

Janhvi's struggles
Actor Janhvi Kapoor shares her journey of overcoming insecurities, dealing with body image issues and self-worth struggles

LEISURE | P2

ANC loses majority
South Africans have slashed support for the African National Congress to 40% in this week's election, ending three decades of dominance

INTERNATIONAL | P10

Flat sales
Passenger vehicle wholesales in India witness a marginal growth in May on account of high base effect and muted demand

BUSINESS | P11

India outplay Germany
India win their FIH Pro League encounter against World Champions Germany by an emphatic margin in London

SPORTS | P12



DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS: Voters leave on a ropeway after casting their votes for the seventh and last phase of Lok Sabha elections in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, Saturday

EXIT POLLSTERS PREDICT NDA WIN

The seven-phase Lok Sabha election, spanning more than six weeks, came to an end Saturday. While the official results will be announced June 4, various media organisations and poll survey agencies conducted exit polls to provide an early indication of whether the BJP-led NDA will get a third term or the newly-formed INDIA will trim their ambitious goals. Based on lakhs of interviews across all Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies, the pollsters concluded that the NDA, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is set to return for a third term with thumping majority while the saffron party will better its last performance in Odisha

POLLSTERS	PARTIES/ALLIANCES		
	NDA	INDIA	Others
Republic PMarq	359	154	30
Republic Matrize	353-368	118-113	43-48
NewsX Dynamics	371	125	47
Jan Ki Baat	377	151	15
India TV	371-401	109-139	28-38
News18	355-370	125-140	42-52
Chanakya	400+15	107+11	36+9
Times Now-ETG	358	152	33

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 1: Exit polls Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the BJP-led NDA expected to win a big majority in the Lok Sabha polls.

The Republic PMarq exit poll gave 359 seats to NDA, 154 to INDIA bloc and 30 to others. Republic Matrize poll gave 353-368 seats to NDA, 118-113 to the INDIA bloc and 43-48 to others. The NewsX Dynamics gave 371 seats to NDA, 125 to INDIA bloc and 47 to others.

NewsX Dynamics exit poll has also predicted seats for different parties and said Congress will marginally improve from

PREDICTION FOR STATE				
Pollsters	BJP	BJD	CONG	
India TV	15-17	04-06	01	
Jan ki baat	15-18	03-07	01	
Chanakya	16	04	01	
C-Voter	17-19	03	01	

its tally of 52 seats in 2019. It said the BJP is poised to win 315 seats, improving its 2019 tally of 303 seats. NewsX Dynamics exit poll predicted Congress winning 60 seats, DMK 22, Trinamool Congress 19, TDP 13, JD(U) 11, Shiv Sena (UBT) five, NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) five, Shiv Sena eight, BJD eight, YSRCP seven, NCP four, Samajwadi Party 10, Rashtriya Janata Dal five, National Conference three, AAP three, AIADMK five, BRS two and JD(S) two seats.

The exit poll predicted that the ruling Left Democratic Front would get four seats in Kerala. It predicted that others will get 32 seats.

The Jan Ki Baat survey predicted 377 seats for NDA, 151 for INDIA bloc and 15 for others.

India TV poll gave 371-401 seats for NDA, 109-139 seats for INDIA

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

SC: Dying declaration enough for conviction

New Delhi, June 1: An authentic dying declaration that inspires the confidence of the court can be relied upon and be the sole basis for the conviction of an accused without any corroboration, the Supreme Court has said.

The top court made this observation May 15 while upholding the conviction of an ex-army personnel for murdering his wife, a police constable, in Maharashtra's Beed district 22 years ago.

It said that the court has to scrutinise the dying declaration carefully and ensure it is consistent, credible and devoid of tutoring.

"Once a dying declaration is found to be authentic and inspiring the court's confidence, then the same can be relied upon and can be the sole basis for conviction without any corroboration.

State clocks 70.67% turnout

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Odisha logged a voter turnout of 70.67 per cent till 12 am Saturday, according to the Voter Turnout App (VTA) of Election Commission of India.

Barring a few incidents of clashes, polling was peaceful in six Lok Sabha and 42 Assembly segments in the state, an official said. A polling official and a voter died of suspected heatstroke in the state, he added.

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) NB Dhal said, "Polling was peaceful in 10,882 booths, barring a few reports of EVM glitches, which were resolved."

Till 5 pm, around 62.46 per cent of over 99.61 lakh voters

Heatstroke claims 2

A polling official, identified as Manoranjan Sahoo, in Jajpur district complained of uneasiness and was taken to a local hospital where he was declared dead, according to an official. Sahoo, an assistant teacher, was deputed as a booth-level officer in Oleichandanapur in the district. Similarly, an elderly man fell sick while standing in a queue outside a polling booth in Iswarpur in Nilagiri Assembly segment of Balasore district. He was taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead, the official added.

exercised their franchise in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur parliamentary constituencies along with the

Assembly segments falling under these Lok Sabha seats, he said.

Till filing of this report, Mayurbhanj Lok Sabha seat had recorded the highest voter turnout of 73.81 per cent, followed by Jagatsinghpur (73.06), Balasore (70.41), Bhadrak (70.34), Kendrapara (68.64) and Jajpur (67.91). Among the Assembly segments, the highest voter turnout of 77.52 per cent was recorded in Bangiriposi of Mayurbhanj, while the lowest polling of 62.38 per cent was registered in the Aul Assembly segment of Kendrapara.

Key candidates in this phase include Odisha Assembly Speaker Pramila Mallik, Government Whip Prashant Kumar Mudili, and state ministers - Sudam Marndi, and Ashwini Patra.

Over 62 % voting in last phase

New Delhi: An approximate voter turnout of 62.36 per cent was recorded Saturday in the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha polls with incidents of violence between TMC and BJP supporters reported in Sandeshkhali region of West Bengal, and complaints of EVM glitches and rigging at some booths lodged. Polling was conducted in seven states and the Union Territory of Chandigarh for 57 constituencies. P9

Arindam's booth rigging allegation

Salipur: BJP's Salipur candidate Arindam Ray alleged that elections were rigged by BJD workers in some of the booths in the area while two persons were injured in separate clashes outside a polling booth in Gop area in the Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha seat and Salipur under the Kendrapara parliamentary constituency. Replying to a question on the political clashes and booth rigging, the CEO said, "No such incidents were reported in booths.

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.7°C	35.6°C
Min Temp	26.4°C	26.0°C
Humidity	74%	70%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

FORECAST

PARTLY CLOUDY SKY

SHORT TAKES

4 buses gutted in Rayagada

Bissamkatak: Four private buses were gutted in fire at the Biju Patnaik bus stand under this block in Rayagada district Saturday afternoon. Two fire engines were pressed into service to contain the blaze. According to reports, six buses belonged to a single owner were parked inside the bus stand out of which four caught fire. While the exact reason behind the fire has not been ascertained, it is suspected that some miscreants could have set the buses on fire due to past enmity.

Puppeteer Maguni Kuanr no more

Keonjhar: Eminent puppet artist Padma Shri Maguni Charan Kuanr passed away Saturday here at Baidyraj Saha after a prolonged illness. He was 88. Apart from being a famous puppeteer, he was also a painter, wood and bamboo artist. He gave Odisha a special identity across the globe for his skills. His last rites were performed by the district administration with national honours. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Governor Raghuraj Das condoled the death. Many dignitaries including MLA Mohan Majhi, former MP Anant Naik, District Bar Association president Alok Mahanta paid their last respects to the departed soul.

Puri firecracker toll 9

Bhubaneswar: The death toll in the explosion of a stockpile of firecrackers in Puri mounted to nine after three of the injured people died, a senior official said Saturday. A total of 21 people are currently undergoing treatment in various hospitals in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. A total of 30 people were injured in the explosion that happened during Lord Jagannath's Chandan Yatra, a ritual, on the night of May 29.

Artificial intelligence giving computers a sense of smell

Ann Arbor (US), June 1: Over 100 years ago, Alexander Graham Bell asked the readers of National Geographic to do something bold and fresh - "to found a new science." He pointed out that sciences based on the measurements of sound and light already existed. But there was no science of odour. Bell asked his readers to "measure a smell."

Today, smartphones in most people's pockets provide impressive built-in capabilities based on the sciences of sound and light: voice assistants, facial recognition and photo enhancement. The science of odour does not offer anything



comparable. But that situation is changing, as advances in machine olfaction, also called "digitised smell," are finally answering Bell's call to action.

Research on machine olfaction faces a formidable challenge due to the complexity of the human sense of smell. Whereas human vision mainly relies on receptor cells in the retina - rods and three types of cones - smell is experienced through about 400 types of receptor cells in the nose.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many cases of smell blindness, or anosmia, were reported. The sense of smell, which usually takes a back seat, rose in public consciousness. Additionally, a research project,

the Pyrfume Project, made more and larger datasets publicly available.

By 2019, the largest datasets had grown from less than 500 molecules in the DREAM challenge to about 5,000 molecules. A Google Research team led by Alexander Wiltchko was finally able to bring the deep learning revolution to machine olfaction. Their model, based on a type of deep learning called graph neural networks, established state-of-the-art results in machine olfaction. Wiltchko is now the founder and CEO of Osmo, whose mission is "giving computers a sense of smell."

Recently, Wiltchko and his team used a graph neural network to create a "principal odour

map," where perceptually similar odours are placed closer to each other than dissimilar ones. This was not easy: Small changes in molecular structure can lead to large changes in olfactory perception. Conversely, two molecules with very different molecular structures can nonetheless smell almost the same.

Such progress in cracking the code of smell is not only intellectually exciting but also has highly promising applications, including personalised perfumes and fragrances, better insect repellents, novel chemical sensors, early detection of disease, and more realistic augmented reality experiences. The future of machine olfaction looks bright.

leisure



GIANCARLO ESPOSITO JOINS CAPTAIN AMERICA CAST

Emmy nominee Giancarlo Esposito will appear in *Captain America: Brave New World*. Esposito announced his casting in a Marvel project during a panel in Brazil earlier this month. His role in the film is being kept under wraps, however, it is being reportedly described as villainous, as per *variety.com*.

MINDY TALKS ABOUT REPRISING HER ROLE IN THE OFFICE REBOOT

Indo-American actress Mindy Kaling, who has been a torchbearer for diversity and right representation, has talked about whether she would ever revisit her character Kelly Kapoor from *The Office* and how she's feeling about the new spinoff series, reports *people.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
It is a sunny, sparkling day, and the stars spell success. If you're feeling creative, simply pick up a paintbrush or try a new recipe. However, care and caution should be the buzzwords if you are driving alone, suggest Ganesh.

TAURUS
You may feel let down as your folks may not extend the support you expected from them, says Ganesh. You should try to remain practical and not get swayed by emotions. It is highly likely that family feuds may erupt today. Ganesh advises you to avoid confrontations and keep smiling to emerge a winner.

GEMINI
An extremely profitable and progressive day awaits you. You may come into a handsome inheritance. Your responsibilities will increase along with a possible promotion at work. However, do not let your success go to your head, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Ganesh advises you to watch your back today. However, he wants to make it clear that you may be at the receiving end of others' actions. Anyway, your cautious and watchful approach will save you from needless discomfort. In short, life will teach you priceless and precious lessons today, predicts Ganesh.

LEO
You have to let go of your stubborn and obstinate streak. You will need to compromise according to the situation. If you do not have such an attitude, arguments and confrontations with your business partners, friends and family members are possible.

VIRGO
The artist in you will set the floor ablaze today. You have the remarkable abilities of a showman and comedian, and people will feel thrilled at your treasure of jokes in the evening, says Ganesh. However, you will do well to conserve some energy for other urgent matters and duties as well.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be able to show your love and appreciation for your beloved. Small issues will crop up and keep you tensed and uncomfortable today. Just remember good days and old memories and life will seem good again. It is essential to have confidence in yourself if you want to go ahead in life and be happy.

SCORPIO
According to Ganesh, it's a good day for long term and real estate investments. It may lead to benefits and profits in long run. Sit back, relax and enjoy the pleasures of life before you miss out on them. Welcome all the opportunities with open arms.

SAGITTARIUS
The wheel of fortune turns towards you today, says Ganesh. Make a wish and it's bound to come true. However don't be over-confident when it comes to decision-making. In case of disappointments, 'this too shall pass' would be the best remedy.

CAPRICORN
You comparatively less experienced than others in the office, but the boss will choose you with a hope to get the company out of the existing troubles. Trusting your intelligence, skills, and potential, you will assigned some crucial matters. It is a great deal to live up to such high expectations, but you will be able to do so and win the hearts of many, predicts Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
You need to think dispassionately and with clarity, says Ganesh. As always, sentiments may come in the way of your success today. Be careful, especially while taking decisions that will impact your future. You don't want to study law, just because your friends are doing it!

PISCES
You will feel very emotional about those who are close to your heart. Those people who know you will endear you because of this quality of yours. But Ganesh adds a word of caution; take care of those people whom you hold close to your heart because in your sentiments for them you might not notice their bad qualities or forgive their mistakes.

Janhvi talks about her insecurities

Mumbai: While promoting her new film, *Mr & Mrs Mahi*, Janhvi Kapoor candidly shared her personal journey of overcoming insecurities. The actress revealed that she once struggled with body image issues and felt she was missing out on many human experiences.

In an interview with Ranveer Allahabadi, the *Mili* actress explained that she has always pursued personal, intellectual, and artistic growth, and dislikes stagnation in any form.

Reflecting on her past, she admitted she used to be in a very different emotional space, overwhelmed by insecurity. She shared that these feelings of insecurity were ingrained in her from a young age. Growing up, the actress felt like she was constantly being judged because of her background and the privileges associated with her family. In school, whenever she made friends, performed well, or received any opportunity, it was always linked to where she came from. It made it hard for her to understand

her own value. Janhvi also opened up about her struggle with self-worth, especially after the loss of her mother, the legendary actress Sridevi. She admitted to seeking validation from the wrong places during that difficult time.

When asked about her insecurities in her 20s, she revealed she was particularly insecure about her body and language. She explained how being in the media at a young age affected her. According to her, either she was being sexualized too much or not enough.

AGENCIES

NATYADHARA - DAY I



The members of Bharat Putra, a Bhubaneswar-based theatre troupe, presented Odia play *Chora Chora* at Bhanjakala Mandap, Saturday, on the first evening of three-day-long Natya Dhara. The programme, a joint collaboration of the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department, in association with Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi and Odisha Natya Sangha, is held on first three days of every month to promote theatre. Adapted from Italian playwright Dario Fo's work by Saqti Mohanty, the play was directed by Choudhury Jayaprakash Das.

Banita opens up on her int'l debut

Mumbai: Actress Banita Sandhu, known for her role as Miss Malhotra in *Bridgerton* season 3, shared her excitement about her international debut.

"It felt like a dream come true," she said, noting the show's prominence on Netflix. She described the set's makeup, costumes, and dance scenes as exceptionally immersive, making the experience feel incredibly real.

Reflecting on her Bollywood debut with the film *October*, the actress mentioned that she didn't view it as a strategic entry into Bollywood but rather as a learning experience. She emphasised that her decisions are driven by her passion and intuition rather than career strategies.

After her first reel video went viral and received love from her fans, she found herself hooked. An avid social media user, she consistently entertains her followers with her clips. "I would do one reel in one or two months, and then she said we have the time to shoot a reel, and I was just having fun. After it went viral, I realised that I did what I enjoyed, and people are also enjoying it. So, I started doing it regularly. I am just having fun, honestly," said the actress.

On the work front, Vidya was last seen in *Do Aur Do Pyaar* and is reportedly set to return as the iconic Manjulika in the upcoming *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3*. IANS

which helps her avoid pressure from high expectations.

The *Sardar Udham* actress also highlighted the contrast in her appearance in *Bridgerton* compared to her Indian films. She received numerous compliments on her glamorous look in the series, noting that she usually wears minimal makeup in her Indian roles. This project showcased a different side of her.

Looking ahead, Banita believed her role in *Bridgerton* will open new opportunities in Bollywood. She expressed pride in her Indian films and hopes her work in India will gain recognition in the West. She concluded by expressing her desire for a reciprocal exchange of opportunities between the Indian and Western film industries.

AGENCIES



Vidya on her tryst with reels

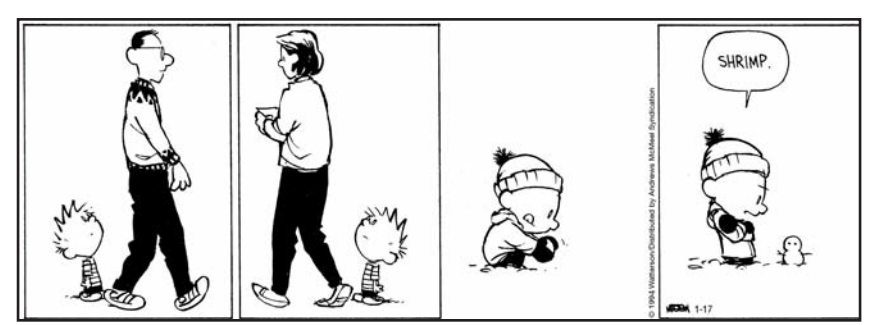
Mumbai: Actress Vidya Balan has become a social media sensation thanks to her engaging reels on the platform, which she said she started making about two years ago and is having fun making them. Talking about her tryst with making reels on social media and going viral with them, the *Thank You* actress told IANS, "It has been about two years, and I was shooting in London for *Neeyat*, and I had a lot of time, and that's why one day, I just decided that my manager had been telling me, 'Why don't we do reels?'"



