao Scindia, Indian Politician and Congress leader (2001): Madhavrao Scindia, a prominent Indian politician and member of the Congress, died in a plane crash on September 30, 2001. The crash occurred near Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, when his private Beechcraft King Air C90 caught fire mid-air.

Sebastian Pinera, President of Chile (2024): Sebastian Pinera, the former President of Chile, died in February 2024. Pinera's helicopter crashed into a lake in southern Chile, resulting in his death.



Raisi's death could echo across ME

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jerusalem, May 20: The apparent crash of a helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, the country's foreign minister and other officials is likely to reverberate across the Middle East. That's because Iran has spent decades supporting armed groups in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the Palestinian territories that allow it to project power and potentially deter attacks from the United States or Israel, the sworn enemies of its

1979 Islamic Revolution. Tensions have never been higher than they were last month, when Iran under Raisi and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles at Israel in response to an airstrike on an Iranian Consulate in Syria that killed two Iranian generals and five officers. Israel, with the help of the United States, Britain, Jordan and others, intercepted nearly all the projectiles. In response, Israel apparently launched its own strike against an air defense

off a wider war. It's a combustible mix that could be ignited by unexpected events, like a helicopter carrying top officials disappearing into a mist.

A BITTER RIVALRY WITH ISRAEL
Israel has long viewed Iran as its greatest threat because of Tehran's controversial nuclear program, its ballistic missiles and its support for armed groups sworn to Israel's destruction. Iran views itself as the chief patron of Palestinian resistance to Israeli rule, and top officials

IRAN'S PRESIDENT DIES FOLLOWING A HELICOPTER CRASH IN A MOUNTAINOUS REGION OF THE COUNTRY SUNDAY

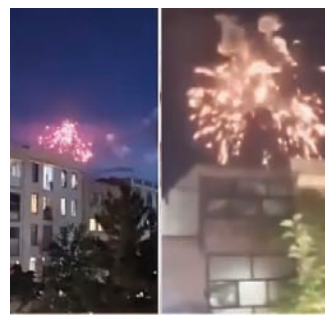
radar system in the Iranian city of Isfahan, causing no casualties but sending an unmistakable message. The sides have waged a shadow war of covert operations and cyberattacks for years, but the exchange of fire in April was their first direct military confrontation. The ongoing war between Israel and Hamas has drawn in other Iranian allies, with each attack and counter-attack threatening to set

for years have called for Israel to be wiped off the map. Raisi, a hard-liner viewed as a protégé and possible successor of Khamenei, chastised Israel last month, saying "the Zionist Israeli regime has been committing oppression against the people of Palestine for 75 years."

I announce five days of public mourning and offer my condolences to the dear people of Iran
ALI KHAMENEI | SUPREME LEADER, IRAN

DIVIDED IRAN

Muted mourning, furtive celebration



A year after Raisi's hardline government cracked down violently to end the biggest anti-establishment demonstrations since the 1979 revolution, opponents even posted furtive video online of people passing out sweets to celebrate his death

history. While government loyalists packed into mosques and squares to pray for Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, both killed in a helicopter crash, most shops remained open and the authorities made little effort to interrupt ordinary life. Laila, a 21-year-old student in Tehran, told Reuters by phone that she was not saddened by Raisi's death, "because he ordered the crackdown on women for hijab. But I am sad because even with Raisi's death this regime will not change."

Rights groups say hundreds of Iranians died in 2022-2023 demonstrations triggered by the death in custody of a young Iranian Kurdish woman arrested by morality police for violating the country's strict dress codes. The authorities' handling of an array of political, social and economic crises have deepened the gap between the clerical rulers and society.

Dubai: Iran proclaimed five days of mourning for President Ebrahim Raisi Monday, though the muted atmosphere revealed little of the spectacular public grief that has accompanied the deaths of other senior figures in the Islamic Republic's 45-year

Mokhber new interim President

Mohammad Mokhber, 68, Iran's first vice president became interim president following the death of Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash. As interim president, Mokhber is part of a three-person council, along with the speaker of parliament and the head of the judiciary, that will organise a new presidential election within 50 days of the president's death. Mokhber, like Raisi, is seen as close to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who has the last say in all matters of state. Mokhber became first vice president in 2021 when Raisi was elected president.