PEANUTS



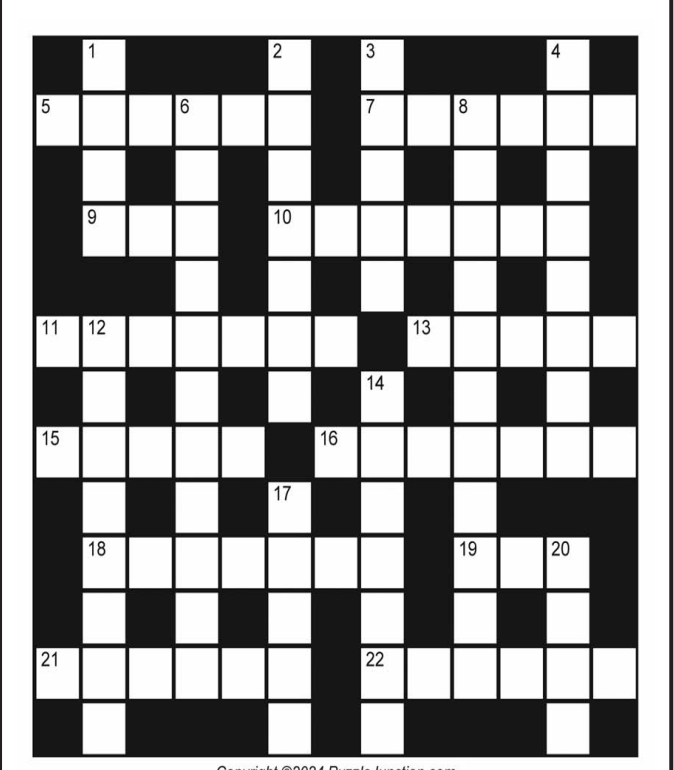
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



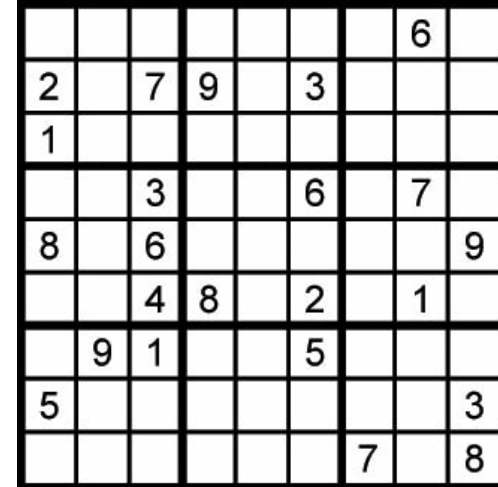
FUN post CROSSWORD



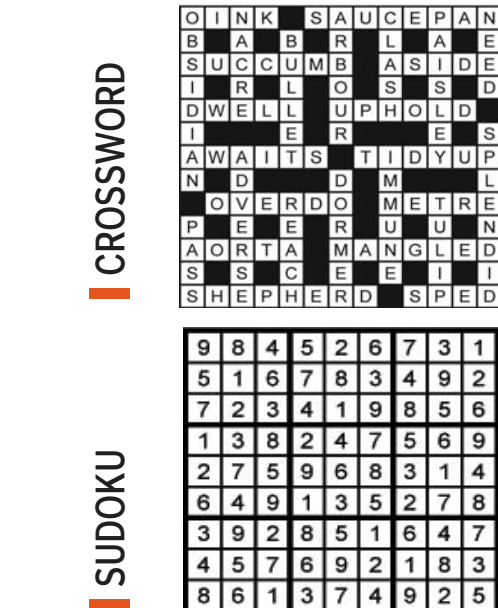
- Across
- 5 Slanted
 - 7 Sully
 - 9 To the point
 - 10 Pill pusher
 - 11 Vary
 - 13 Large edible ray
 - 15 Door part
 - 16 The Big Apple (3,4)
 - 18 Leisurely gait
 - 19 Merino mother
 - 21 Polish city
 - 22 Military unit
- Down
- 1 Red giant in Cetus
 - 2 Instruct
 - 3 Hot or cold drink
 - 4 Despot
 - 6 Easy mark (7,4)
 - 8 Skin rash (7,4)
 - 12 Go-between
 - 14 Eating place
 - 17 Tucks away
 - 20 Door sign

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



A BJD delegation, comprising MP Sasmit Patra, after submitting a memorandum at CEO alleging poll code violation by BJP's Jagatsinghpur MP candidate

downtown

BJD will win 117 Assly, 11 LS seats: Mangaraj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) is set to win 117 Assembly and 11 Lok Sabha seats in the simultaneous elections, claimed party Rajya Sabha MP Manas Mangaraj hours after culmination of the final phase of the polling in the state, Saturday evening.

Mangaraj said while the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will manage to bag 11 Assembly seats, the Congress and others will have to be contended with only three of the total 147 seats. The BJD national spokesperson also predicted close contest between BJD and BJP nominees in 16 Assembly segments.

Mangaraj said BJD MLA aspirants will romp home in Jharigam, Dabugam, Kotpad, Malkangiri, Chitrakonda, Koraput, Pottangi, Rayagada, Bissam-Cuttack, Gunupur, Bhawanipatana, Narla, Lanjigarh, Junagarh, Dharmgarh, Nuapada, Khariar, Berhampur, Gopalpur, Chhatrapur, Chikiti, Mohana, Paralakhemundi, Aska, Hinjili, Polasara, Kabisuryanagar, Surada and Khalikote seats.

Similarly, they will edge past others in Phulbani, G Udayagiri, Baliguda, Bhanjanagar, Daspalla, Boudh, Bolangir, Titlagarh, Loisingha, Kantabanji, Sonapur, Padampur, Bijepur, Bargarh, Bhatli, Brajarajnagar, Jharsuguda, Rourkela, Raghunathpali, Biramitrapur, Sundargarh, Rengali, Rairakhol, Athmallik, Chhendipada, Angul, Talcher, Pallahara,



Kamakhyanagar, Dhenkanal, Hindol, Champua and Telkoi seats. BJD candidates will also win Ghasipura, Anandapur, Baramba, Banki, Athagarh, Barabati-Cuttack, Cuttack-Sadar, Choudwar-Cuttack, Khandapada, Ekamra-Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar-North, Jayadev, Jatni, Begunia, Khurda, Puri, Satyabadi, Pipili, Chilika, Ranpur, Nayagarh, Rairangapur, Saraskana and Udala Assembly seats.

Baripada, Bangriposi, Basta, Jaleswar, Bhograi, Bhadrak, Basudevpur, Bhandaripokhari, Simulia, Soro, Jajpur, Korei, Binjharpur, Sukinda, Barachana, Bari, Dharmasala, Kendrapara, Mahakalapara, Patkura, Mahanga, Salipur, Rajnagar, Aul, Nimapara, Kakatpur, Niali, Paradeep, Balikuda-Erasama, Tirtol and Jagatsinghpur Assembly seats will also see ruling party candidates winning, Mangaraj said.

Saffron party candidates, he said, will bag Dhamnagar, Remuna, Morada, Karanjia, Patna, Kuchinda, Talsara, Attabira, Kantamal, Umerkote and Nabarangapur Assembly segments. Close fight between arch rivals BJD and BJP will be seen in Digapahandi, Patnagarh, Birmaharajpur, Rajgangpur,

Sambalpur, Deogarh, Parjanga, Keonjhar, Bhubaneswar-Central, Brahmagiri, Jashipur, Badasahi, Nilagiri, Balasore and Chandabali Assembly seats, he forecasted. Interestingly, the BJD Rajya Sabha MP has predicted a keen contest between party candidate and Congress nominee in Laxmipur seat.

While CPI(M) will retain Bonai seat, Congress candidates will win Sanakhemundi and Jeypore seats, Mangaraj said.

Similarly, as per Mangaraj's claims the regional party will win at least 11 of the 21 Lok Sabha seats, while the saffron party's tally might decrease to six from the present eight. The Congress and others will draw a blank in the Parliamentary elections, he said, adding that four Lok Sabha seats will witness keen fight between BJD and the BJP candidates.

The Parliamentary constituencies where the BJD candidates are most likely to emerge victorious are: Koraput, Berhampur, Aska, Kandhamal, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur.

At the same time, Mangaraj said the saffron party candidates are going to win in Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Bargarh, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Puri Lok Sabha seats.

In places like Bolangir, Sambalpur and Bhubaneswar, BJD candidates will face straight fight with BJP aspirants. Balasore Parliamentary constituency, however, will witness triangular fight between BJD, BJP and Congress nominees, Mangaraj predicted.

SC to hear June 3 Delhi water plea

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 1: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a Delhi government plea seeking a direction to Haryana to release surplus water provided by Himachal Pradesh to the national capital to mitigate its ongoing water crisis.

According to the cause list of the apex court, a vacation bench of justices PK Mishra and KV Viswanathan is likely to hear the matter.

The plea filed by Delhi's Water Minister Atishi has made the Centre, the BJP-governed Haryana and the Congress-ruled Himachal Pradesh parties to the petition, saying that access to water is essential for survival and is one of the basic human rights.

"Access to water is one of the basic human rights of an individual. Not only is water essential for sustenance, but access to water also forms an essential component of the guarantee of dignity and a quality of life guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution," the plea said.

"The current water crisis, which may only get worse given peak summers and ongoing water shortage, violates the right to a dignified and quality life of the people of the NCT of Delhi, who are unable to access even adequate clean drinking water," it added.

The plea has sought a direction to the Haryana government for immediate and continuous release of water at the Wazirabad barrage, including but not limited to the full surplus water provided by the Respondent No. 2 (Himachal Pradesh) for the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, in order to mitigate the water crisis in the NCT of Delhi.



AT LORD'S SERVICE: A servitor shapes iron nail for the chariots in Puri, Saturday

PICTURE: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

264 VEHICLES SEIZED FOR ROAD RULE VIOLATIONS

DEBADURLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The twin city Commissionerate Police has seized 264 vehicles from across the City for violation of road rules during an enforcement drive Friday evening, an official said Saturday.

Giving details regarding the seizures, ACP (Traffic) Jayant Dora said 46 vehicles were seized for drunken driving, while 218 have been taken into custody for driving on wrong side.

"Of the 46 vehicles, 15 four-wheelers and four two-wheelers were seized from locations under Traffic police station I limits, while 25 four-wheelers and two



ing, and driving under the influence.

About releasing the seized vehicles, the ACP (Traffic) said violators should approach the court to pay fines and get their vehicles released from the RTO.

"RTO has been asked to cancel the DLs of the violators until they furnish a formal court order for release of the vehicles," Dora said.

City DCP Prateek Singh said as the use of mobile phones during driving has increased manifold, police might also seize the cellphones in future. He requested road users to comply with the orders in order to ensure a safe road.

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'Allowing shrines on public land will jeopardise public interest'



Justice Dharmesh Sharma | DELHI HIGH COURT

If each sadhu or guru is allowed to build a shrine or samadhi sthal on a public land and thereby continue to use it for personal gains by the vested interest groups, it would lead to disastrous consequences

JUSTICE DHARMESH SHARMA | DELHI HIGH COURT

did not bestow him with any legal right, title, or interest to continue to occupy the subject property." Furthermore, the court noted the absence of any historical significance or public dedication of the site for worship or prayer to the revered deceased baba.

The court also dismissed the argument regarding the Religious Affairs Committee's pending consideration of the site's demolition, clarifying that it was a private shrine and not one devoted to the public.

Justice Sharma elaborated on the traditional expectations of Naga Sadhus, noting, "Naga sadhus are devotees of Lord Shiva and they are ordained to live a life of complete detachment from worldly affairs. Therefore, seeking property rights in their names do not conform to their beliefs and practices."

ervation while dismissing a petition filed by Mahant Naga Baba Bhola Giri, represented by his successor.

The plea sought a directive for the District Magistrate to demarcate land at Nigambodh Ghat, claiming possession prior to the 2006 deadline set by the Delhi Special Laws Act.

The court found the petition lacking in merit, noting that the District Magistrate had already rejected the request.

The rejection was based on the urbanisation status of the land and the unavailability of relevant revenue records.

Justice Sharma said that the petitioner was essentially a trespasser, stating, "Merely the fact that he had been a cultivator for 30 years or more

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The Delhi High Court has cautioned that if sadhus, gurus, and other religious figures are allowed to build shrines on the public land, it would lead to disastrous consequences and jeopardise larger public interest.

Justice Dharmesh Sharma said, "In our country, we might find thousands of sadhus, babas, fakirs, gurus in different parts of the landscape and if each one is allowed to build a shrine or samadhi sthal on a public land and thereby, continue to use it for personal gains by the vested interest groups, it would lead to disastrous consequences jeopardising larger public interest."

Justice Sharma made this ob-



SABITRI FEST AHEAD: A woman buys bangles from a shopkeeper at Banka Bazar in Cuttack, Saturday

OP PHOTO

ECoR GM inspects works at Talcher



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager Parmeshwar Funkwal inspected the ongoing infrastructural works and traffic facilities under Talcher jurisdiction recently. Divisional railway manager of Khurda Road division HS Bajwa and senior officials from ECoR headquarters accompanied Funkwal during the inspection.

Funkwal inspected the railway sidings and instructed concerned officials to improve mobility for hassle-free traffic movements in the region. He also reviewed the infrastructure works and advised officials for completing the projects within the target period. Apart from this, Funkwal stressed upon faster coal evacuation from various collieries in Talcher area towards different destinations.

Bakul's storytelling festival kicks off

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The second edition of two-day Bakul festival of storytelling kicked off at the Bakul Library here Saturday. It will conclude Sunday evening.

The children participating in the festival will enjoy listening to the City's best storytellers.

The first edition of festival was organised last year during summer in which large number of children attended showing keen interest.

The festival features the best known professional storytellers like Prachi Tara, Meera Das and Saswati Nanda Satpathy. In addition, some of the popular teacher storytellers such as Tapaswini Panda from Mother's Public School, Bidyut Lata from KIIT International School and Moonoo Panda from Sai International School are also taking part in the event.

The festival is organised by the founder of Bakul Foundation Sujit Mahapatra.

It is to be noted that Bhubaneswar has now made its mark internationally for hosting some of the biggest and most interesting storytelling festivals in the world.

It was due to the efforts of Bakul Foundation, which con-



ceptualised and curated BhuFeSto or the Bhubaneswar Festival of Storytelling in 2018 and again in 2023 and 2024 in partnership with BDA.

Earlier, Bakul had curated the popular online storytelling festivals Storytime @9, and Rabibaar Gapabaar; that got children watching the storytelling sessions on Bakul Foundation's YouTube and Facebook channels.

Bakul is looking for young storytellers between 10 and 17 years of age, who if selected, will get a chance of performing at the Children's Storytelling Festival to be organised June 8 and 9 next weekend.

Recently, the foundation selected Sarmistha Panda, an Odissi dancer, to perform at the festival.

During the lockdown, Bakul had also invited the children, who were listening to the storytelling to tell stories and featured them in the online sessions as part of a series called Tiny Tellers Mighty Tales. Bakul organised a training workshop for these storytellers that were conducted by the well-known storyteller, Nupur Agarwal from Hyderabad. At BhuFeSto also, Bakul has tried to give a platform to new storytellers from both children and adults.

KIIT & KISS join FIVB as founding partners

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) announced KIIT and KISS as the founding partners during the launch of the FIVB Volleyball Foundation recently.

The foundation aims to connect, serve, and inspire by providing support through meaningful charitable initiatives, globally. To fund impactful volleyball projects around the world, the FIVB will raise funds through donations as well as a special charity auction.

KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta said, "I would like to express my gratitude to FIVB and its president Ary da Silva Graça Filho, general director Fabio Azevedo, and other members for having decided to do charity, inspired by my philanthropic works through the FIVB volleyball foundation."

"It is a matter of pride for not only Odisha but for the entire country that the FIVB volleyball foundation has accepted KIIT and KISS as the exclusive founding partner institution," Samanta added.

The event was attended by International Olympic Committee (IOC) president



I would like to express my gratitude to FIVB and its president Ary da Silva Graça Filho, general director Fabio Azevedo, and other members for having decided to do charity, inspired by my philanthropic works through the FIVB volleyball foundation

ACHYUTA SAMANTA | FOUNDER, KIIT & KISS

Thomas Bach, representatives of volleyball associations from over 200 countries, and many other dignitaries.

KIIT and KISS have made significant impacts in the field of sports, gaining recognition worldwide. Currently, KIIT and KISS are the only educational institutions associated with the

foundation, highlighting their commitment to sports excellence.

A MoU between FIVB and KIIT and KISS was originally planned to be signed at the event. However, due to absence of Samanta on account of the general elections, it was rescheduled.

'Junior Rakshak' tag for 540 female NCC cadets

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The Junior Rakshak programme by the State Transport department concluded here Saturday.

A total of 540 female NCC cadets received the training over two days. These cadets were awarded with 'Junior Rakshaks' recognition from the transport department. The training programme was inaugurated by the Commerce and Transport department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee, Friday.

Speaking at the event, Padhee emphasised the importance of reducing road accidents and fatalities, stating that efforts should be made to achieve this common goal for all. She expressed confidence at the NCC cadets' commitment to road safety.

During the camp, the cadets were trained on road safety and

delivering first-aid to road accident victims. Training methods included ensuring timely transportation of the victims to nearby hospitals and healthcare facilities. Master trainers Sadhana Satapathy and Jyotiranjani Mohapatra facilitated the training sessions. At the programme, emphasis was placed on the 'Golden Hour', the first hour after an accident, which is crucial for saving lives. Additionally, the 'Junior Rakshaks' will act as brand ambassadors for road safety, promoting awareness and adherence to safety rules within their families and communities.

The initiative was a significant effort by the Transport department in collaboration with the NCC to reduce road accident fatalities. The success of the earlier programmes has led to the expansion of this initiative to include Junior Rakshaks.

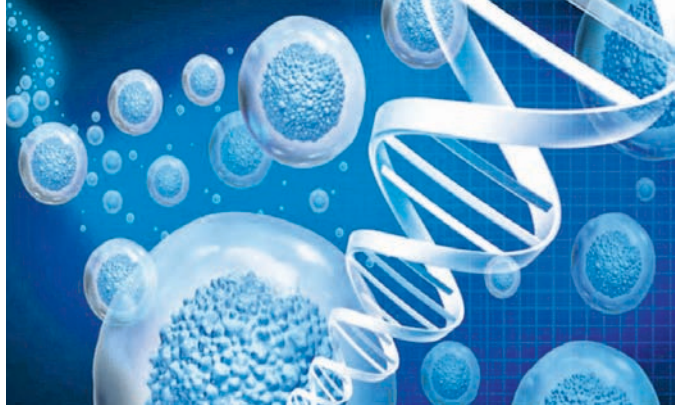
Scientists shed light on inner workings of engineering cells

Waves are ubiquitous in nature and technology. Whether it's the rise and fall of ocean tides or the swinging of a clock's pendulum, the predictable rhythms of waves create a signal that is easy to track and distinguish from other types of signals.

Electronic devices use radio waves to send and receive data, like laptop and Wi-Fi router or cellphone and cell tower. Similarly, scientists can use a different type of wave to transmit a different type of data: signals from the invisible processes and dynamics underlying how cells make decisions.

The research group developed a technology that sends a wave of engineered proteins traveling through a human cell to provide a window into the hidden activities that power cells, when they're healthy and harm cells when they go haywire.

Waves are a powerful engi-



neering tool

The oscillating behaviour of waves is one reason they're powerful patterns in engineering. For example, controlled and predictable changes to wave oscillations can be used to encode data, such as voice or video information. In the case of radio, each station is assigned a unique electromagnetic wave that oscillates at its own frequency.

Scientists used waves of proteins to turn a cell into a microscopic radio station, broadcasting data about its activity in real time to study its behaviour.

Turning cells into radio stations Studying the inside of cells requires a kind of wave that can specifically connect to and interact with the machinery and components of a cell.

While electronic devices are built from wires and transistors, cells are built from and controlled by a diverse collection of chemical building blocks called proteins. Proteins perform an array of functions within the cell, from extracting energy from sugar to deciding whether the cell should grow.

Protein waves are generally rare in nature, but some bacteria naturally generate waves of two proteins called MinD and MinE - typically referred to together as MinDE - to help them divide. My team discovered that putting MinDE into human cells causes the proteins to reorganise themselves into a stunning array of waves and patterns.

On their own, MinDE protein waves do not interact with other proteins in human cells. However, we found that MinDE could be readily engineered to react to the activity of specific human proteins responsible for mak-

ing decisions about whether to grow, send signals to neighboring cells, move around and divide.

The protein dynamics driving these cellular functions are typically difficult to detect and study in living cells because the activity of proteins is generally invisible to even high-power microscopes. The disruption of these protein patterns is at the core of many cancers and developmental disorders.

Scientists engineered connections between MinDE protein waves and the activity of proteins responsible for key cellular processes. Now, the activity of these proteins triggers changes in the frequency or amplitude of the protein wave, just like an AM/FM radio. Using microscopes, we can detect and record the unique signals individual cells are broadcasting and then decode them to recover the dynamics of these cellular processes.

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Garbage piles up in Silk City as BeMC, agencies shirk duty

REPEATED COMPLAINTS TO THE BeMC AUTHORITIES HAVE NOT LED TO ANY EFFECTIVE ACTION, ALLEGE DENIZENS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 1: Despite tall claims of various steps being taken by the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) for adequate waste management, garbage is piling up in many wards of the civic body on account of abject failure on part of agencies hired for maintaining proper cleanliness, sources said Saturday. Things have come to such a pass that life has become miserable for the denizens of the Silk City.

As per sources, cleaning operations are being carried out by private agencies on behalf of the civic body which has earmarked an annual budget of ₹29.42 crore towards the works. Private agencies such as Pratyush, Safai Abhiyan and PMR have been entrusted with the city's sanitation responsibilities.

The Silk City is divided into five zones and 42 wards for efficient management of civic af-

fairs. Currently, 132 garbage collection vehicles and 1,336 sanitation workers are employed for waste collection and management. After the removal of dustbins, garbage is now being collected at designated spots and transported to five collection points in the city. From there, the waste is transported to Mohuda for disposal after its segregation into dry and wet categories.

Additionally, GPS devices have been installed on garbage collection vehicles, which provide real-time data to the sanitation department about their routes and collection details. However, the ground realities paint a different picture.

For instance, in Ward No. 28, near Gosani Nuagaon overbridge, waste has piled up, turning the area into a dumping yard. Residents have alleged that sanitation workers are dumping all the waste collected from the ward at one spot. Furthermore,

reports said there have been several complaints of non-collection of garbage by the agencies entrusted by the BeMC.

Even though established rules require the agencies to collect garbage from designated points, violations have been reported including instances of irresponsible burning of garbage piles. This has caused severe inconvenience to locals owing to emanating smoke and odour. Repeated complaints to the BeMC authorities have not led to any effective action, they rued.

Similar situation is witnessed near Dhanamera Sahi where garbage accumulation has been causing significant odour issues affecting commuters.

Additionally, the promised 'transparency boards' displaying the number of sanitation workers and vehicles per ward have not been implemented. BeMC's assurance of resolving cleanliness complaints within 24 hours also remains unfulfilled, sources said. Residents' complaints to the BeMC about sanitation issues often remain unresolved, they added.

When asked, BeMC Deputy Commissioner Ashirbad Parida said agencies are being directed to immediately clean areas where garbage has been accumulating. However, the effectiveness of these directives remains questionable.



IN LORD'S SERVICE: Artisans preparing backdrops for the chariot of Gupteshwar Baba temple at Thakurpada in Sambalpur as Sital Sasthi draws near, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Man murders wife on polling booth premises

VOTING DISRUPTED FOR AN HOUR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, June 1: In a shocking incident, voting was halted for over an hour in Booth No. 4 at Muktdi school under Kaupur panchayat of Bhadrak Assembly constituency as a man killed his wife with a sharp-edged weapon on the booth premises, Saturday.



The deceased woman was identified as Rashmirekha, 25, and the accused was identified as her

husband Prabhakar Rout, 30, of Muktdi village. On being informed, Bhadrak Rural police station officer Amitabh Das reached the spot and detained Rout. Voting resumed after Das assured that the voting period would be extended to allow all voters to cast their votes.

Wildlife criminal awarded 3 yrs RI

PNN & AGENCIES

Bargarh, June 1: The Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Bargarh Saturday convicted an accused of involvement in trade of leopard skin and sentenced him to three years of rigorous imprisonment (RI).

The court also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 on the convict for commission of offence under section 51 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

According to the prosecution, the wildlife criminal identified as Satyaban Sahu, a native of Khajuria village in Bargarh district, was apprehended by the STF of Bhubaneswar November 24, 2020 and leopard hide along with other wildlife products was recovered from his possession. Sahu was nabbed while waiting at a place to deliver the leopard skin to a customer.

After successful investigation, a chargesheet was submitted against the accused person under sections 379/411/120-B IPC r/w 51 of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

During investigation the seized leopard skin was also sent to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun for biological and chem-



STF sources claimed that trial has been completed in five wildlife cases till date and all the cases ended in conviction. The conviction rate of wildlife crime cases in India is less than five per cent

ical examination and opinion was received affirmatively.

The trial was conducted against the accused and the judge convicted the accused after examining 12 witnesses including the Scientific Officer of WII, Dehradun.

This is the fifth case of STF where the accused persons were convicted under Wild Life (Protection) Act. Till date trial has been completed

in five wildlife cases and all the cases ended in conviction, STF sources claimed.

The conviction rate of wildlife crime cases in India is less than five per cent. However, the STF Odisha has taken special efforts to ensure that the investigation is of the highest standards so that the cases are brought to logical conclusion and conviction. STF is the specialised wing of Odisha Police to curb the organised crime as well as cases against wildlife in the state.

The STF had the power to investigate wildlife cases in 2018. So far, STF has detected 100 cases and arrested 232 wildlife criminals.

Among the seizures, the STF has so far seized 58 leopard hides 27 elephant tusks, 23 life pangolins, 42 pangolin scales, two tiger hides and 11 deer hides.

Journo passes away

Rourkela: Dharitri photojournalist Bibek Mohanty passed away here early Saturday morning. Mohanty was in his early 30s and is survived by his mother and brother. He was suffering from liver related issues for some time. His last rites were performed by his brother at Vedvys cremation ground here, Saturday afternoon.



Waste 2 Wealth initiative by ITI Berhampur students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 1: In a remarkable display of innovation and waste management, Government ITI, Berhampur has taken its 'Waste 2 Wealth' initiative to a whole new level. Students of the institute have fabricated unique tensegrity tables and infinity tables from scraps such as discarded automobile parts, salvaged toilet doors, pipes, chains and wood from old benches and tables.

Made by hands-on 3D design skill with Autodesk software and assembled using laws of physics such as tension and compression techniques, these lightweight tables have minimal usage of raw materials,



making them both eco-friendly and cost effective compared to conventional tables. With a low production cost and surprisingly high selling price, these tables are attractive and sustainable furniture pieces for interior decorators.

Four wagons of goods rain derail; none hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Four wagons of a goods train derailed near Kantabanji station in Sambalpur Division of East Coast Railway (ECoR), an official said Saturday.

The incident took place around 10.50pm Friday, causing disruption of train movement on both tracks, he said, adding that services were restored at 7am Saturday.

However, no injuries were reported in the incident, he said, adding that senior railway officials were on the spot and investigating the matter.

In view of the incident, the ECoR cancelled the Raipur-Titlagarh Express and Junagarh Road-Raipur Express for Saturday

Minor girl drowns in village pond

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, June 1: In a tragic incident, a 5-year-old girl reportedly drowned in a pond at Praharajpur village under Rajkanika block in Kendrapara district Saturday. The deceased was identified as Saraswati Pradhan, daughter of Praharajpur resident Kartik Pradhan.

As per reports, Manjulata Pradhan, mother of the deceased minor, had

gone to cast her vote Saturday leaving the girl alone at home. On her return, she could not find Saraswati in the house.

After a long frantic search, she found Saraswati floating in the pond. Villagers rescued the minor girl and rushed her to Rajanagar Community Health Centre (CHC) where doctors pronounced her 'brought dead'. A pall of gloom descended on the village after the incident.

National Highways Authority of India
Project Implementation Unit, Sambalpur
Sarfakani Chowk, In front of St. John's School Near NH-6
Sakhipara Road, Sambalpur, Odisha-768006

11040/NHAIPIU/SBP/TLN-SBP/TOLL/703/2024-25 Date: 31.05.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Revision of user fee rate for 2024-25 in respect of Pudpada-Nildungri Fee Plaza at Km.551.800 section from Teleibani-Sambalpur Section of NH.53 from Km.493.300 to Km.521.825 and Km.545.176 to Km.567.400 in the state of Odisha w.e.f. 03.06.2024, 0.00Hrs.

Category of vehicle	Fee for single journey	Fee for return journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the district of fee plaza
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	75	115	2550	40
Light commercial vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	125	185	4125	60
Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	260	390	8640	130
Three Axle Commercial Vehicles	285	425	9425	140
HCM or EME or MAV (four to six axles)	405	610	13545	205
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more axles)	495	740	16490	245

The rates of monthly pass applicable for local non commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 Km. from the above toll plaza for the year 2024-25 shall be Rs.340/-, subject to revision every year as per the provisions of said rules.

As FASTag is mandatory for all vehicles, hence, all users are requested to purchase FASTag.
Ph. No. (0663) 2548966, Email : piusambalpur@nhai.org, nhaisambalpur@gmail.com.

Sd/- Project Director
BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
E-AUCTION PROGRAMME FOR JULY & AUGUST-2024 FOR DEPOT & DIVISIONS

SCHEDULE OF E-AUCTION

Month	Division/Unit	Date
JULY-2024	Depot Mancheswar	02.07.2024, 09.07.2024, 16.07.2024 & 23.07.2024
	Khurda Road Division	03.07.2024, 10.07.2024, 17.07.2024 & 24.07.2024
	Waltair Division	04.07.2024, 11.07.2024, 18.07.2024 & 25.07.2024
AUGUST-2024	Sambalpur Division	05.07.2024, 12.07.2024, 19.07.2024 & 26.07.2024
	Depot Mancheswar	01.08.2024, 08.08.2024, 14.08.2024 & 22.08.2024
	Khurda Road Division	02.08.2024, 09.08.2024, 16.08.2024 & 23.08.2024
	Waltair Division	05.08.2024, 12.08.2024, 19.08.2024 & 27.08.2024
	Sambalpur Division	06.08.2024, 13.08.2024, 20.08.2024 & 28.08.2024

Condemned rolling stocks (Loco, Coach, Wagon), Scrap rail, Miscellaneous P. Way fittings (switches, crossings, fish plates, sleepers, fish bolt etc.), Miscellaneous workshop scrap (drums, bogie frame, buffer casing, buffer plunger, turning and boring etc), Miscellaneous ferrous, non-ferrous, non-metallic scrap, condemned machinery and plants, Condemned Vehicles, Condemned office equipments of Sambalpur, Khurda Road & Waltair divisions and scrap materials of Railway Electrifications are expected to be offered on "AS IS WHERE IS" basis. Railway administration shall be at liberty to include other items too in the e-auction and the complete details of materials and terms and conditions will be as per Auction Catalogue, which shall be available with the respective auction conducting authority of East Coast Railway or from our website: www.irops.gov.in within 07(seven) days prior to the date of auction.

PR-171/P/24-25 Principal Chief Materials Manager, Bhubaneswar

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways)

PUBLIC NOTICE
The public is hereby informed that the User fee rate shall be revised w.e.f 03.06.2024 (00.00 hrs) up to 31.03.2025 in respect of Toll Plaza at Pipili at Km.21.000 in Puri District for Bhubaneswar-Puri section from Km.0.000 to Km.67.238 of NH-316 (Old NH-203) in the State of Odisha, as per table below:

Category of Vehicles	Fee for single journey (Rs.)	Fee for return journey within a day (Rs.)	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month (Rs.)
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	140	205	4600
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	215	325	7180
Bus or Truck	440	660	14650
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicle(MAV) (Three to Six axles)	675	1010	22450
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more axles)	860	1290	28620

The rates for monthly pass applicable for local non-commercial vehicles residing within a distance of 20 km from the above toll plaza shall be Rs.340/- for the year 2024-25.
PIU- Bhubaneswar, NHAI: Email: bhu@nhai.org Sd/- Project Director
BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India)
Project Implementation Unit, Sambalpur
Sarfakani Chowk, In front of St. John's School Near NH-6
Sakhipara Road, Sambalpur, Odisha - 768006

11040/NHAIPIU/SBP/NH-153(B)(Kadaligarh Toll)/701/2024 Date: 31.05.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Revision of user fee rate for 2024-25 in respect of Fee Plaza At ch. 102.576 near Kadaligarh village in Sambalpur District in the section from Km.58/000 to Km.116/100 from Naktideuli to Boudh on NH-153(B) in the state of Odisha for net road length of 58.100 Km. to be applicable for the FY- 2024-25 as per the rates given below. Accordingly, the User Fee collection will be started from dated 03.06.2024 00.00 Hours' (in ₹)

Sl. No	Category of Vehicles	Fee for Single Journey	Fee for return journey within a day	Fee for Monthly Pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicle registered within in the district of fee plaza
1	Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	50	75	1705	25
2	Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	85	125	2755	40
3	Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	175	260	5770	85
4	Three-Axles Commercial Vehicles	190	285	6290	95
5	HCM or EME or MAV (Four to Six Axles)	270	405	9045	135
6	Oversized Vehicle (Seven or more Axles)	330	495	11010	165

The rates of monthly pass applicable for local non commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 Km. from the above toll plaza for the year 2024-25 shall be Rs.340/-, subject to revision every year as per the provisions of said rules.

As FASTag is mandatory for all vehicles hence all users are requested to purchase FASTag.
Ph. No. (0663) 2548966, Email : piusambalpur@nhai.org, nhaisambalpur@gmail.com.

Sd/- Project Director
BUILDING A NATION, NOT JUST ROADS

National Highways Authority of India
Project Implementation Unit, Sambalpur
Sarfakani Chowk, In front of St. John's School Near NH-6
Sakhipara Road, Sambalpur, Odisha-768006

11040/NHAIPIU/SBP/NH57(140.900 to 224.900)/TOLL/706/2024-25 31.05.2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Revision of user fee rate for 2024-25 in respect of Fee Plaza at Ch. 190.050 near Rangamatia village in Nayagarh District in the section from Adenigada-Maichheli from Km. 140.900 to Km. 224.180 on NH.57 in the state of Odisha for net road length of 83.800 KM to be applicable w.e.f. 03.06.2024, 0.00Hrs.

Category of vehicle	Fee for single journey	Fee for return journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the district of fee plaza
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	75	110	2445	35
Light commercial vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	120	180	3945	60
Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	250	370	8270	125
Three Axle Commercial Vehicles	270	405	9020	135
HCM or EME or MAV (four to six axles)	390	585	12965	195
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more axles)	475	710	15785	235

The rates of monthly pass applicable for local non commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 Km. from the above toll plaza for the year 2024-25 shall be Rs.340/-, subject to revision every year as per the provisions of said rules.

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FOCUS ECONOMICS

PLEA FOR POLITICAL ECONOMY



Economics is now once again on the cusp of a profound transformation, owing to the digital revolution and the rise of artificial intelligence

to develop new types of non-flammable materials, economists must devote more energy to studying the dynamics of today's emerging technological paradigm.

One way to do this is to go back to basics. Notably, before the late nineteenth century, there was no discipline called economics; it was known as "political economy," in recognition of the intertwined nature of the economy and the polity. This began to change with the publication of Alfred Marshall's Principles of Economics in 1890 and the subsequent rise of marginalism. With its separation from the study of politics, economics became a distinct, mathematical discipline.

While this exclusive focus has allowed economists to focus their research and enabled the discipline to mature by leaps and bounds, it has also created an artificial separation between economic policymaking and politics. In the real world, markets, trade, politics, and international relations have become so interconnected that we miss a lot if we try to study them separately.

Fortunately, the rise of game theory over the past century has provided economists with an analytical framework that, unlike marginalist mathematics, can encompass both economics and politics. Reviving the classical tradition of political economy would provide us with the intellectual tools needed to study — and perhaps finally understand — our rapidly changing world.

The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.

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The world economy is at a turning point. As global supply chains face increasingly frequent disruptions, the structures underpinning markets and international trade are unraveling, leading to economic instability which, in turn, is spilling over into other domains and fueling conflict and political polarisation.

In the face of these challenges, it is worth asking why, despite an unprecedented influx of data, mainstream economic thinking and policymaking appear to be failing. I believe that the problem lies in the lack of theoretical research, particularly when it comes to exploring overarching ideas needed to connect and interpret seemingly disparate data points and trends.