Bagheri new acting foreign min

Iran's veteran nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri, a harsh critic of the West, was Monday named acting foreign minister to replace the top diplomat killed in a helicopter crash along with the president. Bagheri, 56, had served as deputy to the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who perished along with the Iranian president Ebrahim Raisi and seven others in the accident. Bagheri is considered close to Iran's ultraconservatives and a member of the inner circle of Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who is the father-in-law of Bagheri's brother.

Sunak apologises for Britain's historic infected blood scandal

The scandal involves over 30,000 people being infected with life-threatening viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C while they were under NHS care between the 1970s and 1990s, with over 3,000 having died

London, May 20: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Monday apologised after Britain's state-funded National Health Service (NHS) was accused of cover up in an infected blood scandal dating back to the 1970s in a public inquiry report submitted to the government.

Speaking in the House of Commons hours after inquiry chair Sir Brian Langstaff delivered his scathing verdict on the issue, the British Indian leader said it was a "day of shame for the British state" after a catalogue of failures and attitude of denial

documented in the inquiry. The scandal involves over 30,000 people being infected with life-threatening viruses such as HIV and Hepatitis C while they were under NHS care between the 1970s and 1990s, with over 3,000 having died. "I find it almost impossible to comprehend how it would have felt...I want to make a wholehearted and unequivocal apology," said Sunak, addressing the victims and their families. "On behalf of this and every government stretching back to the 1970s, I am truly sorry," he added, confirming compensation to all "whatever it costs". The scandal involves infected batches of Factor VIII, an essential blood clotting protein which haemophiliacs do not produce naturally imported from the US and used widely to treat patients at the time.

New Taiwanese Prez calls on China to stop threats

Taiwan inaugurated Lai Ching-te as its new president, installing a relative moderate who will continue the self-governing island democracy's policy of de facto independence while seeking to bolster its defences against China

REUTERS

Taipei, May 20: Taiwan President Lai Ching-te asked China Monday to stop its military and political threats, saying in his inauguration speech that peace is the only choice and that Beijing had to respect the choice of the Taiwanese people. Lai, addressing the crowd outside the Japanese-colonial-era presidential office in central



Taipei, repeated a call for talks with China, which views the proudly democratic island as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under Beijing's control. "I also want to urge China to stop intimidating Taiwan politically and militarily, and to take on the global responsibility with Taiwan to work hard on maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and in the region, to ensure the world is without the fear of war breaking out," he said. "We also want to declare this to the world: Taiwan makes no concessions on democracy

and freedom. Peace is the only option and prosperity is our goal for long-term peace and stability." Taiwan has faced pressure from China, including regular air force and navy activities near the island, since the election vic-

Taiwan independence is a dead end. Regardless of the pretext or the banner under which it is pursued, the push for Taiwan independence is destined to fail
WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

tory by Lai, 64, who is widely known by his English name, William. In attendance at the ceremony are former US officials dispatched by President Joe Biden, lawmakers from countries including Japan, Germany and Canada, and leaders from some of the 12 countries that still maintain formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan, such as Paraguay President Santiago Pena. China makes its "One China" policy, meaning Taiwan is part of it, mandatory for all nations to have diplomatic ties with it.

We want to declare this to the world: Taiwan makes no concessions on democracy and freedom. Peace is the only option and prosperity is our goal for long-term peace and stability
LAI CHING-TE | PRESIDENT, TAIWAN

Assange wins bid to dare US extradition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, May 20: Wikileaks founder Julian Assange Monday won a major reprieve as a London court permitted him to appeal against his extradition to the US on espionage charges, a legal saga which has been going on for over a decade.

The 52-year-old Australian national has been held at Belmarsh high-security prison in London since 2019.

While the US authorities want Assange to face trial for allegedly endangering lives by publishing thousands of classified documents on Wikileaks, his lawyers have argued that the case against him is politically motivated. On Monday, two High Court judges at the Royal Courts of Justice granted the Australian-born Assange permission to appeal against his extradition order.

SHORT TAKES

SA's Zuma barred from elections

Johannesburg: South Africa's former president Jacob Zuma is barred from running for parliament in this month's election, the country's top court ruled Monday, a judgment that could influence the outcome and trigger unrest from Zuma's supporters. The constitutional court found Zuma's 15-month jail sentence for contempt of court in 2021 disqualified him from standing in the May 29 election, as the constitution prohibits anyone given a prison sentence of 12 months or longer from holding a parliamentary seat.