The growing backlash against economic theory in recent years has tended to focus on the field's reliance on developing mathematical models for their own sake rather than to inform and improve public policy. Many argue that instead of trying to imitate physics, economists should emphasise data-based empirical analysis. But while I do not doubt the importance of collecting data and addressing urgent social issues, major turning points demand that we direct our attention to more fundamental issues and consider the need for an economic paradigm shift.

History is rife with such shifts. The Industrial Revolution, for example, was a period of rapid technological innovation that enhanced our ability to produce goods but also changed the rules of the game, as feudalism gave way to wage labour and large-scale factory production. Children were put to work on the shop floor, and the skies darkened with smoke and pollution. Initially, no one understood how this new industrial econ-

omy worked. But the Industrial Revolution coincided with some of the biggest breakthroughs in economic theory, from Adam Smith's seminal The Wealth of Nations in 1776 to Léon Walras' Elements of Pure Economics in 1874. These pioneering works, in turn, led to innovative and necessary policy interventions, such as Britain's introduction of income tax in 1842 and the passage of the US Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890.

Crucially, the burgeoning discipline was not yet synonymous with mathematical modeling, which is why both Smith's lucid, mathematics-free analyses of political economy and Walras' mathematical work were able to transform economic theory and provide invaluable insights into the new paradigm that emerged during the Industrial Revolution.

After Walras' work laid the foundations for neoclassical economics, mathematical principles became integral to public policy. For a while, this approach worked well. But the neoclassical revolution assumed perfect information, and this became embedded in the discipline, even though most economists — except for a few hardliners — knew it was a chimera. By the early 1970s, Nobel laureate economists George Akerlof, Joseph Stiglitz, and Michael Spence demonstrated that information is not just imperfect but asymmetric, and that this had more dramatic consequences than people had realised. Corporations know more about the products they sell than buyers do, just as used-car dealers know more than their customers about the vehicles they sell. These economists' groundbreaking work upended some of neoclassical economics' fundamental assumptions, leading to a paradigm shift that provided new insights into how to design public policies to protect consumers and workers from exploitation.

Economics is now once again on the cusp of a profound transformation, owing to the digital revolution and the rise of artificial intelligence. By redefining the meaning of labour and giving rise to new forms of economic warfare that disrupt global supply chains, these rapid technological advances are changing the nature of markets and trade.

Policymakers appear slow to recognise this new reality, leading to frequent economic "fire-fighting." But just as fighting fires does not eliminate the need

Kaushik Basu

IN THE REAL WORLD, MARKETS, TRADE, POLITICS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS HAVE BECOME SO INTERCONNECTED THAT WE MISS A LOT IF WE TRY TO STUDY THEM SEPARATELY

SPECTRUM CAPITAL MARKET

Poll outcomes & the stock market

The Indian general elections of 2024 are poised to be a pivotal moment in the nation's political landscape with significant implications for the country's economic trajectory and stock market performance. As the world's largest democracy, India's electoral outcomes are closely watched by investors, both domestic and international, for indications of policy continuity or change, economic reforms, and overall market sentiment.

The incumbent BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeks a third consecutive term. The BJP has enjoyed robust support over the past decade largely due to its pro-business stance, significant infrastructure initiatives, and policies aimed at improving the ease of doing business. However, challenges such as rising unemployment, inflation, and agrarian distress present formidable obstacles.

Broadly, there are three possible election outcomes, which may lead to different reactions from the market. A decisive win for the BJP and NDA securing 320-340 seats will catapult the market towards substantial rally. It will be a signal towards policy continuity and further reforms aimed at economic liberalisation. Markets typically favour such outcomes due to expectations of stability and pro-growth policies. A clear majority for the incumbent would likely bolster investor confidence, providing a sense of political stability. Historically, the stock market tends to perform well in stable political environments, anticipating steady economic policies and reforms.

A BJP and NDA victory with lesser number of seats as compared to 2019 results will result in short-term volatility. Subsequently, the market will settle down and move in a positive direction.

A win for the INDIA bloc will definitely derail the optimistic market sentiments and there are high chances of a market correction. The INDIA bloc government could lead to policy uncertainty. Depending on the composition of the coalition, the market might react with caution, since it includes parties with divergent economic agendas.

A BJP victory is expected to continue the momentum of economic reforms, including privatisation of state-owned enterprises, tax reforms, and investment in infrastructure. This could positively impact sectors like banking, infrastructure, and manufacturing.

In terms of sectors, the banking sector might see positive momentum under a pro-reform government, with expectations of continued efforts to address non-performing assets (NPAs) and improve credit growth. Ongoing

and new infrastructure projects could receive a boost, benefiting companies in construction, real estate, and allied industries.

Technology and pharmaceutical sectors are likely to remain strong regardless of the election outcome due to their inherent growth potential and global market dynamics.

It will be interesting to see how the agricultural and allied sectors will perform, owing to the farmer distress, MSP issues and anger towards the Modi government.

Political stability and a reform-oriented government are likely to attract more FDI. Investors look for assurance that their investments will be secure and that the business environment will remain conducive to growth. A stable government with a clear mandate is more likely to implement policies that favour FDI.

In the run-up to the elections, the stock market experienced volatility as investors react to opinion polls, campaign developments, and political rhetoric. Historical trends indicate that markets tend to dip in the face of uncertainty but recover swiftly once election results provide clarity.

The Indian rupee's performance is closely tied to political stability. A clear election outcome can lead to a strengthening of the rupee, whereas a fragmented

mandate might result in depreciation due to uncertainty and potential policy paralysis.

While immediate reactions in the stock market are influenced by the election outcome, long-term market performance is driven by broader economic fundamentals and global factors. Regardless of which party comes to power, India's long-term growth story, driven by its demographic dividend, urbanisation, and digital transformation, remains a compelling narrative for investors.

Political stability and the nature of economic policies will play crucial roles in shaping investor sentiment. Structural reforms, regulatory clarity, and efforts to enhance the business environment will be key determinants of sustained market growth.

The 2024 Indian general elections will be a watershed moment for the country's political and economic future. Investors will closely monitor the election outcomes for signals of policy direction and stability. While a clear mandate for either major party is likely to be welcomed by the market, the underlying economic policies and their implementation will ultimately determine the long-term impact on the Indian stock market.

The writer is founder and CEO of fintech startup FINCIST. Views are personal.



Sourajeet Pradhani

REGARDLESS OF WHICH PARTY COMES TO POWER, INDIA'S LONG-TERM GROWTH STORY REMAINS A COMPELLING NARRATIVE FOR INVESTORS

Let us keep flaming in our heart the fire of progress.

THE MOTHER



Three Possibilities

A painfully long election in our hottest summer has ended. The tea leaves will be read in the exit polls but one must keep in mind their imperfect record. Even for a single state, West Bengal which went to election in 2021, one out of four got the result wrong. Opinion polls, conducted before this longest cycle of elections was announced, were unanimous that the BJP would get a majority.

Today, some are not sure this will be the case but we shall see. Without knowing the results however, what can be said about the election that is still important? Let us work our way through the possibilities.

The first is that no matter who wins, this was not a free or fair election. Two chief ministers were jailed before campaigning began. Jailed not because they were convicted but because the BJP wanted them jailed. One of them was released for a few days of campaigning but will have to return to jail now. The access to bank accounts of the Opposition was restricted, through attacks made by agencies controlled by the BJP. The Election Commission compromised itself, sadly, and allowed the BJP to control both the planning of the phases and their execution. The commission's insolent replies to the Opposition, its refusal to act on the prime minister's hate speeches against Muslims and its refusal to release poll data on time has harmed democracy. The electoral bonds scheme was determined to be unconstitutional but thousands of crores raised under it were used in this election, and this has tainted it, irredeemably in my opinion.

Next let's look at what the possibilities are. Since the opinion polls were unanimous the most likely may seem to be that Narendra Modi returns to office with a similarly large majority. What should one expect in that case? More of the same of course. He has run the nation as one would a monarchy and his ministers are courtiers (see their social media accounts bleating his glories). The Opposition will continue to be attacked through misuse of agencies, civil society will be force-marched towards extinction and India's plummeting on global indices will continue. Minorities and especially Muslims will continue to have open season declared on them. Institutions will continue their decline. The consolidation of what a former chief economic advisor has referred to as "the two As" will continue, meaning corporate capture of the economy. In short what we see around us today will remain as it is.

It is unhealthy to have a single party state, as has happened in Gujarat. The Opposition exists but only on sufferance. What happened to opponents and prospective candidates in Surat and in Varanasi will repeat in more places. It should be conceded that if he wins again Modi will be the most successful leader we have seen in our history, and delivering three consecutive Lok Sabha wins after three Vidhan Sabha wins all with absolute majorities will be a singular achievement

The second possibility is that the BJP gets a plurality of seats but not a majority. Say they get 250 and form the government. In this case, the situation changes in several ways. First the allies will begin to assert themselves and it will no longer be possible for the king to ignore the courtiers. Does Modi have it in him to function in more democratic manner? No. This will make such a government more volatile. Within the party there will be people wanting to assert themselves. The old men in Nagpur, always playing the long game, will raise their heads and become more visible.

Some of the things will shift though the attack on minorities will continue because that happens at the level of the states, where in several places the BJP enjoys a certain popularity because of its bigotry. The attack on federalism will recede. Today India is federal only in name. States have no power to tax after GST and the unhappiness of many has broken out into the open. Law and order is a state subject but from Delhi to Jharkhand to Karnataka to Bengal, the Union has sent out its agencies to undermine state governments and chief ministers. With the Union government as strong and unwilling to change as it has been, there has been no attempt at redressal. An alliance government will likely alter that and this will be good for our country.

The last possibility is of course that the BJP loses. On the evidence of the opinion polls this is the least likely possibility but one that we have to consider. To my mind this will be a good outcome and not because of personal preferences entirely. Democracy renews and refreshes itself with changes in government. One man presiding for decades — take Putin, Xi and Kim — rarely produces anything positive. Some of the things, many of them in fact, that we have taken on since 2014 need to be gotten rid of. It is true that our democracy gives us the option of countering them in other ways, for instance through the courts or through protest. But elections are the only way in which changes take place structurally.



Aakar Patel

It should be conceded that if he wins again Modi will be the most successful leader we have seen in our history, and delivering three consecutive Lok Sabha wins after three Vidhan Sabha wins all with absolute majorities will be a singular achievement

WISDOM CORNER

You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view. HARPER LEE

I can control my destiny, but not my fate. Destiny means there are opportunities to turn right or left, but fate is a one-way street. I believe we all have the choice as to whether we fulfil our destiny, but our fate is sealed. PAULO COELHO

No work or love will flourish out of guilt, fear, or hollowness of heart, just as no valid plans for the future can be made by those who have no capacity for living now. ALAN WATTS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1840: English novelist and poet Thomas Hardy, who set much of his work in Wessex, an imaginary county in southwestern England, was born.
- 1847: Felix Mendelssohn's Wedding March is used at a wedding for the first time. Dorothy Carew and Tom Daniel were the first to use the iconic piece for their wedding ceremony. The event that made the work world famous was the wedding of Victoria, Princess Royal and Prince Frederick William of Prussia in 1858.
- 1886: Frances Folsom, age 21, married U.S. President Grover Cleveland in the White House and became the youngest first lady in American history.
- 1946: In the aftermath of World War II, the people of Italy passed a referendum to replace the governing monarchy with a republic. The transition from a monarchy to today's Italian Republic was effected by the favorable outcome of a referendum, in which 89 percent of Italians, also including women for the first time, took part.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Cycling to health

Sir, Cycling, like life, is not an easy ride. Important thing for a cyclist is to maintain a fine balance throughout; preserving one's stamina and keep breathing till it is home cannot be over-emphasised. To keep one's balance on cycle, and in life, one has to keep moving. The affordability, utility, versatility, uniqueness and longevity of a bicycle transcend boundaries. Among all people, cyclists see the contours of the country best. Besides, muscle strength, joint stability, weight loss, stress reduction, enhancing endurance - benefits of cycling are so well understood. The small marvel is an environmentalist's delight - nothing better than the bicycle to beat air pollution. Studies have said a cyclist is less exposed to air pollution than a motorist. In India, barring top constitutional functionaries, others can be asked to take recourse to cycling to offices on alternate days. A start could have been made on 3 June, the World Bicycle Day.
Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Regulating AI

Sir, The recent second global summit on AI regulation in Seoul marked a notable advance in the overseeing of this rapidly evolving technology. Tech companies have once again pledged to implement fundamental safeguards as AI progresses. Governments are now better equipped with institutions to monitor emerging risks and establish prohibited zones. The next critical step involves harmonising international regulations to ensure AI development stays within predefined boundaries. Despite these efforts, current regulations remain somewhat toothless. Nonetheless, significant strides have been made since the first AI safety summit at Bletchley Park in Britain, with regulatory authority shifting from corporations and academics to governments, which are now building the capacity to supervise and control AI evolution. There are two primary approaches to AI regulation. The first approach involves applying specific rules to different use cases. For example, AI development in medicine would need to comply with both existing and new regulatory conditions specific to the healthcare industry. The second, more challenging approach is to regulate AI development at its source. This is in response to the risk that AI could potentially outmaneuver specific use-case regulations—the so-called Armageddon scenario.
Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

Decade of triumphs, teething problems

TELANGANA WILL BE COMPLETING 10 YEARS TODAY AND THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS PROPOSED TO CELEBRATE THE OCCASION ON A GRAND SCALE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, June 1: Exponential increase in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), per capita income and agriculture output, sings the growth story of Telangana's decade-long journey since its separation from Andhra Pradesh June 2, 2014 while overall mounting debt is on the rise.

Telangana would be completing 10 years today and the state government has proposed to celebrate the occasion on a grand scale.

Despite ten long years after separation, several issues such as bifurcation of assets, power bills dues, are still unresolved between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

During the past decade, the state has emerged as a favourite destination for investments from across various sectors. Mobile giant Apple, IT major Microsoft, Korean electronics firm Foxconn, e-commerce giant Amazon, domestic battery maker Amara Raja Group are some of the companies that stand testament to the investor-friendly environment of the state.

According to provisional estimates, Telangana's GSDP (at cur-

rent prices), one of the key economic health indicators of a state, in 2022-23 grew to ₹13,13,391 crore, with a growth of 16.3 per cent, from ₹5,05,849 crore in 2014-15.

In 2014-15, Telangana's GSDP contributed approximately four per cent to the GDP of the nation while in 2022-23, it grew to 4.8 per cent, an increase of almost 1 percentage point since state formation, as per official figures.

Per Capita Income (PCI) of Telangana at current prices in 2022-23 was ₹13.12 lakh which is



income to double in 5 to 6 years, whereas the average citizen in the country as a whole would have to wait for about 8 years for their income to double," a recent government report said.

Telangana ranked third in PCI in 2022-23, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

The total area under cultivation in Telangana increased from 1.31 crore (in 2014) to 2.20 crore acres (in 2023), while paddy production rose from 68 lakh metric tonnes to 2.7 crore metric tonnes during the last nine years of last year.

The Telangana government has sealed MoUs worth over ₹36,500 crore at the World Economic Forum held at Davos in January with corporate biggies such as Adani Group and JSW, among the other investors signing MoUs with the state.

On the flip side, according to a Telangana State Finances-White Paper tabled by the government in the Legislative Assembly in December last year, the state would have an outstanding debt of ₹6.72 lakh crore, including non-guaranteed loans of corporations or institutions by the end of FY 24 against ₹72,658 crore in 2014-15.

KCR to boycott celebrations

Alleging that Telangana was ruined during the past six months of Congress regime, former Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao Saturday said the BRS party will not attend the decennial celebrations of the state formation by the government Sunday. In a letter addressed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Rao, also known as KCR, hit out at the Congress party, accusing it of making attempts to remove certain symbols which are said to be pride to the region, from the state emblem. Listing out the alleged failures of the Congress party, KCR said the state government failed in implementing its poll promises and the state's image was being dented by "power cuts". "For the reasons cited above, as people are being pushed into turmoil by your rule... I regret to inform you that the BRS party will not be attending the decennial celebrations," KCR said in the letter.

₹1.40 lakh higher than the National average (1,72,276).

"Based on the Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of

PCI at current prices for Telangana and India from 2014-15 to 2022-23, the average citizen in Telangana can expect his/her

Ex-MLAs flag surge in religious tensions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, June 1: As incidents of reportedly hurting religious sentiments are increasing in the coastal state, former legislators have expressed concern and are holding 'Hindutva forces' responsible for disturbing peace and harmony.

Due to the surge in such cases, Director General of Police Jaspal Singh Tuesday urged people to refrain from posting derogatory posts on social media. Even Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said that irresponsible statements against any religion, which creates tensions, will not be tolerated and action will be taken according to the law.

A few months back, there was



tension in Goa due to the desecration of the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. In February, the Goa police had registered an offence against a mob for an allegedly unlawful assembly and rioting, where Social

Welfare Minister Subhash Phal Dessai was attacked with stones while he was returning after inaugurating the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at Sao Joao De Areal village in South Goa.

Recently in two different incidents, devotees of goddesses from temples in the north and south agitated for action against those who had hurt their sentiments by posting derogatory remarks on social media.

Speaking about these issues, lawyer and former MLA Uday Bhembre said that this has started from 'Hindutva forces'.

"Earlier other religions never complained about such incidents. This is not taking place only in

Goa, but wherever there are governments of the BJP these Hindutva forces are creating problems," octogenarian Bhembre said.

He said that this has happened in Karnataka (earlier), Uttarakhand, UP and Haryana. "As a reaction or retaliation this 'disease' then spreads in other religions. It is natural to get hurt when someone desecrates the 'Holy Cross'. Militant organisations of some 'Hindutva forces' have started this trend of hurting religious sentiments. They don't listen to the thoughts of others, their sentiments are hurt when someone speaks the truth and tells the true history," he said.

Bhembre said that this is basically done to divide people.

Govt adopts 'Jaya Jaya he Telangana' as state song

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, June 1: Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy Thursday said the state government has approved 'Jaya Jaya he Telangana', penned by noted poet Ande Sri, as the state song.

Amid opposition voiced by BRS and AIMIM to the government's alleged move to remove Charminar and the arch of Kakatiya dynasty from the state emblem, the government also said no final decision has been taken in this regard.

The chief minister said a final decision on the Telangana emblem and Telangana Talli statue will be taken only after discussion in the Assembly so that there is no scope for any misconception or false propaganda.

The state song will be released during the grand celebrations of the state formation day June 2, according to an official release issued Thursday night.

Revanth Reddy said the government approved the song, which depicts the struggle for the formation of Telangana, after acceptance of all stakeholders so that the future generations would remember the sacrifices of 'Telangana martyrs' (those who sacrificed their life for the cause of Telangana statehood) and sing the song forever.

Ande Sri said the song he wrote 20 years ago has been accepted as state song without any changes. Oscar-winning music director M M Keeravani composed the music and sang the song.



The decision was taken in a meeting held by the chief minister with state Legislative Council Chairman Gutta Sukhender Reddy, Assembly Speaker Gaddam Prasad, state ministers, Ande Sri, Keeravani, CPI MLA K Sambasivarao, CPI (M) state secretary T Veerabhadram, and professor Kodandaram, who played a key role during statehood agitation, among others. The state song has been produced in two versions, the release said.

Tourists to soon get true taste of 'Goan Cashew'

USUALLY TOURISTS PURCHASE THE CASHEW NUTS LABELLED AS 'GOA CASHEW' WHICH IN FACT COME FROM ODISHA, ANDHRA PRADESH, GUJARAT, KERALA AND MAHARASHTRA



are helpless as there is no strong legislation. The traders pay a fine but soon they start selling the same cashew nut under some other name," a cashew processor said.

Speaking to IANS, Goa Cashew Manufacturers Association (GCMA) president Rohit Zantye said that the trend of selling imported cashew nuts under the name of 'Goan Cashew' can be stopped if the government takes strong action.

"We are optimistic that things will change after we start selling GI labelled cashew nut packets, which will give a real taste of Goa to tourists. We have no issue that shops in the coastal areas sell cashew nuts, but they should not sell imported nuts or poor quality nuts labelled as 'Goan Cashew'," Zantye said.

"We are framing the rules so the GI tag is not misused. We will have to seek a license number from the GI registry in Chennai. This will take around two to three months and later

we can sell it under GI tag," he said. According to him ICAR, Goa Agriculture Department, FDA, Cashew Growers Association is part of the committee framing rules for GI tag labelling.

"There are 18 processing units registered under us, out of which only 4 to 5 have shown interest in getting a GI label. Those who process imported cashew nuts have not shown any interest as they sell their product in Gujarat or in other states," Zantye said.

"GI labelling will benefit us only when action is taken against those who sell products illegally under the Goa brand. Then they will be forced to take 'Goan cashew nuts' from GI labelled units," he pointed out.

Sources informed that local raw cashew production is around 26,000 tonne. However the societies who purchase it from 'the growers' sell it to units from other states. Thus Goan units are forced to import raw cashew from Africa.

Once processed, the units pack these nuts in 25 types of grades, ranging from Rs 700 to Rs 1,400 per kg. Deepak K Parab, nodal officer of Patent Information Centre, Goa State Council for Science and Technology, said that they have already designed the GI logo and are waiting for finalisation of the rules.

GI label on packets

Goa may extend deadline for dismantling beach shacks

PANAJI: The Goa government is contemplating extending the deadline for dismantling beach shacks, state Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte said Saturday. The state government set a deadline of May 31 for dismantling beach shacks ahead of the monsoon but stakeholders wrote to the tourism department seeking an extension as tourists continue to throng the coastal state. "The tourism department will decide by Monday after consulting the India Meteorological Department. We will not disturb the activities of beach shacks, subject to the weather conditions," Khaunte told reporters here.

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India)
Project Implementation Unit, Badadera, Mandua, Keonjhar-758014, Odisha

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public is hereby informed that pursuant to approval of RO, NHAI, Odisha, towards revised user fee rates for use of Four laning of Binjabahal to Telebani section, Km 414.000 to Km 491.710 (Design Chainage Km 414.982 to Km 493.300) of NH-6 (New NH-49) in the state of Odisha under NHDP-IV on Hybrid Annuity Mode & four laning of Singara to Binjabahal section from Ch. Km.311.000 to Km.414.000 (Design Chainage from Km.310.806 to Km.414.982) of NH-6 (New NH-49) in the State of Odisha under Hybrid Annuity Mode to be applicable w.e.f. 03.06.2024 to 31.03.2025 (for the FY 2024-2025) are as under;

(a) At Km. 439.515 near **Bidebadakudar** Village in Deoghar District (in Rupees)

Category of Vehicles	Fee for Single journey	Fee for return journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	145	215	4790	70
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	230	350	7735	115
Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	485	730	16205	245
Three-Axle Commercial Vehicles	530	795	17680	265
HCM or EME or MAV (Four to Six axles)	760	1145	25410	380
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more axles)	930	1390	30935	465

(b) At Km. 339.500 near **Khireitangiri** Village in Keonjhar District (in Rupees)

Category of Vehicles	Fee for Single journey	Fee for return journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	105	155	3480	50
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	170	255	5620	85
Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	355	530	11770	175
Three-Axle Commercial Vehicles	385	580	12840	195
HCM or EME or MAV (Four to Six axles)	555	830	18460	275
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more axles)	675	1010	22470	335

(c) At Km. 401.800 near **Jansanpur** Village in Keonjhar District (in Rupees)

Category of Vehicles	Fee for Single journey	Fee for return journey within a day	Fee for monthly pass for 50 single journeys in a month	Fee for single journey for the commercial vehicles registered within the District of fee plaza
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	65	95	2130	30
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	105	155	3440	50
Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	215	325	7210	110
Three-Axle Commercial Vehicles	235	355	7865	120
HCM or EME or MAV (Four to Six axles)	340	510	11310	170
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more axles)	415	620	13765	205

1. The monthly pass for non-commercial vehicle residing within a distance of 20 km of the toll plaza is Rs.340/-.

2. As per user fee notification, the concessionaire shall issue 50 or more one way tickets at a discounted rate equivalent to 2/3rd of the fee payable during the period of one month from the date of payment of fee. If any person asks more than 50 trips during a period of one month the concessionaire shall be required to issue such tickets at a discounted rate as above (i.e. If 60 trips are asked in a month by any person for a car the amount will be [60 x pre-rounded fee for single trip x 2/3 rounded to nearest 5]).

Sd/- Project Director

NOT JUST ROADS, BUILDING A NATION

Format C-1

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgement dated 25th September, 2018 of Hon'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Name and address of the candidate:-

BIJAYA KUMAR DALABEHERA, AT/PO - RATAPATA, PS - BARAMBA, DIST - CUTTACK, ODISHA, PIN - 754031
INDEPENDENT
ODISHA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY 2024
87 - BARAMBA

Name of Political Party:-

Name of Election:-

Name of Constituency:-

I, BIJAYA KUMAR DALABEHERA, a candidate for the above mentioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

Sl. No.	Name of Court	Case No. & Date	Status of Cases	Section(s) of Acts concerned and briefdescription of offence(s).
1	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 76	Pending	U/S - 147, 148, 149, 427, 120 (B) - Guilty of rioting, being armed with a deadly weapon, commits mischief a party to a criminal conspiracy to commit an offence punishable with death.
2	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 45/2015	Pending	U/S - 7 of EC Act - If any person contravenes any order
3	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 112/2015	Pending	U/S - 143, 341, 283, 278, 139 IPC - Unlawful assembly, punishment for wrongful restraint.
4	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 25/2012	Pending	U/S - 143, 145, 147, 148, 341, 294, 336, 353, 427, 506, 149 IPC - Rashly or negligently as to endanger human life. Assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty.
5	J.M.F.C., Badamba	GR No. 75/2017	Pending	U/S - 143, 454, 294, 506, 379, 354, 34 IPC - Lurking house trespass, commits theft, criminal intimidation.
6	J.M.F.C., Badamba	CT No. 2CC 1/2016	Pending	U/S - 448, 294, 379, 506, 34 IPC - Obscene song, commits theft.
7	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 50/2022	Pending	U/S - 147, 148, 149, 427, 120 (B) IPC - Prosecution has to establish whoever commits mischief cause loss to damage, criminal conspiracy
8	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 248/2021	Pending	U/S - 7 of EC Act - If any portion contravenes any order.
9	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 197/2021	Pending	U/S - 143, 145, 147, 148, 341, 294, 336, 353, 427, 506, 149 IPC - Punishment for wrongful restraint.
10	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 135/2019	Pending	U/S - 143, 243, 294, 506, 149 IPC read with Section 4 PDPP Act - By omitting to take order with any property in his possession.
11	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 77/2017	Pending	U/S - 143, 283, 294, 506, 149, 120 (B) IPC read with Section 4 PDPP Act - Threat be to cause death, obscene language.
12	J.M.F.C., Badamba	FIR No. 186/2006	Pending	U/S - 147, 148, 294, 379, 147, 506, 149 IPC read with Section 25/27 of Arms Act, Section 3 (1)(r)(s) SC/ST (POA) Act - SC/ST (POA) Act and Arms Act.
13	J.M.F.C., Narasinghpur	CT No. 170/2021	Pending	U/S - 341, 294, 323, 506, 379, 353, 34 IPC - Several persons in furtherance of common intention.
14	J.M.F.C., Narasinghpur	CT No. 172/2021	Pending	U/S - 341, 294, 506, 188, 34 IPC Odisha Fireworks Loud Speaker Act - 5 - Causes hurt to any person.
15	J.M.F.C., Narasinghpur	CT No. 304/2021	Pending	U/S - 341, 294, 337, 147, 149 BM Act, 2005 - Disaster Management Act, 2005.
16	J.M.F.C., Narasinghpur	CT No. 5/2021	Pending	U/S - 341, 294, 337, 506, 147, 148, 149 IPC - Obscene language, threat be to cause of death.
17	J.M.F.C., Narasinghpur	CT No. 6/2021	Pending	U/S - 147, 148, 189, 342, 448, 294, 323, 325, 427, 332, 333, 353, 307, 149 IPC read with Section 7 Criminal Law Amendment Act 3/4 PDPP Act - 51 and Disaster Management Act.
18	J.M.F.C., Badamba	CT No. 172/2021	Pending	U/S - 341, 394, 337, 506, 147 IPC - Afflicting hurt on a third person, threat be to cause of death, guilty of rioting.

(B) Details about cases of conviction for criminal offences

Sl. No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
1	NIL	NIL	NIL

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

Sd./- Bijaya Kumar Dalabehera



Voters wait for their turn to cast their votes under the blazing sun at Ransol booth in Ransol panchayat of Sukinda block of Jajpur district, Saturday



Women from Muslim community display their inked fingers after casting votes at a booth in Kendrapara, Saturday



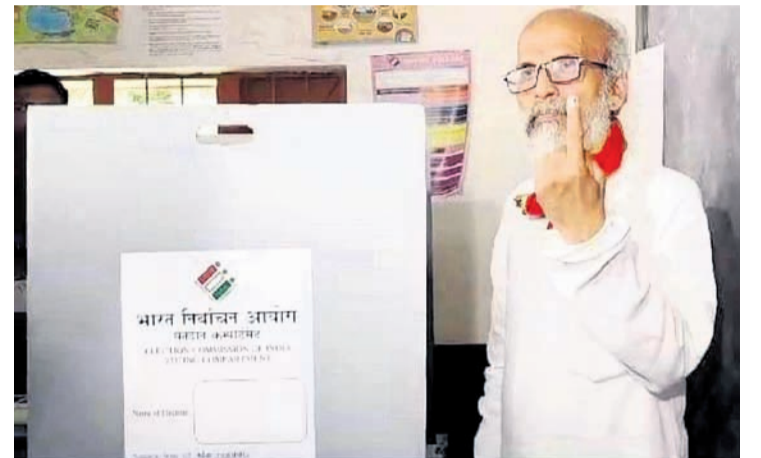
Congress's Bhograi Assembly nominee Satyashiba Das displaying his inked finger



A differently abled man Nibarann Mallick displays his inked finger after casting his vote at a booth in Sihi Primary School in Erasama of Jagatsinghpur district, Saturday



BJD's organisational secretary Pranab Prakash Das displays his inked finger after casting his vote at a booth in Jajpur Road, Saturday



BJP's Balasore Lok Sabha nominee and sitting MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi displays his inked finger after casting his vote at a booth in Balasore, Saturday

OP PHOTOS

BJD will win 115 Assly, 15 LS seats: Pandian

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Senior BJD leader VK Pandian Saturday claimed that the ruling party in Odisha would win more than 115 of the 147 Assembly seats and secure 15 of the 21 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

His claims came on a day when the state's fourth and final round of elections was underway.

Taking to X, Pandian said, "The BJD is winning 85 Assembly seats after 3rd phase polls and with the 4th phase today, it will end up winning more than 115 seats out of a total of 147 and 15 Lok Sabha seats out of 21."

The bureaucrat-turned-BJD leader also said that the party will form the government in the state



with more than a three-fourth majority.

The BJD had, in 2019, won 113 Assembly seats and 12 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state.

"We are grateful to the people of Odisha for blessing us

and we are committed to provide strong and transformational governance to Odisha," BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra said.

Earlier, the Opposition BJP claimed that it would win over 75 Assembly seats and form a government in the state, besides winning above 16 Lok Sabha constituencies in Odisha.

The counting of votes will take place, June 4.

During the election campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the people of Odisha to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the BJP government in the state, June 10.

The BJD claimed that it would form the government for the sixth consecutive time and party president Naveen Patnaik would take the oath June 9.

BJP will win over 370 LS seats: Nadda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: People have voted for a capable, powerful, developed and self-reliant India and to put aside appeasement, nepotism and corruption, BJP chief JP Nadda said Saturday, exuding confidence that his party will win more than 370 Lok Sabha seats and the NDA more than 400.

His remarks came on a day when polling was held for the seventh and last phase of the general elections. Counting of votes will be conducted June 4.

In a statement, Nadda thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making this "festival of democracy" a success for the BJP.

"In this election campaign, Prime Minister Modi addressed more than 206 election rallies, did about 23 roadshows, gave about 82 interviews and made tireless efforts to convey the election is-



The BJP chief also exuded confidence that the NDA will win more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha elections

suages to the people of the country. His efforts are definitely yielding results," the BJP chief said.

Nadda also thanked BJP leaders, including Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh and Nitin Gakari, and the "crores of party workers" for their contributions during the elections.

Shah held about 180 public meetings and roadshows during the elections, he said.

The BJP chief also thanked constituents of the NDA for enthusiastically participating in the election and said with

their hardwork, they succeeded in conveying their thoughts to the people.

"In this election, the voters of the country have voted for a capable India, a powerful India, a developed India, a self-reliant India and to move ahead in the economy, and to put aside appeasement, nepotism and corruption," Nadda said.

"I have full faith that the voters of India will make the BJP win more than 370 seats and the NDA win more than 400 seats under the leadership of Prime

Minister Narendra Modi," he said.

Nadda thanked people for their participation in the Lok Sabha polls and also the Election Commission for successfully conducting the elections.

He also thanked all polling officials for their contribution in making the electoral exercise successful on the ground and also security personnel for maintaining law and order throughout the seven phases of the parliamentary elections.

"I also thank the voters of the country who voted in all seven phases despite the scorching heat during this festival of democracy and salute them for making this great festival a success," the BJP chief said.

"I also thank the new voters who became a part of this festival of democracy by exercising their vote for the first time," he added.

World's highest polling station in Himachal sees 79 pc turnout

Out of the 62 voters, 49 exercised their franchise



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Shimla, June 1: A testament of dedication to the cause of democracy was visible at the world's highest polling station Tashigang, located at a height of 15,256 feet above sea level in Himachal Pradesh's Spiti Valley, as it recorded a poll percentage of 79 per cent in voting to the Mandi Lok Sabha constituency Saturday, a poll official said.

"Thirteen voters could not exercise their franchise as they were out of the village," a state government official told IANS over the phone.

"I am excited to cast my vote," said first-time voter Kunzok Tenzin of Tashigang village.

Donning traditional dress, Additional Deputy Commissioner Rahul Jain welcomed electors at the Tashigang polling station.

In the 2022 Assembly polls and the 2019 general elections, this polling station recorded 100 per cent polling.

Declared a model polling station by the Election Commission

In the 2022 Assembly polls and the 2019 general elections, this polling station, declared a model polling station by the EC, recorded 100 per cent polling

of India (ECI), it falls in Lahaul-Spiti district which has the lowest electorate -- 25,273 -- in the state.

Twenty-nine polling stations were set up in Spiti, which has a total of 8,514 voters -- 4,366 men and 4,148 women. The climatic conditions in Spiti are harsh as much of the land is a cold desert. The Spiti Valley has 13 gram panchayats, mainly populated by Buddhist tribal farmers.

Electronic voting machines (EVMs) and voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) machines for Kaza, the subdivision of Spiti some 320 km from the state capital Shimla, were dropped by an Indian Air Force helicopter.

LAST PHASE MOMENTS

Boats, wheelchairs and more: People come to vote in LS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: People reaching polling stations on horses, boats and ropeways, and the elderly on wheelchairs to vote Saturday were some of the snapshots of the Lok Sabha elections' seventh and last phase held across 57 constituencies in seven states and a Union Territory.

■ In Danapur in Bihar's Patna district, a group of people reached a polling station on horses and showed their voter cards and inked fingers as they left after exercising their franchise.

■ People were seen crossing rapids using a ropeway to cast their vote at a polling station in Himachal Pradesh's Kullu district.

■ While in West Bengal's Sandeshkhali, voters used ferry services to reach polling stations in the Sunderban delta, in Bihar's Patna, people used the services to cross the Ganga and exercise their franchises.

■ In Punjab's Ferozepur district, a BSF unit was deployed to safely and conveniently ferry voters of Kalu Wala village, which is surrounded by river Sutlej on three sides and India-Pakistan border on the other.

■ At polling stations across the constituencies, the elderly and persons with disabilities were helped by young volunteers to reach booths to vote.