Nepal PM wins vote of trust

Kathmandu: Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' Monday won a vote of confidence in Parliament, the fourth within 18 months of taking office. Prachanda, 69, a former guerilla leader from the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) - the third largest party in the House of Representatives (HoR) - received 157 votes in the 275-member House of Representatives.

IN LINE OF FIRE: CAMPUS PROTESTS IN US UNIVERSITIES

BISHNUPRIYA PADHI

Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, viewed university as onward march of human race towards ever higher objectives of humanism, tolerance, reason, adventure of ideas and the search for truth. The university should endeavour to promote national integration, social justice, secularism, democratic way of life, international understanding and scientific approach to the problems of society. It should shape minds and foster a sense of citizenship. Nehru was of the opinion that a university stands for everything that is ideal in the world, everything that makes us human. University is an abode of freedom of speech and expression and academic thought. University campuses are unique hubs of intellectual discovery and debate, designed to teach students how to act within a free society. In April 2024, American university campuses erupted in protest over the conflict in Gaza. Leading universities such as Columbia in New York, Harvard,

Yale, New York University, the University of Virginia, the University of Texas among over 50 campuses witnessed hundreds of student protesters. There have been a few building takeovers, limited use of civil disobedience and absence of bombing and arson. Robert Cohen of New York University is of the opinion that though there were non-violent encampments in campuses of America, police have been called to suppress the protests. As a result, 2600 arrests were made nationally for minimally disruptive acts such as occupying outdoor campus spaces, including lawns and plazas. As per his view, a few lessons can be drawn from such atrocious acts of university authorities. a) Most influential college and university leaders today are less respectful of free speech, right of students and much quicker to use police force (including anti-terrorist squads in combat gear) to suppress protests. Student protest movements have always been unpopular with the American public, owing to the cultural conservatism of society



In his opinion, the anti-Gaza war student movement's romantic embrace of Palestinian nationalism makes it especially easy to demonise them as pro-Hamas, anti-Semitic and promoters of intifada violence against Israel. b) The student protests have been immensely unpopular with cagey university administrators, trustees, some wealthy donors and politicians. Many of them have used their wealth and power not just to advocate but also to enforce suppression of the movement. Cohen has cited an example saying that pressure from billionaire donors and the Congress cost the presidents of Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania their jobs last year. While the

suppression of radical or youth-led movements are not new, current efforts have an unprecedented heavy-handed approach. To substantiate his point, Prof. Cohen states that the Speaker of the House, Mike Johanson, in his trip to Columbia University has urged the varsity president to resign for not doing enough to suppress the movement against war in Gaza. The university authorities have not honoured the rules framed by the American Civil Liberties Union. The rules inter alia state that: 1) No view point, however offensive, must be censored or disciplined; 2) No student or group should be targeted or intimidated in any way in the name of free

speech. 3) Universities can place restrictions on time and place of protests so as not to hamper the functioning of university. 4) The police must be called only as a last resort. 5) Campus leaders must not yield to political pressures. Sadly, these rules were observed more in their violation. The students were concerned about the devastating plight in Gaza and demanded that universities divest from corporations with links to Israel. In such an atmosphere, the students have the guts to speak truth to the power in campuses. One wonders, where are the thought leaders and Nobel laureates that these Ivy League universities are justly proud of? Joseph Stiglitz, Columbia University's professor, a Jew himself, has stated in an interview that, "they (the students) have empathy for what was going on in the world. How could anybody not react after seeing the pictures, after seeing the numbers of people dying, being injured?" He has strongly decried interference in the academic

freedom by the government and police. TT Ram Mohan in his perspective article in Business Standard dated May 16, 2024 has stated that "the faculty may hold forth on human rights abuses and limits on freedom of speech in China, Russia, Myanmar and other places. They may write on government and regulatory bodies and record stirring notes of dissent. They may write searing critiques of political parties succumbing to powerful lobbies. They may exhort graduating students to stand by the values of university and to speak truth to power... academics like sensible people everywhere, know which side their bread is buttered." Politics and money polarise university campuses. None so, in election year campus activism has almost been a rite of passage in American universities. It has moved the dial on civil rights, on American involvement in wars on foreign lands, on racial equality. The protests and disruptions are destined to continue at a time when it has never seemed to be so politically divided.