■ In Varanasi, a holy city in Uttar Pradesh and from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third term to the Lok Sabha, groups of sadhus were seen queuing up at polling stations to cast their vote.

■ In view of heatwave conditions in large swathes of northern and eastern India, poll officials had arranged for cold drinking water, coolers and oral rehydration solution kits at polling stations. In Punjab, people were given 'chabee' (sweetened water) at voting centres to beat the heat.

■ There were also reports of poll boycott from several areas, including Math Dhajju Giri and Rasulpur villages in Uttar Pradesh, Makhani, Chachul and Juri in Himachal Pradesh and Bagdubhi village in Jharkhand.

■ Punjab's cultural heritage was on display Saturday across the state at many polling stations where the voters had a glimpse of old utensils, 'phulkari pakhi', traditional 'atta chakki', 'charkha' and old musical instruments.



Voters show their inked fingers as they ride a boat to cross the Ganga river after casting votes during the seventh and last phase of the Lok Sabha elections, in Patna, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Deeply humbled, says EC after last phase of LS polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: The Election Commission Saturday said it was "deeply humbled" by the voters who made it to polling stations overcoming many challenges and dilemmas they might have.

The Commission's remarks came after the votes were cast for the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha elections which were announced March 16. The first phase was held April 19.

"Indian voters have given their most cherished right to vote for the constitution of the 18th Lok Sabha. Indian democracy and Indian elections have again done the magic. The great Indian voters, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, socio-economic and educational background have done it once again," the poll watchdog said in a statement.

The real winner, EC said, is the Indian voter.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar along with Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and the EC family are "deeply humbled by the voters, who made it to the polling station overcoming many challenges and dilemmas they might have," it said.

The Commission said it wishes to place on record its thanks and appreciation to all voters.

"Through their emphatic participation, the voters have risen to the trust reposed by the founders of the Indian constitution, when they handed over the power of suffrage to the ordinary Indian," it said.



The EC also expressed its gratitude to the entire election machinery, including security forces for their dedication and commitment in providing a smooth, peaceful and festive environment to voters across the country, braving tough weather, and logistical challenges like tough terrains and managing law and order in a diverse demography.

The Commission also thanked all political parties and candidates which it described as a critical pivot of the Indian elections. The Commission also thanked the media for their contribution.

"The importance of votes cast by centenarians, elderly, persons with disabilities, and trans-genders are an inspiration to many, especially the youngsters who will take forward the democracy further," it noted.

"The collective efforts of voters, political parties, candidates, election personnel and security forces during polling have strengthened Indian democracy, deserving great respect and appreciation," it said, adding, "We, the people have kept the wheels of democracy spinning, thanks to collective efforts".

CEC Kumar had been personally preparing for the parliamentary polls for the past two years.



This festival of democracy will be considered successful only when the democratic powers defeat the dictatorial powers
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

INDIA'S FIRST ASTRO TOURISM CAMPAIGN

India's first astro tourism campaign "Nakshatra Sabha" was inaugurated at the George Everest peak in Mussoorie Saturday. The venue of the event, George Everest Peak is a major tourist attraction in Mussoorie which offers spectacular views of the snow-clad Himalayan peaks and the Doon Valley



of the day quote

You (journalists), me and everybody can meditate. No issue. It is good for one's body, mind and soul. But please don't make it a media spectacle, don't sit for meditation in full glare of camera

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY

Our #INDIA bloc, formed to defeat the ten-year fascist regime of the BJP and save India, has met the expectations of the people and stands on the cusp of victory

M K STALIN | CM, TAMIL NADU

The outgoing home minister has been calling up DMs/Collectors. So far he has spoken to 150 of them. This is blatant and brazen intimidation, showing how desperate the BJP is

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

X POST OF THE DAY

Karnataka and Kerala first, then Punjab. I lost it there. Exit polls especially today, pure entertainment. No reasoning mentioned, numbers looking vague unlike the normal @PradeepGuptaAMI who usually gives good reasoning for every seat!

SHORT TAKES

K'taka CM, Dy granted bail

Bangalore: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar were granted bail by the Special MP/MLA court Saturday in connection with a defamation case filed by BJP General Secretary Keshav Prasad. The petition alleges that the Congress party engaged in propaganda by publishing full-page advertisements accusing the then BJP government of charging a 40 per cent commission, labelling it as a "40 per cent government." The Congress also created posters and advertisements displaying a rate card allegedly set by the then BJP government for various posts.

IndiGo receives bomb threat

Mumbai: An IndiGo flight operating from Chennai to Mumbai with 172 persons on board landed in "full emergency" conditions here Saturday after it received a bomb threat, sources have said. The flight landed at around 8.45 am and the passengers' deplaning has been completed using the step ladder, a source said. This is the second such incident involving an IndiGo flight in the past week. An IndiGo Varanasi flight from Delhi had received an alleged bomb threat May 28.

Bizman duped of ₹9cr by scammers

Noida: A businessman has been allegedly duped of over ₹9 crore by cyber thugs here, police said Saturday. According to the police, the fraud took place over a period of one month after Rajat Bothra, resident of sector 40, got added to a WhatsApp group about stock market trading May 1.

Polling ends for Lok Sabha

OVER 62% TURNOUT IN LAST PHASE; SATURDAY'S VOTING MARKED THE END OF THE 7-PHASE POLLING THAT BEGAN APRIL 19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: The marathon polling process to elect the 18th Lok Sabha ended Saturday with the seventh phase of elections witnessing an approximate voter turnout of 62.36 per cent but was marred by incidents of violence between TMC and BJP supporters in Sandeshkhali region and some other parts of West Bengal.

Polling was conducted in seven states and the Union Territory of Chandigarh for 57 constituencies, including Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term in the Lok Sabha.

Voting for the last phase was held amid a severe heatwave in all 13 seats of Punjab and four of Himachal Pradesh, 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, nine in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha and three in Jharkhand, besides Chandigarh. Polling for the remaining 42 assembly constituencies in Odisha and bypolls to six assembly seats in Himachal Pradesh also took



Citizens walk to vote at the world's highest polling station of Tashigang during the last phase of Lok Sabha elections in Lahaul and Spiti district

place simultaneously. Saturday's voting marked the end of the seven-phase polling that began April 19. The assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim also went to polls. The BJP-led NDA is seeking a rare consecutive third term in office. The Opposition INDIA bloc is trying to upset the NDA appecart by putting up a joint fight in some states.

Several exit polls, which were aired after the 6.30 pm deadline set by the Election Commission, predicated a comfortable majority for the BJP-led NDA.

Leaders of several INDIA bloc parties met in the evening to take stock of the opposition's preparations leading up to the June 4 counting of votes and claimed they would get more than 295 seats, enough for them to form the next government.

Modi exuded confidence that people have voted in record numbers to re-elect the NDA government and said the "oppor-

All eyes are now on June 4, when the counting of votes will be held. In Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, the counting for the assembly polls will be taken up June 2

tunistic INDIA Alliance" failed to strike a chord with the voters who rejected their "regressive politics". According to the EC's voter-turnout app at 11:50 pm, the estimated polling percentage in the last phase was 62.

A voter turnout of 70.66 per cent was recorded in Jharkhand. Uttar Pradesh logged a polling percentage of 55.59, West Bengal

INDIA bloc meet in show of unity

THE ALLIANCE CLAIM IT IS WINNING 295+ SEATS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Leaders of several INDIA bloc parties met here Saturday and took stock of the opposition's preparations leading up to the June 4 counting of votes polled in the Lok Sabha elections, and asserted they will get more than 295 seats, enough for them to form the next government.

Addressing the media after two-and-a-half-hour confabulations at his residence, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the INDIA bloc has arrived at the 295-plus figure after feedback from people, which he termed "people's survey".

He said the leaders of the alliance dwelt on a host of issues, including the precautions to be taken on the counting day Tuesday. He said they have instructed their party workers to not leave the counting halls till all formalities are completed.

He said the opposition parties have sought time from the Election Commission Sunday to raise their concerns and urge the poll body to address them soon.

The meeting began at Kharge's residence this afternoon as voting in the last phase of the seven-phase general elections were underway for 57 seats. The voting ended at 6 PM. The counting of votes for all the phases will be

held June 4. "The INDIA bloc will get more than 295 seats. We have arrived at this figure after speaking with all our leaders," Kharge told reporters. "This is a survey of people. People have given this information to our leaders. The government surveys are there and their media friends also inflate figures and put it out. Therefore, we want to tell you about the reality."

Some opposition leaders said the BJP would be happy Saturday evening, when Exit Poll results are released, while they would be happy June 4, when the official results will be declared.

Targeting the BJP, Kharge said, "They are trying to give a narrative through government exit polls and we want to tell the people the truth."

Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, K C Venugopal and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra were also present at the meeting.

Samajwadi Party, CPI(M), CPI, DMK, JMM, AAP, RJD, Shiv Sena (UBT) and the NCP (Sharad Pawar) were also represented at the meeting. TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee had already said she would not attend the meeting as polling was to take place in some Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti did not attend the meeting due to personal reasons.

EXCISE POLICY CASE Kejriwal to be back in lock-up today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: With his three-week temporary bail for poll campaign ending, AAP convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will be back in Tihar Jail Sunday as a court here put off till June 5 its order on his plea seeking interim bail on medical grounds.

Sources in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said Saturday that June 2 the chief minister is likely to visit Mahatma Gandhi's memorial at the Raj Ghat, the party office at the DDU Marg and a temple before heading to the Tihar Jail around 3 pm.

A day before his scheduled surrender, Kejriwal Saturday held a meeting of the AAP's Political Affairs Committee at his residence before attending an INDIA bloc meeting at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's home.

Prominent AAP leaders including Cabinet minister Atishi, Rajya Sabha MPs Raghav Chadha and Sanjay Singh, and MLA Durgesh Pathak attended the PAC meeting, with sources saying the chief minister emphasised the need to keep unity among the party leaders in his absence.

It was also emphasised that Kejriwal will remain chief minister, and his wife Sunita Kejriwal will continue to convey his messages to party leaders, volunteers and the people of Delhi, the sources said.

Kejriwal was released from the jail May 10 on interim bail granted by the Supreme Court for campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls. The polls ended June 1.



PASSING OUT PARADE: Agniveer Vayu trainees during their 'Combined Passing Out Parade at Tambaram Air Force Station, in Chennai, Saturday. A total of 1983 Agniveer Vayu trainees including 234 women passed out

Rahul writes to Prez against Agnipath scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday wrote to President Droupadi Murmu urging her to intervene in the Agnipath scheme to stop "discrimination" in the nature and extent of benefits given to the families of slain soldiers.

Gandhi said though it is a policy matter that falls in the domain of an elected government, an "exception is warranted in this case" as she is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and the issue affects national security.

In his two-page letter to the President of India, Gandhi said



he was writing to her with an appeal to provide 'nyaya' (justice) to Agniveers, who lay down their lives in service to the nation, by ensuring that they get the same benefits as other soldiers. "There can be no clearer illustration of the fundamental flaw in the Agnipath scheme - the creation of a 'lesser' cadre of soldiers who are expected to

work on similar tasks with lower pay, benefits and prospects," he said while sharing his letter to President Murmu on the scheme.

Gandhi also referred to his recent meeting with the family of an Agniveer Ajay Kumar (23) in Rangarh Sardaran village in Punjab, who gave the supreme sacrifice this January in a landmine blast near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

He said like every Indian, he was heartbroken by his martyrdom as Ajay's promising life was tragically cut short at such a young age. He said he was also shocked to find his family living in abject poverty.

SENSOR ERROR Delhi's 52.9°C reading was off by 3°C: IMD

The observations of maximum temperature May 29 were between 45.2 to 49.1 degrees Celsius except the AWS installed at Mungeshpur, which reported a maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: The India Meteorological Department Saturday said the temperature reading of 52.9 degrees Celsius by an automatic weather station (AWS) at Mungeshpur in

northwest Delhi was due to a "malfunctioning sensor" and said that such devices deployed for weather observations will be examined.

The weather office had dispatched a team of experts to Mungeshpur after an AWS deployed there recorded a maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius May 29 to examine the device for errors, if any.

"The temperature sensor of AWS Mungeshpur is found to report about three degrees Celsius higher maximum temperature than the maximum temperature reported by the standard instrument," the IMD said and attributed the readings to "malfunctioning of the sensor" of the AWS.

"We will examine AWS, course corrections, if any, will be carried out on an individual basis," said IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, adding that the faulty sensor of the Mungeshpur AWS would be replaced in a few days.

Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijiju shared a draft report on the Mungeshpur incident, which said the maximum temperature recorded by the AWS was three degrees higher than the standard instruments.

The report recommended that the surface instrument division at IMD Pune may examine and calibrate the AWS temperature sensors at periodic intervals of all the AWS.

It also recommended that a



Factory Acceptance Test should be carried out in different temperatures before the installation of an AWS and called for routine maintenance of such devices installed across the country in

a planned manner.

The IMD said AWS reading at Mungeshpur was an outlier compared to the temperature measured by other AWS and manual observatories in Delhi.

The IMD had said Friday that a faulty sensor had led to higher temperature readings at the AWS installed by the Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth in Nagpur.

The maximum temperature in Delhi NCR is being monitored through five surface observatories and automatic weather stations.

The observations of maximum temperature May 29 were between 45.2 to 49.1 degrees Celsius except the AWS installed at Mungeshpur, which reported a maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius.

As of January this year, more than 800 AWS have been deployed across the country for weather observations.

international

of the day quote

We remain deeply concerned about growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. There is a need for practical measures to reduce tensions, reverse the dangerous dynamic, and create space to explore diplomatic avenues

KHALED KHARI | UN ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL

The relationship we enjoy right now with India is as good as or better than our relationship that it has ever been. We are co-producing armoured vehicles with India

LYOYD AUSTIN | SECRETARY OF DEFENCE, US

The continued stability of Philippines requires China and the United States to manage their rivalry in a responsible manner

Ferdinand Marcos Jr | PRESIDENT, THE PHILIPPINES

SHORT TAKES

Police arrest 80

Washington: Police in riot gear surrounded arm-in-arm protesters Friday at the University of California, Santa Cruz, to remove an encampment and barricades where pro-Palestinian demonstrations have blocked the main entrance to the campus this week. Dozens were arrested, the university said. Campus, local and state police swarmed the protesters, and video from local news stations showed officers telling people to leave, then taking away signs and part of a barricade. There appeared to be some pushing and shoving between police and protesters. Officers carried zip ties and appeared to detain a few people.

44 on death row

Cairo: A court run by Yemen's Houthi rebels Saturday sentenced 44 people to death, including a businessman working with aid groups, on spying charges, a defence lawyer said. The 44 were among 49 people who were detained by the Iran-backed rebels and accused of "collaborating with the enemy," a reference to the Saudi-led coalition that has been at war with the Houthis since 2015, lawyer Abdel-Majeed Sabra said. Four were given prison sentences, Sabra said. Sixteen were sentenced to death in absentia, while 28 were brought before the Specialised Criminal Court in the capital Sanaa, Sabra said. Among those sentenced to death was Adnan al-Harazi, CEO of Prodigy Systems, a Sanaa-based company that developed systems to help humanitarian groups.

FIRST TIME IN MONTHS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sumy Region, June 1: Ukraine and Russia exchanged prisoners of war Friday, each sending back 75 POWs in the first such swap in the past three months, officials said. A few hours earlier and at the same location, the two sides also handed over bodies of their fallen soldiers. The Ukrainian POWs, including four civilians, were returned on several buses that drove into the northern Sumy region. As they disembarked, they shouted joyfully and called their families to tell them they were home. Some knelt and kissed the ground while many wrapped themselves in yellow-blue flags and hugged one another, breaking into tears. Many appeared emaciated and poorly dressed. The United Arab Emirates said it helped negotiate this latest exchange. The two sides have traded blame for what they say is a slowdown in the swaps.

China, Pak unveil new air cargo route

This air route is significant as it marks the first direct connection between Guizhou and Pakistan, as well as the first air freight route linking the province with a Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 1: A new air cargo route has been launched between Pakistan and China to further enhance trade ties between the two all-weather allies, ahead of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing next week.

According to the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, the new air cargo route inaugurated May 28 linked Guizhou, China with

Karachi, Pakistan. The route was launched with the departure of an all-cargo plane carrying six tonnes of freight, including clothing, electronics, and various commodities, from Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

After nearly six hours of flight time, the plane arrived in Karachi. It was to return to Guiyang loaded with blue crabs from Pakistan, according to Guiyang Customs.

The flights on the route were planned to be operated three times a week, carrying goods including hardware accessories, clothing fabrics, and electronic accessories.

Officials believe that this new



route will help establish Guiyang as a cargo distribution centre in southwest China and reduce the time for Pakistan's quality fresh products to reach Guizhou. The inauguration of the Guiyang-Karachi air cargo route is expected to facilitate trade between the two regions, according to the APP report. In January, the two countries launched an air cargo route connecting Ezhou Huahu Airport in central China's Hubei province with Pakistan's eastern city of Lahore.

The air cargo link comes ahead of the five-day official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif from June 4. He will meet the top Chinese businessmen to seek more investments in the second phase of the Pak-China Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.

Sharif is expected to hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang and other leaders to draw a blueprint to strengthen bilateral ties further, as the all-weather allies seek to upgrade cooperation under the multi-billion dollar CPEC.

Kamboj signs off after almost four decades of service in UN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, June 1: After an illustrious career spanning over 35 years, India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ruchira Kamboj, has retired, the senior diplomat said Saturday.

The first woman diplomat to occupy the prestigious position as the Ambassador of India at the UN, Kamboj, who had joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1987, took to social media to bid goodbye.

"Thank you, Bharat, for the extraordinary years and unforgettable experiences," the 60-year-old senior diplomat signed off with this message on her X handle.

Kamboj, who was the All India women's topper of the 1987 Civil Services batch and the topper of the 1987 Foreign Service batch, formally assumed the position of Permanent Representative/Ambassador of India to New York, August 2, 2022.



Israel firm tried to disrupt India polls: OpenAI

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 1: OpenAI, the creators of ChatGPT, has said it acted within 24 hours to disrupt "deceptive" use of artificial intelligence (AI) in a covert operation that sought to influence the ongoing Lok Sabha elections.

This influence campaign, called "Zero Zeno", was run by STOIC, a political campaign management firm in Israel.

The threat actors attempted to leverage OpenAI's powerful language models for tasks like generating comments, articles, social media profiles that criticised the ruling BJP and praised the opposition Congress party. We disrupted some activity focused on the Indian elections less than 24 hours after it began," OpenAI said.

OpenAI said it banned a cluster of accounts operated from Israel that were being used to generate and edit content for an influence operation that spanned X, Facebook, Instagram, websites, and YouTube.

"This operation targeted audiences in Canada, the United States and Israel with content in

'No Gaza truce until Hamas destroyed'

NETANYAHU REBUFFS CEASEFIRE DEAL PROPOSED BY BIDEN

REUTERS

Jerusalem, June 1: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Saturday there could be no permanent ceasefire in Gaza until Hamas was destroyed, casting doubt on a key part of a truce proposal that US President Joe Biden said Israel itself had made.

Biden said Friday that Israel had proposed a deal involving an initial six-week truce with a partial Israeli military withdrawal and the release of some hostages while the two sides negotiated "a permanent end to hostilities".

However, Netanyahu's statement Saturday said any notion that Israel would agree a permanent ceasefire before "the destruction of Hamas' military and governing capabilities" was "a non-starter".

Peace talks have sputtered for months, with Israel demanding the release of all hostages and the destruction of Hamas, while Hamas demands a permanent ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the release of many Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas said Friday it was ready to engage "positively and in a constructive manner" but one of the group's senior officials Mahmoud Mardawi said in a Qatari television interview that it had not yet received the details of the proposal.

"No agreement can be reached before the demand for the withdrawal of the occupation army and a ceasefire is met," he said. Hamas remains committed to Israel's destruction.

The war began October 7 when fighters from the Islamist Palestinian group rampaged into southern Israel from Gaza, killing more than 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and seizing more than 250 as hostages, according to Israeli officials.

Israel's ground and air campaign in Gaza has left the territory in ruins, led to widespread



US leaders invite Netanyahu

Top US leaders have invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to deliver an address to Congress, a show of wartime support for the longtime ally despite mounting political divisions over Israel's military assault on Gaza. The invitation from House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Republican, and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Democrat, along with Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, has been in the works for some time. No date for the speech was set. It comes as the Israel-Hamas war, now in its seventh month after the October 7 surprise attack by the Palestinian militant group, has caused widespread concerns in the US and abroad over Israel's conduct and the extensive civilian death toll. A speech by Netanyahu would almost certainly expose election-year divisions in the US, where a growing number of Democrats have turned away from the right-wing prime minister, while Republicans draw ever closer to the Israeli leader.

starvation, and killed more than 36,000 people according to Palestinian health authorities, who say most of the dead are civilians.

Last month Netanyahu defied calls from world leaders by sending Israeli troops into Rafah, the last place in tiny, crowded Gaza that they had not yet entered in force, displacing more than a million Palestinians who had been sheltering there.

Israel said Rafah, on the frontier with Egypt, was the last main stronghold for Hamas in Gaza and its campaign to destroy the group could not succeed until it had entered the city.

English and Hebrew. In early May it began targeting audiences in India with English-language content," the company said.

Responding to the report, the BJP called it a "dangerous threat" to the democracy.

"It is absolutely clear and obvious that @BJP4India was and is the target of influence operations, misinformation and foreign interference, being done by and/or on behalf of some Indian political parties," said Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

OpenAI said it has disrupted five covert operations in the last three months that sought to use our models in support of deceptive activity across the internet.

THREE DECADES OF RULE SA ends ANC dominance

The African National Congress party that freed South Africa from apartheid loses its 30-year majority in landmark election

REUTERS

Johannesburg, June 1: South Africans angry at joblessness, inequality and power shortages have slashed support for the African National Congress (ANC) to 40% in this week's election, ending three decades of dominance by the party that freed the country from apartheid.

A dramatically weakened mandate for the legacy party of Nelson Mandela, down from the 57.5% it got in the previous 2019 parliamentary election, means the ANC must share power with a rival in order to keep it - an unprecedented prospect.

"We can talk to everybody and anybody," Gwede Mantashe, the ANC chair and current mines and energy minister, told reporters in comments shared by the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), dodging a question about who the party was discussing a possible coalition deal with.

Vote tallying from Wednesday's poll was entering its final stages Saturday, with results from 99.53% of polling stations giving the ANC 40.21%.

The main opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA), had 21.80%, uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), a new party led by former president Jacob Zuma, managed to grab 14.60%, while the far-left Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by former ANC youth leader Julius Malema, got 9.48%.

"We have achieved our mission: ... to bring the ANC below 50%. We want to humble the ANC," Malema told journalists



RULING Party loses majority for 1st time, on 40% of vote
South Africa enters new era of coalition politics
Voters were angry over failed economic and social policies
Opposition DA and ex-leader Zuma's parties in 2nd, 3rd

at the results centre. "We are going to negotiate with the ANC" for a possible coalition deal, he said, although that would not be quite enough to clinch a majority without including another party on the current roster.

The ANC has won every previous national election by a landslide since the historic 1994 vote that ended white minority rule, but over the last decade its support has dwindled as the economy stagnated, unemployment rose and roads and power stations crumbled.

MK's strong performance, especially in Zuma's home province of KwaZulu-Natal, is one of the main reasons the ANC failed to secure a majority.

Analysts say one option for the ANC could be a "government of national unity" involving a broad spectrum of many parties, rather than a for-

mal coalition between a few - an arrangement similar the one set up after 1994's historic all-race vote.

Malema said the EFF was against that idea and preferred to be part of a coalition.

Political parties' share of the vote determine their seats in the National Assembly, which elects the nation's president.

Investors in Africa's most industrialised economy will hope the uncertain picture can quickly become clear and that the country avoids an extended period of wrangling if the main political players struggle to agree how they can cooperate.

Some parties have questioned what they say are vote-counting inconsistencies that may lead to some results being contested.

Electoral commission chair Mosotho Moepeya told a news conference Saturday that "every concern raised in these objections will be considered and we will do so carefully".

Despite the ANC's result, President Cyril Ramaphosa could still keep his job, as the former liberation movement was on course to get about twice as many votes as the next party. But he will be weakened and could face calls to quit both from opposition parties and critics in the deeply-divided ANC.

Russia, Ukraine exchange POWs, bodies of fallen



Ukraine has in the past urged Russia to swap "all for all" and rallies calling for the release of POWs take place across Ukraine weekly. A Ukrainian official at the headquarters coordinating the exchanges, Vitalii Matvienko said that "Ukraine is always ready."

Tatyana Moskalkova, Russia's human rights ombudsperson, said earlier this week that Kyiv was making "new artificial demands", without elaborating.

Among those who were returned home to Ukraine Friday was Roman Onyschuk, an IT worker who joined Ukrainian

forces as a volunteer at the start of the Russian invasion. He was captured in March 2022 in the Kharkiv region.

"I just want to hear my wife's voice, my son's voice. I missed his three birthdays," he said. In the more than 800 days he spent in captivity, he never communicated with his family and he doesn't know what city they are in now, he said.

With the exchanges, including Friday's, Ukraine has gotten back a total of 3,210 members of the Ukrainian military and civilians since the outbreak of the war, according to Ukraine's Coordination Headquarters for Treatment of POWs.

Neither Ukraine nor Russia disclose how many POWs there are in all.

Dmytro Kantypenko was captured on Snake Island in the Black Sea in the first days of the war. He was among those freed Friday and said he called his mother to tell her he was

back in Ukraine. "I'll be home soon," he said, wiping away his tears. He learned that his wife had fled to Lithuania with their son.

According to UN reports, the majority of Ukrainian POWs are subject to routine medical neglect, severe and systematic mistreatment, and even torture while in detention. There have also been isolated reports of abuse of Russian soldiers, mostly during capture or transit to internment sites.

At least one-third of Ukrainians who returned home suffered "injuries, severe illnesses, and disabilities", according to the Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of POWs.

Among those returned Friday were 19 Ukrainian fighters from Snake island, 14 people captured at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, and 10 fighters from the city of Mariupol that was captured by Russia.

MEXICO'S POLITICAL KILLINGS REACH 37

Ruling party hopeful Claudia Sheinbaum is widely expected to win Sunday's vote

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mexico City, June 1: Mexico's election is now the bloodiest in its modern history after a candidate running for local office in central Puebla state was murdered Friday at a political rally, taking the number of assassinated candidates to 37 ahead of Sunday's vote.

Jorge Huerta Cabrera, a candidate who was running for a council seat in the town of Izucar de Matamoros, was gunned down in the attack, according to the state prosecutor's office.

The killing takes the number of assassinated candidates in the 2024 election season to 37,



one more than during the 2021 midterm election when 36 candidates were killed, according to data from security consultancy Integralia.

The issue of violent crime has emerged as one of the top issues in this year's presidential contest, in which the ruling party of outgoing President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been forced to defend a persistently high murder rate, as the opposition has sought to use the bloodshed to argue for change.

of the day quote

It is worthwhile to note that the manufacturing sector witnessed a significant growth of 9.9 per cent in 2023-24, highlighting the success of the Modi government's efforts for the sector. Many high-frequency indicators indicate that the Indian economy continues to remain resilient and buoyant despite global challenges

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

In Tata Group, we are in the midst of executing over 100 GenAI projects. All these projects are demonstrating very tangible business impact in terms of customer experience, productivity and efficiency

N CHANDRASEKARAN | TATA GROUP CHAIRMAN

At Bata, our aim is to bring the best of world's fashion to India for our discerning customers. Nine West, born in New York City and thriving globally, is one of the most recognizable brands in the world. With its entry in India exclusively in partnership with Bata, we are proud to continue to make truly high fashion & premium styles accessible to all

DEEPIKA DEEPTI | HEAD OF MARKETING, BATA INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Ola Electric logs 49% mkt share

Bangalore: Ola Electric, Saturday, said that it has captured 49 per cent market share in the electric two-wheeler (2W) segment in May, with 37,191 registrations (as per government's Vahan portal) riding on its S1 scooter portfolio. The deliveries of the S1 X range of mass-market scooters began last month. "We continue to lead India's EV transition efforts in the 2W segment with a leading 49 per cent share in the market and a steady growth in our registrations," said Anshul Khandelwal, CMO, Ola Electric Technologies. "With our S1 X, we continue to work towards expanding the EV 2W market for overall growth of the industry," he added.

39 startups secure over \$387mn

New Delhi: Funding in the Indian startup ecosystem continued unabated this week despite volatility in stock markets over weak global cues. At least 39 startups in the country secured more than \$387 million, which included 13 growth-stage deals and 20 early-stage deals. Within the growth-stage deals, 13 startups raised \$309.7 million in funding, reports Entracker. Bangalore-based startups led the tally with 15 deals, followed by Delhi-NCR, Mumbai and Hyderabad. Deep-tech startup SEDEMAC raised \$100 million which will be used to build a new manufacturing plant and expand its presence in India, the US and the EU. SEDEMAC builds auto parts and battery management systems.

Black Box PAT at ₹138cr

Mumbai: Black Box, a leading IT solutions provider, announced its results for the quarter and year ended 31st March 2024. The company's emphasis on margin improvement and enhanced productivity has begun to yield positive outcomes, resulting in an increase in EBITDA margins and strong financial performance. Profit after tax for FY24 increased by 5.8x to ₹138cr compared to FY23. For Q4FY24 profit after tax increased by 77 per cent YoY to ₹41cr, highlighting Black Box's robust business model and effective financial management.

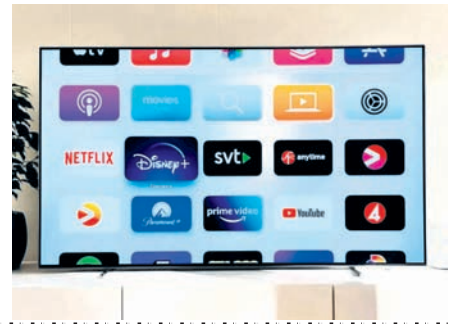


Over time, SpaceX will enable anyone to go to space and travel to the moon and Mars

ELON MUSK | SPACEX CEO

SMART TV SHIPMENTS DOWN 14%

Shipments of smart TVs in India declined 14 per cent in the March quarter on account of muted consumer demand and excess inventory and is likely to witness a decline of 10 per cent this calendar year, according to a Counterpoint Research report



Passenger vehicle wholesales in slow lane

MARGINAL GROWTH IN MAY ON ACCOUNT OF HIGH BASE EFFECT AND MUTED DEMAND DUE TO GENERAL ELECTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Passenger vehicle wholesales in India witnessed a marginal growth in May on account of high base effect and muted demand due to general elections.

The overall passenger vehicle dispatches from companies to dealers stood at 3,50,257 lakh units last month as compared to 3,35,436 in the same month a year ago, registering a growth of 4 per cent.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales rose marginally to 1,44,002 units last month from 1,43,708 units in the year-ago period.

The company saw year-on-year dip in sales of entry level and compact cars last month as against May 2023.

Utility vehicle sales, including that of Brezza, Grand Vitara, Ertiga, S-Cross and XL6, however, rose to 54,204 units last month as against 46,243 units a year earlier.

"It has been discussed that growth this year will not be very high. It will be in single digit because of the high base effect. Secondly, there were elections and the scorching temperatures also had an impact on the overall sales in May," MSI Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Partho Banerjee told reporters.

He further said: "We are very hopeful that we will start seeing the green shoots coming with the election results com-



ing in. I think things will turn around."

Banerjee noted that the company is going to introduce a limited edition trims of its entry level cars - Alto K10, S-Presso and Celerio - in order to rejuvenate the small car segment.

The Dream Series edition trims of the three models will be launched at a price point of ₹ 4.99 lakh (ex-showroom), he said. "Based on the feedback of our target customers we have come up with an edition in which we are mostly focusing on the utilities and convenience features," Banerjee said.

Sales of Maruti Suzuki's mini segment cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined to 9,902 units last month from 12,236 units in May 2023.

Rival Hyundai Motor India reported a 1 per cent year-on-year increase in domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers last month.

The company's wholesales

rose to 49,151 units in May as compared to 48,601 units in May 2023.

Hyundai Motor India COO Tarun Garg said that the sales growth this financial year is anticipated to remain in low single digit range.

"In April also the industry grew by around 1.5 per cent...so April plus May the industry growth should be around 2-2.5 per cent over same period last year," he noted.

Tata Motors said its passenger vehicle sales, including electric vehicles, in the domestic market, were up 2 per cent at 47,075 units as compared to 45,984 units in the year-ago month.

Mahindra & Mahindra on the other hand reported a robust 31 per cent year-on-year increase in passenger vehicle dispatches last month at 43,218 units. It had sold 32,886 units in May 2023.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported a 24 per cent year-on-year

increase in total wholesales in May at 25,273 units as compared to that of same month last year.

Kia India said its total wholesales increased 4 per cent year-on-year to 19,500 units in May. The automaker had dispatched 18,766 units to dealers in May 2023.

"So far in this year, we have been aggressive in introducing new competitive variants of our models, which has contributed significantly to our sales," Kia India Senior VP and Head Sales & Marketing Hardeep Singh Brar said.

With a robust network expansion strategy in place, the company shall continue to grow in the rest of the year and cross 1 million domestic sales milestone soon, he added.

MG Motor India reported a 5 per cent dip in wholesales at 4,769 units in May compared to the same month last year. The company had dispatched 5,006 units to dealers in May 2023.

Corporates urged to set up incubation centres for startups

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: The government has urged over 100 corporates, including Tata, Hyundai, and Apple, as well as unicorns to set up incubation centres for manufacturing sector startups, an official said Friday.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has shared a handbook with the companies on corporate incubation and acceleration.

"We have requested over 100 corporates to have their manufacturing incubators. We have requested companies such as Tata, Hyundai, and Apple as well as unicorns. As we are lacking in this space and we have taken internal goal of creating 50 such entities in near future," the official said.

The National Council for Cement and Building Materials has already set up the centre.

Developing a strong manufacturing base is an essential activity for any nation as it promotes innovation and competitiveness, boosts employment, livelihoods and standards of living, and strengthens self-reliance and economic stability.

Top 100 companies to verify market rumours promptly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: The top 100 listed companies by market capitalisation will have to confirm or deny any market rumour reported in the mainstream media from this Saturday.

The rule will be applicable for top 250 companies from December 1.

Under the Sebi's rule, these companies will have to 'confirm, deny, or clarify any reported event or information in the mainstream media that is not general in nature and that indicates that rumours of an impending specific material event' are circulating amongst the investing public within 24 hours from the reporting of the information.

Sebi through its newly introduced rumour verification framework has excluded the price volatility in arriving at average market price for the purpose of corporate actions in a bid to make it fair for all investors at large.

"The move would dissuade leaking of information that would affect the valuation in the given corporation action. This initiative of Sebi would help strengthen the rumour ver-

GST collections grow 10% to ₹1.73L-cr in May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Goods and Services Tax collections grew 10 per cent to ₹1.73 lakh crore in May driven by an increase in domestic transactions, indicating a sustained economic momentum.

The collections, however, stood lower than the highest-ever mop-up of ₹2.10 lakh crore recorded in April.

"The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue for the month of May 2024 stood at ₹1.73 lakh crore," the finance ministry said in a statement.

The 10 per cent year-on-year growth in May collection was driven by a strong increase in revenues from domestic transactions (up 15.3 per cent) amid slowing of imports (down 4.3 per cent).

After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue for May 2024 stood at ₹1.44 lakh crore, reflecting a growth of 6.9 per cent compared to the same period last year.

The gross GST collections in FY25 till May 2024 stood at ₹3.83 lakh crore, which is a 11.3 per cent year-on-year growth, driven by a strong increase in domestic transactions (up 14.2 per cent) and marginal increase in imports (up 1.4 per cent).

After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue in the FY 2024-25 till May 2024 stood at ₹3.36 lakh crore, reflecting a growth of 11.6 per cent compared to the same period last year.

Experts said the collection numbers reflect the resilience of economy and continued growth momentum.

MS Mani, Partner, Deloitte India, said these collections, which relate to supply of goods and services transactions in April 2024, for which GST has



been paid in May this year, indicate the beginning of a new normal in excess of ₹1.7 trillion in FY25 compared to ₹1.6 trillion during FY24.

"The resilience shown by the GST collections, without significant seasonal or event-based variations across recent months, indicates the maturity of the GST system. There will now be renewed confidence in moving ahead with the next stage of reforms in the coming months, without significant concerns on the revenue impact," Mani said.

Pratik Jain, Partner, PwC India, said it is interesting to see in few states such as Delhi, Haryana and Punjab, growth over last year is much higher than average growth.

Abhishek Jain, Indirect Tax Head & Partner, KPMG, said a 10 per cent growth over last year same month and specially 15.3 per cent growth in GST collections on domestic supplies is impressive and shows the robustness of domestic economy.

Vivek Jalan, Partner of Tax Connect Advisory Services, said one reason of high collections is the recovery action taken by some GST departments for recovery of 100 per cent of demand amounts before the set up of GST tribunals.

"As the GST tribunals are expected to be set up this year, to this effect the collections may take a hit in the 4th quarter of this fiscal and thereafter," Jalan added.

Forex reserves drop by \$2bn to \$646.67bn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 1: India's forex reserves dropped by USD 2.027 billion to USD 646.673 billion for the week ended May 24, the Reserve Bank said.

In the previous reporting week, the kitty had reached an all-time high of USD 648.7 billion after a jump of USD 4.549 billion.

For the week ended May 24, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 1.51 billion to USD 567.499 billion, the data released Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves decreased by USD 482 million to USD 56.713 billion during the week. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were down by USD 33 million to USD 18.135 billion.

India's reserve position with the IMF was also down by USD 1 million to USD 4.326 billion in the reporting week, the apex bank data showed.

E-comm, BFSI, hospitality sectors driving job market: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 1: E-commerce, BFSI (banking, financial services, and insurance), and hospitality sectors witnessed an increased demand for talents in the first four months of 2024, indicating a recovery in overall job market, a report said.

Driven by economic recovery, the demand for workforce in BFSI increased the maximum by 21 per cent during the first four months of this calendar year. The e-commerce sector saw an increase of 17 per cent, services and hospitality industries reported a growth of 13 per cent, according to a report by profes-



sional networking platform Apna. The report is based on the

data on Apna platform during 2023 and 2024.

It also found that the job market in the southern part of India

saw a growth of 23 per cent compared to 18 per cent last year, with cities like Hyderabad, Bangalore and Chennai leading in terms of total number of job postings.

The adoption of digitalisation is becoming increasingly evident in tier II and III cities like Lucknow, Coimbatore, and Gwalior that have been witnessing a surge in job postings.

"Cities such as Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Chennai are at the forefront of the growth in the job landscape. This trend showcases the strength of southern India's job market and underscores the expanding opportunities fuelled by digitalisation. From bustling metropolitan

areas to emerging tier II and tier III cities like Lucknow, Coimbatore, and Gwalior, our platform reflects a dynamic landscape, offering promising prospects for job seekers nationwide," apna.co CEO and founder Nirmal Parikh said.

The platform has registered a 21 per cent year-on-year increase in the number of job applications from freshers and an 18 per cent rise from women job seekers during the reporting period.

The total number of applications received during the period reached approximately 1.7 crore, up 15 per cent from a year ago, the report added.

Good start for Men in Blue in London leg of FIH Pro League India trounce lacklustre Germany



JOB DONE: Indian players celebrate after their emphatic win over Germany in their FIH Pro League encounter played Saturday in London

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 1: India exploited a rusty German defence, scoring three goals as the Harmanpreet Singh-led side outclassed the World Champions to make a winning start to the London leg of the FIH Pro Hockey League here Saturday.

Harmanpreet (16th minute) scored off a penalty corner, Sukhjeet Singh (41st) and Gurjant Singh (44th) tormented an out-of-sorts young German side, who started off on a roaring note but could not sustain the momentum for long.

World No. 5 India, with 24 points from 13 outings are third in table, while Argentina, who India defeated twice during the

Antwerp leg of the Pro League are second with 26 points from 14 matches. The Netherlands are leading the table with 26 points from 12 games.

Goalkeeping stalwart PR Sreejesh stood rock solid against a relentless German attack in the first quarter, thwarting two penalty corners. At the start of the second quarter, Harmanpreet converted India's first penalty corner and it changed the momentum of the game. From then on, the Indians started to dominate.

The India skipper's low flick aimed to the left of German goalkeeper Alexander Stadler took a deflection off the first rusher Barry Antheus before sounding the board.

Sukhjeet then doubled the

lead. Picking up the ball on the wing, he gave a through pass to Abhishek and made a dash to the circle. Abhishek relayed the ball back to Sukhjeet, who unleashed an unstoppable shot past the German goalkeeper.

Gurjant then lined up the third goal for India three minutes later. Sanjay played the ball to Jarmanpreet Singh on the goal-line. The defender flicked the ball back to Gurjant, who scooped it past Stadler to ensure India's dominance.

All along, a jittery German side tried their best to breach the Indian defence but to no avail with Sreejesh showcasing his capability under the bar.

The Germans, returning to competitive hockey after nearly

four months, having last played in the Olympic qualifiers in January, were profligate with penalty corners and their coordination left a lot to be desired. They earned a dozen penalty corners but all went waste. Sreejesh too played his role to perfection, thwarting four attempts – two off penalty corners – in the first quarter. "No doubt, this win will give us a lot of confidence," Harmanpreet said after the game. "However, we still have to improve our coordination and stop giving away so many penalty corners," he added.

India's will play their next game Sunday against hosts Great Britain. They will again face Germany June 8 and Great Britain, the next day.

Bumrah prefers youngsters to learn things their own way

AGENCIES

New York, June 1: Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah has said that he never tries to 'over-teach' the youngsters. He added that he only steps in when asked for advice. The T20 World Cup will be an acid test for Bumrah as he will have to shoulder India's pace responsibility along with the relatively inexperienced Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh.

"One should never try to over-teach. It is something that I have learned early on," Bumrah was quoted as saying by the ICC's official website for the T20 World Cup. "Because whenever people need help, I let them have their own questions. You just should not give too much information to confuse them," he added.

Bumrah asserted it is important for youngsters to know their paths without being burdened with an overkill of information. "It's not like they have just been lucky and have landed in the squad. I do pass on certain information that I have gained from my experience, but not too much of it," he said.

"I don't try to burden them with (over) information. In their journey they have to find their own ways and solutions," Bumrah added.

Bumrah has battled a nagging back injury for the past couple of years and it even kept him out of the 2022 T20 World Cup. However, he is not bothered by thoughts of injury. The reticent bowler said his focus since coming back has been to simply enjoy his game.

"Certain things will go my way, certain things won't,"



There are certain things you can control, certain you can't. So I have decided to enjoy the game rather than think of the end results

JASPRIT BUMRAH

Bumrah pointed out. "All of these things will be a part of my process. I have just realised that I started playing this sport because I love it. And I will focus on it and enjoy, rather than the end results. This process helps in reducing your pressure," the premier Indian fast bowler added.

Bumrah has 74 T20 International wickets, which puts him third in India's all-time list. He is widely perceived to be the best among the current lot of international pacers when it comes to consistently bowling yorkers.

Bumrah said his consistent yorkers are a result of years of practice. "I grew up playing tennis ball cricket and yorkers were one of the major weapons to get wickets. I always wanted to bowl fast and have been bowling yorkers from a very young age. May be, it is one of the reasons why I consistently bowl yorkers well," Bumrah pointed out.

SHORT TAKES

Fernandes inks 3-yr deal with Mumbai

Mumbai: Mumbai City FC signed Saturday a three-year contract with India midfielder Brandon Fernandes, who returns to the ISL side after a brief stint in 2015 from FC Goa. Fernandes played 130 games for FC Goa. "I am delighted to return to Mumbai City FC. It is one of the top clubs in Indian football, and it represents a new and exciting challenge for me in my career," the Goa-based player said after signing the contract.

Manu bags javelin gold in Taiwan meet

New Delhi: India's DP Manu clinched the gold medal Saturday in men's javelin throw event at the Taiwan Open 2024 with a throw of 81.58m in Taipei. The Asian Athletics Championship silver medallist registered his best throw in his last attempt. Taiwan Open is a World Athletics Continental Tour bronze-level meet and awards crucial ranking points. Manu started with a 78.32m throw, while his second attempt measured 76.80m. However, he improved in the latter throws and finally managed to breach the 81-metre mark. However, the performance was far from Manu's personal best of 84.35m.

Aditi makes cut at US Women's Open

Lancaster (Pennsylvania): India's Aditi Ashok shot 1-over 71 to move into the weekend rounds here at the US Women's Open tournament at the Lancaster Golf Club here Friday. At the end of the second day's play she was 4-over and tied-24 on the leaderboard. Aditi had two birdies against three bogeys in the second round after having three birdies, four bogeys and a double bogey on the first day. World No. 158, Wichanee Meechai from Thailand rose to the top as she followed her first round of 69 with a 67 and was 4-under.

Karthik retires

Chennai: Former India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik officially announced Saturday his retirement from all forms of competitive cricket after two decades of playing for the country. He represented India in 180 games across all the three formats and scored 3,463 runs. He also had 172 dismissals in his credit.

2 India bids put FIDE in a spot

DELHI JOINS CHENNAI IN RACE TO HOST WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIPS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Delhi has joined Chennai and Singapore in the race to host the chess World Championship match between D Gukesh and China's Ding Liren after the All India Chess Federation (AICF) backed the national capital's bid while accusing the Tamil Nadu government of acting unilaterally by pushing the southern city's name.

International Chess Federation (FIDE) CEO Emil Sutovsky said Saturday all three cities have submitted their bids and they 'meet the criteria'. He added Chennai was the first to bid for the much-anticipated match in November-December this year, while the New Delhi bid came in last.

"Three bids to host the FIDE World Championship Match-2024. Chennai, Singapore, New Delhi (in order of submission). All meet the criteria," Sutovsky wrote on 'X'. "Next week FIDE Council to discuss it – representatives of the bidders invited to share details and take questions. Final decision in June," Sutovsky added.

- Total prize money for the two contestants in the final is approximately ₹20 crore
- Tournament to be spread over 25 days
- India had hosted the World Championships in 2000 and 2013

The Chennai bid was made by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu while the AICF bid for New Delhi. While FIDE doesn't stop any government from bidding for the prestigious event, it is unusual for two entities from the same country to bid for the tournament.

AICF president Nitin Narang told this agency that the national chess federation has bid for New Delhi as the venue for the title showdown and that a no-objection certificate (NOC) had been taken from the Indian government. He informed that the Tamil Nadu government had not consulted the AICF before sending its bid to FIDE.

"The Tamil Nadu government never consulted the AICF or had any conversation with us about it (Chennai as venue). They also do not have the NOC (from the Government of India) for it," said Narang.

Ganguly backs 'GG' for India job

Former India captain says Gambhir's passion and winning attitude will help the team

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 1: Former India captain Sourav Ganguly said Saturday that Gautam Gambhir would be a 'good coach' for the national cricket team if he has applied for the job as his 'hunger and passion' was evident in the recently-concluded IPL. Ganguly was attending an event here when he made the observations. He also talked about India's chances at the T20 World Cup.

The former BCCI president said he is in favour of the national team having an Indian coach since there is enough talent in the country.

"I am in favour of an Indian coach because we have enormous talent in our country, enormously high-skilled players who have done wonders for Indian cricket and very rightfully they should be a part of the system," Ganguly said.

Ganguly was asked whether Gambhir (popularly known as 'GG') would be suitable for the Team India job. He said that he did not know whether Gambhir had applied for the position, but if selected, he would certainly be a good candidate.

"...has he applied? I really don't know because first he has



to apply and then only he will get the job," Ganguly said. "If he applies and if he wants it, he will be a very good candidate. I will be happy if the board decides to give him the job. He always wants to win and the hunger and passion is evident as one saw during the IPL,"

For India to win the T20 World Cup, Virat and Rohit should open. It would allow India to play with an extra batter

SOURAV GANGULY

Ganguly added. India's head coach position will fall vacant after Rahul Dravid steps down at the end of the team's T20 World Cup campaign in the Americas.

Ganguly also said India's chances are 'very good' in the T20 World Cup but the team should play with 'freedom'.

"...play without fear and just keep hitting. There is enormous talent, (this is) a team that have (Virat) Kohli, Rohit (Sharma), Surya (Suryakumar Yadav), (Rishabh) Pant, (Shivam) Dube, (Hardik) Pandya, (Ravindra) Jadeja, Axar (Patel), (Jasprit) Bumrah, Sanju (Samson)," Ganguly said when asked about India's chances.

"That's why I say everyone is capable of winning it for India and the only way they will do it is (if they) just play with freedom. Play with that extra batsman and hit from the first ball, hit till you have to defend (and) play like each is the last ball," he added.

Sabalenka, Rybakina sail through

AGENCIES

Paris, June 1: Grand Slam winners Elena Rybakina and Aryna Sabalenka reached the fourth round of the French Open winning their respective matches here Saturday.

The 2022 Wimbledon champion Rybakina, seeded fourth, beat Elise Mertens of Belgium 6-4, 6-2. Two-time Australian Open champion Sabalenka followed her on Court Philippe Chatrier and won 7-5, 6-1 against Paula Badosa.

"It's tough to play your best friend," Sabalenka said. It certainly was for a while. After trailing 3-5 in the first set, Sabalenka won eight straight games to take complete control. "I was just feeling myself and trusting my shots," Sabalenka said.

Badosa said their friendship does not affect how they play. "We have a great relationship and then when the match comes we separate things," she said. "We are opponents there but, after that and before that, we are always going to be friends. We connect very well. She's a great



ON A ROLL: Aryna Sabalenka in action Friday during her match against Paula Badosa at Roland Garros

person," Badosa added. In other men's third-round play, 21st-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime beat No. 15-seeded American Ben Shelton 6-4, 6-2, 6-1. Their match resumed after being interrupted by rain Friday evening.

Before rain-interrupted Friday, title-contender Carlos Alcaraz sparked and showed steely resolve in his most convincing match at the French Open this year for a 6-4, 7-6(7-5), 6-3 victory

over American Sebastian Korda to reach the fourth round of Roland Garros.

Still wearing a compression sleeve after a recent forearm issue, Alcaraz produced a stellar show in a rematch of the duo's 2022 encounter to firmly put himself back in the conversation as the favourite to lift the title in Paris and a third Major.

"I feel amazing, feel great playing on this court," Alcaraz said after the match.

RONALDO INCONSOLABLE AFTER KING'S CUP LOSS

AGENCIES

Riyadh, June 1: Cristiano Ronaldo was shattered to the core as his Saudi Pro League side Al-Nassr lost the King's Cup final to rivals Al-Hilal here Friday. The closely-fought tie saw Ronaldo hitting the post with a beautiful bicycle kick, as the match headed into penalties after the normal time score remained 1-1.

No winner could be decided in the extra-time, prompting penalties to be taken where Al-Hilal emerged triumphant 5-4, leaving Ronaldo tearful and inconsolable. After Al Nassr lost the match, Ronaldo sunk to the turf and was inconsolable as teammates and coaching staff tried to lift his spirits. Officials and teammates off the field accompanied the five-time Ballon d'Or winner, as he sat on the bench with the runners-up medal around his neck.

For Al Hilal, Serbian forward Aleksander Mitrovic opened the scoring in the seventh



minute before Ayman Yahya of Al Nassr equalised in the 88th. Finding an equaliser had become quite tough for Ronaldo's side after their goalkeeper David Ospina received a red card in the 56th minute.

Al Nassr kept the pressure on Al Hilal after Ospina's sending-off. Just before the 90-minute mark, Al Hilal saw both of their centre-backs Kalidou Koulibaly and Ali Al-Bulaihi being sent off. The extra-time gave Al-Nassr a chance to get the winner, but goalkeeper Yassine Bonou's heroics kept the scores level in extra time. In the shootout Bonou shone yet again and saved the last two kicks.

Pant dazzles in warm-up match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, June 1: India ticked multiple boxes during their 60-run victory over Bangladesh in the T20 World Cup warm-up match here Saturday, but none bolder than a fifty by Rishabh Pant which has all but sealed his place as the first-choice wicketkeeper batter in the ICC showpiece.

Pant's 53 (32b, 4x4, 4x6), who was making his India comeback after that horrific car accident in December 2022, and Hardik Pandya's equally pleasing (40 not out, 23b, 2x4, 4x6) led India to a competitive 182 for five after opting to bat first.

India faced little trouble in defending the total as left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh found his bowling wares, leading the restriction of Bangladesh to 122 for nine. There was a token fightback from Mahmudullah Riyaz (40 retired out; 28b, 4x4, 1x6) and Shakib Al Hasan (28), who milked 75 runs for the sixth-wicket. But it helped Bangladesh only to reduce the margin of defeat after they were reduced to 41 for five.

Arshdeep, who had a less than satisfactory outing in the IPL for Punjab Kings, struck twice inside the Power Play, ousting Soumya Sarkar, caught behind by Pant, and Litton Das, who was bowled by a lovely in-curler from over the wicket.

Fellow pacer Mohammed Siraj added the wicket of Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (0) as they slipped to 10 for three in 3.5 overs, and it was too deep a hole to claw back against a competent bowling unit, which has good variety through the ranks. The Indian bowlers also showed excellent skills to exploit a slow pitch which was also aided by an equally sluggish outfield where the ball did not roll along. Pacer Shivam Dube also chipped in with two wickets (2/11).

For Bangladesh, the defeat was a continuation of their gloomy build-up to the World Cup as they had recently lost the three-match T20I series against the USA 1-2. The insipid batting effort by Bangladesh also provided a better perspective to the innings of Pant and Pandya earlier.

It was their gumption that led India to an above-par score on a slow pitch, and something that will come very handy once India embrace the tournament proper from June 5 with a match against Ireland at this venue. Pant retired after making 53 but not before nullifying a plethora of Bangladeshi slow bowlers.